

***De servo arbitrio* and the Patristic Discussion  
of Freedom, Fate, and Grace**

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The church first expresses what it believes in the language of prayer and worship, but when it turns to teaching and confessing this language does not always suffice.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Christian theology has often turned to the philosophical schools for language and concepts with which to confess that which is believed. The doctrine of human nature is one such case. The concepts of human freedom, moral responsibility, and fate were debated vigorously by the Greek philosophers. This debate of the academies is clearly reflected in the theology of the early Greek fathers as they confessed human freedom. Further, the very concept of “will”, as we use it, is itself derived from reflection upon human psychology and is not a part of a divinely revealed schematic of human nature. Yet, in churches all around us and in our general society, it is quite common to speak of the unquestionable axiom of “free will”, as some positive and indispensable part of mankind. In this context, Luther’s *de servo arbitrio* (Concerning Bound Choice) and Article XI of the Formula of Concord stick out like two sore thumbs. Given this state of philosophically packed language, a long Christian history, and the Lutheran confession denying human free will it is important to consider the language and context of the confession against free will. In so doing, I believe that it will be discovered that Luther’s *de servo arbitrio* reflects much of Augustine’s approach to free will, divine foreknowledge, and predestination, but, unlike Augustine, Luther keeps these doctrines subject to the preaching of law and gospel, the revelation of God in Christ.

### **Choice and Virtue / Fate and Responsibility**

Greek philosophy, anthropology, and religion knew of no contrast between divine grace and natural free choice. An examination of Homeric literature reveals that the idea of “freedom” itself played only a small part in early Greek thought.<sup>2</sup> The term “free” was slow in developing and did not lead to a Greek doctrine of “free will.” In fact, it is scholarly consensus that the Greeks themselves did not have a concept of “will” at all corresponding to our contemporary idea.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks instead made use of a basic distinction in describing human action as, on the one hand, rational choice or, on the other, as emotional or passionate action, that is, irrational action. And it was the former which the Greeks prized as virtuous.

This basic and even fundamental psychology of rational verses irrational is found already in Homer and permeates Greek thought<sup>4</sup> and language.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the concept of some part of human psychology that is separate from irrational desire and from rational decision, the human “will” as we term it, was not used by the earliest fathers. To discover the context of the early patristic statements concerning human freedom, we must turn to the ancient debates concerning fate, necessity, rationality, responsibility and the terminology expressing these concepts. These ideas were dealt with mainly in two classes of the philosophical literature: cosmology and ethics.

In Greek cosmology there were two competing ideas within the description of the nature of the universe. The first is found already in the epic mythologies, wherein we read that life was seen as ultimately ruled by a deterministic Fate. Particularly death and destruction seemed to be associated with Fate. And while Fate might be avoided for a time,<sup>6</sup> eventually the ruinous goddess<sup>7</sup> had her way and overcame even the heroes. Not even the capricious gods themselves could dominate Fate. However, no “systematic formula for the relation between destiny and the gods” was given by Homer.<sup>8</sup> To what level of detail of life Fate applied is unclear. However, the idea of unavoidable fate was never consistently applied to every detail of life in all its logical conclusions nor was it used to deny the virtues of mankind or the heroes.<sup>9</sup> The nuances of Fate’s relationship to the gods and other parts of life were left as a problem to the later philosophers but the idea was never entirely lost in the Greek mind.

The second fundamental Greek concept was created when the early Greek myths had lost their power of conviction and the early natural philosophers began constructing a new view of the world independent of the Olympian gods. At this time, there arose a profound conviction of nature and the universe as essentially orderly and rational. This concept was to influence almost all subsequent Greek thought. From the early natural philosophers through the classical period and across the various philosophical schools, the universe was considered a rationally ordered place, which the rational human mind is able to observe and understand. Therefore the mind can come to agree with its order and attain virtue.<sup>10</sup>

This emphasis upon the rational aspect of human nature strongly influenced the Greek philosophers, who developed many of the ideas and technical terminology, which, in turn, would influence early patristic authors. Although the various schools differ greatly in the specifics of their cosmology and anthropology, the influence of the ideas of fate and rationality can be seen on them all whether in a positive sense or in a negative reaction. This is already the case with Socrates, the father of classical Greek philosophy. For his famous dictum: οὐδεὶς ἐκβλήν ἀμαρτανεί (no one knowingly does wrong) expressed the fundamental Greek concept of the rationality of the soul which would continue to hold sway among those after him. Plato, the student of Socrates, believed it was the philosopher's goal to be able to see and understand the transcendent realm of Ideas from which all reality comes. This, however, could only happen through the careful contemplation and study of the rational nature of the soul. Through knowledge one knows the good and can choose rationally to perform the good. The discipline of the academy was to lead towards this end. Thus, the body and its irrational passions were basically understood as a prison, which held the rational soul.

Aristotle, Plato's student, developed many of the arguments and much of the anthropological terminology important to later patristic argument, particularly in his ethical writings. Aristotle has a full system of categories and distinctions by which he discusses human emotion (πάθος) and actions (πράξεις) and their relation to blameworthiness. He begins Book 3 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* with a rather fundamental distinction:

As virtue is concerned with emotions and actions, and such emotions and actions as are voluntary are the subjects of praise and blame, while such as are involuntary are the subjects of pardon and sometimes even of pity, it is necessary, I think, in an investigation of virtue to distinguish what is voluntary from what is involuntary.

Thus, Aristotle begins with the conception that human life can be divided into emotions and actions and can be further divided into the subcategories of involuntary and voluntary. Involuntary acts are those things “done under compulsion, or from ignorance”, that is, those things which have their origin “external to the agent or patient.”<sup>11</sup> An act is voluntary “if the agent originates it with a knowledge of the particular

circumstances of the action.”<sup>12</sup> Aristotle also indicates these same categories by distinguishing between those things that are and are not ἐφ’ ἡμῶν, “depend on us” or “in our power.”<sup>13</sup> These things are directly related to whether an agent of some action is deemed to be blameworthy for what he has done. It was Aristotle’s doctrine, that any action performed under compulsion is not blameworthy. And the idea of necessity imposed by fate provided just such a source of compulsion that ethical theory had to face.

It was in the schools that came after Aristotle that fatalistic determinism and moral responsibility would be fully debated. For example, the Stoics believed in fate while the Epicureans were accused of it but denied it. Both schools had to defend themselves against the accusations that they rendered ethical behavior irrelevant. For if all things are fated, no one can be responsible for his actions. Over the following centuries, these ideas were destined to make their mark on the entire Hellenistic intellectual world. Josephus even portrays the Jewish sects as having differed precisely because of what they taught concerning these questions of fate and responsibility.<sup>14</sup> It appears he did this so as to make them resemble the Greek philosophical schools in order to make them more intelligible to his Hellenistic audience. This only demonstrates more clearly how current the matters of fate, freedom, and responsibility were at the beginning of the Christian era, even to non-philosophers.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Rejection of Salvation by Nature and Fate**

It was in this mixed Hellenistic atmosphere that the Christian church drew its first breaths. The New Testament reflects its Jewish religious roots and its soteriological concerns in that the concepts of fate, necessity, τὸ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν, and ethical responsibility are not discussed directly as philosophic matters of inquiry. It is concerned with the ideas of the law, righteousness, faith and good works, and salvation. It was not, therefore, primarily the New Testament writings that motivated the early fathers to discuss determinism or fate and to defend human freedom. Instead, there are two external factors that apparently lead them to speak as they did, the Greek perception of the Christian use of Old Testament prophecy, and the Gnostic doctrines of salvation by nature.

The first clearly identifiable factor which called for an assertion of man's freedom was the Greek perception of the church's appeal to the Old Testament in order to prove that Jesus was the Christ, that he should be called God, and that he had to suffer and die and rise again. When these arguments were used to speak to the pagans, as opposed to Jews, they were not received in precisely the same way since the Greeks did not share the Jewish conviction of the Old Testament as scripture. They could not help but compare this to their own religious or superstitious thought concerning the Sibylline oracles and other similar institutions, namely, the idea of fate. If it was prophesied and thus it happened, the Hellenistic pagan mind understood this in terms of dark fate. That this is in fact what happened can be observed directly in Justin Martyr's First Apology.<sup>16</sup>

Though the use of Old Testament prophecy caused such difficulties, it does not appear that this was the main threat for the church in regard to determinism. The second cause of the early patristic assertion of man's freedom was the Gnostic doctrines of salvation by nature. We can take Valentinus as the foremost example. Irenaeus reports that between 138 and 168 AD, Valentinus was active in Rome promoting his doctrine against which the fathers generally protested.<sup>17</sup> He also gives a detailed report of the Valentinian cosmology, which served as a basis for their soteriology.<sup>18</sup> In the end, claimed Irenaeus, the Valentinians supposed the existence of three kinds of substance in the world, one called matter, a second called animal, and a third, which was called psychic.<sup>19</sup> From the animal substance a being called Demiurge was made, who proceeded to give form to heaven and earth from these three types of substances. Therefore, it was concluded that mankind can be divided into three basic types. Those made from the material substance (matter), says Irenaeus, are called "on the left hand" and said that they must of necessity perish. Those made of the animal substance go to good or evil depending on inclination. And finally, those made of the psychic substance, the Valentinians themselves, are predetermined to become perfect through knowledge and to receive salvation by necessity.<sup>20</sup>

This idea of salvation by nature, in spite of behavior, was unacceptable to the fathers. It was contrary to the very concept of the Christian message of the coming judgment of all people and of

preparing for it by receiving the salvation offered through the church to all people. As Origen would state against this type of Gnostic necessity, “the doctrine of a righteous judgment is contained in the church’s teaching, which when those who hear it believe its truth, are moved to live well and in every way to flee sin.”<sup>21</sup> The Valentinians, according to the fathers, had taken away the ethical responsibility from most of mankind, and granted a fated salvation to themselves. This threatened the validity of the Christian message in toto. The fathers consistently and energetically rejected these ideas.

In addition, by the mid second century the doctrine of creation, which was so vital in the church’s early life, came to make use of the idea of mankind being created in the image of God. This became a vital part of Christian anthropology, serving to frame the Greek fathers’ soteriology. According to this theology mankind was made in the image of God, sinned and lost or tarnished this image with which mankind was created, and thereby became subject to death. Therefore, salvation is a type of restoration of the primitive image and even a surpassing of it leading to immortality. To say that mankind did not have a power of choice or freedom transgressed the very idea of what a human is. And the response to the Valentinians was one that was consistent with this model. Thus, the appeal was made to the idea that man was created with a rational nature and was able to choose right or wrong. Therefore, by referencing Greek ethical thought and terminology, it was proven that man is responsible for his actions and not subject to a natural or fatal necessity unto salvation or destruction. This argument is found already in Justin and Irenaeus.<sup>22</sup> Origen argues in the same way in Book 3 of his *De Principiis*.<sup>23</sup>

### **Human Freedom and the Soteriology of the East**

When these arguments are observed in isolation they leave one with the impression that salvation was a simple weighing of works and each one received according to his choice of works whether good or bad. Salvation appears to be merely a rational choice of the rational mind. In this view there seems little more to God’s grace or Christ’s work than to reveal knowledge, that is the law, so that mankind might turn away from evil deeds and become virtuous and thus saved.<sup>24</sup> The idea of salvation through knowledge, an idea heavily dependent upon contemporary Platonism, definitely affected the early doctrine of the

church.<sup>25</sup> But indications are that these rather “vapid expressions” of Christian doctrine represent an apologetics to the outside pagan world, but that “inside” the church, the liturgy and confessions of faith actually contained the deeper fuller content of the Christian faith though not yet fully expressed in the church’s teaching.<sup>26</sup> For while second century culture and the Gnostic threat gave early motivation for Christian soteriological teaching to develop along the lines of Greek anthropological thought, within the church, the liturgy and sacraments made clear the need that mankind had for the grace of God given in Christ for obtaining salvation. Right alongside the ideas of ethical responsibility based upon human freedom, are statements of absolute necessity of the forgiveness of sins, the reception of the Holy Spirit, and participation in Christ for salvation. It was an indisputable point for the second and early third century fathers that the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit, both given in baptism, were the necessary first step in the process of salvation.

Already in Ignatius, at the beginning of the second century, salvation is described as immortality gained through participation in Christ and the redemption he worked. This salvation is found in the church because the economy of salvation, which was carried out in Christ, now continues in the church.<sup>27</sup> The word and the sacraments administered there by bishop and presbyters bear the gift of life because they bring participation into Christ and his work. And baptism gains its content from participation in Christ who also underwent baptism. Those who enter the church are purified by baptism because Christ “was baptized that by experiencing it he might purify water.”<sup>28</sup> That purification worked by Christ is now communicated by baptism to those who enter the church. For “the Lord did suffer the ointment to be poured upon His head, that He might breathe immortality into His Church.”<sup>29</sup>

Irenaeus, likewise, makes clear the distinction between the “carnal” man and the “spiritual” man.<sup>30</sup> Only by reception of the Holy Spirit does a man become spiritual and capable of immortality. The Word made flesh has reconciled the world to the Father and recapitulated all things in order that people might begin even now to be perfected in the image and likeness of God.<sup>31</sup> For people become acceptable to the Father by being conformed to the image of the Son.<sup>32</sup> But being conformed to the image of the Son



occurs only by the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that changes people from being merely flesh, which can not inherit the kingdom of God, into a spiritual people.<sup>33</sup> And it is the Holy Spirit that is the earnest of the final inheritance, and cries “Abba, Father” in the hearts of those who believe, testifying that even now God’s people have received the adoption of sons.<sup>34</sup> And thus by the Holy Spirit the person once dead is vivified and made to join in union and fellowship with the Son and the Father. And union with God is life and salvation.<sup>35</sup> And so this comes by baptism:

When [do we bear] the image of the heavenly? Doubtless when he says, “Ye have been washed,” believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving His Spirit. Now we have washed away, not the substance of our body, nor the image of our [primary] formation, but the former vain conversation. In these members, therefore, in which we were going to destruction by working the works of corruption, in these very members are we made alive by working the works of the Spirit.”<sup>36</sup>

In summary, the early Christian message recognized all men as sinners, subject to death, in need of forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, and the gift of immortality. The Christian message was a universal one for all mankind. This required a rejection of fate and Valentinian natural necessity and a defense of human freedom. And this was expressed through the language of Greek ethics, which was based upon the idea of rationality and the choice of right and wrong. However, baptism and the Holy Spirit were taught as necessary for salvation. The beginning of salvation was entrance into the church through baptism, not some choice wielded by free will. Therefore, it is important to note, these early fathers worked with no other doctrine of “conversion” than their doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins. Salvation for them is not a moment of conversion. It is a process that begins with baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit, is a restoration and recreation of human nature in the image of God through union with Christ, and will culminate in the coming of the risen Christ, who will judge the living and the dead and bring perfection in immortality to those who believe.

### **The West: Augustine on Human Nature and Divine Grace**

The west was exposed to many of the same philosophic ideas as the east through the classical Roman authors. So the early western theologians were familiar with the ideas of astronomical fate and of free will. Nevertheless, it seems to have concerned them much less than their colleagues in the east. By

the turn of the fifth century, however, Latin theology was to come under the enormous influence of Augustine, who would drastically affect western thought in regard to these questions. The bishop of Hippo was highly reflective and developed a sophisticated model of human psychology. He thus considered salvation from the subjective point of view of personal faith much more closely than had been done before him. When this was combined with his Pauline doctrine of salvation by faith apart from works, this ultimately led him to consider salvation from the point of view of a beginning of saving faith. This consideration along with the motivation of controversy led Augustine to discover weakness in the emphasis upon human freedom made by those before him. Yet his own emphasis upon the subjective part of salvation led him into new and potentially dangerous areas of his own.

In his earliest writings, Augustine wrote very similarly to those before him. In c. 392, he wrote that it was “open and perspicuous to all” that anyone who sins by necessity does not sin at all and thus God had given mankind free will and so that his reward and punishment for righteousness or sins would be just.<sup>37</sup> But what was “open and perspicuous” to the early Augustine was rejected by the mature Augustine. Already by 397 he had abandoned these earlier ideas. Augustine came to believe, even before the Pelagian controversy, that human nature could not accomplish good on its own. It was by nature inclined to do evil and required the grace of God to enable it to accomplish good. Augustine’s solution to the difficulty of sin, necessity, and freedom aggravates philosophers to this day.<sup>38</sup> He solved the problem, not by denying that there was such a thing as “free will” as such, but by redefining the terminology.

Augustine used the term “*voluntas*”, normally translated “will”, as the “human *psyche* in its role as a moral agent”, our “moral self.” And “each human being can make decisions by virtue of what Augustine calls his free choice (*liberum arbitrium*)”<sup>39</sup> By claiming that every person has a “free will” and makes “free decisions,” Augustine intended to state that everyone was still responsible for their decisions. But he no longer intended to indicate that one was really able to choose good or evil with equal ability. He believed that our “free will” was sufficient to do evil but not good.<sup>40</sup> With his so-called “free will”, fallen man is free from virtue and the slave of vice. The Christian, on the other hand, is free from the necessity

of sin and a slave to God. In short, “man belongs to one of two camps, and obeys one of two rulers.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, Augustine, in his own mind, reconciled the ideas of free choice and necessity. Just because human nature by necessity served evil did not mean it was not “free” to make any choice that it was able to make. Augustine decided that God “determines our wills when we will what is good, and also that such willing is none the less free choice, for which we are responsible.”<sup>42</sup>

After Augustine had begun to work out these ideas, Pelagius and his cohort Celestius began teaching a doctrine of salvation that Augustine found entirely unacceptable. Pelagius taught that free will was the gift of God to man and that man was responsible to use it in such a way as to keep God’s commands and live righteously in order to attain perfection. Since he could not do away with the church’s language about “grace” altogether, he used the word, apparently ambiguously, to indicate the gift of creation, the gift of “free will” and the gift of the law and teaching, which shows mankind how to live with free will.<sup>43</sup> Thus, contrary to normal ecclesiastical language, which contrasted nature and grace, Pelagius designated part of created nature itself or merely external teaching of the law as grace. To Augustine this redefinition of grace amounted to the claim that one could become righteous in oneself with no other help from God than having been created and having been given the demands of the law. This implied that even without ever hearing about Christ one might live righteously and be saved. And this was to make Christ and his cross unnecessary.<sup>44</sup>

It did not prove difficult for the West to condemn Pelagian doctrine. It proved more difficult to deal with the implications of Augustine’s doctrine articulated against Pelagius. From his interest in philosophy, Augustine was aware of the debates concerning fate and free will and ultimately Augustine oriented his doctrine in relation to these. In his *City of God*, he pointed out the foolishness of the normal idea of fate, which he equated with popular astrology governed by the position of the heavenly bodies. Nevertheless, he claimed that the idea of fate does not need to be rejected entirely. It is acceptable if it refers instead to the “train of causes which makes everything become what it does become”, which is based on the foreknowledge of God which leaves nothing unordained. Cicero was wrong, Augustine

claimed, when he rejected the idea of the foreknowledge of God in order to avoid the apparent resultant necessity of all things.<sup>45</sup> “They are far more tolerable who assert the fatal influence of the stars than they who deny the foreknowledge of future events. For, to confess that God exists, and at the same time to deny that He has foreknowledge of future things, is the most manifest folly.” Augustine realized that the foreknowledge of God seemed to the philosophers to exclude free will, but Augustine claimed that “the religious mind chooses both, confesses both, and maintains both by the faith of piety.”<sup>46</sup> The ideas of foreknowledge and predestination would play ever-increasing roles in Augustine’s thought as time progressed.

Augustine’s struggle with the Pelagians made him consider the idea of righteousness by faith in relation to free will. This, combined with his own reflective interest into human psychology, led him to areas that the eastern theologians had never gone. Augustine came to view conversion in terms of the beginning of faith and he came to believe that the Bible demanded him to confess that faith itself, the very beginning of salvation, is the gift of God.<sup>47</sup> Thus the solution to the question of why some are saved and not others is no longer found in choice of mankind but rather it is found in God who has mercy on some and not on others. In his work *ad Simplicianus*, written c. 396, Augustine comes to the conclusion that God does not have mercy in vain. Those he does not pity are damned. Those he pities are saved. “If God wishes a man’s salvation, salvation follows of necessity.”<sup>48</sup> In 412, Augustine expressed this slightly differently leaving something to the will of those whom God calls. Here he stated that the will can not believe of its own accord, but God must act in such a way to give it the possibility of believing. But to receive or reject this summoning of God is a function of the person’s will.<sup>49</sup> Thus the *massa damnata* would consist of those who were never offered grace and those who were offered grace but rejected it. But this possibility of leaving something to the human will was based on Augustine’s ideas of God’s two types of calling, one infallibly effective and the other resisted by an evil will. Thus this something left to the will was in reality nothing at all, which became more clear especially as he came to emphasize the doctrine of predestination over against the so-called semi-pelagians.

Some churchmen, who rejected Pelagian dogma, did not accept the full extent of Augustine's claims. There arose a group of theologians, who, unlike the Pelagians, fully accepted the doctrine of original sin, yet did not accept the Augustinian view of predestination. They felt Augustine had resolved the tension between inevitability and free choice in the direction of inevitability. Augustine, they felt, had reintroduced the pagan notion of fate back into Christian doctrine.<sup>50</sup> They preferred to answer the question of why some are saved and not others by reference to the choice of man.

When Augustine himself is consulted in this matter, it becomes clear that his opponents had fairly estimated his doctrinal claims. In the works of his final years, Augustine clearly discussed predestination and the gift of perseverance because of those who disagreed with him on these points. In these works, Augustine's theology became focused more and more on the principle that "nothing comes to pass except what either He Himself does, or Himself allows to be done."<sup>51</sup>

Faith, then, as well in its beginning as in its completion, is God's gift; and let no one have any doubt whatever, unless he desires to resist the plainest sacred writings, that this gift is given to some, while to some it is not given. But why it is not given to all ought not to disturb the believer, who believes that from one all have gone into a condemnation, which undoubtedly is most righteous; so that even if none were delivered therefrom, there would be no just cause for finding fault with God.<sup>52</sup>

With this basic model in mind, Augustine is able to speak of predestination unto faith and holiness. But since only those are saved who are elected, it follows, for Augustine, that God only truly wanted to save those he elected. The rest he left in their natural sin to be condemned. This becomes apparent in Augustine's treatment of biblical passages that teach God's desire for the universal salvation of mankind. For example, on numerous occasions of treating 1 Tim. 2:4, he struggles to find an interpretation that fit this basic theological model. In the *Encheiridion*, he argues that the text "God wishes all men to be saved" must be interpreted to mean that all those who are saved are saved by God's will.<sup>53</sup> In *On Rebuke and Grace*, he argued that the passage can be understood in a number of ways. First, "all men" could mean only "all the elect" or "men of every kind."<sup>54</sup> Or another option is to understand that God makes us

Christians desire all men to be saved, though he himself does not, and in this way God is said to want all to be saved.<sup>55</sup>

In this model, all is left to the choices of God, made before time, to save some and to leave others. Thus Augustine clearly distinguishes between the two calls of God, that by which he calls all people through preaching, about which it is said “Many are called but few are chosen,” and the true effective call of God which is always effective and is based on the foreknowledge and predestination of God.<sup>56</sup> And he distinguishes between those who are called God’s children by us according to grace received in time, and those who are called God’s children by God himself according to foreknowledge and predestination.<sup>57</sup> And he limits the extent of Christ’s redemption by distinguishing between the world which did not know God because it was “predestined to condemnation really deserved”, and the world “which He reconciled unto Himself through Christ.”<sup>58</sup> Likewise, Augustine can on occasion speak of a “predestination to death” and those “predestined to punishment”<sup>59</sup> Gerard O’Daly explains Augustine’s language saying: “predestination to damnation is simply the withholding by God of grace from those he does not will to save. That is to say, whereas predestination to salvation is actively caused by God, God merely permits the damned to suffer the consequences of Adam’s sin.”<sup>60</sup> However true, Augustine had moved beyond the limits of the rule of faith accepted by the fathers by denying the essential universality of the Christian message of salvation.<sup>61</sup>

The dangers of Augustine’s language and theological model were apparent to many of those after him. Augustine had his defenders in men such as Prosper of Aquitaine and his opponents in men such as Faustus of Riez and John Cassian. All of the implications of Augustine’s doctrine were debated in regard to the sacraments, the preaching of repentance, the universality of salvation etc. Ultimately the controversies led to the Synod of Orange which “vindicated Augustine’s essential teaching on grace but muffled his views on predestination to punishment.”<sup>62</sup> However, as time passed a form of so-called semi-pelagian doctrine became generally accepted in what Pelikan calls, the Augustinian synthesis. This synthesis continued to modify and understand Augustine in a way acceptable to most. And “central in the

Augustinian synthesis was the universally accepted principle that ‘we ought to believe both the grace of God and the free will of man,’ neither without the other.’<sup>63</sup> The Middle Ages saw a number of attempts to regain the Augustinian emphasis on grace alone and predestination but only with limited success.

It was against this background that Luther made his theological confession against “free choice” (*liberum arbitrium*). His attack against the notion of *liberum arbitrium* was early and energetic. When Erasmus wrote his defense of free will, Luther felt he had addressed the central issue of the entire reformation, namely, man’s ability to attain to salvation. The purpose of this paper is not to review Luther’s work as a whole. Here I merely want to investigate, in part, the relationship of Luther’s discussion of free will to that which went before him.

Erasmus, in his work against Luther, appealed to authority and claimed that his position agreed with the martyrs, theologians, colleges, councils, bishops, and popes of the church while Luther was left with no one, save Wycliffe and Laurentius Valla, a questionable supporting cast at best. Importantly, Luther responded that he recognized his lonely position and claimed that he, like Erasmus, had long been under the sway of the fathers. But, Luther continued, none of them were saints, had the Holy Spirit, or ever performed a miracle, on the basis of what they taught concerning free will. Luther would stand with scripture alone. Even so, he did not fail to point out that Erasmus had forgotten to mention Augustine, “who is wholly on my side.”<sup>64</sup>

The question arises then to what extent Augustine is on Luther’s side, or stated differently, to what extent Luther agreed with Augustine. Of course, Calvinists, who rightly claim Augustine, also often claim Luther on the basis of this very work under consideration. On the other hand, Lutherans, eager to point out Luther’s agreement with the Formula of Concord, often deny the same and point out the clear differences of emphasis in Luther’s and Calvin’s overall theological models.<sup>65</sup> But it must be admitted from the beginning that there are many borrowings in expression and terminology and thus seeming important points of agreement with Augustine, which can not be overlooked. For example, consider Luther’s famous analogy of the human will as a beast ridden by one of two masters.<sup>66</sup> This seems

potentially to be a dressed up version Augustine's sentiments variously expressed that "carnal cupidity rules wherever the love of God isn't."<sup>67</sup> Or again Luther's discussion of the light of nature, the light of grace, and the light of glory, is very similar to Augustine's own appeal to wait for God's justice to be revealed at the resurrection.<sup>68</sup> Occasions like these deserve their own investigation as to their extent and the paths they might have taken between Augustine and Luther. But for this article, I will limit the remaining observations to the main points of Luther's use of arguments concerning God's foreknowledge against free will.

I believe it can be safely stated that the argument from God's foreknowledge and predestination is one of Luther's primary attacks on free will, to which he returns again and again. Luther turns his doctrine of God against Erasmus' doctrine of man. Namely, he states

that God foreknows nothing by contingency, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His immutable, eternal, and infallible will. ... From which it follows irrefutably, that all things which we do, although they may appear to us to be done mutably and contingently, are yet, in reality, done necessarily and immutably, with respect to the will of God.<sup>69</sup>

This is very similar to Augustine's reference to fate as the "train of causes", decreed by God, by which all things become what they become. With this argument Luther intends to prove that all things that happen, happen by necessity. He is careful to say what he means by "necessity", not implying force or compulsion or unwillingness, but rather simply that all things happen just as God has foreseen them and as his omnipotence brings them about. He does not deny that Judas betrayed Jesus willingly, but he maintains that Judas willed to betray him at a time infallibly predefined by God.<sup>70</sup> If there were such a thing as truly "free" will, it would be impossible to know what the future would be because every "free" choice would alter the course of the future immeasurably. But Luther believes that the doctrine of God proves that all things are absolute. God immutably knows the future and thus there can be no free-choice.<sup>71</sup>



Luther, in the name of the Gospel, even makes use of that which the church had fought so long to reject. He asks why this should be so shocking to us Christians when even the pagans knew this truth. “How often does Virgil alone make mention of Fate?”<sup>72</sup> And seen from this point of view, Luther, unlike Augustine, rejected the terminology “free will” as entirely deceptive and the thing itself ultimately as a non-entity. And this applies to every act and detail of life. Thus it would be “most safe and most religious” to do away with the term altogether and remove it from the “mouths and speech of men”.<sup>73</sup> Luther, of course, recognized that there were other ways of speaking about this ambiguous thing called “free choice.” He granted with Augustine that if some power is to be given to men it should be taught that people have “free will” in regard to those things below them but not in regard to those things above them. But, in reality, this should hardly be given the grand title “free will.” Nevertheless, despite his sentiment expressed here, Luther made use of this mode of speaking on many occasions and it was this type of language that came to be embodied in the Lutheran confessions.

But what other conclusions did Luther draw from his doctrine of God’s foreknowledge and predestination in regard to salvation? The questions and answers are very similar to what one hears from the fifth century bishop. Why is it that some hear the law and repent while others do not? Why do some hear the gospel and believe and others do not? Erasmus accounted for this by appealing to one person choosing or accepting while another does not. But Luther stated that this difference is the result of “God, who, according to His own counsel, ordains whom, and such as, He wills to be receivers and partakers of the preached and offered mercy.”<sup>74</sup> And so Luther recalls the distinction between the will of God revealed and preached, and God himself, not preached, not revealed, not offered to us. God’s preached will wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. But “why that Majesty does not take away or change this fault of the will in all, seeing that, it is not in the power of man to do it; or why He lays that to the charge of the will, which man cannot avoid, it becomes us not to inquire.”<sup>75</sup> Luther had rejected any place within theology for Aristotle’s relationship between necessity and blame. Thus, as in Augustine, some are granted to believe, while others are left in their sin to perish. Luther recognizes the difficulty of

some “to defend the mercy and justice of God, seeing that, He damns the undeserving, that is, those who are for that reason ungodly, because, being born in iniquity, they cannot by any means prevent themselves from being ungodly, and from remaining so, and being damned.”<sup>76</sup> “It is this, that seems to give the greatest offence to common sense or natural reason, - that the God, who is set forth as being so full of mercy and goodness, should, of His mere will, leave men, harden them, and damn them.”<sup>77</sup> Luther had concluded that “the love and hatred of God towards men is immutable and eternal; existing, not only before there was any merit or work of “Free-will,” but before the worlds were made; and that, all things take place in us from necessity, accordingly as He loved or loved not from all eternity.”<sup>78</sup> The doctrine of free will, on the contrary, portrays God as if he had not “determined by certain election who should be saved and who should be damned.”<sup>79</sup> These and other places show that when it is asked why one is saved and not another, for Luther, the answer clearly lies not in man but rather in the decisions of God before eternity. Some were chosen, others were left in sin to perish in judgement. The *cur alii prae aliis* mystery resides entirely in the inscrutable majesty of God. In this, the bishop of Hippo is wholly on his side.

But these great similarities between Luther’s doctrine and Augustine, which, perhaps, are not cheerfully admitted by some Lutherans, must be balanced by consideration of the differences. And this has as much to do with the relationship of this doctrine of God to Luther’s overall theology. When Luther explained the relationship of this teaching to the rest of Christian doctrine, he made great use of the distinction between God himself and God as he is preached and worshiped.<sup>80</sup> So he claimed that God in his word “does not will the death of the sinner” in his word, but he wills it with that will inscrutable. Thus, with his word he preaches that all men should be saved and comes to all with the word of salvation but according to his majesty God has decided not to remove or change the fault of sin in all people and those he leaves by necessity perish. Luther went so far as to speak of Jesus as God incarnate

who was sent into the world for the very purpose of willing speaking, doing, suffering, and offering to all men everything necessary for salvation. Yet he offends very many, who being either abandoned or hardened by that secret will of the Divine Majesty do not receive him as he wills, speaks, does, suffers, and offers. ... It is likewise the part of this

incarnate God to weep, wail, and groan over the perdition of the ungodly, when the will of the Divine Majesty purposely abandons and reprobates some to perish.<sup>81</sup>

This contrast between God preached and God himself leaves one with the rather uneasy feeling that Luther is suggesting that all preaching, all of the word of God, even Christ himself is some sort of cruel joke. And it is this discomfort that makes so many Lutherans uneasy with this work and struggle so earnestly to rescue Luther from himself, or, if that can't be done, to write off this work as a mere "private writing."<sup>82</sup> But Luther does not intend to turn Christ or the revealed will of God into a farce, although, perhaps, he says the opposite too unclearly in this work.

But when *de servo arbitrio* is set into the context of Luther's other works and deeds, it is clear that he can not be suggesting that the revealed word of God is a joke. He did not struggle so hard for the Lord's supper, put his own life on the line before empire and pope, and spend years of life translating the scriptures, for something as absurd as tomfoolery. That being obvious, some have suggested that Luther intends to teach that there are two contradictory wills in God, a revealed and a non-revealed. Thus Luther worked and defended the revealed will of God as best he could, since that was all he had to work with, all the time knowing that the hidden will of God really overruled and contradicted this revealed will on many occasions. But Luther certainly never taught there are contradictory wills within God.

What separates Luther here from Augustine is precisely the relationship of Luther's doctrine of God to God's self-revelation. For Luther, God is so far above us that we can never completely know him. But he has revealed part of himself to us, in the law, and in Christ. The law and gospel, one which says he hates the sinner, and the other which states that out of love for the sinner God has sent his Son to die on the cross to take away the sin of the world, are God's revelation of his one will to us (even here we are speaking of God anthropologically, ascribing a human psychological attribute of "will" to the divinity). Even these two revealed elements of God's will are easily confused and mingled. How can God hate and love the sinner at the same time? Yet this is not the sum total of everything God wills. Luther realized and confessed it to be true that God does in fact want all to be saved. Yet, at the same time, for reasons

unrevealed, he has left some to perish. For Luther, unlike Augustine, this means truly subjecting the unknown of God's will to that which is known of God's will. The doctrine of foreknowledge and predestination must serve, not dominate, the gospel. Luther, unlike Augustine, unlike Calvin, does not subject the revealed word to a rigorously logical application of God's predestination and bring the revealed word to submit to the principle of God outside of his word. The Reformer can take 1 Tim. 2:14 in all seriousness. In some way, unexplainable, God truly does want all to be saved, yet in judgment, he leaves and condemns some, who are unable by nature to believe and save themselves. Both, for Luther, must be true.

This being the case, Luther not only learns the doctrine of God's prescience and predestination from Scripture but also learns the place of predestination within Christian theology as a whole. It is most fitting, indeed, that already in 1522, in the preface to the book of Romans in his freshly published New Testament, Luther appeals to the reader of Romans to place the doctrine of election in the right relation within Christian doctrine.

Concentrate first of all on Christ and His gospel, in order to learn how to recognize our sins and to know His grace. Next, wrestle with the problem of sin as discussed in chapters 1,2,3,4,5,6,7, and 8. Then, when you have arrived at chapter 8, dominated by the cross and passion of Christ, you will learn the right way of understanding the divine providence in chapters 9, 10, and 11, and the assurance that it gives. If we do not feel the weight of the passion the cross, and the death, we cannot cope with the problem of providence without either hurt to ourselves or secret anger with God. That is why the Adam in us has to be quite dead before we can bear this doctrine, and drink this strong wine, without harm.<sup>83</sup>

Seen in this light, it is easy to view *de servo arbitrio* as Luther's chapter 9, 10, and 11. You must consider first Luther's chapters 1-8, that is, his defense of the doctrine of Christ, faith, and the supper, his catechism and his biblical exegesis, his doctrine of vocation, and then you can see where this work fits into his overall thought. One must not dismiss *de servo arbitrio*. Luther never disowned it. He prized it. Even in his latest years he continued to believe that all things are absolute.<sup>84</sup> Yet, at the same time, he claimed that we must not be uncertain about the gospel on account of the doctrine of divinity. "God did

not come down from heaven to make you uncertain about predestination, to teach you to despise the sacraments, absolution, and the rest of the divine ordinances.”<sup>85</sup> The function of the doctrine of predestination is to be learned from Paul. The first is that it throws down and destroys any last vestiges of hope in one’s self or one’s own righteousness. Luther performed this function in *de servo arbitrio*. The second function is that since salvation does not depend on us we need not fear that anything, not sin, death, or the devil, can keep us from God’s love and salvation in Christ (Rom. 8:28-35; Rom. 11). In this way, one rightly and profitably makes use of this doctrine.

A few final comments can be made in regard to Luther’s opinion of the other fathers on free will. Luther was often particularly hard on some of the fathers, especially Jerome, in regard to their opinions on free will. He noted that these ideas were part of the doctrine of man being created in the image of God. He also realized that that these “dangerous opinions” came about as the result of “an emotion and of a particular mood which we do not have and cannot have, since we do not have similar situations.”<sup>86</sup> Luther could excuse the fathers’ language to a degree if it was understood to refer to a “passive potentiality”, that is, a potentiality of believing that is realized only through God’s power.<sup>87</sup> But it’s clear that he realized hardly anyone understood the term in that way .

Finally, it should be noted that Luther was oriented to the whole question of free will as a member of the western church so profoundly affected by Augustine. Both Luther and the Formula of Concord recognize that a Christian cooperates with God in the post conversion life.<sup>88</sup> So the controversy over free will concerns only that time before and up to “conversion”, defined as the beginning of internal faith. After the denial of free will we may indeed tack on the requirement for external word or baptism to effect “conversion.” But the thing itself, so defined, remains an internal event. Thus the question of free will, even when it is denied, always runs the danger of orienting us to the subjective internal part of salvation in such a way that conversion is considered salvation itself and conversion apart from baptism is the norm. Conversion thus becomes mostly a psychological event and the church becomes merely a gathering of those previously so converted. One only need look at the many free will sects of Evangelicals today to

observe such a theology at work. Is there something yet to learn from the ecclesiology and sacramentology of the earliest fathers?

Luther's response to Erasmus was molded in part by the questions asked by Erasmus and by western theology as a whole. Luther's answers were largely Augustinian but the orientation of his answers to his overall theology, which was centered in Christ and the cross as God's greatest revelation, give Luther's work a unique place in the history of Christian doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> Citation of Latin works follows the method of *Vetus Latina: Kirchenschriftsteller Verzeichnis und Sigel* (Verlag Herder Freiburg, 1981). Greek works are cited according to the conventions adopted in G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961-8), xi-xlv. Abbreviations used for editions cited are:

- ANF     *Ante Nicene Fathers, The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (Grand Rapids, MI).
- CC       *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, Turnhout
- CS       *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Wien
- LW       Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works* (English Translation) (St. Louis. 1955-76).
- NPNF    *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Grand Rapids, MI.
- WA       Luther, Martin. *Dr Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 63 vols. (Weimar, 1883-1897).

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 6.448ff. See also *Il.* 16.830f. and *Il.* 20.193f.

<sup>3</sup> Zeitler points out that Homer did not have a word meaning “will.” (Wolfgang M. Zeitler, *Entscheidungsfreiheit bei Platon*, vol. 78 of *Zetemata, Monographien zur Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1983), 26). And Dihle shows at great length that the Greek philosophers had no concept corresponding to will as “sheer volition, regardless of its origin in either cognition or emotion” as is found in modern European languages and thought (Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (University of California Press, 1982), 20).

<sup>4</sup> Dihle, 26. He points out that Homer has this basic model even without the aid of a doctrine of the soul.

<sup>5</sup> The corresponding terminology which relates to the idea of rational thought is impressive. In the classical period *βουλομαι* meant “primarily the planning and reflecting which precedes action.” (*ἵε*)*ϕεῖν* meant to be prepared for something or even to have the ability to do something. *προαίρεσθαι* refers to such a choice “the intellect makes out of several possible objectives of action.” Dihle, 21. But these are merely representative of a general class of terminology that expressed rational knowing and rational choice such as *γίγνωσκω*, *διανοεσθαι*, *νοεῖν* etc.

<sup>6</sup> *Il.* 16.817.

<sup>7</sup> *Il.* 16.849.

<sup>8</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1971), 280.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Sorabji, *Necessity Cause and Blame. Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory*, (Gerald Duckworth & Co, 1980), 243 n. 2.

<sup>10</sup> This is in contrast to Hebrew thought in which obedience to God's commands, whether understood or not, is the nature of righteousness. God, the omnipotent creator of the universe *ex nihilo*, is simply to be obeyed without reference to understanding. For the Greek “the human mind has to be capable of perceiving and understanding the rational order of the universe and, consequently, the nature of the divine.” Dihle, 2. Dihle notes that it was Galen, in the second century, who first notes this fundamental difference between Hebrew and Greek thought. All efforts to reconcile Greek philosophy and Moses, he says, were ultimately trying to overcome this basic difference in the concept of the Creator and the divine. Therefore it expresses the Greek attitude when Seneca says “I do not obey God; rather, I agree with Him.” *ep.* 96.2. (Dihle, 18).

<sup>11</sup> *Nich. Eth.* 3.1.

<sup>12</sup> *Nich. Eth.* 3.3.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle's Theory of the Will* (Yale University Press, 1979), 7f.

<sup>14</sup> *Ant. Jud.* 13.171ff. Also see *Ant.* 18.11ff. and *Bell.* 2.117ff.

<sup>15</sup> Wächter therefore suggests that, “it is very doubtful that the spiritual leaders divided themselves over this question.” Wächter, 112.

<sup>16</sup> *I apol.* 43.1. (ANF 1, 177). It is important to note that this episode occurs in the *Apology* addressed to the pagans and not in the *Dialogue* which records a discussion with a Jew over many Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ.

<sup>17</sup> *haer.* 3.4.3.

<sup>18</sup> *haer.* 1.4.5. (ANF 1, 322).

<sup>19</sup> *haer.* 1.5.1 (ANF 1, 322).

<sup>20</sup> *haer.* 1.6.2. (ANF 1, 324). Irenaeus takes off from this point and makes good use of the fate versus ethics principle. He states that the Valentinians, fated to salvation according to their own doctrine, engage in all types of immorality thinking they will not be affected by it.

<sup>21</sup> *princ.* 3.1.4ff.

<sup>22</sup> *I apol.* 43. (ANF 1, 177). *haer.* 4.37.1ff.

<sup>23</sup> *princ.* 3.3-6.

<sup>24</sup> Take for example Justin’s rationalistic explanation of the way of salvation in *I apol.* 10 (ANF 1, 165). Notice Harnack’s comments on how in this model the historical Jesus Christ loses all importance and is entirely subjected to the cosmological Logos. Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, translated by Neil Buchanan from the third edition of the *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (NY: Dover Publications, 1961): 3, 270f.

<sup>25</sup> So Harnack concludes that “the Pauline formula, ‘Where there is forgiveness of sin, there also is life and salvation’, had for centuries no distinct history. But the formula, ‘Where there is truth, perfect knowledge, there also is eternal life’, has had the richest history in Christendom since its beginning.” (1, 170 n.1). The ultimate result, according to Harnack is that “the moralistic view, in which eternal life is the wages and reward of a perfect moral life wrought out essentially by one’s own power, took the place of first importance at a very early period.” (1, 171). Pelikan notes: “Bent as they were upon proving that Christianity was the fulfillment of the intuitions and expectations of all the nations, not only of the Jews, the apologists represented Christ as God’s answer to the ideas and aspirations of the Greek philosophers. In their treatises, therefore, salvation could be equated with the gift of this answer.” Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 143.

<sup>26</sup> Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 146.

<sup>27</sup> <sup>1</sup> Mag. 6.2 where the church's external unity with the bishop is “type and evidence” of the already present immortality. “There is no gainsaying the fact that he [Ignatius] saw it [the church] as the scene and the mediator of salvation. Within the church, instituted and empowered by God, those being redeemed were given grace, so that in the end they could ‘attain to God.’” Virginia Corwin, *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 204.

<sup>28</sup> *Eph.* 18.2. See *Smyr.* 1.1 where Ignatius quotes Matt. 3:15 to the effect that Christ was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness.”

<sup>29</sup> This would appear to be a baptismal text referring to a chrism of oil accompanying baptism although this would be by far the earliest reference to such a practice.

<sup>30</sup> *haer.* 5.8.2ff.

<sup>31</sup> *haer.* 5.17.1. Also *haer.* 4.38.3; 5.14.3; 5.6.1.

<sup>32</sup> *haer.* 5.16.2. Since Adam was first created in the image of God, that is, in the image of God’s Son, the recreation of man in the image of the Son is a type of restoration of the original state of man. cf. *haer.* 4.33.4.



<sup>33</sup> Christ was “joining and uniting the Spirit of God the Father with what God had fashioned, so that man became accruing to the image and likeness of God.” *Dem.* 97. See Irenaeus’ entire discussion on the exegesis of 1 Cor. 15:50 where Paul says that “flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God.” The gnostics apparently made much of this passage against the resurrection of the flesh and Irenaeus attempts to repudiate their interpretation. *haer* 5.9.1 ff. Also *haer* 5.6.1.

<sup>34</sup> *haer* 5.8.1. (ANF 1, 533). The connection between the Spirit and the adoption as sons is very close in Irenaeus as in the Christian tradition before him. “Thus does he attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons” *haer* 5.12.2.

<sup>35</sup> “*accipiens Filium Dei, ut et homo fieret particeps Dei*” *haer* 4.28.2; “the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam’s formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we all were dead so in the spiritual we may all be made alive.” *haer* 5.1.3; cf. 4.40.1; 5.1.1; 5.13.4; 5.14.3; 5.27.2. “... calling man back again into communion with God, that by communion with Him we may have part in incorruptibility.” *Dem.* 40. On the other hand, “separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store.” *haer* 5.27.2.

<sup>36</sup> *haer* 5.11.2

<sup>37</sup> *Fo.* 17-20. (NPNF 4, 117-119).

<sup>38</sup> Gerard O’Daly, “Predestination and Freedom in Augustine’s Ethics,” in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, edited by Godfrey Vesey, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 97.

<sup>39</sup> Rist, J.M., “Augustine on Free Will and Predestination”, *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1969): 421-22.

<sup>40</sup> “*liberum arbitrium ad malum sufficit.*” *corr.* 1.2; 2.35; 13.42.

<sup>41</sup> Rist,, 424.

<sup>42</sup> O’Daly, 86-87.

<sup>43</sup> Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 314.

<sup>44</sup> *na.* 10 (NPNF 5, 124; CL 60, 238-239).

<sup>45</sup> *ci.* 5.8 (NPNF 2, 89).

<sup>46</sup> *ci.* 5.9 (NPNF 2, 89).

<sup>47</sup> See *re.* 1.23 where Augustine points out his own earlier error in this matter. Also *prae.* 3.7 (NPNF 5, 500).

<sup>48</sup> Rist, 436-437. *ench.* 27.103 (CC 46,104-5). “quia necesse est fieri si voluerit.”

<sup>49</sup> *pec.* 53-60.

<sup>50</sup> See Augustine’s response: *pers.* 19.

<sup>51</sup> *pers.* 12 (NPNF 5, 529).

<sup>52</sup> *prae.* 16 (NPNF 5, 506).

<sup>53</sup> *ench.* 27.103 (CC 46, 104). See Rist, 437-438.

<sup>54</sup> *corr.* 15.44 (NPNF 5, 489).

<sup>55</sup> *corr.* 15.47 (NPNF 5, 491).

<sup>56</sup> *prae.* 16.32 (NPNF 5, 513). See James Wetzel, “The Recovery of Free Agency in the Theology of St. Augustine,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 80 (1987): 101-125. Here 110-111.

<sup>57</sup> *corr.* 9.20 (NPNF 5, 479).

<sup>58</sup> *Jo.* 61.5 (NPNF 7, 415; CC 36, 632)

<sup>59</sup> *an.* 4.16 “*quos praedestinavit ad aeternam mortem*” (CL 60, 396). *ench.* 26.100 “*quos iuste praedestinavit ad poenam*” (CC 46, 103). See also *Jo.* 48.4,6 “*Quomodo ergo istis dixit: ‘Non estis ex ovibus meis’? Qui videbat eos ad sempiternum interitum praedestinos*” (NPNF 7, 267; CC 36, 414-415); *Jo.* 107.7; 111.5 “*mundus quippe ille damnationi praedestinos*” (CC 36, 632).

<sup>60</sup> O’Daly, 90. See also Rist, 428-429.

<sup>61</sup> See Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 296-299; 318.

<sup>62</sup> Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, 81.

<sup>63</sup> Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, 82.

<sup>64</sup> LW 33, 72.

<sup>65</sup> It is fairly common in our midst to excuse Augustine and deny that he questioned universal grace or proposed double predestination. This goes back at least to Pieper (*Christliche Dogmatik* 2, 24-25) and probably to earlier Missouri when the knowledge of the church fathers was quite minimal. It may very well derive from even earlier Lutheran theologians.

<sup>66</sup> LW 33, 65f.

<sup>67</sup> *ench.* 31.117. “*regnat carnalis cupiditas ubi non est Dei caritas.*” See Rist, 424.

<sup>68</sup> Luther: LW 33, 292. Augustine: *ench.* 24.95 “Then shall be made clear much that is now dark. For example, when of two infants, whose cases seem in all respects alike, one by the mercy of God chosen to Himself, and the other is by His justice abandoned (where, in the one who is chosen may recognize what was of justice due to himself, had not mercy intervened); why, of these two, the one should have been chosen rather than the other, is to, us an insoluble problem.”

<sup>69</sup> WA 18, 615 (LW 33, 37-38).

<sup>70</sup> “*disputamus ... an tempore praedefinito a Deo infallibiliter fieri oportuierit, ut Iudas volendo proderet Christum.*” WA 18, 721 (LW 33, 193).

<sup>71</sup> “If we believe it to be true, that God foreknows and fore-ordains all things; that He can be neither deceived nor hindered in His foreknowledge and predestination, and that nothing can take place but as he wills it, (which reason herself is compelled to confess;) then, even according to the testimony of reason herself, there can be no free choice – in man, - in angel, - or in any creature!” WA 18, 786 (LW 33, 293).

<sup>72</sup> WA 18, 618 (LW 33, 41).

<sup>73</sup> WA 18, 637-638 (LW 33, 68; 70).

<sup>74</sup> “*Ezechiel ... loquitur ... non de occulta illa et metuenda voluntate Dei ordinantis suo consilio, quos et quales praedicatae et oblatae misericordiae capaces et participes esse velit.*” WA 18, 684 (LW 33, 139).

<sup>75</sup> WA 18, 686 (LW 33, 140).

<sup>76</sup> “*qui damnet immeritos, hoc est impios eiusmodi, qui in impietate nati non possunt ulla ratione sibi consulere, quin impii sint, maneat et damnentur coganturque necessitate naturae peccare et perire.*” WA 18, 784 (LW 33, 289-90).

<sup>77</sup> WA 18, 719 (LW 33, 189).

<sup>78</sup> WA 18, 724-725 (LW 33, 199-200).

<sup>79</sup> “*et tandem eo venietur, ut homines salvi fiant et damnentur ignorante Deo, ut qui non discreverit certa electeione salvandos et dammandos.*” WA 18, 706 (LW 33, 171).

<sup>80</sup> “We are to argue in one way, concerning the will of God preached, revealed, and offered unto us, and worshipped by us; and in another, concerning God himself not preached, not revealed, not offered unto us, and worshipped by us. In whatever, therefore, God hides himself and will be unknown by us, that is nothing unto us.” WA 18, 685 (LW 33, 139).

<sup>81</sup> LW 33, 146.

<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately for such a plan, the Formula of Concord not only calls upon Luther’s general argument against free will in *de servo arbitrio* but also states that “There likewise his meaning and understanding of some other peculiar disputations introduced incidentally by Erasmus, as of absolute necessity, etc., have been secured by him in the best and most careful way against all misunderstanding and perversion; to which we also hereby appeal and refer to others (Latin: These things we wish thus repeated and we admonish all that they be read diligently.” (FC TD II, 44)

<sup>83</sup> *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings*, edited by John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), 32.

<sup>84</sup> LW 1, 50.

<sup>85</sup> LW 1, 45.

<sup>86</sup> LW 1, 61.

<sup>87</sup> LW 1, 85. See FC TD 2, 44.

<sup>88</sup> LW 33, 241-245.