

"PAULUS AUTEM APOSTOLUS DICIT" (CRESC. 2.21.26): AUGUSTINE'S PAULINE POLEMIC AGAINST THE DONATISTS

How formative was the Donatist controversy¹ in shaping what we may call "Augustine's Paulinism"?² While the Augustine of the Donatist controversy is more often than not explored under the lens of ecclesiology, sacramental theology, and/or church/state questions, anyone who takes up Augustine's anti-Donatist writings ought to be immediately struck by the central role that scripture plays in Augustine's arguments against the Donatists.

It is now time, I believe, to carry out a careful study of these very Scriptural testimonies by which [the Donatists] deceive the less-informed through their wrong interpretation (*ipsa testimonia Scripturarum, quae male interpretando decipiunt imperitos, diligenter attendere*) and, with the Lord's help, explain them according to the catholic sense of truth (*secundum intellectum catholicae veritatis aperire*).³

¹ The literature on the Donatist controversy is extensive, especially after W.H.C. Frend's landmark 1952 study was published (*The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952, reissued, 3rd Impression, 1985). For a comprehensive treatment as well as bibliography, see the lemma "Donatistae," Serge Lancel (I), James S. Alexander (II), *AL*, 606-638; also, Robert A. Markus, "Donatus, Donatism," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, General Editor, Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., 284-287 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999). Some recent "deconstructive" studies have sought to paint an overall malevolent portrait of Augustine in the course of the controversy, see Elizabeth A. Clark, "On Not Retracting the Unconfessed," in *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confession and Circumfession*, edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, 222-243 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005); also, Brend D. Shaw, "African Christianity: Disputes, Definitions, and 'Donatists'," in *Orthodoxy and Heresy: Religious Movements: Discipline and Dissent*, edited by Malcolm R. Greenshields and Thomas A. Robenson, 5-34 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

² See my "Augustine and Paul: The History of a Relationship," in *Rhetoric and Exegesis in Augustine's Interpretation of Romans 7:24-25A*, 1-44 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

³ *C. ep. Parmen.* 1.14.20. All translations are my own for the five anti-Donatist texts that form the basis of this study. For other texts the same holds true, having consulted English translations when available. This study will primarily consider five of Augustine's anti-Donatist writings: *Contra Epistulae Parmeniani* (ca. 400 C.E.), *De Baptismo* (400-401), *Contra Litteras Petiliani* (ca. 400-403), *Ad Catholicos Fratres* (after 400), and *Contra Cresconium* (405). Detailed introductions to these works are to be found in the standard bi-lingual editions of Augustine's writings: the Latin-French *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*, *Oeuvres de Saint Augustine*, the Latin-Italian, *Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana*, the Latin-Spanish *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*,

If the interpretation of the canonical writings in general provides a central backdrop to the controversy, what is likewise striking to note is the prominent place given to the writings as well as the figure of Paul in Augustine's challenge to the Donatist claims.

... your bishops argue against us using the teaching of Paul – *doctrinam Pauli contra nos proferant episcopi vestri...*⁴

Augustine's consistent response to their interpretation of the *doctrina Pauli* was that they were in error:

Who would not recognize that we, instead, have rightly interpreted this text of the Apostle – *quis enim non videat, ideo magis a nobis recte positum hoc Apostoli testimonium...*⁵

Undoubtedly, it was the Donatists' own employment of Pauline texts that called forth Augustine's impassioned turn to the Apostle. But it seems equally clear that Augustine's encounter with a Donatist Paul coincided with what many commentators like to note as Augustine's own "turn to Paul" in the 390's.⁶ While he obviously read Paul "against the Donatists," it also seems evident that he was already reading Paul "for Augustine" – that is to say, as part of his own need to understand Paul more fully, but likewise as part of his own attraction to and identification with Paul, arising from something more intangibly deep within Augustine's own self. Paul never seems to be simply an academic exercise or polemic ploy for Augustine.

In this study it is my intention to highlight Augustine's use of Paul in the course of the Donatist controversy, ever mindful that Augustine's scriptural repertoire cannot be reduced to its Pauline element. In so doing, I make no claim to be a pioneer but wish, in particular, to build upon the work of W. H. C. Frend and Maria Gratia Mara. Both of these distinguished scholars have explored the specific topic of Paul and the Donatist controversy, the former from the Donatist perspective,⁷ the latter by looking at some specific Pauline texts as well as anti-Donatist dimensions of the *Confessions*.⁸ Within

Obras de San Agustín, as well as *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Regarding the Donatists and the Bible, see Maureen A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

⁴ *Cresc.* 1.19.24.

⁵ *C. ep. Petil.* 3.51.63.

⁶ See Martin, "Augustine and Paul: The History of a Relationship," esp. 4ff.

⁷ In particular, see W.H.C. Frend, "The Donatist Church and St. Paul," in *Le Epistole paoline nei Manichei, i Donatisti, e il primo Agostino*, Sussidi patristici, 5 (Rome: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 1989), 85-122.

⁸ In particular, see M.G. Mara, "L'influsso di Paolo in Agostino," in *Le Epistole Paoline nei Manichei, i Donatisti e il primo Agostino* (Rome: Istituto Patristico

the limited space of this study I nonetheless wish to offer a more comprehensive panorama – drawing out from a number of key anti-Donatist writings representative texts and explorations that suggest the importance for Augustine of an anti-Donatist Paul. It is well known that at the precise moment that the Council of Carthage in 411 was “officially” settling the Donatist question, another controversy was already on the horizon. Pelagius and Caelestius had fled Rome’s sack and found themselves in Carthage, Augustine’s home territory. In a short space of time Augustine’s attention will be directed towards the “Pelagians,” and Paul will always be at his side. One of the questions in the background as this study unfolds will be the relationship between the “anti-Donatist Paul” and the “anti-Pelagian Paul” of Augustine. Such a question seems particularly appropriate in a Festschrift dedicated to Dr. Gerhard Ring. His work on Augustine’s Pauline writings has, in so many ways, argued for a “*Kontinuitäts-Hermeneutik*” in reading Augustine, that is to say, the Bishop of Hippo manifests “organic development” rather than “rupture and break.”⁹ Do we find that the Paul that emerges in the Donatist controversy has anything in common with the Paul of the Pelagian controversy? That question will always hover in the background as this study unfolds.

*Testimonia Scripturarum Dei*¹⁰

Before looking more closely at Augustine’s “anti-Donatist” Paul, it is important to emphasize that his employment of the Apostle’s

Augustinianum, 1989), 125-162; idem., “Le Confessioni di Agostino: una confluenza di raggiunte convinzioni,” *Augustinianum* XXXVI/II (1996): 495-509.

⁹ See in particular T. G. Ring, “Bruch oder Entwicklung im Gnadenbegriff Augustins? Kritische Bemerkungen zu Flasch *Logik des Schreckens*,” in *Aug(L)* 44 (1994): 31-113; regarding Augustine, Paul, and the Donatists, see, idem., *Aurelius Augustinus, An Simplicianus zwei Bücher über verschiedene Fragen*, eingeleitet, übertragen und erläutert von Thomas Gerhard Ring OSA. Schriften gegen die Pelagianer, Prolegomena, Band III (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1991), 254ff., 371 ff.; idem., *Aurelius Augustinus, Die Auslegung des Briefes an die Galater, Die angefangene Auslegung des Briefes an die Römer, Über dreiundachtzig verschiedene Fragen: Fragen 66-68*, eingeleitet, übertragen und erläutert von Thomas Gerhard Ring OSA. Schriften gegen die Pelagianer, Prolegomena Band II (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1997), 55 ff.

¹⁰ Augustine repeatedly calls upon the *testimonia scripturarum* to challenge Donatist interpretation. Typical are these comments against Parmenian: “*cur clausis oculis tam multa de scripturis testimonia proferunt, quae intellecta et contra se prolata repudiant, quae si secundum illorum intellectum accipiantur nihilominus eos de sua peruersitate conuincunt?*” (*c. ep. Parm.* 3.6.29); regarding Parmenian’s use of scripture, see Yves M.-J. Congar, “Notes Complémentaires 24, Citations scripturaires

authority, writings, as well as example against his African Christian opponents must be seen against the larger backdrop of a persistent scripturally-based tactic that is manifest throughout the controversy on Augustine's part: "you do not understand what is written [in the scriptures] – *non intellegitis quod scriptum est*" (*cath. fr.* 23.66) is a charge that lies just below the surface of volley after volley of Augustine's prolific rebuke of Donatist theology.¹¹ "We sensibly follow in this matter the most certain authority of the canonical scriptures – *sequimur sane nos in hac re etiam canonicarum auctoritatem certissimam scripturarum*" (*Cresc.* 1.32.38) – again and again the Bishop of Hippo will insist that what is at stake in the debate is the interpretation of the authoritative teachings of the canonical scriptures. "[H]aec sunt causae nostrae documenta, haec fundamenta, haec firmamenta – these [the scriptures] are the proofs of our cause; these, its bases; these, its supports" (*cath. fr.* 19.50) – time after time Augustine will insist that this debate is not about the behavior of certain individuals, it concerns the very truth of the Scriptures. The phrase *testimonia scripturarum* echoes constantly, Augustine's point being that the solution of this conflict is simple: "*lege diligenter*" (15/2, 508). He can thus harshly lament:

These [Donatists], erring in understanding the words of the sacred scriptures, and, as the Apostle says, "Not understanding what they speak nor what they claim as true" (1 *Tm.* 1:7) put themselves in serious straits by reason of their perverse interpretation (*secundum perversitatem intellectus sui*)...¹²

Manifestissimis canonicarum scripturarum testimoniis (*cath. fr.* 18.47): the *auctoritas* and *veritas* of the Scriptures, Augustine continually argues, is *manifestum* – self-evident. Only bad faith – *secundum perversitatem intellectus* – can explain the Donatist position. Placing the heart of the conflict around a correct reading of Scripture is a deliberate strategy on Augustine's part to reframe and relocate the controversy. To whom is this directed? It would seem most especially to the lay faithful on both sides of the controversy, Catholic and Donatist.

de Parménien," in *Traité Anti-Donatistes, Vol. I*, BA 28 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963), 733-735.

¹¹ Lombardi comments that Augustine's polemic against the Donatists use of biblical citations is three-fold: 1. They misinterpret them; 2. they fail to notice that they actually use citations that work against them; 3. they cite texts incompletely and hence misread them. Antonio Lombardi, "Note," in *Sant'Agostino, Polemica con i Donatisti*, NBA XV/2 (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1999), 173, n. 91.

¹² *Errantes enim in verbis sanctorum Scripturarum et, sicut dicit Apostolus: "Non intellegentes neque quae loquuntur neque de quibus affirmant," ipsi potius secundum perversitatem intellectus sui magnas patiuntur angustias ...* (c. ep. Parmen. 2.4.8).

Given an evident "Biblical intensity" that marked North African Christianity (what comes to mind is Augustine's comment to Jerome about a "liturgical riot" over the changing of a text from Jonah, see *Letter* 71.3.5), one can only note the obvious cleverness on the part of the Bishop of Hippo to take the controversy to this arena.

We do not employ corrupt scales (*stateras dolosas*) where we measure what we want and in whatever way we want, claiming by our own judgment: This is heavy; this is light. Rather, we employ from the Lord's treasures, the divine scale of sacred scripture and on it we measure what is more weighty, or rather, we do not do our own measuring but we recognize that done by the Lord...¹³

Augustine's message will be clear and constant throughout the Donatist controversy: "*The word of God is your defeat-vicit vos Dei verbum*" (*cath. fr.* 8.22).

Paulus Noster

One needs only to look at the scriptural indices in the published volumes of Augustine's anti-Donatist writings to appreciate the breadth and depth of the Bishop of Hippo's biblical armory. Yet the voice of the Apostle Paul dominates. *Paulus dicit, Paulus ait, Paulus appellat, Paulus scribit, Paulus locutus est, Paulus iussit, Paulus sentit, Paulus tolerat, fecit hoc Paulus, Paulus expressit, clamat ipse Paulus* – I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that the Apostle Paul indeed stands out as Augustine's principal voice against what he calls the *causa Donatistarum* (*bapt.* 5.1.1).

Our Paul (*Paulus noster*), however, took on [the Greeks], addressing them, correcting them; he was not intimidated by the name of the place [the Areopagus], which takes its name from Mars, whom they call the god of wars. There he spoke words of peace intrepidly to those who were to believe; there, girded with spiritual weapons, he waged war against error, remaining absolutely calm against the quarrelsome, dealing with utter simplicity against the argumentative.¹⁴

¹³ *Non afferamus stateras dolosas, ubi appendamus quod volumus, et quomodo volumus, pro arbitrio nostro dicentes: Hoc grave, hoc leve ist: sed afferamus divinam stateram de Scripturis sanctis tamquam de thesauris dominicis, et in illa quid sit gravius appendamus; imo non appendamus, sed a Domino appensa recognoscamus...* (*bapt.* 2.6.9; cf. 2.14.19).

¹⁴ *Hos tamen Paulus noster alloquendos corrigendosque suscepit: nec ipsius loci nomine exterritus, quod ex Marte inditum resonat, quem Deum dicunt esse bellorum; ibi pacifica credituris intrepidus loquebatur, ibi spiritalibus accintus armis*

One can, without difficulty, also perceive a process of self-identification underway here. Like Paul, so Augustine: *intrepidus, spiritalibus accinctus armis, mittissimus, simplicissimus*. In fact, already in this same treatise against the Donatist Cresconius, we find Augustine associating himself with the figure of Paul.

Recall now not what Paul spoke but what Christ, through Paul, spoke – *recole iam, non quid Paulus, sed quid per eum Christus locutus sit*. (1.9.12).

He then proceeds to comment on the Pauline text: “*Praedica verbum, insta opportune, importune*” (2 Tm. 4,2) and notes how Paul does this with perseverance (*perseverantem*) and right faith (*iuxta doctrinam fidelis verbi, in doctrina sana*), and then, we might propose, he stands himself next to Paul:

I realize that also to me has this [same] order been given; that I carry on with all my strength; in this work, to the extent that he who commands helps, I insist unceasingly. Why do you obstruct, protest, resist, reprove? Ought one obey you – or God?¹⁵

There is no doubt that Augustine could envision the Apostle responding to his “*Paulus noster*” with an “*Augustinus meus*”! When he thus exclaims: *Quid ergo dicat Apostolus audiamus ...* (cath. fr. 6.11), he gives every impression that Augustine’s own voice is to be included in that “*audiamus*.” And he can even more explicitly compare himself to Paul. In addressing the Letters written by Petilian he calls upon Paul, in particular citing 1 Cor. 15, and boldly asserts: *sic etiam in Epistola mea ...* (c. litt. Petil. 3.46.56). Yet, this self-identification is always intended to point back to Paul: “this is not my teaching, it is the salutary apostolic teaching of Paul – *non ex mea, sed ex apostolica Pauli salutari doctrina*” (bapt. 6.2.3). Who better than Paul to oppose the Donatists! “*Quisquis contradicit, non mihi, sed Apostolo contradicit*” (cath. fr. 7.18).

Augustine certainly works this Pauline ambush of the Donatists programmatically by the constant presence of Paul at his side as he seeks to discredit, dismantle, demolish and deride Donatist exegesis and theology: “is there anything more foolish [than Parmenian’s teaching], indeed, is there a more insane madness to be found – *quid hac*

perniciosos expugnabat errores; nec contentiosos tamquam mitissimus, nec dialecticos tamquam simplicissimus formidabat (Cresc. 1.12.25).

¹⁵ Unde hoc etiam mihi iussum esse cognosco: hoc pro viribus ago; huic operi, quantum ipse qui iussit adiuvat, perseveranter insisto. Quid obstas, quid obstrepis, cur prohibes, cur reprehendis? Tibine obedire oportet, an Deo? (Cresc. 1.9.12).

stultitia, immo uero dementia repperitur insanius (c. ep. Parm. 1.2.3)? But this more general tone, an approach which lurks ever below the surface, undergirds a more specific and direct anti-Donatist assault based upon specific texts. In what follows I would like to offer some representative examples of Augustine's working with a range of key Pauline texts against his Donatist opponents.

***Caro concupiscit adversus spiritum* (Gal. 5.17)**

The *Contra Epistula Parmeniani* is Augustine's first major anti-Donatist work to have come down to us. In its three books he follows a model that will become a hallmark of Augustine: it takes the form of a seemingly actual polemical debate, giving the work a lively and often acerbic tone. Augustine's arsenal is a full-range of scriptural texts, but Paul predominates.

Anyone, for sure, who knows how to judge rightly, understands that, even if one could honestly say that someone lives with all righteousness on behalf of the human community, such a one could not be found to be completely faultless as long as "the flesh intensely desires against the spirit, the spirit, however, against the flesh (*caro concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus carnem*)" (Gal. 5:17).¹⁶

A constant charge of Augustine against the Donatists is that they misconstrue the very nature of the Christian life. *Intellectus* – *understanding* as well as *tolerantia* – *forbearance* is what they lack: they are unwilling to understand and acknowledge that even within the church imperfection will exist until it achieves its eschatological fulfillment. The selection just cited is followed by two seemingly contradictory texts from *1 John*, one asserting sinlessness (1 Jn. 3:9), the other seemingly the exact opposite (1 Jn. 1.8) – a reminder that Paul is never "alone" but is always part of an overall scriptural strategy. Augustine then continues:

If it is true that, in so far as we are born of God, we do not sin, there is still within us what we are from Adam (*quod ex Adam sumus*), and since death is not yet "swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54), which to be sure is promised in the resurrection of bodies (cf. 1 Cor. 15:52), there in everyway we will be happy and unstained and incorrupt, we

¹⁶ *Qui autem rectissime sapiunt, intellegunt quemlibet hominum, quamvis iam pro consortio societatis humanae non absurde dici potest iustissime vivere, non posse tamen esse sine aliquot vitio, quamdiu "caro concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus carnem"* (c. ep. Parm. 2.7.14).

who now, according to faith "are sons of God" but according to sight "what we will be has not yet appeared" (1 Jn. 3:2). We are saved not yet in reality, "but in hope. A hope which is seen is not hope. When someone sees, there is no longer a need to hope. If what we do not see, we hope for, we patiently wait" (Rm. 8:24-25). Thus as long as we "patiently await the resurrection of our body" (Rm. 8:23) we dare not say we are completely faultless, lest this very arrogance (*superbia*) become the most monstrous of vices.¹⁷

Clearly, Augustine's polemics with the Donatists regarding perfection has prompted him to articulate a "theology of imperfection" – *non audeamus nos dicere carere omni vitio*, one closely tied to issues of pride and humility: *ne ipsa suprbia sit immanissimum vitium*. Nor does the Galatians text stand alone, for it is ever supported and buttressed by other Pauline texts as well as a wider scriptural armory.

We find a similar tack in his *Contra Litteras Petilian*. Here Augustine is responding to a charge by Petilian that "you feign peace with crimes and seek unity by means of war (*vos pacem scelere fingitis, et bello quaeritis unitatem*)" (c. litt. Petil. 2.68.153). Augustine responds: "We do not feign peace, rather we preach Gospel peace – *non pacem scelere fingimus: sed pacem ex Evangelio praedicamus* ... (68.154). And never one, it would seem, to back down from provocation, after a comment which includes a citation of Lk. 24: 45-47 – "*praedicari ... per omnes gentes*," he takes up Petilian's own words to refute them:

If, by warfare, we seek unity, our warfare could not be more praiseworthy; for it is written: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mk. 12:31; Rm. 13:9). And again it is written, "No one hates their own flesh" (Eph. 5:29), and again, "the flesh intensely desires against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). So, if no one hates their own flesh and yet intensely desires against their own, behold, unity is sought by means of warfare (*ecce bello unitas quaeritur*) ...¹⁸

¹⁷ *Quamvis enim, in quantum ex Deo nati sumus, non peccemus, inest tamen adhuc etiam quod ex Adam sumus, quia nondum est "absorta mors in victoriam," quod etiam in corporum resurrectione promittitur, ut omni modo beati et immaculati et incorrupti simus qui iam secundum fidem "filii Dei sumus" sed secundum speciem "nondum apparuit quod erimus." Nondum enim re, "sed spe salvi facti sumus. Spes autem quae videtur non est spes. Quod enim videt quis, quid sperat? Si autem quod non videmus speramus, per patientiam expectamus." Quamdiu autem "per patientiam expectamus redemptionem corporis nostri," non audeamus nos dicere carere omni vitio, ne ipsa superbia sit immanissimum vitium ... (ibid.)*

¹⁸ *Nam si bello quaerimus unitatem, non potuit laudari praeclarius bellum nostrum; quandoquidem scriptum est: "Diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum." Et iterum scriptum est: "nemo umquam carnem suam odio habet." Et tamen "caro*

Rather than deny Petilian's "*bellum* charge," Augustine embraces it, and makes it Pauline!

... behold, unity is sought by means of warfare (*bello unitas quaeritur*), so that the castigated body is made subject (cf. 1 *Cor.* 9:27). However, what the spirit does against flesh is not a warfare of hatred but of love! This is what spiritual people do against carnal people. What they do towards themselves, they do towards those, because they love their neighbor as themselves. But the warfare of the spirit is a correction carried out in love, their sword, God's word. To such a battle the apostolic trumpet (*tuba apostolica*) sounded the call to arms with great force. "Preach the word, insist in season and out of season, reprove, exhort, reproach, with forbearance and [sound] teaching" (2 *Tm.* 4:2). Behold, we carry on this war not by weapon but by word (*ecce non agimus ferro, sed verbo*)...¹⁹

The military trumpet (*tuba apostolica*) signaling the start of this battle is sounded by none other than Paul, and it is a *bellum verbi* – *gladius sermo dei est*! Augustine perhaps has in mind another Pauline text, *Eph.* 6:17 as well as *Heb.* 4:12²⁰, as well as Paul himself, the intrepid "soldier of the word."²¹ Since Paul had to wage war *adversus carnales*, he will use Paul's own words to charge the Donatists with being *carnales* – and so find apostolic support for his own battles.

... since in our mortal condition as Adam's descendants, "what precedes is not what is spiritual but what is animal, then comes the spiritual" (1 *Cor.* 15:46). Every sort of argument and schism is generated from this *sensus animalis*, because the *homo animalis* does not perceive what pertains to the Spirit of God" (1 *Cor.* 2:14). Those lingering in this *sensus animalis* are said by the Apostle to belong to the Old Testament (cf. *Gal.* 4:24; 2 *Cor.* 3:14). They are captive of earthly

concupiscit adversus spiritum, et spiritus adversus carnem." *Quod si nemo carnem suam odio habet, et tamen adversus carnem suam concupiscit; ecce bello unitas quaeritur* ... (c. litt. *Petil.* 2.68.154).

¹⁹ ... *bello unitas quaeritur, ut corpus castigatum servituti subiciatur. Quod autem spiritus facit adversus carnem, non odio, sed dilectione belligerans; hoc spiritales faciunt adversus carnales, ut quod agunt erga se, agant et erga illos, quia diligunt proximos tamquam se ipsos; sed bellum spiritualium est in caritate correptio, gladius eorum sermo Dei est. Ad tale bellum tuba apostolica concitantur cum mango impetus personante: "Praedica verbum, insta opportune, importune; argue, hortare, increpa, in omni longanimitate et doctrina." Ecce non agimus ferro, sed verbo* ... (ibid.).

²⁰ Regarding Augustine and the *Epistula ad Hebraeos*, see *civ.* 16.22. In his late *Collatio cum Maximino*, dated 427-428 C.E., he says: "*Dicit enim sic Paulus ad Hebraeos: non enim in manufactis templis intrauit Christus exemplarium veritatis; sed in ipso coelo modo apparet personae Dei pro nobis?*" (15.4)

²¹ [*I]pse miles egregius, Io. eu. tr.* 122.3; s. 351.5.

promises, those figures of spiritual promises, for the *homo animalis* does not perceive what pertains to the Spirit of God²²

Just as Paul lovingly “shamed” the Galatians in suggesting that they belonged to the Old Testament, Augustine imitates the Apostle and implies that the Donatists are exactly like the Galatians. For anyone who has carnal sentiments (*carnaliter sapiant*, 15.24), in this case, Donatists who judge the church and sacraments by “external” criteria, the verdict from Paul is clear: “*Ad animales pertinet Vetus Testamentum, ad spirituales Novum*” (*bapt.* 15.24).

After the Lord came in the flesh, the New Testament was revealed. The sacraments of the Old then ceased, but their concupiscences did not cease (*sed concupiscentiae tales non cessaverunt*).²³

Anyone familiar with the mature writings of Augustine ought to be struck by the comment regarding *concupiscentia*.²⁴ Especially during the later Pelagian controversy Augustine will constantly link his arguments for its continuing presence even among the baptized with the Galatians text that began this consideration. Augustine continues:

As in the sacraments of the Old Testament there were *homines spirituales* – in a hidden way, in a hidden belonging, they were [already] of the New, so the same is true presently in the Sacrament of the New Testament now revealed. Many [still] live as *homines animales*. Those unwilling to make progress in perceiving what is of God’s Spirit (cf. 1 *Cor.* 2:14), the very thing the apostolic utterance exhorts them to, such belong to the Old Testament. If, however, they make progress, even before reaching understanding, by their very progress and disposition, they belong to the New Testament.²⁵

²² ... quia in ipsa sorte mortalitatis nostrae, ex quo Adam nascimur, “non est prius quod spiritale, sed quod animale, postea spiritale.” Ex ipso autem animali sensu, quia “homo animalis non percepit quae sunt Spiritus Dei,” omnes dissensiones et schismata generantur. In quo sensu perseverantes Apostolus dicit ad Vetus Testamentum pertinere, id est, ad terrenorum promissorum cupidatem, in quibus quidem spiritalia figurantur, sed “animalis homo non percepit quae sunt Spiritus Dei” (*bapt.* 1.15.23).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Gerald Bonner, “Concupiscentia,” *AL* 1, 1113-1122 as well as accompanying bibliography.

²⁵ Sicut enim in Sacramentiis Veteris Testamenti vivebant quidam spirituales, ad Novum scilicet Testamentum, quod tunc occultabatur, occulte pertinentes: sic et nunc in Sacramento Novi Testamenti quod iam revelatum est, plerique vivunt animales. Qui proficere si nolunt ad percipienda quae sunt Spiritus Dei, quo eos hortatur sermo apostolicus, ad Vetus Testamentum pertinebunt. Si autem proficient, et antequam capiant, ipso profectu et accessu ad Novum pertinent ... (*bapt.* 15.24).

In so far as the Donatists are unwilling to make progress (*proficere*) they will remain *carnales*:

The Apostle speaks what is most reliable, filled with the light of truth. The "*homo animalis*," he says, "does not perceive what belongs to the Spirit of God" (1 *Cor.* 2:14). And yet that he was saying this to the already baptized is clear. For he says to them: "Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul" (1 *Cor.* 1:13)? These have the Sacrament of Baptism and yet their knowledge is carnal, so they could only believe in God according to the carnal sense, which is why the *homo animalis* does not perceive what is of the Spirit of God.²⁶

Working off of *Gal.* 5:17, Augustine has carefully utilized Paul's antitheses, *caro/spiritus*, *carnales/spiritales*, *carnaliter/spiritualiter* to counter his Donatist opponents – with Paul at his side he can charge the Donatists as Paul did the Galatians: *adhuc enim estis carnales* (1 *Cor.* 3:13).²⁷

Qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur (1 *Cor.* 1:31)²⁸

Central to the Donatist controversy for Augustine was the relationship between the worthiness of the minister and the holiness of the sacraments. He will call upon a familiar Pauline text in this regard.

The victor [Paul], through his church and in his church, is the very one who in his writings taught us: "let no one glory in a human being; anyone who glories, glory in the Lord" (1 *Cor.* 3:21). Behold indeed we – who speak with the discourse of truth, that a believer is not justified by the one by whom they are baptized but by him of whom it is written: "To the one who believes in him who justified the unrighteous, faith is imputed according to justice" (*Rm.* 4:5); for we do not glory in humans (*non gloriamur in homine*), but we make every effort

²⁶ *Verissimam quippe sententiam dixit Apostolus, plenus lumine veritatis: "Animalis," inquit, "homo non percipit quae sunt Spiritus Dei." Et tamen de his hoc dicebat, quos iam fuisse baptizatos ipse manifestat. Eis enim dicit: "Numquid Paulus crucifixus est pro vobis? Aut in nomine Pauli baptizati estis?" Habebat ergo isti Baptismi sacramentum, et tamen carnaliter sapiendo, quid poterant de Deo credere nisi secundum sensum carnis sui, ubi "animalis homo non percipit quae sunt Spiritus Dei" (bapt. 3.14.19).*

²⁷ See *bapt.* 1.10.14; 3.14.19.

²⁸ Regarding this text, see Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae. Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité, 148 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996). Regarding its use in the Donatist controversy see esp. 130ff., 510ff.

with his grace so that when we glory, we glory in the Lord – how secure we are, whatever errors or misdeeds could be lain upon anyone of our communion... neither do we fear lest they baptize without justification being conferred, since they believe in him who justifies the unrighteous, so that faith is imputed according to justice (cf. *Rm.* 4:5).²⁹

Paul, Augustine insists, teaches that Christians glory in Christ, not in themselves, and certainly not in their ministers. He deliberately links the Corinthians' text to an important Romans' text with profound Christological-soteriological implications: "*Credenti in eum qui iustificat impium deputatur fides ad iustitiam.*" It is a reminder, as a number of commentators have insisted upon, that Christology is never far from Augustine's intentions.³⁰ What is really at stake is the *gloria Christi*.

When we put forth such divine proofs against vain human speaking we must bear bitter reproaches from the **enemies of the glory of Christ** (*ab inimicis gloriae Christi*).³¹ But let them say what they want, since he [Christ] exhorts us, saying: "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice's sake, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed will you be when they persecute you and curse you and, lying, utter every sort of evil against you for my sake" (*Mt.* 5: 10-11). What he said above "for justice's sake," he repeats when he then says "for my sake," because "he has become for us wisdom, justice, and holiness and redemption, so that, as it is written, Let anyone who glories, glory in the Lord" (cf. *1 Cor.* 1: 30-31).³²

²⁹ *Imo vero ille vicit pro Ecclesia sua et in Ecclesia sua, qui nos docuit in Scriptura sua, "ut nemo gloriatur in homine, et ut qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur."* Ecce enim nos, qui cum veritatis eloquio dicimus, non iustificari credentem ab homine a quo baptizatur, sed ab illo de quo scriptum est: "*Credenti in eum qui iustificat impium deputatur fides ad iustitiam*"; quoniam non gloriamur in homine, nitimurque donante ipso, cum gloriamur, in Domino gloriari; quam securi sumus, quidquid de quibusdam nostrae communionis hominibus erroris aut criminis probare potuerit... neque enim metuimus, ne quos baptizant iustificari non possint; cum illi in eum credant qui iustificat impios, ut deputetur fides eorum ad iustitiam (c. litt. *Petil.* 3.36.42).

³⁰ See, e.g., Hubertus Drobner, "Studying Augustine: an overview of recent research," in *Augustine and His Critics*, edited by Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2000), 29.

³¹ One is tempted to compare this epithet with another that will soon become common for Augustine: *o inimici gratiae christi, et solo uocabulo christiani* (c. *Iul.* 3.15).

³² *Haec et talia divina testimonia nos adversus humana vaniloquia proferentes, ab inimicis gloriae Christi acerba opprobria sustinemus. Dicant quod volunt, dum ille nos exhortetur, dicens: "Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quia ipsorum est regnum coelorum. Beati eritis cum vos persecuti fuerint, et maledixerint*

Ab inimicis gloriae Christi acerba opprobria sustinemus: Augustine himself has been the target of much Donatist venom,³³ certainly an indication of how important they viewed Augustine's role in the campaign being waged against them. Despite Augustine's annoyance if not dismay at the personal turn their arguments have taken, he will use it as a fertile opportunity to insist, using a Pauline phrase, "*nemo gloriatur in homine*" (1 Cor. 3:21). The following excerpt takes up Augustine's response to Petilian's *maledicta* against him. He is in the midst of a Pauline quote:

"... As for me, it matters little to be judged by you or any human tribunal, but neither do I judge myself" (1 Cor. 4: 3-4). Regarding Paul's words that follow, even though I dare not say they refer to me – "I am not conscious of any fault" (1 Cor. 4:4), yet full of confidence in the sight of God I do say: None of these things which Petilian accuses me of during this time of my life after baptism am I aware of doing – "Not however that I am justified in this; it is the Lord who judges me." And so don't judge anyone before the time when the Lord will come... [he continues with a lengthy citation of 1 Cor 4: 4-6, turning then to 1 Cor. 3:21-23] "And so let no one glory in a human. All is yours, you however are Christ's, and Christ is God's." And I repeat, "Let no one glory in a human"; often I repeat, "Let no one glory in a human." If you meet someone worthy of praise, refer the praise to him of whom it is said: "all that is good, everything that is perfect, is that which is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light, with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow of change" (Jam. 1:17).³⁴

vobis, et dixerint omne malum adversum vos, mentientes propter me." Quod ait superius, "*propter iustitiam*"; hoc repetivit, quod ait postea, "*propter me*": quia "*factus est nobis sapientia et iustitia et sanctificatio et redemptio; ut, quemadmodum scriptum est: Qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur*" (c. litt. Petil. 3.7.8).

³³ See, e.g. *Cresc.* 3.80.92; c. litt. *Petil.* 3.16.19-17.20; *breuic.* 3.9.

³⁴ "*Mihi autem minimo est ut a vobis iudicer, aut ab humano die; sed neque ego me ipsum iudico.*" Iam quod sequitur, etsi mihi non audio coaptare, ut dicam: "*Nihil enim mihi conscius sum,*" fidenter tamen in conspectu Dei dico: "*Nihil eorum, quibus Petilianus tempus vitae meae, posteaquam in Christo baptizatus sum, criminatus est, mihi conscius sum; "Nec tamen in hoc iustificatus sum; qui autem diiudicat me, Dominus est. Itaque nolite ante tempus quidquam iudicare, donec veniat Dominus ..."*" "*Itaque nemo gloriatur in homine. Omnia vestra sunt, vos autem Christi, Christus vero Dei.*" Iterum dico: "*Nemo gloriatur in homine*"; saepe repeto: "*Nemo gloriatur in homine.*" Si quid in nobis laudabile advertitis, ad illius laudem referte, a quo est "*omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum: desursum est enim descendens a Patre lumen, apud quem non est immutatio, nec momenti obumbratio*" (c. litt. *Petil.* 3.2.3).

Nemo gloriatur in homine echoes throughout this treatise against Petilian, and each occasion for its use carries with it a certain sting of reproach. In fact the excerpt just cited is preceded by a clear indication of Augustine's state of mind:

Therefore, Petilian, I turn my discourse away from you and speak to those whom you seek to turn against me by your abusive language – as if I am trying to convert people to myself and not rather, with me, to God.³⁵

It is precisely to turn the argument away from Augustine or any human agent and back to God that the Bishop of Hippo will insist time after time in speaking against the Donatists: *nemo gloriatur in homine*.

“What do we have that we have not received? If, however, we have received, we will not glory as if we had not received” (cf. 1 Cor. 4:7). And regarding all those things in us which you know to be good, be our imitator, as long as we are imitating Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 4:16). If, however, you suspect or believe or see something bad about us, hold fast to that saying of the Lord by which, in all security, you do not leave his church because of the evil doings of men and women: “What we say, do; what evil things you think we do or know we do, do not do” (cf. Mt. 23:3). It is not time for me to justify myself before you for, putting aside myself as an issue, I point you towards a salutary reality; “so let no one glory in a human.” “For, “cursed is the one who places their trust in a human being” (Jer. 17:5).³⁶

³⁵ *A te ergo, Petiliane, sermonem parumper avertam; et ad eos convertam, quos a me maledictis tuis es conatus avertere, quasi hoc ego moliar, ut homines ad me convertantur, et non potius mecum ad Deum* (ibid. 3.1.2).

³⁶ *Quid enim habemus quod non accepimus? Si autem accipimus, non gloriemur quasi non acceperimus. Et in his omnibus quaecumque in nobis bona nostis, imitatores nostri estote, si tamen nos Christi; si autem aliqua mala in nobis vel suspicamini vel creditis vel videtis, retinet illud dominicum, quo securi eius Ecclesiam non propter mala hominum deseratis: Quae dicimus, facite; quae autem mala nos facere putatis aut nostis, nolite facere. Non enim tempus est purgandi me vobis, cum, mea causa neglecta, rem vobis salubrem commendare suscepim, ut “nemo gloriatur in homine.” “Maledictus” enim “omnis qui spem suam ponit in homine” ...* (ibid. 3.2.3). Augustine will use this text often against the Pelagians: “Immo dicimus uel ante legem uel tempore ueteris testamenti a peccatis fuisse liberatos non uirtute propria, quia **maledictus omnis qui spem suam ponit in homine** - et in hoc sine dubio maledicto sunt, quos etiam psalmus diuinus notat: qui confidunt in uirtute sua -, nec vetere testamento, quod in seruitutem generat, quamuis certae dispensationis gratia diuinitus datum sit, nec ipsa lege sancta et iusta et bona, ubi scriptum est: non concupisces, quoniam non est data, quae posset uiuificare, sed praeauaricationis gratia posita est, donec ueniret semen cui promissum est, sed liberatos esse per sanguinem ipsius redemptoris, qui est unus mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus” (c. ep. Pel. 1.7.12).

Once again Augustine surrounds his key Pauline text with a wider array of biblical citations and allusions, all in support of the basic principle: *nemo glorietur in homine*. In fact, this persistent use of 1 Cor. 1:31 may be seen to be deliberately intended to short-circuit a Donatist reading of the 1 Cor. 4:7, used to argue that the unholy cannot confer holiness.³⁷

Deus incrementum dat (1 Cor. 3:7)

Throughout his writings against the Donatists Augustine will seek to dismantle what he sees as central to their ecclesiology and sacramental theology, an emphasis on *foris* – what is exterior and observable, while the working of God is *intus*, and, in the final analysis, not subject to human observation or inspection.

... for even when spiritual grace is imparted to believers by a holy and faithful steward, it is not the steward who justifies, rather that one of whom it is said that he justifies the unrighteous. Or is it the Apostle Paul who is head and source (*caput est et origo*) of those who do the planting? Or Apollo, the root (*radix*) of those who do the watering? Rather, does not he give faith of whom Paul speaks: "I planted, Apollo watered, but God gives the increase; and so neither the one who plants is anything nor the one who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6-7); neither was [Paul] their root but rather he who says: "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn. 15:5).³⁸

Augustine addresses whether the *baptizator* is the *origo*, *radix*, and *caput* of the *fides* conferred in baptism, seeing this as central to the workings of Donatist sacramental theology.

What human rashness and arrogance (*O humana temeritas et superbia*)! Why do you not grant that it is always Christ who gives faith,

³⁷ See *c. ep. Parm.* 2.13.27; Lombardi notes the central importance of 1 Cor. 4:7 for the Donatists: "*Qui non habet quod det, quomodo dat?*" See Antonio Lombardi, "Note," in *Sant'Agostino, Polemica con i Donatisti*, NBA XV/1 (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1998), 149, n. 30.

³⁸ *Neque enim etiam cum per sanctum et fidelem dispensatorem gratia spiritualis credentibus impertitur, dispensator ipse iustificat ac non ille unus, de quo dictum est quod iustificat impium, aut uero apostolus Paulus caput est et origo eorum quos plantauerat aut Apollo radix est eorum quos rigauerat ac non ille, qui eis in credendo fidem dederat, cum idem dicat: "ego plantaui, Apollo rigauit, sed Deus incrementum dedit; itaque neque qui plantat est aliquid neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus"; nec radix eorum erat ipse, sed potius ille qui ait: "ego sum uitis, uos estis sarmenta" (c. litt. Petil. 1.5.6).*

and in so doing makes someone a Christian? Why do you not grant that Christ is always the source of someone becoming a Christian, that a Christian is someone who sinks their roots in Christ, that Christ is the head of a Christian (*Christus christiani sit caput*).³⁹

Deus incrementum dat is Augustine's Pauline answer, supported once again by a host of other Pauline and non-Pauline texts:

Let no one claim: I follow so-and-so because he made me a Christian; or, I follow so-and-so because he baptized me. "Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters [matters], only God who gives the increase" (1 *Cor.* 3:7). And, "God is love and who abides in love abides in God and God will abide in them" (1 *Jn.* 4:16). No one preaching the name of Christ and possessing and ministering the Sacrament of Christ should be followed if they are against the unity of Christ. "Everyone should examine their own conduct and so find glory only in themselves and not in another. Everyone should carry their own burden" (Gal. 4:5), the burden, namely of rendering an account, since "everyone must give an account of themselves. Let us no longer judge one another" (*Rm.* 14: 12-13). For regarding the mutual burden of love, "let us bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfil the law of Christ. Anyone who thinks themselves to be something, since they are nothing, seduce themselves" (Gal. 6:2-3). Let us bear with one another in love, content to serve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (cf. *Eph.* 4:2-3). Outside of this bond anyone who gathers, does not gather with Christ; anyone, however who does not gather with Christ, scatters (cf. *Mt.* 12: 30).⁴⁰

This mosaic of scriptural citations and allusions gives the Pauline text both depth and breadth, linked here most especially with another

³⁹ *O humana temeritas et superbia! Cur non sinis potius ut semper Christus det fidem, christianum dando facturum. Cur non sinis ut semper sit Christus origo christianum, in Christo radicem christianus infigat, Christus christiani sit caput* (ibid. 4.42.51).

⁴⁰ *Nemo dicat: Illum sequar, quoniam ipse me christianum fecit; aut: Illum sequar, quoniam ipse me baptizavit. "Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui regat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus." Et "Deus caritas est, et qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet, et Deus in illo manet." Nullus etiam praedicans nomen Christi, et gestans ac ministrans Sacramentum Christi, sequendus est contra unitatem Christi. "Opus suum probet unusquisque; et tunc in se ipso tantum gloriam habebit, et non in altero. Unusquisque enim proprium onus portabit," onus videlicet reddendae rationis: quia "unusquisque nostrum pro se rationem reddet. Non itaque amplius invicem iudicemus." Nam quantum attinet ad onera mutuae caritatis, "invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi. Qui enim putat se esse aliquid, cum nihil sit, se ipsum seducit." Sufferamus ergo invicem dilectione, satis agentes servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis: extra quam quisquis colligit, non cum Christo colligit: quisquis autem non cum Christo colligit, spargit* (ibid. 3.5.6).

central theme of Augustine's anti-Donatist discourse: *caritas*. Augustine uses Paul to chide the Donatists constantly that they lack *caritas*.

Paul teaches that when charity is lacking, suffering is of no use, it does them no good (*nihil prodest*), those who live without love (*sine caritate uiuere*), carrying within envy and ill will.⁴¹

This *caritas* is closely linked to *humilitas*.

This is what holy humility and apostolic love (*sancta humilitas et caritas apostolica*) unquestionably prohibit, resoundingly proclaimed by Paul: "Let no one glory in another human being (*nemo gloriatur in homine*)" (1 Cor. 3:21).⁴²

Paul here is both teacher and model, announcing Christ, but also witnessing to his own humble yet loving work in the service of Christ:

Those who, upon its proclamation, welcome the gospel, do not attribute it to the planter nor to the waterer but to the one who gives the increase, the one by whom they are cleansed and justified.⁴³

Working off of a key Pauline text, Augustine constructs a comprehensive theological vision that encompasses Christology, sacramental theology, ecclesiology, as well as a theology of ministry.

Si caritatem autem non habeam (1 Cor. 13:2)

Not surprisingly, Paul's emphasis on *caritas* in addressing the Corinthians will offer Augustine a substantive resource for his challenge to Donatist theology.

For Paul says: "If I have faith enough to move mountains but have not love (*caritatem non habeam*), I am nothing."⁴⁴

Augustine's most serious indictment against the Donatists, reiterated repeatedly throughout these debates, is that they lack the one thing necessary, love.

⁴¹ *Quod si propter hoc quia caritas deest passio nihil prodest, nec illis prodest, quos intus in inuidia et malevolentia sine caritate uiuere Paulus dicit (bapt. 4.17.24).*

⁴² *Hoc est quod apertissime prohibet sancta humilitas et caritas apostolica clamante Paulo: "nemo gloriatur in homine" (c. litt. Petil. 3.28.33).*

⁴³ *Qui autem omnibus illis annuntiantibus euangelium perceperunt, non a planatore uel rigatore, sed ab eo qui incrementum dat mundari et iustificari potuerunt (ibid. 3.55.67).*

⁴⁴ *Unde et Paulus apostolus: "si habeam," inquit, "omnem fidem ita ut montes transferam, caritatem <autem> non habeam, nihil sum" (Cresc. 1.29.34).*

Indeed one possesses all the sacraments of Christ not for salvation (*ad salutem*) but for judgment (*ad iudicium*) if they are possessed without the love of the unity of Christ (*sine caritate unitatis Christi*).⁴⁵

To support this, Paul will once again provide the centerpiece for Augustine's assertions:

Let them realize how it is of no use to have many and great things if one thing alone is lacking (*si unum quiddam defuerit*). And let them realize what is this very thing. Let them not listen to me but to the Apostle: "If I speak with the tongue of men and angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong, a clashing cymbal... (1 Cor. 13:1-2). What they do, they do separated (*separati*), not bearing with one another in love, not striving to serve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. For without love, even if one possessed everything else, it is of no use for eternal salvation (*ad aeternam salutem peruenire non possunt*).⁴⁶

Nihil eis prosunt: nothing is of use without love is what Paul teaches all Christians, a love whose hallmark is unity.

This is what the Apostle says: "If I have faith to move mountains, and yet have not love, I am nothing." But it must be asked: who has love (*quis habeat caritatem*)? You will find this to be the answer: those who love unity (*nisi eos qui diligunt unitatem*).⁴⁷

Such a lack is not without serious consequences:

We are the ones who are *catholic* because [according to the apostolic voice, (cf. Gal. 6:5)] ... we do not abandon unity; you are the true heretics because on account of some real or imagined wrongdoing, you fail to maintain love with the seed of Abraham.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *Omnia quippe sacramenta Christi non ad salutem, sed ad iudicium habentur sine caritate unitatis Christi* (c. litt. Petil. 3.40.46).

⁴⁶ *Videant quam multa et quam magna nihil prosint, si unum quiddam defuerit, et uideant quid sit ipsum unum, nec me in hoc audiant, sed apostolum: si linguis hominum, inquit, loquar et angelorum, caritatem autem non habeam, factus sum aeramentum sonans et cymbalum tinniens... tamen quia separati haec agunt non sufficientes inuicem in dilectione neque studentes seruare unitatem spiritus in uinculo pacis, caritatem utique non habendo, etiam cum illis omnibus quae nihil eis prosunt ad aeternam salutem peruenire non possunt* (bapt. 1.9.12).

⁴⁷ *Hinc et apostolus ait: "si fidem habeam ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habeam, nihil sum." Hoc ergo quaerendum est, quis habeat caritatem; inuenies non esse nisi eos qui diligunt unitatem* (c. litt. Petil. 2.55.126).

⁴⁸ *Et ideo nos sumus catholici, qui secundum istam sententiam non deserimus unitatem, uos uero haeretici, qui propter quorundam hominum crimina seu uera seu falsa non uultis tenere cum Abrahae semine caritatem* (c. litt. Petil. 2.36.84).

Paul's teaching on love is clear, it is a *catholic* love:

Since it is taught that the Holy Spirit is bestowed only in the catholic church by the imposition of hands, undoubtedly our forbears wanted this to be understood [according to what the Apostle said]: "for the love of God has been poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (*Rm. 5:5*).⁴⁹

There is a vital link between *catholicity*, *caritas*, and the presence of the Spirit of God, supported by a key Pauline text, *Rm. 5:5*.

This is a love which no one has who is cut off from the communion of the catholic church; for this reason, if they speak with the tongue of angels or men, if they know all mysteries and all knowledge, if they have all prophecy and a faith to move mountains, if they distribute all they own to the poor and hand their bodies over to be burned, it is of no use for them (*nihil eis prodest*).⁵⁰

The hallmark of *catholica* is *caritas*:

No one has the love of God who does not love the unity of the church. For this reason it is rightly said that the Holy Spirit is only received in the catholic church.⁵¹

The Apostle's teaching comes together to form a distinctive profile: Augustine speaks of catholic peace, catholic unity, catholic communion, ever drawing upon Paul as his source, always letting the Apostle have the last word.

With these apostolic words commending love above all, we sought to show how it is of no use for anyone to have the sacraments of faith when love is lacking; thus when you come to catholic unity understand what is bestowed upon you and what it was you were lacking – for Christian love can only be maintained in union with the church and

⁴⁹ *Spiritus autem sanctus quod in sola catholica per manus inpositionem dari dicitur, nimirum hoc intellegi maiores nostri uoluerunt quod apostolus ait: quoniam "caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis" – spiritus autem sanctus quod in sola catholica per manus inpositionem dari dicitur, nimirum hoc intellegi maiores nostri uoluerunt quod apostolus ait: "quoniam caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis" (bapt. 3.16.21).*

⁵⁰ *Ipsa est enim caritas, quam non habent qui ab ecclesiae catholicae communione praecisi sunt, ac per hoc, etiamsi linguis hominum et angelorum loquantur, si sciant omnia sacramenta et omnem scientiam et si habeant omnem prophetiam et omnem fidem ita ut montes transferant et distribuant omnia sua pauperibus et tradant corpus suum ut ardeant, nihil eis prodest (ibid.).*

⁵¹ *Non autem habet Dei caritatem, qui ecclesiae non diligit unitatem, ac per hoc recte intellegitur dici non accipi nisi in catholica spiritus sanctus (ibid.).*

there you will see that without it you are nothing, even if you have baptism and faith enough to move mountains.⁵²

The Apostle teaches that without *catholic* love the consequences are inevitable:

And so baptism is the sacrament of new life and eternal salvation which many do not have for eternal life but for eternal punishment, badly using such a great good: only a good person has the true love which is the bond of perfection. No one with love can be a schismatic or a heretic. When anyone coming to the unity of the church, is truly united with its members, such a one receives the Holy Spirit, through whom love is diffused into our hearts, that same love which covers a multitude of sins, so that baptism which was first possessed **unto judgment** (*ad iudicium*) is now merited to be had **unto reward** (*ad praemium*).⁵³

Throughout all of Augustine's Pauline-based exhortations regarding the primacy of *caritas*, it is evident that Paul not only teaches *caritas*, he models it as well.

Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi (1 Cor.4:16)

Augustine is never content merely to cite Paul's words. Just as great an authority is the example Paul has set for later Christians: Paul lives and models what he teaches. A constant critique against the Donatists on Augustine's part is that they wish to separate *now* what will only be separated *eschatologically*. In his work against Parmenian he notes that, indeed, the prophets often called upon God's people to separate themselves physically from evil doers, making specific

⁵² *His enim nos apostolicis uerbis commendantibus eminentiam caritatis uobis solemus ostendere, quomodo non prosit hominibus, quamuis in eis sint uel sacramenta uel fides, ubi caritas non est, ut, cum ad unitatem catholicam uenitis, intellegatis quid uobis conferatur et quantum sit quod minus habebatis – caritas enim christiana nisi in unitate ecclesiae non potest custodiri – atque ita uideatis sine illa nihil uos esse, etsi baptismum et fidem teneatis et per illam etiam montes transferre possitis* (c. litt. Petil. 2.77.172).

⁵³ *Baptismus igitur sacramentum est nouae uitae ac salutis aeternae, quem multi habent non ad uitam aeternam, sed ad poenam aeternam, non bene utentes tanto bono; caritatem uero sanctam, quae est uinculum perfectionis, nemo potest habere non bonus. Nemo qui habet potest esse uel schismaticus uel haereticus. Cum ergo quisque ad ecclesiae ueniens unitatem, cum eius membris ueraciter copulatur, accipiat spiritum sanctum, per quem diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris, eadem que caritas cooperiat multitudinem peccatorum, ut et baptismum, quem primum habebat ad iudicium, habere iam mereatur ad praemium...* (Cresc. 2.13.16).

reference to *Isaiah* 52:11. He asks the question: *cur hoc non fecit Paulus apostolus?* (3.4.25). It certainly was not because Paul never found himself among evildoers:

Were they not chaff, those who preached Christ not out of sincerity but out of envy? Were they not unclean, those who preached the gospel without pure intention. That there were such in the church of those days [Paul] testifies and his most excellent love in bearing with all things, those who came after him imitated. [He then gives Cyprian as an example]... He tolerated the blameworthy lest he abandon the blameless, with whom he washed his hands (see *pss.* 25 (26):6; 72 (73):12), since he loved the beauty of the house of the Lord, a beauty found in honorable vessels: "In a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware, the former for honor, the latter for humiliation (2 *Tm.* 2:20).⁵⁴

It is necessary not only to interpret Paul's words but to look carefully at Paul's own behavior. His actions can be seen as hermeneutical, as a way to interpret his writings, as a model for how to put the content of the Apostle's writings into practice. Thus Paul's tolerance ought to be seen, not as a sign of weakness but, rather, as a sign of a deeper love, one that sets the standard for Christian tolerance ever after.

If you wish to be an imitator of Paul, be a tolerator within [the church] of false brethren, not outside [the church] as a calumniator of the innocent.⁵⁵

Augustine takes every occasion to remind his Donatist opponents that Paul was often speaking to fellow Christians when he spoke of the need for *tolerantia*.

Yet for the love of Christ, who died for the weak, and fearful lest in weeding out the weeds the wheat be also uprooted, he [Cyprian] practiced tolerance with a deep love that was both paternal and maternal,

⁵⁴ *An palea non erant qui non ex ueritate, sed ex inuidia Christum annuntiabant? An immundi non erant qui non caste euangelium praedicabant, quos in illius temporis ecclesia fuisse testatur et cuius excellentissimam caritatem omnia tolerantem etiam posteriores imitati sunt?... ideo quippe tolerabat nocentes, ne desereret innocentes cum quibus manus lauabat, quia diligebat speciem domus domini, quae species in uasis honorabilibus erat. "In magna autem domo non solum aurea uasa sunt et argentea, sed et lignea et fictilia. Et illa quidem sunt in honore, illa autem in contumelia" (c. ep. Parm. 3.4.25). G. Bavaud, "Notes Complémentaires 21, L'exégèse de II Tim., II,20," in *Traité Anti-Donatistes*, Vol. I, BA 28, 609 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963).*

⁵⁵ *Si ergo uelles imitari Paulum, intus esses falsorum fratrum tolerator, non foris innocentium calumniator (c. litt. Petil. 2.76.170).*

having imitated the Apostle Paul, who put up with the ill-willed and envious, doing so with the same love that he had for the church.⁵⁶

A theme that Augustine will insist upon over and over again is that we can never know for sure what is in the heart of someone else and what will happen to that person in the future.

Whoever will be good in eternity, even if for a time they are evil, such are not weeds but wheat in God's foreknowledge (*sed triticum sunt in praescientia dei*).⁵⁷

Unlike God, we can never truly know whether someone is *zizania* or *triticum*. However, the tolerance demanded by love does not mean that we simply remain silent or passive in the face of apparent evil. Once again Paul sets the example, as Augustine takes up a scriptural account that has already been at the heart of his tensions with Jerome, Paul's account of his correction of Peter in *Gal.* 2.⁵⁸

So if Peter could deviate from gospel truth, in compelling the Gentiles to act as Jews, which Paul records in his Epistle in which, with God as his witness, he testifies that he is not lying, for he said: "What I write to you, I say before God, I do not lie" (*Gal.* 1:20). And after this so holy and tremendous testimony of God, he recounted all those things about which he spoke. "When I saw that they had deviated from the gospel truth, I said to Peter before all: If you as a Jew live as a Gentile and not according to Jewish ways, how can you compel the gentiles to act as Jews? (*Gal.* 2:14)... And so, since Peter, having done what he did, was subsequently corrected by Paul, yet maintaining the bond of peace and unity, was exalted to martyrdom, how much more easily and forcefully ought we to prefer what is established by the universal church over the authority of a single bishop or a single provincial council. Thus did Cyprian himself express what he thought, to remain united in peace with those with whom he disagreed."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *Et tamen eos propter Christum, qui pro infirmis mortuus est, ne ante tempus eradicatis zizaniis simul eradicaretur et triticum, paternae et maternae caritatis uisceribus tolerauit, imitatus utique apostolum Paulum, qui maliuolos et inuidos sibi eadem circa ecclesiam caritate sustinuit (bapt. 4.9.12).*

⁵⁷ *Quicumque enim boni in aeternum futuri sunt, etsi ante tempus mali sunt, non zizania, sed triticum sunt in praescientia Dei (cath. fr. 19.52).*

⁵⁸ See G. Bavaud, "Notes Complémentaires 9, La faute de Pierre blâmée par Paul," in *Traité Anti-Donatistes, Vol. II*, BA 29 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1964), 590-592; "The literature on the controversy between Jerome and Augustine is extensive. For a helpful overview and bibliography see Mark Vessey, "Jerome," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, General Editor, Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., 460-462 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999).

⁵⁹ *Si ergo potuit Petrus in aliquo non recte ingredi ad ueritatem euangelii, ita ut gentes cogeret iudaizare, quod Paulus in ea scribit epistula in qua Deum testatus est*

Paul's correction of Peter and Peter's humble acceptance of that correction offer Augustine a provocative model of truth, love, and humility that are the hallmarks of the *pax catholicae unitatis* (bapt. 3.17.22). Thus Augustine joins to the authority of Paul's words the eloquent authority of Paul's example: *fecit hoc Paulus* (c. litt. Petil. 2.58.132).⁶⁰

Praedicator caritatis

[C]ontra donatistas uehementer exercebamur (retr. 2.36): throughout the course of the Donatist controversy Augustine wrote a host of polemical treatises intended both for Catholic and Donatist audiences to argue for the correctness of the "catholic" position over and against Donatist theology. Up until this point in this study, all of the examples of Augustine's use of Paul have been taken from these more formal expositions. It is equally clear that these treatises were complemented with a preaching campaign, once again intended for both Donatist and Catholic ears and hearts. Before this study is concluded, it will be helpful to take a brief glimpse at Augustine's preaching Paul during the Donatist controversy. *Sermon 162A* (Denis 19),⁶¹ placed by commentators in the early 400's, with Carthage as its setting, is an impassioned discourse where, once again, Paul's voice is brought forward to dismantle Donatist theology. In particular, Augustine will draw upon the Apostle to place the question of love at the center of this dispute: "According to the apostle in love is to be found a supereminent way – *est enim secundum apostolum in caritate supereminentissima uia*" (s. 162A.1). And what for Augustine is clear is

non se mentiri – ait enim: quae autem scribo uobis, ecce coram Deo quia non mentior et post hanc tam sanctam adque terribilem adtestationem Dei narrauit haec omnia in quibus dixit: cum uidissem, quia non recte ingrediuntur ad ueritatem euangelii, dixi Petro coram omnibus: si tu cum sis iudaeus gentiliter et non iudaice uiuis, quemadmodum gentes cogis iudaizare?... quapropter cum Petrus illud faciens a Paulo posteriore corrigitur et pacis adque unitatis uinculo custoditus ad martyrium promouetur, quanto facilius et fortius, quod per uniuersae ecclesiae statuta firmatum est, uel unius episcopi auctoritati uel unius prouinciae concilio praeferendum est, cum idem ipse Cyprianus ita dixerit quid ei uideretur, ut in pace unitatis esse uoluerit etiam cum eis, qui de hac re diuersa sentirent (bapt. 2.1.2).

⁶⁰ Many more examples could be given: see, e.g. *Cresc.* 6.6.3; *cath. fr.* 12.31.

⁶¹ Regarding *Sermon 162A*, see the comments by Edmund Hill in *Sermons III/5* (148-183) on the *New Testament*, translation and notes, Edmund Hill, O.P., editor John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1992), 152-166. I have consulted the Hill translation of the sermon.

that the Donatists do not walk in this way: "according to the apostle: 'If I do not have love,' he says, 'I am nothing' (1 Cor. 13:2) – *secundum apostolum: si caritatem, inquit, non habeam, nihil sum* (ibid. 3). They do not love because they neither understand nor cherish the *corpus Christi*, Paul's model of Christian love:

On this point the apostle himself gave the example of love, when he was urging us to love one another in the same way as the members of the body love each other in the body: "If one member suffers," he said, "the other members also suffer with it; and if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 13: 26-27).⁶²

The unity of the body, even in bearing with members in distress, becomes a Pauline hallmark of the demands placed upon the church, the Body of Christ, by love. There is only one way to be united with Christ: *huic capiti non nisi per caritatem connectimur* (6). And the only way to hold on to love is to hold on to the Church:

So I hold onto this church, you don't; so if you have been cut off, recognize what you have been cut off from. Come back, and be grafted in, or else you will wither and be thrown on the fire. The prophets speak, the apostles speak, the Lord speaks about the Church spread throughout the world; these all give judgment against you.⁶³

In the final analysis Paul's voice is simply part of a chorus led by Christ, echoed by all the prophets and apostles: *contra te dicunt omnes...*

Conclusion

This brief exploration of Augustine's use of Paul against the Donatists suggests the foundational role played by the apostle's writings and example in articulating what he clearly saw as a "catholic" vision of the Christian life in all of its depth and complexity. It is clear that in the course of this controversy Augustine turned extensively to

⁶² *Ipse inde apostolus dedit caritatis exemplum, exhortans nos, ut ita nos diligamus inuicem, quemadmodum se in corpore diligunt membra: si patiat, inquit, unum membrum, compatiuntur et alia membra; et si glorificatur unum membrum, congaudent omnia membra* (ibid. 5).

⁶³ *Hanc ergo ecclesiam teneo, tu illam non tenes: si ergo praecisus es, agnosce unde praecisus es. redi, et inserere, ne arescas, et in ignem mittaris. loquuntur prophetae, loquuntur apostoli, loquitur dominus de ecclesia toto orbe diffusa: contra te dicunt omnes isti sententiam* (ibid. 12). See also c. litt. Petil. 2.77.172.

the apostle's writings and gave them place of prominence in constructing a scriptural case against Donatist theology and practice. Given the intensity of feeling and commitment on all sides of the controversy, it is not surprising that this Paulinism often has a sharp edge – lines are clearly drawn, the stakes are starkly laid out: *ad salutem, ad iudicium*. We also see here the continuing emergence and development of a theological vision that will take on even greater detail and relief throughout the course of the Pelagian controversy. Its hallmarks will be expressed in key Pauline affirmations: *caro concupiscit adversus spiritum, ut nemo glorietur in homine, quid enim habes quod non accepisti? Deus incrementum dat...* It is evident that as the Pelagian controversy is about to get underway, Augustine will already have at hand an arsenal of Pauline themes and affirmations from a fading controversy with which to meet an emerging controversy. His words to the “Donatists” could often, just as easily be addressed to the “Pelagians”:

Whatever you possess that is integral and true, it does you no good unless you would come to the grace of Christ – *hoc vobis quamvis integrum et uerum nihil tamen prodesset, nisi ad Christi gratiam ueniretis*. (bapt. 6.44.87)

Who frees the wretched unless the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord – *quis liberat hominem miserum, nisi gratia dei per iesum christum dominum nostrum?* (c. Iul. imp. 5.62)

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