

THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION (SIN AND GRACE)
Part III: The Medieval Church

Summary:

- I. INTRODUCTION.**
- II. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE SYNOD OF ORANGE (529).**
 - A. The Opinions of John Cassian.
 - B. The Mediating Position of the Synod of Orange (529).
- III. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE MEDIEVAL ERA.**
 - A. In the Pre-Scholastic Era.
 - B. In the Scholastic Era.
- IV. CONCLUSION.**

I. INTRODUCTION.

In the previous lesson we focused upon the most active era in the Ancient Church of the discussion of the doctrines of the nature of man and the nature of the origin of saving grace. Augustine postulated that man lost his ability to choose out of a pure motive so that his righteousness was and would always be characterized by imperfection unworthy of God's justice and, hence, forgiveness; Pelagius suggested the plenary ability of all men to will out of a pure motive. Augustine, therefore, argued that God through the preaching of Christ's cross must move upon man to cause him to be willing to choose the Savior; Pelagius felt Christ's death was gracious, but not necessary.

While the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus in 431 condemned Pelagius, the issues of the nature of sin and grace continued to be debated in the church; indeed, even to this day. The purpose of this lesson shall be to trace these doctrines through the Medieval era from Augustine.

II. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE SYNOD OF ORANGE (529).

With the condemnation of Pelagianism (Ephesus, 431) the doctrine of Augustine in its logically worked out details was not necessarily approved. (**N.B.**—Remember the real issue at Ephesus was the securing of the condemnation of Nestorianism; the Western issue of Pelagius was tangential.) The doctrine of predestination, an essential feature in the Augustinian system, was not only rejected by some, but was vigorously opposed by many who heartily condemned Pelagianism; hence from 427 to 529 the controversy

continued, not in North Africa where the Vandals destroyed a once vital Christianity, but in Gaul, the new intellectual center in the West.

A. The Opinions of John Cassian.

1. **The Man (ca. 360–ca. 435).** John Cassian was by birth and education a man of the East and does not appear in the West until 405 when he went to Rome on some business connected with the exile of John Chrysostom, his friend and patron. After some time as an ascetic in Egypt, he became a monk in Marseilles and founded two monasteries (“a haven in the falling debris of western civilization”). Cassian was largely responsible for the spread of monastic life in the West.
2. **His Opinions.** Cassian, through his work *Spiritual Discourses*, sought to mediate the extremes of Augustine’s soteriology. For example, he restated, redefined such concepts as predestination, grace, and free will making God’s actions a response to man’s initial action. In the *Discourses* he wrote (13):

“When His [God’s] kindness sees in us even the very smallest spark of good-will shining forth or which He Himself has, as it were, struck out from the hard flints of our hearts, He fans it and fosters it and nurses it with His breath, as He ‘will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth’ [1 Tim. 2:4] For He is true and lieth not when He lays down with an oath: ‘As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his way and live’ [Ezek. 33:11]. For if He willeth not that one of His little ones should perish, how can we think without grievous blasphemy that He willeth not all men universally, but only some instead of all to be saved. Those then who perish, perish against His will, as He testifieth against each of them day by day: ‘Turn from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?’ [Ezek. 33:11] . . . The grace of Christ is then at hand every day, which, while it ‘willeth all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,’ calleth all without exception, saying: ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will given you rest’ [Matt. 11:28]. But if he calls not all generally but only some, it follows that not all are heavy laden with either original sin or actual sin, and that this saying is not a true one: ‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ [Rom. 3:23]; nor can we believe that ‘death passed on all men’ [Rom. 5:12]. And so far do all who perish, perish against the will of God, that God cannot be said to have made death, as the Scripture itself testifieth: ‘For God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living’ [Wisdom 1:13].

When he sees anything of a good-will arisen in us He at once enlightens it and strengthens it and urges it on to salvation, giving increase to that which He himself implanted or He sees to have arisen by our own effort.

We should not hold that God made man such that he neither wills nor is able to do good. Otherwise He has not granted him a free will, if He has suffered him only to will or be capable of evil, but of himself neither to will nor be capable of what is good It cannot, therefore, be doubted that there are by nature seeds of goodness implanted in every soul by the kindness of the Creator; but unless these are quickened by the assistance of God, they will not be able to attain to an increase of perfection; for, as the blessed Apostle says: ‘Neither is he that planteth anything nor he that watereth, freedom of will is to some degree in a man’s power is very clearly taught in the book called *The Pastor*, where two angels are said to be attached to each one of us, i.e., a good and a bad one, while it lies in a man’s own option to choose which to follow. And, therefore, the will always remains free in man, and it can either neglect or delight in the grace of God. For the Apostle would not have commanded, saying, ‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling’ [Phil. 2:12], had he not known that it could be advanced or neglected by us But that they should not think that they did not need divine aid he adds: ‘For it is God who worketh in you both to will and accomplish His good pleasure’ [Phil. 2:13]. The mercy of the Lord, therefore, goes before the will of man, for it is said, ‘My God, will prevent me with His mercy’ [Psalm 59:10], and again, that He may put our desire to the test, our will goes before God who waits and for our good delays”.

Cassian became the leader of the Massilians who strenuously denied complete moral ability as well as Augustine’s complete moral inability. Klotche summarized Cassian’s arguments (*History*, 94-95): “(a) Adam’s fall entailed death and corruption of nature upon his posterity (original sin). (b) Original sin does not eliminate the free will, but weakens it, nor does it involve complete impotence, but only moral infirmity. (c) The natural man is accordingly neither morally dead (Augustine), or morally healthy (Pelagius), but morally sick and weakened. (d) He needs, therefore, divine grace as the co-operative agency of the human will in conversion. Accordingly the main share in our salvation is to be ascribed not to the merit of our own works, but to heavenly grace. (e) Sometimes it is the divine agency as in the cases of Paul and Matthew, sometimes it is the human agency (Zacchaeus) which

begins the work of regeneration. (f) There is no unconditional election to eternal salvation. Predestination is based on foreknowledge. Those who perish, perish against God's will, for He willeth all men to be saved".

Two other Massilians are worth a passing note: Vincent of Lerins and Faustus of Reji.

- a) **Vincent of Lerins'** attack upon Augustine is not direct but far reaching in that he classified Augustine's views as novel, the product of novel "innovators." He wrote (*Commonitorium* 26): "But what do they say? 'If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down'; that is, 'If thou wouldest be a son of God, and wouldest receive the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven, cast thyself down; that is, cast thyself down from the doctrine and tradition of that sublime Church, which is imagined to be nothing less than the very temple of God.' And if one should ask one of the heretics who gives this advice: How do you prove it? What ground have you for saying that I ought to cast away the universal and ancient faith of the Catholic Church? he has only the answer ready: 'For it is written'; and forthwith he produces a thousand testimonies, a thousand examples, a thousand authorities from the Law, from the Psalms, from the Apostles, from the prophets, by means of which, interpreted a new and wrong principle, the unhappy soul is precipitated from the height of Catholic truth to the lowest abyss of heresy. Then with the accompanying promises, the heretics are won marvelously to beguile the incautious. For they dare to teach and promise that in their church, that is, in the conventicle of their communion, there is a certain great and special and altogether personal grace of God, so that whosoever pertain to their number, without any labor, without any effort, without any industry, even though they neither ask, nor seek, nor knock, have such a dispensation from God, that borne up of angel hands, that is, preserved by the protection of angels, it is impossible they should ever dash their feet against a stone, that is, that they should ever be offended".
- b) **Faustus of Rhegium**, the most ardent spokesman for the anti-Augustinians in his treatise *On the Grace of God and Free Will* argued that faith demands free will. He wrote (1, 11): "To God, the liberality of his reward and to man, the devotion of his search." Gonzalez summarized Faustus (II, 58): "He defends the doctrine according to which the *initium fidei*—the first step of faith—depends on human freedom. This freedom gives man the natural capacity to turn toward God and to seek him until he responds. 'To

God, the liberality of his reward; and to man, the devotion of his search.’ Those who claim that human free will is able only to sin, and can do no good, are mistaken. Christ died for all, and this is sufficient basis on which to reject the doctrine of predestination as Augustine understands it, and to affirm that the so-called predestination is no more than God’s judgment on what his foreknowledge tells him each man will do with his own freedom”.

- c. **Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury (ca.1290-1349)** called Doctor Profundus for his erudition in math, physics, and theology. He was also chaplain to King Edward III.

Bradwardine held that “God immutably ordained all that comes about, with His will as the instrument in attaining His decrees.”

B. The Mediating Position of the Synod of Orange (529).

1. **The Opposition to Cassian.** The principle defenders of Augustine’s theology were Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary of Arles. Of the two the greater was Prosper who wrote *Grace and Free Will. A Defense of St. Augustine Against Cassian*. He stated some of the beliefs of those who attack Augustine (chapter, 19.2-4, 7, 8):

“It was said in the second proposition: ‘The divine protection is inseparably with us, and so great is the love of the Creator for His creature that not only does His providence accompany it, but even unceasingly goes before it, and the Prophet admits this from experience. He said: ‘My God, His mercy shall prevent me.’ And when He sees in us any beginning of a good will, He illumines it, strengthens it and directs it to salvation, giving increase to that which either He Himself planted, or which He saw come forth from our efforts.”

“In the third proposition you asserted: ‘What else are we being told except that in all these both the grace of God and the liberty of our will are proclaimed, and also that man can sometimes by his own activity reach out to a desire of the virtues; but he always needs the Lord’s help’? As if our physician does not also grant the sick desire true health!”

“You asserted in the fourth definition: ‘In order that it may be the more evident that the beginnings of a good will sometimes emanate from a good will, through the bounty of nature bestowed by the beneficence of the Creator, and the Apostle is the witness that, unless

these beginnings are directed by God, they cannot come to the perfection of virtues, he says: ‘For to will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not.’ As if the Apostle, who professes that his sufficiency, even to think, is from God, had a good will from a natural inclination and not from the gift of grace!”

“You said in the seventh proposition: ‘After the Fall, therefore, Adam conceived a knowledge of evil which he did not have; but he did not lose the knowledge of good which he did have’”.

“Both are false, because Adam by a divine admonition knew in advance how great an evil must be on guard against, and, when he believed the Devil, he forgot in how great a good he was established. For, just as to be evil is a very bad knowledge of evil, so not to be good is a very bad ignorance of good”.

“In the eighth definition it was said: ‘Wherefore, we must beware lest we refer all the merits of the saints to God in such a way that we ascribe only what is evil and perverse to human nature’”.

“As if nature were not damned before grace, were not in blindness, not wounded; or as if they whose merits are thence, whence justice, were not gratuitously justified!”

He concluded the treatise by stating (chapter 22), “It has been sufficiently demonstrated, I think, that those who blame St. Augustine make empty objections, attack what is right and defend what is wrong.”

2. **The Synod of Orange (529)**

- a) The immediate background. Through the labor of Faustus of Rhegium (d. 495), Augustinian views (extreme ones) were condemned at a Synod in Arles (475) and again at Lyons. Faustus’ views began to gain a wide currency in Gaul; but the popes in Rome, where Augustine was held in high esteem, rejected semi-pelagianism while ignoring Augustinian predestination. Then in 529 two further synods were held, Valence and Orange, the latter being the most crucial.
- b) **The Synod of Orange.** In reality this synod brought a close to the Semi-Pelagian controversy by moving to a position further toward Augustine, hence a moderate Augustinianism became the official position of the church.

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| 430 A.D. | Augustine | | Pelagius |
| 475 A.D. | Augustine | Cassian | Pelagius |
| 529 A.D. | Augustine | Orange | Pelagius |

The Council of Orange was made up of several bishops and some lay notables that gathered for the dedication of a church. Caesareus of Arles had received from Felix IV of Rome eight statements against the Massilians, Cassians, to which the assembled added several others. The canons that were approved are as follows:

“Canon 2. Whoever asserts that the transgression of Adam injured himself only, and not his offspring, or that death only of the body, which is the penalty of sin, but not also sin, which is the death of the soul, passed by one man to the entire human race, wrongs God and contradicts the Apostle [Rom. 5:12].”

“Canon 3. Whoever says that the grace of God can be bestowed in reply to human petition, but not that the grace brings it about so that it is asked for by us, contradicts Isaiah the prophet and the Apostle [Is. 65:1; Rom. 10:20].”

“Canon 4. Whoever contends that our will, to be set free from sin, may anticipate God’s action, and shall not confess that it is brought about by the infusion of the Holy Spirit and his operation in us, that we wish to be set free, resists that same Holy Spirit speaking through Solomon: ‘The will is prepared by the Lord’ [Proverbs 8:35, cf. LXX; not so in Vulgate or Heb.], and the Apostle [Phil. 2:13].”

“Canon 7. Whoever asserts that by the force of nature we can rightly think or choose anything good, which pertains to eternal life, or be saved, that is, assent to the evangelical preaching, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all grace to assent to and believe the truth, is deceived by an heretical spirit, not understanding the voice to the Lord [John 15:5], and of the Apostle [II Cor. 3:5].”

“Canon 8. Whoever asserts that some by mercy, others by free will, which in all who have been born since the transgression of the first man is evidently corrupt, are able to come to the grace of baptism, is proved an alien from the faith. For he asserts that the free will of all has not been weakened by the sin of the first man, or he evidently thinks that it has been so injured that some,

however, are able without the revelation of God to attain by their own power, to the mystery of eternal salvation”.

Schaff's brief quotation of the canons are quite helpful (*History*. 5, 258-60): “These Canons are strongly anti-Semi-Pelagian—3: ‘The grace of God is not granted in response to prayer, but itself causes the prayer to be offered for it.’ 4: ‘That we may be cleansed from sin, God does not wait upon, but prepares, our will.’ 5: ‘The beginning of faith is not due to us, to the grace of God—that state of believing by which we believe in him who justifies the impious, and attain the regeneration of holy Baptism, is brought about through the gift of grace, i.e., the inspiration of the Holy Spirit correcting our will from unbelief to faith, and it is not ours naturally.’ 6: ‘It is the work of grace that we believe, will, desire, attempt, knock, etc., and not vice-versa.’ 7: ‘We cannot without grace think or choose, by our natural powers, anything good that pertains to salvation.’ 8: ‘It is untrue that some attain baptismal faith by mercy, others by free will.’ 9: ‘As often as we do good, God works in and with us, that we may work.’ 10: ‘Even the regenerate and holy always need the divine aid.’ 11: ‘We can only vow to God what we ourselves have received from him.’ 12: ‘God loves us as we shall be by his gift, not as we are by our merit.’ 13: ‘Choice of will, weakened in the first man, cannot be repaired except by the grace of Baptism.’ 16: ‘Let no one boast of what he seems to have as if he did not receive it, or think that he has received, because the letter appeared or was sounded outwardly that it might be read or heard’”.

N.B. The necessity of divine grace was affirmed, but not grace as irresistible. Baptism is the vehicle of grace. Election to grace is recognized but unconditional election is not mentioned and predestination is expressly anathematized. Orange is not Augustinian, Pelagian, or Cassian! Orange advocated cooperative salvation from an Augustine perspective, not a Pelagian perspective. Hence, it is semi-Augustinianism! Gonzalez stated (*History*. 2, 61): “It would be incorrect to say that the synod of Orange was a victory for semi-Pelagianism. On the contrary, the synod clearly rejected such typical semi-Pelagian doctrines as that of the human *initium fidei*. It is true, however, that the synod was not truly Augustinian in its doctrine. Nothing is said here—although it is in a way implied—of a predestination that takes place not on the basis of a divine foreknowledge of the future attitudes and actions of men, but on the basis of a sovereign decision of God. Nor is anything said of an irresistible grace. The emphasis is now rather on that grace which is given at baptism.

The overwhelming and dynamic experience set forth in the Confession is being transformed into an entire system of grace—a process that was perhaps inevitable, but nonetheless unfortunate”.

- c) The Aftermath. The canons of Orange were then referred to the bishop of Rome, Boniface II, who approved the resolutions thus setting the pattern for catholic theology (semi-Augustinianism). Gradually, however, the church would drift to a Romish position (Cassian) with notions of infusion and gracious ability (i.e., justification through grace and works).

N.B. Concluding Summary of the various general positions on sin and grace.

1. Augustine—Salvation is totally, causatively of God.
2. Orange—Salvation originates in God, proceeds God and man.
3. Semi-Pelagianism—Salvation originates in man, proceeds by man and God.
4. Pelagianism—Salvation is totally, causatively of man.

III. THE DOCTRINES OF SALVATION AND THE MEDIEVAL ERA.

A. In the Pre-Scholastic Era.

In the early medieval era (600–950), the church maintained an Augustinian prospective without exact particulars. Shedd wrote (*History*. 2, 111-12): “The more devout and evangelical minds in the 5th and 6th centuries, like Bede and Alcuin, propagated the teachings of Augustine respecting the corruption of human nature, and the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration; but were less distinct and bold, in their statements respecting the preterition and reprobation of the lost. They were content with affirming, in the most unqualified manner, the doctrine of an enslaved will, and the need of divine efficiency in order to its renewal and liberation, and left the darker and more difficult side of the doctrine of predestination, without explanation. So far, therefore, as the practical part of the Augustinian anthropology,—its relations, namely, to the renewal and salvation of men,—is concerned, the more distinguished Fathers of the Western Church, during the two or three centuries succeeding that of Augustine, were steady adherents to his opinions. But the general decline that was advancing in all the great interests of the church brought with it a departure from the high vantage-ground which had been gained in the contest with Pelagianism”.

N.B. The Medieval Age progressively evidenced a shift from Augustinianism to a semi-Pelagianism!

1. **Gregory the Great (540–640)**, bishop of Rome (590–604), shows the influence of a weakened Augustinianism. Gregory rejected Augustinian's predestination and irresistible grace. Gregory developed within his theological framework the doctrine of penance and progressive satisfaction for sin. Gregory is a milestone in the development of Romish theology, which is a semi-pelagianism.
2. **Gottschalk (ca. 804–ca. 869)**, a monk of Orbais, within the context of the ninth century Carolingian Revival attempted to stir the church to advocate Augustinianism (this attempt evidences how alien Augustine had at length become in the church). Harnack asserted (*History*. 5, 293); "But the theology of Gregory I had already accustomed men to combine the formulas of Augustinianism with the Pelagianism required by the system of the cultures".
 - a) **His Views.** Gottschalk appears to have come to his views having copiously read Augustine, Ambrose, and Prosper. His teachings, says Harnack, "were not different from Augustine" (*History*. 2, 239) except that he stressed predestination to the neglect of other doctrines. Klotsch wrote (*History*. 123) in summary: "Gottschalk, starting from the conception of the immutability of God who from eternity has ordered all his decrees in virtue of his foreknowledge which merely accompanies predestination, contended for a twofold predestination. The immutable God has from all eternity predestinated eternal life to the elect, and the elect to eternal life. And the same immutable God has immutably predestined everlasting punishment to the reprobate, and the reprobate to everlasting punishment. God did not predestinate to sin, but only to punishment for sin. Christ did not die for all, but only for the elect; and only they constitute the true church. Gottschalk did not differ essentially in his view from the Augustinian scheme. He only carried Augustine's doctrine to its extreme logical conclusions".
 - b) **His condemnation.** Gottschalk was opposed by Rabanus, Abbot of Fulda, and Hinkmar, Archbishop of Rheims. Hinkmar has him publicly whipped, forced into a secluded monastery, and so mistreated that he lost sanity. He continued a literary battle until his death against Hinkmar who based predestination on foresight! Of Hinkmar's beliefs and triumph Harnack wrote (*History*. 2, 301-302): "Hinkmar composed this document. Besides predestination to life, which was set forth in good Augustinian language, it was declared that God willed to save all, Christ died for all, and that while free-will required to be redeemed and healed after the Fall, it had never been wholly lost. If the worth of a confession depends on its really expressing the existing belief, then the triumph of

Hinkmar's formula was really more valuable than would have been that of the contrary doctrine. The avowal of twofold predestination, in itself even more the expression of a theological speculation than of Christian faith in God the Father, would have meant less than nothing coupled with the retention of ecclesiastical empiricism. Of course the formula of Hinkmar, which no artifice could reconcile with that of Orange, did not mean much either; for, in spite of words, Augustine remained deposed. Gregory I's system of doctrine held the field. Men thought of the sacramental Christ, as they rejected, along with Adoptionism, the Augustinian Christology, and it was still this Christ and the good works of believers to which they looked, when, along with twofold predestination, they in fact set aside Augustine's doctrine of grace".

B. In the Scholastic Era.

The great scholastics structured the faith so as to buttress its formulations by means of reason. It is not surprising that the ideas of "sin and grace" are discussed.

1. **Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109).** In the scholastic period one thinker appears not only to have an Augustinian viewpoint, but seems to clarify and advance the doctrines of sin and grace.

a) **Anselm and the Doctrine of Sin.** Anselm defines sin in two ways: First, it is the non-payment of the debt of obedience to God and, second, a dishonoring of God. He wrote (*Cur Deus Homo*, 11):

“Boso: What is the debt we owe God?”

“Anselm: The will of every rational creature must be subject to the will of God.

“Boso: Perfectly true.

“Anselm: This is the debt which angel and man owe to God, so that no one sins if he pays it and anyone who does not pay it, sins. This is justice or rectitude of will, which makes persons upright or right in heart, that is, in will. This is the only and the total honor which we owe to God and which God exacts of us. For only such a will produces works pleasing to God, when it is able to act; and when it is unable to act, it gives satisfaction by itself alone, because no effect of activity gives satisfaction without it. A person who does not render God this honor due Him, takes from God what is His and dishonors

God, and this is to commit sin. Now, as long as he does not repay what he has plundered, he remains at fault. Neither is it enough merely to return what was taken away, but no account of the insult committed, he must give back more than he took away”.

Original sin is innate to Anselm; it is inherited from Adam (“everything starts with the original unity of the race”). Anselm maintains mediate, not immediate imputation. He wrote of Original Sin (*The Virgin Conception*, 27):

“I understand original sin, therefore, to be nothing else than what is in an infant, as soon as it has a rational soul, whatever may have occurred in its body, before it was so animated—for example, some disintegration of its parts—or whatever is to occur afterward, either in the soul or in the body. Because of the reasons mentioned before, I think that this is equal in all infants generated in the natural way, and that all who die in that sin alone are equally condemned. Indeed, whatever sin occurs in man over and above this one, is personal; and just as a person is born sinful on account of his nature, so the nature is rendered more sinful by the person, because when any person at all commits sin, man commits sin.”

“In regard to these infants, I cannot understand this sin I am calling ‘original’ to be anything else than that same deprivation of the required justice, which I described before as a result of the disobedience of Adam, by which all are children of wrath. The reason is that the voluntary forsaking of justice, of which nature was the cause in Adam, is a reproach to the nature, and its inability to recover justice does not excuse persons, as has been said. Deprivation of happiness also goes along with this inability, so that as they lack all justice, they likewise totally lack happiness. On account of these two deprivations, they have been left unprotected in the exile of this life, and exposed to the sins and miseries that are unceasingly besetting them everywhere, and assaulting them from every side, except to the extent that they are protected by divine providence”.

- b) Anselm and the Doctrine of Free Will.** Hopkins wrote (*A Companion*, 142), “When Anselm speaks of free will, he is thinking of the will as that function of the soul which is responsible for choosing.” Freedom of choice is, then, “the ability to keep uprightness of will for their own sake.” Freedom is the ability to choose, it has nothing to do with the kind or object of choices (God is free but He cannot choose evil—freedom is ability within nature

or constitution). Although fallen man has the ability to keep the uprightness of the will, he no longer has an upright will to keep. Hence, in freedom he maintains his depraved will. Freedom is not alternatives (good/evil), but the choice of the good. Shedd wrote (*History*, 2, 130-31): “The true end and destination of the will is not to choose either good or evil, but to choose good. The voluntary faculty was intended by its Creator to will the right, and nothing else. Its true freedom, consequently, consists in its self-determination to holiness; in its acceptance of the one single righteous end which the Creator has prescribed to it. The notion that freedom is caprice, that the will is created with the liberty of indifference, and that the choice of either right or wrong is granted to it by the Creator, Anselm rejects. By creation, the will has not option of choosing either of two contrary objects, but is shut up to the choice of but one, namely, holiness. But its acceptance of this one object must be unimpelled. It must be self-determination, and not a compulsion from without. If it chooses holiness by its own inward self-activity, then it exercises true and rational freedom, and the power to choose an entirely contrary object like sin would not add anything to this freedom, because, by the terms of the statement, there is already a self-election of the one true and proper object. On the contrary, the power to choose the wrong, when given for purposes of probation, subtracts from the perfection of voluntary freedom, because it exposes it to the hazards of an illegitimate choice. The human will, according to Anselm, was created in possession of true and rational freedom. It was made with a determination to the one sole proper object, with an inclination to holiness, with a choice of the right”.

- N.B.** As Anselm defines it, natural man has freedom in direct opposition to God. Man has freedom, but not to choose the good.
- c) **Anselm and Grace.** Anselm understands that grace is a gift from God to cause men to will the good, though his thinking is not clear (i.e., no concept of irresistible grace). Hopkins wrote (*A Companion*, 52-53): “Anselm recognized, but never emphasized, the noetic consequences of the Fall. The Apostle Paul teaches that unbelievers have their ‘understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts’ (Eph. 4:18). Anselm holds with the Apostle that the Fall has corrupted human nature, so that the natural man, unaided by grace and revelation, cannot understand the requirements of justice or righteousness. Yet the corrupting influence of sin is not such that it can prevent the natural man’s reason from assenting to the ‘necessities’ of the Christian faith

once these are presented to him. Anselm's 'rationalism' is such that he aspires to prove that God exists, that He is triune, that the soul is immortal, that salvation can be accomplished only by a God-man, and so on. On the other hand, though, he is aware that the mind needs grace as a precondition for theological understanding and that the human intellect is inherently limited with respect to penetrating the mystery of the Divine Being. This recognition—rather than any conflation of *necessitas* and *convenientia*—modifies his rationalism. That Anselm comments relatively little on the relationship between sin and the intellect manifests the absence of that fear of reason's deceptiveness which haunted Augustine after his experience with Manicheism".

Again (*A Companion*, 158): "Baptized infants, who have not yet reached the state of rational choice, are saved by grace alone. Those who have reached the age of understanding either receive uprightness by grace or else they do not receive it at all. Those to whom God gives His grace should recognize that the gift is not based on antecedent merits; i.e., it is truly a gift, and not a reward. Those who are offered divine grace and accept it are to be numbered among the redeemed. Grace further assists them by reducing the power of temptation against the will and by increasing the will's affection for uprightness. Although the initial acceptance of grace is done through free choice, this acceptance is not a meritorious work. For the acceptance is identical with an act of faith. And this act of faith is itself encompassed by grace. Thus Anselm can speak of faith as coming through grace; and like Augustine, he can silently leave it a mystery why this grace, which cooperates with the act of faith by being its necessary precondition, should be given to some men and not to others".

2. **Aquinas, the Dominican (1224/25–74).** Thomas Aquinas is properly designated as "the doctor" of the Roman Church. His concept of "sin and grace" is instructive of the scholastic of his day. Aquinas is semi-Augustinian in his theology. For example he stated that God alone is the cause of grace. He wrote (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 112, 1): "I answer that, Nothing can act beyond its species, since the cause must always be more powerful than its effect. Now the gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the Divine Nature, which exceeds every other nature. And thus it is impossible that any creature should cause grace. For it is as necessary that God alone should deify, bestowing a partaking of the Divine Nature by a participated likeness, as it is impossible that anything save fire should enkindle".

The reception of grace to the soul can and ought to be prepared for by means of the assistance of God (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 112, 3):

“On the contrary, Man is compared to God as clay to the potter, according to Jer. 18:6: As clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand. But however much the clay is prepared, it does not necessarily receive its shape from the potter. Hence, however much a man prepares himself, he does not necessarily receive grace from God.

I answer that, As stated above (A. 2), man’s preparation for grace is from God, as Mover, and from the free-will, as moved. Hence, the preparation may be looked at in two ways:—First, as it is from free-will, and thus there is no necessity that it should obtain grace, since the gift of grace exceeds every preparation of human power. But it may be considered, secondly, as it is from God the Mover, and thus it has a necessity—not indeed of coercion, but of infallibility—as regards what it is ordained to by God, since God’s intention cannot fail, according to the saying of Augustine in his book of the Predestination of the Saints (*De Dono Persev.* xiv) that by God’s good gifts whoever is liberated, is most certainly liberated. Hence if God intends, while moving, that the one whose heart He moves should attain to grace, he will infallibly attain to it, according to John 6:45: Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me”.

On the linkage of grace to the will, Aquinas understands that the will of man is not coerced, but made willing (*Summa Theologia*. Q. 113, 3): “I answer that, The justification of the ungodly is brought about by God moving man to justice. For He it is that justifieth the ungodly according to Romans 4:5. Now God moves everything in its own manner, just as we see that in natural things, what is heavy and what is light are moved differently, on account of their diverse natures. Hence He moves man to justice according to the condition of his human nature. But it is man’s proper nature to have free-will. Hence in him who has the use of reason, God’s motion to justice does not take place without a movement of the free-will; but He so infuses the gifts of justifying grace that at the same time He moves the free-will to accept the gift of grace, in such as are capable of being moved thus”.

Also justification through infused grace is instantaneous. He appears remarkably Augustinian at this point (*Summa Theologia*. Q. 113, 7): “I answer that, The justification of the ungodly consists as to its origin in the infusion of grace. For it is by grace free-will is moved and sin is remitted. Now the infusion of grace takes place in an instant and without

succession. And the reason of this is that is a form by not suddenly impressed upon its subject, it is either because that subject is not disposed, or because the agent needs time to dispose the subject. Hence we see that immediately the matter is disposed by a preceding alteration, the substantial form accrues to the matter; thus because the atmosphere of itself is disposed to receive light, it is suddenly illuminated by a body actually luminous. Now it was stated (Q. 112, A. 2) that God, in order to infuse grace into the soul, needs no disposition, save what He Himself has made. And sometimes this sufficient disposition for the reception of grace He makes suddenly, sometimes gradually and successively, as stated above (Q. 112, A. 2 ad 2). For the reason why a natural agent cannot suddenly dispose matter is that in the matter there is a resistant which has some disproportion with the power of the agent; and hence we see that the stronger the agent, the more speedily is the matter disposed. Therefore, since the Divine power is infinite, it can suddenly dispose any matter whatsoever to its form; and much more man's free-will, whose movement is by nature instantaneous. Therefore the justification of the ungodly by God takes place in an instant."

Also, Aquinas sees man as an absolute debtor to God and cannot merit converting grace (*Summa Theologia*. Q. 114, 1): "Now it is clear that between God and man there is the greatest inequality: for they are infinitely apart, and all man's good is from God. Hence there can be no justice of absolute equality between man and God, but only of a certain proportion, inasmuch as both operate after their own manner. Now the manner and measure of human virtue is in man from God. Hence man's merit with God only exists on the presupposition of the Divine ordination, so that man obtains from God, as a reward of his operation, what God gave him the power of operation for, even as natural things by their proper movements and operations obtain that to which they were ordained by God; differently, indeed, since the rational creature moves itself to act by its free-will, hence its action has the character of merit, which is not so in other creatures."

*See the supplement at the end of this lesson, Thomas's commentary on Ephesians 2:8-10.

Having said all this Aquinas seeks God's grace through sacramental forms. Not that the forms are mechanical means of grace, but that God supplies grace through participating in the forms. He wrote (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 61.3): "I answer that, Sacraments are necessary for man's salvation, in so far as they are sensible signs of invisible things whereby man is made holy. Now after sin no man can be made holy save through Christ, Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to the showing of His justice . . . that He Himself may be just, and

the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:25, 26). Therefore before Christ's coming there was need for some visible signs whereby man might testify to his faith in the future coming of a Saviour. And these signs are called sacraments. It is therefore clear that some sacraments were necessary before Christ's coming".

Again (*Summa Theologica*. Q. 62.1): "We must therefore say otherwise, that an efficient cause is twofold, principal and instrumental. The principal cause works by the power of its form, tho which form the effect is likened; just as fire by its own heat makes something hot. In this way none but God can cause grace: since grace is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature, according to 2 Peter 1:4: He hath given us most great and previous promises; that we may be (Vulg.,—you may be made) partakers of the Divine nature. —But the instrumental cause works not by the power of its form, but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal; for instance, the couch is not like the axe, but like the art which is in the craftsman's mind. And it is thus that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace: for they are instituted by God to be employed for the purpose of conferring grace. Hence Augustine says (*Contra Faust.* 19): All these things, viz. pertaining to the sacraments, are done and pass away, but the power, viz. of God, which works by them, remains ever. Now that is, properly speaking, an instrument by which someone works: wherefore it is written (Titus 3:5): He saved us by the laver of regeneration".

N.B. Rome and Protestantism agree in definition on a majority of theological terms, but are miles apart on the method of reception of God's gracious benefits (works or a gift; assisting, cooperating grace or grace)!!

IV. CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this lesson has been to trace the doctrines of "sin and grace" from the Synod of Orange to Thomas Aquinas. The church repudiated Pelagianism and then battled Cassian's semi-pelagianism only to mediate Augustine's theology for a moderate Augustinianism at Orange (529). In practice the church in the Medieval Era progressively slipped into, or at least perilously close to, a Cassian formula as evidenced by the harsh treatment of Gottschalk in the ninth century. In the Medieval era both Gottschalk and Anselm evidence alliance to Augustine's views, but Aquinas speaks for the church in the thirteenth century in a confused medley on opposites. The reformers will break with Semi-pelagianism and return, in varying degrees, to Augustine.