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**“A History of the Anglican Church—Part XXIII (Sec. 1):
An Essay on the Role of Christian Lawyers and Judges within the Secular
State”©**

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The ideas expressed in this Apostolate Paper are wholly those of the author, and subject to modification as a result of on-going research into this subject matter. This paper is currently being revised and edited, but this version is submitted for the purpose of sharing Christian scholarship with clergy, the legal profession, and the general public.

PREFACE

The organized Christian church of the Twenty-First Century is in crisis and at a crossroad. Christianity as a whole is in flux. And I believe that Christian lawyers and judges are on the frontlines of the conflict and changes which are today challenging both the Christian church and the Christian religion. Christian lawyers and judges have the power to influence and shape the social, economic, political, and legal landscape in a way that will allow Christianity and other faith-based institutions to evangelize the world for the betterment of all human beings. I write this essay, and a series of future essays, in an effort to persuade the American legal profession to rethink and reconsider one of its most critical and important jurisprudential foundations: the Christian religion. To this end, I hereby present the thirty-fourth essay in this series: “A History of the Anglican Church—Part XXIII.”

INTRODUCTION¹

“What must I do to attain everlasting life?” was perhaps the very first theological question that I entertained as a child. Three Bible stories distinctly made an impression upon me during those years: the story of Jesus conversing with the Samaritan woman at the well²; the story of Jesus conversing secretly with the

¹ This paper on the Protestant Reformation in England (1530-1650) is dedicated to the Primitive Baptist Churches of North America. Two of these churches, the Hopewell Baptist Church (Fort Union, Florida) and the Queen Chapel Primitive Baptist Church (Dowling Park, Florida) early and largely shaped my evangelical ideas of church liturgy, the doctrine of grace and justification by faith alone, and holiness.

² John 4:4-26: (“But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where

Jewish ruler and Pharisee Nicodemus³; and the story of the Apostle Paul's sudden conversion while traveling on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians.⁴ I found St. Paul's descriptions of the born-again Christian to be both enlightening and instructive:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye *present your bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but *be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

For I say, through the *grace given* unto me, to every man that is among you, *not to think of himself more highly*

do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."').

³ John 3:1-8 ("There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.")

⁴ Acts 26:14-18: (During his testimony before King Agrippa, Paul said: "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.")

*than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*⁵

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and *ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*. For the *flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: *so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*.

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the *works of the flesh* are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.⁶

And in my secular philosophy or political theory courses in college, whether I studied Karl Marx's dialectical materialism or Milton Friedman's political economy or John Kenneth Galbraith socioeconomic critiques of capitalism or Jean Paul Sarte's existentialism or W.E.B Du Bois' Afrocentric political economy and sociology, *St. Paul's fundamental diagnosis of the human condition was never seriously discredited or called into question*. And throughout my college and law-school years, and during my first several years as a member of the bar, I found St.

⁵ Romans 12:1-3.

⁶ Galatians 5:16-26.

Paul's struggles with the flesh to be insightful in terms of understanding the human condition at every level and layer of the social order, whether economic, political, ecclesiastical, secular, or sacred. As a lawyer, I could readily see that St. Paul's prescriptive admonitions for walking "in the Spirit" could have, as a practical matter, curtailed many dire legal problems, particularly violations of criminal laws and sexual and family abuse. Nor did I draw a fine distinction between what St. Paul called walking "in the Spirit," and the secular pursuit of virtue, occupational excellence and economic prosperity, and being a good neighbor, or a good, law-abiding citizen. Fulfilling the "law of Christ"⁷ seemed coterminous with discharging, in good faith, the rest of our legal and civil duties towards fellow citizens. As the judicious Rev. Hooker argued in the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, the Christian faith and Anglo-American polity and law appeared in my mind as two sides of the same coin.⁸

It next became quite obvious to me that St. Augustine of Hippo built his theology on "grace, sanctification, and justification" upon St. Paul's writings. And years later, I found Methodist founder John Wesley's prescription⁹ for entering

⁷ The Law of Christ is to "love ye one another" (John 15:12); to do justice and judgement (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3).

⁸ See, e.g., Roderick O. Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL.: Xlibris Publishing, 2015).

⁹ "John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, described God's grace as threefold: prevenient grace, justifying grace, [and] sanctifying grace. **Prevenient Grace[:]** Wesley understood grace as God's active presence in our lives. This presence is not dependent on human actions or human response. It is a gift — a gift that is always available, but that can be refused. God's grace stirs up within us a desire to know God and empowers us to respond to God's invitation to be in relationship with God. God's grace enables us to discern differences between good and evil and makes it possible for us to choose good.... God takes the initiative in relating to humanity. We do not have to beg and plead for God's love and grace. God actively seeks us! **Justifying Grace [:]** Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). And in his letter to the Roman Christians, Paul wrote: "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). These verses demonstrate the justifying grace of God. They point to reconciliation, pardon, and restoration. Through the work of God in Christ our sins are forgiven, and our relationship with God is restored. According to John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, the image of God — which has been distorted by sin — is renewed within us through Christ's death. Again, this dimension of God's grace is a gift. God's grace alone brings us into relationship with God. There are no hoops through which we have to jump in order to please God and to be loved by God. God has acted in Jesus Christ. We need only to respond in faith. **Conversion [:]** This process of salvation involves a change in us that we call conversion. Conversion is a turning around, leaving one orientation for another. It may be sudden and dramatic, or gradual and cumulative. But in any case, it's a new beginning. Following Jesus' words to Nicodemus, "You must be born anew" (John 3:7 RSV), we speak of this conversion as rebirth, new life in Christ, or regeneration. Following Paul and Luther, John Wesley called this process justification. Justification is what happens when Christians abandon all those vain attempts to justify themselves before God, to be seen as "just" in God's eyes through religious and moral practices. It's a time when God's "justifying grace" is experienced and accepted, a time of pardon and forgiveness, of new peace and joy and love. Indeed, we're justified by God's grace through faith. Justification is also a time of repentance — turning away from behaviors rooted in sin and toward actions that express God's love. In this conversion we can expect to receive assurance of our present salvation through the Holy Spirit "bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16). **Sanctifying Grace [:]** Salvation

into, and sustaining, a holy life, as the perfect supplement to St. Paul's and St. Augustine's theology on conversion, sanctification, and holiness. (John Wesley divided "grace" into three parts: prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace.)¹⁰ Hence, the theological foundations of my own understanding of God's merciful grace and, subsequently, walking in sanctified holiness have been built largely upon the writings of St. Paul ---> St. Augustine ---> Methodist founder John Wesley.¹¹ For in John Wesley's 18th century philosophy and theology, I saw a continuation of the 16th century Protestant doctrines established in the theologies of Martin Luther and John Calvin. (Wesley's 18th century theology grew out of the 17th-century English Puritan tradition that had been greatly influenced by Luther and Calvin. But Wesley's theology also retained an Anglican "High-Church" distinctiveness that significantly differentiated itself from Luther's and Calvin's theologies). Wesley, Luther, and Calvin were each concerned about the "organized Church" and its many regulations and canons which actually impeded men and women from entering to, and maintaining, the holy life and union with Christ.¹² All of these men were focused on the spiritual edification of the lay Christian.

As I have read all of these great theologians over the years, I drew heavily upon my own Christian up-bringing in the rural Bible belt of Northern Florida—where the voices of my dear mother (an evangelical Methodist) and step-father (a Baptist deacon) who constantly echoed the same concerns about the "organized Church" and its potential to suffocate individual spiritual growth. My idea of Christian conversion and holiness is thus deeply evangelical and deeply influenced by the experience of the Holy Ghost suddenly descending upon shouting, tearful worshippers in the rural African American churches of Northern Florida during the late 1970s and early 1980s. These sudden conversion experiences usually marked the beginnings of a new Christian journey, sometimes followed by baptism and

is not a static, one-time event in our lives. It is the ongoing experience of God's gracious presence transforming us into whom God intends us to be. John Wesley described this dimension of God's grace as sanctification, or holiness. Through God's sanctifying grace, we grow and mature in our ability to live as Jesus lived. As we pray, study the Scriptures, fast, worship, and share in fellowship with other Christians, we deepen our knowledge of and love for God. As we respond with compassion to human need and work for justice in our communities, we strengthen our capacity to love neighbor. Our inner thoughts and motives, as well as our outer actions and behavior, are aligned with God's will and testify to our union with God. We're to press on, with God's help, in the path of sanctification toward perfection. By perfection, Wesley did not mean that we would not make mistakes or have weaknesses. Rather, he understood it to be a continual process of being made perfect in our love of God and each other and of removing our desire to sin." <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/our-wesleyan-heritage>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Between these three erudite theologians—Luther, Calvin, and Wesley-- I embraced John Wesley and the Wesleyan doctrine, largely due to the fact that the Methodist churches had made the most personal impact upon my development and growth as a Christian.

always accompanied with a life-long commitment to Christian holiness. These religious ideas came to me primarily from the black Baptists and the black Methodists of the rural South. And they came often in the guise of wonderful Negro spirituals and melodies, such as:

“I know it was the blood”

I know it was the blood,
I know it was the blood,
I know it was the blood for me;
One day when I was lost
He died on the cross,
I know it was the blood for me.

He never said a mumblin’ word,
He never said a mumblin’ word,
He never said a mumblin’ word for me;
One day when I was lost
He died on the cross,
He never said a mumblin’ word for me....

“Let Jesus Lead You”

Let Jesus Lead You
Let Jesus Lead You
Let Jesus Lead... You
All the way
All the way from
Earth to Heaven
Let Jesus lead you, all the way

He's a mighty good leader
He's a mighty good leader
He's a mighty good leader
All the way
All the way from
Earth to Heaven
Let Jesus lead you all the way

And, of course, I can recall no black Baptist service in the rural South that did not include Charles Wesley's soulful "A Charge," to wit:

"A Charge"

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill:
Oh, may it all my pow'rs engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall forever die.

Community singings and rotating choirs filled the liturgical calendars of our rural churches in those days. And, as I recall, the primary mission work of the church was to instill the Christian walk of faith, through saving the lost sinners, performing the Holy Communion, Baptism, the rites of foot-washings, and other forms of mission work. This wonderful Christian experience remained the barometer with which I would gauge other Christians and other Christian denominations. I was very fortunate in those days have had a knowledgeable Bible-expert and a devoted evangelical Christian in my dear mother, who never hesitated to stress to me that there were two churches: that is to say, the physical church that is visible, and the spiritual church that is invisible; and, she would also stress to me that some of the persons who actually attend the physical, visible church were really hypocrites and not true, authentic Christians. She would often explain to me that the spiritual, invisible church existed in this present world, but it could not now be ascertained with accuracy, since only God knows who the true, elect men and women are. For this reason, even as a child, I never associated church corruption with the true, authentic Christian faith. I would hear about pastoral theft and infidelity in many of the rural and urban African American churches in Northern Florida, but these stories never caused me to ever doubt the

authenticity of the Christian faith. For, indeed, as my dear mother had taught me, the true church is not necessarily confined to the organized, institutional church.

When in college and law school, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, I became fascinated with the Roman Catholic Church, I remained unwilling to allow the news or the history of church corruption to deter me from taking an objective and fair look at the Catholic faith. This unwillingness to pre-judge the Catholic faith has been a blessing. As I have stated in previous essays, I found the Roman Catholic Church to be missing link between my deep interest in the humanities, history, philosophy, and law and the Christian faith. My Protestant background and faith did not offer the same critical link between my secular education and the Christian faith, nor could it. The Roman Catholic Church was for several centuries, from about 325 A.D. until about 1560 A.D., the sole or primary church through all of Western Christendom. I thus discovered from the Roman Catholics many new concepts, such as the “Seven Sacraments” of baptism, confirmation, penance, Eucharist, anointing the sick, marriage, and holy orders. I learned concepts such as the “Seven Deadly Sins” of pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. I learned about the “Four Cardinal Virtues” of prudence, courage, temperance, and justice. And, most significantly, I was introduced to St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas. Why did my Protestant up-bringing and heritage hide all of these treasure troves of Catholic Christian dogma and liturgical rites from me? Indeed, I found the Catholic structure to be complimentary, and not antagonistic, to my Protestant ideals of holiness and of being “born-again.”

As a consequence, from the mid-1990s onward, I have had a love affair with the entire Christian experience-- both Protestant and Catholic-- and I have refused to jettison the wealth of knowledge that I have received from both traditions. To that degree, I imagine, I am probably in perfect alignment with the Church of England and with the “Anglican-Methodist” heritage, which I consider to be the foundation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church which baptized and confirmed me as a churchman in 1981. I almost converted to the Roman Catholic faith during the early 1990s, but as result of the wise and cautious objections from dear family members, I took a step back in order to seriously explore the whole history of Protestantism and, specifically, the histories of the Anglican Church, the various Methodist churches, Eastern Orthodox churches and the Black American church denominations. This paper, which is set forth in four parts, is largely a documentary history of my life-long exploration into the differences between the Protestant Christian faith and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Protestant Reformation which swept through Western Europe during the 16th and 17th Century did not leave the Church of England unscathed. As we have seen in previous papers within this series, the publications of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the King James Version of the Bible in the English language commenced the process of democratizing both church and state in England. The Church of England's catholic and Romanist heritage, together with its ecclesiastical hierarchy and episcopacy naturally came under attack from devoted Anglicans who now reading the radical Christian theology that flowed into England from Europe. This paper shall focus on the theological ideas of two of the most important European reformers of the 16th Century, to wit, Martin Luther of Germany (1483-1546)(Part 2) and John Calvin of Switzerland (1509-1564)(Part 3), and at how their ideas impacted the Church of England, through various English dissenters (Part 4). But first, this paper looks at the most important of St. Augustine of Hippo's theological ideas that impacted the Protestant Reformation. This paper argues, in essence, that St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430, A.D.) became the founding father of the European Protestant Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries. St. Augustine's theology was received as a reflection of the true, authentic Christian faith of the ancient church, before it had become tainted several centuries later through the corrupt practices of the Medieval Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther was himself an Augustinian monk, and John Calvin looked repeatedly to St. Augustine's ideas when refuting and rebutting corrupt Roman Catholic practices, and when vindicating the complete separation from the Roman Catholic Church. Both Luther and Calvin cut through the web of Catholic canons and traditions that had become superfluous, meaningless, repressive, and corrupt; and they both appealed to the texts of the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient church fathers, such as St. Augustine of Hippo, in order to justify the Protestant Reformation.

Perhaps the most controversial and potent theological concept that grew out of the Protestant Reformation was the idea of "justification by faith alone." The fundamental question was this: "What are the necessary components of Christian salvation?" The answer to this question could undermine the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and dispense with many of its practices. The question of "who is saved?" or "what does it take to be saved?" is still today a hotly-debated theological question among Christians, and the following passage certainly illustrates its historical significance:

In Christian theology, justification is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time making a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. The means of justification is an area

of significant difference among Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism. In Lutheranism and Calvinism, righteousness from God is viewed as being credited to the sinner's account through faith alone, without works.

Broadly speaking, Catholic, Methodist and Orthodox Christians distinguish between initial justification, which in their view ordinarily occurs at baptism, and final salvation, accomplished after a lifetime of striving to do God's will (sanctification).

In Catholic doctrine, forgiveness of sin exists, and in the Protestant doctrine, sin is merely "covered" and not imputed. Catholics believe faith as is active in charity and good works (*fides caritate formata*) can justify man, Protestants believe faith without works can justify man because Christ died for sinners, but that anyone who truly has faith will produce good works as a product of faith, as a good tree produces good fruit. For Lutherans justification can be lost with the loss of faith, for Catholics justification can be lost by mortal sin.

Justification is often seen as being the theological fault line that divided Catholic from the Lutheran and Reformed traditions of Protestantism during the Reformation.¹³

The question of justification also impacted the Church of England during the 16th and 17th centuries, because there the Protestants were divided among themselves. There were Anglicans who favored keeping many of the Roman Catholic liturgy and theology, but there were other Anglicans who favored the ideas of Luther, Calvin, and even the Anabaptist doctrines. Opposition to the Church of England and its established hierarchy continued to be a serious offense, and so many Anglican dissenters faced serious and direct consequences for taking a stand against established church doctrine. This resulting conflict from within the Anglican Church largely comprised the most important events in English history during the 17th and 18th centuries.

SUMMARY

This paper, which is a summation of St. Augustine of Hippo's theology on "justification, grace, and faith," is Part 1 of a four-part series on the Protestant

¹³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_\(theology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_(theology)).

Christian theology that impacted the Church of England during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Protestant Reformation in England cannot be correctly understood without understanding the ideas of Martin Luther of Germany (1483-1546) and John Calvin of France and Switzerland (1509-1564). And both Luther's and Calvin's polemics against the Roman Catholic order cannot be rightly understood without an understanding of St. Augustine's theology on "justification through faith alone."¹⁴ For it must be understood that Luther and Calvin did not see themselves as creating a "new holy catholic church," but instead they considered themselves as preserving the old one. They both believed that the Roman Catholic Church of their day was thoroughly corrupt and had veered away from teachings and example of the ancient church, the Sacred Scriptures, and the original, ancient teachings of the Church Fathers. And they both relied heavily upon the theology of St. Augustine of Hippo in order to lay the theological foundations of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. John Calvin's landmark work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (discussed in Part 3 of this paper) especially relied on St. Augustine's theology in order to impeach many Roman Catholic liturgical practices and theological doctrines. And the Augustinian monk Martin Luther's famous *Ninety-Five Theses*, which set the Protestant Reformation in motion, adopted a definition of "justification by faith alone" that closely resembled the same theological concepts found in St. Augustine's *On Grace and Free Will*, discussed here in Part I of this paper). For these and other reasons, St. Augustine of Hippo may very be considered to be a founding father of the Protestant Reformation.

Part XXIII. Anglican Church: "Christian Theology and Protestant Dissent in England (1530-1650)" (Part 1)

Section I. St. Augustine's *On Grace and Free Will*

In the sixteenth century, Saint Augustine of Hippo's catholic theology on grace and justification through faith became the foundation of the Protestant Reformation. In Germany, the Roman Catholic priest Martin Luther (1483-1546) and, in France, the Roman Catholic humanist lawyer John Calvin (1509-1564) embraced St. Augustine of Hippo as their leading Catholic authority which they relied upon when attacking the abuses and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason, in order to fully understand the Protestant Reformation in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, it is necessary to compare the doctrine

¹⁴ See, e.g., Saint Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* (Louisville, Kentucky: GLH Publishing, 2017).

of one of the churches' greatest theologians in St. Augustine of Hippo to the prevailing practices of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches.

First and foremost, the Roman Catholic Church held, and still holds, that "Sacred Tradition" was part and parcel of the Bible and should be read in tandem with, and on par with, the Old and New Testaments. Incorporated within this "Sacred Tradition" included a battery of canon laws and regulations, including the Seven Sacraments of baptism, Eucharist, confirmation, reconciliation (penance), anointing of the sick, marriage, and holy orders. Church administration within the Roman Catholic Church thus became complex and extravagant and corrupt. And since the church held the "keys to the kingdom of heaven," it also held the power to manufacture a battery of rules, regulations, and requirements in order to compel men and women to submit to church authority or risk excommunication from the church and risk forfeiture of entrance into the kingdom of Christ. Church corruption, greed, and graft led many of its thoughtful, sincere priests to question church practices, by comparing those practices to the practices and teachings of the ancient church practices in the Books of Acts, in the various writings of St. Paul, and of the Church fathers such as St. Augustine of Hippo. The result was the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, out from which emerged the "doctrine of justification by faith alone." This doctrine was, of course, made notorious among the Catholics and popular among the Protestants by the Augustinian monk Martin Luther during the early 1500s. However, as we shall see below, St. Augustine's *On Grace and Free Will* initially set forth the "doctrine of justification by faith alone" during the fifth century.

A. God's Providence governs all Human Affairs, both those of Church and Secular society.

For St. Augustine, God's divine providence governs every aspect of human affairs, whether secular or sacred in nature. His assessment of divine providence is firmly supported in several Bible references:

Psalm 103:19 ("The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all"); Genesis 45:5-8 (where Joseph explained that God's Providence had permitted that he be sold into Egypt, stating: "Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. "For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor

harvesting. "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.... Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt"); Psalm 145:17 ("The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds"); Job 11:7-9 ("Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? "They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? "Its measure is longer than the earth And broader than the sea); Romans 8:28 ("And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"); Psalm 22:28 ("For the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations"); Daniel 4:35 ("All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?"); and Nehemiah 9:6 ("You alone are the LORD You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You.")

In *The City of God*, St. Augustine further drives home the point that within the Christian worldview, the king or magistrate (i.e., the secular state) must not be construed to be outside of God's divine providence and jurisdiction, contending that:

For he who denies that all things, which either angels or men can give us, are in the hand of the one Almighty, is a madman. The Platonist Plotinus discourse concerning providence, and, from the beauty of flowers and foliage, proves that from the supreme God, whose beauty is unseen and ineffable, providence reaches down even to these earthly things here below....¹⁵

Therefore God supreme and true, with His Word and Holy Spirit (which three are one), one God omnipotent, creator and maker of every soul and of every body; by whose gift all are happy who are happy through verity and not through vanity;

¹⁵ Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 319.

who made man a rational animal consisting of soul and body, who, when he sinned, neither permitted him to go unpunished, nor left him without mercy; who has given to the good and to the evil, being in common with stones, vegetable life in common with trees, sensuous life in common with brutes, intellectual life in common with angels alone; from whom is every mode, every species, every order; from whom are measure, number, weight; from whom is everything which has an existence in nature, of whatever kind it be, and of whatever value; from whom are the seeds of forms and the forms of seeds, and the motion of seeds and of forms; who gave also to flesh its origin, beauty, health, reproductive fecundity, disposition of members, and the salutary concord of its parts; who also to the irrational soul has given memory, sense, appetite, but to the rational soul, in addition to these, has given intelligence and will; who has not left, not to speak of heaven and earth, angels and men, but not even the entrails of the smallest and most contemptible animal, or the feather of a bird, or the little flower of a plant, or the leaf of a tree, without an harmony, and, as it were, a mutual peace among all its parts;-- *that God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence.*¹⁶

Therefore, the Christian church (both Catholic and Protestant) has never conceptualized the province of the king, the civil government, or the secular state to be completely outside of the divine providence of the Judea-Christian God. The Christian church has always held to the idea that even non-Christian governors (whether kings or magistrates) were placed in their positions of authority by the Judea-Christian God, in order to mete out justice and judgment, and to carry out His will.¹⁷ For this reason, we may surmise that the Christian need not worry so much about evangelizing the non-Christian king or magistrate who is an unwilling sinner, a heathen, an unbeliever, or the unrepentant tyrant, since God in due time will turn his or her will-power in such a manner, and in such a way, as to achieve His divine purpose, which is ultimate justice. “God does whatsoever he wills in the hearts of even wicked men,” St. Augustine wrote.¹⁸ In *On Grace and Free Will*, he argues that in the Old Testament, it is readily apparent that God uses non-believers

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁷ Romans 13: 1-7.

¹⁸ *On Grace and Free Will*, pp. 82-87.

as his agents in order to prove various divine points regarding his sovereignty and providence. Thus citing 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezekiel, Esther, Proverbs, and Psalms, St. Augustine points out that God used the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Arabians, King Amaziah, King Joash, and King Ahasuerus (the husband of Queen Esther), in order to show that “the Almighty sets in motion even in the innermost hearts of men the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatsoever He wishes to perform through them,-- even He who knows not how to will anything in unrighteousness.”¹⁹ Hence, according to St. Augustine, the “secular civil state or government” is never truly relinquished from the grip of the Judea-Christian God, “whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways are past finding out.”²⁰ This idea of God’s divine providence was readily received and incorporated into Protestant doctrine, as we shall observe from the writings of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and references to several other Protestant theologians, such as John Wesley. In England, this idea of God’s divine providence was also manifest in political treatises as well, such as Thomas Hobbe’s *Leviathan* and John Locke’s various *Essays on Civil Government*.

B. God’s Providence (i.e., His omnipotence and omniscience) does not abrogate our Free Will.

St. Augustine answered critics who questioned the omnipotence and omniscience of God. These critics often asked questions such as: *why does such a omniscient and omnipotent God grant “free will” to human beings, if he had complete control over their circumstances and already knows, from beginning to end, their sealed fate?* To a degree, St. Augustine responds by saying: “[y]ou must refer the matter, then, to the hidden determinations of God...”²¹ In *The City of God*, he argues that “to confess that God exists, and at the same time to deny that He has foreknowledge of future things, is the most manifest folly.”²² “[W]e, in order that we may confess the most high and true God Himself, do confess His will, supreme power, and prescience.”²³

Cicero²⁴, the Stoics²⁵, and, to a degree, the Pelegians²⁶, did not believe that God had perfect foreknowledge of future events, because to hold that God had

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

²¹ Ibid., p. 91.

²² *The City of God*, p. 152.

²³ Ibid., p. 153.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 153.

foreknowledge is to disavow a belief in the free will of human beings. In other words, Cicero and the Stoics contended that, if God already knows how events will end in the future, then we must deny that human beings really have free will. They contended that God's omniscience must necessarily imply predestination, since those persons who are the "elect" have already been chosen from the beginning of creation. Cicero believed in the "doctrine of fate." According to that doctrine, "if all future things have been foreknown, they will happen in the order in which they have been foreknown; and if they come to pass in this order, there is a certain order of things foreknown by God; and if a certain order of things, then a certain order of causes, for nothing can happen which is not preceded by some efficient cause. But if there is a certain order of causes according to which everything happens which does happen, then by fate, says [Cicero], all things happen which does happen."²⁷ The "doctrine of fate" and that of predestination are very similar, in that "free will" of human beings are significantly diminished, or denied, in light of the fact that "fate" and "predestination" have already sealed the outcome from the beginning of creation.

St. Augustine answered these objections to the "doctrine of free will." He held that the Christian believes in both "free will" and "predestination." "Now, against the sacrilegious and impious darings of reason, we assert both that God knows all things before they come to pass, and that we do by our free will whatsoever we know and feel to be done by us only because we will it.... [I]t does not follow that, though there is for God a certain order of all causes, there must therefore be nothing depending on the free exercise of our own wills, for our wills themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to God, and is embraced by His foreknowledge, for human wills are also causes of human actions; and He who foreknew all the causes of things would certainly among those causes no have been ignorant of our wills."²⁸ God created the "human will" as a "voluntary cause," of which he has foreknowledge; but we human beings, in our finite knowledge of God's foreknowledge, cannot abdicate our duty and responsibility to exercise our free will to do good and to obey God. For we are not privileged to know God's foreknowledge; nor are we with privilege to question "the secret providence of God, whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out."²⁹

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *On Grace and Free Will*, pp. 88-90.

²⁷ *The City of God*, p. 153.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 154-155.

²⁹ *On Grace and Free Will*, p. 88.

This question of “predestination” would be later addressed by Luther, Calvin and Wesley.

C. We have Free Will, but we can do nothing good without God’s Grace.

An important message of St. Paul to his fellow Jews was that it was not possible to fulfil the Law of Moses without God’s assistance (i.e., His grace):

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye *present your bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but *be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

For I say, *through the grace* given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.³⁰

Here St. Paul enunciates a theology of “grace” that is “given... to every man,” such that no one should “think more highly of himself than he ought to think.”³¹ In other words, all good works, all merit in human beings and in human actions, come from, and through, God’s grace. Human beings thus can do nothing good without God’s help and grace. The Christian walk of faith is not based upon merit, but upon free will, choice and grace.

In *On Grace and Freewill*, St. Augustine essentially expounds upon St. Paul’s theory of grace. He reassures Christians “that whatever they have to fulfil in the law, they must ask for in the prayer. But this, of course, would be utterly empty if the human will were sufficient for the performance without the help of God.”³²

³⁰ Romans 12:1-3.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Saint Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will* (Louisville, Kentucky: GLH Publishing, 2017), pp. 50-51.

According to St. Augustine, when Adam sinned, Man lost his ability to control his willpower and to do good.³³ Under this set of circumstances, human beings must purify their hearts and return to God, who in turn grants them grace, “without which we are not able to do any good thing.”³⁴ This grace, in turn, allows human beings to think good thoughts and to do good deeds. Grace is therefore a “gift.” It is a pardon from God. It is also God’s divine partnership with human beings, allowing them to work good deeds.³⁵ For this reason, St. Augustine concludes that Man is not capable of actually doing good, or of achieving anything good, without assistance from God. The only “freedom” in human beings is to make a choice, within the depths of their own hearts, in order endeavor to do that which is good; because only God’s grace, which is freely given to everyone, actually provides the strength, whereby human beings can actually do good deeds and think good thoughts.

In *The City of God*, St. Augustine acknowledges St. Paul’s description of the struggle that we are in (i.e., the human condition), that is, “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.”³⁶ St. Augustine calls this human predicament a “war.”³⁷ “Now, such a war as this would have had no existence, if human nature had, in the exercise of free will, continued steadfast in the uprightness in which it was created.”³⁸ Christians therefore, in trying to maintain control over its free will, have a war to maintain against subjection to sin. “We long, indeed” says St. Augustine, “for the cessation of this war, and, kindled by the flame of divine love, we burn for entrance on that well-ordered peace in which whatever is inferior is for ever subordinated to what is above it. But if (which God forbid) there had been no hope of so blessed a consummation, we should still have preferred to endure the hardness of this conflict, rather than, by our non-resistance, to yield ourselves to the dominion of vice.”³⁹

Grace, then, is Christ Jesus; it is him who assists us, who walks with us, and who give us the victory. Following the Ten Commandments and other church laws, without Christ, avail us nothing, but rather it is Christ who gives us the victory.⁴⁰ We Christians must “flee to grace for help, and so, by a penitence more

³³ Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 785.

³⁴ *On Grace and Free Will*, p. 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

³⁶ *The City of God*, p. 786.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 786.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 787.

bitter, and a struggle more violent than it would otherwise have been, they subdue the soul to God, and thus give it its lawful authority over the flesh, and become victors.”⁴¹

Thus, the theological system which St. Augustine set forth, and which became the foundations of the Protestant Reformation, saw no distinction between Man’s ability to perform good sacred (Church) and good secular (State) functions. In either instance, God’s providence governs all human affairs, and dispenses justice, turning even the hearts of even evil men, and God’s grace is absolutely indispensable for anyone who seeks to do good and to achieve the good life. St. Augustine concluded that “there is in man a free determination of will for living rightly and acting rightly... the divine testimonies concerning the grace of God, without which we are not able to do any good thing.”⁴²

It is important to stress, here, that St. Augustine held that all of our good works come from the hand of God’s grace, quoting the Gospel, saying “ ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ ”⁴³ Christian service is by God’s grace, and not through individual virtue and merit. “ ‘By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast....’ ”⁴⁴ For St. Augustine, “the good life is nothing else than God’s grace.”⁴⁵

D. God’s Laws are themselves sufficient proof that we have Free Will.

There are many ancient philosophers, such as Cicero, who inquired into the question of whether there was a God who commanded all actions through Fate and, as such, deprived human beings of free will. For St. Augustine and the early Church Fathers, the very existence of God’s various laws and commandments were sufficient to illustrate that human beings have choice and the freedom to choose between good and evil. “There is, to begin with,” St. Augustine writes, “the fact that God’s precepts themselves would be of no use to a man unless he had free choice of will, so that by performing them he might obtain the promised rewards.”⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. p. 17.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 38.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

⁴⁶ *On Grace and Free Will*, p. 5.

St. Augustine held that God’s various laws, including the Ten Commandments and the injunctions found in the New Testament prove that human beings are not compelled to be good or evil, but instead the Grace of God is prevenient, in that is widely available as a gift to all human beings. In other words, all human beings have the freedom of choice and the actual ability to will good or to will evil.⁴⁷

According to St. Augustine, the fundamental challenge in human beings is to receive and accept God’s prevenient grace, which is free and available to everyone. The nature of this challenge of choice is internal; it is spiritual warfare. St. Augustine defined this problem of the “human will” as “war,” contending that “when we reach that age which can now comprehend the commandments, and submit to the dominion of law, we must declare war upon vices, and wage this war keenly, lest we be landed in damnable sins.”⁴⁸ And the fundamental question for each human being is whether he or she is willing to accept God’s free, prevenient grace. He thus writes: “When God says, ‘Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you,’ one of these clauses—that which invites our return to God—evidently belongs to our will; while the other, which promises His return to us, belongs to His grace.”⁴⁹ And “[w]hat is the import of the fact that in so many passages God requires all His commandments to be kept and fulfilled? How does He make this requisition, if there is no free will? What means ‘the happy man,’ of whom the Psalmist says that ‘his will has been the law of the Lord?’”⁵⁰

In this current state of the human condition, with the advent of Christ and the availability of God’s prevenient grace, we are through faith “able to not sin,” until such time as God shall re-establish his divine kingdom, whereby the righteous will be restored to God, and God will be all in all, and the risen elect of Christ shall be invested with the power “not be able to sin.”⁵¹

E. Our Free Will Renders Us to be without excuse with regards to the consequences of our sin.

⁴⁷ *On Grace and Free Will*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁸ *The City of God*, p. 787.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵¹ *The City of God*, p.p. 865-866.

St. Augustine next concludes that God's "gift" of prevenient grace, which is available to everyone, is sufficient to enable every human being to have the "ability to not sin." Everyone has the free will to choose God's grace, which is the "ability to not sin." Since human beings have freewill and free choice, whatever divine punishment that they receive from God is justly deserved. For human beings are now without excuse.⁵² The power of Satan's temptation is, according to St. Augustine, an inadequate excuse; because God's grace enables everyone to overcome such temptation by merely choosing to do good. Grace helps the will that is within man to have sufficient strength to withstand temptation. Again, this grace is free; it is available to everyone; and it is not dispensed on the basis of favoritism or merit.

In other words, our ability to turn to God, and to "not sin," is due to God's grace, but we must first be "willing" to make that turn towards God. According to St. Augustine, the person who is unwilling is thereby unable to withstand Satan's temptation. Some people have the desire to do "good," but they have not yet the will to accept God's grace. In this regards, their will is "good," but still "weak." This "good, weak will," St. Augustine refers to as the "hard heart."⁵³ "We should remember," he writes, "that He says, 'Make you a new heart and a new spirit,' who also promises, 'I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you.'⁵⁴ This changed heart in essence is the good will that God gives freely through his grace. "By it also it comes to pass that the very good will, which has now begun to be, is enlarged, and made so great that it is able to fulfil the divine commandments which it shall wish, when it shall once firmly and perfectly wish."⁵⁵

F. God's Laws are most suitable for human propensities, abilities and willpower.

It is a cliché among Christian theologians that keeping the entire Law of Moses is impossible. However, according to St. Augustine, the reason that our frail, human will is not able to fulfill God's commandments, is because we have not sought after God's grace for divine aid and assistance. Through God's grace, "the human will is not taken away, but changed from bad to good, and assisted

⁵² *On Grace and Free Will*, pp. 7-8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

when it is good.”⁵⁶ Thus, unless our will has been changed from bad to good through God’s grace,⁵⁷ it is not possible to fulfill the Mosaic law. At this point, whenever the frail, human will accepts God’s grace, it is “assisted when it is good.”⁵⁸

G. Grace is needed not only to fulfil the Law of Moses, but it is also necessary to fulfil the laws of nature, upon which human and civil laws are founded.

The Anglican church’s established theology has long held that the Church of England and the English civil government represented two sides of the same coin, and the laws temporal were a reflection of the laws spiritual. This idea of the nature of law was, of course, derived from classic Catholic teachings. For this reason, both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches have long held that “grace” is secular and sacred; and that no law—civil or ecclesiastical-- can be properly applied and fulfilled without God’s aid and assistance. The early Protestant theologians did not change this fundamental conception of law.

St. Augustine also held the “law of nature” or “natural law” to same standard that he held the Law of Moses. In other words, St. Augustine believed that God’s grace is necessary to fulfill the natural moral law, even if not explicitly enunciated in the Law of Moses. In order to prove this point, St. Augustine states: “...the Pelagians have been bold enough to aver, that grace is the nature in which we were created, so as to possess a rational mind, by which we are enabled to understand,--formed as we are in the image of God, so as to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth. This [natural law of human reason], however, is not the grace which the apostle commends to us through the faith of Jesus Christ.... [I]f righteousness come from nature, then Christ is dead in vain. But the law was in existence up to that time, and it did not justify; and nature existed too, but it did not justify. It was not, then, in vain that Christ died, in order that that law might be fulfilled through Him who said, ‘I am come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it,’ and that our nature, which was lost through Adam, might through Him be recovered....” For this reason, St. Augustine implies that secular human laws, which are based upon human reason, as Man is able to fashion laws through empirical studies in nature, cannot be kept without God’s grace, because in essence the Law of Moses, which

⁵⁶ Ibid., P. 79.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Jesus Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil, was extracted out from the same law of nature. For the Christian, then, God's grace is necessary to fulfill both the laws of nature and the Law of Moses.

H. The Pelegian heresy is that God's "grace" is unnecessary for human beings to do good.

In Augustine's day, the Pelegian heresy held that we can do good or be good (i.e., virtuous, holy, etc.), even without God's grace and assistance. Today, the secular doctrine of the "reasonable man" standard, present in law, presupposes human beings can either do good, or be curtailed from doing wrong, through "rule of law" and punishment. Both the Pelegian heresy, and the modern secular idea of social regulation, void of God, present the critical problem which Paul faced as a Jewish Pharisee prior to his conversion to Christ: although he had expert knowledge of the Mosaic law, and tried to keep that law, he could not keep it, nor could he fulfil it, without God's grace. In other words, goodness, good thoughts, and good deeds are not dependent upon God, but these blessings are found within our inherent nature, through reason and the ability to choose between good and evil.

The Pelegian system, which is similar to the prevailing secularism within the Western democratic state, thus promoted human merit (i.e., meritocracy), wherein God's grace played no role. The Pelegians believed that God's grace only applied at the Final Judgment, whereby God might forgive sin and allow sinners to enter into eternal life on the basis of their meritorious deeds. St. Augustine rejected this system. In sum, St. Augustine relied upon "The Lord's Prayer," to wit:

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,

For ever and ever.
Amen.

St. Augustine concludes that this prayer “would be utterly empty if the human will were sufficient for the performance without the help of God.”⁵⁹

I. Grace leads to Faith. And Faith leads to Good works. But good works cannot be achieved without God’s grace.

St. Augustine also held that “faith without good works is not sufficient for salvation.”⁶⁰ For, indeed, good works are what “severs God’s faithful from unclean demons,— for even these ‘believe and tremble,’ as the Apostle James says; but they do not do well. Therefore they possess not the faith by which the just man lives,— the faith which works by love in such wise, that God recompenses it according to its works with eternal life.”⁶¹ Hence, while “works” alone do not merit salvation, without faith; faith without works is not sufficient to merit the reward of eternal life. The Christian must perform good deeds and do good works through God’s grace.

J. Justification is achieved through Faith alone, not works. But good works are inherently a manifestation of grace (i.e., faith).

As previously mentioned, St. Augustine held that Man can do that which is good only with God’s grace. Therefore, eternal life is “grace for the sake of grace,” and not “grace as the reward of merit.” Faith is the willingness to accept God’s Grace, which then enables Man to do good deeds and to fulfill the Law of Moses. We are justified through faith, and through faith alone—not works.

Here it is critically important to define “works” and to ask the fundamental question, “Why does works not justify Man before God?” The rationale here is designed to root out religious hypocrisy from within the Church. A religious hypocrite can perform all sorts of religious rituals of the Law of Moses—such as many of the ancient Jewish priests, Pharisees, and rabbis during Jesus’s day—and still not have turn their hearts towards accepting God’s grace. God’s grace must be

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

⁶¹ Ibid.

accepted through the will and inside of the heart. Without such acceptance, there can be no charity and no love, both of which are required to fulfill the Law of Moses.

On this point, St. Augustine states: “[t]his charity, that is, this will glowing with intensest love, the apostle eulogizes with these words: ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?’... ‘And in another passage he says, ‘And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.... ‘And a little afterwards he says, ‘And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: but the greatest of these is love. Follow after love....’ He also says to the Galatian, ‘For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ This is the same in effect as what he writes to the Romans: ‘He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.’”⁶² Importantly, St. Augustine points out that this “love,” which fulfills the commandments, is not of ourselves, but is rather a gift from God.⁶³

K. Grace Removes the Stony Heart and Converts it into a New Heart

In the *Gospel of Luke*, Jesus tells his famous “Parable of the Sower of Seeds,” as follows:

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid., pp. 66-69.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 73-74.

⁶⁴ Luke 8:4-8.

The “sower,” of course, is Christ; the “seed” represents God’s word; and the symbolism of the “way side,” “rock,” “thorns,” and “good ground,” reflects the hearts and minds of men and women. Similarly, in *On Grace and Free Will*, St. Augustine uses the symbolism of the “stony heart” to depict men and women who are unwilling to turn towards God’s grace for assistance with fulfilling the royal laws of God. St. Augustine describes the assistance of grace as a process of conversion—much similar to the sort of conversions which later depicted the primitive Methodist revivals of the 18th century-- whereby an individual person will receive a “new heart,”⁶⁵ as is stated in the *Book of Ezekiel*, 36:22-27, where it is written: “[a] new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and the stony heart shall be taken away out of your flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”⁶⁶

Here, again, St. Augustine describes a conversion experience that resembles the sort of Christian revival experiences, as I have described in my introduction, and as many Evangelical Protestants describe the process of being “born again.”⁶⁷ I note here especially that this mode of induction into the Christian faith, that is to say, to rely upon God’s grace, has remained predominant in the African American faith tradition.⁶⁸ This conversion process was markedly different from the Catholic and Anglican liturgical practices of the 17th and 18th centuries, thus leading to significant conflict. Within the Church of England, this idea of conversion would

⁶⁵ *On Grace and Free Will*, pp. 55-56; 73-74.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55-56.

⁶⁸ For example, in his autobiography *Life and Times*, Frederick Douglass recalled his own conversion experience as follows: “Previously to my contemplation of the anti-slavery movement and its probable results, my mind had been seriously awakened to the subject of religion. I was not more than thirteen years old, when, in my loneliness and destitution, I longed for someone to whom I could go, as to a father and protector. The preaching of a white Methodist minister, named Hanson, was the means of causing me to feel that in God I had such a friend. He thought that all men, great and small, bond and free, were sinners in the sight of God: that they were by nature rebels against his government; and that they must repent of their sins, and be reconciled to God through Christ. I cannot say that I had a very distinct notion of what was required of me, but one thing I did know well: that I was wretched and had no means of making myself otherwise. I consulted a good colored man named Charles Lawson, and in tones of holy affection he told me to pray, and to ‘cast all my care upon God.’ This I sought to do; and though for weeks I was a poor, broken-hearted mourner, traveling through doubts and fears, I finally found my burden lightened, and my heart relieved. I loved all mankind, slaveholders not excepted, though I abhorred slavery more than ever. I saw the world in a new light, and my great concern was to have everybody converted. My desire to learn increased, and especially did I want a thorough acquaintance with the contents of the Bible. I have gathered scattered pages of the Bible from the filthy street-gutters, and washed and dried them, that in moments of leisure I might get a word or two of wisdom from them.” *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1994), p. 538.

not be taken up until the advent of George Whitfield, Charles Wesley, John Wesley and the Methodist movement at Oxford during the 18th century.

CONCLUSION

In *On Grace and Free Will*, Saint Augustine of Hippo, a doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, sets forth a simple and cogent argument for the doctrine of “justification thorough faith alone, and not works.” This argument was embraced by Martin Luther and utilized in his famous *Ninety-Five Theses*, which launched the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Soon thereafter, two of the Protestant Reformation’s greatest leaders, Martin Luther and John Calvin, incorporated St. Augustine’s theology on ecclesiology, law, and the doctrine of justification through faith alone into their polemics which they used as the basis for separation from the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason, nearly all of St. Augustine’s ideas on Christian theology, justice, and law were readily incorporated into the Protestant governments of Western Europe. Luther and Calvin maintained the idea of Church involvement in civil affairs; and neither of them had formulated an idea of a complete separation between church and state. In other words, the Holy Bible and the “law of Christ”⁶⁹ remained a vital part of the secular legal systems of Western Europe, even after the Protestant Reformation, throughout the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. These same Protestant ideas of law and government would later become important models for the Puritans who settled in New England during the 17th century.

In England, where the Anglican Church retained intact nearly all of St. Thomas Aquinas’ theology and legal philosophy, the secular law continued to reflect “the law of Christ” as a fundamental legal and constitutional doctrine. But the central problems regarding the power and structure of the Church of England, were never fully addressed in England during the 16th century. The same concerns which led to the Protestant revolt against the Roman Catholic Church in northern Europe were brought to England and were vociferously expressed by the Puritans and the Presbyterians. At the very core of these concerns were the Christian

⁶⁹ The Law of Christ is to “love ye one another” (John 15:12); to do justice and judgement (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3).

theological question as to “justification” and “grace.” Relying upon the dogma of St. Augustine, Luther and Calvin, the English Presbyterians and Puritans held that the Church of England continued to follow the same corrupt practices of the Roman Catholics. The end result, as we shall see in Part IV of this paper, was political revolution and civil war.

THE END

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