LUTHER THE AUGUSTINIAN: AUGUSTINE
PELAGIANISM AND LUTHER'S
PHILOSOPHY OF MAN

Thesis

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By

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Augustine has had a large influence on the development of western theology, and nowhere is this more obvious than in Martin Luther's understanding of God, humankind and grace. Yet at the same time there are also significant differences in the two churchmen's thought. Sometimes these differences are subtle, such as their views of the state; other times they are not so subtle, such as their positions on free will or their praise of philosophy and its usefulness in sounding the depth of Christianity. In order to best explain these varying views, one must look at Augustine's and Luther's diverging opinions of man's nature where one will see that the dissimilarities are best understood in light of Luther's pessimistic view of humanity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification by faith: old or new?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luther and total depravity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. AUGUSTINE AND THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An age of change and fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelagius: the man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelagius: the theology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine: defender of the faith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orders from above: the official condemnations of Pelagius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGY OF MAN</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin, the fall and human nature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new grace and justification in light of man's fallen nature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man and the <em>imagio Dei</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ERASMUS AND LUTHER AND THE DEBATE ON THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church on the eve of the Reformation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther: soul in turmoil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus: Prince of Letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus: friend or foe?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The debate: <em>libero arbitrio</em> or <em>servo arbitrio</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. LUTHER'S THEOLOGY OF MAN</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total depravity and the Reformation principles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predestination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society and the state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding remarks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A ................................................................. 103
APPENDIX B ................................................................. 106
BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................. 109
PREFACE

In the Modern Age, one might think that a discussion focusing on the anthropologies of long dead monks and church figures is merely a practice in antiquarianism. Nothing could be further from the truth. The views of Augustine and Luther are important for modern man for three reasons. First, Augustine's understanding of man and man's nature dictated how the medieval church saw humanity. Prior to the Pelagian controversy, there was no clear teaching on grace; however, due to the debate Augustine formed his doctrines of human nature and man's salvation which provided the intellectual and theological basis for the church’s teaching on the subjects. For Augustine, man was incapable of reaching God through his own merits; therefore, he had to be in communion with the church, since the church offered the sacrament of baptism, which was the only way to cleanse oneself of Adam's sin. Hence, though the church's power was already increasing, Augustine's teaching on human nature only increased it more.

Secondly, Luther's pessimistic view of man directly determined the three major doctrines of the Reformation—sola scriptura, sola fides and sola gratia. For if the whole man is sinful, this would include his reasoning, in which case he would need divine teaching; if man is so vile that he can do no good, he must have faith in God to save him; and if he is so thoroughly corrupt that he cannot even have faith, then God must be gracious enough to make him believe. These principles, based on a theory of man, were the driving force of the Reformation. They gave many the strength to stand up to the establishment, even if it meant their lives. Also, these views threw Europe into tumult for over a hundred years and forever changed the religious life of the West.
Lastly, if one is to believe Lewis Spitz, Luther's, and by implication Augustine's, anthropologies were very influential in the development of modern views of man.¹ They influenced the development of the Rationalist, Idealist and Liberal Traditions and also Anthropological Realism. Professor Spitz claims that "it is because Luther's biblical anthropology sees man whole that it remains disconcertingly relevant down to the present day."² Although this article may in many ways give too much credit to Luther, it does make a major point: Luther has influenced modern man's view of himself. It is a rare bird that does not lock doors or listens to people's words with a critical ear. If modern man truly believed that he was inherently good would these precautions be necessary? Lest someone reply, "we do these things, not because we have a pessimistic view of man, but because experience has shown that it is wise to be careful." Both Augustine and Luther would respond that experience has merely demonstrated what the Bible has said all along—man is in a fallen state! Although one can say that an investigation of Augustine and Luther and their views of man are pedantic or too theological, nonetheless, let them never say they are unimportant.
Endnotes

1 L. Spitz, "Luther's Impact on Modern Views of Man," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 41 (January 1977): 26-43. Professor Spitz claims that at least concerning the Rationalist, Idealist and the Liberal Tradition, it was "Luther's Christian rationalism" that had the most profound impact. Spitz argues that though Luther was not an "unrestrained rationalism" he felt that reason was "the crowning glory of God's creation" (29). In opposition to professor Spitz thesis, I will attempt to show in chapter 5 that in fact Luther does not have a high regard for reason for it was corrupted and weakened after the fall and more often than not leads one away from God. One merely needs to look at his commentary on Genesis, *The Bondage of the Will* and his disputation against scholastic theology to see his less than glowing opinion of reason. Nonetheless, Spitz is probably correct in his belief that Luther impacted modern thoughts of man; for it is not nearly as important what one says, as it is what others think has been said.

2 Ibid., 40.
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him... 

Genesis 1. 27

We ourselves can recognize in ourselves an image of God, in the sense of an image of the Trinity.

Augustine, The City of God

I fear, however, that since this "image of God" has been lost by sin, we can never fully attain to the knowledge of what it was.

Martin Luther, "Commentary of Genesis"
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A hot African sun beat down on Augustine when in 412 he wrote to his friend Marcellinus on the forgiveness of sins and infant baptism. Over a millennium later, Martin Luther resolutely nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg. These events, though different on the surface, shared one thing in common--they both marked turning points in the development of Christian doctrine and church history. At both times each man struggled with the doctrines of justification, grace and human nature. These doctrines were the central issues in both Augustine's controversy with Pelagius, and later in the Reformation. 1

Justification by Faith: Old or New?

One of the major weapons of the Counter Reformation apologists was to show that the Lutheran understanding of justification constituted a theological novum. If the Catholics could show that Luther's teaching was an innovation, then any claim by the Reformers to catholicity would be seriously called into doubt. 2 For it is highly unlikely, argued the Catholic apologists, that the veracity of God would permit an article of faith essential to one's salvation to be absent from the teachings of the true church. For the great seventeenth century preacher Bossuet:

The Church's doctrine is always the same. . . . the Gospel is never different from what it was before. Hence, if at any time someone says that the faith includes something which yesterday was not said to be of the faith, it is always heterodoxy, which is any doctrine different from orthodoxy. There is no difficulty about recognising false doctrine: there is no argument
about it: it is recognised at once, whenever it appears, merely because it is new.³

The Lutheran reformers appreciated this criticism since they strongly desired to find forerunners for their conception of justification.⁴ If early Protestants could show that the Wittenberg professor's teachings were in reality a return to the apostolic and patristic vision of justification, and that the papist view was in actuality a corrupt and accretive version of this doctrine, then the reformers could rightly claim to be the torchbearers of the true universal church.

Consequently, it is important to clarify the doctrines of the founders and fathers of the church. The crucial passages on which this controversy hinged were from the Pauline epistles. According to Paul, "The free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For The Judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification."⁵ Because of Adam's transgression in the garden, all of humanity was burdened with the weight of sin, but through the gratuitous sacrifice of the God-man, Jesus Christ, the Lord has provided a way out for humankind. If one merely accepts the free gift of grace he will be justified, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'"⁶ One cannot earn this gift, but can only graciously accept it from the hands of God.⁷ Since grace and the righteousness that comes through grace are God's gifts, and only God knows to whom He will bestow them, Paul can boldly say: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son . . . And those whom he predestined he called; those he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."⁸

Since the meaning of scriptures is often less than obvious, however, there are varying interpretations of the Pauline doctrine of justification. One of the first systematic attempts at interpreting that doctrine occurred in 412 with Augustine's anti-Pelagian treatise
On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins. As the controversy with Pelagius intensified, Augustine's teaching on original sin and justification evolved and eventually became the orthodox understanding of the Latin church.

A letter reached Augustine from his dear friend Marcellinus which compelled him to take up pen and paper and respond. The Imperial Commissioner had written the bishop, asking if he could answer a few questions which were proving to be a source of anxiety for himself and other members of the church at Carthage. The questions so captivated Augustine that he wrote, "my mind has gradually admitted this inquiry to an importance transcending that of all others." The questions were those of the British monk, Pelagius. The doctrine of Pelagius was simple: since God would never ask the impossible, it is man's duty to keep all of God's commandments. This doctrine horrified Augustine, since as a result of the fall, man was no longer free to will the good, but was held captive by sin. "Forasmuch, however, as there is, owing to the defects that have entered our nature . . . a certain necessary tendency to sin, a man should listen, and in order that the said necessity may cease to exist, learn to say to God, 'Bring Thou me out of my necessities' . . . and thus, by the assistance of grace through our Lord Jesus Christ both the evil necessity will be removed and full liberty be bestowed." Therefore, man cannot keep all of God's commandments.

In the hands of the church this doctrine was transformed over the centuries. For instance, certain interpretations of the doctrine of indulgences held that humans had the ability to either remit sins or cancel temporal punishment in purgatory. A good example was Frederick the Wise, Luther's prince, who had such a large collection of relics that "those who viewed these relics on the designated days and made the stipulated contribution might receive from the pope indulgences for the reduction of purgatory, either for themselves or others, to the extent of 1,902,202 years and 270 days." Augustine would have argued that such a view was merely a return to the Pelagian doctrine of justification by
"Beautiful! Beautiful!" And though this may not sound like much of a compliment when contrasted to his marginal comments on Biel, "Completely mad!", its significance becomes evident. Also, lest it be argued that Augustine interested Luther only because Luther was an Augustinian, Luther would respond: "I do not defend Augustine because I am an Augustinian; before I began reading his works he meant nothing to me." Luther felt that he was following in the footsteps of Augustine, since in his preface he argued:

Later I read Augustine’s *The Spirit and the Letter*, where... I found that he, too, interpreted God’s righteousness in a similar way, as the righteousness with which God clothes us when he justifies us.

As Luther’s detractors pointed out, however, his conception of grace was not a restatement of Augustine. Even Luther was aware of this, for although Luther was fond of using Augustine to support his view of justification, the church father was not the final court of appeal--the scriptures were! For "who gave [Augustine] authority, that we must believe what he says? What scripture does he quote to prove the statement?" And since Luther believed that Augustine could not support free will based on the scriptures, Luther followed the Bible and not Augustine. In his debate with Erasmus, Luther willingly diverged from the teachings of Augustine:

... Free Choice avails for nothing but sinning. This is Augustine's view, which he expresses in many places, but particularly in his book *On the Spirit and the Letter*, in the fourth or fifth chapter... where he uses those very words. The... hardest opinion is that of Wyclif and Luther, that free choice is an empty name and all that we do comes about by sheer necessity.

The debate between Erasmus and Luther focused on the freedom or bondage of the will, but the question of human nature was also central. For Luther, free will was a word without content. He asserted that the world would have been a better place if the word had never been invented and, then, if it was to be used one should apply it only to the "Divine
When one spoke of the will, they should understand that "the human will is placed between [God and Satan] like a beast of burden. If God rides it, it wills and goes where God wills ... If Satan rides it, it wills and goes where Satan wills." For Luther, freewill was anathema.

Luther and Total Depravity

Luther's adamant rejection of free will puzzles many historians. He claimed to be returning to the Augustinian view, yet it was on the very issue of free will that he departed from Augustine. For Augustine, after the fall there was a fundamental change in the very nature of humanity, such that humankind was no longer able not to sin but was instead inclined towards sin. Free will, however, though in bondage, was never done away with in Augustine's theology. Grace was an aid to free will, and if there was no free will, grace would have nothing on which to work. If Luther had modified his views and brought them into line with those of Augustine, papal theologians may still have reviled him; nevertheless, he certainly would have had a just claim to being the heir of apostolic and patristic thought. Also, his rejection of free will could not have been based purely on the Bible, since Holy Writ was never as stringent as Luther was. Although scriptures speaks of humanity as fallen and sinful, the Bible also speaks of man as created in the "image of God." In actuality, the impetus for Luther's denial of free will was his strong belief in the total depravity of man, according to which man is wholly destitute and desires nothing more than to do evil. This view of human nature appears to originate in Luther's own sense of guilt and the awareness of his own sinfulness. The word Luther used to describe this personal experience was Anfechtung. "It is all the doubt, turmoil, pang, tremor, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation which invade the spirit of man." Even Luther's entrance into monastic life did not lessen his despair. "In the monastery I
did not think about women, money, or possessions; instead my heart trembled and fidgeted about whether God would bestow his grace on me." A probable hypothesis is that Luther projected his feelings of "fear and trembling" on the rest of humankind. He saw his limitations as not merely personal, but as applicable to mankind in general.

Another factor that gave Luther a low estimation of humanity was the practice of confession, whereby the church required one to confess all of their mortal sins as an ordinary condition for salvation. Due to the fourth Lateran Council, this institution became prominent in the thirteenth century, and though completely foreign to Augustine, was ever so familiar to Luther. During the time of Augustine there were three institutions for the forgiveness of sins: baptism, penance, and the Lord's Prayer, with penance being on the fringe of the Christian life. The situation had drastically changed by the eve of the Reformation. Luther was so petrified that he might miss one small trespass that he could spend up to six hours per confession. Staupitz even scolded the frightened Luther for his obsessive behavior. "Look here," he said, "if you expect Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive--parricide, blasphemy, adultery--instead of all these peccadilloes." Despite Staupitz' advice, Luther continued to see himself and the rest of humanity as corrupted beyond the point of comprehension. This doctrine of the total depravity of man placed the Reformation Founder apart from Augustine and other church theologians.

The fulcrum in both the Pelagian Controversy and the Reformation was the doctrines of grace and justification, and by implication, the question of the efficacy of the will. Though the teachings that came out of both events are strikingly similar, the Catholic church awarded Augustine the title "Doctor of Grace," whereas it branded Luther the arch-heresiarch extràordinaire. In order to understand this discrepancy, it is necessary to examine the Pelagian Controversy. This debate between Augustine and Pelagius was a rehearsal for the Reformation. Luther, however, would prove to be a much more
intransigent proponent than Augustine on the issue of man's fallen nature; consequently, the sixteenth century church, which advocated Pelagian ideas, condemned Luther's exaggerated Augustinian view as heretical.
Endnotes

1For both Augustine and Luther the theological principles of justification, grace and the bondage of the will are so bound together that the mention of one implies the others. For both theologians the fallen will is so corrupted that it is bound to sin and therefore, is deserving of eternal punishment. Humanity is justified, however, by God's grace, which man neither deserves nor can earn. Because of the interconnectedness of these three doctrines, when either Augustine or Luther expounds on one tenet, there is usually an implicit reference to the other two that is assumed.


3Premiere Instruction Pastorale, xxvii, from McGrath, 220.

4McGrath, 219

5Rom. 5. 16; all scriptural references come from the New Oxford Annotated Bible: Revised Standard Version.

6Rom. 1.1 7.

7Gal. 2. 21; Eph. 2. 8-9.

8Rom. 8. 29-30.

9Although it can be argued that the actual origins of Augustine's doctrine on grace can be found in his work of 396, Ad Simplicianum, where he has a concept of humankind as a "lump of sin," his first concerted efforts are his tracts against Pelagius (J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, revised ed. (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), 357.


12Ep. ad Demetriadem, 16, ad fin., P.L. xxxiii. 1110 from Henry Bettenson ed, Documents of the Christian Church, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980), 52. The doctrine of Pelagius will be more thoroughly discussed in Ch. 2.


15Luther, "Ninety-five Theses," 76.

16McGrath, 229.

17Ibid.


19H. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* trans. E. Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), 59. From this discovery we can also date Luther’s first introduction to Augustine in 1509. He wrote on the title page that “St. Augustine died in the year of our Lord 433. Now, in the year 1509, that is 1076 years ago” (*WA* 9.3, 19-21). Although the date of Augustine’s death is wrong (d. 430), the quotation does provide us with a fairly certain date of Luther’s first contact with the Bishop.


21Quoted from Oberman, p.161.


24Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will*, trans. P. Watson, in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, The Library of Christian Classics Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 180 (henceforth, *BOW*). Although Luther continued and tried to demonstrate that the first opinion is identical with his own, if he had been shown that his view was different from Augustine’s, it is certain he would have rejected the patriarch’s view for his own.

25A full discussion of this debate will be given in ch. 4

26Kerr, 91.

27*BOW*, 140.
Ibid., p.90.

The theology of Luther will be more thoroughly discussed in ch.5.

Augustine, *City of God*, XIV.13; *Enchiridion*, XXX; *On Rebuke and Grace*, 2.


Gen. 1. 27.

"A man void of the Spirit of God, does not evil against his will as by violence, or as if he were taken by the neck and forced to it . . . but he does it spontaneously, and with a desirous willingness (BOW, 88-90).

Here I Stand, 42.

Quoted from *Luther*, 128.


*Here I Stand*, p.54.

Quoted from *Here I Stand*, p.54.

"This hereditary sin is so deep a corruption of nature, that no reason can understand it. . . " (Kerr, p.84).
Pelagius was saying 'my sin is, God help me, freely committed', Augustine 'My salvation, God be thanked, comes from Christ alone.'

"In Defence of Pelagius," John Ferguson.

Spiritales vero divitas nullus tibi praeter te conferre poterit.

*Ep. ad Dem.* , Pelagius.

Da quod iubes et iube quod vis.

*Confessions* (X.29), Augustine.
CHAPTER 2

THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY: REHEARSAL FOR
THE REFORMATION

The Pelagian controversy was not the greatest threat to Christianity during the fourth and fifth centuries. Arianism, Donatism or Manichaeism could claim this title; however, Pelagianism may have had the most far reaching effect. For out of the debate between Augustine and Pelagius, the West received its first systematic teaching on the doctrines of original sin, justification and grace. Luther, over a millennium later, returned to these doctrines in his fight against the Pelagianism which he saw as destroying the church. To understand, then, what Luther was combating and the weapons that he used, one must return to the fifth century and the Pelagian controversy. During this era the church was in the position of redefining its functions and taking on new roles, and within this setting both Pelagius and Augustine attempted to establish a fixed point for a rapidly changing society. Hence, to appreciate these two men's theologies and the security they were trying to provide, one must look at the period just before this conflict. This will also allow for a better understanding of Luther and his time, since he too attempted to furnish a terra firma in a sea of doctrinal pluralism.
An Age of Change and Fear

The event that most changed the character of the church was the conversion of Constantine. So great was the impact of this first Christian Emperor that a brief sketch of his spiritual turn and subsequent influence on the church is warranted.

In the noonday sky, Constantine and his troops had seen the words "by this, conquer" inscribed on a cross. That evening Constantine dreamt that Christ came to him with the same symbol and commanded him to "use its likeness in his engagements with the enemy."\(^1\) The following day Constantine and his troops painted their shields and helmets with the symbol of the cross, and by the end of 312 Constantine had defeated Maxentius at Milvian Bridge and was in control of the western half of the Roman empire.

Constantine believed that his victory was a direct result of the Christian God's intervention.\(^2\) As a sign of gratitude to God he convinced Licinius, the Augustus in the east, to tolerate the Christian religion in order that "the divine care for us of which we have been aware on many earlier occasions will remain with us unalterably for ever."\(^3\) Not only did the Edict of Milan provide for the toleration of Christians, but it also returned confiscated church lands at the empire's expense. Constantine again showed his thankfulness to God when, with the defeat of Licinius in 324 and Constantine's elevation to sole ruler of the empire, he urged his subjects to convert to Christianity.\(^4\)

Providing protection and prestige were not the only gifts that Constantine gave to the church. He also bestowed on the Catholic clergy the dearly sought after benefit of being exempt from civic offices. The empire usually restricted this type of exemption to athletes, "exceptional sophists" and the priests of Egypt; but under Constantine, the Emperor granted it to a larger number than ever before,\(^5\) and then, merely on the basis that the State's well-being depended on the prayers of the Christian clergy.\(^6\) Along with this
prized favor Constantine also donated large sums of money to the church. In a letter to Caecilian, the Bishop of Carthage, the Emperor spoke of giving the church 3000 *folles*, or bags of gold, as a "contribution towards expenses." Though one may never known exactly what Constantine saw in the sky on that day in 312, one can be certain of his consequent belief in the God of Christianity. The Emperor amply testified to this by the favors and gifts he bestowed on the church.

The impact of Constantine's conversion and subsequent influence on the development of the church is difficult to overestimate. Edward Gibbon wrote in his classic work:

> The victories and the civil policy of Constantine no longer influence the state of Europe; but a considerable portion of the globe still retains the impression which it received from the conversion of that monarch; and the ecclesiastical institutions of his reign are still connected, by an indissoluble chain, with the opinions, the passions, and interests of the present generation. ⁸

Had the emperor been content merely to bequeath favors and money to the church his reign would have still been a turning point in the history of Christianity; however, he went even further and became intimately involved in the politics of the church.

Within six months of his victory at Milvian Bridge Constantine was brought into the Donatist controversy. The Donatists were a schismatic body within the North African church who refused to accept the Bishop Caecilian, because they believed he had been ordained by a *traditor* during the persecution of Diocletian. Their major tenet was that the true church had to continue in its full holiness or purity, and that unworthy bishops, of whom they believed Caecilian to be one, threatened this purity. ⁹ Although Constantine would have preferred the church not to have involved him in these matters, in the name of "brotherly concord" and "to leave no schism or division of any kind anywhere," he called a number of synods in order to judge the Donatist case. ¹⁰ In all three synods the bishops
found in favor of Caecilian and against the Donatists. Though the Donatist heresy persisted in Numidia until Islam swept through northern Africa in the late seventh century, the significance was that for the first time the politics of church and state had become intermingled.11

Another example of the Emperor's intimate involvement in church affairs was his handling of the dispute that originated with the teachings of Arius (c.324). Arius argued that if God is One, then "if any other being were to participate in the divine nature in any valid sense, there would result a duality of divine beings . . . Therefore whatever else exists must have come into existence."12 This included Christ. By 324, most churches in the east had either rejected or accepted this doctrine and the only way to arrive at a final solution was for a general council to be held at a neutral place. In 325, Constantine himself called a council to be held in Nicea and through the Emperor's support the council accepted the important *homoousion* clause--God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father.13

At least officially, Constantine brought a close to both the Donatist and Arian controversies. What was more significant, however, was that church issues became state issues, forcing Christianity to take on new roles and come to terms with new problems. For instance, before Christianity's political rise, discussion on which see was the most "important" was virtually non-existent. Cyprian wrote in the third century that "the bishop is in the church and the church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the church."14 For Cyprian and other early Christians, questions on which church had the highest standing were just not asked—they did not need to be.15 This was, however, to change. By the fourth century, two schools of thought concerning which metropolitan see was the most important had arisen: one view derived its origin from apostolic tradition and the prestige of its founder, and the other based the importance of a see on its standing in the imperial administration.16 The significance of this event is that
the character and direction of the church had fundamentally changed within less than a century. Christianity had gone from being a religion of slaves to a religion of emperors; from a religion of the powerless to a religion of the powerful; from a body interested in its own affairs to one interested in those of the empire.

The church during this period was not the only institution which was experiencing change; the empire was evolving as well. Reports of barbarians entering Roman territory began to be received in 376. This was not new in itself, since Germanic tribes had either been in or trading with the empire for quite some time. In fact, when the Visigoths asked Emperor Valens for sanctuary from the threat of the Huns, he allowed them to stay in the wastelands of Thrace. The problems with controlling and providing for the refugees, however, incited the Visigoths to take up arms against the empire; and in 378 they killed Emperor Valens and defeated his troops at Hadrianople. This battle was a turning point, since from this time on the empire attempted to control the barbarians through economic means rather than merely military might. Although one would be wrong to see the fall of the Roman empire in these events, they most certainly had their effect on the Roman populace. And though most people tried to ignore the barbarians' gradual advances, the significance of these events must have left a sense of foreboding and fear. Augustine responded to this threat by telling his congregation to keep their eyes on the 'City of God' instead of worrying about the vicissitudes of this earthly life.

Pelagius: The Man

As a response to these social conditions, the British 'monk' Pelagius offered to the people a theology of perfection as a fixed point in an everchanging and fearful world. The only certain fact that is known of Pelagius' early life is that he came from the British isles. Bede called him the "the Briton Pelagius," and Orosius referred to him as "Britanica
noster." In A History of the English Church and People the author quoted Prosper who said of Pelagius:

Against the great Augustine see him crawl,
This wretched scribbler with his pen of gall!
In what black caverns was this snakeling bred
That from the dirt presumes to rear its head?
Its food is grain that wave-washed Britain yields,
Or the rank pasture of Campanian fields.

Jerome once in passing claimed that Pelagius was of Irish descent, however, the great biblical scholar most likely meant this as an abuse rather than a factual utterance. The exact year of his birth is uncertain, though the belief that Augustine and Pelagius were born in the same year (354) is probably only a myth. The only thing that is known, though, is that he was almost surely born after 350 and before 380.

That Pelagius had a "first-class education" is certain to one of his biographers. He demonstrated this education in his comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, his ability to cite classical authors and his grasp, at least to an extent, of classic philosophy. Though Alexander Souter believes that this suggests Pelagius came from a wealthy family, G. De Plinval argues that if this were the case Pelagius would have had a hereditary cognomen. John Ferguson tries to reconcile Pelagius' learning with his lack of any title by suggesting that it is more probable that he was of humble birth and received his education when he "joined in the fellowship of the church." Also, if the British church educated him this would be one explanation for his ascetic inclination, since the church of Britain espoused a doctrine of voluntary poverty. Although this teaching was not unique to Britain, if the church did instill Pelagius with this belief from an early age it might explain why he placed such a strong emphasis on it in his theology. Augustine and Mercator testified to Pelagius' asceticism by constantly referring to him as "monachus," and since Pelagius is never found
to be authentically associated with any monastic order, this title most probably referred to his ascetic tendencies and not to him being a monk.29

Another area of Pelagius' life that is veiled to the modern historian is exactly when and why he left Britain. Souter, after analyzing a number of passages from Pelagius' works, believes that there had been a major fight with his father.30 De Plinval, on the other hand, thinks that the Briton was rebelling against a secular career as a lawyer.31 After leaving Britain, a late tradition has it that he went to the east which would explain his knowledge of the commentaries of the Greek Fathers and the similarities between some of his views and those of Origen.32 Nonetheless, more likely this time was spent in Rome, since during his later visit to Palestine he showed no indication of ever being there before. Mercator also noted that Rufinus taught Pelagius the theology of Origen during the time of Pope Anastasius (398-402).33 This would explain both his knowledge of the Greek Fathers and Origen. Furthermore, if Pelagius did not sojourn in the east after leaving Britain, he can then be placed in Rome between 382 and 385. In 414, Jerome wrote of Pelagius as his "vetere necessitudinem," which implies that the two met when Jerome was in Rome (382-385).34 During his time in Rome, Pelagius wrote De fide Trinitatis, Expositiones XIII Epistularum Pauli and a handbook of biblical passages relating to Christian practices. It was also while in Rome that the seeds of his conflict with Augustine were planted. In 405, Pelagius heard Augustine's prayer from book ten of the Confessions--"Give what Thou Commandest, and command what Thou willest"--and it so bothered Pelagius that he nearly came to a quarrel with the Bishop who was reading the passage.35 Within four years, Pelagius left the Eternal City with his close friend Caelestius when the threat of Alaric had reached Rome itself. They first left for Sicily and then continued to North Africa where they attempted to see the famous Bishop of Hippo.

At this point, a little should be said about Pelagius' companion Caelestius. He was apparently born an eunuch of an aristocratic family, and was trained for a legal career.
While in Rome he most likely came into contact with Pelagius at the house of Pammachius or Rufinus. The influence of Pelagius' teaching convinced Caelestius to renounce his secular plans in favor of a more stringent religious life. The real significance of Caelestius was his ability to publicize and systematize. Had it not been for his advocacy of Pelagius' tenets, very likely the entire controversy would not have occurred. Augustine described Caelestius and Pelagius well when he wrote:

"The one is more open, the other more reserved; the one more pertinacious, the other more mendacious; or, at any rate, that the one is more candid, the other more astute?"

When in 410 Pelagius and his companion visited Hippo in order to speak to the famous Bishop, they discovered to their disappointment that he was away dealing with the Donatist schismatics. The two then left for Carthage where, though Augustine said he caught glimpses of Pelagius once or twice, they were never formally introduced. Shortly thereafter, Pelagius left Africa and went to Palestine, leaving his friend Caelestius in Carthage. No longer under the guidance of Pelagius, Caelestius began preaching his teacher's gospel with a missionary zeal. He was eventually accused of heresy and was brought before an African council led by bishop Aurelius. The accused maneuvered adroitly through the proceedings often not giving a direct answer or answering questions with questions, but in the end when he refused to affirm the doctrine of original sin the council excommunicated him. Caelestius' excommunication officially initiated the Pelagian controversy.
Pelagius: The Theology

The question that arises is what were the doctrines of Pelagius that Caelestius taught at Carthage and eventually threw the Christian church into a tumult? John Ferguson argues that Pelagius "consistently maintained that the basic dogmatic issue was whether a man could live without sin." Peter Brown, in his work Augustine of Hippo, says that the message of Pelagius "was simple and terrifying: 'since perfection is possible for man, it is obligatory.' The main issue then is whether or not man can live a sinless life; however, "before all other things," argued Pelagius, "we have to inquire what sin is?"

Pelagius began by posing the question: is sin a substance or wholly a name without substance? Though this inquiry may seem odd at first, it does make sense when one realizes that the question deals with original sin and how one can pass Adam's sin on to his progeny. Pelagius' contention was that if Adam's sin is something that is handed down from generation to generation, then it must be just that, 'some thing'. A thing, however, is a substance, and it is just this view that Pelagius rejects.

Pelagius presented his personal view of sin in a dilemma set for those who denied the possibility of living a sinless life.

If anyone maintains the inevitable sinfulness of man, we must ask him what is a specific sin, something which can be avoided or something which cannot? If the latter, it is not sin; if the former, man can live without sin, seeing that it can be avoided, for certainly neither reason or justice could ever allow that which can by no means be avoided, to be called sin.

For Pelagius, a sin is a willful "contempt of God, and every contempt of God is pride." Pride is an action that one can either do or not do. Sin is a personal choice to either follow the commands of God or not, and this choice is not hindered by any primordial sin.
committed by one's forefathers. Hence, for Pelagius all sin is personal, and no sin can be attributed to anyone but the individual:

Everything good, and everything evil, on account of which we are either laudable or blameworthy, is not born with us but done by us: for we are born not fully developed, but with a capacity for either conduct; and we are procreated as without virtue, so also without vice; and previous to the action of our own proper will, that alone is in man which God had formed.46

Pelagius supported his position against original sin by asking, if baptism cleanses one of original sin, then why are the children of baptized parents not born free of this sin? If original sin no longer polluted the parents' natures, they would no longer have the sin to pass on to their progeny.47 And again, "if Adam's sin injured those who had not themselves sinned, the saving work of Christ should be equally efficacious for good even in the lives of those who have not believed."48 The problem is simple: if one is going to be damned for something that they did not do, then they should be saved for something they did not do too (in this case believe).49

For Pelagius, the will is neither good nor evil, but is rather like a tabula rasa which is blank until some action or choice writes on it. Man's free will can explain all moral evil in the world and there is not need to refer to some distant event in the past. Nonetheless, he argued, Adam's sin does have a dangerous effect on humanity. This danger, though, is not due to the corruption of human nature, but rather to Adam's bad example which through custom "seems in some ways to have the force of nature."50

Since Pelagius rejected the notion of original sin and believed that each person's nature is ethically neutral, the grace that God initially bestowed on humanity is not prevenient grace but merely the ability (posse) not to sin.51 There are three faculties within humanity by which man carries out God's laws: posse, velle and esse, or ability, volition and action,52 which are arranged in a graduated order: "posse we place in our nature, velle
in our will, and the esse in the effect." Pelagius equated the first faculty, posse, with God's grace. "... Posse properly belongs to God, who has bestowed it on His creature. ... and that a man is able to will and effect any good work, comes from God alone." Grace, then for Pelagius, is nothing more than the ability to live a sinless life. He was not such an idealist, however, that he expected every Christian to live a sinless life. When one did sin, they were in dire need of God's forgiveness. He argued that "sins which have been committed do notwithstanding require to be divinely expiated, and that the Lord must be entreated because of them because that which has been done cannot be undone [by that] power of nature and will of man." It should be noted, however, that for Pelagius even in this state of sin man still has the capacity to turn towards God. This was the point that Augustine could not accept and Luther would attack in his debate with Erasmus and the church eleven hundred years later.

Augustine: Defender of the Faith

This theology proved to be the bane of one of Christianity's greatest defenders of the faith--Augustine. He was born in 354 in the agricultural town of Thagaste. Monica, his mother, was the ideal Christian woman, whereas his father, who converted to Christianity only at the end of his life, was remarkably kind, though also "given to violent anger" at times. The young Augustine must have shown some potential since his parents saved up money and sent him to the town of Madaurus, just south of Thagaste, to be educated. Though he disliked Greek and never gained a mastery of it, he enjoyed Latin and became well versed in a number of the Roman classics. Due to a lack of money, he had to come home during his sixteenth year where he idled away his time in petty acts of vandalism.
The following year Augustine again took up his studies, but this time in Carthage where "a caldron of shameful loves seethed and sounded about [him] on every side." He was not yet in love, but was in love with love. During this time he took a concubine, though he said very little about her in any of his writings. More importantly, at least for his intellectual development, was his introduction to Manichaeism while in Carthage. The religion of Mani (c. 216-76) was a radical dualism which pitted the force of light against darkness. In a great primeval conflict, light had been trapped in matter, and only through the austerity of the elect could the light be freed. The appeal of this system was that it reconciled an all loving God with the presence of evil here on earth. Evil did not spring out of the creation of an all good God, as Christians taught, but was rather the product of an equal and opposite evil principle. This philosophy deeply affected Augustine, both while he was a Manichaean and while he was a Christian, although once a Christian it was more the object of his polemics than a positive influence.

After completing his education, Augustine conducted a school in his home town of Thagaste (373-375). Then in the autumn of 376 he opened a school in Carthage. In 383, he again opened a school of rhetoric but this time in Rome; and in 384, he became professor of rhetoric at Milan. While living in the imperial city, Augustine came under the direction of Ambrose whose sermons confronted and answered many of the questions that had perplexed the younger Augustine. Though he did not convert to Christianity at this time, his new insights convinced him to abandon Manichaeism.

More importantly, however, was that Ambrose introduced Augustine to Neoplatonism. The Neoplatonic school at Milan took a special interest in Christian Scriptures, especially the prologue of John's Gospel, and some of Paul's platonic language in his epistles. This explains why Augustine "seized upon the sacred writings ... and especially the Apostle Paul," and also why there was a copy of Romans readily available in the garden at the time of Augustine's conversion. His encounters with Ambrose,
Neoplatonism and Paul had convinced Augustine that it was only a small step from Plato to Christ. In the late part of July 386, as Augustine strolled through the gardens of a friend, he experienced a great desire to "walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit" (Rom. 8.4). He could not, however, escape the urges of the flesh. He flung himself down at the base of a fig tree and began to weep, but just then he heard the sound of a child who said "take up and read." He rushed back to where he had been and read:

Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires (Rom. 13.13,14).

On the Easter of 387, Ambrose baptized Augustine, his son Adeodatus and Augustine's close friend Alypius in Milan. In late 388, Augustine and Alypius arrived in Africa as servi Dei, or servants of God. They both returned to their hometown, Thagaste, to live the contemplative life. During this time, a number of like minded Christians gathered around Augustine. This coterie began to "resemble a 'monastery,' with Augustine as a 'spiritual father'." Being the 'spiritual father' of a small group was fine for Augustine; however, that was enough. The thought of possibly becoming a bishop frightened him so much that he "would not go to any place where [he] knew there was no bishop." His life of merely being a spiritual father, however, was not to be. Augustine related how "I came to [Hippo] to see a friend, whom I thought I might gain for God, that he might live with us in the monastery. I felt secure, for the place already had a bishop. I was grabbed. I was made a priest . . . and from there, I became your bishop."

Whether Augustine intended to be a bishop or not, he executed his newly assigned task with great diligence. He carried his congregation through the wiles of heresy and the allure of pagan philosophy alike, attacking the Manichaeans in debates and treatises;
fighting the Donatists both in council and in court. When pagans blamed the fall of Rome on the empire's acceptance of Christianity, Augustine countered with his famous book *The City of God*. And when he perceived the teachings of the Pelagians as a threat to Christ's grace, he channeled all of his intellectual acumen and political sway to defeat them.

Augustine said that he first heard the doctrines of Pelagius in a passing conversation while he was in Carthage. This suggests that he first encountered Pelagianism either in 410 or 411 while he was dealing with the Donatists. Since "its propounders were not persons whose influence gave [him] anxiety, [he] readily let the subject slip into neglect and oblivion." When his close friend Marcellinus, however, wrote him and asked if he could respond to some questions that were troubling the church at Carthage, Augustine could not let the subject slip any longer. His first treatise, written in 411, was *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins*. In this work, though he mentioned neither Caelestius nor Pelagius by name, he attacked the views that "Adam was so formed that he would even without any demerit of sin have died, not as the penalty of sin, but from the necessity of his being"; that there was no fundamental corruption of human nature when Adam sinned in the garden; and "that infants are not baptized for the purpose of receiving remission of sin, but that they may be sanctified in Christ." *On the Spirit and the Letter*, written the next year, analyzed the same themes, but in a more abstract and speculative manner. As in his first work, he refused to mention the names of either of Caelestius or Pelagius. Peter Brown suggests that Augustine's hesitation to come to grips with Pelagius by name in the first two works is because of the existence of Pelagius' influential patrons, a number of which fled to Africa before Alaric reached Rome. In order to avoid a possible scene, Augustine used discretion in responding to Pelagius' beliefs. Only after these families left in 415 did Augustine then feel at liberty to respond to Pelagius by name.

The battle, however, was not merely literary. Augustine also gave a series of sermons against the new heresy while in Carthage which addressed infant baptism and the
effect of Adam's sin. He also played on the Carthaginians' 'patriotism' by quoting from a letter of the city's martyr-bishop, Cyprian. Augustine interpreted the passage as a statement that explained baptism was essential to wash away the taint of Adam's sin.80

In *On Nature and Grace* (313), Augustine finally mentioned Pelagius by name, and then it was only with the greatest respect. The two "beloved sons" of Augustine, Timasius and Jacobus asked for a point by point reply to Pelagius' *On Nature*.81 Augustine looked at Pelagius' notion of grace and concluded that not only was it counter to the scriptures, but it also made no sense of the Lord's Prayer. For if man can live a sinless life, why pray "lead us not into temptation?"82

In 414, Augustine received a pamphlet of sixteen definitions purported to be by Caelestius from the Sicilian priests Eutropius and Paulus. He responded with the treatise *On Man's Perfection in Righteousness*, most likely finished early in 415. The argument that Caelestius continually put forward in his sixteen definitions was that the word 'sin' implied moral responsibility.83 Though Augustine never gave a direct answer to Caelestius' question, he did explain how God can create human nature good, and yet now it can now be in a state of corruption.84 He also repeated his belief that "no man . . . can be without sin . . . unless he be assisted by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ."85 The treatise overall is colder than his earlier works. In the first two works, Augustine never mentioned his opponents, "hoping and desiring that by such reserve they might the more readily be set right."86 In his third work, though he specifies Pelagius by name, he does so with the utmost respect. In this final work, however, Augustine condemns! He concluded *On Man's Perfection in righteousness* with the terrible words:

But if any man says that we ought not to use the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation" (and he says as much who maintains that God's help is unnecessary to a person for the avoidance of sin, and that human will, after accepting only the law, is sufficient for the purpose), then I do not hesitate at once to affirm that such a man ought to be removed from the public ear, and to be anathematized by every mouth.87
Orders from Above: 
the Official Condemnations of Pelagius

While Augustine was waging a literary battle against Pelagius and his comrade, Pelagius was fighting for his very existence within the church. An African council had excommunicated Caelestius and had condemned his teaching, which he had learned at the feet of Pelagius, as heresy. By 414, Caelestius must have reached his master and reported the events of Carthage. Also, by this time it is highly likely that Pelagius came across either *On the Merits and Remission of Sins* or *On the Spirit and the Letter*, and would have recognized that they were directed at his teachings. What Pelagius saw as the very basis of Christian piety, moral responsibility, was being undercut by the doctrine of original sin. Pelagius felt not only that he needed to defend himself, but even more so, he wanted to ensure a basis for what he saw as the true spiritual life. In both his letter to the young noble woman Demetrias who had chosen to renounce the world, and his more rigorous theological treatise *On Nature*, Pelagius attacked original sin as blasphemous and attempted to lay a groundwork for moral responsibility. In his letter to Demetrias, he bemoaned the fact that "instead of regarding the commands of our illustrious king as a privilege . . . we cry out at God, in the scornful sloth of our hearts, and say, 'This is too hard and difficult. We cannot do it. We are only human, and hindered by the weakness of the flesh.' Blind folly and presumptuous blasphemy!" On *Nature* put forth the thesis that it is at least possible to live a sinless life. This belief, argued Pelagius, did not mean that anyone, save Christ, ever had lived a sinless life, but merely that it is possible. After acknowledging many Biblical passages which supported the claim that there is no one who had not sinned, Pelagius explained, "but they testify to the point of not being, not of not being able; for by testimonies of this sort it is shown what kind of persons certain men were at such and such a time, not that they were unable to be something else. Whence they are justly found to be
blameworthy. If, however, they had been of such a character, simply because they were unable to be anything else, they are free from blame. Pelagius' point is simple; just because no men have ever lived a sinless life does not mean that they cannot. If it was impossible not to sin, then they can not be held responsible for their sin.

The following year the church made Pelagius defend these beliefs. On 28 July 415, a diocesan synod was held at Jerusalem to inquire into the teaching of Pelagius. The presiding bishop, John, called the Spaniard Paulus Orosius, who had freshly arrived from the side of Augustine in Africa, to see what light he could shed on the subject. He relayed the events of Carthage where the council had excommunicated Caelestius and read a letter of Augustine written to Hilary refuting the Pelagian doctrines. The synod sent for Pelagius in order to reply to the charges brought against him. When Augustine was mentioned as one of his accusers, Pelagius shocked the presbyters by replying, "What is Augustine to me?" Nonetheless, after explaining, clarifying or repudiating the various tenets he was reported to have held, the synod acquitted him. Orosius blamed this on the integrity of the translator who had to relate his thoughts to the Greek speaking council. Augustine, however, felt that through deceit and tergiversation, Pelagius had freed himself from the charge of heresy.

But all was not over for Pelagius in Palestine. Two deposed bishops from Gaul, Hero and Lazarus, drew up a formal indictment and presented it to the metropolitan of Caesarea, the senior bishop in Palestine, who then called a synod at Diopolis. Pelagius was again called to defend his doctrine. And again, Pelagius either elucidated or anathematized each charge that was brought against him; and as at Jerusalem, Pelagius' response satisfied the bishops. The synod declared:

Now since we have received satisfaction on the points which have come before us touching the monk Pelagius, who has been present; since, too, he gives his consent to the pious doctrines, and even anathematizes everything
that is contrary to the Church's faith, we confess him to belong to the communion of the Catholic Church."92

When Augustine first heard the news it elated him that Pelagius had renounced his heresy.93 Yet his joy was short lived, for when he read Pelagius' four-book treatise on free will he "discovered that [Pelagius] was still cherishing thoughts which were opposed to the catholic faith . . ."94 Orosius confirmed his suspicions when he returned from Palestine with the news of his failure. In the early part of the summer of 416, a synod was called in Carthage, and based on the testimony of Orosius and a letter from Jerome, anathematized both Pelagius and Caelestius unless they abjured their heretical beliefs.95 Early that fall, the Churches of Numidia also called a council and drafted a document stressing the latent danger in Pelagius' teaching. Both synods sent letters to Innocent, the bishop of Rome, asking him to add the authority of Peter to their condemnation of this new heresy. Five bishops, including Augustine and Aurelius, sent personal letters to the pope, and also forwarded a copy of Pelagius' De nature as prima facie evidence. Pope Innocent was convinced. On 27 January 417, he issued three letters condemning Pelagius' teaching on grace,96 and excommunicated both Pelagius and Caelestius until they returned to orthodoxy.

The issue seemed closed, but in March, Innocent died and a new pope was elected. When Pelagius sent his apologia defending his orthodoxy, and Caelestius came in person to Rome to contest his condemnation, Zosimus, Innocent's successor, felt justified in reopening the case, given that their excommunication was in force as long as they did not return to the true teachings of the church. If they could show that in fact they were not heretical, then Rome could rescind the condemnation it had passed. Zosimus called a synod to review the matter further. With no accusers present, he heard Caelestius and was moved to write two letters to the Africans, stating that though he had come to no final
decision, Caelestius had satisfied him with his confession of faith, and he also reprimanded the Africans for their hasty condemnation of the two.97

One of the mysteries of church history is why at this time Emperor Honorius (395-423) intervened and issued his 'law to outdo the laws of every age' (30 April 418). On this point one can only speculate. Peter Brown suggests that there was the intimation that the bloody rioting that took place among the Latin community in Jerusalem was the Pelagians' doing. When riots suddenly broke out in Rome, therefore, the Pelagians were immediately suspected. Since "Emperor Honorius had been living safely behind the marshes of Ravenna [during the Sack of Rome] he felt under a particular obligation to care for his 'Most Sacred City': at least he could protect it from rioting and heresy."98 In "Pelagius and His Supporters," Brown gives a more subtle analysis of the situation. He suggests that in 410, Rome was marked by a reaction. Leading residents believed that due to division between pagans and Christians within the city, Rome had fallen and that in the aftermath of Alaric, the city could no longer afford to tolerate conflicting groups within its walls. Thus when the division between the friends and foes of Pelagius created discord, the city's aristocracy had the Pelagians removed in order to preserve Rome's solidarity.99

The rescript's charge of disturbing the peace of Rome and the church gives some support to this interpretation and the possibility that the complaint to the Emperor originated in Rome, and not in Africa, as is commonly thought.100 Another possible explanation could be that since Pelagianism was in vogue among the aristocracy, and also had what may be construed as 'socialistic' tendencies,101 the Emperor felt that Pelagianism posed a threat to the very fabric of Roman society.

A view that is occasionally held by church historians is that upon receiving the news that Zosimus had re-opened the Pelagian case, the Africans bypassed the authority of the pope, and applied government pressure to ensure the condemnation of Pelagius and his followers.102 Two points weaken this view. First, such an action would have violated the
Cyprianic ecclesiology. Considering that Cyprian was the patron saint of Africa, one would think that his teachings on the subject would at least have some influence. Secondly, since the Pelagians were quick to condemn the Roman see for succumbing to imperial pressure, if the Africans were responsible for forcing the pope's judgment it is likely that one would have heard a protest from the losing side. A more plausible solution, therefore, is that upon receiving Innocent's censure of Pelagius the Africans appealed to Ravenna in order that the government could take civil action and bring back the followers of Pelagius to truth. This legation would then probably have left Carthage in September or October, at least one month prior to the word that Zosimus had resumed discussion of the case. Three considerations commend this view. First, it accounts for all the evidence and does not presuppose any lost correspondences which would have had to have taken place between Aurelius and Augustine if they had already received the Magnum pondus. Secondly, on 23 September 417, Augustine told the congregation at Carthage that the controversy was over, the African council had damned the heresy, Rome agreed, and now all that was left was to expunge the error. The imperial rescript followed this very program trying to maintain peace in the city rather than curing the heretics. Finally, if Augustine had tried to undermine papal authority, one would not expect Zosimus to place Augustine in charge of settling a dispute in Mauretania in the summer of 418. For whatever the reasons, not long after the issue of the imperial rescript Pope Zosimus issued his Epistola Tractoria (418) which reaffirmed the decision of his predecessor in excommunicating Pelagius and his disciple Caelestius.

The controversy was over. Caelestius would again attempt to have the case re-opened, but this time he would fail; Augustine would continue his literary campaign against Pelagianism, but this time against the younger Julian of Eclanum; as for Pelagius, he would drop out of history, though one would like to believe that he ended his life in Egypt writing a commentary on the Song of Songs extolling the virtues of true love.
Endnotes


4 Gibbons, 642.

5 *Pagans and Christians*, 623.

6 "Many facts combine to prove that the sad neglect of religious observances, by which the highest reverence for the most holy, heavenly Power is preserved, has brought great dangers upon the community, and that the lawful restoration and preservation of the same has conferred the greatest good fortune on the Roman name, and wonderful prosperity on all mankind--blessings conferred by divine benevolence. I have accordingly decided that those men who with due holiness and constant attention to this law give their services to the conduct of divine worship shall receive the rewards of their own labours, Anulinus, Your Excellency. So in the province entrusted to you, in the Catholic church over which Caecilian presides, I desire those who give their services to the sacred observances--the people commonly known as clergymen--once and for all to be kept entirely free from all public duties" (Eusebius. X. 7).

7 Eusebius, (X.6)

8 Gibbon, 634.


10 Eusebius, X. 5.

11 This by no means implies that religion and politics had not been intermingled prior to this time, but rather that the empire took a personal interest in the affair of the Church as an official institution and not merely as some cult that needed to be repressed.


Letters, 72-73:21 quoted in W. Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 3d ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 67; also "The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one in its entirety (letter, 68-66:8), 67.

It should be pointed out, however, that Cyprian happily admitted that Rome was the highest church in dignity, but he was not nearly as quick to suggest that Rome held the same position as far as judicial authority was concerned.

Davis, 64.

Davis, 20.


Bede, 1. 10.

"habet progeniem Scoticae gentis, de Britannorum vicinia," (Jerome, Pref. Lib. 3 in Jerem. in Pelagius, 39).

Pelagius, 41.


Pelagius, 41-42.

Ibid.

De Plinval, Pélage, ses écrits, sa vie et sa réforme (Lausanne: np, 1943), 60

Pelagius, 42.

Ibid., 35-36.

Ibid., 43.

A. Souter, "Pelagius' Doctrine in Relation to His Early Life," Expositor, i (1915), 180 ff.

De Plinval, 64.

Pelagius, 44.
33 Mercator, *Lib. Subn.*, 2-3 from *Pelagius*, 44.

34 Jerome, *Comm. in Jerem.*, iv, 1,6 from *Pelagius*, 44-45.


37 Ibid., xii. 13.

38 Ibid., xxii. 46.

39 Ibid., iii-iv.

40 *Pelagius*, 90.


43 Ibid., xix. 21.

44 *Pelagius*, *On the Ability not to Sin*, from *Pelagius*. (160).

45 *Pelagius*, *De natura*, from *On Nature and Grace*, xxix. 33. This and several other references in this section I owe to W. Phipps' article "The Heresiarch: Pelagius or Augustine?" [*Anglican Theological Review* 62 (April 1980): 124-133].

46 *Pelagius De libero arbitrio* in *On Original Sin*, xiii,14. (emphasis added.)

47 Augustine quoting *Pelagius*, *The Merits and Forgiveness of Sin*, iii,16. From *Pelagius*, 55.

48 *Pelagius*, 58.

49 Ferguson points out that Pelagius does not present either of the above dilemmas as his own in his commentaries, but rather as the position of one who opposes original sin, and at the time when Pelagius was writing his commentaries it is not known for certain
whether he had made a decision on original sin, or he did not want to directly challenge orthodoxy (Pelagius, 142).


52 Pelagius *Pro libro arbitrio*, from *On the Grace of Christ*, iii. 4.

53 Ibid., iv. 5.

54 Ibid.


56 However, it is only by God's grace that man has this "capacity to turn," according to Pelagius.

57 *Confessions*, ix. 8-9.

58 Ibid., 9.

59 Ibid., i. 13.

60 Ibid., ii. 9.

61 Ibid., iii. 1.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., iii. 6.

64 Ibid., v. 14.

65 Ibid., vii. 9.


67 *Confession*, vii. 21.

68 Ibid., viii. 12.

69 According to Chadwick "the crux was the abandonment of all intention to marry. Could he bring himself to live without a woman?" (*Augustine*, 25).

70 *Confessions*, 8. 11.
71Ibid., 8. 12.

72Confessions, ix. 6.

73Augustine of Hippo, 136.

74Serm., 355. 2 quoted in Augustine, 138.

75Ibid.


77Ibid., i. 2.

78Ibid., iii. 12.


80Pelagius, 57-58.

81Augustine, On Nature and Grace, i. 1.

82Ibid., liii. 62 ; lviii. 68 ; lxvii. 80.

831. "If sin cannot be avoided it is not sin (neither philosophy nor justice would allow the name of sin, which implies moral responsibility, to that which is absolutely inevitable). If it can be avoided, man can live without sin.

2. "If sin comes from necessity, it is not sin; if from free will it can be avoided.

3. "If sin is an essential part of human nature, it ceases to be sin; if an accidental, it can be avoided.

4. "If sin is a substance, it must be created by God. Such a statement is blasphemous. Sin therefore is not a substance existing of itself but something which men do. But if so it is something which they might not do, that is, it can be avoided.

5. "An "ought" implies a "can." A man ought to live without sin: Therefore he can.

6. "The injunction to live without sin implies its possibility.

7. "God wills us to live without sin: the will of God must be capable of fulfillment.

8. "God does not will us to live with sin: it is blasphemous to suppose then that he would create man incapable of living without sin.

9. "If sin comes from natural necessity, it is not blameworthy; if from our free decision it can be avoided, for God would not give us a will inclined to evil rather good.

10. "God made man good and commanded him to be good. It is blasphemous to say that man is evil and incapable of good.
11. "Sin consists in 'leaving undone those things which ought to be done and in doing those things which ought not to be done.' The every statement makes clear that it is possible to do the former and refrain from the latter.

12. "If man's alleged inability to be free from sin comes from nature, it is not sin. If from will, will may be changed by will.

13. "If the inability comes from outside, he is not responsible; if from inside he is not responsible for a failure to be what his very nature prohibits him from being.

14. "It is heretical to deny the goodness of human nature. But to say that human nature cannot be free from the evil of sin is to precisely that.

15. "God would not be just if he held against any man as a sin something which that man could not avoid.

16. "Each of us can be without sin, though we are not. But if we examine why, we freely admit that the fault is ours." [I am indebted to J. Ferguson, *Pelagius*, (62-64) for this summary of Caelestius' 16 dilemmas.]


85 Ibid., vii. 16.

86 Augustine, *Retractions*, ii. 23.

87 Ibid., xxi. 44.


90 The following discussion comes from *Pelagius*, ch vi, the section entitled "The Synod at Jerusalem."

91 For a full and detailed account of the Synod at Diopolis one should consult Augustine's *On the Proceedings of Pelagius*.


93 *On Original Sin*, xiv. 15.

94 Ibid.

95 Pelagius, 93.

96 Innocent's letters are among Augustine's, 181-183.

*Augustine*, 361.


The term "socialistic" must be used with extreme reservations. Since the Pelagians believed that God only gave commands that could be followed, therefore if God gave a command it was the individual's responsibility to obey it. In Matt 19. 21, Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Thus, if one truly wants to follow God's commands, he must sell his possessions and follow Christ.

The following discussion comes from Burns, "Augustine's Role in the Imperial Action Against Pelagius," 77-81.

In Burns' article he actually gives four reasons why the civil action was made on the basis of Innocent's condemnation, but the second and fourth seemed similar enough that I only presented the first three and omitted the fourth.
By his sin the whole race of which he was the root was corrupted in him, and thereby subjected to the penalty of death. And so it happens that all descended from him... were tainted with the original sin, and were by it drawn through divers errors and sufferings into that last and endless punishment...

Augustine, *Enchiridion*

... Because we are men, created to the image of a Creator... who is the eternal, true, and lovable Trinity in whom there is neither confusion nor division, that, wherever we turn among the things which He created and conserved so wonderfully, we discover His footprints, whether lightly or plainly impressed.

Augustine, *The City of God*
Although many authorities believe that the main issue in the debate between Pelagius and Augustine was over free will and necessity, the controversy went deeper. The ultimate focus of the debate was original sin, man's nature and God's grace. To understand why Augustine formulated what may seem like an unyielding predestinarian theology, one must first see how Augustine defined sin and how the first sin affected the rest of mankind. One will see that underlying all of Augustine's theology is a distinct philosophy of man, which in turn determined his response on grace and predestination. It was this theology that Luther returned to, and transcended, when he saw the sixteenth century church being assailed by the heresy of Pelagianism.

Sin. The Fall and Human Nature

The works of Plotinus certainly had a profound influence on Augustine; however, the exact extent of the Neoplatonist's impact is not certain. Augustine, following the passage in Exodus, "I Am who I Am," conceived of God as Being. This alone set him apart from Plotinus, who conceived of the One as being the first principle, transcending all others, including being itself. For the same reason their trinitarian teachings differ. Plotinus' trinity consisted of three hypostases--the One, which is beyond being, the Intellect or the divine mind which emanates from the One. It is at this level of reality that one can speak of the world of being. The third hypostasis which emanated from Intellect is the World Soul. Augustine, following the decision at the Council of Nicea (325),
conceived of the Trinity as three equal persons united in one essence which is being. Despite their differing view of God, they shared many philosophical tenets, such as that man is "a soul that uses a body," and evil is not a thing *per se*, but rather a privation of the due measure, order and form of a thing. It is this last doctrine that Augustine used to combat many of the criticisms that the Pelagians marshalled against him, and it also provided the basis for his anthropology.

In his controversy with Augustine, Pelagius had levelled two pungent criticisms against the notion of original sin. For Augustine to preserve this doctrine as well as God's justice, these two arguments would have to be answered. Pelagius had maintained that in order for Adam's sin to be transmitted to his progeny, sin must be a substance, a doctrine that was certainly peculiar if not unorthodox. Also, the Pelagians argued that if sin is unavoidable, God cannot judge man without doing damage to either reason or justice. Augustine handled the first by explaining what was meant by sin. The Augustinian analysis of sin begins with the concept of evil, which he defined as "the absence of good." Evil is not merely a lack of any good, however, but the lack of a good that is appropriate to a thing according to its nature; for example, though a rock lacks sight, which is a good, one would not say it suffers a privation. On the other hand, if a person lacks sight one would say this is evil, since it is part of the nature of a human to have sight. In like manner, sin is nothing more than a "privation of natural good," (i.e., a moral evil), whereas evil is "nothing else than corruption, either of the measure, or the form, or the order, that belongs to nature." Sin, therefore, is a species of the genus evil, and although it is true that "all sin is evil," its converse, "all evil is sin", is not true. To be in ignorance or in error is an evil, but it most assuredly is not a sin.

Given this definition, Augustine claimed without qualification that sin is not a substance. He argued that if a being continued to exist after all the good was removed, it would not be capable of suffering corruption, for there must be a good to be corrupted in
order for the being to suffer corruption. But a being that can not suffer corruption is better than a being that can. Therefore, argued Augustine, if a being loses all good it would be better than a being that had good, since it can no longer be corrupted. It is obviously false, however, that a being becomes better when all the good is removed. Hence, to believe that a being can exist once all the good has been removed is to hold to an absurdity. Sin is not a substance but rather a privation of the good.

Augustine's position, however, did not evade Pelagius' dilemma. If sin was not a substance, Pelagius argued, it could not be passed on to one's progeny. In fact, it created an even greater problem, for now Augustine had to explain how evil, which is only a corruption of the good, and hence no-thing, is able to be the cause of sin?--since *Ex nihilo nihilo fit*--from nothing, nothing comes.

Augustine himself stated the problem by asking "if God is the good Author and Creator of all essences, and all things that God makes are good, then what can be the efficient cause of evil, and more specifically of the evil will which first gave rise to evil actions?" Augustine listed the options. If anything is the cause of the first evil will, then this thing either has a will or does not have a will. If it has a will, then this will is either good or evil. If the will is good, then a good will would be the cause of an evil will--a conclusion that Augustine found absurd. On the other hand, if the will is evil, this just pushes the question back and explains nothing, since one would have to account for what made that will evil. What, then, made the first will evil, if not a cause which itself has a will? Augustine asserted that it cannot be replied that "nothing made it evil; it was always bad," since "an evil will could not have existed from all eternity in a nature in which a previously existing good had to be eliminated before the evil will could harm the nature." It may be argued, then, that the thing which made the first will evil itself had no will. This thing, however, must be either superior, equal or inferior to the first will. It cannot be superior, for this would require that it have a will, since that which has no will is inferior to
that which has a will. The same reasoning applies for things that are equal. If, however, it is an inferior thing that corrupted the will, the thing, inasmuch as it has a nature, is good. Therefore, a good thing would be the efficient cause of an evil will, which is an untenable position for Augustine.

After exhausting these options, Augustine concluded that the only possible cause of the first evil will is the will itself. He illustrated this by giving the example of two men of equal moral and physical makeup who both see the same beautiful body. One has an illicit desire for this body and the other does not. The cause for this movement of the will in the one and not in the other cannot be the bodily beauty of the object, since both men see the same body. It also cannot be the physical constitution or psychological disposition of the one who desires, for both men are of the same constitution and disposition. Augustine concluded that the obvious solution "is that one was unwilling, the other willing, to fail in chastity. And what else could be the cause of their attitudes but their own wills, since both men have the same constitution and temperament?" This example, however, does not clarify how the first evil will became evil. If God made the first will good (as the two wills are said to be good), yet the will consents to evil (as the one will fails in chastity), then it would appear that a good will causes itself to become an evil will.

Augustine answered this problem by pointing out that since the effect (the evil will) is not a thing, but a privation, its cause cannot be efficient; it must instead be deficient. Trying to find what caused such a deficiency, however, is like trying to see darkness or hear silence. One knows darkness when one begins not to see, and silence can be known only by not being heard. "Things we know, not by sensation, but by the absence of sensation, are known... by some kind of 'unknowing' so that they are both known and not known at the same time." Also, the more an entity shares in being and the more good things they do or make, the more their causes are efficient. Insofar as they fail or are defective, their causes are deficient. The goodness of the will, therefore, does not
explain its turning, but rather its deficiency in the good. Augustine explained this deficiency in the good by the doctrine of creation ex nihilo:

Notice, however, such worsening by reason of a defect is possible only in a nature that has been created out of nothing. In a word, a nature is a nature because it is something made by God, but a nature falls away from That which Is because the nature was made out of nothing.

In making this claim, Augustine is not stating that a nature necessarily falls away from God because it is made out of nothing, but merely that it is possible for it to fall. All creatures, insofar as they arise out of non-being and pass into a state of being, are mutable. This includes humanity and the angels as well. But because they are mutable, there is the possibility, if not propensity, for humanity and the angels to turn from true being (verum esse), or God, to lesser goods. This Augustine described as a turning back to non-being. In his treatise On Free Will, Augustine likened this 'propensity' to the falling of a stone to the earth with the qualification that "it is not in the power of a stone to arrest its downward motion, while if the soul is not willing it cannot be moved to abandon what is higher and to love what is lower." In short, the fall of humanity and the angels is caused by the voluntary defection of the will away from God which is made possible, but not necessitated, by its creation out of nothing.

All of this has yet to answer Pelagius' question of how sin can be passed on from generation to generation and yet not be a substance. In order to meet Pelagius' criticism, Augustine must also describe man's nature prior to the fall and then give an account of what happened to man after the fall. Since God is supremely good, all things that He creates must also be good because they are created by Him. As has been said, since man is not made out of God, but rather ex nihilo, he is subject to change. Nonetheless, man is highly good "by reason of [his] capacity for union with and, therefore, beatitude in the
Immutable Good which is so completely [his] good that, without this good, misery is inevitable.\textsuperscript{26}

Therefore, when Adam took an inordinate pleasure in himself and turned from God to himself, there was a loss of good in his very nature.\textsuperscript{27} For if one moves from the Supreme Good to a lesser good, and the complete goodness of his nature is dependent on his union with the Supreme Good, then once he turns from God, his nature is no longer completely good. But such a turning is possible only in a nature made out of nothing. Therefore, "no longer to be in God but to be in oneself in the sense to please oneself is not to be wholly nothing but to be approaching nothingness."\textsuperscript{28} Also, though man's nature is still good, for as much as something has being it is good, it is nonetheless a lesser good.

Therefore, when Augustine said that Adam's sin is passed on from generation to generation, he is not saying Adam's particular sin, but rather the effect (i.e., the fundamental change in man's nature) is passed down. Before the fall, God created man in such a way that he was able not to sin (\textit{posse non peccare}) and could remain in God as long as he so willed. After the fall, however, man became a slave to sin. He was no longer able not to sin (\textit{non posse non peccare}), since once sin had corrupted his nature, that corrupted nature had only the propensity for sin. Because man was now under the "dominion of unrighteousness," he could no longer return to God of his own will.\textsuperscript{29} Augustine was unambiguous on this point:

\begin{quote}
For, as a man who kills himself must, of course, be alive when he kills himself, but after he has killed himself ceases to live, and cannot restore himself to life; so, when man by his own free-will sinned, then sin being victorious over him, the freedom of his will was lost.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

The image is clear. Once Adam sinned there was such a change in the nature of man that he could no longer return to his earlier state on his own—the effects of original sin forever corrupted him.
A New Grace and Justification in Light of Man's Fallen Nature

The effects of original sin are devastating. "The entire mass [of humanity] incurs penalty; and if the deserved punishment of condemnation were rendered to all, it would without doubt be righteously rendered." Because of this fallen nature man is in need of God's prevenient grace, which is the Creator helping the individual to will the good which he himself would naturally refuse to do. This grace is a free gift of God, not based on merit, for "[God] does not, indeed, extend His mercy to them because they know Him, but that they may know Him; nor is it because they are upright in heart, but that they may become so, that He extends to them His righteousness, whereby He justifies the ungodly." Prevenient grace works in individuals through the incentive of their perceptions, either externally through evangelical exhortations or internally through the thoughts that enter their mind. The will, then, can either freely consent to God's summoning or reject God's gift.

Yet, says Scripture, God "desires all men to be saved" (I Tim. 2.4). Therefore, is God's will sometimes confounded by man's free will? "The Omnipotent is never defeated." What this passage means is that "no man is saved unless God wills his salvation: not that there is no man whose salvation he does not will, but that no man is saved apart from His Will." If God had chosen to damn the entirety of humanity He would be quite just, since it was through the abuse of free will that man turned from the true light and preferred his own evil desires. Hence, if God saves some it is because his mercy; if he does not save others it is because of his justice. Why God saves these particular people and not others is one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith. "It is better in this case for us to hear or to say, 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'
than to dare to speak as if we could know what He has chosen to be kept secret. Since, moreover, He could not will anything unrighteous."  

Prevenient grace, however, is not the only type of grace God bestows; He also gives His chosen cooperating grace. Though prevenient grace erases the guilt of original sin, it does not return man back to his pre-fallen state. Man is still inclined towards sin, and it is only through God's cooperating grace that the new Christian can follow the commandments of God.  

... The Heavenly Physician cure[s] our maladies, not only that they may cease any longer to exist, but in order that we may ever afterwards be able to walk aright--to which we should be unequal, even after our healing, except by His continued help.  

For Augustine, as later for Luther, the devastating consequences of the fall so vitiates man's nature that at no time is he able to live without a propensity toward sin; unless, God supports him and strengthens his will to do good.

**Man and the Imagio Dei**

Since God is all knowing, all powerful and all good, whereas man lives in ignorance and in servitude to sin, one would think that though originally God made man in His image, whatever similitudes there may have been were lost due to the fall. Yet Augustine strongly believed that "God's image has not been so completely erased in the soul of man by the stain of earthly affections." Augustine took Paul's statement to the Romans that the "Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires" (Rom. 2.14), as a clear indication that "what was impressed on their hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly blotted out."
Yet there are more obvious traces of God's image in man. The most apparent of these is reason, for it is only through the rational soul that one could say that a body made of dust is similar to its Creator. Because of man's soul, endowed with reason and intelligence, humans transcend all creatures of the earth, sea and air and are superior to all things except for God Himself. Although the effects of Adam's sin were devastating to human nature, God let man retain reason in order that he would not sink to the level of the beasts. "For, man who was once 'in honor' sinned, and after that 'he is compared to senseless beasts' and has become like them in the matter of procreation, even though that light of reason which makes man an image of God has not been extinguished altogether. It was only because God added to the animal power of procreation this conformation to God's image that man's offspring retain the form and essence of our specifically human nature."

Also, for Augustine, God is triune, an aspect that is not merely superimposed on divinity, but is a part of God's very nature. Hence, if God made man in His image one should expect to see at least some aspects of God's trinitarian nature in humanity. Augustine thought that if one sounds the depths of his own mind he will begin to see resemblances of the Trinity. In On the Trinity, Augustine looked at possible images of God found in man. The most obvious of these were the relations between mind (mens), knowledge (notitia) and love (amor); memory (memoria sui), intelligence (intelligentia) and will (voluntas); and one's memory of God (memoria Dei), intelligence (intelligentia) and love (amor). The most manifest of these three trinities, however, is found in the relation between memory, intelligence and will.

Memory for Augustine is merely the mind's knowledge of itself. He used the word memory because, though the mind and the mind's knowledge of itself are inseparable, the mind often does not "see" itself, though it is present. In a sense the mind knows that it exists, but it is not thinking about its existence, therefore, Augustine claimed, that it is
present in one's memory. In order for the mind to recognize itself as it really is, it must first reach below the crust of sensible images. There it will find its true nature, a nature which is not corporeal, but a being which is, lives and understands; a nature which can see not only bodies but also the divine models. The mind can see and understand these eternal reasons because it is a rational substance. Although the mind's true knowledge of itself and its latent memory of itself are different, they are not detached from one another. This mind, acquiring knowledge of itself, however, implies a third element, for the mind would not have come to know itself unless it had willed this. These three--memory, knowledge and will--are so interconnected that within one's self there is the formation of a Trinity--an image of God.

Now this triad of memory, understanding and will, are not three lives, but one; nor three minds, but one. It follows that they are not three substance but one substance . . . they are three inasmuch as they are related to each other . . . I remember that I possess memory and understanding and will: I understand that I understand and will and remember; I will my own willing and remembering and understanding . . . Since all are created by one another singly and as whole, the whole of each is equal to the whole of each, and the whole of each to whole of all together. And these three constitute one thing, one life, one mind, one essence.

For Augustine, though human nature was fundamentally altered for the worst when Adam sinned in the garden, he was not flung into a state of total depravity. A remnant of God's image, though very faint, still remains in man and his reason, which though weak strives for the good. Speaking of this trace of the divine image, Augustine wrote:

In regard to the principle of human life, God infused into it a capacity for reasoning and intellection. In infancy, this mental capacity seems, as it were, asleep and practically nonexistent, but in the course of years it awakens into a life that involves learning and education, skill in grasping the truth and loving the good. This capacity flowers into that wisdom and virtue which enables the soul to battle with the arms of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice against error, waywardness, and other inborn weaknesses, and to conquer them with a purpose that is no other than that of reaching the supreme and immutable Good. Even when this Good is not attained, there still remains, rooted in all rational nature, a divinely given
capacity for goods so high that this marvel of God's omnipotence is beyond any tongue to express or any mind comprehend.
Endnotes


3 Ibid.


5*Enchiridion*, xxi.


7 Ibid., xii. 6.

8The following argument is based on material in *City of God*, trans. G. Walsh et.al (Garden City: Image Books, 1958), xii. 6.

9 Ibid.

10 Augustine, for example, writes that "a rational nature even in misery is higher than one which, because it lacks reason or sensation, cannot suffer misery" (*City of God*, xii. 1).

11 Ibid., xii. 6.

12 The following example is based on material in *City of God*, xii. 6.

13 Ibid., xii. 6.

14 Augustine understands the consent of the first will to evil to be the turning of the will from its Supreme Good (God) to an inferior good (the self). He writes that "the fault of an evil will begins when one falls from Supreme Being to some being which is less than absolute" (Ibid., xii. 7).

15 "No one, therefore, need seek for an efficient cause of an evil will. Since the 'effect' is, in fact, a deficiency, the cause should be called 'deficient'" (Ibid., xii. 7).

16 *City of God*, xii. 8.
17Ibid.

18"What 'makes' the will evil is, in reality, an 'unmaking,' a desertion from God" (City of God, xii. 9).

19Ibid., xiv. 13.

20"All things which He has made are good because made by Him, but they are subject to change because they were made, not out of Him, but out of nothing" (Ibid., xii. 1).

21That humans have a propensity to turn away from God does not mean that they have a natural tendency towards non-being; rather, humans, being created out of nothing by God, depend upon the power of God to sustain them in being. If this power were to be withdrawn they would fall back into non-being.

22"... Insofar as [man] turned himself toward himself, he became less than he was when he was adhering to Him who is supreme Being. Thus, no longer to be in God but to be in oneself in the sense of to please oneself is not to be wholly nothing but to be approaching nothingness" (Ibid., xiv. 13).


24"... All good things throughout all the ranks of being, whether great or small, can derive their being only from God. Every natural being, so far as it is such, is good" (Concerning the Nature of the Good, i).

25Concerning the Nature of Good, x.

26City of God, x.

27Ibid., xiv. 13.

28Ibid.


30Enchiridion, xxx.


32St. Augustine, "Epistle to Vitalis," (ep. 30), Documents of the Christian Church, 55.

34 Ibid., xxxiv. 60.

35 Ibid.

36 *Enchiridion*, cii.

37 Ibid., ciii.

38 Ibid., xxvii.

39 Ibid., xciii.


41 *On Nature and Grace*, xxvi. 29.

42 Ibid.


44 Ibid.

45 *City of God*, xiii. 24.

46 Ibid., xi. 2; xii. 24.


50 Ibid., bk. 10.

51 Ibid., bk. 14.
The following discussion comes from E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*.

An analogy that may help to make this premise more obvious is one's knowledge of his being alive. Although one knows that he is alive, he may not be aware of it in the sense that he is consciously thinking about it. When I am sitting at my desk studying, I seldom contemplate that I am alive, though nonetheless I am alive. In like manner, when Augustine said that the mind does not see itself though it is present, he is implying that the mind is just not contemplating its own existence; but despite that, it still exists.

*On the Trinity*, 10. ix [13].


*City of God*, xxii. 24.
... I have never sworn allegiance to the words of Luther. So that it should not seem unbecoming to anybody if at any point I differ publicly from him, as a man surely may differ from another man, nor should it seem a criminal offense to call in question any doctrine of his, still less if one engages in a temperate disputation with him for the purpose of eliciting truth.

Erasmus, *On the Freedom of the Will*

... Your book struck me as so cheap and paltry that I felt profoundly sorry for you, defiling as you were your very elegant and ingenious style with such trash, and quite disgusted at the utterly unworthy matter that was being conveyed in such rich ornaments of eloquence, like refuse or dung being carried in gold and silver vases.

Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will*
CHAPTER 4

ERASMUS AND LUTHER AND THE DEBATE
ON THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL

The church had condemned Pelagianism and Augustine had provided the West with the first cohesive doctrines of man and grace. As years passed, however, the church developed a new character. After the decline of the Roman empire, the church found itself as the leader of Europe. In order to finance the hierarchy that emerged out of its new responsibilities, the church turned to the practice of indulgences, a way in which one could earn temporal forgiveness for sins—Pelagianism had returned. When Luther presented his theses on indulgences, therefore, he was not initially attacking the church; instead, he was returning to the teachings of Augustine and attempting to remove the cancer of Pelagianism. Hence, to appreciate both Luther and his reform program, one must at least briefly look at the age that preceded him and the Church's accompanying evolution.

The Church on the Eve of the Reformation

In 476, fifty-eight years after Augustine's defeat of Pelagius, the Hun Odovacar deposed the last Roman Emperor in the West, Romulus Augustus; the West had "fallen." The date 476, however, is nothing more than a convenient point of demarcation for the historian of antiquity. Rome had been on the decline for some time. The imperial frontiers had grown sufficiently large that their defence produced problems both socially and economically. Nonetheless, the empire had provided a political unity and a social cohesion during these times. When the Roman
hierarchy, however, came into the hands of the invaders, the barbarians found themselves incapable of maintaining it. Hence, with the decline of the empire there was also a loss of unity and cohesion. This situation, though, created a new role and a new set of responsibilities for the church. When the barbarians invaded, the Catholic bishops assumed the position of leadership after the civil authorities had failed. People began to look towards the church as their source of stability.

The most obvious example of this was the bishop of Rome and his rise to predominance in the West. Professor J. M. Wallace-Hadrill gives several reasons for the rise of the Roman see. First, due to the land that Constantine had given the church and what the church had obtained after his death, the Roman bishopric acquired much economic power. Also, the popes had shown a great ability for using the imperial administrative tradition for their own use. Furthermore, the popes were able to thrive on the prestige that grew around the cult of St. Peter. Finally, these bishops were natural leaders who were able to turn political adversity to their own advantage. As the church moved from the late antique world to the medieval world, it found itself as the new leader of Europe.

One historian has discerned three periods in the the medieval church: dissemination, domination, and disintegration. The first phase roughly covered the fifth through the eleventh centuries. The church had sent missionaries to the Arian and pagan barbarians; however, since many of these people traded in kind instead of in coin, the only way for these missionaries to support themselves was to possess and till the soil. Eventually, the church became a great landed institution and inevitably found itself intertwined in the affairs of state. "In a society where all relations rested on land and the church was the most landed of all institutions, the rulers naturally wished to be sure that the incumbents would discharge all of the normal obligations, and for that reason demanded the right to review appointments." The church also became involved, not only political concerns, but in all aspects of the world. So much so that one "prince bishop" said that
though he was celibate as a bishop, in his role as baron he was married and the father of a large family.  

By the twelfth century, the situation within the church had become so bad that almost everyone conceded the urgent need for reform. The origin of this reform spirit was the monastery of Cluny. The Cluniac program held that the church should be free from all lay control. Previous to this, secular authorities had filled ecclesiastical offices through lay appointments. To ensure church control, however, the reformer argued that these offices should be filled by an election of the clergy. The Cluniac party also held that clerical marriages were blameworthy and that the church should require the clergy to take a vow of perpetual chastity.

The task of carrying out this program came under Pope Gregory VII. As one might expect, the Holy Roman Emperor and other civil authorities did not meet the reforms with great enthusiasm. What followed was a long struggle between the papacy and the empire; and though the pope died in exile, the reform program which he had initiated began gaining strength. Within a generation, not only would the clergy accept clerical celibacy and the prohibition against simony as law, but the supremacy of the popes over earthly sovereigns became a matter of daily fact. Lewis Spitz points out that the church "as an institution . . . had a hierarchical organization that reached into every parish, and a bureaucracy that rivaled that of kings and emperors." This medieval theocracy reached its apex under Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). "No monarch in Europe was so powerful." The church had changed from an institution that spread the gospel throughout Europe to an institution that dominated Europe.

By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, the Church's ability to maintain order and unity were called into question. The church entered a time of disintegration. Though the events of this period may not have affected the average layman, they most certainly had an effect on theologians and churchmen and their ideas concerning the church.
In 1305, the popes moved to Avignon for a seventy year period known as the "Babylonian Captivity." During this time, the popes came strongly under the influence of the French Monarchies. This created an irritating situation for Germany and Italy, and especially for England, who at the time was at war with France. Due to a number of English victories over the French during the Hundred Years War, however, the popes regained some modicum of freedom of action. This manipulation of the church by France shook many theologians' belief in the Church's potency as head of Europe.

This situation escalated when in 1378, the church experienced the Great Schism, where as many as three individuals claimed to be pope at the same time. Many people questioned how the church could expect to retain order when it was itself in a state of chaos. "If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand" (Mark 3. 25). It is difficult to overestimate the effects of the Great Schism and the Babylonian Captivity upon the medieval church. For instance, though the Church's administrative divisions corresponded roughly with the areas of secular government, the great international orders had established a unity throughout Europe. As Denys Hays points out, however, "with the Schism, the headquarters of the Cistercians and the Cluniac were in the obedience of Avignon, and this inevitably led to the rulers of areas which accepted the claims of the Roman pope insisting on the separation of monasteries in their lands from the order as such. In many territories the great international orders, broken into pieces in this way, never recovered their former unity."

Another consequence was that many theologians and churchmen began to maintain the doctrine that a general council was superior to the pope. A far reaching effect of this conciliar movement was that popes became wary of general councils; and when one was urgently needed in the first years of the Lutheran Reformation, the popes hesitated until it was too late. The Conciliar Movement also created an immediate crisis which by the eve of the Reformation had not yet been settled. Because of the undermining of papal
authority, one no longer knew where to look for a statement on the faith of the church.\textsuperscript{18} Traditionally, the believer had turned to the papacy which objectified the institutional church; however, due to the Schism, the institution itself seemed to be called into question. Even when Pope Pius II condemned the conciliar movement as a "pestiferous poison,"\textsuperscript{19} the question of who should validate a theological opinion still lingered. Within this milieu a doctrinal pluralism developed, and though theologians agreed that church dogmas could not be questioned, the church allowed scholars to debate theological opinions in an academic situation. Alister McGrath suggests that Luther perceived the nominalist \textit{opinion} on justification\textsuperscript{20} as the official teaching of the church, and hence became convinced that the entire church had fallen into Pelagianism.\textsuperscript{21} Some evidence for this thesis can be seen in the fact that though the second council of Orange (529) had clarified the Church's position on grace and justification, the council and its decision were lost to the Middle Ages and only rediscovered at the beginning of the council of Trent. Medieval schoolmen therefore, proposed their opinions of justification based on the ill-defined decisions of the council of Carthage (418) which appeared to allow anything from semi-Pelagianism to double-predestination.

Doctrinal problems, however, were not the Church's only concerns. Its problem intensified when the Roman see took on a number of building projects under the administration of what one historian has termed the "bad popes."\textsuperscript{22} Pope Julius II spent enormous amounts of money on artwork in order to make Rome a "capital without equal."\textsuperscript{23} He had the architect Bramante tear down the old basilica of St. Peter's and begin construction on the greatest piece of architecture in all Europe. During these building projects, Julius also engaged in a number of wars to secure control of the papal states. To pay for both his wars and his building projects the pope needed to raise money, and one way of doing this was by selling indulgences.
The selling of indulgences had originated with the crusades, where the church would remit a soldier from the temporal punishment of his sin if he embarked on the holy war. Rome enlarged this benefit to include those who contributed to the expedition, and from there it was easily expanded in order to help finance any number of church projects. The theory behind indulgences is that though eternal punishment is removed when one is forgiven of sin, the earthly punishment is not necessarily remitted. One would still have to endure either earthly punishment or purgatorial suffering; however, since Christ and the saints have experienced more suffering than is necessary for the satisfaction of any temporal punishment, their merits are added to the treasury of the church to be disposed of at the church's discretion. Exactly what the church could forgive, although, was a subject of debate. One school thought that the pope could only remit penalties he himself had imposed; whereas, another view held that the pope's power extended into purgatory. The more extreme position averred that not only could the pope remit temporal punishment, but he could even forgive the most heinous of sins. The practice of selling indulgences obviously lent itself to large scale abuses. Martin Mair, Archbishop of Mainz, complained in 1457 that "new indulgences are approved day after day for one purpose only: their profits to Rome." Indulgences, however, created even greater theological problems. First, indulgences allowed one to buy forgiveness from temporal punishment for a set fee. The implication was that forgiveness was not necessarily free—one could earn it. Secondly, the entire doctrine rested on the treasury of merits. Yet, Augustine had said that no one can merit salvation, it must be freely given of God. The system of indulgences, then, was nothing more than a return to Pelagianism, since the main point in both was that God's grace could be earned. These problems finally prompted Luther to nail his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg, and hence begin the Protestant Reformation.
Such was the world that Hans and Margareta Luder brought their second son Martin into on 10 November 1483. He was born in the town of Eisleben to parents of "middle class" standing, although his father would steadily rise socially. His parents were strict disciplinarians; for Luther later wrote, "my father once whipped me so that I ran away from him; I was upset till he was able to overcome the distance." Nonetheless, his parents wanted the best for him and saw that he received a good education. The Luder's moved to Mansfeld when Martin was around two, and it was in this town that he received his basic education in grammar, logic and rhetoric. In 1497, the young Luther attended school at Magdeburg where he stayed with the Brethren of the Common Life. The Brethren, however, merely housed and supervised the student's education; hence it would be wrong to attribute too much to their influence.

The following year Luther left for Eisenach to prepare for university studies, where he stayed with a friend of the family. Although it makes a nice story to recount how Luther was so desperate that he was forced to beg for food, it is nonetheless a myth. During this era, young school children often went around on high holidays singing and expecting a sweet or even a meal in return; thus, to claim that Luther was destitute since he begged for food is just an erroneous conclusion. At the end of four years he entered Erfurt and in 1502, he received his Bachelor of Arts. The following year, he earned his Masters of Arts; and though he had entered the university at the age of eighteen, which made him older than most, he received his Masters degree at the earliest allowable age of twenty-two.

Although Luther's parents had destined him to be a lawyer, this was to change when on 2 July 1505 he found himself trapped in a thunderstorm. A bolt of lightning struck inches from him and threw him to the ground. In terror he yelled, 'St. Anne help me! I will become a monk.' Two weeks latter he entered the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt. His renunciation of the world, however, does not appear to be a spontaneous
action. He must have been thinking about his salvation and the possibility of entering a monastery for some time, since he later wrote, "I was always thinking, when will you do enough that God may be gracious? Such thoughts drove me to the monastery."32

Fear for his eternal soul eventually brought Luther to the monastery gates. He desperately wanted to ensure his own salvation and the only way he could achieve this was through God's grace. For the medieval church, this grace was an objective reality that one received through the sacraments. To obtain this grace, one merely needed to show serious intent and then confess his sins.33 In striving to demonstrate his serious intent, Luther, like so many monks before him, set out on a program of righteous works. He felt, "by letting my body waste away with fastings and watchings, I should satisfy the law, and shield my conscience against the goad; but all availed me nothing; the further I went on in this way the more was I terrified .... "34 Even if he could not earn his salvation, he could at least confess his shortcomings. However, even this terrified Luther, since he feared God would damn him if he should forget the littlest sin. He confessed everything and frequently stopped his fellow monks and asked them to be his confessor. His confessions became so numerous and monotonous that his good friend and mentor Staupitz, the vicar of the Augustinian order, advised "if you expect Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive--parricide, blasphemy, adultery--instead of all these peccadillos."35

In order to ease his fears, Staupitz told Brother Martin that he should study for a doctor's degree and assume the chair of Bible. As much as Luther tried to talk Staupitz out of his decision, the vicar had made up his mind, and the monk had no choice but to obey. On 19 October 1512, Luther received his Doctor of Theology. He then preceded to lecture on the Psalms (1513), Romans (1515- Sept. 1516) and then Galatians (Oct. 1516). Whether it was during these lectures that Luther had his "tower experience,"36 or later, is a matter of scholarly debate; but in any event, it gave the despairing Luther peace of mind. He related that what kept him from truly experiencing God's mercy was the phrase
"righteousness of God" (Rom. 1.17) which he had taken as God the Pantokrator, or God as the righteous judge punishing the unrighteous sinner. As he meditated on this phrase day and night, he finally came to understand the true significance of these words.

I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith. . . . Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.

The exact date of Luther's experience is a question of historical interest. Luther recounted in the preface to his Latin writings that it was while expounding on the Psalms the second time. If this is correct, it places his revelation between 1519-21. The prevailing interpretation, however, is that Luther made a mistake in his recollection and this event actually occurred during his first series of lectures on the Psalms (1513-1515). This is quite feasible, since, though Luther could memorize large sections of the Bible, he had a difficult time with dates and events. He once said, "I was born in Mansfeld [the county] in 1484, that is certain," although it is known that he was born in 1483. The full force of his revelation on justification probably did not hit him during his first exegesis of Psalms either, since there it appears only in a germinal form. By Luther's "disputation against scholastic theology" in September 1517, however, his doctrine of justification had blossomed. He asserted, "the grace of God is never present in such a way that it is inactive, but it is a living, active, and operative spirit; nor can it through the absolute power of God act so that an act of love may be present without the presence of the grace of God." His new understanding of God's righteousness came most probably after his first commentary on the Psalms (finished ca. April 1515), yet prior to the "disputation against scholastic theology" (September 1517).
Despite the date of Luther's conversion, it was his Ninety-five Theses and the indulgence conflict which first initiated the Reformation. Albrecht of Brandenburg had commissioned the Dominican Tetzel to promote indulgences in order to pay off the large debt acquired by procuring the Archbishoprics of Magdeburg and Mainz. Tetzel was unscrupulous in his tactics as one eyewitness recounted:

He said the pope had more power than all the apostles, all the angels and saints, even than the Virgin Mary herself. For these were all subject to Christ, but the pope was equal to Christ. After his Ascension into heaven Christ had nothing more to do with the management of the church until the judgement day, but had committed all that to the pope as his vicar and vicegerent.44

In response to abuses like this and others, Luther posted his Theses on the castle door at Wittenberg. Though Pope Leo X initially perceived the incident as merely a squabble between two monastic orders, he eventual saw the Theses as an attack on papal authority, and on 7 August 1518, ordered the Augustinian to come to Rome for questioning. Luther related that if it had not been for the intervention of his prince, Duke Frederick of Saxony, he would have been forced to go to the Holy see and it is most likely that the hopes for a Reformation would have gone up in smoke.45 Instead, Frederick arranged for Cardinal Cajetan to question Luther in Germany. The interview was quick. Cajetan demanded that Luther recant; Luther refused.

The following year Luther and his senior at Wittenberg, Carlstadt, became involved in a debate at Leipzig with John Eck, a University professor at Ingolstadt. Luther initially went along only as a spectator since he could not obtain a safe conduct from Duke George of Albertine Saxony. Eck, however, who had actually come to debate Luther and not Carlstadt, saw to it that the Duke granted Luther this privilege and the debate preceded.46 The significance of this debate was that Eck associated the teachings of Luther with those of the Bohemian heretic John Hus. Luther argued that the pope was not head the of the
church by divine right and that belief in the preeminence of the Roman church was not necessary for salvation.\textsuperscript{47} Eck responded, "I see that you are following the damned and pestiferous errors of John Wyclif, who said 'It is not necessary for salvation to believe that the Roman church is above all others.' And you are espousing the pestilent errors of John Hus, who claimed that Peter neither was nor is the head of the Holy Catholic church."\textsuperscript{48} Luther responded, "Among the articles of John Hus, I find many which are plainly Christian and evangelical, which the universal church cannot condemn."\textsuperscript{49} The next year in his treatise \textit{Assertion of All the Articles Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull} Luther retracted his statement saying, "I was wrong. I retract the statement that certain articles of John Hus are evangelical. I say now, 'Not some but all the articles of John Hus were condemned by Antichrist and apostles in the synagogue of Satan.'"\textsuperscript{50}

There was no longer hope for peace. On 15 June 1520, Rome issued the bull \textit{Exsurge Domine}, "Arise O Lord," which gave Luther sixty days to retract his schismatic teachings. On October 10, Luther received the bull, and on December 10, along with a copy of canon law, he burned it in front of Elster gate in Wittenberg. Luther had crossed his Rubicon.

Despite all of this, the year 1520 was a fruitful one for Luther from a literary standpoint. During this year, Luther wrote his classic Reformation Treatises--\textit{Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation}, \textit{The Babylonian Captivity} and \textit{The Freedom of a Christian}. In this first work, Luther called the German nobility to reform the church and explained why it was their personal duty. In \textit{The Babylonian Captivity}, he attacked the entire Catholic sacramental system and put forth his own views on the sacraments. Finally, his classic, \textit{The Freedom of a Christian}, was a brief summary of his theology, where he gave an eloquent account of Christian faith and life.

On 6 March 1521, the Emperor summoned Luther to Worms to account for his teachings. He wrote: "Honorable and beloved [Luther]. Since we [the Emperor] and the
estates of the Holy Empire... have proposed and decided, to obtain information from you about your doctrines and books, we give you safe conduct... with the desire that you should set out, and that under our protection you will appear here among us and not stay away. The Emperor's electoral oath required that he review the case, since no citizen could be placed under imperial ban without first having a hearing. When Luther arrived at the Diet, he was brought before a pile of his books and simply asked if he acknowledged their authorship and whether he retracted their contents or persisted in their error. The Diet wanted no discussion, just the REVOKO, I recant. Luther asked for a day to think about his answer. The following day he told the assembly:

Unless I shall be convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures or by evident reason (for I believe neither pope nor councils alone, since it is manifest they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is held captive by the word of God; and as it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience, I cannot and will not retract anything. Here I stand; I cannot otherwise; God help me. Amen.

Luther left the Diet an outlaw to both church and state. For whatever motives, Frederick the Wise took Luther into protective custody and spirited him away to Wartburg Castle, where the outlaw hid as Junker Jörg from 4 May 1521 till 1 March 1522. In March, however, Luther left his Patmos and returned to Wittenberg to correct the reform measures Carlstadt had taken in his absence. In September, Luther published his new German translation of the Bible and by the beginning of 1523, he was once again lecturing. The following year, however, he was struck with a bolt that, as he said, quite damped his spirit and eagerness, and left him exhausted before he could strike a blow. Erasmus, the humanist par excellence, entered the debate; and not on the side of the reformer.
In the autobiographical *Compendium* attributed to Erasmus, the famous humanist recounted how his parents had been two young lovers, but because of the harassment of his family the man had left for Rome while his beloved was still pregnant. When in Rome, he received the false report that his lover had died and in his grief, the man took religious orders. Upon returning to his native land, however, he discovered the deceit, and though his vows prohibited him from ever touching his beloved again, he did make sure that his son was given the best possible education. A romantic and sad story, but one that does not account for the facts. For example, how does Erasmus explain his brother Peter who was three years older than himself?

The two boys were born in Rotterdam, Holland, the younger on 27 October ca. 1464-69, although the later year is the more appealing. Erasmus' account of his birth, though certainly fabricated in places, does provide some evidence to the year of his birth. The enigma that society attached to being the bastard son of a priest must have haunted Erasmus for most of his life, and in order to save both his father's reputation and make it easier for him to obtain certain church dispensations he attempted to make himself look older. Dr. Preserved Smith puts forth the evidence for this view, pointing out that "of the twenty-three direct references to his age the first (made in 1506) gives the year 1466; the next two (made in 1516) gives 1467; the next twelve (made during the years 1517-24) indicate 1466; and the last eight (made during the years 1525-34) point to 1464. In other words, the older he became the earlier he put the year of his birth."56

One area that was not a fabrication in Erasmus' account of his childhood was that his parent gave him the best education. He first went to school at Gouda under the tutelage of Peter Winckel; later his mother took his brother and himself to Deventer, a city "impregnated by the spirit of the *Devotio moderna*."57 At the death of their parents, the
two lads returned to Gouda where Winckel and others persuaded Peter and Erasmus to enter a monastery. Though Erasmus gave his age to be sixteen when this event occurred, Johan Huizinga says that he must have been at least twenty. He took the monastic vows in 1488.

In 1491 or 1492, the budding humanist was recommended to the bishop of Cambray, Henry or Bergen, who was planning a trip to Rome and needed a capable Latinist. The bishop obtained permission for Erasmus to leave the monastery and then made preparations to leave for Rome. Erasmus' trip to Rome, however, would have to wait since the bishop cancelled his journey; even so, Henry did not send the monk back to the monastery, but instead arranged for Erasmus to go to the University of Paris where the young scholar supported himself by tutoring pupils. In 1498, Erasmus matriculated and received his Bachelor of Theology at the age of twenty-six.

One of the students whom Erasmus tutored was the young Lord William Mountjoy, who at the year of his tutor’s graduation offered him a pension if he would accompany him to England. Erasmus did, and spent the time making acquaintances and lifelong friendships with some of the most renowned scholars of the time--John Colet, Thomas Linacre, William Grocyn and that great chancellor of England, Thomas More. The following year he returned to Paris with a new emphasis to his studies. The English group had impressed on him the need of a mastery of the Greek language. He applied himself to the study of the language and translated some Greek authors into Latin.

In 1500, he published the first edition of the Adagia, which already showed the fruit of his linguistic studies, containing several quotations in the Greek tongue. This work was a collection of proverbial sayings, coming predominantly from Latin writers, on various human interests. The first edition contained around 800 of these sayings. Another work that came out of this period was his Enchiridion Militis Christiani. The work was "a
kind of compendium, or guide for spiritual living, so that being instructed by it [one] may attain those virtues of mind that should characterize him who is truly Christian."

Erasmus, however, was not to stay in one place for too long. In 1506, he finally made his long desired trip to Rome. And though the trip was profitable (he received his doctor of Theology at Turin), it also proved a disappointment. He wrote to friends that the speeches were boring, the bullfights too violent, the people were superstitious and ignorant, and worst of all, he had to bear the sight of the pope leading a troop of soldiers to do battle against a Christian city.

The experience was not pleasant, and in 1510, Erasmus once again set off for England. It was while on this journey that he wrote his enduring classic, ΜΩΠΙΑΣ ΕΙΣΚΩΜΙΩΝ, or The Praise of Folly, to his good friend Thomas More. At England, he stayed in Cambridge, where he was a professor of divinity and also lectured on Greek. The future Charles V offered the now famous scholar the office of Councillor which paid 200 florins, and Erasmus moved to Brabant. Two years later (1516), Froben published the first edition of Erasmus' New Testament with a purified Greek text. Also in the same year, Erasmus moved to Basel, which would be his chief place of residence from this time forth. This, however, is not to say that he ceased traveling; he never completely shook off his wandering habits. The year 1517 began, and for the great ultramontane humanist it seemed to be just another year of literary endeavors. The events of this year and those following, however, were to force Erasmus to choose between his ideal and his church. The Reformation had arrived.

Erasmus: Friend or Foe?

When Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses, Erasmus could only shake an approving head. He knew about the abuses associated with indulgences and he knew
Luther's condemnation was just. Erasmus himself had asked in *The Praise of Folly*, "what shall I say about those who happily delude themselves with false pardons for their sins? They calculate the time to be spent in purgatory down to the year, month, day, and hour as if it were a container that could be measured accurately with a mathematical formula." To a mutual friend, Erasmus not only praised Luther, but gave his approval. "Eleutherius, I hear, is approved of by all the leading people . . . . I imagine that his Conclusions [the Ninety-five Theses] satisfied everyone, except for a few of them on purgatory. . . ." And again, the year after Luther nailed his Theses to the castle door, Erasmus defended this action to Paul Volz, saying, "If one said, for example, that it would be safer to trust to good works than to papal dispensations, one is not condemning his dispensations in any case, but preferring what according to Christ's teaching is more reliable."$

Also, the tone of affection the two scholars initially used towards one another suggests that they saw in each other an ally for their own reform goals. Luther wrote to Erasmus in the Spring of 1519, referring to his senior as "our glory and our hope," and ever so pleased that his "ideas are not only known to [Erasmus] but approved by him." Erasmus praised Luther too, as seen in the letter to Lang and Volz. He admired the reformer's integrity and upright life, and once sent a letter to Frederick the Wise in Luther's defense.

There is good reason for this shared affection, for though Luther and Erasmus were of different temperaments, Luther was coarse and blunt; whereas, Erasmus was refined and mediating, the two shared in the same reforming spirit. This becomes manifestly obvious when one makes a comparison of their ethics and theology. Both theologian's ethics were based on Christ's saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22.39). For Luther, "A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body to work for it alone, but he lives also for all men on earth; rather, he lives only for others and not for himself. To
this end he brings his body into subjection that he may the more sincerely and freely serve others . . . "65 Erasmus, following the same precept, declared, "charity [is] the edification of one's neighbor, the attempt to integrate all men into one body so that all men may become one in Christ, [through] the loving of one's neighbor as one's self."66

When the indulgence controversy began, Luther opposed the view that one could buy their salvation, and by the time he wrote *The Freedom of a Christian* he rejected the position that any ceremony or rite was efficacious for one's salvation. "It does not help the soul if the body is adorned with the sacred robes of priests or dwells in sacred places or is occupied with sacred duties or prays, fasts, abstains from certain kinds of food, or does any work that can be done by the body and in the body."67 Erasmus argued the same position when he claimed, "If these external things were the true source of holiness, then certainly there could never have been any people more religious than the Jews."68 This is not racism on Erasmus' part, but rather a condemnation of the view that legalism or ceremonies can gain one access to heaven.

Given their similar views and the affection that they showed to one another, it seemed apparent that the two reformers would join forces and together put the Lord's house into order; at least, this was the belief of their contemporaries. The famous German artist Albrecht Dürer wrote in his diary when he heard the false report of Luther's death, "O Erasmus of Rotterdam, where will you be? Hear, you knight of Christ, ride forth beside the Lord Christ, protect the truth, obtain the martyr's crown."69 But the Protestants were not the only ones who thought this. Aleander, one of the papal legates in charge of disseminating the bull *Exsurge Domine*, believed that both Luther and Erasmus taught the same views with the exception that Luther's was more lethal.70

Surprisingly, Erasmus merely wanted to observe the Reformation tragedy and not be an actor in it. Although the humanist would defend Luther, he also disassociated himself from the reformer's theology and vehemently denied that Luther was his disciple.71
In fact, probably not until 1522 did Erasmus really sit down and work through Luther's writings. But until Erasmus responded to the Reformation, either positively or negatively, he was seen as a Lutheran, by the Catholics and a coward by the Protestants. The lines had been drawn and Erasmus was forced to choose—Wittenberg or Rome!

The Debate: *Libero Arbitrio* or *Servo Arbitrio*

On 15 April 1524, Luther wrote to the famous humanist, 'Please remain now what you have always professed yourself desirous of being: a mere spectator of our tragedy.' It was too late. Erasmus had already decided that despite what he wished he must take up paper and pen against the reformer. The subject, however, had to be a topic on which he truly disagreed with Luther. After long deliberation, he finally decided on Henry VIII's proposal of the freedom of the will.

In the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther had referred to "free will" as a word without content, and in *The Freedom of a Christian* he argued that all of man's actions are damnable unless done through the power of God. Erasmus countered that on this subject the Bible was anything but clear, and even if it was, "some things there are of such a kind that, even if they were true and might be known, it would not be proper to prostitute them before the common ears." The question that the humanist puts before the reformer was how could he be certain that his understanding of scriptures was the accurate one? For, "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (I John 4. 1). "How then shall we prove the Spirit?" asked Erasmus. "By learning? On both sides there are scholars. By holiness of life? On both sides are sinners. On the other hand, there is a whole choir of saints who support free choice."

But what is free choice? Erasmus began with this supposition: "By free choice in this place we mean a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the
things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them." Prior to the fall of Adam, God made man in such a way that he could have remained in innocence of his own power although he could never have attained the beatific vision, or eternal life, without God's special grace. After the fall, however, "the will with which we choose or refuse was thus so far depraved that by its natural powers it could not amend its ways, but once its liberty had been lost, it was compelled to serve that sin to which it had once for all consented." Through the grace of God, however, man's will was to an extent once again made free. Erasmus then proceeded to delineate the Pelagian view and the orthodox view on man's free will. Orthodoxy teaches, averred the humanist, "God ... created and restored free will ... so it is possible for man, with the help of divine grace to continue in the right, yet not without a tendency to sin, owing to the vestiges of original sin in him." This differed from the Pelagian view in that there is an additional grace beyond God's original forgiveness, and this grace is perpetual in order to help one deal with his inward propensity to sin. In all, Erasmus distinguished four types of grace. The first is natural grace, which God infused into all humanity in order to allow them to choose right from wrong. This grace, although vitiated by sin, is not completely extinguished in man. The second is stimulating grace, whereby one becomes displeased with his sinfulness. God grants this grace completely without merit and one can either accept its condemnation or turn away from it. If one chooses to turn towards God, God gives him cooperating grace which makes the will efficacious and "is always present in those who strive until they attain their end, but on condition that at the same time and in the work both free choice and grace operate; grace, however, as the leader and not as a companion." The final grace helps one persevere to the end. This, opined Erasmus, seemed "probable enough" (satis probabile).

Far from stopping at a mere appeal to authority and an analysis of grace, Erasmus catalogued the verses that supported free will. "Let every one turn from his evil way and
from the violence which is in his hands" (Jonah 3. 8). "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14. 15). And the list continued. If free will is merely an illusion, then how can one make sense of the fact that "all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (II Tim. 3. 16.)? If Holy Writ is to make sense, there must be free choice.

Erasmus concluded his diatribe:

And so, if it is now sufficiently demonstrated that this matter is such that it is not conducive to godliness to search into it deeply, particularly before the unlearned... if it is agreed that Holy Scripture is in very many places obscured by figures of speech, or even that in some places it seems at first sight to be self-contradictory... if it has been shown how inconvenient, not to say absurd, are the consequences if free choice is entirely taken away... I would ask the reader... whether is it reasonable to condemn the opinion of so many doctors of the Church, which the consensus of so many centuries and peoples has approved, and to accept in their stead certain paradoxes on account of which the Christian world is now in an uproar... I have completed (contuli) my discourse; now let others pass judgment.

Luther "met the graceful little book with a bomb." Luther's rebuttal questioned if Erasmus was even a Christian; said that the humanist was a "pig from Epicurus' sty"; called him a "Proteus"; claimed that he "reek[s] of nothing but Lucian;" and this all within the first ten pages. The reformer finally added that Erasmus' theology is not Pelagianism; it is worse, for it "purchase[s] the grace of God for far less than the Pelagians."

Most scholars have agreed that Luther and his judgment of Erasmus were correct. Professor Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, however, suggests, "a misreading of Erasmus' orthodoxy has resulted from a false focus on his alleged definition rather than on these rhetorical emphases: the initial summation of the state of the question and the final summation of the disputation." The genre of De libero arbitrio was not that of an invective or an exposition on the subject of the freedom of the will; it was a διατριβή (diatribe) or collatio. When Erasmus used these words, he had a precise meaning based on
a literary tradition; they were not meant to be understood in terms of the common usage. A diatribe, Professor Boyle points out, was a classical form of philosophical debate; which, though typified by the New Academy, was derived from the Socratic method. One looks at all sides of an issue, and then suggests what seems to be the most probable opinion, while personally suspending judgment. A *collatio*, on the other hand, was a comparison of passages based on their resemblances or similarities. Both of these literary forms are inductive and not deductive, therefore only giving one a probable solution. Erasmus was approaching the question of free will, not from the traditional scholastic methodology, but rather from a new skeptical and rhetorical methodology.

There is much to commend Boyle's thesis. For instance, Richard Popkin points to the facts that the works of the Greek Pyrrhonist, Sextus Empiricus, had just been made available in the first part of the sixteenth century. Given Erasmus' deep interest in the writings of the ancient and his love of Greek, it is almost certain that he would have read the Greek skeptic. Also, if, as Boyle relates, Erasmus had just finished editing the *Tusculanes quaestiones* of Cicero, a work in the style of the New Academy, it is most probable that this genre would emerge in some of his own writings—which it does. Finally, if Erasmus believed that there was no official church teaching on the subject of justification, but only academic "opinions," then it would be completely in line with Erasmus' mediating spirit to hold to a skeptical position than rather make a dogmatic assertion.

Based on the genre of *De libero Arbitrio*, Boyle points out that Erasmus' "definition" of free will as "a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them," was not what Luther and other scholars have perceived it to be; that is, a definition. "It was simply a premise, a supposition, a conversational opener, as it were, for that exercise of comparison." Instead of giving a direct definition, as the more "scholastic" Luther would have wanted,
Erasmus chose to define by comparing, which is what the majority of *Diatribe* does. This starting premise was nothing more than a focal point. "It was a guide-star or a topographical map for exploring the texts to be interpreted. It was not a definition, however." Hence, argues Dr. Boyle, one should not judge Erasmus' position on grace based on this "definition," but rather on the humanist's conclusion. One may contend that Erasmus gave no conclusion, but instead took a skeptical stance. This, however, is an erroneous opinion, once again based on a misunderstanding of the genre in which Erasmus was writing. For when Erasmus said of the orthodox view "probable enough" (*satis probabile*) he did not mean it "as in a ordinary forecast of facts or events. It was rather an epistemological term, borrowed from the doctrine of the New Academy. No casual guess whatever, 'sufficiently probable' was the firmest and surest assent to truth which could be ventured short of absolute certainty." For Erasmus, "now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (I Cor. 13. 12).

One final question must be asked in reference to Erasmus' *De Libero Arbitrio*, and that is what was its effect? On the Reformation, very little; but then Erasmus' target was not the Reformation. Erasmus agreed almost wholeheartedly with the reformers that the church was in need of correction. And though he may have rejected "Luther's paradoxes," he certainly never felt that the Wittenberger was a heretic. At the same time Erasmus undertook his debate with the reformer he was also composing the *Inquisitio de Fide*, a colloquy where a Lutheran is questioned on his belief concerning the articles of all the major creeds--Apostle's, Nicean and Chalcedon--at each point the Lutheran is shown to be orthodox. What was Erasmus' effect on Luther? The humanist had certainly not tried to offend or attack the German. Even Luther realized this and sent a letter to Erasmus trying to soothe over some of the wounds he had inflicted in his *De Servo Arbitrio*. Erasmus merely took what he saw as a fruitless "opinion" of Luther's--the bound will--and brought it up for discussion. Here lies Erasmus' impact, for it forced Luther to explicitly
present what had up till then only been implicit; that is, his doctrine of total depravity.

Man, Luther will write, is nothing more than a beast of burden who goes where its master wills; never choosing who will ride it, merely going where its led. It was this doctrine Erasmus could not tolerate; it was this doctrine Luther could not deny.
Endnotes


2 The political unity that the Empire provided is best seen in the great codex of Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) which was equally valid in the East and the West. As for social cohesion, although there was servile unrest during this time period, the Romans held to a "strong sense of the rightness of social hierarchy" (Wallace-Hadrill, 10).

3 Although the modern reader might take for granted Rome's significance in the Church, at this juncture, this was anything but obvious. As has been noted earlier, there were at least three views on church importance: the Cyprianic ecclesiology which said that all bishops were equal, the belief that imperial importance should determine the importance of the see, and the view that importance should be based on apostolic tradition. Given these schools of thought, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome could all claim to be the most significant based on the latter two views.

4 The following discussion comes from The Barbarian West, 29-31.

5 R. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), 6-21. Though this is an over generalization and does not take into account all the intricacies of medieval church history, for this summary it does provide an adequate framework.

6 Ibid, 9-10.

7 Ibid., 7. It should be noted that this situation was not as bad as it may seems since until the 11th century; though the marriages of clergy was looked down upon, it was not formally condemned.

8 For a concise outline of the pope's reform program, one should refer to Dictatus Papae (Jaffe, Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum, 6 vol., II, p.174). Though this was originally thought to come from the pen of Pope Gregory VII, research now suggests that it came after the year 1087, two years after the death of Gregory [Thatcher and McNeal, A Source book for Medieval History, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 136].


The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, 11.

It should be noted that the advancement of centralization did not occur in a continuous line with each pontificate building on the foundations of its predecessors, but was rather a process that went through a series of ups and downs.


Hence, even if one spoke, for example, of the Church of England, what was meant was the Church in England.


Ibid., 14.


Bull *Excrabilis* (1459/60)

More specifically the 'opinion' of the *Via moderna* which Luther considered Pelagian, or at least semi-Pelagian.


The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, 13-14.

It seems to be the latter two views that Luther attacks. See theses 20, 27, and 75.


Ibid., 96-99.
30Ibid., 99.


33Dillenberger, xv, xviii.


35Quoted from R. Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), 54.

36In actuality the phrase "tower experience" is only a nicety introduced by later biographers of Luther. Luther himself said, "the Spiritus Sanctus gave me this realization [understanding of God's righteousness] in the cloaca" (i.e., the toilette). The possible symbolism is obvious; God comes to us when we are our most vulnerable and in our most earthly and vile act (WA 2. no. 1681; 177, 8f, quoted from Luther, 135).

37Luther, "Preface to Latin Writings" in Dillenberger, 11.

38Ibid.

39Ibid., 10.

40Luther, 83.

41"Blessed are they who keep judgment. He does not say 'make,' but 'keep,' that is, they always preserve it and always do it. First let them condemn their own righteousness and so lay hold of the righteousness of God, and always both. Hence the most accurate gloss is to take 'judgment' for the condemnation of one's own righteousness and for self-accusation in a moral sense, and 'righteousness' for the grace of faith given gratis by the Lord. Therefore he does judgment who always destroys himself according to the old man with his deeds. And he does righteousness who always builds himself up according to the new man in spirit. But to do this judgment is hard and difficult and a continuous struggle, namely, to destroy oneself in true humility and subjection and the forfeit of one's own will and counsel, something that the common man calls heart-breaking. And it is the noblest virtue, in which the ungodly do not rise. They are stubborn in their justifying, and defending themselves. Whatever they might have perhaps even praiseworthy, when it should be the opposite, that they should regard all their own things as stupid, evil, and blameworthy. This is what it means to keep judgment [comments on Psalms 106. 3.; American Edition of Luther's Works, ed. J. Pelikan and
trans. G Schick et al. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955- ), 11. 346; henceforth LW.

42 LW. xxxi. 9-16; theses, 7, 29, 40.

43 Ibid., 13; thesis, 55. The phrase "the absolute power of God" is in reference to a doctrine in the nominalist school (see chap. 6). In this thesis, Luther is denying the premise of Gabriel Biel, a prominent nominalist, who argued that God's plan for salvation is not a necessity and God could have chosen another form of justification for man.

44 From Fr. Myconius, Geschichte der Reformation, Anno 1517, in Thatcher, 340.

45 "Preface to the Latin Works," in Dillenberger, 6.

46 Ibid., 8.


48 Quoted in Here I Stand, 115.

49 Ibid., 116.

50 Assertion of All the Articles Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull, no. 29, quoted from Here I Stand, 165.

51 Proceedings of the Imperial Diet, 2.526, 24-32, quoted in Luther, 35.

52 Luther, 36.

53 Acta Wormatiae habitae, in Opera [Jena], ii, 414.

54 WA 18, 601.

55 The basis for this outline of Erasmus' life comes from the Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, s.v. "Erasmus;" however, it is also heavily supplemented by the works of Bainton, Huizinga and Smith.


61 *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, eds. P.G. Bietenholz et al., trans. R. Mynors and D. Thomson, vol. 6, *The Correspondence of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.) ep. 872; P. Smith gives a variant translation of this passage: "I hear that Eleutherius is approved by all good men, but it is said that his writings are unequal. I think his *Theses* will please all, except a few about Purgatory, which they who make their living from it don't want taken from them."

62 Ibid., ep. 858.

63 Greeting, often as I converse with you and you with me, Erasmus, our glory and our hope, we do not yet know one another. Is that not extraordinary? No, it is not extraordinary, but a thing of every day. For who is there whose innermost parts Erasmus has not penetrated, whom Erasmus does not teach, in whom Erasmus does not reign? I mean of those who rightly love learning; for I rejoice that among Christ's other gifts to you, this also is numbered, that you displease many; for by this criterion I am wont to know the gifts of a merciful from the gifts of an angry God. I therefore congratulate you that while you please good men to the last degree, you no less displease those who alone wish to be highest and to please most.

Now that I learned from Fabritius Capito that my name is known to you on account of my little treatise on indulgences, and as I also see from the preface to the new edition of your *Hand Book of the Christian Knight* that my ideas are not only known to you but approved by you, I am compelled to acknowledge your noble spirit, which has enriched me and all men, even though I write a barbarous style. Truly I know that you will esteem my gratitude and affection, as shown in this epistle, a very small matter, and that you would be content to have my mind burn secretly before God with love and gratitude to you; even as we are satisfied to know you without your being aware of it, having your spirit and services in books, without missives or conversation face to face. But shame and conscience do not suffer me not to thank you in words, especially now that my name has begun to emerge from obscurity, lest perchance some one might think my silence malignant and of ill appearance. Wherefore, dear Erasmus, learn, if it please you, to know this little brother in Christ also; he is assuredly your very zealous friend, though he otherwise deserves, on account of his ignorance, only to be buried in a corner, unknown even to you sun and climate (ep. 933, quoted in Smith, 219-220).


66 *Enchiridion*, 68.
67*Freedom*, 279.

68Ibid., 67.

69Quoted from Huizinga, 148-49.

70*Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Karl V*, ii, 523 f.

71*Erasmus of Christendom*, 158.


73Quoted from Huizinga, 162.


75Heidelberg theses, 13.

76*Freedom*, 281.


78Ibid., 40.

79Ibid., 44-45.

80Ibid., 47.

81Ibid., 48.

82Ibid., 48-49.

83Ibid., 49.

84Ibid.

85Ibid., 52-53.

86Ibid., 52.

87Ibid., 53.

88Ibid., 97.


91 Ibid., 109.

92 Ibid., 103, 107.

93 Ibid., 113.

94 Ibid., 311, 321.


97 The New Academy was a form of Platonism which was founded by Carneades (214-129 B.C.E.). It substituted a form of probability into Plato's system instead of the principle of doubt that was introduced by the Middle Academy.

98 Boyle, 60.


100 Boyle, 60.

101 See above discussion on doctrinal pluralism in the late Middle Age.

102 Ibid., 64.

103 Ibid., 65.

104 Ibid., 69.

105 Ibid., 75.

The human will is placed between [God and Satan] like a beast of burden. If God rides it, it wills and goes where God wills... If Satan rides it, it wills and goes where Satan wills...

Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will*

"Free Will" after the fall is nothing, but a word, and as long as it is doing what is within it, it is committing deadly sin.

Martin Luther, "Thesis 13, Heidelberg Disputation."
CHAPTER 5

LUTHER'S THEOLOGY OF MAN

In the debate with Luther, Erasmus had been hesitant in attacking the reformer since they agreed on so many issues. Even their views of salvation had much in common, such as a belief in justification by faith. What Erasmus could not accept, however, was the tenet that man cannot of his own accord turn towards God, but instead must be turned by God. For Erasmus, though man was weak and desperately in need of God's support, he still had enough power to decide to follow God, even if God had to carry him along afterwards. Because of their contradictory views of man, the humanist and reformer would never be able to see eye-to-eye.

The Fall

The starting premise for all of Luther's theology is "God is God." He is all-knowing, all-powerful, all-merciful, all-just. "God works all in all" (I Cor. 12. 6). Therefore, when Adam, whose "intellect was the clearest, his memory was the best, and his will was the most straightforward,"1 sinned, it came as no surprise to God.2 From the very beginning of time, God had known that man would fall and consequently He had already worked out a plan for man's salvation. However, if God already knew that man would sin and if God works all in all, then it would seem that God is also the author of the first evil act. Blasphemy! Luther would declare. God's goodness and righteousness eliminate this possibility. Luther's response to this great riddle was that it is one of the
great mysteries of Christianity and, unlike Augustine, he refused to give a philosophical explanation. Man freely chose to sin and God allowed it. As to why God would allow this, Luther's first retort was, God is God, but nonetheless answered that in allowing Adam to fall, God had let the world see how awful man's free will really is. And in permitting man to sin, God destroyed the basis for any moralistic self pride on man's part.³

In Luther's theology, like Augustine's, the effects of the fall were devastating. Unlike Augustine, however, who thought that one could see images of God in man, Luther thought that not only was this sort of speculation fruitless, it was even dangerous. He said in his commentary on Genesis, "I am afraid that since the loss of this image through sin we cannot understand it to any extent." ⁴ Augustine saw the image of God in man's memory, mind and will, but, pointed out Luther, the devil has all these same qualities and he has them to a greater extent. Should one, then, suppose that Satan is more in the image of God than humanity?⁵

"And what shall we farther say of hatred towards God, and blasphemies of all kinds? These are those sad evidences of the fall, which do indeed prove, that the image of God in us is lost. Wherefore, when we now attempt to speak of that image, we speak of a thing unknown; an image which we not only have never experienced, but the contrary to which we have experienced all our lives, and experience still. Of this image therefore all we now possess are the mere terms,—"the image of God!" ⁶

After the fall, sin and death gnawed at man's perceptive powers like a leprosy, until they were mere specters of their former abilities. "Therefore when we speak about that image, we are speaking about something unknown."⁷ Hence, when one honestly looks within himself, he will find there only sin, vice and lust, and nothing of the Creator.

Another effect of the fall was that God's spirit was removed from humanity as well.⁸ "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh" (Gen. 6. 3). Flesh is nothing more than all of man's ungodly desires, completely devoid of the glory of God and the spirit of God.⁹ But from flesh only flesh comes; therefore, all of humanity is without
the spirit and cannot enter the kingdom of God. Because the whole human race is flesh and the spirit of God is absent, humanity can only sin and do no good. Neither God nor Satan, however, compel man to sin; rather man sins because of the sheer pleasure of it. "For if God is in us, Satan is absent, and only a good will is present; if God is absent, Satan is present, and only an evil will is in us." Man's will is like a mule. If God rides it, then it goes where God wills; if Satan rides it, then it goes where Satan wills. And just like a pack animal, a man cannot chose who is to be his master. If one should reply "then why has God given man commandments if it is either God or Satan who works in man and not his own will?" Luther responded that "they are intended to teach man to know himself, that through them he may recognize his inability to do good and may despair of his own ability." Although Luther believed members of the non-elect can do acts of love and mercy, they could not, however, do meritorious acts toward their salvation. For to say one can earn his salvation is tantamount to calling God a liar—the utmost in blasphemies. Man is totally depraved, and without God's grace he is damned to a life of sinfulness. He is caught between God and the Devil.

**Total Depravity and the Reformation Principles**

The Lutheran Reformation was based on three primary principles—*sola scriptura*, *sola fides* and *sola gratia*. Yet underlying each of these principles is something even more basic to Luther's theology—his strong belief in man's total depravity. Because of man's corrupt intellectual faculties, he should only trust scripture, for reason errs; because he can do no good, he must be saved through faith; and because his evil will can never have faith in God on its own, his salvation must come from God's grace.

At the Diet of Worms, Luther claimed that unless he was convinced by the scriptures or by evident reason he was bound to the Bible. In his reply to Erasmus, he
continually demonstrated that the humanist's position was irrational. Despite his constant appeal to reason, however, one thing was certain, if reason ever contradicted God's word, scripture always took precedence. Ultimately, one could not trust reason, since due to man's depraved nature his reasoning capabilities had also become seriously weakened. Using his corrupted reasoning, man took whatever knowledge he had from his own experience and then used this understanding as his measure of God. Yet man's corrupt mind cannot grasp the true God; therefore, what man calls god is in reality nothing more than a phantasmagoria. The only way man in his fallen state can apprehend God is through God's own utterances--that is the Bible. But even when one turns to scripture he must be wary of using reason, for "reason interprets the scriptures of God by her own inferences and syllogisms, and turns them in any direction she pleases." As a member of the true hidden church one can be sure of his understanding by way of two tests. the first is the internal test, whereby the Holy Spirit enlightens one to the true dogma and opinions of God. The second is the external clarity of scripture. To God's chosen, there is no obscurity in Holy Writ, only harmony; but to those men with darkened hearts, even if they memorized everything in scripture they would still understand nothing. scripture is man's only sure and ultimate source of knowledge about himself, God and God's plan for man. Without it man would certainly perish, for only through scripture is the Word able to work, and it is only through faith in the Word that man is saved.

Merely to know the truth, however, will not save anyone. Christ says of Chorazin and Bethsaida that "if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. 11. 22). Knowledge is not enough; there must be more. Though scripture is man's only source of knowledge about God, faith in the Word is the only way man can return to God. This Word is the gospel of the Lord concerning His Son who was made flesh, crucified and then glorified through the Holy Spirit. Faith in this gospel is the only saving and efficacious use of the
Word. Nonetheless, sinful man will attempt to earn his salvation through merit; yet because of his depraved nature he will only heap destruction and damnation on his head instead of salvation. "For if the man himself is not righteous neither are his works or endeavors righteous, and if they are not righteous, they are damnable and deserving wrath."25 Once man begins to have faith, however, he will learn that all things within himself are blameworthy and without merit. He will despair of himself and his deeds, realizing that "None is righteous, no, not one . . . all have turned aside, together they have gone wrong" (Rom. 3. 10-12). Only after one sees his own sinfulness will he realize that he needs Christ and then only through faith in Christ can he become a new creature.26

The power of faith bestows on man four "incomparable benefits." The first of these is that faith makes laws and works unnecessary for one's salvation or righteousness.27 The next privilege is that sinful man, who could never have approached the Most High or shown Him due praise, is able to honor God with the most reverent and highest regards; for now he willingly ascribes truthfulness and righteousness to God.28 A third profit that comes through faith in Jesus is that Christ unites His soul with that of the believer's. As a bride is united with her bridegroom, so the believer is united with the Son, and all that was his becomes Christ's. The union is such that the "believing soul can boast of and glory in whatever Christ has as though it was its own."29 In like manner, Christ took man's sins as if they were his own and with them descended into hell and since:

death and hell could not swallow him up, these were necessarily swallowed up by him in a mighty duel; for his righteousness is greater than the sins of all men, his life stronger than death, his salvation more invincible than hell. Thus the believing soul by means of the pledge of his faith is free in Christ, its bridegroom, free from all sins, secure against death and hell, and is endowed with the eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of Christ its bridegroom.30

The final incomparable benefit of faith is that it alone can fulfill the law and justify man.31
One need only believe and all these privileges are his. Yet even given the simplicity of what God demands (i.e., belief), humanity is still incapable of complying with God's desire. Man is totally depraved. He hates God and would never believe, and even if he wanted to (which he does not), Satan holds man in his clutches. Hence, even man's faith in Christ is not in his own hands but in God's. If one believes and accepts Christ as his savior, this, too is God's grace. Man is so wicked that not only can he do nothing to merit his salvation, but sin constrains him in such a way that he cannot even have faith in the life renewing Word unless God makes him believe through grace. Free will would never turn towards its redeemer, for it is only capable of sinning. This loss of free will is the divine punishment for man's sin. If man is to be saved, it must be through God's grace—a grace that is not based on merit, for where there is no freedom of the will there can be no room for merit. This grace must, therefore, be freely given by God. The conclusion of Luther's premises is inescapable—man is predestined either to eternal happiness or eternal torment. For if man's free will is ineffective apart from the grace of God, then when God's grace is absent, man's own powers can do nothing. God, however, chooses on whom he will have mercy and on whom he will have compassion. And this decision is foreknown and unchangeable. The logic is simple:

If his foreknowledge is an attribute of his will, then his will is eternal and unchanging, because that is its nature; if his will is an attribute of his foreknowledge, then his foreknowledge is eternal and unchanging, because that is its nature. . . From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently, happens in fact nonetheless necessarily.

This argument merely restates Romans: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8. 28). Luther, however, does not believe God only predestined those on whom he was to have mercy, but also on those whom He hurls his wrath. God has chosen a few to live forever with Him in
perpetual bliss; the rest of humanity He damned to spend eternity "where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9. 49). If someone should gainsay this doctrine on account of its harshness, Luther would retort "it is the highest degree of faith, to believe him merciful when he saves so few and damns so many, and to believe him righteous when by his own will he makes us necessarily damnable, so that he seems . . . to delight in the torments of the wretched and to be worthy of hatred rather than of love."37 Man does not comprehend the magnitude of his sin. He is a stench to God and if God chose to damn all humanity and save no one, He would be completely just in doing so. That God should save anyone demonstrates the vastness of His mercy and compassion.

Like Augustine, Luther realized that at the fall there was a tremendous change that took place in man's being. Once the church and society lost sight of this event, they began to claim powers that they did not have, and turned away from the true source of salvation--God Himself. Unlike Augustine, Luther saw humanity as totally depraved; man is a filthy, corrupted, leprous, weak, wretched, depraved soul, incapable of doing anything through his own power. This conviction was the impetus for all of Luther's teaching on man and salvation; it provided the basis for his principles of *sola scriptura*, *sola fides* and *sola gratia*; and in the end it gave peace to a man who struggled with his own salvation.
Endnotes


3Ibid., 159.

4LW, I. 61.

5Ibid., 61-62.


7LW, I. 63.


9Ibid., 274.

10Ibid., 264, 273.

11Ibid., 120.

12Ibid., 180.

13Ibid., 140.


15BOW, 143.

16"What more complete fulfillment is there than obedience in all things? This obedience, however, is not rendered by works, but by faith alone. On the other hand, what greater rebellion against God, what greater wickedness, what greater contempt of God is there than not believing his promise? For what is this but to make God a liar or to doubt that he is truthful?--that is, to ascribe truthfulness to one's self but lying and vanity to God? Does not a man who does this deny God and set himself up as an idol in his heart? Then of what good are works done in such wickedness, even if they were the works of angels and apostles? (FC, 280-281); see also BOW, 308 and passim.

17LW, I. 61.

19 *BOW*, 184.

20 *BOW*, 159.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 112.

23 *FC*, 279.

24 Ibid., 280.

25 *LW*, xxxiii. 270.

26 *FC*, 281.

27 *FC*, 284.

28 Ibid., 284-285.

29 Ibid., 286.

30 Ibid., 287.

31 Ibid., 288.

32 *LW*, 283.

33 *LW*, 267.

34 Ibid., 276-77.

35 *BOW*, 141.

36 Ibid., 119.

37 Ibid., 138.
Man is the measure of all things.

Protagoras
of righteousness, by love of righteousness the accomplishment of the law."\(^3\) The purpose of grace then is not to destroy free will, but to assist it. Augustine contended that because of man's fallen nature he is not free to choose (*liberum arbitrium*) the good, which is liberty (*libertas*), but instead is destined to sin because of his nature. Thus, for man to be released from sin and to be truly free, it is essential that God's grace be present.\(^4\) Etienne Gilson points out, "... to be confirmed in grace to the point of no longer being able to do evil is the supreme degree of liberty. The man most completely strengthened by grace is also the freest."\(^5\) For Augustine:

> ... this will [to believe] is to be ascribed to the divine gift, not merely because it arises from our free will, which was created naturally with us; but also because God acts upon us by the incentives of our perceptions to will and to believe ... \(^6\)

God's grace, therefore, acts through man's free will in order to rescue him from the bondage of sin and lead him back to the Supreme Good, namely God.

In contrast to Augustine's version of predestination, Luther's concept began with the total depravity of man. For Luther, the fall so wholly corrupted man that he lost any trace of free will. This view is in contrast to Augustine's, who believed that though the fall damaged man's free will, it did not destroy it completely. For Luther, when the term free will was applied to man's ability, it was nothing more than empty verbiage.\(^7\) "In matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice, but is a captive, subject and slave either of the will of God or the will of Satan."\(^8\) To make the point absolutely clear, Luther gave his infamous analogy (previously cited), which likens the human will to a beast between God and the Devil.

Luther defended this extreme position not only in the face of enemies, but also while he was among friends. In the *Table Talks* Luther unambiguously stated, "This is my absolute opinion: he that will maintain that man's free will is able to do or work anything in
spiritual cases be they never so small, denies Christ." Even when caught up in religious ecstasy, Luther showed his belief in total depravity and the bondage of the will. While praising God with hymns and spiritual songs, he wrote:

Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay,
Death brooded darkly o'er me;
Sin was my torment night and day,
Therein my mother bore me,
Deeper and deeper still I fell,
Life was become a living hell,
So firmly sin possessed me.

For Luther, since man is wholly corrupted and has no desire to turn towards God, all things he does are damnable and deserving of punishment. If God saves anyone, it is because He chooses them. God then brings them back to Himself, and makes them righteous through a righteousness which is not their own. Although in many ways this is similar to Augustine's view, as Augustine admitted that the will is a slave to sin, it differs in that Augustine believed that one could of his own accord turn towards God and be saved. "It is now in your power . . . to choose which of these two (elect or reprobate) you wish to be . . . Choose while there is time."10 "Who are the elect?" asked Augustine, "You if you wish."11 For Luther, this teaching would be anathema, for one would never choose God of his own; his sin nature would not let him.

Reason and Philosophy

Another area where Augustine and Luther part ways is their opinions of philosophy and reason. Augustine undoubtedly felt that though the fall had certainly weakened human reason, man's intellect was not wholly impaired. He praised the talents displayed by pagan philosophers and even Christian heretics in the defense of their errors, while condemning their conclusions.12 Philosophy is most certainly efficacious for bringing one to at least
some understanding of God, for in Augustine's own life this had been the case. He related how, upon reading works of the Platonist, they had given arguments for the doctrine that "in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." These philosophers had not intended to give a proof for Christian teachings, but natural reason had nonetheless brought them to the same conclusions. This was a lesson Augustine never forgot, for he applied the principles of Neoplatonism and philosophy to a number of Christian endeavors. He used the platonic privation theory of evil to counter the Manichaean theology; he took Plato's definition of the soul as his own; and he used speculative philosophy to sound the depths of the Trinity. Augustine never saw philosophy in itself as a threat; on the contrary, it was only when men became "puffed up with most unnatural pride" that reason and philosophy became dangerous. Man's ability to speculate and investigate the underlying structure of God's creation, whether it be man himself or the Universe, was a gift of God which man still held even after the fall.

Philosophy also profoundly influenced Luther, but instead of then applying this method to theological questions, he became convinced that philosophy must be banished from the realm of theology. While at Erfurt, Luther had come under the influence of Nominalism. This school of philosophy taught that there were two powers within God—the ordained (potentia Dei ordinata) and the absolute (potentia Dei absoluta). The ordained referred to how God actually created the world, whereas the absolute referred to how things might have been. The conclusion drawn from this division of God's powers was that there is no necessity in the created order, which included salvation, the incarnation and many others articles of faith. The world and God's plan for salvation could have been different than they actually are, since God was not impelled to create this world out of necessity. Hence, to apply philosophy (which looked for logical and therefore, necessary conclusions) to theological questions was a fruitless endeavor. The only source one had for understanding the world was experience and Scripture. After both reading the Bible
and then looking at the corruption in the world, and more specifically his own feelings of
sinfulness, Luther came to the conclusion that all humanity was in a state of depravity.
God's grace may have used Nominalism to bring Luther to despair of human nature, but
afterwards he could not be held back by the fetters of philosophy—not even Nominalism.
Adam's sin in the garden had so thoroughly corrupted reason that it would only hold one
back in his quest for God. The god of the philosophers was not the God of Abraham and
Isaac. In fact, this god was one of the greatest threats to Christianity; for it led people to
believe that by their own power they could come to know God, whereas in actuality it
casted them to lose their souls. Reason is blind when it comes to scriptures and her
inferences do not hold there.\textsuperscript{15} "No syllogistic form is valid when applied to divine
terms"\textsuperscript{16} and "in vain does one fashion a logic of faith."\textsuperscript{17} Unlike Augustine, who felt that
though reason was considerably weakened after the fall, it was still useful in dealing with
all types of philosophical and theological problems, Luther felt that man's perceptive
powers were eaten away like the flesh of a leper.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Society and the State}

A third area of discrepancy in Augustine's and Luther's thought is their conception
of the state. Augustine based his political theory on the existence of two cities. One is the
city of God, which consists of the elect and the angels who had not fallen. This city
focuses not on the here and now, but on eternal blessedness. The other is the earthly city,
which is interested in the things of the world whether it be power, knowledge or just
temporal peace. In his work \textit{Secular Authority}, the Wittenberger, following Augustine,
also acknowledged two kingdoms. In his analysis of the function of government,
however, there is a subtle divergence from Augustine's notion, which betrays Luther's
pessimistic view of mankind.
For Augustine, the function of the state is to maintain an ordered harmony of authority and obedience between the citizens. Although the populace may differ on what form of government would best bring this about, they agree that everyone desires peace. For man is "powerless not to love peace of some sort. For, no man's sin is so unnatural as to wipe out all traces whatsoever of human nature." Whether he be a soldier, highwayman, family man, elect or non-elect, all people want peace; whereas the Christian will seek peace in eternal blessedness, the unbeliever will seek it here in the world. For Augustine, the function of the state is to provide this peace.

Although on the surface Luther's political thought looks like an apish copy of Augustine, there is a very subtle difference. Where Augustine believed that the state sought to maintain harmony, Luther saw the function of government as punishing the wicked and protecting the upright. Only those made righteous by God truly wanted peace; the unrighteous will never do what civil authorities demand unless they are instructed, compelled and constrained to obey the laws. "The whole world is evil and that among thousands there is scarcely one true Christian, men would devour one another ... and thus the world would be reduced to chaos." Because man does not seek after peace but rather destruction, government needs to be strong, and at times even oppressive. If governments were not, civil affairs would be like:

a shepherd who should place in one fold wolves, lions, eagles, (the world) and sheep (the Christian) together and let them freely mingle with one another and say, Help yourselves, and be good and peaceful among yourselves; the fold is open, there is plenty of food; have no fear of dogs and clubs. The sheep, forsooth, would keep the peace and would allow themselves to be fed and governed in peace, but they would not live long; nor would any beast keep from molesting another.

The differences are clear. Augustine, though certainly maintaining the sinfulness of man, believed that traces of man's initial good are still found in humanity; in contrast, though
man is good inasmuch as he is a creation of God, Luther also saw the evil nature that man 
wrought within himself as vile and lacking any redeeming qualities.

Concluding Remarks

For the sake of contrast, the emphasis on Augustine's theology throughout this 
chapter has been the goodness which man still retained after the fall; nonetheless, 
Augustine always placed the most emphasis on the wickedness of man in his fallen state. 
To assume that he held an optimistic opinion of man and his abilities would be an 
erroneous conclusion. What Augustine did not believe, though, was that man was totally 
depraved. This teaching was original with Luther and constituted the theological novum 
which early Catholic apologists so desperately sought.

A point that can be made about Luther's teaching of total depravity is that Germany 
was the heir to this theology, and though it would be wrong to explain all of modern 
German history in terms of this doctrine, a few observations should be made. One, 
Germany has been one of the least receptive nations to the idea of democracy. It was the 
last major European power (barring Russia, which was probably more of an eastern 
country than western) to do away with a monarchy. This country had experienced the 
brunt of the Thirty Years' War; it knew the evils that men could inflict on one another; it 
saw total depravity in all of its terror. Would one blame Germany for taking the advice of 
its greatest theologian and instead of allowing liberty, providing security? In the same 
vein, one of the great mysteries of twentieth century German history is why the German 
people allowed Hitler such an easy access to power. Their reasoning would be simple: "in 
a world filled with corrupt and wicked people it is better to sacrifice democracy for a 
dictator, than security for chaos." Once again, one should not make too much of Luther's 
teaching on man and the rise of Fascist Germany, but nonetheless, in a country where total
depravity had been implanted in their minds one can easily see how at least the door had been left open for Hitler.

Finally, though Augustine's thought has had more impact theologically in the West with its evangelical emphasis on choice, in the secular arena the theology of Luther has been the most influential. In political affairs, states have seen their function most often as providing a form of security, whether it be the military, the police or even the fire department. The world is a brutish place and man is often worse than a animal; for beasts never engage in great military campaigns against one another, nor murder each other in order to rise in power. Luther's theology also affected the modern view of education, since the only way corrupted man could be saved is through the Word. If children were taught to read then maybe, just maybe, God would extend his grace to them through the scriptures. Finally, man in his private life is more affected by the practical theology of Luther than the speculative thought of Augustine. How often are intellectuals accused of living in ivory towers and being too abstract? The masses do not want long philosophical discussions on a subject, they just want the answer, and this is what Luther provided--simple answers to complex questions.
Endnotes

1 Gilson points out that one does not carry on a dispute for twenty years without somewhat overstating one's point [History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 78].

2 Ibid., 78-79.

3 Augustine, On the Spirit and the Letter, 52. [xxx].

4 History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages, 79.

5 Ibid.

6 On the Spirit and the Letter, lx.

7 BOW, 142.

8 Ibid., 143.

9 Table-Talk, CCLXII.


11 Ibid., 219.

12 City of God, xxii. 24.

13 Confessions, vii. 9.

14 For a thorough analysis of late medieval nominalism, and specifically the philosophy of Gabriel Biel, the last of the scholastics, one should read H. Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology (n.p, Harvard UP, 1963; 3d ed., Durham, The Labyrinth Press, 1983); for a short study of the attitudes toward philosophy (specifically Lang) and the impact of nominalism in the Erfurt Cloister, see L. Murphy, "Martin Luther, the Erfurt Cloister, and Gabriel Biel: The Relation of Philosophy to Theology," Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte 70 (1979), 5-23; for an excellent discussion of the late medieval intellectual trends in general and how they affected the Reformation, see A. McGrath, The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Inc., 1987).

15 BOW, 185.

16 LW, xxxi. 12; "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," thesis 47.

17 Ibid., thesis 46.

18 LW, i. 62.
19 City of God, xix. 13.

20 Ibid., xix. 12


22 Ibid., 369.

23 Ibid., 370.

24 Ibid., 371.
APPENDIX A
### Important Dates in the Pelagian Controversy

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 405  | While in Rome Pelagius hears Augustine's prayer, "Grant what you command, and command what you will." He finds this appalling, since he believes that it makes man nothing more than a puppet.  
*Pelagius completes his *Expositiones XIII Epistularum Pauli*. |
| 409  | Alaric besieges Rome.  
*Pelagius and Caelestius leave Rome for Sicily and then to North Africa.* |
| 410  | Alaric sacks Rome; refugees flee to Africa.  
*Pelagius attempts to see Augustine at Hippo, but the bishop is in Carthage dealing with the Donatists.  
*Pelagius leaves for Palestine (or 411).  
*Caelestius stays in Carthage and preaches.* |
| 411  | Caelestius called before council in Carthage to account for his teaching; he is excommunicated by the council.  
*Marcellinus writes Augustine about the Pelagian view present in Carthage.  
Augustine writes *De peccatorum meritis et remissione*. |
| 412  | Caelestius leaves for the east.  
*Augustine writes *De spiritu et littera*.  
*Augustine gives three sermons against the new heresy (412-413).* |
| 414  | *Pelagius writes *Epistola ad Demetriadem* and *De natura*.  
*Augustine writes *De natura et gratia* in response to a request by Timasius and James for a point by point reply to Pelagius' work.* |
| 415  | Synod of Jerusalem where Orosius charges Pelagius with heresy; Pelagius was acquitted of the charges brought against him.  
*Synod of Diospolis where again Pelagius is charged with heresy and acquitted.  
*Augustine writes *De perfectione iustitiae hominis* in response to a letter by Eutropius and Paul which contained a document, probably written by Caelestius, that attempted to reduce the orthodox position to an absurdity by a series of sixteen dilemmas.* |
| 416  | Orosius returns to Africa with news of his failure in Palestine.  
*During the summer African bishops meet in Carthage and Meliv and condemn the teachings of Pelagius and Caelestius; they both send reports to Pope Innocent.  
*Augustine prepare scriptural evidence for reports and his reply to *De natura* are sent to Innocent.* |
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<th>417</th>
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| • In January Innocent excommunicates Pelagius and Caelestius.  
• March Innocent dies and Zosimus elected pope.  
• September first of two letters by Zosimus that rebukes the Africans for their hasty condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius |

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<th>418</th>
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| • Violence breaks out in Rome which according to Prosper's *Chronicle* is between Pelagians and their enemies (*P.L.* 51, 592).  
• March Zosimus sends second letter to Africans where he states no further action will be taken against Caelestius until the case against him is proven.  
• April the imperil rescript is issued that condemned Pelagius and Caelestius for heresy and disturbing the peace.  
• In the early summer Zosimus *Tractoria* issued which up holds Innocent's condemnation and excommunication of Pelagius and Caelestius. |
APPENDIX B
Important Dates in the life of Martin Luther and the debate over the *servum arbitrio* *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1507</td>
<td>Pope Julius offers indulgences for the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica.</td>
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</table>
| 1513 | Leo X elected pope (d.1521).  
|      | Luther begins his lectures on the Psalms (completed 1515). |
| 1515/16 | Luther lectures on the book of Romans at Wittenberg |
| 1517 | The Dominican Johann Tetzel begins selling indulgences at Brandenburg and Magdeburg.  
|      | October 31: Luther posts his Ninety-five Theses.  
|      | Rome views Luther's Theses as a direct attack on papal authority. |
| 1518 | Silvester Prierias writes *Dialogue Concerning the Authority of the Popes*.  
|      | April: the Heidelberg disputation.  
|      | October 12-14: Cardinal Cajetan questions Luther at the Diet of Augsburg; Luther refuses to recant. |
| 1519 | Charles the V elected Holy Roman Emperor (crowned 23 October 1520).  
|      | June 27- July 16: Debate with Luther and Carlstadt against Eck.  
|      | Luther's theology condemned at the Universities of Cologne and Louvain. |
| 1520 | June 15: Papal bull, *Exsurge Domine*, threatens Luther with excommunication.  
|      | August: Luther writes *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*.  
|      | October 6: Luther writes *The Babylonian Captivity*.  
|      | October 10: Luther receives papal bull.  
|      | November: Luther writes *Freedom of a Christian*.  
|      | December 10: Luther burns the bull *Exsurge Domine* along with a copy of the canon law. |
| 1521 | January 3: Luther excommunicated.  
|      | January 27: Diet of Worms begins.  
|      | April 17/18: Luther questioned before the Diet and refuses to recant.  
|      | May 26: Imperial ban imposed on Luther and his followers. |
| 1522 | Hadrian VI elected pope (d. 1523).  
|      | Luther writes *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It should Be Obeyed*. |

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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1524</td>
<td>• Clement VII elected pope (d. 1534).</td>
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<td>• Erasmus writes <em>Freedom of the Will</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td>• November/December: Luther writes <em>Bondage of the Will</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1534</td>
<td>• Paul III elected pope (d. 1549).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1535</td>
<td>• Luther lectures on Genesis (completed in 1545).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1536</td>
<td>• January: Disputation concerning man and disputation concerning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>justification.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1546</td>
<td>• February 14: Luther dies at Eisleben.</td>
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