The Doctrine of the Cross:
A Conversation between St. Augustine and John Calvin

by

Robert James Heffernan

Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts (Theology)

Acadia University
Spring Convocation 2011

This thesis by ROBERT JAMES HEFFERNAN was defended successfully in an oral examination on DATE OF DEFENCE.

The examining committee for the thesis was:

_____
Dr. Bruce Fawcett, Chair

_____
Fr. Dr. Jean-Marc Laporte

_____
Dr. Carol Anne Janzen

_____
Dr. William Brackney, Supervisor

_____
Dr. Craig Evans, Director of MA program, Acadia Divinity College

_____
Dr. Harry Gardner, President, Acadia Divinity College

This thesis is accepted in its present form by the Division of Research and Graduate Studies as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Theology).

.....

I, ROBERT JAMES HEFFERNAN, grant permission to the University Librarian at Acadia University to reproduce, loan or distribute copies of my thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats on a non-profit basis. I, however, retain the copyright in my thesis.

_____
Author

_____
Supervisor

_____
Date

To Melissa
My Loving Wife

Soli Deo Gloria

We enter the sphere of Christian knowledge in which we have to do with the heart of the message received by and laid upon the Christian community and therefore with the heart of the Church's dogmatics: that is to say, with the heart of its subject-matter, origin and content. It has a circumference, the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of the last things, the redemption and consummation. But the covenant fulfilled in the atonement is its centre. From this point we can and must see a circumference. But we can see it only from this point. A mistaken or deficient perception here would mean error or deficiency everywhere: the weakening or obscuring of the message, the confession and dogmatics as such. From this point either everything is clear and true and helpful, or it is not so anywhere. This involves a high responsibility in the task which now confronts us.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV.I.XIII/57

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the convergences and divergences between St. Augustine and John Calvin's doctrines of the cross. Although many suggest that Calvin was essentially Augustinian, this paper investigates that assumption. Through an examination of their respective contexts and influential belief systems, the foundational principles and key concepts of their respective doctrines of the cross are surveyed. While appreciating each theologian's theological heritage, the author interacts with Augustine and Calvin's teachings on the cross before having them interact with each other. As a result, a three-way conversation occurs about the cross of Christ that enables the author to gain insights about the cross from two of the greatest theologians in the history of Western Christianity. At the same time this dialogue reveals the uniqueness of Augustine and Calvin's own beliefs on this critical subject to the Christian faith. In conclusion, Calvin is fundamentally Augustinian; however, he goes beyond Augustine at points while also introducing the justice of God into his doctrine of the cross that Augustine did not highlight.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge several people who made the completion of this project a reality. My wife of 10 years has and continues to give sacrificial support and thoughtful encouragement to my calling in life. Along with my children, she is the main reason why I have the confidence to continue pursuing the path laid out for me and the joy to keep going. With the recent passing of my father in 2010, both my mother and brother have also continued to be a positive influence towards the completion of this project. I must also acknowledge the words of encouragement and the prayerful support of the church that I currently pastor, Billtown (NS) United Baptist Church. Their warm, open hearts to the Lord and his leading is an inspiration. Although now at a distance, the wonderful people and staff of Woodstock (NB) Baptist Church should also be mentioned because of their support as well. I was a pastor at that church when I began this degree. I also want to mention my mentor and supervisor, Dr. William Brackney. His persistent encouragement to greater levels of academic study both spiritually and professionally not only imparts confidence, but also inspires me to persevere. Finally, I must acknowledge my Lord and Saviour whom this paper is about. I honestly do not know what I would be doing with my life had Jesus not intervened and showed me the 'way', as Augustine called it. It is a love for Christ that both compels me to continue on this spiritual journey with Jesus and that also causes me to probe deeper into the mysteries of the cross that transformed my life.

INTRODUCTION

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders…the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb…And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Revelation 5:6-10[1]

As a young man coming out of high school I was introduced to the theologically complex book of Revelation in the Bible. Confused, yet intrigued, I read my way through this book and was left with one question that touched the very core of my soul, "Who is this slain lamb?" Through time, I came to know this lamb in the passages of the Bible I was reading. It was Jesus Christ. The scriptures themselves testify about him (Jn. 5:39) as the one who died so that all who believe in him might live (Jn. 3:16). I soon learned that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus not only changed the course of my life, but is essential to the faith of Christians worldwide. It was the Apostle Paul who wrote to the Corinthians that he was determined to know nothing among them "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

The cross, which represents Jesus' crucifixion, is at the heart of the Christian faith. Crosses are constructed on many churches around the world to mark them as places of worship. They are places where the slain, yet risen, lamb is worshipped. The life and work of Jesus Christ on earth roughly 2,000 years ago is represented by these crosses.[2]

---

[1] *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984).

[2] The cross was an historical event (Matt. 26:32-56) that demonstrated the saving grace of God for sinners (Rom. 5:8) while being a spiritual symbol for the life of the Christian (Lk. 9:23). "The meaning of the Christian Cross is clear and significant. It is the symbol of life eternal, redemption, and resurrection through faith." Also, "Christ proclaimed that it was God's will that all who believed and followed him must endure the cross of sorrow or misfortune patiently and uncomplainingly." George Willard Benson, *The Cross: Its History and Symbolism* (New York, NY: Hacker Art Books, 1976), 23& 188. In Jesus' time, the

Spiritually, the historical event of the cross becomes a symbol representing that place or point in one's life where Christians[3] for centuries have claimed to receive forgiveness, new life, and ultimately, salvation. What then is one to say about the cross of Jesus Christ? If the cross is such a distinguishing mark for the church as a physical symbol that represents inner spiritual renewal for the worshipper, what has the church believed about the cross of Jesus Christ? What did the work of Christ years ago at Calvary accomplish?

I want to expand my theological understanding of the cross by learning from two of the most prominent theologians in church history – St. Augustine of Hippo and John Calvin. As Christian theologians, the cross was also central to their own lives and theologies. In order to understand their respective doctrines of the cross, the question that I am asking in this thesis is, "What are the convergences and divergences between St. Augustine and John Calvin's doctrines of the cross?" However, there is more behind this question than simply to garner a more in-depth understanding and appreciation of their similarities and differences.

In popular Calvinistic circles and literature, one will typically discover Augustine and Calvin lumped together as champions of grace. Since grace is their common denominator, they are defended as theologically synchronous. Within the last century,

---

cross was an instrument of torture and execution used by the Romans. W.R.F. Browning, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Oxford University Press Inc., *Oxford Reference Online*, Oxford University Press, Acadia University, 10 February 2011, http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t94.e455. As such, the early centuries of the church marvelled at how the cross, which once represented a place of guilt for prisoners, through the death of Christ became in Christianity a symbol of honour and victory. Gerhard Podskalsky, Apostolos Karpozilos, Anthony Cutler, "Cross", *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*., ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan, Oxford University Press 1991, Acadia University, 10 February 2011, http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t174.e1284.s0001.

[3] In this paper I will use the words Christians, believers, and the faithful to refer to the same group of people. They are those who believe in the testimony of Jesus Christ found in the New Testament and attempt to follow his ways.

this is expressed in the classic work, *Augustine & Calvin* (1956), written by the late Princeton theologian of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, B. B. Warfield.[4] It is a collection of Warfield's essays assembled by The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.[5] In the foreword to the book all things common to Augustine and Calvin are discussed as though they are identical. Calvin essentially becomes a 16th century rendition of Augustine because he proclaimed the real Augustine to a fallen medieval church that fell away from its Augustinian foundation of grace. R.C. Sproul, past professor at Reformed Theological Seminary and now founder and president of Ligonier Ministries, argues, "We see that the *sola gratia* of Trent is not the *sola gratia* strenuously affirmed by Augustine and the Reformers."[6] Augustine and Calvin are presented once again as theologically harmonious with respect to grace. In fact, Barbar Pitkin, Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Stanford University, explains, "The significance of St. Augustine for John Calvin's theology has been perhaps the only virtually uncontested issue in the diverse and frequently conflicting perspectives on Calvin's theology."[7]

---

[4] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956).

[5] This publisher is dedicated to publishing books that promote teachings consistent with the *Westminster Confession* (1646) and *Catechisms* (1647). See http://www.prpbooks.com/. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this confession was the common doctrinal standard of all the Presbyterian Churches in the world of English and Scottish heritage. Explained later in the paper under my discussion on Calvinism, this confession is critical to the development of Calvinism in the English speaking world and underscores the Calvinistic perspective of the publisher.

[6] R.C. Sproul, *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 142. Here Sproul uses the word "Reformers", though he quotes Calvin for his defence in the previous paragraph.

[7] Barbara Pitkin, "Nothing But Concupiscence: Calvin's Understanding of Sin and the *Via Augustini*", *Calvin Theological Journal*, Volume 34, 1999, 347.

If grace is ultimately demonstrated by the death of Christ for the Christian (Rom. 5:8), then what does this alleged harmony between Augustine and Calvin suggest about their doctrines of the cross? Mark Ellingsen, Associate Professor of Church History at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, points out in his introduction in *The Richness of Augustine* (2005), that no one theologian has the whole Augustine.[8] This is why the Council of Trent understood itself as Augustinian when arguing that faith alone does not simply justify someone even though the Reformers quoted Augustine to declare the opposite. Who were the true Augustinians during the Reformation – Calvin or the Catholic Church?[9] Although I cannot answer this particular question in this study, it does show that due diligence is needed to ensure that the interpretations of the writings of Augustine and Calvin are done within the historical contexts of their day. Ellingsen's argument also suggests that divergences between these two theologians probably exist and that one should not paint them together with such broad strokes. It is all too common to project the view of one onto the other.

Given the nature of my thesis, I will be employing a dialogical method of presentation. The paper will take the form of a conversation or dialogue between Augustine, Calvin, and me. This involves presenting, through texts and analysis, Augustine's and Calvin's positions, which I then respond to respectively. I will begin in Chapter 1 by exploring Augustine's view of the cross. The format of that chapter will consider the following: Augustine's life and context, the influential belief systems that come out of that context, the foundational principles of his doctrine, the key concepts that

[8] Mark Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 1ff.

[9] Gordon E. Rupp, past Principal of Cambridge and Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the university, argued that Augustine was the father of both Reformations: the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic counter-Reformation. "Augustine: Father of Both Reformations", *Epworth Review*, Volume 17, No. 2, May 1990.

derive from those principles, Augustine's theological heritage, and then my analysis of his view. In Chapter 2, I will explore John Calvin's view of the cross by following the same format as Chapter 1. Then in Chapter 3, I will engage these two men with each other based on their positions previously defined by using a point/counterpoint format through primary texts that will help to identify convergences, divergences, and further areas of study. The primary texts in this study are all in the English language, not each author's original written language. This is an adopted standard for a Master's level thesis.

My presuppositions in this study are here defined. I am not defending the traditional Christian view of Jesus as the God-man who died to redeem fallen humanity; instead I am presuming that to be true. Essentially, the basic tenets of Christ laid out in the Apostles' Creed and the Definition of Chalcedon adopted in 451 C.E. are assumed to be correct. The paper, therefore, is written from a classical Christian point of view that is open to new theories depending upon their consistencies with the biblical testimony. Instead of an apologetic for the faith, or even a defence of either theologian's views, this thesis is intended to enter into each of the worlds of Augustine and Calvin as a third party in a dialogue. As such, I agree with John Webster, the current Chair of Systematic Theology at the University of Aberdeen, that any study about a theologian's doctrine of the cross should also bear in mind that theologian's biography that intersects with Jesus' work.[10] By appreciating each theologian's life and context, my pursuit is to listen to how Augustine and Calvin described, through their own theological works, this Jesus whom they also worshipped. It is intended that this endeavour will lead to a greater

[10] John Webster, "Atonement, History and Narrative", *Theologische Zeitschrift*, Volume 42, No. 2, 1986, 131.

understanding of the cross combined with a greater appreciation for the uniqueness of these two theological giants.

CHAPTER 1
St. Augustine's Doctrine of the Cross

> "How long, Lord? Wilt Thou be angry for ever? Oh, remember not against us former iniquities;" for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries, - "How long, how long? Tomorrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness? I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of heart, when, lo, I heard the voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighbouring house, chanting, and oft repeating, "Take up and read; take up and read." Immediately my countenance was changed, and I began most earnestly to consider whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing such words; nor could I remember never to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book, and to read the first chapter I should light upon…I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell, - "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended, - by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart, - all the gloom of doubt vanished away.[11]

In a revealing passage in his *Confessions* (397), Augustine opened his heart to God and the reader. Here Augustine described what has been called one of "the most important days in church history" – his conversion to Christ.[12] Aurelius Augustinus, the church Father of church Fathers, a thinker beyond his own time who greatly influenced the theology and philosophy of medieval Schoolmen, had experienced in real time and history the grace of the Lord Jesus. It is grace that flowed from the cross of Christ, entered his heart, and transformed him into one of the greatest theologians in the history of Western Christianity. This chapter will pursue the question, "What was Augustine's doctrine of

[11] St. Augustine, "The Confessions of St. Augustine", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 1, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 127-128 (VIII.xii.28-29).

[12] John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 51.

the cross?" In order to answer this inquiry, I will follow the outline described in the introduction by beginning with Augustine's life and context.

Life & Context

Augustine was born on November 13, 354, in the village of Thagaste in Roman North Africa (modern Eastern Algeria at Souk-Ahras). Former professor at Oxford and Cambridge, Henry Chadwick, wrote about the culture of Augustine's upbringing:

> On the farms the peasants were Berber and Phoenician, speaking Punic. At seaports like Carthage and Hippo many of the traders were Greek-speaking with close links to Sicily and southern Italy, at the age (and long afterwards) a largely Greek-speaking region. But Latin was the language of the educated, the army, and the administration. The culture of Augustine's home and school was wholly Latin, though his mother bore a Berber name.[13]

Augustine grew up in an educated Latin culture. He was born to a Christian mother named Monica.[14] His father, Patricius, was a pagan who was baptized before he died when Augustine was a teenager.[15] Monica was very protective of her son and was the voice of God in Augustine's early life, while Patricius is only passed over coldly by Augustine.[16] Augustine did have a brother and a sister, although whether he was the eldest, middle, or youngest is unknown.[17]

---

[13] Henry Chadwick, *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1986), 7.

[14] Garry Wills, *Saint Augustine* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1999), 2. As indicated, Monica had a Berber name. The significance of this name is that it is Donatist and implies that she was raised in the atmosphere of that sect. Donatism will become a very significant issue for Augustine as Bishop later in his life.

[15] Philip Schaff (ed.), "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 127-128.

[16] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 17-19.

[17] Chadwick, 7-8.

Educationally, Augustine looked back on his school days as a miserable experience. He was a highly sensitive and bookish boy who felt he had "largely educated himself by his reading in great authors."[18] Despite the difficulties as a schoolboy in Thagaste, Augustine was also schooled in Madaura for a period and then went on to Carthage to study rhetoric.[19] It was in Carthage where he took a concubine at seventeen years of age who would be with him for fourteen years.[20] They had a son named Adeodatus in 372. It was also in Carthage where Augustine read Cicero's *Hortensius* (45-44 B.C.E.) at nineteen years of age.[21] Of this work Augustine wrote that "this book, in truth, changed my affections, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord."[22] Influenced by Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.), Augustine began to study the scriptures. However, they appeared as unworthy to him so he turned to the spiritual and intellectual comfort of Manichaeism.[23] According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2003), Augustine's conversion to Manichaeism was largely the result "of a strong anti-intellectualism on the part of the African Church, which seems to have demanded a blind faith that Augustine looked upon as a yoke and a terror."[24]

---

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Williston Walker, *A History of The Christian Church*, 3rd Edition (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 160.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] St. Augustine, "The Confessions of St. Augustine," 61 (III.iv).

[23] Walker, 161.

[24] *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Edition, Volume 1 (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2003), 852.

Augustine remained a Manichean for nine years living partly in Carthage and partly in Thagaste.[25] As a Hearer among them, Manichaeism offered Augustine the "open and undiluted truth" that he was looking for.[26] It was an extreme, illegal group with a sinister reputation that would later be persecuted savagely.[27] Through time Augustine doubted the intellectual and moral adequacy of the dualist system known as Manichaeism. Augustine's associates urged him to meet the highly respected Manichean leader, Faustus.[28] Faustus' expositions were unsatisfactory for Augustine; Augustine was now completely disillusioned with the sect.[29] In 384, Augustine obtained from the prefect, Symmachus, a government appointment as teacher of rhetoric in Milan.[30]

It was in Milan where Augustine met the Christian intellectual, Ambrose the Bishop (340-397).[31] Neil McLynn, University Lecturer and Fellow in Later Roman History at Corpus Christi College Oxford, writes that:

> Ambrose was an oracle, expected not to participate in arguments but to finish them. It is on this level, too, that we can best appreciate the effect of his preaching and the peculiarly austere charm that delighted Augustine – and compelled his reluctant attention – when he first came to listen.[32]

[25] Walker, 161.

[26] Brown, 34.

[27] Ibid., 35.

[28] Walker, 161.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Chadwick, 16.

[32] Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 243.

Augustine developed a profound respect for Ambrose and his preaching. Monica also deeply respected this pastor who often cited ideas from Plotinus.[33] It is with Plotinus (204/5-270) and Porphyry (234-305) that Neo-Platonism emerges as the great final rethinking and development of Hellenistic Platonism.[34] Not only through Ambrose, but also through an older man named Simplicianus, Augustine came into contact with Neo-Platonism.[35] Instead of the materialism and dualism of Manichaeism, Augustine saw in the spiritual world the only real world where God is the source of all good and reality.[36] A crisis in Augustine's life had escalated. In July 386, in the Milan garden, Augustine was drawn to Christ and essentially resolved to abandon his secular career and his relationship with his concubine.[37] Some have suggested that it was a conversion to monasticism.[38] Augustine retired with his friends to the estate named "Cassisiacum".[39]

Augustine was baptized at Easter season of 387 along with his son, Adeodatus, and his best friend, Alypius, by Ambrose the Bishop.[40] Augustine left Milan for his birthplace. On the way, his mother died in Ostia so he lived in Rome for some months

---

[33] Chadwick, 16-17.

[34] A. Hilary Armstrong, "Dualism, Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian," *Studies in Neo-Platonism: Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism*, Volume 6, ed. Richard Wallis (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 39.

[35] Chadwick, 17. It was through Simplicianus that Augustine was drawn into a group of laymen of high education who met to read Plotinus and Porphyry.

[36] Walker, 161.

[37] Brown, 102-107. Augustine had left the mother of Adeodatus while at Carthage and was with a new woman whom he now left as well.

[38] Walker, 162. Just prior to his conversion, Augustine was influenced by a gentleman named Plotitianus, who told Augustine and his best friend Alypius of the monastic life.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

until finally reaching Thagaste in autumn of 388 where his son died shortly thereafter.[41] Augustine wanted to form a monastery so he went to Hippo Regius (modern Annaba) in 391 at thirty-seven years of age.

In Hippo, Augustine was a newcomer in an ancient town. Peter Brown, Rollins Professor of History at Princeton University, describes the location as follows:

> It was the second port of Africa. To a traveller by sea from Carthage, a long row of cliffs would suddenly give way for some miles to the rich, flat plain of the river Seybouse. Hippo Regius would have stood out at the far end of this plain, covering two little hillrocks, a natural harbour formed by the mouth of the river, and backed, on the West, by a high mountainous headland, the Djebel Edough.[42]

Augustine arrived in the port of Hippo and shortly thereafter was ordained to the priesthood. Four years later he was ordained Bishop of Hippo Regius and then eventually had full episcopal charge when Valerius died, Augustine's aged associate.[43] Here Augustine wrote historic works while administering his diocese and a monastery for the remaining thirty-four years of his life.[44]

Augustine's congregation consisted of farmers who lived off of the bounty of the land as they carefully maintained their crops, particularly corn and vineyards, while using the sea to trade their goods.[45] Due to the isolation of his post, Augustine had to "resign himself increasingly to a purely African circle of episcopal colleagues."[46] Yet, Augustine

---

[41] Ibid.

[42] Brown, 183.

[43] Walker, 162.

[44] Wills, 65-68.

[45] Brown, 185-186.

[46] Ibid., 197. Brown's work is part of a growing interest in North African Christian life and thought. A North African theological school, of which Augustine was a major part, can be identified. See especially W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 651-697, and Elizabeth

became a very well-known and influential bishop. This suggests that Augustine was not an academic theologian *per se*, but a pastor and bishop who carried out much of his important work in the context of his duties.[47] Augustine eventually started a monastery in Hippo. He also entered into necessary controversies for the sake of the church.

One controversy was over grace and free will that developed about 400 where Augustine opposed the teachings of Pelagius. Another major controversy was with the schismatic Donatists.[48] As such, during Augustine's time there, he wrote such great historic works as *The Confessions* (397) and *The City of God* (413-426). Moreover, he authored various treatises collected under the following titles: *The Anti-Manichean Writings* (388-404), *The Anti-Donatist Writings* (393-420), and *The Anti-Pelagian Writings* (412-429). One should also remember Augustine's homilies. Augustine left behind a legacy that extended well beyond his day as the world he knew had changed dramatically with the capture of Rome in 410 by the Visigoth leader Alaric.[49] Augustine eventually died on August 28, 430, while Vandals were besieging Hippo.[50] The world Augustine knew would change significantly after his death, though his written words would carry on with great influence.

Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 20-40.

[47] Stanley P. Rozenberg, "Interpreting Atonement in Augustine's Preaching", *The Glory of the Atonement*, eds. Charles E. Hill & Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 228.

[48] Alan Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages* (Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 633.

[49] Wills, 99.

[50] Schaff, 3.

This very brief and selective sketch of Augustine's life and context helps us to enter his world. In it one can begin to see and take note of particular belief systems that influenced him.

Influential Belief Systems

In sum, the main influential strands of thought that impacted Augustine were Donatism, Cicero and Manichaeism, Neo-Platonism, Christianity and Ambrose, and Pelagianism. Each of these will be explored to appreciate their impact on Augustine's life and doctrines. To begin, the late W.H.C. Frend, past Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Glasgow University, argued that with the spread of Christianity from Constantine to Chalcedon, one enters with Augustine into the "North African Dimension."[51] This dimension is where the Catholic Church was pushed underground until its eventual recovery and triumph in the first part of the sixth century.[52] It was also in this dimension that Augustine was born and where Donatism had "gained practically all [of] Africa."[53]

Donatism

Timothy Barnes, Honorary Fellow at the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity, suggests that the earliest years of Donatism will never be more than imperfectly known.[54] Despite certain ambiguities that exist with respect to its early development that spawned its growth, it eventually became a mass movement that centered in North Africa. The movement originated with Donatus in the mid-fourth century and formed from a

[51] Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 651; 814-815.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., 653.

[54] Timothy D. Barnes, "Beginnings of Donatism," *Journal of Theological Studies*, Volume 26, Number 1, April, 1975, 13.

coalition of Carthaginian dissenters who were angry at the promotion of a tactless archdeacon who became primate of African Christianity.[55] The alliance eventually cemented and found in Donatus a leader of conviction. In fact, Frend argued in his classic work, *The Donatist Church* (1952), that Donatism was not merely a theological controversy, but a cultural and economic movement where indigenous North African culture attempted to assert itself against the Latin culture of the urban elite.[56]

Regardless of the complex social dimensions of the movement, their theological beliefs were rather simple. God is one and so the church is one that is made up of members who are passionate for integrity, purity, and suffering that ultimately results in a martyr's death.[57] There was no salvation outside of this body of elect.[58] The Donatists held they were the true church. Despite their spiritual arrogance, Augustine maintained a sense of balance in appreciating what they believed. He penned:

> And so the Donatists in some matters are with us; in some matters have gone out from us. Accordingly, those things wherein they agree with us we do not forbid them to do; but in those things in which they differ from us, we earnestly encourage them to come and receive them from us, or return and recover them, as the case may be; and with whatever means we can, we lovingly busy ourselves, that they, freed from faults and corrected, may choose this course. We do not therefore say to them, "Abstain from giving baptism," but "Abstain from giving it in schism."[59]

---

[55] Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 654.

[56] W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in North Africa* (Oxford, UK: Claredon Press, 1952).

[57] Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, 654.

[58] Ibid.

[59] St. Augustine, "On Baptism, Against the Donatists", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 412 (I.ii).

One of the issues Augustine confronted was whether ordinations conferred by unworthy bishops were valid.[60] Essentially, Augustine responded by arguing that the validity of any rite in the church does not depend upon the moral virtue of the one who administers it.[61] God's grace in one's life is still received in the sacrament even if sin is present in the priest.[62] As such, the Catholics need not be re-baptized by the Donatists, as was their practice. Despite what one might conclude upon learning about this movement, judging the Donatists prematurely is not wise. Barnes points out that certain documents, of which Frend also made mention, have not been cited in studies on Donatism.[63] With these incorporated, Barnes concludes that the Donatists may not have been the hypocrites that some have judged them to be.[64] The balanced approach that Augustine took displays wisdom for one to follow.

Cicero & Manichaeism

As mentioned, Augustine read Cicero's *Hortensius* (45-44 B.C.E.). Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.) was a philosopher whose ideal was that "personal self-sufficiency and an awareness that happiness, which everyone seeks, is not found in a self-indulgent life of

[60] Walker, 166.

[61] Ben Quash, Professor of Christianity and the Arts at King's College in London, argues that the result of the church defeating Donatism was that "the grace of God in the sacraments does not depend for its efficacy on the personal sanctity of the individual minister, but on whether in the sacramental actions he does…what God commands to be done." "Donatism: Do Christian ministers need to be faultless for their ministrations to be effective", *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe*, ed. Ben Quash & Michael Ward (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 89.

[62] Augustine's doctrines of grace and predestination resulted in the sacraments becoming signs of spiritual realities, rather than those realities themselves. Walker, 166.

[63] Barnes, 13.

[64] Ibid., 22.

pleasure, which merely destroys both self-respect and true friendships."[65] This spoke volumes to the sexually-driven Augustine and put him on a quest for truth that led him to Manichaeism. However, Cicero's *Hortensius* (45-44 B.C.E.) never left Augustine's intellectual development; it planted a seed. Augustine was indebted to Cicero for showing him that Plato had placed the supreme good, the causes of things, and the certainty of reason, not in human, but in divine wisdom and immutable truth.[66] Truth is what Augustine was seeking from Manichaeism.

Manichaeism was founded by Mani (215/216-276/277), a Persian name,[67] in the third century.[68] The religion dealt primarily with the question of the origin of evil.[69] To Mani, evil resulted from a "primeval and still continuing cosmic conflict between Light and Dark" where neither side can vanquish the other and the damages inflicted by the powers of Dark on the realm of Light cause little pieces of God to be scattered throughout

[65] Chadwick, 11.

[66] John Hammond Taylor, "St. Augustine and the *Hortensius* of Cicero", *Studies in Philology*, Volume LX, No. 3 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, July, 1963), 496.

[67] Jürgen Tubach & Mohsen Zakeri, "Mani's Name", *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West: Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht Symposium of the International Association of Manichean Studies*, eds. Johannes Van Oort, Otto Wermelinger, & Gregor Wurst (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2001), 275.

[68] Geographically, Manichaeism in Africa was located in Thagaste (modern Souk Ahras), Milevis (Mila), and Hippo Regius (Annaba) – all in Numidia (present-day eastern Algeria) as well as in one location in Africa Proconsularis (Carthage) and two in Mauretania Caeseriensis (Tipasa and Malliana). These locations represent the full geographical extent of Manichean phenomenon in Roman Africa. J. Kevin Coyle, "Characteristics of Manichaeism in Roman North Africa", *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism, Organized by the International Association of Manichean Studies* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 113.

[69] Chadwick, 13. Augustine's response to the Manichean solution to evil as a privation of the good rooted in the human will would become standard throughout the Middle Ages. Eventually refined by Thomas Aquinas, it still remains that fountainhead of Augustinian and Catholic theology. Samuel N.C. Lieu, "Manichaeism", *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey & David G. Hunter (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 233.

the world in all living things.[70] Mani's teachings are often understood as the last manifestation of Gnosticism.[71] Through time Augustine found lacunae both in their religious beliefs and in their attempts for virtuous living. He eventually wrote his *Anti-Manichean Writings* (388-404) with the intention of wanting the Manicheans cured. Augustine explained:

> But as the Manicheans have two tricks for catching the unwary, so as to make them take them as teachers, - one, that of finding fault with the Scriptures, which they either misunderstand or wish to be misunderstood, the other, that of making a show of chastity and of notable abstinence, - this book shall contain our doctrine of life and morals according to Catholic teaching, and will perhaps make it appear how easy it is to pretend to virtue, and how difficult to possess virtue…for I wish them, if possible, to be cured rather than conquered.[72]

Manichaeism was not the body of truth Augustine was looking for,[73] and so as he continued on his journey, Augustine embraced Neo-Platonism.

Neo-Platonism

Augustine became a Neo-Platonist in Milan. Plato was *the* leading philosopher in antiquity and his dicta were constantly "in the air."[74] Augustine knew Plato exclusively through secondary sources such as Plotinus and Porphyry and was influenced by various

---

[70] Ibid.

[71] Lieu, 225.

[72] St. Augustine, "Of the Morals of the Catholic Church", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 4, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 41-42 (I.ii).

[73] Jason BeDuhn, Professor of Religious Studies at Northern Arizona University, argues that "The Manichean religion fails to motivate him to reach his ascetic aspirations; only by embracing the Catholic faith does he find the inner strength of commitment to forego wife and wealth and fame. Therefore, by Faustus's own measure of truth, Catholicism rather than Manichaeism proves itself. If the Catholic faith produces moral adherents, then its doctrines must be true." "A Religion of Deeds: Scepticism in the Doctrinally Liberal Manichaeism of Faustus and Augustine," *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism, Organized by the International Association of Manichean Studies* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 25.

[74] Fitzgerald, 651.

Platonic teachings: God as Creator, the world with a beginning but no end, an eternal and unchangeable world of Forms, the immortal and spiritual human soul, and so on.[75] More specifically, Porphyry taught that happiness consisted in wisdom and therefore the need to know oneself.[76] A human's end was attained through the contemplation of Being.[77] This language is echoed in Augustine's *Confessions* (397). Basically, "Platonism liberated him from the Manichee notion of God as subtle luminous matter."[78] It brought Augustine to a place of encounter with a real Being while Neo-Platonic exhortations pushed him to leave the carnal life aside. Augustine saw the ultimate example of this abandonment of worldly ways in Christ and wrote:

> But I thought differently, thinking only of my Lord Christ as of a man of excellent wisdom, to whom no man could be equalled; especially for that, being wonderfully born of a virgin, He seemed, through divine care for us to have attained so great authority of leadership, - for an example of condemning temporal things for the obtaining of immortality. But what mystery there was in, "The Word was made flesh," I could not even imagine.[79]

The incarnation is critical in appreciating Augustine's doctrine of the cross. This Being, this immortal and eternal Being, took on a body and showed humanity the life it was meant to live. Augustine eventually found his home in Christ and the truth he was looking for.[80]

---

[75] Ibid.

[76] Chadwick, 21.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid, 23.

[79] St. Augustine, "The Confessions of St. Augustine", 112-113 (VII.xix.25).

[80] Augustine was a Christian Neo-Platonist. Robert Crouse, past Professor of Classics at the University of King's College, articulated a balanced view of Augustine's Neo-Platonism. "Augustine was a Platonist, giving Platonism a creative Christian interpretation. He led it beyond Plotinus and Porphyry in a direction of development in some ways parallel to its development in the history of pagan Platonism…in some ways

Christianity & Ambrose

At Milan, Augustine met a Christian intellectual whose ability was not far from his own – Ambrose, the Bishop. Ambrose was a man of high education who, knowing his way about the corridors of power at the court, received Augustine kindly.[81] As indicated earlier, Ambrose was held in deep respect by Augustine's mother, Monica, and is the one who baptized Augustine. Ambrose drew ideas and inspiration in his sermons from people such as Basil of Caesarea, Philo, and Plotinus.[82] There is no question that Augustine's understanding of Christianity would be influenced by a spiritual elder such as Ambrose.[83] However, Garry Wills, Emeritus Professor of History at Northwestern University, argues that Augustine was not impressed by Ambrose's oratory skills, never corresponded with Ambrose after leaving Milan, and never dedicated a work to Ambrose.[84] It was Augustine's powerful conversion combined with Ambrose's Neo-Platonic teachings that influenced Augustine's Christianity in particular directions. As Chadwick explained, three main points should be appreciated: first, God, the supreme Being who created and ordered all things, is the One whom humans are to worship; second, human nature, post-

---

decisively different by virtue of the illumination of Christian doctrine." "Paucius Mutatis Verbis: St. Augustine's Platonism," *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. Gerald Bonner (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 43.

[81] Chadwick, 16.

[82] Ibid., 17.

[83] J. Patout Burns, Edward A. Malloy Professor of Catholic Studies at Vanderbilt University, suggests that, "…we may recognize Ambrose's preaching and the preaching Ambrose as major influences on Augustine. The preaching seems to have moved Augustine principally by convincing him that the Scripture and the church's way of life provided access to the wisdom which he had desired since he read Cicero's *Hortensius* at age nineteen. The preacher himself, by the example of his own Christianity, was perhaps more important than what he actually said." "Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: the Shaping of Faith," *Augustine – Second Founder of the Faith*, ed. Joseph Schnaubelt (New York, NY: P. Lang Publishing Company, 1990), 378.

[84] Wills, 42.

Fall, fails to correspond to the Creator's intentions; third, this supreme Being has acted in time and history through Jesus Christ to bring fallen humanity to a right relationship with God while abolishing pride and forgiving all the sins of the faithful.[85] Essentially, Augustine will take these first principles from 387 onward to help bring him to certain theological conclusions later.[86] Coming to Christ was a long internal and intellectual journey for Augustine and one that he articulated and defended as a complete act of God's grace intervening in his life and others.

Pelagianism

According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2003), Pelagius was probably born in Britain in 354 and arrived in Rome in 380.[87] However, very little is known about his life. Theologically, Pelagius was concerned mainly with Christian practice, free choice, and human nature. They all converge in the assertion that "Adam's sin did not affect the natural abilities of later human beings, whose similarities to Adam are therefore voluntary, not congenital."[88] Around 400 there was a controversy in Rome. This controversy concerned death, sin, and the purpose of baptism. In this dispute, Augustine articulated a new doctrine on the universality of sin, the bondage of the will, and

[85] Chadwick, 31.

[86] Ibid.

[87] *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Edition, Volume 11 (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2003), 61.

[88] Fitzgerald, 633. One reads of this concept in Pelagius' own commentary on Romans 5:12 when he said, "*By example or by pattern*. Just as through Adam sin came at a time when it did not yet exist, so in the same way through Christ righteousness was recovered at a time when it survived in almost no one." Italics are mine and emphasize that Adam's offspring sins by example, not by nature. Theodore Pelagius, *Pelagius' Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translated with Introductory Notes* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 92.

predestination.[89] Pelagius reacted to Augustine and created the beginning of what is known as the Pelagian controversy in 412.

Both Pelagius and Augustine affirmed human freedom and divine grace; at issue was the meaning of the terms.[90] Essentially, "the key conceptual task of Augustine's polemics was to say what grace is and why it is something more than the kind of divine help Pelagius was willing to affirm."[91] Through the debate Augustine eventually articulated that it is an inner grace that does not give us "mere abilities, but actualities."[92] Augustine elaborated as follows:

> Now as touching this kind of teaching, the Lord also says: "Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"…But everyone who has learned of the Father not only has the possibility of coming, but *comes*; and in this result are already included the *motion* of the capacity, the *affection* of the will, and the *effect* of the action.[93]

Augustine understood salvation as a complete act of God's grace. After all, because of Adam's sin, humanity cannot help but sin without God's grace entering our lives. This understanding aids in comprehending Christ's work on the cross as a place of sovereign grace and victory over the curse of the Fall. Christ is the Redeemer who *will* redeem.

Donatism, Manichaeism, Neo-Platonism, Ambrose and Christianity, and Pelagianism were five main strands of thought that influenced Augustine's life and

---

[89] Fitzgerald, 634.

[90] Ibid., 635.

[91] Phillip Cary, *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 70.

[92] Ibid., 96.

[93] St. Augustine, "On the Grace of Christ", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 5, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 223 (I.xv).

doctrines. With these belief systems in view, I will now proceed to explain the foundational principles of Augustine's doctrine of the cross.

Foundational Principles of Doctrine

Four foundational principles need to be appreciated to get at the heart of Augustine's understanding of the cross: the love of God, the ascent of the soul to God, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the sacrifice of Christ. I will begin with the love of God.

The Love of God

Augustine wrote of God as a God of love. God is to be loved by his creatures and they are to love each other because this affection represents God's very character. Based on the First Epistle of St. John, Augustine explained:

> For in this same epistle, a little further on, he says most plainly thus: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." And this passage declares sufficiently and plainly, that this same brotherly love itself (for that is brotherly love by which we love each other) is set forth by so great authority, not only to be from God, but also to be God.[94]

The love of God is a foundational pillar in Augustine's theology. Even Augustine's Trinitarian formula expressed in the image of man is described within the framework of love.[95] It is no surprise then that the cross is fundamentally an expression of God's grace and love.

---

[94] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 123 (VIII.viii).

[95] Ibid., 125ff. (IX).

According to Augustine's *Confessions* (397), grace impinges itself upon the world so that sinners may yet continue to turn, seek, and find it.[96] The very act of Christ descending into this world was based on "God's great mercy".[97] Jesus' life and death was an act of love that purposefully made atonement for sin so that fallen people might live.[98] As indicated in his *Enchiridion* (421), Augustine believed all of Christ's coming (birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension) as demonstrating the grace of God.[99] The Word taking on flesh was God's love displayed on the stage of human history so that reconciliation might be achieved. As such, for Augustine, salvation was fundamentally Christocentric:

> Nevertheless, that one sin, admitted into a place where such a perfect happiness reigned, was of so heinous a character, that in one man the whole human race was originally, and as one may say, radically, condemned; and it cannot be pardoned and blotted out except through the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus…[100]

The cross was where the Word who became flesh was crucified so that Adam's original sin might be conquered. Christians are delivered through God's grace all because of Christ's work as Mediator. It was an act that fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, fulfilled the direction that human history was moving toward at that time, and that ultimately fulfilled God's unalterable will.[101] All faithful people then, because of God's grace

---

[96] William Mallard, *Language and Love: Introducing Augustine's Religious Thought Through the Confessions Story* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1994), 233.

[97] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 79 (IV.xiii.xviii).

[98] St. Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 5, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 86 (VIII).

[99] St. Augustine, "The Enchiridion", 249-250, (XXXVI-XXXX).

[100] Ibid., 253 (XXXXVIII). Italics are mine.

[101] St. Augustine, "The City of God", 89, 141, & 337ff. (Book V, & XVII).

revealed in Christ, are citizens of the city of God who owe all glory to Him.[102] It is a grace that calls out to sinners to turn to God.

The Ascent of the Soul to God

Articulating Augustine's doctrine of the cross is not easily done. Retired Professor of Church History at Candler School of Theology, William Mallard, describes this difficulty:

> Augustine's Christology…has been a matter of wide, continuing conversation, especially in the twentieth century. He wrote no single, systematic treatise in this area, and scholars point out that his understanding of the person and work of Christ unfolded and shifted, especially in his early years as a baptized Christian and priest. Some have found him to have a surprising lack of emphasis on Christ, focusing more on the soul's direct apprehension of God.[103]

This observation is valid. Without a doubt, Augustine affirmed the Catholic essentials such as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene understanding of Christ; however, Augustine's Christology was not as forthright, particularly his doctrine of the cross. This subtlety was present because generally speaking, the early theologians of the church were not as concerned over the atonement as they were with the nature of Christ because of the heresies they were facing. More particular to Augustine himself, if one appreciates his philosophical context and background, who could blame him? Augustine was a teacher of rhetoric in the company of Neo-Platonic philosophers while in the midst of a life journey of inward struggle where he was trying to find freedom in the truth. His Christology, as a dialectic theologian,[104] came out of that context and in that sense I would argue is quite

[102] Ibid., 96-97, (V.xiv).

[103] Fitzgerald, 464.

[104] This point is commonly written about in the secondary literature surrounding Augustine. By dialectic, scholars are referring to a Platonic procedure that Augustine used and developed through his life as expressed in his writings. This procedure or approach involved the use of propositions and rhetorical

powerful. It is more of an integrated theological approach that focused on the Creator in a redemptive relationship with the creation from a Neo-Platonic perspective. An encounter with God and true life, which Augustine eventually found through faith in Christ, was his pursuit. The pursuit was the ascent of the soul towards the transcendent God of the universe.[105] Augustine also exhibited an underlying motive for those who read his writings. When the soul finds the One who created it, this union and this union alone is what makes one truly happy.[106]

This journey of the soul to God in Augustine's writings is evident particularly in his *Confessions* (397). Carl Vaught, former Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University, in his ground-breaking study on Augustine's *Confessions* (397), echoed this point even in the titles of his trilogy – *The Journey Toward God*, *Encounters with God*, and *Access to God*.[107] Vaught wrote:

> …my book…does not focus simply on the typically philosophical aspects of Augustine's undertaking, but draws experience, reflection, and

---

devises to explain concepts of theology or to counter fallacies as Augustine understood them. See Michele Malatesta, "Dialectic", *Augustine Through the Ages*, ed. Alan Fitzgerald (Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 269-271. More broadly speaking, some scholars view Augustine as dialectic in a modern sense whereby he is understood as holding opposing truths in tension See David J. Lawrence, "Medieval Refinements in Augustinian Theology: Scholastic Foundations for the Reformation," *Fides et Historia*, Volume 33, No. 2, June 2001, 56.

[105] Augustine's account of the ascent of the soul, a journey that returns man to his proper and original state and his own true country and Father, was something Plotinus believed as well. A. Hilary Armstrong, *The Saint Augustine Lecture 1966: St. Augustine and Christian Platonism* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1967), 5. See also Brian Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 183ff. Here Dobell reviews Augustine's use of the "graded ascent" in Augustine's writings that is also found in Platonic literature.

[106] Gerald Bonner, "The Doctrine of Sacrifice: Augustine and the Latin Patristic Tradition", *Sacrifice & Redemption* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 101. In this page, Bonner also notes that this eudemonistic element is characteristically Augustinian, although he has little concern for "transitory happiness of the present age". Augustine was a "thorough hedonist" in his desire for "eternal beatitude."

[107] Carl Vaught, *The Journey Toward God in Augustine's Confessions: Books I-IV* (New York, NY: State University of New York, 2003). *Encounters with God in Augustine's Confessions: Books VII-IX* (New York, NY: State University of New York, 2004). *Access to God in Augustine's Confessions: Books X-XII* (New York, NY: State University of New York, 2005).

> evocative discourse into an account of the relation between God and the soul that can never be frozen into a cluster of doctrines…Augustine moves from the enigma of his origins, through his resistance to education in childhood, to the turmoil of an emerging adolescent; but he also begins to enter the place where the mystery, the power, and the intelligibility of God converge. *If we choose to follow him there*, we will face the problem of God and the soul; enter the temporal, spatial, and eternal matrix that gives us access to it; and hear the language of the heart that places us at the center of Augustine's restless journey toward God.[108]

In the *Confessions* (397), one of Augustine's underlying aims was to persuade the reader to an encounter with God that he himself had experienced. Augustine did not simply want to explain Christ, but wanted to help one enter into an encounter with God. One might say that Augustine's Christology was for the reader to experience as he did.

Augustine's long and restless personal journey to God is essential to fully grasp his doctrine of the cross. As Augustine wrote in the third sentence of the *Confessions* (397), "Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."[109] The cross for Augustine was where the soul finds deliverance:

> Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This is the universal way of the soul's deliverance.[110]

The deliverance of the soul is through Christ. Augustine found rest in Christ through faith, which God the Father had "breathed into [him] through the incarnation of [His]

[108] Vaught, *The Journey Toward God in Augustine's Confessions: Books I-IV*, 18-19. Italics are mine.

[109] St. Augustine, "Confessions of St. Augustine", 45 (I.i.).

[110] St. Augustine, "The City of God", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 2, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 203 (X.xxxii).

Son."[111] The Son of God took on human flesh. This was a very significant aspect of Augustine's conversion.[112]

The Incarnation of the Son of God

Albert H. Newman, Baptist historical theologian at McMaster University and later at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, gave an accurate description of Augustine's view of God in his introductory essay as follows:

> With Augustine God is absolutely simple and immutable, incomprehensible by men in their present state of existence, exalted above all human powers of thought or expression. All things may be said of God, and yet nothing worthily; God is honoured more by reverential silence than by any human voice. He is better known by not being known; it is easier to say what He is not, than what He is. God is wanting in qualities; has no variety and multitude of properties and attributes; is absolutely simple. By no means is God to be called substance, for the word substance pertains to a certain accident; nor is it allowable to think of Him as composed of substance and of accidents. Divine qualities are therefore purely subjective. There is no discrimination in God of substance and accidents, of potency and act, of matter and form, of universal and singular, of superior and inferior. To know, to will, to do, to be, are in God equivalent and identical. Eternity itself is the substance of God, which has nothing mutable, nothing past, nothing future.[113]

For Augustine, this view of God resulted in observing the incarnation as nothing short of miraculous. Neo-Platonic thinkers would have rejected this notion. Therefore, to Augustine the incarnation became the critical point in any discussion on Christ and his work. In fact, at one point Augustine said that "the incarnation of the unchangeable Son

---

[111] Ibid.

[112] "The conversion of Augustine significantly involved the doctrine of the incarnation." William Mallard, "The Incarnation in Augustine's Conversion," *Recherches Augustiniennes*, Volume 15, January 1980, 98.

[113] Albert H. Newman, "Introductory Essay on the Manichean Heresy", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 4, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 28.

of God…[is] whereby we are saved."[114] In Augustine's mind, the immutable and eternal God who became flesh represented everything that Christ had done (His virgin birth, crucifixion, death, and resurrection) and thereby salvation. That the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14) cannot be overlooked in Augustine's atonement theology.

In one of Augustine's sermons, *On the Creed: A Sermon to the Catechumens* (395), he stated as clearly as one can find what his view of the cross was:

> Of His Cross what shall I speak, what say? This extremist kind of death He chose, that not any kind of death might make His martyrs afraid. The doctrine He shewed in His life as Man, the example of patience He demonstrated in His Cross. There, you have the work, that He was crucified; example of the work, the Cross; reward of the work, Resurrection. He shewed us in the Cross what we ought to endure, He shewed in the Resurrection what we have to hope. Just like a consummate task-master in the matches of the arena, He said Do, and bear; do the work and receive the prize; strive in the match and thou shalt be crowned. What is the work? Obedience. What the prize? Resurrection without death. Why did I add, "without death?" Because Lazarus rose, and died: Christ rose again, "dieth no more, death will no longer have dominion over Him."[115]

Augustine's perception of the cross captures several strands of thought in relation to the humanity of Christ. For the disciple, it implies humility, obedience, and work that will result in resurrection without death. In this sense, the cross becomes life-giving and the resurrection, which Augustine did not separate from the cross, becomes life-eternal. Christ Himself is at once the way of life on earth and life itself in heaven.[116]

The cross is life-giving. The incarnation that leads to Christ's work on the cross becomes the "Way" for all the fallen offspring of Adam. Augustine explained:

---

[114] St. Augustine, "The City of God", 199, (X.xxix).

[115] St. Augustine, "On the Creed: A Sermon to the Catechumens", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 372 (IX).

[116] St. Augustine, "The City of God", 174, (IX.xv).

> And that in this faith it might advance the more confidently towards the truth, the truth itself, God, God's Son, assuming humanity without destroying His divinity, established and founded this faith, that there might be a way for man to man's God through a God-man. For this is the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. For it is as man that He is the Mediator and the *Way*. Since, if the way lieth between him who goes, and the place whither he goes, there is hope of his reaching it; but if there be no way, or if he know not where it is, what boots it to know whither he should go? Now the only way that is infallibly secure against all mistakes, is when the very same person is at once God and man, God our end, man our way.[117]

The humanity of Christ establishes both the way for one to know God and thereby the way of knowing how to live in obedience as Christ did. Christ's obedient life recapitulated Adam's disobedient life so that restoration might be achieved.[118] One comes to God through Christ in faith by living like Christ did. He is the Mediator and the Way.[119] He is the "Mediator of life…For as the devil through pride led man through pride to death; so Christ through lowliness led back man through obedience to life."[120] This recapitulation of Adam's fallen way to Christ's life-giving way could only take place because of Jesus' sacrifice that ransomed sinners.[121]

---

[117] St. Augustine, "The City of God", 206, (XI.ii). Italics are mine. The word "Way" in the quotation comes from the Latin word *via*, which literally means a road, path, or journey. In this context, Jesus as the way would represent that as the Mediator, Jesus is the road to God, and thereby, the One people should follow to the Father. As Augustine said in his commentary on John 14:6, where Jesus claimed to be the Way, "He, therefore, went to Himself by Himself, and we by Him to Him; yea, likewise both He and we go thus to the Father." St. Augustine, "On the Gospel of John", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 7, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 325 (LXIX, ii).

[118] In this point one sees Irenaeus' view that the purpose of the incarnation was so that God might deliver man from the enemies of sin, death, and the devil that held him in bondage and thus accomplish the recapitulation of fallen humanity.

[119] The discovery of Christ as the only Way drove Augustine beyond Neo-Platonic thinkers. While they spoke about the nature of God, they lacked the means of access to God. For Augustine, Christ was the Way to God. John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3.

[120] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 76, (IV.x).

[121] Robert J. O'Connell, past Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University, wrote that "the view of us humans as fallen souls is either the root, or so very close to the root of Augustine's entire intellectual

The Sacrifice of Christ

In order for the soul to ascend to God, the incarnate Son had to become a sacrifice in Augustine's theology. Christ "took upon Himself man to liberate us."[122] This act of liberation achieved at the cross came at a great sacrifice. It was a sacrifice that even the greatest Christian martyr could not endure,[123] because it was a sacrifice for sin that justifies sinners:

> For it was brought to pass that the bonds of many sins in many deaths were loosed, through the one death of One which no sin had preceded. Which death, though not due, the Lord therefore rendered for us, that the death which was due might work us no hurt. For He was not stripped of the flesh by obligation of any authority, but He stripped Himself. For doubtless He who was able not to die, if He would not, did die because He would: and so He made a show of principalities and powers, openly triumphing over them in Himself. For whereas by His death the one and most real sacrifice was offered up for us, whatever fault there was, whence principalities and powers held us fast as of right to pay its penalty, He cleansed, abolished, extinguished; and by His own resurrection He also called us whom He predestined to a new life; and whom He called, them He justified; and whom He justified, them He glorified…He being Himself put to death, although innocent, by the unjust one acting against us as it were by just right, might by a most just right overcome him, and so might lead captive the captivity wrought through sin, and free us from a captivity that was just on account of sin, by blotting out the handwriting, and redeeming us who were to be justified although sinners, through His own righteous blood unrighteously poured out.[124]

---

synthesis, that virtually all the significant particularities of that synthesis slide into sharper focus, become more naturally intelligible, once we envisage them as emerging from that root vision." "Augustinism: Locating the Center", *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine, Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, & Roland J. Teske (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Company, 1993), 211. Though I would agree with the fallen state of humanity as the backdrop to Augustine's thought in its entirety, the same way it is the case in biblical revelation (Gen. 1-3), I disagree that this teaching would have been the "root" for Augustine. For Augustine, the root of his theology would have more likely been God in Christ for which Augustine longed. It is only in the light of God that one is fallen, not the other way around for Augustine.

[122] St. Augustine, "Acts or Disputation Against Fortunatus", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 4, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 115, (IX).

[123] St. Augustine, "On Faith and the Creed", 326, (V). In this reference, one finds a slight jab at the Donatists who praised those who suffer for purity of the faith. However, when one sees Christ's work on the cross one should be humbled.

[124] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 78 (IV.xvii).

In this passage Christ's sacrifice and his deliverance of captives go hand in hand. As justified people, believers have victory in Christ because they have been set free. They receive justification, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God. Guilt for Adam's original sin along with personal sin is forgiven because it was defeated at the cross. The faithful are ransomed by the sacrifice of Christ from the principalities and powers that held them captive.

Key Concepts

Branching out of these four foundational principles emerge key concepts important to Augustine's doctrine of the cross. Original sin, the use of a mousetrap analogy, and an inner resurrection are structurally integral to Augustine's thought.

Original Sin

First, as seen in his dialogues with Pelagius, Augustine coined the term "original sin." Original sin is "the sin of the first man [, Adam,] passing over originally into all of both sexes in their birth through conjugal union, and the debt of our first parents binding their whole posterity."[125] This death has resulted in physical death for all and eternal damnation for unbelievers. However, Christ came and becomes the second Adam to restore a people unto God by conquering the deceiver. Augustine taught:

> It was necessary, therefore, that this carnal concupiscence should be entirely absent, when the offspring of the Virgin was conceived; in whom the author of death was to find nothing worthy of death, and yet was to slay Him in order that he might be conquered by the death of the Author

[125] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 175 (XIII.xii.xvi). Furthermore, Augustine argued that sin is relational. It is the wilful re-direction of attention and love from God to the human self that results in alienation from God and the fracturing of human society. The soul goes the way of the earthly city and towards the things of human nature instead of towards God. See Matt Jenson, *The Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and Barth on Homo Incurvatus In Se* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2006), 7. James B. Weidenaar, "Augustine's Theory of Concupiscence in *City of God*, Book XIV," *Calvin Theological Journal*, Volume 30, No. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1995), 54.

> of life: the conqueror of the first Adam, who held fast the human race, conquered by the second Adam, and losing the Christian race, freed out of the human race from human guilt, through Him who was not in the guilt, although He was of the race; that that deceiver might be conquered by guilt.[126]

The deceiver was conquered by the second Adam, Christ. The original sin binding on all of Adam's posterity and resulting in condemnation was atoned for by Christ. Therefore, this sin infecting the human race is presented as a disease by Augustine.[127] It was Christ's work as "the true healer"[128] that restored and is restoring those held captive through Adam's original sin.

The Mousetrap Analogy

Augustine commonly used what is called the mousetrap analogy with respect to the work of Christ. As Augustine wrote:

> But the Redeemer came, and the seducer was overcome. And what did our Redeemer [do] to him who held us captive? For our ransom he held out His Cross as a *trap*; he placed in It as a *bait* His Blood. He indeed had power to shed His Blood, he did not attain to drink it. And in that he shed the Blood of Him who was no debtor, he was commanded to render up the debtors; he shed the Blood of the Innocent, he was commanded to withdraw from the guilty. He verily shed His Blood to his end, that He might wipe out our sins.[129]

As the bait, Christ's blood drew the devil in so that he might hook him in order to release those indebted to him. Christ was the ransom that covered the debts of the faithful so that they might be delivered. Though the crucifixion looked like a defeat, it was really a trap

---

[126] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 180 (XIII, xviii).

[127] St. Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter", 86 (IX).

[128] Ibid., 86 (X).

[129] St. Augustine, "Sermons on New Testament Lessons", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 6, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 499 (LXXX). Italics are mine. Elsewhere, Augustine will describe Christ as the "physician" sent to heal the sick. "On the Gospel of John", 83 (XII, vi).

that brought deliverance. Believers have been ransomed from the devil by the work of Christ who purchased, with his blood, a new life for them.

The Inner Resurrection of the Christian

For Augustine, the old person of the Christian was crucified with Christ, so that the new inner person might walk in new resurrected life and be transformed into Christ-likeness. This new life of obedience, charity, and good will takes place now on earth as the first resurrection until the eventual second resurrection of the saint to glory. Augustine explained:

> The one death therefore of our Saviour brought salvation to our double death, and His one resurrection wrought for us two resurrections; since His body in both cases, that is, both in His death and in His resurrection, was ministered to us by a kind of healing suitableness, both as a mystery of the inner man, and as a type of the outer.[130]

This new "inner resurrection" was important to Augustine.[131] Christ is both the giver and the inspirer of the moral life. Faith in Christ for Augustine is dead and cannot save a person unless it is fruitful.[132] In Augustine's writings, Christ is the "Illuminator" of true wisdom and knowledge.[133] However, it is not simply meant to be knowledge that illumines for information's sake, but knowledge that illumines for life change. The Christian is no longer under the wrath of God and is able to participate in God's divinity. As Augustine observed, "By joining therefore to us the likeness of His humanity, He took

---

[130] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 73, (IV.iii.vi).

[131] Ibid., 72, (IV.iii.vi).

[132] St. Augustine, "The Enchiridion", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 259, (LXVII).

[133] This is a chapter in Turner's book, "Christ the Illuminator", and a concept that I have found true while reading Augustine. H.E.W. Turner, *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1952), 29.

away the unlikeness of our righteousness; and by being made partaker of our morality, He made us partakers of His divinity."[134] This largely Greek emphasis of deification[135] that one will read in the Cappadocians is also a part of Augustine's theology of Christ's redeeming work. In fact, Augustine's focus on participation in the divinity was the centerpiece of his pastoral agenda as reflected in his homilies.[136] More precisely, it is the soul that needs to be refashioned by the One who originally fashioned it – Christ. Augustine used the analogy of the minting and refashioning of coinage to describe this process.[137]

The inner resurrection is meant to bring about a life of charity. In this sense, righteousness for Augustine is infused[138] and becomes a part of one's nature in order that the Christian might actually become Christ-like. This pursuit of Christ-likeness stems from the Christian's love for God "because he who loves God must…do what God has

[134] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 71, (IV.ii.iv).

[135] Leonid Ouspensky, one of the greatest Russian iconographers of the last century, wrote that the "ascension of man reverses the process of the fall and begins to deliver the universe from disorder and corruption, since the deification attained by the saint constitutes the beginning of the cosmic transfiguration to come." "The Meaning and Content of the Icon", *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Daniel B. Clendenin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), 40. However, the Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan of Pergamon, John Zizioulas, notes that the "authentic Greek patristic tradition never accepted the Platonic notion – adopted by Origen and St. Augustine among others – in which perfection belongs to the *original* state of things." *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 100. Although Augustine had a similar view to Greek thinkers both past and present with respect to deification, the Greek patristic tradition did not embrace a Platonic notion of perfection whereby one transcended to an original 'form' of humanity.

[136] Rozenberg, 237.

[137] "We are God's money: we have wandered away as coin from the treasury. The impression that was stamped upon us has been rubbed out by our wandering. He has come to refashion, for He it was that fashioned us at first; and He is Himself asking for His money, as Cæsar for his." Augustine, "On the Gospel of John", 228 (XL.ix).

[138] Augustine claimed that Christians are "made righteous", not simply declared righteous. See "The Enchiridion", 251 (XXXXI).

commanded."[139] Righteousness is not simply imputed as the Reformers insisted. Matthew Heckel, Adjunct Professor of Humanities and History at Missouri Baptist University, comments:

> …we see that Augustine's doctrine of justification is not "by faith" in the Reformation sense, but by the works of love produced by faith. Faith is not justifying in any formal way. The basis of justification is the Christian's new obedience to the law out of love for God. McGrath cites Bavaud, saying that Augustine's doctrine of justification, instead of being characterized by *sola fide*, is more properly called justification *sola caritate* (by love alone). Luther scholar David Steinmetz comments, "Augustine regards love rather than faith as the central principle of justification." For Augustine, love is both poured in and worked out in the process of justification, and faith is the link between these two aspects of justifying love that moves the process along.[140]

Love is critical to this new inner resurrection that the Christian walks in on earth. This infusion of righteousness towards a life of obedience or process of justification is kept through love. Augustine articulated:

> We ought then to love God, the Trinity…For as the praise improves and extends, so the love and affection increases in fervour. And when this is the case, mankind cannot but advance with sure and firm step to a life of perfection and bliss. This, I suppose, is all we wish to find when we speak of the chief good of man, to which all must be referred in life and conduct.[141]

This pre-Reformation understanding of faith and good works was not unusual during Augustine's lifetime. As a contemporary of Augustine, John Chrysostom (349-407) from the East, would have seen faith and good works as "necessary conditions of

[139] St. Augustine, "On the Holy Trinity", 122 (VIII.vii.x).

[140] Matthew C. Heckel, "Is R.C. Sproul Wrong about Martin Luther? An Analysis of R.C. Sproul's *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification* with Respect to Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Catholic Luther Scholarship", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Volume 47, No. 1 (March, 2004), 96-97.

[141] St. Augustine, "Of the Morals of the Catholic Church", 48, (XIV).

justification and salvation, though Christ's merits alone are the efficient cause."[142] One will look in vain for Augustinian type doctrines of predestination and irresistible grace in Chrysostom. Chrysostom commented on John 1:38 by stating that "we are taught, that God does not prevent our wills by his gifts, but that when we begin, when we provide the being willing, then He gives us many opportunities of salvation."[143] A comment such as this is far from Augustine's position; however, in the same vein, Chrysostom made clear that the need for divine grace at the beginning of every good action is necessary when he stated that, "We can do no good thing at all…except we are aided from above."[144] For Augustine, this aid from above and human desire to serve, was rooted in love.

The following prayer that Augustine would recite when concluding his sermons will also conclude this section:

> Turn we to the Lord God, the Father Almighty, and with pure hearts offer to Him, so as our meanness can, great and true thanks, with all our hearts praying His exceeding kindness, that of His good pleasure he would deign to hear our prayers, that by His power He would drive out the enemy from our deeds and thoughts, that He would increase our faith, guide our understandings, give us spiritual thoughts, and lead us to His bliss, through Jesus Christ His Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Him, in the Unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.[145]

---

[142] Philip Schaff (ed.), "Prolegomena: The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Chrysostom*, Volume 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 20.

[143] St. John Chrysostom, "Homilies on St. John", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Chrysostom*, Volume 14, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 65 (XVIII).

[144] Philip Schaff, "Prolegomena: The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom", 20.

[145] St. Augustine, "Expositions on the Psalms" ", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 8, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 683 (CL.vi).

Theological Heritage

At this stage it is helpful to pause and consider Augustine's place in the history of atonement theory. What exactly is Augustine religious heritage in general and also with specific respect to the doctrine of the cross?

It was Gustaf Aulén (1879-1978), the Bishop of Strängnäs in the Church of Sweden, who coined the term "Christus Victor" as the typical view of the New Testament and the Fathers, along with Augustine, that was then later revived by Luther. This classic view is understood as God in Christ reconciling the world to himself by triumphing over sin, death, and the devil so that man might be free.[146] For Aulén, it is opposed to the Latin view expressed by Anselm, the West, and the Middle Ages that objectifies the atonement and makes it more transactional.[147] However, though Aulén viewed Augustine as a part of the Christus Victor group,[148] medieval theology was largely Augustinian in its roots. As Ellingsen points out, it is probably more accurate to see the Fathers, medieval Schoolmen, Reformers, and Catholics as all Augustinian to some degree.[149] Furthermore, the late Robert Franks, past professor at Western College in Bristol, made a helpful observation by describing in Augustine one of the "great turning-points of doctrinal development."[150] With respect to the atonement, while Augustine clearly embraced the notion of Christus Victor common to the Fathers, he also laid significant stress on Christ's

---

[146] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor* (London, UK: S.P.C.K., 1953), 20.

[147] Ibid., 22f.

[148] It should be noted that Aulén does appreciate certain distinctions that make Augustine unique, namely, his view of Divine love. See p. 55ff.

[149] Ellingsen, 1ff.

[150] Robert S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1962), 87.

sacrifice unto God, which eventually had complete supremacy in the West.[151] According to H.E.W. Turner, past Van Mildert Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham, Augustine affords an important link between the patristic and scholastic traditions where the purpose of the incarnation becomes bound up with sin and its remedy.[152] I view Augustine as a man 'doing' theology in his day despite the fact that he was actually outside of his time and probably more medieval than anything else. As Chadwick asserts, Augustine had much more influence on medieval Schoolmen, theology, and piety than other times in history.[153]

As such, a widening breach between the Eastern and Western churches began with Augustine. It is fair to say that Augustine began to take a more transactional angle based on the sacrifice of Christ that distinguished him from the East. In the East, the Cappadocians were asserting that the Holy Spirit was God so that the concept of the Trinity as One in essence and at the same time three Persons or Hypostasis would be embraced as consistent with the Nicene formula. Although their formula would later be adopted at the Council of Constantinople (381), the diverse doctrinal positions they encountered[154] on matters of the Holy Spirit placed an emphasis on the work of Christ more with respect to the Spirit's work of transformation. The essential difference in emphasis from the Cappadocians to Augustine is that contextually the Cappadocians were

[151] Ibid., 96.

[152] Turner, 108. In this section Turner went on to describe four aspects of the redemptive work of Christ in Augustine: Sacrifice, Mediator, Saviour from Death, and Inspirer of the Moral Life.

[153] Chadwick, 3.

[154] Two specific positions they encountered were Sabellianism (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were different modes of the same God, not distinct Persons) and the Pneumatomachians (denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit).

slanted towards a focus on the Holy Spirit as the giver of new life. Meanwhile Augustine emphasised the life of Christ as a whole, including Christ's work on the cross, as that which made the transformation possible. Generally speaking, in his own personal story of conversion, Augustine emphasized the need to live a different way. As one who converted from impotent Manichaeism to Neo-Platonic Christianity, Augustine emphasized Christ as the only "Way" for that to happen. Hence, a more transactional emphasis takes place.

John M. Rist, part-time Visiting Professor at the Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum in Rome, elaborates more fully on Augustine's impact upon the Latin Middle Ages (5th to the 15th century):

> The writings of Bishop Augustine, a man predestinate, as his first biographer put it, and the most influential Christian theologian after St. Paul, mark the transition from the ancient world to the Latin Middle Ages, and set the Western theological tone for more than a thousand years. Those writings form no fully tidied theological system, for as Augustine tells us himself, his thought developed.[155]

Since Augustine did not write a tidy theological system, areas of his thought required further development in the Middle Ages. For example, Martin Luther (1483-1546) brought a clearer definition of justification while basing much of his foundational theological agenda on Augustine.[156] Similarly, one major area left in indistinct form was the atonement. It was the great scholar, Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), who defined the atonement as a satisfaction. Anselm was indebted to Augustinian theology. From such a theological influence, Anselm described the cross as a payment for the sins of the

[155] John M. Rist, "Augustine of Hippo", *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. G.R. Evans (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 3.

[156] Lawrence, 54.

world made by the Son to satisfy the Father's honour that was owed to him.[157] However, Augustine is quoted by so many different theologians from diverse orientations, that not everything in medieval theology can be subsumed under Augustinian influence.[158]

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2003) designates the term "Augustinianism" as representing "an attempt to reach an ever fuller understanding of revealed truth through supernatural graces and gifts, aided by principles of philosophical inquiry."[159] This general definition encompasses Augustinianism's development in the Middle Ages, modern period, and contemporary era. With respect to grace in the Middle Ages, the theological school of Augustinianism emphasized "the primacy of grace over free will in salutary and meritorious works."[160] Provocatively, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907) linked Augustinianism directly to John Calvin (1509-1564) despite the fact that it argued that Calvin's understanding and application of Augustine's doctrine of grace to his theology was "horribly" incorrect.[161] The newest edition, however, does not include this divisive statement. Again, most theologians were Augustinian to some degree or another during the Middle Ages, although they disagreed with each other. The *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* (2001) helpfully concludes that "Augustine's Augustinianism was

---

[157] Ibid. Anselm himself wrote: "Therefore to sin is nothing else than not to render to God his due…This is the debt which man and angel owe to God…This is the sole and complete debt of honour which we owe to God, and which God requires of us." (p. 202, I.xi). "That honour certainly belongs to the whole Trinity; and, since he is very God, the Son of God, he offered himself for his own honour, as well as for that of the Father and the Holy Spirit." (p. 282, II.xviii). St. Anselm, "Cur Deus Homo", *Saint Anselm: Basic Writings*, 2nd Edition, trans. S.N. Deane (IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962).

[158] Paul Rorem, "Augustine, the Medieval Theologians, and the Reformation", *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. G.R. Evans (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 365.

[159] *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 1, 875.

[160] Ibid, 883.

[161] Eugène Portalié,. "Teaching of St. Augustine of Hippo," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume. 2 (New York, NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), 9 November, 2010 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02091a.htm>.

nothing but Christian doctrine; he did not have in mind the formulation of some personal system."[162]

Augustine's heritage stretched well beyond his time. His heritage eventually influenced an Augustinian monk[163] named Martin Luther. Luther was the hermit whose passion and desire for truth blazed a trail and ignited a long awaited reformation in Europe that influenced a young man from France named John Calvin. It was a reformation that came out of a medieval context of penance, purgatory, and an ecclesiastical system that had lost its way according to Luther and Calvin. Would John Calvin have agreed with Augustine and on what grounds with respect to the cross? I will explore those questions later, but for now I will enter the dialogue by interacting with Augustine's view of the cross.

Analysis: Entering the Dialogue

After summarizing Augustine's view of the cross and then looking at his theological heritage, several points are noted. Augustine had a strong appreciation for the following: the Son of God becoming human, one's need to experience Christ for themselves, Christ's example for people to live by, Christ's sacrifice to deliver and redeem believers, and God's grace and sovereignty that is seen through it all. I would like to note several positive aspects of his doctrine that I would agree with and then some potential negative ones that, if anything, deserve further reflection.

---

[162] Goulven Madec, "Augustinianism", *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. André Vauchez (James Clarke & Co. Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, 2001 (e-reference edition), Distributed by Oxford University Press, Acadia University, 9 November 2010. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t179.e270>

[163] Augustine's influence deeply marked Western monasticism. Martin Luther was a member of The Order of Hermits of St Augustine. See Daniel Baloup, "Hermits of Saint Augustine, Order of", *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. André Vauchez. (James Clarke & Co. Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages (e-reference edition), 2001). Distributed by Oxford University Press, Acadia University, 9 November 2010, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t179.e1305

As an evangelical Baptist minister in the Western tradition, I must confess that I tend to understand Christ's work in too much of a transactional way. Augustine had a very balanced way of appreciating the sacrifice of Christ alongside Christ's deliverance of Christians so that they might walk in newness of life. Augustine seems to have the whole doctrine with elements of the East and the West in his writings. This is very helpful for ecumenical dialogue. It is helpful because Augustine had a mature way of holding concepts in 'tension' even though they might contradict each other while he himself grew as a theologian. This self-learning is seen in his *Retractions* (427/428) and his tensions are observed in his disciples – Reformers, Catholics, Calvinists, etc. – who all quote him even to the contradiction of each other.

Regardless of this balance, I do believe it would be more appropriate to categorize Augustine, as I indicated earlier, with a more medieval view of the cross than with the early church Fathers. Millard Erickson, Distinguished Professor of Theology at Western Seminary in Portland, explains that Augustine held to the ransom theory of the atonement in general to which all other early church Fathers would agree with except Gregory of Nazianzus and Athanasius.[164] However, there are strong components of the satisfaction theory that was articulated by Anselm that I believe can be seen in Augustine. Moreover, Hans Boersma, J.I. Packer Professor of Theology at Regent College, in his chapter on "The Anselmian Tradition" in his book *Violence, Hospitality, & the Cross* (2004), indicates that Augustine maintained the element of substitution with Christ taking our

[164] Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 812.

punishment in his doctrine of the cross.[165] If anything, the Augustinian tradition has had a tendency to minimize divine hospitality because of its judicial elements such as satisfaction and substitution.[166] If Augustine's 'tradition' is such, as expressed by Calvin and the Reformed tradition, which has many links to medieval theology in general and an Anselmian theory in particular, I am not convinced that Augustine can simply be categorized as only belonging with the early church Fathers as Erickson suggests. Although Augustine is from the first five centuries, I believe his doctrine of the cross extends beyond them as a continental shift of emphasis between East and West begins to take place in Augustine's own theology.

I also appreciated Augustine's emphasis on love and the deep desire of the Christian to serve and honour God with their humble lives. I have often found the notion of justification by faith alone, though to be true in the Reformation sense as Luther and Calvin taught it, also very dangerous if not properly understood. The Apostle Paul was not preaching cheap grace (Rom. 6:1-2), but a life of obedience lived in the Spirit whose power was to actually make one righteous. Understanding love as more of a central theme in the process of justification is very helpful. The word love makes it more relational, which I think could help lead to more effective discipleship.

Augustine's emphasis on the incarnation may be edifying as it relates to his doctrine of the cross;[167] however is not without its weaknesses. I hold that Augustine's

---

[165] Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, & the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 160-162. Also, in the Western tradition, substitution is particularly important to the Reformers' doctrine of the cross as will be seen in Chapter 2 on Calvin.

[166] Ibid., 163f.

[167] Appreciating the life and ministry of Jesus on earth before accelerating to his work on the cross is important. The Lord of glory did walk among us in order to instruct fallen humanity how to life according to God's ways.

emphasis on the Word becoming flesh has two *potential* weaknesses to it – de-historicizing the cross and divine suffering. Overall, Augustine's appreciation and emphasis on eternity combined with his Neo-Platonic perspective is widespread, especially in *The City of God* (413-426). Adam's sin is everyone's sin that Christ will redeem for those of faith. Those without faith would suffer eternal damnation. All of these concepts were based on God's eternal decrees. This logic:

> …may seem flawless, but Colin Gunton has somewhat of a point when he argues that in the Augustinian tradition "there has been both an overvaluing of abstract logical connections between ideas and an undervaluing of everything else." God's dealings with the people of Israel come to be viewed merely as an incidental historical interlude until the time that God would send his Son to deal with the problem of Adam's sin, which had merited eternal death.[168]

Gunton has a significant criticism which is noteworthy. God is eternal and has worked in created time and human history. With respect to Christ and His work, Augustine has a tendency to look at the Deity 'behind' the flesh instead of Him being 'in' the flesh. Augustine's theology places emphasis on the eternity and not the humanity of Christ, except that it teaches one how to live for eternity. Augustine is a true product of his Neo-Platonic context. However, it does make the cross sound like something that took place outside of the human realm. One of the direct theological consequences of this is a complete oversight on the notion of divine suffering. If God took on flesh, what did this do to God? What happened to God on the cross? This was the issue raised by the Patripassianists, of whom Augustine was aware.

In modern day circles, Jürgen Moltmann, Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen, has stated:

[168] Boersma, 169.

> Christian theology acquired Greek philosophy's ways of thinking in the Hellenistic world; and since that time most theologians have simultaneously maintained the passion of Christ, God's Son, and the deity's essential incapacity for suffering – even though it was at the price of having to talk paradoxically about the 'sufferings of the God who cannot suffer'. But in doing this they have simply added together Greek philosophy's 'apathy' axiom and the central statements of the gospel. The contradiction remains…unsatisfactory.[169]

This contradiction of two natures, as the Chalcedonian formula states, is not satisfactory for Moltmann. According to him, Christ suffered on the cross, not just in his humanity, but also in his Deity.[170] With this, the classical notions embraced by Augustine that God is impassible, immutable, and simple are theologically incorrect. Is this a fair criticism from Moltmann?

Daniel L. Migliore, Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, argues that:

> The creeds of Nicea (325) and Chalcedon (451) established the limits within which confession of Christ faithful to the gospel and consonant with the worship of the church should proceed…They aim to preserve the biblical witness that only God can be the agent of our salvation and that God's work of salvation is accomplished in and through a fully human life. It would be a mistake, however, to think of the affirmations of the classical Christological creeds as antithetical to the concern for contextual authenticity in Christian witness and theology…The truth claims made by Nicea and Chalcedon are not properly understood if they are thought to prohibit fresh witness to the living Christ in new contexts.[171]

I would have to agree with Migliore. Augustine was influenced by Neo-Platonism; however, this does not imply that his doctrine of God was all Hellenistic and nothing of

---

[169] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity & The Kingdom* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 22.

[170] Moltmann, however, does not agree with patripassianism, the third century doctrine from Sabellius which stipulated that because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were different modes of the same being that the Father himself suffered on the cross and died. For Moltmann, the Son suffered death while the Father suffered the loss of the Son. The suffering of the Father and the Son was distinct. Ibid., 81 & 135.

[171] Daniel L. Migliore, "Christology in Context: The Doctrinal and Contextual Tasks of Christology Today", *Interpreter*, Volume 49, No. 3 (July, 1995), 243.

the true God in Christ as revealed in scripture. Migliore suggests, and I would concur, that Nicea and Chalcedon established a framework to be applied in particular contexts and should not be disregarded as Moltmann contends. However, with respect to divine suffering and the classic doctrine of impassibility, I think Moltmann has a criticism that needs further reflection. With respect to impassibility,[172] is Augustine too Neo-Platonic? Scholars such as Moltmann and Thomas Weinandy, Tutor and Lecturer in History and Doctrine at Oxford,[173] continue to debate the issue.

Summary

This chapter raised the question, "What was St. Augustine's doctrine of the cross?" By reviewing his life and context, five strands of influential belief systems were introduced: Donatism, Cicero and Manichaeism, Neo-Platonism, Ambrose and Christianity, and Pelagianism. I then explored four foundational principles to Augustine's doctrine of the cross: the love of God, the ascent of the soul to God, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the sacrifice of Christ. From these principles three integral concepts emerged: original sin, Augustine's use of a mousetrap analogy, and the inner resurrection of the Christian. While appreciating Augustine's extensive influence and generational heritage, particularly on medieval Schoolmen, I then assessed his view. While areas of further exploration would be beneficial, Augustine's doctrine has much value and merit both in his time and my contemporary situation.

[172] There are three respects in which orthodox theology has traditionally denied God's subjection to 'passibility', namely (1) external passibility or the capacity to be acted upon from without, (2) internal passibility or the capacity for changing the emotions from within, and (3) sensational passibility or the liability to feelings of pleasure and pain caused by the action of another being. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd Edition, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997), 823.

[173] See Thomas Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2000).

We will now move ahead 1100 years and consider John Calvin's doctrine of the cross. Calvin was in a different context. Despite the gap, Christ's work becomes one of, if not the, common denominator. This leads us to the question, "What was Calvin's doctrine of the cross?" The next chapter will attempt to answer that query.

CHAPTER 2
John Calvin's Doctrine of the Cross

> And first, since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life. Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness, I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardour. I was quite surprised to find that before a year had elapsed, all who had any desire after purer doctrine were continually coming to me to learn, although I myself was as yet but a mere novice and tyro.[174]

In this unique passage, Calvin revealed something of himself to the reader. It was very unusual for Calvin to talk about his life in his writings. Calvin's amanuensis and eventual successor, Théodore de Bèze (1519-1605), wrote that Calvin "was sparing in his use of words."[175] Yet, one is given a glimpse into the heart of a man who had a "sudden conversion" from the superstitious Catholicism of his day. As the passage reveals, people who had a desire for "purer doctrine" came to learn from Calvin even though he was just a student himself. It was the purer doctrine of the French Reformed movement that drew them to Calvin. With a similar motivation, I want to learn from Calvin as well. "What did Calvin teach about the doctrine of the cross?" It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate Calvin's doctrine of the cross. It is an exploration that will attempt to avoid the influence of "Calvinists" who followed after him, without completely ignoring them, in order to appreciate Calvin's actual writings within their context. The chapter will

[174] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Joshua & Psalms 1-35*, Volume IV, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), xl-xli.

[175] Théodore de Bèze, "Life of John Calvin", *John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, Volume I: Tracts, Part I, ed. & trans. Henry Beveridge, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), xcviii.

follow the same format as the previous one by commencing with a brief sketch of John Calvin's life.

Life & Context

Jean Cauvin (English: John Calvin) was born in Noyon, France on July 10, 1509 as the second child in a family of eight.[176] Sadly, unlike Augustine, there is a near total absence of material that we have to learn about Calvin's formative period. This absence is because Calvin never divulged much of his personal life in his writings and because if any material did exist, it was probably destroyed in November 1533 when the police raided his home and destroyed his papers.[177] However, much is written in secondary literature about Calvin's French context that is critical in understanding Calvin's formation as a second generation Reformer.[178]

Williston Walker, past Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale and Dean of twentieth-century American Church Historians, wrote that France was fairly content with its religious situation as compared with Germany or Spain and that its sense of a need for betterment was undeveloped.[179] Despite this comparably relaxed attitude, a new humanist leaning was rapidly gaining way and leading to criticism of the existing state of the church.[180] This re-evaluation of ecclesiastical matters was due largely in part

[176] François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1950), 16.

[177] Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 15-16.

[178] The main first generation Reformers were: Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Oecolampadius (1482-1531), Martin Bucer (1491-1551), Ulrich Zwingli (1487-1531), and Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536). Calvin joined their cause for reform as a second generation Reformer.

[179] Williston Walker, *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 5.

[180] Ibid., 6, 8.

to the writings of Martin Luther (1483-1546) that were in circulation. In 1519, letters of the period record that six hundred of Luther's titles had reached Spain and France.[181] As such, before John Calvin was born there existed a French movement of evangelicals whose efforts coincided with the developments in Wittenberg.[182] On the other hand, because of the close alliance of the French Parliament with Rome, Luther's writings were forced underground in France.

As a child, Calvin grew up in this context. He studied in the home of the aristocrat, Charles de Hangest. From 1523, Jean studied first with Mathurin Cordier, one of the outstanding Latinists of the day, at the Collège de la Marche in Paris; he then devoted himself to the liberal arts at the Collège Montaigu.[183] Calvin's father, Gérard Cauvin,[184] was an advisor to the bishop of Noyon in Picardy[185] and led Jean to these Latin studies that would prepare him for a career in divinity.[186] Jean did not want this vocation, nor did his father want him to pursue it after Gérard's break with the cathedral chapter.[187]

---

[181] Daniel Walther, "Marguerite d'Angoulême and the French Lutherans: A Study in Pre-Calvin Reformation in France I", *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Volume 3, No. 1, January 1965, 152.

[182] Ibid., 4. Wittenberg is where Luther taught the Bible as a professor and is understood as the heart of the Lutheran movement in Germany.

[183] Alexandre Ganoczy, "John Calvin", *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, Volume 1, trans. Jeff Bach, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 234.

[184] Gérard, along with Calvin's brother, were eventually excommunicated from the Church. See David C. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7.

[185] The inhabitants of Picardy exhibited certain characteristics: eager, controversial, dogmatic, enthusiastic, and leadership. It was a place where reformatory ideas could not fail to find a response. Walker, *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism*, 21.

[186] Ozment, 352.

[187] Ganoczy, 234.

So, Calvin went on to study law and then the classics after his father's death.[188] While at Orléans studying law, Jean came under the teaching influence of Guillaume Budé (1467-1540) and Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) at the Collège Royal.[189] They taught the young scholar humanism: the importance of establishing reliable critical editions of original languages such as Greek and Latin texts, and of interpreting these texts in their respective contexts so as to derive their genuine meaning.[190] Budé was a leading French humanist who was not the stereotypical humanist outsider; rather he was very much part of the system as a supporter of the monarchy.[191] Conversely, Erasmus was a "prince of humanists" who persisted in a genuine concern for the reform of traditional religion.[192]

John Calvin became a master of humanist linguistic techniques.[193] His educational background is significant as it will help to mark him in two movements of restoration in the sixteenth century: the restoration of arts and letters by recovering classical literature and the restoration of the church by attempting to recover the genuine meaning of scripture.[194] The work that launched Calvin's academic career as a noted scholar was his *Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia* (1532). Seneca was an opportune research area

[188] Randall C. Zachman, "John Calvin", *The Reformation Theologians*, ed. Carter Lindberg (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 184. See also, Ganoczy, 235.

[189] Ganoczy, 235.

[190] Ibid. See also McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 52-54.

[191] David O. McNeill, *Guillaume Budé and Humanism in the Reign of Francis I* (Geneva, CH: Librairie Droz, 1975), 1, 129.

[192] J. Kelley Sowards, *Desiderius Erasmus* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 117.

[193] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 57.

[194] Zachman, 184.

for a young humanist because Seneca was cited by various humanist authors.[195] Moreover, this commentary edifyingly dealt with a critical Renaissance topic: the character of the sovereign king.[196]

Calvin's conversion probably took place between August 23, 1533 and May 1534.[197] It is around this time that Calvin had developed an appreciation for Luther's writings. Luther, the Augustinian monk, had a great impact on Calvin. Calvin addressed Luther as "the very excellent pastor of the Christian Church, my much respected father."[198] Despite Calvin's dislike for Luther's temperament and what Calvin considered poor exegesis of scripture at times, Calvin clearly held to Luther's understanding of the gospel. Calvin made it his life's work to restore a clear reading of scripture to the church through his catechetical teachings found in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559).[199] Establishing a coherent Protestant theology was critical. Alister McGrath, Professor of Theology, Ministry and Education, and Head of the Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture at King's College, claims that Calvin's context had four main pressures underlying it: the growth of adult literacy, the phenomenon of personal religion,

---

[195] Ford Lewis Battles, "Calvin as Literary Critic and Rhetorician", *Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles & Andre Malan Hugo (Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 1969), 73.

[196] Ibid., 74.

[197] Wendel, 39. The year 1534 was also when England's Declaration of Royal Supremacy was passed.

[198] Ibid., 185.

[199] Zachman, 185-186. The *Institutes of the Christian Religion* began as a "pocket sized" catechetical work written in Latin and dedicated to the King of France in 1536. It was expanded to seventeen chapters in 1539 again in Latin. In 1541, it was published in French. In 1543, Calvin published a third edition also translated into French with twenty-one chapters in it. Eventually, in 1559 a final edition consisting of eighty chapters in four books was completed. See Evelyn Bence, "Preface to the Hendrickson Edition", *John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), xv.

the growth of anti-clericalism, and a crisis in authority within the church.[200] Although being unordained, Calvin taught a new way forward from his eventual base in Geneva.

Calvin's first arrival in Geneva was rather haphazard. He was travelling from Paris to Strasbourg where he took a long detour because the direct route was barred by a war that subsequently brought Calvin through Geneva in July 1536.[201] Calvin may have initially intended to spend only one night in Geneva, but this would change. Following Guillaume Farel's[202] encouragement to stay in Geneva, Calvin decided to make the city his permanent home which he then did in August 1536.[203] However, Calvin's first stay in the city did not last long. Calvin stayed until he, along with other reformed ministers, were banished from Geneva in 1538.[204] Although ejected from Geneva for a time and exiled in Strasbourg,[205] Calvin did return. In the meantime Calvin married a widow from Strasbourg, Idelette de Bure.[206] When Calvin came back to Geneva he was thirty-two.[207] He came with his intellectual training and theological initiation complete as a man ready to pursue his call by those in Geneva to restore order to the church. They were so eager to

---

[200] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 4-14.

[201] Walker, *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism*, 158.

[202] Farel (1489-1565) was a local reformer living in Geneva.

[203] Walker, *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism*, 182.

[204] Calvin had only been in Geneva a couple of months before the Anabaptists were creating difficulties for him. Also, Caroli, a Roman Catholic preacher at Lausanne, claimed that Calvin's *Institutes* (1536) and Farel's *Summary* (1524) were complicit with Arianism. Due to the conflict the reformed ministers were ousted. Wendell, 53-55.

[205] In Strasbourg, Calvin was influenced by other reformers as well. Of note, were Martin Bucer and Philip Melanchthon. To Calvin, Melanchthon was "the most illustrious light and distinguished teacher of the church." Zachman, 187.

[206] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 102.

[207] Wendel, 70.

have Calvin that he received a salary double that of other pastors along with certain allowances.[208] Calvin's eventual vision as a pastor and teacher was to create a place where students and teachers could learn from scripture in Geneva. Despite long hard years of work, Calvin's crowning achievement was the creation of the Geneva Academy in 1559.

His years in Geneva had highlights and disappointments. The most shocking event to modern readers, and one particularly noted by scholars,[209] was the trial and execution of Miguel Serveto (English: Michael Servetus) as a heretic. Servetus' theology could be called a "Pantheistic Sabellianism."[210] He believed that Christ is not God by nature, but by privilege, and that everyone could receive that same divine privilege.[211] In order to send a strong message, the Genevan city council, while listening to Calvin as a technical advisor, executed Servetus.[212] On the positive side, Calvin created the Geneva Academy, the Venerable Company of Pastors, and used printing presses in Basle, Strasbourg, and Geneva to his advantage by publishing his works.[213] All in all, a set of ideas associated with one man evoked a powerful response throughout Europe. Whether

---

[208] Ibid.

[209] Though noted by scholars, McGrath makes a strong case for an event that has been exaggerated beyond its cultural context. See McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 114ff.

[210] Eric Kayayan, "The Case of Michael Servetus: The Background and the Unfolding of the Case", *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, Volume 8, No. 2, 1992, 123.

[211] Ibid., 124.

[212] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 119. This being said, Servetus was a "hunted heretic" of Rome because of his work *Errors of the Trinity* (1531) before he arrived in Geneva as an international refugee. Although a tragedy, circumstances were not in favour of Servetus. See Timothy H. Wadkins, "A Recipe for Intolerance: A Study of the Reasons Behind John Calvin's Approval of Punishment for Heresy", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Volume 26, No. 4, December 1983, 431, 440.

[213] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 126-127.

positive or negative, Calvin left a significant legacy behind him through his work in Geneva.

As Calvin aged, he persevered through ill-health. Théodore de Bèze wrote of Calvin's struggle with asthma, digestive problems that left him eating one meal a day, headaches, ulcerated haemorrhoids, and the gout.[214] Calvin persevered through these illnesses. Near the end of his life when Calvin had respite from his illnesses, he devoted himself fully to the perfecting of his work and to the recommendations intended for his disciples.[215] Calvin chose Théodore de Bèze to be his successor. On February 6, 1564, Calvin preached for the last time and died shortly thereafter on May 27.[216] Through hard work and perseverance Calvin became a pastor and teacher of this new evangelical and reformed theology, par excellence.

This very brief and selective sketch of Calvin's life and context helps one to enter his world. In it one can begin to see and take note of particular belief systems that would have influenced him.

Influential Belief Systems

Like anyone, John Calvin was a product of his time. Belief systems were present which impacted his understanding of God and the world. Overall, three main strands of thought had an impact on Calvin during his life that influenced his doctrine of the cross: late-medieval Christianity, humanism, and Luther and other reformers. Each of these influences will be analyzed in turn to assess their impact on Calvin's doctrine.

---

[214] de Bèze, "Life of John Calvin", lxxxi-lxxxiii.

[215] Wendel, 106.

[216] Ibid.

Late-Medieval Christianity

This section is comprised of three main categories: soteriology, monasticism, and authority. Much could be written on late-medieval Christianity (1300-1500); however, these broad topics expose critical truths about Calvin's doctrine of the cross. In general, the points that are made about late-medieval Christianity in relation to Calvin's doctrine of the cross had a negative effect on him. What is meant by a negative effect is that, generally speaking, his beliefs were in opposition to the commonly held beliefs of the day.[217] Calvin was reacting against them while very rarely integrating them into his ideas. Calvin was superseding, as cited in his works earlier, "the superstitious beliefs of the Papacy."

The context that Calvin was born into was a state of ecclesiastical degeneration.[218] The church, for all intents and purposes, had lost its way. Steven Ozment, McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History at Harvard University, outlines in his prize winning work, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* (1980), the general view of salvation of the late-medieval mindset:[219]

1	2	3	4
Moral Effort: doing the best one can on the basis of natural moral ability	Infusion of grace as an appropriate reward	Moral cooperation: doing the best one can with the aid of grace	Reward of eternal life as a just due

[217] In balance, it should be expressed that Calvin drew on medieval philosophical and theological ideas where "it suited him to do so." However, Calvin did this while remaining critical of what he regarded as the over-subtlety and sophistry of some scholastic discussions. Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 389.

[218] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 3.

[219] Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* (Yale, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 234.

In this four step morphology of salvation, "God meant for people to acquire grace as semi-merit within a state of nature and to earn salvation as full merit within a state of grace by doing their moral best."[220] Basically, all subtleties aside, one could initiate one's own salvation. This position argued by scholastics is what Luther assailed in his *Disputations Against Scholastic Theology* (1517).[221] As an influence on Calvin, Luther's principal ideas were echoed in Calvin's thought: the inability of fallen humanity to achieve or even initiate salvation, and therefore, making salvation a complete act of God's grace from beginning to end because of the cross. Soteriologically, late-medieval Christianity had a polarizing effect on Calvin by pushing him to the other side of the pendulum on the subject. As a case in point, Calvin sharply criticized the scholastics or "Schoolmen" as he called them regularly in his writings.[222]

As a reaction to scholasticism, critics of that period returned to patristic and monastic ideals in an effort to revive traditional religious life.[223] Whereas the scholastic program of study proceeded from question to argument, the monastic program moved from reading to meditative prayer and contemplation.[224] However, Augustine's warning

---

[220] Ibid.

[221] Ibid., 235.

[222] For example, Calvin wrote, "But to ask whether Christ merited anything for himself, as Lombard and the Schoolmen do, is no less stupid curiosity than their temerity in making such a definition." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford L. Battles. (Philadelphia, PA: John Knox Press, 1960), 534 (II.xvii.vi). All other references in this paper to Calvin's *Institutes* (1559) will refer to this edition.

[223] Ozment, 73. Monasticism was one of the most important and characteristic phenomena of medieval society. See also Adalbert de Vogüé, Thierry Pécout, Bernard Flusin, Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, & Robert E. Sinkewicz, "Monasticism", *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, ed. André Vauchez, (James Clarke & Co. Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, 2001 (e-reference edition), Oxford University Press, Acadia University, 9 November 2010, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t179.e1889-s2>

[224] Ibid., 82.

not to become idle in contemplation found in *The City of God* (413-426) was applied.[225] As a result, cloistered life within a community of like-minded believers was a calling common in this era.[226] Luther lived this calling as a celibate monk, even though he was eventually excommunicated and married with children.[227] Calvin, like Luther, was not impressed with the monastic way,[228] particularly its emphasis on perfection. In *The Institutes* of 1559 (4.3) Calvin argued that monastic life in his day had gone astray while he rejected the notion of a monastic life that leads to perfection.[229] Again, as this relates to Calvin's doctrine of the cross, it is only because of Christ's righteousness that one is perfect. Through Christ's work one attains peace with God because one is declared sinless through faith in Christ. All Christians are called to avoid sin, even though being

[225] Augustine wrote, "No man has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own ease the service due to his neighbour; nor has any man a right to be so immersed in active life as to neglect the contemplation of God. The charm of leisure must not be indolent vacancy of mind, but the investigation or discovery of truth, that thus every man may make solid attainments without grudging that others do the same." *The City of God*, p. 413 (XIX.xix.). Ozment, 82.

[226] Ozment, 83.

[227] To be specific, Luther's internal pursuit for holiness before a just God resulted in him wanting to join the cloister to seek peace with God. He eventually became a monk par excellence. However, the monastic way towards peace with God that the medieval church prescribed did not work for Luther. See Roland Bainton's classic work, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1950), 27, 34.

[228] David C. Steinmetz**,** Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of the History of Christianity at Duke Divinity School, insightfully comments on Calvin's criticism of monasticism, "Calvin's criticisms of monasticism are not primarily directed toward individual failure of monks, but against the institution and ideology of monasticism." "Calvin and the Monastic Ideal", *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Dykema (New York, NY: E.J. Brill, 1993), 605.

[229] Calvin said, "…they boast that they are in the state of perfection. When they are so closely pressed that they cannot maintain such empty arrogance, they fall back on this dodge – that they have not yet attained perfection, but that they are in such a state they aspire to it more than all other men. Meanwhile, such admiration of monasticism remains among the people that they think the monastic life alone angelic, perfect, and purged of all fault. On this pretext they engage in the most profitable commerce. But they leave that restraint of theirs buried in a few books. Who does not see that this is an intolerable mockery?" (*Ins.* 4.13.11).

sinless is impossible in this lifetime, and to devote themselves to Christ while living in this world.

Lastly, the question of authority is important. In the high Middle Ages (1000-1300), the Pope was the authority in the church and in the known world, although this was being questioned due to the rise of strong monarchies and individual nation states.[230] It was during the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216) when Innocent himself considered the papal office "not lower than God but higher than man."[231] With such a mindset prevalent, who was Calvin to question the Pope's authority, not only as head of the church, but as higher than man? Moreover, since the church had developed a sacramental tradition that included penance, purgatory, and the Eucharist based on biblical interpretations from theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, who was John Calvin to question their tradition? Calvin based his theology on scripture. In his doctrine of the cross, Calvin attempted to rest squarely upon biblical revelation as he understood it. This pursuit of a pure scriptural doctrine is seen in one of many rebukes directed towards the papacy:

> Come now, let the papists deny if they can – however much they extenuate their faults – that the condition of religion among them is as corrupt and debased as it was in the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. But they have a grosser idolatry. And in doctrine they are not one droplet purer, but actually even more impure in this! (*Ins*. 4.2.9)

[230] The most dramatic example of this wrestle between papal power and national monarchies during the age of reform is seen between King Henry VIII and the Pope. Furthermore, Ozment explains that there were three points of view on the relationship between church and state competing during the later Middle Ages: one strictly subordinated secular power to ecclesiastical power, the other reversed that order and put secular power above the church, and the third saw the church and state as parallel powers to each have autonomy in its own respective sphere. Ozment, 178.

[231] Ibid., 143.

It is this attempt to have scriptural doctrine that guided Calvin, in the humanistic fashion of his day, to go back to the sources.

Humanism

Probably the most influential humanist for Calvin was Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536).[232] Sixteenth century humanism was concerned with the study of original literary sources. Specific to the church, it was Erasmus' *Enchiridion* (1502) that developed the attractive thesis that the church should be reformed by a return to the writings of the Fathers and scripture.[233] Erasmus' influential thesis explains in part Calvin's authoritative references in his writings to the sources of scripture and the early church Fathers such as Augustine. Mark Greengrass, Emeritus Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Sheffield, makes the following observation:

> Calvin's theological system was supported by three fundamental, mutually reinforcing pediments: refined texts of the Bible, an interlocking exegetical framework in his commentaries on the books of the Bible, and the theological *summa* of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*…All three components witnessed to Calvin's command of humanist technologies of learning, exposition, and logic.[234]

Calvin's theological system demonstrates that he was a Christian humanist who followed the Erasminian view.

---

[232] Arvin Vos, "Calvin: The Theology of a Christian Humanist", *Christianity and the Classics: The Acceptance of a Heritage*, ed. Wendy E. Helleman (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 111.

[233] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 55.

[234] Mark Greengrass, "The Theology and Liturgy of Reformed Christianity", *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion (1500-1660)*, Volume 6, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 113.

Along with scripture, Calvin also cited Augustine 487 times in the *Institutes* (1559).[235] Anthony Lane, Professor of Historical Theology and Director of Research at the London School of Theology, argues that his eleven theses should be used when considering the authenticity of Calvin's citations of the church Fathers.[236] It is not enough to assert that Calvin is Augustinian because Calvin quotes Augustine extensively, since the citations are not always accurate. Furthermore, McGrath argues that Calvin had two motivations for referencing Augustine: first, it neutralized Catholic criticism that Protestantism was theologically innovationist, and second, it resolved disputations amongst early evangelicals over conflicting viewpoints by appealing to Augustine's authority, which all respected.[237]

Calvin, however, was still fundamentally Augustinian, particularly with respect to grace. It would be historically imprudent to suggest that simply because citations were not done properly or that Calvin had potentially ulterior motives for using Augustine, that Calvin himself was not Augustinian. After all, if Calvin was critical and judgmental of the Roman Church in his own day, would he really just cite Augustine uncritically as extensively as he did? I would think not. Calvin was a person of conviction who agreed with Augustine's basic convictions, particularly on matters of grace. Calvin's intention was to renew a church that had lost its way.[238] As a man born within an Augustinian

---

[235] Anthony Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 55-56.

[236] Ibid., 1-13.

[237] Alister E. McGrath, "The Shaping of Reality: Calvin and the Formation of Theological Vision", *Toronto Journal of Theology*, Volume 25, Number 2 (Toronto, ON: Toronto School of Theology, Fall 2009), 193.

[238] Vos, 115.

milieu and influenced by an Augustinian monk who viewed Augustine as the "doctor of grace",[239] Calvin wanted to reshape the ecclesiological landscape dominated by a meritorious system of grace to a worldview more reflective of scripture and Augustine himself. Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907) viewed Calvin as a part of the Augustinian heritage of grace, despite its disagreement with Calvin on his conclusions.[240] Calvin was creating a theological system using humanist literary techniques that was based on emerging Protestant beliefs found in scripture. Calvin also believed that Augustine and others of the church Fathers agreed with him. Calvin was pursuing the truth and garnering credibility by citing Augustine.

Luther & Other Reformers

The cry for reform was present years before Martin Luther. John Wycliffe (1328-1384) and John Huss (1369-1415) called for reform and paid for it with their lives. Rome silenced them and their followers by burning Huss at the stake and by exhuming the remains of Wycliff. Silencing Luther, however, would prove to be an impossible task. With strong monarchies, regional interests of nation states that conflicted with Rome, and the printing press carrying Luther's ideas throughout Europe, including France, reform was inevitable.

Often considered the fountainhead of the Reformation, Luther had one particular belief that would transform medieval society: the doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fides*). Coming out of Luther's deep need for forgiveness as he strived to be loved by God in the meritorious system of the late-medieval period, Luther discovered in his

[239] Phillip Carey, "Where to Flee for Grace: The Augustinian Context of Luther's Doctrine of the Gospel", *Lutheran Forum*, Volume 30, No. 2, May 1996, 17.

[240] Portalié, "Teaching of St. Augustine of Hippo", 9 November, 2010 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02091a.htm>.

reading of Romans that one receives God's righteousness by faith alone.[241] Consequentially, the cross for Luther became that place where Christ received the believer's punishment while the believer received Christ's righteousness.[242] This belief led to the rejection of penance, indulgences,[243] etc. and essentially the complete upheaval of a medieval social context based on merit. For Luther, the hub to which all other doctrines were linked was the conviction that Christ alone was the basis of salvation.[244]

Jaroslav Pelikan, past Sterling Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University, wrote that Calvin's *Institutes* of 1536 was a true disciple of early Reformers, especially Luther.[245] This first edition of Calvin's *Institutes* (1536) cultivated the seed of thought from which Calvin's later expanded editions grew. Although Calvin and Luther never met personally, Calvin was among Luther's greatest disciples.[246] Calvin himself wrote that the doctrine of justification by faith alone was "the main hinge on which religion turns" (*Ins.* 3.11.1). This doctrine, which was cemented in all of the Reformers to varying degrees, meant that the Reformers were all soteriologically slanted. It is natural,

---

[241] See Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: Lectures on Romans,* Volume 25, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 9. Here Luther argued that "revealed" in Rom. 1:17 removes the idea of hidden works so that righteousness comes only through faith.

[242] Luther explained in his commentary on Galatians that "if Christ is made guilty of all the sins that we have committed, then we are delivered from all sins, but not by ourselves, nor by our own works or merits, but by him." *Galatians: The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, eds. Alister McGrath & J.I. Packer (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 153.

[243] Luther posting his 95 theses against indulgences on the castle door of Wittenberg on October 31, 1517 is commonly viewed as marking the beginning of the Reformation.

[244] Scott Hendrix, "Martin Luther, Reformer", *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion (1500-1660)*, Volume 6, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 19.

[245] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of Development of Doctrine – Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*, Volume 4 (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 183.

[246] Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 166.

therefore, when exploring Calvin's doctrine of the cross or when reading someone who is exploring Calvin's doctrine, to expect to hear about the effects of the cross on the believer instead of the cross itself, the latter of which is the focus of this study.[247]

Three other Reformers had influential positions of importance in Calvin's life: Guillaume Farel (1489-1565), Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), and Martin Bucer (1491-1551).[248] Farel, whose main influence on Calvin was to draw Calvin's interest toward Geneva, also served as a sounding board about pre-communion confession in Calvin's Strasbourg congregation in a letter Calvin wrote to him in May 1540.[249] Aside from this rather moot point, very little else is written in the literature surrounding Calvin about Farel's influence on him. On the other hand, Melanchthon, Luther's close successor and professor at Wittenberg who wrote the *Augsburg Confession* (1530), was close to Calvin. Calvin thought very highly of Melanchthon. In fact, Calvin used Melanchthon's *Loci*

---

[247] Even preliminary research on Calvin's doctrine of the cross will lead one into studies on his view of the atonement and its effects. When approaching Calvin on the importance of the doctrine of the cross, a lot of the secondary literature is of this nature. For example, see Robert Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1983). See also Henri Blocher, "The Atonement in John Calvin's Theology", *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill & Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004). An excellent study of recent memory that relates more specifically to this paper is Mark Thompson, "Calvin on the Cross of Christ", *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Chung (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009). Here Thompson articulates more fully Calvin's concept of Christ as Mediator, which is central to Calvin's doctrine. The others discuss it, but with more brevity as they place substantial emphasis on the effects of the atonement.

[248] One would be remiss not to mention Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), albeit briefly. Zwingli died in the revolution in Zurich before Calvin arrived in Geneva and began leading reform before his death while being a pastor at Zurich. Although not a direct influence upon Calvin, similar lines of thought between the two have been traced. It is argued that Calvin absorbed Zwingli's disciples. See Kurt Aland, *Four Reformers: Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, & Zwingli*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 81ff. See also Fritz Busser, "Elements of Zwingli's Thought in Calvin's *Institutes*", *In Honour of John Calvin, 1509-64: Papers from the 1986 International Calvin Symposium, McGill University* (Montreal QC: McGill University, 1987). This being said, the two branches of the Swiss Reformation, Zwinglian and Calvinian, were distinct.

[249] Barbara Pitkin, "Redefining Repentance: Calvin and Melanchthon", *Calvinus Praeceptor Ecclesiae: Papers on the International Congress on Calvin Research, Princeton, August 20-24, 2002*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Geneva, CH: Librairie Droz, 2004), 277.

Communes Theologici (1521) as a resource for his second edition of the *Institutes* (1539) as a decisive point of reference for his doctrine of repentance.[250] Through their epistolary friendship, one reads of discussions on predestination, church practices, human free will, and the Lord's Supper.[251] Calvin, however, did not think fondly of Melanchthon's silence on certain issues and his reluctance to disagree with Luther publicly.[252] Overall, in terms of the Reformation, the most important factor about Melanchthon and Calvin's relationship was that it kept Calvin in connection with the new leader of the German Reformation after Luther's death.[253]

Martin Bucer (1491-1551), a Protestant Reformer based in Strasbourg, spent a lot of personal time with Calvin. Calvin called him "the most faithful teacher of the Church of God."[254] They both attached great significance to their time together in Strasbourg (1538-1541), had similar views on predestination, ecclesiology, the Lord's Supper, and were both influenced by Luther and humanism.[255] Although they differed over the doctrine of justification (Bucer viewed it as forensic-effective), Calvin followed Bucer where Calvin differed from Luther.[256]

---

[250] Ibid., 276.

[251] Timothy Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever': The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip Melanchthon", *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence Beyond Wittenberg*, ed. Karin Maag (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 22-25.

[252] James T. Hickman, "The Friendship of Melanchthon and Calvin", *The Westminster Journal*, Volume 38, No. 2, December 1976, 153, 157, & 160.

[253] Ibid., 165.

[254] Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Joshua & Psalms 1-35*, xxxv.

[255] W van't Spijker, "The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the *Institutes*", *John Calvin's Institutes: His Opus Magnum: Proceedings of the Second South African Congress for Calvin Research* (Potchefstrom, RSA: Potchefstrom University, 1986), 107-115.

[256] Ibid., 127-131.

Late-medieval Christianity, humanism, and Luther and other Reformers shaped Calvin's understanding of theology in general and doctrine of the cross in particular. While recognizing the richness of Calvin's context along with the thoughts and people who shaped him, I will now explore Calvin's own writings in an attempt to discuss and recount his doctrine of the cross as accurately as possible.

Foundational Principles of Doctrine

Calvin had a much clearer definition of the doctrine of the cross than Augustine. The specific chapters in the *Institutes* (1559) that dealt exclusively with Christ's saving work on the cross are found in Book I, Chapters XVI to XVII. Furthermore, Calvin's biblical commentaries, sermons, and letters also disclosed aspects of his doctrine. Based on Calvin's writings, I have organized his doctrine of the cross into the following foundational categories: the love of God, the justice of God, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and the two natures of Christ the Mediator.

The Love of God

For Calvin, the cross originated from God's love toward fallen humans. It expressed God's purpose of reconciliation. Calvin wrote:

> For this reason, Paul says that the love with which God embraced us "before the creation of the world" was established and grounded in Christ [Eph. 1:4-5]. These things are plain and in agreement with Scripture, and beautifully harmonize those passages in which it is said that God declared his love toward us in giving his only-begotten Son to die [John 3:16]; and, conversely, that God was our enemy before he was again made favourable to us by Christ's death [Rom. 5:10]. But to render these things more certain among those who require the testimony of the ancient church, I shall quote a passage of Augustine where the very thing is taught: "God's love," says he, "is incomprehensible and unchangeable. For it was not after we were reconciled to him through the blood of his Son that he began to love us. Rather, he has loved us before the world was created, that we also might be his sons along with his only-begotten Son – before we became anything at all (*Ins.* 2.16.4).

The very act of the Father sending the Son to die was based on God's love toward fallen sinners. It is out of God's eternal love that God removes the barrier of sin that makes one an enemy to God. The doctrine of original sin is presumed here and will be discussed later.

The love of God demonstrated at the cross originated before the world began. For Calvin, the cross was an expression of a predetermined love. God of "his own good will first loved us."[257] Therefore, based on God's love, the cross is a place of sovereign security for the believer who can trust in Christ's redeeming work that will never fail. This concept of security also underlines the power of the cross as that place which will bring about the benefits of Christ's work in the life of the believer.[258] Due to God's unalterable will to save and thereby regenerate those whom God has chosen to save in Christ, the cross is where God accomplished once and for all his intention to redeem.[259] For Calvin, the effects of Christ's redeeming work are applied in real time and history through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Breaking down the sovereign love of God from Book II in Chapter XVII of the *Institutes* (1559), two main points emerge. First, God's wrath toward believers (though He always loved them) was appeased by Christ's atoning work at the cross (including His

[257] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Acts 14-28 & Romans*, Volume XIX, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 196.

[258] In fact, all of Book III of the *Institutes* (1559) is about the work of the Holy Spirit applying the finished work of Christ articulated at the end of Book II.

[259] As is commonly understood in the secondary literature, God's redemptive purpose was accomplished at the cross. See Sung Wook Chung, "Taking up Our Cross: Calvin's Cross Theology of Sanctification", *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Chung (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 164.

obedience to the Law)[260] so that in his blood the believers' price of redemption was paid for and God can now extend the full measure of his love toward them in Christ. Second, Christ is therefore the only way of salvation. Christ is the means the Father uses to reconcile believers to himself by imputing to them the "merit of Christ", thereby, making Christ's righteousness theirs. Essentially, the sinner is no longer a sinner in God's eyes due to Christ's work, although still a sinner who sins. Again, this forensic[261] declaration of righteousness reverberates through Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone.

The Justice of God

Since the cross justifies people who believe in Christ's work, the cross is a place of justice. When commenting on Romans 3:23, Calvin wrote:

> There is perhaps, no passage in the whole of Scripture which illustrates in a more striking manner the efficacy of his righteousness; for it shows that God's mercy is the efficient cause, that Christ with his blood is the meritorious cause, that the formal or instrumental cause is faith in the word, and that moreover, the final cause is the glory of the divine justice and goodness.[262]

At the cross the divine justice was glorified. By divine justice, Calvin is referring to God's requirement for atonement to be made in order to satisfy God's wrath against sinful people who stood condemned before a holy God. Calvin continued by asserting that, "Christ by his obedience satisfied the Father's justice."[263] Justice was established at the cross.

---

[260] By "Law" Calvin meant "not only the Ten Commandments…but the form of religion handed down by God through Moses" (*Ins.* 2.7.1).

[261] By "forensic", Calvin meant that a believer is declared righteous outside of themselves in Christ, not actually made righteous. Therefore, a Christian is legally righteous as declared by God.

[262] Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Acts 14-28 & Romans*, 140.

[263] Ibid. It is argued that Calvin, along with Melanchthon, returned to Anselm's theory of satisfaction. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, 2nd Edition, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins & Duane A. Priebe

This emphasis on justice highlights the atonement theory that Calvin adhered to: penal substitution. Calvin viewed the cross from a legal perspective. God as Judge condemns guilty sinners under the Law to eternal death. Jesus died on behalf of those sinners by taking their punishment so that through faith they are set free. Out of love, Christ became a penal substitute on the cross by taking the believer's punishment.[264] This substitution allows one's sins to be imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness to be imputed back to that person. This concept of Calvin comes out clearly in his exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:18-21[265] as "the sum of the gospel embassy" where believers are reconciled to God through Christ because they receive Christ's righteousness (*Ins*. 3.11.4). This fundamentally Lutheran doctrine, however, is not without logical inconsistencies.

The tension of love and wrath at the cross for the sake of justice may seem contradictory. Therefore, Calvin elaborated:

> But how does it happen, it will be asked, that a beloved Son is cursed by his Father? We reply, there are two things which must be considered, not only in the person of Christ, but even in his human nature. The one is, that he was the unspotted Lamb of God, full of blessing and of grace; the other is, that he placed himself in our room, and thus became a sinner, and subject to a curse, not in himself indeed, but in us, yet in such a manner, that it became necessary for him to occupy our place. He could not cease to be the object of his Father's love, and yet he endured his wrath. For how could he reconcile the Father to us, if he had incurred his hatred and displeasure? We conclude, that he "did always those things that pleased" (John viii. 29) his Father. Again, how would he have freed us from the

---

(Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1977), 279. I agree to a certain extent; however, while Anselm perceived satisfaction as pacifying God's outraged honour, Calvin viewed satisfaction as pacifying God's wrath against sinners who broke God's Law as fallen descendants of Adam.

[264] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I&II Thessalonians, I&II Timothy, Titus, & Philemon*, trans. William Pringle, Volume 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 91.

[265] In this passage, Calvin saw the word "reconciled" to mean nothing else but than to be justified. In fact, Calvin called this passage the most remarkable passage in "any of Paul's writings." *Calvin's Commentaries: I & II Corinthians*, Volume XX, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 235.

> wrath of God, if he had not transferred it from us to himself? Thus, "he was wounded for our transgressions," (Isa. liii. 5) and had to deal with God as an angry judge. This is the foolishness of the cross, (1 Cor. i. 18) and the admiration of angels, (1 Pet. i. 12) which not only exceeds, but swallows up, all the wisdom of the world.[266]

God the Father loving God the Son while also punishing the Son in the place of sinners is "the foolishness of the cross." According to Calvin, no one can fully make sense of this tension. Justice was served at the cross despite the tension it creates as Christ became the penal substitute.

The Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ

On the cross Jesus became a sacrifice. Calvin explained, "For we could not believe with assurance that Christ is our redemption, ransom, and propitiation unless he had been a sacrificial victim" (*Ins*. 2.16.6). Jesus paid the price for redemption. "Christ was offered to the Father in death as an expiatory sacrifice [so] that when he discharged all satisfaction through his sacrifice, we might cease to be afraid of God's wrath" (*Ins*. 2.16.6). Through Christ's sacrifice three viewpoints are important to appreciate: God was satisfied (propitiation), humans are redeemed (redemption), and God and humans are at peace (reconciliation).[267] Within this notion of sacrifice are two important elements: satisfaction and efficiency.

Since the time of Anselm, the church has used the term "satisfaction" to express the real significance of Christ's sacrifice.[268] As cited in the previous chapter, for Anselm, satisfaction meant pacifying God's outraged honour. On the contrary, according to

---

[266] Ibid., 92.

[267] Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 67.

[268] J.I. Packer, "Sacrifice and Satisfaction", *Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer: Celebrating God's Saving Work*, Volume 1 (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998), 127.

Robert Peterson, Professor of Systematic Theology at Covenant Theological Seminary, Calvin was more inclined to use the term with respect to the wrath and love of God both illustrated in the work of Christ.[269] Honour is not so much the focus as are love, wrath, and justification. Furthermore, Christ's sacrifice was totally efficient. As Calvin stated in contrast to the Roman Catholic missal of his day:

> The sacrificial victims which were offered under the law to atone for sins [Ex. 29:36] were so called, not because they were capable of recovering God's favour or wiping out iniquity, but because they prefigured a true sacrifice such as was finally accomplished in reality by Christ alone; and by him alone, because no other could have done it. And it was done but once, because the effectiveness and force of that one sacrifice accomplished by Christ are eternal, as he testified with his own voice when he said that it was done and fulfilled [John 19:30]; that is, whatever was necessary to recover the Father's favour, to obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation – all this was performed and completed by that unique sacrifice of his. And so perfect was it that no place was left afterward for any other sacrificial victim (*Ins*. 2.18.13).

Christ's sacrifice was, is, and will be perpetually efficient to propitiate and expiate the sins of the faithful through all time with no other sacrifice necessary. The cross was an all-sufficient sacrifice that made satisfaction for people's sin because of its substitutionary effect.

The Two Natures of Christ the Mediator

In Calvin's thought, he linked two important theological concepts: the incarnation[270] and Christ's function as Mediator. These two points are foundational to his doctrine of the cross. Calvin explained:

> Now it was of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator be both true God and true man. If someone asks why this is

[269] Robert Peterson, "Calvin on Christ's Saving Work", *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes*, eds. David W. Hall & Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian &Reformed Publishing, 2008), 244.

[270] Peterson correctly claims that God becoming man for humanity's salvation was a "prerequisite" to Calvin's doctrine of the atonement. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 11.

> necessary, there has been no simple (to use the common expression) or absolute necessity. Rather, it has stemmed from a heavenly decree, on which men's salvation depended. Our most heavenly Father decreed what was best for us. Since our iniquities, like a cloud cast between us and him, had completely estranged us from the Kingdom of Heaven [cf. Isa. 59:2], no man, unless he belonged to God, could serve as the intermediary to restore peace…Ungrudgingly he took our nature upon himself to impart to us what was his, and to become both Son of God and Son of Man in common with us (*Ins*. 2.12.1-2).

As Mediator, Jesus is fully divine[271] and fully human. The two natures of Christ are necessary if Jesus is to be a Mediator who intermediates between heaven and earth. As Calvin elaborated, "Who could have done this had not the self-same God become the Son of Man, and had not so taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace?" (*Ins*. 2.12.2). For God to approach humanity and for humanity to approach God, Christ needed to be fully God and fully human.

In particular, Christ's humanity was essential for him to live an obedient life. Fallen humanity required an obedient second Adam. Calvin expounded:

> The second requirement of our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved (*Ins*. 2.12.3).

By Christ taking on human nature and living a life of full obedience to God, Jesus represented the human nature of anyone who believes in him. Christ's obedience satisfied God's righteous judgment. As such, through Christ's crucifixion, death, burial, and

[271] "Calvin affirms that God the Son was wholly incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth and yet wholly outside (*extra*) of him too. This is the *extra-calvinisticum*, the Calvinistic 'extra' or 'without'. God was 'without' Jesus as well as fully incarnate in him." The term, *extra-calvinisticum*, is a product of sixteenth and seventeenth Christological debates occasioned by divergent views of Reformed and Lutheran theologians regarding the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Robert Peterson, *Calvin and the Atonement* (Great Britain, UK: Mentor, 1999), 27-28.

descent into hell, Christ paid the penalty for the believer's deserved punishment (*Ins*. 2.16.5-10). On the other end, Christ's resurrection and ascension will lead to new life now and in glory for believers who will be able to stand before Christ's eventual judgment of everyone (*Ins*. 2.16.12-18).[272] The cross is the central location of this theological reality.

As the all-sufficient Saviour and Mediator, Jesus Christ has a three-fold office – prophet, king, and priest (*Ins*. 2.15.1). Wolfhart Pannenberg, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Munich, suggests that the threefold character of the offices of Christ achieved general recognition through Calvin.[273] Calvin's Christology was focused on Christ's work in salvation as it pertained to Christ's office as Mediator.[274] In fact, studying Christ had a single objective for Calvin. He explained, "What we have said so far concerning Christ must be referred to this one objective: condemned, dead, and lost in ourselves, we should seek righteousness, liberation, life, and salvation in him" (*Ins*. 2.16.1).[275] Therefore, from a soteriological perspective, Christ's role as prophet is the "Messiah" whose perfect doctrine has put an end to all prophecies so that "outside Christ nothing is worth knowing" and that those with faith in Him "have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits" (*Ins*. 2.15.3). Christ's kingly office is of a spiritual nature as the anointed one who reigns as Lord over the church and world so that the devil

[272] For Calvin, when one talks about Christ's death one is also to understand at the same time his resurrection and vice versa. Literally speaking, it is a synecdoche (*Ins*. 2.16.13).

[273] Pannenberg, 213. Pannenberg criticizes Calvin for maintaining the Chalcedonian formula in his doctrine of Christ, particularly his understanding of Christ as Mediator. See p. 279.

[274] Stephen Edmondson, *Calvin's Christology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6-7.

[275] Pelikan creatively organizes Reformed thought, including that of Calvin's, under the imagery of a mirror. For Calvin, Christ is a mirror that believers are to look into and contemplate their salvation. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Cultures* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 158.

cannot stop the church's advancement as the church finds solace in King Jesus by forsaking the world (*Ins*. 2.15.3-5). Finally, Christ's priestly office is as the holy sinless one who reconciles believers to God and acts as their eternal intercessor (*Ins*. 2.15.6).

The love of God, the justice of God, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and the two natures of Christ the Mediator are foundational principles that Calvin taught. From these principles, key concepts emerge that are important to examine.

Key Concepts

Calvin's theology of the cross embraced the concepts of original sin, the meritorious work of Christ, and the union between Christ and sinner. As described by Calvin, I will explore Calvin's teachings on these subjects in order to attain a deeper understanding of his thought.

Original Sin

Like Augustine, Calvin viewed humanity as fallen in Adam.[276] Calvin defined the term "original sin" as follows:

> Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls "works of the flesh" [Gal. 5:19] (*Ins*. 2.1.8).

Calvin understood everyone to be a part of this hereditary depravity from Adam. This depravity is expressed through works of flesh and can only be redeemed by the work of Christ. This redemption requires the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit applying the finished work of Christ on the cross in the hearts of fallen people and bringing them to

[276] Theologically bound to the doctrine of original sin is Calvin's doctrine of predestination, which he understood as authentically Augustinian. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 432.

faith in Christ (*Ins*. 3.2). As Calvin worded it, "Here, then, is the relationship between the two: Adam, implicating us in his ruin, destroyed us with himself; but Christ restores us to salvation by his grace" (*Ins*. 2.1.6). For Calvin, Christ's saving work was a substitutionary sacrifice that merited salvation.

The Meritorious Work of Christ

In Calvin's own words, Christ "merited" salvation for believers (*Ins*. 2.17). What Calvin meant by this term is that Jesus not only redeems his people by taking away their sins, "but also by meriting grace and salvation for them."[277] Due to the negative connotations of the word "merit", Calvin was forced to give an expanded clarification of this doctrine.[278] Merit suggested that something was earned, rather than being of grace. This notion of merit in Christ's work did not contradict God's free grace for Calvin. The first cause for the Son coming to earth was the Father's decree to do it; however, the "highest cause" was that Christ came out of God's love (*Ins*. 2.17.2). What this doctrine attempted to do was stress the *positive* achievement of Christ on behalf of His people.[279] As such, the notion of Christ meriting salvation for the believer did not mean his work had nothing to do with grace for Calvin. Merit here implied being obedient to the Father's will to go to the cross as the ultimate expression of God's love. In this teaching, Christ merited grace and salvation for Christians because of his sacrifice.

[277] Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 72.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 76.

The Union between Christ and Sinners

For Calvin, the cross is the place where fallen sinners are united[280] to God through the Holy Spirit (*Ins*. 3.1.1). It is a union based on faith where believers receive all of the benefits connected with Christ: justification, sanctification, and glorification.[281] The cross then becomes a place of blessing and assurance for the Christian. Due to the work of the Holy Spirit who secretly works in the lives of the elect (*Ins*. 21.24), Christians are empowered to make it through this life's journey and on into glory. It is a pilgrimage that requires mortification of the flesh through denial of the world, repentance, and humility (*Ins*. 3.6.10).[282] Therefore, the cross is a place of victory and example.

First, the cross is a place of victory. A theme that does arise in Calvin's theology is that of Christ as victor. Calvin upheld that the believer's victory is in Christ alone. Calvin taught:

> Death held us captive under its yoke; Christ, in our stead, gave himself over to its power to deliver us from it. So the apostle understands it when he writes: "He tasted death for everyone" [Heb. 2:9 p.]. By dying, he ensured that we would not die, or – which is the same thing – redeemed us to life by his own death. He differed from us, however, in respect: he let himself be swallowed up by death, as it were, not to be engulfed in its abyss, but rather to engulf it [cf. I Peter 3:22, Vg.] that must soon have engulfed us; he let himself be subjected to it, not to be overwhelmed by its power, but rather to lay it low, when it was threatening us and exulting over our fallen state. Finally, his purpose was "that through death he might

[280] Calvin also cited the Apostle Paul and used the word "engrafted" (*Ins*. 3.1.1). The imagery suggests that the cross of Christ is a vine from which the fruits of salvation grow on the branches of people who are grafted into the vine by faith. See John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: John 12-21 & Acts 1-13,* Volume XVIII, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 106.

[281] I have used these broad titles as categories to summarize the topics of salvation found in Book III of the *Institutes* (1559).

[282] Otto Gründler, past Instructor of Religion and founder of the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University, authored that for Calvin the goal of the spiritual life is the full display of the image of Christ in the life of the Christian. "John Calvin: Ingrafting into Christ", *The Spirituality of Western Christianity*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976)., 183.

> destroy him who had the power of death, that is, that devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" [Heb. 2:14-15] (*Ins*. 2.16.7).

The Christian is victorious in Christ through faith because of the cross. Christ died to defeat death, the consequence of sin, and the devil. The cross is a place of victory.

Second, the cross serves as an example. For Calvin, Christ set the church an example to follow. Ultimately, every believer is to deny themselves from the desires of the flesh in order to love God and neighbour as Christ would (*Ins*. 3.7). For Calvin, denial of self is the sum of the Christian life. Calvin said that "Christ, through whom we return into favour with God, has been set before us as an example." Calvin continued to say that "we have been adopted as sons by the Lord with this one condition: that our lives express Christ, the bond of our adoption" (*Ins*. 3.6.3). It is because of Christ's blood that Christians have been reconciled and so should live "heavenward" by laying aside "earthly things" (*Ins*. 3.6.3). For Calvin, the aim of reconciliation through Christ's work was to bring about the effect of one's total transformation into Christ-likeness. Ultimately, this fulfills and restores the call to humble obedience in the faithful where Adam fell short.

Calvin's concepts of original sin, substitutionary sacrifice, merit, and union in his doctrine of the cross have helped to shed further light on his beliefs. Overall, these and the other points mentioned are beliefs that have shaped generations of Christians in the Reformed tradition.

Theological Heritage

When reviewing John Calvin's theological heritage, one immediately encounters Calvinism. Calvinism[283] is a complex system of thought that is both geographically and

[283] McGrath says that the term "Calvinism" appears to have been introduced by the German Lutheran polemicist Joachim Westphal to refer to the theological, particularly sacramental, views of the Swiss

generationally diverse. Calvin is its fountainhead, although its proponents were not necessarily faithful to John Calvin in every respect. J.I. Packer, Professor of Theology at Regent College, theologically defines Calvinism as follows:

> Calvinism is a whole world-view, stemming from a clear vision of God as the whole world's Maker and King. Calvinism is the consistent endeavour to acknowledge the Creator as the Lord, working all things after the counsel of His will. Calvinism is a theocentric way of thinking about all life under the direction and control of God's own Word. Calvinism, in other words, is the theology of the Bible viewed from the perspective of the Bible – the God-centered outlook which sees the Creator as the source, and means, and end, of everything that is, both in nature and in grace. Calvinism is thus theism (belief in God as the ground of all things), religion (dependence on God as the giver of all things), and evangelicalism (trust in God through Christ for all things), all in their purest and most highly developed form. And Calvinism is a unified philosophy of history which sees the whole diversity of processes and events that take place in God's world as no more, and no less, than the outworking of His great preordained plan for His creatures and His church.[284]

Calvinism is a worldview that stems from an understanding of God who is sovereign in all things. This being said, Alister McGrath makes a strong point, when he suggests that the term Calvinism is potentially misleading. The reason is that the term suggests a movement concerned with the intellectual history of John Calvin, although some theologians regarded as Calvinists draw upon theological resources other than Calvin himself.[285] The term 'Reformed' may be a better term as it implies no exclusive

---

Reformers in general, and John Calvin in particular. What is helpful to note is that Calvinism was introduced to refer to the outlook of Calvin's followers by theological opponents who wanted to discredit Calvin's ideas as a foreign influence on Germany. The term, therefore, had a negative connotation in its infancy. *A Life of John Calvin*, 202-203.

[284] J.I. Packer, "Introductory Essay", *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 5. Since Packer is a professed Calvinist, Terry L. Miethe, Dean of the Oxford Study Centre, helpfully points out that Calvinism is not necessarily the gospel as Packer seems to suggest, but is a theological system of thought that not every evangelical agrees with. "The Universal Power of the Atonement", *A Case for Arminianism: The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 87-88.

[285] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 207.

dependence upon Calvin.[286] In fact, Calvinism can be broken down into two main categories of heritage: the Reformed Church and Puritanism. These two categories are particularly relevant to Calvin's doctrine of the cross and its development as applied by Calvin's spiritual pupils in the centuries following his death into their own historical contexts. By selectively tracing Calvinism's theological developments, the importance of these two categories will be highlighted.

Calvin's life and work really was the "genesis of a movement."[287] Calvinism was a movement that had an impact on all areas of life and shaped modern western culture economically, religiously, and socially.[288] John T. McNeill, past Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary (NY) and translator of Calvin's *Institutes* (1559), traced the development of Calvinism into France, the Netherlands, Germany, Eastern Europe, Scotland, England, Ireland, and America.[289] "At every period, vivid figures move in the pageant of Calvinism, and it has touched the destinies of nations."[290] In fact, McNeill claimed that the first time the word 'Calvinist', which Calvin's followers are generally described as, appeared in printed English was in 1579. However, equivalent uses of the word such as Calvinian or Calvinism both occurred earlier in 1566 and 1570 respectively.[291]

---

[286] Ibid. As such, one will notice that in this section the words Calvinist or Reformed are used interchangeably like synonyms reflective of the academic community that uses them as such.

[287] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 196ff.

[288] Ibid., 247-261.

[289] John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1954).

[290] Ibid., viii.

[291] Ibid., 309

During Calvin's time in Geneva, he attempted to bring reform to European churches. Students were trained in Geneva and then sent as missionaries of the Reformed faith by returning to their native countries.[292] Although the strongest effort launched from Geneva was to convert France to Protestantism, this attempt ultimately failed.[293] Of interest, it is argued that the countries which rejected Calvinism were countries that had supreme rulers such as in France with the reign of Louis XIV.[294] I disagree with the argument based on the English landscape and the reign of Henry VIII (1491-1547). It is precisely King Henry's break with the Papacy that allowed for eventual reforms to occur. Influenced by Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), many reforms took place, such as Reformed revisions in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549). Actually, nowhere has Calvin been more influential than in the English speaking world.[295]

John Knox was a Scottish student of Calvin (1510-1572). Knox was appointed a joint-pastor in Geneva after he left Berwick under the bloody reign of Mary I (1516-1558).[296] When Queen Elizabeth took the throne (1533-1603) Knox returned to Scotland. Knox was a leading influence toward English Puritanism and subsequently Presbyterianism.[297] Puritanism was a movement for reform of religion, which in little

---

[292] The pool of prominent refugees in Geneva not only helped Calvin win control of Geneva, but also helped to spread his religious ideas to other countries. Robert M. Kingdon, "The Calvinist Reformation in Geneva", *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion (1500-1660)*, Volume 6, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 101.

[293] Ibid., 103.

[294] Franklin Charles Palm, *Calvinism and the Religious Wars* (New York, NY: Howard Fertig, 1971), 65.

[295] Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context*, 3. This point is not intended to undervalue the significant influence of Zwingli, Melanchthon, and Luther on Thomas Cranmer.

[296] D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 261.

[297] Ibid., 262.

more than a single lifetime led to the founding of New England and the transformation of English society.[298] Doctrinally, Puritan thought was expressed most accurately in the *Westminster Confession* (1646). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this confession was the common doctrinal standard of all the Presbyterian Churches in the world of English and Scottish derivation.[299]

Frank Hugh Foster, past Professor of Church History at Oberlin Theological Seminary, argued that the pilgrims who arrived in New England at Plymouth in 1620 had an English Puritan background.[300] Although theological controversy was present, the conclusions of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) brought harmony in New England.[301] The Westminster standards were adopted in Massachusetts (1648) and later adopted in Connecticut (1708). Old Calvinism, shaped by the *Westminster Confession* (1646) continued to be the dominant and unchallenged system in New England.[302] Moreover, Calvin's theology in its essential points as expressed by the Synod became the adopted doctrine of the Reformed Church.[303] The Synod of Dort was a critical aspect in the development of Calvinism with respect to the cross.

---

[298] William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1938), 5.

[299] Alexander McPherson, "Foreword", *Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Glasgow, UK: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976).

[300] Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1963), 12.

[301] Ibid., 13.

[302] Ibid., 15.

[303] E.H. Klotsche, *The History of Christian Doctrine*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 244.

It is common in evangelical circles to think of Calvinism in reference to the acronym T.U.L.I.P. because of T.U.L.I.P.'s origin.[304] This acronym stands for Total depravity of humanity, Unconditional election of sinners, Limited atonement of Christ, Irresistible grace, and the Perseverance of the saints.[305] To understand fully where T.U.L.I.P. blossomed from, some history is necessary. John Calvin named Théodore de Bèze as his successor. Where Calvin adopted an inductive and analytical approach to theology, de Bèze adopted a deductive and synthetic approach that began with general principles being deduced into their consequences for Christian theology.[306] These general principles began with a reference to the doctrine of predestination, which was a controlling principle for de Bèze.[307] Therefore, unlike Calvin who treated predestination as an aspect of salvation, de Bèze made it an aspect of the doctrine of God.[308] This theological development led to one major consequence with respect to the doctrine of the cross. For whom did Christ die?[309] Though much could be said about the entire acronym, the "L" of T.U.L.I.P. will now be the focus.

For de Bèze, Christ died only for the elect, not for everyone. As de Bèze himself explained:

---

[304] Actually, in the preface to Calvin's *Institutes* (1559), Evelyn Bence cites this acronym as views that Calvin himself "held" too, although they were identified much later. Bence, xv.

[305] For a full modern exposition of these terms see James M. Boice & Philip G. Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002).

[306] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 213.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Ibid.

[309] Historically, this is not the first time in church history that this question was raised. This question was brought forward in the great controversy over predestination in the ninth century. The Benedictine monk, Godescalc of Orbais (805-866/69), developed a doctrine of double predestination similar to Calvin and his followers. Ibid., 214.

> Therefore, we will describe it this way: we say that it is the eternal and immutable decree of God, going in order before all the causes of salvation and damnation, whereby God has determined to be glorified in some by saving them in Christ by mere grace, but in others by damning them by His rightful judgment in Adam and in themselves. From the use of Scripture we call the former vessels of glory, and elect, that is, predestined to salvation from eternity through mercy; the latter are called reprobates and vessels of wrath, that is, those who are predestined likewise to rightful damnation from eternity (both of which God knew individually from eternity)."[310]

Hence, it was a limited atonement. Actually, to be specific, the view is that Christ died *sufficiently* for everyone, but only *efficaciously* for the elect.[311] This view was not admired in the Low Countries.[312] Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) was a pastor in Amsterdam and a student of de Bèze whom de Bèze initially spoke highly of.[313] Ariminius came to reject Calvin and de Bèze's doctrines of predestination and as a result, he also rejected the view of a limited atonement.[314] His followers, the "Remonstrants", were ministers who agreed with Arminius and signed the Remonstrance of 1610 that gave them their name.[315] The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) met to settle divisions within the Reformed church in the Low Countries and came to the five point conclusions mentioned above that can be summarized by the T.U.L.I.P. acronym.[316] Again, this Synod was

---

[310] Theodore de Bèze, *A Little Book of Christian Questions and Responses*, trans. Kirk M. Summers (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986), 84.

[311] This carefully nuanced sentence means that Christ's work is sufficient for anyone to come, but will only effectively bring about salvation for those whom the Father has chosen to come. Consequently, not everyone will come because they were not chosen to do so.

[312] The Low Countries would be what is referred to now as Belgium, the Netherlands, and parts of northern France and western Germany.

[313] Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971), 71 & 74.

[314] Ibid., 193.

[315] Ibid., 356.

[316] McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin*, 217.

influential in the creation of the *Westminster Confession* (1646), England Puritanism, and subsequently, New England theology as well. A direct line of thought from Calvin to New England can be traced with respect to limited atonement. However, not everyone agrees that Calvin adhered to limited atonement.

Richard T. Kendall, the past pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, wrote a controversial work, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (1979).[317] In it he suggested that Calvin believed that "Christ died for all men" as Kendall revised the assumption that Calvin's soteriology was faithfully upheld by the theologically Puritan *Westminster Confession* (1646).[318] Paul Helm, Teaching Fellow at Regent College, wrote a reply to Kendall's book, *Calvin and the Calvinists* (1982), wherein he argued that John Calvin did believe in limited atonement.[319] Overall, the assessment of Calvin's position in this area has varied. Past Professor Emeritus at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Roger Nicole, traced the main proponents of both sides in his article, "John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement" (1985).[320] As a prominent theologian in the United States, he concluded that limited atonement fits better than universal grace into the total pattern of Calvin's teaching. Is the "L" of T.U.L.I.P. popularly viewed as part of Calvinistic teaching true to the writings of John Calvin himself? It has been debated among scholars. Finally, we are led to Alister McGrath's point that Calvinism was and is not *necessarily* of

---

[317] Richard T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1979). This book was a D. Phil dissertation under the Baptist, B.R. White, at Regents Park, Oxford.

[318].Ibid., 2. This conclusion is not what the book is about in essence, but rather a view attained while studying the nature of saving faith in William Perkins (a Puritan theologian) and his followers as compared to what Calvin believed concerning faith. Perkins followed de Bèze's view more so than Calvin's. See p. 3.

[319] Paul Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinists* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 13ff.

[320] Roger Nicole, "John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement", *Westminster Theological Journal*, Volume 47, No. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985).

John Calvin in every way. Calvin's heritage, albeit intimately connected with the people and publications listed above, are not *necessarily* doctrines that scholars have believed Calvin himself taught. A case in point is the teaching of limited atonement.

Theologically speaking, Calvinism is a movement that has been resuscitated in recent years.[321] This is largely because Calvin's contribution to Protestantism in general is not any specific doctrine. Calvin demonstrated how the Bible can serve as the foundation of a stable understanding of Christian beliefs and structures.[322] He also gave a new vision of what it meant to be the church (preach the word and administer the sacraments properly) that allowed Protestantism to deal with rapid social and cultural change which enabled entrepreneurial pastors to recast a vision of the gospel to a new situation while still remaining a Christian church.[323]

Regardless, Calvin has not always been appreciated consistently. Professor of History and Director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College, Karin Maag, writes that Calvin is a theologian who has either been viewed as a hero or a villain,[324] and passionately so from both perspectives. In fact, Calvinism continues to

---

[321] In a recent article in the September 2009 edition of *Christianity Today*, Timothy George wrote an article called, "John Calvin: Comeback Kid" demonstrating this point. In the article George comments on the resurgence of Calvin in evangelical circles. Timothy George, "John Calvin: Comeback Kid", *Christianity Today*, September 2009 (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today International). http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/september/14.27.html. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, behind the influence of Albert Mohler, has become home to the "Founders" movement, a Neo-Calvinist group of evangelicals.
Impressively, a 2009 *Time Magazine* article noted Calvinism as number three in a list of top ten ideas changing the world right now. David Van Biema, "10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now: The New Calvinism", *Time Magazine*, Volume 173, No. 11 (New York, NY: Time Warner, March 23, 2009). http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1884779_1884782_1884760,00.html

[322] McGrath, "The Shaping of Reality: Calvin and the Formation of Theological Vision", 196.

[323] Ibid., 196-197.

[324] Maag has a helpful article discussing the roots of Calvin's legacy and suggests that the only way to properly understand Calvin is to set him in his context. By approaching Calvin this way, it helps to remember that he was a human who made mistakes just like his contemporaries while doing more than just

have theological opponents called Arminians who are the theological descendants of Arminius. Clark H. Pinnock, past Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at McMaster Divinity College, was at one point in his life a Calvinist, but then later deviated from the Calvinist fold. In fact, Pinnock used the word "Calvinian" to describe the main soteriological teachings of Calvin that Pinnock rejected.[325] He used the word in such a way to suggest that a Calvinian was someone who used to be a Calvinist.

By selectively tracing the development of Calvin's theological heritage, its geographical and generational complexity becomes obvious. Yet with respect to the doctrine of the cross, the Synod of Dort became a landmark moment in doctrinal development for later Calvinists and the doctrine of limited atonement. It is an issue that is still debated today along with other components of Calvin's theology in particular and theological heritage in general. Whether one adheres to Calvin's thought or not, one has to acknowledge his vast impact that, like Augustine, far transcends Calvin's own time. History will reveal just how influential Calvin not only was, but undoubtedly will be.

Analysis: Entering the Dialogue

After summarizing Calvin's view of the cross and then looking at his heritage, several points are obvious. Calvin had a strong appreciation for the love and justice of God revealed at the cross. For Calvin, the cross was based on the substitutionary and sacrificial work of Christ the Mediator. Christ's meritorious work transforms the life of

---

killing Servetus. It also helps to remember that for some, although Calvin was a strong theologian, he was not infallible. Karin Y. Maag, "Hero or Villain? Interpretations of John Calvin and His Legacy", *Calvin Theological Journal*, Volume 41, No. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Theological Seminary, 2006), 222 & 237.

[325] Clark H. Pinnock (ed.), "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology", *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989).

the Christian through the victory of the cross to become more Christ-like. I would like to note several aspects of Calvin's doctrine where I agree and some aspects where I differ.

First of all, penal substitution is to be highly respected as the overall theory of Calvin's doctrine. The basic notion that Christ died in the place of sinners is biblically-based (Rom. 5:8). Christ's death was an offering on behalf of sinners so that they could receive God's peace (Isa. 53). The concept of Jesus being a substitute in place of sinners does, however, lend itself to the question posed earlier, "For whom did Christ die?" As such, it is the basic logic of substitution that Jesus would have had to die for a particular group of people. J.I. Packer explains this rationality as follows:

> Should we not think of Christ's substitution for us on the cross as a definite, one-to-one relationship between him and each individual sinner? This seems scriptural, for Paul says, 'He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*' (Gal. 2:20). But if Christ specifically took and discharged my penal obligation as a sinner, does it not follow that the cross was decisive for my salvation not only as its sole meritorious ground, but also as guaranteeing that I should be brought to faith, and through faith to eternal life?...And if Christ by his death on my behalf secured reconciliation and righteousness as gifts for me to receive (Rom. 5:11, 17), did not this make it certain that the faith which receives these gifts would also be given to me, as a direct consequence of Christ's dying for me? Once this is granted, however, we are shut up to a choice between universalism and some form of the view that Christ died to save only a part of the human race.[326]

So, there is the reasoning. Since Christ was to be a substitute, it logically follows that one will need to either embrace universalism or a limited atonement.

Being faced with such a question, I am led to conclude that Calvin adhered to a limited atonement. I would have to disagree with Kendall and concur with Helm. Quite

[326] J.I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution", *Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer: Celebrating the Saving Work of God*, Volume 1 (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998), 115.

simply put, Calvin's overall view of double predestination[327] combined with his theory of substitution, lends itself to Christ dying efficaciously for the elect only. In fact, Calvin himself stated this truth in passing when commenting on 1 John 2:2:

> Here a question may be raised, how have the sins of the whole world been expiated? I pass by the dotages of the fanatics, who under this pretence extend salvation to all the reprobate, and therefore Satan himself. Such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation. They who seek to avoid this absurdity, have said that Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect. This solution has commonly prevailed in the schools. *Though then I allow that what has been said is true*, yet I deny that it is suitable to this passage; for the design of John was no other than to make this benefit common to the whole Church.[328]

Here Calvin agreed that Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but only efficiently for the elect. Although highly controversial, I do understand it to be Calvin's view.

Within Calvin's view, similarly with Augustine, but not nearly as direct, lies the issue of individualism. Hans Boersma, J.I. Packer Professor of Theology at Regent College, correctly identifies that:

> Calvinism's emphasis on double predestination meant that the violence of God's hidden will came to overshadow the hospitality of his revealed will. The harshness of this system became evident especially when Calvinism limited the redemptive value of Christ's work to the elect. Christ's death had no meaning at all for those outside the invisible Church of the elect. Calvinism came to highlight divine violence both in the idea that God powerfully overcame all resistance against his grace for his chosen ones and in the notion that certain individuals had been eternally excluded from

[327] Calvin wrote on predestination as follows, "As God by the effectual working of his call to the elect perfects salvation to which by his eternal plan he has destined them, so he has his judgments against the reprobate, by which he executes his plan for them. What of those, then, whom he created for dishonour in life and destruction in death, to become the instruments of his wrath and examples of his severity? That they may come to their end, he sometimes deprives them of the capacity to hear his word; at other times he, rather, blinds and stuns them by the preaching of it." (*Ins*. 3.24.12).

[328] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John, James, II Peter, Jude*, Volume XXII, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 173. Italics are mine.

> his hospitality. The result was a limited hospitality that located violence in the very heart of God.[329]

God's hospitality is not open to all in Calvin or Calvinism. The past LaFollette Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Wabash College, William C. Placher, wrote that Reformation soteriology shifted toward individualism in some respects.[330] Furthermore, Placher wrote that one of the strengths of Process and Liberation theologies is to shift the doctrine of the work of Christ away from individualistic models, which makes them worth pursuing.[331] I think Placher has an argument worth investigating and exploring.

The doctrine of penal substitution is also spiritually helpful for the Christian to know that he or she can be at peace with God because of Christ's work that justifies a sinner (Rom. 5:1). Justification, however, through Reformation spectacles, seems somewhat slanted. I agree that a Christian is justified by faith, but I am hesitant to embrace fully the notion of a righteousness that is just simply imputed. Appreciating Calvin's context, I hear the cry of the Reformation loudly that it is not by works that one is saved, but by faith alone in Christ. However, it is possible that the context out of which Martin Luther arose, skewed his understanding of the Apostle Paul's theology. Being

---

[329] Boersma, 18. For Boersma, hospitality has to do with God's reconciliation in the work of Jesus Christ as welcoming sinners, while violence has to do with exclusion from God's hospitality.

[330] William C. Placher, "Individualism, Process, Liberation, and The Work of Christ", *Encounter*, Volume 47, No. 3, Summer, 1986, 235.

[331] Ibid., 240. Generally speaking, Process theologies conceive the world as an active ongoing process that is not static where God, actively involved in the process, is changing and learning as well. In process theology, therefore, God is not a cosmic moralist who controls the world as classical theists would suggest. John B. Cobb & David Ray Griffin *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1976), 7-11. Meanwhile, Liberation theologies understand the teachings of Jesus Christ in terms of liberation from unjust political, economic, or social conditions.

influenced by Luther, if Calvin is one who wanted to return to the source, then I believe it is a fair criticism to ask whether he understood Paul's teaching on justification accurately.

Douglas Moo, Blanchard Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, concedes that justification by faith is not at the heart of Paul's theology. Moo explains in his commentary on the book of Romans:

> Is, then, justification by faith the theme of the letter? Certainly a good case can be made for it. But I do not finally think that it can stand as the overarching theme… If, then, justification by faith is not the center of Romans or of Paul's thought in the logical sense, in another sense it expresses a central, driving force in Paul's thought. In this respect, the Reformers were not far wrong in giving to justification by faith the attention they did.[332]

If justification is not at the heart of Paul's theology in Romans then what is? If one turns to another Pauline epistle, Martin Luther believed that the book of Galatians was written so that "we may understand exactly the nature of Christian righteousness and its difference from all other kinds of righteousness" by teaching the reader that the most excellent righteousness is what God imputes to believers through faith in Christ.[333] Renowned New Testament Pentecostal scholar and editor of the New International Commentary on the New Testament, Gordon Fee, taught me in class that Paul's theology had to do with the Gentiles becoming part of the new covenant people of God.[334] Even Moo cites Fee's view and others who adhere to it as being "understanding and, to a

[332] Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans: NICNT*, ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 28 & 90.

[333] Martin Luther, *Galatians: The Crossway Classic Commentaries*, xvii.

[334] Gordon Fee, *BIBL 563: Galatians in a Week, July 25 to 29* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College, Summer, 2005), July 25. Fee warned the class not to read the letter to the Galatians through "Reformation bifocals."

considerable extent, justified."[335] Furthermore, Fee explained from the book of Galatians, that righteousness for the Apostle Paul should be understood as to 'righteouscize' because it is not simply about being declared righteous, but instead about being in a relationship with God and thereby reformed into God's image on earth (Gal. 5:22).[336] This is not what Calvin taught, or what he learned from Luther. It demonstrates that, although Calvin was focused on the scriptures, he did not have all the tools one has today and may have been wrong with respect to this issue of imputed righteousness.

This emphasis on the Holy Spirit leads to a somewhat neglected truth about Calvin. Calvin was "the theologian of the Holy Spirit."[337] Calvin made an important contribution in his teachings on the effectual work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit applied Christ's finished work into the lives of Christians. This title given to Calvin demonstrates that emphasis. B.B. Warfield elaborated:

> It has been common to say that Calvin's entire theological work may be summed up in this – that he emancipated the soul from the tyranny of human authority and delivered it from the uncertainties of human intermediation in religious things: that he brought the soul into the immediate presence of God and cast it for its spiritual health upon the free grace of God alone. Where the Romanist placed the Church, it is said, Calvin set the Deity. The saying is true, and perhaps, when rightly understood and filled with its appropriate content, it may sufficiently characterise the effect of his theological teaching. But it is expressed too generally to be adequate. What Calvin did was, specifically, to replace the doctrine of the Church as sole source of assured knowledge of God and sole institute of salvation, by the Holy Spirit.[338]

This idea would astonish some people; however, when reading Calvin's original works it becomes quite apparent.

---

[335] Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans: NICNT*, 27.

[336] Fee, *BIBL 563: Galatians in a Week, July 25 to 29*, July 26.

[337] Warfield, 484.

[338] Ibid., 486.

There are other aspects of Calvin's doctrine of the cross that I appreciate as well. First, I affirm the fact that he held seemingly contradictory truths in tension. Calvin embraced the notion of mystery to theology in general and the atonement in particular. He stated with respect to the crucifixion that the "form of Christ's death also embodies a singular mystery" (*Ins*. 2.16.6). Calvin did not try to explain it all away as some might criticize, but presented truths that essentially derive from scripture as he understood them. As the late Dean of the Protestant Faculty of Theology of Strasbourg, François Wendel, explained:

> What have been called the 'paradoxes' of Calvin remain. These still present themselves in the unity of, and distinction between, the two natures of Christ, or in God's abiding love for his creatures and his wrathful attitude to fallen man, in the justification which leaves man still a sinner, or in the complete and immediate imputation of the righteousness of Christ while regeneration is slow and always imperfect…[339]

Calvin's theological approach attempted to derive the meaning of scripture in its historical context, connect it together coherently using all systems of thought available to him, and where there were contradictions, to leave those mysteries in God's infinite hands. I appreciate Calvin's zeal for truth coupled with his theological humility.

Second, some suggest a contradiction in the love and wrath of God at the cross for Calvin. "Does the Bible's teaching about God's wrath, about human guilt and the judgment that awaits us all, render meaningless all talk about God as loving and gracious?"[340] For Calvin, the scriptures, particularly the Apostle Paul, held up these two points together (Eph. 2:3-5). Therefore, albeit a mystery for one's finite mind, love and wrath co-exist harmoniously in scripture for Calvin. Again, this simply demonstrates

[339] Wendel, 358.

[340] Thompson, 118.

Calvin's approach to hold contradictory truths in tension if he believed scripture taught it as such. To this way of thinking, Christ's death must be understood as an act of substitution grounded in the Father's love who sent the Son to die so that satisfaction could be made for sin.

Summary

This chapter asked the question, "What was John Calvin's doctrine of the cross?" By reviewing his life and context, three strands of influential belief systems were introduced: late-medieval Christianity, humanism, and Luther along with other Reformers. I then explored four foundational principles to Calvin's doctrine of the cross: the love of God, the justice of God, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and the two natures of Christ the Mediator. From these principles, three key concepts emerged: original sin, the meritorious work of Christ, and the union between Christ and sinner. While appreciating Calvin's extensive heritage, particularly to Protestantism in the English speaking world and the Reformed Church, I then assessed his view. While areas of further exploration would be beneficial, Calvin's doctrine also has much value and merit both in his time and in my current contemporary situation.

Calvin was a remarkable theologian, as was St. Augustine. Now that their respective contexts and doctrines have been reviewed, I will discuss their potential convergences and divergences. Was Calvin an Augustinian in his doctrine of the cross? If historically possible, would Augustine say that he agreed with Calvin? In an imagined way, I will allow these two theologians to interact with each other in order to ascertain their similarities and differences in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3
Convergences & Divergences

St. Augustine and John Calvin are arguably the two most influential theologians in the history of Western Christianity. Since the cross is so central to the Christian religion,[341] what are the convergences and divergences of these theologians with respect to their doctrines of the cross? This chapter will investigate that question in light of the research accomplished so far in this project. A textual dialogue between Augustine and Calvin will be attempted by giving appropriate weight to their contexts and influences as I compare their own writings on the subject matter. At the same time, I approach this chapter with a demeanour that perceives any theory of the atonement as "but probings into the mystery…of love that did not have to be but was, and is."[342] It is not about discerning who is right or wrong, but how their doctrines were similar or different and with that approach to learn from them. I will begin by considering possible convergences and then analyze the divergences between them.

Convergences

Overall, I agree with the general assumption in secondary literature that Calvin was Augustinian with respect to grace. [343] Grace is not the focus of this thesis; however, their doctrines of predestination, original sin, and salvation, which inevitably surround a discussion on the doctrine of the cross, demonstrate that Calvin was Augustinian in that

[341] See John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 17-46. Here Stott explains the centrality of the cross to the Christian religion.

[342] Richard J. Neuhaus, *Death on a Friday Afternoon: Meditations on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross* (New York, NY: Basic, 2000), 8.

[343] An older and very detailed work often cited to support this point is Luchesius Smits, *Saint Augustine Dans L'Oeuvre de Jean Calvin*, Volume 1 (Paris, FR: Van Gorcum & Company, 1958). Smits wrote that, "Saint Augustine exerça sur Calvin une influence considérable.", 272.

regard. I am not suggesting that Calvin agreed with Augustine on every point in those doctrines, as will be demonstrated. I am, however, stating that Augustine was the fountainhead from which Calvin's thoughts on these matters originated. In fact, Calvin used the basic framework of Augustine's teachings, albeit in a more nuanced, complex, and applicatory way. In particular, Augustine and Calvin share five main convergences: the love of God, the sacrifice of Christ, the incarnation and the two natures of Christ, original sin, and the victory of the cross.

The Love of God

Both Calvin and Augustine placed the love of God as a foundational principle to their doctrines of the cross. This similarity is no surprise. A cursory reading of the New Testament will reveal this (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). It is no wonder, therefore, that these two scripturally grounded theologians comprehended the love of God as central to the work of Christ on the cross. Augustine said that Jesus "loved them that were killing him; since for them also he was dying."[344] Likewise, Calvin stated that "Christ brought life, because the Heavenly Father loves the human race, and wishes that they should not perish."[345] Furthermore, they each understood God's love as predetermined. Both of them believed in predestination, and thereby connected God's love to the effective working of God's grace that sovereignly saves fallen sinners. Augustine wrote that "The Lord knoweth them that are His; and 'Whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate'…For we [believers] are made the sons of God by grace."[346] Similarly, when commenting on John

[344] St. Augustine, "The Epistle of John", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 7, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 489, (V, iv).

[345] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Harmony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John 1-11*, Volume XVII, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 123.

[346] St. Augustine, "On the Gospel of John", 267 (XLVIII, vi).

10, Calvin explained that "according to the secret election of God, we are already *sheep* in his heart, before we are born; but we begin to be *sheep* in ourselves by the calling, by which he gathers us into his fold."[347] In conclusion, Calvin was in agreement with Augustine about a predetermined love as a foundational element of the cross.

Needless to say, their contexts were different. Augustine did not have individualism beginning to diffuse into his society like Calvin. Nor did Augustine have a Théodore de Bèze following after him arguing that predestination was an aspect of the doctrine of God. Therefore, the very notion of a limited atonement was entirely out of Augustine's context. In fact, the work of Christ in the early centuries of the church laid more emphasis on the salvation of the world, although it always rejected universalism.[348] Therefore, even though Augustine taught a predetermined love, it was a doctrine that came to the fore in his writings against Pelagius at the latter end of his life and was underdeveloped in comparison to Calvin.

Augustine stressed love or charity more than Calvin did. When reflecting on 1 John 2:12-17, Augustine preached that:

> There are two loves: of the world, and of God: if the love of the world inhabit, there is no way for the love of God to enter in: let the love of the world make way, and the love of God inhabit; let the better have place. Thou lovedst the world: love not the world: when thou hast emptied thine heart of earthly love, thou shalt drink in love Divine: and thenceforth

[347] Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Harmony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John 1-11*, 399. Italics are Calvin's. Scholars contend that Calvin's doctrine of predestination was simply a derivation of Augustine's doctrine of predestination while others suggest that Calvin's doctrine was not at all Augustinian. See Robert M. Kingdon, "Augustine and Calvin", *Saint Augustine the Bishop: A Book of Essays* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1994) and Mark E. Vanderschaaf, "Predestination and Certainty of Salvation in Augustine and Calvin", *Reformed Review*, Volume 30, No. 1, Autumn, 1976

[348] Universalism is that doctrine which argues that every person will be saved whether or not belief in Christ is present in the sinner.

> beginneth charity to inhabit thee, from which can nothing of evil proceed.[349]

Due to the Greek influences of Cicero and Neo-Platonism, Augustine saw God's love as that which the soul both longed for and reflected. The love of God at the cross was where the soul could be liberated to find its Creator and become truly human. Professor of Reformation Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Randall C. Zachman, comments on how this affected the readings of St. Paul in the Middle Ages:

> The reading of Paul in the Middle Ages was decisively shaped by the legacy of Augustine of Hippo, the great father of Latin theology. The central theological issue for Augustine had to do with the correspondence of the order of our love with the order of being and reality. Since God is the being of beings, and the highest good, we should love God for the sake of God alone. Since human beings are created in the image of God, we should love ourselves and other human beings, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of God. All love should be referred to God alone, and the way we love should direct others to love God as well. Hence the central concern dominating the reading of Paul after Augustine was how to love God, others, and ourselves in a rightly ordered way, and hence just, way.[350]

This concentration on love and just living resulted in a Western Christian medieval society whose very system was based on merit, good works, and a God who condemned sinful actions.

Therefore, in contrast, Calvin wrote more about the love of God in its relation to the justice of God. The cross revealed God's love because God, the Almighty Judge, justified and continues to justify sinners through Christ's work. God's love, for Calvin, was bound to God's justice. Calvin taught that "Christ was given to us by God's generosity…that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in

---

[349] Augustine, "The Epistle of John", 472 (II, viii).

[350] Randall C. Zachman, "Medieval and Reformation Readings of Paul", *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2006), 169.

heaven instead of a Judge, a gracious Father" (*Ins*. 3.11.1). This duality created a tension between love and wrath in Calvin's doctrine. God could have condemned everyone to eternal hell, but decreed to send Christ to take the punishment rightfully deserved for the elect so that those who believe would have eternal life instead. One cannot help but overhear Luther's conversion ringing loudly in Calvin's ears along with Calvin's own studies in law. Regardless of these differences, Augustine and Calvin believed that the cross saved sinners. The cross was based on the mercy, grace, and love of God for both of them because Christ paid the price to achieve redemption.

The Sacrifice of Christ

Salvation for Augustine and Calvin was Christocentric. Augustine expounded on John 14:6 by saying that "No man cometh unto the Father but by me [Christ]. And in this way, He goeth by Himself both to Himself and to the Father, and we by Him both to Him and to the Father."[351] Elucidating on the same passage Calvin wrote, "If any man turn aside from Christ, he will do nothing but go astray…if any man, not satisfied with him alone, wishes to go farther, he will find death instead of life."[352] It is because of Christ's death or atonement that anyone with faith can be forgiven. They both wrote about the cross as a place where Christ sacrificed himself to save sinners worldwide. Christ became the second Adam who restored fallen humanity as the all-sufficient Saviour. In particular, Augustine understood Christ's sacrifice broadly to include liberation, justification, and glorification:

> For whereas by His death the one and most real sacrifice was offered up for us, whatever fault there was, whence principalities and powers held us

[351] St. Augustine, "On the Gospel of John", 325 (LXIX, ii).

[352] Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: John 12-21 & Acts 1-13*, 85.

> fast as of right to pay its penalty, He cleansed, abolished, extinguished; and by His own resurrection He also called us whom He predestined to a new life; and whom He called, them He justified; and whom He justified, them He glorified.[353]

Augustine utilized the term "sacrifice" in a very loose pre-Anselmian way. Calvin would agree in principle with Augustine. However, with Anselm in Calvin's rear view mirror, Calvin's teachings on sacrifice were much more in-depth and carefully nuanced than the teachings of Augustine. Under Calvin's roof of sacrifice are three pillars: substitution, satisfaction, and efficiency.

As explained in Chapter 2, Calvin believed that Christ's sacrifice was a substitution for sinners. "We must, above all, remember this substitution" (*Ins*. 2.16.5). I have not found Augustine making such a statement himself, although Augustine certainly believed that Christ died on behalf of sinners. For Augustine, Jesus is the good shepherd who laid his life down for the sheep.[354] In that sense, Augustine would have certainly agreed with substitution. Nonetheless, influenced by Luther and other Reformers, Calvin posited Christ's sacrificial work in a substitutionary way based on the justice of God. Augustine did not. Moreover, influenced by Anselm, Calvin understood Christ's sacrifice as satisfying or propitiating God's wrath so that Christ's righteousness was imputed to the believer and the believer's sins were imputed to Christ. Satisfaction for Calvin was viewed in a legal way that made Christ a penal substitute.

Augustine's treatment of justification was much different. Where Calvin held the love and wrath of God together at the cross, Augustine placed much more emphasis on the love of God that heals the sinner to live justly. He wrote, "But this is true love, that

[353] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 78 (IV.xiii.xvii).

[354] St. Augustine, "On the Gospel of John", 257 (XLVI.v).

cleaving to the truth we may live righteously, and so may despise all mortal things."[355] As such, to be justified meant to be made righteous, not simply declared as such. Augustine did not view the cross in a legal way, but much more relationally than Calvin. In this same light, Calvin did regard the cross as having efficiency to bring about salvation. Book III of the *Institutes* (1559) is essentially about the work of the Holy Spirit applying the finished work of Christ on the cross that made people more Christ-like. Again, while Augustine did proclaim the truth of God's election in his writings against Pelagius, Augustine meditated on the cross more as the way to God. Augustine did not present the cross as God the Judge taking on punishment to the extent Calvin did, but Christ the incarnate Saviour drawing Christians to the immutable God of all creation. Augustine stated, "The Son of God became incarnate in order that we being cleansed by faith may be raised to the unchangeable truth."[356] Although this might sound like the moral influence theory, it is not.[357] Augustine did believe in the efficacious nature of the cross and the power of God to save because of the sacrificial atonement of Christ like Calvin. Augustine articulated that "everyone who has learned of the Father not only has the possibility of coming, but *comes.*"[358] However, Augustine stressed the importance of living justly that demonstrated that transformation. In contrast to Augustine, Calvin instructed his followers to behold the cross in faith only and to be certain that their salvation was secure. Calvin inscribed, "even though the desertions of vast multitudes

---

[355] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 122 (VIII.vii.x).

[356] Ibid., 81 (IV.xviii). This does not deny that Augustine taught about the importance of God's judgment. He clearly did. St. Augustine, "Concerning Faith of Things Not Seen", *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*, Volume 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 341 (VIII).

[357] The moral influence theory posits that Christ's life and death is primarily a moral example to humanity. It is meant to inspire sinners to lift themselves out of sin and grow towards union with God.

[358] St. Augustine, "On the Grace of Christ", 223 (I.xv). Italics are not mine.

shake the whole world, God's firm plan that election may never be shaken will be more stable than the very heavens" (*Ins*. 3.22.7). God would empower them to walk with him through the trials and tribulations of this life. In this logic, the efficacious work of the Holy Spirit is much more predominant in Calvin's writings. In light of Augustine's conversion and influence with Greek philosophy, Augustine observed the cross more in terms of a journey of the soul to God. This being said, both agreed that the cross serves as an example for Christians who are called to live Christ-like lives.

The Incarnation and the Two Natures of Christ

As was demonstrated thus far, the incarnation was a vital foundation for both theologians. Without the Son of God taking on human nature, no salvation would be possible. More precisely to Augustine's Neo-Platonic backdrop, the incarnation was of fundamental import. Augustine recorded the incarnation as an incredible event whereby the transcendent Creator took on human nature and became like man. It was a complete act of mercy for Augustine, which fulfilled Old Testament prophecy for the redemption of the city of God:

> …from the time when the promises of God began to be more clear, down to the virgin birth of Him in whom those things promised from the first were to be fulfilled, the course of that city which is God's might be made more distinctly apparent.[359]

On the other hand, Calvin was more concerned with the obedience of Christ who took on human nature to become the Mediator who justifies sinners:

> For if we ask how we have been justified, Paul answers, "By Christ's obedience" (Rom. 5:19). But did he obey in any other way than when he took upon himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7)? From this we conclude that in his flesh, righteousness has been manifested to us. Similarly in

[359] St. Augustine, "The City of God", 361 (XVIII.i).

> other words…Paul has established the source of righteousness in the flesh of Christ alone (*Ins*. 3.11.9).

Christ's obedience to the Law enabled his righteousness to be imputed to the believer. Calvin esteemed the incarnation for its soteriological significance, while Augustine valued it more in terms of its theological ramifications on the philosophies of his day combined with God's gracious character. It was the incarnate Son of God who took on flesh and became Mediator between God and man.

Both theologians would agree that Jesus was the Mediator. Consequently, for Jesus to be the Mediator, he had to be both God and man. Augustine's version of Jesus' role as Mediator was to observe it as the way to the Father through the Son's sacrifice in order to free the faithful from bondage to sin. He taught, "in that manhood He might be the Mediator between God and men, from some other source, and not from the race of that Adam who bound the human race by his sin."[360] More specifically, the humanity of Christ exemplified the humility and obedience all Christians are to follow. "The Word was made flesh…that the pride of man, which is the chief hindrance against his cleaving God, can be confuted and healed through such great humility of God."[361] Conversely, as cited from Pannenberg earlier, Calvin ascribed the role of prophet, priest, and king to Jesus' function as Mediator. Since Christ fulfilled the Old Testament Law, he is the final prophecy, sole high priest, and Lord of all. Unique to Calvin, even in his day, was linking these three offices within the two natures of Christ as Mediator.

The Chalcedonian formula was apparent in both individuals. Both theologians affirmed the constant Deity of Christ while embracing Jesus' full humanity as has been

[360] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 180 (XIII.xviii.xxiii).

[361] Ibid., 179 (XIII.xvii.xxii).

demonstrated thus far. While Calvin maintained that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth the Son was still upholding the universe, Augustine centered on the miraculous notion that this transcendent God actually took on human flesh. Regardless, both viewed the humanity of Jesus as necessary to recapitulate the descendants of Adam and bring them to restoration with God.

Original Sin

The term "original sin" was first used by Augustine. Therefore, Calvin's use of this term represented his inheritance from Augustine. Calvin explained that "this is the inherited corruption, which the church Fathers termed 'original sin', meaning by the word 'sin' the depravation of a nature previously good and pure" (*Ins.* 2.1.5). Augustine and Calvin mutually expressed the need for world-wide salvation based on every individual being descendants of Adam's fallen race. All of Adam's offspring are in bondage to a life of sinfulness, not because they sin, but because they are born sinners in Adam and will be found guilty as such outside of Christ.[362] However, even though Augustine and Calvin each professed this fundamental presupposition to their doctrines of the cross, their doctrines of original sin are not entirely identical.

Augustine perceived humanity's fallen nature as a genetic illness when he described Christ as offering medicine. He instructed, "the apostle shows that the same medicine was mystically set forth in the passion and resurrection of Christ."[363]

[362] Reinhold Niebuhr, past professor at Union Theological Seminary and influential commentator on public affairs, wrote that the "Christian doctrine of sin in its classical form offends both rationalists and moralists by maintaining the seemingly absurd position that man sins inevitably and by a fateful necessity but that he is nevertheless to be held responsible for actions which are prompted by an ineluctable fate." *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 241.

[363] Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter", 86 (X).

Meanwhile, Calvin went further and described it as a total corruption of the human nature by saying, "Adam, implicating us in his ruin, destroyed us with himself; but Christ restores us to salvation by his grace" (Ins. 2.1.6). The result of the Fall was the illness of man for Augustine, while Calvin interpreted it as the ruin of man.[364] As a consequence, Augustine saw the cross more as a place of healing, while Calvin saw the cross more as a place of efficacious redemption. Calvin's language expressed more hopelessness and desperation than that of Augustine's. Calvin used more extreme language. Augustine had a more relational view of sin, while Calvin understood sin within more of a legal framework. Humanity was utterly condemned by God the Judge with no hope at all outside of Christ. As stated earlier, Augustine was certainly Christocentric in terms of salvation, but described fallen humanity on a journey away from God that required healing. The late-medieval context was certainly influential upon Calvin in this doctrine. Luther and Calvin were both hardline defenders of nothing good coming from man outside of Christ. Augustine is easier to read and listen to given his spirit of openness, while Calvin is much more literalistic to the words of scripture.[365] I think their respective personalities come forward with respect to this doctrine since this doctrine relates to anthropology.[366] Both would agree, however, that the cross liberated fallen man from the bondage of sin, death, and the devil.

---

[364] Larry D. Sharp, "The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine", *The Evangelical Quarterly*, ed. F.F. Bruce, Volume LII, No. 2, April-June, 1980, 85.

[365] Although I applaud the critical need for good solid biblical teaching, my concern here has more to do with the personality and context of Calvin as a reader of the scriptures.

[366] As referenced earlier, the picture painted by de Bèze presented Calvin in a very solemn way as a man so devoted to his work that one could not get too close to him. Potentially as a result, the cross was written about by Calvin in a way that seemed distant, while Augustine's passion painted Jesus more as the lover of one's soul.

The Victory of the Cross

Both theologians clearly viewed the cross as a place of victory; for it is through the cross that salvation is even possible. What is unique to Augustine is that he described the new life of the Christian as an inner resurrection. Augustine portrayed it as follows:

> "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;" since by the crucifixion of the inner man are understood the pains of repentance, and a certain wholesome agony of self-control, by which death the death of ungodliness is destroyed, and in which death God has left us…But the resurrection of the body of the Lord is shown to belong to the mystery of our own inner resurrection…[367]

Obviously, the resurrection of Christ was critical for Calvin as well. What is fundamentally different, however, is that Calvin would describe this new life as the *effective* work of the Spirit. Calvin said:

> Therefore, we divide the substance of our salvation between Christ's death and resurrection as follows: through his death, sin was wiped out and death extinguished; through his resurrection, righteousness was restored and life raised up, so that – thanks to his resurrection – his death manifested its power and efficacy in us (*Ins*. 2.16.13). [It is] the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits (*Ins*. 3.1.1).

It seems to me that in this context the Spirit and resurrection are almost synonyms for Calvin and Augustine. Where Augustine thought of an inner resurrection, Calvin thought of the work of the Spirit. It is the same principle; however, as a humanist I think Calvin's language is more accurate to the biblical testimony as described in the letter to the Galatians. Interestingly, Augustine seems closer to Pannenberg on this point, because Augustine described the work of Christ linguistically in the life of the Christian with a stronger Christocentric language. Furthermore, while Augustine and Calvin would both acknowledge this new life in Christ in terms of love and self-denial, Augustine puts more

[367] St. Augustine, "On the Trinity", 72 (IV.iii.vi).

emphasis on the former and Calvin on the latter. Augustine said when referring to God that "it is by love that we must stand firm."[368] Conversely, Calvin emphasized denial when he wrote, "Let this therefore be the first step, that a man depart from himself in order that he may apply the whole force of his ability in the service of the Lord" (*Ins*. 3.7.1). Regardless, due to this new life in Christ, the cross then becomes, through Christ's death and eventual resurrection, a place of victory.

As referenced earlier, this *Christus Victor* teaching comes up in Augustine and also in Calvin. However, Calvin did not entertain the mousetrap analogy. Christ's victory for Augustine was over sin, death, and the devil because Christ baited Satan to crucify him, which led to Satan's eventual defeat along with the consequences of sin. This theme, which was not uncommon in the early centuries of the church, underscores the victory of the cross over the spiritual forces of the world (Col. 2:15). Even though Calvin acknowledged this truth (*Ins*. 1.14.18), victory for Calvin had more to do with faith and the mercy extended from God through Christ because of it. One is justified by faith alone and set free so that the meritorious system of late-medieval Christendom was both scripturally incorrect and unnecessary. Victory is based solely on what Christ did at the cross, not so much according to Augustine, about the good works one will be able to do as the believer walks in the power of Christ's resurrection.

Divergences

Now that Augustine and Calvin's convergences have been explored, without neglecting the differences within those concepts, I will examine aspects of their respective doctrines that are unique to each of them. Augustine, the wayward Manichean who

[368] Ibid., 118 (VIII.iv.vi).

became a Christian Neo-Platonist, has one particular aspect that is exclusive to him compared to Calvin: the ascent of the soul to God. Alternatively, Calvin, the lawyer "turned rogue" theologian who wanted to see the Protestant cause win and Europe reformed, applied two distinctive terms to Christ: merit and union.

The Ascent of the Soul to God

As touched on throughout, Augustine lived life in a Christian home and ecclesiastical structure that was influenced by monasticism. Moreover, Plato's dicta were constantly in the air. It is without astonishment then that Augustine's perception of the cross was strongly connected to his lost soul. Although Calvin affirmed a doctrine of God in the classical form, he was not at all on par with Augustine at this juncture. Augustine's level of introspection in his *Confessions* (397) would be astounding to Calvin considering how little Calvin revealed about himself to the reader. Yet, Augustine bravely and contextually catalogued his conversion and life for all to read. Augustine displayed his introspective conscience as follows:

> Accept the sacrifice of my confessions by the agency of my tongue, which Thou hast formed and quickened, that it may confess to Thy name; and heal Thou all my bones, and let them say, "Lord, who is like unto Thee?"…But let my soul praise Thee, that it may love Thee; and let it confess Thine own mercies to Thee; that it may praise Thee.[369]

In fact, it seems as though Augustine wrote so that he could understand what was happening to him. Quite literally, the cross opened Augustine up from the inside out so that the righteousness he argued was inherently a part of the Christian was being developed in him as well.

Augustine's comprehension of the cross on this level is very therapeutic. The life-giving nature of the cross expressed in the grace and love of God that calls humans to

[369] St. Augustine, "The Confessions of St. Augustine", 79 (V.i.i).

ascend to a higher level of living away from the fallen paths of this world is restorative. Augustine's emphasis on the soul not only motivates one to want to be like Christ as the reader hears himself in Augustine's testimony, but it also depicts in an honest fashion what the cross is all about – God redeeming a people unto himself. Calvin would have absolutely agreed with Augustine on this point of redemption. Calvin, however, had an alternative way of describing it.

Calvin's method was most definitely objective. Calvin described what happened at the cross, instead of how he experienced it. It was not about the soul being healed and called home, but about living a life of self-denial in the pain and trials of this world like Jesus did. One can almost hear Calvin's own health issues being expressed in his doctrine of the cross. Most certainly one can hear the ecclesiastical degeneration that Calvin was fighting as well. After all, Calvin did not have the luxury of writing a nice story of conversion. Calvin was a reformer while acknowledging his responsibility and gifting by God to do his part as a teacher to guide the church down a new path. Calvin regarded the cross from the standpoint of a leader who was seeking the transformation of church and thereby society. When Calvin expressed the cross in terms of God's justice, he was saying that penance and indulgences should be abolished because they were holding people in bondage. Calvin's biggest opponent was not an individual such as Pelagius, it was the church itself. Calvin wanted to be received as credible in the eyes of both Rome and Kings. The opening paragraph of Calvin's prefatory address to King Francis I of France in the *Institutes* (1559) demonstrates Calvin's need for credibility:

> When I first set my hand to this work, nothing was farther from my mind, most glorious King, than to write something that might afterward be offered to Your Majesty. My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness. And I undertook this labour especially for our

> French countrymen, very many of whom I knew to be hungering and thirsting for Christ; but I saw very few who had been duly imbued with even a slight knowledge of him. The book itself witnesses that this was my intention, adapted as it is to a simple and, you may say, elementary form of teaching.

The last thing Calvin wanted was to be viewed as unpatriotic to his city or unfaithful to the church.

Calvin also had a soteriological orientation towards the cross because the church and society needed reform, which a proper knowledge of salvation could help to create. "Now indulgences flow from this doctrine of satisfaction. For our opponents pretend that to make satisfaction those indulgences supply what our powers lack" (*Ins*. 3.5.1). Calvin understood that Roman theologians of his day believed that the satisfaction of Christ was not wholly sufficient for salvation. Indulgences, fasting, and other duties were necessary to receive total forgiveness. For Calvin, a proper understanding of the cross at this point would help to remove those societal norms so that free forgiveness could be granted solely based on Christ's work. Built on these facts, I contend that Calvin was objective for a reason and not just because of his personality. He had a very serious task before him. I think Augustine would have respected how Calvin applied his theology in Calvin's time. Although Calvin does not talk about the soul like Augustine, Calvin's piety, expressed through his description of the cross, certainly maintains the spirit of Augustine. I am alluding to a spirit of grace and transformation to Christ-likeness.

The Meritorious Work of Christ

Calvin used the term "merit" with respect to Christ's work largely because of his historical context. "Christ [is] rightly and properly said to have merited God's grace and salvation for us" (*Ins*. 2.17.1). Calvin attributed no merit to human beings whatsoever because of humanity's fallen habits. As such, the cross merited salvation for Christians.

This argument placed all conversation of merit solely on the cross. Christ's merit is "opposed to all human righteousness as God's grace is" (*Ins*. 2.17.1). In contrast, I have not found a passage in Augustine's literature on this topic in relation to the cross; however, I could perceive Augustine agreeing with it. Considering Augustine's writings against Pelagius, it is unintelligible to fathom Augustine concurring with medieval Schoolmen that people can merit their salvation and spend less time in purgatory if they give more money to the church! This notion would have enraged Augustine as well. Augustine believed that everyone was fallen and in need of a Saviour when he wrote that "whatever be the quality or extent of the righteousness which we may definitely ascribe to the present life, there is not a man living in it who is absolutely free from all sin."[370] Although Augustine believed strongly in charity and good works, and therefore, understood being justified as a process that reflects one's love for God in action, I suggest that Augustine would have rejected merit in the late-medieval sense of the term.

The Union between Christ and Sinners

I have always thought that incorporation in Calvin's theology was brilliant. Through the bond of the Holy Spirit, a fallen sinner is united to Christ because of the cross. As a result of this union, all benefits are bestowed upon the believer in Christ – justification, sanctification, and glorification (*Ins*. 3.1.1). As an earlier forerunner, Augustine just simply did not have the depth in his theology for the carefully nuanced theological language that Calvin employed here. Calvin positioned Christ and the applicatory work of the Holy Spirit as central to his soteriological framework. Again, Augustine did not deposit the same emphasis on the Spirit as Calvin, although it was

[370] St. Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter", 113 (LXV).

clearly a part of his theology. At one point Augustine articulated that "an individual has been aided in the attainment of his good character not merely by the teaching of the law which God gave, but also by the infusion of the Spirit of grace."[371] Augustine was more receptive to a relational dynamic with respect to the cross, rather than incorporation into Christ. This is not to say that a relationship with God was not a part of Calvin's view. In fact, Calvin wrote very clearly that nearly all wisdom humans possess consists in "the knowledge of God and of ourselves" (*Ins*. 1.1.1). The Holy Spirit illumines, regenerates, and consecrates believers to become a holy temple for God as they grow in their walk with God (*Ins*. 3.1.4). Rather, I am referring here to different emphasises between the two men. Justification and a life of love and charity for Augustine was based on the lost soul finding its way home through the cross, hence my use of the term relational.

Summary

This chapter investigated the question, "What are the convergences and divergences of Augustine and Calvin's doctrines of the cross?" A textual dialogue between Augustine and Calvin was presented by giving appropriate weight to their contexts and influences while citing their own writings in order to answer that question. My intention was not to ascertain who was correct or incorrect, rather to probe into the mystery of the cross by comparatively analyzing the lives and writings of these two theologians. The foundational convergences were the love of God, the sacrifice of Christ, the incarnation and the two natures of Christ, original sin, and the victory of the cross. Their unique divergences were the ascent of the soul to God, the meritorious work of Christ, and the union between Christ and sinners. While recognizing the differences and similarities within these overarching convergences and divergences, the basic assessment

[371] St. Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter", 113 (LXVI).

that Calvin was primarily Augustinian with respect to grace was understood. Particular to the cross, I would suggest that Calvin was foundationally Augustinian with one notable exception – the justice of God. The plausible reasons for this exception are: the time gap between them along with the theologians who wrote in the interim, namely Anselm, Calvin's medieval context, Luther's conversion, and Calvin's own studies and perhaps even personality. Now that the main question raised in this thesis has been processed, I am left with specific conclusions drawn from my research.

CHAPTER 4
General Summary & Conclusions

It was the Apostle Paul who wrote to the Corinthians that he was determined to know nothing among them "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). The cross is an historical event (Matt. 26:32-56) that demonstrates the saving grace of God for sinners (Rom. 5:8). Spiritually, the historical event of the cross becomes a symbol representing that place or point in one's life where Christians for centuries have claimed to receive forgiveness, new life, salvation, and the example of a cruciform lifestyle they are called to imitate. What then is one to say about the cross of Jesus Christ? I wanted to expand my theological understanding of the cross by learning from two of the most prominent theologians in church history – St. Augustine of Hippo and John Calvin. As Christian theologians, the cross was also central to their own lives and theologies. In order to understand their respective doctrines of the cross, the question that I asked in this thesis was, "What are the convergences and divergences between St. Augustine and John Calvin's doctrines of the cross?" However, there was more behind this question than simply to garner a more in-depth understanding and appreciation of their similarities and differences.

In popular Calvinistic circles and literature, one will typically discover Augustine and Calvin lumped together as champions of grace. Since grace is their common denominator, they are defended as theologically in sync. Barbary Pitkin, Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Stanford University, explains, "The significance of St. Augustine for John Calvin's theology has been perhaps the only virtually uncontested issue in the

diverse and frequently conflicting perspectives on Calvin's theology."[372] I investigated that point in this project and concluded that Calvin was in fact theologically synchronous with Augustine.

Given the nature of my thesis, I employed a dialogical method of presentation. The paper took the form of a conversation or dialogue between Augustine, Calvin, and me. This involved presenting, through texts and analysis, Augustine's and Calvin's positions, which I then responded to respectively. I began in Chapter 1 by exploring Augustine's view of the cross. The format of that chapter considered the following: Augustine's life and context, the influential belief systems that came out of that context, the foundational principles of his doctrine, the key concepts that derive from those principles, Augustine's theological heritage, and then my analysis of his view. In Chapter 2, I explored John Calvin's view of the cross by following the same format as Chapter 1. Then in Chapter 3, I engaged these two men with each other based on their positions previously defined by using a point/counterpoint format through primary texts that helped to identify convergences and divergences. Coupled with a vast and thorough review of the literature on the topic under consideration, I am left with the following conclusions.

First, I was amazed to find such a lack of literature both on Augustine's doctrine of the cross in general and on comparative studies between Augustine and Calvin in particular given the amount of material they authored. Studies do exist as were noted in this paper. However, given the vast amount of literature on these two theological giants who presumably have much in common, I was puzzled by the lack of research in this area.

[372] Barbara Pitkin, "Nothing But Concupiscence: Calvin's Understanding of Sin and the *Via Augustini*", 347.

Therefore, I conclude that more helpful research could be done on Augustine's doctrine of the cross and comparative studies between Augustine and Calvin in general.

Second, another helpful area of comparative research between Augustine and Calvin is linguistic. Augustine wrote in Latin and understood Greek, despite his distaste for the Greek language. On the other hand, Calvin, influenced by Renaissance Humanism, was adept in Greek and Hebrew, and from his legal studies, proficient in Latin. He wrote in French for an increasingly theologically literate public and used Latin citations in the various stages of his *Institutes* and commentaries. Since this project assumed the use of English translations for these two theologians, terminological nuances between Augustine and Calvin in their original language of authorship would provide a fruitful area of discovery.

Third, I think that popular Calvinistic literature is correct in suggesting that Augustine and Calvin are theologically related with respect to grace and its surrounding doctrines, generally speaking. Although this does not answer the question of my thesis specifically, as a by-product of the doctrine of the cross, this point does play a part.

Fourth, foundationally, Calvin's doctrine of the cross is Augustinian with one notable exception – the justice of God. Again, the potential reasons for this exception are: the time gap between them along with the theologians who wrote in the interim, namely Anselm, Calvin's medieval context, Luther's conversion, Calvin's own studies, and perhaps even personality differences.

Fifth, given that the justice of God was the one prominent difference between Calvin's doctrine of the cross and that of Augustine's, I have noticed a lacuna in the secondary material. There is a near total absence of anything that discusses the influence

of Calvin's legal studies upon his theology.[373] It is true that the Bible does present the cross in a legal framework (Rom. 3:21-26); however, the extent to which Calvin operates within this legal structure becomes particularly noticeable when comparing him to someone from another era. This is a potential area of further research. To what extent did his studies in law influence his theology? How similar were the two fields of thought?

Sixth, I believe that much literature does not do enough diligence in understanding these two theologians or even reading the primary sources. At times, I was disappointed academically when quick references were given to either Augustine or Calvin individually or respectively without either citing them or understanding them properly. I also found a close correlation between what Calvin believed and what the author of the article or book on Calvin believed. For example, if an author believed in limited atonement, so did Calvin. If an author did not believe in limited atonement, astonishingly neither did Calvin. Theological presupposition in the secondary literature was customary when referring to these two theologians. I can, however, sympathize with wanting influential theologians on one's side. Nonetheless, since this paper attempted in a relatively unbiased way to learn from these two theologians by reading their primary sources while respecting their contexts, I conclude that not everyone chooses that method, and consequently risks misrepresenting Augustine and Calvin.

Finally, the work of Christ on the cross over 2,000 years ago continues to be a mystery to me. Although truths about the cross are revealed in the pages of scripture and theologians with the brightest minds like Augustine and Calvin guide one's learning, I am left with the only response I believe I can have in relation to the cross – worship. Blaise

[373] Aside from biographies noting that Calvin studied law or studies that focus on Calvin's theology of the Law in the Old Testament, I have yet to find even an essay about the influence of Calvin's legal studies upon his theology.

Pascal (1623-1662), a French Catholic philosopher, once wrote that, "God being thus hidden, every religion which does not say that God is hidden is not the true religion, and every religion which does not show the reason of it is unedifying."[374] Certain aspects of God will always remain hidden from the creature's point of view. Any religion must acknowledge that at some point. I believe that the cross of Christ will always be wrapped in mystery, even though elements of truth about it have been revealed to us in scripture. The Apostle Paul wrote it well when he said, "Oh the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Rom. 12:33).

[374] Blaise Pascal, *The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal*, trans. C. Kegan Paul (London, UK: George Bell and Sons, 1905), 207.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aland, Kurt. *Four Reformers: Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, & Zwingli*. Translated by James L. Schaaf. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979.

Armstrong, A. Hilary. "Dualism, Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian". *Studies in Neo-Platonism: Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism*. Volume 6. Edited by Richard Wallis. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992.

_____. *The Saint Augustine Lecture 1966: St. Augustine and Christian Platonism.* Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1967.

Aulén, Gustaf. *Christus Victor*. London, UK: S.P.C.K., 1953.

Bainton, Roland. *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1950.

Baloup, Daniel. "Hermits of Saint Augustine, Order of". *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*. Edited by André Vauchez. James Clarke & Co. Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, 2001 (e-reference edition). Distributed by Oxford University Press, Acadia University. 9 November, 2010. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY html?subview=Main&entry=t179.e1305

Bangs, Carl. *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971.

Barnes, Timothy D. "Beginnings of Donatism," *Journal of Theological Studies*. Volume 26. Number 1. April, 1975.

Battles, Ford Lewis. "Calvin as Literary Critic and Rhetorician". *Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia*. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles & Andre Malan Hugo. Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 1969.

BeDuhn, Jason David. "A Religion of Deeds: Scepticism in the Doctrinally Liberal Manichaeism of Faustus and Augustine". *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism, Organized by the International Association of Manichean Studies.* Boston, MA: Brill, 2009.

Bence, Evelyn. "Preface to the Hendrickson Edition". *John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Translated by Henry Beveridge. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008.

Benson, George Willard. *The Cross: Its History and Symbolism*. New York, NY: Hacker Art Books, 1976.

Blocher, Henri. "The Atonement in John Calvin's Theology". *The Glory of the Atonement*. Edited by Charles E. Hill & Frank A. James III. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Boersma, Hans. *Violence, Hospitality, & the Cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.

Boice James M. & Ryken, Philip G. *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002.

Bonner, Gerald. "The Doctrine of Sacrifice: Augustine and the Latin Patristic Tradition". *Sacrifice & Redemption*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000.

Browning, W.R.F. *A Dictionary of the Bible.* Oxford University Press Inc. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Acadia University. 10 February 2011. http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t94.e455.

Burns, J. Patout. "Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: the Shaping of Faith". *Augustine – Second Founder of the Faith*. Edited by Joseph Schnaubelt. New York, NY: P. Lang Publishing Company, 1990.

Busser, Fritz. "Elements of Zwingli's Thought in Calvin's *Institutes*". *In Honour of John Calvin, 1509-64: Papers from the 1986 International Calvin Symposium, McGill University*. Montreal, QC: McGill University, 1987.

Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries: Acts 14-28 & Romans*. Volume XIX. Translated by Henry Beveridge Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

_____. *Calvin's Commentaries: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, I&II Thessalonians, I&II Timothy, Titus, & Philemon*. Volume XXI. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

_____. *Calvin's Commentaries: Harmony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John 1-11*. Volume XVII. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

_____. *Calvin's Commentaries: Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John, James, II Peter, Jude*. Volume XXII. Translated by John Owen. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

_____. *Calvin's Commentaries: John 12-21 & Acts 1-13*. Volume XVIII. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

_____. *Calvin's Commentaries: Joshua & Psalms 1-35*. Volume IV. Translated by Henry Beveridge. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

_____. *Calvin's Commentaries: I & II Corinthians*. Volume XX. Translated by John Pringle. Volume XX. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2009.

_____. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeil. Translated by Ford L. Battles. Philadelphia, PA: John Knox Press, 1960.

Cary, Phillip. *Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008.

_____. "Where to Flee for Grace: The Augustinian Context of Luther's Doctrine of the Gospel". *Lutheran Forum*. Volume 30. No. 2. May 1996.

Chadwick, Henry. *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Chung, Sung Wook. "Taking up Our Cross: Calvin's Cross Theology of Sanctification". *John Calvin & Evangelical Theology: Legacy*. Edited by Sung Wook Chung. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Cobb, John B. & Griffin, David Ray. *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1976.

Coyle, J. Kevin. "Characteristics of Manichaeism in Roman North Africa". *New Light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism, Organized by the International Association of Manichean Studies*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2009.

Crouse, Robert. "Paucius Mutatis Verbis: St. Augustine's Platonis". *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*. Edited by Gerald Bonner. New York, NY: Routledge, 2000.

de Bèze, Théodore. *A Little Book of Christian Questions and Responses*. Translated by Kirk M. Summers. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986.

_____. "Life of John Calvin". *John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*. Volume I: Tracts. Part I. Edited and Translated by Henry Beveridge. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009.

de Vogüé, Adalbert. Pécout, Thierry. Flusin, Bernard. Congourdeau, Marie-Hélène, & Sinkewicz, Robert E. "Monasticism". *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*. Edited by André Vauchez. James Clarke & Co. Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, 2001 (e-reference edition) Oxford University Press, Acadia University. 9 November, 2010. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t179.e1889-s2>

Dobell, Brian. *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Edmondson, Stephen. *Calvin's Christology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Ellingsen, Mark. *The Richness of Augustine*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998.

Fee, Gordon. *BIBL 563: Galatians in a Week, July 25 to 29.* Vancouver, BC: Regent College, Summer, 2005.

Fitzgerald, Alan. Editor. *Augustine Through the Ages*. Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

Foster, Frank Hugh. *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*. New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1963.

Franks, Robert S. *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1962.

Frend, W.H.C. *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in North Africa*. Oxford, UK: Claredon Press, 1952.

_____. *The Rise of Christianity*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984.

Ganoczy, Alexandre. "John Calvin". *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*. Volume 1. Translated by Jeff Bach. Edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.

George, Timothy. "John Calvin: Comeback Kid". *Christianity Today*. September, 2009. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today International. http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/september/14.27.html

_____. *Theology of the Reformers*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988.

Greengrass, Mark. "The Theology and Liturgy of Reformed Christianity". *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion (1500-1660)*. Volume 6. Edited by R. Po-Chia Hsia. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Gründler, Otto. "John Calvin: Ingrafting into Christ". *The Spirituality of Western Christianity*. Edited by E. Rozanne Elder. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976.

Haller, William. *The Rise of Puritanism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1938.

Heckel, Matthew C. "Is R.C. Sproul Wrong about Martin Luther? An Analysis of R.C. Sproul's *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification* with Respect to Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Catholic Luther Scholarship". *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. Volume 47. No. 1. March, 2004.

Helm, Paul. *Calvin and the Calvinists*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982.

_____. *John Calvin's Ideas*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hendrix, Scott. "Martin Luther, Reformer". *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion (1500-1660)*. Volume 6. Edited by R. Po-Chia Hsia. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Hickman, James T. "The Friendship of Melanchthon and Calvin". *The Westminster Journal*, Volume 38. No. 2. December, 1976.

Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

Jenson, Matt. *The Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and Barth on Homo Incurvatus In Se*. New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2006.

Kayayan, Eric. "The Case of Michael Servetus: The Background and the Unfolding of the Case". *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, Volume 8, No. 2, 1992.

Kendall, Richard T. *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Kingdon, Robert M. "Augustine and Calvin". *Saint Augustine the Bishop: A Book of Essays*. New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1994.

_____. "The Calvinist Reformation in Geneva". *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion (1500-1660)*. Volume 6. Edited by R. Po-Chia Hsia. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Klotsche, E.H. *The History of Christian Doctrine*. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979.

Lane, Anthony N.S. *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Lawrence, David J. "Medieval Refinements in Augustinian Theology: Scholastic Foundations for the Reformation". *Fides et Historia*. Volume 33. No. 2. June, 2001.

Lieu, Samuel N.C. “Manichaeism”. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*. Edited by Susan Ashbrook Harvey & David G. Hunter. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Lloyd-Jones, D.M. *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987.

Luther, Martin. *Galatians: The Crossway Classic Commentaries*. Edited by Alister McGrath & J.I. Packer. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998.

_____. *Luther’s Works: Lectures on Romans*. Volume 25. Edited by Hilton C. Oswald. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1972.

Maag, Karin Y. “Hero or Villain? Interpretations of John Calvin and His Legacy”. *Calvin Theological Journal*. Volume 41. No. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Theological Seminary, 2006.

Madec, Goulven. "Augustinianism". *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*. Edited by André Vauchez. James Clarke & Co. Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages, 2001 (e-reference edition). Distributed by Oxford University Press, Acadia University. 9 November, 2010. http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t179.e270.

Malatesta, Michele. “Dialectic”. *Augustine Through the Ages*. Edited by Alan Fitzgerald. Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

Mallard, William. *Language and Love: Introducing Augustine’s Religious Thought Through the Confessions Story*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1994.

_____. “The Incarnation in Augustine’s Conversion”. *Recherches Augustiniennes*, Volume 15, January 1980.

McGrath, Alister E. *A Life of John Calvin*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1990.

_____. “The Shaping of Reality: Calvin and the Formation of Theological Vision”. *Toronto Journal of Theology*. Volume 25. No. 2. Toronto, ON: Toronto School of Theology, Fall 2009.

McLynn, Neil B. *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.

McNeill, David O. *Guillaume Budé and Humanism in the Reign of Francis I.* Geneva, CH: Librairie Droz, 1975.

McNeill, John T. *The History and Character of Calvinism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1954.

McPherson, Alexander. "Foreword", *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Glasgow, UK: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976.

Miethe, Terry L. "The Universal Power of the Atonement". *A Case for Arminianism: The Grace of God, The Will of Man*. Edited by Clark H. Pinnock. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

Migliore, Daniel L. "Christology in Context: The Doctrinal and Contextual Tasks of Christology Today". *Interpreter*. Volume 49. No. 3. July, 1995.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Trinity & The Kingdom*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.

Moo, Douglas. *The Epistle to the Romans: NICNT*. Edited by Gordon Fee. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.

Neuhaus, Richard J. *Death on a Friday Afternoon: Meditations on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross*. New York, NY: Basic, 2000.

Newman, Albert H. "Introductory Essay on the Manichean Heresy". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 4. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Nicole, Roger. "John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement". *Westminster Theological Journal*, Volume 47. No. 2. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

O'Connell, Robert J. "Augustinism: Locating the Center". *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine, Presbyter Factus Sum*. Edited by Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, & Roland J. Teske. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Company, 1993.

Ouspensky, Leonid. "The Meaning and Content of the Icon". *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*. Edited by Daniel B. Clendenin. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003.

Ozment, Steven. *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550*. Yale, CT: Yale University Press, 1980.

Packer, J.I. "Introductory Essay". *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967.

_____."Sacrifice and Satisfaction". *Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer: Celebrating God's Saving Work*. Volume 1. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998.

_____. "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution". *Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer: Celebrating the Saving Work of God*. Volume 1. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998.

Palm, Franklin Charles. *Calvinism and the Religious Wars*. New York, NY: Howard Fertig, 1971.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Jesus: God and Man*. 2nd Edition. Translated by Lewis L. Wilkins & Duane A. Priebe. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1977.

Pascal, Blaise. *The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal*. Translated by C. Kegan Paul. London, UK: George Bell and Sons, 1905.

Pelagius, Théodore . *Pelagius' Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translated with Introductory Notes*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.

_____. *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Cultures*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.

_____. *The Christian Tradition: A History of Development of Doctrine – Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*. Volume 4. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Peterson, Robert. *Calvin and the Atonement*. Great Britain, UK: Mentor, 1999.

_____. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1983.

_____. "Calvin on Christ's Saving Work". *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes*. Edited by David W. Hall & Peter A. Lillback. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian &Reformed Publishing, 2008.

Pinnock, Clark H. Editor. "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology". *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

Piper, John. *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000.

Pitkin, Barbara. "Nothing But Concupiscence: Calvin's Understanding of Sin and the *Via Augustini*". *Calvin Theological Journal*. Volume 34. 1999.

_____. "Redefining Repentance: Calvin and Melanchthon". *Calvinus Praeceptor Ecclesiae: Papers on the International Congress on Calvin Research, Princeton,*

August 20-24, 2002. Edited by Herman J. Selderhuis. Geneva, CH: Librairie Droz, 2004.

Placher, William C. "Individualism, Process, Liberation, and The Work of Christ." *Encounter*, Volume 47. No. 3. Summer, 1986.

Podskalsky, Gerhard; Karpozilos, Apostolos; & Cutler, Anthony. "Cross". *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Edited by Alexander P. Kazhdan, Oxford University Press, 1991. Acadia University. 10 February, 2011. http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t174.e1284.s0001.

Portalié, Eugène. "Teaching of St. Augustine of Hippo". *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Volume. 2. New York, NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 9 November, 2010. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02091a.htm>.

Quash, Ben. "Donatism: Do Christian ministers need to be faultless for their ministrations to be effective". *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe*. Edited by Ben Quash & Michael Ward. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007.

Rist, John M. *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

_____. "Augustine of Hippo". *The Medieval Theologians*. Edited by G.R. Evans. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

Rorem, Paul. "Augustine, the Medieval Theologians, and the Reformation". *The Medieval Theologians*. Edited by G.R. Evans. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

Rozenberg, Stanley P. "Interpreting Atonement in Augustine's Preaching". *The Glory of the Atonement*. Edited by Charles E. Hill & Frank A. James III. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Rupp, Gordon E. "Augustine: Father of Both Reformations". *Epworth Review*. Volume 17. No. 2. May, 1990.

Schaff, Philip. Editor. "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 1. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. Editor. "Prolegomena: The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Chrysostom*. Volume 9. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Sharp, Larry D. "The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine". *The Evangelical Quarterly*. Edited by F.F. Bruce. Volume LII. No. 2. April-June, 1980.

Sheible, Heinz. "Philip Melanchthon". *The Reformation Theologians.* Edited by Carter Lindberg. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Smits, Luchesius. *Saint Augustine Dans L'Oeuvre de Jean Calvin*. Volume 1. Paris, FR: Van Gorcum & Company, 1958.

Sowards, J. Kelley. *Desiderius Erasmus*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1975.

Spijker, W van't. "The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the Institutes". *John Calvin's Institutes: His Opus Magnum: Proceedings of the Second South African Congress for Calvin Research.* Potchefstrom, RSA: Potchefstrom University, 1986.

Sproul, R.C. *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995.

St. Anselm, "Cur Deus Homo". *Saint Anselm: Basic Writings*. 2nd Edition. Translated by S.N. Deane. IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962.

St. Augustine. "Acts or Disputation Against Fortunatus". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 4. Edited by. Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "Concerning Faith of Things Not Seen". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 3. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "Expositions on the Psalms". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 8. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "Of the Morals of the Catholic Church". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 4. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On Baptism, Against the Donatists". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 4. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On Faith and the Creed". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 3. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On the Creed: A Sermon to the Catechumens". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 3. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On the Gospel of John". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 7. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On the Grace of Christ". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 5. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On the Spirit and the Letter". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 5. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "On the Trinity". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 3. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "Sermons on New Testament Lessons". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 6. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "The City of God". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 2. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "The Confessions of St. Augustine". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 1. Edited by. Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "The Enchiridion". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 3. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

_____. "The Epistle of John". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Augustine*. Volume 7. Edited by. Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

St. John Chrysostom. "Homilies on St. John". *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Chrysostom*. Volume 14. Edited by Philip Schaff. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Steinmetz, David C. "Calvin and the Monastic Ideal". *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Edited by Peter Dykema. New York, NY: E.J. Brill, 1993.

_____. *Calvin in Context*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Stott, John. *The Cross of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

Taylor, John Hammond. "St. Augustine and the *Hortensius* of Cicero". *Studies in Philology*. Volume LX, No. 3. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, July, 1963.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.

The New Catholic Encyclopedia. 2nd Edition. Volume 1. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2003.

_____. 2nd Edition. Volume 11. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2003.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. 3rd Edition. Edited by E.A. Livingstone. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Thompson, Mark. "Calvin on the Cross of Christ". *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*. Edited by Sung Wook Chung. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Tubach, Jürgen & Zakeri, Mohsen. "Mani's Name". *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West: Proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht Symposium of the International Association of Manichean Studies*. Edited by Johannes Van Oort, Otto Wermelinger, & Gregor Wurst. Leiden, NL: Brill, 2001.

Turner, H.E.W. *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1952.

Van Biema, David. "10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now: The New Calvinism". *Time Magazine*. Volume 173. No. 11. New York, NY: Time Warner. March 23, 2009. http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1884779_1884782_1884760,00.html

Vanderschaaf, Mark E. "Predestination and Certainty of Salvation in Augustine and Calvin". *Reformed Review*. Volume 30. No. 1. Autumn, 1976.

Vaught, Carl. *Access to God in Augustine's Confessions: Books X-XII*. New York, NY: State University of New York, 2005.

_____. *Encounters with God in Augustine's Confessions: Books VII-IX*. New York, NY: State University of New York, 2004.

_____. *The Journey Toward God in Augustine's Confessions: Books I-IV*. New York, NY: State University of New York, 2003.

Vos, Arvin. "Calvin: The Theology of a Christian Humanist". *Christianity and the Classics: The Acceptance of a Heritage*. Edited by Wendy E. Helleman. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.

Wadkins, Timothy H. "A Recipe for Intolerance: A Study of the Reasons Behind John Calvin's Approval of Punishment for Heresy". *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. Volume 26. No. 4. December 1983.

Walker, Williston. *A History of The Christian Church*. 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

_____. *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004.

Walther, Daniel. "Marguerite d'Angoulême and the French Lutherans: A Study in Pre-Calvin Reformation in France I". *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. Volume 3. No. 1. January 1965.

Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge. *Calvin and Augustine*. Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956.

Webster, John. "Atonement, History and Narrative". *Theologische Zeitschrift*. Volume 42. No. 2. 1986.

Weidenaar, James B. "Augustine's Theory of Concupiscence in *City of God*, Book XIV". *Calvin Theological Journal*. Volume 30. No. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1995.

Weinandy, Thomas. *Does God Suffer?*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2000.

Wendel, François. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought.* Translated by Philip Mairet. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1950.

Wengert, Timothy. "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever': The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip Melanchthon". *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence Beyond Wittenberg*. Edited by Karin Maag. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Wills, Garry. *Saint Augustine*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1999.

Zachman, Randall C. "John Calvin". *The Reformation Theologians*. Edited by Carter Lindberg. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

_____. "Medieval and Reformation Readings of Paul". *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification*. Edited by David E. Aune. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2006.

Zizioulas, John. *Being as Communion*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.