

**AUGUSTINE'S USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE ANTI-DONATIST WRITINGS
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH**

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I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that the work is my own:

ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates and elucidates Augustine's use of Scripture in the anti-Donatist writings, with special reference to the debated issues of the catholicity, purity and unity of the church. An introductory chapter sets the context for the study by tracing Augustine's developing engagement both with Donatism and with Scripture from the time of his ordination in 391. A further chapter considers the hermeneutical theory, as expounded in the *De doctrina Christiana*, which informed his exegetical practice during the relevant period. Of special significance for our study is the interpretative function there assigned to *caritas* and Augustine's adaptation of the rules of Tyconius which provided the seed-bed for his own *totus Christus* construct. In the three main chapters of the thesis, an inductive study is offered of Augustine's polemical handling of biblical texts in relation to the debated marks of the Christian church, whose nature was of central importance in the theological and biblical debate between Catholics and Donatists. These chapters establish the general consistency of Augustine's exegetical theory and practice and the literal - figurative (spiritual) interpretative duality in terms of which his handling of Scripture is regularly controlled. Comparison is made between Augustine's differentiated use of Scripture in the treatises and in the preached material. The depth and richness of the contribution of his figurative exegesis to his distinctive (and anti-Donatist) ecclesiology is explored, with particular attention paid to the function of his *totus Christus* hermeneutical tool. In the concluding chapter, our study of Augustine's use of Scripture is related to recent important changes in scholarly assessment of the figurative method of interpretation - changes which have paved the way for an appreciation, lacking in the English-reading world for most of the twentieth century, of the enduring quality of Augustine's spiritual exegesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General abbreviations (Series, Journals, Critical Works, etc):

- A-L *Augustinus-Lexicon*, ed. C. Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1986 -)
- AM *Augustinus Magister*, Congrès International Augustinien, 1954, vols. 1-3 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes).
- AS *Augustinian Studies* (Villanova, 1970 -)
- BA *Bibliothèque Augustinienne: Oeuvres de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1933 -)
- CCL *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnhout, 1953 -)
- CPL *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, ed. E. Dekkers, Editio tertia, aucta et emendata (Steenbrugge: In Abbatia Sancti Petri, 1995)
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, 1866-)
- JTS *Journal of Theological Studies* (London, 1899 -)
- LXX *Septuaginta*, ed. A. Rahlfs (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935)
- MA *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, 2 vols. (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1930-31)
- NCE *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967-)
- PL *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, 221 vols. ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64)

PLS	Supplement to the <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i> , 3 vols., ed. A. Hamman (Paris, 1958-63)
REA	<i>Revue des Études Augustiniennes</i> (Paris, 1955 -)
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> (Paris, 1942 -)
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i> (Edinburgh, 1948 -)
SP	<i>Studia Patristica</i> (in TU, Berlin, Leuven, 1957 -)
TU	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i> (Leipzig, Berlin, 1882 -)
VL	<i>Vetus Latina</i>
Vulgate	<i>Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem</i> , 4th edn., ed. R. Gryson (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994)

Abbreviations of Primary Sources

Note: The critical edition used in each citation from the following works is indicated in the appropriate footnote. See bibliography for further information regarding critical editions of Augustine's works.

Works of Augustine

<i>Ad Donat. post Coll.</i>	<i>Ad Donatistas post Collationem</i>
<i>Brev. Coll.</i>	<i>Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessiones</i>
<i>Contra Cresc.</i>	<i>Contra Cresconium</i>
<i>Contra Gaudent.</i>	<i>Contra Gaudentium</i>
<i>Contra ep. Parmen.</i>	<i>Contra epistulam Parmeniani</i>

<i>Contra Faust.</i>	<i>Contra Faustum Manichaeum</i>
<i>Contra litt. Petil.</i>	<i>Contra litteras Petiliani</i>
<i>De bap(t).</i>	<i>De baptismo</i>
<i>De civ. Dei</i>	<i>De civitate Dei</i>
<i>DDC</i>	<i>De doctrina Christiana</i>
<i>De Gen. ad Litt.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad Litteram</i>
<i>De Gen. ad Litt. lib. imperf.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad Litteram liber imperfectus</i>
<i>De Gen. contra Man.</i>	<i>De Genesi contra Manichaeos</i>
<i>De un. bap(t).</i>	<i>De unico baptismo contra Petilianum</i>
<i>De Trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>
<i>Enarr(s). in Ps.</i>	<i>Enarratio(nes) in Psalmos</i>
<i>Ep. ad Cath.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Catholicos fratres (or De unitate ecclesiae)</i>
<i>Ep(p).</i>	<i>Epistula(e)</i>
<i>Gesta cum Emer.</i>	<i>Gesta cum Emerito</i>
<i>In Ioh. Ep.</i>	<i>In Iohannis epistulam Tractatus</i>
<i>In Ioh. Tr.</i>	<i>In Iohannis euangelium Tractatus</i>
<i>Psalm. contra part. Donat.</i>	<i>Psalmus contra partem Donati</i>
<i>Quaest. in Hept.</i>	<i>Quaestiones in Heptateuchum</i>
<i>Retract.</i>	<i>Retractationes</i>
<i>Sermo ad Caes. eccl. pleb.</i>	<i>Sermo ad Caesariensis ecclesiae plebem</i>

Works of Possidius

Vita

Vita Augustini (ed. Weiskotten)

Elenchus

Operum S. Augustini Elenchus (ed. Wilmart)

Works of Cyprian

Ad Donat.

Ad Donatum

Ad Dem.

Ad Demetrianum

Adv. Jud.

Adversus Judaeos

De unit.

De ecclesiae Unitate

De zelo et liv.

De zelo et livore

Works of Optatus

Contra Donat.

Adversus Parmenianum Donatistam

Works of Tyconius

LR

Liber Regularum

Other

Gesta coll. Carth.

Gesta collationis Carthaginensis

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and approach

This dissertation aims to investigate and elucidate Augustine's use of Scripture in the anti-Donatist writings, with special reference to the marks of the church. The historical study of exegetical methods is a comparatively modern development. The large number of books and articles on the history of biblical interpretation now available in English indicates the growing interest within the English-reading world of scholarship in this subject. Within the field of patristic and of Augustinian studies, this new interest has been signalled by the recent translation into English of important works of French scholarship, most notably, Henri de Lubac's magisterial *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*,¹ Bertrand de Margerie's *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse*, vol.3: *Saint Augustin*² and A.-M. La Bonnardière's *Bible de Tous les Temps*, vol.3, *Saint Augustin et la Bible*.³ De Lubac's work has been particularly influential, with its sustained argument that spiritual (allegorical) exegesis as practised in the patristic and medieval periods was a distinctively Christian approach to the Old Testament as understood in the light of the New Testament and of Christ, who was understood to be central in both Testaments.

¹ In four vols., 1959-64 (ET, Vol.1: 1998; Vol.2: 2000).

² 1983. ET, 1991.

³ 1986. ET, "Augustine and the Bible," edited with additional material, by Pamela Bright (1999).

Of ground-breaking importance in recent study of Augustine's biblical text and usage have been the detailed analyses provided by La Bonnardière in the seven fascicles of her *Biblia Augustiniana*. These represented only a beginning and very much work remains to be done to bring this project to completion.⁴

This dissertation aims to make a contribution to the study of Augustine's exegesis by exploring his use of Scripture in the anti-Donatist writings. Amid the vast outpouring of scholarly literature on Augustine,⁵ these writings, particularly in the English-reading world, have been an area of comparative neglect. Yet, for Augustine, *theological* engagement with the Donatists was central to the debate, and since (as De Lubac has shown) for Augustine, as for other patristic exegetes, biblical exegesis was not a specialized discipline distinguishable from theology, but the very medium through which theological discussion was carried on, Augustine's theological debates with the Donatists cannot be properly understood without study of his exegetical practice in this context.⁶

⁴ The Old Testament works covered by La Bonnardière were: Deuteronomy, the historical books, Proverbs, Wisdom, Jeremiah and the twelve minor prophets. Of the New Testament, only 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Titus and Philemon were treated. It is doubtful whether the aim of establishing a definitive "Augustinian Bible text" can be attained in view of Augustine's regular practice of citing Scripture from memory, with the inevitable (and in themselves enlightening) variations in quotation. Augustine usually worked from one of the VL translations, now being reconstructed by the Vetus-Latina-Institut in Beuron, Germany (following the work of Petrus Sabatier [1743]). This work has been in progress since 1951. Cf. Drobner (2000), 24-7. For other literature on Augustine's exegesis, vd. *infra* in the survey of his exegetical works.

⁵ Reviewed annually in REA.

⁶ The comparative neglect, in the English-reading world, of this part of the Augustinian *corpus* is strikingly highlighted by the lack, to date, of translations of several significant anti-Donatist treatises. These are, *Contra ep. Parmen.*, *Contra Cresc.*, *Ep. ad Cath.*, *De un. bapt.*, *Brev. Coll.*, *Ad Donat. post Coll.*, *Contra Gaudent*. Likewise, the *Gesta* of the Conference of Carthage, in 411, with significant input from Augustine, awaits an English translation.

This study will proceed, first, by placing the exegetical investigation to come in the context of Augustine's developing engagement with the Donatists and with Scripture, from the time of his ordination in 391. The following chapter expounds the hermeneutical theory, as elaborated particularly in the *De doctrina Christiana*, which informed his exegetical practice against the Donatists. It will be suggested that this theory may have been formulated, at least to an extent, with the needs of the controversy in mind. The three main chapters of the study will focus in on the anti-Donatist writings and investigate Augustine's exegetical engagement with Donatism on specifically ecclesiological issues: respectively, on the catholicity, purity and unity of the church.⁷ These chapters will pay close attention to the function of the differing methods of exegesis employed by Augustine in the context of the controversy. The final chapter will summarize the results of the study and relate them to recent changes in hermeneutical theory more favourably disposed than earlier modern approaches to Augustine the exegete.

In order to set in context our study of Augustine's handling of Scripture against the Donatists, with reference to the marks of the church, we shall sketch first his developing engagement with the Donatists from the time of his ordination in 391 and then outline his developing engagement with Scripture during the same period.⁸

⁷ It is clear that Augustine's ecclesiological thinking was done in terms of the traditional four marks of the church established in the ninth article of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. The fourth mark was apostolicity but this did not feature in the exegetical debate. For Augustine's denial of this mark to the Donatists, on the basis of Donatist non-communion with the see of Rome and other apostolic sees, vd. Willis (1950), 120. On variations in church history on the number of marks of the church, cf. art. "Marks of the Church," in NCE 9 (1967), 240-1; also "Catholicity," *ibid*, 3.339; "Unity of the Church," *ibid*, 14.450-1. For a useful, though somewhat dated, introduction to Augustine's doctrine of the church, vd. Willis (1950), 93-126. Space precludes present treatment of Augustine's use of Scripture with reference to other theological aspects of the debate. Vd. conclusion.

⁸ David Alexander has argued convincingly that Augustine's early ideas of the church had already come

1.2 Augustine's developing engagement with Donatism.⁹

1.2.1 The period of his presbyterate (391-395).

From the earliest period of his ordained service, Augustine was preoccupied with the Donatist schism and sought to devise means for its healing.¹⁰ The earliest reference to Donatism in Augustine's writings occurs in a letter written to Antoninus, probably in 391, the year of his ordination as presbyter at Hippo.¹¹ Augustine assures Antoninus that no one in a spiritually healthy state could fail to distinguish the one Catholic church from any kind of schism, especially if he had the assistance of a good teacher.¹² Throughout the period when Gildo, the Moorish Count of Africa, wielded power, before his suppression by Honorius in 398, "Augustine continued outwardly to champion reason and discussion as the best means of converting Donatists."¹³ Augustine probably never lost hope of being able to persuade the Donatists from Scripture of the correctness of the Catholic position.

together to form "a coherent ecclesial understanding" by the time of his ordination in 391. Alexander (1995), 250f. and *passim*.

⁹ An older but useful survey is provided by Willis (1950), 36-92.

¹⁰ To this end he laboured "diebus ac noctibus." Possidius, *Vita* 9. Weiskotten (1919), 58. At the time of Augustine's ordination, the Donatist schism was some eighty years old. On the origins of the schism, *vd.* Frend (1952), 1-24.

¹¹ *Ep.* 20. Cf. Frend (1952), 237.

¹² *Ep.* 20.3 (CSEL 34/2.49).

¹³ Frend (1952), 240.

A plenary Council of all Africa was convened at Hippo in 393. At one of its meetings Augustine was requested by the bishops to speak before them and his address, on the insistence of close friends, was subsequently expanded into the work published as *De fide et symbolo*.¹⁴ Commenting on the article, *Credimus et sanctam ecclesiam, utique catholicam*, Augustine draws attention to the importance of the latter epithet in light of the fact that heretics and schismatics both refer to their congregations as churches. At this stage he wishes to distinguish between heretics as marked by doctrinal aberration and schismatics who are doctrinally orthodox but break the bonds of brotherly love by withdrawing into schism. Neither heretics nor schismatics belong to the Catholic church, in the case of heretics because the church is marked by the love of God, in the case of schismatics because she is marked by love of neighbour.¹⁵

In their endeavours to reach a popular audience with their message, both Catholics and Donatists employed the medium of song. In 393, Augustine made his single contribution to this genre with his *Psalmus contra partem Donati*.¹⁶ The refrain of the song (its first line), *Vos qui gaudetis de pace, modo verum iudicate*, was to be chanted after each of the twenty verses of twelve lines each. Each line is composed of two hemistiches and most have seven syllables. The poem is abecedarian, ie each of the twenty verses begins with the following letter of the alphabet, up to V. The work has no pretensions to metrical

¹⁴ Cf. *Retract.* 1.17 (CCL 57.52).

¹⁵ *De fide et symbolo* 10 (BA 9.64). In practice, however, Augustine applied both the terms “schismatici” and “haeretici” to Donatists, the latter with increasing frequency.

¹⁶ Augustine states that his aim in writing this song was to reach the lower and uneducated classes: “volens...causam Donatistarum ad ipsius humillimi vulgi et omnino imperitorum atque idiotarum notitiam pervenire.” *Retract.* 1.20 (CCL 57.61).

skill. It concentrates on dealing with some of the basic issues in the debate, both historical (the origins of the schism, the inferior quality of Donatist evidence, etc.) and theological (the church as a mixture of saints and sinners in this age, the issue of rebaptism, etc.). The work is significant as illustrative of Augustine's early use of biblical texts that will become increasingly prominent in his engagement with the Donatists, notably the so-called parables of separation. In the thirty-verse epilogue, mother church is portrayed as expostulating with the Donatists for quarrelling with their own mother and appeal is made for peace and unity.¹⁷

Another work of Augustine, published in 393, is his *Contra epistulam Donati haeretici*. It was produced in response to a book written by Donatus the Great (who had succeeded Maiorinus as Donatist bishop of Carthage) arguing that true Christian baptism is found only within the Donatist communion. Augustine's work is not extant but in the *Retract.* he corrects a number of statements he made in it.¹⁸

1.2.2 From his ordination as bishop to the Conference of Carthage (395-411).

¹⁷ Cf. *Retract.* 1.20 (CCL 57.61).

¹⁸ First, he corrects his earlier (Ambrosian) view that Peter was himself the rock on which the church was built. His view now is that the rock on which the church is built is Christ himself, as confessed by Peter, while Peter, called after this rock, represents the church built on the rock. Secondly, he clarifies his assertion that "God does not seek the death of anyone." Thirdly, he clears up a confusion regarding the identity of the Donatist work, which had arisen on account of the existence of more than one Donatist leader with the name of Donatus. Finally, he apologizes for having accused Donatus of altering a biblical text (Sir. 34:30) in favour of the Donatist position. He had subsequently discovered numerous codices (*verumtamen Afros*) which existed long before the *pars Donati* which had the same (Donatist) wording (*Retract.* 1.21 [CCL 57.62-3]).

In 395, Augustine was ordained as co-bishop with Valerius and from this position of increased authority his anti-Donatist crusade continued to gather momentum. At every opportunity he sought to engage Donatist leaders in debate.¹⁹ Probably in 396 he wrote to Proculeianus, the Donatist bishop of Hippo Regius. The letter was the outcome of a meeting between the Catholic Evodius²⁰ and Proculeianus. Proculeianus had felt insulted by the manner in which Evodius had spoken to him but had expressed a willingness to engage Augustine in friendly debate in the presence of other good men. Augustine's irenic reply reflects his eagerness to progress the cause of unity. He apologizes for his friend's severity, asking Proculeianus to make allowance for his age. He offers Proculeianus alternative means of carrying forward their discussion, first that suggested by Proculeianus himself of debate in the presence of others - a suggestion with which Augustine agrees, providing that the discussion were recorded and that it proceeded in a calm and orderly way.²¹ Alternatively, they could carry on a private discussion which could subsequently be shared with their people, or a private correspondence which could then be read to their congregations (*plebibus*) in order, he says, *ut aliquando non plebes sed plebs una dicatur*.²² Anticipating the *totus Christus* argument that would become so central in his anti-Donatist polemic, Augustine portrays the schism as injury done to

¹⁹ As Bonner points out, the "early years of (Augustine's) episcopate coincided with the period when Donatism came nearest to securing the domination of Africa, and Optatus of Thamugadi ruled southern Numidia from his great cathedral and waged relentless war upon Catholic and Maximianist alike, secure in the favour of Count Gildo...." Bonner (1963), 259.

²⁰ Doubtless the Evodius who was Augustine's friend and who later became bishop of Uzalis, a small city near Carthage. Cf. "Evodius of Uzalis," in Fitzgerald (1999), 344.

²¹ *Ep.* 33.4 (CSEL 34/2.20-1).

²² *Ep.* 33.4 (CSEL 34/2.21). "Plebs", in the sense of congregation or definite Christian community is found in three of the Divjak letters (*Epp.**13, 20 and 22). Eg. "octo plebes quae ad ecclesiam Fussalensem...non venerant." *Ep.**20.9 (BA 46B.308). Cf. *Epp.**13.3 (BA 46B.260), 20.13 (BA 46B.314), 22.6 (BA 46B.354), etc. For the use of the term in this and related senses in late Latin, vd. Niermeyer (1976), 807-8.

Christ by tearing his members apart. People come to their bishop to seek arbitration of disputes about material things, but this dispute is *de ipso capite nostro*.²³ The hope is that by prayer and discussion Donatists may be recalled from error and dissension *in veritatis et pacis itinera*.²⁴

Two further letters of Augustine written about this time to a senior Donatist bishop, Eusebius, reflect Augustine's endeavours to secure mutual recognition of Catholic and Donatist discipline and his consistent preference for arguing the case between the two communions on biblical and theological, rather than on historical, grounds.²⁵ The letters concerned a case in which a youth who had beaten his mother and threatened to kill her had fled the Catholic church to avoid discipline and had later been re-baptized by the Donatists, thus dishonouring, said Augustine, both his earthly and his spiritual mothers. Augustine requested Eusebius to investigate whether Proculeianus had sanctioned the action of his presbyter Victor in rebaptizing the young man. He concurs with a suggestion made (apparently by Proculeianus) that a peaceful meeting should take place between ten men (*graves et honesti viri*) from either side in order to establish the scriptural position on the issue.²⁶ To the end this remained Augustine's dominant concern in debating with the Donatists.

²³ *Ep.* 33.5 (CSEL 34/2.22).

²⁴ *Ep.* 33.6 (CSEL 34/2.22).

²⁵ *Epp.* 34 and 35.

²⁶ "...et secundum scripturas, quid in vero sit, perquiramus." *Ep.* 34.5 (CSEL 34/2.26).

In *Ep.* 35, Augustine emphasises to Eusebius the urgency of the discipline issue by reference to another case. This concerned a Catholic sub-deacon named Primus (*quondam Spaniensis ecclesiae*) and a number of nuns with whom Primus had been forbidden contact because of his undisciplined behaviour. Primus, with two of the nuns concerned, had gone over to the Donatist church and all three had been re-baptized. Primus had since become a licentious Circumcellion. Augustine urges Eusebius to bring the matter to the attention of Proculeianus.²⁷ He claims that the Catholics, on their part, respected Donatist discipline and when a Donatist under ecclesiastical discipline joined the Catholic church, the recognized procedure was that *in humilitione paenitentiae recipiatur*.²⁸

In the years immediately following his appointment as sole bishop in 397 (on the death of Valerius), Augustine continued to seek peaceful engagement with the Donatists in free discussion. He engaged in considerable correspondence²⁹ and a number of meetings with prominent Donatists took place. For example, while on a visit to Carthage, probably in 397, Augustine met with a number of Donatist leaders, including Glorius and Eleusius, with whom he discussed *nonnulla...de communione Christianae unitatis*.³⁰ A number of Donatist documents on the origin and history of the schism were produced, while Augustine found it necessary to rely on his ability to remember the content of relevant

²⁷ *Ep.* 35.2 (CSEL 34/2.28).

²⁸ *Ep.* 35.3 (CSEL 34/2.29).

²⁹ Cf. *Epp.* 43, 44, 49, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 61. Again, these letters illustrate Augustine's prime concern with the biblical and theological dimensions of the controversy.

³⁰ *Ep.* 43.3 (CSEL 34/2.86).

Catholic documents.³¹ His opponents were not impressed but in the course of the next few days, while visiting the church at Geliza, he was able to obtain a copy of the necessary documents. On his return to Carthage, Augustine spent a day reading the Catholic *gesta* to the same group of Donatist leaders.³² The main historical matter addressed was the circumstances of the condemnation of Caecilian. Augustine's records showed that among those bishops who had condemned Caecilian were a number of *praesentes et confessos traditores* whom Secundus of Tigisis, then primate of Numidia, had permitted to remain in possession of their sees, content to leave them to the judgement of God.³³ Secundus is condemned for having failed to consult other African bishops or, in the event of these proving unable to agree, the overseas bishops. If Caecilian had subsequently rejected their judgement, his disobedience would have made him the author of schism, whereas it was now the Donatists who had set up their altar against the universal church.³⁴ Also dealt with at the meeting was the outcome of petitions made by the Donatists to Constantine which had as their outcome the acquittal of Caecilian,³⁵ and Donatist inconsistency in tolerating the activities of the Circumcellions and of Optatus of Thamugadi.³⁶

Augustine, however, was clearly on more comfortable ground when it came to making biblical and doctrinal points relative to the sin of schism than in dealing with the historical

³¹ *Ep.* 43.3-5 (CSEL 34/2.86-8).

³² *Ep.* 43.5 (CSEL 34/2.88).

³³ *Ep.* 43.3 (CSEL 34/2.87).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ep.* 43.4 (CSEL 34/2.87-8).

³⁶ *Ep.* 43.24 (CSEL 34/2.106).

and factual issues in dispute.³⁷ Donatists are accused of schism, rebaptism and withholding communion from the universal church.³⁸ Against Donatist intolerance is cited the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24-30) which establishes that the all-important unity of the church can be maintained only by tolerance. The tolerant conduct of Aaron, Moses, David, Samuel, Jeremiah, Zacharias and of Jesus himself towards sinners is cited in support of this point.³⁹ The Catholic church spread throughout the whole world is the Lord's inheritance and is in fellowship with the churches of the New Testament which Apoc. 2:1-5 makes clear contained both good and bad.⁴⁰

Not long after the encounter at Carthage, Augustine and the party travelling with him to Cirta met with Fortunius, a Donatist bishop, at Tubursicum.⁴¹ A crowd gathered and many noisy interruptions made it impossible to take notes of the discussion.⁴² The substance of the discussion, which ranged over issues such as the universality of the church,⁴³ rebaptism and the Donatist claim that their experience of persecution demonstrated them to be the true people of God, is conveyed in *Ep.* 44 to the Donatists

³⁷“Certe non chartis veteribus, non archivis publicis, non gestis forensibus aut ecclesiasticis agamus. Maior liber noster orbis terrarum est.” In this latter book is fulfilled what has been promised “in libro dei” (eg. Ps. 2:7-8). *Ep.* 43.25 (CSEL 34/2.107).

³⁸ *Ep.* 43.21 (CSEL 34/2.102-3).

³⁹ *Ep.* 43.23 (CSEL 34/2.104-6).

⁴⁰ *Ep.* 43.22 (CSEL 34/2.103-4). Cf. “nemo delet de caelo constitutionem dei. Nemo delet de terra ecclesiam dei; ille totum orbem promisit, ista totum orbem replevit et malos habet et bonos, sed nec in terris amittit nisi malos nec in caelum admittit nisi bonos.” *Ep.* 43.27 (CSEL 34/2.109).

⁴¹ *Ep.* 44.1 (CSEL 34/2.109-10).

⁴² Augustine complains that most of those present had come “magis ad spectaculum quasi altercationis nostrae prope theatrica consuetudine quam ad instructionem salutis Christiana devotione....” *Ep.* 44.1 (CSEL 34/2.110).

⁴³ The issue of the universality of the church is further handled in Augustine's letter to the Donatist bishop Honoratus. By emphasising that Catholics are in communion with those churches to which the apostles wrote letters, while the Donatists are not, Augustine neatly links the notes of catholicity and apostolicity. *Ep.* 49.3 (CSEL 34/2.142).

Eleusius, Glorius and the Felixes, with a request that it be read to Fortunius for correction by him.⁴⁴ The letter closes with the suggestion that a further meeting take place in a small village (such as Villa Titiana) where neither Catholics nor Donatists had a church and where discussion would not be interrupted by the presence of a crowd. Both the canonical books and documents from both sides should be brought and Augustine asks that the meeting should be allowed to go on for as many days as were necessary for the purpose of bringing the debate to a successful conclusion.⁴⁵

About this time, Augustine wrote the work now lost, entitled *Contra partem Donati libri duo*. In *Retract.* he quotes from the first book where he affirms his opposition to the coercion of schismatics by the secular powers.⁴⁶ Augustine comments that he held this view at the time because he had not yet learned how much evil Donatist impunity would dare nor how much change for the better the application of this discipline could achieve.⁴⁷

Between 398 and 400, Augustine wrote the first of his major dogmatic treatises against the Donatists, the *Contra epistolam Parmeniani*, in three books. Parmenian had been successor to Donatus the Great in the see of Carthage and was one of the Donatists'

⁴⁴ *Ep.* 44.2 (CSEL 34/2.111).

⁴⁵ *Ep.* 44.14 (CSEL 34/2.121). Other letters of Augustine written about this time reflect an eirenic spirit towards the Donatists and a desire to address the church situation as it then was rather than to get bogged down in controversial historical details. Cf. *Ep.* 51, written c. 399-400 to Crispinus, Donatist bishop of Calama; *Ep.* 52 to Severinus (c.400); *Ep.* 53 (written c. 400, together with Fortunatus and Alypius) to the Catholic Generosus, and *Epp.* 56 and 57 (c.400) to Celer.

⁴⁶ "...non mihi placere ullius saecularis potestatis impetu schismaticos ad communionem violenter arctari." *Retract.* 2.5 (CCL 57.93).

⁴⁷ "Et vere mihi tunc non placebat, quoniam nondum expertus eram, vel quantum mali eorum auderet impunitas, vel quantum eis in melius mutandis conferre posset diligentia disciplinae." *Retract.* 2.5 (CCL 57.93-4). Cf. *Ep.* 93.

most able protagonists.⁴⁸ The *epistula* in question was that in which Parmenian had sought to refute the ideas of Tyconius the Donatist who was eventually excommunicated for his views and whose ecclesiological thinking had a deep influence on Augustine.⁴⁹ This letter “still enjoyed a wide popularity among the Donatists, even though Parmenian had been seven years or more in his grave”.⁵⁰

In the first book, the issues as highlighted in Parmenian’s letter to Tyconius are set out. Augustine addresses the question of the origin of the schism and the question of which party first appealed to the state. He provides an account of the history of the schism from its beginning to his own day. He criticises the Donatists for the inconsistency of not rebaptizing those who returned to the fold from schisms in their own church while consistently rebaptizing Catholic converts.

In the second book, Augustine discusses the nature of the church. The Donatists could not be the one true Catholic church because they had broken communion with churches furth of Africa. Augustine discusses biblical texts used by the Donatists in support of their view of church purity. Claims to holiness were undermined by the manifest unholiness of Donatist priests and by participation, on the part of Donatist members, in the violent activities of the Circumcellions. Augustine accepted the position of Tyconius

⁴⁸ It was against him that Optatus of Milevis directed his six-volume work in refutation of Donatism, entitled *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam*, also known as *De schismate Donatistarum*, published c. 365/6. Later, Optatus added a seventh book and the enlarged edition was published c. 385. This work greatly influenced Augustine, not least in its use of Scripture against the Donatists. Vd. infra.

⁴⁹ Vd. discussion in following chapter.

⁵⁰ Bonner (1963), 261.

that the sins of church members could not contaminate other members and argued that the validity of a sacrament depended, not on the sanctity of the human ministrant, but on the action of the Holy Spirit. For the first time, he also drew a distinction between the validity and the efficacy of a sacrament, holding that baptism could be administered in schism but that its efficacy was suspended until the recipient returned to the true church.

In the third book, Augustine dealt further with the Donatist notion of purity. The example of Cyprian is cited to reinforce Augustine's positions on ecclesial universality, unity and tolerance. The church is portrayed as "an organism in process within the history of the world (Dan. 2:34-5), one which awaits the final judgement for the uprooting and expulsion of sinners (Matt. 13:47-50)."⁵¹

Augustine next found it necessary to reply to a letter directed against the Catholic church by Petilian of Cirta, "perhaps the ablest of the Donatist leaders".⁵² The threat which Augustine believed was posed by this work of Petilian can be gauged by his decision to suspend the task of completing his *De Trinitate* and the *De Genesi ad Litteram*, in order to produce the three books of his *Contra litteras Petiliani*.⁵³ Initially, Augustine was able to consult only part of Petilian's letter and his own first book represents a reply to that portion which he had read (early in 400). In it he rebuts three main charges against the Catholics: that they were *traditores*, by showing that the Donatist clergy were as sinful as

⁵¹ "Epistulam Parmeniani, Contra," Fitzgerald (1999), 312. On this work, in general, cf. Y. M.-J. Congar, "Introduction" and "Notes complementaires," BA 28.197-207 and 718-46; Monceaux 5.221-41 and 7.89-92.

⁵² Bonner (1963), 262.

⁵³ *Retract.* 2.25 (CCL 57.110).

the Catholic; that they persecuted the true (Donatist) church, by pointing to Donatist treatment of their own schismatics and that they did not possess true baptism, by arguing (somewhat lamely) that if this were true then neither did any of the churches overseas.

The following year (401), Augustine was able to read the whole of Petilian's letter and he wrote his second book by way of reply.⁵⁴ Much of this second book dealt with the interpretation of various biblical texts relating to the ecclesiological issues in dispute.⁵⁵ In this book, too, Augustine develops his notion of the distinction between the validity and efficacy of a sacrament and moves to the position of granting to the state a role in the enforcement of religion by legislation. When Petilian published a reply to Augustine's arguments, the latter found it necessary to respond with his third book (c. 402/403) which addresses one main question: "If Donatists rely on the holiness of the minister of baptism for the remission of sin, how can those who receive baptism at the hands of an unworthy minister receive salvation?"⁵⁶

The next major anti-Donatist work by Augustine is the *Ad Catholicos Epistula contra Donatistas*, often referred to as *De unitate ecclesiae* (written sometime between 401 and 403).⁵⁷ It was written in reply to a lost Donatist pamphlet and was addressed primarily to

⁵⁴ So detailed was the reply that it enabled Monceaux to reconstruct Petilian's original letter. Vd. Monceaux 5.309-28.

⁵⁵ Many of them are discussed fully in the main body of the present work.

⁵⁶ "Litteras Petiliani, Contra," in Fitzgerald (1999), 505. Cf. B. Quinot, "Introduction," and "Notes complémentaires," BA 30.9-128 and 747-812; Monceaux 5.3-86, 309-28.

⁵⁷ There has been some dispute over the authenticity of this work but it is generally believed to have been written by Augustine. Cf. Congar, BA 28.485-94. It is included among genuine works in CPL, no. 334, even though "plurimi negant" (p.83). Bonner thinks it "likely that it was written by one of Augustine's clergy, assisted by the master." Bonner (1963), 263, fn.1.

the Catholic constituency. Here we find Augustine arguing his case mainly on an exegetical basis, giving close attention to biblical texts which are read christologically and ecclesiologically.⁵⁸ The church is presented as one and catholic, as the body of Christ which consists of him as its head and those in him as its members. A whole florilegium of biblical texts is offered as proof of the geographical catholicity of the church. The African church in communion with that world-wide body must therefore represent the true church. Parables of separation are deployed to argue for the eschatological timing of the separation between the *boni* and the *mali* in the church. Augustine stoutly defends the use of state power to enforce unity. As a treatise it clearly demonstrated “how Augustine valued ecclesial unity over purity, a unity whose hallmark was charity”.⁵⁹

The first book of Augustine’s reply to Petilian had been read by Cresconius, a Donatist layman and grammarian. Cresconius’ reply in defence of Petilian was taken with great seriousness by Augustine and c.405 he responded with the four books of *Contra Cresconium Grammaticum Partis Donati*.⁶⁰ In the first three books, Augustine deals with a variety of issues: the validity of Catholic baptism, the distinction between heresy and schism as applied to Donatism, the Donatist practice of rebaptism and the biblical basis of the universality of the church, in opposition to Donatist exclusivism. In the third book, documents bearing on the origin of the schism were used to shew that neither side could claim that none of their bishops had handed over the Scriptures. Part of the third and the

⁵⁸ Vd. discussion of Augustine’s interpretative method in the following chapter.

⁵⁹ “Catholicos fratres, Ad; or De unitate ecclesiae,” in Fitzgerald (1999), 151. Cf. Y. M.-J. Congar, “Introduction,” and “Notes complémentaires,” BA 28. 485-501 and 746-49; Monceaux 7.105-7.

⁶⁰ Vd. art. “Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati (Ad-),” A-L 2, fasc. 1/2, 131-37.

entire fourth book are devoted to demonstrating how Donatist handling of the Maximianist schism undermines every argument in defence of the *pars Donati*.⁶¹

Having completed *Contra Cresc.*, Augustine next drew up a collection of *necessaria documenta*, either from ecclesiastical or public acts or from Scripture, bearing on the questions between Catholics and Donatists. Incorporating another work of his, *Contra Donatistam nescio quem liber unus*, it was entitled *Probatiorum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas liber unus* and was designed for use both by Donatists and Catholics.⁶² A further work published c. 406, *Admonitio Donatistarum de Maximianistis*, aimed to refute Donatist claims for those with little time for reading by recounting the changing attitude of Donatists to their own Maximianist schism.⁶³ Changing views on the subject of coercion by Augustine and other Catholics, against the background of growing Donatist (mainly Circumcellion) violence, led to appeal from the Catholic council of Carthage (on 16 June, 404), for active repression of Donatism. This led, the following year, to a number of severe anti-Donatist legislative measures.⁶⁴

⁶¹ "If Donatists taught that the evil of a person infects others, the fact that the Maximianists had been among them had infected them. Their recognition of Maximianist baptism undermined their refusal to accept Catholic baptism. Finally, their own persecution of the Maximianists vitiated their claim that they were the true, ie., persecuted church, since they had become the persecutors." Art., "Anti-Donatist Works," in Fitzgerald (1999), 37. Cf. *Retract.* 2.26 (CCL 57.111). Vd. A.C. De Veer, "Introduction," and "Notes complementaires," BA 31.9-67 and 741-830; Monceaux 5.87-110 and 7.109-15.

⁶² Neither work is extant. At the time of writing, Augustine had regarded the Donatists as spiritual babes but in the *Retract.* he corrects his use of terms, since he had come to regard them rather as dead and lost. *Retract.* 2.27-8 (CCL 57.112-3).

⁶³ Cf. *Retract.* 2.29 (CCL 57. 118).

⁶⁴ Cf. Bonner (1963), 265.

In the second book of his work against Parmenian, Augustine promised a fuller treatment of the subject of baptism.⁶⁵ His promise was fulfilled in his seven-volume work, *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, now redated after 405.⁶⁶ In the first book, Augustine argues his view that the minister of the sacrament is a mere instrument of divine grace which belongs neither to him nor to the church but to God alone. Ministerial unworthiness, therefore, cannot hinder the operation of grace. The second book addresses the issue of ecclesial purity and seeks to demonstrate that the Catholic position on this was more true to the Cyprianic traditions than that of the Donatists. In the remaining five books, Augustine defends the Catholic case against Donatist use of Cyprian⁶⁷ and of the Council of Carthage (256), with its eighty seven deliverances in favour of rebaptism.⁶⁸

Probably shortly after completing his *De baptismo*, Augustine replied to an attack on the Catholics by a Donatist layman named Centurius. Augustine's work, *Contra quod adtulit Centurius a Donatistis liber unus*, is not extant. It is referred to immediately after *De baptismo* in the *Retractationes*.⁶⁹

Allusion has already been made to one of the most significant anti-Donatist letters written by Augustine in the first decade of the fifth century. It was addressed to Vincentius, the

⁶⁵ *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.14.32 (BA 28.356).

⁶⁶ On the basis of the most recent research, Schindler judges the work to be "frühestens 405". He reckons, however, that "Eine genauere Eingrenzung ist nicht möglich." Art. "Baptismo (De-)," in A-L 1.574 (574-82).

⁶⁷ Cf. Cyprian, *Epp.* 69-74.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Retract.* 2.18 (CCL 57.104-5). Vd. Bavaud, "Introduction" and "Notes complémentaires," BA 29.9-51 and 577-627; Monceaux 7.92-7.

⁶⁹ *Retract.* 2.19 (CCL 57.105).

Rogatist bishop of Cartenna, in reply to a letter written to Augustine with a strong plea against persecution of the Donatists. Augustine writes in justification of coercion of schismatics and points to the fruitful outcome of involvement by the secular authorities on the traditionally strongly Donatist high plains of Numidia⁷⁰ where many, including Circumcellions, had returned to the Catholic fold. Biblical texts used by Augustine in justification of coercion include the *coge intrare* of the parable of the banquet (Lk. 14:23) and Sarah's correction of Hagar. The matter of supreme importance in connection with persecution is the aim - whether the intention is oppression or the good of those concerned. The difference is illustrated by the treatment of Israel respectively by Pharaoh and Moses. The reason why there are no examples in the New Testament of coercion inflicted by Christians is that rulers had not yet become members of the Christian church.⁷¹

About 410, Augustine was shown a treatise written by Petilian of Cirta (*De unico baptismo*) to which Augustine was urged by a friend to make reply. This he did in a work bearing the same title, in late 410 or early 411. Petilian had apparently argued that there was only one true baptism and that this was administered only in the Donatist church.

Augustine's basic response was to agree that there was only one baptism but also to

⁷⁰ Cf. Frend (1952), 48f.

⁷¹ Cf. *Ep.* 93, *passim*. Among other examples of the "successful" application of penal laws, Augustine, in the letter, refers to the conversion of "civitas mea" to the Catholic fold. "Nam primo mihi opponebatur civitas mea, quae cum tota esset in parte Donati, ad unitatem catholicam legum imperialium timore conversa est, quam nunc videmus ita huius vestrae animositatis perniciem detestari, ut in ea numquam fuisse credatur." *Ep.* 93.17 (CSEL 34/2.462). Most scholars accept the identification of "civitas mea" with Thagaste, Augustine's home town - an identification which suggests that Augustine grew up in a largely Donatist community. It has even been argued that his family may have had Donatist connections. Sometimes writers, generally less expert, take Augustine to refer to Hippo. Other letters of Augustine of relevance to this issue include *Epp.* 97, 100, 105, 106, 107, 108, 111.

affirm that it was Christ's alone. This was the reason why rebaptism represented error. Catholics could accept Donatist baptism as a sacrament since belief in God can exist outside the church, but only by joining the true church could the fruits of baptism be enjoyed. While Cyprian and Stephen of Rome disagreed on the issue of rebaptism, Cyprian (who, in Augustine's judgement was in error on the subject) refused to break communion with Stephen - something which, on Donatist principles, he ought to have done. Cyprian provides an abiding example of perseverance in unity and charity despite deep disagreement.⁷²

1.2.3 The Conference of Carthage (411) and its aftermath.

After some five years of enforcement of anti-Donatist legislation, the emperors Honorius and Arcadius temporarily suspended the laws in 410 and called both sides together to a Conference to be held in Carthage in 411. The Conference lasted from 1 to 8 June of that year and was "conducted as an imperial inquiry and was supposed to bring a halt to intra-Christian rivalries and to settle once and for all the schism between the Donatist and Catholic parties."⁷³ Seven representatives of either side met on three occasions during this period and debated both the origins of the schism and their opposing ecclesiologies.⁷⁴ All the proceedings were conducted in the baths of Gargilius, with the parties standing, since

⁷² Cf. *Retract.* 2.34 (CCL 57. 118). On this work, vd. A.C. De Veer, "Introduction," and "Notes complementaires," BA 31.645-61 and 830-53; Monceaux 7.117-18. Immediately after completing this treatise, Augustine wrote a larger work in refutation of Donatist claims on the basis of their handling of the Maximianist schism. Cf. *Retract.* 2.35 (CCL 57.119).

⁷³ Art. "Anti-Donatist Works," in Fitzgerald (1999), 37.

⁷⁴ Their names are listed in *Gesta coll. Carth.* 2.2 (CCL 149A. 161) and 3.2 (CCL 149A.180).

the Donatists, citing Scripture, refused to be seated “first on the ground that Christ had stood before His judge and later because they declined to sit with the ungodly....”⁷⁵ Bishops not taking part remained in the outer rooms. Although Marcellinus showed “remarkable impartiality”,⁷⁶ it was made clear both in his opening and closing speech that “the government favoured the Catholic side and would once again enforce anti-Donatist legislation.”⁷⁷ The lengthy proceedings were taken down in shorthand and a large part survive as *Gesta Collationis Carthaginensis*.⁷⁸

Augustine played a prominent role at the Conference. The *mandatum Catholicorum*, a kind of Catholic position paper which served as “un aide-memoire très complet de l’argumentation que devaient développer les avocats catholiques”,⁷⁹ bears his stamp. The main point made here was the distinction between the two ages of the church - *ecclesia qualis nunc est* and *ecclesia qualis futura est*, with the former marked by unity and by a *permixtio bonorum et malorum* until the end of history. This was intended to undercut the Donatist position that the unity of the church had been destroyed by those who had been *traditores* in time of persecution. The mark of universality is also enlarged upon. Many of the biblical texts whose use by Augustine we shall examine in detail below occur in the *mandatum*. In the third session, on 8 June, Augustine appears as the chief Catholic disputant on doctrinal and historical points at issue and in replying to the Donatist

⁷⁵ Bonner (1963), 268.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Art. “Anti-Donatist Works,” in Fitzgerald (1999), 38. On the Conference, vd. art. “Conlatio Carthaginensis,” in A-L 1.1204-9.

⁷⁸ It is found in Migne’s PL 11. 1231-1420.

⁷⁹ S. Lancel, SC 194.45. Cf. *Gesta coll. Carth.* (CCL 149A. 78-88).

response to the Catholic *mandatum*. His concern to lay a biblical basis for his positions is again evidenced by the deployment of various biblical texts whose use by him is discussed in detail below.⁸⁰

Realising that few people, Catholic or Donatist, would have the time or energy to cope with the full published minutes of the Conference, Augustine within a few months produced his own summary of the Conference proceedings, published as *Breviculus conlotionis cum Donatistis*, cross-referencing the work, for the convenience of readers, to the lengthy *Gesta*.⁸¹ Following the order of the minutes, he sets out in summary form the main issues of debate as they were raised at the Conference. The summary, inevitably, bears a Catholic slant. The outcome of the Conference was never, of course, in doubt. The imperial commissioner “was bound, by first principles, to regard as Catholic the Church which was actually in communion with other churches overseas”.⁸² Marcellinus found in favour of the Catholics and this was proclaimed throughout the African provinces. The Donatists appealed to Honorius the emperor but he chose to act on the report sent by Marcellinus and Donatism was officially proscribed in an edict of 30 January 412.⁸³

⁸⁰ *Gesta coll. Carth.* 3 (CCL 149A.180-257).

⁸¹ Cf. E. Lamirande, “Introduction,” and “Notes complémentaires,” BA 32.9-77 and 687-734; Monceaux 4.83-87, 388-435 and 7.118-19. Vd. *Retract.* 2.39 (CCL 57.122).

⁸² Bonner (1963), 269. Cf. *Gesta coll. Carth.* 3.92, 103 (CCL 149A. 202, 205-6).

⁸³ “The full weight of the law was to be brought into operation; only the sanction of capital punishment was omitted.” Bonner (1963), 270.

In the aftermath of the Conference,⁸⁴ Augustine redoubled his efforts to win over the Donatists. Thus, at the beginning of 412, he published a long and nuanced analysis of the arguments of the Conference, aimed at the Donatist laity, entitled *Ad Donatistas post Collationem*.⁸⁵

The biblical basis of the Catholic arguments is again much in evidence in relation, in particular, to the issue of ecclesial universality and to that of separation. Donatist speakers at the Conference were mocked for their alleged handling of the biblical and archival material to the advantage of the Catholic position. Various extracts from the writings of Cyprian are used to bolster the Catholic case. The work concludes with an appeal to the Donatists to return to Catholic unity - an appeal whose very earnestness “suggests that, even with the full force of the state directed against them, the Donatists were not returning to unity in the numbers which the Catholics had anticipated,” particularly “on the high plains of Numidia, always a stronghold of Donatism.”⁸⁶

In the period following the Conference, Augustine increasingly turned his attention to the Pelagian threat and to the writing of his magnum opus, *De civitate Dei*. He continued, however, to take whatever opportunities presented themselves of debating with Donatist leaders or of preaching in their congregations. In a well-known letter to Boniface, written

⁸⁴“...a personal triumph for Augustine....” Bonner (1963), 270.

⁸⁵Vd. *Retract.* 2.40 (CCL 57.122). Cf. E. Lamirande, “Introduction,” and “Notes complémentaires,” BA 32.79-90 and 735-39; Monceaux 7.119-24.

⁸⁶Bonner (1963), 271.

in 417, Augustine offered a lengthy defence of religious coercion in the form of imperial legislation against schismatics - a position he had originally resisted.⁸⁷

In 418, a notable debate took place between Augustine and Emeritus the Donatist bishop of Caesarea who had been a party at the Conference of 411 and to whom Augustine had earlier written *Ep.* 87 (between 405 and 411) and c. 416 a lost work entitled *Ad Emeritum episcopum Donatistarum post conlationem*.⁸⁸ Augustine had been asked by bishop Zosimus of Rome to preach in Caesarea, the capital of Mauretania. There Augustine preached his *Sermo ad Caesariensis ecclesiae plebem* in which he dealt with the issue of Donatist baptism, countered Donatist propaganda about the Conference and appealed to his audience to enter the Catholic church.⁸⁹ A debate with Emeritus ensued, two days later, in which Augustine made much of the role of Emeritus in formulating the sentence passed on Maximian and his followers at Bagai in 394. The text of Augustine's speech was published as *Gesta cum Emerito Donatistarum episcopo*.⁹⁰

Two years later, in 420, Augustine wrote his last major anti-Donatist work, the *Contra Gaudentium*. Gaudentius, Donatist bishop of Thamugadi, had refused to hand over his basilica as required by imperial law. In one of two letters sent to the tribune Dulcitius, he threatened to barricade himself and his people in the building and to burn it down, if

⁸⁷ *Ep.* 185. Almost a treatise, it is also known as *De correctione Donatistarum*. On this work, vd. Alexander (1996).

⁸⁸ Vd. *Retract.* 2.46 (CCL 57.127-8).

⁸⁹ Cf. E. Lamirande, "Introduction," and "Notes complementaires," BA 32.408-10 and 739-42; Monceaux 7.124-5.

⁹⁰ Vd. *Retract.* 2.51 (CCL 57.129-30). On this work, cf. E. Lamirande, "Introduction," and "Notes complementaires," BA 32.397-414 and 742-3; Monceaux 5.149-50 and 7.124-5.

Dulcitus enforced the law. Dulcitus sent the correspondence to Augustine and asked him to reply to the letters. Augustine agreed and in his reply (book one of *Contra Gaudentium*) he quotes and answers Gaudentius line by line, in particular denying Donatist claims regarding persecution and refuting their use of Cyprian. When Gaudentius replied directly to Augustine, the latter's response became book two of *Contra Gaudentium*. Here, Augustine again opposed Cyprian's love of unity to Donatist separatism. The use of imperial power to enforce peace and unity is defended. Thus, this "last major battle of the war against the Donatists reveals that Augustine and his opponents had carried on the same conversation for nearly forty years".⁹¹

Although little information about Donatism in Africa is available after 420, it seems certain that the Catholic-Donatist conflict continued for some time.⁹² The victory of Islam in Africa, marked by the fall of Carthage in 698, sealed the fate of both sides of the African church. "Weakened as much by internal dissension as by external attack, the once flourishing African Church perished and Christianity proved to have been only an episode in the history of the Berber peoples."⁹³ In this, at least, the African church has left behind a solemn, though much ignored, message for the Christian church in all time to come.

In this outline of Augustine's developing engagement with the Donatists, it has become clear that the witness of Scripture occupies a central place in Augustine's thinking and

⁹¹ Art. "Gaudentium, Contra," in Fitzgerald (1999), 375.

⁹² For Donatism in the post-Augustine period, cf. Markus (1972). Frend thinks that the letter written by bishop Honoratus to Augustine in 428 (answered by Augustine in *Ep.* 228) offers evidence of a continuing Donatist presence. Vd. Frend (1952), 298. Cf. Bonner (1963), 274, fn. 1.

⁹³ Bonner (1963), 275.

anti-Donatist strategy, in relation both to his ecclesiology and theology of the sacraments. Before proceeding to consider in detail his handling of Scripture in relation to the Donatists, we shall first sketch, as part of the appropriate context for our study, Augustine's general developing engagement with Scripture during the period in question.

1.3 Augustine's developing engagement with Scripture

One of Augustine's first tasks on his ordination to the episcopacy in 395 was to write a manual for the interpretation of Scripture, the *De doctrina Christiana*.⁹⁴ Throughout his career, study of and comment on the Bible were central in his life and work. This was so not only, and obviously, in his many explicit works of biblical exposition but in many other works where "very often the very order and structure...will be determined not by an abstract consideration of the topics embraced by the subject at hand but by the sequence of biblical texts that offer challenge and illumination".⁹⁵

Augustine's understanding of Scripture was never static and throughout his career he maintained a readiness to change interpretation of particular biblical texts in response to clearer light. It would, however, be an impossible task to trace developmentally

⁹⁴ Vd. following chapter.

⁹⁵ J.J. O'Donnell, art. "Bible", in Fitzgerald (1999), 102. O'Donnell offers the examples of Augustine's "De continentia" which is structured around a series of meditations on biblical texts and his "two most ambitious general works of theology", "De Trinitate" and "De civitate Dei", in the latter of which (books 11-22) Augustine follows "the narrative order of Scripture from Genesis to the Last Judgement as the normative way to describe the history of human civilization, and with many (to us incidental) digressions on points of scriptural interpretation". Ibid.

Augustine's changing, deepening, expanding grasp of Scripture, and a thoroughly *chronological* treatment is therefore not attempted.⁹⁶

Soon after his ordination as presbyter in 391, Augustine wrote to Valerius, his bishop, about the burden of responsibility he now felt himself under. Convinced already that only the study of Scripture could equip him rightly to fulfil his new duties,⁹⁷ Augustine requested time off for the purpose.⁹⁸ This was granted and, as our study will amply demonstrate, Augustine used well the last period of leisure he was to enjoy in his life.⁹⁹

The passage of time and his ever deeper involvement in the work of the ministry

⁹⁶This section is not, therefore, strictly coordinate with the previous one. To illustrate Augustine's capacity for interpretative change, the following instances may be given. First, his interpretation (in the aftermath of the fall of Rome in 410) of Rev. 20 and the millenium, in "De civitate Dei" book 22, represented a "definitive and daringly original reformulation of orthodox apocalyptic belief". P. Fredriksen, art. "Apocalypticism", in Fitzgerald (1999), 49. Second, Augustine's exposition of Rom. 9:10-29 in the second part of book one of "Ad Simplicianum" (finished in 396) "sets off a veritable revolution in his theology", with its fresh understanding of grace in relation to free will. Vd. J. Wetzel, art. "Simplicianum, Ad", in Fitzgerald (1999), 798. Thirdly, Augustine's understanding, in *Ep.* 93, of the "coge intrare" of Lk. 14:23, an important text in his anti-Donatist biblical armoury, appears to have been significantly different from that of the younger Augustine. There is some debate as to whether Augustine's theory of coercion arose from Augustine's understanding of Lk. 14:23 or was read into it. Lamirande concludes the latter and speaks of the verse as "hardly more than a convenient polemical tool and...(one) used with relative restraint". Lamirande (1975), 58. Cf. his discussion, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-8. Certainly in his earlier ministry Augustine was determined to keep ecclesiastical discipline under strict control: "non ergo aspere...non duriter, non modo imperioso". *Ep.* 22.5 (CSEL 34/2.58). Cf. Markus (1970), 140.

⁹⁷"debeo scripturarum...medicamenta omnia perscrutari et orando ac legendo agere, ut idonea valitudo animae meae ad tam periculosa negotia tribuatur." *Ep.* 21.3 (CSEL 34/1.51).

⁹⁸"Parvum tempus velut usque ad pascha." *Ep.* 21.4 (CSEL 34/1.52). The inadequacies of Augustine's prior biblical formation are reflected in the paucity of scriptural citations in his early Christian writings. For a good discussion of Augustine's developing interaction with Scripture in the period prior to his return to Africa in 388, vd. La Bonnardière (1999). Augustine's request to Valerius "must stand tantalizingly for a process of largely autodidactic education in Scripture that is invisible to us as process but inescapable for its results". Art. "Bible", in Fitzgerald (1999), 102.

⁹⁹Bonner comments, "The effect of this close and devoted application to the text of scripture in Augustine's early years as a priest and bishop may be seen in his later writings, both exegetical and controversial, with their constant citations which, on occasion, produce what is virtually a mosaic of scripture texts, perfectly welded together." Bonner (1970), 544. The canon of Scripture with which Augustine worked was that recognized by the Council of Carthage of 397. It included the books of the Apocrypha. Augustine provides a list in *DDC* 2.8.13 (CCL 32.39-40).

confirmed his conviction of the nature of Scripture as the Word of God and of the consequent *auctoritas divinarum scripturarum unde mens nostra deviare non debet*.¹⁰⁰ As will be amply illustrated in this study, Scripture was therefore for Augustine the ultimate arbiter of all controversies.¹⁰¹

In the following sections we shall provide a survey of the main exegetical works of Augustine in which he engages with the Donatists. Attention is given first, however, to his various expositions of early Genesis, as illustrative both of his early exegetical endeavours and of his developing style of biblical interpretation during the period of our interest.¹⁰²

1.3.1 Augustine's works on the early chapters of Genesis.

Augustine made four separate attempts to expound the seminal early chapters of Genesis, the first three with an explicit anti-Manichaean intent.¹⁰³

a. In the period immediately preceding his ordination in 391, he produced his *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* (388-90) which was a response to Manichaean attacks on the

¹⁰⁰*De Trin.* 3.11.22 (CCL 50.151). Vd. Markus (1970), 187-96.

¹⁰¹On the authority of Scripture as virtually a self-evident fact in Augustine's theology, cf. Polman (1955), 63. On the role of scriptural authority in Augustine's theology, vd. Loewen (1981). In the context of the Donatist controversy, this explains why, although Augustine "could show meticulous care in accumulating relevant material from official archives when this served his purpose...in general this kind of work was foreign to his interests." Markus (1970), 5. Cf. DDC 2.27.41-28.44 (CCL 32.62-3) where history is valued only in so far as it assists in the interpreting of Scripture.

¹⁰²Cf. Simonetti (1994), 103-5.

¹⁰³Vd. Wright (1996), 703-8.

creation account. In many ways this work sets the tone for much of Augustine's later handling of Scripture, with its pastoral concern,¹⁰⁴ polemical interest and his awareness and use of both literal and figurative exegesis.¹⁰⁵ In an important statement in book two, Augustine acknowledges the great value of a literal interpretation of his text, providing blasphemy is avoided and explanation is given "in harmony with the Catholic faith". In the case of passages which cannot be literally interpreted "in a devout manner worthy of God", apostolic authority is adduced for taking them to be expressed *figurate atque in aenigmatibus* and to be so interpreted, always in accord with the Catholic faith.¹⁰⁶

b. Augustine's second attempt at expounding the early chapters of Genesis is his *De Genesi ad Litteram, imperfectus liber* (393-394).¹⁰⁷ It was Augustine's intention to offer an exposition of Genesis *secundum historicam proprietatem* and that it should cover at least the six days of creation. The exposition was abandoned, however, at Gen. 1:26 where Augustine may have found himself defeated by the difficulty of providing a literal

¹⁰⁴ Augustine explains that the work was written for "infirmos et parvulos nostros," unable themselves to respond to Manichaean errors. *De Gen. contra Man.* 1.1.2 (CSEL 91.67).

¹⁰⁵ In book 1, literal interpretation predominates, while in book 2 he makes frequent use of allegory, as he makes clear in the opening statement: "quae omnis narratio non aperte, sed figurate explicatur, ut exercent mentes quaerentium veritatem ut spiritali negotio a negotiis carnalibus avocet." *Ibid.* 2.1.1 (CSEL 91.115). Thus, the plant of the field (Gen. 2:5) is the soul, etc. Augustine later confessed to an over-zealous use in this work of the figurative sense. *Retract.* 1.10 (CCL 57.29-33).

¹⁰⁶ *De Gen. contra Man.* 2.2.3 (CSEL 91.120-1). Cf *De Gen. ad Litt.* 8.2.5 (BA 49.14-16) where the passage from the earlier work is cited.

¹⁰⁷ In the years immediately following his ordination in 391, Augustine appears to have suffered a bout of "writer's block". O'Donnell refers to these years as "a difficult and frustrating period of his life, when one literary project after another fell to pieces in his hands...." O'Donnell (1992), 1.xlii. These include a commentary on Genesis (*De Genesi ad Litteram imperfectus liber*, 393-394) and an exposition of Romans (*Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*, 394-395). Augustine's early position on grace, faith and free-will, as set out in this latter work, against the Manichees, was decisively repudiated by him in the significant *Ad Simplicianum* (396), his first literary work as a bishop. Vd. Babcock (1979). A different explanation for Augustine's discontinuing of his *De doctrina Christiana* (begun in 396 but not completed until 427) is offered in the following chapter.

interpretation of the differentiation of the sexes in the passage.¹⁰⁸ The work reveals the growing importance for Augustine of the *regula fidei* as marking the parameters within which legitimate exegesis can take place.¹⁰⁹ When Augustine came across the work while writing his *Retractationes*, he decided not to destroy it but (having added two final sections, 16.61-2) to leave it as an example of his early exegetical endeavours.¹¹⁰

In this work, Augustine lists four ways of interpreting Scripture, handed down by earlier exegetes (“certain expositors”): as *historia*, *allegoria*, *analogia* and *aetiologia*. He begins by applying these methods to the early verses of Genesis but thereafter says nothing about them. This is consistent with Augustine’s increasingly manifest preference for a simple literal/figurative distinction. In this case, he lays aside allegorical exegesis to concentrate on the literal.¹¹¹

c. Augustine’s continuing preoccupation with the correct interpretation of early Genesis is next shown by his devoting three books (11-13) of the *Confessiones* (397) to an extended exposition of Gen. 1.¹¹² Often described as an allegorical commentary, these

¹⁰⁸In his earlier work on Genesis, Augustine’s interpretation of human beings in the pre-Fall period is highly spiritualized. Cf. art. “Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus, De,” in Fitzgerald (1999), 377.

¹⁰⁹Augustine begins by affirming that doubt in enquiry ought not to go beyond the bounds of the Catholic faith (“ea tamen quaerendi dubitatio catholicae fidei metas non debet excedere”). *De Gen. ad Litt. lib. imperf.* 1.1 (PL 34. 221). He adds what is apparently a commentary on the “Apostles’ Creed” in the version of Ambrose and the church of Milan. *Ibid.* 1.2-3 (PL 34.221). Cf. R.J. Teske in FC 84.145, n.2.

¹¹⁰“...ut esset index, quantum existimo, non inutilis rudimentorum meorum in enucleandis atque scrutandis divinis eloquiis.” *Retract.* 1.18 (CCL 57.54).

¹¹¹“Instituimus enim de Scripturis nunc loqui secundum proprietatem rerum gestarum, non secundum aenigmata futurarum.” *De Gen. ad Litt. lib. imperf.* 1.17.34 (BA 48.128).

¹¹²The relationship of these chapters to the rest of the *Conf.* is controverted. Chadwick’s opinion that they (together with ch. 10) are intended to “make explicit what is only hinted at in the autobiographical parts, namely that the story of the soul wandering away from God and then in torment and tears finding its way home through conversion is also the story of the entire created order,” is attractive. Chadwick (1991),

chapters offer, rather, “unsystematic musing” (on time in Bk. 11, on creation in Bk. 12).¹¹³ Only in Bk.13 does Augustine provide an allegorical exposition of Genesis 1, “seeing the story of the divine making of the formless world another story about the divine remaking of the sinful soul”.¹¹⁴ In Bk. 12, Augustine gives voice to his growing sense of the *mira profunditas* of Scripture, contrasting the surface meaning with the amazing depths that lie hidden beneath.¹¹⁵ The Platonic influence on his thought here is obvious, as also on his view that “a multiplicity of interpretations is consistent with the many and varied embodiments in the physical realm of the unvarying realities of the intelligible world, such as wisdom and knowledge.”¹¹⁶ Such interpretations may yield diverse truths which may not necessarily coincide with the (human) author’s intended meaning.¹¹⁷

d. Augustine’s second attempt at a literal commentary on Genesis led to a new work on Gen. 1-3, the *De Genesi ad Litteram* (in twelve books), begun in 401 and completed in 415. This is one of Augustine’s *magna opera* and deserves to be ranked alongside his *De Trinitate* and *De Civitate Dei*. The commentary is *ad litteram*, Augustine explains, because his exposition is *non secundum allegoricas significationes, sed secundum rerum gestarum proprietatem*.¹¹⁸ In this work Augustine operates explicitly in terms of the single

xxiv. For discussion of the problem, vd. O’Donnell I (1992), xxxii-xli; III (1992), 150-54, 250-52.

¹¹³Wright (1996), 706.

¹¹⁴Williams (2001), 59.

¹¹⁵“Mira profunditas eloquiorum tuorum, quorum ecce ante nos superficies blandiens parvulis: sed mira profunditas, deus meus, mira profunditas.” *Conf.* 12.14.17 (CCL 37.224). On Augustine’s deepening awareness of the *mira profunditas* of Scripture with its entailment of the Bible’s “infinita sensuum silva”, so significant for his anti-Donatist polemic (vd. infra), cf. Finan (1995), 163-99.

¹¹⁶Wright (1996), 706. Cf. *Conf.* 13.20.27 (CCL 37.257).

¹¹⁷*Conf.* 12.18.27 (CCL 37.229-30). Cf. 13.20.27 (CCL 37.257).

¹¹⁸*Retract.* 2.24 (CCL 57.109).

literate/figurate interpretative distinction. He regards the writer of these chapters as recording history¹¹⁹ in the manner of the books of Kings, rather than writing *figurate*, in the manner of the Song of Songs which is *genere locutionis figuratarum rerum*.¹²⁰ When the literal sense is absurd or conflicts with the *regula fidei*, a figurative reading is preferable as, for example, when God is said to know anything in time.¹²¹ Augustine also lays stress on a favourite theme - the deliberate obscurity of texts, in order to stimulate reflection. In such instances “Augustine refrains from insisting on one explanation to the exclusion of a possibly better one, leaving each reader to choose the version that he can cope with.”¹²²

1.3.2 The *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.

We have already noted the deep significance held by the Book of Psalms for Augustine from his earliest years as a Christian. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that by far the longest of his works was a collection of expositions, in the form of a verse-by-verse homiletic commentary on the whole Book of Psalms.¹²³ These expositions were given over a period of about three decades (c. 394 - c. 422). The earliest, those on Psalms 1-32,¹²⁴ were delivered in Hippo c. 394- 396 and the last and longest, the thirty two

¹¹⁹“gestum narrat.” *De Gen. ad Litt.* 11.1.2 (BA 49.232).

¹²⁰*De Gen. ad Litt.* 8.1.2 (BA 49.10). It is important to note that in this work, within Augustine’s understanding of literal interpretation, place is found for metaphor and for anthropomorphic and anthropopathic expressions. Eg. *De Gen. ad Litt.* 6.12.20 (BA 48.474).

¹²¹*Ibid.* 8.1.4 (BA 49.12-14), 11.1.2 (BA 49.232).

¹²²Wright (1996), 708. Cf. *De Gen. ad Litt.* 1.20.40 (BA 48.138-40).

¹²³The *Enarrationes* together are more than twice the length of the *De civitate Dei*. They also represent the only exposition of the entire Psalter surviving from the Patristic period. Cf. Wright (1996), 710.

¹²⁴Cf. *Ep.* 21.3 (CSEL 34/2.51).

sermons on Psalm 118(119), have been dated to c. 422.¹²⁵ Following the distinction drawn in the reference to the *Enarrationes* in Possidius' *Elenchus* of Augustine's works between *Enarrationes* that were *dictati* and those, on the other hand, that were *tractati/disputati/habiti in populo* and in light of Augustine's own use of the distinction in his preface to the *Enarrationes* on Ps. 118(119), it has become standard practice to categorize these expositions as either preached or dictated.¹²⁶ Although "the unity of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* is deceptive, at least in respect of genre",¹²⁷ it is clear from the preface to the homilies on Ps. 118(119) that Augustine viewed the collection as a unified work.¹²⁸ His expositions are based on the so-called *Vetus Latina* version of the Psalms which was a rather wooden translation from the Septuagint made in the latter half of the second century.¹²⁹ While they reflected, to some extent, the handling of the Psalms by earlier writers like Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine's treatment represents a highly individualistic development of the inherited tradition.

¹²⁵La Bonnardière (1965), 119-41. On the unresolved problems of dating the *Enarrationes*, cf. Perler (1969), 247 n.1 and Wright (1996), 710-11. La Bonnardière's dating of the *Enarrationes* on the *Cantica graduum* (Pss. 119(120) - 133(134)) to the months December to April, 406-7 (La Bonnardière (1965), 19-62), and those on Pss. 110(111) - 117(118) to c. 400 (ibid., 143 - 64) have been widely accepted. Cf. Wright (1996), 710-11 and ibid. for further literature relevant to attempts to date individual *Enarrationes*.

¹²⁶Vd. Possidius, *Elenchus* (MA 2.181). Cf. "partim sermocinando in populis, partim dictando exposui...." *Enarr. in Ps. 118, prooemium* (CCL 40.1664-65). Wright calls attention to the difficulty in drawing the distinction too neatly, noting, for example, the possibility of different categories of *dictati* and pointing out that some expositions which were "not first of all preached before the congregation may have been delivered by Augustine, in a manner not too different from dictation to a class of pupils, in the monastery or to a week day assembly limited de facto to the religious, clergy and members of the episcopal household." Wright (1996), 711.

¹²⁷Wright (1996), 712.

¹²⁸The Psalm, Augustine states, "ad eiusdem corporis psalmos pertinet." *Enarr. in Ps. 118 prooem.* (CCL 40.1664). Augustine appears not to have given the collection a title. He does not mention it in *Retractiones*.

¹²⁹Cf. *De doctrina Christiana* 2.11.16 (CCL 32.42).

Here we witness the full flowering of Augustine's spiritual (allegorical) approach to exegesis. The structure of prophecy and fulfilment in Scripture meant that the task of the expositor was to seek out the spiritual food of the New Testament which lay hidden in the Old *like fruit in the root*.¹³⁰ To achieve this end the interpreter was required to attend not so much to the literal sense but to "pass through" the literal to seek out the mysteries which it often concealed.¹³¹ In these expositions Augustine strives constantly to grasp and explore the mind of God lying hidden beneath the surface letter.¹³² Among other textual signals pointing through the literal to the figurative sense, Psalm titles were of special importance as uncovering the very *anima* of a Psalm from which the whole was to be understood.¹³³ As Cameron points out, the patterns of figurative relationship revealed in Augustine's use of imagery "remained stable across many years of preaching, for example, 'arrow' referring to the word of God (37.5; 123.6), or 'clouds' to prophets and apostles (17.12; 88.1.7)."¹³⁴

The hermeneutical significance of *caritas* and the highly individualistic development of *totus Christus* as hermeneutical construct (based on the first rule of Tyconius) find rich application in these expositions. Given Scripture's vital function in the economy of salvation as the means through which souls are made to ascend to God, and since it is

¹³⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 72.1 (CCL 39.986).

¹³¹"Sed solemus in Psalmis non ad litteram adtendere, sicut in omni prophetia, sed per litteram scrutari mysteria." *Enarr. in Ps.* 131.2 (CCL 40.1912).

¹³²The task of the preacher was to "crack open" (30/2.1.1), "shake out" (126.11), "unwind" (147.23) and "draw out" (149.14) the "secrets" (34.2.5), "enigmas" (127.2) and "shadows" (28.9) of which Scripture was full. Vd. Fitzgerald (1999), 291.

¹³³Vd. *Enarr. in Ps.* 65.2 (CCL 39.839).

¹³⁴In Fitzgerald (1999), 292. Even those that changed meaning "drew on stable underlying meanings". *Ibid.*

only by loving that souls can so return, all of Scripture, whether the passage be plain or obscure, concerns love.¹³⁵ As we shall see, Augustine makes much use of this principle against the Donatists.

The hermeneutical principle of *totus Christus* in terms of which “sometimes Christ speaks in the Psalms in the person of his members, at other times in his own person as our head”,¹³⁶ controls Augustine’s figurative exegesis of the Psalms throughout.¹³⁷ By this hermeneutical means, the Psalter becomes not only informative but performative, and by presenting contemporary Christians as *de facto* participants in the living voice speaking in the Psalms, Augustine “unwittingly...gave an intriguing reply to the hermeneutical conundrum created by the modern division between participant and observer, subject and object, positing their conjunction not by mere fiat but by uncovering the engine of participation in the structure of redemption itself.”¹³⁸

Surveying Augustine’s deployment of the *totus Christus* hermeneutic in these expositions, it is impossible not to “admire (his) versatility in applying a profound theological theme

¹³⁵“Quidquid ergo salubriter mente concipitur, vel ore profertur, vel de qualibet divina pagina exsculptur, non habet finem nisi caritatem.” *Enarr. in Ps.* 140.2 (CCL 40.2026). Cf. 103/1.9 (CCL 40.1481-83), 83.10 (CCL 39.1155-6). Cf. also *DDC* 1.35.39 - 1.40.44 (CCL 32.28-32). Cameron points out that the christological form of *caritas* is made clearer in the *Enarrationes* than in *DDC*. Vd. Fitzgerald (1999), 292.

¹³⁶Wright (1996), 713.

¹³⁷The two most recent studies of this work stress its christocentric intention and method. Vd. Vincent (1990), Fiedrowicz (1997). Augustine’s mature expositions make more of the unity within the distinction between the voices of Christ and the church in Scripture than of the distinction itself which is more stressed in earlier treatments. Vd. Cameron (1999), 292-3. The point is well illustrated by a comparison of Augustine’s earlier and later treatments of Ps. 21(22).

¹³⁸Cameron (1999), 293. We shall return to the issue of the relevance of Augustine’s approach for modern hermeneutical theory in the conclusion.

that here becomes an interpretative device serving highly diverse ends”.¹³⁹ One of these ends was that of polemical engagement with the Donatists. For Augustine “the comprehensive mystery underlying all of Scripture is Christ and the church”.¹⁴⁰ By means of *totus Christus* this is made to serve as a kind of *bibliola in Biblia* in which the entire mystery of Scripture comes to expression. Because of the dominance of figurative exegesis in these expositions, the dispute appears “less a duel of theology than a conflict of imaginations over the picture of the true church”.¹⁴¹

Augustine’s exegetical assault on Donatism in the *Enarrationes* is frequent. All his rhetorical skills are brought to the service of discrediting Donatist leaders as enemies of Christ and of his church. In particular, since the authority and exegesis of Scripture were so important in the conflict, Augustine loses no opportunity of berating Donatist leaders for knowing and preaching the Scriptures but being, at the same time, blind to its obvious meaning, or worse, guilty of twisting it to their own ends.¹⁴² This explains their inability to recognize and embrace the clear biblical teaching on the traditional distinguishing marks of the true church.¹⁴³ In part, our study will elucidate how Augustine’s employment of imagery in preaching on the Psalms contributes to his distinctive ecclesiology and was

¹³⁹Wright (1996), 713.

¹⁴⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 79.1 (CCL 39.1111).

¹⁴¹Cameron (1999), 294.

¹⁴²Eg. *Enarrs. In Ps.* 96.4 (CCL 39.1357), 36.2.20 (CCL 38.361-66).

¹⁴³Cf., eg. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 21/2.2, 24-32 (CCL 38.122); 131.13 (CCL 40.1917-18); 149.2 (CCL 40.2178-9). For a presentation of Augustine’s doctrine of the church in the context of developing Eastern and Western ecclesiologies, cf. Kelly (1958), 401-21.

calculated to establish Catholics in, and woo Donatists to embrace, his ecclesiological positions.¹⁴⁴

In important respects, the *Enarrationes* illustrate the distinctive hermeneutical principles expounded in the *De doctrina Christiana*. Thus, his expositions are controlled by the belief that the purpose of Scripture throughout (as a united whole: *unus sermo Dei*¹⁴⁵) is the production of *caritas*¹⁴⁶ and by the principle of the unity of Christ and his church, *totus Christus*, in terms of which “sometimes Christ speaks in the Psalms in the person of his members, at other times in his own person as our head.”¹⁴⁷ In these mature expositions Augustine makes more of the unity within the distinction between the voices of Christ and of the church in Scripture than of the distinction itself as in earlier treatments.¹⁴⁸

1.3.3 The Johannine writings.

¹⁴⁴Cameron comments that although “he distorted historical Donatism, Augustine’s propaganda in the *Enarrationes* is best understood in the context of the rhetorical effort to sway the springs of perception and motivation where loyalties are formed.” Cameron (1999), 295.

¹⁴⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 103/4.1 (CCL 40.1521).

¹⁴⁶Cf. *Enarrs.* 140.2, 103/1.9, 83.10.

¹⁴⁷Wright (1996), 713. Cf., “For Augustine the voice of the *totus Christus* is the radiating hermeneutical center of the Psalms.” Fitzgerald (ed.) (1999), 293. Vd. the following chapter for a consideration of Augustine’s hermeneutical principles in the *DDC*, with their particular relevance to the exegesis of Scripture against the Donatists. As Cameron points out, Augustine’s mature expositions of the Psalms make more of the unity within the distinction between the voices of Christ and of the church in Scripture than of the distinction itself, as in earlier treatments. Art., “Enarrationes in Psalmos,” Fitzgerald (1999), 292.

¹⁴⁸Useful discussions of the exegesis of the *Enarrs. in Ps.*, are found in Pontet (1945), 387-418. On the church as the body of Christ, cf. Borgomeo (1972), 191-208.

Apart from the *Enarrationes*, the Augustinian *corpus* contains two further collections of homiletic commentaries both on the Johannine writings and both containing considerable anti-Donatist material.¹⁴⁹ Some introductory comments are therefore appropriate on each.

a. *In Iohannis euangelium Tractatus*.¹⁵⁰

Of the one hundred and twenty four *Tractatus*, 55-124 (those on John 13-21) were dictated, not to be preached but “solely to complete the series on John’s Gospel”.¹⁵¹ Of *Tractatus* 1-54 it is generally agreed that 1-16 (on John 1-4) were preached in the winter of 406/7, the year following the passing of the Edict of Union on 12 February 405. In it, Donatists were classed as heretics, thus bringing to bear on them the provisions of anti-heretical legislation.¹⁵² *Tractatus* 17-19 and 23-54 (on John 5-12) were preached in 414,¹⁵³ and 20-22 were probably still later.¹⁵⁴

These *Tractatus* on John have a “markedly pastoral character”¹⁵⁵ and reflect on the nature and implications of the central mystery of the faith, that of the Word made flesh, as a

¹⁴⁹As with the *Enarrationes*, neither of the following works was given a title by Augustine nor included in his *Retractationes*.

¹⁵⁰For Augustine, *tractatus* means an oral commentary on a biblical text whether preached to the people or dictated. Cf. *DDC* 4.30.63 (CCL 32.167). It stands in contrast with *libri*. *DDC* 4.18.37 (CCL 32.143-4).

¹⁵¹Wright (1996), 712 n.66. Cf. Berrouard, BA 74A.39-44. On the basis of Ep. 23A, Berrouard dates these *Tractatus* to 419. Vd. Berrouard, BA 74A. 9-52.

¹⁵²Vd. Frend (1952), 261-74.

¹⁵³Berrouard, BA 72.18-46.

¹⁵⁴Berrouard holds that *Tractatus* 20-22 reveal a knowledge of Arianism that was dependent on the *Sermo Arianorum* which he read in 419. Berrouard BA 46B.301-27.

¹⁵⁵Art., “Johannis euangelium tractatus, In, (*sic*)” Fitzgerald (1999), 474.

mystery of humility.¹⁵⁶ It is this context which determines the particular slant of Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic in this work which makes injury done to Christ, the centre of his refutation of Donatism. Of the first sixteen homilies on John, three are devoted to Donatism: *Tractatus* 5, 6 and 13, while seven others give it considerable space: *Tractatus* 1, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14. Augustine's polemic here is controlled by the conviction that "toutes les prétensions de la dissidence tendent au fond à détrôner le Christ pour transférer sa gloire à des hommes et lui substituer des hommes dans l'amour de ses fidèles."¹⁵⁷ Berrouard recognizes that it is Augustine's struggle to ensure that Christ alone be loved and that Christians place their hope in him alone which "donne une tonalité particulière à la controverse des *Tractatus*."¹⁵⁸

It is this consistent emphasis on the Donatist schism as an injury done to Christ which gives to Augustine's theological and figurative polemic in this work its distinctive character and, as Berrouard says, the over-simplicity of a caricature.¹⁵⁹ Injury was done to Christ when the Donatists failed to emulate the humility of the dove as exemplified in John the Baptist and in Paul the Apostle. Donatist rebaptising of Catholics was injury done to Christ by their taking to themselves his sole power to baptise. Further such injury was done by their separating themselves from the unity of the church and by their denying its universality. In developing this theme, Augustine borrowed much material from his

¹⁵⁶*In Ioh. Tr.* 45.13 (CCL 36.395-6). Cf. *Ibid.* 43.5 (CCL 36.374).

¹⁵⁷Berrouard, BA 71.79.

¹⁵⁸Berrouard, BA 71.79.

¹⁵⁹Cf. Berrouard, BA 71.89.

theological treatises, especially the *De baptismo*, but they are organized within “une synthèse qui a pour centre la mystère du Verbe incarné”.¹⁶⁰

b. *In Epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos*¹⁶¹ *Tractatus*.

This commentary on the first letter of John comprises ten sermons preached in Easter week, 407. The dominant theme running through the sermons is that of love (to which all of Scripture refers¹⁶²) and this focus explains the unevenness of his treatment of the text. This was a theme which gave scope to polemic against the Donatists and “much of the immediate social context for the work is provided by the Donatist controversy.”¹⁶³ Thus the Donatists are characterized as violaters of the law of love on the grounds that they “left us”¹⁶⁴ and are portrayed as those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh.¹⁶⁵ Their failure to love the brethren reveals their lack of love for God. In this context, too, Augustine’s famous *Dilige, et quod vis, fac*, is used to justify coercion of dissidents.¹⁶⁶ Augustine’s exegetical approach in this work is theological rather than figurative.¹⁶⁷

1.3.4 The *Sermones*.

¹⁶⁰Berrouard, BA 71.113. On the recognition in this work of the plural sense of Scripture and the importance for it of the “*totus Christus*” interpretative device, vd. Comeau (1930), 103-12, 339-69.

¹⁶¹No explanation has yet been found for Augustine’s taking of John’s letter as having been written *ad Parthos*.

¹⁶²*In Ioh. Ep.* 5.7 (SC 75.258-62), 6.12 (SC 75.304-6), 9.3 (SC 75.380-82). Cf. *DDC* 3.10.15 (CCL 32.86-7).

¹⁶³Art., “*Epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus, In*,” in Fitzgerald (1999), 311.

¹⁶⁴*In Ioh. Ep.* 3.4 (SC 75.190-92).

¹⁶⁵*In Ioh. Ep.* 7.2 (SC 75.316-8).

¹⁶⁶Vd. *In Ioh. Ep.* 7.8 (SC 75.328). For similar passages and analyses, vd. Gallay (1955). Cf. Russell (1999), 126.

¹⁶⁷Useful works on *In Ioh. Ep.* include Agaësse (1961) and Dideberg (1975).

The last main body of expository works of relevance to our study is the *Sermones* (sometimes referred to as *Sermones ad populum*).¹⁶⁸ This comprises all the discourses preached by Augustine and not included in a continuous commentary on a book of the Bible.¹⁶⁹

The *Sermones* reflect the fundamental distinction drawn by Augustine between texts that are *aperta* and those *obscura*, as already noted.¹⁷⁰ They also widely illustrate his conviction that the obscurities of biblical texts are divinely intended “to rouse us to the effort that will bring the delight of discovery.”¹⁷¹ The unity of the Old and New Testaments (a unity based on the fact of Scripture’s single authorship¹⁷²), and of the need

¹⁶⁸For a useful introduction which lists all three hundred and ninety six, together with collections, Latin editions and the place and time where preached (when known), vd. “Sermones” in Fitzgerald (1999), 773-92. On Augustine as preacher cf. Van der Meer (2nd edn. 1978), 412-52; Old (1998), 2.344-98, with useful, if brief, discussion of all the preached material and of *De doctrina Christiana*.

¹⁶⁹Modern students of the “Sermones” are indebted to the work of the seventeenth century French Benedictines of St Maur (the so-called Maurists) who restored the Latin text of 361 sermons of Augustine. Subsequent work done by scholars like Morin, Wilmart and Lambot has brought the total number of sermons recognized as authentic, complete or fragmentary, to 559. This, however, represents only a fraction of the estimated c. 8,000 sermons preached by Augustine. Vd. Drobner (2000), 22-3. The exciting possibility of the discovery of further sermons is illustrated by the work of Dolbeau. The new sermons discovered by him and published originally in various issues of REA, have been brought together in one convenient volume. Vd. Dolbeau (1996). A good English translation of the *Sermones*, including those discovered by Dolbeau, is found in Rotelle (1990-), III/1-11. A chronological table of the sermons is found in *ibid.* III/1.138-63 and also a useful introduction, to which the following summary is indebted, by Cardinal Michaeli Pellegrino, *ibid.*, 13-137. GG Willis has attempted to reconstruct the lectionary used at Hippo, particularly for the seasons of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Augustine, however, had a more-or-less free hand in choosing which passage of Scripture to expound on any particular occasion. Willis (1961), 22-37.

¹⁷⁰Cf. *Sermones* 32.1 (CCL 41. 398), 42.1 (CCL 41.504), 163B.6 (MA 1.217-8).

¹⁷¹Pellegrino, in Rotelle (1990-) III/1.35.

¹⁷²*Sermo* 170.1 (PL 38.927).

to interpret the Old in the light of the New,¹⁷³ is presupposed throughout. Christ is affirmed as the key to the interpretation of the Old Testament as of the New.¹⁷⁴

Spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament pervades the sermons. Sometimes the historico-literal sense is affirmed as its basis¹⁷⁵ but often the spiritual sense is given without reference to the historical reality of the underlying events.¹⁷⁶ Augustine stresses the inadmissibility of interpretations that are contrary to the *regula fidei*.¹⁷⁷

This survey of Augustine's exegesis has called attention to a number of features that distinguished his approach to the interpretation of Scripture: notably, his belief in the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture, his conviction of the unity and christocentricity of both Testaments, his distinction between literal and figurative exegetical approaches, his ability to use either as the text and occasion required and the particular importance for him of spiritual exegesis and of *totus Christus* as a hermeneutical tool. The main body of this study will examine the way in which these general characteristics of Augustine's exegetical approach are brought into the service of his anti-Donatist polemic in the area of ecclesiology. Given the, sometimes neglected, importance of biblical exegesis in Augustine's thinking, this study should reveal the

¹⁷³Biblical texts should be understood "christiane a christianis." *Sermo* 41.6 (CCL 41. 500-1).

¹⁷⁴It is in coming near to Christ that the veils hiding the meanings of Scripture are removed. *Sermo* 51.5 (PL 38. 336). Cf. 2 Cor. 3:16.

¹⁷⁵As, eg, in the case of the miraculous catch of fish after the resurrection. *Sermo* 252.1 (PL 38.1171-72). Cf. Jn. 21:5-8.

¹⁷⁶As, eg, in the case of the paralysed man at the pool in Jn. 5. Vd. *Sermo* 124.1 (PL 38.686-7).

¹⁷⁷Eg. *Sermo* 7.3-4 (CCL 41.71-3). Cf. *Sermo* 265.9 (PL 38.1222-3).

crucial role of exegesis in his anti-Donatist polemics and the very close connection between his exegesis and his theology.

1.4 A note on Donatist exegesis

In his exegesis of Scripture against the Donatists, Augustine's handling of the biblical material inevitably operated in interaction with that of his opponents. In the study of Donatist exegesis, the most significant recent work has been that of Maureen Tilley in her recently published work, *The Bible in Christian North Africa. The Donatist World*.¹⁷⁸

Tilley traces Donatist use of Scripture during the first century of the movement. By applying "a hermeneutic of suspicious retrieval and a theory of world-construction" to the material, Tilley examines "the twists and turns in the biblical interpretation presented by the surviving literature of the movement and glimpsed in the works of its opponents".¹⁷⁹

She demonstrates the discrimination with which Donatists chose their biblical texts, always with the aim "to keep Donatists from being pressured to join the Catholics".¹⁸⁰

Tilley argues for a fundamental continuity in Donatist exegetical practice throughout the period. She does this in terms, firstly, of the way in which the Bible was used to interpret their world; secondly, of the way in which "they modelled themselves on the persecuted people" of the biblical world; and, thirdly, of the consequent manner in which "the

¹⁷⁸Tilley (1997). Of great usefulness also are the excellent apparatus, introductions and notes in the BA volumes, to which frequent reference will be made.

¹⁷⁹Tilley (1997), 175.

¹⁸⁰Tilley (1999), 141.

commands God gave the biblical characters became divinely authorized mandates for Donatists and Catholics”.¹⁸¹

By their characteristic typological and literal reading of Scripture, the Donatists with whom Augustine engaged “interpreted the Scriptures and found strength for survival by playing out the stories of the Bible in their own lives”.¹⁸² In this connection, the major biblical image used by them to form their self-identity, according to Tilley, was that of the assembly of Israel on pilgrimage from Egypt to the Promised Land, with the law of God as its most treasured possession. It was, therefore, mainly the Old Testament texts which sustained this image of “the Law-loving *collecta*” that “provided the community the strength to sojourn in a land of idolators, keeping itself pure and separating from those who did evil in the sight of the Lord”.¹⁸³

Tilley’s work awaits a detailed critique but her overall argument is, in general, convincing. Actual Donatist use of Scripture, as addressed by Augustine, will be exposed in the substantive chapters of the thesis.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹Tilley (1997), 171-2.

¹⁸²Tilley (1997), 174.

¹⁸³Tilley (1997), 178.

¹⁸⁴Some criticism of Tilley will be noted at the appropriate place.

CHAPTER TWO

AUGUSTINE'S *DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA*, BOOKS 1-3: THE HERMENEUTICS UNDERGIRDING HIS USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE ANTI-DONATIST WRITINGS

2.1 Augustine's hermeneutical manual

In studying the use made of Scripture by any exegete, it is clearly of importance to give due consideration to those hermeneutical principles by which such use is informed and in the light of which it must, to some extent, be assessed. In the case of many exegetes the absence of explicit statements of the controlling hermeneutical theory means that this can be attained only by means of a broad inductive study of the writer's exegetical practice. A beginning has been made in the application of this method to the exegesis of Augustine.¹ Such studies, however, seem set more to fill out rather than substantially to modify our understanding of his hermeneutical theory as expounded in a major work he wrote on this subject. Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* (*DDC*) is by general agreement one of the great works on hermeneutics of the Christian era and was written specifically to provide help for the Christian teacher in interpreting and proclaiming the Bible (*doctrina* in the title thus bearing the active sense of "teaching" or "instruction" rather than "doctrine").² The programme,

¹Cf. Van Fleteren (1996), 107-128.

²Cf. the title of the translation by Hill (1996), *Teaching Christianity*. Hill's translation is used in this chapter. For a general introduction to *DDC*, cf. Fitzgerald (1999) (ed.), 278-80.

described by the author as *magnum onus et arduum*,³ is set out at the beginning of the first book: *Duae sunt res, quibus nititur omnis tractatio scripturarum, modus inueniendi quae intellegenda sunt, et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt. De inueniendo prius* (books 1-3), *de proferendo postea* (book 4) *disseremus*.⁴ Our study will deal only with the first part, Augustine's discussion *de inueniendo*, as more immediately relevant for our purpose of setting his use of Scripture against the Donatists in its hermeneutical context.

It is widely agreed that the first part of *DDC* was completed by 397.⁵ While compiling his *Retractationes* in 426-27, his discovery that the first part had then been left incomplete (at 3.25.35) led him to set about correcting the deficiency. At that time he finished the third book (the section which contains his summary of the rules of Tyconius) and added the fourth.⁶ The fact that in 426-27 Augustine apparently saw no need to revise the principles of Biblical interpretation he had worked out some twenty years earlier (only supplementing them with the rules of Tyconius the Donatist) strongly suggests the consistency of his thought in this area during a period which saw his exegetical work reach its full maturity. These were also years in which much of Augustine's energy was devoted to opposing the Donatists, not least by means of exegesis, and which witnessed the production of his anti-Donatist writings, beginning about 394 with the *Psalmus abecedarius* or *Psalmus contra Partem Donati* and concluding with his *Contra Gaudentium Donatistarum Episcopum Libri II*, in

³*DDC* 1.1.1 (CCL 32.6). Cf. Cicero, *Orator* 10.33.

⁴*ibid.*

⁵For dating, vd. Wright (1996), 717 with further literature.

⁶*Retract.* 2.4.1 (CCL 57.92-3)

420. The principles, therefore, expounded in *DDC* are those which informed Augustine's use of Scripture throughout this significant period.

It should not, however, be thought that *DDC* was written by Augustine in the manner of a purely academic treatise. As a bishop of the church his writings were produced in response to the various pastoral situations which he encountered. In that connection E. Hill has made the interesting suggestion that *DDC* may have been first produced in response to a request from Aurelius, bishop of Carthage.⁷ He draws attention to Augustine's *Ep.* 41 (usually dated early in his episcopate) in which Aurelius is congratulated on having achieved his "holy plan" (*sancta cogitatio*) "about all our ordained brethren, and especially about the priests preaching to the people in your presence".⁸ This achievement, Hill suggests, "was nothing less than the Catholic Church's revival in North Africa" through the provision of training for the priesthood in interpreting and expounding the Bible. "Augustine's self-given ecclesiastical education remained an exception, but Aurelius' great design was to make it as far as possible into a model."⁹ To this end (it is conjectured) Augustine was instructed to prepare an appropriate manual and the following words in *Ep.* 41 Hill takes to be a reference to this request: "For I too am not neglecting what you commanded me." Now well into the letter Augustine adds, pleadingly, "I am still waiting to know what your opinion is about the seven rules or keys of Tychonius, which I have often written to you about already."¹⁰ This would suggest that at the time of writing, Augustine had reached the point in the third book at which he wished to discuss the seven

⁷Hill (1962), 443-46.

⁸ibid. 444

⁹ibid. 445

¹⁰ibid.

interpretative *regulae* of Tyconius, before proceeding with book four. The problem was whether the rules of Tyconius, as a Donatist, could "be incorporated into a Catholic text-book for training a clergy whose principal task of the moment would be conducting a polemic against the Donatists? Augustine was personally in favour, but junior bishop that he was, he would not take such a bold step without first consulting the primate of all Africa".¹¹ Catholic suspicion of Donatist work in so sensitive an area would appear to have given Augustine's idea a reception sufficiently cool to prevent the work proceeding further at that time.¹²

If this is a true reading of the situation it is one, it might be suggested, not lacking in irony. The role of Aurelius in the Donatist controversy is often lost sight of because of the dominance of Augustine. As a first-class organizer, however, he played a very important part and certainly none was more eager than he to see the Donatists resoundingly defeated. But he was "neither a scholar nor a theologian"¹³ and the significance of what Augustine had accomplished might well have been lost on him. In the *DDC* Augustine had in fact developed a hermeneutic which could scarcely have been better framed to suit the needs of the North African Catholic clergy in preaching against Donatism; and the rules of Tyconius, as Augustine clearly saw, represented, with minimal modification, an ally not a foe in the struggle.

Unfortunately, Tyconius was a Donatist, albeit excommunicate. The irony would be that the very clergy Aurelius so wished to see better equipped to use Scripture against the Donatists were deprived of a tool of potential usefulness for this purpose. And not

¹¹ibid.

¹²It is surprising, however, if Aurelius had commissioned *DDC*, that there is no reference to this in the work, nor in the relevant entry in the *Retract*.

¹³Bonner (1986), 246.

until the Donatist controversy had, more or less, come to an end many years later was it to be made publicly available. It remained for Augustine himself meantime to give practical demonstration of the value of these principles through his own use of Scripture in this context.

What, then, were the main elements in Augustine's hermeneutical theory in *DDC*? It seems appropriate to consider the material under three headings: the meaning of *res* in the context of the *uti/frui* distinction (book one), the interpretation of *signa* found in Scripture, and the *regulae* of Tyconius (books two and three).¹⁴

2.2 *Res* in the context of the *uti/frui* distinction

In the first book, Augustine sets out to provide a solid theological foundation for his hermeneutics "by offering...a concise review, a 'short inventory,' of truths in the area of dogma and morality that constitute as it were the essence of Christianity according to biblical revelation and that are here placed in the pedagogical and educational perspective proper to the treatise".¹⁵

He launches his discussion with a brief presentation of the distinction he wants to draw between *res* (things, realities) and *signa* (signs) through which we learn about *res*.¹⁶ By *res* in the strict sense he means "those that are not mentioned in order to signify something, such as wood, a stone, an animal, and other things like that".¹⁷ In

¹⁴For a detailed analysis of the content and structure of *DDC*, vd. Press (1980), 99-124.

¹⁵Naldini (1996), in Hill (1996), 14.

¹⁶*DDC* 1.2.2 (CCL 32, 7-8).

¹⁷*ibid.*

certain contexts, however, some *res* can also serve as *signa*; and there are also *signa* whose sole function is that of signifying, such as words.¹⁸ That distinction made, he proceeds to explain the *uti/frui* one: some *res* exist to be enjoyed (*frui*) and some to be used (*uti*).¹⁹ The distinctive service for which these terms are placed under tribute by Augustine is made clear by his immediately placing them in a setting of Christian theology and ethics. Firstly, he states, "things that are to be enjoyed make us happy; things which are to be used help us on our way to happiness, providing us, so to say, with crutches and props for reaching the things that will make us happy, and enabling us to keep them".²⁰ A little later he adds, "Enjoyment, after all, consists in clinging to something lovingly for its own sake, while use consists in referring what has come your way to what your love aims at obtaining, provided, that is, it deserves to be loved."²¹ The teleological and eschatological orientation of Augustine's thought here is apparent.²² In this world Christians are exiles for whom enjoyment (*frui*) of the truly *beata vita* awaits return to the *patria* to which we are daily journeying. In the circumstances of our present exile it would be perverse to seek enjoyment in those things (*res*) which are intended to be employed (*uti*) as vehicles to carry us on our way to the blessed goal of our lives.²³

¹⁸ibid.

¹⁹*DDC* 1.3.3 (CCL 32. 8)

²⁰ibid: "Illae quibus fruendum est, nos beatos faciunt. Istis quibus utendum est, tendentes ad beatitudinem adiuuamur et quasi adminiculamur, ut ad illas, quae nos beatos faciunt, peruenire atque his inhaerere possimus."

²¹*DDC* 1.4.4 (CCL 32. 8): "Frui est enim amore inhaerere alicui rei propter se ipsam. Vti autem, quod in usum uenerit, ad id, quod amas obtinendum referre, si tamen amandum est."

²²The phrase "Biblical teleology" as descriptive of the thrust of book one of *DDC* is that of Luc Verheijen. Vd. Harrison (1992), 247.

²³*DDC* 1.4.4 (CCL 32. 8)

More explicitly, Augustine now identifies the Christian *patria* as nothing less than the blessed Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, *una quaedam summa res communisque omnibus fruuntibus ea....*²⁴ Augustine speaks strikingly of the distinct but shared attributes of the Three, particularly emphasising the role of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ It is the Trinity as the *summa res* which alone it is the destiny of saved humanity to enjoy for its own sake. All other things are to be used towards the end of the knowledge of and participation in the triune Godhead.

But how can fallen mankind attain such a goal? It is in answering this question that the Christocentricity of Augustine's thought begins to emerge in *DDC*. Sinful humanity has turned away from God and needs a way back. In order to attain the enjoyment of God as immutable and infinite wisdom and that truth *quae incommutabiliter uiuit*, human frailty and pride need to be healed.²⁶ A way of illumination and purification is required. It was for this very purpose that "Wisdom herself had seen fit to adapt herself even to such infirmity as ours...So she herself is our home, she made herself for us into the way home."²⁷ This, Augustine explains, took place in a manner analogous to the way in which, in human verbal communication, the word in our thoughts becomes a sound called speech while remaining itself undiminished. In similar manner, *verbum dei non commutatum caro tamen factum est, ut habitaret in nobis.*²⁸ The ills of fallen humanity thus find their

²⁴*DDC* 1.5.5 (CCL 32. 9)

²⁵*ibid*: "Eadem tribus aeternitas, eadem incommutabilitas, eadem maiestas, eadem potestas. In patre unitas, in filio aequalitas, in spiritu sancto unitatis aequalitatisque concordia, et tria haec unum omnia propter patrem, aequalia omnia propter filium, conexa omnia propter spiritum sanctum."

²⁶*DDC* 1.10.10 (CCL 32.12).

²⁷*DDC* 1.11.11 (CCL 32.12): "...Cum ergo ipsa sit patria, uiam se quoque nobis fecit ad patriam."

²⁸*DDC* 1.13 (CCL 32. 13).



curatio in the incarnate wisdom of God who is "herself the physician, herself the physic".²⁹

There can be only one mediator between God and man since "it is only by virtue of the unity of His humanity and divinity that Christ is able to heal man and reveal to him, or at least lead him towards, the truth, because only as God and man can he be the way, the truth and the life of men".³⁰ Only because Christ is *in forma Dei* does He possess the necessary omnipotence and only because He is *in forma servi* does He have the requisite humility, to restore fallen man to true health. And if the purpose of salvation is incorporation into Christ, at once our *patria* and the way there, it is "the Lord's resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven " which, "once believed supports our faith with a very great hope" because the resurrection demonstrates to us "how willingly he had laid down his life for us, by having the power in this way to take it up again".³¹ The life, death and resurrection of Christ thus constitute the *via* by which we return to God, bringing us healing and supporting our faith with the great hope of the reward that will become ours at the second coming.³² For Augustine, then, Christ alone can fulfil the role of mediator between God and man in virtue of the unique constitution of His person as the God-man. As such, and in virtue of His saving work, He is uniquely and exclusively endowed with what is required to minister the healing grace of God to fallen people. The implications of this belief which lies at the base of his hermeneutical approach for the Donatist

²⁹*DDC* 1.14.13 (CCL 32. 13-14): "...sic sapientia dei hominem curans, se ipsam exhibuit ad sanandum, ipsa medicus, ipsa medicina."

³⁰Harrison (1992), 213.

³¹*DDC* 1.15.14 (CCL 32. 14-15).

³²For Augustine's use of the idea of "Christus medicus", vd. Harrison (1992), 221-24, and further literature.

controversy will become clear in due course. Suffice it to say at this stage that at core the Donatist controversy, for Augustine, was consistently perceived as nothing less than a struggle to maintain the unique glory of Christ.

Reference to the future rewards of believers, leads Augustine to mention Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit, given "for our comfort and consolation on this journey". In the Holy Spirit, even in the troubles of life "we already possess...that great confidence and love of the one whom we cannot yet see, as well as gifts proper to each one of us for the building up of his Church...".³³ The appropriateness of this arrangement relates to the nature and destiny of the church.

The church according to apostolic teaching is both the body and the wife of Christ.³⁴ The image of the church as *corpus Christi* is particularly significant for it serves to bind his Christology and ecclesiology into one inseparable whole. As Harrison states: "The Church, so to speak, is the visible, tangible continuation of Christ's Incarnation, since, Augustine observes, it was in His flesh, *in forma servi*, that He united Himself to it and now reigns over it as its risen and ascended Head...Man is thus unified not only with Christ Incarnate, but (because His temporal mission *in forma servi* was inseparable from His eternal life *in forma Dei*) with His Trinitarian Godhead (to which He is the Mediator) and by faith, hope, and love, with His eternal life."³⁵

³³DDC 1.15. 14 (CCL 32. 14-15).

³⁴DDC 1.16.15 (CCL 32. 15).

³⁵Harrison, op.cit., 225-26.

As within the Trinity the Holy Spirit functions as the principle of unity, so in him the head of the church, with all its diverse parts and functions, "binds it tightly together with the knot of unity and love, as its proper kind of health".³⁶ The work of the Holy Spirit at this point follows, as Harrison remarks, from his being "preeminently identified as love. Even though the members of the body cannot see the Head, they are united to it in love, and are united to each other by the love of the same object which dwells in their hearts".³⁷

United, however, as the church is in these healing bonds of love, Augustine significantly stresses that sinless perfection is not attained by the church in this present age. This is a period, rather, in which its head "trains and purges it with various kinds of salutary vexation and distress". Only when finally plucked out of this world will he "bind his wife the church to himself for ever, not having any stain or wrinkle or any such thing".³⁸ The sinless purity of the church is thus reserved for the *eschaton* and represents the culmination of the purificatory process, modelled on the death and resurrection of Christ, by which through ongoing repentance and faith death to sin and living to God (a being "remodelled on the truth"³⁹) are experienced in the life of the church.

To summarize thus far: Augustine's crucial distinction between *uti* and *frui* has led to an eschatologically oriented exposition of those tenets of Christian doctrine relevant

³⁶DDC 1.16.15 (CCL 32. 15): "...nodo unitatis et caritatis tamquam sanitatis adstringit."

³⁷Harrison (1992), 227 and notes.

³⁸DDC 1.16.15 (CCL 32.15): "Exercet autem hoc tempore et purgat medicinalibus quibusdam molestiis, ut erutam de hoc saeculo in aeternum sibi copulet coniugem *ecclesiam non habentem maculam aut rugam aut aliquid eiusmodi*" (Eph. 5:27).

³⁹DDC 1.20 .19 (CCL 32. 16).

to the purpose of the work.⁴⁰ Firstly, the goal of salvation is knowledge of and incorporation into the unity of the Trinity. Secondly, it is only Christ, the God-man, all of whose functions "have as their end the revelation of the truth, goodness and beauty of the Godhead and thereby the instruction, healing and incorporation of the believer into Its unity,"⁴¹ who is able to fulfil the role of mediation between God and sinful humanity. And thirdly, the church as *corpus Christi* is related to Christ and indwelt by his Spirit in such a way that in this present age incorporation into the divine unity is inseparable from incorporation into Christ's *corpus* which is where the Godhead's unity is located on earth.

Having discussed the relevant *res* of revealed doctrine within the context of the *uti/frui* distinction Augustine proceeds to relate revealed ethics, particularly Christian love, to the same distinction. The problem is, if God alone, as the eternal and unchangeable, is to be enjoyed (*frui*), loved for his own sake, what then of the Scriptural commandment to love one another? If others are to be loved for their own sake then they too are things to be enjoyed. But if they are to be loved for the sake of something else, they are for us to use (*uti*). To avoid the otherwise inevitable conclusion that others constitute the *beata vita*, he makes clear that love for others must be for the sake of something else.⁴²

⁴⁰DDC 1. 40. 44 (CCL 32. 32): "...de rebus continentibus fidem, quantum pro tempore satis esse arbitratus sum..."

⁴¹Harrison (1992), 224.

⁴²DDC 1.22.20 (CCL 32. 17): "*Praeceptum est enim nobis ut diligamus inuicem; sed quaeritur utrum propter se homo ab homine diligendus sit an propter aliud. Si enim propter se, fruimur eo; si propter aliud, utimur eo. Videtur autem mihi propter aliud diligendus. Quod enim propter se diligendum est, in eo constituitur beata vita, cuius etiam si nondum res, tamen spes eius nos hoc tempore consolatur. Maledictus autem, qui spem suam ponit in homine.*"

Augustine states that of many things which are to be used only four are to be loved: things above us (God and the angels), below us (carnal and material things), within us (a natural love of self, which should exist as a means rather than an end so that we may "love ourselves so as to benefit from it").⁴³ Loving our equals involves loving our fellow men who are "to be loved equally".⁴⁴ Our love for "all those who are able to enjoy God together with us" will be shaped by the exact nature of our relationship to others, yet "we ought to want all of them to love God together with us, and all our helping them or being helped by them is to be referred to that one single end".⁴⁵ Our neighbour is to be enjoyed in God and when our enjoyment of another is related rightly to God, *deo potius quam homine frueris*.⁴⁶

On this basis Augustine goes on to enunciate what is for him, in many ways, the most important (negative) hermeneutical criterion of all. Since "the fulfilment and the end...of all the divine scriptures is *love*: love of the thing which is to be enjoyed, and of the thing which is able to enjoy that thing together with us..,"⁴⁷ it follows that "if it seems to you that you have understood the divine scriptures, or any part of them, in such a way that by this understanding you do not build up this twin love of God and neighbour, then you have not yet understood them".⁴⁸ Since God himself who is love is the ultimate author of Scripture the works of the inspired human writers "if they are

⁴³DDC 1.25.26 (CCL 32. 20).

⁴⁴DDC 1.28.29 (CCL 32. 22).

⁴⁵DDC 1.29.30 (CCL 32. 23): "Omnium autem, qui nobiscum frui possunt deo, partim eos diligimus, quos ipsi adiuuamus, partim eos a quibus adiuuamur...Velle tamen debemus, ut omnes nobiscum diligant deum, et totum, quod eos uel adiuuamus uel adiuuamur ab eis, ad unum illum finem referendum est."

⁴⁶DDC 1.33.37 (CCL 32. 27).

⁴⁷DDC 1.35.39 (CCL 32.28-29).

⁴⁸DDC 1.36.40 (CCL 32. 29): "Quisquis igitur scripturas diuinas vel quamlibet earum partem intellexisse sibi videtur, ita ut eo intellectu non aedificet istam geminam caritatem dei et proximi, nondum intellexit."

to be worthy of the divine and supreme author who inspires them, must be rooted in charity and directed towards the love of God and man".⁴⁹ And since Scripture is supremely a revelation of divine love, exegetes, in turn, "are required to follow the commandment of love in carrying out their task; charity must be at once the source, object and purpose of exegesis, which should obey the most fundamental of all divine commands".⁵⁰

So basic is this principle in Augustine's whole approach to exegetical activity that he is prepared to draw an initially surprising conclusion. It begins with an acknowledgement that any interpretation of a passage of Scripture which fails accurately to represent the intended meaning of the writer is a mistaken interpretation. Nevertheless, he adds, if the intention and effect of this mistaken interpretation is to build up the church in love then the mistake is not to be regarded as pernicious. It is analogous to the situation of "people who go astray off the road, but still proceed by rough paths to the same place as the road was taking them to". The error, however, should be corrected lest the interpreter get into the habit of straying and of going in the wrong direction altogether.⁵¹

It is not entirely clear how this apparent concern to uphold the literal sense of the text is consistent with Augustine's own extensive spiritualising of Scripture. De Margerie comments that "it is by seeking the intention of the inspired writer that those who

⁴⁹De Margerie (1991), 21.

⁵⁰ibid.

⁵¹DDC 1.36.41 (CCL 32. 30): "Sed quisquis in scripturis aliud sentit quam ille, qui scripsit, illis non mentientibus fallitur, sed tamen, ut dicere coeperam, si ea sententia fallitur, qua aedificet *caritatem*, quae *finis praecepti est*, ita fallitur, ac si quisquam errore deserens viam eo tamen per agrum pergat, quo etiam uia illa perducit. Corrigendus est tamen et, quam sit utilius uiam non deserere, demonstrandum est, ne consuetudine deuiandi etiam in transuersum aut peruersum ire cogatur."

study or interpret scripture hope to recognize the divine will...the spiritual meaning emerges on the basis of the literal meaning."⁵² As Wright, however, points out with reference to a recent document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), which speaks of a necessary "relationship of continuity and of conformity" between the literal sense and the spiritual sense, "it is precisely 'the relationship of continuity and conformity' that one too often misses in Augustine."⁵³

It is possible that Augustine had less confidence in the ability of untutored and less able clergy in North Africa to impose the necessary restraints on the practice of spiritualising than he himself felt able to do. It was certainly the case that his warning against wandering from the intended meaning of the Scripture writers related to his understanding of the relationship between Scripture and the linked graces of love, faith and hope. Love, which it is the aim of Scripture to produce, presupposes faith and when "people frequently hit upon other opinions which it is impossible to square with the author's meaning, such that if they are convinced these opinions are true and certain, what the writer meant cannot be true... faith will start to totter if the authority of scripture is undermined"⁵⁴ with a resulting undermining of love itself, *non enim potest diligere, quod esse non credit*.⁵⁵ Hope, in turn, grows out of a love that is rightly related to faith; and so only by believing and loving, and thus "doing good and

⁵²De Margerie (1991), 22.

⁵³Wright (1996), 726-27.

⁵⁴DDC 1.37 (CCL 32. 30): "*Per fidem enim ambulamus, non per speciem; titubabit autem fides, si diuinarum scripturarum uacillat auctoritas.*"

⁵⁵ibid.

complying with the requirements of good morals, you ensure that you also hope to come eventually to what you love".⁵⁶

So ultimately important indeed is love, with its attendant faith and hope, that people who are supported by and have a firm grasp of these actually "have no need of the scriptures except for instructing others". There are many who live a life of solitude, without books, but who live by these three which together form such an impressive structure around them "that these people, holding onto something perfect, do not seek that which is in part - perfect, of course, insofar as that is possible in this life; because compared with the future life not even the lives of holy and just people here below are perfect".⁵⁷ The grand purpose of divine revelation in Scripture, therefore, is to elicit faith, hope and love- especially love- as the necessary means of healing and purification in preparation for the beatific vision when only love will remain.

This basic hermeneutical principle of dual love for God and neighbour stands closely related to Augustine's concept of *totus Christus*, that is, of Christ and his church as one person, which is expounded later in the work.⁵⁸ The Christocentricity of Augustine's thought is again apparent. For the object of this love, in the words of de Margerie, "is Christ the immutable God, the one and only Son inseparable from the Father and their Spirit, the only-begotten Son extended in his Body, the Church, his Bride...In other words, the purpose and hallmark of the divine and human (or theandric) scriptures are to be found in the double teaching of the Saviour on his two

⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷DDC 1.39.43 (CCL 32. 31).

⁵⁸DDC 3.31.44. (CCL 32. 104).

natures as object of unified charity and counterpart of man who is body and soul and is called upon to love the God Christ in the ecclesial projection of his blessed humanity."⁵⁹ The one Christ is to be loved not only as head but as body with that unified love which is *dilectio rei qua fruendum est et rei quae nobiscum ea re frui potest*.⁶⁰

2.3 The *signa* of Scripture in relation to its *res*

Having established at the beginning of book one his basic distinction between *res* and *signa* Augustine devoted most of the first book to a discussion of the former, including as we have seen the central topic of love. In the second and third books he comes to the nuts and bolts of his hermeneutical theory by addressing in detail the practical question of how the desired knowledge of divine love is to be assimilated by human beings. This leads to an extended discussion of the nature and function of signs, especially words, since it is only through the use of Scripture that saving knowledge is acquired.⁶¹

A sign is defined as "a thing, which besides the impression it conveys to the senses, also has the effect of making something else come to mind".⁶² Luigi Alici, while acknowledging that there are different possible ways of clarifying Augustine's teaching on signs, helpfully suggests a three-level approach.⁶³ Augustine firstly, as to their

⁵⁹De Margerie (1991), 22-3.

⁶⁰DDC 1.35.39 (CCL 32. 29).

⁶¹DDC 2.1-6 (CCL 32.32-36).

⁶²DDC 2.1.1 (CCL 32.32): "Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire..." Extensive studies of Augustine's theory of signs exist. Vd., for example, Markus (1957), 60-83; Jackson (1969), 9-49.

⁶³Alici (1996), 40f.

nature, distinguishes between the natural and the conventional (or "given"), the latter being used "to transfer to someone else's mind what we, the givers of the sign, have in mind ourselves".⁶⁴ Of these, words are by far the most numerous and also the most important as "the principal means used by human beings to signify the thoughts they have in their minds".⁶⁵ But since spoken words "pass away once they have agitated the air waves" it was necessary for signs to have been made of these signs by means of written letters which are able to present spoken words to the eyes "not in themselves, but through what are signs of them".⁶⁶ The communication of God's word, however, is threatened by the limitation of writing systems to specific languages as a result of sin and therefore it has necessarily been through a variety of translations that Scripture has been disseminated throughout the world, "and thus came to the knowledge of the nations for their salvation".⁶⁷

Secondly, as regards understanding them, *signa* that are recognized are distinguished from those that are unrecognized or ambiguous, the latter being the main cause of failure to understand Scripture.⁶⁸ The innumerable obscurities and ambiguities in the text, however, have a divinely ordained purpose. They are there to bring down human pride and to prevent boredom.⁶⁹ Rightly approached, the obscurer passages in which almost nothing can be found that is not plainly said somewhere else, are designed to

⁶⁴DDC 2.2.3 (CCL 32. 33).

⁶⁵DDC 2.3.4 (CCL 32. 34).

⁶⁶DDC 2.4.5 (CCL 32. 34): "Ita uoces oculis ostenduntur non per se ipsas, sed per signa quaedam sua."

⁶⁷DDC 2.5.6 (CCL 32. 35).

⁶⁸DDC 2.10.15 (CCL 32. 41).

⁶⁹DDC 2.6.7 (CCL 32. 35-36): "Quod totum prouisum esse diuinitus non dubito ad edomandam labore superbiam et intellectum a fastidio reuocandum, cui facile inuestigata plerumque uilesunt."

enhance our pleasure in receiving the truth of Scripture. Augustine's own scarcely concealed delight in giving significance to such passages well illustrates his point.

The second distinction between signs intersects with a third, in relation to their meaning: that between proper or transferred (metaphorical) signs.⁷⁰ The former correspond substantially to conventional signs and convey the literal meaning of the text. The latter are more complex: signs "are metaphorical when the very things which we signify with their proper words are made use of to signify something else".⁷¹ In *DDC* Augustine gives most space to an exposition of conventional signs since a given sign is a means of "interpersonal mediation, its function being to render visible what is interior".⁷² The desired goal of Scriptural understanding can, however, be hindered through signs (whether proper or metaphorical) being either unknown or ambiguous and Augustine offers an appropriate remedy for each case.⁷³

The remedy for ignorance of proper signs is found principally in a knowledge of languages but includes other matters such as "attention to sources, a continual expanding of our fund of information, and an ability to compare texts and the different ways in which they are translated".⁷⁴ On the other hand unfamiliar metaphorical signs *partim linguarum notitia partim rerum inuestiganda sunt*.⁷⁵ He commends a wide-ranging programme of general studies, underlining at the same time their limited

⁷⁰*DDC* 2.10.15 (CCL 32. 41).

⁷¹*ibid*: "Propria dicuntur, cum his rebus significandis adhibentur, propter quas sunt instituta... Translata sunt, cum et ipsae res, quas propriis uerbis significamus, ad aliquid aliud significandum usurpantur..."

⁷²Alici (1996), 41.

⁷³Remedies for unknown signs are handled in *DDC* 2.11.16-2.42.63 (CCL 32. 42-77); and those for ambiguous signs in 3.1.1-3.37.56 (CCL 32. 77-82).

⁷⁴*DDC* 2.11.16-2.15.22 (CCL 32. 42-48); Alici (1996), 43.

⁷⁵*DDC* 2.16.23 (CCL 32. 48).

usefulness for the exegete, and inculcating in relation to them all the wise maxim of Terence: *ne quid nimis*.⁷⁶ Above all the attitude of the exegete himself is crucial and, always remembering that *scientia inflat, caritas aedificat*,⁷⁷ he must seek in all his work to be "gentle and humble of heart, submitting to Christ's easy yoke, and burdened with his light load, being founded and built up in love, and so not liable to be puffed up by knowledge".⁷⁸

In the third book Augustine turns to the problem which ambiguous signs present to the exegete in handling the most difficult passages of Scripture. Remedies for ambiguous proper signs are first offered.⁷⁹ These involve matters of pronunciation, punctuation, grammar and context, together with the need to consult the rule of faith.⁸⁰

More attention is given to remedies for ambiguous metaphorical signs.⁸¹ Augustine formulates two fundamental rules. The first requires a careful distinction to be drawn between metaphorical and non-metaphorical signs. In allusion to 2 Cor. 3.6 he states that to take a metaphorical expression literally is to follow the letter which kills. This *miserabilis animi seruitus*⁸² was what particularly marked the Jewish people. His second rule relates to the method of distinguishing literal and metaphorical signs.

"Anything in the divine writings that cannot be referred either to good, honest morals or to the truth of the faith, you must know is said figuratively. Good honest morals

⁷⁶DDC 2.39.58 (CCL 32. 72).

⁷⁷DDC 2.41.62 (CCL 32. 75).

⁷⁸DDC 2.42.63 (CCL 32. 77).

⁷⁹DDC 3.2.2 -3.4.8 (CCL 32. 77-82).

⁸⁰DDC 3.1.1-3.4.8 (CCL 32. 77-82).

⁸¹DDC 3.5.9-3.37.56 (CCL 32. 82-116).

⁸²DDC 3.5.9 (CCL 32. 83).

belong to loving God and one's neighbour, the truth of the faith to knowing God and one's neighbour."⁸³ But Scripture "commands nothing but charity, or love, and censures nothing but cupidity, or greed, and that is the way it gives shape to human morals".⁸⁴

On this basis Augustine sets out a number of rules for interpreting ambiguous figurative signs which seek to do justice to the fact that "the ultimate purpose sought by God through the gift to mortal man of the immortally mortal scriptures is to lead men to an immortal love toward him and toward all those who can enjoy him eternally in a direct contemplation".⁸⁵ To move himself and others towards the goal of the *beata uita*, therefore, the exegete must go beyond the letter of the text to the deeper spiritual meaning conveyed by the figurative signs, interpreting these signs in light of the principle that they are all intended, whether by positive or negative means, to magnify dual love for God and others. "So this rule will be observed in dealing with figurative expressions, that you should turn over and over in your mind what you read, until your interpretation of it is led through to the kingdom of charity."⁸⁶

Exegesis undertakes a search for *res fidei* and *res caritatis* and this effectively means "both Christ and the Church, the things that are to be believed, the means of purification, the *sacramentum*".⁸⁷ The Scriptures are themselves ultimately a

⁸³DDC 3.10.14 (CCL 32. 86).

⁸⁴DDC 3.10.15 (CCL 32. 87): "Non autem praecipit scriptura nisi caritatem nec culpatur nisi cupiditatem et eo modo informat mores hominum."

⁸⁵De Margerie (1991), 31.

⁸⁶DDC 3.15.23 (CCL 32. 91): "Seruabitur ergo in locutionibus figuratis regula huiusmodi, ut tam diu uersetur diligenti consideratione quod legitur, donec ad regnum caritatis interpretatio perducatur."

⁸⁷ Studer (1975), 119, quoted by Alici (1996), 45.

sacramentum, both veiling and unveiling the truth "in a degree proportionate to its object's transcendence, by reason of which this object has no choice but to manifest itself 'in the obscurities of allegory'".⁸⁸ The metaphorical signs point beyond themselves to a deeper spiritual or allegorical meaning. Indeed the same passage may yield several meanings and, he says, "even if you cannot tell which of them the writer intended, there is no risk if they can all be shown from other places of the holy scriptures to correspond with the truth". We should not assume that the writer did not see this meaning in the text and "certainly the Spirit of God who produced these texts through him foresaw without a shadow of doubt that it would occur to some reader or listener; or rather he actually provided that it should occur to them, because it is upheld by the truth".⁸⁹ Augustine holds that the very multiplicity of the possible spiritual meanings of any Scriptural passage was intended to enrich the Biblical text.⁹⁰ It was certainly the case that the inexhaustible "hermeneutical dynamism"⁹¹ released by this conviction served well the distinctive Christological/ecclesiological exegesis which he practised in response to the Catholic-Donatist split in North Africa.

2.4 The seven rules of Tyconius

In 426-7 when completing this work, no longer under the authority of Aurelius and with the Donatist controversy in any case largely a thing of the past, Augustine felt able to include the seven rules of the Donatist Tyconius as he had wished but was

⁸⁸Alici (1996), 44.

⁸⁹*DDC* 3.27.38 (CCL 32. 99-100).

⁹⁰*ibid.* Augustine's insight here "seems to rehabilitate...the fundamental intuition of Origen's exegesis." Simonetti (1994), 108.

⁹¹Alici (1996), 45.

unable earlier to do. In the concluding part of book three⁹² Augustine commends these rules as a good example of those general rules which are of use in interpreting metaphorical signs in a way consistent with the teachings on *res* in book one.

Although the product of a Donatist and therefore to be handled with some caution, they are useful, he claims, for explaining many, though not all, of the controverted passages of Scripture.⁹³ These rules provide one spring-board for Augustine's development of the prophetic and christo-ecclesial hermeneutic which was of great importance for his exegesis against the Donatists.⁹⁴

The first rule, *de domino et corpore eius*, is essentially Christological and has in view the various hints given in Scripture that the head (Christ) and his body (the church) constitute one single person. It is intended to prevent confusion when a transition takes place in a text from head to body and from body to head while still referring to one person. Examples are provided from Gal. 3.29 where reference is made in the plural to the faithful (*fidelibus*) as the seed of Abraham (*Abrahamae semen*) when there is only one seed of Abraham - Christ, and from Isa. 61.10 where the one person describes himself as both bridegroom and bride and the question to be answered is which of the two fits the head, Christ, and which the body, the church.⁹⁵

⁹²*DDC* 3.30.42-37.56 (CCL 32. 102-116)

⁹³*DDC* 3.30.42-43 (CCL 32.102-104). For Tyconius and his *Liber regularum*, vd. Wright (1996), 722 and the further literature. Brown notes the decisiveness of the influence of Tyconius on Augustine at an early stage in his ministry. From him he derived "many details and some basic ideas" and "this writer, more than any other whose influence we can discern, deflected Augustine's thought into some of its most distinctive channels." Brown (1967), 272. For an introduction to the hotly debated subject of the relationship between Tyconius and Augustine, vd. Chadwick (1989). For one cause of the tendency to exaggerate Augustine's misreading of Tyconius, vd. Wright (1996), 723, n. 124. Our interest, of course, is primarily in Augustine's use of Tyconius' rules rather than the original rules themselves.

⁹⁴Evidence that this hermeneutic was already important for his approach to exegesis at the time he wrote the *DDC* is found in his figurative interpretation of Gen. 1, in terms of Christ and the church, in *Conf.* 13.12.13ff. (CCL 27. 248f.).

⁹⁵*DDC* 3.31.44 (CCL 32.104).

The second rule is entitled *de domini corpore bipartito*. For Tyconius the reference is to the left and right sides of the one body of Christ but on the basis that what is bad in the mixed character of the church *non...re uera domini corpus est* and therefore *cum illo non erit in aeternum*, Augustine claimed a better title for the rule would be *de domini corpore uero atque permixto aut uero atque simulato uel quid aliud*. He supports his case with a number of texts. In Cant. 1.4, for example, the woman who speaks says: *Fusca sum et speciosa ut tabernacula Cedar, ut pelles Salomonis*. She does not say *Fusca fui et speciosa sum* but is claiming to be each at the same time *propter temporalem unitatem intra una retria piscium bonorum et malorum*. The same point is made on the basis of Isa. 42.16-17 while he seeks to show from Matt. 24.51 that the two will not always be in the same body by identifying the whole church with the servant whose master (Christ) when he arrives for the final judgement *dividet eum et partem eius cum hypocritis ponet*. That a rule, even if slightly modified, of such usefulness in employing Scripture against the Donatist position that only non-sinners make up the church could have emerged from the Donatist camp was an irony not lost on Augustine, though it may have been on the bishop of Carthage.⁹⁶

The third rule of Tyconius is entitled *de promissis et lege* and it too, for Augustine, has anti-Donatist overtones. Building on the second it seeks to harmonize the promises of Scripture in terms of their being addressed either to the left side

⁹⁶*DDC* 3.32.45 (CCL 32. 104-105). Augustine refers to "Ticonius quidam, qui contra Donatistas inuictissime scripsit, cum fuerit donatista, et illic inuenitur absurdissimi cordis..." For the largely untapped potential of Augustine's own theory of signs in its application to the church as a way of expressing its deep ambiguity as an institution, vd. Markus (1970), 178-86. Cf. Ratzinger (1956), 179-83.

(conditional promises) or to the right side (unconditional promises) of the church.⁹⁷

For Tyconius this rule yields further evidence of the bipartite nature of the church.⁹⁸

Augustine supports Tyconius' view of the relationship between promise and law (citing Rom. 12:3, 1 Cor. 11:19, Eph. 6:23, Phil. 1:29), but interprets the rule in line with his own non-bipartite ecclesiology.

The fourth rule is named *de specie et genere*.⁹⁹ Tyconius held that this distinction corresponded to two types of prophetic texts in all of Scripture (both Testaments) - those which have both an immediate reference and also a reference to the church (*species*) and those which refer only to the church of the present age (*genus*).¹⁰⁰

Augustine agrees with the distinction, while identifying the prophecies concerned as those of the Old Testament which find their fulfilment in the New.¹⁰¹

Various towns and peoples in the Old Testament, for example, are often, though not always, referred to in a way more appropriately applied to all nations. The same rule may hold in the case of individuals, "as when things said about Solomon exceed his limitations, and become luminously clear when applied to Christ or the Church, of which Solomon is a part". The general point finds illustration in the new covenant

⁹⁷*DDC* 3.33.46 (CCL 32. 105-106)

⁹⁸"The right side of the Church lives out the pattern of promise and fulfillment while the left hand side continues to exist under the power of law and without the benefit of the fulfillment of God's promises." Kugler (1999), 137.

⁹⁹This is the third of four rules concerned with parts and wholes: the others are the first, second and seventh.

¹⁰⁰This enables Tyconius to see all of Scripture "to be *prophetic* of the nature of the Church in his day, and therefore perfectly clear in its own speech so long as one understands the logic by which it speaks." Kugler (1999), 138.

¹⁰¹"Tyconius understands promise and fulfillment in the Bible to be paradigmatic and prophetic of contemporary reality, while Augustine understands the schema as the historical trajectory which leads to and beyond the present reality." Kugler (1999), 147, n.55. Augustine also argues that "carnal Israel" and spiritual Israel", appearances notwithstanding, never did belong to the one body (*DDC* 3.5.9 [CCL 32.82-3]).

prophesy of Ezekiel 36. New Testament allusions to it make clear that the new covenant embraces, not one nation, but all the nations. This is the world-wide church "gathered together out of all the nations and destined to reign for ever with Christ". The usefulness of this rule in supporting the Catholic notion of catholicity, against that of the Donatists, is well illustrated in the following chapter.¹⁰²

The fifth rule, *de temporibus*, proposes a solution to certain numerical problems in Scripture through the use of either synecdoche or proper numbers. By the use of synecdoche apparent contradictions, for example in the differences in chronological calculations between the synoptic writers, can be solved. The same rule can also be applied to those numbers which Tyconius calls *legitimi* and to which "divine scripture gives pride of place...like seven or ten or twelve and any other there may be". Such numbers can refer to unlimited time but also to other things, as, for example, the whole body of saints in the apocalypse. For example, by showing that the 144,000 of Rev. 7:4 is a reference to all the saints, Augustine provides a basis for his portrayal of the church as existing in the midst of iniquity. For him, it therefore follows that "according to this Scripture, the evil is not in the true Church; rather the true Church exists in its midst, and is even mixed up with it in the present age".¹⁰³ Kugler calls attention to the differing views of Scripture held by Augustine and Tyconius, as illustrated by this and the preceding rules. For Tyconius, Scripture speaks directly (eg. by temporal designations) to the present-day church, while for Augustine such application can only be by means of a deciphering of the *signa* of Scripture.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²DDC 3.34.47-49 (CCL 32.106-110).

¹⁰³Kugler (1999), 140.

¹⁰⁴Ibid. DDC 3.35.50-51 (CCL 32. 110-111).

The sixth rule, *de recapitulatione*, had a mainly eschatological orientation for Tyconius and was concerned with the question of discerning the signs preceding the coming separation of the two parts of the one body of Christ, at the Second Coming.¹⁰⁵ A *recapitulatio* takes place “when certain events happening in the present time bear a resemblance...to events described in Scripture”.¹⁰⁶ Often these recapitulations are signalled in Scripture by temporal expressions like “then”, “in that hour”, on that day”. Sometimes they represented a similitude of a present occurrence with something in the past, sometimes a likeness between the present and the future (eg. the present sufferings of the Donatists with the sufferings at the end of the age as prophesied by Daniel). Augustine speaks of this rule as one which Tyconius discovered “by being particularly wide awake”. He himself takes it as a general rule for reading Scripture. It applies to passages in which the narrative, while appearing to continue “in the order of time...is imperceptibly turned back to earlier events that had been left out”. By interpreting Lk. 17:29-32 (the call to remember Lot’s wife), cited by Tyconius, in light of 1 Jn. 2:18 (“...it is the last time”), Augustine bring the rule firmly into line with his own ecclesiology. “The admonitions of Scripture regarding watchfulness refer not to some future time but to the present life of the Church as it awaits the eschaton.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Cf. Bright (1988), 79-87.

¹⁰⁶Bright, 79.

¹⁰⁷Kugler (1999), 141. Augustine “seems to view the true Church as a single body, undivided and united in itself, on the journey to the New Age, and needful at every step of the way to be careful in its way of life.” *ibid.* DDC 3.36.52-54 (CCL 32. 111-114).

The seventh and final rule, *de diabolo et eius corpore*, is the counterpart of the first such that when Scripture speaks of the devil, it includes also his body.¹⁰⁸ The words addressed to Lucifer in Isa. 14.12 with reference to his being crushed to the earth need to be understood of the devil's body. "Because even if it is the devil who sends his angels to all the nations, still it is his body, not himself, that is crushed into the earth - except that he himself is in his body..." The application of this rule to the subject of the mixed nature of the church on earth is made explicit. While it is true that the devil has his body in those *qui manifestissime foris sunt* he also has it "in those who, while belonging to him, are for a time mixed up in the Church (*ad tempus miscentur ecclesiae*), until each one departs this life, or the chaff is separated from the wheat at the final winnowing (*...a frumento palea uentilabro ultimo separetur*).¹⁰⁹ Once again a key emphasis of Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic is given hermeneutical undergirding - and again with the valued help of a representative of the opposing side.

The part of the *De doctrina Christiana* dealing with principles of Biblical interpretation was compiled by Augustine by 397 in the early stages of his involvement in the Catholic-Donatist controversy. The work was intended to be a manual for Catholic clergy in their pastoral task of interpreting and proclaiming the Scriptures. It was a time when that task would to a large extent involve dealing from Scripture with the major issues at the heart of the controversy, such as the nature of the church and of the sacraments. It would appear to have been reflection on this

¹⁰⁸*DDC* 3.37.55 (CCL 32. 114-115): "Est enim et ipse caput impiorum, qui sunt eius quodam modo corpus, ituri cum illo in supplicium ignis aeterni, sicut Christus caput est ecclesiae, quod est corpus eius futurum cum illo in regno et gloria sempiterna."

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*

need, in the context of his understanding of Christian theology, and informed deeply by the thought of Tyconius which formed the matrix for Augustine's contribution to hermeneutical theory as outlined above. It was a hermeneutic tailor-made for the purposes of using Scripture in the interests of anti-Donatist polemic. By the time the completed work came to publication, however, the battle had already been won.

2.5 The early development of Augustine's *totus Christus* hermeneutic

One of the most significant recent efforts to trace the hermeneutical development of Augustine, apart from the *DDC*, is that of Michael Cameron.¹¹⁰ Through an application of Thomas Kuhn's conception of "paradigms", Cameron has elucidated the connection between Augustine's developing christology and his figurative exegesis. Cameron identifies a shift in Augustine's thinking from a "spiritualist" paradigm (embracing signs, figurative exegesis and christology), held in the period following his conversion, to an "incarnational" paradigm, resulting from development in his christological thinking in the early 390's, which came to full expression in the *Contra Faustum* (c. 398).¹¹¹

In the early "spiritualist" paradigm, Christ's role was understood as essentially exemplarist, in that Augustine "understood the divinity of the Word to have used the man Jesus didactically as an exemplar of humility who opened the way to the spiritual realm. There was, consequently, little emphasis, at this stage, on Christ's mediatorship."¹¹² Gradually, however, in the early 390's, deeper reflection on the

¹¹⁰Vd. Cameron (1996), (1997), (1999).

¹¹¹Cameron (1999), 75.

¹¹²Ibid. For an analysis of Augustine's early "spiritualist" paradigm, cf. Cameron (1999), 76-82.

meaning of the eternal Word's assumed weakness, led Augustine to adopt a paradigm which "interrelated the eternal and temporal by embracing Christ not only as exemplar but also as mediator whose ensouled flesh was the nexus of a saving exchange between immutable divinity and mutable humanity". This, in turn, produced a "conjunctive theory of signs which acknowledged the ductility of God's power for the world of history and language," and also, correspondingly, a view of the Old Testament (as effectively, on this view, the first book of the New Testament) which gave to it a new pastoral-polemical role, since it now "appeared not only to anticipate but also to dispense the grace of the New, though made to wear a "veil" because of its different place in salvation history".¹¹³

The development of Augustine's christology of Christ as mediator is traced through his engagement in 394 with Paul's letter to the Galatians (in his *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas*) whose image of the mediator is conflated with the "kenosis" Christology of Phil. 2:6ff, to articulate "a saving 'exchange' between human weakness and divine strength".¹¹⁴ Augustine interpreted the role of the angels in Galatians, mediating the whole Old Testament dispensation, as being that of "temporary surrogates" of the incarnation. Thus, "through the various elements of this dispensation the Spirit revealed Christ's future humility to the spiritual people of that age - the patriarchs, the prophets and their followers." Angelic activity was therefore "exactly analogous to that of the prophets who acted sometimes in their own person, at other times in the person of God, in order to indicate that God was acting in them". On the same

¹¹³Cameron (1999), 75.

¹¹⁴Cameron (1999), 83. For Augustine's use of "transfiguro" and its cognates to express Christ's effecting of change in the human will, cf. Cameron (1997).

analogy Augustine was able to develop the traditional “prosopological exegesis” of the Psalms, by which they are interpreted as representing both the prophetic words of the Psalmist and the actual words of the mediator. For Augustine, the quotation of Ps. 21(22):1 (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) by Christ on the cross was an “act of bedrock exegesis which disclosed the voice of Christ in all of Scripture; the rest of the Psalter and the whole Old Testament accordingly indicated not only that the mediator would appear on earth, but also that he himself was secretly acting in all the persons, events, rites and texts of the prophetic people”.¹¹⁵

These developments in Augustine’s christology and exegesis entailed the development of his theory of conjunctive signs, in terms of which “a reality of the spiritual world (is bound) to its sign in such a way that, despite their incommensurability, the effectiveness of the reality depended on the presence of this particular sign.”¹¹⁶

Cameron acknowledges the presence in *DDC* of a dramatic christology and a conjunctive understanding of signs, but calls attention to what he regards as its failure to articulate a christological method of exegeting the Old Testament, on account of its generally anagogic approach to christology, signs and exegesis. As Cameron himself shows, however, key elements of Augustine’s dramatic, figurative perspective on the humanity of Christ appear in the work. It seems likely, therefore, that if Augustine had completed book 3 in 397, he would have considerably elaborated the christo-ecclesial hermeneutic discovered by him in the seven rules of Tyconius which were later inserted in the work at this point.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Cameron (1999), 86-7.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p.87.

¹¹⁷Cf. Cameron (1999), 93.

Cameron demonstrates that it was in the *Contra Faustum* (c. 398) that Augustine's new incarnational, hermeneutical perspective came to its first full flowering.¹¹⁸ This work was produced in response to a book by the Manichaean rhetor, Faustus, in which he attacked the inspiration of the Old Testament. In each section of *Contra Faustum* Augustine begins by quoting from his opponent and then offers the Catholic reply to the particular point of Manichaean doctrine under consideration. In particular, Augustine handles each Old Testament passage to which Faustus had objected, "showing its dramatic inner unity with the New Testament." This is based on the hidden presence of the New Testament in the Old by means of figurative, prophetic signs. Christ and the church are thus presented as the key to understanding the Old Testament which, in the dramatic perspective, "was necessary because it not only launched but sustained the understanding of Christ, supplying not one but both poles of what modern thought would call the hermeneutical circle."¹¹⁹

In this way, Augustine's *Contra Faustum* serves to complement and fill out the hermeneutics of the *DDC* by bringing to centre stage, in an anti-Manichaean context, the distinctive christo-ecclesial exegetical principle that would play so prominent a part in his anti-Donatist polemics which were about to commence.¹²⁰ In this way, the anagogic perspective, in which *caritas* (the *sine qua non* of the human ascent to God)

¹¹⁸For an introduction to this work, vd. Kirkpatrick (1999) (ed.), 355-56.

¹¹⁹Cameron (1999), 94.

¹²⁰For examples of the employment of the *totus Christus* hermeneutic in this work, cf. Cameron (1999), 95-6.

is the end of Scripture, is complemented by the dramatic, in which the end of Scripture is represented by *totus Christus*.¹²¹

This study of the hermeneutics controlling Augustine's deployment of Scripture against the Donatists, has prepared the way for a detailed study of his engagement with Scripture, in this polemical context, in respect of the marks of the church.

¹²¹“In a sense the Manichaean controversy prepared the ground for argument with the Donatists...The dispute with Manichaeism was over *whether* the Old Testament was to be received; with Donatism the controversy turned on *how* the Old Testament was to be received. In other words the dispute with the Manichaeans concerned canonicity; the dispute with Donatists concerned hermeneutics. And by a kind of organic growth the conclusions harvested in the former controversy germinated seeds of argument for the latter.” Cameron (1999), 98.

CHAPTER THREE

ECCLESIA TOTO ORBE DIFFUSA: AUGUSTINE'S EXEGESIS OF CATHOLICITY AGAINST THE DONATISTS

3.1 Introduction

The issue of the catholicity of the church was of major importance in the debate between Catholics and Donatists. It was in addressing this question, and particularly in his attempt to lay a deep and broad exegetical basis for the position that "the reality called Church was not something restricted to a little part of Africa but was in fact *ecclesia toto orbe diffusa*",¹ that Augustine made one of his most distinctive and lastingly influential contributions to the debate. In this, however, Augustine owed much to the work of Optatus bishop of Milevis (fl. c. 370), the first Catholic writer to engage the Donatists in sustained argument. Optatus defined the fundamental point at issue as being *quae, vel ubi, sit una ecclesia*?² and his answer was given with such clarity that Augustine "had but to broaden it out and illustrate it with his matchless genius. St. Augustine had only to fill in the picture which St. Optatus had already drawn in clear outline."³

¹Fahey (1992), 173.

²*Contra Donat.* 1.7 (SC 412.184).

³Vassall-Phillips (1917), ix.

Although preeminently the historian of the origins of Donatism, having collected and analyzed a large number of documents bearing on the origins of the split, Optatus was also the first to have sketched "une critique du donatisme au nom de la catholicité comme universalité."⁴ The general background here was the ever deepening division in the fourth-century North African church which the ecclesiology of Cyprian, with its tension-laden double emphasis on the unity of the whole church as held together by the union of the bishops on the one hand and on the exercise locally and equally of episcopal authority by each bishop on the other,⁵ was simply unable effectively to address. "It was no longer a question of a division in this or that local Church. Now a great whole area of the world Church finds itself divided. Every town and village has its representatives of the two rival communions. Both claim to be the one Church outside which there is no salvation. The question is simply this: Which is the true Church and which the counterfeit? *Ubi ecclesia?* Optatus realized that appeal had to be made to the Church beyond Africa."⁶

The argument developed by Optatus and set in contrast to the particularism of the Donatists was that catholicity is nothing other than the divinely willed world-wide geographical extension of the church and that since it was the Catholic Church in North Africa, and not the *pars Donati*, which was in communion with that extended church, she alone must be the representative, in Africa, of the universal church.⁷ In support of the concept of geographical catholicity, Optatus cites a number of biblical

⁴Congar, BA 28. 78.

⁵Vd. Cyprian, *De unit.* 5 (CCL 3. 252-3).

⁶Eno (1973), 681.

⁷Vd. Optatus, *Contra Donat.*, 2.1 (SC 412.236-44); cf. 3.9 (SC 413.62-4). Vd. also *ibid.*, 2.6 (SC 412.256); 6.3 (SC 413.168-74). Cf. Congar, BA 28. 74-80; Batiffol (1929), 96-100.

texts which Augustine will later pick up and interpret more fully and to the same end.⁸

The Donatists for their part also wished to affirm the catholicity of the church of Christ but by this they understood not, primarily, geographical extension but the plenitude of divine truth and of the sacraments as found in the fellowship of the truly faithful.⁹ Since these did not characterize the church of their opponents they had no legitimate claim to the title *ecclesia catholica*. It is not entirely clear to what extent these strictures were applied to churches furth of North Africa. The Catholic stance, well illustrated in Augustine, was that the Donatists had unchurched the entire world, bar themselves, but it has been argued that while this view was certainly present among the Donatist rank and file, Donatist writers did not in fact claim that their communion represented the whole church.¹⁰

In support of their "intensive" understanding of catholicity as sacramental plenitude, Donatists interpreted the etymology of *catholica* in such a way as to produce the sense of "la cohesion interne de ce qui fait bloc."¹¹ Augustine was prepared to argue the etymological case with them, pointing out that ὅλον translates into Latin as *totum* or *universum* and καθ'ὅλον as *secundum totum*, and he finds Cyprianic authority for this "extensive" position.¹² On this etymology the *Catholica* must be the church

⁸Pss. 2:8, 71:8, 49:1, 112:3, 95:1-3, 112:3 (SC 412.256, 413.168-74).

⁹"Donatistae... responderunt non catholicum nomen ex universitate gentium, sed ex plenitudine sacramentorum institutum." *Brev. Coll.* 3.3 (BA 32. 135); cf. *Ep.* 93.7 (CSEL 34/2. 468): "...non ex totius orbis communionem... sed ex observatione praeceptorum omnium divinarum atque omnium sacramentorum." For the Donatist view of catholicity, vd. Lamirande, "La conception donatiste de la catholicité," BA 32. 702-3 and Quinot, "Les donatistes sont-ils catholiques?" BA 30. 785.

¹⁰Vd. Tilley (1989), 324.

¹¹Quinot, BA 30. 785. Quinot provides a detailed discussion of καθ' ὅλον and its derivatives: *ibid.* 785-6.

¹²Vd. *Contra Gaudent.* 2.2.2 (BA 32. 642, 644).

spread throughout the world: *Ipsa enim est Ecclesia Catholica; unde καθ' ὅλον graece appellatur, quod per totum orbem terrarum diffunditur.*¹³

Important as the etymological argument was to the discussion, for Augustine it was preliminary and ancillary to the biblical exegesis which formed the real core of his case against the Donatists. The crucial issue for those who professed a shared submission to scriptural authority was the testimony of the Bible itself. This testimony throughout was to the church of the exalted Christ as his *corpus* drawn out from all the nations of the world through the proclamation of the Gospel in obedience to the commission of her Head.¹⁴ This church continues through all generations and has spread, or is in course of spreading, through the whole earth. The essential mark of the true church, then, affirms Augustine following the lead of Optatus, is "celle de la catholicité, et d'une catholicité conçue avant tout comme une extension à travers l'espace."¹⁵ *Ecclesia magna totus orbis est,*¹⁶ and Catholic Christians are justified in claiming, *Nos totus mundus sumus modo.*¹⁷ The main task, then, to which Augustine addressed himself in countering Donatist particularism was the disclosing through exegesis of the biblical foundation on which this idea of catholicity rested.¹⁸

Consideration will be given to key instances of Augustine's handling of texts drawn from both Testaments, beginning with the Old Testament which Augustine believed

¹³*Ep.* 52.1 (CSEL 34, 150). Cf. *Contra Gaudent.* 2.2 (BA 32. 642, 644); *In Ioh. Tr.* 118.4 (CCL 36. 657). Vd. Quinot, BA 30. 785.

¹⁴"Evangelium emissum totum orbem implese..." *Sermo* 77.5 (PL 38. 486).

¹⁵Pontet (1945), 444.

¹⁶*Enarr. in Ps.* 21.2.26 (CCL 38. 129).

¹⁷*Sermo* 113A. 5 (MA 1. 145-6).

¹⁸For general discussions of Augustine's notion of catholicity vd. e.g. Borgomeo (1972), 137-50; Pontet (1945), 419-46.

foretold the catholicity of the Christian church, with a clarity which only the perverse could dispute.

3.2 Old Testament Texts

3.2.1 The Pentateuch

a. Gen. 6-8¹⁹

This is the earliest passage in Genesis used by Augustine in support of his position on catholicity. As we shall see the symbolic potential of this account is, in fact, realised by Augustine in relation to various aspects of the nature of the church and of baptism. It was a text much used by the Donatists, exemplifying as Congar says their predilection "pour les images spatiales traduisant l'idée d'un lieu clos."²⁰ Interestingly, it first appears in the *Epistula ad Catholicos* as one of two examples (the other is the story of Gideon's fleece) of texts whose obscurity makes possible incompatible interpretations in support of either party and which therefore need to be understood in the light of clearer passages.²¹ If the outcome of the debate hinges on the interpretation of such texts, he asks, *quis erit finis?*²² Catholics are certainly sure that Noah's ark was a figure of the church.²³ But if the exegetical debate is conducted

¹⁹The narrative of the Flood and Noah's ark.

²⁰ Congar, BA 28.525; cf. *Ep.* 93.27 (CSEL 34/2. 472).

²¹"Sic et illa interim seponenda sunt, quae obscure posita et figurarum uelaminibus inuoluta et secundum nos et secundum illos possunt interpretari." *Ep. ad Cath.* 5.9 (BA 28. 524). The hermeneutical procedure of interpreting obscure texts in light of the clear was, as we shall see, one applied with great consistency in Augustine's anti-Donatist writings.

²²*Ep. ad Cath.* 5. 9 (BA 28. 524).

²³"nulli nostrum dubium est per arcam Noe... etiam ecclesiam fuisse figuratam..." *ibid.*

only on the basis of this sort of passage Catholic teaching will always be vulnerable to Donatist counter-interpretations.

Although in the treatises Augustine, for the most part, offers a polemical interpretation of Scripture according to the literal sense, here he is prepared already to illustrate the symbolic potential of this narrative for his purposes. In respect of the catholicity of the church he finds in the variety of animals aboard the ark "un symbole de l'universalité des nations accueillis par l'Église."²⁴ The reason why the ark contained so many kinds of animals was that thereby the future extension of the church *in omnibus gentibus* might be prefigured.²⁵ In the preached material Augustine enlarges on this figure. Noah represents Christ, the ark the world, and the animals all the nations: *Christus etiam figuratus est in Noe, et in illa arca orbis terrarum. Quare enim in arca inclusa sunt omnia animalia, nisi ut significarentur omnes gentes...?*²⁶ It would have been an easy matter for God the Creator to recreate every species of animal, reasons Augustine.²⁷ A little later in the same *Tractatus*, he repeats: *Hoc (the universality of the church) in Noe propter arcam figuratum est, in qua erant omnia animalia, quae significabant omnes gentes....*²⁸ Augustine is arguing that since God could as easily have recreated after the flood all the animals which might have been destroyed as he had created them originally, his sole purpose in preserving alive in the ark all the different species must have been to signify, figuratively, the future inclusion in the church of all the nations. This same

²⁴Bavaud, BA 29. 619.

²⁵*Ep. ad Cath.* 5.9 (BA 28. 524).

²⁶*In Ioh. Tr.* 9.11 (BA 71. 532).

²⁷"Rursus creare omne genus animalium: quando enim omnia non erant, nonne dixit: Producat terra? Et produxit terra; unde ergo tunc fecit, inde reficeret; verbo fecit, verbo reficeret...." *ibid.*

²⁸*In Ioh. Tr.* 9.14 (BA 71. 536).

interpretation which, as Berrouard says, "paraît propre à Augustin,"²⁹ appears also in *Enarr. in Ps.* 103(104), where it is used as the first of two proofs³⁰ in support of Augustine's spiritual interpretation of words in verse 11, *Potabunt omnes bestiae silvae*, with reference to the Gentiles.³¹ Among other uses, therefore, for the purposes of anti-Donatist polemic, the symbolism of the ark, illumined by the vision of Peter, provides Augustine with a colourful representation of the all-embracing catholicity of the Christian church.³²

b. Gen. 22: 16-18³³; 26:1-5³⁴; 28:10-15³⁵

If Augustine is prepared to admit the obscurity of the earlier passage in Genesis, it is a different matter when it comes to God's promises to the patriarchs, and especially the definitive promise made to Abraham, as found in Gen. 22: 16-18. New Testament references confirm their direct prophetic intent.³⁶ He frequently berates the Donatists

²⁹Berrouard, BA 71. 532, n.2.

³⁰"evidentissima duo...documenta," *Enarr. in Ps.* 103 (104).3.2 (CCL 40. 1499); the other is Peter's vision of the animals in Acts 10 which may well have triggered Augustine's interpretation of the animals in the ark with reference to *omnes gentes*. Vd. infra for discussion of this passage.

³¹"Bestiae silvae, gentes intelligemus; et multis hoc locis scriptura testatur.", *ibid.*

³²Cf. *In Ioh. Tr.* 6.2 (BA 71. 344-46); 120.2 (CCL 36. 661).

³³"Per memet ipsum iuravi dicit Dominus quia fecisti rem hanc et non pepercisti filio tuo unigenito benedicam tibi et multiplicabo semen tuum...possidebit semen tuum portas inimicorum suorum *et benedicentur in semine tuo omnes gentes (terrae)* quia oboedisti voci meae." The italicized words represent the key part of the promise for Augustine's purpose and the form in which he usually cites it, beginning with *Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.2.2 (BA 28. 212).

³⁴"... tibi enim et semini tuo dabo omnem terram hanc et statuam ius iurandum meum quod iuravi Abraham patri tuo et ampliabo semen tuum tamquam stellas caeli et dabo tibi et semini tuo omnem terram hanc, et benedicentur in semine tuo omnes gentes terrae, pro his quae obaudivit Abraham pater tuus vocem meam et servavit praecepta mea et iustitias meas et legitima mea." See *Ep. ad Cath.* 6.12 (BA 28. 532, 534); *Contra Cresc.* 4.61.74 (BA 31. 624).

³⁵"... ego sum dominus deus Abraham patris tui et deus Isaac, noli timere; terram in qua tu dormis super eam, tibi dabo eam et semini tuo. et erit semen tuum sicut harena terrae et multiplicabitur supra mare et in africanum et in aquilonem et ad orientem; et benedicentur in te omnes tribus terrae et in semine tuo. et ecce ego sum tecum, custodiens te in omni via quacumque ibis, et reducam te in terram hanc, quia non te derelinquam donec faciam omnia quae tecum locutus est." Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 6.13 (BA 28. 534); *Contra Cresc.* 4.61.74 (BA 31. 624); *Enarr. in Ps.* 44.22 (CCL 38. 508).

³⁶Hence the emphatic use made of them in the treatises.

for their failure to recognize in the ever-increasing extension of the church throughout the world the fulfilment of the promises made to the patriarchs.³⁷ These promises foretold with the utmost clarity that the true church would be identifiable as the geographically universal church. Donatist rejection of this catholicity - a constituent element of the promises given to the patriarchs - was itself evidence enough of the spurious nature of their own claim to be the one true church.

The importance of the first of these texts for Augustine is clear from the frequency with which he quotes and argues from it (beginning with the *Contra ep. Parmen.*), often explicitly linked with and explained by Gal. 3:15-16. In stated contrast to frequent Donatist citations of texts which are at best ambiguous in their meaning (and in implicit contrast with the ark symbolism) he offers it as one that *non eget interprete*.³⁸ Against Parmenian, Augustine comes to the defence of Tyconius whom he describes as *hominem quidem et acri ingenio praeditum et uberi eloquio, sed tamen Donatistam....*³⁹

Parmenian had refused to accept the testimonies of Scripture, whereas Tyconius, through alertness of mind, saw *ecclesiam dei toto terrarum orbe diffusam*, as had been foretold long before.⁴⁰ Tyconius may have been a Donatist but he understood, and sought to show, that human sin, however bad, including even the impiety of members of the church could not limit the promises of God or render void God-given faith *de*

³⁷Augustine holds it to be true that while Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ are often obscure those relating to the identity of the church are made *aperte*. Vd. e.g. *Enarr. in Ps. 30/2.2.9* (CCL 38. 209).

³⁸*Ep. ad Cath.* 19.51 (BA 28. 652).

³⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.1.1 (BA 28. 208).

⁴⁰*ibid.* On Parmenian and Tyconius, vd. Congar, BA 28. 70, n. 10.

*ecclesia futura diffundenda usque ad terminos orbis terrae, quae in promissis patrum retenta et nunc exhibita est.*⁴¹

This was a position which Tyconius argued effectively against his opponents in such a manner as to shut the mouths of his opponents *multis et magnis manifestis sanctarum scripturarum testimoniis*.⁴² He failed, however, to see the consequence of his own stance, namely that the Christians in Africa who belong *ad ecclesiam toto orbe diffusam*, cannot be the Donatists who have separated themselves from the communion and unity of the universal church, but the Catholics who have maintained the connection.⁴³ Parmenian and the other Donatists well understood this corollary but chose the path of stubborn resistance against *apertissimam veritatem, quam Tyconius asserebat*.⁴⁴

At first Parmenian had in mind to restore Tyconius to the right way, though later he was condemned by a Donatist council. His letter to Tyconius was written to chide him for saying that the church is *toto orbe diffusam*. It is against this charge that Augustine wishes primarily to defend Tyconius, on the basis of a professedly shared submission to biblical authority.⁴⁵ The truth is that while Tyconius is able to offer many weighty texts from Holy Scripture, Parmenian expects others to believe that the whole world (*totum orbem*), by which he means *Gallos et Hispanos et eorum socios*, are colleagues in crime of the African *traditores*, on the basis of his own mere word.

⁴¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.1.1 (BA 28. 208).

⁴²*ibid.* (BA 28. 210).

⁴³*ibid.*

⁴⁴*ibid.*

⁴⁵Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.14.33 (BA 30. 256, 258).

It is Tyconius who *profert...divini testamenti tonitrua*. This *testamentum* was established primarily in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the One who declares himself to be their God.⁴⁶

According to Augustine, the Donatists believed that the promises given to the patriarchs applied only to the Jews. Against that understanding, he sets the apostle Paul's explanation of the meaning of *semen Abrahae*, in whom all the nations are to be blessed: *Abrahae dictae sunt promissiones et semini eius. non dicit 'et seminibus' tamquam in multis, sed tamquam in uno 'et semini tuo', quod est Christus*⁴⁷ It is, therefore, in Christ that all the nations receive the blessing *tanta auctoritate promissum... tanta exhibitum veritate*, but this is contradicted by those (the Donatists) who nevertheless *se christianos dici volunt*.⁴⁸

At this point Augustine offers what appears to be a direct quotation from the *Epistula Parmeniani*, which he finds it polemically useful to place beside the foregoing texts since it serves to point up the contrast he is always keen to draw between Catholic submission to the authority of Scripture and alleged Donatist dependence on merely human authority: *legatione, ait, functi, quidam fidelissimi testes ad easdem provincias venerunt; deinde geminatu adventu sanctissimorum domini sacerdotum dilucide plenius ac verius esse publicatum*.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Exod. 3: 6, 15; *ibid*.

⁴⁷Gal. 3:16, *Contra. ep. Parmen.* 1.2.2 (BA 28. 212).

⁴⁸*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.2.2 (BA 28. 212-14).

⁴⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.2.2 (BA 28. 214).

The reference appears to be to the two occasions when the Donatists had their case heard (unsuccessfully) by bishops representing the universal church. The first was at the Council of Rome in 313 which comprised nineteen members, sixteen from Italy and three from Gaul under the presidency of Miltiades, himself a native African. The second was the Council of Arles (314)⁵⁰ which in addition to the Italian and Gallic bishops included a number from Spain and Britain.⁵¹ Augustine scornfully asks whether the Donatist representatives (*fideles testes*) had been able to declare any more than that, on account of the African *traditores*, *semen Abrahae, quod est Christus, non est permissum pervenire usque ad omnes gentes et ibi exaruit quo pervenerat*.⁵²

It was out of selfish concern not to lose his episcopal seat that led Parmenian to give less credence to Scripture than to his colleagues. Their anger at not being received into communion *illis partibus, ubi iam deus complebat quod promiserat patribus nostris*⁵³ led them to hurl calumnies at the holy bishops who justly rejected them and so to deceive *infirmos animos* that Donatists *iam credunt nuntiantibus non impleri quae promisit deus, et ideo ex partibus terrarum in quibus iam impletum erat periisse Abrahae semen, quod est Christus, et evacuatas promissiones dei*.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Vd. Ferguson (1996), 116.

⁵¹cf. the earlier reference to “Gallos et Hispanos et Italos et eorum socios, quos utique totum orbem vult (ie Parmenianus) intellegi”. Congar takes issue with the view of Monceaux that “geminato adventu” is a reference to deputations sent by the Donatists to the major churches of Italy, Gaul and Spain prior to the council of Rome. He points out that Monceaux offers no other reference to these deputations than this present passage and argues convincingly that it should be taken as a reference to the Donatist deputations to these two councils. They failed to convince their judges of the guilt of Caecilian. Vd. Congar, BA 28. 271, note 11.

⁵²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.2.2 (BA 28. 214).

⁵³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.2.3 (BA 28. 214).

⁵⁴*ibid.* (BA 28. 216).

Donatists fail to apply Romans 3:4⁵⁵ and John 8:44⁵⁶ to the evil report concerning the universal church brought by the Donatist messengers. By claiming that the words of these men are more worthy of belief than the witness of God they are seeking to destroy by their words the very *testamentum* which they boast of having saved from the flames.⁵⁷ What is even worse, they believe Christ has perished from the world where he has already begun to reign and, in their folly, they not only claim, '*Christiani sumus*', but '*nos soli sumus*'.⁵⁸ In place of the clear promise of God to Abraham: *in semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes*, the Donatists substitute their own (wicked) version: *in semine traditorum Afrorum maledicuntur omnes gentes*.⁵⁹

From the outset, Augustine appears to have been convinced that Genesis 22:18 was of such clarity as in itself to establish beyond question his doctrine of catholicity and to make ridiculous any continuing opposition to it. This conviction he appears to have held from the earliest stages of his involvement in the controversy. In the *Epistula ad Catholicos*, for example, a full quotation of Gen. 22:16-18 is introduced with the summons, *O Donatistae, Genesin legite*, and followed immediately with the confident challenge, *quid ad haec dicitis?*⁶⁰ Augustine proceeds to accuse the Donatists of imitating the perversity of the Jews in maintaining that only the literal descendants of Abraham are to be accounted *semen Abrahae*. At least the Jews lacked the advantage

⁵⁵"solus deus verax, omnis autem homo mendax."

⁵⁶"qui loquitur mendacium de suo loquitur."

⁵⁷"...et haec dicentes ipsum testamentum vos a flamma conservasse gloriimini, quod lingua delere conamini." *Contra. ep. Parmen.* 1.2.2 (BA 28. 214). Augustine is seeking to call attention to the irony whereby the Donatists condemn the universal church for alleged complicity in the surrendering of the Scriptures while they themselves undermine the authority of Scripture by their rejection of its clear witness. With special ref. to Gen. 22:18, cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 1.23.25 (BA 30. 176); *ibid.* 2.8.20 (BA 30. 244).

⁵⁸*ibid.*

⁵⁹*Contra. ep. Parmen.* 1.4.6 (BA 28, 222).

⁶⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 6.11 (BA 28, 530).

of having the apostle Paul read in their synagogues, which the Donatists cannot claim to be the case in their "conventicles". The true meaning of *semen Abrahae* is placed beyond doubt by Gal. 3:15-16.⁶¹ Here is God's own clear testimony regarding the *semen* in whom all the nations are blessed. The Donatists are asked to explain why they do with it the two things which Paul, in verse 15, says is not done even to a human *testamentum*. On the one hand they effectively annul it by denying its fulfilment *in omnibus gentibus*, and by regarding it as having been set aside in the nations where the *semen Abrahae* once lived. On the other they add to it (*superordinatis*) by alleging that Christ remains an heir only of that part of the earth where he can find a co-heir in Donatus.⁶²

Occasionally, Augustine can capitalise on Donatist recognition of the church's extension by claiming this to be acknowledgement, even if involuntary, of the fulfilment of the patriarchal promises. In his work against Cresconius, he first berates his opponent for daring, in his preference for the party of Donatus, to argue *inaniter contra evidentissimam veritatem* concerning the *semen Abrahae* spoken of in Gen. 22:18 and Gal. 3:15-16, whose *fecunditas tam copiosa promissa est, ut diceretur ei: sic erit semen tuum sicut stellae caeli et sicut arena maris quae non potest dinumerari*.⁶³ Cresconius quibbles that the world cannot be entirely in communion with the Catholic church, *quia vel adhuc multa sunt gentium barbararum, quae in Christum nondum crediderunt, vel sub nomine Christi haereses multae a*

⁶¹"Fratres, *inquit*, secundum hominem dico. tamen hominis confirmatum testamentum nemo irritum facit aut superordinat. Abrahae dictae sunt promissiones, etc." *ibid*.

⁶²"quare superordinatis dicendo in nullis terris heredem permanere Christum, nisi ubi potuerit coheredem habere Donatum?" *Ep. ad Cath. 6.11* (BA 28. 532).

⁶³*Contra Cresc. 3.63.70* (BA 31. 414).

*communione nostrae societatis alienae.*⁶⁴ But, Augustine retorts, this is to refuse to recognize the extent to which the barbarous nations have already been subjugated to the name of Christ, as well as the church's ongoing responsibility to preach the Gospel everywhere, as the Lord commanded, till the end come.

In the fourth book, however, Augustine draws attention to a passage from Cresconius⁶⁵ which he links with Cyprianic and biblical authority in such a way, he believes, as to undermine the Donatist position from the mouth of one of their own spokesmen. Cyprian had spoken of the church extending its branches in the world *copia ubertatis* and so eventually reaching *ad multas etiam barbaras gentes extra orbem Romanum.*⁶⁶ Augustine offers a quotation from Cresconius to prove that, effectively, he had come to believe the same thing. Cresconius had spoken of the whole pagan world as having converted to Christianity.⁶⁷

Not only is this in accord with Cyprian's understanding of church extension, more importantly it is a statement of the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:18.⁶⁸ That *omnes gentes* rather than *omnium gentium omnes homines* is used in the text points to the foreseen mixed character of the church until the final judgement. This promise was a *testamentum* which was repeated to Isaac and then to Jacob. The use of *supra mare* in the latter case is significant because it is often used in Scripture and usually means the West (*occidentalem partem*). If Cresconius had had the will to

⁶⁴ibid. (BA 31. 416).

⁶⁵quoted more fully here than in ibid. 3.65.73, 4.54.64.

⁶⁶Cf. Cyprian, *De unit.* 5 (CCL 3.252-3).

⁶⁷The quote is, "omitto gentium barbarum proprias religiones, Persarum ritus, sidera Chaldaeorum, Aegyptiorum superstitiones, deos magorum, ut omnia ista non sint, quia providentia dei in christianum nomen totus cotidie vertitur mundus." *Contra Cresc.* 4.61.74 (BA 31.622).

⁶⁸ibid.

agree with the testament which has been made public he would not have restricted his perspective to Africa.⁶⁹

For Augustine, then, Gen. 22:18 (with its twofold confirmation) was a key Old Testament text for proving the universality of the church. The passage is quoted with almost wearying frequency and in the process acquires a certain formulaic ring. It seemed to Augustine to give to the question at issue an answer of such incontrovertible clarity that its message simply had to get through to his hearers if they were exposed often enough to it. He quotes it more frequently than any other biblical text, something over forty times.⁷⁰

3.2.2. The Prophets

From the prophetic books Augustine quarries some twenty texts to contribute to the exegetical foundation of his theology of catholicity. With one notable exception,⁷¹ these texts are interpreted as literal prophecies, confirmed by the New Testament, of either Christ or the church. Their use is thus largely confined to the treatises where

⁶⁹"...non in solo africo remanisses." *Contra Cresc.* 4.61.74 (BA 31. 624).

⁷⁰Vd. also *Ep. ad Cath.* 25.75 (BA 28. 705); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.36.84 (BA 30. 336) , 2.14.33 (BA 30. 258), 2.31.71 (BA 30. 314), 2.36.83 (BA 30. 336), 2.65.146 (BA 30. 408), 3.50.62 (BA 30. 714); *Contra Cresc.* 2.36.45 (BA 31. 254); *Contra.Gaudent.* 1.15.16 (BA 32. 532, 534), 1.33.42 (BA 32. 608); *In Ioh. Tr.* 6.9 (BA 71. 360), 9.9 (BA 71. 526), 9.12 (BA 71. 532), 9.14 (BA 71. 536), 12.2 (BA 71. 632); *In Ioh. Ep.* 1.13 (SC 75.144); *Enarrs. in Ps.* 30/2.2.9 (CCL 38. 209) , 39.15 (CCL 38. 436), 71.19 (CCL 39. 984-5), 113.1.2 (CCL 40. 1636), 121.5 (CCL 40. 1805-6), 147.16 (CCL 40. 2150); *Sermo* 22.4 (CCL 41. 294), 46. 33 (CCL 41. 559), 47.22 (CCL 41. 596) , 51.4 (PL 38. 335), 63B. 2 (MA 1. 612), 88.10 (PL 38. 545), 91.1 (PL 38. 567), 105.9 (PL 38. 622) , 113A.10 (MA 1. 150), 129. 5 (PL 38. 722), 130.3 (PL 38. 727), 168.1 (PL 38. 911), 295.5 (PL 38. 1351), 307.3 (PL 38. 1407) ; *Ep.* 53.1 (CSEL 34/2.152-3; 88.11 (CSEL 34/2.418); 89.4 (CSEL 34/2. 421), 93. 15, 51 (CSEL 34/2. 459, 495); 105.14 (CSEL 34/2. 605); 199.40 (CSEL 57/2. 279); 208.6 (CSEL 57/2. 346). In the new sermons discovered by Dolbeau there are two references to Gen. 22:18 in the context of attacks on the Donatists: *Sermones* 360A.2 (Dolbeau [1996], 233); 159B.16 (Dolbeau[1996], 294).

⁷¹Dan. 2:34-5. Vd. infra.

Augustine is happy to restrict himself to a small number of chosen *testimonia*.

Coming to the prophets in the *florilegium* in the *Epistula ad Catholicos* he exclaims, *quam multa et quam manifesta sunt testimonia ecclesiae per omnes gentes toto terrarum orbe diffusae!*⁷² He immediately adds, *unde pauca commemorabo, plura relinquens otio diligentiae cum dei timore legentibus.*⁷³ Sparing as is his citation of these texts, Augustine is, however, supremely confident in the clarity with which those he uses shed light on the point at issue. These texts are interpreted within the framework of *totus Christus*. Sometimes it is of Christ, sometimes of the church which they speak, but in either case they are held to establish the universality of the church.

a. Isa. 11: 9-10.⁷⁴

The passage, which speaks of the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth as the waters fill the sea, is given a christological interpretation by Augustine. By the *radix Iesse* he understands Christ as born of the seed of David according to the flesh. Doubtless with Rom. 15:12 in mind, where Paul finds the same christological significance in the text, he can confidently claim that to reject his interpretation is to be at odds with the apostle Paul.⁷⁵

b. Isa. 27:6⁷⁶

⁷²*Ep. ad Cath.* 7.15 (BA 28. 538).

⁷³*ibid.*

⁷⁴"Repleta est, *inquit*, universa terra, ut cognoscant dominum, ut aqua multa operiat mare. et erit in illa die radix Iesse et qui exurget principium habere in nationes, in eum gentes sperabunt." *Ep. ad Cath.* 28.7.15 (BA 28.538).

⁷⁵*ibid.*

⁷⁶"Germinabit et florescet Israhel et replebitur orbis terrarum fructu eius." *ibid.*

This text, too, is given christological significance both by linking it with the promises given to the patriarchs and with reference to its (infallible) apostolic interpretation.⁷⁷

This interpretation finds further confirmation in the genealogy traced by the evangelist⁷⁸ which demonstrates Christ to be the son of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. To deny what Isaiah affirms in this verse necessarily involves a prior rejection of the witness of the gospel.

c. Isa. 42:1-4;⁷⁹ Isa. 43:4-5⁸⁰

In the *Epistula ad Catholicos* where these two texts are cited together, Isa. 43: 4-5 is quoted first.⁸¹ It is interpreted in the light of Apoc. 22:13 where Christ claims to be *primus et novissimus*.⁸² Corresponding to the Apocalypse's *novissimus*, is Isaiah's *et in his quae advenient ego sum* but for Augustine the similarity between the two texts is sufficient to justify a christological interpretation of the latter. Christ is thus the A and the Ω⁸³ whom the nations and the ends of the earth will recognize and reverence.

⁷⁷"Israhel nempe filius fuit Isaac, nepos Abraham, cui promissum est quod in semine eius benedicerentur omnes gentes, quod semen Christum interpretatur apostolus." *ibid.* Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3.16.

⁷⁸Cf. Matt. 1:1-17.

⁷⁹Jacob puer meus, suscipiam illum. Israhel electus, suscepit eum anima mea. dedi spiritum meum in illum: iudicium gentibus proferet. non clamabit neque cessabit neque audietur foris vox eius. harundinem quassatam non confringet et linum fumigans non extinguet, sed cum veritate proferet iudicium. refulgebit et non confringetur, donec ponat in terra iudicium, et in nomine eius gentes sperabunt." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.15 (BA 28. 540).

⁸⁰"ego deus primus et in his quae advenient ego sum. viderunt gentes et timuerunt fines terrae." *ibid.*

⁸¹*ibid.*

⁸²"ego A et Ω primus et novissimus principium et finis." *ibid.*

⁸³"quae sunt litterae in signo Christi omnibus notae." *ibid.*

With this text is connected Isa. 42: 1-4,⁸⁴ whose christological reference is made entirely clear in the gospel.⁸⁵ Whoever, therefore, accepts the testimony of Scripture should *cum gentibus* hope in Christ and not withdraw *ab unitate gentium* whose hope he is. Anyone who has already withdrawn should return, since the universal Catholic church is the one locus of salvation.⁸⁶

Other Isaianic texts similarly accorded, in the treatises, a christological interpretation with reference to ecclesial universality are Isa. 49: 5-6,⁸⁷ 8,⁸⁸ 12-17,⁸⁹ 18-23;⁹⁰ 51: 4-5;⁹¹ 52: 9-10.⁹²

Augustine held that these texts, in themselves and as interpreted in light of the New Testament, made unmistakably clear the biblical teaching on the universality of the church.⁹³ He believed, however, that the remaining chapters of Isaiah, in which he

⁸⁴Introduced, with an uncharacteristic Augustinian lapse, by "item paulo post." For "post" read "prius." *ibid.*

⁸⁵"hoc testimonium de Christo intellegendum et in evangelio positum est." *ibid.* Cf. Matt. 12: 17-21.

⁸⁶*ibid.*

⁸⁷"et nunc sic dicit dominus, qui finxit me in utero servum sibi, ut congregam Iacob et Israhel ad eum. appropinquabo illum et honorabor coram domino et deus meus erit mihi virtus. et dixit mihi: maximum tibi erit hoc, vocari te puerum meum, ut constituas tribus Iacob et prolem Israhel convertas. et posui te in testamentum generis, in lucem gentium, ut sis salus usque ad fines terrae." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.16 (BA 28.540-2).

⁸⁸"Sic dicit dominus Israhel: tempore optissimo exaudivi te et in die salutis adiuvisti te. dedi te in testamentum gentium, ut incolas terram et possideas hereditatem deserti." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.16 (BA 28.542).

⁸⁹"Ecce isti a longinquo venient, hi autem ab aquilone et mari, alii autem ex terra Persarum... et brevi aedificaberis ab his a quibus eversa es, et qui desolaverunt te discedent a te." *ibid.*

⁹⁰"Circumspice ubique oculis tuis et vide universos... sic dicit dominus: ecce tollam in nationes manus meas et in insulas signum meum et adducam filios tuos in sinu; filias etiam tuas super umeros portabunt, et erunt reges educatores vestri, quae autem principales sunt nutrices vestrae; super terram declinantes faciem deprecabuntur te et vestigia pedum tuorum elingent, et scies quoniam ego dominus, nec erubesces." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.16 (BA 28.542-4).

⁹¹"Audite me, audite populus meus, reges quoque intendite mihi, quoniam lex a me prodiet et iudicium meum in lucem gentibus. appropinquat mature iustitia mea et salutare meum proficiscetur et in brachio meo gentes salvantur." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.16 (BA 28.544).

⁹²"Erumpant laetitia simul deserta Hierusalem, quoniam misertus est eius et eruit Hierusalem, et patefaciet dominus brachium suum sanctum in conspectu universarum gentium, et videbunt omnes nationes usque ad ultima terrae salutem quae a deo est." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.16 (BA 28.544-6).

⁹³Regarding them, he asks, "quis tam surdus, quis tam demens, quis tam mente caecus his tam

found clear references to the church as the bride of Christ, yielded even stronger testimony to this truth.⁹⁴

d. Isa. 53:11-12⁹⁵; 54:1-5⁹⁶; 62:1-4⁹⁷

Isaiah 53 provides a detailed description of the *sponsus* of the church. While the Jews have nothing to say about its many features, the Donatists at least agree that the chapter, including vv.11-12, contain prophecies *de domino nostro Iesu Christo*. But when it is asked why the church's *sponsus* was so abased as to be delivered up to death and ranked with malefactors, only the wilfully obtuse could fail to perceive the reason as given in the text by Isaiah.⁹⁸ If, therefore, it was in order that he might possess a multitude as his inheritance that the Lord Jesus Christ was delivered to

evidentibus testimoniis obloquatur, nisi qui nescit quid loquatur?" *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.16 (BA 28. 546).

⁹⁴"sed ad manifestiora veniamus. certe sacratissimas nuptias in scripturis novimus sponsum et sponsam Christum et ecclesiam." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.17 (BA 28. 546). Isaiah depicts both "ne forte in eorum aliquo erremus, quod cui acciderit utrumque amittit." The witness of Paul to this union is that "erunt duo in carne una (Eph. 5:31)." Ibid. On the importance of this text for Augustine's ecclesiology and anti-Donatist polemic, vd. infra.

⁹⁵"Peccata eorum ipse portabit; ideo <ipse> hereditate possidebit multos et fortium partietur spolia. propter quod tradita est in mortem anima eius et inter iniquos deputatus est et ipse peccata multorum sustinuit et propter iniquitates nostras traditus est." Cited at *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.17 (BA 28. 546).

⁹⁶"Laetare, sterilis, quae non paris, erumpe et exclama quae non parturis, quoniam multi filii desertae magis quam eius quae habet virum. dixit enim dominus: dilata locum tabernaculi tui et aularum tuarum, fige - noli parcere - , longos fac funiculos tuos et palos tuos confirma, adhuc in dextram et in sinistram extende. et semen tuum gentes possidebit et civitates desertas inhabitabis. ne timeas, quoniam praevaleris, neque vereris quod detestabilis fueris. confusionem aeternam oblivisceris, ignominiae viduitatis tuae non eris memor. quoniam ego dominus qui facio te, dominus nomen illi, et qui liberavit te deus Israhel universae terrae vocabitur." Cited at *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.19 (BA 28. 550).

⁹⁷"Propter Sion non tacebo et propter Hierusalem non quiescam, donec prodeat sicut lux iustitia mea. salvatio autem mea sicut facula ardebit et videbunt omnes gentes iustitiam tuam et reges honorem tuum. et vocabit te nomine tuo novo quod dominus vocabit illud, et eris corona pulchritudinis in conspectu domini et diadema regni in manu dei tui, et iam non vocaberis derelicta et terra tua non vocabitur deserta. tu enim vocaberis voluntas mea et terra tua orbis terrarum." Cited at *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.19 (BA 28. 550-552).

⁹⁸"Ideo <ipse> hereditate possidebit multos et fortium partietur spolia. propter quod tradita est in mortem anima eius et inter iniquos deputatus est." *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.19 (BA 28. 550-52).

death, the Donatists must be asked how they can possibly boast of the smallness of their numbers.⁹⁹

The sequel in Isaiah makes all clear, for if Isa. 53 describes the *sponsus* of the church, the following chapters depict the *sponsa* herself who is to be known *in orbe terrarum*.

That Isa. 54:1 is a prophecy of the church is proved by Paul's citation of the text.¹⁰⁰

The *multi filii desertae* are to be identified with the *multos* of Isa. 53:12 who constitute God's heritage - his church. Augustine proceeds to refute the Donatist exegesis of Isa. 54:1 by which it is made to refer to their church. The very emphasis on numbers (*multos, multi*) in the text makes Donatist pride in the smallness of their communion look foolish. Moreover, by the one *quae habet virum* is clearly meant the synagogue of the Jews who have received the Law as their husband. The ground thus cleared, a basis is laid for passing judgement on the validity of the respective appropriations by Donatists and Catholics of this text¹⁰¹. If the Donatists were to compare the size of their own geographically restricted communion with the numbers of Jews dispersed *per omnes terras*, they would observe *quam sint in illorum comparatione paucissimi*¹⁰² and consequently the inadmissibility of applying Isa. 54:1 to themselves. Conversely, if they would but compare with the Jews the numbers of Christians dispersed *per omnes gentes*, whose communion the Donatists reject, they would perceive how comparatively few are the former, *et tandem aliquando*

⁹⁹"quid est, haeretici, quod de paucitate gloriamini, si propterea dominus noster Iesus Christus traditus est ad mortem, ut hereditate multos possideret?" *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.17 (BA 28. 548).

¹⁰⁰Gal. 4. 27. *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.18 (BA 28. 548).

¹⁰¹"hinc iam potest diiudicari quod dicimus." *ibid.*

¹⁰²*ibid.*

*intellegant in ecclesia catholica toto orbe diffusa istam prophetiam esse completam.*¹⁰³

For Augustine, therefore, Isa. 54:1 is a clear prophecy of the universal church of Christ.¹⁰⁴ The extent of that universality is clarified in the immediately following verses. The church is commanded to extend her cords (*funiculos*): *donec deus eius Israhel universae terrae vocetur.*¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Isa. 62:1-4 is found to yield a further helpful reference to the church of Christ and its world-wide expansion. Later in *Ep. ad Cath.* Augustine brings these two texts together as exegetical proof that the Christian God who is God of the whole earth also possesses a church which is as wide as the earth.¹⁰⁶

Augustine concludes his survey of Isaianic texts in the *Ep. ad Cath.* by underlining the great number and clarity of the relevant passages,¹⁰⁷ many more of which could have been adduced. To reject their testimony is to offer opposition not to a man but *spiritui dei et evidentissimae veritati*. The trouble with the Donatists is that, although they wish to boast of the Christian name, they are in truth envious of the glory of

¹⁰³*Ep. ad Cath.* 7.18 (BA 28. 550).

¹⁰⁴Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 14.36 (BA 28. 606-8), 24.70 (BA 28. 692); *Enarr. in Ps.* 134.26 (CCL 40. 1956); *Ep.* 196.12 (CSEL 57/2.4. 226).

¹⁰⁵*Ep. ad Cath.* 7.18 (BA 28. 550). For further refs. to Isa. 54:1-4 in this connection vd. *Contra Cresc.* 3.64.72 (BA 31. 420); *Enarrs. in Ps.* 46.9 (CCL 38. 534), 101.2.6-7 (CCL 40. 1441-2), 112.8 (CCL 40. 1634); *Contra Gaudent.* 1.33.42 (BA 32. 608); *Sermo* 37.6 (CCL 41. 453), 293B.4 (MA 1.230-1); *Epp.* 196.12 (CSEL 57/2/4. 226), 105.15 (CSEL 34/2/2. 608), 93.29 (CSEL 34/2/2. 474).

¹⁰⁶*Ep. ad Cath.* 24.70 (BA 28. 692). Cf. Augustine's handling of Mal. 1:10-11. He claims that the Donatists are able to recognize Christ in v.10 but not the church in v.11. Vd. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.86.191 (BA 30.458), *Contra Cresc.* 3.64.72 (BA 31.418). Cf. *Enarr. In Ps.* 106.13 (CCL 40.1579).

¹⁰⁷"quid dici manifestius adhuc exigendum est? ecce ex uno profeta quam multa, quam clara!" *Ep. ad Cath.* 7.19 (BA 28. 552).

Christ himself.¹⁰⁸ This is what explains their unwillingness to believe that these prophecies have been fulfilled, demonstrable as it is that they have been.¹⁰⁹

e. Dan. 2: 34-35¹¹⁰

Judging by the number of times he cites it, it is clear that Augustine saw this as a key text for establishing the doctrine of the universality of the church. The great majority of quotations/allusions (some seventeen in all) occur in the preached material where it receives figurative exegesis.¹¹¹ Significantly, the anti-Donatist treatises contain only four brief references to this text and in none of them is it quoted directly.¹¹²

Traditional Christian spiritual exegesis of this text had been distinctively christological, and Augustine stands squarely in this tradition. Earlier exegesis had, however, concentrated on educing from the phrase *sine manibus* proof of the virginal birth of Christ, understood as the *lapis*.¹¹³ Augustine's exegesis reflects this tradition¹¹⁴ but he also takes interpretation of the text in new directions. The earlier tradition, for

¹⁰⁸"...ab eis, qui nomine christiano gloriari volunt, gloriae Christi ipsius invidetur ..." *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*

¹¹⁰V. 34: "Vidi et ecce lapis abscissus de monte sine manibus..." *Sermo* 45.6 (PL 38.266); v.35: "...et crevit lapis ille, et factus est mons magnus, et implevit universam faciem terrae." *In Ioh. Tr.* 4.4 (BA 71.260).

¹¹¹Lauras comments: "... le commentaire de ce texte ou son utilisation est bien un fait propre à la predication..." Lauras (1954), 667. In this article Lauras offers a helpful analysis of Augustine's use of Dan. 2:34-35 in his sermons. In his references, he overlooks *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.70.158 (cf. following footnote).

¹¹²The refs. are: *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.27 (BA 28. 464); *Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.629); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.38.91 (BA 30.350), 2.70.158 (BA 30.416).

¹¹³Cf. e.g. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 3.21.7 (SC 34. 365-6); Origen, *In Exodum*, 6.12 (SC 321. 199-200); Ambrosiaster, *In Romanos* 9.35 (PL 17. 142).

¹¹⁴"Et quare *sine manibus*? Quia sine opere virili Virgo peperit Christum." *In Ioh. Tr.* 4.4 (BA 71. 260); or, in a less cryptic and somewhat more daring attempt to show how the teaching derives from the text: "... praeciditur sine manibus, sine opere humano, quia sine amplexu maritali de virgine exortus est." *In Ioh. Tr.* 9.15 (BA 71. 538).

one thing, had tended to understand the *mons* from which the stone was cut as symbolic of human nature as that from which the body of Christ was taken¹¹⁵ while Augustine identifies it rather with the Jewish nation.¹¹⁶

Augustine also stresses the smallness, at first, of the *lapis*, representing the lowliness of Christ during his earthly life. This is what explains why the Jews failed to recognize his true identity and so stumbled over him in the way spoken of in Scripture.¹¹⁷ It was a failure for which the very smallness of the stone at this stage of salvation history provides at least some excuse¹¹⁸ but the situation is now radically altered in that Daniel's prophecy regarding it has now been fulfilled in respect both of the symbolism of its striking the statue of Nebuchadnezzar and of itself becoming a *mons magnus*.¹¹⁹ Christ the *lapis* hewn without hands has broken all the kingdoms of the earth, identified by Augustine as *regna idolorum, regna daemoniorum*.¹²⁰ It is in the church that the *lapis* has grown and *implevit universam terram* - a fulfilment which is now

¹¹⁵Cf. Origen, *In Exod.* 6.12 (SC 321.199-200): "Sine manibus, id est absque opere hominum, de monte humanae naturae et substantia carnis excisum."

¹¹⁶"Christus ante Iudaeos iam praecisus erat de monte. Montem regnum vult intelligi Iudaeorum." *In Ioh.* 4.4 (BA 71. 260). Cf. *In Ioh. Tr.* 9.15 (BA 71. 538); *Sermo* 45.6 (CCL 41. 521-2); *Sermo* 147A.4 (MA 1. 53). In this last passage Augustine refers to "the nation of the Jews which was also a mountain because it has the kingdom." The present tense is surprising. Hill takes the meaning to be that "it is the nation to which the kingdom has been promised, the nation of the messianic king," Rotelle, III/4, 456, n.14, but this does not adequately explain the tense.

¹¹⁷"Quia ergo nondum creverat, offenderunt in illum tanquam in lapidem, et factum est in eis quod scriptum est: *Qui ceciderit super lapidem istum conquassabitur; et super quos ceciderit lapis ille, conteret eos.*" Lk. 20:18. *In Ioh.* 4.4 (BA 71. 260). Cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 3.6 (SC 75. 196); *Enarr. in Ps.* 45.12 (CCL 38. 526); *Sermo* 91.1 (PI. 38. 567); *Sermo* 92.2 (PL 38. 573).

¹¹⁸"Sed ignoscendum est Iudaeis, quia offenderunt in lapidem qui nondum creverat." *In Ioh. Tr.* 4.4 (BA 71. 262). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 45.12 (CCL 38. 526), *In Ioh. Ep.* 3.6 (SC 75. 196).

¹¹⁹*Enarr. in Ps.* 45.12 (CCL 38. 526).

¹²⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 98. 14 (CCL 39. 1391). Augustine adds: "Regnabat Saturnus in multis hominibus; ubi est regnum eius? Regnabat Mercurius in multis hominibus; ubi est regnum eius? Fractum est, redacti sunt illi in regnum Christi, in quibus ille regnabat. Regnum Caelestis quale erat Carthagini! Ubi nunc est regnum Caelestis? Lapis ille fregit omnia regna terrarum, lapis praecisus de monte sine manibus." *ibid.* (CCL 39. 1391-2). Cf. *Ep.* 105.15 (CSEL 34.2/2. 607); *Ep.* 164.16 (CSEL 44.2/3. 536).

clearly evident.¹²¹ Whatever part of the world one happens to live in there is no need to journey to this mountain - the mountain has already *venit ad nos*.¹²²

Thus exegeted, Dan. 2:34-35 serves Augustine's purposes well. On the one hand it provides an effective "proof-text" for his *totus Christus* ecclesiology, supplying him, as Lauras says, with "un nouveau moyen de marquer l'union intime entre le Christ et l'Église."¹²³ For Augustine Christ is the true *mons*,¹²⁴ but the term can also be used appropriately of the church,¹²⁵ and this text helps to elucidate the essential, organic relationship between the two.¹²⁶ It also provides a basis for calling attention to serious Donatist deficiencies in respect of spiritual vision and worship. The Jews might be forgiven for tripping over a stone that was relatively difficult to see. But those *qui negant ecclesiam toto orbe diffusam*, are like those who stumble over the mountain itself.¹²⁷ For Donatist blindness in regard to the mountain there can be no excuse - on the evidence of this passage alone. The mountain, it states, fills *universam terram* - not *universam Africam*!¹²⁸

¹²¹"... non enim tenuerat regnum Iudaeorum omnes gentes. At vero regnum Christi universum orbem terrarum cernimus occupare." *In Ioh. Tr.* 9.15 (BA 71. 538). Cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 1.13 (SC 75. 144, 146); *Sermo* 45.7 (CCL 41. 522-23); *Enarrs. in Ps.* 45.12 (CCL 38. 526), *Ps.* 98.14 (CCL 39. 1391).

¹²²*Enarr. in Ps.* 47.2 (CCL 38. 539).

¹²³*art. cit.*, 669.

¹²⁴e.g., *Enarr. in Ps.* 67. 22-23 (CCL 39. 885-87); *Sermo* 89.2 (PL 38. 554-55).

¹²⁵e.g. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 42.4 (CCL 38. 476), 57.9 (CCL 39. 716).

¹²⁶"Voici que la prophétie de Daniel prend tout son sens: l'Église, cette montagne immense, vient toute entière de cette pierre qui est le Christ, ne forme qu'une seule réalité avec elle: 'Ergo qualem montem habemus Christum, Ecclesiam habemus, Ecclesiam amemus.'" Lauras, *art. cit.*, 669; *Sermo* 45.7 (CCL 41. 522-23).

¹²⁷*In Ioh. Tr.* 4.4 (BA 71. 262). "Caeci Iudaei non viderunt humilem lapidem; quanta caecitas est non videre montem?" *loc.cit.* Cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 2.2 (SC 75. 156); *Enarr. in Ps.* 45.12 (CCL 38. 526).

¹²⁸*Sermo* 45.7 (CCL 41. 522-23). Cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 1.13 (SC 75. 144). In the latter passage Augustine links this text with Isa. 2:2 which prophesies the establishing of the "mons domus Domini" on the top of the mountains (ie. as the highest of the mountains) and that "congregabuntur ad eum omnes gentes." Cf. *In Ioh. Tr.* 6.9 (BA 71.360). It is this link with his figurative handling of Dan. 2:34-5 which probably explains why Isa. 2:2 is not cited in the treatises.

As in connection with Donatist rejection of other prophetic Scriptures, Augustine finds the explanation of this blindness in the hatred which they have for Christ and his church. Spiritual blindness produces, as its inevitable accompaniment, unspiritual worship. The *mons magnus* of Dan. 2 is the *mons sanctus* of Ps. 3.4 where the Psalmist discovered that his prayer was heard. On this mountain alone, not in the Donatist communion, lies hidden the church and truth of Christ.¹²⁹

3.2.3 The Psalms

Augustine finds extensive exegetical support for his notion of catholicity in the book of Psalms. In the dogmatic treatises, texts are used whose christo-ecclesial significance is held to be established by their fulfilment in the New Testament.

Augustine is economical in his deployment of these texts.¹³⁰ In the figurative exegesis of the preached material, the Psalms figure prominently as a key biblical resource for understanding the geographical extension of the church. As indicated in the introduction, it is in his expositions of the Psalms that Augustine makes most use of the *totus Christus* hermeneutical procedure. In this section, the main lines of Augustine's use of the Psalms for this purpose are set out through the provision of major examples of his varied approach.

a. Psalm 2:7-8¹³¹

¹²⁹*Enarr. in Ps.* 57.9 (CCL 39. 716).

¹³⁰Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.20 (BA 28. 552): "Iam pauca de psalmis audiamus tanto ante cantata et nunc iam compleri cum magno gaudio videamus."

¹³¹"Dominus dixit ad me: filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te. postula a me et dabo tibi gentes

This Psalm, as one whose prophetic fulfilment in Christ and the church is affirmed in the New Testament, was grist to Augustine's anti-Donatist mill. It was also used, however, by the Donatists themselves. In the *Contra litt. Petil.*, this *primus Davidicus psalmus*¹³² is cited in its entirety as part of an extended quotation from the pastoral letter of Petilian.¹³³ Petilian's use of the Psalm relates to his condemnation of Catholic support for the abuse of civil power in the persecution of the Donatists. For Augustine, on the other hand, the real importance of the Psalm, in the context of the Donatist controversy, lay in its christological and ecclesiologically universalist significance. From this perspective, he calls attention to the irony involved in Donatist use of this Psalm in support of their position and refers to Petilian's effrontery in citing it.¹³⁴

Donatists refuse to recognize the charter (*lex*) of the inheritance (the church of Christ) which resounds in the books held in common by Catholics and Donatists (*quae de communibus codicibus personat*), in the prophecy of Ps. 2:8.¹³⁵ Donatist invective warns Catholics of coming judgement on them as those *qui sanctissimam legem dei iudicis incendisti*. But in light of Ps. 2:8, the point that ought to have struck them is the ridiculous nature of the allegation that Catholics have destroyed the Lord's testament, when they are, in fact, established in the heritage which is defined by that

hereditatem tuam et possessionem tuam fines terrae." *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.20 (BA 28. 552).

¹³²*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.92.202 (BA 30.474).

¹³³*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.92.202 (BA 30. 468-476).

¹³⁴"et prius illud ipsum (*Psa.* 2), quod Petilianus in epistula sua quo ore posuerit nescio, audiant et iudicent." *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.20 (BA 28. 552). As Quinot rightly says, "Augustin n'oubliera pas cette citation universaliste de Petilianus." BA 30. 473, n. 3.

¹³⁵*Contra litt. Petil.* 1.13.14 (BA 30. 158). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 3.50.62 (BA 30. 714).

testament (*quae illo testamento conscripta est*).¹³⁶ In the case of the Donatists themselves, the big surprise is that they have preserved the testament and lost the inheritance.¹³⁷

Donatists dismiss as *Macarii partem*,¹³⁸ *universum orbem terrarum christiana societate gaudentem*,¹³⁹ by way of response to the Catholic charge that they (the Donatists) are *de parte Donati*.¹⁴⁰ To this the world-wide church¹⁴¹ replies, *Macarium istum, de cuius parte nos dicitis, omnino non novimus*, a claim which the Donatists could scarcely make with regard to Donatus.¹⁴² Augustine makes ironical play with the etymology of the Greek original of Macarius. The Greek μακάριος translates into Latin as *beatus*. In that sense, Catholics plainly are *de parte Macarii*, since their allegiance is to Christ, the supremely blessed one.¹⁴³ Donatists seek to apply to the inheritance of this Macarius (Christ) words spoken by Solomon against the wicked: *pereat pars eorum a terra*.¹⁴⁴ When they quote Ps. 2:8 (along with Ps. 21(22):28) and claim that this promise has already perished from the earth, it becomes clear that they want to apply to the inheritance of Christ that which had been prophesied *de sorte...impiorum*.¹⁴⁵ The truth is that the inheritance of Christ remains and continues to grow, while those who speak thus are themselves perishing. The principle

¹³⁶*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.8.20 (BA 30. 242).

¹³⁷"Vos autem mirum est testamentum servasse et hereditatem perdidisse." *ibid.*

¹³⁸A reference to one of the two imperial commissioners "who had been sent to Africa to resolve the dispute and who had acquired a reputation for partiality in the interest of the Catholics." Bonner (1963), 243.

¹³⁹*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.39.94 (BA 30. 354).

¹⁴⁰*ibid.*

¹⁴¹"...universum semen Abrahae ab universa terra..." *ibid.*

¹⁴²*ibid.*

¹⁴³"Quid enim," he asks, "est Christo beatius cuius sumus, ad quem commemorantur et convertuntur universi fines terrae et in cuius conspectu adorant universae patriae gentium?" *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.39.94 (BA 30.356,358). Cf. Ps. 21(22):28, on which *vd. infra*.

¹⁴⁴Prov. 2:22. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.39.94 (BA 30. 358).

¹⁴⁵*ibid.*

operating here is that *plus valet praedictio prophetarum quam maledictio pseudoprophetarum*.¹⁴⁶

b. Psalm 18(19): 4-6¹⁴⁷

That the future universality of the church finds intimation in this passage is rendered incontrovertible for Augustine by its Pauline application to preachers of the New Testament.¹⁴⁸ In verse four he discovers a prophecy of the apostolic tongue-speaking which resulted from the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.¹⁴⁹ The following verse (v5) makes clear that the Gospel would spread to all the languages of the nations and that the body of Christ would make it resound (*personaturum*) *per totum orbem terrarum linguis omnibus*.¹⁵⁰ This is a verse which effectively restrains the Donatists in their endeavour to destroy, by contradiction, all the prophetic witnesses to the

¹⁴⁶Ibid. The claim that it was Catholics and not Donatists who possessed the last will and testament of the Lord's inheritance, as found in Ps. 2:7, was one expressed by Augustine also from the pulpit. Cf. *In Ioh. Tr.* 2.13 (BA 71.196-98), 6.9 (BA 71.360); *In Ioh. Ep.* 3.7 (SC 75.198-200). Cf. *Sermones* 358.2 (PL 39.1586-87) 359.2-4 (PL 39.1591-93), both preached in 411, the year of the Conference of Carthage. The most rhetorically dramatic presentation of the theme of "testamentum" from Ps. 2:7-8, is found in *Enarr. in Ps.* 21(22)/2.30 (CCL 38.131-32).

¹⁴⁷v.4: "Non sunt loquelae neque sermones quorum non audiantur voces eorum" *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.32.74 (BA 30. 320); v.5: "in omnem terram exiit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum" *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.21 (BA 28. 554); v.6: "In sole posuit tabernaculum suum et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam" *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.32.74 (BA 30. 320).

¹⁴⁸v.5 is cited at Rom. 10:18. Augustine asks, "Nonne apostolus de praedicatoribus novi testamenti dictum exposuit quod scriptum est...?" *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.21 (BA 28. 554).

¹⁴⁹Vd., Acts 2. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.32.74 (BA 30.320). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 18.2.5 (CCL 38. 108-9); *Enarr. in Ps.* 32.11/2.7 (CCL 38.260); *Sermo* 46.24 (CCL 41.552); *Sermo* 59.1 (PL 38.400). Elsewhere, Augustine speaks of Pentecost as representing the reversal of the judgement of Babel. *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.11 (CCL 39.665). The question requiring answer by the Donatists is how the languages of the nations "concordarunt, et una lingua Africae discordavit." *In Ioh. Tr.* 6.10 (CCL 36.58-9). Augustine devotes a whole sermon, albeit brief, to the subject of the tongues of Pentecost as the divine response to Babel. *Sermo* 271 (PL 38.1245-46).

¹⁵⁰*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.32.74 (BA 30. 320). On vv. 4 and 5 cf. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 32(33).11/2.7 (CCL 38.260); 67(68).10 (CCL 39.874); *Ps.* 88(89).1.3 (CCL 39.1222); 143(144). 12 (CCL 40.2082); *Sermo* 113A.9 (MA 1. 149).

world-wide church.¹⁵¹ The sound has gone into all the earth and has reached as far as us so as to provide entrance into heaven. And yet, despite the plainness and clarity (*quid planius, quid apertius?*) of the Psalm's meaning, *haereticus ecclesiam non intrat*. He demands, *Quid contra te conaris? Partem vis in lite retinere, qui potes totum in concordia retinere?*¹⁵²

In accordance with Augustine's *totus Christus* hermeneutic, vv. 5 and 6 together yield clear testimony to Christ as head and body and thus prove that the church is to be found among all the nations. *Testimonium pro capite* is provided in v. 6: *Et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo*, and, correspondingly, *pro corpore* in the preceding verse: *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum.*¹⁵³

c. Psalm 21 (22): 27-28¹⁵⁴

For Augustine, this Psalm prophesies aspects of Christ's purchase of his church which are significant for his case against the Donatists.¹⁵⁵ It represents a prophecy which has

¹⁵¹*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.14.33 (BA 30. 258); for Augustine's use of v. 5 for this purpose, cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.43.102 (BA 30.362); *Enarr. in Ps.* 39(40).10, 15 (CCL 38.433, 436); *Sermones* 233.1 (PL 38.1112); 258.3 (PL 38.1196); 295.1,5 (PL 38. 1348, 1351); 298.1 (PL 38.1365); 299.1,12 (PL 38.1367, 1376); 299C.2 (MA1.523); *Ep.* 93. 21 (CSEL 34/2. 466).

¹⁵²*Enarr. in Ps.* 18.2.5 (CCL 38. 108-9).

¹⁵³*Sermo* 129.5 (PL 38. 722-23); cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 2.3 (SC 75. 160), 1.2 (SC 75. 114-16); *Enarr. in Ps.* 18.2.10 (CCL 38. 110); *Ep.* 105. 14 (CSEL 32.606).

¹⁵⁴"commemorabuntur et convertentur ad dominum universi fines terrae et adorabunt in conspectu eius universae patriae gentium, quoniam domini est regnum et ipse dominabitur gentium." *Ep. ad Cath.* 25.75 (BA 28. 706); cf. *Contra ep. Parm.* 1.7.12 (BA 28. 236), where "reminiscentur" substitutes for "commemorabuntur".

¹⁵⁵"In uno eodemque psalmo emptorem video, et pretium, et possessionem. Emptor Christus est, pretium sanguis, possessio orbis terrarum. Voces ipsas propheticas audiamus, contradicentes litigatoribus haereticis." *Enarr. in Ps.* 147.16 (CCL 40. 2151).

been so clearly fulfilled that Donatists betray themselves to be deaf, not only to the original prophecy, but to its manifest present fulfilment.¹⁵⁶

Cresconius is accused of being a poor interpreter of texts relating to the catholicity of the church in comparison with Cyprian (whom the Donatists revered). It was on the basis of this text (together with Matt. 24:14; Psa. 21:17-19; Psa. 71:2, 8-11; Mal. 1:11; Isa. 53:7; Isa. 54:1-5) that Cyprian was able to say, *sic ecclesia domini luce perfusa per orbem totum radios suos porrexit, ramos suos per universam terram copia ubertatis extendit.*¹⁵⁷ Cresconius misrepresents the truth by concentrating attention on those parts of the earth of which the church has not yet taken possession, rather than on the large area of the world which the church has already occupied. He thus subjects to attack *tantae manifestationi divinatorum eloquiorum.*¹⁵⁸

Augustine compares these two verses to *tabulae commerciales* on which is announced precisely what the Lord (the *emptor*) has purchased at the price of his blood.¹⁵⁹ They provide explanation of the greatness of the price paid in Christ's suffering and of his rising from the dead.¹⁶⁰ Nor is it as though Catholics had privileged access to this Psalm. It is read in both communions and Donatists have no excuse for not recognising the truth.¹⁶¹ Perversely, they agree in recognising Christ in vv16-18 of the Psalm while refusing to recognise the church in these later verses.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.14.33 (30.258)

¹⁵⁷Cyprian, *De Unit.* 5 (CCL 3.253).

¹⁵⁸*Contra Cresc.* 3.64.72 (BA 31.420); cf. *Ibid.* 4.58.70 (BA 31.616).

¹⁵⁹*In Ioh. Tr.* 13.14 (BA 71.704)

¹⁶⁰*In Ioh. Ep.* 2.2 (SC 75.154).

¹⁶¹*In Ioh. Tr.* 13.14 (BA 71.704). Cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 2.2 (SC 75.154) where Augustine reminds his people that the Psalm had been read at the first assembly of the fourth day of the previous week. This would appear to refer to Holy Week when the Psalm was presumably read in both churches. Vd. La

Enarr. in Ps. 21.2¹⁶³

Throughout this full-length exposition of the Psalm, Augustine clearly has the catholicity question at the forefront of his mind and by a clever linking of texts and images seeks to undermine the Donatist and support the Catholic claim to be the true church. From the outset, his exposition carefully prepares the ground for the climactic comments on the key verses, 27-28.¹⁶⁴ The introduction makes clear the direction which the ensuing exposition will take. The yearly celebration of Easter served as an important reminder of the once-for-all death of Christ on the cross. It evoked the same emotional response as if Christ were actually viewed hanging on the cross. The wheat of Christ's threshing-floor groan to see their Lord insulted *in re aperta: Possidenti enim universum orbem terrarum, pars offertur; et dicitur sedenti ad dextram Patris: Ecce quid hic habes. Et pro tota terra ostenditur illi sola Africa!*¹⁶⁵

Augustine goes on to make use for his purpose of the passage which had been read at the service (Matt. 26:6-13). The woman who came to anoint Jesus was a type of the

Bonnardière (1965) 54-56; Berrouard (1969) 704. Cf. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 21/1.1 (CCL 38. 117), 21.2.1-3 (CCL 38.121-23).

¹⁶²*Ep.* 185.3 (CSEL 57. 2-3). On Christ speaking as head in vv16-18 and as body in vv 27-28, cf. *Sermo* 129.5 (PL 38.722); *Ep.* 105.14 (CSEL 34. 606).

¹⁶³In a number of *Enarrationes*, Augustine gives to the issue of catholicity more extended exegetical treatment from the particular Psalm being expounded. When its contribution is judged significant, a separate discussion of the *Enarratio* in question is provided.

¹⁶⁴La Bonnardière thinks that this *Enarr.* was preached on the Wednesday of Holy Week, 407 AD, the day after *In Ioh.* 12. Allusions to this Psalm occur in *In Ioh. Ep.* 2 (SC 75.154-6) which she places on the following Monday. La Bonnardière (1965) 54-56. For a later exposition of the whole Psalm, this time oriented to the growing Pelagian threat, see *Ep.* 40 (CSEL 44.155-234).

¹⁶⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 21/2.1 (CCL 38.122). Cf. Matt. 3:12. On Augustine's handling of this text in relation to the purity of the church, vd. *infra*.

church, and her ointment a type of that odour of which Paul declares, *Christi bonus odor sumus in omni loco*.¹⁶⁶ Paul's *sumus* is a reference to the church and his statement that all such are the sweet odour of Christ in every place is contradicted by the Donatists who say rather, *Africa sola bene olet, totus mundus putet*.¹⁶⁷ The attempt of Judas to make merchandise of the sweet odour of Christ, drew from the Lord a reply which foretold the preaching of the gospel *in toto mundo*. It is as though the Lord had been asked regarding the gospel, *Ubi enim praedicabitur?* It is the Truth who is speaking here but, according to the Donatists, he is either lying or deceived. Augustine invites his hearers to consider whether in fact this Psalm does not say the same thing as Christ in the Matthew passage.¹⁶⁸ He wonders whether the Psalm was being read that very day in the Donatist churches and anticipates the conclusion to which his own exposition will (inevitably) come by speaking of the Psalmist's lament as appropriate in view of Donatist deafness to its clear witness. Could it be that the Donatists are made of stone (*lapidei*), he asks ironically.¹⁶⁹

Having dealt with the content of the sufferings as described in the first 21 verses, Augustine begins at v. 22 to address the question of their underlying *quare*. In that verse Christ intimates the fruit of his suffering as being the declaration of God's name to his brethren. The question is whether this declaration was intended to be only *in parte*. The immediately following words hint at the correct answer: *in medio ecclesiae, cantabo te*. It is this church, for which Christ suffered, that must be

¹⁶⁶Cf. 2 Cor. 2:14-15.

¹⁶⁷*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.2* (CCL 38.122).

¹⁶⁸"In toto mundo, inquit. Psalmum audiamus, videamus si hoc dicit." *Enarr. in Ps. 21.2.2* (CCL 38.122).

¹⁶⁹*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.2* (CCL 38. 122-23).

accurately identified.¹⁷⁰ Verse 23 is of help here, revealing as it does that wherever the fear of God and the praise of God are found, *ibi est ecclesia Christi*. God is feared and praised all over the world. Donatus, however, has turned away from the *Catholica* saying, *Prorsus non timetur, totus mundus perit*. Christ's words are well fitted to silence tongues that say such things.

Augustine seeks to demonstrate that it is of the Catholic and not the Donatist church that Christ is speaking in vv. 23ff.¹⁷¹ It cannot be said that the Lord is praised in the midst of the Donatist church, when they imagine that *diabolus illi totum (orbem) abstulit, et in parte ipse remansit*.¹⁷² Further, the Donatists may claim to be the *semen Iacob* and *semen Israel* of this verse. But since these are characterised as poor (*pauperum*) in v. 24 and since those who trust in themselves (*de se praesumentium*) and say, *Nos sumus iusti*, do not fit this description, the Donatists, who do both, cannot be the *semen Iacob*.¹⁷³

But should the Donatists deny that they trust in themselves, and claim to follow Christ's example (in v. 25) of entrusting his praise to God, such a claim needs to be tested against the words of the same verse, *In ecclesia magna confitebor tibi*. Here, Augustine believes, we come to the heart of the matter. A great church cannot embrace only a tiny part (*exigua pars*) of the world. To the contrary, *Ecclesia magna totus orbis est*. The Donatists contradict Christ's words in the text and reduce him to "the small bit that is Africa" (*ad frustum Africae*). Although Christ has shed his blood

¹⁷⁰*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.23* (CCL 38.128).

¹⁷¹"Adhuc nobis dicitur: *In medio ecclesia*; de ecclesia nostra dicitur." *Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.24* (CCL 38.128).

¹⁷²*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.24* (CCL 38.128-29).

¹⁷³*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.24-5* (CCL 38.129).

for the whole world, he has been defeated by a usurper (*invasorem*) and they (the Donatists) say (to Christ), *totum mundum perdidisti*. They dare to say, *Et nostra ecclesia magna est. Quid tibi videtur Bagai et Tamugade?*¹⁷⁴

Augustine leads into his exposition of the key verses with words that provide a clever link while heightening his readers' expectations, *Si non dicit (Christus) aliquid unde obmutescant, adhuc dicant quia magna est ecclesia sola Numidia.*¹⁷⁵ The vows which Christ promises to pay in v. 25 are the sacrifice which he offered to God. They are known by the faithful who fear him. These are the poor of v. 26 who eat and are filled. They have suffered as he did, in order to follow in his footsteps. In their poverty they praise the Lord because, *Dominus est divitiae pauperum*. The treasure of the truly poor is not found in the chest, granary or storehouse but in this, *Vivent corda eorum in saeculum saeculi.*¹⁷⁶

Coming to v. 27, Augustine first reviews his earlier exposition, admitting that the Donatists claim to be the *ecclesia* (v. 22), the *semen Israel* (v. 23), the *pauperes* (vv. 24, 26) and those who entrust their praise to him (v. 25). But what was the fruit of the death which the Lord died and in which his poor have partaken because of their union with him? The unambiguous answer is found in v. 27, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord." The answer to Donatist claims is found in the Psalm which was being read in both communions that very day. It is a

¹⁷⁴Two major centres of Donatist influence.

¹⁷⁵*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.26* (CCL 38.129).

¹⁷⁶*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.27* (CCL 38.130).

Psalm which should be written *in frontibus nostris*, for it tells of the *pretium nostrum* paid by Christ the *mercator* in his own blood - the *pretium orbis terrarum*. Are the Donatists really going to claim that Christ's blood has redeemed only Africa? They dare not say that Christ has redeemed, but subsequently lost, the entire world! *Quem invasorem passus est Christus, ut perderet rem suam?* he pointedly asks. If Christ had spoken of *finis terrae*, the Donatists might have been able to say, *Ecce habemus finis terrae in Mauretania*. But what he said was, *universi finis terrae*. In truth they have no way out of their difficulty.¹⁷⁷

The *haeretici* have forgotten what Christ bought in v. 27, despite their hearing it repeated every year. Or maybe it was just that their concentration lapsed while the verse was being read. It is, after all, only one verse.¹⁷⁸ But that excuse is removed by the double repetition of the same truth in the following verses, "All the lands of the peoples will worship in his presence" (v. 27); and, "Since the kingdom belongs to the Lord, he will rule over the peoples" (v. 28). Augustine claims to be so distressed by the shocking hardness and deafness of Donatist hearts that, *aliquando dubitem utrum habeant illud in codicibus*. The Donatists all hurry to church this same day and listen *suspensio corde* to this Psalm. But even if they are drowsy, it is hard to conceive how they could sleep through the reading of, not one, but all three verses.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.28* (CCL 38. 130-31). In typical rhetorical style Augustine adds, "non habes quae exeat, sed habes quo intres".

¹⁷⁸"Aliunde cogitabas, cum fratre tuo fabulararis, quando illud dixit," he surmises ironically. *Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.29* (CCL 38.131).

¹⁷⁹*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.29* (CCL 38. 131).

The Donatists' dispute is with the Scriptures. While claiming to have preserved the Book they, in fact, attack it by refusing to implement the Father's will in Scripture. The Lord's inheritance is found in Ps. 2:7-8,¹⁸⁰ confirmed by the present passage. The kingdom is the Lord's, and Augustine's challenge to the Donatists is, *Agnoscite Dominum! agnoscite possessionem Domini*. The Donatists prefer to rule on earth than to reign with Christ in heaven and therefore, *quia privata vestra vultis possidere, et non communi cum Christo unitate... possidetis domos vestras*.¹⁸¹ Catholic invitations to them together to seek and find the truth on this matter, are, allegedly, met with the response, *Vos tenete quod tenetis; oves tuas habes, oves meas habeo; noli molestus esse ovibus meis, quia et ego non sum molestus ovibus tuis*.¹⁸² But this is to ignore the fact that the *oves* belong to neither party but to the one who purchased and branded (*signavit*) them as his own. The point is supported with a reference to 1 Cor. 3:7.¹⁸³ If Christ is with the Donatists, then by all means let the Catholic sheep go there, *quia non sunt meae*. On the other hand, *si hic est Christus, huc eant tuae, quia non sunt tuae*.¹⁸⁴ There should be an end to the existing alienation over the issue of *possessiones*.

d. Ps. 44(45):5¹⁸⁵, 10¹⁸⁶, 11-12¹⁸⁷, 17-18.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁰Cf. comments on this passage supra.

¹⁸¹*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.30* (CCL 38.132).

¹⁸²*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.31* (CCL 38.132).

¹⁸³"Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus." *Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.31* (CCL 38.133).

¹⁸⁴*Enarr. in Ps. 21/2.31* (CCL 38.133).

¹⁸⁵".... Et intende, et prospere procede, et regna propter veritatem et mansuetudinem et iustitiam." *Enarr. in Ps. 44(45).14-15* (CCL 38.503).

¹⁸⁶"... Adstitit regina a dextris tuis in vestito deaurato, circumamicta varietate." *Enarr. in Ps. 44.24* (CCL 38.512).

¹⁸⁷"Audi, filia, et vide; et inclina aurem tuam. Et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui. Quoniam concupivit rex speciem tuam quia ipse est Deus tuus." *Enarr. in Ps. 44.25-26* (CCL 38.512-13).

¹⁸⁸"Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii; constitues eos principes super omnem terram/Memores erunt

*Enarr. in Ps. 44*¹⁸⁹

Throughout, Augustine treats the Psalm as a song of the marriage-feast of Christ and his church. In v.5, Christ the king is addressed in words that we see already fulfilled, for, (*Christus*) *intendit, prospere processit, et regnat; subditae sunt omnes gentes.*¹⁹⁰ What was seen of old *in spiritu*, we are now privileged to be able to experience *in veritate.*¹⁹¹

To the same purpose, Augustine interprets the golden vesture of the queen, *circumamicta varietate*, in v.10. The queen's vesture is precious because made of gold and is also of different colours. It thus represents, *sacramenta doctrinae in linguis omnibus variis. Alia lingua afra, alia syra, alia graeca, alia hebraea, alia illa et illa: faciunt istae linguae varietatem vestis reginae huius.*¹⁹² The world-wide church speaks many languages, but just as the variety of colours in the queen's vesture all harmonize, *sic et omnes linguae ad unam fidem*. The vesture itself refers to unity, the colours to diversity within the church and the gold to the identical *sapientiam, ... doctrinam et disciplinam* which *omnes linguae praedicant*. Augustine adds, *Varietas in linguis, aurum in sentiis.*¹⁹³

nominis tui in omni generatione et generatione. Propterea populi confitebuntur tibi in aeternum et in saeculum saeculi." *Enarr. in Ps. 44.33* (CCL 38.516-17).

¹⁸⁹CCL 38.493-517.

¹⁹⁰*Enarr. in Ps. 44.14* (CCL 38.503).

¹⁹¹*ibid.*

¹⁹²*Enarr. in Ps. 44. 24* (CCL 38.512).

¹⁹³*ibid.* Cf. *Ep. 36.22* (CSEL 34.2.52).

The queen is destined to come *ex gentibus...circumamicta omnibus linguis, in unitate sapientiae*.¹⁹⁴ These are the Gentiles who, renouncing their natural Satanic parentage, come to the king who is also *sponsus tuus*.¹⁹⁵ The daughters of Tyre of v.12 are *filiae gentium: a parte ad totum*. As a city bordering on the country where the prophecy was delivered, Tyre *significabat gentes credituras Christo*.¹⁹⁶ It was from this region that the Canaanite woman came to Christ.¹⁹⁷ Initially referred to as a dog in order to make clear her origin *apud patrem suum et in populo suo*, by coming to and calling on the King, *decora facta (est) credendo in illum*.¹⁹⁸

The *templum regis* of v.15 is the church.¹⁹⁹ Into it the *virgines* of v.14 are led. Augustine concedes that there are virgins *extra templum regis*,²⁰⁰ but that to be so is profitless *nisi adducantur in templum regis*.²⁰¹ The church is so described *propter unitatem diffusam toto orbe terrarum*.²⁰² Those who have chosen to be virgins cannot obtain the favour of the king unless they enter into his *templum*. The implication of the figurative exposition is clear: the Donatists, who in other respects may be indistinguishable from the Catholics, place themselves outside the divine favour simply by refusing to enter the true, Catholic, church.²⁰³

¹⁹⁴*Enarr. in Ps.* 44.25 (CCL 38.512).

¹⁹⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 44. 26 (CCL 38.513).

¹⁹⁶*Enarr. in Ps.* 44.27 (CCL 38.513).

¹⁹⁷Cf. Matt. 15:21-28.

¹⁹⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 44.27 (CCL 38.513). On Augustine's use of the Canaanite woman as a type of the Gentile church, vd. La Bonnardière (1967).

¹⁹⁹"Templum regis ipsa ecclesia.... Unde construitur templum? De hominibus qui intrant in templum. Lapidés vivi qui sunt, nisi fideles Dei?" *Enarr. in Ps.* 44.31 (CCL 38.515).

²⁰⁰He refers to the *haereticæ sanctimoniales*: presumably nuns of the Donatist church.

²⁰¹A reference to v.16. *Enarr. in Ps.* 44. 31 (CCL 38.515).

²⁰²*Enarr. in Ps.* 44.32 (CCL 38.516).

²⁰³There appears to be an echo here of the parable of the virgins, in Matt. 25:1-13.

The fathers of the church, prophesied in v.17, are the apostles. Although it is true that one of them said, *manere in carne necessarium propter vos*,²⁰⁴ it was not possible for them to be with us *corporaliter* always. This verse, however, makes clear that the church was not left *deserta* by their departure: *Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii*. The bishops are the sons born to the fathers. *Ipsa ecclesia patres illos appellat, ipsa illos genuit, et ipsa illos constituit in sedibus patrum*.²⁰⁵ The church should not consider itself abandoned because Peter and Paul can no longer be seen, for *de prole tua tibi crevit paternitas*. The wide diffusion of the temple of the king is indicated in the following words, *constitues eos principes super omnem terram*. From this, the virgins not led into the temple of the king should know *non se ad istas nuptias pertinere*. Clearly, the *principes super omnem terram* are the children of the *catholica ecclesia*.²⁰⁶ Those *qui praecisi sunt* should acknowledge the truth of this and come *ad unitatem*. The temple of God and the *fundamenta prophetarum et apostolorum*²⁰⁷ have been established everywhere (*ubique*). *Filios genuit ecclesia, constituit eos pro patribus suis principes super omnem terram*.²⁰⁸

The confession²⁰⁹ referred to in v.18 is profitless when made outwith the temple. The obvious link between *templum* and *mons* leads Augustine at this point to make reference to Ps. 3:4 and Matt. 5:14. The question of which hill is being referred to in these texts, is given an indubitable answer. For Augustine it is, *quem vidit Daniel ex*

²⁰⁴Paul in Phil. 1:24.

²⁰⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 44.32 (CCL 38.516).

²⁰⁶*ibid. Ep.* 93.29 (CSEL 34.2.474).

²⁰⁷Eph. 2:20.

²⁰⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 44.32 (CCL 38.516).

²⁰⁹The corresponding Hebrew verb can mean both 'to praise' (as in most English versions) and 'to confess'.

*parvo lapide crevisse, et fregisse omnia regna terrarum, et implevisse omnem faciem terrae.*²¹⁰

e. Ps. 56(57): 6a, 12b²¹¹

It is Christ who speaks in v.5 about his sufferings in the world at the hands of men. It is the *vox Christi* which says, *Dormivi conturbatus*.²¹² Christ was *conturbatus* on account of those whom the verse describes as *fili hominum, dentes eorum arma et sagittae et lingua eorum machaera acuta*. This is a clear reference to those who cried out, *Crucifige, crucifige*.²¹³ The questions raised of *quid hoc totum?* and *cui bono, cui lucro?* find their answer in v. 6 which, as v.5 describes *Christum in passione dormisse*, speaks of him *resurrectione super caelos ascendisse*. Vv. 5 and 6 are to be understood in light of Lk. 24: 46-7.²¹⁴

The reason why his glory is over the whole earth is *quia ecclesia eius (est) per omnem terram*.²¹⁵ Augustine confidently addresses the Donatists: *In his duabus*

²¹⁰Dan.2:34-35. Vd. comments supra on this text. For Augustine, of course, the "mons" is the "ecclesia catholica". *Enarr. in Ps. 44.33* (CCL 38.516).

²¹¹"Exaltare super caelos, deus (v.6a) et super omnem terram gloria tua (v. 12b)." *Ep. ad Cath. 8.21* (BA 28.556). V.6b (Vulg.) Reads, "et in omnem terram gloria tua," but Augustine appears to prefer to link v.6a directly with v.12b; or, possibly, he is working with an alternative reading of v.6b.

²¹²Augustine does not think these words could have been spoken by David about his own personal experience. Vd. *Enarr. in Ps. 56.11* (CCL 39.701).

²¹³*Ep. ad Cath. 8.21* (BA 28.556).

²¹⁴"Si obscurum est: *dormivi conturbatus*, numquid obscurum est: *quia oportebat Christum pati?* si obscurum est: *exaltare super caelos, deus*, numquid obscurum est: *et resurgere tertia die?* item si obscurum est: *super omnem terram gloria tua*, numquid obscurum est: *et praedicari in nomine eius paenitentiam et remissionem peccatorum per omnes gentes?*" *Ep. ad Cath. 10.25* (BA 28.566 - italics added). Cf. *Sermones* 262.4 ((PL 38.1208), 279.3((PL 38.1276-77), 335E.2 (PLS 2. 781).

²¹⁵*Ep. ad Cath. 8.21* (BA 28.556). In one sermon Augustine includes vv. 6a and 12b in a string of texts bearing witness to Christ and the church: "Audi aliud breve, et prope una sententia complexum pro capite et pro corpore. De resurrectione Christi Psalmus loquebatur: *Exaltare super caelos, Deus*. Continuo pro corpore: *Et super omnem terram gloria tua*." *Sermo 129.5* (PL 38.722). Cf. *Ep. 105.17* (CSEL 34/2/2. 606).

sententiis brevissimis vos, haeretici, totum quod inter nos agitur interrogo. He wonders why the Donatists can preach *dominum Christum exaltatum super caelos* while, at the same time, *eius gloria super omnem terram non communicatis.*²¹⁶ That God is exalted above the heavens is something not seen by us, yet believed; while the fact that his glory is *super omnem terram* is not only believed but also seen. The *haeretici*, however, are afflicted with a kind of insanity (*vesaniam*) by which *Illi praecisi a compagine ecclesiae Christi, et partem tenentes, totum amittentes, nolunt communicare orbi terrarum, qua diffusa est gloria Christi.*²¹⁷ By holding a part, the Donatists lose the whole while Catholics, he tells his flock, *in omni terra sumus* because of our communication with all the world *quacumque gloria Christi diffusa est.*²¹⁸ What was once only sung has now been fulfilled and the *haeretica insania* of the Donatists is manifest: *quod non vides credis mecum, quod vides negas; credis mecum exaltatum Christum super caelos, quod non videmus, et negas gloriam eius super omnem terram, quod videmus.*²¹⁹ In so doing they detract from the glory of Christ.²²⁰

f. Ps. 60(61):3-4²²¹

²¹⁶*Ep. ad Cath.* 8.21 (BA 28. 556).

²¹⁷*Enarr. in Ps.* 56.13 (CCL 39.703).

²¹⁸*ibid.*

²¹⁹*ibid.*

²²⁰*Contra litt. Petil.* 3.6.7 (BA 30.602). In the peculiar and short *Sermo* 360, preached by Augustine in the *persona* of a converted Donatist (or composed by him for some such convert to preach himself?), the convert tells how his eyes were opened to see from this text the truth about the spread of the church of Christ. *Sermo* 360.1 (PL 39.1599).

²²¹"a finibus terrae ad te exclamavi, cum angeretur cor meum. in petra exaltasti me; deduxisti me, quia factus es spes mea, turris fortitudinis a facie inimici." *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.108.247 (BA 30.558).

In the treatises Augustine links this text with Matt. 16:18 and Matt. 7:26 which establish that *ecclesia in petra est*. But lest it be imagined that that the church on the rock occupies only one part of the earth and is not spread *usque ad fines terrae*, he cites this text and calls on his readers to hear *eius vocem de psalmo gementis inter mala peregrinationis suae*. Clearly the church is not in Africa alone, nor is it for those Africans alone who sent *episcopum Romam paucis Montensibus et in Hispaniam domui unius mulieris ex Africa mittentibus*.²²² According to Optatus, the fact that the Donatist episcopal succession at Rome, beginning with a certain Victor Garbensis, was entirely composed of Africans and immigrants, without one local citizen among them, manifests the *dolus* and *factio quae mater est schismatis*.²²³

Enarr. in Ps. 60(61)

In the *Enarratio*, the Psalm becomes “performative” by Augustine’s application to it of the *totus Christus* hermeneutic. Those who are members of Christ’s body should recognize the voice speaking in this Psalm to be *nostram*, not that of some foreigner. But by *nostram* he does not mean to imply that it belongs only to those immediately present, *sed nostram qui sumus per totum mundum, qui sumus ab oriente usque in occidentem*.²²⁴ He speaks in the Psalm as if one man, as one man, *unitas loquitur*, for

²²²ibid. According to Optatus the name *Montenses* was given to a small group of Donatists at Rome on account of a cave outside the city which was their place of meeting. Vd. Optatus *Contra Donat.* 2.4 (SC 412.248). Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 3.6 (BA 28.519), where the Donatists at Rome are referred to as “... paucis... Cutzupitanis vel Montensibus...” and Congar: “Noms des Donatistes de Rome” (BA 28.746). On the origins of the Donatist group at Rome, vd. Monceaux 5. 151f. The Spanish woman referred to is clearly the wealthy Lucilla who opposed the election of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage in 311. Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 3.6 (BA 28.518) and vd. Congar, “Lucille et sa clique,” (BA 28. 723-24).

²²³*Contra Donat.* 2.4 (SC 412.248). On Donatist attempts to found a party in Rome, vd. Augustine, *De un. bapt.* 16.28 (BA 31. 726-30). On Donatist bishops in Rome, vd. De Veer, “Un siege episcopal donatiste a Rome,” (BA 31. 847-49).

²²⁴*Enarr. in Ps. 60.* 1 (CCL 39.765).

in Christ we are all one man, *quia huius unius hominis caput est in caelo, et membra adhuc laborant in terra....*²²⁵ The cry from the ends of the earth is that of Christ in his members, namely his *possessio* and *hereditas* promised in Ps. 2:8: *hoc Christi corpus, haec una Christi ecclesia, haec unitas quae nos sumus, clamat a finibus terrae.*²²⁶ In them he is *per omnes gentes toto orbe terrarum in magna gloria, sed in magna tentatione.*²²⁷ Our life in this sojourning condition cannot be without temptation, since in this life progress is made through temptation. For the body of Christ, the outcome of the struggle is not in doubt. The faithful were already prefigured in Christ's literal body in which he died and rose. The man crying from the ends of the earth is not conquered for the reason given: *in petra exaltasti me* (v.3). The identity of the rock is made clear by Paul, *Petra autem erat Christus.*²²⁸ This is the rock that remained unmoved when beaten by the winds, flood and rain of temptation and this is what ensures that the true (Catholic) Christian's voice is heard.²²⁹

g. Ps. 71(72):8-11, 17b-19²³⁰

For Augustine, the key to the right interpretation of the Psalm lies in the title, *In*

Salomonem. Things are said in the Psalm which are not applicable to the literal

²²⁵ibid. (CCL 39.766). Cf. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 49.13 (CCL 38.586-87), 85.4 (CCL 39.1179-80), 119. 7 (CCL 40.1783-84), 122.2 (CCL 40. 1815); *Sermo* 210.8 (PL 38.1051-52); *Ep.* 93.28 (CSEL 34/2. 472-73).

²²⁶*Enarr. in Ps.* 60.2 (CCL 39.766). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 54. 17 (CCL 39.669-70).

²²⁷*Enarr. in Ps.* 60.6 (CCL 39.766).

²²⁸1 Cor. 10:4.

²²⁹*Enarr. in Ps.* 60.3 (CCL 39.766-67). Cf. *Sermo* 47.17 (PL 38.304-06) where Christ the rock is contrasted with the mountain of Donatus.

²³⁰Vv. 8-11: "et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrae. coram illo decident Aethiopes et inimici eius terram lingent. reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent, reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent. et adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae, omnes gentes servient ei." Vv. 17b-19: "et benedicentur in eo omnes tribus terrae, omnes gentes magnificabunt eum. benedictus dominus deus Israhel, qui facit mirabilia solus, et benedictum nomen gloriae eius in aeternum et in saeculum saeculi, et replebitur gloria eius omnis terra. fiat, fiat." *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.22 (BA 28.556-58).

Solomon, and these provide invincible evidence that they *de Christo esse praedicta*. No Christian denies that there are verses in the Psalm which speak with such clarity about Christ that the matter is simply not in doubt.²³¹ While the Donatists are able to recognize Christ in v. 2, *deus, iudicium tuum regi da et iustitiam tuam filio regis*, they fail to discern the church in the testimony of vv. 8-11. In v. 8, *Et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare*, God intended to shew *quam late* his church would spread, but the Donatists cannot grasp the point.²³²

Enarr. in Ps. 71.

In the *Enarratio*, Augustine develops figuratively his exposition of the Psalm. He points out that since the name in the title cannot be taken to apply to the literal Solomon, *intellegitur... ad figuratam significationem adhibitum, ut in eo Christus accipiatur*. The etymological meaning of Solomon, which Augustine understands to be *pacificus*, makes clear the entire appropriateness of its application to him *per quem mediatorem ex inimicis, accepta remissione peccatorum, reconciliamur Deo*.²³³

Vv. 8-11

²³¹ibid. Cf. *De civ. Dei* 17.8 (CCL 48.571-2) where Augustine discusses this Psalm in the context of explaining why God's promises to David about his son did not find more than partial fulfilment in Solomon. He points out, for example, that the territorially limited extent of Solomon's kingdom precludes the application to him of v. 8.

²³²*Contra Cresc.* 3.64.72 (BA 31.418). Cf. *Ep.* 105.14 (CSEL 34/2.606-7). In the treatises verse 8 is quoted as an "apertum" for polemical purposes also at *Contra Cresc.* 2.36.45 (BA 31.256); *Contra litt. Petil.* 1.13.14 (BA 30.158), 3.50.62 (BA 30.714); *Contra Gaudent.* 1.19.21 (BA 32.548), 1.34.44 (BA 32.612). It becomes a virtual cliché of Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic, often supported by Gen. 22:18, Ps. 2:8, Ps. 21(22):27. This verse is one of the texts, drawn exclusively from the Psalms, used by Optatus to establish the biblical basis of the "Catholica" against the Donatist position. Vd. Optatus, *Contra Donat.* 2.1 (SC 412. 236-44). The other texts are Pss. 2:8; 49(50):1; 95(96):1,3; 112(113):3. Augustine accepts their applicability to the catholicity issue but adds many other Psalm texts of his own choosing. Cf. Edwards (1997), 30 n. 5.

²³³*Enarr. in Ps. 71.1* (CCL 39.971).

Clear witness is given in these verses to *ecclesia toto orbe diffusa*, so that even all the kings of the earth are depicted as subjugated to the yoke of Christ. For v.8, *Et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare*, the explanation is given that the land is encircled by a great sea called *oceanus*, from which there flows some little part (*quiddam exiguum*) in the midst of the lands, *et facit ista maria nota nobis, quae navigiis frequentantur*.²³⁴ The phrase *a mari usque ad mare* is interpreted figuratively to mean that *a quolibet fine terrae, usque ad quemlibet finem* he would reign as Lord *cuius nomen et potestas toto orbe fuerant praedicanda, multumque valitura*.²³⁵

To ensure that the words are understood in their intended sense, he immediately adds, *et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrae*. This is a clear expression of the divine will that Christ would begin to exercise his power from the place where he began to choose his disciples. The *flumen* of v.8 represents the Jordan where the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the voice from heaven saying, *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*, gave public witness to Christ.²³⁶ It was beginning at the Jordan that Christ's *doctrina... et magisterii caelestis auctoritas, dilatur usque ad terminos orbis terrae, cum praedicatur evangelium regni in universo orbe, in testimonium omnibus gentibus; et tunc veniet finis*.²³⁷

²³⁴*Enarr. in Ps. 71.11* (CCL 39.979-80).

²³⁵*ibid.* (CCL 39.980).

²³⁶Matt. 3:16-17 et parall. *Enarr. in Ps. 71.11* (CCL 39.980); *Ep ad Cath.* 8.22 (BA 28.586-8). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.58.132 (BA 30.394); *Sermo* 288.2 (PL 38.1303). "The River" in the Old Testament, without qualification, refers to the Euphrates. On the Holy Spirit as represented by a dove, vd. *infra*.

²³⁷*Enarr. in Ps. 71.11* (CCL 39.980). In a letter written to the Donatist bishop of Calama who had rebaptized at Mappala eighty Catholics, tenants on a farm which he had bought, Augustine, after quoting v. 8, asks, "Sed certe quo modo confidis non te perditurum, quod in Africa videris emisse, qui Christum dicis toto orbe perditum ad solam Africam remanisse." *Ep.* 66.1 (CSEL 34/2.236). In light of this verse, Donatists are attempting to make Christ an exile "de regno sanguinis sui." *Ep.*

In v.9, the *Aethiopes, a parte totum*, are taken to represent all the nations. This nation is selected for mention because *in finibus terrae est*. They fall down in adoration before Christ. But because there were to be schisms in different regions of the world which would hate the Catholic church, *toto terrarum orbe diffusae*, and because these schisms would divide themselves *per hominum nomina*, and because by loving those men *quibus auctoribus scissa sunt* they would be set in opposition to the glory of Christ which *per omnes terras est*, he adds, *et inimici eius terram lingent (v.9)*.²³⁸ By licking the earth, is meant being delighted *auctoritate vaniloqua* of these men, loving them and holding them to be *suavissimos*. In this way, they contradict the divine sayings, by which the Catholic church is foretold, *non in aliqua parte terrarum...sed in universo mundo... usque ad ipsos Aethiopes...*²³⁹ The *dona* which the *reges* in vv.10-11 lead (*adducent*), Augustine takes to mean people, on the grounds that *ea quippe adduci solent, quae ambulare solent (!)*. The reference is to those *quos in societatem ecclesiae Christi regum adducit auctoritas*.²⁴⁰ The (figurative) prophecy of the universality of the church in the text is thus so clear that the passage seeks *non expositorem, sed contemplatorem*.²⁴¹

In one *Sermo*, On the basis of vv. 8-11, Augustine invites the Donatists to take possession of this world-wide inheritance with Catholics. When the words of vv. 8-11 were first spoken, they were believed; now that they have been fulfilled, they are

93.19 (CSEL 34/2.464). Cf. *Epp.* 185.5 (CSEL 34/4.4), 199.47 (CSEL 34/4.285); *Sermo* 37.12 (CCL 41.457).

²³⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 71.12 (CCL 39.980).

²³⁹*ibid.*

²⁴⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 71.13 (CCL 39.981).

²⁴¹*ibid.* For refs. to the *reges*, vd. *Sermones* 113A.9 (MA 1.73), 313B.3 (MA 1.73); *Epp.* 87.8 (CSEL 34/2.404), 185.19 (CSEL 34/4.18).

denied. Donatists should take possession of this world-wide inheritance with Catholics. Augustine asks: *Quare non vis? Quare huic promissioni et haereditati, divitiis tuis, inimicus es? Propter Donatum? propter Caecilianum?* But despite the clear evidence of the church spread throughout the world (*post ecclesiae declarationem et toto mundo dilatationem*), Augustine will receive the reply, *Non dimitto Donatum, non dimitto nescio quem Gaium, Lucium, Parmenianum. Mille nomina*, he adds, *mille scissuras*. By following a mere man, made of the dust of the earth, the Donatists show themselves to be the *inimici* of v.9 who *terram lingent*. Augustine counsels: *Despice hoc potius. Noli lingere terram, ut spem ponas in eum qui fecit coelum et terram.*²⁴²

Vv. 17b-19

It is in Christ that *omnes tribus terrae* will be blessed, for *in ipso quippe impletur quod promissum est Abrahae.*²⁴³ *Omnes gentes magnificabunt eum*, not by themselves making him great, but by praising and making him great.²⁴⁴ The filling of every land with his glory has been commanded by God and so it is taking place: *Iussisti, Domine, ita fit; ita fit, donec illud quod coepit a flumine, perveniat omnino usque ad terminos orbis terrae.*²⁴⁵ In his letter of 408, addressed to Vincentius the Rogatist bishop of the town of Cartenna in Mauretania, Augustine quotes these verses and adds: *et tu sedes Cartennis et cum decem Rogatistis, qui remansistis, dicis: 'Non fiat, non fiat.'*²⁴⁶

²⁴²*Sermo* 358.3 (PL 39.1587-8).

²⁴³*Enarr. in Ps.* 71.19 (CCL 39.984-5).

²⁴⁴*ibid.* (CCL 39.985).

²⁴⁵*ibid.*

²⁴⁶*Ep.* 93.20 (CSEL 34/2.465).

h. Ps. 95(96):1²⁴⁷

The main point in Augustine's use of this text against the Donatists is his claim that the communion from which the Donatists have separated themselves, is the universal communion of the *Catholica* to which the verse is addressed.²⁴⁸ The *canticum novum* is to be sung in the Spirit in the only safe way - the way known *in omnibus gentibus*. The new song *non pertinet ad partem. Qui in parte cantat, vetus cantat; quodlibet cantet, vetus cantat, vetus homo cantat; divisus est, carnalis est.*²⁴⁹

Enarr. in Ps. 95

Augustine begins his exposition by calling attention to the title of the Psalm.²⁵⁰ Some may be led by it to expect that the Psalm will be about the building of a literal temple. But when linked with v.1, the title cannot refer to the literal temple of Solomon. The house is being built by God but not in the place where Solomon built his temple. The stones sing as the *domus* is being built and they sing in all the earth. What they sing is

²⁴⁷"cantate domino canticum novum, cantate domino omnis terra." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.24 (BA 28.456). For Optatus' use of Ps. 95(96):1-3 to argue the case that since only the church can truly praise God and that since the text speaks of God's praise in omnibus populis, the Donatists would be wrong to claim that God's praise exists only among them. Vd. Optatus, *Contra Donat.* 2.1 (SC 412.240-1).

²⁴⁸*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.24 (BA 28.456). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.47.110 (BA 30.372) where the verse is used to counter Donatist appropriation of Ps. 22(23), with the comment, "omnis ergo terra, in cuius unitate non estis, cantat canticum novum." Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.45.146 (BA 30.408); *Contra Gaudent.* 1.20.22 (BA 32.554).

²⁴⁹Allusions to 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Cor. 3:1. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 66.6 (CCL 39.863), 97.1 (CCL 39.1372), 149.2-3 (CCL 40.2179). Cf. *Sermones* 33.5 (PL 38.209), 46.40 (PL 38.294), 163.3-4 (PL 38.890-1); *Epp.* 140.44 (CSEL 44/3.192, 142.2 (CSEL 44/3.249).

²⁵⁰"Quando domus aedificabatur post captivitatem." *Enarr. in Ps. 95.1* (CCL 39.1342). Augustine's Latin version follows the LXX. The title is lacking in the Hebrew text.

a new song for *vetus cantat cupiditas carnis: novum cantat caritas Dei*.²⁵¹ It is the whole earth that sings the new song and throughout it the house of God is being built.²⁵²

The *captivitas* to which the title refers is that of the devil, from which the *totus orbis* is redeemed by Christ at the price of his blood. It is because they are redeemed that the house is said to be built after the captivity. They are *ingrati pretio suo* who claim that the price paid was so small that it purchased only the Africans or who believe that they themselves *tam magnos esse* that it was paid for them alone.²⁵³ Clearly with the Donatists in view, Augustine comments, *si omnis terra domus Dei, qui non haeret omni terrae, ruina est, non domus*.²⁵⁴

Through the preaching of the Gospel, the *domus* is being built throughout the nations. At the present time it is still being built, for although it has greatly increased and filled many nations, it has not yet occupied all nations. To this house objection is made (*contradicatur*) *ab eis qui domesticos eius se esse gloriantur, et dicitur: Iam decrevit*. The truth is that the house is growing and all those nations which have not yet believed, are destined to do so. With his cross Christ has defeated kings and fixed *ipsam crucem in fronte* so that these kings glory in it *quia ibi est salus eorum*. In this way the house increases as the following vv. which depict them *operantes et fabricantés domum* make clear.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ *Enarr. in Ps. 95.2* (CCL 39.1343).

²⁵² *ibid.* Cf. "cantando aedificatur, credendo fundatur, sperando erigitur, diligendo perficitur." *Sermo 27.1* (PL 38.178).

²⁵³ *Enarr. in Ps. 95.5* (CCL 39.1346-7). Cf. *Sermo 27.2* (PL 38.178-9).

²⁵⁴ *Enarr. in Ps. 95.2* (CCL 39.1343).

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

The Donatists choose to declare their own honour rather than the Lord's and refuse to dwell in that house. They, therefore, do not share the new song with all the earth. Far from joining in building the true house, *parietem dealbatum erexerunt*.²⁵⁶ A certain person²⁵⁷ has pointed out that just as anyone who enters by a door made in a wall that stands alone inevitably finds himself outdoors, so those (the Donatists) who refuse to sing *canticum novum cum domo* and thus choose to build a wall on its own, are found outside the church, *Quia enim ipsi non per ianuam introierunt, et ianua ipsorum non intromittit*.²⁵⁸

The charge given in v. 3 is to declare the Lord's glory *in gentibus*. Plausibly, perhaps, the reference here could be taken to be to only a few and *illa pars quae erexit parietem dealbatum* might say, *Quare non gentes sunt Getulia, Numidia, Mauretania, Byzacium? Provinciae gentes sunt*. Augustine will not, however, permit its restriction to these strongholds of Donatism. Let God's word (*sermo*) remove *sermonem hypocrisi parieti dealbato, aedificans domum toto orbe terrarum*. The universality of the reference is established in the immediately following words, *In omnibus populis mirabilia eius*.²⁵⁹

We are called to worship the Lord *in atrio sancto eius* (v.9). This refers to the *ecclesia catholica*. Addressing the Donatists, he says, *Ad parietem dealbatum*

²⁵⁶Most probably an allusion to Ezek. 13:10. *Enarr. in Ps.* 95.3 (CCL 39.1344). There is a probable allusion here to the Donatist practice of "cleansing" Catholic churches by coating them with whitewash. Cf. Brown (1967), 219.

²⁵⁷"Quidam", sc. Optatus of Milevis. For Optatus' treatment of the image of the "paries dealbatus", vd. *Contra Donat.* 3.10 (SC 413. 64-70).

²⁵⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 95.3 (CCL 39.1345).

²⁵⁹v.3. *Enarr. in Ps.* 95.3 (CCL 39.1345).

*vocatis; in atrio sancto adoro Deum meum.*²⁶⁰ Testimonies to the building of the house of God are provided in v.11. The *nubes caelorum* thunder *per totum orbem terrarum* that the house of God is being built. But *clamant ranae de palude: Nos soli sumus christiani.*²⁶¹

3.2.4 Other Old Testament texts

a. Cant. 1:6-7²⁶²

This appears to have been a favourite text of the Donatists as supporting, on their interpretation, the exclusive claims made on behalf of their communion.²⁶³ Augustine claims that when the unity of the world-wide church is pressed on the Donatists and when asked for some testimony from Scripture in which God foretold that the church would exist only in Africa, while the rest of the nations were lost to it, *hoc solent testimonium in ore habere, et dicere, Africa in meridie est.*²⁶⁴ For Augustine, therefore, it was of great importance to refute Donatist use of the text and to provide a convincing counter-interpretation. This he seeks to do in the treatise *Ep. ad Cath.*

²⁶⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 95.10 (CCL 39.1350).

²⁶¹"ranae" = frogs: the Donatists. *Enarr. in Ps.* 95.11 (CCL 39.1350).

²⁶²V.6: "Annuntia mihi, quem dilexit anima mea, ubi pascis, ubi cubas in meridie. Ne forte fiam sicut operta super greges sodalium tuorum." *Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.618). V.7: Nisi cognoveris temet ipsam, o pulchra in mulieribus, exi tu in vestigiis gregum et pasce haedos tuos in tabernaculis pastorum." *Contra Gaudent.* 1.17.18 (BA 32.538-40).

²⁶³Vd. *Ep. ad Cath.* 24.69. Cf. *Sermo* 46.36 (CCL 41.561), 138.9 (PL 38.768). Tilley, who takes a suspicious view of Catholic, including Augustinian, writings as a source for Donatist teachings, recognizes the vigour of Augustine's polemical deployment of this verse as reliable evidence of its use by the Donatists in the way alleged by Augustine. Vd. Tilley (1997), 5.

²⁶⁴*Sermo* 138.9 (PL 38.768). Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 24.69 (BA 28. 690) and *Ep. ad Cath.* 19.51 (BA 28. 652f.) with specific reference to this text: "videtis enim unicum illud, quod proferre consuestis."

Donatist interpreters understood the text to contain, first, the request of the bride (the church), *Annuntia mihi, quem dilexit anima mea, ubi pascis, ubi cubas*, followed by the reply of the bridegroom (Christ) in the words, *in meridie*. They understood *in meridie* as meaning "in the south," hence Africa, where the true (Donatist) church is located. This is where Christ feeds his flock and takes his rest. Tilley claims that the Donatists had precedent in Cyprian for the use of Cant. 1:6 to foster exclusivity.²⁶⁵ This, however, is something of an overstatement. Cyprian quotes three texts from Cant. (4:12, 15, 13; 5:2a; 6:8) and interprets them in accordance with the principle, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.²⁶⁶ But Cyprian had in mind the universal (world-wide) church and it is not likely that he would have interpreted Cant. 1:6 (which, in fact, he never quotes) along Donatist lines. Tyconius, in turn, contrasts *meridianum*, which belongs to the Lord, with *aquilo*, the possession of the devil, but he interprets both symbolically: *utraque autem pars in toto mundo*.²⁶⁷

Augustine posits a number of objections to the Donatist understanding of this verse. Grammatically, they are wrong to ascribe the words *in meridie* to the bridegroom. The phrase, rather, is part of the address of the *sponsa*. The proof is found in the following words, where *operta* is feminine singular.²⁶⁸ It is the (one) church which both addresses the bridegroom and asks where it (the church) is to be found *in meridie*. The text, therefore, does not prove that the church is found *in sola parte meridiana* rather than being *in aliis mundi partibus constituta*.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵Tilley (1997), 149.

²⁶⁶eg. *De unit.* 1.4-6 (CCL 3.249-52). Cf. Fahey (1971), 169-71.

²⁶⁷*LR* 7 (Babcock [1989], 124).

²⁶⁸*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28. 620). Augustine pours scorn on, supposed, Donatist ignorance of grammar: "Puto omnes peritos imperitosque discernere genus masculinum et femininum." *Sermo* 46. 36 (PL 38.290). Cf. *Sermo* 138.10 (PL 38.768-9).

²⁶⁹*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.618). Cf. *Sermo* 138.9 (PL 38.768).

Allowing the Donatist interpretation of *meridies*, Augustine suggests that the question posed in the text is that of certain members of Christ (*quaedam membra eius, id est boni fideles*) who have travelled to Africa *ex partibus transmarinis*, and when they learn that the *partem Donati* is there, call on Christ in fear *ne incidant in manus alicuius rebaptizatoris*.²⁷⁰ It is not the *sponsus* she fears but the *sodales* who have abandoned the true flock and who feed each his own flock. These are the Donatist *haeretici*, as v.7 makes clear.²⁷¹ The church cannot go with these other shepherds because she does not wish to be like a veiled woman, an *operta, latens et incognita et non revelata*, as if belonging not to the flock of the *sponsus* but to that of the *sodales*.²⁷² They were once with the *sponsus* but chose rather to gather their own flocks, deaf to his words: *qui mecum non colligit spargit*²⁷³ and to his charge to Peter: *Pasce oves meas*,²⁷⁴ *non 'oves tuas'*, adds Augustine.²⁷⁵

The true church is not like an *operta*, as texts like Matt. 5: 14-5 indicate. But to the Donatists she is such, for despite the clearest testimonies to her presence *toto orbe*, they choose to close their eyes and trip over the mountain described in Dan 2:34-5 which filled the whole earth, rather than to climb it.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.618-20). Cf. *Contra Gaudent.* 1.17.18 (BA 32.536-40).

²⁷¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28. 618-20). Cf. *Sermones* 46.36 (CCL 41.561-2), 138.7,8 (PL 38.766-7, 146.2 (PL 38.797); *Ep.* 93.28 (CSEL 34/2. 472-3).

²⁷²*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.620).

²⁷³Matt. 12:30. Vd. infra for discussion of this text.

²⁷⁴Jn. 21:17. Vd. infra for a discussion of this text.

²⁷⁵*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.620).

²⁷⁶*ibid.* Cf. *Sermones* 147A.3 (MA 1.52-3), 295.5 (PL 38.1350-1).

Augustine also seeks to establish another, symbolic, sense for *meridie* as used in v.6. He refers to the prayer attributed to Moses: *dextram notam fac mihi et eruditos corde in sapientiam*.²⁷⁷ In Scripture *meridies* represents the light both of wisdom and of love. Thus, when the Spirit of God, through the prophets, exhorts a man to good works, he also gives him the promise, “and your darkness will be as *meridies*”.²⁷⁸ *Meridies*, argues Augustine, can therefore scarcely mean a part of the world. But even if the Donatist interpretation is upheld and the reply to the question is given *de terreno loco in meridie*, Egypt has a better claim than Africa to be the referent of *meridie*, since Egypt is true south (*austrum*), while Africa is situated in the south west (*ad africanum*).²⁷⁹

If the church, then, is asking the bridegroom *de loco familiaris dilecto et cubili quodam suo secreto*, and he replies, *In meridie*, the Catholic church would recognize this in his members in Egypt. There thousands of God's servants are found *qui per heremum sancta societate vivunt*, applying themselves to keep *perfectionem praecepti evangelici*, as found in Matt. 19:21.²⁸⁰ How much more pleasingly could the Son of God be said to feed and rest there *quam in turbis inquietis furiosorum circumcellionum, quod malum Africae proprium est*. It was, after all, concerning Egypt that the prophecy recorded in Isa. 19:19-22 was made.²⁸¹ The truth is that the Donatists stand defeated on either a figurative or a literal interpretation of *meridie*. The question to be answered by the Donatists is why they are not in communion with

²⁷⁷Ps. 89(90).12. *Ep. ad Cath.* 16.41 (BA 28.620).

²⁷⁸Isa. 58:10.

²⁷⁹For a helpful discussion of the distinctions here, vd. Congar, “Definition géographique du Midi”, BA 28.748, n.c. 44.

²⁸⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.41 (BA 28.622).

²⁸¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.41 (BA 28.622-4).

the church of Egypt, thus prophesied. Or if, *praefiguratione prophetica*, Egypt signifies the world, the question awaiting an answer is *Quare non communicant ecclesiae orbis terrarum*.²⁸²

Augustine also finds divisions in the Donatist communion of use in countering their interpretation of this text. On close inspection it turns out, he tells them, *longe aliud indicat quam vos putatis*.²⁸³ Even on their understanding of the text, the bad news is that *Maximianistae vos in eo vincerent*.²⁸⁴ The reason is that the Maximianist schism took place in Byzacena which is further south than the Donatist stronghold of Numidia (*ubi vos praepolletis*).²⁸⁵

A more extended and dramatic treatment of the bridegroom's reply, in v.7, is found in *Sermo* 46. The bridegroom's words, *Nisi cognoveris temetipsam*, are interpreted to mean: *agnosce viriliter, femina, temetipsam*. The bride should take a manly view of herself.²⁸⁶ In the following threatening words, free from all *blandimenta*, the bridegroom tells the church that unless she recognizes her true self she should go out *in vestigiis gregum* and feed her goats (*hoedos*) *in tabernaculis pastorum* and not, be it noted, *in tabernaculo pastoris*.²⁸⁷

²⁸²*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.41 (BA 28.624).

²⁸³*Ep. ad Cath.* 19. 51 (BA 28.652).

²⁸⁴*ibid.*

²⁸⁵*ibid.* Cf. *Ep.* 93.24 (CSEL 34/2.469-70) where *in Byzantio* should be amended to *in Byzacio* since, apart from the improbability of such a small group extending so far afield, Byzantium (on the Bosphorus) is, by latitude, north of Africa.

²⁸⁶*Sermo* 46.36 (CCL 41.561).

²⁸⁷*Sermo* 46.36 (CCL 41.562).

The bride is concerned lest, with midday coming, when *ad umbracula concurrunt pastores*, she may somehow fail to recognize where the shepherd is feeding his flock and resting. Her fear, as an *operta*, is lest *incidam super greges sodalium tuorum*.²⁸⁸

The *sodales* are so called because having gone out from Christ whose hospitality they once accepted, they became bad shepherds, *habentes greges suos sub nomine Christi*. They are called *sodales* because *illius sodales fuerunt, illius convivium acceperunt*. Augustine finds in Ps. 55(56):12-13 an example of these *sodales malos, id est, unius convivii*, receiving deserved rebuke.²⁸⁹ Many *sodales, ingrati mensae dominicae*, went forth from the church and *fecerunt sibi suas mensas, erexerunt altaria contra altare*.²⁹⁰ It was over these that the bride feared to stumble.

The one who commends the unity of the shepherd and who says *Ego pascam*,²⁹¹ answers her *severissime non blande* but *pro magnitudine periculi*.²⁹² As *pulchra inter mulieres* she must acknowledge herself *in toto orbe terrarum*. Her beauty is that of world-wide unity. As she has believed in Christ, so she must acknowledge herself: *Cognosce te et me: me in caelo, te in toto orbe terrarum*.²⁹³ Otherwise she must follow the course of all heretics - *exire*. She will then follow *malos greges* and feed *hoedos* in place of *oves*. After all, Peter remaining inside was told, *Pasce oves meas*, while the command *exeunti haeretico* is, *Pasce hoedos tuos*.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁸ibid.

²⁸⁹ibid.

²⁹⁰*Sermo* 46.36 (CCL 41. 563).

²⁹¹Cf. Ezek. 34:15.

²⁹²*Sermo* 46.36 (CCL 41.563).

²⁹³*Sermo* 46.37 (CCL 41.564).

²⁹⁴*Sermo* 46.37 (CCL 41.565). Cf. *Contra Gaudent.* 1.18 (BA 32.540): "etiamsi te pastorem esse gloriaris, tamen, quia de ovili dominico existi, haedos tuos pascis, non ovis Christi."

3.3 New Testament Texts

For Augustine, the New Testament presents the *res* rather than the *signa* of Christ and the church. It is these *res* which figurative interpretation of the *signa* of the Old Testament discloses but the fulfilment of the christo-ecclesial prophetic content of the Old in the New Testament, makes the latter the most effective (and necessary) resource for direct exegetical/theological engagement with the Donatists. Thus the following texts are found mainly in the dogmatic treatises and their ecclesiological yield provides authoritative control and confirmation of Augustine's interpretation of Old Testament *obscura*, already considered. Again, attention will be given to the most significant examples of Augustine's procedure.

3.3.1 The Gospels

a. Matt. 5:14b-15²⁹⁵

Augustine identifies the *mons* of v.14b with that of Dan. 2:34-5.²⁹⁶ In opposition to the Donatists, for whom the church is *velut operta*,²⁹⁷ Matt 5:14b provides the reason why *ecclesia vera neminem lateat*.²⁹⁸ Her inability to lie hidden is the *certum signum* of the true church and the sure evidence that the Donatist communion does not

²⁹⁵Matt. 5:14b: "Non potest civitas abscondi super montem constituta." *Ep. ad Cath.* 28.16.40 (BA 28.620); Matt. 5:15: "neque accendunt lucernam et ponunt eam sub modio sed super candelabrum ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt." loc. cit.

²⁹⁶See above on this text. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.27 (BA 28.464); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.70.158 (BA 30.416; *Enarr. in Ps.* 44.33 (CCL 38.516-7).

²⁹⁷See above on Cant. 1:6-7.

²⁹⁸*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.32.74 (BA 30.320); *In Ioh. Ep.* 1.13 (SC 75.146); *Sermo* 295.5 (PL 38.1351); *Ep.* 93.29 (CSEL 34/2.474).

constitute such. *Nota est ergo omnibus gentibus; pars autem Donati ignota est pluribus gentibus, non est ergo ipsa.*²⁹⁹ Here on the mountain *exstat ecclesia cunctis clara atque conspicua*, the *civitas* through which Christ reigns from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.³⁰⁰ Here is the seed of Abraham, multiplied as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the shore *in quo benedicuntur omnes gentes.*³⁰¹ This is what *beatus Cyprianus* affirmed to the extent *ut eam dicit domini luce perfusam radios suos per orbem terrarum porrigere, ramos suos per universam terram copia ubertatis extendere.*³⁰²

Likewise, v.15 provides one of those *tam lucida et manifesta testimonia* which demonstrate that the church is *toto orbe* while *Donatistis velut operta est.*³⁰³ In the church of God was disclosed the mountain which fills the earth and there the light has been placed on the lamp-stand *quae lucet omnibus qui in domo sunt.*³⁰⁴ The light which is the light of the whole world comes only from Christ, “the true light which illumines everyone who comes into the world”.³⁰⁵

b. Lk. 24:47³⁰⁶

²⁹⁹*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.239 (BA 30.548)

³⁰⁰Ps. 71(72):8.

³⁰¹Gen. 22:17-8.

³⁰²*Contra Cresc.* 2.36.45 (BA 31.256). Cyprian, *De unit.* 5 (CCL 3.253).

³⁰³*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.620).

³⁰⁴*Enarr. in Ps.* 57.9 (CCL 39.9). Cf. *Epp.* 52.1 (CSEL 34/2.149), 23.4 (CSEL 34/1.67), 25.1 (CSEL 34/1.79).

³⁰⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 88/1.13 (CCL 39.1228). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 118/23.1 (CCL 40.1741); *In Ioh. Tr.* 54.4 (CCL 36.460-1).

³⁰⁶"Et praedicari...in nomine eius paenitentiam et remissionem peccatorum per omnes gentes incipientibus ab Hierusalem." *Ep. ad Cath.* 10.24 (BA 28.564).

This text in its context represented, for Augustine, one of the clearest and most effective scriptural witnesses to his view of catholicity against that of the Donatists. In the *Ep. ad Cath.*, his handling of it follows a discussion of the Donatist position on human free will. The Donatists, he says, do not dare to allege that the Old Testament texts he has cited as evidence for the geographical extension of the church *toto orbe* are false. They accept them as true but hold that free will has made their lasting fulfilment impossible. Because man has been created with free will, *si vult credit in Christum, si non vult non perseverat.*³⁰⁷ When the church, therefore, began to grow *per orbem terrarum* human beings chose not to persevere, *et defecit ex omnibus gentibus christiana religio excepta parte Donati.*³⁰⁸ Augustine pours scorn on the allegedly Donatist idea that the Spirit of God has no knowledge of what the will of human beings will be in the future. The truth is that if any prophecy of future events is certain of fulfilment, this is *quia deus etiam futuras praevidet voluntates.*³⁰⁹ This, reckons Augustine, should be self-evident, *et tardibus cordibus*, but the Word himself has spoken definitively on the subject in Lk. 24:47 and the preceding verses.

Augustine applies his *totus Christus* principle to the interpretation of vv. 44-6. After the resurrection he said to his doubting disciples, *isti sunt sermones quos locutus sum ad vos cum adhuc essem vobiscum, quia oportebat adimpleri omnia scripta in lege*

³⁰⁷*Ep. ad Cath.* 9.23 (BA 28.560).

³⁰⁸*ibid.* Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.84.185 (BA 30.451). As Congar says, "C"était en effet l'argumentation donatiste. Ils ne niaient pas que les prophéties aient été accomplies... Mais ils disaient qu'ensuite le mal avait prévalu, sauf en Afrique..." BA 28.560-1 n.2. For differences in the views of Augustine and Tyconius on the subject of free will, vd. Babcock (1979), 55-74. Although, as Tilley points out [(1979), 150], "we cannot know if this indeed was the Donatist view pure and simple," the strength of Augustine's attack on the alleged position would suggest that their understanding of grace and free will was very different from his own.

³⁰⁹*Ep. ad Cath.* 9.23 (BA 28.562).

*Moysi et prophetis et psalmis de me.*³¹⁰ Only as enemies of the truth can the Donatists deny the necessity for the fulfilment of all these things.³¹¹ The head is clearly pointing out his body the church in this text. The phrase *de me* is to be understood of the church in light of the Pauline text, *erunt duo in carne una.*³¹² This is made clear by the words of the evangelist which follow (vv.45-6), *tunc aperuit illis sensum, ut intellexerunt scripturas, et dixit illis: quoniam sic scriptum est et sic oportebat Christum pati et resurgere a mortuis tertia die.*³¹³ In this text the head is pointed out. But he also speaks of his body the church, *ut nos nec in sponso nec in sponsa errare permittat*, by adding, *et praedicari in nomine eius paenitentiam et remissionem peccatorum per omnes gentes, incipientibus ab Hierusalem.*³¹⁴ The Donatists should be ashamed to contradict the clarity of this statement. There may be some truth in the claim that the texts cited from the Old Testament are obscure and speak figuratively and may, therefore, sustain a different interpretation from the one given by Augustine. Certainly what Christ says in this passage is not obscure nor is it *aenigmati velamento inumbratum.*³¹⁵

If there is obscurity in the text, *dormivi conturbatus* (Ps. 56(57):5),³¹⁶ there is none in the words of v.46, *quia oportet Christum pati*. If the cry, *exaltare super caelos, deus* (Ps. 56:6), is obscure, there is no obscurity in the words *et resurgere tertia die* (v.46). If this announcement is obscure, *super omnem terram gloria tua* (Ps. 56(57):6), the following is not, *et praedicare in nomine eius paenitentiam et*

³¹⁰Lk. 24:44. *Ep. ad Cath.* 10.24 (BA 28.562).

³¹¹ibid.

³¹²*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.24 (BA 28.564).

³¹³ibid.

³¹⁴Lk. 24:47. ibid.

³¹⁵*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.25 (BA 28.564-6).

³¹⁶Vd. *Enarr. in Ps.* 56.11 (CCL 39.701).

remissionem peccatorum per omnes gentes (v.47).³¹⁷ The oracle stating that *ex Sion species decoris eius* (Ps. 49(50):2) may be obscure but not the formula of v.47, *incipientibus ab Hierusalem*.³¹⁸

If the Donatists deny a connection between Augustine's quotations from the Law, Prophets and Psalms and the Lord's words recorded in Luke they must explain why the Lord said of these or of other Old Testament texts, *oportet adimpleri omnia quae scripta sunt in lege Moysi et prophetis et psalmis de me...* and went on to open their understanding to understand what was written there (Lk. 24:44-5).³¹⁹ The fact is, says Augustine, that even if the Lord had made no reference to Old Testament prophecies, the explicit command of Christ himself in v. 47 was enough for Christians. It was as a concession to the weakness of his doubting disciples that he sought to fortify them through the witness of the Scriptures, as a more striking proof than the visible and palpable presence of his resurrection body. Augustine concludes, *teneamus ergo ecclesiam ex ore domini designatam, unde coeptura et quo usque perventura esset, coeptura scilicet ab Hierusalem et perventura in omnes gentes*.³²⁰

At this point Augustine, demonstrating his ability to insist on the literal, against the figurative sense, when required, proceeds to counter a possible objection that *Hierusalem* in v.47 requires figurative interpretation. The reference, on this view, is not to *illam visibilem civitatem* but is to be understood figuratively of the whole

³¹⁷*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.25 (BA 28.566).

³¹⁸*ibid.*

³¹⁹*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.25 (BA 28.566-8).

³²⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.25 (BA 28.568).

church, *aeterna in caelis et ex parte in terris peregrina*.³²¹ By way of answer, Augustine appeals to the manifestly literal meaning of the previous verse (v.46) in its reference to the death and resurrection of Christ. Anyone who holds that these events were purely symbolic *nec quoque modo christianus habendus est*. Just as this verse is to be received in its proper sense (*proprie*) so is the following one *de omnium gentium ecclesia incipiente ab Hierusalem*.³²² Moreover, since the Lord is explaining that these facts have been prophesied concerning him in the Law, Prophets and Psalms, the explanation itself cannot be metaphorical, *alioquin non esset expositio*.³²³ Also, while Jerusalem, in the figurative and spiritual sense, represents the universal church, the literal sense is needed to make the text intelligible, otherwise, *quomodo universa ecclesia incipit ab universa ecclesia, tamquam Hierusalem incipiat ab Hierusalem?*³²⁴ Clearly, then, we are dealing here with the literal sense of Jerusalem.

In order to remove every hiding place for the cunning of *haeretici*, the Lord adds (vv. 48-9), *et vos testes horum, et ego mitto promissionem meam super vos; vos autem sedete in civitate, quoad usque induamini virtute ex alto*.³²⁵ The city in which the disciples were commanded to remain until endowed with power from above is the same city from which *coepturam praedixit ecclesiam*. The concluding verses of Luke, with their reference to the disciples return to and activity in Jerusalem following the ascension, place beyond doubt the correctness of the literal interpretation of Jerusalem in the context: *produxit autem illos usque Bethaniam, et levavit manus suas et*

³²¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.26 (BA 28.568).

³²²*ibid.*

³²³*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.26 (BA 28.568-70).

³²⁴*Ep. ad Cath.* 10.26 (BA 28.570).

³²⁵*ibid.*

*benedixit illos. et factum est, cum benedixisset illos, discessit ab eis. et ipsi reversi sunt cum gaudio magno in Hierusalem, et fuerunt semper in templo laudentes deum.*³²⁶

The claim tirelessly made by Augustine is that by refusing communion with the universal church, the Donatists have cut themselves off from the inheritance of Christ. With reference to vv. 46-7, Augustine says, *ecce a qua hereditate vos alienatis, ecce cui heredi resistitis.*³²⁷

The responsiveness of these verses to the *totus Christus* interpretative principle ensures that they feature also in the sermonic material to Donatist disadvantage. Donatists ought, he tells his congregation, to be able to understand from the text that there is really as little doubt about the identity of the church of Christ as about the reality of his resurrected body as shown to his disciples. After all, Donatists believe in the risen Christ and should, therefore, have no difficulty accepting his words in v.47.³²⁸ In what was possibly a sermon preached at the ordination as bishop of Fussala of Antoninus³²⁹ and which, as Hill comments, is full of irony in view of the

³²⁶Lk. 24:50-3. *Ep ad Cath.* 10.26 (BA 28.570).

³²⁷*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.8.70 (BA 30.244). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.13.30 (BA 30.252), 2.16.37 (BA 30.266), 2.73.164 (BA 30.423), 2.84.187 (BA 30.454), 2.104.239 (BA 30.544); *Contra Cresc.* 4.54.64 (BA 31.598), 4.58.70 (BA 31.616); *Contra Gaud.* 1.20.22 (BA 32.552) where Gaudentius is invited to understand from the text "quam fidem de ecclesia reliquit apostolis, quale testamentum quodammodo fecerit (Christus) non vitam finiturus, sed sine fine victurus...."; *Brev. Coll.* 1.7 (BA 32.102); *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 2.2 (BA 32.252), 18.24 (BA 32.306).

³²⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 147.18 (CCL 40.2155).

³²⁹So, eg., Morin. Two letters of Augustine shed light on the famous affair of Antoninus, bishop of Fussala c. 415-23: *Ep.* 209 (CSEL 57/2.347-53) to Pope Celestine and *Ep.* 20* (BA 46B. 292-342) to Fabiola, a Roman heiress. The appointment of the canonically underage and (as it transpired) utterly rapacious Antoninus to the see of Fussala, completely Donatist prior to the imperial ban of 412, led to a serious crisis of credibility for Augustine. Divjak's *Ep.* 20* "demonstrates that papal verdicts were becoming decisive for disciplinary cases too difficult to resolve in Africa". Art. "Antoninus of Fussala", in Fitzgerald (1999), 47. Cf. Art. "Antoninus Fussalensis episcopus", in A-L 1.378-80 and van der Meer (1961), 230-1; Perler (1969), 370-73.

unhappy outcome of the ordination,³³⁰ Augustine imagines a legal contest being conducted between Catholics and Donatists before the divine tribunal. In this contest he makes Lk. 24:39-47 function as the *instrumenta hereditatis ipsius* in order to draw attention to the contradiction whereby the Donatists believe what is said *de capite* while rejecting what is said *de corpore*.³³¹ This enables him to perform one of his favourite table-turning exercises in deflecting the original Donatist charge of *traditio* back on themselves: *Tabulae dominicae leguntur, evangelium dominicum loquitur: quid mihi calumniaris, quia ego incendi tabulas istas?* Donatist disdain for the *evangelium dominicum* is far more deserving of the charge than are the Catholics who obey it.³³²

The disciples to whom the risen Christ appeared could not yet see the church spread throughout the nations, but they could see its risen head. The sight of Christ enabled them to believe in the church that was still to be. They could believe Christ in what he said about the body.³³³ On the other hand, present day Christians see the body and this leads them to believe in the (as yet) unseen head. As the disciples saw the one and believed the other, so must we, for head and body are inseparable.³³⁴ Donatist failure to accept this text, says Augustine, means that they really wish to decapitate the

³³⁰Rotelle III/9.307.

³³¹*Sermo* 340A.11 (MA 1.574).

³³²*Sermo* 340A.11 (MA 1.575). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 57.6 (CCL 39.714), *Sermo* 162A.10 (MA1.108), *In Ioh. Ep.* 10.10 (SC 75.438).

³³³*Sermo* 116.6 (PL 38.660). Elsewhere he speaks of the Donatists claiming Christ as the exclusive bridegroom of their own party. The wedding documents, he responds, as found in Lk. 24:46-7 state otherwise, "Ergo si tu dicis, Christus est sponsus partis Donati; ego tabulas lego, et invenio esse Christum sponsum Ecclesiae diffusae toto orbe terrarum." *Sermo* 183.11 (PL 38.991-2).

³³⁴*Sermo* 229I.2 (MA1.325). Cf. "Nemo tibi fabulas vendat, non latret rabies haereticorum de angulo..." The world-wide church of v. 47, ipsa est vera, ipsa est catholica. Christum non vidimus, hanc videmus: de illo credamus. Apostoli e contra illum videbant, de ista credebant." *Sermo* 238.3 (PL 38.1126).

church.³³⁵ The Donatists wish *corpus relinquere, quasi exanime corpus*. Their problem, however, is that *qui decollare vult, et caput et corpus conatur occidere*. The contradiction in their position is that while *erubescunt negare Christum...non erubescunt negare verba Christi*.³³⁶

On the basis of this text, Donatist claims to catholicity are dismissed. Crispinus, for example, the Donatist bishop of Calama (a town about 40 miles from Hippo), stated before the court of the proconsul: *Catholicus sum*. This claim cannot be accepted for a true Catholic obeys the injunction: *totum tene*. He explains: *holon enim totum est, et inde appellata est ecclesia catholica, quia per totum est*.³³⁷ The church has never been known as *catamerica*, as the Donatist position would require.³³⁸ Donatists cannot be described as Catholic because they are not in communion with the church described in v.47.³³⁹ A true Catholic is not someone from Numidia, as Crispinus implied. The very word *catholica* which is Greek and not Punic, should have taught him so. Augustine adds: *Interpretem quaere. Merito erras in lingua, qui non consentis omnibus linguis*.³⁴⁰

³³⁵"Quid tibi fecit Ecclesia, ut eam velis quodam modo decollare." *Sermo* 129.9 (PL 38.725).

³³⁶ibid. Elsewhere, employing the metaphor of the vine found in Ps. 79(80):8-11, he describes as *in vite* those who are in communion with the universal church "quae crevit et implevit totum orbem terrarum, corpus Christi, ecclesia Christi, cuius caput est in caelo". The Donatists are not "in vite" because they are in communion only with Africans. From Africa they send out those "qui consolentur peregrinos" - a reference presumably to the Donatist community in Rome. *Sermo* 162A.10 (MA1.108).

³³⁷*Sermo* 162A.10 (MA1.108). On Crispinus vd. Frend (1971)760-1.

³³⁸Augustine appears to have coined the word for his purpose, on the model of "catholica", in order to yield the opposite meaning: "according to the part." He explains that "meros" means "pars". *Sermo* 162A.10 (MA1.108).

³³⁹ibid. Cf. *In Ioh. Ep.* 3.7 (SC 75.198-200), 10.8 (SC 75.430).

³⁴⁰*Sermo* 162A.10 (MA1.109). Cf. *Sermo* 268.4 (PL 38.1233); *Ep.* 129.2 (CSEL 44/2.35).

Again, the Donatist position implies that the church arrived in Africa from Jerusalem by means of emigration. On the contrary, says Augustine, it only reached Africa from Jerusalem because it spread there by filling the intervening areas.³⁴¹ He tells the Donatists that his concern is not that the *rivus de fonte* dried up along the way but: *ne tu siccaveris: etenim omnis rivus a fonte praecisus siccet necesse est*. With a measure of unrecognized irony, he says that the very harshness with which Donatists speak against the Catholic church is evidence enough that they are cut off *a fonte*: *De siccitate aspera loquuntur adversus ecclesiam: lenia loquerentur, si rigarentur*.³⁴²

Nor can the Donatists produce any convincing Scripture testimony to the effect that the church would die out in other parts of the world and survive in Africa alone.³⁴³

Referring in a sermon to the recently held Conference of Carthage in 411, he reminds his people how on that occasion it was pointed out that even if the case concerning Caecilian had proved indefensible, in the light of Lk. 24:47 it would be ridiculous to suggest that the testimony of a handful of men could prejudge *tot millibus fidelium toto orbe terrarum multiplici fecunditate diffusorum*.³⁴⁴ *promisit?*³⁴⁵ Against the clear *testimonia* of Scripture regarding the universal church, the Donatists were unable to reply.³⁴⁶

³⁴¹Ibid. The origins of the church in Africa are, in fact, shrouded in obscurity. Augustine is arguing, not very convincingly, that the gospel could only have come to Africa by first passing through the countries lying between it and Palestine.

³⁴²ibid.

³⁴³*Ep.* 129.2 (CSEL 44/2.35).

³⁴⁴*Sermo* 359.5 (PL 39.1594).

³⁴⁵ibid.

³⁴⁶ibid. 1594-5.

One particularly interesting instance of Augustine's use of Lk. 24:47 in an anti-Donatist context is found in *Sermo* 46. There he deploys it to counter an alleged use by the Donatists of Hab. 3:3, which Augustine quotes in the form, *Deus ab Africo veniet, et sanctus de monte umbroso*.³⁴⁷ Donatists claim that God will come *ab Africo, et iam ubi Africus, utique Africa*. The question to be addressed, however, is what exactly this means, *Deus ab Africa veniet*.³⁴⁸ It would have been disgraceful enough of them to have claimed, *Deus in Africa remansit*, but they go beyond that. Catholic knowledge of the past and present *ubi* of the gospel reduces Donatist claims to absurdity.³⁴⁹

Augustine finds disproof of the Donatist claims in the text itself. These cannot rest on both *ab Africa* and *de monte umbroso*. The latter phrase renders their claim spurious.³⁵⁰ The reason is that the *pars Donati* took its beginnings *de Numidia*.³⁵¹ Numidia is so bare that *muscarium*³⁵² *vix invenitur* and the dwellers live *in cupsonibus*.³⁵³ The *pars Donati* do not come, therefore, *de monte umbroso*. In

³⁴⁷*Sermo* 46.39 (CCL 41.566). Hill finds the rendering *Africo* puzzling, pointing out that the LXX simply transliterates the Hebrew תֵּימָן (=Teman), the district of Edom. Vd. Rotelle(1990) III/2.290. Both this and the Vulgate rendering (*austro*), however, are clearly intended to reflect the meaning of the Hebrew word: "south" or "south wind". Cf. Gesenius (1907) 412. For *umbroso* the Vulgate has Pharan. The rendering used by Augustine probably was made on the assumption that the underlying Hebrew place name פְּאֵרָא derives from פְּאֵרָא meaning "bough". The noun is regularly used in the plural for the (shade-giving) branches of a tree. Vd. Brown, etc (1906) 802-3.

³⁴⁸*Sermo* 46.38 (CCL 41.566).

³⁴⁹"Novimus ubi sit natus Christus, ubi sit passus, ubi in caelum ascenderit, ubi discipulos serit, ubi eos sancto spiritu impleverit, ubi per totum mundum euangelizare iusserit, et obtemperaverunt, et impletur orbis terrarum euangelio. Et tu dicis: Deus ab Africa veniet." *ibid*.

³⁵⁰*ibid*. 566-7.

³⁵¹*ibid*. 567. Augustine is referring to the Numidian opposition to the election of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage.

³⁵²Hill translates "fly-whisk bush" from the normal meaning of the word "fly-whisk." Rotelle (1990) III/2. 297. Lewis & Short offer as one meaning of *muscarium* the botanical *umbel*.

³⁵³The word is otherwise unattested. Suggestions re. the meaning of *cupso* include "cave" and "tent". As Hill points out, if the word is Punic it may be related to the Hebrew verb צָבַע meaning "draw together" or "fold up". This would give credibility to the latter rendering. Rotelle (1990), III/2.297.

Numidia you find *nuda omnia, pingues quidem campos, sed frumentarios, non olivetis fertiles, non ceteris nemoribus amoenos*. He asks: *Unde ergo mons umbrosus in Numidiae partibus, unde hoc scandalum venit?*³⁵⁴

The true and straightforward explanation of Hab. 3:3 he finds in the light of Lk. 24:46-7. In saying *incipientibus ab Hierusalem* the Lord was foretelling *unde utique se in sanctis suis ad alias gentes venturum esse*. If the Donatists care to read about the division of the land among the tribes of the children of Israel *in libro Iesu Nave*, they will find the key to the matter clearly expressed there: *Iebus ab Africo, quae est Hierusalem*.³⁵⁵ This, he says, confirms that the first part of Hab. 3:3 is to be interpreted in terms of the *incipientibus ab Hierusalem* of Lk. 24:47. The meaning of *de monte umbroso* is also made clear in the gospel. The ascension took place *a monte Oliveti*. That this is the *mons umbrosus* of Hab. is made clear by his following words: *cooperiet montes umbra eius, et gloria eius plena est terra*. These words the Donatists ignore and omit. Hab. 3:3 can thus be seen to correspond to *per omnes gentes, incipientibus ab Hierusalem*.³⁵⁶ It was from the mount of Olives that Christ sent out his disciples and it was there that he spoke to them the words recorded in Acts 1:7-8.³⁵⁷ When, therefore, Christ comes in the preaching of the gospel throughout the nations, *operiet montes umbra eius* which signifies *refrigerium eius, protectio eius*, and thus, *laudis eius plena est terra*. Let then the *novum canticum* be sung, he concludes, *non canticum vetus cum angulo terrae*.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴*Sermo* 46.39 (CCL 41.568).

³⁵⁵Josh. 18:28. *Sermo* 46.40 (CCL 41.568).

³⁵⁶*ibid.*

³⁵⁷*Sermo* 46.40 (CCL 41.568-9).

³⁵⁸*Sermo* 46.40 (CCL 41.569).

3.3.2 The Book of Acts

a. Acts 1:8³⁵⁹

Augustine highlights the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8 as lending further support to his (Jesus') own words expressed through the law, prophets and psalms, as well as by his own mouth, that the church prophesied beforehand would begin at Jerusalem and reach the ends of the earth.³⁶⁰ The unfolding story of the church in the book of Acts shows how the Lord's words in Acts 1:8 were realised.³⁶¹

The Donatists seek to justify their small numbers on the basis of a few texts³⁶² while *in sanctis ecclesiae multitudinem toto orbe diffusam blasphemare non cessant*.³⁶³ Like Catholic Christians, they should come to believe, not only these texts, but all of Scripture, including texts of such clarity as Acts 1:8 and Lk. 24:47.³⁶⁴ Petilian is alleged to have quoted the beatitude, *Beati mansueti, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram*³⁶⁵ only to deny its applicability to the Catholics, *vos igitur non mansueti terram et caelum pariter perdidistis*.³⁶⁶ Augustine's response is to call them to listen

³⁵⁹Augustine refers to Acts 1:1-8 for the purpose in hand, but particularly v.8: "sed accipietis virtutem spiritus sancti supervenientem in vos, et eritis mihi testes in Hierusalem et in tota Iudaea et Samaria et usque in totam terram." *Ep. ad Cath.* 11.27 (BA 28.572).

³⁶⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 11.27 (BA 28.572).

³⁶¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 11.30 (BA 28.582).

³⁶²Augustine refers to Gen. 5:24, 7:1, 19:12 (used by Petilian) & 3 Reg. 11-12. Vd. *Ep. ad Cath.* 13.33 (BA 28.596).

³⁶³*ibid.*

³⁶⁴*ibid.* Cf. 19.51 (BA 28.654), 24.70 (BA 28.692); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.38.91 (BA 30.350), 2.43.102 (BA 30.362), 2.55.126 (BA 30.392) 2.58.132 (BA 30.396).

³⁶⁵Matt. 5:4.

³⁶⁶*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.64.143 (BA 30.406).

iterum atque iterum to the Lord speaking in Acts 1:8 and to ask, *Cur non ergo illi perdiderunt terram et caelum, qui, ut non communicent universae terrae, contemnunt verba sedentis in caelo.*³⁶⁷

In short, this text is taken to represent the beginning of the fulfilment of prophecies like those of Ps. 112(113):3 and Ps. 44(45):11. Only spiritual blindness prevented the Donatists from sharing the vision.³⁶⁸

d. Acts 10:11-15³⁶⁹

Peter's vision of the great sheet let down from heaven, containing (ceremonially) unclean animals, reptiles and birds was one "cher à Augustine"³⁷⁰ and received both literal and figurative exegesis. The former stays with the apostolic and contextual exposition. That this vision was intended to establish that the whole gentile world would come to faith is clear, says Augustine, since *ipse quippe apostolus hoc exponit in illo vase sibi demonstratum.*³⁷¹ He does this through Peter's words in v.28, *vos melius scitis quomodo abominandum sit viro Iudaeo iungi aut accedere ad alienigenam; sed mihi deus ostendit nullum communem aut inquinatum dicere*

³⁶⁷*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.64.144 (BA 30.406). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.97.224 (BA 30.514), 2.99.228 (BA 30.524). In the *Contra Gaudent.* Augustine describes Acts 1:6-8 as the words of the bridegroom entrusting his bride to his friends as he departs. The Donatists have betrayed this trust. *Contra Gaudent.* 1.20.22 (BA 32.554). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 49.5 (CCL 38.579).

³⁶⁸*Sermo* 267.3 (PL 38.1230-1). Cf. *Epp.* 93.21 (CSEL 34/2.466), 185.5 (CSEL 57/2.4), 199.48 (CSEL 57/2.287).

³⁶⁹"Caelum apertum et quattuor initiis ligatum vas quoddam tamquam linteum limpidum, in quo omne genus quadrupedum ac ferarum et volucrum caeli. et factum est vox: Petre, surge, macta et manduca. ait autem Petrus: domine, numquam manducavi omne commune et immundum. et vox rursus ad eum: quae deus mundavit tu ne communia dixeris." *Ep. ad Cath.* 11.30 (BA 28.584-6).

³⁷⁰Congar, BA 28.568, n.1. Vd. Pontet (1945), 429-30.

³⁷¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 11.30 (BA 28.586).

*hominem.*³⁷² This explains the divine words of v.15, *quae deus mundavit tu ne communia dixeris*. It is clear, he holds, that the sheet signifies *orbem terrarum cum omnibus gentibus*. The binding of the sheet by the four corners was intended to represent the four parts of the earth: *propter notissimas quattuor orbis partes orientem et occidentem, austrum et aquilonem, quas saepissime scriptura commendat.*³⁷³

In his preaching, Augustine breaks free from the restriction imposed by the demands of literal interpretation. Commenting on Ps. 103(104):11,³⁷⁴ he takes the words of the text to refer to the Gentiles and adduces two scriptural proofs for this. One is Noah's ark, given long in advance,³⁷⁵ while the other was provided when the precise time arrived for that to be fulfilled which had been prefigured by the ark, *in ecclesia*. This was the vision given to Peter, *dubitans dare sacramentum euangelium gentibus incircumcisis; immo non dubitans, sed omnino dandum esse non putans....* The account in *Actibus Apostolorum omnibus bene legentibus et bene audientibus notum est*. His vision was an instance of what the Greeks call *ecstasin*.³⁷⁶ Augustine here describes the sheet as a *discus*³⁷⁷ held by four lines representing *orbis terrarum...in quattuor partibus*.³⁷⁸ Its being let down three times from heaven signifies the

³⁷²ibid.

³⁷³ibid.

³⁷⁴"Potabunt omnes bestiae silvae." *Enarr. in Ps. 103(104)/3.2* (CCL 40.1499).

³⁷⁵"qua nemo nostrum dubitat ecclesiam esse praefiguratam. All kinds of animals would not have been included in the ark "nis in illa unitate compaginis omnes gentes significarentur." *Enarr. in Ps. 103/3.2* (CCL 40.1499). Vd. supra for comments on his use of Noah's ark.

³⁷⁶ibid.

³⁷⁷*quoit* or *dish*.

³⁷⁸*Enarr. in Ps. 103/3.2* (CCL 40.1500). The unclean animals represented the gentiles who, prior to the coming of Christ, were "in erroribus et superstitionibus et concupiscentiis suis." But, with Christ's coming, their sins were forgiven and, with that, "quare non recipiantur in corpus Christi, quod est ecclesia Dei, cuius personam Petrus gestabat." *Sermo 149.6-10* (PL 38.802).

three-fold name in Matt. 28:19. Augustine also manages to find the twelve apostles in this text for, since the whole world is divided into four parts, *et totus orbis in euangelio vocabatur, unde quattuor euangelia conscripta sunt*, and since *totus orbis in nomine Trinitatis vocatur, ut congregetur ecclesia, quattuor ter ducta, duodecim fiunt*.³⁷⁹ It is the teaching of the apostles that constitutes the flowing water which all the beasts drink. All were in the sheet (as in the ark). To kill them signifies: *occidere in eis quod erant, et in sua viscera assumere*. If you manage to persuade a pagan to leave his *sacrilegia: occidisti quod erat; dato sacramento Christi incorporasti ecclesiae, manducasti*.³⁸⁰

Peter represented the church, as texts like Matt. 16:19 proved. Since the church is *corpus Christi* and since it was in order that he might receive the now cleansed Gentiles that Cornelius, *gentilis homo, et qui cum illo gentiles erant*, sent for Peter, he (Peter) received the vision of the sheet to remove his hesitancy and to show that Cornelius and those with him were to be regarded as represented by the animals in the sheet, already made clean by God. What remained now was for them to be (symbolically) killed and eaten. The purpose of this was, *ut interficeretur in eis vita praeterita, qua non noverant Christum; et transirent in corpus eius, tanquam in novam vitam societatis ecclesiae*.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ibid. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 96.13 (CCL 39.1366). On Augustine's fascination with numerology, Hill writes: "How seriously did he take his playing around with numbers? My answer would be that he took it about as seriously as crossword puzzles are taken by addicts, or chess by chess buffs. It was an irresistible challenge to intellectual agility, it was a kind of battle of wits with the divine wisdom that scattered these obscure clues through the divine scriptures, it was a game to be enjoyed - but a game with a serious motive, namely the discovery and display of God's saving truth." Rotelle III/3.44n.1.

³⁸⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 103/3.2 (CCL 40.1500). Cf. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 3.7 (CCL 38.10-11), 13.4 (CCL 38.87), 30/2.5 (CCL 38.205), 34/2.15 (CCL 38.321), 58/1.16 (CCL 39.742), 123.5 (CCL 40.1828), 149.13 (CCL 40.2187); *Sermones* 4.19 (PL 38.43), 125.9 (PL 38.696).

³⁸¹*Sermo* 149. 8 (PL 38. 803). Vd. *Sermo* 266.6 (PL 38.1227-8). The vision warned Peter "agitur negotium regni coelorum, et hic et ibi, ab illo qui ubique est." Cf. *Sermo* 313B.3 (MA 1.73).

3.3.3 Pauline Epistles

a. Gal. 3:15-16³⁸²

This text, literally interpreted, Augustine uses frequently, especially to support his interpretation of Gen. 22:16-18.³⁸³ He taunts the Donatists with siding with the Jews in claiming that *semen Abrahae* is to be understood only of the literal descendants of Abraham. The Jews, at least, had the excuse of not reading Paul in their synagogues. Donatists agree with Catholics that Gal. 3:15-16 represents *testamentum Dei*. It is inexcusable, therefore, that they fail to see that the *semen Abrahae* is Christ and that in him *benedicuntur omnes gentes*. He points to the *irritum facit* and *superordinat* of v.15, claiming that Donatists have done both in denying the world-wide extension of the church and by restricting it to Africa.³⁸⁴ The point that, according to Paul, the seed of Abraham is Christ is made tirelessly in the dogmatic treatises, *quia semen Abrahae Christum non ego sed apostolus interpretatur*.³⁸⁵

In his preaching, Augustine explicitly links Gal. 3:16 and Gen. 22:16-18 by means of *totus Christus*. The words of Ps. 54(55):20, *Polluerunt testamentum eius*, he applies directly to the Donatists. The Lord's testament which they have polluted is the

³⁸²(v. 15) Fratres... secundum hominem dico. tamen hominis confirmatum testamentum nemo irritum facit aut superordinat. (v.16) Abrahae dictae sunt promissiones et seminis eius. non dicit 'et seminibus' tamquam in multis, sed tamquam in uno 'et semini tuo', quod est Christus." *Ep. ad Cath.* 6.11 (BA 28.530-2).

³⁸³Vd. comments on this text supra.

³⁸⁴*Ep. ad Cath.* 6.11 (BA 28.532).

³⁸⁵*Ep. ad Cath.* 19.51 (BA 28.652). Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 24.70 (BA 28.692); *Contra litt. Petil.* 1.23.25 (BA 30.176), 2.8.20 (BA 30.244), 3.50.62 (BA 30.714); *Contra Cresc.* 3.63.70 (BA 31.414).

promise to Abraham, *In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes*. This they do by rejecting Paul's identification of the seed of Abraham with Christ, in Gal. 3:15-16. Their position consequently, he says, is, *Africa sola istam gratiam meruit sancti Donati, in ipso remansit ecclesia Christi*.³⁸⁶ In giving up the unity of the nations and remaining *in parte*, they have polluted the testament. The following words of the Psalm, *Divisi sunt prae ira vultus eius*, indicate clearly who the *haeretici* are. He addresses them, *Quod tibi ergo contigit, ut exterminaretis, ut ab hereditate separareris, de ira Dei est*.³⁸⁷

The Donatists fail to appreciate that the *semen Abrahae* is Christ, *caput et corpus*.³⁸⁸ Gal. 3:16 and Gen. 22:16-18 must be taken together, the former providing evidence for the head and the latter for the body.³⁸⁹ When Christ ascended to heaven his disciples were not separated from him, since he and we together form the *semen*.³⁹⁰ Those who have put on Christ are the true seed of Abraham and are themselves truly Christ.³⁹¹ The true church, therefore, is world-wide and one, *Si unum semen, unus Iacob, unus Israel, et omnes gentes unus in Christo*.³⁹²

b. Col. 1:(3-)6³⁹³

³⁸⁶*Enarr. in Ps.* 54.21 (CCL 39.672).

³⁸⁷*ibid.*

³⁸⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 88/1.5 (CCL 39.1222-3).

³⁸⁹*Sermo* 129.5 (PL 38.722). For the linking of these two texts cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 71.19 (CCL 39.984-5); *Sermones* 105.9 (PL 38.622), 129.5 (PL 38.722); *Epp.* 76.1 (CSEL 34/2.324-5), 105.14 (CSEL 34/2.605).

³⁹⁰*Sermo* 263A.2 (MA 1.348).

³⁹¹"Christum enim induti Christus sumus cum capite nostro; quia utique Abrahae semen sumus." *Enarr. in Ps.* 100.3 (CCL 39.1408). Cf. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 142.3 (CCL 40.2062), 147.16 (CCL 40.2150), 148.17 (CCL 40.2177); *Ep.* 196.10 (CSEL 57/2.223).

³⁹²*Enarr. in Ps.* 147.28 (CCL 40.2164). Cf. *In Ioh. Tr.* 6.9 (BA 71.360), 12.9 (BA 71.650).

³⁹³"...in omni mundo fructificans et crescens sicut et in vobis, ex qua die audistis." *Ep. ad Cath.* 17.45 (BA 28.632).

Augustine links this text closely with Matt. 13:39³⁹⁴ in which the field, as Christ goes on to explain, symbolises the world. The church must therefore continue to grow *usque in finem, quia usque ad messem; messis enim est finis saeculi.*³⁹⁵ This argument he uses to counter what he assumes to be the Donatist position, namely, that the preaching of the gospel to all the nations (Lk. 24:47) prior to the end of the age (Matt. 24:14) would not be accomplished by the churches founded by the apostles but through Donatist labours. The churches of apostolic foundation, the Donatists believe, have perished, *et earum reparationem ex Africa futuram per partem Donati et residuarum gentium acquisitionem.*³⁹⁶ He wonders what they will make of Col. 1:3-6 when read in conjunction with Matt. 13:24. Would not the Colossians and all others throughout the world where the good seed has been sown through the words of the apostles, reply to the Donatists: *quid nobis affertis novi? numquid iterum seminandum est bonum semen, quando ex quo seminatum est crescit usque ad messem?*³⁹⁷

The Donatists will be unable to establish from Scripture their opinion that the seed sown by the apostles has perished and must be sown again from Africa until they first demonstrate *falsum esse quod scriptum est, semen illic ante seminatum crescere usque ad messem.*³⁹⁸ Since the words spoken by God cannot contradict each other, *nullo modo in eis invenientis, quod contra hoc tam manifestum recitare possitis.* It

³⁹⁴"Simile est regnum caelorum homini seminanti bonum semen in agro suo." *Ep. ad Cath.* 17.45 (BA 28.632). For comments on this text, vd. infra.

³⁹⁵ibid.

³⁹⁶*Ep. ad Cath.* 17.44 (BA 28.630).

³⁹⁷*Ep. ad Cath.* 17.45 (BA 28.632).

³⁹⁸ibid.

follows, therefore, that what the Donatists say, they say *non ex divinis libris* but, he says to them, *ex vobis*.³⁹⁹

3.3.4 References to New Testament Churches

Augustine finds proof for his understanding of the catholicity of the church, against that of the Donatists, from the various references to the N.T. churches in the apostolic writings received as authoritative equally by Catholics and Donatists: Acts, the Epistles and the Apocalypse. *Dicant istae (sc. ecclesiae) nobis*, he suggests ironically, *quemadmodum Africana seditione perierint*.⁴⁰⁰ These churches, he wishes it to be noted, *accepimus non ex conciliis contendantium episcoporum, non ex disputationibus, non ex forensibus vel municipalibus gestis, sed ex litteris sanctis canonicis*.⁴⁰¹ It is ridiculous to suggest that a church like that at Antioch, *ubi primo appellati sunt discipuli christiani*, could have perished on account of the faults of Africans. The shortcomings of Africans cannot affect people in places so far removed from Africa that *nec nomina eorum, per quos ortum est vel de quibus ortum est hoc malum, nota esse potuerunt, Athenis, Iconio, Lystris*.⁴⁰² He refers the Donatists to Rom. 15:15-19⁴⁰³ suggesting ironically that if they do not know then they should ask how many *mansiones* there are *ab Hierusalem per terrena itinera in circuitu usque in*

³⁹⁹ibid.

⁴⁰⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.588). He accuses the Donatists of not heeding the witness of Acts: "expressa sunt nomina civitatum, in quibus ecclesia Christi apostolico labore fundata est, quae loca et civitates etiam epistulas ab apostolis accipere meruerunt." The Donatists themselves read the N.T. epistles in their congregations, "et tamen non communicant eorum locorum et civitatum ecclesiis, quae ipsas epistulas accipere meruerunt, obicientes eis nescio qua crimina Afrorum..." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 2.2 (BA 32.252).

⁴⁰¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.588).

⁴⁰²ibid.

⁴⁰³"...ita ut ego ab Hierusalem et in circuitu usque in Illyricum repleverim euangelium Christi." *Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.588-90).

Illyricum.⁴⁰⁴ He then issues his challenge: *si tot ecclesias computemus, dicite quemadmodum per Africanas contentiones perire potuerant*. He accuses the Donatists of retaining the apostolic letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Thessalonians and Colossians merely for the purpose of reading them (*in lectione*) while *nos (sc. catholici)...et epistulas in lectione ac fide et ipsas ecclesias in communione retinemus*.⁴⁰⁵

They must know, too, that Galatia does not comprise one single church but that within this region there are *innumerabiles (ecclesiae)*. Paul's greeting to the Corinthians, with its reference to *sanctis omnibus qui sunt in universa Achaia*,⁴⁰⁶ demands that the question be asked, *quot putatis esse ecclesias in universa Achaia?*⁴⁰⁷ Donatist geographical ignorance is such that they probably do not know where Achaia is and they would therefore be passing blind judgement on a province unknown to them but which, they hold, African sins caused to perish.⁴⁰⁸

He asks whether the places named by Peter in his letter are not covered *florentissimis ecclesiis: Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia et Bithynia*. The Donatists should realise, too, how far distant from Africa are the churches to which John wrote: *Zmyrnae, Pergami, Sardis, Thyatirae, Philadelpiae, Laodiciae*.⁴⁰⁹ If they really understood the geographical distance involved, they would not accuse *tam sacrilega temeritate*

⁴⁰⁴*Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.590).

⁴⁰⁵*ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶2 Cor. 1:1.

⁴⁰⁷*Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.590).

⁴⁰⁸*ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹*ibid.* Vd. Apoc. 1:11; 2-3.

churches which to them are *omnino...incognitas*, but *in apostolicis litteris manifestatas*, and say that they *criminibus Afrorum perisse*.⁴¹⁰

The holy books which both sides venerate make clear that there are churches of Christ, *et universali totius orbis nomine et nominatim designatae et expressae*.⁴¹¹ Of the charges made against those in fellowship with them by the ancestors of the Donatists, these churches have no knowledge. Having had no knowledge of these things, how then could they have perished on their account. He concludes with a challenge to the Donatists to establish their position on scriptural grounds: *ecce sunt scripturae quibus credo, ecce sunt ecclesiae quibus communico: ubi tibi lego nomina eorum, ibi mihi lege crimina eorum*.⁴¹² He is confident of the result.

3.4 Conclusion

This study of Augustine's exegesis has sought to elucidate both his conviction of the foundational importance of the mark of catholicity for the purposes of his anti-Donatist polemic and the diversity and ingenuity of his exegetical practice in drawing on the perceived wealth of biblical testimony to his position. Optatus had pointed the way, but now it fell to the bishop of Hippo to bring to bear on the debate the full riches of the Scriptural witness to this key aspect of ecclesiology.

⁴¹⁰*Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.590-2).

⁴¹¹*Ep. ad Cath.* 12.31 (BA 28.592).

⁴¹²*ibid.*

For Augustine the exegetical demand of the controversy was primarily to uncover the testimony of Scripture to the church as the *corpus* of its exalted Head and to its function as the instrument of his saving action in all the earth. As God's instrument, the church "cannot fail its mission" and "because it is the exclusive instrument of God's saving action, the church must be universal."⁴¹³ The claims of the Donatist communion, localized in North Africa, can thus be shown to be spurious, for the true catholicity of the church is seen in its world-wide (*non in Africa sola*) extension. The point is driven home by the repeated use of similar formulaic expressions such as *in omnes terras, in toto orbe terrarum, per totum orbem terrarum, tota terrarum orbe diffusa, toto orbe diffusa*, etc. It is with this alone authentic church that North African Catholics, as distinct from Donatists, are in communion and their position is, therefore, the truly scriptural one.

As has been shown, Augustine's procedure in the dogmatic treatises was to adduce only *testimonia* of incontrovertible clarity in support of his understanding of catholicity. In the treatises, therefore, he works mainly with texts whose literal sense corresponds with this criterion, although in countering Donatist figurative use of a particular text he is prepared to turn it back on the Donatists (as in the case of the ark narrative) by means of the same interpretative procedure. In his preaching, however, as demonstrated above, Augustine cast aside this limiting criterion and in that context, in his ingenious deployment of, mainly Old Testament, figurative exegesis, we look on "the true face of Augustine the interpreter of Holy Scripture."⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³Patout Burns (1980), 57.

⁴¹⁴Wright (1996), 718.

The exegetical survey of this chapter makes clear the immense seriousness, persistence and ingenuity brought by Augustine to the task of establishing the biblical basis of catholicity understood as universality - a mark of the church which, in itself, he believed fatal to the Donatist position. The authentic church he finds in Scripture to be the geographically universal church - a point driven home by the repeated use of similar formulaic expressions such as *in omnes terras, in toto orbe terrarum, per totum orbem terrarum, toto orbe diffusa*, etc.⁴¹⁵ Augustine's policy was to adduce only *testimonia* of the utmost clarity in the dogmatic treatises. In his preaching, however, and most strikingly in his use of *totus Christus* in the *Enarrationes*, he was able to break loose from this limiting criterion and there, in relation to this issue, among others, we discover "the true face of Augustine the interpreter of Holy Scripture."⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁵Searches on Villanova University's database, using some key phrases indicating geographical universality, yielded the following "hits": "catholica": 746; "fines terrae": 134; "omnem terram": 195; "universa terra": 37; "orbis terrarum": 158; "in omni loco": 51; "omnes gentes": 584. While these searches covered all of Augustine's extant works (comprising 5,215,267 words) a high percentage occur in the anti-Donatist writings. They confirm the dominance of the notion of catholicity as universality in his thinking.

⁴¹⁶Wright (1996) 718.

CHAPTER FOUR

ECCLESIAL PURITY: SCRIPTURE AND THE DEBATE OVER THE PRESENCE OF *MALI* IN THE CHURCH

4.1 Introduction

The question, “In what sense may the church on earth be said to be holy?” is fundamental to the Catholic-Donatist controversy. Their respective attempts to provide a convincing answer to this question and to establish their position against that of the other, on the basis of a mutually recognized authoritative Bible, take us to the heart of the debate between Augustine and the Donatists. Before proceeding to consider the use by Augustine of biblical texts relating to this issue, we shall first sketch the main lines of the opposing Donatist and Augustinian positions on it.

4.1.1 Donatists and the holiness of the church

As we have seen, the Donatists consistently maintained the Cyprianic notion of catholicity as meaning a single, unique whole. One of the main marks of this wholeness, and a fundamental test of the true church, was freedom from corruption or stain. Such “unspotted wholeness” (to quote the words of a Donatist bishop at the

Conference of Carthage in 411) consisted in acceptance of the "total" Christian law,¹ and the fulness of the sacrament.

Cyprian's teaching on the relationship of the episcopate to the church as that of head to body, fountain to stream, root to stock was reaffirmed by the Donatists and it entailed for them that, "(this) freedom from corruption is the possession of the church only if its bishops have not been guilty of infraction of that divine law peculiarly placed on them".² When such infraction did occur, in the "handing over" (*traditio*) of copies of the Scriptures during times of persecution, the consequence, in Donatist eyes, was not only the disqualification of the bishops concerned from administering the sacraments, but the deadly infection of all those with whom these bishops were in communion.³

The great seriousness attached by the Donatists to the sin of *traditio* requires to be assessed in light of the fact that "the act of 'handing over' issued in the burning of Scriptures by government personnel who officially despised these writings".⁴ As Evans aptly comments, "Such an act could not be taken lightly by people who treasured the written Law of God as revelation. Neither Augustine nor any Catholic writer was disposed to argue that *traditio* was a small matter."⁵

¹Vd. Markus (1988), 113; Brown (1967), 217.

²Evans (1972), 70.

³ibid.

⁴Brown (1967), 219.

⁵Evans (1972), 71.

In the last few years, work done by Maureen Tilley on the surviving Donatist sources has shed helpful light on the significance, for the Donatists, of *traditio*, in particular, and on the Donatist understanding of church purity, in general.⁶ Tilley adopts a somewhat novel approach to her material, utilising what she calls "a hermeneutic of suspicious retrieval"⁷, combining this with a theory of world construction derived from sociological theory and techniques used by New Testament scholars "to explore the ways in which biblical texts acted as instruments for the ordering of experience".⁸ By studying the changes in the first century of Donatist history, Tilley aims to "show that far from being a monolithic, apocalyptic community of pure Christians, seeking martyrdom", (as older, static models held), "Donatism responded to changes in its situation by constructing and restructuring the world of its own experience. In this way it was able to survive the transition from persecuted minority 'sect' to the 'church' of the majority."⁹

Tilley holds that the Donatists were remarkably successful in correlating their interpretations of the Bible with changes in the political and social contexts of their church, by means of a consistent grounding of their self-image in Scripture. The core of that self-image, she argues, was increasingly "the concept of the holy assembly of Israel in the midst of her unclean enemies". This, Tilley claims, "was a far more potent self-image for Donatist Christians than that of the church of the martyrs".¹⁰ It is

⁶Tilley (1997).

⁷"Suspicious", because the material in Optatus and Augustine relevant to her purpose is not entirely to be trusted because of the polemical context. Tilley (1997), 1.

⁸Tilley (1997), 6.

⁹ibid. 8.

¹⁰Tilley (1997A), 21.

the former, not the latter, image which explains "the continued cohesion and survival of the movement" through periods of persecution and of relative peace alike.¹¹

This dominant self-image as the new Israel went along with a distinctive understanding of the nature of the Bible. As for ancient Israel, God's pilgrim people journeying from Egypt to the promised land, so for the Donatist church, their most valuable possession was the Law gifted to them exclusively by God.¹² Donatist writers regularly referred to the Scriptures in their entirety as Law, "whether inscribed on the pages of a physical book or, more importantly, in the hearts and lives of true believers".¹³ Earlier examples of Donatist classification of the whole Bible in this way (for example by Macrobius) are reflected in similar references in the *Liber Regularum* of Tyconius. Similar identification is made by Parmenian and Petilian who closely link the Law and the purity of the community.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid. Tilley places much weight on the application to the Donatist church, in Donatist writings, of the word *collecta*: it is "a technical term for the ritually pure assembly of Israel at prayer" (Tilley [1997A], 21, and passim). The programmatic use of the term, she claims, occurs in the *Acta Saturnini*, in the responses of the Abitinians under interrogation when, instead of simply using the established formula, *Christianus/a sum*, they additionally stated their religious affiliation in the words, *collectam feci*. Tilley calls this a "curious formula" (ibid., p.24). On her own acknowledgement, however, *collecta* can mean simply a gathering of people (eg for worship) and *collectam facere* to participate in such a gathering. In view of the fact that this was the very thing that had been forbidden during the persecution, the term, as used by the confessors, need have no typological connotation at all. They were simply acknowledging that they had indeed been present at a meeting for Christian worship. Evidence produced from later Donatist writings equally fails to establish the typological use of the term sought by Tilley (ibid., pp. 27-33). No more successful is her appeal to Augustine's references to the word (ibid., pp. 33-4). It was not the *collecta* (the "solemn assembly" of Israel) that provided the typological model for Donatist ecclesiology, but Israel itself, as the chosen and consecrated people of God. Tilley's handling of the term *collecta* thus reveals a tendency to overwork her methodological tools, but does not necessarily detract from the value of her conclusions about the implications of the model for Donatist self-identity.

¹²"One way of keeping the community separate and preserving its identity was to deny those on the outside the right to interpret the Law or Christian Scriptures. According to Augustine, Cresconius claimed that as Ezekiel and the other prophets came only to the house of Israel, so the Bible, the words of the prophets, were to be interpreted only by the true Church. Tilley (1997), 156. The ref. is to *Contra Cresc.* 1.10.13 (BA 31.96).

¹³Tilley (1997), 178.

¹⁴Cf. Tilley (1997A), 28-30.

Growing Donatist self-understanding as the new Israel, cohered well with the need deeply felt by them for a clear line of demarcation between their church and that of the *traditores* which, like the nations surrounding Israel, had given way to apostasy and idolatry. As the separated people of God the Donatists were called to holiness. Such holiness required physical separation from the unholy, since evil and holiness alike were "communicated by touch, even by proximity... Petilian, Parmenian, Cresconius, and Gaudentius were all concerned with separation as a sign of the true Church".¹⁵ Many biblical texts were found explicitly to stress this responsibility. For the Donatists, then, the maintenance of church purity was inseparable from a recognition of and obedience to the Scriptures as, primarily, divine law.

With the passage of time, Donatists found it necessary to relate biblical interpretation not only to the Donatist-Catholic divide, but to problems within their own communion. Especially in the period following the reign of Julian, "the Donatist majority church learned to cope with the realities of life as a broad-based popular movement that grew to the point of having its own schisms".¹⁶ Of particular significance in this regard was Parmenian who became Donatist bishop of Carthage in 362 and died c. 391. It was his interpretation of Scripture, in particular, that provided Donatists with a biblical rationale for the presence of evil *within* the church. Central to his ecclesiology was his doctrine of the *notes* of the church. These were gifts with which the true (ie Donatist) church was endowed by God and which ensured that the sacraments were properly administered irrespective of the personal sanctity of the

¹⁵Tilley (1997), 157.

¹⁶Tilley (1997), 178.

minister or people.¹⁷ "From Parmenian's use of the Bible Donatists learned that corrupt members would not vitiate the strength of the Church itself. The church of the pure could and did contain the not-so-pure."¹⁸

Donatists may have been prepared to acknowledge the presence of evil within the church. The real matter of concern for them, however, was the question of what action should be taken when it came to light. To Donatist thinking, the present was the time for the exposure of sin. "Indeed, it was their contention, against the Catholics, that the ability to deal with evil in an appropriate and timely fashion was a mark of the true Church. Whereas Catholics pushed off judgement to the end of time, Donatists reinterpreted eschatological verses to apply to the present, allowing the constant purging of evil from the Church, keeping her as the pure bride of Christ."¹⁹

The Donatist solution to the problem of church purity was, therefore, essentially the principle of *separatio* in order to avoid the pollution inevitably resultant upon association with those who had committed the sin of apostasy. This sin inhered in the Catholic communion as the church of those who were the descendants and supporters of the *traditores*. The divine command to the Donatists was to be separate and thus to avoid *contagio*. To this fundamental responsibility many biblical texts, they believed, spoke directly and Donatist polemicists so applied them.²⁰ An important part of Augustine's self-imposed task in the anti-Donatist treatises was to offer a counter

¹⁷On the five *dots* of Parmenian, cf. Tilley (1997), 102-6.

¹⁸*ibid.* p.179.

¹⁹Tilley (1997), 127.

²⁰These texts included some like Lev. 10:9-10, Ps. 140:5, Isa. 52:11, 2 Cor. 6:14-15 and 1 Tim. 5:22, which were earlier used in the martyr stories.

exegesis that would bring them firmly within the Catholic arsenal of biblical anti-Donatist ammunition.

4.1.2 Augustine and the holiness of the church.

Augustine's understanding of catholicity as the divinely-willed, world-wide extension of the church raised in an acute way the question of church purity. As Brown says, "such a rapidly expanding church could never claim to be 'holy' in any sense that was immediately apparent".²¹ Augustine's universal church demanded a more complex solution to the problem of church purity than that offered by the Donatists. In his formulation he drew particularly on the work of two earlier North African theologians: Cyprian of Carthage and Tyconius the Donatist.

Cyprian had seen in the parable of the field of wheat and tares a figure of the church. Augustine develops the thought to enunciate his doctrine of the world-wide church (Jesus had explicitly identified the field with the world) as a *corpus permixtum*, composed of both good and bad (wheat and tares) in an association that will continue until God himself in the end effects the separation. In this light, "the crucial mistake that the Donatists have made is to confuse the end of the world with the time of Optatus."²² While for the Donatists the interests of church purity demand *separatio* as an urgent present necessity, for Augustine it is a future, eschatological reality.

²¹Brown (1967), 221.

²²Evans (1972), 83.

Augustine also drew here on the thought of Tyconius whose *Liber Regularum* he regarded so highly. In this work Tyconius presented a vision of the church which placed his thought outwith the parameters of Donatist orthodoxy. For Tyconius the church was the body of Christ and yet in a mysterious way in this world contained evil as a constitutive part of the body. *Canticles* 1:5 ('I am black but comely') was used as Scriptural evidence for the mixed character of the church. From Tyconius Augustine took over the idea that the truly significant division is not one of churches but of two supernatural societies: the city of God and the city of the devil. Each of these is made up of individuals governed by contrary wills. The Donatist principle of the separation of faithful Christians from the wicked is therefore a mistake.

For Augustine, the idea of holiness attaching to the church requires to be conceived primarily in two ways.²³ First, in terms of the holiness of Christ its head. The church is not a congregation of the pure, since *nemo habet de suo nisi mendacium et peccatum*²⁴ and this includes believers. The holiness of the church is rather that which derives from her participation in Christ the sole mediator who is both *in forma Dei* and *in forma servi* and, as such, the way, the truth and the life of men. Augustine's "participation" language reflects the neo-Platonic cast of his thought. Like all else in the realm of empirical and historical reality, "the empirical church in Christ may be an only imperfect realization of its true nature".²⁵ What is "unique about the church among the things of this world is the uniqueness, the holiness, of that in which it peculiarly participates: Christ the eternal Word of God who has become man".²⁶

²³Here we follow quite closely the helpful discussion in Evans (1972), 84-6.

²⁴*In Ioh. Tr.* 5.1 (CCL 36.40).

²⁵Evans (1972), 84.

²⁶*ibid.*

Augustine's *totus Christus* ecclesiology thus entails that the holiness of the *corpus* derives neither from the sanctity of its members, nor even from any *notes* bestowed on it, but alone from the goodness of its head which is Christ.

The second way in which the idea of church purity is preserved by Augustine, as Evans points out, is by giving to the word "church" (ie the church of the present age) two different applications: that of the empirical, universal society (the total field of wheat and tares) and the smaller number of those within this society who are being made holy by God (ie an application to the wheat alone).²⁷ As we have seen, for Augustine the destiny of saved humanity (the "wheat") is the enjoyment of the Trinity for its own sake. But this will only be attained after a process of illumination and purification made necessary by remaining sin and infirmity in the wheat. The "spotless wholeness" of the church is therefore for Augustine an eschatological notion - something unattainable in the conditions of the church's present existence.²⁸

It can thus be seen that the issue of church purity is a much more complex one for Augustine than for the Donatists.²⁹ For true Christians, the call to holiness in the present was adequately met, not by separation, but by a recognition and acceptance of a range of relationships entailing a three-fold responsibility: personal separation from sin by not committing it oneself and by withholding *consensio* from the sins of

²⁷ibid. 84-5.

²⁸"The members of the Church within the Church must still be drawn towards their final perfection, must still be gradually released from their varying degrees of ignorance and infirmity, must continue daily to pray that their sins be forgiven. The Church that is truly and finally 'holy and without blemish', 'having neither spot nor wrinkle' (Eph. 5:27), is the Church which in the lives of these members is still 'being prepared'" (Evans [1972], 85).

²⁹Brown compares Augustine's church to "an atomic particle: it was made up of moving elements, a field of dynamic tensions, always threatening to explode". Brown (1967), 223.

others;³⁰ toleration of the tares in the interests of church peace and unity;³¹ and the right exercise of church discipline. Such exercise of discipline requires much sensitivity and constant concern for the peace of the church. When discipline is exercised in a spirit of love which seeks to correct, and not from hatred which seeks to inflict suffering, the righteous person has fulfilled *plenissimum officium non solum castissimae innocentiae sed etiam diligentissimae severitatis*.³² But when the interest of church peace and unity render this third responsibility impracticable, the constant observance of the first two will keep one *incompactum castumque*.³³

In summary, for the Donatists the apostasy of earlier bishops meant that all recipients of their ministry became *ipso facto* tainted by their sin. The sin "spreads like physical contagion through communion, polluting an entire network irrespective of the conscious intentions of the communicants".³⁴ The only solution for this problem is full separation from all who have in this way become polluted, as God's chosen Israel was separated from the idolatrous and apostate nations around them.

For Augustine, on the other hand, it is only the consent of the will, not mere physical proximity, that makes one party to the sin of another. He therefore rejects the

³⁰"Against the Donatist theory, Augustine asserted that a person's intention in joining himself to another determines the nature of the fellowship and communion between them. Contact between souls is by consent rather than physical presence. Hence one person shares the guilt of another if the sin pleases him, if he imitates the evil willing and behaviour" (Burns [1980], 60).

³¹"It is a primary thesis of Augustine that no man, not even a bishop, can rightly claim to distinguish here and now the wheat from the tares. One of the chief errors of the Donatists, he thought, was to attempt a premature separation of good and bad men... To attempt to uproot the tares from the Church is to be lacking in the virtue of patience, to refuse to allow to God what only he can do." Evans (1972), 85. This is a fault of which Augustine is relentless in accusing the Donatists.

³²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.41 (BA 28.378-80).

³³*ibid.*

³⁴Burns (1980), 60.

Donatist notion of sin as *contagio* and affirms that the mere presence of tares in the communion of the church does not, by itself, corrupt the wheat. At this point, too, Donatists sought to detract from the glory of Christ whose saving power they evidently question. Out of pride and lack of love they seek to usurp his prerogative. They refuse to see that "Catholic willingness to tolerate sinners within the communion arises not from moral laxity but from the love which God himself inspires. Charity is tolerant and patient, seeking to win sinners over for Christ rather than fleeing them; through charity the great good of unity is attained and preserved".³⁵

Against this general background we now proceed to examine Augustine's use of Scripture in seeking to establish his position on the purity of the church against that of the Donatists. We shall devote the first section to his handling of biblical texts that were key ones for the Donatists themselves since, on this issue, Augustine gave considerable attention to rebutting Donatist exegesis. His deployment of other texts, which he himself considered the most significant in favour of the Catholic case, will then be considered.

4.2 Augustine's handling of biblical texts used by the Donatists.

4.2.1 Old Testament "Donatist" texts.

a. Lev. 10:9-10³⁶

³⁵ibid. 60-1.

³⁶"Sit vobis legitimum aeternum in progenies vestras dividere in medio sanctorum et inreligiosorum et in medio mundorum et immundorum." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.23.43 (BA 28.382).

Although Augustine does not respond at length to the Donatist use of this text, its key function in Donatist exegesis in establishing the biblical requirement of separation from defilement, merits its inclusion here.³⁷ Regarding relations with the Catholics, "the first and greatest of the commandments Scripture provided was that of the duty and necessity of separation".³⁸ The failure of Catholic priests to fulfil the responsibility originally given to the priests of Israel enabled the Donatists to denounce them for dereliction of duty. It was a text used earlier in the martyr stories and *Gesta* and one which enabled the Donatists to portray themselves as the priests of God who kept the Law in distinction from the Catholics who did not.

At the Conference of Carthage, Donatists "protested that the Catholics refused to take seriously their obligation to purge evil from their midst and were waiting for God to do it at the Final Judgement. Donatists found this not simply a manifestation of Catholic laziness, but also a danger to the salvation of the whole community".³⁹ Lev. 10:9-10 enabled them to apply "this responsibility given to the priests of Israel to the Catholic priests".⁴⁰

Augustine's response is simply to call for interpretation of the text in the clearer light of the parable of the wheat and tares. The *servi patris familiae* were indeed able to distinguish between the two (the point at which, for the Donatists, separation should immediately take place), but they obeyed the command to allow both to grow together until the harvest. In other words, the less clear text must be interpreted in

³⁷The roots of the position derive from Cyprian (*Ep.* 67.3f)

³⁸Tilley (1997), 163.

³⁹*ibid.* 158.

⁴⁰*ibid.*

light of the more clear - in this case that which contains the Lord's own explicit direction.⁴¹

b. 2 Chron. 19:2-3⁴²

This text was quoted by Parmenian to prove that physical proximity to sinners entails spiritual contamination. In defiance of the words of Micaiah God's prophet, Ahab, king of Israel, had attacked Ramoth Gilead and was sinfully joined by Jehoshaphat in what turned out to be a disastrous venture.

Augustine's response is to insist that it is only by what takes place in the heart that the righteous are separated from the wicked. He denies that Catholics would say that a sinner like Ahab who had despised the *veracia verba* of Micaiah is to be helped - *utique in quo peccare vult*.⁴³ While Jehoshaphat certainly helped Ahab by going with him to battle, the episode proves rather that physical separation is not essential to maintain purity. That Jehoshaphat was not contaminated by the criminal conduct of Ahab is proved by the fact that he was delivered by God when he cried to him, while the wicked Ahab was allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy. Jehoshaphat's innocence did not suffer from Ahab's wickedness. The risk run by Jehoshaphat was a consequence of the divine anger upon him, not for the sin of another, but for his own sin in helping a wicked man. Jehoshaphat's acceptance by God on account of his other

⁴¹Matt. 13:30.

⁴²V.2 is quoted in two different forms in *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.18.37 (BA 28.368-70): "o rex Iosaphat, si peccatorem tu adiuvas aut eum quem dominus odit tu diligis? propterea fuit super te ira domini" (BA 28.368). Again: "si peccatorem illum adiuvisi et eis qui oderunt dominum amicus es? et in hoc super te ira a facie domini" (BA 28.370). V.3 continues this latter quote as follows: "sermone dei boni in universa sunt tecum, quoniam abstulisti lucos de terra et parasti cor tuum ad requirendum deum" (BA 28.370).

⁴³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.18.37 (BA 28.368).

good deeds is established in v.3. The text, therefore, does not establish the Donatist case.

Augustine goes on to apply this narrative to the current situation in terms of Phil 1:15-18, 2:21 and 2 Cor. 6:14-18. He argues that by giving to this latter passage a carnal sense, the Donatists divide themselves without end and become a mince of sects in Africa alone.⁴⁴ Donatists do not understand that no one participates in sin, *nisi qui iniqua vel agit vel adprobat*, that is, the one who communicates with darkness through the darkness of his consent (*consensio*) when, *dimisso Christo*, he follows Belial and thus ceases to be the temple of God by uniting himself to idols.⁴⁵ Those, however, who are the temples of the living God and who, having the word of life, shine as lights in the midst of a depraved and perverse people are not contaminated by that which they tolerate for the sake of unity. Meantime they are separated only in heart from the wicked for fear lest a spiritual rupture among the good rather than a physical rupture among the evil takes place.⁴⁶

c. Ps. 25(26):4-10⁴⁷

These verses, in which the psalmist speaks of his determination to keep apart from sinful men, provided a useful text for the Donatists in support of the necessity and

⁴⁴On the various divisions within the Donatist communion vd. "Émiettement du Parti donatiste," Congar, BA 28.740-1, n.c. 32; Frend (1952), 213f.

⁴⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.18.37 (BA 28.372).

⁴⁶*ibid.*

⁴⁷"non sedi in conventiculo vanitatis et cum facinerosis non introibo. odio habui curiam nequissimorum. lavabo cum innocentibus manus meas et circumdabo altare domini, ut audiam vocem laudis et enarrem omnia mirabilia tua. domine, dilexi speciem domus tuae et locum tabernaculi claritatis tuae. ne simul perdideris cum peccatoribus animam meam et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam, in quorum manibus delicta sunt, dextera eorum impleta est muneribus." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.26 (BA 28.460).

urgency of separation. It is for this purpose that Parmenian apparently quotes it in full.⁴⁸

Augustine's response is that Parmenian fails to grasp that the requirements of the text can be fully observed *sine ullo divisionis nefariae sacrilegio*. The true sense is achieved by interpreting it in the clear light of the Pauline distinction between two qualities of *vasa* found within the unity of the one great house - those which are *in honore* and those *in contumelia*.⁴⁹ The former do not separate themselves from the great house on account of the latter but for the sake of unity they tolerate them, while taking care not to imitate their example.⁵⁰ The radiance of God's glory and the place where his honour resides is not seen in all the vessels in the great house, but only *in his quae sunt in honore sanctificata, utilia domino, ad omne opus bonum semper parata*.⁵¹ In tolerating the *vasa in contumelia* and in refusing to leave the house on their account, they manifest a proper concern not only not to be themselves such vessels, but even dung (*stercus*) which is thrown out of the house.⁵²

In this light, the prayer of Ps. 25(26):9-10 expresses the recognition of the good of their temporary union *cum malis in una domo*. They pray not to perish with those with whom, at the same time, *caritas* commands them to live.⁵³ They are those described by Ezekiel who grieved on account of the iniquities of the people perpetrated in their midst.⁵⁴

⁴⁸loc. cit.

⁴⁹Cf. 2 Tim. 2:20.

⁵⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25 (BA 28.458).

⁵¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.26 (BA 28.460). Cf. 2 Tim. 2:21.

⁵²ibid.

⁵³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.26 (BA 28.462).

⁵⁴ibid. Cf. Ezek. 9:4f. and comments *infra* on this text.

Cyprian is cited as evidence for the correctness of Augustine's interpretation of this passage against that of the Donatists. There was manifest sin in the church of Cyprian's day and yet *Cyprianus inter avaros collegas pacatissime vixit* without at all separating, *pacatissime*, because *corde non tetigit (avaritiam)*. He washed his hands with the innocent (Ps. 25(26):6) and *tolerabat nocentes ne desereret innocentes cum quibus manus lavabat*. The reason he so acted was *quia diligebat speciem domus domini, quae species in vasis honorabilibus erat*.⁵⁵ Thus Cyprian, to whom the Donatists appealed so often, stands opposed to them on this central issue.

Ps. 25(26):4-5 reappears in *Brev. Coll.* and *Ad Donat. post Coll.* in connection with the Conference of Carthage (411). At the Conference, the Donatists had apparently been invited by the *cognitor* (the presiding judge) to take their seats. They refused to do so, appealing to Ps. 25(26):4: *non sedi in concilio impiorum*.⁵⁶ This, for Augustine, is a prime example of the kind of inconsistency into which Donatist (context-insensitive) interpretation lands them. He points out that the same verse goes on to say, *et cum iniqua gerentibus non introibo*. Since the psalmist is clearly referring to the same group of people, consistent Donatist application to the present would require that they be not present at the Conference at all. If the Donatists were prepared to enter in with those they considered to be wicked, they should also have been able to sit down with them in order, he adds (somewhat mischievously): *ut in*

⁵⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25 (BA 28.458).

⁵⁶*Brev. Coll.* 3.9.18 (BA 32.174). The reference is incorrectly given by Tilley (1997), 215.

*utroque non corporalem, sed spiritalem consessum et ingressum devitasse viderentur.*⁵⁷

For Augustine, then, this text, when properly interpreted, requires a very different application to the North African church situation from that urged by the Donatists. Their literalist and physicalist exegesis of the passage and their failure to interpret it in light of clearer texts leads them astray, Augustine believes, and into hopeless self-contradiction.

d. Ps. 49(50):16-18,20⁵⁸

This text was clearly an important one in the Donatist repertoire.⁵⁹ Parmenian apparently applied it directly to the polluted condition of the Catholic communion and the consequent need for separation from it.⁶⁰ In light of the dominant Donatist self-image as the law-keeping, covenant people of God, it was particularly apposite for their purpose with its reference to *iustificationes meas* and *testamentum meum*. It is to the Catholics whose relationship to both is a sinful one, that the Lord directs these words.

⁵⁷ibid. Cf. *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 5.7 (BA 32.266) where the same charge of inconsistency is made. There Augustine speaks of the Donatists as those who: "scripturas sanctas non intellegendo et carnaliter sapiendo etiam ipsam unitatem dissipaverunt." Cf. *Sermo* 99.8 (PL 38.599-600). De Tillemont refers to the "manière litterale et sensuelle" of Donatist exegesis (De Tillemont [1732], 533). On Augustine's application of v. 4 to the Donatists, vd. Lamirande, "Vanité et orgueil des Donatistes", BA 32.735-6.

⁵⁸Vv. 16-18: "peccatori autem dicit deus: ut quid tu enarras iustificationes meas et adsumis testamentum meum per os tuum? tu vero odisti disciplinam et abiecisti sermones meos post te. os tuum abundavit malitia et lingua tua amplexa est dolositatem. si videbas furem, concurrebas ei et cum adulteris portionem tuam ponebas." V.20: "sedens adversus fratrem tuum detrahebas et adversus filium matris tuae ponebas scandalum." *Contra Cresc.* 2.29.37 (BA31.236). The ref. in BA 31 wrongly implies that v.19 is included in the quotation.

⁵⁹Surprisingly, Tilley (1997) does not refer to it.

⁶⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.9.18 (BA 28.306-8).

Augustine replies that the Donatists have failed to understand the true meaning of v.16, which is that God's words do not benefit the one who speaks them, if he does not obey them. But they do benefit those who hear and do them - even if this comes about *per malos*. The Lord's words in Matt. 23:2-3 confirm this.⁶¹

The passage is used to attack alleged Donatist claims to moral faultlessness. The text constitutes a mirror in which the Donatists are invited to have a look at themselves. It is they who fit the description of v. 17 (...*et abiecisti sermones meos retro*) inasmuch as they proclaim peace to the people, and yet have no love for peace; they hate discipline as those who dare to condemn the world without a hearing, and when they come under the merciful discipline of God, as deserved *pro tanti furoris audacia*, instead of acknowledging the punishment due to their sins, rather boast that their merits are being crowned. If the noun *fur* is replaced with *raptor* (*quia fure peior est raptor*) then, claims Augustine, v. 18 describes Donatist conduct in relation to the notorious Optatus of Thamugadi.⁶²

The reference in the same verse to association with adulterers finds fulfilment in Donatist acceptance of the activities of their *sanctimoniales*. Augustine speaks of the drunken bands of their *sanctimonialium* whom the Donatists allow to wander around day and night *cum gregibus ebriis circumcellionum*.⁶³

⁶¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.9.19 (BA 28.308). Cf. *Contra Gaudent.* 1.17.18 (BA 32.538).

⁶²*ibid.* Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.23.53 (BA 30.292). On Optatus, vd. Quinot, "Optatus de Thamugadi," BA 30. 757-60.

⁶³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.9.19 (BA 28.308-310). The "sanctimoniales" were women who had taken a vow of chastity. Their association with the Circumcellions is referred to several times by Augustine. Vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.3.6 (BA 28.278), *Ep.* 35.2 (CSEL 34/2.28-9) re. the case of Primus. In *Contra Gaudent.* 1.36.46 (BA 32.618) Augustine refers to some Donatist "sanctimoniales" who, on becoming pregnant (to Circumcellions), took their own life by leaping from rocks.

V. 20 is also used against the Donatists. They are those who speak against their brethren in holding that *in hereditate Christi toto terrarum orbe diffusa... non esse christianos* on account of some persons against whom they are not, in any case, able to make good their charges. Thus, moreover, they slander their own mother's son - i.e. place a *perniciosissimum scandalum* in the road of the immature Christian whose weakness causes him to follow a man and not God his Father, and thus *inlectus ab unitatis compage crudeli laceratione divellitur*.⁶⁴

In the same context Augustine alleges Donatist inconsistency in believing themselves to be untainted by the sins of others committed among them. Why, he wonders, do they tolerate in the sacrilegious fellowship of schism what they were not able to bear *in unitatis integritate*? Experience should have opened their eyes to see that the sins of individuals (*singulorum*) cannot harm others who neither do nor approve them. Schism, however, is not a matter of individual but corporate evil (*schisma crimen est omnium*).⁶⁵ Since they say that in their own communion the sins of some do not defile the others, by the same token they should acknowledge that they had no justification at all for separating from the unity of the church *ubi eos non possent aliorum scelera maculare*. By so doing they are equally bound together *scelere schismatis apertissimo tamquam uno mortifero vinculo*.⁶⁶

e. Sirach 10:2⁶⁷

⁶⁴*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.9.19 (BA 28.310).

⁶⁵*ibid.*

⁶⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.9.19 (BA 28.310-2).

⁶⁷"secundum principem populi sic et ministri ipsius, et qualis rector est civitatis tales et inhabitantes."

This text was quoted by Parmenian in support of the view that the communion of good and evil in the church is inevitably destructive of the good and that therefore the Catholic church was fatally contaminated.⁶⁸ The text can only be so used, responds Augustine, when its meaning is completely misunderstood.

In line with his usual procedure with such texts he first seeks to undermine the Donatist interpretation. He denies the propriety of identifying a bishop of the church (as the Donatist use of the verse requires) with the *principem populi* and *rector* of the text. He is quick to add that this is not on account of any inability *innumerabiles sanctos in catholica episcopos intueri*, but because the passage must be interpreted in light of the clear text, *maledictus qui spem suam ponit in homine*.⁶⁹ On the Donatist understanding, anyone who finds himself living in a city which has a wicked bishop might conclude that he can, on that account, become wicked himself, *usurpans ad defensionem suam tam perverse intellectam istam scripturam quam perverse ab istis intellegitur*.⁷⁰ To prevent such a perverse use of the text it has to be viewed in the clearer light of Matt. 23:2-3. Believers who happen to have bishops who fit the description of those *qui bona dicant ex cathedra Moysi et ea quae dicunt non faciant*, but who themselves do good and keep from evil, as the Lord required, demonstrate clearly that the Donatists are wrong in interpreting *principem populi et rectorem civitatis* as they do. Good people can exist under bad bishops *sicut potuit esse populus malus ubi fuit Moyses princeps et rector bonus*.⁷¹

Contra ep. Parmen. 2.4.8 (BA 28.284).

⁶⁸Tilley (1997) makes no reference to this text.

⁶⁹Jer. 17:5. *ibid.*

⁷⁰*ibid.*

⁷¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.4.8 (BA 28.284-6). Opportunity is taken to introduce a reference to Optatus of Thamugadi. Donatist failure to heed the clearer texts in the light of which Sir. 10:2 must be understood leads to the great embarrassment of hearing it said: "ergo qualis fuit Optatus, talis fuit et

Augustine proceeds to offer a very different understanding of the text. He finds in it support for his notion of two spiritual societies (*civitates*) within the one church. The sole prince and ruler of the first *civitas* (symbolically, Jerusalem) is the Lord Jesus Christ whose ministers are good. His citizens are in harmony with the dignity of the ruler, *non ad aequalitatem sed pro modo suo*, for it was said to them, *sancti eritis, quoniam et ego sanctus sum*.⁷²

The devil is the prince *alterius mali populi* and the ruler of the other *civitas, quae mystice* (allegorically) *Babylonia dicitur*. This is because Paul calls him and his angels *principes et rectores tenebrarum harum id est peccatorum....*⁷³ His ministers are like him because they transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, as the devil transformed himself into an angel of light.⁷⁴

The *aperta separatio* of these two peoples and cities will take place *cum ista messis fuerit ventilata*, but until then love (*dilectio*) for those who are grain *omnia tolerat*. The danger of a premature attempt to flee the chaff is that of sinful separation *a consortibus granis*.⁷⁵

plebs Thamugadensis." The Donatist position on "contagio mali" entails that all Donatists who are in communion "illi collegae vestro" and "illi plebi" must be contaminated (ibid.). The usefulness of Optatus for Augustine's purpose lay in his fame. Donatists could not make the excuse that he was a "hidden sinner".

⁷²Lev. 11:45. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.4.9 (BA 28.288).

⁷³Eph. 6:10. Ibid.

⁷⁴2 Cor. 11:14-5.

⁷⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.4.9 (BA 28.288).

Augustine's handling of this text in *Contra ep. Parmen.* is of special interest as being his first attempt in writing to define the holiness of the church in terms of the image of the two cities - an image for which he was indebted to Tyconius. "It is not that she (the church) is a congregation of the saints...but she is sanctified by her ruler, who alone is the priest without sin, who has entered into the Holy of Holies."⁷⁶

f. Isa. 52:1⁷⁷

Augustine regularly accuses the Donatists of applying to the church of the present time texts which actually refer to the pure church of the future age. They fail to make the vital distinction between the two *tempora* of the church, *non eam nunc esse talem qualis post resurrectionem futura est; nunc malos habere permixtos, tunc omnino non habituram....*⁷⁸ Compelled at the Conference of Carthage, it appears, to acknowledge the presence of hidden sinners in the church, Augustine counters their use of this text to establish the radical distinction between the unclean world and the pure church. Interpreted in the clear light of the parable of the dragnet (Matt. 13:47-50), he argues, it is apparent that only of the future, *post iudicium*, age can it be said, *nullum incircumcisum et inmundum per ecclesiam transiturum.*⁷⁹ This temporal division is implicit in the text. The *inmundi*, even though *occulti*, now pass through the church. But the words *non adiciet ultra* clearly refer to those who once passed through *sed ultra non transituros* (i.e. in the church of the future age).⁸⁰

Donatists berate Catholics for stating that the devil sows tares in the church of Christ

⁷⁶Bonner (1963), 289.

⁷⁷"non adiciet ultra per te transire incircumcisus et inmundus." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 9.12 (BA 32.276).

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 8.11 (BA 32.274-6).

⁸⁰*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 9.12 (BA 32.276).

but they perversely refuse to admit that this is the explanation of the presence in the church of the hidden sinners whom they acknowledge to be there.⁸¹

The text, then, does not support the Donatist case but rather demonstrates that it is to the church of the future age and not *ad huius temporis permixtionem* that those scriptural testimonies relate.⁸²

g. Isa. 52:11⁸³

This was a key text for the Donatists and was used by Parmenian, Petilian and Donatist representatives at the Conference of Carthage. It also appears in a sermon by an unknown Donatist.⁸⁴ The text is quoted by Parmenian as scriptural evidence for the duty of separation from sinners in the present. Augustine asks whether he will have to repeat on each occasion *quomodo fiat separatio cordis a malis*. The truth is

⁸¹ibid. (BA 32.276-8).

⁸²ibid. (BA 32.276).

⁸³"recedite recedite, exite inde et immundum nolite tangere. exite de medio eius et separamini, qui fertis vasa domini." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.19 (BA 28.442).

⁸⁴Published in PLS 4.707-10 as *Homilia* 18 of the Escorial Collection of 28 sermons which purport to be Latin translations of sermons of John Chrysostom. These form part of a larger group of 60 sermons (all traditionally attributed to Chrysostom) which scholarly opinion now believes to be of Donatist authorship. Vd. Leroy (1994). Leroy describes the above sermon as "indubitablement donatiste" (134). He adds, "Si la collection est bien globalement homogène, ainsi qu'il semble jusqu'à plus ample informé, nous nous trouverions donc pour la première fois en possession de la catéchèse d'un évêque de la célèbre Église africaine" (p. 134). The sermon is based on Matt. 7:15-16 ("Cavete a pseudoprophetis..."), a text much used by Donatists to excoriate Catholics for their resort to violence. The sermon stresses obedience to the divine law as the necessary authentication of Christian profession (the sermon's concluding three words are: "facite quodcumque iubetur" (710) - a possible allusion to Jn. 2:5). The need for separation from Catholics, whose inherent evil as *traditores* (a term employed twice) is revealed by their cruel persecution of Donatists, and who "...familias dei sacrilegio contaminare nituntur" (709). Nature itself demonstrates that "contraria copulari non possunt" (709). When the good and the evil are joined together the result is inevitable: "non ex bono malus melioretur, sed ex malo bonus contaminetur" (709). Lot was permitted to remain in Sodom without incurring defilement: "Christianos vero cum traditoribus morari non licuit" (709). To avoid pollution, those to whom 2 Cor. 6:16 ("templum dei iam estis" - another significant Donatist text, on which vd. below) applies (the Donatists), must obey Isa. 52:11 (quoted in the form: "Discedite...discedite inde, et exite de medio eorum, qui domini vasa portatis"). The preacher explains: "Discedite, ne quod sanctificavit Christus, polluat diabolus: aut quod mundavit deus, contamine inimicus" (710).

*immundum non tangit qui ad peccatum nulli consentit.*⁸⁵ Those who wish to abandon *corporaliter* people who are taken to be *manifestos malos* are guilty of abandoning *spiritaliter* the *latentes bonos*, thus condemning those who are *inexpertos et incognitos...dum separationem suam conatur defendere.*⁸⁶ Besides it needs to be noted that the very person who denounced the impurity of the people (Isaiah) was joined in one congregation with them.⁸⁷ By example, therefore, he showed the wrongness of physical separation.

This was also one of a number of texts quoted by Petilian to establish the doctrine of *contagio mali*⁸⁸ with a view, says Augustine, *ad excusandum nefas separationis suae.*⁸⁹ In this context Augustine alludes briefly to the distinction drawn by the Donatists between the sin of *traditio* and other sins. No such distinction is found in these texts but all *peccati consociatio* is forbidden. In separating, the Donatists draw criteria *non de scripturis sed de cordibus suis*, and effectively are saying that in the unity of sacramental communion the sins of others can be tolerated without contamination but not the sin of *traditio*. He claims that there is no point in dealing at length with this distinction since the Donatists themselves only rarely dare to draw it. They are ashamed to do so, recognizing the emptiness of their own words, and when they do, *nullo divino testimonio fulcire nituntur.*⁹⁰

⁸⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.20 (BA 28.442).

⁸⁶*ibid.* (BA 28.444).

⁸⁷*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.23 (BA 28.450).

⁸⁸The others are Ps. 49(50):18, 1 Tim. 5:22, Lev. 22:4-6, 1 Cor. 5:6.

⁸⁹*De un. bapt.* 14.24 (BA 31.716).

⁹⁰*ibid.* Appeal is made here to Cyprian: if he had understood these texts in the same way as the Donatists, he would certainly have separated from Stephen (bishop of Rome), "nec cum illo in catholicae unitatis communione persisteret." As de Veer points out it is impossible to verify Augustine's claim that the Donatists only rarely drew this distinction, "puisque nous ne connaissons les ouvrages donatistes que par les extraits qu'il a bien voulu nous transmettre." ("La 'traditio' considérée par les donatistes comme un péché d'origine." [BA 31. 839-42] 839). It is likely, as de

The weakness of Augustine's response to the Donatist distinction is that he nowhere attempts to address the theological issues it raises. He simply uses the instance of Optatus of Thamugadi to affirm that on the Donatist view of *contagio mali*, all Donatists would share in the guilt of the crimes of this one man. Clearly, Augustine thinks that no more need be said.⁹¹

Further appeal was made to Isa. 52:11 by Donatists at the Conference of Carthage. Augustine's reply is basically the same: the text is calling for separation of heart together with *vitae morumque dissimilitudine*.⁹²

h. Jer. 23:28b⁹³

This text is quoted by Cyprian⁹⁴ and it is "un texte de Jeremie que les donatistes aiment lui emprunter..."⁹⁵ Augustine suggests that among the many texts used by the

Veer says, that they drew it more often than Augustine suggests. The fundamental Donatist concern, after all, was about ecclesial defilement, resulting from associating with apostates. De Veer calls attention to the polyvalency of the scriptural texts cited and rightly comments: "donatistes et catholiques les interprétaient à la lumière de leur théologie préétablie et ils s'en servaient en réalité davantage pour illustrer celle-ci que pour lui donner ses assises." (BA 31.839).

⁹¹*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.23.54 (BA 30.296). De Veer notes the same weakness in the argument drawn by Augustine from the mainline Donatist attitude to the Maximinianists, an argument which he believed refuted at a stroke all the Donatist attacks on the Catholics "sive de baptismo, sive de persecutione... vel de communionis contagione." *Brev Coll.* 1.10 (BA 32.108). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 1.27.29 (BA 30.184-6); *Contra Cresc.* 3.82.94 (BA 31.460), 4.1.1 (BA 31.462-4); *Ep.* 51.1-5 (CSEL 34/2.144-49). Vd. de Veer (BA 30.840-2). The Donatists sharply distinguished between the sin of Maximian and that of which they accused Caecilian, some even suggesting that Maximian had only sinned against a man, Caecilian against God. Augustine ridiculed the distinction without attempting a theological answer to it. Cf. *Contra Cresc.* 4.10.12 (BA 31.494).

⁹²*Brev. Coll.* 3.9.18 (BA 32.172-4). Those who believe that this command is not properly obeyed *spiritualiter*, fall through pride into the very abomination of which the Lord expresses his abomination through the same prophet: "qui dicunt 'noli me tangere, quoniam mundus sum', hic fumus indignationis meae" (Isa. 65:5). This is what took place when, at the Conference, the Donatist representatives refused to sit down with their Catholic counterparts. Vd. discussion of Ps. 25(26):4-10 above. *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 5.7 (BA 32.264-6).

⁹³"quid paleis ad triticum?" *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.18 (BA 28.436).

⁹⁴*Ep.* 63.18 (CSEL 3/1-2.715).

⁹⁵La Bonnardière (1972), 30. For a comprehensive listing of the texts from Jeremiah used by both

Donatists none reveals so clearly their *sacrilegus tumor* as this one. With it Parmenian seeks to persuade blind men not only that the Donatist communion is the true church, but that it is in the present age *talem... qualis post ultimam ventilationem ecclesia sancta futura est*.⁹⁶ He uses it to counter the argument of Tyconius that *malos a bonis in unitate interim pro pace tolerandos et in fine ultimi divini iudicii separandos*.⁹⁷ Parmenian rather understood it as referring to Jeremiah's ability to discern the distinction between sinners and the righteous in his own time - a distinction that demanded immediate separation.⁹⁸ Is it really possible, asks Augustine, that Africa has been chosen to be the place *ubi purgata massa consisteret* while the *palea separata* covers the rest of the earth? Donatist moral failings (represented by the activities of the Circumcellion bands, drunken revelries, etc) gave the lie to such a claim unless, he asks sarcastically, *et hoc triticum est?* So did the Maximianist schism.⁹⁹

The true meaning of the prophet's words is clear to those who have any *sensus humanus*. Attention should be given first to the place of which the prophet's words speak: not the field (where the same root bears them both), nor the threshing floor (where both are equally threshed), but obviously the granary (*horreum*).¹⁰⁰ This

sides in the Donatist controversy, vd. *ibid.* 28-34 and cf. charts on pp. 83-103.

⁹⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.17 (BA 28.434).

⁹⁷*ibid.* (BA 28.436). In doing so, says Augustine, "perversus atque errans perversos et errantes ad turbulentissimas et sceleratissimas seditiones inflammet."

⁹⁸*ibid.* Augustine wonders, in that case, which Donatist leader should be regarded as the winner - Parmenian? Donatus? Majorinus? Or maybe all three should be regarded "tamquam tria cornua cuiusdam ventilabri in manu domini per quos messis orbis totius mundaretur"? *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.18 (BA 28.438). Cf. Congar, "Le van à trois pointes," BA 28.742-3)

⁹⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.18 (BA 28.438). Why do the Donatists allow in their midst (*intus*) those who once were without (*foras*) *inter paleam Maximianistarum* without saying to them: "quid paleis ad triticum?"

¹⁰⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.19 (BA 28.440).

meaning is achieved by comparing the text with the clearer Matt. 3:12. The *paterfamilias* himself will come carrying his winnowing fork and *mundabit aream suam, frumenta recondet in horreum, paleam vero comburet igni inextinguibili*. That is, the separation will take place at the final judgement.¹⁰¹ Those who imagine their fellowship to be already *frumentum purgatum* have flown off *a commixtione frumenti et paleae* as pure chaff. If, however, Jeremiah's prophecy has been fulfilled in the present it can have only one correct meaning: the one church truly unites both until the final winnowing which will separate them, *etiam corporaliter*. The difference meantime is that the chaff has its heart set on earth, seeking its own interests, not those of Jesus Christ¹⁰²; while the grain stores up treasure in heaven where its heart already is.¹⁰³

Moreover, the prophet's personal practice condemns the Donatist interpretation of his words. Jeremiah spoke these words but he did not withdraw *a paleis populi sui in quas tanta illa vera dicebat*.¹⁰⁴ The Donatists, *impietate vesana*, condemn the prophets' conduct from the words of the prophets. Or do they wish to say that in those times the righteous did not need to separate from wicked people as they do at the present time? What could be more perverse than to say that in the age of the

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* Augustine also appeals here to Matt. 25: 31-46 (the parable of the sheep and the goats). Alluding to the parable of the dragnet (Matt. 13:47-50), Augustine allows that the good fish can properly say to the bad fish caught in the mesh of the net which the Lord compares to the kingdom of heaven: "Recedite a nobis aut recedamus a vobis." This, however, has reference not to what takes place in the present age but is said in expectation that all the fish will in due course be drawn to the shore and that the angels will place the good in vessels and throw the bad away. The thought is eschatological.

¹⁰² Cf. Phil. 3:19, 2:21.

¹⁰³ Cf. Matt. 6:20-21. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.19 (BA 28.442).

¹⁰⁴ *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.23 (BA 28.450). Together with Isaiah (Isa. 52:11) and David (Ps. 25(26):4-5) Jeremiah would say: "consensione atque placito conscientiae recedebamus et exhibamus ab eis," because not only did we not do such things, "sed nec facientibus tacebamus." *ibid.* (BA 28.452).

prophets the good had no need to separate *corporaliter* from the wicked, when many *sacramenta* were required to be observed *corporaliter* but that now *corporalem separationem* is necessary *quando...illa spiritaliter observantur*.¹⁰⁵

In two passages in *Contra Cresc.*, Augustine refers to Parmenian's audacity in using Jer. 23:28 in order to set Donatist purity over against alleged Catholic impurity.¹⁰⁶

Donatists, apparently, have created a new kind of *area* (threshing-floor) - either one which contains only wheat or one in which only wheat appears - *cui non sit necessarius ventilator, sed perscrutator*.¹⁰⁷ The truth is, if they had themselves been wheat they would have listened to the counsel of Cyprian and not sought to avoid, before the time of winnowing, being mixed with chaff.¹⁰⁸ Since the whole Donatist defence consists in saying that they have separated *ne alienorum peccatorum contagione periretis*, Catholics rightly accuse them when they discover in their midst *notum hominem malum*.¹⁰⁹ For their part, the Donatists are marked by that swelling pride which is always found among those who separate themselves from the unity of Christ. They boast of being the only Christians and condemn all others.¹¹⁰

Parmenian quotes this text as though it were spoken about Catholics and Donatists (*de nobis et vobis*) but this misapplication arises from his failure to grasp that Jeremiah is (not speaking about the church but) attacking, as the context shows,

¹⁰⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.23 (BA 28.452).

¹⁰⁶"nam et Parmenianus vester praeclaram vestram munditiam velut inmunditiae nostrae a contrario comparans ausus est interponere sententiam prophetae Hieremiae..." *Contra Cresc.* 3.81.93 (BA 31.458). Cf. 4.59.71 (BA 31.618).

¹⁰⁷*Contra Cresc.* 3.81.93 (BA 31.458).

¹⁰⁸*ibid.* Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 54.3 (CSEL 3/1-2.622-23).

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*

¹¹⁰*Contra Cresc.* 4.59.71 (BA 31.618).

those *qui divinis oraculis sua somnia coaequabant*.¹¹¹ Donatist use of this text at the Conference of Carthage is rebutted in the same way.¹¹²

i. Ezek. 20:18¹¹³

This text was apparently introduced into the debate for the first time by Cresconius "to identify his contemporary Donatist opponents not only with Mensurius and Caecelian (*sic*) but also with the idolaters of the Bible...".¹¹⁴ Augustine, again, berates Donatist failure to observe the context. The command was given to the Jews in order that they might not copy the evil deeds of their fathers - *non ut ab illo dei populo scinderentur*.¹¹⁵

Appeal is made to the still wider Old Testament context. The saints and prophets of God like David, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah were called to observe the divine commandments *inter contemptores legis dei*. While they denounced the transgressors of the law of God and refused to imitate the sins of their fathers by which God was offended and on account of which they were prevented from entering the land of promise, it was nevertheless not lawful for them *alterum populum quasi purgatum et liquatum separatione sacrilega constituere*.¹¹⁶

The text, rightly interpreted, calls attention to the Donatist error of judging the Catholics to be impure, while they (the Catholics) do not commit the sins of those

¹¹¹*Contra Cresc.* 3.81.93 (BA 31.458-60). Cf *Contra Cresc.* 4.59.71 (BA 31.618).

¹¹²"non attendentes unde hoc ille dixisset. non enim aiebat de ecclesia, sed divinis prophetarum visionibus et humanis somniis, ne ullo modo compararentur." *Brev. Coll.* 3.8.10 (BA 32.154).

¹¹³"in legalibus patrum vestrorum ne ambulaveritis." *Contra Cresc.* 3.38.42 (BA 31.352).

¹¹⁴Tilley (1997), 160-1.

¹¹⁵*Contra Cresc.* 3.38.42 (BA 31.352).

¹¹⁶*ibid.* (BA 31.352-4).

whom the Donatists accuse without proof, and do not separate themselves from the church *in universo mundo*.¹¹⁷ Is the problem, he asks, that the *traditores* have instituted a new sacrament of baptism? Or have they written other books *de facienda vel imitanda traditione* for their successors? Do Catholics hold and follow their teaching? If the *traditores* had written such texts and forbidden participation in their communion except to those who read and approve them, they would indeed have divided themselves from the unity of the church.¹¹⁸ But if they had written such *pessima...praecepta* without establishing their own fellowship *extra ecclesiam*, they are to be reckoned on that account as *zizania...quorum causa frumenta non recte desererentur*.¹¹⁹

j. Hagg. 2:14¹²⁰

This text was an important one in Donatist usage for many years.¹²¹ It was used by them at the Conference of Carthage in support of their doctrine of *contagio mali*.¹²²

Augustine states that of all the biblical texts which the Donatists (uncomprehendingly)

¹¹⁷*Contra Cresc.* 3.38.42 (BA 31.354).

¹¹⁸*ibid.* Augustine adds: "in quorum divisione me si videres, tunc me dicere deberes esse in ecclesia traditorum."

¹¹⁹*ibid.*

¹²⁰"sic populus iste et gens ista, omnis qui accesserit illo inquinabitur (propter praesumptiones eorum matutinas a facie laborum suorum, et odio habebatis <in portis> arguentes)." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.31 (BA 32.324). The final part of the verse (enclosed in brackets) is not found in the Hebrew original nor in the Vulgate but the LXX has ἕνεκεν τῶν λημμάτων αὐτῶν τῶν ὀρθρινῶν ὀδυνηθήσονται ἀπὸ προσώπου πόνων αὐτῶν. As Lamirande comments: "Il faut avouer que le sens nous échappe. Le texte latin d'Augustin n'a pas de verbe correspondant à ὀδυνηθήσονται ce qui finit d'enlever tout sens à la phrase." Lamirande, "Notes sur le texte biblique d'Augustin (Ad Donatistas post coll.)," BA 32.738. It is the earlier part of the verse alone, however, that Augustine quotes elsewhere in this context, as directly relevant to his purpose.

¹²¹Optatus refers to Donatist use of it. *Contra Donat.* 6.3 (SC 413.168).

¹²²Vd. *Gesta Coll.* 3.258 (PL 11.1411). Of Donatist use of Hagg.2:14 at the Conference, Augustine says: "cuius testimonium prae ceteris legerunt, ut solum adhuc pro omnibus iactent." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.30 BA 32.318-20. With reference to Donatist use, primarily of Hagg. 2:14 and Hos. 9:4, Tilley comments: "In casting their opponents in the roles of the people denounced in the Scriptures, the Donatists appointed themselves as the true priests and prophets for their own era. As their predecessors had done with the stories of the martyrs, so the Donatists at the Conference of Carthage envisioned their religious fidelity primarily in Old Testament terms. They were the faithful prophets and priests; the Donatist church was the assembly of Israel." Tilley (1997), 159.

used at the Conference, the only one to which, in defeat, they later appealed was this one from Haggai - *tamquam praecipuum*. This, he says, was a happy choice to be used as a summary of all their other biblical testimonies, because Haggai, in fact, establishes clearly the point that the Catholics wanted to make against the Donatists - namely that, *non corporalis, sed spiritualis contactus, qui fit per consensionem, ipse polluit homines, quorum causam unam facit ipsa consensio*.¹²³ Here, again, was Donatist biblical ammunition waiting to be used against themselves. It fell to Augustine to demonstrate that what Haggai was forbidding was communion of spirit, not physical contact, between good and bad. Augustine's strategy, again, is to seek to show that the text in its context simply cannot bear the Donatist construction. This case affords a particularly interesting example of his approach.¹²⁴

The preceding context of Hagg. 2:14 is first explained. Through the prophet, the Lord accused the remnant of the Jews who had returned from the captivity of Babylon of neglecting the house of the Lord while embellishing their own homes. As a consequence, the land had been stuck with barrenness. Zerubbabel, Joshua and all the people then began to work on the house of the Lord.¹²⁵ Those who undertook this work were clearly not defiled, since it was the Lord who stirred their hearts to do it and who had promised them in connection with it: *ego vobiscum*.¹²⁶

¹²³*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.26 (BA 32.312).

¹²⁴La Bonnardière has shown that 22 of the 38 vv. of Haggai appear in Augustine's writings, mostly in *Ad Donat. post Coll.* in the context of opposing the Donatist use of Hagg. 2:14. La Bonnardière (1957a), 363-5. Cf. Lamirande, "Saint Augustin et le livre d'Aggée," BA 32.737-8.

¹²⁵Hagg. 1:1-15.

¹²⁶Hagg. 1:13. *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.30 (BA 32.320).

Augustine then calls attention to the following verses (Hagg. 2:1-7), and to their prophetic and messianic import.¹²⁷ The words are properly understood of the times of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose people constitute the true and holy temple of God.¹²⁸ But this *templum* is not formed of those *qui permixti tolerantur* but only of those who for the present are separated *spiritaliter* from such, as they await the eschatological hour when they will also be separated *corporaliter*. Of such, too, were Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people to whom the prophecy was first directed and who responded obediently by working in the house of the Lord. The people to whom the words of Hagg. 2:4-5¹²⁹ were addressed cannot fit the description of a *populum immundum...ad quem si quis accesserit inquinabitur* (v. 14).

It follows, argues Augustine, that since the impure people described in Hagg. 2:10-14 cannot be identified with those to whom the Lord says, *praevalisce, et spiritus meus in medio vestrum*, there must have been two peoples, *unus immundus et alter qui ad immundum prohibetur accedere, qui exhortabatur praevaliscere, quia spiritus dei erat in medio eorum*. There were not, however, two altars or two sets of priests who offered separate sacrifices, each for their own people. Rather, these two peoples formed one people under one High Priest, together entering one temple, just as all the

¹²⁷"...[v.7] et concutiam omnes gentes, et venient omnia electa gentium, et implebo domum hanc, dicit dominus omnipotens." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.30 (BA 32.320-22).

¹²⁸*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.30 (BA 32.322).

¹²⁹"et nunc praevalisce, Zorobabel, dicit dominus, et praevalisce, Iesus filius Iosedec sacerdos magne, et praevalisce, omnis popule terrae, dicit dominus omnipotens, et spiritus meus praeest in medio vestrum." Augustine asks, "quis dementissimus dixerit istum esse populum, ad quem si quis accesserit inquinabitur?" *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.30 (BA 32.322).

people had been under the one Moses - *quidam deum offendentes, quidam deo placentes....*¹³⁰

Within the external unity of the people, however, there existed a deep spiritual distinction, *factis non locis, animo non templo, moribus non altaribus*. It was in this way that separation from defilement was achieved. As Moses had been aware of the presence of wicked ones among the one people, and as Samuel had observed the (spiritual) distinction between Saul and David,¹³¹ so Haggai recognized two peoples in the one people, and yet separated neither them nor himself *ab eodem templo et ab eisdem altaribus separabat*. It was, therefore, *spiritalem...accessum consensionemque factorum* which he prohibited in v.14. It was to a particular *vitium* that he forbids approach, but *non homines ab hominibus corporali disiunctione seclisit. acceditur autem ad vitium corruptionis vitio consensionis.*¹³²

At this point Augustine anticipates a possible (Donatist) objection to his line of argument. What if the (undefiled) people addressed in Hagg. 2:1-4 had, within a few days, (all) so turned to evil as to deserve to hear Hagg. 2:14? Comparing Hagg. 2:1&10, Augustine allows a gap of about ninety days between the words of blessing addressed to the people and the command to avoid impurity. Spiritual degeneration could have occurred in this interval and therefore there is no need to distinguish between the people in the way Augustine has done. This objection is met by

¹³⁰*Ad Donat. post Coll. 20.31 (BA 32.324)*. Augustine here refers to 1 Cor. 10:5: "non in omnibus illis beneplacitum est deo." Paul, he comments, does not say, "in omnibus illis non est beneplacitum deo," as if they all displeased God. "Ergo," he concludes, "in quibusdam, non in omnibus." *ibid.* (BA 32.324-6).

¹³¹"...distincte utique videbat, quia distinctos videbat et unum eorum in aeternum amabat, alium pro tempore tolerabat."

¹³²*Ad Donat. post Coll. 20.31 (BA 32.326-8)*.

comparing Hagg. 2:14 with the immediately following context of vv. 15-19 which contain words of blessing.¹³³ Augustine notes that the words of the latter vv. were spoken on the very same day as vv. 10-14.¹³⁴ The blessing spoken on the same day was clearly not addressed to those to whose impurity the people were commanded not to come near, *sed ad illos bonos, qui prohibentur accedere*. The same distinction, therefore, remained among the people. In the one body there were *permixti et separati: permixti quidem corporali tactu, separati autem voluntatis abscessu*. But Scripture is speaking here *more suo* - condemning the wicked as if all among the people were wicked and comforting the good as if all among them were so.

Augustine concludes his discussion of this text by commenting that the Donatist bishops have performed a service for the Catholic cause by continuing to quote it even after their defeat at the Conference. They have reminded Catholics of the way in which this text supports the Catholic, not the Donatist, position regarding separation.¹³⁵

In view of Donatist self-understanding as the new Israel, God's chosen and law-keeping people, it is not surprising that Old Testament texts featured so prominently in their case for the purity of the church and that Augustine felt compelled to offer radical counter-interpretations by way of response. He does so, in particular, by seeking to exegete the relevant texts in light of clearer biblical passages, by offering detailed contextualised interpretations and by pointing out that the actual

¹³³The passage concludes: "...a die hoc benedicam." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.31 (BA 32.328-30).

¹³⁴The twenty fourth day of the ninth month (Hagg. 2:10).

¹³⁵"...quia et in uno populo, in uno templo, sub eisdem sacerdotibus, inter eadem sacramenta hominibus dissimili voluntate viventibus et diversis moribus discrepantibus nec causae causa nec personae potest praeiudicare persona." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.32 (BA 32.330).

practice of Old Testament saints and prophets did not support Donatist separatism.

Donatists, however, also made use of New Testament texts for the same purpose and

it is to these that we now turn.

4.2.2 New Testament "Donatist" texts

a. Matt. 22:13-14¹³⁶

Donatist use of the parable of the wedding banquet (Matt. 22:1-14) provides a quite rare example of their use of the allegorical, rather than the preferred typological, method of interpretation to buttress their position on church purity.¹³⁷ Use by them of the passage at the Conference of Carthage reflects the use made of it earlier by Parmenian, as reported by Optatus.¹³⁸ As Parmenian had done, the Donatists there "focused on the command of the king to his ministers that they should expel the guest. Since the priests of the Church were the ministers of the eternal king, they were licensed to exclude those who were sinners, *as soon as they knew their condition*".¹³⁹

Augustine's response is to concentrate attention on the role of king himself rather than on that of his ministers. Instances from the Old Testament are adduced in which, in

¹³⁶"ligate illi manus et pedes et proicite eum in tenebras exteriores; ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium. multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.27 (BA 32.314).

¹³⁷Tilley claims that each case of Donatist allegorical interpretation was "provoked by Catholic allegorizing. Donatists then used the Catholic train of thought to support their contention that the true Church, that is, that of the Donatists, separated itself from sinners." Tilley (1997), 146. While this was doubtless true in general, it does not appear to have been so in this instance. Tilley herself mentions Optatus' reference to Parmenian's use of this parable, in which "he candidly accused Parmenian of applying it to the wrong time, the present, instead of to the end of the world". There is no evidence of earlier Catholic use of the passage against which Parmenian was reacting. Vd. Tilley (1997), 109.

¹³⁸Optatus *Contra Donat.* 5.10 (SC 413.156).

¹³⁹Tilley (1997), 147.

the face of imminent divine judgement on the ungodly, God himself acted directly to separate the godly from them.¹⁴⁰ In the case of the man who did not have a wedding garment, Augustine emphasises that it was not those who gave out the invitations to the banquet but *ipse dominus cuius erat convivium* who commanded him to be bound and thrown out.¹⁴¹

Precisely in order to anticipate the Donatist retort that the reference here is to an individual sinner in the church,¹⁴² unnoticed by the servants, as a fish below the waves is concealed from the view of the fishermen,¹⁴³ the Lord immediately indicates that this same individual symbolises the large crowd of wicked in the midst of whom *pauciores boni in convivio dominico vivunt*. The following explanatory statement (*multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi*, v.14) makes this clear. These words make sense only if the single person from the crowd thrown out into outer darkness represents *grande corpus...omnium malorum ante domini iudicium convivio dominico permixtorum*. From these the good separate themselves *corde interim ac moribus*, while at the same time *manducantes et bibentes corpus et sanguinem domini*.¹⁴⁴

The great distinction between the two parties is that the one wear the wedding robe, which is *fidissimam sponsi caritatem*, in honour of the groom, not seeking their own but the things of Jesus Christ,¹⁴⁵ while the others are without it and give evidence of

¹⁴⁰"ipse ab eis iustos admonitione separavit." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.27 (BA 32.312). The examples given are: Noah and his family before the flood (Gen. 7-8), Lot before the destruction of Sodom by fire (Gen. 19), his whole people prior to the destruction of the company of Abiram (Num. 16).

¹⁴¹ibid.

¹⁴²"velut unus in turba latenter subrepsisset ignaris"

¹⁴³Vd. comments below on Matt. 13:47-50.

¹⁴⁴*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.27 (BA 32.314).

¹⁴⁵Phil. 2:21.

the lack by seeking only their own interests. Thus, although taking part in the same feast, *isti misericordiam manducant, illi iudicium*.¹⁴⁶

Augustine adds that this position should not be understood as a denial of the propriety of ecclesiastical discipline. But the objects of such discipline - those who are brought *vel degradando vel excommunicando ad humiliorem paenitendi locum* - are not by it actually separated *a populo dei*.¹⁴⁷ When the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline is foregone in the interests of the preservation of the peace and tranquillity of the church, it would be wrong to interpret this as rejection of discipline. Rather, he says, *toleramus quae nolumus, ut perveniamus quo volumus*. Both the Lord's warning and Cyprian's example and precept support the Catholic stance on this.¹⁴⁸

b. 1 Cor. 5:6¹⁴⁹

This was one of the key texts on the basis of which the Donatists accused the Catholics of corrupting their whole church through failing to separate the evil from the good.¹⁵⁰ To this end it was quoted by Parmenian. As reported by Augustine, Parmenian asks, *quomodo...incompactus poteris permanere qui corruptis sociaris?*

¹⁴⁶Cf. 1 Cor. 11:29. *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.27 (BA 32.314).

¹⁴⁷*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.28 (BA 32.314-6). Lamirande points out that, for Augustine, excommunication ("au moins certaines formes") does not involve separation from God's people (BA 32.316, n. 1). On Augustine and excommunication, cf. e.g. Adam (1917) 56-59, 77-80, 89-95.

¹⁴⁸*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.28 (BA 32.316).

¹⁴⁹"modicum fermenti totam massam corrumpit." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 22.42 (BA 28.380). Tilley (1997) does not refer to this text.

¹⁵⁰As Congar well expresses it: "Les Donatistes ne niaient pas qu'il y eut parmi eux, comme chez les Catholiques, des coupables cachés: ce qu'ils reprochaient aux Catholiques, c'était de ne pas séparer les mauvais (ecclésiatement parlant) des pur, quand leur péché était notoire, et ainsi de rendre impure la totalité de leur communion." BA 28. 59. For the same purpose were used Jer. 23:28, Jn. 9:31, 1 Tim. 5:22. Vd. comments ad loc. Augustine reports Donatist use of Rom. 1:32 ('non solum qui faciunt ea, sed etiam qui consentiunt facientibus') to condemn overseas churches in fellowship with the Catholic Church in North Africa. Paul's own practice, however, proves that this text does not refer to co-existence with sinners within the church. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.3.5 (BA 28.220). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.107.244-45 (BA 30.554-56).

Augustine agrees that one cannot if by *sociari* is meant either of two things, *si mali aliquid cum eis committit aut committentibus favet*. But when one does neither the one nor the other, this is not *sociari*, and defilement is not incurred.¹⁵¹ If a righteous person meets a third condition (*si addat tertium*) by exercising church discipline in the right spirit,¹⁵² he has then fulfilled *plenissimum officium non solum castissimae innocentiae, sed etiam diligentissimae severitatis*.¹⁵³ When the third requirement proves impracticable, the constant observance of the first two will keep one *incompactum castumque*.¹⁵⁴

The text is now turned directly against the Donatists by calling attention to its relevance to the situation within the Donatist communion. Parmenian has no means of showing that it does not contain *non solum modicum fermenti, sed multum veneni ex illis ovis aspidum ruptis et praevalidis iam serpentibus pro Primiano damnatis et ad Primianum iterum revocatis*.¹⁵⁵ But if there is a way of correction by which Maximianists can return to the *pars Donati*, he asks, *quanto verior perfectiorque correctio est ab ipsa parte Donati ad unitatem catholicam remeare!*¹⁵⁶ That such *correctio* is needed is made clear by Tyconius who had inside knowledge of, and recorded at length, Donatist misdeeds of his own time. He was in a position to know

¹⁵¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.41 (BA 28.378).

¹⁵²"cum dilectione corrigendi, non cum odio persequendi"

¹⁵³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.41 (BA 28.378-80).

¹⁵⁴*ibid.* 380.

¹⁵⁵The allusion is to Isa. 59:5. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.22.42 (BA 28.380). Augustine is referring to the return to the Primianist fold, following the Council of Bagai (394), of two bishops who had participated in the Maximianist schism - Felicianus of Musti and Praetextatus of Assuras. Their return was mainly due to the high level of pressure brought to bear on the Maximianists by Optatus of Thamugadi. The baptisms which they had administered during the secession were subsequently recognized. Cf. Monceaux 4. 126f.; Frend (1952), 213f.; Congar, "Émiettement du Parti donatiste," BA 28.740-1. It was a situation that provided Augustine with a ready argument. Cf. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.3.7 (BA 28.280).

¹⁵⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.22.42 (BA 28.380).

what they were unwilling to confess, that their whole lump had been corrupted, not with a measure, but with a whole lot of leaven, while they *totum orbem terrarum peccatis Afrorum fermentatum esse criminarentur*.¹⁵⁷

Mainline Donatist unwillingness to allow that the misdeeds of Optatus of Thamugadi corrupted any more than his friends should in itself have taught them the correctness of the Catholic interpretation of the text. Since the *massa tota* undoubtedly comprises all those to whom the term *totum* applies, *sive bonum sive malum*, it must refer here to those *qui consentiunt* and to them alone.¹⁵⁸

The evil is, therefore, to be corrected, not by physical separation, but by church discipline: *ne ad multos persuadendo perveniat*. Both when the interests of peace permit it and when they do not, it is the neglect (of discipline) itself which *culpam trahit et in periculo consentiendi est per desidiam corrigendi*.¹⁵⁹

c. 1 Cor. 5:13b¹⁶⁰

The importance of this text for the Donatists, as a clear biblical proof of their doctrine of *contagio mali* is, in all probability, reflected in the detailed treatment given to it by

¹⁵⁷ibid. (BA 28.380-82).

¹⁵⁸ibid. (BA 28.382).

¹⁵⁹ibid. This is one of a number of texts, apparently cited by Petilian (the others are: Ps. 49(50):18, 1 Tim. 5:22, Isa. 52:11, Lev. 22:4-6), which Augustine uses to undermine the distinction effectively made by the Donatists between the sin of "traditio" and other sins. These texts, he states, rather forbid "omnis peccati consociatio". *De un. bapt.* 14.24 (BA 31.716). Augustine's failure to take with sufficient seriousness the logic of this Donatist distinction and his consequent inability to recognize the reason for the distinction drawn by Donatists between the behaviour of Majorinus towards Caecilian and, for instance, that of Maximian towards Primian (to which regular appeal is made in Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic) is well discussed by de Veer, "La 'traditio' considérée par les donatistes comme un péché d'origine" (BA 31.839-42).

¹⁶⁰"auferte malum a vobis ipsis." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.1 (BA 28.384).

Augustine in the *Contra ep. Parmen.*¹⁶¹ The argument drawn from the text by Parmenian was that if the *malum* did not adversely affect the good, there would not have been a command to remove it.¹⁶² Augustine seeks to show that a proper interpretation of the text does entail the conclusion which leads Donatists, on its basis, *ad sacrilegium schismatis et ad occasionem praecisionis*. He wishes to establish an interpretation which upholds proper ecclesiastical discipline - the kind which always has in view *unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis*. Any form of discipline which breaks the bond of unity is not only superfluous but positively harmful and provides no remedy.¹⁶³

Addressing himself to the proper application of the text, Augustine asks first whether the apostle had a reason for not rather saying (unambiguously), *auferte malos a congregatione vestra?*¹⁶⁴ The explanation, he suggests, is that there was no need to separate *malos homines* in this way from the gathering of the church, provided that one *a se ipso auferat malum*. In this way he is both joined *spiritualiter* to the good and similarly separated from the evil.¹⁶⁵ V. 13 must be viewed in the context of v.12 where

¹⁶¹The only earlier recorded Donatist use of the text occurs in the *Gesta apud Zenophilum* where it is found in a letter written by one Donatist Numidian bishop, Sabinus, to another, Silvanus. The letter was used as evidence in the trial of the latter on the charge, among others, of being a "traditor". This text, together with Isa. 1:16, 18 ("expellite malignitatem de animis vestris...et venite disputemus, dicit dominus..."), was quoted "to encourage bishop Silvanus to fulfill the prophecies of Scripture in his own person by coming to terms with his Christian accusers." Tilley (1997), 80. *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (CSEL 26.191).

¹⁶²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.1 (BA 28.384).

¹⁶³*ibid.* Cf. Eph. 4:3.

¹⁶⁴*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.2 (BA 28.384-6).

¹⁶⁵*ibid.* (BA 28.386). Augustine finds the same point made in 1 Tim. 5:22, on which *vd.* below. In part, Augustine's argument here depends on the meaning given to "malum". He takes "malum" as a neuter noun (as also, probably, does Parmenian), while the NT Greek (τὸν πονηρὸν) requires rather that "malum" be taken as masculine. In the *Retract.* Augustine acknowledges that the Greek requires the (masculine) sense "hunc malum", not "hoc malum", thus conveying the meaning: "ut homo malus auferatur ex hominibus bonis" - an object accomplished "per ecclesiasticam disciplinam" (*Retract.* 2.17 [BA 12.480]). As Congar says, "Il s'est en effet appuyé sur la discipline de l'Église, et c'est elle qui vise à réaliser la monition de saint Paul" ("Le pervers' ou 'le mal'? Masculin ou

Paul speaks of Christians as judges not of those who are outside but rather those who are within the church. It is the issue of internal discipline that is being addressed and v. 13 is added to allay the fears of those Corinthians who are troubled by the fact that the relatively large number of wicked persons in the church made it impossible to separate them *a congregatione*, without doing damage to the good. Paul assures them that even if this cannot be done, nevertheless *aufferendo malum ex se ipsis*, through neither taking part in nor consenting to their sinning, *integerrimi inter eos et incorruptissimi versarentur*. It is through one's own wickedness that one agrees with the wicked, but if one removes wickedness from oneself, the happy consequence is that *alieno malo non est unde consentiat*.¹⁶⁶

The third essential requirement is that of church discipline. Negligence *in tanta re...grave malum est*. One sins grievously by failing *monere, corripere, arguere* those whose sins are neither shared nor approved. Failure to exercise appropriate discipline when the peace of the church permits it, even to the extent of separating the offender from participation in the sacraments, means that the person concerned *non alieno malo peccat sed suo*. Such discipline, however, must be exercised *dilectione servata non sine spe correctionis*.¹⁶⁷

Augustine proceeds to argue at length that Parmenian's understanding of 1 Cor. 5:13b is flawed because he has neglected to place the text within the proper context of the chapter as a whole.¹⁶⁸ In a passage which well illustrates his ability, when required, to

neutre?" [BA 28.741 n.c.33]).

¹⁶⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.2 (BA 28.386).

¹⁶⁷*ibid.* (BA 28.388).

¹⁶⁸*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.7 (BA 28.404-6).

interpret texts in context, Augustine offers an exposition of the whole chapter in order to demonstrate that the text in question supports his view of church discipline against that of the Donatists.¹⁶⁹

Vv. 1-8 emphasize that those who exercise ecclesiastical discipline must do so in a right spirit. The command to discipline, in v. 5, is qualified by the requirement that this be exercised *humilitate lugentium...non superbia saevientium*.¹⁷⁰ The *modicum fermenti* of v.6b is identified with the sin of pride which, as in the case of the Pharisee in the parable of Jesus,¹⁷¹ finds occasion in the sins of others for self-congratulation. The proper spirit when confronted with the sins of others is one of humility and love, as texts like 1 Cor. 12:12; Gal. 6:1-2; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:27; Eph. 4:2-3 establish.

This is why the apostolic command of v.7 (*expurgate vetus fermentum, ut sitis nova conspersio sicut estis azymi*)¹⁷² is necessary. The *ut sitis* and the *sicut estis* point to the existence in the Corinthian church of two distinct groups: one that has already been purged of leaven and one that has not but is exhorted so to be. Paul's exhortation is expressed as if all were in the latter group, to prevent the former from despairing of the latter or drawing the conclusion that they did not belong *ad compagem corporis sui*.¹⁷³ The humble already know, although through the apostle's counsel they know

¹⁶⁹ibid. 3.2.5 - 3.2.16 (BA 28.398-434).

¹⁷⁰ibid. 3.2.5 (BA 28.398). Cf. 1 Cor. 5:2,6,8. Augustine supplies alternative readings for v.6a: "non bona gloriatio" and "bona gloriatio". He states that the latter reading "nonnulli et maxime Latini codices habent," but notes that the difference presents no interpretative problems: "cum eadem in utroque sententia teneatur." The latter reading, if correct, is to be understood as ironic.

¹⁷¹Lk. 18:9-14.

¹⁷²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.5 (BA 28.400).

¹⁷³ibid. For the use of *compago* by early Christian writers as "un terme du vocabulaire ecclésiastique de communion ou d'appartenance au corps ecclésial," vd. Congar and refs., BA 28.401-3, n.3.

still better, that it was their responsibility to bear in love with those in the church who were not yet so, and in this way to fulfill the law of Christ.¹⁷⁴

The primary example of such humble forbearance is that of Christ himself who, *ad docendam humilitatis viam*, humbled himself *ad mortem crucis*. This is why Paul adds in v.7: *etenim pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus*.¹⁷⁵ The (life-long) celebration (v.8) must therefore be made, not with *malitia* and *malignitas* which lead only to pride on account of others' sins, but *in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis*. Partaking of this bread makes a person remember what he himself had been and produces compassion for those who have fallen, *quandoquidem ipse erectus est lapsu suo per Christi misericordiam*.¹⁷⁶

Having established the spirit in which true discipline must be exercised, Augustine goes on to expound the nature of such discipline from vv. 9-13. He takes vv. 9-10 to be dealing, not with the issue of discipline, but with the relationship between the church and the world. Paul is saying that if anyone wishes to protect himself from sinners who are outside the church (*praeter ecclesiam*) he will have to go out of the world. But the task of Christians in this world is to win sinners to Christ for their salvation and this cannot be done if all relationship with them is avoided.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴Gal. :2. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.5 (BA 28.402).

¹⁷⁵*ibid.*

¹⁷⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.5 (BA 28.402-4).

¹⁷⁷*ibid.* 3.2.6 (BA 28.404).

He acknowledges that Parmenian might have found in v. 11¹⁷⁸ support for his position on the necessity of physical separation *a male viventibus*, but suggests that omission of any appeal to it is significant. The explanation for this, hazards Augustine, is that Parmenian feared having to deal with the obvious Catholic objection to Donatist use of v. 11 for their purpose, namely, that the Donatist communion itself contains the very kinds of sinners mentioned in v. 11 and with them they shared not only *cibum mensae vestrae* but *cenam mensae dominicae*.¹⁷⁹ Parmenian understood only too well the teaching of the chapter as a whole - otherwise he would not have cited only the last part of it.¹⁸⁰

Augustine anticipates an objection to his interpretation of 1 Cor. 5:11-13. It begins with a recognition that vv. 9-10 clearly require separation, not from sinners who are not Christians but from those who are. Separation of heart is, of course, necessary from all sinners, but the puzzle is that Paul is forbidding the same relationship with sinful Christians as is permitted with pagans in the ordinary intercourse of life.¹⁸¹ The conclusion is surely inescapable, *persuadet ergo ante tempus messis a frumentis zizania separari*.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸"nunc scripsi vobis non commisceri. si quis frater nominetur aut fornicator aut idolis serviens aut avarus aut maledicus aut ebriosus aut rapax, cum eiusmodi ne quidem cibum simul sumere." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.6 (BA 28.404).

¹⁷⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.7 (BA 28.406).

¹⁸⁰*ibid.* Augustine goes on to say that the Donatists should have learned from Cyprian not to use 1 Cor. 5:13b to justify schism since the existence of similar sinners in the church of Cyprian's day should, on Donatist presuppositions, have led to its destruction then - a claim that even the Donatists do not make. They ought to ask how Cyprian (and those like him) would have interpreted 1 Cor. 5:11. *Ibid.* 3.2.8-11 (BA 28.408-16).

¹⁸¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.12 (BA 28.418). By comparing 1 Cor. 10.27 and 1 Cor. 5:11 the putative objector demonstrates how Paul permits eating with those "qui foris sunt", but with those "qui intus sunt" to whom v.11 applies, "vetat etiam cibum sumere". *Ibid.* 3.2.12 (BA 28.418-20).

¹⁸²*ibid.* (BA 28.420).

Augustine acknowledges the strength of the objection but has recourse to that which *sanitas observat ecclesiae* in the case of a brother who is overtaken in a sin. It seeks not his eradication but his correction. 2 Thess. 3:15 and Matt. 13:29-30 are adduced in support.¹⁸³ But the unrepentant sinner who does not amend, places himself outside (*ipse foras exiet*), *et per propriam voluntatem ab ecclesiae communione dirimetur*. In the case of individual notorious sins whose very notoriety prevents them from becoming the occasion of schism, *severitas disciplinae* can safely be exercised *sine labe pacis et unitatis et sine laesione frumentorum*.¹⁸⁴

This latter point explains Paul's choice of words in v.11, *si quis frater nominatur*.¹⁸⁵ That is, it is a necessary condition of discipline that the brother undergoing it has attained notoriety for his sins. This is in order that the *anathematis prolata sententia* might appear *omnibus dignissima* and thus the peace of the church is preserved.¹⁸⁶ It is essential, therefore, that the discipline be recognized by the great majority in the church.

This is the explanation of the different instructions given later to the same church by Paul in regard to other offenders.¹⁸⁷ On this occasion, the latter were so numerous

¹⁸³"ut non inimicum eum existimetis, sed corripite ut fratrem." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.13 (BA 28.420).

¹⁸⁴ibid.

¹⁸⁵The Latin verb, as used here, means something like "to be famous (or notorious)" and therefore sustains the point Augustine is making. The original, however, means "one who bears the name of brother." As Congar says: "Une fois de plus, Augustin est victime de son texte latin" (BA 28.423, n.1).

¹⁸⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.14 (BA 28.422). Catholics do not hesitate to practice 1 Cor. 5:11 in respect of two groups: those whom they believe can be corrected by this measure of separation and those of whose correction they despair altogether, in order to prevent them corrupting others "conloquiorum malorum contagione (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33)". *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.16 (BA 28.430).

¹⁸⁷"ne iterum cum venero humilet me deus ad vos et lugeam multos ex his, qui ante peccaverunt et non egerunt paenitentiam super immunditia et luxuria et fornicatione quam gesserunt." 2 Cor. 12:21 *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.14 (BA 28.424).

within the church that the exercise of discipline ran the risk of removing the wheat with the chaff. In his grief, therefore, he urges them to recognize that they are being corrected by the Lord's own scourge and are not to act on the instruction he had formerly given, *ut ceteri se ab eorum coniunctione contineant*. They are too numerous to be corrected by the separation from them of other believers. The fact is that *cum contagio peccandi multitudinem invaserit, divinae disciplinae severa misericordia necessaria est*. In this case all human measures taken for separation are both futile and dangerous.¹⁸⁸

d. 2 Cor. 6:14-18¹⁸⁹

This was a favourite text of the Donatists in urging the duty of separation from the Catholics, since it commanded "radical separation between the faithful and the unfaithful on the grounds that God dwells only with the former".¹⁹⁰ It was so used by Parmenian and Petilian and at the Conference of Carthage, following earlier use in the *Acts of the Abitinian Martyrs*.¹⁹¹ In this they were following Cyprian.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ibid. (BA 28.424-6). Again he claims that these were the principles followed by Cyprian .

¹⁸⁹"(14) nolite coniungi cum infidelibus. quae enim participatio est iustitiae et iniquitati? quae communicatio est luci ad tenebras? (15) quis autem consensus est Christi ad Beliar? aut quae pars fidei cum infidei? (16) quae autem conventio templo dei cum simulacris? vos enim templa dei vivi estis. dicit enim: quia inhabitabo in eis et inambulabo et ero illorum deus et ipsi erunt mihi populus. (17) propter quod exite de medio eorum et separamini, dicit dominus, et immundum ne tetigeritis. et ego recipiam vos (18) et ero vobis in patrem et vos eritis mihi in filios et filias, dicit dominus omnipotens." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.18.37 (BA 28. 370, 372).

¹⁹⁰Tilley (1997), 166.

¹⁹¹"Acta Martyrorum..." 18,19 (PL 8.701B&D). Much of the biblical material in Donatist martyr stories "was," as Tilley states, "devoted to direct condemnation of Catholics and the legitimacy of separation from them". She calls attention to the importance of such texts drawn from the early Donatist martyr stories for Donatists at the turn of the 5th century in giving them a sense that "the time of the earliest Donatist persecution was one with the present". Referring to 2 Cor. 6:14-16, she comments: "it is no wonder that the cry of the Abitinian martyrs echoes through the Donatist literature with as much value as that of anyone recently tortured...Separatism was the order of the day." Tilley (1997), 64, 145.

¹⁹²*Ep.* 73.15 (CSEL 3/1-2.789).

In *Contra ep. Parmen.* Augustine chides the Donatists for understanding the text in a carnal sense (*carnaliter*), with the consequence that their own communion is divided up into little pieces *in ipsa una Africa*. They fail to grasp that to be joined to the unfaithful means either to commit or approve their sins (v.14a-b). Only they have fellowship with darkness who *per tenebras consensionis suae* abandon Christ to follow Belial (vv.14c-15a); and the only person to have his part with the unfaithful is the one *qui eius infidelitatis fit particeps* (v.15b).¹⁹³ In doing so he ceases to be the temple of God and thus he joins himself to idols (16a). By contrast, those who are the temple of the living God are not contaminated by the sin they tolerate among them for the sake of unity, as Phil. 2:15b-16a shows.¹⁹⁴ Nor are they straitened (*angustantur*) in this situation, because God dwells in them and walks among them (v.16b). It is, meantime, by separation in heart (*corde*) that they go forth *de medio malorum*. When the temptation physically to separate comes *per seditionem schismatis*, they resist, *ne forte...prius a bonis spiritualiter quam a malis corporaliter separentur*.¹⁹⁵

This is also one of a number of texts which Petilian used to urge separation from the wicked in order to avoid defilement. To this end he quotes 2 Cor. 6:14-15.¹⁹⁶

Augustine acknowledges that these are Paul's words but denies they are of any help to

¹⁹³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.18.37 (BA 28.372).

¹⁹⁴"in medio nationis tortuosae ac perversae apparent sicut luminaria in mundo verbum vitae habente" (VL). *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.18.37 (BA 28.372).

¹⁹⁶In the form: "nolite iugum ducere cum infidelibus; quae enim participatio iustitiae cum iniquitate, aut quae societas luminis cum tenebris? quae autem conventio Christi ad Belial, aut quae pars fideli cum infidele?" *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.40.95 (BA 30.358). Among other scriptural reference and allusions, including 1 Cor. 1:12-13 (*ibid.* 2.42.99, BA 30.360), 1 Jn. 2:19 (*ibid.* 2.39.92, BA 30.352) and the example of Judas (*ibid.* 2.44.103, BA 30.364), Petilian finds in Matt. 7:13-14 linked with Ps. 1 (*ibid.* 2.45.105-8, BA 30.366-68), further scriptural justification of the need for radical separation. Augustine suggests that Petilian should read the Psalm in Greek and discover that the "beatus vir" (v.1. Gr: μακάριος) is to be found in the "pars Macarii"! Petilian had dismissed any possibility of a reunion between the "pars Donati" and the "pars Macarii" on the basis of 2 Cor. 6:14b (*ibid.* 2.39.92, BA 30.352).

the Donatist case. There is no compromise of righteousness even in a situation when, like Judas and Peter, the *iustus et iniquus...pariter sacramenta communicent*. The same food brought to Judas condemnation, to Peter salvation. Donatist sacramental fellowship with Optatus of Thamugadi is again used as a weapon for attacking their inconsistency in this respect.¹⁹⁷

e. Eph. 5:27¹⁹⁸

This was a key Donatist text for establishing their view of the purity of the church. It is probable that in this they were indebted to Cyprian who quotes Eph. 5:25-26 in combination with Cant. 6:9 and 4:12, thus equating the spotless bride of Eph: 5 with the one dove and the enclosed garden of Canticles.¹⁹⁹

For the Donatists, this text clearly refuted the Catholic (and Tyconian) view of the church as a *corpus permixtum*. Parmenian appears so to have used it;²⁰⁰ Cresconius alludes to Eph. 5:25-26,²⁰¹ and appeal was made to it at the Conference of Carthage in association with Cant. 4:7.²⁰²

In countering Parmenian, Augustine invites him to explain the presence of notorious sinners, even among the bishops, in the church of Cyprian's day and to consider that

¹⁹⁷*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.40.96 (BA 30.358-60).

¹⁹⁸"ut exhiberet sibi gloriosam ecclesiam, non habentem maculam aut rugam aut aliquid eiusmodi." *Ep. ad Cath.* 2.2 (BA 28.506).

¹⁹⁹Cyprian, *Ep.* 69.2 (CSEL 3/2.750-52), a letter to Magnus dealing with the issue of rebaptism.

²⁰⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.7.13 (BA 28.294-96) where the apparent allusion (note the repeated use of "macula") finds support in the clear ref. to Eph. 5:5; *ibid.* 3.2.10 (BA 28.412).

²⁰¹*Contra Cresc.* 2.20 (BA 28.208), 3.5.5 (BA 28.274).

²⁰²*Gesta* 3.258 (CCL 149A.244). According to Optatus, Parmenian had used in a similar way Cant. 4:12 and Cant. 6:8 (*Contra Donat.* 1.10 [SC 413.192]). On Eph. 5:27 cf. *Gesta* 3.75, 3.249 (CCL 149A.197, 241).

the *ecclesia gloriosa sine macula et ruga* was formed only of those who conformed to the description of Ezek. 9:4²⁰³ - a text which demonstrates that the wicked were *in medio bonorum...constitutos*.²⁰⁴ The answer given to Cresconius is that the holiness of the church is that of its head, Christ himself.²⁰⁵ There is no record of an Augustinian response to Donatist use of Eph. 5:27 at the Conference of Carthage.

f. 1 Tim. 5:22b²⁰⁶

This text, with its call to avoid contamination by the sins of other people, was quoted by Parmenian (in close association with Eph. 5:11-12²⁰⁷, which, avers Augustine, makes clear that while church discipline condemns with a view to correction, it always protects church unity: *non communicare est non consentire*).²⁰⁸

The first part of 1 Tim. 5:22b requires to be understood in light of the second. It is the man who keeps himself pure who avoids participation in the sins of another.

Augustine spells out the logic of the text: *si enim communicat consentit, si consentit corrumpitur, si corrumpitur castum se ipsum non servat*.²⁰⁹ Does Parmenian's

²⁰³Vd. comments infra.

²⁰⁴*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.10 (BA 28.412-14). Once again, the second rule of Tyconius controls Augustine's exegesis. Cf. *ibid.* 2.7.13 (BA 28.294-96). Elsewhere Augustine chides Parmenian for failing to make the vital distinction between the two ages of the church. *Ibid.* 3.3.17 (BA 28.434.36). Eph. 5:27 is referred to in *Ep. ad Cath.* 2.2 (BA 28.504-6), in which context Augustine expounds the first rule of Tyconius.

²⁰⁵*Contra Cresc.* 3.5.5 (BA 31.274). The first rule of Tyconius is again in view. The context here is a baptismal one. On Augustine's discussion of the distinction between the "animales" and the "spiritalis" in the one church, though in a baptismal context, vd. *De bapt.* 1.15.24 (BA 29.108f).

²⁰⁶"ne communicaveris peccatis alienis. te ipsum castum serva." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.40 (BA 28.376).

²⁰⁷"nolite communicare operibus infructuosis tenebrarum, magis autem et redarguite. quae enim fiunt ab ipsis latenter turpe est et dicere." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.20.39 (BA 28.376).

²⁰⁸Both texts share the same verb, "communicare". Tilley comments: "*Communicare* in the patristic period had left behind the simple concept of sharing and was used in situations of a superior mixing socially with an inferior, or of a good person associating with an evil one. It did not bear eucharistic overtones." Tilley (1997), 215, n.138. Vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.40 (BA 28.376). Cf. *Contra Cresc.* 3.36.40 (BA 31.348, 350). In the latter passage, appeal is again made to the example of Cyprian.

²⁰⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.40 (BA 28.376).

quotation of this text, asks Augustine, show that he has at last wakened up to the teaching of Tyconius? Not likely, he adds, for *amore sententiae suae contra veritatem oculos clausit!*²¹⁰ By interpreting "communicare" in an essentially physicalist way, Parmenian *non totum dixit*. It is not sufficient not to commit the sins of others, *nisi displiceant*. It is not sufficient that they displease us, *nisi redarguantur*. Parmenian was not prepared to give the whole picture.²¹¹ The Catholic position is that it is the person who fulfills all three conditions (ie., *non facere, non communicare [id est consentire facientibus], redarguere*) who remains uncompromised *inter iniquos...*²¹²

Augustine also links this text closely with 1 Cor. 5:13 in arguing that Paul is speaking of separating sin from oneself, while maintaining spiritual union with the good and spiritual separation from the bad.²¹³ When he says *neque communicaveris peccatis alienis*, it is as if to say since it was not possible to separate *aliquos malos* from the fellowship of the church and that, therefore, they must be tolerated, he is giving advice on how not to participate in their sins. The point is that *non...malis nisi malus misceri potest*, but *bonus...nullo modo, quamvis in una cum eis congregatione versetur*.²¹⁴

Elsewhere, Augustine states that Aurelius, bishop of Utica, quoted this text in support of the position that to receive a heretic into the church without (re)baptism is

²¹⁰ibid. Augustine has in mind, in particular, the second and seventh rule of Tyconius. "Le vraie division n'était pas tant entre deux Églises qu'entre deux cités ou sociétés spirituelles..." Congar, BA 28.376-77, n. 4.

²¹¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.21.40 (BA 28.376).

²¹²ibid. (BA 28.376-78).

²¹³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.2 (BA 28.386).

²¹⁴ibid.

to be participate in his sin.²¹⁵ Augustine denies that the text is making any distinction between sins and he appeals once more to the practice of Cyprian and his colleagues in regard to sinners in their communion *quales Cyprianus videbat gemebat arguebat ferebat*.²¹⁶ If, therefore, Cyprian's church has not perished *contagione peccatorum* but still continues, the *communio peccatorum* forbidden by the apostle *non nisi in consensione intellegenda est*.²¹⁷

Petilian claims that 1 Tim. 5:22 means that lay people in communion with contaminated bishops cannot claim to be free from participation in their sins.²¹⁸ In Paul's judgement both the authors of and accomplices in sin merit death.²¹⁹ Again Donatist interpretive attempts have failed through pride (*per superbiam*). First, the words were not addressed to a layman but to Timothy,²²⁰ whose holding of office in the church is proved by 1 Tim 4.14. Second, what Paul is opposing in the text is consent to or approval of others' sins. This is why he immediately explains how the command is to be obeyed: *te ipsum castum custodi*.²²¹ The principle finds illustration in the practice of Paul himself and of the earlier apostles. Paul endured *in unitate corporali* the falso brethren over whom he groaned²²² but that did not make him a partaker in their sins. The original apostles even partook of the Holy Supper with

²¹⁵*De bapt.* 7.5.8 (BA 29.510).

²¹⁶*ibid.*

²¹⁷*De bapt.* 7.5.9 (BA 29.512).

²¹⁸*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.106.242 (BA 30.554). As Quinot says: "La sainteté des ministres est en effet au coeur de la théologie donatiste: elle commande celle du peuple, elle constitue le socle de l'unité de l'Église." Quinot, BA 30.220. Catholic practice, in their sight, fatally undermined the holiness of the church.

²¹⁹*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.107.244 (BA 30.554). On Augustine's counter-interpretation of this text, in terms particularly of "consensio voluntatis", vd. also *Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.3.5 (BA 28.220), *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 5.8 (BA 32.266).

²²⁰*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.106.243 (BA 30.554).

²²¹*ibid.*

²²²Cf. 2 Cor. 11:26.

Judas, when he had already sold his Lord and had been identified as the traitor, but they did not thereby partake *furto et scelere Iudae*.²²³

Interestingly, at the Conference of Carthage, the Donatists played the Catholics at their own game of contextualising passages of Scripture, by claiming that when 1 Tim 5:22b is interpreted in light of the first part of the verse, with its prohibition of laying hands hastily on any person, it is found to support the Donatist physicalist understanding of separation.²²⁴

In this first main part of the chapter, we have sought to identify the commanding biblical texts for Donatists on the issue of church purity whose use by them Augustine endeavoured to refute. Donatist use of these texts well illustrates their endeavour to bring their distinctive typological approach to exegesis to bear on the controversy. In this way, they sought to apply to the contemporary North African Church scene the scriptural, particularly Old Testament ritual requirement of holiness for God's people and the consequent demand for separation from all potential sources of defilement. This principle had a special application to bishops of the Catholic church who had all been contaminated by the cardinal sin of *traditio*. In this context, Donatist use of the biblical texts was aimed at establishing two basic and interconnected positions: the pervasive corruption of the Catholic church (particularly of its bishops) and the imperative necessity, on that account, to maintain separation from it.

²²³*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.106.243 (BA 30.554). Cf. *Contra Cresc.* 3.36.40 (BA 31.348-49).

²²⁴*Gesta* 3.258 (CCL 149A.250). Cf. Tilley (1997), 166. Supporting texts were Num. 16:26, Isa. 52:11, 2 Cor. 6:16-18. *ibid.* 3.258 (CCL 149A.243-5).

Prior to the Conference of Carthage, the principal exponent of the biblical basis of the Donatist position was Parmenian. The main biblical texts cited by him and refuted by Augustine were the following:

1. Those establishing the spiritual corruption of the Catholic church: 2 Chron. 19:2, Ps. 25(26):4-10, Ps. 49(50):16-18, Sir. 10:2, 1 Cor. 5:6.
2. Those establishing the consequent duty of separation: Lev. 10:9-10, Isa. 52:11, Jer. 23:28b, 1 Cor. 5:13b, 2 Cor. 6:14-18, Eph. 5:27 and 1 Tim. 5:22b. Under this general heading, Petilian introduced Ps. 1,²²⁵ and Cresconius Ezek. 20:18.²²⁶

At the Conference of Carthage, the key texts used by the Donatists and refuted by Augustine (under the above headings) were:

1. Isa. 52:1, Hagg. 2:14.
2. Isa. 52:11, Jer. 23:28b, Matt. 22:13-14, 2 Cor. 6:14-18, Eph. 5:27.

Augustine's handling of these key Donatist texts should be viewed in the context of his more general use in polemical writings of the ancient rhetorical technique of *refutatio*.²²⁷ The (to moderns, tiresomely) detailed responses which its employment

²²⁵*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.46.107 (BA 30.366-68).

²²⁶*Contra Cresc.* 3.38.42 (BA 31.352), 4.45.54 (BA 31.578).

²²⁷On this technique, which involved quoting or summarising the main points made by one's opponents before refuting them as comprehensively as possible, and on Augustine's frequent use of it, vd. Monceaux 7:188-272 and De Veer, "Avantages et inconvénients d'une technique de réfutation," BA 31.834-37. De Veer comments, "Augustin fait remarquer qu'en citant l'Écriture contre les catholiques, les donatistes rendent ceux-ci attentifs, pour ainsi dire, au jugement de valeur que l'Écriture elle-même prononce contre eux." He calls attention to *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.1.1 (BA 28.264), pointing out how books 2 and 3 of this work put "cette rétorsion en pratique". He also notes *De un. bapt.* 7.10 (BA 31.684-86) and *Contra Cresc.* 2.24.29-2.28.36 9 (BA 31.216-36). De Veer, BA 32.836.

entailed were made necessary, according to Augustine, by his pastoral responsibility to simple folk who were unable themselves to establish connections between identical points when made in different words and contexts.²²⁸

Augustine's strategy in countering Donatist use of these texts is to attempt to show that, when interpreted in the immediate and broader scriptural context, with the less clear interpreted in light of the more clear, they cannot sustain the sense which the Donatists read into them. When properly interpreted, they rather establish the Catholic position by revealing the (foreseen) presence of sinners in the church of the present time and the true way to maintain Christian integrity within the church - i.e. not by physical but by spiritual and moral separation (*non carnaliter sed spiritualiter*). The demonstrable presence of (even notorious) sinners within the Donatist communion and the inconsistency of Donatist practice underscores this point and suggests the hypocrisy of their case. Donatists detract from the glory of Christ by usurping in the present the prerogative which is his alone as head of the church, of separating the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, which he will exercise at his coming at the end of the age. In the meantime, the good ought not to be unduly perturbed by the presence of sinners in the church, for as long as they withhold heart-consent from their sins, and do not themselves commit them, they remain undefiled. Their relation to such sinners, however, must not be one of passivity but of active tolerance, correction and discipline, exercised in humility and love, with a view to the final salvation of the offenders.

²²⁸ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.1.1 (BA 30.222). Cf. *Contra Cresc.* 3.1.1 (BA 31.266); *De un. bapt.* 1.1 (BA 31.664); *Contra Gaudent.* 1.1 (BA 32.510-12).

4.3 The church as *corpus permixtum*: Augustine's armoury of biblical texts

4.3.1 Old Testament "Augustinian" texts.

In the dogmatic treatises Augustine makes reference to only a small number of Old Testament texts of which only Cant. 2:2 and Ezek. 9:4 receive more than cursory attention.²²⁹

a. Cant. 2:2²³⁰

It has been noted that in Augustine the Song of Songs "appears nearly exclusively in baptismal or anti-Donatist contexts."²³¹ One of the Donatists' favourite biblical images was that of the enclosed garden of Cant. 4:12.²³² It was regularly quoted by them in support of their radical exclusivism.²³³ In so doing they made appeal to the authority of Cyprian who had already used this text to require, as against Stephen of Rome, the rebaptism of converted schismatics.²³⁴ By applying his exegetical ingenuity to its

²²⁹Other O.T. texts referred to are: Ps. 39:6 (40:5) which is cited once in support of the large number of *spinae* which co-exist with the *lilium* of Cant. 2:2 (*De bapt.* 5.27.38 [BA 29.394]); Ps. 100(101):1 (*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.8 [BA 32.268]); Ezek. 18:4 (*De un. bapt.* 17.31 [BA 31.734]) and, as allusion, *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.8 [BA 32.268]). The latter two texts are held to show that the sins of individuals condemn only themselves. All three are linked with 1 Cor. 11:29. Prov. 1:33, "qui autem me audit, habitabit in spe et silebit sine timore ab omni malignitate," is used to support the case that the Donatists by their premature separation reveal that they have lost the patience of Christian hope (*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.27 [BA 28.466]).

²³⁰"Sicut lilium in medio spinarum, ita proxima mea in medio filiarum." *Ep. ad Cath.* 14.35 (BA 28.602).

²³¹Henry (1996), 255. In this article Henry offers a useful general analysis of Augustine's handling of the Song in response to Donatist use of this book. La Bonnardière (1955), provides a full list of texts from Canticles found in Augustine's works.

²³²"Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, fons signatus, puteus aquae vivae."

²³³E.g. by Parmenian. Congar comments: "Les Donatistes ne se lassent pas d'invoquer le texte du *Cantique*, où ils trouvaient l'idée de l'Église, enclos unique et fermé dans lequel, exclusivement, jaillit la source du salut." BA 28.54.

²³⁴E.g. *Epp.* 69.2 (CSEL 3/2.751), 74.11 (CSEL 3/2.808-9). As Tilley points out, "exclusivity had thus been licensed by pre-Donatist interpretations of the enclosed garden of Cant. 4:12, which was part of the Catholic heritage." Tilley (1997), 148.

interpretation, Augustine seeks to make Canticles rather lend support to his inclusivist ecclesiology. This he does by taking Cant. 2:2 as the key text in whose light the whole must be interpreted. In this way he is able to insist that 4:12 "must be applied to the Church only insofar as she is *in sanctis et justis* and that it does not exclude the sinners from the visible Church".²³⁵

In the image of the lily surrounded by thorns, Augustine finds a clear reference to the church as *corpus permixtum*.²³⁶ Within the one church coexist the wicked, represented by "thorns" *propter malignitatem morum*, and also referred to as "daughters" *propter communionem sacramentorum*.²³⁷ Cameron calls attention to the way in which "the incongruity of the coupling" (of "thorns" and "daughters"), for Augustine, "contained a lesson not in Hebrew literary artistry but in the spiritual mystery hiding in the interplay of its verbal figures." The term "daughters" bespeaks "a relationship of intimacy, likeness and sharing in a common life." But the juxtaposition of "daughters" with "thorns" "sharply redefines the relationship of the daughters to the bride: these are the members among whom the Church groans, faints and pines. The lily is (the) number of the *sancti* who are scattered throughout the visible body and whose only tracks are left by *caritas*...Purity remains in the Church because it is rooted in God, but in the present age purity does not appear without thorns."²³⁸

²³⁵Henry (1996), 258.

²³⁶Tyconius, whose thought Augustine is of course developing here, appeals to Cant. 1:5 in support of his notion of a bipartite church. Vd. Henry (1996), 260.

²³⁷*Ep. ad Cath.* 14.35 (BA 28.602-4). Cf. 18.48 (BA 28.642), *Enarrs. in Ps.* 47(48).8 (CCL 38.545), *Ep.* 93.28 (CSEL 34/2.472-3), *Sermo* 37.27 (CCL 41.469-70)

²³⁸Cameron (1996), 409.

While the good and the evil both give and receive the sacrament of baptism, only the good (those *regenerati spiritaliter*) *in corpus et membra Christi coaedificentur*. It is *in bonis* that the church of Cant. 2:2 is found.²³⁹ Augustine links this text with Matt. 16:18 and Matt. 7:24, 26, thus identifying the lily with those *qui audiunt verba Christi et faciunt*.²⁴⁰ He acknowledges that the depiction of the church in Cant. 4:12-13 applies exclusively to the good but insists on the basis of Cant. 2:2 that the evil and the good share the sacramental signs. It is the absence of *caritas*, a mark shared by the immoral Catholic and the morally upright schismatic alike, which effects the estrangement of both *ab illius unicae columbae corpore*.²⁴¹ Thus the *spinae* of Cant. 2:2 represent both the schismatic Donatists and the *mali* within the church.²⁴²

Here again Augustine appeals to the example of Cyprian who recognized the presence of unworthy bishops within the church, *et tamen intus fuisse testatur*. Augustine draws the conclusion, *Si enim et ipsi ibi sunt, et ipsi sponsa Christi sunt*.²⁴³ He thus grounds his *corpus permixtum* doctrine, in an exegesis which aims to undermine Donatist claims to enjoy the support of Cyprian.

²³⁹*Ep. ad Cath.* 21.60 (BA 28.672).

²⁴⁰*ibid.* (BA 28.672-4).

²⁴¹*De bapt.* 4.20.27 (BA 29.302).

²⁴²As Cameron comments: "The subtle connection turned the text into a reflection of the Donatists themselves, and served notice that the entire body of mixed Church exegesis applied also to them. By an ironic and rhetorically fruitful twist of categorization, Donatists were grouped with the immoral Christians and brushed with the very pollution they abhorred in the mixed Church." Cameron (1996), 410.

²⁴³*De bapt.* 7.27.38 (BA 29.394). For Augustine's replacement of the stark Cyprianic *intus/foris* distinction with his preferred *intus esse/constare* division, thus enabling him to hold that "The just constitute the garden itself whereas the sinners do not participate in the structure of the garden but merely happen to be in it." Henry (1996), 259.

b. Ezek. 9:4²⁴⁴

It is likely that Augustine was aware of Cyprian's references to this text but his own use of it appears to be independent of Cyprian.²⁴⁵ He first appeals to this text in the *Psalmus contra partem Donati*. Catholics are following the example of those in Ezekiel's time who groaned over the sins of their brethren, without separating from them. This precedent establishes that the presence of the wicked in the church cannot harm the good. If the evil cannot be expelled from the church *salva pace*, then their exclusion *de corde* will suffice.²⁴⁶ The *tanta multitudo sceleratorum*, as described in Isa. 59:1-8 (quoted by Parmenian) cannot harm the faithful until the *dominus areae* comes. The clear impossibility of correcting so many and the absolute duty of maintaining unity makes such tolerance blameless. The faithful *signari meruerunt et in illorum perditorum vastatione atque interitu liberari*.²⁴⁷ Even the church of Cyprian's day contained such sinners as those of whom Paul said that they would not inherit the kingdom of God.²⁴⁸ But the essential church - *ecclesia gloriosa sine macula et ruga* (Eph. 5:27) - is to be reckoned as composed only of those who are described in Ezek. 9:4. These alone receive the appropriate mark by which they will be preserved from the fate of others.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴"Vade, et da signum in frontibus eorum qui gemunt et moerent de peccatis populi mei, quae fiunt in medio eorum." *Sermo* 107.7 (PL 38.630).

²⁴⁵In his *Ad Dem.*, in the context of referring to the coming Day of the Lord prophesied in Ezek. 9:5ff., Cyprian links the sign of the cross placed on the forehead at baptism with the *signum super frontes* of Ezek. 9:4. Interpreting this "signum" in terms of the Passover narrative of Ex. 12 (especially v. 13) he concludes that it represents "passionem et sanguinem Christi" and thus secures the ultimate protection of each one who "in hoc signo invenitur". *Ad Dem.* 22 (CSEL 3/1-2.367). Cf. *Adv. Jud.* 2.22 (CSEL 3/1-2.90). Vd. Fahey (1971), 228-9.

²⁴⁶*Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 170-2 (BA 28.174). Cf. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.14 (BA 28.424). Augustine's stance on toleration "corpore" and separation "corde" in such circumstances is consistent. For an explicit statement of the opposition vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.25 (BA 28.334).
²⁴⁷*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.3.6 (BA 28.278).

²⁴⁸1 Cor. 5:11. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.10 (BA 28.410-12). It was Cyprian's recognition that such were included in the unity of the church that kept him from separating from them.

²⁴⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.10 (BA 28.412-14).

Significantly, Augustine calls attention to the precise, literal wording of the text. It is the evil who are said to be *in medio bonorum...constitutos* and not *bonos...in medio malorum*. He points out that if Ezekiel had suggested the latter, *illi (boni) quasi extrinsecus et forinsecus esse viderentur*. Ezekiel's language is carefully chosen to make clear that the evil are *non solum non exclusos, sed etiam inclusos.....*²⁵⁰

Augustine nowhere interprets the *signum* in Cyprianic fashion in terms of Ex. 12:13 nor link it with baptismal practice.²⁵¹

His exegesis of Ezek. 9:4 enables Augustine to point up a serious Donatist inconsistency. Donatists tolerate evil within their own communion on the understanding that the sinful practices of others cannot defile those who neither practice nor approve them. The sin of schism is not, however, that of individuals but the collective sin of those who do not participate in the unity of the Catholic church. They fail to recognize that the reason why, in their communion, the sins of some do not become the responsibility of others is precisely that which makes them all guilty of the crime of schism. For as soon as they acknowledge that in a given party the misdeeds of some cannot defile the rest, the logic of the admission ought to compel the acknowledgement that they have no good reason to separate from the unity of

²⁵⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.10 (BA 28.414). Cf. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.26 (BA 28.462), *Ep. ad Cath.* 14.35 (BA 28.604), *Ep.* 87.2 (CSEL 34/2.399).

²⁵¹On the *signum* of Ezek. 9:4, Congar's comment is somewhat misleading: "Le prophete parle litteralement d'un *taw*, c'est-a-dire de la lettre hebraique qui avait anciennement la forme d'une croix. C'etait une marque de protection; comp. Gen., iv, 15." BA 28.175, n.2. Similarly, Finaert translates Augustine's "quosdam consignatos esse" (*Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 171) as "qui d'une croix etaient marques" (BA 28.175). Neither Ezek. 9:4 nor Gen. 4:15 (which in any case contains no reference to the Hebrew letter *taw*) associate the "signum" with the cross. The thought is anachronistic and misses the point that Augustine deliberately avoids such association. The Donatists, too, had been baptised!

Christ, and, on that account, *scelere schismatis apertissimo tamquam uno mortifero vinculo pariter conligantur*.²⁵² Similarly in the context of refuting the Donatist case for the passing of the guilt of sins from one generation to another, Augustine claims that this text shows how it was possible for the holy prophets, together with people like Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna to remain holy in the midst of a sinful people.²⁵³

In the preached material Ezek. 9:4 is expounded only (and briefly) in *Sermo* 107, by scholarly consensus preached at Carthage, though of uncertain date.²⁵⁴ Before sending to his sinful people an *exterminator*, God first sends a *signator* to mark those who mourn over the sins committed *in medio eorum*, not those committed, he emphasises, *extra ipsos*.²⁵⁵ The "forehead" (*frons*) is interpreted figuratively (*figurate*) as that of the heart rather than the face.²⁵⁶ By their very grief they are separated from the sins committed in their midst which they are unable to correct. They are *separati Deo* while *oculis hominum mixti erant*. The inner mark which they bear guarantees their security when the *vastator* arrives. *Signantur occulte, non laeduntur aperte*.²⁵⁷

²⁵²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.9.19 (BA 28.310).

²⁵³*Brev. Coll.* 3.9.17 (BA 32.172).

²⁵⁴Pre-410 (Mo), 411 (K, Be).

²⁵⁵*Sermo* 107.7 (PL 38.630).

²⁵⁶"in fronte interioris hominis, non exterioris. Est enim frons in facie, est frons in conscientia." A blow to the inner "frons" may however manifest itself on the outer. Ibid.

²⁵⁷Ibid.

4.3.2 New Testament “Augustinian” texts.

In view of the need to establish in clear biblical texts his *corpus permixtum* ecclesiology against that of the Donatists, Augustine's main appeal is to the New Testament. With the exception of a few Pauline passages, by far the most important material for Augustine comprises four Matthaean texts: the parables of the field of wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43), the net (Matt. 13:47-50, frequently linked with a figurative treatment of the two miraculous catches of fish described in Lk. 5:1-7 and John 21:6-10), and the Last Judgement (Matt. 25:31-46), together with John the Baptist's prophecy concerning the threshing-floor (Matt. 3:12). For Augustine these texts demonstrated, beyond all doubt, the mixed character of the church in this age.²⁵⁸

In many passages in which Augustine drew on these texts, the various images which they contain (*area, palea, retia*, etc) become quite intertwined in his exposition.²⁵⁹ The following section provides examples of Augustine's use of each text separately in order to make clear the specific contribution made by the images of each parable to his anti-Donatist polemic. In each case, illustration will also be offered of Augustine's distinctive figurative interpretation of Scripture with reference to passages in his sermons in which the text under discussion is cited or alluded to in support of the direction of his figurative treatment of some *obscurum*. This section concludes with a

²⁵⁸On the Donatist response to Augustine's use of these parables and related texts, vd. Alexander (1999), 634-35.

²⁵⁹Borgomeo speaks of "multiples contaminations" and offers some representative instances. Borgomeo (1972), 323.

consideration of a number of Pauline texts used by Augustine for the same ecclesiological and anti-Donatist purposes.

4.3.2.1 Gospel parables and figurative exegesis

a. The parable of the field of wheat and tares (Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43).

The parable of the field is the one most frequently referred to by Augustine in support of the mixed character of the church of this age.²⁶⁰ He believed that Jesus' own recorded interpretation of the parable lent incontrovertible authority to his own use of it and he was able thus to represent the Donatists as those who directly contradicted Christ himself. In the interests of his polemic, Augustine lays emphasis on three aspects of the parable and its dominical interpretation: (1) The command of the owner of the field to his servants that the wheat and the tares, the latter sown in the wheat field by an enemy, should be permitted to grow together until the harvest (v.30); (2) Jesus' statement that the field is the world (v.38); (3) Jesus' explanation that the harvest is the close of the age and that its reapers are the angels (v.39).

In the treatises Augustine tirelessly seeks to represent the Donatists as false witnesses to the truth.²⁶¹ In a significant and typical passage, he discusses at length the dispute between them on the basis of this text.²⁶² He begins by calling on the Donatists to

²⁶⁰Augustine would have been aware of Optatus' use of this parable in an anti-Donatist context and appears to have borrowed from it. Optatus' main points were: the field is the whole world in which there is one church, the field has one Lord but the seeds have two authors, separation cannot now take place without damage to the good, the harvest will occur at the Day of Judgement when Christ will choose what he stores in the barn and what will be cast into the fire. He warns against premature attempts to discriminate: "Nemo sibi usurpet divini iudicii potestatem." *Contra Donat.* 7.2.1-6 (SC 413.216-20). Optatus makes no reference to the other parables used by Augustine in this context.

²⁶¹Augustine's appeal to this text begins in the *Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 182-89 (BA 28.176).

²⁶²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.2.5 (BA 28.272-5).

recognize the superior claim on them of the fear of God over the love of Donatus. The God revered by both parties, he points out, is true. A shared high christology enables him to make much of the authority of the Lord's interpretation (vv. 36-43)²⁶³ and to impale, he thinks, the Donatists on the horns of the dilemma of having to choose whether to listen to the one who said, *Ego sum veritas*, or to Donatus.²⁶⁴

In this passage, Augustine sets out the disputed points in terms of contrasting statements of Christ and Donatus. Considerable rhetorical effect is achieved by introducing each successive statement of the former with the formula, *Christus id est veritas dicit*, and each of the latter with *Donatus autem dicit* and by concluding each contrasting pair of statements with the challenge: *Eligant cui credant*. Augustine is untroubled by the fact that he is putting words into the mouth of his adversary, no doubt because he believes that his representation of the Donatist position is fair.

(1) To the words of Christ, *Sinite utraque crescere usque ad messem* (v.30) are opposed the putative response of Donatus, *zizania quidem crevisse, frumenta vero esse deminuta*.²⁶⁵

(2) To Christ's, *Ager est hic mundus* (v.38), Donatus is made to reply, *Agrum Dei solam Africam remansisse*.²⁶⁶

²⁶³He combines for the purpose Rom. 3:4: "solus deus verax est, omnis autem homo mendax," and Rom. 9:5: "(Christus) qui super omnia deus est benedictus in saecula." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.2.5 (BA 28.272).

²⁶⁴ibid. (BA 28.272-4).

²⁶⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.2.5 (BA 28.274). Elsewhere in the same work Augustine speaks of the way in which Donatists do violence to the clear command of v. 30. Prov. 14:28 ("in lata gente gloria regis, in deminutione autem populi contritio principis") is cited to support the point that the honour of Christ is at stake in this and the Donatists are accordingly portrayed as "Christo regi et principi nostro sacrilegam facientes iniuriam." ibid. (BA 28.262). Cf. 2.19.38 (BA 28.374), 3.2.13 (BA 28.420); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.78.174 (BA 30.432); *Contra Cresc.* 3.66.75 (BA 31.426).

²⁶⁶ibid. Augustine never wearies of pointing out that Christ "non ait: 'ager est Africa', sed ait: 'ager

(3) To Christ's, *In tempore messis dicam messoribus: colligite primum zizania* (v.30) and *messis est finis saeculi* (v.39) is opposed the claim of Donatus, *per praecisionem partis suae ante messem a frumentis zizania separata*.²⁶⁷

(4) To Christ's, *messores angeli sunt* is opposed Donatus' statement, *se atque collegas suos hoc fecisse ante messem quod ille dixit angelos in messe facturos*.²⁶⁸

Augustine proceeds to call on the Donatists, as professing Christians, to accept, in faith, Christ's teaching that the *fili regni* and the *fili maligni* grow together *per totum orbem* rather than the error of Donatus that only the *fili maligni* grow throughout the world while the *fili... boni usque ad solam Africam deminuti sint*. It is not only with the churches of the world that the Donatists must make peace but with the very gospel which they claim by their separation to have saved from the fire, but now contradict by their practice.²⁶⁹

autem est hic mundus', and that this establishes that the wheat has been sown "per totum...mundum" and that "per totum superseminata zizania, per totum crescit utrumque usque ad messem." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.14.21 (BA 28.260). Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 17.45 (BA 28.630-32). On this basis he regularly attacks alleged Donatist confinement of true Christians to North Africa. Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.39.93 (BA 30.352), 2.78.174 (BA 30.432), 3.2.3 (BA 30.590); *Contra Cresc.* 3.66.75 (BA 31.426). On Donatist acceptance of the principle of the church's universality, despite the universalising of their criticism of Catholicism by Optatus and Augustine, vd. Alexander (1999), 633-34. On the debate at the Conference of Carthage on the identification of "ager" with "mundus", vd. *Gesta coll. Carth.* 3.265-81 (CCL 149A. 253-57).

²⁶⁷ibid. Cf. 1.7.12 (BA 28.238).

²⁶⁸ibid. For the same list of contrasting positions, cf. *Ep.* 76.2 (CSEL 34/2.326-7). Augustine elsewhere claims that the Donatist position implies a recognition of the arrival of the harvest with their separation "a terrarum orbe", and of Donatus as principal harvester ("maior messorum"). It was, he argues, precisely to anticipate such an idiosyncratic interpretation that Christ explained with great clarity ("apertissime dixerit") that the harvest would coincide with the end of the age and that the reapers were the angels who alone are able infallibly to distinguish tares from wheat. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.14.21 (BA 28.260). Cf. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.19.38 (BA 28.374), 3.2.13 (BA 28.420); *Ep. ad Cath.* 14.35 (BA 28.602-06), 18.48 (BA 28.640-42).

²⁶⁹ibid.

Augustine was, as ever, concerned to demonstrate Cyprianic support for his argument.²⁷⁰ In a passage in which the parable is brought to bear on the issue of the validity of baptism administered by unworthy ministers, Augustine appeals to the example of Cyprian, whose attitude to unworthy ministers he finds to be an expression of faithfulness to the teaching of the parable. He alludes to a passage in Cyprian's *De zelo et livore* in which Cyprian was concerned to trace the destructive effects of envy, the *radix...malorum omnium* to its source in the devil.²⁷¹ Augustine's virtual quotation of Cyprian's, *Imitantur illum qui sunt ex parte eius*²⁷² enables him to insinuate Cyprianic support for his position, adapted from the second rule of Tyconius, that there are those within the church who belong to the party of the devil. He asks: *Unde sunt in unitate Christi qui sunt ex parte diaboli?* and replies that this takes place in accordance with the words of the parable: *inimicus homo hoc fecit* (v.28), *qui superseminavit zizania* (v.25), the latter verse being the part of the parable most directly alluded to by Cyprian.²⁷³

In the following discussion Augustine makes a number of points which are helpfully summarized by Bavaud:

1. The tares are found both inside (*intus*: Catholic sinners) and outside (*foris*: schismatics) the true church.
2. The tares outside come initially from the tares within, for the Donatist schism was initially the work of bad Catholics.

²⁷⁰Cyprian nowhere explicitly quotes this parable but his definite allusions make clear its importance to him. These allusions "were especially appropriate at a time of persecution and defections in the Church." Fahey (1971), 306-7.

²⁷¹Cyprian, *De zelo et liv.* 6 (CCL 3A.78).

²⁷²*De zelo et liv.* 4 (CCL 3A.77). Cf. Augustine: "imitantur illum qui sunt ex parte eius." For "eius" Migne reads "illius". *De bapt.* 4.9.13 (BA 29.264).

²⁷³*De bapt.* 4.9.13 (BA 29.264-6). Cf. *Ep.* 108.10 (CSEL 34/2. 621-2).

3. Outside the communion of the church one finds only tares, while in the *ecclesia terrena* one finds the tares mixed with wheat.
4. The tares are, in their entirety, tares. It is impossible for tares to have any participation in the virtue of the wheat (*zizania non habet aliquid frumenti*). This applies equally to the tares without and those within.
5. One must carefully avoid comparing the sacrament received through sinners or schismatics to the tares. On the contrary, the sacrament belongs to Christ. A better symbol of baptism is the rain which waters both the good and the bad. The latter, although belonging in heart to the devil, do possess, in the sacrament, something of heaven.
6. As a general rule, the tares outside the church are found in a situation far less favourable to their becoming wheat than are the tares within. Augustine wonders whether the term *zizania* ought not to be reserved for describing those who persist in evil until their death.²⁷⁴

At the Conference of Carthage this parable (together with the other three) formed the basis of the Catholic argument that "known offenders (including bishops compromised by apostasy and persecution) may be tolerated in the church for the sake of unity."²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴*De bapt.* 4.9.13-15 (BA 29.264-70). Vd. Bavaud, "La parabole du bon grain et de l'ivraie," BA 29.608-9, n.c. 20. For Augustine it was axiomatic that the present "permixtio" in the church was provisional and that wheat can become tares and tares wheat. In his preaching he reminds his "carissima frumenta Christi" of the need to persevere "usque ad finem" as evidence of their being wheat and calls on those who discover themselves to be "zizania" not to hesitate to change. *Sermo* 73A.2 (MA 1.249-50). Cf. *Sermo* 73.3 (PL 38.471), 223.2 (PL 38.1092-3). Vd. Borgomeo (1972), 314.

²⁷⁵Alexander (1999), 634. Cf. *Gesta coll. Carth.* 1.55 (CCL 149A.83). The Donatist response was "that the toleration in the church of known offenders gains no support from the parables quoted because either, as in the case of the field, it is the world, not the church that is referred to, or, as in the case of the net, it is purely a question of sinners whose presence in the church escapes detection by the priests: the bad fish remain unknown to the fishermen till the final separation (Matt. 13:47-49), just as the wedding guest's improper dress went unobserved till the entrance of the king (Matt. 22:11-13)." Alexander, loc. cit.

The Donatist response to Catholic use of this parable was simply to call attention to the exact terms of the Lord's own interpretation: *ager, inquit, est mundus*.²⁷⁶ In the aftermath of the Conference, it was on this point that debate appears to have centred and not surprisingly, given the weakness of Augustine's position here, he makes frequent appeal to Cyprian, particularly to his *Ep. 54*.²⁷⁷ Donatist bishops, Augustine claims, have not dared to respond to *Ep. 54.3* despite their lengthy insistence that *non in ecclesia predicta sint figurata zizania*.²⁷⁸

Augustine also makes an effort to deal with the troublesome term *mundus*. Donatist bishops hold that the word always has a pejorative meaning (*malam significationem*) and they provide biblical texts in support, such as 1 John 2:15 (*Si quis dilexerit mundum, non est caritas patris in illo*). Augustine reminded them of the Catholic response, namely, that in Scripture the term is used *non solum in malam, sed etiam in bonam significationem*.²⁷⁹ The witness of Paul, (2 Cor. 5:19: *deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi*), combines with the affirmation of the Lord, (Jn. 3:17: *non venit filius hominis ut iudicet mundum, sed ut salvetur mundus per ipsum*), to make

²⁷⁶*Gesta coll. Carth.* 3.258 (CCL 149A.245). The response continues: "Non ergo ecclesia, sed mundus in quo boni simul et mali usque messem, id est usque ad divinum iudicium reservantur." *ibid.*

²⁷⁷Augustine cites verbatim the following passage in which Cyprian, in the context of the Novatianist schism, is arguing against withdrawal from the church on account of *zizania* within: "nam etsi videntur in ecclesia esse zizania, non tamen impediri debet aut fides aut caritas nostra, ut quoniam zizania esse in ecclesia cernimus ipsi de ecclesia recedamus." Cyprian, *Ep. 54.3* (CCL 3B.253), quoted at *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.9 (BA 32.268-70). Elsewhere Augustine scotches the notion that Cyprian was referring to hidden sinners in the church by calling attention to his precise words. For "videntur" he could have substituted "suspicatione creduntur", but did not. And, lest anyone should think that "videntur esse" was meant to leave open the possibility of their non-existence ("tamquam non essent, sed esse viderentur"), Cyprian makes the matter clear in the remainder of the quote ("non tamen impediri..."). Again, emphasis is laid on Cyprian's exact language: he does not use "suspiciamus", "credimus", "putamus", "opinamur" but "cernimus". *Contra Gaud.* 2.4.4 (BA 32.648-50).

²⁷⁸*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.9 (BA 32.270).

²⁷⁹*Ibid.* The debate at the Conference on the meaning of "mundus" is recorded in *Gesta* 3.265-81 (CCL 149A.253-7).

this clear.²⁸⁰ How, he asks, can the world be reconciled to God and saved by Christ if the term does not signify, in these texts, the church which alone is saved and reconciled to God through Christ? Whether, therefore, the *mali* go out or remain within, and whether, remaining within, they are unrecognized or identified, the *misericordia et iustitia Dei* ensure that they do not harm the *boni*.²⁸¹

For Augustine the idea that one can in this age belong to a church exclusively of wheat is an "illusion dangereuse".²⁸² The ability to discern and accept the mixed character of the *ecclesia terrena* is a mark of spiritual maturity. He finds evidence for this in the detail of the parable that it was only when the plants had grown and bore grain that the tares appeared.²⁸³ Recognition of and a willingness to tolerate the *permixtio* in expectation of the harvest at the end of the age is a sure sign of spiritual development and of the presence of that love for God and for others which Scripture and the church exist to nurture. The pressure exerted by the tares on the wheat, which makes the latter groan,²⁸⁴ is an essential part of the development of true Christians and cannot ultimately harm them.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 8.11 (BA 32.274).

²⁸¹*ibid.* Augustine finds support for his identification of the *ager* with the church in his figurative treatment of the field in Isaac's blessing of Jacob (Gen. 27:27). Having quoted this verse he adds: "Ager iste ecclesia est. Probemus, quia ager est ecclesia." In the same field enriched by the dew and the sun are "mali", who use both to produce only thorns. *Sermo* 4.26, 31 (CCL 41. 39,41-2).

²⁸²Borgomeo (1972), 313. Borgomeo calls attention to Augustine's concern (as seen, for example, in *De cat. rud.* that catechumens be well taught from the outset about the mixed nature of the church (op. cit., p. 314). Cf. *Sermo* 223 (PL 38.1092-93).

²⁸³"scriptum est in euangelio, quia cum crevisset herba apparuerunt zizania, quia cum coeperint homines proficere tunc incipiunt malos sentire." *Sermo* 5.8 (CCL 41.59). Cf. Borgomeo (1972), 312-3.

²⁸⁴Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 42.1 (CCL 38.474).

²⁸⁵Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 98.12 (CCL 39.1389).

Augustine's handling of this text in the treatises illustrates his endeavour to offer the kind of persuasive interpretation of clear biblical passages which his anti-Donatist polemic demanded. That this text was expounded by the Lord himself, explains the prominence with which it features in Augustine's polemical works. He argues that his own interpretation follows that of the Lord so closely that Donatist objections represent a rejection at this point of the teaching of Christ.

In the preached material Augustine sometimes uses this text in a manner similar to its use in the treatises. A sermon entitled, *de homine qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo*, offers an example of his handling of the parable in a pastoral context.²⁸⁶ It is a restrained exposition which makes largely the same points as made in the treatises. He emphasises that the *zizania* are co-extensive with all sectors of the church,²⁸⁷ that God who cannot err will make infallible separation in due course, and that no one should be surprised to find *malos in loco sancto* or imagine that such can infect the good. This is argued on the basis of the precedents of the non-pollution of heaven by the sin by which the angels fell, of paradise by the sin of Adam, of the house of Noah by the sin of his son Ham (Gen. 9:20-27), and of the band of disciples by the sin of Judas.²⁸⁸ The fallibility of human judgement requires that heed be given to Paul's warning in 1 Cor. 4:5.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶*Sermo 73A* (MA 1. 248-251).

²⁸⁷"Quod genus, quem locum frumentorum invenit, et non zizania sparsit?" *Sermo 73A.3* (MA 1.250). They are: "inter laicos...inter clericos...inter episcopos...inter coniugatos...inter sanctimoniales...in domibus laicorum...in congregationibus monachorum." *ibid.* (MA 1.251).

²⁸⁸*ibid.*

²⁸⁹"Nolite ante tempus quicquam iudicare, donec veniat dominus, et inluminet abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestabit cogitationes cordis; et tunc laus erit unicuique a deo." *ibid.* Cf. *Sermo 73*, in which the tares are identified with the pathway, the stony places and the thorny ground of the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23). Augustine thus summarizes his message to both groups: "Boni tolerant malos: mali mutantur, et imitentur bonos." *Sermo 73.2-3* (PL 38. 471-72).

In other passages in the preached material, the text is cited or alluded to in the context of his practice of figurative exegesis. By so doing Augustine seeks to give more credence to the hidden meanings which he delights in drawing from obscure texts which are made to yield the same teaching as the clear one. A few examples will illustrate the point.

(1) *Enarr. in Ps.64(65).16-17*

Augustine comments on Ps. 64(65).11, *Benedices coronam anni benignitatis tuae.*²⁹⁰

The “crown” is the end of the year, and represents the harvest at the end of the world.

The crown signifies the glory of victory involved in that harvest, while the reference to the divine goodness is *ne quisquam de suis meritis gloriatur.*²⁹¹ Among the growing wheat, an enemy has sown *zizania* which, he says, *nascuntur in similitudine frumentorum, sicuti est lolium, sicuti est avena, et cetera talia quae primam herbam prorsus similem habent.* Far from choking the wheat, however, *per tolerantiam zizaniorum crescit fructus frumentorum.*²⁹²

The various geographical features of v. 12²⁹³ next receive relevant figurative treatment. The *campi*, *colles* and *fines deserti* all represent human beings. The evenness (*aequalitatem*) of the first makes them an appropriate symbol of *populi iusti*. The *colles* stand for those who have been lifted up by God (*qui se humilant*). The

²⁹⁰*Enarr. in Ps. 64.16* (CCL 39.836).

²⁹¹*ibid.*

²⁹²*Ibid.* The idea is that, in the divine plan, the very effort required, on the part of the *boni*, to put up with the “*mali*” in the church, is productive of the spiritual growth of the former.

²⁹³“*Et campi tui replebuntur ubertate. Pinguescent fines deserti, et the colles exultatione accingentur.*” *Enarr. in Ps. 64.17* (CCL 39.837).

fines deserti are *omnes gentes*. The appropriateness of the reference to the desert is that *nullum verbum Dei missum est ad gentes*. The first harvest, which took place when the Lord came, was of Jews: *quia mittebantur ad illos prophetae annuntiantes venturum Salvatorem*. It was of this that the Lord spoke to his disciples in Jn. 4:35. It was from the wheat of this first harvest that *seminatus est orbis terrarum*.²⁹⁴ While in this second harvest tares have been sown, in it too, like the apostles before them, *omnes praedicatores veritatis laborant quousque in finem Dominus mittat in messem angelos suos*. In this task they have entered into the labours of the prophets (Jn. 4:38).²⁹⁵

(2) *Enarr. in Ps. 98(99).10-13.*

In this part of his exposition, Augustine interprets vv.6-8 in a way that demonstrates how the *corpus permixtum* is a necessary condition of the spiritual progress of the true Christian.²⁹⁶ He calls attention to the greatness and godliness of the Old Testament figures named in v.6. In accordance with his *totus Christus* hermeneutic, Moses, Aaron and Samuel are taken to signify both Christ and all believers.²⁹⁷ Each of them, as a great Old Testament priest, represented Christ, the true priest. It is with reference to him that the exhortation of v. 5 is given, *Adorate scabellum pedum eius*. Christ is to be worshipped as the *scabellum Dei* and is so referred to *quia carnem*

²⁹⁴"Dicitis quia longe est messis; respicite, et videte quia albae sunt regiones (understood of Israel) ad messem." *ibid.*

²⁹⁵*ibid.*

²⁹⁶"Moyses et Aaron in sacerdotibus eius, et Samuel in his qui invocant nomen eius. Invocabant Dominum, et ipse exaudiebat eos (v.6); in columna nubis loquebatur ad eos. Custodiebant testimonia eius, et praecepta eius quae dedit eis (v.7). Domine, Deus noster, tu exaudisti eos; Deus, tu propitius fuisti illis." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.10-11* (CCL 39.1386-87). For Augustine's treatment of the earlier part of the Psalm in light of Matt. 25:31-4, *vd. supra.*

²⁹⁷"Commemorat istos, et per istos omnes sanctos nos vult intellegere. Quare autem hic illos nominavit? Quoniam diximus Christum hic nos debere intellegere." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.10* (CCL 39.1387).

*assumsit, in qua appareret generi humano.*²⁹⁸ In order to make clear to us that the ancient fathers also preached Christ as true priest, the Psalm refers to the *columna nubis* out of which God spoke to them. The term *columna* indicates that the one who was preached and prophesied remained still unknown.²⁹⁹ God has now clearly spoken clearly *in scabello pedum suorum* and, therefore, *intellecta sunt verba nubis eius.*³⁰⁰

Moses, Aaron and Samuel also signify all believers. As such, vv. 7b-8 confirm both that they were holy in that they gave obedience to God's commands and, importantly, that each was less than sinlessly perfect. This is what explains the reference to God's forgiving them and to his *vindicans in omnes affectiones eorum*. For a Christian, forgiveness and chastening, the latter *ne semper peccare delectet*, are both necessary.³⁰¹

Augustine proceeds to consider the nature of the chastisement received by these (typical) Old Testament figures. The term *affectiones* implies sinful aspects of their lives, hidden from others, but known to God.³⁰² Investigation of the lives of each fails to yield evidence of direct divine punishment for their sins: both Aaron and Samuel died holy old men, while Moses' non-entry into the Promised Land was more in the nature of a *figura* of those who choose to be under the law rather than under grace than it was a punishment.³⁰³ The true chastisement borne by these godly men was,

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹⁹ "Loquebatur per figuras. Si enim quadam nubecula loquebatur, obscura illa dicta nescio quem manifestum praesignabant." *ibid.* Augustine's substitution of the diminutive "nubecula" serves to emphasise the temporary nature of the hiddenness of Christ's identity.

³⁰⁰ *ibid.*

³⁰¹ *Enarr. in Ps. 98.11* (CCL 39.1387-88).

³⁰² He points out, however, that Moses once murdered a man (Ex. 2:12-15) and Aaron permitted God's people to construct an idol (Ex. 32:1-4). *Ibid.*

³⁰³ It was scarcely a punishment to enter "in regnum caelorum" and thus to experience the reality of

therefore, to be compelled to live daily in close proximity to sinners.³⁰⁴ It was their own progress in holiness that made this experience so painful.³⁰⁵ But in each case it was a situation that had to be endured, in accordance with the Lord's command in Matt. 13:30.³⁰⁶

(3) *Enarr. in Ps.* 119(120).

Augustine's exposition of this Psalm provides a further important example of spiritual exegesis, undertaken for theological reasons, on the basis of the *apertum* of Matt. 13:24-30. The title of the Psalm, *Canticum graduum*, indicates that it is concerned with the upward movement of the soul towards God. The mountain on which the ascent is made is Christ who became for us, by his humiliation, a *montem adscensionis*.³⁰⁷ The cry of v.2³⁰⁸ is that of one who is making progress in the ascent and who, by virtue of that very fact, *incipit pati linguas adversantium*.³⁰⁹ The *lingua dolosa* is that of a false Christian who, by pretending to offer counsel, but in

which the land was the "umbra". *Enarr. in Ps.* 98.12 (CCL 39.1389).

³⁰⁴"Quotidie patiebantur populos contradicentes, quotidie patiebantur inique viventes; et inter illos vivere cogebantur, quorum vitam quotidie reprehendebant." Ibid.

³⁰⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 98.12 (CCL 39.1389-90). Matt. 13:26 is cited in support of the point. Augustine ingeniously derives the same teaching from Lk. 12:47-8: "Servus qui novit voluntatem domini sui, et non facit digna, plagis vapulabit multis." Vd. ad loc. He cites Eccles. 1:18 in confirmation: "Qui apponit scientiam, apponit dolore." The lesson is: "Ecce abundet in te caritas, plus dolebis peccantem. Quanto in te maior caritas est, tanto amplius te torquebit quem toleras: non torquebit tamquam irascentem illi, sed tanquam dolentem pro illo." Further confirmation of the need to tolerate sinners within the church is found in the experience of Paul as described in 2 Cor. 11:28-9 ("Praeter illa quae extrinsecus sunt incursus in me quotidianus, sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum. Quis infirmatur, et non ego infirmor? quis scandalizatur, et non ego uror?") and 2 Cor. 12:7-9 ("In magnitudine revelationum ne extollar, datus est mihi stimulus carnis meae, angelus satanae, qui me colaphizet. Propter quod ter Dominum rogavi ut auferret eum a me; et dixi mihi: Sufficit tibi gratia mea; nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur." For comment on Augustine's use of these texts, vd. infra.

³⁰⁶Ibid.

³⁰⁷*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.1 (CCL 40.1777).

³⁰⁸"Domine, erue animam meam a labiis iniustis et a lingua dolosa." *Enarr. in Ps.* 119.4 (CCL 40.1780).

³⁰⁹*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.3 (CCL 40.1779).

contradiction of Christ's command,³¹⁰ seeks to dissuade another from facing the rigours of the ascent, *alii prohibendo deterrent, alii laudando plus premunt.*³¹¹

The possibility of such *mali* being converted to Christ is found in vv. 3-4.³¹² The arrows represent the words of God which *transfigunt corda*, with the outcome that *amor excitatur, non interitus comparatur.*³¹³ Examples, however, must be added to words in addressing the deceitful tongue and sinful lips. These *exempla*, represented by the *carbones vastatores*, are *multorum iniquorum qui conversi sunt ad Dominum*. They are appropriately so signified because *extincti carbones, mortui dicuntur; ardentis, vivi appellantur.*³¹⁴ When arrows and coals have done their work in a person, they begin to ascend the mountain. The further one ascends, however, the more one sees greater scandals among the people. Matt. 13:26 is cited, and explained, as proof of the fact that *nulli homini apparent mali, nisi factus fuerit ipse bonus.*³¹⁵

Verse 5 signifies the cry of the progressing Christian who becomes increasingly aware of the presence of sinners around him.³¹⁶ He laments that his pilgrimage is still far off from the *patria* for which he longs and where evil people will not be found.

³¹⁰"Vade, vende omnia quae habes, et distribue pauperibus, et sequere me" (Matt. 19:21).

³¹¹*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.4 (CCL 40.1780).

³¹²"Quid dabitur tibi, aut quid adponetur tibi ad linguam dolosam? Sagittae potentis acutae, cum carbonibus desolatoriis." *Enarr. in Ps.* 119.4 (CCL 40.1780-81). Augustine notes that some MSS. read "vastatoribus" for "desolatoriis" (which reflects the LXX: ἐρημικοῦς), but regards the difference as insignificant, since "carbones...vastando et desolando ad desolationem facile perducunt." The Vulg. has "iuniperorum", after the Hebrew יַיִן־יִנְיָן.

³¹³*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.4 (CCL 40.1781). Augustine calls attention to the graciousness with which God fire such arrows: "Novit Dominus sagittare ad amorem; et nemo pulchrius sagittat ad amorem, quam qui verbo sagittat; immo sagittat cor amantis, ut adiuvet amantem; sagittat, ut faciat amantem." *ibid.*

³¹⁴*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.5 (CCL 40.1782). Augustine lays much stress on the impact for good on others of changed lives.

³¹⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.6 (CCL 40.1782).

³¹⁶"Heu me, quod incolatus meus longinquus factus est! Inhabitavi cum tabernaculis Cedar." *Enarr. in Ps.* 119.6,7 (CCL 40.1782-83).

Sometimes foreign travel is good for one: sometimes one finds faithful friends abroad when they cannot be found *in patria*. But this does not apply to the true *patria, ubi omnes boni*.³¹⁷ To be on pilgrimage away from Jerusalem, is to be always and inevitably *inter malos*. The cry here is that of the church which toils on this earth, the whole inheritance of Christ spoken of in Ps. 2:8, and which in another Psalm said, *A finibus terrae ad te clamavi*.³¹⁸ All the saints are *unus homo in Christo, quia unitas sancta in Christo est*. The groan of the church is expressive of misery but also of hope because it has begun to sing the *canticum graduum*.³¹⁹ The words *tabernaculis Cedar* signify the context in which the church at present sojourns. Augustine takes the Hebrew Cedar to mean *tenebrae* in Latin. Gen. 25:13 identifies Cedar as one of the sons of Ishmael. The tents are therefore those of Ishmael who, as Gal. 4:22ff. makes clear, was a type of the old covenant whose promises were earthly and a shadow of the heavenly kingdom. It follows, therefore, that Ismael *in umbra, Isaac in luce. Si ergo Ismael in umbra, non mirum quia ibi tenebrae*. Those who belong to Isaac, the heir of the promise, must now live with those who belong to Ishmael and endure that of which Gal. 4:29³²⁰ speaks, until the final separation.³²¹

Verse 7³²² finds a similar interpretation. Such words can be truly sung only if that of which they speak is practised. The Catholic challenge to the Donatists must be,

³¹⁷*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.6 (CCL 40.1782-83). The church of the future age is thus described: "Ibi omnes iusti et sancti, qui fruuntur Verbo Dei sine lectione, sine litteris; quod enim nobis per paginas scriptum est, per faciem Dei illi cernunt. Qualis patria! Magna patria, et miseri sunt peregrini ab illa patria."

³¹⁸Ps. 60(61).2. *Enarr. in Ps.* 119.7 (CCL 40.1783).

³¹⁹*Ibid.*

³²⁰"Sed sicut tunc, qui secundum carnem natus erat, persequebatur eum qui secundum spiritum, ita et nunc."

³²¹*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.7 (CCL 40.1784-85).

³²²"Cum his qui oderunt pacem, eram pacificus." *Enarr. in Ps.* 119.9 (CCL 40.1785).

Cognoscite pacem, amate pacem! If they were righteous, as they claim to be, they too would groan as wheat among the chaff, awaiting the coming of the *Ventilator*. But they show their hatred of peace by tearing apart the unity of the church. They do this *ut non haberent mixtos iniustos*.³²³ In doing so, on the basis of a misinterpretation of Isa. 52:11, they separate from many *boni*, while slanderously speaking of them as *mali*. They must learn that to love peace is to love Christ, for "he is our peace".³²⁴ Christ's honour is at stake in this controversy, and the Donatists must cease making two, of those whom Christ has made one.³²⁵

b. The "parable" of the threshing-floor (Matt. 3:12).³²⁶

This text is referred to frequently in the anti-Donatist treatises, with one exception always by way of allusion. In its description of the presence, winnowing and ultimate separation of the wheat from the chaff on the threshing-floor, Augustine finds a metaphor which supports the same *corpus permixtum* understanding of the church.³²⁷ The same double significance of the term *ecclesia*, as seen also in the parables of the field and the net, is found here. As the church is both the wheat and the field, the good fish and the net, so it is both the good grain and the threshing-floor, the latter "comme

³²³*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.9 (CCL 40.1785-86).

³²⁴Eph. 2:14.

³²⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 119.9 (CCL 40.1786).

³²⁶"Veniet ferens ventilabrum in manu sua et mundabit aream suam, frumenta recondet in horreo, paleas autem comburet igni inextinguibili." *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 10.14 (BA 32.280).

³²⁷Here, too, Augustine seems to be building on Cyprian's use of this text for his own purposes. Although he never quotes it, Cyprian makes frequent allusion to its imagery (regularly in association with Matt. 13:24-30) to distinguish believers from heretics. Cyprian had emphasised that the souls of the just and the unjust are already distinguished here below, before the judgement (*De unit.* 9). But he warns against any human attempt to distinguish in the church between the wheat and the chaff (*Epp.* 54.3 and 55.25, as quoted by Augustine at *De bapt.* 4.12.18 [BA 29.278]).

lieu où se joue le drame de la coexistence entre bons et méchants."³²⁸ As Borgomeo indicates, this metaphor, better than the others, enables Augustine to portray the church as characterized by the grace of *patientia*.³²⁹ The Donatists, on the other hand, by separating themselves from the good, *impia diremptione*, and declaring themselves innocent in so doing, show clearly that they do not understand Christ's teaching. If they had, he argues, *eligeres potius fortis esse in tolerandis malis quam impius in deserendis bonis*.³³⁰ Borgomeo helpfully elucidates the contribution of the image of the *area* to Augustine's ecclesiology, mainly from the preached material. The following paragraphs summarize his findings,³³¹ before considering the use to which the text is put in the treatises.

(1) The *area* signifies mixture and thus establishes that the church of the present age includes a mixture of wheat and chaff. Since an area by definition contains both wheat and chaff, it follows that a church comprising only wheat cannot be the church of the present time.

(2) The *area* implies testing. On the threshing-floor the grains are destined to be freed from the husks which surround them. This, however, only takes place through the necessary employment of the *tritura*. During the present, penultimate, stage of the church, the testing provided by the *tritura* is unceasing. Such pressure inevitably

³²⁸Borgomeo (1972), 315.

³²⁹ibid.

³³⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.7.12 (BA 28.238).

³³¹Vd. Borgomeo (1972), 315-322.

causes the wheat to groan. Acceptance of the *permixtio*, however, which gives meaning to the use of the *tritura*, renders such suffering spiritually creative.

(3) The *area* demands waiting. It is always tempting to leave the threshing-floor to escape a *permixtio* which signifies *tritura*. It is also easy - one simply allows oneself to be carried by the gusts of wind that blow at times over the floor. Such premature separation is a poor parody of the authentic winnowing which will take place at the Last Judgement. Schismatics, believing themselves to be wheat, show themselves thus to be chaff, while the wheat shows itself to be such by a willingness to remain on the floor, patiently awaiting the definitive winnowing. To insist on a separation on the floor before the coming of the true Ventilator, is effectively to render vain the parousia of Christ whose prerogative alone this is. To accept the *permixtio* until that day is to live in harmony with Christ's church which is a creature of waiting and of hope.

(4) The *area* gives assurance of salvation. Continuance and growth on the Lord's floor is what is required, and the true wheat, anchored by the weight of love, will not succumb to the pressure exerted by the great mass of chaff nor abandon the floor.³³² Augustine seeks to demonstrate that the situation of mixture, in fact, applies to the church at each stage of salvation-history, not just the present. The winnowing of his people carried out by Christ at his first coming, by which he founded his visible, earthly church, is a prefiguration of the final winnowing out of which his heavenly church will be formed. In both cases the coming of Christ the Winnower entails the

³³²This is another example of Augustine's interpretation stretching the imagery of his text.

liberation of the church from a situation of mixture and its consecration as his elect people.³³³

In the treatises, this text is adduced mainly in support of the argument that the presence of evil people in the church cannot harm the good. In an early work, Augustine applies the principle of *permixtio* to the church of Old and New Testament alike. Both these threshing-floors contain saints and sinners. If the righteous people of the Old Testament tolerated the wicked as they waited for the first coming of the Winnower, why should Christians today separate themselves from the unity of the church, on account of particular sins, instead of waiting for the winnowing at the end of time?³³⁴

Parmenian had cited the account of wickedness in Israel in Isa. 59:1-9 to justify Donatist separation. Augustine's response is that those described in the passage, although found among the good, cannot harm them, any more than the chaff can harm the wheat - *donec veniat dominus areae...*³³⁵ The reason this cannot happen is that the same Lord who says, *sancti estote, quia et ego sanctus sum* (Lev. 11:45) causes his saints (*si custodiant eam quam accipiunt santitatem*) to remain undefiled by contact with sinners. This follows the pattern set by Christ himself, who *nulla contagione malignitatis in Iudaeorum gente pollutus est*, neither when, as one born under the law he received the first sacraments, nor later when he had chosen his

³³³Vd. Borgomeo, loc.cit., for references to Augustine.

³³⁴*Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 177-201 (BA 28.174-178). Cf. *Tr. in Ioh.* 15.32 (BA 71.163). Cf. Berrouard, "Les deux moussons," BA 71.952-53.

³³⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.3.6 (BA 28.276).

disciples and *cum suo traditore usque ad extremum osculum vixit*.³³⁶ It is after the example of Christ who neither did any evil nor gave consent to any evil that *inter paleam frumenta securo sunt*. It is evident that the Donatists are blind leaders of the blind in that they can see even in their own number so many wicked people and yet persuade men, *ut se non ad sustinendum invicem propter unitatis vinculum, sed ad dividendum invicem propter schismatis sacrilegium sequantur*.³³⁷

The example of the eleven apostles and of Paul is likewise put under tribute. The eleven clearly did not participate in the pilfering of Judas although so closely associated with him that *cum illo eidem domino visibiliter cohaerebant, eundem magistrum audiebant, idem credendum euangelium praecipiebant, eadem sacramenta sumebant*. Such connection was only physical, *cum illo congregatione permixti, spiritali dissimilitudine separati*.³³⁸ Similarly, Paul did not participate in the diabolical vices of those who did not preach Christ purely (cf. Phil. 1:17); yet, with them, he preached the same Christ and participated in the sacraments of the same Christ, and declared, *sive occasione sive veritate Christus admuntietur*.³³⁹

Augustine quotes Petilian as saying, *in una communione sacramentorum mali maculant bonos, et ideo corporali disiunctione a malorum contagione recedendum est, ne omnes pariter pereant*.³⁴⁰ His response, supported by Matt. 3:12, is that if this is true, the church must be said to have perished in the time of Cyprian, inasmuch as

³³⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.17.36 (BA 28.364-68).

³³⁷*ibid.* (BA 28.368).

³³⁸*Contra Cresc.* 4.26.33 (BA 31.534-36).

³³⁹Phil. 1:18. Vd. comment on Augustine's use of this text *infra*. *Contra Cresc.* 4.26.33 (BA 31.536).

³⁴⁰*De un. bapt.* 14.23 (BA 31.714).

he failed to separate from Stephen over the issue of re-baptism. In that case, there should have been no church left, *ubi Donatus ipse spiritaliter nasceretur*. But Cyprian knew that in the unity and communion of the sacraments of Christ, the evil of one could not contaminate others, and he therefore did not separate.³⁴¹

Augustine wishes to insist that Matt. 3:12 makes clear that this principle applies whether the wicked persons concerned are hidden or known. This was an important issue at the Conference of Carthage. According to Augustine, when the Catholics began explaining Matt. 3:12 they were interrupted by the Donatists who stated that *de area non legeretur in evangelio scriptum*. When the exact reference was given to them, their response was to say that the text referred to *occultos malos* (in line with their interpretation of the parable of the net: the bad fish are unknown to the fishermen till the final separation when the shore is reached).³⁴² Writing after the Conference, and clearly irritated by the Donatist use of the parable of the net, Augustine tries to make their endeavour to interpret Matt. 3:12 in its light look ridiculous. *Palea* is certainly not hidden *sub fluctibus*. To the contrary, it is so conspicuous *ut potius occulta sint in ea frumenta*.³⁴³ This parable, therefore, is given, not to show the presence of hidden sinners, but the mixture of good and bad, in the church. The parable of the net should, therefore, be understood in the light of this one and taken to teach the same thing. The only possible alternative is that the parable of the net is about *occultos malos* while that of the floor concerns *manifestos malos*.³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ibid. Cf. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.11 (BA 28.414-16); *De bapt.* 2.6.8 (BA 29.142-44), 3.2.3 (BA 29.178-82); *Contra Cresc.* 2.35.44 (BA 31.252-54).

³⁴²For the record of the brief discussion at the Conference on Matt. 3:12, vd. *Gesta* 3.261-3 (CCL 149A.252). *Brev. Coll.* 3.9.15 (BA 32.164-66).

³⁴³*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 10.13 (BA 32.278).

³⁴⁴ibid. 10.14 (BA 32.280).

In any case, whether hidden or notorious, sinners in the church cannot corrupt the good.³⁴⁵

In his preaching, Augustine's concern was not to offer complex theological arguments, although the theology his figurative exegesis is made to yield is largely that of the treatises. His primary aim, in an anti-Donatist context, was to strengthen the faith of average Catholics, while providing them with a stock-pile of images which they could use in their daily interaction with Donatists. Examples are offered from his preaching of the manner in which his figurative exegetical method is employed for this purpose. They are taken from contexts in which Matt. 3:12, sometimes linked with other texts, is cited or alluded to in support of the figurative treatment.

(1) *Enarr. in Ps. 51(52).1-6.*³⁴⁶

In this passage Augustine alludes to Matt. 3:12 in connection with his ingenious exposition of the title of this Psalm, *In finem intellectus David, cum venit Doech Idumaeus et nuntiavit Saul: Venit David in domum Abimelech.*³⁴⁷ Doeg is understood to be not only *unus homo...sed genus hominum*, while David, on the other hand, represents *corpus ipsum regis et sacerdotis*³⁴⁸ (the latter, since when he went over to Ahimelech he ate the *panes propositionis*³⁴⁹). Doeg represents *homo terrenus* as distinct from *caelestis homo*.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁵*Contra Gaudent. 2.4.4* (BA 32.648-52). In itself, a bold conviction.

³⁴⁶CCL 39.623-28.

³⁴⁷*Enarr. in Ps. 51.5*. Augustine describes the title as "aliquantulum negotiosum"! *Enarr. in Ps. 51.1* (CCL 39.623).

³⁴⁸*ibid.* 51.3 (CCL 39.625).

³⁴⁹*ibid.* (CCL 39.624).

³⁵⁰*ibid.* (CCL 239.625).

This Augustine seeks to establish by means of an etymological argument. He takes the meaning of *Doeg* to be *motus* and that of *Idumaeus* to be *terrenus*. He thus represents that *genus hominum...non ergo perseverans in aeternum, sed emigrandus* whose earthly character is such that they can be expected to produce no fruit. *Doeg* thus represents those who belong to the *regnum terrenum* which coexists with the *regnum caeleste* represented by David. This *permixtio* is a temporary arrangement³⁵¹ and Augustine draws attention to two consequences of it. First, the pressure exerted on the citizens of the heavenly kingdom is such that they are made to groan (*regnum caeleste gemit inter cives regni terreni*)³⁵². Second, the closeness of the relationship between the two sets of citizens means that each is able to lay the other under tribute, in a certain sense.³⁵³ Examples of service exacted from citizens of the heavenly kingdom are offered in the cases of Daniel and the three youths in Babylon who *praepositi sunt negotiis regis* and Joseph in Egypt who *positus est administrare rempublicam*.³⁵⁴ The example of Esther is later added.³⁵⁵ As an example of service exacted from members of the earthly kingdom by the other, Augustine cites the case of those referred to by Paul who, says Augustine, *non caste euangelium annuntiabant, sed terrena desiderantes regnum caelorum praedicabant; sua quaerebant, et Christum annuntiabant*. In so preaching they acted *tamquam*

³⁵¹"Modo in hoc saeculo cives utriusque regni permixti sunt; corpus regni terreni, et corpus regni caelestis commixtum est." *Enarr. in Ps.* 51.4 (CCL 39.625).

³⁵²Vd. on Matt. 3:12.

³⁵³"aliquando (nam et hoc tacendum non est) quodammodo regnum terrenum angariat cives regni caelorum, et regnum caeleste angariat cives regni terreni." *Ibid.* This is a theme of *De civ. Dei*. "Angario" is a rare verb, meaning "to compel, restrain." Cf. Lewis and Short (1879), 118.

³⁵⁴Dan. 2:49, Gen. 41:40.

³⁵⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 51.6 (CCL 39.627). Cf. Esth. 14:16.

mercenarii, but Paul still rejoices that this service is being rendered.³⁵⁶ In terms of this Psalm, *quae dicunt, pertinent ad David; quae autem faciunt, pertinent ad Doeck*.³⁵⁷

Augustine's exegesis of the Psalm thus enables him to stress the ambiguity inherent in the present stage of the church, as a *corpus permixtum*. This leads him to emphasise, again, that the only valid separation will occur at the Lord's return: *quando utrumque diligentissime discernatur*.³⁵⁸ Tolerance of the wicked is the duty of Christians until then.³⁵⁹

(2) *Enarr. in Ps. 54 (55)*.³⁶⁰

Augustine's understanding of Matt. 3:12, to which he alludes in his exposition,³⁶¹ clearly controls his figurative interpretation of this Psalm. His use of the Psalm exemplifies the application of his christo-ecclesial hermeneutic for the purposes of his anti-Donatist polemic.

Augustine finds *totus Christus* in the title of the Psalm,³⁶² by an ingenious linking of it with Rom. 10:4.³⁶³ Christ is the *finis* who makes perfect and therefore *perfectio nostra Christus*. It is in Christ that believers are made perfect *quia ipsius capitis membra*

³⁵⁶He quotes Phil. 1:17-18. Confirmation of Paul's attitude is found in the words of Christ spoken with reference to the same "genus hominum": "Pharisaei et scribae super cathedram Moysi sederunt. Quae dicunt, facite; quae autem faciunt, facere nolite; dicunt enim, et non faciunt." Matt. 23:2-3. *Enarr. in Ps. 51.4* (CCL 39.625-6). This is tacit acknowledgement that Donatists hold the same Gospel as Catholics, and of the validity of their preaching and evangelism.

³⁵⁷*ibid.* 626.

³⁵⁸*Enarr. in Ps. 51.6* (CCL 39.627).

³⁵⁹"hoc enim affectare debemus, tolerare hic malos, quam tolerari a bonis." *ibid.*

³⁶⁰CCL 39.655-76.

³⁶¹*Enarr. in Ps. 54.19* (CCL 39.670).

³⁶²"In finem, in hymnis, intellectus ipsi David." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.1* (CCL 39.655).

³⁶³"Finis enim legis Christus est, ad iustitiam omni credenti." *ibid.*

sumus.³⁶⁴ The phrase, *intellectus ipsi David*, provides Augustine with a basis for appealing to Catholic Christians to understand the nature of the current situation of the church, in respect of the Catholic-Donatist divide. Christ was the son of David *secundum carnem*, while Lord of David *secundum divinitatem*. David is therefore a figure of Christ, but since Christ is both head and body, those who are his members should not consider themselves *a Christo alienos...nec nos quasi alterum computare; quia erunt duo in carne una...*³⁶⁵ It is, then, the *membra Christi* who, in this Psalm, are seeking an *intellectus* of the current sinful conditions in the church.³⁶⁶ Such understanding as they already have, leads them rather to groan than exult, while any exultation yet enjoyed, is in hope of what is yet to be. Those not on the *iter pietatis* are inevitably surprised *quia talia gemunt membra David*. The reason such do not feel what the body feels is that they are *praeter corpus*. What is required of a person in this position is clear: *incorporetur, et sentiet*.³⁶⁷

For Augustine, the Psalm throughout can thus be interpreted as an expression of the grief of Christians, troubled by the presence of *mali* in the church. He points out that the presence of the latter is not without profit in relation to the good, and finds evidence in the words of v. 2, *Contristatus sum in exercitatione mea et conturbatus sum*.³⁶⁸ The *malus* exists for either of two purposes, *aut...ut corrigatur, aut...ut per illum bonus exerceatur*. They should not, however, be hated, but hope should be maintained that they, too, may be converted and so *nobiscum exerceantur*.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁴ibid. (CCL 39.655-56).

³⁶⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 54.3 (CCL 39.656). Cf. Eph. 5:32.

³⁶⁶ibid.

³⁶⁷*Enarr. in Ps.* 54.3 (CCL 39.657).

³⁶⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 54.4 (CCL 39.657).

³⁶⁹ibid. (CCL 39.658).

In the Psalmist's depiction of himself surrounded by evil men, who return hatred for his love, Augustine sees an image of the position of the *bonus* in the present church, and of his struggle to maintain *caritas*. While making every endeavour to love his enemies, he finds himself surrounded *multorum inimicitis, multorum rabie*. As he wrestles against hatred, in order to perfect *ipsam dilectionem*, in that very struggle, *turbatus est*. An image of this is found in Peter's walking on the sea.³⁷⁰ Augustine comments, *Ille enim calcat fluctus huius saeculi, qui diligit inimicos*. This, he says, is why Christ (*cuius omnino de corde auferri non poterat inimici dilectio*) could walk *intrepidus* on the waves. While Peter also walked, it was entirely *gratia iubentis, non viribus suis*. The strong wind, on the sight of which Peter began to fear and call on the Lord to save him, corresponds to the *...voce inimici et... tribulatione peccatoris* of v. 4 which constrained David to pray *ne amittat dilectionem*. It is such love of an enemy that conquers the devil.³⁷¹ He therefore prays to be kept from hatred of any of his enemies, recognizing that *vita nostra dilectio est; si vita dilectio, mors odium est*.³⁷²

The intensity of the struggle to preserve *caritas* is reflected in v. 5,³⁷³ when interpreted in light of 1 Jn. 2:9,11.³⁷⁴ Faced with the demand to maintain love, and yet finding its sight affected and heart disturbed by the *convicia* (revilings) of evil men, the longing

³⁷⁰Matt. 14:30. *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.5 (CCL 39.659).

³⁷¹*Enarr. in Ps.* 54.5-6 (CCL 39.559-60).

³⁷²*Enarr. in Ps.* 54.7 (CCL 39.661).

³⁷³"Timor et tremor venerunt super me, et contexerunt me tenebrae." *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.8 (CCL 39.661).

³⁷⁴"Qui odit fratrem suum, in tenebris est usque adhuc." *ibid.* Augustine comments: "Si dilectio lumen est, odium tenebrae."

of the church for either death or solitude is expressed in v.7.³⁷⁵ Augustine envisages a situation where every endeavour has been made to put right bad men who, in the event, prove utterly incorrigible and who therefore must simply be tolerated:

*corrigeri non potest, pati necesse est.*³⁷⁶ Even a person like that, says Augustine, *tuus est, aut consortio generis humani, aut plerumque ecclesiastica communione.*³⁷⁷ When all that is possible has been done by way of exhorting and reproofing such, the only prospect of rest appears to be in the way spoken of in v. 7: *Quis dabit mihi pennas?* The immediately following words, *sicut columbae* (*non*, he notes, *sicut corvo*) are, however, of crucial importance. The dove *pro signo dilectionis ponitur*, and so its desire, as distinct from that of the raven, is only to escape from its troubles, not from love. It is a desire to be separated from men *corpore, non amore*. But while these are the longings of Christians under the pressure of the *mali*, they do not in fact fly away, because they are tied down (*ligantur*), *non visco sed officio.*³⁷⁸

The desert of v. 7,³⁷⁹ Augustine insists, is to be interpreted figuratively rather than literally. A literal interpretation is inappropriate because wherever one goes in the world, it seems impossible, at last, to escape the *societatem fratrum*. Rather it is to be understood of the conscience (*conscientia*), *quo nullus hominum intrat, ubi nemo tecum est, ubi tu et Deus es.*³⁸⁰ There, some rest of soul may be found *in his qui tecum*

³⁷⁵"Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae, et volabo et requiescam?" *ibid.* He finds Paul giving expression to the same desire and for the same reasons in Phil. 1:23, Gal. 6:17 and refers also to Ps. 119:53.

³⁷⁶*Enarr. in Ps. 54.8 (CCL 39.662).*

³⁷⁷*ibid.*

³⁷⁸*ibid.* The example of Paul is adduced: "...dissolvui, et esse cum Christo, multo enim magis optimum; manere in carne necessarium propter vos."

³⁷⁹"Ecce elongavi fugiens et mansi in deserto." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.9 (CCL 39.663).*

³⁸⁰*ibid.*

intus sunt,³⁸¹ but while one may be *solus in conscientia*, it is not possible to be *solus in caritate*, and for this reason, *forinsecus tribulationes non relinquebant*.³⁸²

Commenting on vv. 13-15,³⁸³ Augustine makes the point that if the (external) enemies of the church cause pain and trouble, the deepest groanings of all arise on account of the hostility of false brethren. They had been friends together in the church of God (*Unde ergo dissensio?* he asks) but now the one *qui intus erat, foris factus est*.

Ambulavit mecum in domo Dei cum consensu: aliam domum erexit contra domum Dei.³⁸⁴ In an eloquent passage, Augustine calls attention to the many things Catholics and Donatists have in common.³⁸⁵ In their light, he demands to know, *Quid tu foris es, et ego intus sum?*³⁸⁶ To this evil of separation they add that of the practice of rebaptism, ignoring the fact that even if they hate Catholics, they should spare the Christ who is in them.³⁸⁷

Augustine points out how v. 16 of the Psalm³⁸⁸ is reminiscent of the outcome of the schism of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, as described in Num. 16:31-33. Like these schismatics, Donatists are being swallowed up alive *hiatu terrae, id est devoratione terrenarum cupiditatum absorberi*. As *viventes* they are in the tragic position of

³⁸¹ *Enarr. in Ps. 54.15* (CCL 39.667).

³⁸² *Enarr. in Ps. 54.10* (CCL 39.664).

³⁸³ "Quoniam si inimicus exprobrasset mihi, sustinuissem utique; et si is qui oderat me, super me magna locutus fuisset, absconderem me utique ab eo. Tu vero homo unanimes, dux meus et notus meus; qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.15* (CCL 39.668).

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*

³⁸⁵ "Fratres sumus, unum Deum invocamus, in unum Christum credimus, unum euangelium audimus, unum psalmum cantamus, unum Amen respondemus, unum Alleluia resonamus, unum Pascha celebramus." *ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*

³⁸⁷ "Agnosce in me quod habes; et si tu me odisti, Christo in me parce." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.16* (CCL 39.669).

³⁸⁸ "Veniat mors super eos, et descendant ad infernum viventes." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.16* (CCL 39.668).

*scientes quia pereunt, et tamen pereuntes.*³⁸⁹ The Donatists *descendant ad infernum viventes* because they know well that the scriptural witness to the *ecclesia catholica per totum orbem terrarum...diffusa* is such that *omnino contradictio omnis vacet* and that it provides no justification for their schism, but they ignore it.³⁹⁰ Augustine cleverly finds the universal church in v.17 of the Psalm³⁹¹ by linking it with Ps. 60(61):2.³⁹² It is the *corpus Christi et unitas Christi* which is here *in angore*.³⁹³ The one individual (*ille unus homo*) crying out represents the *unitas* of the one body. The fact that (according to Ps.60[61]) he cries from the ends of the earth, proves that in the one body there are many.³⁹⁴

The words of v.19 Augustine finds particularly useful in support of the *corpus permixtum*.³⁹⁵ He invites the congregation to consider those among them (*quos in ipsa congregatione parietum*) who are rebellious and proud and *ad dissensionem paratos, sed occasionem non inveniantes* as *palea dominicae areae*.³⁹⁶ From here, he says, the wind of pride has driven away (*excussit*) a few, but adds, *tota palea non volabit, nisi cum ille in ultimo ventilabit*. As we wait for the coming of the *Ventilator* we can but sing, pray and mourn with this man, looking for the redemption of our soul in peace, *contra illos qui non amant pacem*.³⁹⁷ Augustine points out that redemption from those *qui longe sunt a me* (ie. pagans), is an easy matter. Christians are not easily led

³⁸⁹ibid.

³⁹⁰*Enarr. in Ps. 54.16 (CCL 39.669).*

³⁹¹"Ego ad Dominum exclamavi." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.17 (CCL 39.669).*

³⁹²"A finibus terrae ad te clamavi...cum angeretur cor meum." *ibid. (CCL 39.669-70)*

³⁹³*Enarr. in Ps. 54.17 (CCL 39.669).*

³⁹⁴ibid. (CCL 39.670).

³⁹⁵"Redimet in pace animam meam ab his qui adpropinquant mihi, quoniam in multis erant mecum." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.19 (CCL 39.670).*

³⁹⁶ibid.

³⁹⁷ibid.

into overt idolatry. The problem with the Donatists is that *ex propinquo adversatur, prope est*. The words *in multis erant mecum*, therefore, have a two-fold significance. First, Donatists are said to draw near in this sense, *baptismum habebamus utrique, in eo erant mecum; euangelium utrique legebamus, erant in eo mecum; festa martyrum celebrabamus, erant tibi mecum; Paschae solemnitatem frequentabamus, erant ibi mecum*.³⁹⁸

The other side of the coin, however, adds Augustine is that while *in multis mecum, in paucis non mecum*. For example, *in schismate non mecum, in haeresi non mecum*. The problem is that the few things in which they do not share with the Catholics, remove any profit they would otherwise derive from the many.³⁹⁹ According to 1 Cor. 13:1-3,⁴⁰⁰ the many things are negated by the one thing which is of more weight than all others: *caritas*. Ergo, he adds, *in omnibus sacramentis mecum, in una caritate non mecum*.⁴⁰¹ The *unum corpus*, therefore, says, *In palea mecum erant, in tritico non mecum erant*. Augustine uses the verb *propinquare* to emphasise the closeness of the chaff to the wheat. The closeness should not be overlooked: *de uno semine exit, in uno agro radicatur, una pluvia nutritur, eundem messorum patitur, eandem triturationem sustinet, eandem ventilationem expectat*, but at last, *non in unum horreum intrat*.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁸ *Enarr. in Ps. 54.19* (CCL 39.671).

³⁹⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ "Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum...si habeam omnem prophetiam et omnem fidem, et omnem scientiam, si montes transferam, si distribuam omnia mea pauperibus, si tradam corpus meum ita ut ardeat..." *ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰² *ibid.*

The remaining verses of the Psalm, Augustine continues to expound in relation to the Donatist schism.⁴⁰³ Those who do not experience *commutatio* are the Donatists, *quia non mutantur in melius, sed in peius, nec cum his sunt, nec in resurrectione*.⁴⁰⁴ God will humble them *in damnatione, quia erecti sunt in dissensione*.⁴⁰⁵ The one remedy for (sinful) Donatist changelessness, is found in the same text: *timeant Deum, deserant Donatum*.⁴⁰⁶ Verse 21⁴⁰⁷ is easily turned against the Donatists. The *testamentum* is identified with the promise made to Abraham⁴⁰⁸ and Augustine mocks the, supposed, Donatist view that *Africa sola istam gratiam meruit sancti Donati, in ipso remansit ecclesia Christi*.⁴⁰⁹ Donatist abandonment of the *unitatem omnium gentium* is sufficient proof of their pollution of the divine testament.⁴¹⁰

The words of v. 22⁴¹¹ are applied directly to the *caput* whose anger has led to the division referred to in the previous verse. They relate, he claims, to the revelation of the divine will in Scripture regarding the *haeretici*, in those passages *quae latebant in scripturis*. The actual occurrence of schisms serves to elucidate those dark passages of Scripture, in such a way that *intellecta est voluntas Dei*.⁴¹²

⁴⁰³ *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.20-27 (CCL 39.671-76).

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.20 (CCL 39.672).

⁴⁰⁷ "Polluerunt testamentum eius; divisi sunt prae ira vultus eius." *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.21 (CCL 39.672).

⁴⁰⁸ Gen. 22:18. Vd. supra.

⁴⁰⁹ *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.21 (CCL 39.672).

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.* V. 21 in Augustine's Latin version concludes with words not found in the Hebrew original, but which reflect the LXX. They aid his anti-Donatist cause: "divisi sunt prae ira vultus eius." Augustine asks: "Quae maiore nota ostendantur haeretici?" *ibid.*

⁴¹¹ "Et adpropinquavit cor illius." *Enarr. in Ps.* 54.22 (CCL 39.672).

⁴¹² *ibid.* (CCL 39.672-3).

The words of v. 26⁴¹³ are readily applied, literally, to the Circumcellions. The plural noun in the text well represents the plurality of the Circumcellion armoury.⁴¹⁴ But the spiritual application of the text to those *qui animas occidunt* by their separation from the unity of the church finds ironical confirmation in the very terms of the Donatist condemnation of the Maximianist schism, at the Council of Bagai.⁴¹⁵

(3) *Enarr. in Ps. 99(100)*.

Augustine's exposition of this short Psalm concerns particularly the issue of the toleration of sinners in the church.⁴¹⁶ The call to shout for joy in v.1⁴¹⁷ is addressed to this church, the *catholica*, in all lands, in accordance with the prophecy of Lk. 24:47. In view, however, of the fact that *mixti sunt boni malis, et mali per omnem terram, et boni per omnem terram* it is necessary to distinguish between a *iubilationem improbandam* and a *iubilationem coronandam*.⁴¹⁸ The title of the Psalm is *Psalmus in confessione*⁴¹⁹ and the meaning of *in confessione iubilare* is provided by the text of another Psalm: *Beatus populus qui intellegit iubilationem*.⁴²⁰ That which makes men blessed when understood must be very great and is none other than *Dominus...Deus noster beatificator hominum*.⁴²¹ Augustine proceeds to present God to the congregation, in terms of the *frui/uti* distinction expounded in *DDC*, as the One who

⁴¹³"Viri sanguinum et dolositatis." *Enarr. in Ps. 54.26* (CCL 39.675).

⁴¹⁴"Si fustem saltem solum ferret; sed fert fundibulum, fert securim, fert lapides, fert lanceas; et ista portantes ubique qua possunt evagantur, sanguinem innocentium sitiunt." *ibid.*

⁴¹⁵Vd. *Sententia concilii Bagaiensis*, CSEL 53.277.

⁴¹⁶That Matt. 3:12 is before his mind is clear from various allusions. At the beginning, for example, he speaks of the significance of the Psalm, and the desired outcome of his preaching from it, thus: "Pauci versus sunt, magnarum rerum gravidi; pariant semina in cordibus vestris, ut paretur horreum messi dominicae." *Enarr. in Ps. 99.2* (CCL 39. 1393).

⁴¹⁷"Iubilare Domino, universa terra." *Enarr. in Ps. 99.3* (CCL 39.1393).

⁴¹⁸*Enarr. in Ps. 99.3-4* (CCL 39.1393-94).

⁴¹⁹*Enarr. in Ps. 99.2* (CCL 39.1393).

⁴²⁰Ps. 88(89).16. *Enarr. in Ps. 99.3* (CCL 39.1393).

⁴²¹*ibid.*

alone is to be loved and enjoyed for his own sake and can make humans truly *beati*.⁴²²

The *visio Dei* is the goal of the Christian life (Matt. 5:8 is quoted) and Augustine calls on believers to use other *res* to forward that end, *Para unde videas quod amas, antequam videas*.⁴²³ A necessary part of preparation for the sight of God, who is love, is love for neighbour, for God's sake.⁴²⁴ There is, he argues, a direct connection between growth in such love (which has the effect in a believer of *efficiens te et revocans te ad similitudinem Dei*) and the ability to extend it *usque ad inimicos*, in imitation of God himself.⁴²⁵

In his exposition of the words, *Servite Domino in iucunditate* (v.2), Augustine applies this principle to the issue of intra-church tolerance. Christian joy is a taste *de spe futurae vitae hic unde ibi satiatur*, but meantime *sunt grana inter paleam*.⁴²⁶ In this context the reality of growth in love will manifest itself. Citing Eph. 4:2-3,⁴²⁷ Augustine makes four points. First, he asks what would have become of the Christian now advanced in love if others had not borne with him prior to his attaining this level of development. Second, if on the basis of his professed spiritual progress he is unwilling to tolerate others, by that very fact he is convicted of his lack of progress. Third, the fewer deficiencies that exist in oneself which require to be tolerated by others, the stronger one is, in turn, to tolerate deficiencies in others. Fourth, if the

⁴²²*Enarr. in Ps. 99.5* (CCL 39.1394-96). Cf. "Domino iubila; noli iubilationem tuam in alias atque alias res dividere." *Enarr. in Ps. 99.6* (CCL 39.1397).

⁴²³*ibid.* (CCL 39.1395).

⁴²⁴Augustine quotes Matt. 5:45: "Estote sicut Pater vester qui in caelis est, qui solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos, et pluit super iustos et iniustos." *Enarr. in Ps. 99.5* (CCL 39.1395-96).

⁴²⁵*ibid.* (CCL 39.1396).

⁴²⁶Matt. 3:12. Allusion is also made to Matt. 13:24-30 and Cant. 2:2 is cited. Ps. 54(55): 12-14 is also cited. Augustine states that the "dulces cibos" partaken of together was the Lord himself (on the basis of Ps. 33[34]:8). On his handling of this Psalm, *vd. supra. Enarr. in Ps. 99.8* (CCL 39.1398).

⁴²⁷"Sustinentes invicem in dilectione, satagentes servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis." *Enarr. in Ps. 99.9* (CCL 39.1398).

spiritually advanced choose to separate themselves, they are no longer able to help others to follow them. It is a case of destroying the bridge over which one has just crossed.⁴²⁸

The argument that to live in separation *cum paucis bonis*, to whom benefit can thus be ministered, does not answer the case.⁴²⁹ Evidence for this is found in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), in which the slave addressed as *serve nequam et piger* is condemned, not for purloining (*intervertit*) what he had received, but for not paying it out (*erogavit*).⁴³⁰ Even those who choose to serve their brethren *in his quae monasteria dicuntur*,⁴³¹ cannot yet experience the fulness of joy that is promised. If such a community can be compared to a harbour, it must be recognized that it, too, has an entrance through which strong winds can rush and dash the ships against each other (if not onto the rocks). Even here, therefore, great care to maintain *caritas* is required.⁴³² Those in leadership in such places might resolve never to admit a *malus*. This immediately raises, however, the question of recognition: *Ubi cognoscis quem forte vis excludere?* The necessary tests can be applied only to those who are within. With the Donatists clearly in his sights he says, *Repelles omnes malos? Dicis enim, et nosti inspicere*. The truth is, he adds, that they are not able to know the hearts of those who enter from without who do not even know themselves (*ipsi se non noverunt; quanto minus tu*).⁴³³

⁴²⁸"An quia veloces pedes tibi videris habuisse ad transeundem, praecisurus es pontem?" *Enarr. in Ps.* 99.9 (CCL 39.1398).

⁴²⁹*Enarr. in Ps.* 99.10 (CCL 39.1399).

⁴³⁰*ibid.*

⁴³¹An interesting phrase, suggesting that Augustine probably has in mind the Greek root of "monasterium". Vd. *infra*.

⁴³²*Enarr. in Ps.* 99.10-11 (CCL 39.1399).

⁴³³*Enarr. in Ps.* 99.11 (CCL 39.1399).

Augustine enlarges on this latter point to show the impossibility of excluding *malos fratres a conventu bonorum*. All Christians desire to have their hearts secured to prevent any evil suggestion from entering but this is found impossible for *unde...intret, quis novit?*⁴³⁴ The kind of security which the believing heart desires is therefore found nowhere in this life, *nisi in sola spe promissorum Dei*. When this goal is attained, *perfecta securitas* together with *vere plena iubilatio et magnum gaudium* will be enjoyed when the gates are closed and the bars of the gates of Jerusalem are established.⁴³⁵ Meantime scriptural restraint is required: *ante mortem ne laudes hominem quemquam*.⁴³⁶

In order to give further warning against the danger of losing patience,⁴³⁷ Augustine links Matt. 3:12 with Matt. 24:40-41 and Lk. 17:34, for the purpose.⁴³⁸ Expounding Matt. 24:40 in light of 1 Cor. 3:6,9,⁴³⁹ Augustine takes the *duo in agro* to represent the *clerici* of whom the good will be taken and the bad left. The two women grinding at the mill are the *plebes* because *devinctae saeculo, circuitu rerum temporalium, tamquam mola detinentur*. Of these also there are good and bad, of whom the former are taken. In both cases the *bonus* is the person who performs good works, *diligens quantum potest, non solum amicos, sed etiam inimicos*. With reference, presumably (he does not say so), to the two in a bed, Augustine warns those who long for the

⁴³⁴ibid. (CCL 39.1399-1400).

⁴³⁵ibid. (CCL 39.1400). The reference is to Ps. 147:13.

⁴³⁶ibid. Ecclus. 11:30.

⁴³⁷"Vae his qui perdidērunt sustinentiam." Ecclus. 2:16. *Enarr. in Ps. 99.12* (CCL 39.1401).

⁴³⁸"Duo in agro; unus assumetur, et unus relinquetur; duae in molendino; una assumetur, et una relinquetur (Matt. 24:40-41); duo in lecto: unus assumetur, et unus relinquetur (Lk. 17:34)." *Enarr. in Ps. 99.13* (CCL 39.1402).

⁴³⁹"Ego plantavi, Apollos rigavit; sed Deus incrementum dedit (v.6). Dei agricultura estis (v.9b)." *ibid.*

quies of having none to tolerate, to beware of imagining that they will find a bed on which to lie without any anxiety.⁴⁴⁰ Every *professio*⁴⁴¹ in the church contains hypocrites: *sunt Christiani mali, sed sunt et boni*. The *mali* seem to be more numerous, but the wheat are there, nonetheless, and can be judged by their taste (*adhibe oris iudicium*).⁴⁴² This latter point is interesting as indicating that, for Augustine, there is, after all a test by which the *boni* and the *mali* can be distinguished. The great charge of the Psalm, *Servite Domino in iucunditate*, Augustine concludes, *vos alloquitur, quicumque in caritate omnia toleratis, et spe gaudetis*.⁴⁴³

(4) *Enarr. in Ps.* 100(101).12.

Matt. 3:12 is alluded to by Augustine to lend legitimacy to his treatment of v.8 of this Psalm.⁴⁴⁴ He interprets this verse in light of the opening verse.⁴⁴⁵ This latter he takes to be stating the central theme of the Psalm, with its reference to the present time of mercy (the present stage of the church), followed by the Day of Judgement. Again, the Psalm is expounded in terms of his *totus Christus* hermeneutic.⁴⁴⁶

Verse 8 supports the belief that there are evil-doers in the church, that for the present they are spared because this is the period of *miser cordia*, and that their time of

⁴⁴⁰*Enarr. in Ps.* 99.13 (CCL 39.1402).

⁴⁴¹Presumably the membership roll.

⁴⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴⁴³*Enarr. in Ps.* 99.14 (CCL 39.1402).

⁴⁴⁴"In matutinis interficiebam omnes peccatores terrae...ut disperdam de civitate Domini omnes operantes iniquitatem." *Enarr. in Ps.* 100.12 (CCL 39.1415).

⁴⁴⁵"Misericordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi, Domine." *Enarr. in Ps.* 100.1 (CCL 39.1405).

⁴⁴⁶"Cantat enim hoc Christus; si solum caput cantat, a Domino est canticum hoc, ad nos non pertinet; si autem totus Christus, id est caput et corpus eius, esto in membris eius, adhaere illi per fidem, et per spem, et per caritatem..." *Enarr. in Ps.* 100.3 (CCL 39.1408).

judgement will come.⁴⁴⁷ This explains why the body is able to endure the wicked within, while cleaving only to the righteous: *adhuc nondum revelatum est iudicium: nox est; apparebit dies, apparebit iudicium*. The present age is represented by *nox* because of our inability to see the heart of another. Christ alone cannot be deceived and this is why the *dies* signifies his coming.⁴⁴⁸

The *nox* is also the time when temptations abound. Having quoted or alluded to Ps. 103(104): 20-21, Eph. 2:2, Job 1:1 and Matt. 25:46, Augustine refers to the words Christ spoke to Peter, *Hac nocte postulavit satanas vexare vos sicut triticum; et ego rogavi pro te, Petre, ne deficiat fides tua*.⁴⁴⁹ The phrase *vexare...sicut triticum* is understood of the devil's endeavour to ruin a person *per tribulationem* (as wheat is only consumed once ground to powder). But if those who suffer thus remain wheat, they have nothing to fear. When the *boves...cum tribula* do their work on the *area*, *non conciditur nisi palea; triticum spoliatur superfluis, et veniet ventilatio, et inveniet puram massam*.⁴⁵⁰ While the wheat will then be gathered *in horreum suum*, those who have not been converted during the season of mercy, *interficiet eos Christus in matutinis*.⁴⁵¹

(5) *Enarrs. in Pss. 8 and 83(84)*.

⁴⁴⁷*Enarr. in Ps. 100.12* (CCL 39.1415).

⁴⁴⁸*ibid.* Augustine cites 1 Cor. 4:5 in support: "Itaque nolite ante tempus quidquam iudicare...Donec veniat Dominus, et illuminet abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestabit cogitationes cordis; et tunc laus erit unicuique a Deo."

⁴⁴⁹*Enarr. in Ps. 100.13* (CCL 39.1416).

⁴⁵⁰Augustine's regular use of "massa" is a negative one, with reference to humanity's fallen state after Adam. Cf. Fredriksen, in Fitzgerald (1999), 545-47. This is a rare example of its use in Augustine with reference to the total sum of those chosen by God out of the "massa damnata". Fredriksen overlooks this positive use of the term.

⁴⁵¹*Enarr. in Ps. 100.12-13* (CCL 39.1416-17).

The title of both these Psalm includes the words, *Pro torcularibus*⁴⁵², and both *Enarrationes* offer an interesting example of Augustine's figurative hermeneutical procedure. As usual, he takes the Psalm titles to be inspired and consequently insists on the need to interpret the Psalm in question in accordance with the meaning of its title. Matt. 3:12 is adduced to show that *torcularia* must represent the church, for the same reason that *area* represents the church, *quia sive in area, sive in torculari, nihil aliud agitur, nisi ut fructus ab integumentis purgentur*.⁴⁵³ As the *frumenta* is stripped of the husks on the *area*, so *vinaciis in torcularibus vina exuuntur*.⁴⁵⁴ Such coverings, in both cases, represent the *mali* in the church. The separation from them of the righteous is meantime *non loco sed affectu*. At a future date (the day of Christ's return), however, as the wheat will be stored in the granary, *vina in cellas segregentur*.⁴⁵⁵ The present experience of the *boni* is inevitably one of pressure on account of the *tribulatio* necessary in the situation.⁴⁵⁶ As in the case of the *area*, however, the procedure has a positive intent and outcome: in this case the production of fine wine.

Various details of both Psalms are interpreted in accordance with Augustine's interpretation of their title. In the *Enarr. in Ps. 8*, for example, the separation between the *mali* and the *boni* in the church is found to be represented in a number of

⁴⁵²The full title of Ps. 8 is: "In finem pro torcularibus, psalmus ipsi David," (*Enarr. in Ps. 8* [CCL 38.49]), and for Ps. 83(84): "Pro torcularibus, filii Core" (*Enarr. in Ps. 83.2* [CCL 39.1146]).

⁴⁵³*Enarr. in Ps. 8.1* (CCL 38.49). Cf. *Enarr. in Ps. 83.1* (CCL 39.1146).

⁴⁵⁴*Enarr. in Ps. 8.1* (CCL 38.49).

⁴⁵⁵*ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶*Enarr. in Ps. 83(84).1* (CCL 39.1146). That the experience of the head, in this respect, is being reproduced in his body, Augustine argues by taking *fili Core* to mean Christians. *Core*, which means, he claims, "bald" (Latin: *calvus*), signifies Christ. This is established (remarkably!) from the fact that "in Calvariae loco crucifixus est." *Enarr. in Ps. 83(84).2* (CCL 39.1147).

contrasting sets within the Psalm. The babes and sucklings of v. 3⁴⁵⁷ signify the *boni*, while the *inimicus* who is also a *defensor* represents the foe within - one who appears to be defending the Christian faith while actually opposing it.⁴⁵⁸ The same distinction is found in v. 5 where *homo* is taken to represent the carnal man and *filius homo* the spiritual.⁴⁵⁹ Similarly, the *oves et boves* of v.8, represent *sanctos laicos et sanctos ministros*, while the *pecora campi, volucres caeli, et pisces maris qui perambulant semitas maris* (whose respective moral significance he cleverly works out to be *pecora voluptatis, et volucres superbiae et pisces curiositatis*) represent the *mali*.⁴⁶⁰

Augustine's exposition of Ps. 83(84) lays particular emphasis on the groaning and unfulfilled longing of the righteous, inevitably associated both with indwelling sin and with the presence of sinners, in the church of this age. The desires expressed in the Psalm are those of members of the body, who are marked by love for God alone.⁴⁶¹ Such find themselves now *in tabernaculis* in which *torcularia* are present because of the proximity of wicked men. Under the pressure of the situation they long for *alia tabernacula, ubi nulla pressura est* (ie., the church of the future age).⁴⁶² In the coming age the wines will flow *in lacum et in apothecae requiem, servenda in quiete magna*. The experience of the the *corpus Christi* in the two ages can thus be

⁴⁵⁷"Ex ore infantium et lactentium perfecisti laudem, propter inimicos tuos ut destruas inimicum et defensorem." *Enarr. in Ps. 8.6* (CCL 38.51).

⁴⁵⁸*ibid.* Augustine's interpretation is based on a reading of which he elsewhere writes: "Nonnulli codices *defensorem* habent; sed verius *vindicatorem*." *Enarr. in Ps. 102.14* (CCL 39.1464). In this context Augustine is opposing those who impatiently take steps to avenge themselves and thus ignore Deut. 32:35: "Mihi vindictam, et ego retribuam (dicit Dominus)." *loc. cit.* The LXX reads ἐκδικητήν and the Vulgate has "ultorem". This well illustrates Augustine's ability to apply variant readings to the task in hand.

⁴⁵⁹*Enarr. in Ps. 8.10* (CCL 38.53).

⁴⁶⁰*Enarr. in Ps. 8.13* (CCL 38.56-7).

⁴⁶¹"Restat enim illis desiderandus Deus; iam non amant terram." *Enarr. in Ps. 83.3* (CCL 39.1148).

⁴⁶²*Enarr. in Ps. 83(84).5* (CCL 39.1150).

compared: *Hic desideratur, ibi capitur; hoc suspiratur, ibi gaudetur; hic oratur, ibi laudatur; hic gemitur, ibi exsultatur.*⁴⁶³

c. The parable of the net (Matt.13: 47-50).

The parable of the net occurs frequently in the anti-Donatist treatises, usually by way of allusion, and often in association with the other Matthaean texts.⁴⁶⁴ The parable describes a net which, having been thrown into the sea, gathers fish of every kind, good and bad alike. The net is then drawn to the shore where the good and bad fish are separated. Our Lord himself gives the parable an eschatological orientation, stating that it is a picture of what will take place at the end of the age when the wicked and the righteous will be separated from one another. Unsurprisingly, Augustine finds in the parable and its dominical interpretation clear authority for important aspects of his *corpus mixtum* ecclesiology.

The value of this parable for his anti-Donatist polemic was evident to Augustine from the earliest stages of his engagement with his opponents. It features in the *Psalmus* as the first scriptural text to receive any kind of discussion by Augustine in relation to the Donatist controversy. He first recounts the parable, concluding, *Quisquis novit euangelium, recognoscat cum timore.*⁴⁶⁵ His brief exposition of its details makes clear why he believed *timor* an appropriate response: the net is the church, the sea represents this age, the mixture of different kinds of fish represents the righteous

⁴⁶³*Enarr. in Ps.* 83(84).6 (CCL 39.1150).

⁴⁶⁴The following are the most significant: *Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 9-21 (BA 28.150-52); *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.17.36 (BA 28.368), 3.3.19 (BA 28.441); *Ep. ad Cath.* 14.35 (BA 28.604-6), 18.48 (BA 28.642), 20.55 (BA 28.664-66); *Contra litt. Petil.* 3.2.3 (BA 30.591), 3.3.4 (BA 30.592); *Contra Cresc.* 4.26.33 (BA 31.537); *De un. bapt.* 8.14 (BA 31.694), 14.23 (BA 31.714), 15.25 (BA 31.720), 17.31 (BA 31.734). There are no Cyprianic references to this parable.

⁴⁶⁵*Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 9-14 (BA 28.150-52).

mixed with sinners in the church, the shore is the end of the age which is the time for the separation to be made. Those who now break the net demonstrate their inordinate love of this age. The vessels are the thrones of the saints, which those who love this age will not reach.⁴⁶⁶ The reference to the net breaking (*conscissuram* - a strong term) is imported from Lk. 5:6 and is an early indication of Augustine's almost instinctive association of the parable with the two accounts of miraculous catches of fish, in Lk. 5:1-11 and John 21: 6-10.⁴⁶⁷

It is in the preached material, however, doubtless on account of their potential for spiritual exegesis, that we find Augustine's characteristic use of these three texts.⁴⁶⁸ The eschatological interpretation given to the parable by the Lord (Matt. 13:49), lends support to Augustine's use of it for the purpose of expressing his understanding of the composition of the church, both as it is in this age, and as it shall be in the age to come. In that connection, he differentiates between the two miraculous catches. The Lucan account, which makes no reference to the net being brought to the shore, but describes a catch of fish so great that the nets were breaking under the pressure, is for Augustine a clear representation of the church in time. The Johannine miracle, which describes the actual landing of a net full of fish, represents the future, post-resurrection state of the church. Taken together an image is given us of the church: *qualis est modo et qualis erit in resurrectione mortuorum*.⁴⁶⁹ The parable of the net, on the other hand, represents both states of the church. For the purpose of

⁴⁶⁶"Videt reticulum ecclesiam, videt hoc saeculum mare; genus autem mixtum piscis iustus est cum peccatore; saeculi finis est litus: tunc est tempus separare; qui modo retia ruperunt, multum dilexerunt mare; vasa sunt sedes sanctorum, quo non possunt pervenire." *ibid.* 15-19 (BA 28.152).

⁴⁶⁷*ibid.* 18 (BA 28.152).

⁴⁶⁸The following paragraphs draw on the discussion of Borgomeo. Cf. Borgomeo (1972), 308-12.

⁴⁶⁹*Sermo* 248.1 (PL 38.1159). Cf. *In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CCL 36.671-72). Augustine commented yearly on the Johannine miracle. *Sermo* 248.4 (CCL 38.1160). Vd. Rondet (1954), 701; Pontet (1945), 300.

describing the church of the present age, it is the earlier part of the parable (that describing the casting of the net into the sea and its gathering all kinds of fish [v.47]) which is of significance, and which must be taken with Lk. 5:1-11. By conflating Matt. 3:47 and Lk. 5:1-11 in this way, Augustine is able to claim scriptural authority for a three-fold perspective on the church of this age.⁴⁷⁰

a) The church is like the net in which are mixed an innumerable number of good and bad. Augustine stresses the impossibility of numbering the fish (by contrast with the other catch) to make the point that "une multitude amorphe est nécessairement une multitude mélangée."⁴⁷¹ The submersion of the net in the sea due to the large number of fish, represents the consequence of the rapid expansion of the world-wide church.⁴⁷²

b) The church is like a net which is broken, thus allowing some (bad) fish to escape. On account of the great size of the mixed multitude, the weight of the net threatens to sink the boat. This leads Augustine to make the point that schisms in the church are caused by the sheer numbers of which the *corpus permixtum* is comprised.⁴⁷³ This is another example of Augustine's being led by the imagery of his text to an odd theological conclusion - that numbers alone can be the cause of schism.

⁴⁷⁰Cf. Borgomeo (1972), 308-9.

⁴⁷¹Borgomeo (1972), 309. Cf. *Sermo* 251.2 (PL 38.1168). Vd. Rondet (1954), 700-1.

⁴⁷²"Primo enim commendata paucitate sanctorum, tamquam missis retibus multiplicata est ecclesia, et capti sunt innumerabiles." *Enarr. in Ps. 30/2/2.2* (CCL 38.203).

⁴⁷³"Tria ergo ista in illa piscatione significata sunt: mixtura bonorum et malorum, pressura turbarum, separationes haereticorum...Disrupta retia quid significaverunt, nisi futura schismata?" *Sermo* 250.1 (PL 38.1168).

c) Given the large numbers of fish in the net, and the latter's submersion in the sea, it is impossible to distinguish between the fish until the shore is reached. Those who seek to anticipate the sorting then to take place are *impatientes pisces* who proceed to break the net.⁴⁷⁴ Borgomeo rightly observes that the image of the net illustrates the violent character of schism more clearly than do the other parables employed by Augustine.⁴⁷⁵ By refusing to tolerate the bad fish taken by the net, such schismatics, ironically, *ipsi mali facti sunt potiusquam illi quos se non potuisse tolerare dixerunt*.⁴⁷⁶ Tolerance of the bad fish within the net thus becomes "un critère d'assurance pour le fidèle, une marque d'authenticité...."⁴⁷⁷ Borgomeo points to the clarity with which the image of the net represents the melange double of the church's present existence, inasmuch as it is "dans le filet avec les méchants du dedans, et dans la mer qui pénètre de tous côtés," with only a "barrière mince et transparente" separating it from the world.⁴⁷⁸

If Augustine's handling of Matt. 13:47-50 is marked by restraint, in his interpretation of the two miraculous catches of fish, especially that in John 21: 6-10, he allows himself greater figurative freedom. In a remarkable passage, Matt. 13:47-50 is partly alluded to, and partly quoted, to provide justification for Augustine's figurative handling of the two miraculous catches.⁴⁷⁹ In distinction from the parable, which *non rei gesta (est)*, these two accounts show *re...gesta* both *qualiter in saeculi fine futura*

⁴⁷⁴*Sermo* 252.4 (PL 38.1174). Cf. *Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 18 (BA 28.152).

⁴⁷⁵Borgomeo (1972) 310.

⁴⁷⁶*Enarr. in Ps.* 64.9 (CCL 39.832).

⁴⁷⁷Borgomeo (1972), 311. "Tolerantia" is thus seen to carry remarkable weight for Augustine in his notion of the "corpus permixtum".

⁴⁷⁸Borgomeo (1972), 310-11.

⁴⁷⁹*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.6 (CCL 36.671). John 21:6-10 formed part of the Scripture reading on which this *Tractatus* is based.

sit (ecclesia) (John 21:6-10) and *qualiter nunc sit* (Lk. 5:1-11).⁴⁸⁰ The latter miracle occurred *in initio praedicationis suae* in order to make clear that the catch of fish symbolises *bonos et malos...quos nunc habet ecclesia*. The catch recorded in John, took place after Christ's resurrection to signify *tantummodo bonos, quos habebit in aeternum, completa in fine huius saeculi resurrectione mortuorum*.⁴⁸¹ The details of these miracles, therefore, illumine the situation of the church as it is in the world and as it will be at the end of the world.

In the Lucan miracle the catch of fish was drawn into the two ships, not to the shore as in John 21. The nets were not cast on the right side only: *ne solos significant bonos*, nor on the left side only: *ne solos malos*.⁴⁸² Christ's command was issued: *indifferenter...ut permixtos intellegamus bonos et malos*.⁴⁸³ Thus interpreted, the miracle offers a clear image of the present condition of the church.

Detailed exegesis of the account in John 21, on the other hand, provides evidence that its reference is to the situation of the church at the end of the age. The seven disciples engaged in fishing (Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee and two unnamed others), *suo septenario numero finem significant temporis*. This interpretation is based on the Augustinian understanding that *universum...septem diebus voluitur tempus*.⁴⁸⁴ Jesus' standing on the shore is similarly interpreted: *quia*

⁴⁸⁰*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CCL 36.671).

⁴⁸¹*ibid.*

⁴⁸²*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CCL 36.672).

⁴⁸³*ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.6 (CCL 36.671). For Augustine, the number seven more usually signifies the Holy Spirit, but this interpretation is found in a number of places. Eg. *Sermo* 114. 1 (PL 38.652). For seven as symbolic of the Holy Spirit, cf. *infra. In Ioh. Tr.* 122.8 (CCL 36.673-74). Both interpretations are given in *De civ. Dei* 11.31 (CCL 48.350-51).

*etiam littus finis est maris, et ideo finem significat saeculi.*⁴⁸⁵ The fact that Peter drew the net *in terram, hoc est in littus*, proves the point, for the Lord explains the meaning of *littus* in Matt. 13:48-9: *Et eam trahunt, inquit, ad littus. Quod littus quid esset exponens, ait, Sic erit in consummatione saeculi.*⁴⁸⁶

The command to cast the net on the right side of the boat was intended to signify *eos qui stabant ad dexteram, solos bonos.*⁴⁸⁷ In the Lucan miracle the net was broken to signify schisms (*propter significanda schismata rumpebatur*), and the weighing down of the boats almost, but not quite, to the point of sinking, signifies the danger to the church from such a great multitude within.⁴⁸⁸ Augustine holds that it is by way of deliberate contrast with this account, that John stresses that, *Et cum tanti essent, non est scissum rete.*⁴⁸⁹ This establishes that at the end of the age, *in illa summa pace sanctorum nulla erunt schismata.*⁴⁹⁰

Augustine explains that those who sought, without success, to haul in the net,⁴⁹¹ represent those *qui pertinent ad resurrectionem vitae, id est ad dexteram*, having left the world *intra christiani nominis retia*, and who will only become manifest *in littore*,

⁴⁸⁵*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.6 (CCL 36.671).

⁴⁸⁶*ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CCL 36.672). This is a clear allusion to Matt. 25:33-4, on which *vd. infra.*

⁴⁸⁸Augustine asks: "Unde enim existunt in ecclesia, tanta quae gemimus; nisi cum tantae multitudini obsisti non potest, quae ad submergendam propemodum disciplinam intrat cum moribus suis a sanctorum itinere penitus alienis?" *In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CCL 36.672). Augustine's stress on the dangers inherent in great numbers within the church, is to be seen in tension with the modern highlighting, in his thought, of the importance of a comprehensive, all-inclusive church.

⁴⁸⁹*ibid.* "Tanti" is explained by Augustine as meaning "tam magni". Comeau claims that "tanti" is a literary term which Augustine explains by the colloquial "magni" to help his audience. Comeau (1930), 80. Augustine later refers both to the number and size of the fish: "hi pisces et tot et tanti." *In Ioh. Tr.* 122.9 (CCL 36.674).

⁴⁹⁰*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.9 (CCL 36.672).

⁴⁹¹"Et iam non valebant illud trahere a multitudine piscium (v.6)."

*id est in fine saeculi cum resurrexerint.*⁴⁹² The two hundred cubits from which the net was drawn to the shore signify the same thing as the two boats in Lk. 5, namely, the circumcision and the uncircumcision. In John 21, the elect of both kinds (Jews and Gentiles) are represented, *tamquam centum et centum quia in summa centenarii numerus ad dexteram transit.*⁴⁹³

The most ingenious part of Augustine's allegorical treatment of the miracle is with regard to the number of fish in the net. He contrasts the silence regarding the number of fish in the former miracle, as if in fulfilment of the prophetic Psalm, *Annuntiavi et locutus sum; multiplicati sunt super numerum.*⁴⁹⁴ In the post-resurrection miracle the number is specified. Augustine now wishes to offer an explanation of this number.⁴⁹⁵

He begins by positing the number ten as signifying the law.⁴⁹⁶ He points out, however, that without the assistance of grace, the law only *praevaricadores facit, et tantummodo in littera est*, citing as proof 1 Cor. 3:6: *Littera occidit, spiritus autem vivificat*. Only by the addition of the Spirit to the letter, or grace to law, can the

⁴⁹²*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CL 36.672).

⁴⁹³*ibid.* Augustine bases this interpretation on the Roman practice of representing amounts involving hundreds. Rettig's comment is helpful: "In Roman numerals 200 is CC, that is, C plus another C to the right; so 300, CCC, C and C and C, again to the right. But this is not the system in Greek and hence this interpretation would not work for the Greek text." Rettig, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 92, p. 69, n.20.

⁴⁹⁴Ps. 39(40):6 (LXX). *In Ioh. Tr.* 122.7 (CCL 36.672).

⁴⁹⁵*ibid.* Many attempts have been made throughout the history of the church to find deep significance in the number 153. The most popular has been that of Jerome who, in linking it with the vision in Ezek. 47 of the river of water flowing from the temple to the Dead Sea, bringing life wherever it goes, and, on the authority of the naturalist Oppian, claiming that there are precisely 153 species of fish, sees the miracle as an acted parable of the fruitful mission of the church. Jerome, *In Ezechielem* 14.47 (PL 26.474). For a general discussion of attempts, ancient and modern, to explain the number, vd. Carson (1991), 672-3. Carson appears to have missed Augustine's finding of the Trinity in the text (*loc. cit.*).

⁴⁹⁶*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.8 (CCL 36.673).

commandments be obeyed by sinners.⁴⁹⁷ This addition is represented numerically by adding seven to ten. The number seven signifies the Holy Spirit who is so called *proprio...nomine*.⁴⁹⁸ When seven is added to ten the result is seventeen. The triangular number of 17 is 153 - the number of fish counted on the shore. The number, therefore, is a figurative representation (*figurate significantur*) of the *millia sanctorum ad gratiam Spiritus pertinentium*.⁴⁹⁹

Augustine's ingenuity discovers further significance in the number 153. He notes that it is made up of $(3 \times 50) + 3$. The latter is *propter mysterium Trinitatis*. Fifty is reached by multiplying 7 by 7 and adding 1. The addition of one here has the effect of signifying that he is one *qui per septem propter operationem septenariam demonstratur*.⁵⁰⁰ The significance of fifty is that the Holy Spirit was sent on the fiftieth day after Christ's ascension.⁵⁰¹

In the concluding section of the *Tractatus* Augustine calls attention to the significance of the largeness of the fish caught. He reminds the congregation of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: *non veni solvere legem, sed implere* (Matt. 5:17). He spoke this as the one who was about to add seven to ten by sending the Holy Spirit through whom the law can be fulfilled.⁵⁰² His following words in v. 19⁵⁰³ give clarity to the

⁴⁹⁷ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Scriptural support for this symbolic use of seven is found in the sanctification of the seventh day in the creation narrative (Gen. 2:3 and cf. *Quaest. in Hept.* 5.42 [CCL 33.297-98]), the seven-fold characterization of the Spirit's work in Isa. 11:2-3 and the identification of the Holy Spirit with the seven spirits of God in the Apocalypse (cf. Apoc. 1:4, 3:1). *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.8 (CCL 36.674). On the significance of the role of the Holy Spirit in Augustine's ecclesiology, *vd. infra.*

⁵⁰⁰The reference is to the seven-fold fruit of the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord, in Isa. 11:2-3. *ibid.*

⁵⁰¹Cf. Acts 2:1-4. *ibid.*

⁵⁰²*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.9 (CCL 36.674).

implied symbolic distinction between little and large fish in John 21:8. Those referred to in the first part of Matt. 5:19 (*qui solvit factis quod docet verbis*) are to be found in the church symbolised by the catch in Lk. 5, one *habentem bonos et malos quia et ipsa dicitur regnum caelorum*.⁵⁰⁴ That such will not even be *minimos in vita aeterna* is taught in Matt. 5:20.⁵⁰⁵ The conclusion is inescapable: *ut qui minimus est in regno caelorum, qualis nunc est ecclesia, non intret in regnum caelorum, qualis tunc erit ecclesia*. Those only are *in numero piscium magnorum* who fulfil the second half of Matt. 5:19.⁵⁰⁶

Augustine's use of Jn. 21:6-10 provides a good example of the way in which he is able to make the fruit of the most detailed allegorical exposition of a text, even from the New Testament, harmonize with the clear teaching of others, literally interpreted, in the interests of his anti-Donatist polemic.

d. The parable of the Last Judgement (Matt. 25:31-34).

There are fewer citations of, and allusions to, this parable in the polemical treatises in comparison with the other Matthaean texts.⁵⁰⁷ The description in the parable of the separation made by the Son of Man, at his coming, between the sheep and the goats,

⁵⁰³"Qui ergo solverit unum de mandatis istis minimis, et docuerit sic homines, minimus vocabitur in regno caelorum; qui autem fecerit et docuerit, magnus vocabitur in regno caelorum." *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴*ibid.* Matt. 13:47 is cited.

⁵⁰⁵"Dico enim vobis, quia nisi abundaverit iustitia vestra plus quam scribarum et pharisaeorum, non intrabitis in regnum caelorum." *ibid.* (CCL 36.674-75). The Scribes and Pharisees "docent sermonibus, quod solvunt moribus." *ibid.* (CCL 36.675). Cf. Matt. 23:3.

⁵⁰⁶*In Ioh. Tr.* 122.9 (CCL 36.675). Cf. *Brev. Coll.* 3.9.16, where Augustine makes use of the two miraculous catches in the context of arguing a distinction between the two ages of the church (BA 32.168-70). Cf. Lamirande, "Les deux états de l'Église 'qualis nunc' et 'qualis tunc'," BA 32.723-25, n.c.27.

⁵⁰⁷Although Cyprian refers several times to this parable, his usage does not appear to have contributed anything to Augustine's handling of it in anti-Donatist contexts. Vd. Fahey (1971), 324-26. On the general attention paid to the Final Judgement in the patristic period, vd. De Lubac (1938), 85.

the righteous and the wicked, provided Augustine with the same kind of arguments as Matt. 3:12.⁵⁰⁸ He alludes to it, for example, in the context of contrasting Catholic patience, in awaiting the Final Judgement, with Donatist impatience.⁵⁰⁹ He cites vv. 31-34 and v. 41 in full, in the context of opposing Parmenian's interpretation of Jer. 33:28, in association with allusion to Matt. 3:12 and Matt. 13:47. He finds in Matt.25 *aliam similitudinem* in which *omne triticum ovium nomine et omnis palea haedorum nomine significantur*. In different figurative terms, the same point is being made. Until the final separation (*interim*), *duo pecorum genera...permixta sub uno pastore pascuntur*. But then the son of man will effect eternal separation between the two groups, since sheep and goats cannot share pasture with each other.⁵¹⁰

In a late passage, in which Matt. 13:47, Matt. 13:38 are linked with Matt. 25:32-3 as together establishing the Catholic position on church purity, Augustine refers to the latter as *similitudinem de ovibus et haedis, qui simul pascuntur et in saeculi fine segregabuntur*.⁵¹¹ This situation will continue *donec a pastore summo in iudicio novissimo alii ad sinistram, alii ad dexteram segregentur*.⁵¹²

In the preached material, the parable of the Last Judgement is most often used in support of spiritual interpretations which make two main points: tolerance must be practiced in the church at present,⁵¹³ and Christ, the one true judge, will make an unerring separation at his coming.⁵¹⁴ Two examples follow.

⁵⁰⁸Vd. supra. For reference to their use in conjunction, vd. Congar, BA 28.85, n. 3.

⁵⁰⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.27 (BA 28.466).

⁵¹⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.19 (BA 28.440).

⁵¹¹*Brev. Coll.* 3.8.10 (BA 32.154-56).

⁵¹²*Ad Donat. post Coll.* 4.6 (BA 32.262).

⁵¹³Cf. e.g., *Enarr. in Ps.* 48/1.3 (CCL 38.553); *Enarr. in Ps.* 71.7 (CCL 39.976).

⁵¹⁴Cf. e.g., *Enarr. in Ps.* 98.6 (CCL 39.1383).

(1) *Sermo* 47.

This sermon, together with the preceding one, offers an extended treatment of the theme of the shepherds and the sheep in Ezekiel 34, with particular reference to the Donatists. Repeated reference is made to this parable.⁵¹⁵ The Ezekiel passage offered much scope to Augustine, with its strong emphasis on the fact that God alone is the judge of his flock.⁵¹⁶ Commenting on v. 17, he makes explicit the perceived connection between the text and the parable, *In eisdem pascuis, in eisdem fontibus, et hirci tamen sinistrae destinati dextris miscentur, et prius tolerantur qui separabuntur.*⁵¹⁷ The purpose of this arrangement relates to the spiritual development of the righteous, in terms of growing conformity to the divine likeness: it is that *exercetur ovium patientia, ad similitudinem patientiae Dei.*⁵¹⁸ Referring to a verse already cited in the sermon,⁵¹⁹ Augustine accuse the Donatists of wanting to speak out about something regarding which the Lord wishes to remain silent: not the issue of discipline in the church but any attempt to usurp the divine prerogative of judgement.⁵²⁰ Earlier, Augustine had linked Isa. 42:14 with the Lord's words of invitation and condemnation in Matt. 25:34 and 41. These words are recorded to serve as a warning that, one day, they will be uttered. Meantime, the principle to be

⁵¹⁵Although CCL states that the place where it was preached is unknown, Hill has made a strong case for Carthage. On dating, he argues for 414, after the Conference of 411 (Rotelle III/2.292, n.1).

⁵¹⁶Cf. v. 17: "Et vos...oves meae, haec dicit Dominus Deus: Ecce ego iudico inter ovem et ovem, et arietes et hircos." *Sermo* 47:6 (PL 38.298); v.20: "pro istis haec dicit Dominus Deus ad eos: Ecce iudico inter ovem fortem, et ovem imbecillam." *Sermo* 47.15 (PL 38.303); v.22: "Et salvabo...oves meas, et iam non erunt in vastationem: et iudicabo inter ovem et ovem." *Sermo* 47.19 (PL 38.308).

⁵¹⁷*Sermo* 47.6 (PL 38.298).

⁵¹⁸ibid.

⁵¹⁹Isa. 42:14: "Tacui; numquid semper tacebo?" *Sermo* 47.4 (PL 38.296).

⁵²⁰Augustine asks: "Unde ipse tacet?" and answers: "A vindicta iudicii, non a verbo correptionis." *Sermo* 47.6 (PL 38.298). Earlier, Augustine had linked Isa. 42:14 with the Lord's words of invitation and condemnation in Matt. 25:34, 41. These words, he says, are recorded as a warning that one day they will, in fact, be uttered. The principle to be heeded meantime is: "Loquitur...in praecepto, tacet in iudicio."

followed is, *Loquitur...in praecepto, tacet in iudicio*. God, the judge, is pictured as writing the judgement with his own hand, in the privacy of his chambers, while the anxious parties wait outside.⁵²¹ What is required, therefore, meantime, is the patience God himself shows. He concludes, *Disciplina exerceatur, iudicium non praecipitetur*.⁵²²

Commenting on Ezek. 34:17&20, Augustine makes much of the emphasis in the passage on the fact that the Lord, who by definition is incorruptible, assumes to himself alone the prerogative of judgement.⁵²³ The *boni* should recognize their security in this and the *mali* should be afraid.⁵²⁴

Commenting on v.20, Augustine notes the absence of reference to goats after v.17.

In v.20 (and in v.22) the judgement is between sheep and sheep. The goats are mentioned only once, he says, so that we may know that they exist (*ut sciremus esse*): *Ipse enim bene novit*.⁵²⁵ Having first spoken from the divine perspective, he now speaks as if all were sheep - i.e., from our perspective. The significance of this is clear: *non scit nisi praedestinatione et praescientia oves et hircos, ille solus, qui praedestinare potuit, quia praescire*. Since, at the present, all *sub signo Christi sunt et...ad gratiam Dei accedunt*, a person may assume himself to be a sheep when he is known by God as a goat. It follows that God alone can be judge.

⁵²¹*Sermo* 47.4 (PL 38.296-7). The passage contains the interesting sentence: "magnum secretum iudiciis, unde secretarium nominatur." "Secretarium," which Augustine rightly derives from "secretus," is used of a judge's council-chamber. For refs., vd. Lewis & Short, "secretarium," p. 1653.

⁵²²*Sermo* 47.6 (PL 38.299).

⁵²³"Iudicem ipsorum nullus adversarius corrumpit, nullus advocatus circumvenit, nullus testis illudit." *Sermo* 47.7 (PL 38.299).

⁵²⁴*Sermo* 47.7 (PL 38.299).

⁵²⁵*Sermo* 47.15 (PL 38.303-4).

Augustine finds a figurative portrayal of Donatist pride in v.21.⁵²⁶ He points out that the verse only makes sense if sheep have in fact strayed outside. It is those whose sides, shoulders and horns have brought this about who are to be held responsible. Such are the *fortes oves* - those *de suis viribus praesumentes...de sua iustitia gloriantes*.⁵²⁷ It is pride that makes the Donatists view themselves as righteous in contrast to others, and therefore: *indignum erat ut oves inter hircos pascere, donec pastor veniret qui in separando non errat*.⁵²⁸

(2) *Enarr. in Ps. 98(99).1-9*⁵²⁹

Augustine introduces his exposition with a short discussion of the correct approach to Old Testament interpretation. It has to be recognized that it was the truth regarding Christ that *multi praecones* in the Old Testament proclaimed, but their meaning was obscured by their use of figures of other things.⁵³⁰ This covering (*velamen*) by which the truth was concealed in the books of the ancients, was only removed *quando iam ipsa veritas de terra oriretur*.⁵³¹ The whole aim of the expositor (*tota intentio nostra*) with regard to the Old Testament Scriptures is *Christum ibi videre, Christum ibi*

⁵²⁶"Quoniam lateribus et humeris vestris impellebatis, et cornibus vestris percutiebatis, et omne quod deficiebat comprimebatis, quoadusque dispergeretis eas foras." A fine treatment of Augustine's figurative portrayal of Donatist pride is found in Cameron (1996), 326-35.

⁵²⁷*Sermo* 47.16 (PL 38.304).

⁵²⁸*Sermo* 47.16 (PL 38.304).

⁵²⁹CCL 39.1378-86.

⁵³⁰"sed ita dixerunt, ut quibusdam figuris rerum tegerent sententias suas." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.1* (CCL 39.1378).

⁵³¹An allusion to Ps. 84(85):11. *ibid.*

intellegere.⁵³² He invites his audience to follow him in interpreting the Psalm in that light.

This part of the *Enarr.* interprets vv.1-5 in terms of the Lord's session (*Qui sedet super Cherubim*, v.1),⁵³³ his reign (*Dominus regnavit*, v.1),⁵³⁴ and particularly his return in judgement.⁵³⁵ The call to the people in v.3, *confiteantur nomini tuo magno*,⁵³⁶ is interpreted in relation to the world-wide extension of the church. Christ's *nomen* signifies *fama ipsius*. In that sense, the *nomen* was once *parvum* in that its *fama* had not yet spread. The present changed situation prompts the question, *Quae gens est quae non audivit nomen Christi?*⁵³⁷ Christ's name is to be confessed because *terribile et sanctum est; et honor regis iudicium diligit* (vv. 3,4). This relates especially to his role as future judge.⁵³⁸ It is the identity of the judge that gives assurance of the infallibility of the final separation and adjudication.⁵³⁹

If it is the case that *errare (Christus) non potest*, the fact is that *nos erramus*. Our responsibility is to turn to Christ, avoid presumption and so live that we will be found at his right hand.⁵⁴⁰ The *iudicium et iustitiam* which God works in Christians,⁵⁴¹ does not equip them to separate the sheep from the goats themselves. *Iudicium* enables

⁵³²Cf. De Lubac (1998), 235-37.

⁵³³*Enarr. in Ps. 98.3* (CCL 39.1379).

⁵³⁴*Enarr. in Ps. 98.1* (CCL 39.1378).

⁵³⁵"Primo enim venit ante iudicem staturus; postea venturus est iudex sessurus." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.1* (CCL 39.1378).

⁵³⁶*Enarr. in Ps. 98.6* (CCL 39.1382).

⁵³⁷*ibid.* (CCL 39.1383).

⁵³⁸"Venturus est enim, et iudicaturus." With allusion to Matt. 25:33, he says that Christ will come in such a way: "ut alios ponat ad sinistram, alios ad dexteram." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.6* (CCL 39.1383).

⁵³⁹"Et non illud facit ipse quomodocumque, ut erret forte in hominibus, ut qui ad dexteram ponendus est, ad sinistram ponatur; aut qui ad sinistram debet stare, errante deo ad dexteram ponatur...." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.6* (CCL 39.1383).

⁵⁴⁰*ibid.*

⁵⁴¹v. 4: "Iudicium et iustitiam in Iacob tu fecisti." *Enarr. in Ps. 98.7* (CCL 39.1384).

them to distinguish evil from good, and *iustitia* to turn from the evil. For this they are dependent on Christ who works in them the righteousness by which they so please him, as to be placed *ad dexteram*.⁵⁴²

4.3.2.2 Pauline texts.

For Augustine, there appear to have been two primary texts in the Pauline epistles which supported his *corpus permixtum* ecclesiology and its implications. A number of others played a supporting role.

A. Primary Pauline texts.

a. Phil. 1:15-18⁵⁴³

Phil. 1:15-18, (frequently, only v.18 is cited), was a popular anti-Donatist text from the time of Tyconius,⁵⁴⁴ although Optatus does not refer to it. Augustine's appeal to Cyprian's earlier use of the text is considered below.

The main thrust of Augustine's use of the text in an anti-Donatist context is already set out in Bk. 4 of the *DDC*. He quotes v.18 (in association with Ecclus. 37:2), in justification of his claim that an eloquent preacher, who lives a sinful life, is well able

⁵⁴²*Enarr. in Ps.* 98.7-8 (CCL 39.1384).

⁵⁴³"Quidam quidem, per invidiam et contentionem, quidam vero et per bonam voluntatem Christum praedicant; quidam ex caritate, scientes quoniam in defensione euangelii positus sum; quidam vero et per contumaciam Christum annuntiant non caste, existimantes tribulationem suscitari vinculis meis. quid enim, dum omni modo sive occasione sive veritate Christus annuntietur? et in hoc gaudeo, sed et gaudebo." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.24 (BA 28.332).

⁵⁴⁴Tilley calls attention to its use in the time of Tyconius to justify the imperial repression of Donatism and to defend Catholic sacraments. To its use for this purpose Tyconius replied with 1 John 5:21: "Filioli, abstinete vos a simulacris." Tyconius, *LR* 6 (Burkitt, 70). Vd. Tilley (1997), 125.

to instruct many, while doing no good to his own soul. The truth can be proclaimed even by untruth, which is why Christ can be proclaimed by those who seek their own (Phil. 2:21). Good people listen, not to a man, but to the Lord. The elevation of the episcopal chair, established by sound teaching, deters preachers with sinful lives from using it to preach their own notions. They bring benefit to many by preaching what they do not practise, but would benefit far more if they practised what they preached.⁵⁴⁵

In the treatises, the text is cited in full, or in part, about ten times.⁵⁴⁶ References in the preached material are relatively infrequent. Augustine's main discussions of the passage are the following.

(1) *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.24.

This full citation of Phil. 1:15-18 occurs in a context where Augustine is arguing that it is the Holy Spirit who works through a minister, whether he is faithful or a hypocrite. This he bases on John 20:21-3.⁵⁴⁷ Augustine acknowledges that if the concluding words had stood alone, the Catholic position would have been undermined, as suggesting that the remission of sins was accomplished *ab hominibus...non per homines*.⁵⁴⁸ The words that link the two parts of the text (*accipite spiritum sanctum*) make clear that ministers are instruments rather than

⁵⁴⁵DDC 4.27.59 (CCL 32. 163-4).

⁵⁴⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 1.3.5 (BA 28.220-22), 2.11.24 (BA 28.332), 2.18.37 (BA 28.370); *De bapt.* 4.7.10 (BA 29.256), 4.11.17 (BA 29.274), 7.50.98 (BA 29.562); *Contra Cresc.* 1.7.9 (BA 31.86), 4.26.33 (BA 31.536); *Brev. Coll.* 3.8.11 (BA 32.158).

⁵⁴⁷"Sicut misit me pater, et ego mitto vos. haec cum dixisset, insufflavit et ait illis: accipite spiritum sanctum. si cui dimiseritis peccata dimittentur et si cui tenueritis tenebuntur." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.24 (BA 28.328).

⁵⁴⁸ibid.

agents of the remission or retention of sins.⁵⁴⁹ Other texts are cited in confirmation: Matt. 10:20, Sap. 1:5, 1 Cor. 11:17. This latter,⁵⁵⁰ Augustine interprets as meaning that those to whom a person ministers God's grace will gain benefit from his ministry, even if he himself proves to be a hypocrite.⁵⁵¹ Those who preach the gospel (ie. the truth, which is Christ) but not sincerely, Paul permits to do so and even rejoices, not in them, but *eis qui per eos salvi fiebant*. This is in accordance with the command of Christ, *quae dicunt facite, quae autem faciunt facere nolite. dicunt enim et non faciunt*.⁵⁵²

For such men, it is a dangerous thing, *rem castam non caste annuntiare*, but, *illis...salubre qui bona et vera per eos audientes proficerent ad salutem*.⁵⁵³ Paul's permission is to be contrasted with his attitude when it becomes a matter, not of the gospel being preached, but *falsitas et mendacium*, as shown by Gal. 1:9 and 1 Tim. 1:3. Where the issue is the sinful character of the preacher, the Holy Spirit indeed *eorum fictionem fugiebat*, but in such a way as not to abandon the ministry of those by whom *Christus praedicabatur*.⁵⁵⁴

(2) *De bapt.* 4.7.10.

Augustine here appeals to Cyprian's recognition that this text is of no relevance to the question of heretics or their baptism. He quotes a passage from Cyprian's *Ep.* 73, in which Cyprian argues its irrelevance in this context, since Paul in Philippians is

⁵⁴⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.24 (BA 28.328-30).

⁵⁵⁰"Si enim volens hoc facio, mercedem habeo, si autem invitus, dispensatio mihi credita est."

⁵⁵¹*ibid.* (BA 28.330).

⁵⁵²Matt. 23:2. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.24 (BA 28.332).

⁵⁵³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.25 (BA 28.332). On Paul's use of "castitas" and cognates in this context, vd. Madec (1961), pp. 245-47.

⁵⁵⁴*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.11.24 (BA 28.334).

speaking of two groups *within* the church (*loquebatur de fratribus sive inordinate et contra ecclesiasticam disciplinam ambulantibus sive euangelicam veritatem de dei timore servantibus*).⁵⁵⁵ Those who preach the gospel, not in love, but for envy or strife, are to be tolerated. Augustine calls attention to the concluding sentence of the passage quoted from Cyprian,⁵⁵⁶ and claims that it demands a distinction to be drawn between those who *foris mali sunt* and those who *intus mali sunt*.⁵⁵⁷ Those who preached the gospel *non caste* were certainly *intus*.⁵⁵⁸ Augustine develops Cyprian's thought by arguing that if no one *foris* can have anything that belongs to Christ, it follows that neither can anyone *intus* have what belongs to the devil.⁵⁵⁹ Conflating allusions to Cant. 4:12 and 2:2, he asks why, if the enclosed garden could contain *spinas diaboli*, the *fons Christi* could not flow *extra hortum*.⁵⁶⁰ If it is not possible for the garden to contain such, how can the emergence *intus* of *tantum malum invidiae et malivolae dissensionis* in the time of Paul be explained? It cannot be that *invidia* or *dissensio* are small evils, for at the time of the birth of Christ it was the voice of angels that proclaimed *gloria in excelsis deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*.⁵⁶¹ God wanted it to be understood that *eos esse in unitate corporis Christi qui sunt in pace Christi, eos autem esse in pace Christi qui sunt bonae voluntatis*. Such good will is demonstrated by *benevolentia*.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁵*De bapt.* 4.7.10 (BA 29.256). Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.14 (CCL 3C. 544-45).

⁵⁵⁶"Porro aliud est eos qui intus in ecclesia sunt in nomine Christi loqui, aliud eos qui foris sunt et contra ecclesiam faciunt in nomine Christi baptizare." *ibid.* Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 73, loc. cit.

⁵⁵⁷*ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸*ibid.* (BA 29.256-8).

⁵⁵⁹*De bapt.* 4.7.10 (BA 29.258).

⁵⁶⁰*ibid.* Augustine is arguing Cyprian's inconsistency in requiring the re-baptism of heretics. Bavaud comments: "Saint Cyprien doit concéder que le diable agit dans les mauvais Catholiques. Pourquoi donc ne pas concéder que le Christ peut aussi agir chez les dissidents (par le baptême en particulier)." BA 29.259, n.5.

⁵⁶¹*De bapt.* 4.7.10 (BA 29.258).

⁵⁶²*ibid.*

(3) *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.81.179

Petilian had quoted Phil. 1:18 (in the form, *quoquo modo Christus annuntietur*) as a biblical witness against the persecution of Donatists by Catholics.⁵⁶³ Augustine invites him to consider the text in its context, and quotes vv. 15-18 inclusive. What the preachers, who are there described, proclaimed was *sanctam et castam et veram* but they preached *per invidiam et contentionem sine caritate sine castitate*.⁵⁶⁴ Petilian had claimed that in the absence of charity, *quidquid fuerit nihil prodest*. Yet here were people without charity, preaching Christ. Paul's rejoicing in that fact demonstrates that in him was the *caritas quae non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati*.⁵⁶⁵ His rejoicing was not *malo illorum...sed bono nominis Christi*, while the *invidia* of his opponents came from the devil.

Petilian can choose whether these men were *intus* or *foris*. If the former, then Paul knew them and remained undefiled by them. Similarly, the Donatists would not be polluted *in unitate orbis terrarum* by those against whom their charges, whether true or false, are directed. If they were *foris*, the text proves that even in schismatics who have no love, and therefore cannot belong *ad vitam aeternam*, is found *sanctitas nominis Christi*. On this basis is justified Catholic refusal to rebaptize returning Donatists: *ipsos corrigimus, illud (nomen Christi) honoramus*.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶³*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.81.179 (BA 30.438).

⁵⁶⁴*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.81.180 (BA 30.440).

⁵⁶⁵*ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶*ibid.*

(4) *Contra Cresc.* 1.7.9.

Augustine here claims that Paul recognized two kinds of opponents: those who *praebent patrociniū falsitati*, and those who *invida iactantia ministrant praeconium veritati*.⁵⁶⁷ The former are represented by *Alexander aerarius*.⁵⁶⁸ The latter, described in Phil. 1:15-17, *id ipsum adnuntiabant quod Paulus*, but without love and seeking to outclass Paul himself *in eadem ipsa adnuntiatione*.⁵⁶⁹ Paul discerned that their preaching was *non sincera intentione*, but Cresconius cannot judge Catholic hearts in that way and, in light of the text, the only thing he needs to know about Catholics is whether they oppose the truth or seek to subdue those who resist the truth.⁵⁷⁰ If Catholics are found to be preaching the truth and refuting error, even if they do so *emolumentum saeculi huius et humanam gloriam quaerentes*, those who love the truth should rejoice.⁵⁷¹ Only by coming to share fellowship with Catholics, will Donatists be able to appreciate the concern for love that motivates their efforts to contend for the truth against its adversaries.⁵⁷²

(5) *Brev. Coll.* 3.8.11.

Phil. 1: 15-18 was one of the texts debated at the Conference of Carthage.⁵⁷³

Augustine here recalls the use of examples drawn from the prophets, from the Lord

⁵⁶⁷*Contra Cresc.* 1.7.9 (BA 31.86).

⁵⁶⁸"Alexander aerarius multa mala mihi ostendit; reddet illi dominus secundum opera eius. quem et tu evita, valde enim restitit nostris sermonibus." 2 Tim. 4:14-15. The verb "resto", with the sense, "to withstand, oppose", is used much less frequently than "resisto" which Augustine himself prefers to use in this same context.

⁵⁶⁹*ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰*ibid.*

⁵⁷¹*Contra Cresc.* 1.7.9 (BA 31.88).

⁵⁷²*ibid.*

⁵⁷³Vd. *Gesta coll. Carth.* 3.258 (CCL 149A.248). Cf. *Gesta coll. Carth.* 1.55 (CCL 149A.85).

and his apostles, and the (inconsistent) judgement of the Donatists themselves in regarding as uncontaminated some of their number who were involved for a while in the Maximianist schism, to demonstrate the principle that *mali* must be tolerated in the church and that they cannot infect the good. Significantly, the Donatists had nothing to say at the Conference about either the example of Cyprian or the Maximianist schism.⁵⁷⁴ This was despite their knowing that Cyprian wrote about the case of Judas and about Paul's tolerance of those described in Phil. 1:15-18.⁵⁷⁵

b. 2 Tim 2:20⁵⁷⁶

There are several citations of, or allusions to, this text in Augustine's anti-Donatist treatises, though few in other of his works.⁵⁷⁷ This section considers, mainly, three key passages in the treatises, where the main lines of Augustine's use of the text are set forth.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁴*Brev. Coll.* 3.8.11 (BA 32.156).

⁵⁷⁵*ibid.* (BA 32.156-58). For examples of Augustine's treatment of the text in the preached material, cf. *Tract. in Ioh.* 11.9 (CCL 36.115), where Paul's opponents are compared with "mercenarii" in terms of Jn. 10:11-12; *Tract. in Ioh.* 50.8 (CCL 36.437) where it is used to elucidate 2 Cor. 2:14-16; *Enarr. in Ps.* 49.23 (CCL 38.593) where v. 16 of the Psalm, "Peccatori dicit Deus: Ut quid tu enarras iustitias meas, et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum," is expounded in its terms.

⁵⁷⁶"In magna autem domo non solum aurea vasa sunt et argentea, sed et lignea et fictilia. et illa quidem sunt in honore, illa autem in contumelia. et mundabat semet ipsum ab huiusmodi, ut esset etiam ipse vas in honore sanctificatum, utile domino, ad omne opus bonum paratum." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25 (BA 28.458). For a brief general review of patristic usage of this text, vd. Clancy (1993), 247-48.

⁵⁷⁷The references in the treatises are: *Ep. ad Cath.* 20.55 (BA 28.666); *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25-6 (BA 28.458-60); *De bapt.* 4.12.18 (BA 29.278-80), 7.51.99 (BA 29.564); *Contra litt. Petil.* 3.2.3 (BA 30.590), 3.28.33 (BA 30.652); *Contra Cresc.* 2.34.43 (BA 31.250), 2.38.48 (BA 31.262), 4.26.33 (BA 31.538); *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 20.26 (BA 32.312); *Contra Gaudent.* 2.3.3 (BA 32.646), 2.13.14 (BA 32.680).

⁵⁷⁸Vd. also Clancy (1993), 243-44.

(1) *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25-6.

The first is in the context of an appeal, against Parmenian, to the example of Cyprian. Augustine uses this text (and also v.21) in replying to Parmenian's citation of Ps. 25(26):4-10 in justification of separating from the wicked. Parmenian has not troubled to notice the significance of v.8 of his text, *Domine, dilexi speciem domus tuae et locum tabernaculi claritatis tuae.*⁵⁷⁹ The reason why Cyprian was willing to tolerate the presence of sinners in his communion was that he refused to abandon the *innocentes cum quibus manus lavabat* (cf. Ps. 25[26]:6), a position which showed that Cyprian *diligebat speciem domus domini.*⁵⁸⁰ Citing 2 Tim 2:20, Augustine states that this *species* is found *in vasis honorabilibus*. Inevitably in a large house there are vessels of diverse quality and beauty is not found in them all. But Cyprian did not separate himself from the vessels he loved in the house of the Lord, *propter vasa quae erant in contumelia*. He reproved (*arguens*), but tolerated, those *a quibus se non imitando mundabat.*⁵⁸¹ The prayer of Ps. 25(26): 9-10⁵⁸² is to be interpreted in this light: it is offered *propter ipsam temporalem cum malis in una domo congregationem.*⁵⁸³

(2) *De bapt.* 4.12.18.

In this context Augustine cites a passage from Cyprian's *Ep.* 83.13 in which he applies 2 Tim. 2:17 (*sermonem eorum sicut cancer serpere*) to heretics.⁵⁸⁴ Augustine wishes

⁵⁷⁹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.5.26 (BA 28.460).

⁵⁸⁰*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25 (BA 28.458).

⁵⁸¹*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.25 (BA 28.458-60).

⁵⁸²"Ne simul perdideris cum peccatoribus animam meam et cum viris sanguinum vitam meam, in quorum manibus delicta sunt, dextera eorum impleta est muneribus."

⁵⁸³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.4.26 (BA 28.460).

⁵⁸⁴*Contra ep. Parmen.* 4.12.18 (BA 29.276).

to show that they apply equally to sinners in the church. He begins by making use of texts in 1 Cor. 15. When Paul said, *corrumpunt mores bonos conloquia mala* (1 Cor. 15:33), it is clear that the reference was to the situation within the church in light of the phrasing of the question of v.12, *quomodo dicunt quidam in vobis quia resurrectio mortuorum non est?*⁵⁸⁵ A passage from Cyprian (in which 2 Tim 2:20 is cited), is quoted as evidence of Cyprian's belief that the church would contain a mixture of good and bad until, at the last day, the tares are separated from the wheat and the chaff from the grain.⁵⁸⁶ Cyprianic authority is thus secured for the position that it is *in ipsa ecclesia, id est in ipsa domo magna* that there exist *vasa in contumeliam, quorum sermo ut cancer serpebat.*⁵⁸⁷ There are two entailments: first, it is wrong to separate oneself from the unity of the church on account of the *mali* within and, second, the sanctity of the sacrament remains intact, even if administered by a *vasum in contumeliam.*⁵⁸⁸

(3) *De bapt.* 7.51.99 - 7.52.100

In this, his lengthiest treatment of 2 Tim. 2:20, Augustine is arguing for the vital need to adhere to the house of God.⁵⁸⁹ The glory of the house he seeks to convey with a string of texts. Some contain general biblical images of the church, as: rock (Matt.

⁵⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ *ibid.* Vd. Cyprian, *Ep.* 55.25.2 (CCL 3B.288). Cf. *Ep.* 54.3 (CCL 3B.253-5). These are the only two passages in Cyprian's writings which refer to this text. In the *Retract.*, when commenting on *De bapt.* 7 (vd. *infra*), Augustine states that he was following Cyprian's interpretation of 2 Tim. 2:20, but later came to prefer the interpretation he found in Tyconius (*Retract.* 2.18 [CCL 57.105]). He is most likely referring to the seventh rule of Tyconius's *LR* ("De diabolo et corpore eius"). Tyconius, unlike Cyprian, believed that the good and the evil were represented among all four classes of vessels. Augustine's dependence on Cyprian is clear, but, "he also employs the imagery in a more varied manner, sometimes bearing witness to a possible Tyconian influence". Clancy (1993), 243. Vd. *infra*.

⁵⁸⁷ *De bapt.* 4.12.18 (BA 29.278).

⁵⁸⁸ *De bapt.* 4.12.18 (BA 29.280).

⁵⁸⁹ *De bapt.* 7.52.100 (BA 29.568).

16:18), dove (Cant. 6:9), bride (Eph. 5:27), enclosed garden, sealed fountain (Cant. 4:12), well of living water (Cant. 4:15), orchard of pomegranates (Cant. 4:13) and fruitful wheat (Matt. 13:23). Others draw on the use of *domus* in the Psalms: Ps. 25(26):8, Ps. 67(68):6(LXX), Ps. 121(122):1, Ps 83(84):4.⁵⁹⁰ This house is found in the vessels of gold and silver, in the *bonis fidelibus* who are spread throughout the world, *spirituali unitate devinctis*.⁵⁹¹ Others may be said to be in the house but in such a way *ut non pertineant ad compagem domus nec ad societatem fructiferae pacificaeque iustitiae, sed sicut esse palea dicitur in fructis*. These *vasa in contumeliam* comprise both the *mali* within the church, who give great grief to the righteous, and the countless heresies and schisms of those (referred to in 1 Jn. 2:19) who have broken the net (cf. Lk. 5:6) and, therefore, *qui magis iam ex domo quam in domo esse dicendi sunt*.⁵⁹² The latter are now separated *corporaliter* as those within are *spiritaliter*.⁵⁹³

Augustine finds himself able to distinguish three groups on the basis of his text. First, those who are within the house in such a way as to be of the house (*qui sic sunt in domo dei, ut ipsi sint domus dei*). These are people who are either already spiritual or, like infants, are still making progress towards the spiritual. Second, there are the *vasa in contumeliam* within, whose baptism neither profits themselves nor those to whom they administer it, if the latter follow their example. On the other hand, it does profit those *qui non ipsis corde adque moribus, sed sanctae domui copulantur*. Third, there

⁵⁹⁰*De bapt.* 7.51.99 (BA 29.562-64).

⁵⁹¹*ibid.*

⁵⁹²*ibid.* Bavaud comments that the distinction *in domo* and *ex domo* "se réalise en fonction du jugement des *hommes*, puisqu' aux yeux du Seigneur, la vie divine s'est éloignée du dissident comme du mauvais Catholique." In heart they are the same. BA 29.39.

⁵⁹³*De bapt.* 7.51.99 (BA 29.566). On the *corporaliter-spiritualiter* distinction, vd. Alexander (1987).

are the *vasa in contumeliam, qui...separatiores non magis in domo quam ex domo sunt*. Their baptism profits only those whose heart maintains the *vinculum unitatis* and who return *ab haeresi vel schismate illi domui*.⁵⁹⁴

Some references to this text in other treatises may be noted. In *Contra litt. Petil.* Augustine links it with all the Matthaean texts discussed above, in support of the *ecclesia permixta*.⁵⁹⁵ In the three passages in *Contra Cresc.*, its first two occurrences are in passages quoted from Cyprian, *Ep.* 54.3.⁵⁹⁶ In the third reference, it is linked with Matt. 3:12, Matt. 13:47, together with Phil. 1:18 and 1 Cor. 11:29.⁵⁹⁷

In the preached material and letters, references to this text are few and generally follow the same pattern as in the treatises.⁵⁹⁸ Clancy calls attention to the possible significance of Augustine's statement in *Sermo* 15,⁵⁹⁹ in reference to 2 Tim 2:20, that no one will ever be without some sin (*non eris sine aliquo malo*). He thinks that "this may well represent the assimilation of the Tyconian view on the good and evil potentially existing in all categories of vessels". In holding out, in the sermon, the hope of the conversion of some *mali*, Augustine also reflects the view of Tyconius.

For the most part, Augustine follows closely the pattern of Cyprian's interpretation of the text, for the purpose of illustrating the mixed character of the church of this age, and often linking it with the parables already discussed, for this purpose. He does,

⁵⁹⁴*De bapt.* 7.52.100 (BA 29.566-68).

⁵⁹⁵*Contra litt. Petil.* 3.2.3-4 (BA 30.590-92). Cf. 3.28.33 (BA 30.652).

⁵⁹⁶*Contra Cresc.* 2.34.43 (BA 31.250), 2.38.48 (BA 31.262).

⁵⁹⁷*Contra Cresc.* 4.26.33 (BA 31.536-38). In this passage and at 2.34.43, the *corporaliter-spiritualiter* distinction is explicitly mentioned.

⁵⁹⁸For references and a brief discussion of some texts, vd. Clancy (1993), 242 and 244-46.

⁵⁹⁹*Sermo* 15.5 (CCL 41.196-7).

however, expand "on the Cyprianic interpretation so as to reflect on the nature of membership of the Church; the objective dimensions of the Church's ministry; the theme of the vessels of honour constituting the beauty of God's house, with the associated corollary of God's indwelling in those united in mind and heart."⁶⁰⁰

B. Secondary Pauline texts.

A few texts from the Pauline epistles played for Augustine an important, if secondary, role in establishing apostolic authority for the *corpus permixtum* and, in particular, for the duty of non-separation from the church of the present time. All are cited in the third book of *Contra ep. Parmen.*, although some are found also in other treatises.

These texts are all illustrative of Augustine's capacity for restrained and literal exegesis, in the interests of theological polemics. For reasons of space attention will be given only to one, Gal. 6:1-5.⁶⁰¹

All the verses of this passage are cited or alluded to in the anti-Donatist treatises.⁶⁰²

VV. 1-2,⁶⁰³ linked with 1 Cor. 12:12, Jn. 13:34, Jn. 14:27, Eph. 4:2-3, are quoted to show that true Christians grieve in humble love over, and seek to restore, the errant, rather than separate from them.⁶⁰⁴ Allusion is made to v.3 in arguing against

⁶⁰⁰Clancy (1993), 246.

⁶⁰¹The other texts in view are 2 Cor. 2:4-11 (vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.3 [BA 28.394-6]), 2 Cor. 12:21-13:3 (vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.14 [BA 28.424-6]), 2 Thess. 3:14-15 (vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.3 [BA 28.392]).

⁶⁰²Augustine would have been aware of Optatus' quotation of Gal. 6:2, in the context of arguing that, for the sake of unity, the sins of others should be "buried". Optatus, *Contra Donat.* 7.3 (SC 413.222).

⁶⁰³"si praeoccupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto, vos qui spiritales estis instruite huiusmodi in spiritu mansuetudinis, intendens te ipsum, ne et tu tempteris. alter alterius onera portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi." *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.5 (BA 28.400).

⁶⁰⁴ibid. Cf. *De bapt.* 5.27.38 (BA 29.396), 2.6.8 (29.142); *Contra litt. Petil.* 3.5.6 (BA 30.598).

Parmenian's use of Jer. 23:28.⁶⁰⁵ Allusion is made to v.4 in the context of arguing that each bears responsibility for their own sins and not those of others.⁶⁰⁶ In that connection, however, v.5⁶⁰⁷ is the one most frequently cited or alluded to. Most of the references are found in *Contra litt. Petil.* and are deployed to counter the Donatist notion of *contagio mali*. Each carries the *onus* of his own accountability to God. Separation is, therefore, unnecessary.⁶⁰⁸

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify, and explore Augustine's handling of, biblical texts that were judged important, in some cases by Donatists, in others by Catholics, in the debate on ecclesial purity. Donatist use of Scripture in this context, as already noted, was aimed mainly at establishing the spiritual corruption of the Catholic communion, the inadmissibility of its claim to be the true (holy) church of Christ and the consequent necessity for true Christians to maintain (physical) separation from it.

⁶⁰⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.3.17 (BA 28.436). Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 3.3.4 (BA 30.592).

⁶⁰⁶*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.46.108 (BA 30.370).

⁶⁰⁷"Unusquisque nostrum proprium onus portabit." *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.36.84 (BA 30.336). In one place Augustine conflates Gal. 6:5 and a free paraphrase of Matt. 3:12: "Unusquisque nostrum proprium onus portabit et a tritico paleam ventilabrum ultimum separabit." *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.23.54 (BA 30.298).

⁶⁰⁸ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.23.54 (BA 30.298) (where Petilian is accused of inconsistency on account of his acceptance of solidarity with Bishop Optatus of Thamugadi: cf. 2.92.208 [BA 30.492]). Cf. *ibid.* 2.36.84 (BA 30.336), 2.67.149 (BA 30.410) (in association with Ps. 140[141]:5a - cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 140.13 [C.C.I. 40.2036]), 2.96.221 (BA 30.510), 3.39.45 (BA 30.680). Cf. also: *Contra Cresc.* 3.35.39 (BA 31.348); *De un. bapt.* 17.31 (BA 31.734) (where it is linked with Ezek. 18:4, 1 Cor. 11:29, Matt. 13:24-30, 25:32-33, 13:47-48) and *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.9 (BA 32.270), 28.48 (BA 32.364). In six references to the text, five of them allusions (*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.67.149, 2.92.208, 2.96.221; *Contra Cresc.* 3.35.39; *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.9) and one citation (*Contra litt. Petil.* 3.39.45), Augustine substitutes "sarcina" for "onus". On "sarcina" as a technical term, vd. Lamirande, "'Sarcina': fardeau épiscopal et fardeau de la vie," BA 32.736, n.c. 41.

Augustine's attempted refutation of the key "Donatist" texts has been examined and summarized.

In this part of the chapter, consideration has been given to Augustine's use of particular biblical texts which he believed served to undergird an essentially Catholic theology of church purity against the Donatists. Here, again, we find Augustine's ecclesiology developing, partly through dialogue with the tradition of the church, but mainly through his exegesis of the Scriptures, informed by the principles expounded in the *De doctrina Christiana*, and not least, by the (slightly modified) rules of Tyconius. In this context, too, Augustine's exegetical procedures have served to illumine the central principle of his approach to biblical interpretation: the Old Testament must be understood in the light of the New.

The main contents of Augustine's armoury of commanding biblical texts in support of the *corpus permixtum* have been identified and explored. His consistent aim has been to demonstrate biblically the mixed nature of the church during this present age and separation, meantime, as a moral and not a physical duty. He has sought to demonstrate exegetically that actual separation of *mali* and *boni* awaits the Last Judgement and that Donatists, therefore, are guilty of confusing the present and eschatological states of the church and of usurping the prerogative of Christ as alone judge. The relevant texts considered were Cant. 2:2, Ezek. 9:4, Matt. 3:12, Matt.13:24-30, Matt. 13:47-50, Matt. 25:31-34, Phil. 1:15-18 and 2 Tim. 2:20.

Augustine's use of Cant. 2:2 may have been triggered by Donatist deployment of this biblical book, particularly of Cant. 4:12, and was certainly designed to undercut Donatist appeal to Cyprianic use of it. Cant. 2:2 is presented as the key text for interpreting the whole which must be understood in its light, as an *apertum*. His use of Ezek. 9:4 well illustrates Augustine's ability to apply literal and contextual exegesis to the Old Testament prophets, for polemical purposes. In the service of direct polemics, his main texts are, as usual, drawn from the New Testament where the *mysterium* of Christ and his church is fully disclosed. Immediate dominical and apostolic authority for his ecclesiology could thus be claimed. His exegesis of the parables in direct polemical engagement with the Donatists, while allegorical and, hence, unacceptable by modern standards, in fact reflected the regular approach to the interpretation of the parables in the patristic period (Augustine's most developed allegorical exegesis of them was reserved for the pulpit). His use of Pauline texts, as noted, also involves a literal and contextual reading of the text, thereby establishing his position in New Testament *aperta* and establishing the continuity of his understanding with that of Cyprian.

Augustine's polemical engagement with the Donatists on the issue of church purity continued, indirectly, in his preaching. While productive of a theology of church purity indistinguishable from that yielded by the commanding texts, Augustine's interpretative strategy is markedly different here. Examples are offered of significant passages from the preached material in which his interpretation of the Psalms, while clearly controlled by commanding texts (one or other of the Matthaean parables, in this case), which are cited, reveals his exegesis at its most characteristic, with its

generally allegorical, and specifically *totus Christus*, methodology. The *sacramentum* of the Old Testament in which the mystery of Christ and the church, fully revealed in the New, lies hidden and awaiting disclosure is made in this way to yield his *corpus permixtum* ecclesiology. This interpretative approach was designed to lead to a deeper understanding of the truth about the church revealed in the New Testament. It also aimed at the transformation of the hearers in respect of the point at issue. Augustine was deeply aware of the capacity of the graphic and often moving biblical images to reach people at a level deeper than the purely cognitive, indeed, at the deepest springs of motivation and commitment. As a consequence of the inherent power of the Word, thus interpreted, Catholics could be expected to become more fully Catholics in commitment to the *corpus permixtum*, and Donatists (if listening) should be constrained to convert. The only exegesis in which Augustine was at last interested was that which served to nurture the pastoral care of the flock of God.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁹Cf. Borgomeo (1972), 391.

CHAPTER FIVE

SCRIPTURE, *UNITAS* AND THE SIN OF SCHISM

5.1 Introduction

Augustine's interest in the subject of unity was that both of a philosopher and of a pastor-theologian. His early post-conversion writings reflect his deep engagement with the theme on a theoretical level.¹ It was, however, his deep involvement, as a Catholic bishop, in the Donatist controversy, that led him to give sustained attention to the principle as realized in the life of the church, on the basis now of biblical authority.²

On certain basic ecclesiological principles, Catholics and Donatists were able to agree. As Prina points out, Augustine and Petilian, and, before them, Parmenian and Optatus, could accept both that the church is of divine origin and that it is united, in the sense that there is only one church of Christ.³ Catholics and Donatists, however, were hopelessly divided on how these two points of general agreement should be interpreted. Attention has already been given to Augustine's understanding of catholicity as referring to the world-wide spread of the church, in distinction from the Donatist intensivist view. On the

¹ For a summary of his reflections, particularly in the *De vera religione* 30.55-36-66 (CCL 32.223-31), on the principle of unity as rooted in God and spontaneously approved by the human mind, vd. Cameron (1996) 414, n.91.

² So important was unity in Augustine's conception of the essential nature of the church, that he can use "unitas" as a virtual synonym for the "Catholica". Vd. *De bapt.* 1.2 (BA 29.58), 1.2.3 (BA 29.62, 64), 1.7.9 (BA 29.78), etc.

³ Prina (1942), 28.

issue of church unity they were similarly divided. Both appealed to the teaching and/or example of Cyprian.⁴ For Cyprian, the basis of ecclesial unity lay in the communion of bishops, the *collegium sacerdotum*, with authority invested solely in the bishop as the personification of the local church.⁵ Aligning themselves with this position, the Donatists held a high view of the episcopate and priesthood, and regarded church unity as founded on the fellowship of worthy bishops. As already noted, Augustine also appealed to Cyprian, particularly to his concern to maintain unity with overseas churches and his refusal to separate on account of bishops whose lives were less than blameless or whose practice regarding heretical/schismatic baptism did not agree with his. For Augustine, however, for reasons that will become apparent, it is to the *Catholica* as such, not to the *collegium sacerdotum*, that the unity of the church is to be attributed. As Congar indicates, on this view it is God (Christ and the Holy Spirit) who is the subject of all sacramental and sanctifying operations, while the church itself is the ecclesial subject, and, as such, has the power of the keys. In this way, unity, love and peace are realised by the presence of the Holy Spirit.⁶

It was in the context of responding to the Donatists that Augustine elaborated the exegetical basis of this ecclesiology. By applying his distinctive hermeneutical principles, as expounded in *DDC*, he produced an exegetical and theological synthesis, not only of great polemical value, but of remarkable coherence and power. In this chapter, attention

⁴ It is significant that several of the texts used by Augustine, discussed below, were employed by Cyprian. They include, Matt. 12:30, Matt. 12:32, Mk. 3:28-9, Jn. 19:23-4, Jn. 21:15-17, Acts 4:32, Rom. 5:5, 1 Cor. 1:10, 1 Cor. 13:1-3, 1 Jn. 2:19. For references in Cyprian, cf. Fahey (1971).

⁵ Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 33.1.1 (CCL 3B.164).

⁶ Congar, BA 28.103.

is given to the way in which Augustine's hands-on exegesis yields an ecclesiological system for which he is still renowned. Three biblical images appear to have consistently controlled his reflection and exegetical engagement on this subject.

5.2 The church: *corpus Christi*, *sponsa Christi* and *columba*

By far the most significant image of the church for Augustine, and pervasively present in the anti-Donatist writings, is that of *corpus Christi*.⁷ Paul's image of the church as a body composed of many members was important to the apostle (1 Cor. 12:12-27).⁸ It is Augustine's interpretation of this image in terms of the *totus Christus* construct that gives to his conception of the church its distinctively christological character. Christ chose to be complete only by the incorporation of believers into his unity. "The church is primarily the active gathering of a new humankind into communion with Christ...From the moment that people follow Jesus in faith, hope and love, communion with Christ comes into existence." It follows that "to share in Jesus' life means to pray to the Father as he did...to love friend and enemy with his love. By this communion the body of Christ was constituted...."⁹ Thus, in Augustine's conception, the church is composed of head and body in such a way that "the whole salvific ecclesiastical activity is based on the working of Christ. Apart from Christ the church loses its significance."¹⁰ Christ is acting in the

⁷ Borgomeo speaks of the theme of "corpus Christi" as "le pilier même de la doctrine ecclésiologique et de la pastorale de l'évêque d'Hippone." Borgomeo (1972), 193. Augustine insists that his dispute with the Donatists is not "de capite, sed de corpore," not about Jesus Christ as Saviour but "de eius ecclesia." *Ep. ad Cath.* 4.7 (BA 28.518).

⁸ Vd. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.8.16 (BA 28.302-4), 3.1.3 (BA 28.390).

⁹ Van Bavel, in Fitzgerald (1999), 171.

¹⁰"Quicumque de ipso capite a scripturis sanctis dissentiunt, etiamsi in omnibus locis inveniantur in

sacraments of the church; they are all his property.”¹¹ It follows that those who claim that they themselves baptize are guilty of usurping the authority of Christ - a charge frequently levelled by Augustine against the Donatists.¹²

It is in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* that the theme of the church as the body of Christ receives its fullest prominence. This is due to his pervasive deployment in that work of *totus Christus* as his fundamental hermeneutic, in terms of which the Psalmist always speaks in the person of either the head or the body. The contribution of this work to his anti-Donatist polemic, with reference to the theme of unity, is considered below.

Closely connected with this image of *corpus Christi*, and complementing it, is that of the church as the *sponsa Christi*. For Augustine there is a direct correlation between the image of Christ as head and body, and that of Christ as husband and wife. Both instances represent *totus Christus*.¹³ As husband and wife, Christ and the church are *duo in una carne* (Eph. 5:31). They appear to be two, but are in reality one.¹⁴ The same phrase (*duo in una carne*) occurs in the creation narrative with reference to Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:24). In this text, interpreted as *prophetia*, Augustine finds a reference to the church emerging from the side of Christ, asleep in death on the cross.¹⁵ This implies a deep and

quibus ecclesia designata est, non sunt in ecclesia.” *Ep. ad Cath.* 4.7 (BA 28.518).

¹¹ Van Bavel, in Fitzgerald (1999), 170.

¹² Vd., eg., *Contra Cresc.* 2.21 (BA 31. 210-11).

¹³ “Sive ergo dicam caput et corpus, sive dicam sponsus et sponsa; unum intellegite.” *Sermo* 341.10 (PL 39.1500). Cf. *Sermo* 91.7 (PL 38.570-71). As Borgomeo points out, it is “le célèbre passage paulinien” (Eph. 5:23-32), concluding with the words, “sacramentum hoc magnum est, ego autem dico in Christo et in ecclesia,” that enables Augustine to make this identification. Borgomeo (1972), 191.

¹⁴ Vd. *Ep. ad Cath.* 4.7 (BA 28.518), 7.17 (BA 28.546), 10.24 (BA 28.564).

¹⁵ *Enarr. In Ps.* 40.10 (CCL 38.456). Cf. *De Gen. contra Man.* 2.24.37-40 (CSEL 91.160-66) and Cameron (1999), 77.

intimate spiritual union between Christ and the church. “Through baptism we died in Christ by being redeemed from sin. We have risen in Christ, be it only in hope, because in him our human nature preceded us.”¹⁶

The main significance of this model for Augustine’s anti-Donatist polemic is that, while the former (*caput-corporis*) calls attention to the immanent activity and vital influence of the head in relation to the body, this one emphasises the issue of the personal relationship between husband and wife. It is a union in which each freely chooses to love the other. From this perspective there emerges the theme of *caritas* as unity, through the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, producing, in turn, the *pax* of the body, all of which ideas Augustine develops exegetically against the Donatists.¹⁷

The third key image used by Augustine to portray the unity of the church is that of the dove (*columba*). Because of its biblical associations, this term, as Congar points out, serves to summarize for Augustine those aspects of his understanding of church unity just noted.¹⁸ For Augustine’s purposes, these associations are largely four-fold, and each feeds into his anti-Donatist use of the term.¹⁹ The first relates to the appearance of the *columba* in the flood narrative, returning to the ark (itself a symbol of the church) bearing

¹⁶Fitzgerald (1999), 171. Vd. infra, on the theme of ascension in unity, against the Donatists.

¹⁷Vd. infra.

¹⁸Congar, BA 28.103-9. The following paragraph draws on Congar’s discussion, ad loc.

¹⁹Congar omits the important Gen.15: 10 reference. Like “unitas”, “columba” is used by Augustine as a synonym for the church, as expressions, for example, like “pertinere ad columbam” (eg in *De bapt.* 4.3.4 [BA 29.238], 5.18.24 [BA 29.368]; *Tr.in Ioh.* 6.8 [CCL 36.57]) and “columbae membra” (eg *De bapt.* 4.3.4 [BA 29.238-40], 5.16.21 [BA 29.360], *Tr. in Ioh.* 6.12 [CCL 36.59]). For further refs., vd. BA 28.109, n.1.

an olive branch (Gen. 8:8-12). The dove is perceived here particularly as a symbol of peace.²⁰ Secondly, Abraham's not dividing the *columba* when offering sacrifice (Gen. 15:10) was on account of the bird's being a symbol of the unity of the church.²¹ Thirdly, there is the *una columba* of Cant. 6:8 which is identified with the *hortus conclusus* and *fons signatus* of Cant. 4:12.²²

The fourth significant context in which the dove appears is that of the baptism of Jesus, where it is presented as a symbol of the Holy Spirit descending on the Lord (Jn. 1:32).²³ By highlighting from these passages the traditional symbolic identification of the dove with peace, unity, love and the Holy Spirit (among other things), while also identifying the dove with the church, Augustine has manufactured an effective anti-Donatist weapon. The true church is composed of believers whose community is marked by peace because they are motivated by love, as those filled with the Holy Spirit.²⁴ While the Donatists, therefore, practise a valid baptism, its efficacy is dependant on their return to the unity of the dove where the fruit of baptism in forgiveness of sins is found.²⁵ This position enables Augustine to recognize the dove as possessing the power of the keys and thus closely to identify *columba* with *petra* (almost yielding the notion of a rock dove!), since this power

²⁰ *Tr. in Ioh.* 6.3-4 (CCL 36.53-55), 6.19 (CCL 36.64). Cf. 7.3 (CCL 36.68-9).

²¹ *De bapt.* 1.17.26 (BA 29.114-15).

²² For the identification, vd. *De bapt.* 6.3.5 (BA 29.410), 7.51.99 (BA 29.562). Cf. *Contra Cresc.* 2.21.26 (BA 31.210-12).

²³ *Tr. in Ioh.* 4.16 (CCL 36.40). On the symbolism of the dove at Christ's baptism, cf. Comeau (1930), 156-60.

²⁴ *De bapt.* 7.51.99 (BA 29.562-68). Cf. *De bapt.* 6.3.5 (BA 29.411).

²⁵ Cf. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.58.132 (BA 30.396). Only within the unity of the dove can one learn the lesson which John learned through the dove, namely, that Christ has reserved to himself the prerogative of baptising (cf. Jn. 1:32-3). For a detailed exposition of this text, vd. *Tr. in Ioh.* 5, passim (CCL 36.40-53).

was given to Peter, as himself representative of *unitas*.²⁶ Following Cyprian, the Donatists held the bishops to be the subject of the power of the keys. Augustine's ecclesiology requires that this power belong to the *unitas* of the church as founded on the *petra* (Christ).²⁷ Meantime, the Donatist communion is more truly represented by the raven (*corvus*) which was also sent from the ark, but did not return. Donatists seek their own and while the kisses of the dove are expressions of love and of peace, those of the raven lacerate, making them an appropriate symbol of the Donatists' rending of the church of Christ.²⁸

It is, then, within the broad perspectives provided by his interpretation of these images, that Augustine's detailed exegesis of church unity against the Donatists is practised. In the remainder of this chapter attention will be given to the main lines of this detailed exegesis, both literal and figurative, following an outline which reflects the (very coherent) structure of his thought on this subject.

5.3 The church as *unitas*: the exegetical groundwork in the anti-Donatist writings.

Support for Augustine's conception of the church as *corpus Christi*, comprising multiplicity in unity, is found in the communal life-style of the earliest Christian church.

²⁶ Vd. *De bapt.* 3.18.23 (BA 29.214-18), 4.1.1 (BA 29.234), 6.34.66 (BA 29.476-78), 6.40.78 (BA 29.486-88), 6.41.80 (BA 29.490), 7.51.99 (BA 29.562); *Ep. ad Cath.* 21.60-61 (BA 28.672-76); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.108.247 (BA 30.556-58).

²⁷ Cf. Congar, "L'interpretation de Matth., XVI, 18," BA 28.716, n.c. 8.

²⁸ The *columba-corvus* contrast is expounded in detail in *Tr. in Ioh.* 6, passim (CCL 36.53-67). For an earlier use of this contrast, vd. Tertullian, *De idololatria.* 24.4 (CCL 2/2.1124).

Against Petilian, he quotes Acts 4:32-5 (v. 32: *et erat illis anima una et cor unum in deum, et nemo dicebat aliquid proprium, sed erant in omnia communia*), although in an incomplete form and with the verses in incorrect order.²⁹

In a number of sermons, Acts 4:32 is used to confirm Augustine's interpretation (to the same purpose) of other biblical texts. Sometimes his concern is to link it with the model of the Trinity. In a sermon on Lk. 10:38-42, and with reference to the Lord's address to Martha (*Martha, Martha, tu circa multa es occupata, unum autem opus est* [vv. 41-2]³⁰), he invites his hearers to consider the idea of *unum* and asks them to see *in ipsa multitudine si delectat, nisi unum*. The universal silence of the congregation in response can only be explained thus, *Da unum, et populus est: tolle unum et turba est*.³¹ Acts 4:32 (linked with 1 Cor. 1:10, Phil. 2:2-3 and Jn. 17:22) is quoted as biblical authority for this principle in its application to the church. This, in turn, is based on the *unum necessarium* which is the unity of God himself: *unum illud supernum, unum ubi Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus sunt unum*. This ultimate principle of unity explains why the real distinctions between the three do not entail *tres dii*, but rather *unus Deus omnipotens, ipsa Trinitas unus Deus*. The essential nature of the church as *unitas* is thus rooted in the nature of God himself.³²

²⁹ Augustine's order is, vv. 34, 35a, 32b, 35b, 32a. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.239 (BA 30.542). This is the only citation of this text in the treatises. The same text figures prominently in Augustine's monastic *Regula*, whose fundamental principles are based on the ideal of Christian community which they contain. Cf. *Regula (Praeceptum)*, 1.1, 5.1, 5.3. Verheijen I (1967), 417,429,430. Cf. Verheijen's comment that "the Rule of Saint Augustine and his *Enarratio in Ps.* 132 (give) an absolutely identical idea of monastic life." Verheijen (1979), 1. On Augustine's interpretation of Ps. 132(133), vd. *infr.* Augustine sees the ideal of ecclesial unity as embodied in a monastery. Cf. Lawless (1987) and Alexander (1995).

³⁰ *Sermo* 103.3 (PL 38.614).

³¹ *Sermo* 103.4 (PL 38.614).

³² *Sermo* 103.4 (PL 38.614-15). For a discussion by him of the problems associated with the term *unitas*,

In another sermon, Augustine links Acts 4:32 with 1 Cor. 10:17 (*unus panis, unum corpus multi sumus*), in order to place the “multiplicity in unity” principle on a sacramental basis. Christians are *corpus Christi et membra* (1 Cor. 12:27) and this *mysterium...in mensa Dominica positum est*.³³ Believers are the body of Christ both *in pane* and *in vino*. They are so *in pane* (in terms of 1 Cor. 10:17) because as they are many, so *panis non fit de uno grano, sed de multis*. The idea is developed, in connection with the rites of baptism and confirmation, with reference to the bread-making process. When catechumens were being exorcised, it was as if they were being ground in the mill (*molebamini*); their baptism corresponded to the flour being mixed with water and kneaded into dough (*conspersi estis*), and when they received the Holy Spirit, on being anointed with oil at confirmation, they were, as it were, baked (*quasi cocti estis*).³⁴ Similarly, in the wine-making process, the juice derived from many grapes *in unitate confunditur*.³⁵ These elements were divinely chosen to symbolize the church as body of Christ, and thus the Lord *mysterium pacis et unitatis nostrae in sua mensa consecravit*.³⁶

With a clear eye to the Donatists, Augustine adds that anyone who partakes of this *mysterium unitatis*, without holding simultaneously the *vinculum pacis*, receives the sacrament, not as a *mysterium...pro se* but as a *testimonium contra se*.³⁷

as used to express distinctions in the trinity, vd. *De trin.* 7.4-6 (CCL 50.255-67). Elsewhere, in his preaching, Augustine tries to help his congregation to grasp the mystery of the Trinity by referring them to the model of the visible unity of believers described in Acts 4:32. Vd. *Sermo* 229G.5 (MA 1.477-78). On the early Christian community as an image of Trinitarian unity, cf, Berrouard (1987).

³³ *Sermo* 272 (PL 38.1247). Cf. *Ep.* 185.50 (CSEL 34/4.43).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Sermo* 272 (PL 38.1248).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.* For an example of Augustine’s use of Acts 4:32 to support Old Testament allegorical interpretation, vd. his exposition of “dies” in Ps. 117(118): 24 in *Sermo* 260D.1 (MA1.499).

Since unity is essential to the nature of the church, Augustine employs other texts to establish the sinful nature of schism, as committed by the Donatists. To their detriment, he compares their action with apostolic example in this regard. The Donatists are guilty of tearing the seamless garment of Christ. In the *Ep. ad Cath.*, Augustine quotes Ps. 21(22): 17-19 (v.18: *diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea et super vestimentum meum miserunt sortem*), but merely alludes to Johannine use of it (Jn. 19:23-4).³⁸ In the preached material Augustine interprets the reference in John to Christ's *unam tunicam inconsutilem desuper textam* (Jn. 19:23) for his anti-Donatist purpose. The distinction drawn in Ps. 21(22):18 between Christ's *vestimenta* and *vestimentum* is put to good service. The division of the former represents the fact that the *sacramenta visibilia* (the *aliquas vestes Christi*) can be divided and, although they, too, are *indumenta...Christi*, can be possessed by good and bad alike.³⁹ Christ's tunic, on the other hand, representing his body the church, was *praeter divisionem*, because it was woven from the top (*desuper texta*).⁴⁰ The weaving of the tunic *desuper* was intended as a sign, bearing the same significance as that of the exhortation, *sursum cor*. Those whose heart is lifted up to Christ (the church's *caput*), cannot be divided *in partes*, since they belong to the tunic which cannot be divided. They are the *germina catholicae*.⁴¹ The Donatists belong to the other garments

³⁸ *Ep. ad Cath.* 8.21 (BA 28.554). Augustine wonders, "quando etiam cum hoc factum euangelista narraret, huius testimonii memor fuit?" *ibid.*

³⁹ *Sermo* 218.9 (PL 38.1086).

⁴⁰ *Sermo* 159B.18. Dolbeau (1996), 287-88.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

of Christ which, because they are woven from below rather than from above, *possunt dividi*.⁴²

The great sin of the Donatists lay in their determination to establish their own sect outside of the *Catholica*. The scriptural evidence for this was found mainly in Matt. 12:30b (*qui mecum non colligit, spargit*) and Cant. 1:6-7, with the latter text's implied distinction between Christ's flock (*gregem suum*), made up of those *qui habent caritatem et non dividunt unitatem*, and the Donatist schism (*greges sodalium tuorum*) who chose to gather *extra*, not Christ's flock but *suos greges*.⁴³

Augustine's handling of this text offers an example of his use of the rhetorical technique of *retorsio*, as a text frequently deployed by the Donatists against Catholics.⁴⁴ For example, in *De un. bapt.*, Augustine responds to Petilian's statement that when an act is performed sacrilegiously (even if in the name of Christ), it nullifies the act concerned. Augustine accepts the point in the sense that those who so act in the name of Christ, destroy their own work (*falsum opus proprium*). But when Matt. 12:30 is interpreted in light of Lk. 9:49-50 (the case of the man who did not follow Christ or his disciples but

⁴²Ibid. Cf. *Sermo* 218.9 (PL 38.1086).

⁴³*Ep. ad Cath.* 16.40 (BA 28.620). On the latter text, vd. Congar, "Cant. 1, 6-7, dans la discussion entre Augustin et les Donatistes," BA 28.747-48, n.c.43.

⁴⁴Vd. *De un. bapt.* 7.10 (BA 31.684) where Augustine is responding to Petilian. Donatist use of the text reflected the fact that their biblical formation had taught them "to be wary of liturgical claims of wicked priests," and that "God accepted worship only in the approved sanctuary." Tilley (1997), 168-69. For Augustine's response to its use by other Donatists, vd. *De bapt.* 6.18.30 (BA 29.442), 6.28.53 (BA 29.464), 6.31.59 (BA 29.470).

whom Christ permitted to cast out demons) it allows that one who is outside the unity of Christ's flock can possess, in his sin, *veritatem...alienam*.⁴⁵

In this light, not surprisingly, the potential of Matt. 12:30 (linked with Lk.9:49-50) for anti-Donatist polemics is most frequently exploited in baptismal contexts. In the *De bapt.* it features some nine times.⁴⁶ In this context, it serves to support the Augustinian distinction between the validity and efficacy of schismatic baptism. The Donatists do not gather with Christ because they are at one and the same time *in sacramenti sanitate* and *in schismatis...vulnere*.⁴⁷

In an important passage, Matt. 12:30 is quoted in the context of Augustine's interaction with a remark made by Cyprian, namely, *aliud est eos qui intus in ecclesia sunt in nomine Christi loqui, aliud eos qui foris sunt et contra ecclesiam faciunt in nomine Christi baptizare*.⁴⁸ Augustine is not entirely happy with the statement, since he recognises the presence of sinners within the church, and outside (*foris*) of those who speak in Christ's name. . Those represented by the person in Lk. 9:49-50 are not, therefore, forbidden by Scripture to work Christ's works but only *foris esse*.⁴⁹ Taken together, therefore, Matt. 12:30 and Lk. 9:49-50 form a useful combination for

⁴⁵ *De un. bapt.* 7.12 (BA 31.690).

⁴⁶ *De bapt.* 1.6.8 (BA 29.76), 1.7.9 (BA 29.78), 1.8.11 (BA 29.84), 3.10.13 (BA 29.194), 4.10.16 (BA 29.272), 4.17.24 (BA 29.294-96), 6.18.30 (BA 29.442), 6.28.53 (BA 29.464), 6.31.59 (BA 29.470-72).

⁴⁷ *De bapt.* 1.8.11 (BA 29.84). Cf. *De bapt.* 3.10.13 (BA 29.194).

⁴⁸ *De bapt.* 4.10.16 (BA 29.272). Vd. Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.14 (CCL 3C.544-46).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* With the Rules of Tyconius again in mind, Augustine concludes that some things are done "foris...non contra ecclesiam" while some are done "intus ex parte diaboli contra ecclesiam." *De bapt.* 4.10.16 (BA 29.274). Cf. 4.17.24 (BA 29.294-96).

Augustine. Matt. 12:30 enables him to characterize the Donatists as schismatics, while the Lucan text enables him to discover in the schismatic group “des actes accomplis au nom du Christ, le don du bapteme en particulier.”⁵⁰

Another instance of biblical *retorsio*, in this same connection, is Augustine’s use of 1 John 2:19 (*ex nobis exierunt, sed non erant ex nobis; nam si fuissent ex nobis, mansissent utique nobiscum*).⁵¹ Petilian had, apparently, used this text (with others) as a basis for denying that any meeting was possible between the Donatist church and the *pars Macarii* (the catholic church). In that connection Petilian speaks of the Catholic church as a *sentina vitiorum* and compares it to dross (*sordibus*) from which the gold has been removed. It cannot be part of the Donatist communion since it pollutes the Donatist rite, *similitudine* (ie, by mimicking it).⁵² Augustine launches the text right back at the Donatists. The *pseudochristiani...et antichristi* comprise those who are both openly *ex domo* and some who (apparently) are *in domo*. The latter are always seeking opportunity to go out, as Prov. 18:1 makes clear.⁵³ As such they remain separated *ab illa invisibili caritatis compagine*. It is not by going out that they cease to be *ex nobis*. They went out because they were not *ex nobis*.⁵⁴ While the sacrament of baptism remains holy whether administered *intus* or *foris*, *fraternum odium* (cf. 1 Jn. 2:9) cherished by a candidate for

⁵⁰Bavaud, “L’exorciste blâmé par les Apotres,” BA 29.584. Bavaud calls attention to Augustine’s failure to engage with the (very different) context of either passage. Cf. *Ep.* 208.6 (CSEL 4.346).

⁵¹*De bapt.* 3.19.26 (BA 29.222). Cyprian’s maintenance of unity is here contrasted with Donatist divisiveness. This text was used by Optatus. Cf. *Contra Donat.* 1.15.3 (SC 412.206).

⁵²*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.39.92 (BA 30.352).

⁵³“Occasiones quaerit qui vult discedere ab amicis”(LXX). *De bapt.* 3.19.26 (BA 29.222).

⁵⁴*De bapt.* 3.19.26 (BA 29.222-24). Further evidence of the same point is adduced from 2 Tim. 2:16-21.

baptism blocks the remission of sins or, if remission is granted, their sins immediately return to them again.⁵⁵

An interesting example of figurative exegesis of Ezek. 34:20-21⁵⁶ and Prov. 10:12,⁵⁷ in relation to 1 John 2:19, occurs in *Sermo* 47. Ezek.34:20 is taken to mean that while all the Lord's (apparent) sheep are at present *sub signo Christi*, it is God alone who can recognize the goats who appear as sheep.⁵⁸ The following verse (v.21) is intelligible only if some sheep are *foris*. Those who drove them out are the *fortes oves* (the various anatomical references are appropriately spiritualized), representing Donatist leaders who boast in their own righteousness, like the *filius malus* of Prov. 10:12. Such "strength" does not represent true health but, like the *male fortis freneticus* who beats up his *medicus*, the Donatists claim perfection in order to attain defection.⁵⁹ Interpreting *exitus* (Prov.10:12) in light of 1 Jn. 2:19, Augustine states that it is the Donatist who *exitum suum non abluit*. For all his boasting, the Donatist remains *malus*.⁶⁰

⁵⁵*De bapt.* 5.51.99 (BA 29.566). Cf. *De bapt.* 7.51.99 (BA 29.566), 7.53.102 (BA 29.572). Vd. infra on Augustine's understanding of the link between "unitas" and "caritas" and the forgiveness of sins. On claimed Cyprianic support for Augustine's interpretation of 1 Jn. 2:19, vd. *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 6.9 (BA 32.268-70). On the difficult subject of the reviviscence of sins, vd. Bavaud, "Le problème de la reviviscence des péchés," BA 29.585-86 and Wright (1987).

⁵⁶"Pro istis haec dicit dominus deus ad eos: ecce ego iudico inter ovem fortem, et inter ovem imbecillam" (v.20). *Sermo* 47.15 (CCL 41.584). "Quoniam lateribus et humeris vestris impellebatis, et cornibus vestris percutiebatis, et omne quod deficiebat comprimebatis, quoadusque dispergeretis eas foris"(v.21). *Sermo* 47.16 (CCL 41.585).

⁵⁷"Filius malus ipse se iustum dicit, exitum autem suum non abluit" (VL). *Sermo* 47.17 (CCL 41.586). The words of Augustine's translation scarcely make sense, but he rejoices to find anti-Donatist mileage in it nonetheless.

⁵⁸*Sermo* 47.15 (CCL 41.585).

⁵⁹"Dicis tu perfectum, ut facias defectum." *Sermo* 47.17 (CCL 41.586).

⁶⁰*Sermo* 47.17 (CCL 41.587).

It is the *Catholica*, therefore, that speaks in 1 Jn. 2:19, providing the true explanation of the Donatist schism. In relation to the world-wide church, the Donatists have chosen to be *foris*.⁶¹ In this, they are at odds, not only with Paul, but with the Lord himself.⁶² The Psalm just read in church contained the words, *non repellit dominus plebem suam quoniam in manu eius fines terrae*.⁶³ Unlike the Lord who does not push away his people, the Donatists are guilty of doing just that (cf. Ezek. 34:21). If their claim to be righteous is to stand, they must return to bear the requisite fruit *in catholica pace*, because *fructus non est ubi non est cum tolerantia*.⁶⁴

As already noted, church schism, for Augustine, stands condemned by both dominical and apostolic authority and example. This is a claim frequently made by Augustine, and he seeks to establish it primarily on the basis of two *aperta*. The first is a Lucan text (Lk. 12:13-14) which describes a man's appeal to Jesus against his brother who had gone off with the whole of their father's estate, thus depriving his brother of the portion that was due to him. It also records Jesus' response (*Domine, dic fratri meo, ut dividat mecum haereditatem...Homo, quis me constituit divisorem inter vos?*)⁶⁵ Augustine does not use this text in the treatises but it appears frequently in the *Sermones* and once in the

⁶¹ Elsewhere, Augustine links 1 Jn. 2:19 with Jude 19 ("Hi sunt qui se ipsos segregant..."), to stress that John did not say of the "antichristi", "eiecti sunt" but "exierunt". The pattern of divine judgement at work here was that which applied "in primis peccantibus" (Adam and Eve). The Lord let them go from paradise as those "iam pronos proprio pondere". Cf. Gen. 3:23. *Sermo* 285.6 (PL 38.1296).

⁶² *Sermo* 47.17 (CCL 41.587).

⁶³ Ps. 94(95):3b-4 (VL). The VL of v.3b is based on the LXX (Codex Vaticanus only): ὅτι οὐκ ἀπωσεται κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. Vd. Sabatier 2 (1751), 189.

⁶⁴ In support he quotes Lk. 8:15, "Et fructum afferent cum tolerantia," and Sir. 2:14, "Vae his qui perdidit tolerantiam". *Sermo* 47.17 (CCL 41.588-89). Cf. *Sermones* 138.7 (PL 38.767), 147A.4 (MA1.54).

⁶⁵ *Sermo* 107.2-3 (PL 38.628).

Enarrationes, where its figurative potential is laid under tribute. Augustine comments on Jesus' use of the term, *Homo*. By attaching such importance to the inheritance, the plaintiff showed himself to be a mere man. The Lord's desire was to have him numbered *inter deos...qui avaritiam non habent*. Augustine invites the congregation to consider *quam mali sint homines, qui volunt esse divisum, qui noluit esse divisor*.⁶⁶ Augustine calls attention to the folly of Donatist *avaritia*. Everything divided is diminished. It is not in the interests of either party that this should happen. Augustine frequently insists that, for the sake of owning a part, the Donatists have, in fact, lost the whole of the Lord's inheritance.⁶⁷ In this way, Augustine seeks to drive a wedge between the Donatists and the Lord who loved unity and hated division.⁶⁸

Secondly, Augustine compares Donatist schismatic activity unfavourably with the example of Paul who is shown, unlike them, to have adhered to the principle laid down by the Lord in Lk. 12:13-14. Paul's refusal to divide the Lord's inheritance is highlighted from the key text (for Augustine) of 1 Cor. 1:10-13, *obsecro autem, vos, fratres...ut id ipsum dicatis omnes et non sint in vobis schismata, sitis autem perfecti in eodem sensu et in eadem sententia...quia unusquisque vestrum dicit: ego quidem sum Pauli, ego autem Apollo, ego vero Cephae, ego autem Christi. divisus est Christus? Numquid Paulus pro vobis crucifixus est aut in nomine Pauli baptizati estis?*⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *Sermo* 107.3 (PL 38.628). The "totus Christus" notion underlies the point.

⁶⁷ *Sermo* 107A.1 (PLS 2.770-71). Cf. *Sermones* 265.11 (PL 38.1224), 340A.12 (MA 1.573-74), 359.1-5 (PL 39.1590-94); *Enarr. in Ps.* 18(19)/2.6 (CCL 38.109).

⁶⁸ "Noluit esse divisor hereditatis: unitatem venerat congregare, unam hereditatem per terras dare." *Sermo* 340A.11 (MA 1.574).

⁶⁹ *De bapt.* 1.10.14 (BA 29.90). 1 Cor. 1:10 was used by Optatus, *Contra Donat.* 1.21.3 (SC 412.218), 3.7.5 (SC 413.54).

1 Cor. 1:12-13 was a text used by the Donatists to condemn what they perceived as the Catholic schism.⁷⁰ Augustine's *retorsio* occurs mainly in baptismal contexts. Sometimes he pulls in other texts from the context in 1 Cor. 1 to support his case. For example, in the context of arguing that baptism is Christ's alone, Augustine refers to Paul's thanksgiving in 1 Cor. 1:14 that he had baptized none of the Corinthian schismatics who, forgetful of the one in whose name they had been baptized, had divided themselves under the leadership of different individuals. Paul would have nothing to do with that.⁷¹ The main point that Augustine wishes to establish on the basis of 1 Cor. 1:10-13 is that Paul recognized in the Corinthian schismatics both the sin of schism and the good of baptism.⁷² By linking together Paul's condemnation of the schismatic groups, and the fact that their members had been baptized with Christ's baptism, Augustine is able to portray Paul as a supporter of his own anti-Donatist position. While attacking the evil of schism, Paul recognized the existence of true baptism in Corinthian schismatic contexts,⁷³ despite the kind of deficient faith reflected in the words, *ego quidem sum Pauli* (1 Cor.1:12).⁷⁴ Indeed it was to the truth of their baptism that Paul appealed, in his endeavours to restore

⁷⁰ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.41.97 (BA 30.360). As Quinot comments, in Petilian's perspective "la prétention des catholiques d'être l'Église du Christ, introduirait un schisme dans une Église qui ne peut être qu'une ou n'être pas!" (BA 30.206). Augustine retorts that Petilian was only trying to pre-empt the text's obvious anti-Donatist use but all he achieved was a double quotation of a manifestly pro-Catholic text. Not much meeting of minds there! Vd. *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.42.100 ((BA 30.360). Cf. 3.51.63 (BA 30.716).

⁷¹ *De bap.* 5.13.15 (BA 29.352).

⁷² Augustine exempts from blame those Corinthians who claimed, "ego autem Christi" (1 Cor. 1:12), failing to appreciate that this was probably the most proudly schismatic group of all. *Contra Cresc.* 1.27.32 (BA 31.132).

⁷³ *De un. bap.* 5.7 (BA 31.676).

⁷⁴ Contrary to the position of Petilian. Vd. *Contra litt. Petil.* 1.2.3 (BA 30.136-38), 2.4.8 (BA 30.226).

the schismatics to unity (*numquid Paulus pro vobis crucifixus est?*)⁷⁵ On this basis Augustine invites his readers to consider that 1 Cor. 1:10-13 counts for the Catholic position rather than that of Petilian.⁷⁶

This section of the chapter concludes with a consideration of Augustine's handling of a number of texts which he treat figuratively in terms of the *totus Christus* hermeneutic. By this means these texts are demonstrated to confirm those aspects of Augustine's theology of church unity and schism already established on the basis of the above *aperta*.

Possibly the most significant of these texts and one that, unusually, has already done service in the treatises, is Ps. 132(133) which describes the anointing oil descending from Aaron's head, over his beard, and down to the borders of his garments.⁷⁷ Its appearance in the treatises was due to the need to counter Donatist use of the same text against the Catholics, but Augustine clearly understood it as an *apertum* in its own right.⁷⁸ Petilian, as reported by Augustine, summarizes thus the Psalm's significance for the Donatist position on unity, *sic...ungitur unitas, sicut uncti sunt sacerdotes*.⁷⁹ Church unity as

⁷⁵ 1 Cor. 1:13. *De un. bapt.* 11.18 (BA 31.702).

⁷⁶ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.41.98 (BA 30.360). Other contexts in the treatises where Augustine similarly handles 1 Cor. 1:10-13 are *De bapt.* 1.10.14 (BA 29.86-92); *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.41.97 (BA 30.360), 1.3.4 (BA 30.140), 3.3.4 (BA 30.590); *De un. bapt.* 5.7 (BA 31.676); *Ad Donat. post Coll.* 21.33 (BA 32.330). For similar treatment of the text in the preached material, cf. *Sermones* 76.1 (PL 38.479), 103.4 (PL 38.614), 107.3 (PL 38.628), 2290.3 (MA1.497), 268.4 (PL 38.1234), 379.7 (PLS 2.816), 198.52 (Dolbeau) 407.

⁷⁷ "ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum. tamquam unguentum in capite, quod descendit in barbam, barbam Aaron, quod descendit in oram vestimenti eius; sicut ros Hermon, quod descendit super montes Sion. quoniam ibi mandavit dominus benedictionem et vitam usque in saeculum." *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.238 (BA 30.540). Cf. *Psalm. contra part. Don.* 60 (BA 28.158); *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.1.1 (BA 28.264); *Sermo ad Caes. eccl. pleb.* 4 (BA 32.426-30).

⁷⁸ Augustine's use of this text thus represents a further instance of "retortio" creating an "apertum".

⁷⁹ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.238 (BA 30.540).

Petilian conceives it, following Cyprian, is that of the *ordo episcoporum* who are properly called *sacerdotes* in terms of “l’aspect cultuel de la fonction episcopale.”⁸⁰ This unity, symbolized by the anointing of a new bishop at his ordination, is maintained by avoiding the *oleum peccatoris* inevitably present in the communion of bishops who are guilty of the *crimen falsi baptismi, traditionis* or *persecutionis*.⁸¹ Petilian, following Cyprian, quotes Ps. 140(141):5 in support (*oleum peccatoris non unget caput meum*).⁸² Parmenian had already established the importance of the *sacerdotium* (thus understood) for the Donatists by making it one of the six *notes* by which the true church can be recognized. Augustine accuses Parmenian of making the bishop the *mediatorem...inter populum et deum* and thus usurping the authority of the one true mediator, Christ.⁸³ Augustine’s response to Petilian is a development of this argument, in terms of a figurative treatment of Ps. 132(133).

Aaron’s head represents Christ, whose name derives from the Greek *χρῖσμα*, meaning anointing, on account of the invisible anointing of the Holy Spirit received at his incarnation. It is not only the bishops, but all Christians, who, by being anointed in Christ’s name, enter the priestly body of which he is the head.⁸⁴ The beard of Aaron (a symbol of *fortitudo*) represents the strong in the church (ie. the apostles and those who,

⁸⁰Quinot, “‘Sacerdos’ chez Petilianus de Constantine,” BA 30.768.

⁸¹Vd. Quinot, *ibid.*, p.766.

⁸²*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.103.236 (BA 30.536) The indispensability of episcopal sanctity is further established from 1 Sam. 2:25 which Petilian quotes, “si peccaverit populus, orabit pro illo sacerdos; si autem sacerdos peccaverit, quis orabit pro eo?” *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.105.240 (BA 30.548).

⁸³*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.8.15 (BA 28.302). Augustine (*ad loc.*) quotes 1 Jn. 2:1-2, “advocatum habetis ad patrem Iesum Christum iustum.”

⁸⁴“nam illud sacerdotium in figura corporis Christi habebat unctionem, quod unitatis compage fit salvum.” *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.103.239 (BA 28.540). Cf. *De civ. Dei* 20.10 (CCL 48.720).

like Stephen, faithfully preach the Word of God), while the *ora vestimenti*, which Augustine understands to refer to the upper edge of the garment through which the head must pass when one is dressing, represents the *perfecti fideles in ecclesia*. Beginning from them, *per omnes gentes unitas toto contextitur...ut indueretur Christus varietate orbis terrarum*.⁸⁵ The *unguentum* which flows from the head over the beard and all Christ's priestly vestments is *sanctificatio spiritalis*⁸⁶ symbolized by the use of oil in the baptismal rite.⁸⁷

The church, therefore, is composed of all who are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit and who thus constitute the priestly body of *totus Christus*, the *unus et verissimus sacerdos*.⁸⁸ On this basis, Donatist literalist interpretation of the anointing in the Psalm as the *sacramentum chrismatis* is rejected. While the latter is holy within the class of visible signs which the sacraments represent, it can be possessed by *mali*, who belong neither *ad barbam Aaron nec ad oram vestimenti eius nec ad ullam contextionem vestis sacerdotalis*.⁸⁹ The visible sacrament must therefore be distinguished *ab invisibili unctione caritatis quae propria bonorum est*. Augustine calls on the Donatists to return to the city set on a hill (Matt. 5:14), and so become the *ros Hermon super montes Sion*.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.239 (BA 28.542-44).

⁸⁶ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.239 (BA 30.542).

⁸⁷ *De bapt.* 5.20.28 (BA 29.377); *Sermo* 324 (PL 38.1447). Cf. Optatus, *Contra Donat.* 7.4 (SC 413.228-32).

⁸⁸ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.30.69 (BA 30.310). Vd. Quinot, "Le Christ seul et véritable prêtre," BA 30. 781-83. Cf. Lamirande, "'Sacerdos' dans la langue de saint Augustin," BA 32.720-21.

⁸⁹ *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.239 (BA 28.544). On the crucial significance of Christ's priesthood in the development of Augustine's ecclesiology against the Donatists, cf. Bonner (1989).

⁹⁰ "quomodolibet," he adds, "abs te accipiatur". Ibid.

In his *Enarr. in Ps.* 132 (133), Augustine offers a similar figurative exposition of the Psalm. The *in unum* of v.1 corresponds to the *unum cor et unam animam* of Acts 4:32. One of the interesting aspects of this exposition is Augustine's use of the Psalm to justify the existence of monasteries. Brothers who longed to dwell together in unity were stirred up by v.1 of this Psalm, as by a trumpet. He refers to the Catholic - Donatist slanging match, in which any Catholic criticism of the Circumcellions is met by Donatist criticism of Catholic monks.⁹¹ Augustine is prepared to accept Donatist preference for the term *agonistici* (on the ground that those referred to were fighting for Christ) over *circumcelliones*, provided that they do in fact fight for Christ and not for the devil.⁹² Augustine, however, wishes to argue for the biblical foundation of monasticism, as an embodiment of the kind of unity which the church as a whole is intended, in God's purpose, to manifest. He points out that the term "monk" derives from the Greek *μόνος*. He argues that *μόνος* means one alone, in a manner that is not applicable to one individual in a crowd. It is those who fulfil the conditions described in Acts 4:32 (*unum cor et unam animam*), living together so as to make one man, who can rightly be called *μόνος*, *id est unus solus*.⁹³ Augustine suggests that Donatist dislike for monks is, therefore, deeply significant. Having cut themselves off from unity, they have followed Donatus and rejected Christ.⁹⁴

⁹¹ *Enarr. In Ps.* 132(133).3 (CCL 40. 1927-28).

⁹² *Enarr. In Ps.* 132(133).6 (CCL 40.1930-31).

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Enarr. In Ps.* 132(133).6 (CCL 40.1931). Although there is no direct reference to Ps. 132(133) in the *Regula*, it is hard not to detect an allusion, in the repeated "in unum". *Regula* 1.2, 5.1. Verheijen (1967), 417, 428. The repeated reference to "fratres" should also be noted. Cf. Mayer (1987), 327-39.

Augustine acknowledges the strangeness of the reference to the *ros Hermon*, a mountain far away from Jerusalem (beyond the Jordan), falling on the mountains of Sion. He interprets Hermon to mean, in light of his understanding of its etymology, “a light set on a high place”. This stands for Christ, lifted up, first on the cross, and then into heaven. It is from him that the dew (the Holy Spirit comes) without whose presence schism will inevitably ensue.⁹⁵ God’s blessing is commanded only among brethren dwelling together in unity. It is to this unity that the Donatists must return.⁹⁶

Other occurrences of *unum* in the biblical text provide a springboard for figurative exegesis of unity against the Donatists. For example, commenting on Ps. 33(4):3, *Magnificate Dominum mecum et exaltemus nomen eius in idipsum*, Augustine states that for the latter phrase, *multi codices* have *in unum*, although he adds that the meaning of each is identical.⁹⁷ The verse represents the call of the *Catholica* to the Donatist communion which has cut itself off, through pride, from the body of Christ which, even on the cross, remained whole.⁹⁸

Another example of Augustine’s exploiting of the presence of *unum* in the text, is his figurative treatment of Jn. 5:1-9, where his anti-Donatist and anti-Jewish polemic intersect. The pool encircled by five porches, represented the Jewish people encircled by their law (the five books of Moses). Healing came when the Lord troubled the waters by

⁹⁵ *Enarr. In Ps.* 132(133).11 (CCL 40.1933-34).

⁹⁶ *Enarr. In Ps.* 132 (133).13 (CCL 40.1934-35).

⁹⁷ *Enarr. In Ps.* 33(34).7 (CCL 38.286).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (CCL 38.286-87).

his crucifixion.⁹⁹ The *unum* whom the sick man complained had entered the pool before him (Jn. 5:7) is the one body of Christ.¹⁰⁰ Since it is in the Lord's passion that *unitas* is healed; those outside that unity, even if they are lying in the porches of the law of Moses, cannot be healed. For that, there must be a return to unity.¹⁰¹

The Psalms of Ascents (*cantica graduum*)¹⁰² offer rich material for Augustine's exegesis of unity, in relation to the theme of ascension. He understands the Psalm title to refer to the upward journey of the heart to God through Christ, who, by his own descent and subsequent ascent, became for believers a *mons adscensionis*.¹⁰³ This ascending takes place by the love which unites the body of Christ.¹⁰⁴ In that body Christ ascended to heaven, and only those who belong to that unity will ascend with him.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, *illi soli cum illo non adscendunt, qui cum illo unus esse noluerint*.¹⁰⁶

References in the Psalms to God's tent, or temple, give further occasion for figurative exegesis against the Donatists. Commenting on Ps. 83(84):10, *Elegi abici in domo Domini, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum*, Augustine contrasts the Lord's tent which is the *sancta ecclesia toto orbe diffusa*, with the tents set up by others

⁹⁹ *Enarr. in Ps.* 70(71).19 (CCL 39.957).

¹⁰⁰ "Piscina illa mota descendebat aegrotus, et sanabatur unus, quia unitas." *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Enarr. in Ps.* 102(103).15 (CCL 40.1465-66). Cf. *Enarrs. in Ps.* 83(84).10 (CCL 39.1156-57), 132(133).6 (CCL 40.1931).

¹⁰² Pss. 119(120) - 133(134).

¹⁰³ *Enarr. in Ps.* 119(120).1 (CCL 40.1777).

¹⁰⁴ *Enarr. in Ps.* 122(123).1 (CCL 40.1814).

¹⁰⁵ The "totus Christus" principle here is supported by Jn. 3:13, "Nemo adscendit in caelum, nisi qui de caelo descendit, Filius hominis qui est in caelo." *Enarr. in Ps.* 122(123).1 (CCL 40.1814).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 83(84).15 (CCL 39.1159).

for themselves *extra ecclesiam*, in which God has no pleasure.¹⁰⁷ He recognizes that *tabernaculum* and *domus* can be used interchangeably for the church, but believes that *tabernaculum* is more appropriately used of the church of this age and *domus* of the church of the heavenly Jerusalem, since tents, as used by soldiers in the field, aptly represent the church in its present militant phase.¹⁰⁸ Correspondingly, the text, *Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes eius*,¹⁰⁹ is put to use. If the feet referred to are those of the Lord, as he stands in his church, it follows that Donatist worship is unacceptable because offered outside.¹¹⁰ If the feet are those of the church itself (Christ's feet in his body), the Donatist claim, *Nos baptizamus*, reveals them not to be standing *in Christo* and therefore bound to fall.¹¹¹

The *ecclesia catholica* is also the *templum regis* of Ps. 44(45),¹¹² which, according to the Psalm, is spread *super omnem terram*.¹¹³ All believers are the living stones of which this temple is built (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5). Prayer is heard and eternal life is granted only within the unity of Christ's body. Those praying outside may be heard in respect of certain temporal requirements (as the demons who requested to enter into the swine were heard¹¹⁴), but they are not heard *ad vitam aeternam*.¹¹⁵ This was symbolized by the Lord's driving out

¹⁰⁷*Enarr. in Ps.* 146(147).19 (CCL 40.2137).

¹⁰⁸*Enarr. in Ps.* 131(132).10 (CCL 40.1916).

¹⁰⁹Ps. 131(132):7.

¹¹⁰“*Praeterquam domum suam, non exaudit Deus ad vitam aeternam.*” *Enarr. In Ps.* 131(132).13 (CCL 40.1917).

¹¹¹*Enarr. in Ps.* 131(132).14 (CCL 40.1918-19).

¹¹²“*Adducentur in templum regis,*” Ps. 44(45):15. *Enarr. in Ps.* 44(45).31 (CCL 38.515).

¹¹³*Enarr. in Ps.* 44(45).32 (CCL 38.516).

¹¹⁴Vd. Matt. 8:31-32.

¹¹⁵*Enarr. in Ps.* 130(131).1 (CCL 40.1898).

of the temple, with a whip of cords, those who sought their own things, rather than those of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:21).¹¹⁶

In these different ways, Augustine is arguing that Donatist possession of the *signa* of the Christian *res* will bear them no real fruit until they return to the *unitas* where alone the *res* are held. That *totus Christus* is the only valid context for fruitful spiritual activity is further established on the basis of Ps. 83(84):3-4, *Cor meum et caro mea exsultaverunt in Deum vivum. Nam et passer...invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum sibi, ubi ponat pullos suos.*¹¹⁷ The Psalmist's heart is represented by the sparrow (*passer*) and his flesh (*caro*) by the dove (*turtur*). The heart finds a home by beating its wings *in virtutibus huius temporis, in ipsa fide, et spe, et caritate, quibus volet in domum suam.*¹¹⁸ The home (God) is chosen *ad sempiternum*; the dove's nest (the unity of the church), on the other hand, is chosen *ad tempus*, as the context in which good deeds (*pullos suos*) are properly performed.¹¹⁹ Pagans and Donatists alike do good deeds outside the church, but their *pullos*, since they are not laid in a nest, are destined to be crushed.¹²⁰ Augustine links the point with Paul's interpretation (1 Tim. 2:15¹²¹) of Eve's relation to the Fall narrative (Gen. 3:1-6). The young of Eve (=the church), are laid in the hay of flesh (*feno carnis*) with which the Lord condescended to clothe himself.¹²² The faith in which Eve abides

¹¹⁶*Enarr. in Ps.* 130(131).2 (CCL 40.1899).

¹¹⁷*Enarr. In Ps.* 83(84).7 (CCL 39.1151).

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹¹⁹“In fide vera, in fide catholica, in societate unitatis ecclesiae pariat opera sua.” *Enarr. in Ps.* 83(84).7 (CCL 39.1152).

¹²⁰“Conculcabuntur et conterentur; non servabuntur, non custodientur.” *ibid.*

¹²¹“Salva autem erit per filiorum generationem, si permanserit in fide et dilectione et sanctificatione cum sobrietate.” *ibid.*

¹²²*Ibid.*

prefers to have a lowly place *in domo Domini* (the *Catholica*), than to dwell in *tabernaculis peccatorum* (the Donatist communion).¹²³

Augustine's exegetical ingenuity is applied to a portrayal, not only of the true unity of the *Catholica*, but, by way of contrast, of the spurious unity of the Donatist communion. The words of Ps. 61(62):5, *Cucurri in siti*,¹²⁴ are taken as a reference to the thirst of the head of the church for the return of schismatics to his body. This is justified on the basis of the analogy of drinking as involving the introduction of liquid, from outside, into the body.¹²⁵ This explanation is now linked with a figurative exposition of the worship of the molten calf by the Israelites in Exod. 32. As those who seek earthly things, schismatics are well represented by the hay-eating calf, a point supported by Isa. 40:6, *omnis caro fenum*.¹²⁶ The subsequent drinking of the water into which the powder of the image had been sprinkled, on Moses' instructions, symbolized the gradual process (*paulatim*) by which true converts, by their being made to pass through the fires of tribulation and their being ground by the word of God, are eventually detached from the false unity of the calf (*ab unitate corporis eius*) and absorbed into the unity of the *Catholica*. In this way, the thirst of the body of Christ, as it runs through time, is satiated.¹²⁷

¹²³*Enarr. In Ps.* 83(84).15 (CCL 39.1159). It is in the lowly place, chosen in unity, that the call of the host of the banquet (Lk. 14:10) is heard, "Adscende" (ibid.). Vd. supra, on the theme of ascension in unity.

¹²⁴According to the LXX.

¹²⁵*Enarr. In Ps.* 61(62).9 (CCL 39.780). This also explains the cry of Jesus on the cross, "Sitio" (Jn. 19:28), and his, "Sitio, mulier: da mihi bibere" (Jn. 4:7), both misunderstood by his hearers. Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid. On the earthly object of schismatic ambitions, cf. *Enarrs. In Ps.* 11(12).9 (CCL 38.80), 39(40).28 (CCL 38.445-46).

¹²⁷*Enarr. In Ps.* 61(62).10 (CCL 39.780-81). Augustine's exegesis represents an implicit justification of imperial measures against the Donatist. His words, "conspirati oderunt, comminuti crederunt" (*Enarr. In Ps.* 61[62].9 (CCL 39.780)), "sounds like a slogan in the campaign for imperial legislation against the schismatics." Cameron (1996), 416. Following Zarb, CCL dates this *Enarratio* to Sept.-Dec. 412 (CCL

Augustine's exegesis thus enables him to portray the Donatist church as the whole (spuriously united) body of the devil.¹²⁸ They belong *ad unam illam civitatem* (symbolized by Babylon) whose king the devil is. The unity of this *civitas* is illusory and transitory and it contains the seeds of its own dissolution, while the unity of the body of Christ is both true and permanent.¹²⁹

5.4 Scripture and *caritas* as the *vinculum unitatis*

The importance of the image of the church as the bride of Christ (in terms of the *duo in carne una* mystery of Eph. 5:31) entails for Augustine the closest link between unity and love.¹³⁰ His exposition of the connection, through exegesis, adds depth to his portrayal of church unity. Possibly influenced by the parable of the nobleman in Lk. 19:11-27, Augustine compares Christ to a husband who has gone from home on a long journey, having entrusted his wife to the care of his friends. It was not his intention that she should fall in love with any of them, but rather that she should always remain faithful to him.¹³¹

38. XVI).

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹*Enarr. In Ps. 61(62).6* (CCL 39.776). The Tyconian influence is again in evidence. Jerusalem represents the church because, as the Israelites passed into it, so people pass into the church by baptism. *Enarr. In Ps. 61(62).9* (CCL 39.780). Augustine's mature development of the notion of the two contrasting cities is found in his *De civ. Dei*. For a survey of expressions used by Augustine for the unity of the church, cf. Prina (1942), 149-50.

¹³⁰Vd. Grabowski (1957).

¹³¹"Ascensus in caelum, ipsam rursus Ecclesiam commendavit. Sponsus profecturus sponsam suam amicis suis commendavit: non ut amet aliquem ipsorum; sed ipsum tamquam sponsum, illos tamquam amicos sponsi, neminem eorum tamquam sponsum." *Sermo 268.4* (PL 38.1233-34). As Borgomeo says, "Du coup, sous le voile de l'image, un lien indissoluble s'établit entre amour et unité." Borgomeo (1972), 238.

This relationship requires of all Christians total commitment to their head.¹³² In terms of the marriage contract found in the Scriptures,¹³³ the duty of the bride, as the glory of her husband,¹³⁴ is to love him exclusively.¹³⁵

By reference to this image, Augustine is able to portray the Donatists in the role of the adulterous wife of the prophet Hosea.¹³⁶ In accordance with the statement of Hosea's wife (v.5), *Ibo post amatores meos...qui mihi dant panes meos et aquam meam, vestes meas et linteamina mea et oleum meum et universa quae mihi conducent*, the Donatists are without love to their true husband (God) and have been seduced by the proud (their leaders) with whom they commit adultery.¹³⁷ On the other hand, those Donatists who eventually see through the reasoning of their seducers, and return *ad viam pacis et quaerendum sinceriter deum*, are represented in vv. 6-7: *...ibo et revertar ad virum meum pristinum, quia bene tunc mihi fuit quam nunc*.¹³⁸ The failure of Hosea's wife (as expressed in v.5) to grasp that all the *integra et legitima* possessed by her seducers did not belong to them but to God, is addressed in v.8 (*et haec non cognovit, quod ego ei dederim frumentum et vinum, et oleum et pecuniam multiplicavi illi?*).¹³⁹ Similarly, Donatists do not grasp that all *sacramenta* and *spiritalia...operationes circa praesentem*

¹³²Cf. *Sermo* 238.3 (PL 38.1126).

¹³³*Sermo* 268.4 (PL 38.1233). Cf. *Sermo* 183.7 (PL 38.991).

¹³⁴*Sermo* 262.6 (PL 38.1209). In terms of "totus Christus", unity is the "pulchritudo" of Christ's bride: "Si enim pulchra, unitas est in te. Ubi divisio, foeditas est, non pulchritudo." *Sermo* 46.37 (CCL 41.564).

¹³⁵Cf. *Sermo* 138.10 (PL 38.769).

¹³⁶Vd. Hos. 2:5-8 (LXX), which functions as an "apertum". Curiously, it appears to have been cited only in *De bapt.* in an anti-Donatist context.

¹³⁷*De bapt.* 3.19.27 (BA 29.226).

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹*De bapt.* 3.19.27 (BA 29.230).

salutem, received through their spiritual leaders, are *munera dei*.¹⁴⁰ The same verse teaches them not to attribute to these leaders *illa quae...habent integra et de veritatis doctrina venientia* which their seducers use to lead them *ad falsitates dogmatum et dissensionum suarum*.¹⁴¹

In the treatises, and in some sermons, Augustine presents a number of (New Testament) texts as *aperta* on the subject of *unitas* as *caritas*, without recourse to figurative exegesis.¹⁴² The most frequently quoted text in this connection, in the treatises, is some part or other of 1 Cor. 12:31-1 Cor. 13:3.¹⁴³ These references appear most often in baptismal contexts. It is a text which enables Augustine to highlight both what Donatists possess, and what they lack, in their separation from unity. He uses it to express his view of the benefits shared by Donatists with Catholics (*quam multa et quam magna*).¹⁴⁴ The Donatists might have *linguam in sacris mysteriis angelicam* and the gift of prophecy, as had the ungodly Caiaphas (cf. Jn. 11:51) and Saul (cf. 1 Kgs. 10:10, 18:10). They might

¹⁴⁰*De bapt.* 3.19.27 (BA 29.226).

¹⁴¹*Ibid.* (BA 29.226-28). Augustine finds a similar (anti-Donatist) point made in the case of the adulterous woman addressed in Ezek. 16:17-19, "...et fecisti tibi imagines masculinas et fornicata es in eis. Et accepisti vestem meam versicoloriam...." The use of the 1st pers. "meam" in Augustine's Latin vs. (the LXX, following the Heb., has the 2nd pers: τὸν ἱματισμὸν σου) assists his argument. On Hosea's wife as a type of the Donatists, vd. Bavaud, "L'épouse adultère d'Osée, symbole de l'hérésie," BA 29.606, n.17.

¹⁴²For the virtual equivalence, for Augustine, of "amor", "caritas" and "dilectio", cf. Agaësse, SC 75, 31-6.

¹⁴³12:31-13:1: "et adhuc supereminentiorem viam vobis demonstro. si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum, caritatem autem non habeam, factus sum aërementum sonans aut cymbalum tinniens," *De bapt.* 1.18.28 (BA 29.118); 13:2: "et si sciero omnia sacramenta et omnem scientiam, et si habuero omnem prophetiam et omnem fidem ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habeam, nihil sum," *De un. bapt.* 7.11 (BA 31.688); 13:3: "et si distribuero omnem substantiam meam pauperibus, et tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam, caritatem autem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest," *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.77.171 (BA 30.428). For Optatus' use of this text, vd. *Contra Donat.* 3.8.10 (SC 413.60-62).

¹⁴⁴*De bapt.* 1.9.12 (BA 29.86). Cf. *De un. bapt.* 7.11 (BA 31.688), "Illa enim magna sunt, etiamsi ille nihil sit, qui ea sine caritate habuerit et eorum veritatem in sua iniquitate tenuerit."

possess the sacraments, as did Simon Magus (cf. Acts 8:13),¹⁴⁵ or have faith, as did the demons who confessed Christ (cf. Mk. 1:24). Not only in the *Catholica*, but *in diversis haeresibus*, people give of their possessions to the poor and even, in time of persecution, their bodies to the flame, *pro fide quam pariter confitentur*. But because, as *separati*, they perform these things neither as *sufferentes invicem in dilectione*, nor as *studentes servare unitatem in vinculo pacis* (cf. Eph. 4:2-3), they are unable thereby to attain to salvation.¹⁴⁶

Cyprian is held up as an example of one who observed the principle of *caritas*, enshrined in the text. As a *filius pacis ecclesiae*, Cyprian refused to create a schism, although it would have given him more followers than had Donatus (*quam latius Cyprianistae quam Donatistae vocarentur*). If Cyprian's insight into the *secretum abditum sacramenti* was deficient, that very fact served the purpose of making stand in bolder relief the *aliud supereminens* of the text (cf. 1 Cor. 12:31).¹⁴⁷ For all the imperfection of his insight into the sacrament, Cyprian *caritatem...humiliter fideliter fortiter custodivit*, and so deserved to receive the crown of martyrdom.¹⁴⁸ Donatist lack of *caritas*, on the other

¹⁴⁵Cf. *Ep. ad Cath.* 23.67 (BA 28.686).

¹⁴⁶*De bapt.* 1.9.12 (BA 29.86).

¹⁴⁷Because it seeks the peace of the church, "caritas" casts a veil over errors of human infirmity. Augustine quotes 1 Pet. 4:8 in support, "quia caritas cooperit multitudinem peccatorum." *De bapt.* 1.18.27 (BA 29.114).

¹⁴⁸*De bapt.* 1.18.28 (BA 29.118). Augustine describes the cloud covering the brightness of Cyprian's mind (with regard to the sacraments) as being dispelled "gloriosa serenitate fulgentis sanguinis." This was because his blood was shed "in unitate," to which Cyprian always gave precedence, something the Donatists fail to do. *De bapt.* 2.6.7 (BA 29.140-42). The parable of the vine (Jn. 15:1-17) is used to support his argument, in reference to Cyprian, that to abound "fructu...caritate", is compatible with the possession of deficiencies which require pruning. Compensation was made for Cyprian's error by his remaining "in catholica unitate...et caritatis ubertate," and it was completely removed by the pruning-hook of martyrdom ("passionis falce"). *De bapt.* 1.18.28 (BA 29.120). Cf. 2.5.6 (BA 29.138-42), 4.16.23 (BA 29.294). On the use of this passage with reference to Cyprian, vd. Bavaud,

hand, lends to their evangelism the disastrous consequence of healing their converts of idolatry or unbelief, while striking them with the still more serious *vulnere schismatis*. To drive home the point, Augustine contrasts the fate of idolatrous Israelites (execution by the sword¹⁴⁹) with the worse fate suffered by Israelite schismatics who were swallowed by the earth.¹⁵⁰

Part of Augustine's concern is to rebut Donatist use of 1 Cor. 13:1-3 against their Catholic opponents. Augustine notes its use by Petilian in a passage where the verses are quoted, with a variant in v.1.¹⁵¹ Augustine's response is to accuse Petilian of seeking to prevent the (clearly justifiable!) use of the text against the Donatists, not recognizing that the texts themselves are pre-programmed missiles, designed to strike the appropriate target from wherever launched.¹⁵² The programming in question is, of course, that of the Catholic (anti-Donatist) interpretation of the passage, as noted above. Faith and the sacraments are profitless without the presence of that *caritas* which is found only *in unitate ecclesiae*.¹⁵³

A number of other *aperta*, establishing the inseparable link between *caritas* and *unitas*, receive more cursory treatment in the treatises. These are texts which Augustine clearly

"L'allégorie de la vigne appliquée à Cyprien," BA 29.619, n.30.

¹⁴⁹Exod. 32:25-29.

¹⁵⁰A reference to Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16:31-3). Cf. Optatus, *Contra Donat.* 4.9.1 (SC 413.104).

¹⁵¹"et angelorum scientiam habeam," for "si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum." The latter is the reading in VL and Vulgate.

¹⁵²"Haec iacula viva sunt; undecumque iacentur, agnoscunt quos perimant." *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.77.172 (BA 30.428).

¹⁵³Ibid.

felt needed minimal exposition. They include Jn. 13:34-5, *mandatum novum do vobis, ut vos invicem diligatis...in hoc scient omnes quia discipuli mei estis, si vos invicem dilexeritis*.¹⁵⁴ Petilian had also quoted this text, claiming it to have been given to them by the Lord in order to guard simple faith and patience against Catholic savageries. Augustine, in turn, accuses them of hypocrisy, on account of the contradiction between the requirement of the text and actual Donatist character.¹⁵⁵

Closely associated in Augustine's mind with this text, are those which refer to the love of God and neighbour as the fulfilling of the law. It was to fulfil the law that Christ came and *plenitudo...legis caritas*. This is found only in his body.¹⁵⁶ As in the Old Testament there were true and false Israelites, so *veri christiani* are to be distinguished from *pseudochristiani*, the latter including *omnes haeretici et schismatici*. The former are represented by Nathanael, to whom the Lord said, *ecce vere Israhelita, in quo dolus non est* (Jn 1:47). Such fulfil the commandments by love, in the manner spoken of by Jesus, *qui diligit me, mandata mea custodit* (Jn. 14:21), within the context of unity.¹⁵⁷ Again, Augustine takes 1 Jn. 2:9, *qui odit fratrem suum, in tenebris est usque adhuc*, as a clear description of the Donatists. Their lack of love entails that their (valid) baptism does not benefit them outside of unity.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴*De bapt.* 3.19.26 (BA 29.222), where it is linked with the parable of the vine as applied to Cyprian. Cf. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.2.5 (BA 28.400), *De bapt.* 1.18.28 (BA 29.118).

¹⁵⁵*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.75.167-68 (BA 30.424).

¹⁵⁶Vd. Rom. 13:10. *De bapt.* 3.19.26 (BA 29.222). Cf. *Sermones* 33.2 (CCL 41.413), 125.10 (PL 38.696-97), 90A.4 & 13 Dolbeau (1996), 60-1, 66. For a discussion of the unity of love of God and neighbour in Augustine, cf. Schlabach (1995).

¹⁵⁷*De bapt.* 3.19.26 (BA 29.220-22). Cf. Augustine's quotation of "diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum" (Matt. 22:39, Mk. 12:31, Rom. 13:9, all reflecting Lev. 19:18). *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.68.154 (BA 30.412).

¹⁵⁸*De bapt.* 6.14.23 (BA 29.434-36). Cf. 7.46.91 (BA 29.556), 5.20.27 (BA 29.372).

It is significant that most of these *aperta* which seek to establish the link between *unitas* and *caritas* occur in baptismal contexts. This reflects the importance of the baptismal issue in the Catholic - Donatist controversy. Augustine was deeply convinced that the Donatists possessed the *signum* of the sacrament in a way that rendered their administration of it valid. Lacking the indispensable *caritas*, however, they could not possess the *res* to which the sacrament's salvific effect was tied.

In the preached material, Augustine elaborates his doctrine of the *unitas-caritas* connection by means of his distinctive figurative exegesis. Five key examples will cover the main lines of his approach.¹⁵⁹

a. Controlled by his understanding of 1 Cor. 13:1-3, Augustine offers a detailed allegorical treatment of the valiant woman in Prov. 31, as a figure of the church. His main focus is on v.10a, *mulierem fortem quis inveniet?*¹⁶⁰ V.10b, *Pretiosior est autem lapidibus pretiosis, quae eiusmodi est*, is explained in light of 1 Cor. 13:1. Augustine distinguishes between the *lapides pretiosi* which are *in ecclesia*, so precious that they are

¹⁵⁹Augustine's most sustained treatment of "caritas", however, is found in his theological exposition of 1 John, in ten homilies (*In Ioh. Ep.*). Useful general treatments of Augustine's theology in this work are found in Agaësse (SC 75), 37-102 and Dideberg (1975). Cassidy offers a valuable study of the bearing of the Donatist controversy on Augustine's exposition of this book. Motifs from 1 Jn. which receive special emphasis, on this account, are, a. the need for humility to confess sin in order to love, b. love of unity as the condition of sharing the divine life, c. the need to affirm Christ (head and body), not only in word, but in deed and truth. Cassidy notes Augustine's (unlikely) use of 1 Jn. 3:9 (which speaks of those who are born again as not committing sin) against the Donatists, by making it refer to a particular sin - that against love (= the Holy Spirit). Cassidy (1995), 201-20.

¹⁶⁰*Sermo* 37.1 (CCL 41.446). For a full survey of Augustine's use of Proverbs in an anti-Donatist context, vd. La Bonnardière (1975), 54-64.

described as *vivi* by Peter (cf. 1 Peter 2:5), and the *ecclesia* itself which is still *pretiosior*.¹⁶¹ A further distinction is drawn. The precious stones, so-called because *docti, abundantes et scientia et eloquio et omni instructione legis*, are represented by Cyprian because he remained in the woman's ornament (*mansit in huius ornamento*). Other stones are represented by Donatus because he broke out of the connected arrangement of jewellery (*resilivit a compagine ornamenti*).¹⁶² The distinction relates to the issue of *caritas*. Augustine underlines this by means of a further comparison. The person who shakes himself free from the woman's jewellery, is wanting to make a name for himself, apart from the woman (=the church), while the person who remains with her, *ad illam collegit*.¹⁶³ With a play on the root of *caritas*, Augustine claims that the stones are only precious because *caro valent*, and therefore *ille vilis est, pretium perdidit, qui non habet caritatem*.¹⁶⁴ Whatever learning or eloquence the latter might have, he must listen to the *ornamenti inspectorem*, as he speaks in 1 Cor. 13:1 (*si linguis hominum loquar...aut cymbalum timmiens*). This verse describes a *lapis*, like Donatus, that once shone, but can now only make a tinkling noise. The conclusion drawn is that no stone should give pleasure *praeter huius mulieris ornamentum*. He adds that this woman, since she is herself more precious than precious stones, *ornamenti sui ipsa pretium est*.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹*Sermo* 37.3 (CCL 41.449).

¹⁶²*Ibid.*

¹⁶³*Sermo* 37.3 (CCL 41.449-50). Cf. Lk. 11:23.

¹⁶⁴*Sermo* 37.3 (CCL 41.450).

¹⁶⁵*Sermo* 37.3 (CCL 41.450-51). Augustine is being carried away here by the imagery of his text to the point of envisaging the church as an entity apart from its members. Cf. a later paragraph in the same sermon where the church is invited to come to the final judgement without fear, to be judged not only by her husband, but by her members, the saints. *Sermo* 37.19 (CCL 41.463-64).

Later in the sermon, Augustine's allegorical treatment is again explicitly controlled by 1 Cor. 13:1-3 (which he cites). Commenting on Prov. 31:29, *Multae filiae fecerunt potentiam. Tu autem superasti, et superposuisti omnes*, Augustine contrasts the many daughters with the woman herself. The former, so called because born of the woman, he takes to represent *haereses*. As such, the latter are daughters *similitudine sacramentorum*, not *morum*.¹⁶⁶ He finds the same distinction in Cant. 2:2, identifying the *mulier* with the *lilium in medio spinarum*. That the *spinae* also *faciunt potentiam*, despite their having *florem* without *fructum*, is proved from Matt. 24:24-5.¹⁶⁷ The way in which the woman has surpassed them all, is by having both flower and fruit. The fruit corresponds to the *super eminentem viam* of 1 Cor. 12:31 and the *fructus spiritus* of Gal. 5:19-22, of which the first and most important is *caritas*. It is from this pinnacle or root (*ab hoc apice ab hac tamquam radice*) that the other constituent parts of the fruit of the Spirit are held together, as by the indispensable unifying principle.¹⁶⁸

b. Another way in which Augustine uses figurative exegesis to support the *caritas-unitas* connection relates to the biblical image of a banquet. In a sermon preached in Carthage, on the parable of the wedding of the king's son in Matt. 22:1-14, Augustine begins by distinguishing two banqueting-tables, one at which both *boni* and *mali* sit (as the one in the parable - cf. v.10), and the one in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11), from which the *mali* are excluded.¹⁶⁹ He dismisses the suggestion that the terms *boni* and *mali* (v.10)

¹⁶⁶*Sermo* 37.27 (CCL 41.469).

¹⁶⁷"Nonne in nomine tuo manducavimus et bibimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus?" *Sermo* 37.27 (CCL 41.470).

¹⁶⁸*Sermo* 37.28 (CCL 41.471). Augustine adds, "Unde iste botrus pulcher? Quia pendet a caritate." *ibid.*

¹⁶⁹*Sermo* 90.1 (PL 38.559).

might refer to the same individuals (while acknowledging on the basis of 1 Jn. 1:8-9, that all believers are both, simultaneously), on account of the fact that one was found present at the feast without a wedding garment (*vestem nuptialem*). This individual was ejected in such a way as not only to miss out on the banquet but also to be eternally damned.¹⁷⁰ This one man, argues Augustine, is to be taken as representative of the many.¹⁷¹ He points out that the discovery of the offender was made, not by the servants, but by the *paterfamilias* who entered the hall to inspect the guests.¹⁷² The reason why only the *paterfamilias* could discern the lack, was that the garment is the kind seen *in corde, non in carne*....¹⁷³

The question of the identity of the *vestis nuptialis* is now addressed. Augustine rejects the idea that it refers either to baptism or to the eucharist, since in the case of either sacrament, *quam vestem video in bonis, video in malis*. Neither can it represent miracles, since Pharaoh's magicians were able to perform miracles which the Israelites could not (Exod. 7-8).¹⁷⁴ The meaning of the wedding garment is summed up in 1 Tim. 1:5, *Finis autem praecepti est...charitas de corde puro, et conscientia bona, et fide non ficta*.¹⁷⁵

This love alone, as distinguished from all earthly loves, is the wedding garment. Faith, of itself, is not sufficient to secure a place at the banquet - it must be the *fides quae per*

¹⁷⁰*Sermo* 90.3 (PL 38.560). For Optatus' use of Matt. 22:11-13, cf. *Contra Donat.* 5.10.3, 6 (SC 413.156,158).

¹⁷¹"Unus ille unum genus erat; nam multi erant." *Sermo* 90.4 (PL 38.560). That this one represents many is proved by the Lord's explanation of the command given to the attendants, "Projicite eum" (v.13), as being, "Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi." *Sermo* 90.5 (PL 38.561).

¹⁷²"Paterfamilias inspexit, paterfamilias invenit, paterfamilias distinxit, paterfamilias separavit." *ibid.* Augustine's use of "paterfamilias" instead of "rex" (as in the text) is probably due to a confusion, through lapse of memory, with Lk. 14:21, "tunc iratus paterfamilias dixit servo suo..."

¹⁷³*Sermo* 90.4 (PL 38.561). This is supported by Ps. 131(132):9, "Sacerdotes tui induantur iustitiam," and 2 Cor. 5:3, "Si tamen induti, et non nudi inveniamur." *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵*Sermo* 90.6 (PL 38.562). Augustine also cites, *ad loc.*, 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

dilectionem operatur (Gal. 5:6). Love is the wedding garment because, while it is possible to have faith without love, *dilectionem non potestis habere sine fide*.¹⁷⁶

In another sermon, Augustine links this parable with the account of the feeding of the four thousand with seven loaves (Mk. 8:1-9), of which he offers a supporting interpretation. The four thousand represent the church as founded on the four gospels, the seven loaves signify the seven-fold working of the Holy Spirit (based on Isa. 11:2-3), and the whole episode represents God's banquet.¹⁷⁷ By drawing on a text found in the Matthaean account,¹⁷⁸ Augustine distinguishes between the four thousand who actually partook of the food and the *insensati* and *effeminati* (represented by the children and women) who are invited to partake, and so to change for the better. It is God who *inspicit convivium suum*, and if the *mali* do not change, the one *qui novit invitare, novit separare*.¹⁷⁹ The *paterfamilias* (so-called) who discovered the man without the wedding garment is identified as *sponsus ille speciosus forma prae filiis hominum* (cf. Ps. 44(45):1). With characteristic word-play, Augustine explains the purpose of the marriage. The groom is the one who *foedus factus propter sponsam foedam, ut eam faceret pulchram*. That such a sponsus imposed so severe a judgement on the offender, demonstrates the lack of a wedding garment to be a *culpa...valde gravis*.¹⁸⁰ Linking his exposition with 1 Cor. 13:1-3, Augustine describes the various items listed there as

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷*Sermo* 95.2 (PL 38.581).

¹⁷⁸“Erant autem qui manducaverunt quatuor milia hominum, exceptis pueris et mulieribus” (Matt. 15:38).

¹⁷⁹*Sermo* 95.3 (PL 38.382).

¹⁸⁰*Sermo* 95.5 (PL 38.583).

*magnae vestes: nondum tamen est illa nuptialis.*¹⁸¹ His hearers are invited to clothe themselves in this garment of *caritas*, and thus to be able to recline at the table *securi*, when Christ comes to inspect them.¹⁸²

c. An important symbol of the unity of the church, for Augustine, was the Lord's tunic, which his executioners cast lots for, but did not tear.¹⁸³ The close identity between *unitas* and *caritas*, for Augustine, appears in his treating these terms as synonymous in his figurative interpretation of the *tunica: quae est tunica, nisi caritas... quae est tunica nisi unitas?*¹⁸⁴ The Lord's outer garments represented the *sacramenta visibilia*, possessed by *boni* and by *mali* alike.¹⁸⁵ While these outer garments are liable to be rent by *haeretici*, the inner garment of *caritas* cannot be divided. The reason is that this *tunica inconsutilis* (Jn. 19:23) is *desuper texta*, the latter phrase indicating its source in the Father and the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁶ Those whose hearts are lifted up to heaven (where Christ is) are incorporated into the *tunica* and are thus themselves *desuper texti*. They cannot, therefore, be divided *in partes* since the tunic *non potest dividi*.¹⁸⁷ It was because schismatics could not divide *caritas* that they withdrew from the *Catholica*.¹⁸⁸ In doing

¹⁸¹*Sermo* 95.7 (PL 38.584).

¹⁸²*Ibid.*

¹⁸³Vd. Jn. 19:23-4 and Ps. 21(22):18, "Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea et super vestimentum meum miserunt sortem." This had been an important symbol of the unity of the church also for Cyprian. Cf. Cyprian, *De unit.* (CSEL 3/3.215).

¹⁸⁴*Enarr. In Ps.* 21(22).19 (CCL 38.127).

¹⁸⁵*Sermo* 218.9 (PL 38.1086), *Enarr. In Ps.* 21(22)/2.19 (CCL 38.127).

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷*Sermo* 159B.18. Dolbeau (1996), 288.

¹⁸⁸*Enarr. In Ps.* 21(22)/2.19 (CCL 38.127).

so, they showed themselves to be woven from below, rather than from above, and for this reason are vulnerable to division.¹⁸⁹

d. By a skilful handling of references to the *canticum novum* in a number of Psalms, Augustine manages to equate *caritas* with the *Catholica*. The new song is represented as being sung, not in any particular region (as the Donatists supposedly believed), but in all the earth.¹⁹⁰ Elsewhere, commenting on the text, *Deus, canticum novum cantabo tibi, in psalterio decem chordarum psallam tibi* (Ps.143[144]:9), Augustine takes the harp of ten strings to represent the ten commandments. To sing and play is the happy business of lovers, and is a mark of the new man, as fear is characteristic of the old covenant.¹⁹¹ It is because the *mandatum novum* of love (Jn. 13:34) is the *plenitudo legis*, that it sings the new song on an instrument of ten strings. Love for God and neighbour fulfils them all.¹⁹² The *rebaptizatores donatistae* do not belong to the new song because they have cut themselves off from the church which sings it *in omni terra*.¹⁹³

e. Further figurative exegesis of the *unitas-caritas* connection occurs on the narrative of Peter's post-resurrection commissioning (Jn. 21:15-17). In a sermon on the shepherds in Ezek. 34, Augustine contrasts the one true shepherd who speaks in Jn. 10:27 (*quae sunt*

¹⁸⁹*Sermo* 159B.18. Dolbeau (1996), 288.

¹⁹⁰“Cantate Domino canticum novum, cantate Domino omnis terra” Ps. 95(96):1. *Enarr. In Ps. 95(96).2* (CCL 39.1343).

¹⁹¹*Sermo* 33.2 (CCL 41.413).

¹⁹²*Ibid.* In another musical figure, Augustine understands the exhortation to praise God, “in chordis et organo” (Ps. 150.4), to represent true harmony (one organ) arising out of diversity (many strings). *Enarr. In Ps. 150.7* (CCL 40.2195).

¹⁹³*Sermo* 33.5 (CCL 41.415).

oves meae, audiunt vocem meam, et sequuntur me) with the many bad shepherds that exist. All good shepherds, however, are found *in uno pastore*. In charging Peter, *Pasce oves meas* (Jn. 21:17), the Lord was commending the sheep to a good shepherd. By addressing the charge to only one of several apostles, the Lord *in ipso Petro unitatem commendavit*.¹⁹⁴ The divine *misericordia* ensures that there are still good shepherds, but all good shepherds *in uno sunt, unum sunt*. In a striking application of the *totus Christus* principle, Augustine states that Christ himself *pascit unus in his, et hi in uno*. He feeds the sheep when they feed them, because *in illis vox ipsius, in illis caritas ipsius*.

Augustine makes explicit the undergirding *totus Christus* construction doing service here. Christ wished to make Peter one with himself (*unum secum*), *ut esset ille caput, ille figuram corporis portaret, id est, ecclesiae, et tamquam sponsus et sponsa essent duo in carne una*.¹⁹⁵ To this end, it was necessary to establish the presence in Peter of the love that undergirds unity.¹⁹⁶

In another sermon, Augustine speaks of the Lord's making *amatorem...pastorem*.¹⁹⁷ It is by loving the sheep that love is shown for the shepherd, whose they are, *nam et ipsae oves membra sunt pastoris*.¹⁹⁸ In his handling of the passage, Augustine also highlights his notion of *caritas* as the health (*sanitas*) of the body. The Lord was the *medicus* whose

¹⁹⁴*Sermo* 46.30 (CCL 41.555).

¹⁹⁵*Sermo* 46.30 (CCL 41.556). Cf. Augustine's statement elsewhere, "in Petro ecclesiam cognoscendam." *Sermo* 229P (PLS 2.756-58).

¹⁹⁶"Confirmat caritatem, ut consolidet unitatem." *Sermo* 46.30 (CCL 41.556).

¹⁹⁷*Sermo* 138.4 (PL 38.765). Cf. *Sermones* 137.3 (PL 38.755-56), 147.2 (PL 38.798).

¹⁹⁸*Sermo* 229N.1 (MA1.493).

interrogation of Peter *ad sanitatem pertinet*.¹⁹⁹ As a good physician he followed the correct procedure, first showing Peter to Peter, and then Christ to Peter.²⁰⁰

In this section, consideration has been given to the exegetical basis of Augustine's understanding of the link between the unity of the church and love, in the context of his anti-Donatist polemic. The picture is incomplete, however, without an appreciation of Augustine's view of the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to both. In the following section, therefore, attention will be given to Augustine's attempt to uncover the scriptural basis of his understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the unity of the church.

5.5 Scripture, *caritas* and *Spiritus Sanctus*

If Augustine frequently identifies *unitas* with *caritas* in anti-Donatist contexts, he is equally concerned, in these contexts, to identify the source, even the essence, of *caritas* with the Holy Spirit. This enables him to account for Donatist breach of unity in terms of their lack, not only of love but, still more seriously, of the Holy Spirit.²⁰¹

Augustine's key scriptural *apertum* for this purpose, found in the anti-Donatist treatises almost invariably in baptismal contexts, is Rom. 5:5, *caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus*

¹⁹⁹*Sermo* 253.1 (PL 38.1180).

²⁰⁰*Sermo* 299B.1 (MA1.517). On the "unitas-caritas-sanitas" link, vd. Borgomeo (1972), 241-46.

²⁰¹Cf. Prina (1942), 133f.

*nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.*²⁰² In the *Ep. ad Cath.* he quotes it in the context of responding to Petilian's use of Prov. 5:15 (*ab aqua aliena abstine te et de fonte alieno ne biberis*) with reference to heretical (Catholic) baptism.²⁰³ Augustine points out that *aqua* in Scripture does not always stand for the visible sacrament of baptism, and he prefers to take *aliena aqua* as symbolic of the spiritual defection described in 1 Tim. 4:1.²⁰⁴ The *flumina aquae vivae*, promised by the Lord (Jn. 7:37-8), for example, on his own authority represent, not baptism, but the Holy Spirit who had not yet been given, although the visible sacrament had at that time already been administered to many by the disciples.²⁰⁵ On the same basis, Augustine rejects Petilian's application to baptism of the continuing exhortation in the Proverbs passage (Prov. 15-17).²⁰⁶ The reference again, he claims, is not to visible baptism which strangers, too (ie, those who will not possess the kingdom of God), can have, but to the gift of the Holy Spirit who belongs only to those who will reign eternally with Christ. Rom. 5:5 is quoted in this context. The heart-expanding (*latitudo cordis*) effect of love, produced by the Holy Spirit, is signified by Proverb's reference to *plateis*.²⁰⁷ Making explicit his *aperte/figurate* interpretive procedure, Augustine points out that what is conveyed *figurate* in Prov. 5:15 is taught

²⁰²*Ep. ad Cath.* 23.66 (BA 28.684). Cf. *Epp.* 157.4 (CSEL 34/3.451), 185.50 (CSEL 34/4.43-4). For a general survey of Augustine's use of Rom. 5:5, including its use in the anti-Donatist context, vd. La Bonnardière (AM II), 657-66.

²⁰³*Ep. ad Cath.* 23.65 (BA 28.682).

²⁰⁴"Spiritus autem manifeste dicit quia in novissimis temporibus recedent quidam a fide, attendentes spiritibus seductoribus, doctrinis daemoniorum." *ibid.*

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*

²⁰⁶"Bibe aquam de tuis vasis et de puteorum tuorum fontibus, et fons aquae tuae sit tibi proprius et nemo alienus communicet tibi, et non superfluant tibi aquae foras, et in plateis tuis discurrant aquae tuae." *Ep. ad Cath.* 23.66 (BA 28.684).

²⁰⁷*Ibid.* "Platea," from the Greek πλατεία, means a broad way. Augustine finds a reference to the same effect of Spirit-induced love in 2 Cor. 6:11, which he quotes, "os nostrum patet ad vos, o Corinthii, cor nostrum dilatatum est." *Ibid.*

aperte in 1 Jn. 4:1, while the correct figurative interpretation of Prov. 5:17 is controlled *aperte* by Rom. 5:5.²⁰⁸

On the basis of the link already established between unity and love, and since love is the *dei caritatem* of Rom. 5:5, Augustine is in a position to argue that *non accipi nisi in catholica spiritum sanctum* and that, by necessary implication, the Donatists are without the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁹ The attesting miracles (including speaking in tongues), originally associated with the giving of the Spirit, *per manus inpositionem*, are no longer a necessary sign of having received the Holy Spirit. The situation now is that divine love is breathed into the heart *invisibiliter et latenter propter vinculum pacis*, enabling the recipients to employ the words of Rom. 5:5 as their own.²¹⁰ Again, Augustine distinguishes between the many general operations of the Holy Spirit (like prophecy), which the *mali* can experience and the particular operation of the Spirit, in terms of *caritas*, of which the *boni* are the alone objects. This gift of love *proprium donum est catholicae unitatis et pacis*.²¹¹ Augustine calls on Petilian to recognize the vital distinction between the *signum* (the visible sacrament) and the *res* of baptism. The latter is the invisible anointing of *caritas* by the Holy Spirit.²¹² Because *mundatio spiritualis*, which is the *res* of baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit, can be experienced only within the *Catholica*, Augustine believes that Donatist conversion “ne consiste pas en un

²⁰⁸“Nolite omni spiritui credere, sed probate spiritum qui ex deo est.” *Ep. ad Cath.* 23.67 (BA 28.686).

²⁰⁹*De bapt.* 3.16.21 (BA 29.210).

²¹⁰*De bapt.* 3.16.21 (BA 29.210-12).

²¹¹*De bapt.* 3.16.21 (BA 29.212).

²¹²“Discerne ista, discerne; discernat te deus a parte Donati et in catholicam revocet....” *Contra litt. Petil.* 2.104.239 (BA 30.546).

simple passage d'une communauté de sacraments à une autre, mais d'une communauté de sacraments à une société de saints, ce qui présuppose chez eux un changement radical de la volonté et du cœur."²¹³ On the basis of Rom. 5:5, therefore, Augustine can call on Donatists to return to Catholic truth and peace, through the gift of the Holy Spirit and thus find cleansing and healing (*mundari sanarique*). The result is not the annulment of Donatist sacraments, but the enjoyment, for the first time, of their salvific benefit.²¹⁴

In the treatises, Augustine makes much of the Pauline *animalis(carnalis)/spiritualis* distinction in pursuing his aim of portraying the Donatists as lacking the Holy Spirit, and thus *caritas*. His chosen *apertum* in this connection is 1 Cor. 2:14, *homo animalis non percipit quae sunt spiritus dei*.²¹⁵ The distinction finds allegorical illustration in the case of Esau compared with that of Asher.²¹⁶ Esau, though born of a natural wife, was separated from the people of God *propter fraternam discordiam* (Gen. 25:23), while Asher, who was born *ex ancilla*, received the promised land, *propter fraternam concordiam* (cf. Gen.30:13).²¹⁷ Augustine anticipates the objection to this line of allegorizing that it implies that Ishmael's preceding Isaac and Esau's preceding Jacob, entails either that heresy gives birth to its children before the church gives birth, or else that the church first gives birth to those who are *carnales vel animales*, and only

²¹³De Veer, "Mundatio spiritualis," BA 31.772, n.c.18.

²¹⁴*Contra Cresc.* 2.16.20 (BA 31.194). Cf. Batiffol (1929), 158-67.

²¹⁵*De bapt.* 1.15.23 (BA 29.108). Cf. 3.14.19 (BA 29.204), 3.15.20 (BA 29.208), 4.15.22 (BA 29.288); *Contra Cresc.* 2.13.16 (BA 31.184). To the same purpose Augustine also cites Jude 19 ("Hi sunt qui se ipsos segregant, animales, Spiritum non habentes"). *Sermo* 265.11 (PL 38.1223-24). Cf. *Sermo* 269.3 (PL 38.1236) and *Retract.* 2.27 (CCL 57.112). The latter refers to Augustine's use of the text (with 1 Cor. 2:14) in his "Probationum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas liber unus." This work is not extant.

²¹⁶On Esau and Ishmael as symbols for Augustine of all "carnales", vd. Pontet (1945), 331.

²¹⁷*De bapt.* 1.15.23 (BA 29.106). Vd. Bavaud, "L'exégèse allégorique de l'union des patriarches avec leurs épouses et leurs servantes," BA 29.587-88.

afterwards to *spiritalis*. Augustine answers the point by interpreting the order of births in light of 1 Cor. 15:46 (*non est prius quod spiritale sed quod animale, postea spiritale*) to refer to the fallen condition of humanity in which all are born from Adam.²¹⁸ All *dissensiones et schismata* are to be traced to their root in this derived *sensus animalis*. All who refuse to make progress in relation to the things which are *spiritus dei*, will always remain *animales* and belong to the old covenant. On the other hand, those who make progress towards the perception of the things of the Spirit belong to the new covenant. Even if they die before fully becoming *spiritalis*, they are protected *per sacramenti sanctitatem* and thus *in terra viventium computantur*.²¹⁹

The link between *caritas* and the Holy Spirit is also explored, to Donatist disadvantage, in Augustine's figurative exegesis in the preached material. Two examples will be given. The first occurs in a complex figurative treatment of Ps. 103(104):3, *Qui protegit in aquis superiora (caeli)*.²²⁰ Having established that v.2 (*extendit caelum, sicut pellem*), is a figurative reference to the Scriptures,²²¹ Augustine proceeds to identify their higher parts (*superiora*) with the *via supereminetior* of 1 Cor. 12:31.²²² Confirmation that *aquae* refers to the Holy Spirit is (again) found in Jn. 7:37-9. This identification of the Holy Spirit with the covering of the *superiora* with water is supported from Rom. 5:5. The

²¹⁸*De bapt.* 1.15.23 (BA 29.108).

²¹⁹*De bapt.* 1.15.24 (BA 29.108-10). Cf. Ps. 141(142):6. Augustine adds that he can find no better interpretation of the words of Ps. 138(139):16, "inperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui," in light of those that immediately follow, "et in libro tuo omnes scribentur." Ibid. For a detailed discussion of "homo spiritalis" in Augustine, cf. Mayer (1987), 3-60.

²²⁰*Enarr. In Ps.* 103 (104)/1.9 (CCL 40.1481).

²²¹*Enarr. In Ps.* 103(104).8 (CCL 40.1480).

²²²*Enarr. In Ps.* 103(104).9 (CCL 40.1481).

appropriateness of the image lies in the fact that *Dominus in caelos adscendit, ut superior esset caelis, et inde mitteret caritatem*.²²³

Secondly, in connection mainly with Rom. 5:5, Augustine makes much figurative play with the notion of the breadth of true *caritas*, in contrast with the *angustum cor* of the Donatists.²²⁴ The believer's heart, as God's home, is contrasted with the temple of Solomon which was too confined to be able to offer God a dwelling-place.²²⁵ When this wealthy guest (*spiritus sanctus*), who is both God and the gift of God, comes, the space available for him is widened, not narrowed. To show this he not only promised, *Habitabo in eis*, but *Et deambulabo*.²²⁶ Those who receive him can say, *Implesti cellam meam, et non me exclusisti, sed angustiam meam*.²²⁷ Commenting on Ps. 118(119):96, *Omnis consummationis vidi finem. Latum mandatum tuum valde*, Augustine points out that in Rom. 5:5, Paul did not use the term *inclusa*, but *diffusa*, in order to indicate *latitudinem*. It is *propter ipsam latitudinem* that he calls on Donatists (suitably referred to, in the context, as *fratres nostros*) to return (to the sphere where the Spirit thus works).²²⁸

His establishing of the link between unity, love and the Holy Spirit, enables Augustine to use biblical texts referring to the sin against the Holy Spirit to good polemical effect

²²³*Enarr. In Ps. 103(104).10* (CCL 40.1483).

²²⁴Cf. *Sermo 23.7* (CCL 41.313). This must be related to Augustine's oft repeated accusation that the Donatists believed their communion to represent the only true church in the world.

²²⁵Ibid. Cf. 1 Kgs. 8:27. Augustine quotes, ad loc., Jn. 14:23, "Veniemus...ad eum, et mansionem apud eum faciemus."

²²⁶*Sermo 23.7* (CCL 41.313). Cf. 2 Cor. 6:16.

²²⁷*Sermo 169.15* (PL 38.924).

²²⁸*Sermo 358.4* (PL 39.1588).

against the Donatists. For the Donatists, the sin of Caecilian in handing over copies of the Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was regarded as so heinous as to be identified as the sin against the Holy Spirit. This is the sin which *non remittitur neque hic neque in futuro saeculo*.²²⁹ Augustine naturally rejects this view and identifies the sin against the Holy Spirit as that of schism, because it is in the Holy Spirit that the *unitas dilectionis et pacis* is preserved. He refuses to accuse the Donatists of this sin, however, since he does not wish to despair of their recovery. It is, rather, the sin of those who, *ab unitate disiuncti*, maintain an impenitent heart to the end of their life.²³⁰

Augustine's fullest treatment of the sin against the Holy Spirit, with an eye to the Donatists, is found in a long and rambling sermon based on Matt. 12:32, *Qui dixerit verbum contra Spiritum sanctum, non remittetur ei, neque in hoc saeculo, neque in futuro*.²³¹ He regards the text as an *obscurum*, requiring elucidation from *aperta*.²³² His first main point is that the Lord's choice of words in the text leaves room for a distinction between forgiveable and unforgiveable speaking against the Holy Spirit. The Lord deliberately avoided saying either, *Omnis blasphemia Spiritus non remittetur*, or, *Qui dixerit quodcumque verbum contra Spiritum sanctum, non remittetur ei*. If he had used either of these formulae, it would have made it impossible for the *Catholica* to win over

²²⁹Matt. 12:32. Cf. Mk. 3:28-9. *Contra Cresc.* 4.8.10 (BA 31.490).

²³⁰*Contra Cresc.* 4.8.10 (BA 31.490-92). Vd. Lamirande, "Le péché contre le Saint-Esprit," BA 32.748-49).

²³¹*Sermo* 71.1 (PL 38.445). Augustine claims that, "forte in omnibus sanctis Scripturis nulla major quaestio, nulla difficilior invenitur," and this was why, in preaching, he had hitherto avoided "huius quaestionis difficultatem molestiamque." *Sermo* 71.8 (PL 38.449).

²³²*Sermo* 71.11 (PL 38.450).

pagans, Jews or *haeretici*.²³³ He then proceeds to discuss the question of the exact meaning of *verbum* in the text, noting that it must refer to some particular reality,²³⁴ since the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is clearly a particular kind of blasphemy.²³⁵ After an involved discussion, the conclusion is eventually reached that the sin in question is that of persistent *impoenitentia* in regard to the reception of this *donum gratuitum* who binds the people of God into unity.²³⁶ A number of other biblical texts are referred to (Hos. 1:1, 1 Tim. 5:17, Jas. 1:22) to show that elsewhere in Scripture the singular *verbum* can represent many words. This enables Augustine to argue that the singular here represents the drawn-out resistance of impenitent hearts to the forgiveness of sins which the Holy Spirit bestows within the unity of the *Catholica*.²³⁷ Since the *verbum contra Spiritum sanctum*, understood in this way, keeps a person *extraneus...ab Ecclesia*, the one context where remission of sins is effected by the Holy Spirit, it is obviously a more serious sin than a word spoken against the Son of Man.²³⁸ No absolute judgements should be made, however, about the repentance of others in this life and not even schismatics should be despaired of.²³⁹ The only way to be sure of having not committed the unpardonable sin is to avoid an impenitent heart in relation to the *societas Spiritus in pacis vinculo*.²⁴⁰

5.6 Scripture, *caritas* and *pax*

²³³*Sermo* 71.9 (PL 38.449).

²³⁴*Sermo* 71.10-11 (PL 38.449-51).

²³⁵*Sermo* 71.16 (PL 38.453).

²³⁶*Sermo* 71.19 (PL 38.455).

²³⁷*Sermo* 71.22 (PL 38.456-57).

²³⁸*Sermo* 71.28 (PL 38.460).

²³⁹“Schismaticus est hodie: quid si cras amplectatur catholicam pacem?” *Sermo* 71.21 (PL 38.456).

²⁴⁰*Sermo* 71.37 (PL 38.466).

References to *pax* in the above discussion have indicated the close link between this notion and that of *unitas* and *caritas* in the ecclesiology developed by Augustine in the context of the Donatist controversy. For Augustine, as has been shown, the *caritas* of the Holy Spirit is the foundation of ecclesial unity. *Pax*, in turn, represents the constituent element of love and “brings together all three themes of universality, unity and the holiness of charity within the *corpus permixtum*.”²⁴¹ Attention is given in this section to Augustine’s exegetical handling of *pax*, in the context of arguing his case for church unity, against the Donatists.

For Augustine, those who remain in the unity of the *Catholica* are *ipso facto* the children of peace.²⁴² This notion of *unitas* as *pax* is found in Augustine’s earliest anti-Donatist works. In the *Ps. contra part. Don.*, for example, he puts in the mouth of the faithful the words, *Nos amemus pacem Christi/ gaudeamus in unitate*.²⁴³ The *pax Christi*, which is nourished by love, finds frequent mention in the treatises, both in relation to the issue of discipline and to that of schism. The main *apertum* is that of Eph.4:2-3, *sufferentes invicem in dilectione, studentes servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis*.²⁴⁴ This text is

²⁴¹Cameron (1996), 429. Cf. *Enarr. In Ps.* 149.2 (CCL 40.2178), “In nova caritate quid est? Pax, vinculum sanctae societatis, compago spiritalis, aedificium de lapidibus vivis. Ubi est hoc? Non in uno loco, sed per universam orbem terrarum.” For a helpful general survey of Augustine’s handling of “pax”, vd. Fitzgerald (1999), 629-32.

²⁴²“Pax est in eis, custodiunt eam in ceteris quantum possunt; ubi in aliis deficiunt, in se tenent.” *Enarr. In Ps.* 103(104)/3.5 (CCL 40.1503).

²⁴³*Psalm. contra part. Donat.* 167 (BA 28.172). On the peace of the church as an image of the peace of the future heavenly city, vd. Borgomeo (1972), 258-59.

²⁴⁴*De bapt.* 6.7.10 (BA 29.420). Cf. *Epp.* 44.11 (CSEL 34/2.119), 210.1 (CSEL 34/4.354).

frequently repeated, almost like a refrain, and usually by way of allusion rather than quotation.

On the one hand, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is presented as the *pia ratio et modus* of ecclesiastical discipline. All punitive remedies used within the church, which have the effect of breaking the bond, are both superfluous and useless.²⁴⁵ Paul would not permit this bond of peace to be broken on any account, as his refusal to remove *fraternam...caritatem* from the one he asks to be separated *de fraterna congregatione* demonstrates.²⁴⁶ The Donatists are exhorted, for their benefit, to consider how the apostle's love is directed to the end of compelling believers, in mutual support, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.²⁴⁷

The same text is used against the Donatists themselves in response to the latter's deployment of it against the Catholics. Augustine gives Petilian's quotation of the text (as supported by Matt. 5:9, *Beati pacifici quoniam ipsi filii dei vocabuntur*, and Jer. 8:11, *Pax, pax, et ubi est pax?*), in accusing Catholics of feigning a desire for peace, while seeking unity by war.²⁴⁸ Augustine responds that if Petilian would heed the words he quotes, he would be willing to tolerate known evils, *propter pacem*, instead of inventing new ones, *propter dissensionem*.²⁴⁹ He calls attention to Donatist inconsistency at this

²⁴⁵*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.1 (BA 28.384).

²⁴⁶*Contra ep. Parmen.* 3.1.3 (BA 28.392). In this connection, 2 Thess. 3:14-15 is quoted, "...non ut inimicum eum existimetis, sed corripite ut fratrem." *ibid.*

²⁴⁷*Ibid.*

²⁴⁸*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.68.153-70.157 (BA 29.410-14).

²⁴⁹*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.69.155 (BA 30.414).

point, in that *propter unitatem Donati*, they had themselves learned to put up with the infamous evils of Optatus (of Thamugadi).²⁵⁰ He describes the Donatists as broken cisterns (with a possible allusion to Jer. 2:13, *isti lacus detriti*²⁵¹) who hold only the smoke of their pride and are thus unable to contain the Holy Spirit, in such a way as to be able to obey the exhortation in Eph. 4:2-33.²⁵² They are also blind leaders of the blind who cannot see the *viam pacis*.²⁵³ Augustine calls on Donatists of good will to correct their error at this point.²⁵⁴

For Augustine, therefore, *pax* is an essential, constituent element of the love on which the unity of the church is based. The Donatists lack the qualities listed in Eph. 4:2-3 (*sustinentiam, dilectionem, unitatem spiritus, pacem*), since each of these is produced by the Holy Spirit whom they are without. Their lack of *sustinentia* is shown by their withdrawal from the church, of *dilectio* by their desertion of the *membra Christi*, of unity by their *sacrilega praecisione* and of *pax* by their *nefaria dissensione*.²⁵⁵

It is particularly in his preaching on the Psalms, controlled by the *totus Christus* hermeneutic, that Augustine employs figurative exegesis, in relation to *pax*, against the Donatists. The emphasis on this in his regular preaching is suggested by the fact that, preaching on one occasion on Ps. 146(147), Augustine had only to quote v.14 (*Qui*

²⁵⁰*Contra litt. Petil.* 2.69.156 (BA 30.414). Cf. 2.78.174 (BA 30.432-34), 3.5.6 (BA 30.598).

²⁵¹This text is used by Optatus. Cf. *Contra Don.* 4.9.1 (SC 413.104).

²⁵²*Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.8.15 (BA 28.302).

²⁵³Cf. Isa. 59:8. *Contra ep. Parmen.* 2.17.36 (BA 28.368).

²⁵⁴*Ep. ad Cath.* 20.55 (BA 28.666).

²⁵⁵*Sermo* 260A.3 (MA1.37-8).

posuit fines tuos pacem), for his congregation to respond with a delighted shout. He tells them that it was *dilectio pacis* in them that made them cry out.²⁵⁶ The Donatists, to the contrary, by condemning the whole world, except Africa, manifest disobedience to the injunction of Ps. 33(34):14, *Quaere pacem et sequere eam*.²⁵⁷ The church's borders are not only *pax*, they are conterminous with *universi fines terrae*.²⁵⁸

Augustine ingeniously finds the *pax-caritas* connection in Ps. 121(122):7, *Fiat pax in virtute tua*. He links the verse with Cant. 8:4, *Valida est sicut mors dilectio* and thus offers as an equivalent reading of his first text, *Fiat pax in dilectione tua*, because, he says, *virtus tua, dilectio tua*.²⁵⁹ For the destruction of this peace, Donatist leaders are made to carry a heavy burden of responsibility. They say, *Pax vobiscum*, but *pacem non habent quam populis praedicant*. If they had possessed it, they would not have torn the unity of the church.²⁶⁰ Commenting on Ps. 71(72):5, *Suscipiant montes pacem populo, et colles iustitiam*, Augustine takes the *montes* to refer to those who are eminent in the church, and commissioned to teach others (2 Tim.2:2). Those less eminent (the *colles*) follow their teaching and example, and so the former should take care to counsel peace, in order that schisms be prevented. The *colles*, on the other hand, are counselled to follow the *montes* by imitation and obedience, in such a way that they accord a superior

²⁵⁶*Enarr. In Ps. 146(147).15 (CCL 40.2149)*. Augustine comments, "Quanta pulchritudine intellectus pacis corda vestra percussit?" He feels himself too weak to speak further on the topic and is happy to await a better time, "Differamus omnes laudes pacis ad illam patriam pacis. Ibi eam plenius laudabimus, ubi eam plenius habebimus." *ibid.*

²⁵⁷*Ibid.*

²⁵⁸Ps. 21(22):27. *Enarr. In Ps. 146(147).16 (CCL 40.2151)*.

²⁵⁹*Enarr. In Ps. 121(122).12 (CCL 40.1812)*.

²⁶⁰*Enarr. In Ps. 121(122).12 (CCL 40.1813)*. Cf. *Enarr. In Ps. 124(125).10 (CCL 40.1843)*.

place to Christ than to their leaders. Only this will keep them from being seduced by the authority of evil mountains and *se a Christi unitate disrumpant*.²⁶¹ By contrast, the fruitful olive branches of Ps. 127(128):3, *in circuitu mensae...velut novellatio olivarum*, through association with the olive-carrying dove of Gen. 8:11, represents the *filiis pacis*. The olive is the fruit of peace, since oil signifies love, and *sine caritate nulla pax est*. It follows that those *qui diviserunt pacem, non habebant caritatem*.²⁶²

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a detailed study of the way in which Augustine, in his anti-Donatist writings, applies his hermeneutical tools to the task of establishing from Scripture his distinctive conception of the unity of the church. As noted, various biblical texts, with reference to unity, were shared by him with Cyprian and Optatus, but even these were made to serve Augustine's distinctive ecclesiology. While Optatus had already moved from the Cyprianic and Donatist notion of the church to one that conceived of unity within the context of a universal church, Augustine went much further with his doctrine of the church as *corpus Christi*. This, essentially spiritual, model leaves Augustine's church with a somewhat ambiguous relationship to the empirical church of Cyprian, of the Donatists or even of Optatus. Its unity is essential and organic, because dependent on the head (Christ), its essential characteristic is *caritas*, because indwelt by the Holy Spirit who, as the bond of the Trinity, comes from the head and unites in love all

²⁶¹ *Enarr. In Ps. 71(72).5* (CCL 40.974).

²⁶² *Enarr. In Ps. 127(128).13* (CCL 40.1877).

the members of the body, in such a way that they live together in peace. All salvific operations within the church are performed by the head. As the dwelling of the Spirit, the *ecclesia* has been given the power of the keys. Forgiveness of sins and all other beneficial effects of the sacraments, are found only within her fellowship. To this *corpus*, therefore, Augustine persistently and repeatedly calls on all schismatics to return.

The hermeneutical tools employed in the exegetical exposition of this ecclesiology are those described in the *De doctrina christiana*. There is a remarkable convergence between the ecclesiology just considered and the principles there enunciated, which Augustine deploys to best (theological and anti-Donatist) effect in relation to the central issue of ecclesial unity. This will appear most clearly in the context of a full discussion of the relationship between Augustine's hermeneutics and his understanding of the *nota ecclesiae*, as presented in the foregoing chapters. To this discussion we turn in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The main body of this work has involved a close reading of Augustine's handling of a wide range of biblical texts in his anti-Donatist writings. All of these texts received his exegetical attention because they were believed (most often by Augustine but sometimes by the Donatists) to bear, in one way or another, on issues relating to those traditional marks of the church on which Catholics and Donatists were at variance. Because the consistent theme here is that of the nature of the Christian church, Augustine's handling of these texts is particularly well placed to illustrate the distinctive christo-ecclesiological hermeneutic, expounded in the *De Doctrina Christiana*, by which his biblical interpretation was informed. Our study of Augustine's employment of exegesis in the service of ecclesiastical polemics requires to be supplemented by further research on his use of Scripture in relation to the recognized sacraments (in particular, baptism,¹ but also eucharist and ordination) and to the issue of church-state relations. An important further line of research would seek to place Augustine's use of Scripture in the anti-Donatist writings in the broad context of his use of Scripture for polemical purposes, earlier against the Manichees and subsequently against the Pelagians. A comparative study of Augustine's handling of Scripture in the context of the three major controversies in which

¹ The issue of baptism was of great importance in the Catholic - Donatist debate, as the length of Augustine's treatise on the subject (*De baptismo*) itself indicates. From one perspective it was on the question of rebaptism that "the whole argument between Donatists and Catholics ultimately turned." Bonner (1989), 327. In terms of his "totus Christus" construct, Augustine was able to present Christ as the true minister of the sacrament and (fallen) human ministers as merely agents through whom Christ acts. The exegetical basis on which Augustine argues his position requires further elucidation.

he was deeply involved would serve to elucidate patterns of continuity and of discontinuity, over time, in his biblical exegesis and to illustrate his capacity for adapting his exegetical strategy to the widely differing demands and audiences which these polemical contexts represented.² The outcomes of this study require to be set, and will be best appreciated, in light of comparatively recent changes in general scholarly assessment of Augustine as an exegete.

6.1 Augustine's changing reputation as exegete

The general neglect of Augustine's exegesis in the 20th century, in comparison with other aspects of his work, reflects a widespread negative assessment, by historians and biblical scholars alike, of the value of his contribution in this area. The trend-setter here, in the English-reading world, was FW Farrar whose Bampton Lectures, delivered in 1885, included an assault on Augustine's exegetical skills which was as vitriolic as it was lacking in balanced judgement.³ Farrar acknowledged Augustine's greatness as apologist and theologian. He also recognized the quality of some of Augustine's theoretical rules of interpretation but claims that "when we read his actual comments, these principles are forgotten."⁴ Part of the problem, Farrar judges, was the poor equipment brought by Augustine to the task of exposition. His lack of Hebrew and meagre knowledge of Greek, for example, left him vulnerable to the (often) misleading texts of the LXX and the Old

² A useful introduction to Augustine's involvement in these controversies is found in Bonner (1963).

³ Farrar (1886).

⁴ Farrar (1886), 234.

Latin versions.⁵ Augustine's exegesis is consequently marked by "prolix puerility" and "arbitrary perversion." It was also "warped by dogmatic prepossessions."⁶ Foolishly seeking to find all, or almost all, of the truth of the Gospel in the Old Testament, Augustine failed to see "that there could be nothing of real or independent value in the incessantly wavering interpretations of divine enigmas." As a result, his exegetical output is scarred by "incessant instances of that futile method which evacuated the Bible of a significance infinitely precious, in order to substitute for its real lessons the thinnest commonplaces of homiletic and dogmatic edification." His exegesis thus becomes "the facile slave of his personal theology."⁷ Farrar can find some justification for the employment of the allegorical method of interpretation in the pre-Nicene period, but in the hands of Augustine its use had degenerated to a purely artistic method for the display of ingenuity and for the support of ecclesiasticism. Farrar's main concern, in this connection, was the lack of any proper control on the exegete afforded by the method. Once admit the principle "that whole passages and books of Scripture say one thing when they mean another," and "the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to the caprice of the interpreter."⁸

In the course of the last century, Farrar's strictures have been echoed in the writings of scholars as diverse as Jean Daniélou, CH Dodd, James Barr and Raymond Brown.

Bonner offers a generally positive appraisal of the principles of *De Doctrina Christiana*

⁵ Farrar (1886), 234.

⁶ Farrar (1886), 236.

⁷ Farrar (1886), 237.

⁸ Farrar (1886), 238-39.

but worries about Augustine's actual (allegorical) expositions which "bear so little relation to the thought of the original writer of the text," and about Augustine's "fascinated preoccupation with the hidden meanings, the *sacramenta*, of scripture."⁹ Bonner seeks to win back some reputation for Augustine as an exegete by distinguishing between his (strict) use of allegory and his typological interpretation of the Bible, but this distinction has been shown to be, at last, unsustainable.¹⁰

In more recent years the tide has been turning in the direction of a new appreciation of Augustine's exegetical practice, as well as his theory, in the wake of a new openness to the validity of allegorical approaches to biblical interpretation.¹¹ Two fundamental presuppositions, both of them now widely questioned, lie at the root of twentieth century hostility to Augustine's characteristic method of exegesis. The first was a strong reaction against the traditional view that the New Testament parables were to be read as allegories. The new view was that "the parables were challenging and sharp vignettes, directed *ad hominem*, whose cutting edge had been far too long smoothed over by the mistakes of allegorical interpretation."¹²

The second presupposition was the assumption that the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation was the only valid one. Since allegorical approaches were

⁹ Bonner (1963), 558-59.

¹⁰ Bonner (1963), 560. On the failure of the attempted distinction, cf. Young (1993), 104.

¹¹ Cf. Louth (1983), Young (1993).

¹² Young (1993), 103. The relevant classical 20th century studies of the parables from this perspective are those of Jülicher, Dodd and Jeremias. Dodd influentially offered Augustine's interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of the discredited approach to the interpretation of the parables. Cf. Dodd (1934), 11-12.

inextricably mixed up with spiritual speculations (rather than hard historical facts), they represented a useless embarrassment.¹³ As Young shows, the attempt to justify traditional “typology” and to distinguish it from allegory relates to these assumptions. Daniélou had sought to distinguish events and words and associated the first with typology and the latter with allegory.¹⁴

These assumptions have now been widely challenged. The current reaction against modern historicism is partly based on a new appreciation of the literary character of the biblical writings and a recognition that it is “the way the story is told in the biblical material that makes the events significant in any sense.” Since Scripture is literature, response to it, as always to story, “no matter how ‘history-like’, involves dimensions other than a documentary reading.”¹⁵ Watson identifies a growing recognition that revelation takes place in the very words of Scripture with a consequent liberation of the meaning of Scripture from dependence on the results of scholarly reconstruction of the events underlying the text.¹⁶ In addition, there is now a new awareness that the ancients had a different kind of appreciation of history from us. This has led, for example, to a recognition that “it may have been a modern projection to suppose that a parable did not mean allegory, a view advanced...irrespective of the reality that allegorical reading was a widespread assumption for ancient readers”.¹⁷

¹³ Young (1993), 104.

¹⁴ The same distinction is implicit in the title of RPC Hanson’s study of Origen as biblical interpreter, *Allegory and Event* (1959). Cf Young (1993), 104.

¹⁵ Young (1993), 105.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* For a study of problems raised by historical criticism for the life of the contemporary church, cf. Braaten and Jenson (1996).

¹⁷ Mark’s parables, for example, have been shown to be something like “historical allegories” which

There is no doubt, however, that the main impetus to the new appreciation of Augustine's exegesis derives from the so-called hermeneutical revolution represented, among others, by Gadamer. In his significant work, *Discerning the Mystery*, Andrew Louth draws on Gadamer's critique of the (Romantic) hermeneutic of the historical-critical method, especially his rejection of the notion of an "original meaning" of a text, as leading to the "Promethean" hermeneutical endeavour of "seeking to relive the author's original creative inspiration, with the hope of doing so with greater understanding than the author himself," by means of "painstakingly reconstructing his original context". Gadamer preferred to see understanding "as an engagement with what a writer wrote, and thus (and only thus) engagement with him".¹⁸ Louth links this with the view of TS Eliot that, in composing a poem, a poet has created something new and therefore to understand a poem is to understand the new thing that is, not to have access to the process by which it came into being.¹⁹ Like poetry, Louth argues, Scripture is a *mira profunditas*, a depth, "a richness derived from the mystery to which it is the introduction, of which it is the unfolding."²⁰

Similarly, Young believes that some degree of allegory is necessitated by a commitment on the part of readers to participation in texts and argues that "every attempt at entering the world of the text, or seeing the text as mirroring our world and reflecting it back to

combine "concealment and revelation in the sort of riddling symbolism which is an ingredient of apocalyptic." Young (1993), 106-7 and cf. the literature there cited.

¹⁸Louth (1983), 102.

¹⁹Louth (1983), 102.

²⁰Louth (1983), 110.

us, involves some degree of allegory.” On this understanding, the supposed repudiation of allegory “has been a dramatic loss to the Christian tradition.”²¹ On this basis and in opposition to the prevailing twentieth century dismissal of allegorical interpretation as fundamentally dishonest, Young offers three reasons why an allegorical interpretation of Scripture might be ethical. First, there is its potential for creative cultural challenge, by enabling the reader “to grapple constructively with the dynamic between divergencies and connections, differences and similarities, as the reader allows the text to impinge on the self and/or the world of the present.”²² Secondly, allegory can facilitate the reclaiming of the rich intertextuality of the Bible, by enabling “associative links of poetic images, symbolic actions, parables, metaphors, stories, to be discerned.”²³ Thirdly, since allegory “self-consciously makes play with the inadequacies of human language for explaining the divine,” allegorical approaches can have the effect of liberating the reader “for creative engagement with transcendence, and such spiritual reading, with a certain open-mindedness, can alone do justice to the textual claim which the Bible makes...”²⁴

The validity of each of these arguments in defence of an allegorical reading of Scripture - its potential for creative cultural challenge, its contribution to the rich canonical intertextuality of the Bible and its value as a means of constructive engagement with transcendence - has found ample illustration in our study of Augustine’s exegetical endeavours against the Donatists. They go a long way towards absolving him of the

²¹ Young (1993), 117.

²² Young (1993), 117-18.

²³ Young (1993), 118.

²⁴ Ibid.

charge of dishonest exegetical practice which has so often and on doubtful grounds been levelled at him. In this connection, Louth compares Augustine's exegetical method favourably with that of modern historical criticism. The latter operates on the principle that the meaning of a text is basically objective and unproblematic and obtainable by the means of historical criticism. Louth points out that in developing his hermeneutical theory in the *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine "takes for granted that the meaning of a text is what the author intended, and so sees allegorical meanings as part of what the author intended." Louth argues, however, that the historical-critical method has been found deficient in that, for all its claimed objectivity, it regularly fails to deliver the truth of the Word of God and thus undermines that devotion to Scripture as the Word of God which is represented by Fathers like Augustine.²⁵ The vital question to ask about the allegorical approach, Louth argues, is whether "this way focuses our attention on the text of Scripture in such a way that we are more able to hear what it has to say to us, more alert, more sensitive, to the voice of God in the Scriptures." He claims that, properly understood, this is exactly what it does.²⁶ Our study of Augustine's exegesis, in which the allegorical method plays so significant a part, tends to bear out Louth's conclusions both in terms of the devotion to Scripture as God's Word which it represents and its general faithfulness to major contours of biblical truth. Our study certainly makes the view that spiritual exegesis "is fundamentally faithless, irreligious" appear absurd.²⁷

²⁵Louth (1983), 98.

²⁶Louth (1983), 106.

²⁷Cf. Louth (1983), 98.

One of the most important writers in recent times on patristic and medieval exegesis has been the noted Jesuit scholar Henri de Lubac whose multivolume study, *Exégèse Médiévale*, is now appearing in English. De Lubac's work sheds much light on the inner structure and undergirding principles of allegorical or "spiritual" exegesis which he holds to be the unanimous tradition of the church in its first 1500 years. By analysing the traditional four senses of Scripture (the literal, moral/tropological, mystical/allegorical and analogical) and, in particular, by exploring the organic inner connections of the latter three senses, De Lubac has shown that this schema can be collapsed into a simple two-fold division, that between the literal and the allegorical (spiritual) senses. By the "spiritual" interpretation of the Bible, De Lubac means the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in the light of Christ and of the New Testament. "The conversion of the Old Testament to the New or of the letter of Scripture to its spirit can only be explained and justified, in its radicalness, by the all-powerful and unprecedented intervention of Him who is Himself at once the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last."²⁸ Christ "is the Master of the First Testament as He is of the Second. He has made them for each other. He separates them and reunites them in Himself."²⁹ In this perspective, "Jesus Christ brings about the unity of Scripture, because He is the end point and fullness of Scripture...Consequently, He is, so to speak, its whole exegesis."³⁰ Thus, "He unites the two Testaments into a single body of doctrine."³¹

²⁸ De Lubac, (ET, vol.1, 1998), 235-36.

²⁹ Ibid., 236.

³⁰ Ibid., 237. As De Lubac points out, ad loc., Augustine takes this to be the meaning of the phrase "in finem" which is often found in the headings of Psalms. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* 139.3 (CCL 40.2013).

³¹ Ibid., 239.

The relationship between the two Testaments, on this view, is one of fulfilment in Christ, “in whom the hints and guesses of the Old are realized in the reality of the new and eternal.”³² Conversely, the movement from the literal to the allegorical sense is “a movement of understanding the mystery which the facts revealed by the literal sense disclose.”³³ This movement can be seen as one from *fides* to *intelligentia*, or of *fides quaerens intellectum*.³⁴ The purpose of this *intelligentia*, however, is not purely intellectual but is essentially a matter of realizing our participation in the mystery of Christ. Thus (following the traditional division of senses), the allegorical sense, with its primarily dogmatic dimension, is organically connected with and leads into the moral sense, since it calls for response and participation on the hearer’s/reader’s part. The anagogical sense, in turn, provides a window on to the fruition of the mystery of Christ in which Scripture calls us to participate.³⁵

Our study of Augustine’s use of Scripture in the anti-Donatist writings has focussed mainly on the treatises and on the preached material. In both, Augustine was concerned to establish the biblical foundation of his understanding of the nature of the *Catholica* and to confute Donatist ecclesiology. His aim was to establish Catholics in the revealed truth regarding the church, as he understood it, and to win over Donatist readers and hearers, with a view to ending the unhappy schism. Augustine’s handling of Scripture in these two

³²Louth (1983), 117.

³³Ibid.

³⁴On the contrasting functions of faith and understanding in Augustine, cf. De Lubac (ET, vol. 2, 2000), 114-16. “Augustine...readily makes the faith line up with the milk of the letter, or of the flesh, and understanding line up with the solid nourishment of the spirit or of divinity.” Ibid., 114-15.

³⁵For an extended discussion of allegory as the sense of the faith, in medieval exegesis, with many helpful references to Augustine (and other patristic writers), cf. De Lubac (ET, vol. 2, 2000), 83-125.

sets of texts is, however, markedly different from each other and corresponds, largely, to De Lubac's distinction between literal and spiritual exegesis.

6.2 Augustine's use of Scripture in the anti-Donatist treatises

In one of the earlier treatises, Augustine makes plain his intention of avoiding in direct polemics texts (like the narratives of the ark and of Gideon's fleece) which are *figurarum velaminibus involuta* and whose obscurity requires them to be interpreted in the light of clearer passages.³⁶ Augustine's main aim in the deployment of Scripture in the treatises, as representing direct polemical encounter with those perceived to be fundamentally in error on basic aspects of divine revelation, was to establish *fides* in the relevant *res* of the Christian mystery. He concentrates, therefore, on the fundamental meaning of Scripture which is the literal meaning of the New Testament, as the (spiritual) fulfilment of the mystery which is everywhere present in the Old. This largely explains the distinctive emphases in Augustine's use of Scripture in the treatises where, as we have seen, New Testament texts are much more in evidence.

First, we have highlighted Augustine's emphasis on New Testament evidence of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. This was of special importance for the support of Augustine's notion of catholicity as geographical extension against the Donatist view that catholicity means doctrinal and sacramental plenitude. Clear instances of fulfilled

³⁶ *Ep. ad Cath.* 5.9 (BA 28.524). In the case of the ark narrative (Gen. 6-8), however, Donatist use of the text constrained him to demonstrate its figurative pro-Catholic potential.

prophecy of the church's catholicity are found in the promises made to the patriarchs, particularly Gen. 22:18 which is regularly linked with Gal. 3:15-16. Use of texts from the prophets is sparing and those cited are carefully linked with New Testament evidence of their fulfilment in Christ and the church.³⁷ The *sponsus-sponsa* relationship provides the controlling image for interpreting the fulfilment of texts from Isa. 53 and 54 in the New Testament. In view of Donatist acceptance, on apostolic authority, of the fulfilment of Isa. 53 in Christ and of Isa. 54 in the church, Augustine offers a restrained exegesis of these texts, with simple reference to the largeness of the number of people who are mentioned in them, in order to establish that the referent is the universal *Catholica* rather than the Donatist communion. By contrast, a text like Dan. 2:34-5, which is not cited in the New Testament but which was of great importance for Augustine, receives only a few brief allusions in the treatises, without exposition, although it features prominently in the homilies where it serves as an effective proof text for his *totus Christus* ecclesiology. Similarly, in the treatises, Augustine's exegesis of the Psalms with reference to catholicity, concentrates on those Psalms whose fulfilment in the New Testament is there made explicit. Of particular importance is his handling of Ps.2:7-8 (one of the most frequently cited Old Testament texts in the New Testament) where the notion of Christ's world-wide *hereditas* is expounded for his purpose. Even here, however, the exposition is restrained in comparison with the highly figurative treatment of the theme of *testamentum*, from the passage, in the preached material.

³⁷ Cf. Isa. 11:9-10/Rom. 15:12; Isa. 27:6/Gal. 3:6; Isa. 43:4-5/Apoc. 22:13; Isa. 42:1-4/Matt. 12:17-21; Isa. 49:6/Acts 13:47; Isa. 49:8/2 Cor. 6:2, etc.

Augustine held that *fides* in ecclesial catholicity, in the sense in which he understood the term, was further confirmed by a number of *lucida et manifesta testimonia* found in the New Testament itself. These, as noted, were Matt. 8:11-12, which was partly used to rebut Donatist deployment of Matt. 7:13-14, Matt. 24:14 (used to counter Donatist interpretation of Lk. 24:47), Matt. 28:19, Lk. 24:47 (to which the *totus Christus* hermeneutic is applied, although more fully in his preaching), Acts 1:8, Acts 2:10, 11-15, Gal. 3:15-16 and Col.1:3-6. Corroboration of his understanding of catholicity is found in a (literal) reading of the references in Acts, the New Testament epistles and the Apocalypse to the geographical spread of the early church.

In his exegesis of ecclesial purity in the treatises, Augustine handles in some detail two main sets of biblical texts: those to which the Donatists made appeal and those which he believed were the key ones in support of the Catholic position. The emphasis in ancient Israel on cultic purity and the consequent need for physical separation from any potential source of defilement, provided the Donatists with an arsenal of Old Testament texts relevant to their understanding of church purity. Augustine's main response is to insist on the need to interpret such texts in light of their fulfilment in the New Testament. Thus, Lev. 10:9-10 must be understood in the clearer light of the parable of the wheat and the tares; 2 Chron. 19:2-3 in the light of Phil. 1:15-18, 2:21 and 2 Cor. 6:14-16, etc. Augustine's response to Donatist use of Hagg. 2:14 is an interesting example of his endeavour to turn "Donatist texts" against themselves, on the basis of their clear prophetic and messianic context. When this hermeneutic is applied, the literal sense of the

Old Testament texts become essentially their spiritual, New Testament, meaning. Most “Donatist texts” on purity discussed by Augustine in the treatises are taken from the Pauline epistles. Augustine’s handling of these texts is, in general, aimed at demonstrating that a proper (literal) interpretation does not support the Donatist but the Catholic position. The one example of Donatist allegorical exegesis found in this context (their interpretation of the parable of the wedding banquet in Matt. 22:1-14) is met by a counter allegorical interpretation. Augustine, throughout, is attempting to offer a more convincing theological and contextual exegesis of the text under discussion.

In Augustine’s handling of his preferred texts on the issue of purity, Old Testament texts are again sparingly deployed. Only Cant. 2:2 and Ezek. 9:4 occur in this context, the former against the background of frequent Donatist appeals to Canticles, and interpreted in light of New Testament texts, with appeal to the precise, literal wording of the latter. Pauline texts again predominate and are given a theological and contextual interpretation in support of his *corpus permixtum* ecclesiology. The most striking aspect of Augustine’s exegesis, under this heading, is the use made by him of several Matthaean parables which are treated to detailed allegorical interpretation. Augustine’s allegorizing of these parables, however, requires to be differentiated from his characteristic allegorizing of Old Testament *obscura*. The fact, as indicated above, that it was taken for granted by patristic commentators that this was the correct way to interpret parables, provided Augustine with a useful opportunity to approach these texts as *aperta*. He was able thus to combine his penchant for figurative exegesis with a commitment to the New Testament as the

source of the *res* of the Gospel on which faith must be grounded.³⁸ The special contribution of the parables to Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic was their provision of direct dominical authority for his position.

The same fundamental exegetical pattern has emerged in our study of Augustine's handling in his treatises of texts relating to the mark of church unity. For the most part, Augustine's appeal is to New Testament texts which reflect dominical and apostolic authority for, and example of, the positions for which he wishes to argue. Very occasionally, an allegorical treatment of an Old Testament text appears in answer to prior Donatist allegorical treatment of the same text. The most important example is Augustine's exegesis of Ps. 132(133) in response to its use by Petilian.³⁹

Augustine's use of Scripture in the treatises, therefore, reflects the restraints placed on it by the demands of formal polemical engagement with his Donatist opponents. This entailed a concentration on the literal interpretation mainly of relevant New Testament texts. These texts, which reflect New Testament fulfilment of the Old in Christ and the church, offered the necessary way of establishing the authoritative teaching of Scripture on the topics under debate. In this context we have encountered many examples of

³⁸ The only other exceptions to Augustine's otherwise literal New Testament exegesis, in this context, are his symbolic interpretation of names (eg Bethesda) and numbers (eg the catch of 153 fish), and for the same reason.

³⁹ Cf. also Augustine's response to Petilian's use of Prov. 5:15. Elsewhere in the treatises, Hos. 2:5-8 is made to serve as a kind of acted prophecy of the Donatist schism.

responsible exegesis (from the standpoint of modern hermeneutical theory), with attention often paid to the original meaning of the text, in its context.⁴⁰

6.3 Augustine's use of Scripture against the Donatists in the preached material

Augustine's approach to biblical exegesis was primarily that of a pastor, called to minister the Word of God to the people of God. Among his people and in the pulpit he was at his most relaxed and here he was able to "be himself" in his handling of Scripture, in a way that was not possible in writing polemical treatises. In this context his use of Scripture against the Donatists we have shown to have conformed to those patterns of exegesis which are most characteristically his. In each area of debate we have witnessed him instructing, admonishing and delighting his congregation by his indefatigable synthesizing of Scripture as he weaves tapestry after tapestry of biblical citations and allusions which, at times, so dazzled the audience that their astonishment came to open and loud expression. As we have seen, it was also in the preached material that the christo-ecclesial hermeneutic, with its associated conjunctive theory of signs, comes into its own. *Totus Christus* functions as the key to the unity of the Testaments. By this means the Old Testament is made to operate as much more than a purely historical document. It is the Word of God, addressing the concrete situation of individuals and the church here and now.

⁴⁰ Cf. his treatment of Lk. 24:47, Acts 1:8, Gal. 3:15-16, in relation to catholicity; Phil. 1:15-18, 2 Tim. 2:20 in relation to ecclesial purity, etc.

For Augustine, the Bible is the appointed channel of the divine will to transform human beings from those who, in pride, oppose the divine call (as the Donatists, in several important respects were perceived to have done), into people who, in the fellowship of the *Catholica*, embrace it in love.⁴¹ Thus, Augustine's exegetical strategy against the Donatists is a true reflection of his understanding of the divinely ordained function of Scripture in the redemptive process. In this process, which is centred on the incarnation as God's response of love to human pride, Scripture was the appointed means by which redemptive encounter with the incarnate Christ takes place.⁴² Incorporation into the body of Christ, the *locus* of salvation, requires a true engagement with, and participation in, the "body" of Scripture as the literary representation of Christ's ecclesial body.⁴³ Such engagement and participation are achieved by means of figurative readings of the text which moves, more or less explicitly, around the poles of Christ and the church, especially in Augustine's expositions of the Psalms.⁴⁴

⁴¹"Augustine is intent on interpreting God's Word only to build (in thankfulness) and extend the Church which conveys and reads to him the Word that shall not pass until the end of history, thus enabling him to take part in its trans-historical vision of eternal Love." De Margerie (1991), 129.

⁴²De Margerie calls attention to a passage in the *Confessiones* in which the Scriptures are thus explicitly linked with the humanity of Christ as the way of salvation. De Margerie (1991), 17. Cf. *Conf.* 7.7.11 (BA 13.602-4).

⁴³Cf. De Margerie (1991), 18f.

⁴⁴"Fallen human beings have lost their original simplicity and fallen into confusion and multiplicity, the "regio dissimilitudinis" (*Conf.* 7.10.16). The simple, clear crystal of love is shattered into countless pieces: we can no longer see how they fit together. The Scriptures tell the story of God's way of leading men back into unity, and the way *has* to be from the fragmented to the unified. The history of the Old Testament fashions a matrix, a kaleidoscope, which shares in our fragmentedness and yet harks forward to the simplicity of the One who will restore all things, the One 'in quo omnia constant'." Louth (1983), 130. Brown, to whom Louth refers, points out that for Augustine allegory was necessary because of "a specific dislocation of the human consciousness." Brown regards Augustine's position as analogous to that of Freud. "In dreams also, a powerful and direct message is said to be deliberately diffracted by some psychic mechanism, into a multiplicity of 'signs' quite as intricate and absurd, yet just as capable of interpretation, as the 'absurd' or 'obscure' passages in the Bible. Both men, therefore, assume that the proliferation of images is due to some precise event, to the development of some geological fault across a hitherto undivided consciousness: for Freud, it is the creation of an unconscious by repression; for Augustine, it is the outcome of the Fall." Brown (1967), 261.

Augustine's *totus Christus* hermeneutic, which represented a creative development of the thought of Tyconius, served to synthesize the idea of the Christological interpretation of the Old Testament with that of the incorporation of humanity into Christ. The unity between Christ the head and his body is so close that it is simply not possible to conceive of the one without the other. The head acts transformatively on the body and the body fully shares in the power of the head in his life, death, resurrection and ascension. It was this fundamental construct which enabled Augustine the preacher to synthesize, in the way our study has elucidated, a vast range of biblical texts within an overall, unifying perspective and to give them an essential coherence with the history of salvation. And since Scripture was the Word of God for the present, this hermeneutic enabled Augustine to interpret and challenge the contemporary ecclesiastical situation in North Africa. By thus bringing together two conceptual realms, Augustine's hearers were invited to explore one in terms of the other. His many figurative expositions were, therefore, intended to refract the people's experience and to lead them (in particular Donatist readers and hearers) on from their present levels of understanding of the nature of the church's relationship to Christ. The consistent aim is the recreation of the *caritas* of *totus Christus* within a reunited *Catholica*.⁴⁵ In this connection, a number of matters require some further comment.

⁴⁵ Simon speaks of the way in which, for Augustine, "sustained and reformed by caritative and diligent love, interhuman enjoyment is the historical way of expressing the journey toward and incipient dwelling in the enjoyment of the Trinity. Enjoyment within and amidst the human community is oriented to and supported by the anticipated enjoyment of the Trinity...Augustine's hermeneutics of the Scriptures is a practical hermeneutics of love and enjoyment within an eschatological community that does not rest in possession of itself but finds itself inspired to be dispossessed, moving toward an ultimate joy." Simon (1999), 115.

6.4 Figurative exegesis in the service of theological polemics

Augustine had a clear grasp of the value of images to affect people at a deeper level than that of the merely intellectual and cognitive. Although, in the treatises in particular, as we have seen, he could operate on the latter level, Augustine recognized the importance of engaging the imagination as a means of bypassing rational defences and of redirecting love and activating the will to act on that basis.⁴⁶ In the context of the controversy, figurative exegesis as deployed by Augustine became a key tool for the strengthening or reordering of the loyalties of the constituencies concerned. Figurative exegesis, since it could penetrate to the very springs of human motivation and conduct, had unparalleled potential for stirring the affections to that *caritas* which, as *DDC* made clear, was the irreducible means of both knowing and serving God and neighbour. In turn, *caritas* creates a way of understanding deeper than mere *scientia* (a grasp of facts) in that it lays hold of the very essence of the truth disclosed by *scientia*. This is the *sapientia* which Scripture is intended to produce.⁴⁷ Figurative exegesis, therefore, served to orient people away from error and charm them to truth. The Donatist schism derived ultimately from a lack of love which, in turn, blocked the way to a true perception of the mystery of Christ in Scripture and in countering this, Augustine's use of biblical images was seen as an essential therapeutic tool.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Figurative exegesis was thus "not merely a cognitive exercise but an emotional one," as it "kindles ardour, arouses affections, and strengthens the soul." L. Poland, quoted in Goldingay (1995), 154.

⁴⁷ Cf. *De doctrina Christiana* 1.35.39 and 2.7.9-11 (CCL 32.28-9, 36-38).

⁴⁸ Cf. Cavadini (1995).

6.5 The issue of controls in the practice of figurative exegesis

As already noted, one of the main modern objections to figurative exegesis is the lack of any inherent controlling principle and the consequent arbitrariness of its handling of texts. Conversely, as Young points out, “the Fathers would condemn much modern exegesis for its exclusive focus on the ‘earthly’ and its lack of concern with the ‘heavenly’ dimension of the text.”⁴⁹ There is no doubt, however, that an allegorical approach to the text represents a real danger of arbitrariness of interpretation. In the case of Augustine, in the exegesis which we have studied, a number of external, self-imposed controls go a considerable way towards avoiding this danger.

First, there are very few theological positions deriving from his figurative exegesis which are not found elsewhere based on a literal interpretation. Augustine worked within the parameters laid down by the literal sense. In arguing his case that Scriptural arguments may be drawn only from the literal and not from the allegorical sense of a text, Aquinas made appeal to Augustine’s *Ep.* 93 (against Vincentius the Donatist). There, Augustine states, *Quis autem non impudentissime nitatur aliquid in allegoria positum pro se interpretari, nisi habeat et manifesta testimonia quorum lumine inlustrentur obscura?*⁵⁰

It is important, however, to note that Augustine is not saying here that a figurative interpretation of a particular text which is used for argumentation must be based on a literal interpretation of that same text (which Aquinas may have understood him to

⁴⁹ Young (1997), 3.

⁵⁰ *Ep.* 93.8.24 (CSEL 34/2.470). Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1.1.10.

mean). If, for Augustine, biblical arguments should be based on the *res* rather than the *signum* of a text, the *res* in question is not that of the literal meaning of the particular text, but the fulfilment of the mystery of Christ and the church in the New Testament (of which the whole Old Testament is the *signum*). We have come across only one or two instances where Augustine's heady involvement with figurative exegesis has led him to enunciate positions which he could not possibly argue from the *res* of salvation history in Scripture. The generally consistent application of this control is strengthened by the way in which Augustine employs the same clusters of texts for his polemical purposes, with an almost monotonous regularity.

Secondly, Augustine was generally consistent in applying to *obscura* the principle laid down in *DDC* of interpreting obscure and literal texts within the context of the church's *regula fidei*.⁵¹ On a superficial reading, Augustine's figurative expositions, with their theological yield, often appear extremely arbitrary. A closer view, however, has led us to a recognition that their theological yield corresponds almost invariably to the credal affirmations of the church which form the grid through which his interpretative activity consistently passes. This is notably the case, as the structure of our thesis indicates, with respect to the traditional marks of the church, enshrined in the universal church's confession as one, holy, catholic (and apostolic). Augustine here well illustrates the point that there "can be no churchly reading of Scripture that is not activated and guided by the church's teaching," as "there can be no reading of the Bible that is not churchly."⁵²

⁵¹ *DDC* 3.2.2 - 3.3.6 (CCL 32.77-80).

⁵² Jenson (1996), 98. Jenson argues convincingly that "there can be no reading of the unitary Bible that is not motivated and guided by the church's teaching." He concludes, "We will either read the Bible under

Our study has pointed to the need for a re-marriage between biblical exegesis and Christian theology. Commentators increasingly point to the spiritual and theological sterility of the dominant twentieth century historical-critical approach to exegesis. Frances Young, for example calls attention to the need for much work to be done in this area. She comments, “The modern divorce between biblical exegesis and systematic theology, or indeed between biblical exegesis and *praxis*, would have been unthinkable in the days of the Fathers.”⁵³ For Augustine, as for other Patristic writers, the *regula fidei* provided the extra-canonical framework, or “overarching story”, by which the Scriptures were to be read and interpreted.⁵⁴ Our study lends support to the conclusion drawn by Young from her wide-ranging study of exegesis in the Patristic period (concluding with Augustine), that “patristic study is most significant for the discovery of the inseparability of theology, exegesis of Scripture and spirituality, an integration by no means apparent in the modern world.”⁵⁵ Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana* makes clear that he believed the Bible to be essentially a book of theology - “the theology of the inexorable love of God demanding love in return”⁵⁶ - and, as we have seen, the two-fold law of love became a key criterion of interpretation. Augustine thus reminds the contemporary church that the theologian must always be exegete and the exegete theologian. Biblical exegesis, on this understanding, must aim to draw others “into a totalizing discourse, a universal plot,

the guidance of the church’s established doctrine, or we will not read the Bible at all. When we attempt dogmatically rebellious or ignorant reading of Scripture, we will find only *dissecta (sic) membra* in our hands.” *ibid.*

⁵³ Young (1997), 4. Cf. *ibid.* 217-84.

⁵⁴ Young (1997), 18. Cf. Young (1990), 45-65.

⁵⁵ Young (1997), 284.

⁵⁶ Young (1997), 274.

the drama of salvation.”⁵⁷ Augustine’s theory and practice of biblical exegesis challenges the church of the twenty first century to reunite what has been too often separated into scholarship, theology, *praxis* and spirituality and thus to reinstate the Bible at the heart of the debate about what constitutes appropriate beliefs and practices for Christian people both individually and ecclesiastically.⁵⁸

6.6 Hermeneutical pluralism and ecclesiastical pluralism

Finally, the question arises whether the kind of hermeneutical pluralism which so marked Augustine’s practice of exegesis against the Donatists entails an inevitable ecclesiastical pluralism. There is little doubt that cultural factors play a significant part in determining, in any particular context, the preferred biblical figures in terms of which the church is understood. In part, the Catholic - Donatist division in North Africa can be accounted for in this way. As we have seen, both Catholics and Donatists had their preferred biblical images for defining the bounds of their own communion. They found it difficult to give weight to those which were felt not to square with their chosen self-identity. Such hermeneutical failure has marked the church of the twentieth century as it did that of the fifth and, in part, accounts now, as then, for the divided state of the church.⁵⁹ The way

⁵⁷ Young (1997), 284. As Young points out, even in the treatises, Augustine’s interest is not just in assembling proof-texts but in arguing about the “mind” of Scripture, of “finding appropriate ways of understanding finite human language when used of the infinite, or of testing meanings of Scripture against Scripture.” *ibid.* 298. On the relevance of the classical notion of *mimesis* to allegorical approaches to Scripture, cf. Young (1990), 134-59.

⁵⁸ Cf. Young (1997), 298-99.

⁵⁹ This has always been a problem in the church. Clowney points out how “people in social or political bondage will take most seriously the liberation aspect of the exodus figure,” while “a factory worker (may) be drawn to the freedom of the church as fellowship of the Spirit, just as the chaotic Middle Ages sought structure and stability in a hierarchical institution.” Clowney (1984), 104.

forward appears to be to resist the temptation to isolate or ignore biblical images of the church and to recognize that such do not present “central concepts that cannot be related or reconciled.” Otherwise, theological pluralism is inevitable. Rather, the understanding gained from the biblical images requires to be systematized in conjunction with and in a manner controlled by the instruction delivered in “plain speech”.⁶⁰ As Clowney indicates, the metaphors of Scripture can never be discarded. “The metaphorical form is not chaff to be blown away once the wheat of meaning has been harvested. No, the metaphors remain, not only to compel us to re-check our conclusions, but also to lead us into further understanding produced by the power of their truth.”⁶¹ On the other hand, a descent into relativistic pluralism is prevented by the controlling influence of the church’s *analogia fidei*. The answer to the church’s current problems is not “a pluralistic theology grounded in a hermeneutical principle of relativism. The answer is found in comparing Scripture with Scripture, relating metaphor to metaphor, and gaining that growing understanding that leads to the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as we discern one body and one Spirit in one hope of our calling.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Cf. Clowney (1984), 96-7.

⁶¹ Clowney (1984), 97. Clowney calls attention to the way in which the Westminster Confession of Faith, for example, seeks to keep in balance theoretical and figurative forms of definition of the church. Distinguishing between the church visible and invisible, it uses as figures for the church invisible, “spouse”, “body”, “fulness of Christ”, and, for the church visible, “kingdom”, “house” and “family of God”. “The figures are carefully chosen to express the distinction between the church as God alone forms it and the church as it is made apparent to us. Yet, while these emphases may be shown to be uppermost, the figures cannot be strictly categorized in this way. The metaphor of the house of God, for example, may be used so as to include non-elect people (under the further figure of clay pots for dishonour, 2 Tim. 2:20). But the same figure of the house may also be used to describe the temple of living stones (1 Pet. 2:4), a figure in which a hypocrite would find as little place as in the body of Christ metaphor. (There is no suggestion of surgery on the body of Christ). Apart from the unifying perceptions of theoretical analysis we would be vulnerable to a relativistic pluralism in which any image is legitimate.” Clowney (1984), 97.

⁶² Clowney (1984), 105.

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