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## ARTICLE VII.

## AUGUSTINE AS AN EXEGETE.

BY THE REVEREND J. RITCHIE SMITH.

THE place of Augustine is with the foremost creative minds of history. No other man has exercised such imperial sway in any realm of thought as the great Latin father in the realm of theology. Even Aristotle must yield to him the palm. As he strove to grasp and reduce to order the whole range of Christian truth, his theology is broad enough to embrace the difficulties, the apparent contradictions, which the Word of God presents, while it partakes of the errors and imperfections which belong to all things human. To his authority, therefore, appeal the most diverse schools of theology and philosophy,—Roman Catholic and Protestant, scholastic and mystic, Thomas Aquinas and Anselm and Pascal and Luther and Calvin; while Christians of every name do him honor as the most potent champion of the faith which they hold in common. He is the greatest man of the Christian church since the days of the apostles, the successor of Paul in logical acumen, of John in spiritual fervor. It is a profoundly interesting study to trace the principles and methods by which he wrought out of the Scripture the massive system that bears his name.

## HIS EQUIPMENT.

Of his education he has given us a sketch in his "Confessions." He was trained for oratory, and studied grammar, rhetoric, and books of eloquence. In the school of rhetoric in Carthage he won the first place; became a teacher of the art,

and practiced his profession in Rome and Milan. All the books of the so-called liberal arts—rhetoric, logic, geometry, music, arithmetic—that came within his reach, he read and understood. Of astronomy he had some knowledge. With pagan literature he was familiar from childhood. When scarcely twenty years of age he read and comprehended without a teacher the Ten Predicaments of Aristotle. He read both Greek and Latin biographies (Jerome, Letter LXXV. 3). Certain books of the Platonists he read in a Latin translation. His knowledge of Greek and Roman history appears in his "City of God," and his acquaintance with Greek philosophy is often shown (Letter CXVIII.; City of God, viii.). Plato he preferred to all other philosophers, because he came nearest to Christian truth. At one time, pleading the authority of Ambrose (Christ. Doct. ii. 28. 43), he held the opinion that Plato was a disciple of Jeremiah. Afterward he acknowledged his mistake, yet admits that Plato may have been acquainted with the *prophecy* of Jeremiah (Retract. ii. 4; City of God, viii. 11).<sup>1</sup>

In early life Augustine composed poems in various kinds of meter, and wrote two or three books on "The Fair and the Fit." He wrote six books on rhythm, and purposed to write as many more on music, but was prevented (Letter CI. 3). In the summer of his conversion he suffered from weakness of the lungs induced by excessive study. Quotations from Greek and Latin literature are frequent. His favorite authors were Virgil, Cicero, whose "Hortensius" inflamed him with the love of wisdom, Varro, Sallust, and Plato. He cites, moreover, Horace, Lucan, Terence, Persius, Ovid, Livy, Juvenal,

<sup>1</sup>For convenience the translation of the fathers published by the Christian Literature Company of New York is used, with occasional reference to writings which it does not include.

Ennius, Homer, Plutarch, Apuleius, Justinus, Scaevola, Seneca, Claudian, Terentian, Euhemerus, Labeo, Aulus Gellius, Plotinus, Pliny, Lucretius.

The weak point in his exegetical equipment was his imperfect acquaintance with the original tongues of Scripture, though his deficiencies have often been exaggerated. Gibbon remarks, "According to the judgment of the most impartial critics, the superficial learning of Augustine was confined to the Latin language." The great historian usually followed safer guides. Augustine had some knowledge of the Punic, a language spoken within recent times (Letter XVII.), which he pronounced akin to the Hebrew and the Syriac (N. T. Homil. lxiii. 2; Tract. on John, xv. 27). Several times he interprets Punic words—*Namphanio* (Letter XVII.), *Mammon*, which is both Punic and Hebrew (N. T. Hom. lxiii. 2; Serm. on Mt. ii. 14. 47), *iar* (Ps cxxiv. 5). He observes that *Edom* in Punic signifies "blood" (Ps. cxxxvi. 7), and *Bal* is equivalent to "lord" (Qu. on Judg. xvi.; see also Serm. clxvii. 3; Rom. xiii.; De Magistro xliv.).

Of Hebrew, which he believed to be the original language of the race (City of God, xvi. 11), he confessed himself wholly ignorant (Conf. xi. 3; Letter CI. 3); as were the fathers generally, except Origen and Jerome. His dependence upon others led him into curious errors. He preferred to derive "Hebrews" from *Heber*, but thought that the derivation from *Abraham*—"Abrahews"—might possibly be correct (City of God, xvi. 3). *Racha* and *Hosanna* he supposed to be interjections, incapable of translation (Christ. Doct. ii. 11; John li. 2); *David* signifies "strong in hand" or "desirable" (Ps. xxxv. 1; cxxxii. 2);<sup>1</sup> *Galilee*, "transmigration" or "revela-

<sup>1</sup> Origen says it means "skillful with the hand" (Matt ii.).

tion" (Harm. Gos. iii. 25. 86); *Joab*, "enemy (Ps. lx. 2); *Philistine*, "falling from drink" (Ps. lxxxiii. 5); *Hermon*, "his curse" (Ps. lxxxix. 13). In correcting the mistake of those who derived *pascha* ("passover") from the Greek *πάσχειν* ("to suffer"), he remarks that "in Hebrew *pascha* means passover; because the *pascha* was then celebrated for the first time by God's people, when, in their flight from Egypt, they *passed over the Red Sea*" (John lv. 1).<sup>1</sup>

He spoke modestly of his knowledge of Greek, "scarcely to be called knowledge at all" (Agt. Letters of Petil. ii. 38. 91), and confessed that he was not familiar with the technical terms of theology (Trin. iii. 1); not even understanding the distinction between *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* (Trin. v. 8, 10). Yet he studied Greek literature from boyhood, though he always disliked it (Conf. i. 13. 20). Ordinarily he used the Latin translation of the New Testament, and was thus often misled. He comments on Gal. vi. 2-5 without observing that "burden" represents two Greek words, though he remarks that the word is used in different senses (Harm. Gos. ii. 30. 72); finds in the phrase "evening of the Sabbath" (Matt. xxviii. 1) a difficulty which is not in the Greek (Harm. Gos. iii. 24. 65); remarks on John xix. 34 that the evangelist uses a suggestive word, not "pierced," but "opened," while the Greek has "pierced" (Vulg. *aperuit*); several times in his exposition of First John he reads "love is God"; and discusses the difficulty raised by the reading "to" Caiaphas in John xviii. 28, where the original has "from" Caiaphas (Harm. Gos. iii. 7. 27; John cxiv. 1). *Κενοφωνίας* he renders as if it were *καινοφωνίας* (John xcvi. 4), which is indeed the reading of some Greek MSS. of inferior authority. The Vulgate has *vaniloquia*. *Eis*

<sup>1</sup>On Hebrew terms, comp. Irenæus, Ad Haer. ii. 35; Ambrose, Letter LXIII.

in Phil ii. 11 he translates as *de* (John civ. 3), an error in which he was anticipated by Origen, and is followed by Bengel (so Cassian, On the Incarnation, iv. 18). The Vulgate has *in gloria*. These prepositions are often confounded, as in our Authorized Version (Winer, N. T. Gram. 1. 4). In Heb. xi. 1 he translates *ἐλπίζομένων* by *sperantium*, the confidence "of those that hope" (N. T. Hom. lxxvi. 3; John lxxix., xcvi.). The Vulgate has *sperandarum rerum*. In his controversy with Pelagius he laid great stress on *ἐφ' ᾧ* in Rom. v. 12, which he rendered "in him"—Vulgate, *in quo* (Trin. iv. 12; Agt. Two Letters Pelag. iv. 7, 8; On Marr. and Concup. ii. 47). In John iv. 3 he has the singular reading, "Qui solvit Christum"—so the Vulgate; yet he quotes the common reading in Serm. clxxxii., clxxxiii. (See Westcott, Eps. of John, addnl. note on I. iv. 3, and to the authorities there given add Cassian, On the Incarnation, v. 10.)

But the fact that he often neglects to refer to the Greek, and sometimes errs with the Greek before him, does not prove that he was wholly incompetent to use it. The statement that "in his exegetical and other works he very rarely consults the Septuagint or Greek Testament" (Schaff, Church History, iii. 1001, note 1) requires serious modification. The single volume devoted to the Psalms in this edition, abridged from the six volumes of the Oxford translation, contains over one hundred references to the Septuagint, which Jerome rebuked him for reading in the edition of Origen, the one in common use (Letter LXXV. 19). The Greek is frequently quoted in his notes on the Heptateuch, and, in general, references to it are as numerous as we should expect in view of the character of his writings. This followed naturally from his extravagant estimate of the Septuagint. He says that the Latin versions of the Old Testament must be corrected by the Greek

versions, especially the Septuagint, and of the New Testament by the original text (Chris. Doct. ii. 15. 22; Ps. cxix. 47). References to the Greek of the New Testament seem to be less numerous in proportion, though by no means wanting. Jerome's version of the Gospels he compared with the original text (Letter LXXI. 6). He often refers to various Greek copies of both Testaments; occasionally to the versions of Aquila and Symmachus (City of God, xv. 23; Qu. on Numb. lii.); and to many Latin codices. "The translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted, but the Latin translators are out of all number" (Christ. Doct. ii. 11). Of the Latin translations he preferred the Itala, "for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice to clearness of expression" (Christ. Doct. ii. 15). He was familiar with the use of Greek letters as numerals (John x. 12; Ps. lxxviii. 29). Apart from Scripture quotations, a considerable list of Greek words may be culled from his writings. In a cursory examination of a portion of his works, nearly one hundred have been found. Trench gives a list of words of similar meaning which Augustine compares, including twenty-eight examples (Aug. on Serm. on Mt. ii. 20, 21); to which may be added *λόγος* and *λόγιον* (Ps. cxix. 51), *σοφία* and *φρονήσις* (Ps. cv. 13), *χρηστός* and *αγαθός* (Ps. cxxxvi. 1). And in his study of the Scripture he was not unmindful of the labors of his predecessors (Ps. lxxxviii. 1).

From this review it appears that the learning of Augustine, while by no means contemptible, was rather varied than profound, and that his equipment for the work of the expositor was decidedly imperfect. But if he fell behind some of the fathers in this regard, in amplitude and originality of genius he surpassed them all. His mind was singularly acute, subtle, penetrating, profound. For his meta-

physical acumen it is enough to refer to his discussion of time (Conf. xi.), and of memory (Conf. x.). In his proposition, "*Si enim fallor, sum*" (City of God, xi. 26), he anticipated the famous dictum of Descartes, "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" As an instance of subtle and striking exposition may be named the contrast, suggested by Origen (on John ii. 26), between John the Baptist the voice and Christ the Word (Serm. ccxcii. 3, cited by Trench, Syn. N. T., p. 89). If it be true that the heart makes the theologian, no man was ever more thoroughly qualified to expound the mysteries of God. He combined in eminent degree intellectual vigor, moral earnestness, and spiritual intuition. So retentive was his memory that he seemed to have all Scripture at command, and he had the power of stating truth in those terse, strong phrases that turn to proverbs. A list of them is given in Schaff's "Church History" (iii. 999), to which may be added: "*Crede ut intelligas,*" "*Intellectus enim merces est fidei,*" "*[Christ] quo itur Deus, qua itur homo,*" "*Fuga animi timor est,*" "*In templo vis orare, in te ora*"; on Simon Magus, "*Voluit talia facere, non talis esse*"; on "My Kingdom is not of this world," "*Non negat hic esse, sed hinc.*" If deficient in attainment, by nature and by grace he was prodigally endowed, and in rare measure, to use his own words, he saw "with the eyes of the heart into the heart of Scripture."

#### HIS EXEGETICAL PRINCIPLES.

The first point to be noted is his view of the Scriptures.

1. *Canon.*—He often insists upon the distinction between the canonical and apocryphal books. In the canon of the Old Testament he included Tobias, Judith, the two books of the Maccabees, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus (Christ. Doct. ii. 8); and his judgment was ratified by the Third Council of

Carthage and the Council of Hippo, and was generally accepted until the Reformation. In practice he was singularly wavering and inconsistent, a position by no means peculiar among the fathers. He was aware that Ecclesiasticus (On Care for the Dead, xviii.), Wisdom (City of God, xvii. 20; *Re-tract.* ii. 20), and Maccabees (City of God, xviii. 36) are not contained in the Hebrew canon; but he accepted them on the authority of the church, and frequently appealed to them as Scripture (On Predest. of Saints, xxvii.). Occasionally he cites as of scriptural authority other apocryphal writings, as the additions to the book of Daniel, the History of Susanna (On Virginity, xix. 20), which Julius Africanus had rejected more than a century before (*Routh, Rel. Sac.* ii. 225), and the Song of the Three Children (City of God, xi. 9); Baruch, which some attributed to the scribe of that name, but more with better reason to Jeremiah (City of God, xviii. 33; *Agt. Faust.* xii. 43); and First (Third) Esdras (*Agt. Two Letters of Pelag.* iv. (vi.) 14; City of God, xviii. 36).<sup>1</sup>

He held that both Hebrew and Greek are needful to the expositor (*Christ. Doct.* ii. 11), yet with Justin Martyr (*Hort. Addr. to Greeks*, xiii.; the genuineness of this address is questioned), Irenæus (*Ad. Haer.* iii. 21), Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* i. 22), and Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catechet. Lect.* iv. 34) he accepted the current fable of the inspired origin of the Septuagint, drawn apparently from Philo, and rejected by Jerome (*Pref. to Gen.*), and held the Greek to be of equal authority with the Hebrew original (City of God, xviii. 42-44; *Christ. Doct.* ii. 15).<sup>2</sup> The discrepancies between them he

<sup>1</sup> For the opinion of the fathers regarding these books, see lists in *Smith's Bib. Dict.*, art. "Canon," pp. 364, 366.

<sup>2</sup> On the divergent chronologies of the Hebrew and the Greek, see *City of God*, xv.

compared to the differences between the Gospels: "And if an explanation is asked for this discrepancy . . . I am of opinion that no more probable account of the matter will suggest itself, than the supposition that the Seventy composed their version under the influence of the very Spirit by whose inspiration the things which they were engaged in translating had been originally spoken" (Harm. of Gos. ii. 66. 128). "Where the difference is not a mere copyist's error, and where the sense is agreeable to truth and illustrative of truth, we must believe that the Divine Spirit prompted them to give a varying version, not in their function of translators, but in the liberty of prophesying, and therefore we find that the apostles justly sanction the Septuagint by quoting it as well as the Hebrew when they adduce proofs from the Scriptures" (City of God, xv. 14. See also xv. 23 and xviii. 43).

He advised Jerome to translate the Old Testament from the Septuagint, because few were familiar with the Hebrew, and the Greek text was more accessible (Letter LXXI. 4); but afterward owned that Jerome had chosen the better way, "in order that you may bring to light those things which have been either omitted or perverted by the Jews" (Letter LXXXII. 34).

He declared, "I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church" (Agt. Ep. of Manich. v.); but he traced the witness of the church in unbroken tradition to the days of our Lord and his apostles (Agt. Faust. xi. 5; xxviii.), so that faith in the Scripture rests ultimately upon the authority of the *apostolic* church. And he furnishes abundant proof that he was not unmindful of the evidence of divine origin which the Scriptures themselves furnish.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With this saying of Augustine, comp. Iren., Ad. Haer. iii. 3. 4; Ter-

2. *Inspiration.*—With the fathers generally he held the most rigid theory of inspiration. The Scriptures are holy, sacred, divine, infallible, inspired, “the venerable pen of thy Spirit” (Conf. vii. 21). “He [Christ] stands to all his disciples in the relation of the head to the members of his body. Therefore, when those disciples have written matters which he declared and spake to them, it ought not by any means to be said that he has written nothing himself; since the truth is that his members have accomplished only what they became acquainted with by the repeated statements of the Head. For all that he was minded to give for our perusal on the subject of his own doings and sayings, he commanded to be written by those disciples, whom he thus used as if they were his own hands” (Harm. of Gos. i. 35. 54). But in thus emphasizing the divine he does not fail to recognize the human element. “I venture to say, my brethren, perhaps not John himself spoke of the matter as it is, but even he only as he was able; for it was man that spoke of God, inspired indeed by God, but still man. Because he was inspired he said something; if he had not been inspired, he would have said nothing; but because a man inspired, he spoke not the whole, but what a man could, he spoke” (John i. 1. Comp. Harm. of Gos. ii. 12).

It is interesting to note here Augustine’s conception of the relation of God to the world: “For he did not make it as a carpenter makes a chest. The chest which he makes is outside the carpenter . . . . and although the workman is nigh, he sits in another place and is external to that which he fashions. But God, infused into the world, fashions it; being everywhere present he fashions, and withdraweth not himself elsewhere, nor doth he, as it were, handle from without the tull, *De Præscr. Haer. xix.-xxi., xxxvi.* In Milman’s *Latin Chrty.* xii. 7, p. 93, note 1, the true interpretation of Augustine’s words by Marsilio of Padua is noted.

matter which he fashions. . . . Therefore was he in the world as the maker of the world" (Tract. on John, ii. 10, delivered in the year 416, fourteen years before his death, or even later). Yet Professor Allen (*Contin. of Chr. Tht.*, p. 149) and Mr. Heard (*Alex. and Cath. Theol. Contrasted*, p. 204) charge him with abandoning the truth of the divine immanence in his later writings. Professor Erdman observes that Augustine was much nearer to pantheism than to dualism (*Hist. of Phil.* i. 275).

The Scripture is without error of any kind. "For it seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books" (Letter XXVIII. 3). "Of these alone [the canonical books of Scripture] do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the MS. is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it" (Letter LXXXII. 3). "We are bound to receive as true whatever the canon shows to have been said by even one prophet, or apostle, or evangelist. Otherwise not a single page will be left for the guidance of human fallibility, if contempt for the wholesome authority of the canonical books either puts an end to that authority altogether, or involves it in hopeless confusion" (*Agt. Faust.* xi. 5. See the whole paragraph). "Your design clearly is to deprive Scripture of all authority, and to make every man's mind the judge what passage of Scripture he is to approve of, and what to disapprove of. This is not to be subject to Scripture in matters of faith, but to make Scripture subject to you. Instead of making the high authority of Scripture the reason of approval, every man makes his

approval the reason for thinking a passage correct" (Ag. Faust. xxxii. 19; comp. Letter XL.; Jerome, Letter LVII.).

Sound reason and Scripture are never at variance (Letter CXLIII. 7). All the prophecies must be fulfilled (Letter CCXXXII. 4). The Old and New Testaments are in perfect accord (On the Profit of Believing, ix.). "*Novum Testamentum in vetere latet, Vetus in novo patet.*" "*Distingue tempora, et concordabit Scriptura.*" The Gospels are in harmony (Harm. Gos. ii. 17, 27, 28, 29, 41, 66, 67). An interesting example of the treatment of a difficult passage is afforded by his discussion of the quotation ascribed to Jeremiah in Matt. xxvii. 9 (Harm. Gos. iii. 7). He notes that there are codices in which the name *Jeremiah* does not occur, but insists that it must be retained because it is found in the oldest codices, and because it is easier to suppose that it was erased to avoid the difficulty than that it was added without warrant. Thus he recognized the critical canon that the more difficult reading is to be preferred. His explanation is that *Jeremiah* was substituted for *Zechariah* under the inspiration of the Spirit to signify the unity of the prophetic order, whence we may look upon "their individual communications as also those of the whole body, and on their collective communications as also those of each separately." It is true, moreover, that the quotation, so far as it relates to the purchase of the field, is drawn from Jeremiah xxxiii., mystically interpreted. The apparent discrepancy between Mark and John regarding the hour of the crucifixion is removed by the reflection that Jesus was virtually crucified when the Jews cried out against him, though not actually nailed to the cross until the sixth hour. "For he [Mark] judged most truly that the Lord's murderer was rather the tongue of the Jews than the hand of the sold-

iers" (Harm. Gos. iii. 13. 42; John cxvii. 1; Ps. lxxiv. 5). Another solution is suggested, that the sixth hour of the *preparation* coincided with the third hour of the day.

Though Scripture has to some extent been corrupted by copyists (City of God, xv. 13), yet these errors are not serious enough to affect its authority (Letter LXXXII. 6; On the Profit of Believing, vii.; On Morals of Cath. Ch. xxix.; Agt. Faust. xvi. 11; xxxii. 16; xxxiii. 6). "Should there be a question about the text of some passage, . . . we should first consult the manuscripts of the country where the religion was first taught; and if these still varied, we should take the text of the greater number, or of the more ancient. And if any uncertainty remained, we should consult the original text" (Agt. Faust. xi. 2).

In his treatise on "Christian Doctrine," of which three books were written in 397, about ten years after his conversion, and the fourth in 426, near the close of his life, he lays down the principles that should guide the expositor. The end of Scripture is love. No interpretation can be correct which does not tend to build up love to God and man. "A man who is resting upon faith, hope, and love, and who keeps a firm hold upon these, does not need the Scriptures except for the purpose of instructing others" (i. 39; comp. Trin. viii. 4. 6). The plainer passages must be used to throw light upon the more obscure. "The Holy Spirit has, with admirable wisdom and care for our welfare, so arranged the Holy Scriptures as by the plainer passages to satisfy our hunger, and by the more obscure to stimulate our appetite" (ii. 6. 8). "The very obscurity . . . was a necessary element . . . to profit our understandings, not only by the discovery of truth, but also by the exercise of their powers" (iv. 6. 9). The words of Scripture should be committed to memory. Hebrew and Greek

are needful, and the correct text must first be ascertained. All truth found in heathen learning belongs to Christ, and should be appropriated by the Christian, as the Jews spoiled the Egyptians (comp. Justin Martyr, Apol. ii. 13; Origen, Letter to Gregory). Yet it is poor in comparison with Holy Scripture. "For whatever man may have learned from other sources, if it is hurtful, it is there condemned; if it is useful, it is therein contained" (ii. 42. 63)—which reminds us of the judgment that Omar is said to have pronounced upon the library of Alexandria. The importance of punctuation,<sup>1</sup> pronunciation, numbers, natural history, history, and logic is noted, and the *Bible Dictionary* is suggested (ii. 39. 59). Astronomy is of little service. The literal and the figurative must not be confounded. "Whatever there is in the word of God that cannot, when taken literally, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative" (iii. 10. 14). Prayer is essential. Scripture should be interpreted by Scripture. The "Book of Rules" of Tichonius is of great assistance, but should be used with caution. "Of these rules, the first relates to the Lord and his body, the second to the twofold division of the Lord's body, the third to the promises and the law, the fourth to species and genus, the fifth to times, the sixth to recapitulation, the seventh to the devil and his body" (iii. 30. 42). He refers to these Rules several times, but they exercised little influence upon his exposition.

#### EXEGETICAL METHODS.

Augustine was happier in the statement than in the application of exegetical principles. "*Video meliora proboque,*

<sup>1</sup> This must be determined by the rule of faith and the context. He gives an example in his treatment of John i. 3, which, with the Ante-Nicene fathers generally, he renders, "That which was made in him was life."

*deteriora sequor,*" is the confession of the race. His principal exegetical works are his Commentaries upon Genesis, the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel and Epistles of John, Romans (unfinished), and Galatians, and the Harmony of the Gospels; and his writings generally abound in exposition. His commentaries are not of the modern type, with elaborate introduction, minute textual criticism, and detailed verbal exposition. They are largely, as he terms his work on the Psalms, homilies, expository discourses delivered to the people. This accounts in great measure for their prolixity and repetitions. Often he preached every day, sometimes twice a day. There was neither occasion nor opportunity for the niceties of scholarship. This must be borne in mind if we would form a fair estimate of his exegetical ability. "For I have not now, and I can never hope to have, such knowledge of the Divine Scriptures as I see you possess. Whatever abilities I may have for such a study, I devote entirely to the instruction of the people whom God has entrusted to me" (Letter LXXIII. 2. 5, to Jerome). Often he used words not Latin in his preaching (Ps. cxxiv. 5), and did not disdain the rude phrases of the vulgar idiom. "I would rather have the barbarism . . . than have the passage in better Latin, but the sense less clear" (Christ. Doct. iii. 3. 7). "Better is it that scholars find fault with us, than that the people understand us not" (Ps. cxxxix. 15). His expositions were sometimes prepared with great care (Ps. civ. 46), and sometimes extempore (Ps. xxxv. 16; cxxxix.).

In the sphere of textual criticism he is a witness, not a judge. He seldoms discusses or attempts to correct the received text. Passages rejected by modern criticism he retains—as Mark xvi. 9–20; John v. 4. John viii. 1–11 he not only retains but defends, alleging that it was rejected lest it should

encourage immorality (On Conj. Adult. ii. 7). He does not notice the reading *οὐπω* in John vii. 8, though he treats the passage at length. Here the Vulgate has *non*, and many critics retain *οὐκ* though the weight of MSS. authority is in favor of *οὐπω*. *Πρὸ ἐμοῦ* in John x. 8 he omits, and in John viii. 19 inserts and discusses the word "perhaps." In both cases he is in accord with the Vulgate. In Ps. xcvi. 11 he accepts the singular reading, "The Lord reigneth (hath reigned) from the wood," which Justin Martyr (Dial. lxxiii.) charged the Jews with expunging (comp. Apol. i. 41; Tertull., Ans. to Jews, x.). Justin Martyr (Dial. lxxii.) asserted that the Jews had erased several passages relating to Christ from the Old Testament, and the Koran alleges that they have erased prophecies relating to Mohammed. For singular readings and consequent singular interpretation his exposition of Ps. lxxviii. is an interesting study.

Questions of *introduction* hold a subordinate place. The current traditional views are commonly accepted. All the Psalms he ascribed to David, who prefixed to some of them the names of other men (City of God, xvii. 14). Undoubtedly this judgment betrays a gross lack of the historical sense, yet it may be questioned whether it is more uncritical to assign all the Psalms to David or to allow him none. Canon Driver, in his able "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," maintains that David was not the author of Psalm li., mainly for the reason that he could not have said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned" (p. 367, note 3). Yet the *bloodguiltiness* of verse 14 points directly to his crime. Canon Driver holds that the subject of the Psalm is Israel in exile, but Prof. W. R. Smith, who holds the same view, has truly observed of "collective Israel in the captivity," that, "according to the prophets, it was the guilt of blood equally with the

guilt of idolatry that removed God's favor from his land" (O. T. in Jew. Ch., p. 417). It was the sin of man against man that the prophets charged upon Israel as well as the sin of man against God. If the literal sense of the words be pressed, no man, whether speaking for himself or for his people, could say, "Against thee only have I sinned." Augustine's conduct toward his mistress after his conversion may serve to illustrate the thought of David, the sin against man lost in the greater sin against God. In view of this episode in his life, the comparison of Augustine to Paul in point of moral character before his conversion is singularly unfortunate (Schaff, Ch. Hist. iii. 991, note 1).

The Gospels were written in their present order (Harm. Gos. i. 2). Matthew wrote in Hebrew (*Ibid.*). This is attested by Papias (Eus., Eccl. Hist. iii. 39), Irenæus (Haer. iii. 1), Origen (Eus., Eccl. Hist. vi. 25), Epiphanius (Hær. xxx. 3), Chrysostom (Hom. on Matt. i. 7), Jerome (Praef. in Matt. De Vir. Ill. iii.), Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechet. Lect. xiv. 15), and others; an array of evidence that cannot be set aside, however difficult may be the problem of the relation of this Hebrew Gospel to the Greek. He is at variance with the sounder tendency of modern criticism in regarding Mark as a mere attendant and epitomizer of Matthew (Harm. Gos. i. 2). He observes that Matthew has an attendant because he represents Christ in his royal character, while Luke has none because he represents him as the high priest who must enter the holy place alone (Harm. Gos. i. 3. 6). The Epistle to the Hebrews, he remarks, was commonly, though not universally, ascribed to Paul (City of God, xvi. 22). Some doubted its authority, but the eastern churches gave it a place in the canon (On Merits and Remission of Sins, i. 50). In his list of the canonical books he assigns it to Paul (Christ. Doct. ii. 8), though in

quotation, while he sometimes refers it to the Apostle (N. T. Hom. v. 5; xxxii. 11), he usually cites it by name (Westcott, Canon N. T., p. 455, note 1). It may fairly be said that he recognized the doubts regarding its authorship, but himself believed it to be the work of Paul, who is said to have omitted the customary salutation lest his name should give offense to the Jews (Rom. xi.). To the title of First John he adds, *ad Parthos*—words which he nowhere explains. He alludes to the doubts regarding the Revelation (N. T. Hom. ccxcix.), but has no hesitation in ascribing it to John (City of God, xx. 7; N. T. Hom. xlv. 2).

The great vice of Augustine's system was his abuse of allegory. This is not peculiar to him, nor to Christian theology. It was employed among the Greeks upon ethical grounds from an early period (comp. City of God, vi. 5 ff.; Grote's Greece, xvi.), and was used to defend the popular mythology against the attacks of Christians (Athenag., Apol.; Arnobius, Adv. Gent. v. 32 ff.). It was in common use among the Jews, and found an able exponent in Philo. The practice of putting the Word upon the rack, and "straining the breast of Scripture," in the language of Saint Ulric, "until it yields blood instead of milk," is confined to no age of the church. But Augustine does not set aside the literal sense. He finds the allegory upon it. "Thus Paradise is the church . . . the four rivers . . . are the four gospels, the fruit-trees the saints, and the fruit their works; the tree of life is the holy of holies, Christ; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the will's free choice. . . . These and similar allegorical interpretations may be suitably put upon Paradise without giving offense to any one, while yet we believe the strict truth of the history" (City of God, xiii. 21. Comp. Cyprian, Letter (to Jubaianus) LXXII. 10). The allegorical interpretation must accord with the rule ✓

of faith. All Scripture treats of Christ, and beneath the letter of the Word Christ and his church may everywhere be found. That allegory has a place in Old Testament interpretation Paul has shown (Gal. iv. 24). How readily it may be perverted, Augustine is one of innumerable examples to prove. The superiority of the New Testament writers to the greatest of the fathers appears nowhere more clearly than in the sobriety and self-restraint with which they employ a method so tempting and so easily abused. In the whole range of Christian literature it would be difficult to find conceits more fantastic and puerile than those which may be gathered from the pages of Augustine. Often indeed he has only repeated or amplified explanations already given by others, as the references appended, to which many more might be added, will show. References to his master Ambrose may be specially noted. These allegories, it should be observed, are not mere passing allusions, or homiletic adaptations; often they are drawn out in detail, form the burden of the exposition, are adduced as doctrinal proofs. Though the literal sense is maintained, it is often obscured and reduced to a subordinate place, and a spiritual significance is imposed upon every detail.

The Trinity may be indicated by the three loaves of Luke xi. 5 (Letter CXXX. 15), and by the two or three firkins of John ii. 6, the six water pots representing the six ages of the church. (For other interpretations see Tract. on John, *ad loc.*)<sup>1</sup>

Christ was prefigured by Isaac sporting with his wife (Agt. Faust. xxii. 46); by David in his sin, though the sin of course is condemned, Uriah representing the devil, and Bathsheba

<sup>1</sup> Reuchlin is said to have discovered in בְּרַח of Gen. i. 1 the initial letters of Father, Son, and Spirit. On the typical significance of the wives of Jacob, see Agt. Faust. xxii. 51 ff.

the church, "when washing herself on the roof, that is, when cleansing herself from the pollution of the world, and in spiritual contemplation mounting above her house of clay, and trampling upon it" (Agt. Faust. xxii. 87); by Jacob's stone and ladder (*Ibid.* xii. 26. Comp. Justin Martyr, Dial. lxxxvi.); by the rod of Moses (*Ibid.* xii. 28); by the axe that fell into the water (2 Kings vi.), his body the wood, his spirit the iron, separated at his death, united again in his resurrection (*Ibid.* xii. 35. Comp. Justin Martyr, Dial. lxxxvi.; Irenæus, Frag. xxviii.; Tertullian, Ans. to Jews, xiii.); by the worm that destroyed Jonah's gourd, which signified the promises and privileges of the Old Testament, "a shadow of things to come" (Letter CII. 35-37); by Elisha healing the son of the Shunamite, the staff that failed to restore life symbolizing the law (Ps. lxxi. 17; N. T. Hom. lxxxvi. 6); by the stone knives of circumcision (John xxx. 5); by the pelican, the owl, and the sparrow of Ps. cii. 7, 8; by the fish with the tribute-money, the four drachmas being the four Gospels (Ps. cxxxviii. 12); by David hiding in a cavern, which signifies at once the flesh and the tomb of Christ (Ps. lvii. 4); by the psaltery and harp, which denote his miracles and sufferings (Ps. lvii. 14), or the Spirit and the flesh (Ps. lxxi. 28), or again the ten strings of the psaltery may signify the ten commandments (Ps. xcii. 5). "But we must sing upon that psaltery, and not carry it only. For even the Jews have the Law; but they carry it; they sing not."

The cross is prefigured by the timbrel and psaltery:—"On the timbrel leather is stretched, on the psaltery gut is stretched; on either instrument the flesh is crucified" (Ps. cxlix. 4); by the drum, a skin stretched on wood (Ps. xxxiv. 1); by the spittle of David flowing upon his beard, strength covered by weakness (Ps. xxxiv. 3), though the reference is rather to

his whole estate of humiliation, culminating in the cross; by the double smiting of the rock in the wilderness, indicating two beams of the cross (John xxvi. 12); by the two sticks of the widow woman in 1 Kings xvii. 12 (Agt. Faust. xii. 34); by the three hundred of Gideon, a number represented in Greek by the letter T (Ps. lxxviii. 29. See Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith*—*prol.* For symbols of the Cross, see also Barnabas, Ep. viii., xi., xii.; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* lxxxvi. ff.; *Apol.* i. 55, 60).

The passion of Christ is symbolized by the drunkenness and nakedness of Noah—"The mortality of Christ's flesh was uncovered"—Shem and Japhet representing believers, Jews and Greeks, and Ham the heretics, or the Jewish people, while the garment with which he was covered was the sacrament, and the backs of his sons the memory of things past—"for the church celebrates the passion of Christ as already accomplished" (*City of God*, xvi. 2; *Agt. Faust.* xii. 23. *Comp.* Cyprian, Ep. lxii. 3); his blood by the scarlet thread of Rahab (Ps. lxxxvii. 5. *Comp.* Justin Martyr, *Dial.* cxi.; Irenæus, *Haer.* iv. 20. 12; Clemens Rom. xii.; Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith*, v. 10. 127); his baptism by the Red Sea, since it is consecrated by his blood (John xi. 4; Ps. cvi. 8). Origen taught that the shoes of Christ are his incarnation and his descent to hades. To interpret these is to loose the latchet of his shoes (*Com. on John* vi. 18).

The church is represented by the ark, though in the application the figure wavers between Christ and the church, his body. The proportions of the ark are those of the human body which he assumed (so Philo); the door is the wound made by the spear; the three stories may denote the sons of Noah, the Christian graces, or the states of marriage, widowhood, and virginity (*City of God*, xv. 26. *On degrees of*

Chastity see Ambrose, *On Widows*, iv.). Other interpretations may also be given. (For further details see *Agt. Faust.* xii. 14 ff.; comp. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* cxxxviii.) The church is signified again by Eve issuing from the side of Adam in his sleep—"since from Christ, sleeping on the cross, was the church to come" (John xv. 8; Ps. xli. 9); by the snow-like wool of Ps. cxlvii. 16, now cold, presently to become a garment for Christ; by the moon (Ps. xi. 3; civ. 26), though this may signify also the synagogue (Ps. xi. 12), the resurrection (Ps. ciii. 8), or the mortality of the flesh (Ps. lxxxix. 32).

The facts and fables of natural history are often adduced, though he advises, "If any comparisons shall have been made for thee, if thou hast found them in the Scriptures, believe: if thou shalt not have found them spoken of except by report, do not very much believe them" (Ps. lxxvii. 10). To be wise as serpents is to sacrifice the body for Christ the head, and to put off the old man as the serpent sheds its skin (*Christ. Doct.* ii. 16. 24; comp. Ambrose, *On the Faith*, iii. 16. 131; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechet. Lect.* iii. 7). To renew the youth like the eagle's is to break off the beak, that which hinders the Christian life, against the rock, Christ (Ps. ciii. 8). The believer is compared to the hart (Ps. xlii.), which destroys serpents, and then, inflamed with these, seeks the water-brooks (comp. Origen on *Matt.* xi. 18). Moreover the harts in wandering or swimming support one another, as Christians should bear one another's burdens. The sinner is like the hare, because he is weak and timid; like the hedgehog, because covered with sins as prickles (Ps. civ. 25; comp. Cassian, *Conf. of Abbot Isaac*, ii. 11). The only reference that I have noted to the phoenix, employed as a symbol of the resurrection by Clemens Romanus, Tertullian, and others, is in the treatise "*On the Soul and its Origin*" (iv. 33).

The numbers of Scripture afford an inexhaustible field for ingenuity.<sup>1</sup> The twelve apostles signify the twelve hours of the day, or the four quarters of the earth multiplied by the number of the Trinity (John xxvii. 10; xlix. 8). The twenty years of Num. xiv. 29 represent the five books of the law multiplied by the four Gospels (On Merits and Rem. of Sins, ii. 57). The letters of *Adam* are the initials of the Greek words for east, west, north, and south. The numerical value of the letters is 46. Thus the forty-six years of the building of the temple (John ii. 20) indicate that Christ in the flesh was born of Adam, representing the race (John ix. 14; x. 12). (Comp. Origen on John, *in loc.*) This interpretation he received from the elders. He suggests again that  $46 \times 6 = 276$ , the number of days between Christ's conception on March 25 and his birth on December 25 (On the Trin. iv. 5). The seventy and eighty years of Ps. xc. 10 represent the Old and New Testaments, which hallow the seventh and eighth days (comp. Ps. cl. 1).

The bread, the fish, and the egg of Matt. vii. 9-11 denote faith, hope, and charity (Letter CXXX. 8. 16). The vinegar put to the lips of Christ represents the Jews degenerated from the wine of the patriarchs and prophets; the sponge their hearts; the hyssop the humility of Christ, and the reed the Scripture (John cxix.). The Samaritan woman (John iv.) signifies the Church, her husband the understanding, and the five husbands, like the five yoke of oxen in Luke xiv. 19, the five senses (John xv. 10 ff.; N. T. Hom. lxxii. 3). The fig-tree under which Jesus saw Nathanael is sin, because our first parents covered the shame of their transgression with fig leaves (John vii. 21; N. T. Hom. lxxii. 1). The words of John the

<sup>1</sup>See, in general, On the Trin. iv. 4-6; Letter LV. 28-31; John cxxii; 8 Ps. l. 9; City of God, xi. 80-81.

Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease," point to the birth of the one when the days begin to lengthen, of the other when they begin to shorten; and to the fact that John was beheaded while Jesus was lifted up (John xiv. 5). The five thousand of John vi. signify the people under the five books of the law; the twelve baskets the apostles, filled with the fragments of the law; the five loaves the Pentateuch, which was only as barley compared with the wheat of the gospel; the lad perhaps Israel, bearing but not eating; the two fishes the two great Commandments, or the Jews and the Gentiles, or the king and the priest of the old economy, typical of Christ (John xxiv.; N. T. Hom. lxxx. 1. Comp. Origen on Matt. xi.). By the pool of Bethesda is symbolized the Jewish people, enclosed within five porches, the books of Moses, which contained but did not heal them. The angel that troubled the water represented Christ; that only one was healed denoted unity; the thirty-eight years of infirmity are forty, the number of righteousness, less two, the great commandments of the law. "Take up thy bed and walk" meant, Obey these commandments. For *bed* signifies *neighbor*. "When thou wast weak, thy neighbor bore thee; thou art made whole, bear thy neighbor." *To walk* is to go unto God (John xvii.; N. T. Hom. lxxv.; Ps. lxxi. 17). For the application to baptism, see Ambrose. On the Mysts. iv.; Chrysostom, John xxxvi.; Tertullian, On Baptism, v. On Old Testament figures of baptism, see Ambrose, On the Mysts. iii.

The eyelids of God (Ps. xi. 4) are the Scriptures, the opening and closing indicating the clear and obscure passages of the Word. Or the death and resurrection of Christ may be signified. The law was written on stone, intimating the hardness of Jewish hearts; our Lord wrote upon the earth (John viii. 8), signifying the productiveness of Christians (John

xxxiii. 5; Ps. ciii. 9). In the three instances of the raising of the dead in the Gospels, the three degrees of sin are set forth, in thought, in act, in habit. The discussion is interesting and suggestive (N. T. Hom. xlviii. 5; John xlix. 3). The good Samaritan is Christ, the beast his flesh, the oil and wine baptism, the inn the church, the host the apostle Paul, the twopence the great commandments (N. T. Hom. lxxx. 6; Ps. cxxvi. 11. Comp. Clement of Alexandria, *Salvation of the Rich Man*, xxviii., xxix.).

To these illustrations, which might be multiplied indefinitely, may be added a few examples of his treatment of passages upon which expositors are divided. Difficulties are often passed over without remark, as *ἐπιούσιος* (Matt. vi. 11), the feast of John v. 1, the date of the Last Supper. On the preaching to the spirits in prison (1 Peter iii. 19) see the long discussion in Letter CLXIV. The change of Saul's name to Paul (little) is ascribed to humility (Hom. 1 John viii. 2; On Spirit and Letter, xii.; N. T. Hom. xxvii. 3); in another place to the conversion of Sergius Paulus (Conf. viii. 4). The imprecatory Psalms are not the expressions of desire, but prophecies (Ps. lxxix. 14). The ignorance of the Son (Mark xiii. 32) he understands, with Hilary (Letter CLXXX. 3), to mean only that he would not reveal to his disciples. "He is ignorant of this, as making others ignorant" (On the Trin. i. 12. 23. Comp. Ambrose, *On the Faith*, v. 16 ff.; Gregory the Great, x.; Letter XXXIX.; Basil, Letter CCXXXVI.). Upon the vexed question of the genealogies of our Lord, he held that Matthew gives the line of Joseph's father, Luke the line of the stepfather by whom, or rather unto whom, he was adopted (Harm. of Gos. ii. 3; N. T. Hom. i. 27-29). On the significance of the number of the generations recorded, see Harm. of Gos. ii. 4; N. T. Hom. xxxiii. 5, 6. Comp. Julius

Africanus; Eus., Hist. i. 7). That both genealogies were Joseph's was the unanimous opinion of the early church, though the differences were variously explained. With the Latin fathers generally he identified Mary of Bethany with the woman that was a sinner of Luke vii., though he recognized two anointings (Harm. of Gos. ii. 79. 154; John xlix. 3, where he intimates a doubt), an error which modern exegesis has not wholly outgrown (Hengstenberg). See Ambrose, Letter XLI., where a mystical interpretation is put upon the passage.)

Beyond any other teacher Augustine has profoundly and permanently affected the whole course of Scripture exposition. A few examples may suffice to illustrate the extent of his influence. He was one of the first (City of God, xv. 23) to apply the phrase "sons of God," in Gen. vi. 2, to the children of Seth, the line of godly men, in opposition to the common opinion that it signified the angels, held by Justin Martyr, Apol. ii. 5; Athenagoras, Apol. xxiv.; Josephus, Antiq. i. 3. 1; Philo, De Gig. ii.; Book of Enoch, ii. 6; Tertullian, On Veiling of Virgins, vii.; Test. xii. Patrs. i. 5; Methodius, Disc. on Resurrection, iii. 7; Clement of Alexandria, Paed. iii. 2; Lactantius, Div. Instt. ii. 15; Sulpitius Severus, Sac. Hist. i. 2. Ambrose seems to waver (Expos. Ps. cxviii.; Serm. iv. 8 and viii. 58; Apol. David, i. 4; On Noah and the Ark, iv. 8). In face of these witnesses it is difficult to understand the statement of Prof. W. H. Green in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for October, 1894, p. 655, that "this purely mythological conceit . . . . was repelled by the great body of Jewish and Christian interpreters from the earliest periods." Compare the Commentaries of Delitzsch and Dillmann. In this interpretation, Augustine was anticipated by Julius Africanus (Routh, Rel. Sac. ii. 421. See Cassian, Conf. of Abbot Serenus, ii. 21). In strong reaction from the

absurdities of chiliasm, to which in its more spiritual form he was at one time inclined, he taught that the millennium is the period between the coming of Christ in the flesh and the end of the world (*City of God*, xx. 7-9); and against his judgment, reinforced as it appeared to be by the course of history, hardly a dissenting voice was raised for a thousand years. His doctrine of the Trinity has been profoundly influential in shaping the thought of the church. He taught the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (*On the Trin.* iv. 20-29; *John* xcix. 6-9), though principally from the Father (*On the Trin.* xv. 26. 47); and to him beyond any other man is due the addition of *filioque* to the Latin creed, which remains to this day the doctrinal stumbling-block in the way of the reunion of Eastern and Western Christendom as represented by the Greek and Roman Catholic churches.

It would be highly interesting to examine the teaching of Augustine upon such themes as the celibacy of the clergy, purgatory, prayers for the dead, church polity, and baptism, and trace his influence in the development of government and doctrine: but this belongs rather to history.

It is apparent that Augustine was not a master in the sphere of critical exegesis; but what man can be named in the history of the church who stands in the front rank at once of exegetes and of theologians, except John Calvin? Yet though inferior in learning to many of earlier and of later times, he is surpassed by none in the firmness with which he grasped, and the clearness and force with which he expounded, the essential truth of Scripture. So vigorous was his understanding, so keen his insight, so rich his experience, that with all their defects his expositions are mines of intellectual and spiritual treasure, still indispensable after the lapse of fifteen centuries to the thorough student of the Word.