THE CHRISTIAN NORTH AFRICAN DEBATE ON ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH, MINISTRY, AND SACRAMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE USE OF SCRIPTURE.

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DECLARATION.

I declare that the above-mentioned thesis embodies the results of my own special work, that it has been composed by myself and that it does not include work forming part of a thesis presented successfully for a degree in this or another University.

L. S. Kirkpatrick.___

DEDICATION.

Several individuals helped me produce this thesis over the past nine years. My parents willingly supplied fees, books, and travel expenses. My advisor of Studies, Ian Hazlett, was very patient with my slow progress. He was always positive and an inspiration to work with. My wife Pamela was always helpful. My children, Stephen, Jonathan and Emily lost out in much 'quality time' with their father They have made many sacrifices and I will be glad to repay them now. The good people of Shaneoguestown congregation were very understanding. My colleague, Brian Kennaway was always willing to cover my absence at short notice and I thank him for this very practical assistance. To these, and all who helped me in any way, I acknowledge my indebtedness.

CONTENTS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

In spite of the fact that the African Church had a relatively late birth it made a much more significant contribution to early Christian theology and literature than, for example, the Roman Church. Africa was in the vanguard of Latin Christianity. The link between this Church and that of Rome was strong. The debates and conflicts which often absorbed the energies of the Christians in the capital were usually mirrored in Carthage.

The subject matter of this thesis concerns elements in a drama of theological development spanning three centuries. The theme of this drama is the North African contribution to certain aspects of the development of the doctrine of the Church. The central plot concerns the sacrament of baptism and the related problem of post-baptismal sin. Each of the three main scenes is dominated in turn by a major personality; Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine. These men were prime influences within the African Church in their own time, often promulgating their theological views in the teeth of Christian opposition and controversy.

In such debate it was generally recognised that authority was all important. Such authority was based upon the twin pillars of Scripture and tradition and it was in these areas that the basis for the respective theological positions was established. It is the use of Scripture by each party that will be examined in turn, overall comparisons made, and conclusions drawn. This will entail grasping the historical and ecclesiastical situations obtaining at the time and, where appropriate, a detailed examination of specific primary sources.

What enriches this particular field of study is the fact that not only did various schools of thought originate and operate within the same Church but to a very large degree they addressed the same problem, namely the problem of 'the Christian sinner'. From this well springs all the controversial theological tributaries which flooded the North African Church. How pure can the Church be? Who can remit apostasy? Where does authority lie

within the Church? In what does the unity of the Catholic Church consist? Are schismatic baptisms valid? Can the Holy Spirit operate outside the one Catholic Church?

By peeling away the layers of literary controversy, invective and caricature it should be possible to expose the scriptural underpinning of the varying theological platforms. Such will constitute the main threads running through the fabric of this thesis. Tertullian is an important source for any early Church appreciation of baptism, both practical and theological. He demonstrably changed his views on penance and became a leading exponent of a more rigorist position. Was Tertullian innovative in adopting a rigorist position regarding the Christian sinner or did he reflect an earlier authentic African position? In any event, his importance is undeniable. All subsequent parties quoted Tertullian with reverence, knowing that he was held in honour by generations of North African Christians.

Although Cyprian only briefly held the bishopric of Carthage (249-258) he grappled with a major post-persecution crisis in the Church and represents an important benchmark in ecclesiological development. His views on the unity of the Church and his stance on heretical baptism are of particular importance. Cyprian's own writings will be scanned, especially *De lapsis* and *De unitate* with a view to grasping clearly his policy decisions and their scriptural basis. His knowledge of Scripture and methods of interpretation will emerge. Most importantly, his line of reasoning from text to dogma, or vice versa, will be established.

When Augustine became Catholic bishop of Hippo in 396 the Donatist controversy had been raging in Africa for over eighty years. There were in fact two Churches in Africa, the Catholics and the Donatists. The latter appear to have been in a majority in Hippo and elsewhere at the close of the fourth century. The cause of the schism revolved around the problem of the Christian sinner. A full explanation of the nature of this dispute will be given

in chapter four though an appraisal of the Donatist cause is severely handicapped by the fact that none of their major works are extant.

In his struggle against the Donatists Augustine covered the familiar ground, providing new answers to an old North African question. He added to an understanding of the nature of the Church and argued his different conclusion from Cyprian on the question of the validity of heretical baptism. Augustine's views on the operation of Divine grace are interesting and will be examined with particular reference to his use of Scripture.

At the Council of Carthage in 411 Augustine and his fellow Catholics routed the Donatists. While the Catholics may have 'won the war', did they win the argument? An attempt will be made in this thesis to establish the opposing biblical anthologies. All sides attempted to be scriptural in setting out their respective arguments. They each constructed a reservoir of 'proof texts' which they sought to apply in support of their particular stance. The biblical anthologies which emerge are historical links in an ecclesiological chain, stages in an evolving theological debate. The merits and demerits of each, and the whole, will then be analysed.

Overshadowing each link in this chain is the important question of Church-State relations. Were the Donatists condemned as much for their separatist stance on this question as for their rigorist theology? Did Augustine establish his ecclesiology, and perhaps especially his teaching on the sacraments, on purely scriptural-theological grounds or was the maintenance of a 'Christian State' of paramount importance?

The task of scriptural interpretation has always been fundamental for Christianity. The Ethiopian official was in need of help, having been asked by Philip, 'Do you understand what you are reading?'[1] Assuming that the content and authority of Scripture are both agreed and accepted, the challenge for the Church has always been to read these ancient books in a way in which their message is relevant to each succeeding generation. This

interpretative challenge is of paramount importance in evaluating the North African debate on matters relating to Church and sacrament.

The earliest Christian exegesis largely reproduced Jewish exegetical methods. Each verse could be trawled for meaning and often a symbolic sense was extracted, independant of any natural or historical context. It is possible that Paul was imitating such Rabbinic methods of interpretation when he allegorised Ishmael and Isaac as representing two Divine covenants.[2]

The question of authoritative scriptural interpretation was a live issue. Within the New Testament itself there are examples of differing interpretations. Referring to what the Jewish law taught regarding eternal life, Jesus asked an expert in the Torah, 'How do you read it?'[3] He also disagreed on one occasion with a Pharisaic interpretation which gave equal importance to the tithing of herbs as caring for parents.[4] Similarly he disagreed with the Sadducees whose querulous questioning of his teaching served to reveal the limitations of their interpretative assumptions.[5]

The primary task of the first Christians was to convey the message that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah and so they scanned the Old Testament with a Christological lens. The Prophets were found to be a more fertile source of proof texts than the Torah for such exegesis. Generalisations can be misleading but in broad terms the earliest Christian writers tended to write in a popular style rather than comprehensively or with precision, and until the mid-second century they much preferred the Old Testament than the New as a source of quotations. On numerous occasions they attributed equal authority to apocryphal writings. There are many such examples in the North African literature.

From about the latter half of the second century a distinctive New Testament exegesis emerged. In response to the challenge of Gnostic sects operating in the penumbra around the Church, a doctrine of the Church itself began to develop. Allegorical interpretations were in abundance and in Africa there

are many examples of such interpretations applied to the problem of sacramental validity and post-baptismal sin.

The context of verses of Scripture was usually of secondary importance. Verses and parts of verses could be wrenched from context and claimed as scriptural warrant in support of a popular cause. The shortcomings of such an approach are obvious. Allegorical interpretations were clearly capable of producing outlandish ideas. The issues under debate in Africa tended to be treated in isolation rather than as part of a comprehensive picture. Tertullian, Cyprian, the Donatists, and Augustine all seemed to state their view on specific matters, then plundered both Old Testament and New Testament for suitable proof texts which could be used to support their positions. The nett result was that ALL sides claimed scriptural support for their views. The important question must therefore be asked; Can Scripture alone settle ecclesiological disputes?

The methodology to be employed in this thesis is that of tracing the development of the North African Church from the end of the second century to the early fifth century. The emergence of various schools of thought as represented by Tertullian, Cyprian, the Donatists, and Augustine will each be examined in turn. Evolutionary aspects of the doctrine of the Church will be highlighted. Careful consideration will be given to all the factors which produced each step in this process. Attention will be focused upon original sources and in particular the use of Scripture as employed to legitimise various stances.

The vast majority of source material relating to this thesis was originally composed in Latin. It is my intention when quoting from such sources to give the Latin if the quotation is reasonably short, a sentence or phrase. English translations will be substituted for all lengthy quotations.

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2. NORTH AFRICA:
CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND AND TRADITIONS.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

'Kart Hadasht' (new capital) was founded as a trading post by Phoenician sailors about 1000 B.C. The name 'Carthage' was a later Roman corruption. This area was inhabited by the indigenous Imazighen or Berbers, some of whom were nomadic pastoralists with herds of sheep, goats and cattle. Others were farmers, domiciled in the fertile upland valleys, producing olives, wheat and barley. Many Phoenicians settled along this African coastal area, intermarrying with the Berbers, adopting the Punic language and developing an extensive agricultural area which produced cooking oil, wheat and grapes. The height of Carthaginian power was achieved by Hannibal who, after crossing the Alps in 219 B.C., was denied the conquest of Rome only by the non-arrival of North African reinforcements.

In the second century B.C. the Romans, awakened to the real threat Carthage posed to them, seized the initiative and eventually assumed control of North Africa in 146 B.C. as victors in what has become known as the Third Punic War. In this year the city of Carthage fell to an 84,000 strong Roman army after a three year siege. Roman colonization of the area was a natural result of conquest and many provincials, speaking Latin and Greek, were settled in newly developing towns. The native Punic element was never totally assimilated by this new influx of colonists and was to become an active and distinctive element in the North African Church. Although the names of virtually all known African bishops were Latin, Punic names do occur among the martyrs, for example, 'Namphand', the first known African martyr.[1] As late as Augustine's time, both bishops and priests had to be conversant in the native tongue as there was some preaching in Punic. Bible readings were often translated during worship into Punic.[2] The 'boom period' of the third century A.D. which witnessed the rapid expansion of Christianity in North Africa saw many other changes. Roman citizenship was relatively easily attained by new

Carthaginians and Berbers alike. Septimus Severus (Emperor 193-211), is the most obvious example. The son of a Punic father and native of Leptis Magna, he never lost his African accent and his Punic-speaking sister is said to have shamed him as Emperor with her broken Latin.[3]

In the first century A.D. the Romans had divided the entire coastal strip into five provinces; *Libya* extended westwards from Egypt to the region around Cyrene, *Proconsular Africa* was the most Romanised region, incorporating Carthage as capital and the area around the main coastal bay, *Numidia*, *Mauretania Caesariensis* and *Maruetania Tingitana* were the least Romanized and extended further to the west. The vast inland plains were left to the control of local Amazigh chieftains.

'The origin of the African Church is one of the great "missing links" in Church History'.[4] Certainly there were Christians in the eastern area, around Cyrene, from earliest times. Simon of Cyrene and his sons, Alexander and Rufus are named in the New Testament.[5] An unspecified number of Libyans were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost hearing Peter preach.[6] Some Christians from Cyrene are named as founder members of the new congregation in Syrian Antioch.[7] The Gospel may have reached Carthage and surrounding district in a series of westward extensions from Egypt or directly from Rome or both.

The constituent elements which were to give the North African Church its particular character in the third and fourth centuries were all present at an early stage. The recurring themes of Church-State relations, martyrdoms, ecclesiological and scriptural interpretations constantly interacted in the minds and lives of African believers and produced the distinctive North African Church. This lively Church, so often unhappy with itself, exhibited both the noble and the base in its history.

There is no extant record of any North African Christian community prior to A.D. 180 and the first known bishop of Carthage is Agrippinus, at the end of the second century. This earliest record of Christianity in the region is of the martyrdom of twelve Christians from Scilli on 17 July 180 at Carthage. Although the precise

location of Scilli is uncertain, Tertullian informs us that the Proconsul of Africa, Vigellius Saturninus, was the first Roman administrator in Africa to take active measures against Christians,[8] in this case for refusal to offer sacrifices to the gods. The names of these martyrs were; Aquilinus, Cittinus, Felix, Laetantius, Nartzalus, Speratus and Veturius; and Donata, Generosa, Januaria, Secunda and Vestia. This record of the Scillitan martyrs, occurring early in the reign of Commodus, is also the earliest surviving example of Christian writing in Latin. At this trial, not for the first time, State and Church talked at cross purposes. The Christian predicament when confronted by pagan Roman government is perfectly illustrated by two quotations. The martyr's spokesperson, Speratus, said to Saturninus, the Proconsul. 'I do not recognise the Empire of this world; but rather I serve that God, whom no man has seen nor can see'.[9] Vigellius Saturninus summed up as follows, 'Whereas Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Donata, Vestia, Secunda and the rest have confessed that they live in accordance with the religious rites of the Christians, and, when an opportunity was given them of returning to the usage of the Romans, persevered in their obstinacy, it is our pleasure that they should suffer by the sword'.[10] The problem for the Christians was that 'the usage of the Romans' meant pagan practices. Veneration of the Scriptures is also emphasised in this record; 'Saturninus, the Proconsul, said, "What have you in your case?" Speratus said, *Libri et epistulae Pauli uiri iusti*.[11]

The basic Roman assumption was that the State gods were the protectors and guarantors of peace and prosperity throughout the Empire. The African Christians learned to expect martyrdom from such a State, knowing that they based their lives upon entirely different premises. Their expectation was that God's final judgement would come soon. North African veneration of martyrdom is evidenced by the fact that a basilica was later built over the tombs of the Scillitan martyrs.[12] On their feast day, sermons were preached and their Passion read to the faithful.[13]

Septimus Severus (Emperor 193-211) issued an edict in 202 forbidding conversion to either Judaism or Christianity: *Judaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit, idem etiam de Christianis sanxit.*[14] This may have been as a result of the Christians being tarred with the same brush as the Jews, the latter having sided with the Parthians

against Severus in 198-9. Severus' edict was designed to guard the stability of the East in the light of Jewish disloyalty and Judeo-Christian apocalyptic pronouncements. The most famous Carthaginian martyrs in this persecution were *Perpetua* and *Felicitas* and it would appear from allusions in Tertullian's writings that there were similar outbreaks in North Africa in 195-200 and again in 208 and 212-13.[15]

The Severan persecution of 202 was the first Empire-wide persecution of the Church. Although it was confined to the main cities and even at that affected only a minority of Christians, its greatest impact was probably upon the future Church. Certainly in Carthage, the deaths of twenty-two year old *Vibia Perpetua* and her slave *Felicitas* and three other catechumens made a lasting impression. The glory of martyrdom itself and the prestige of confessor/martyr Christians was to become a major factor in early North African Christianity. The *Passio Perpetuae* provides a vivid first hand account of the pressure, suffering, and martyrdom of these women and their Christian companions. Very full details are preserved of their thoughts and experiences in a diary kept for several weeks as they were held in jail. Beset by concern for her young son, (her husband is nowhere mentioned), and the constant pleadings of her non-Christian father, *Perpetua* resisted all soft options and met her death *cum magna dignatione*. There are important features concerning this event. The voluntary submission of *Saturus*, their catechist, to share their fate was regarded as a glorious act[16] and was subsequently used by the Donatists to support their position. The Catholics, on the other hand, criticised such provocative actions.

The fact that both *Perpetua* and *Felicitas* were new converts ties in with the notion that the Severan rescript was aimed at preventing such conversions. Despite her recent conversion *Perpetua* recognises herself as a competent confessor and as such can demand and receive visions from God (three are recorded). In her second vision her young brother, *Dinocrates*, cannot reach the water (of baptism?) yet finally succeeds with her help. Was this perhaps an early example of the ability of a confessor/martyr to help even the dead? It was the belief that such martyrs possessed the Holy Spirit to an extraordinary degree (since the Holy Spirit cannot deny Himself even under torture) and were therefore able to remit even serious sin.

This was to lead to major problems in the African Church and further afield in the mid-third century.

In the crucial early years of the third century it is possible to discern the emerging thoughts on the nature of the Church which were to be central in both the Montanist and Donatist debates. Such ecclesiological development in North Africa was never the product of formal scriptural or doctrinal debate. The important issues were practical, the urgent contemporary questions confronting ordinary believers on a daily basis.

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS.

The relationship between Church and State must be mentioned in understanding the development of early North African Christianity. Ultimately it was the attitude and intervention of the State in the early fifth century which had the most profound impact upon North African and Western Christianity, helping establish subsequent tradition. Indeed some scholars believe that the Donatist schism was as much fuelled by political/economic factors as theological.[17]

In broad terms, *religio* was for the Romans not so much a matter of personal devotion as a national cult. The *pax deorum* was all important. The welfare of a particular province or community was dependant upon the mood of the gods. As Roman influence spread, the religions of other peoples were accepted insofar as they were not offensive to Rome nor the seedbed of aggressive proselytism. As a man could not be the citizen of two States, either could he practise two religions. An individual inherited his religion from his ancestors. State persecution of the Church tended to be local, rather haphazard, and of short duration.

Three-quarters of Rome was gutted in a six day fire which commenced on 19 July 64. Nero blamed the Christians and persecuted them. The main charge against the Christians though was not that of incendiarism but of *exitiabilis superstitio*. Typical

Roman thinking is revealed by Tacitus, writing about fifty years after the event. He did not think the Christians were guilty of burning the city but neither did he have any love for them.[18]   Pliny also illustrates common Roman thinking against Christians, explaining as he does that one *pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere punire.*[19]   In this early period 'official' knowledge of Christianity was often both indirect and incomplete.

In consequence of Nero's actions, Christianity was now on thin ice. Reluctance to participate in the Imperial cult looked suspiciously like atheism and hostility towards one's own society; also the pre-dawn meetings gave credence to the charge of being a secret society. In the earliest years the State lacked any clear and comprehensive policy towards the Church. It was inevitable though that from time to time, and for a variety or reasons, the two would clash openly. The edict of Septimus Severus in 202 represented a development in Roman attitude to Christianity. The previous haphazard 'Trajanic tolerance' approach was now replaced with an official State edict which required from the Church a positive and obedient response. It was in effect an attempt at containment. Ultimately it was to fail and the subsequent Church-State struggle witnessed sterner measures before a lasting accomodation was arrived at.

By the third century many African Christians were suspicious and hostile towards Rome. For them, the capital was impregnated with pagan practices as exemplified by gladiatorial contests, idolatrous living and pagan sacrifices. The powers of evil were present in Roman officials and magistrates. The concept of the 'Two Cities' as elucidated by Tyconius and Augustine had a long pedigree in North African Christianity. Although the African Christians could not take up arms against State officials they could embrace martyrdom at their hands as a reward for their piety.[20]

By the late fourth century the triumphant Christian Church had developed a new understanding of Church-State relations in the Christian era. Lactantius and Eusebius exemplify this view in identifying only four Emperors as persecutors of the Church; Nero, Domitian, Decius and Diocletian. The motivation for their persecutions are stated to have been the demons. Attention is drawn to the fact that

each of these persecuting Emperors was punished by God. This view of Church-State relations was a post-Constantinian accomodation, a later development, and certainly foreign to earlier third-century North African Christianity with its a priori rejection of the 'world'.

TERTULLIAN.

a) Biographical Outline.

No introduction to North African Christianity can fail to mention *Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus*, African-born, Christian layman, lawyer, rhetorician, and moral rigorist. Born in Carthage about A.D.155, and son of a centurion of the pro-consular cohort, he studied law and practised in Rome. Were it not for Jerome, we would have precious little information on Tertullian's life and indeed some of Jerome's information has been questioned. He was converted around 190-5, possibly in Rome, and returned to Carthage where, according to Jerome, he became a priest.[21] This latter assertion is doubtful as Tertullian's status as priest is never referred to in any of his writings. It is known also that he was married. In 197 Tertullian began a career as Christian writer in defence of Christianity and his thirty or so extant writings are invaluable as they illustrate much of North African belief and practice in this period. About A.D.207 he became a Montanist and later leader of his own group, the Tertullianists, who survived in Carthage until the time of Augustine.

Tertullian seems to have ended his days outside the Catholic Church, yet he was never condemned or excommunicated by the Catholic Church at either Carthage or Rome. The date and circumstances of his death are unknown but it took place after 220. An understanding of North African Christianity is impossible without a sound grasp of Tertullian's surviving works. He was the first prominent Christian writer to use Latin and indeed there is evidence to suggest that in Tertullian we witness the African Church moving from Greek to Latin; though as late as 390 Valerius, Catholic bishop of Hippo and predecessor of Augustine, spoke fluent Greek and poor Latin. Greek had been the predominant ecclesiastical language in the earliest period partly because it was the lingua franca of commerce and travel throughout the

Roman Mediterranean world. The New Testament had been immediately accessible to a wide readership because it was written in Greek, relating easily to the Septuagint. Tertullian wrote some of his early works in Latin and Greek: *Ae ego si quid utriusque linguae praecerpsi . .*[22] None of his early Greek works have survived. Tertullian has been called 'the father of Latin theology' and it has been estimated that in the field of neology he was instrumental in the development, both lexicological and semantic, of some nine hundred and eighty-two words.[23] Tertullian wrote in the language of the Christians of his time, the Latin of an infant Latin Church, and as such he was largely instrumental in minting a new linguistic coinage.

Although his writings reveal little of the public and external organisation of the North African Church, nevertheless Tertullian is a vitally important source for ecclesiological development at this time. His life and writings proved very influential for subsequent Western theology in general and the North African Church in particular. For example, in attempting to define the Godhead he almost anticipated the Nicene settlement by more than a century.[24] He was the first to use the Latin word *trinitas* for each of the three Divine Persons and affirmed that these three are united in one substance; *Ubique teneo unam substantiam in tribus cohaerentibus.*[25] Tertullian is also the first Christian writer to use the term 'mother' as a title for the Church, *Domina mater ecclesiae.*[26] Other favoured types of the Church are, Paradise, the dove, and Eve.

As Tertullian became more rigorous in outlook it is interesting to contrast the views expressed in his earlier as opposed to his later works. For Tertullian the Montanist, the Church is the community of those who possess the Holy Spirit. A Christian sinner ceased automatically to be a Christian.[27] For such individuals there was no forgiveness except through a second baptism of blood, by which he means martyrdom.[28]

All of Tertullian's writings are of a polemical nature. With a relentless determination he pursues 'truth' against all enemies; Jews, pagans, heretics, and eventually Catholics too. 'Whenever he speaks, he acts like an advocate who is interested only in winning his case and annihilating his adversary. Thus in many instances he may

silence, but he does not convince, his adversaries'.[29] It is to some specific teaching of Tertullian that we now turn.

b) Baptism.

The study of the early history of the doctrine of the sacraments is more an examination of early Church teaching and practice than scriptural exegesis. Although the Greek word $\mu\nu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota o\nu$ does not appear in the New Testament to refer to specific 'sacraments' it is clear from early Christian writings that both this term and the Latin equivalent, *sacramentum*, were used in a very broad sense in the early patristic period. Baptism and Eucharist appear to be linked only in I Corinthians 10:1-4 though the combination of water and blood within a single verse was also frequently interpreted as indicating this same link.[30]

From earliest post-apostolic times the indispensability of baptism was assumed by all.[31] The foundational text was, 'Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'.[32] There are scattered references to the sacrament of baptism throughout early Christian literature but Tertullian's *De baptismo* is the only extant treatise devoted to he subject. Indeed this is the only Ante-Nicene treatise on any sacrament. *De baptismo* is accredited an early date of composition as it contains no references to Montanism. The only comparable treatise is Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, in which aspects of what appears to be the normal Roman baptismal practise are mentioned.

It is in his treatise *Adversus Marcionem* that Tertullian states the four basic gifts conveyed in baptism.[33] These are; the remission of sins, deliverance from death, regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Although a Montanist when this treatise was written, there is no reason to suppose that he was doing other than succinctly summarising the generally accepted beliefs concerning baptism at that time. Subsequent North African debate centred upon the remission of sins and reception of the Holy Spirit aspects of this sacrament.

De baptismo represents an important snapshot of North African baptismal practice and belief at the end of the second century. This book was a rebuttal of the claims of a female, Quintilla, who had denied the necessity of baptism for salvation,

affirming that faith alone was essential. Tertullian is adamant that baptism is vital for salvation, and he cites Christ's 'Great Commission' and words to Nicodemus as scriptural support.[34] Opponents of this high view of baptism pointed out that the disciples were not baptised. Tertullian replies that the Lord's words to Nicodemus were spoken after they were already apostles; *itaque omnes exinde credentes tinguebantur*.[35] In addition, Tertullian seems to equate John's baptism with Christian baptism when he asserts that if the disciples had received the former they could not subject themselves to the latter in the light of the scriptural injunction that one bath is sufficient.[36] The significance and standing of John's baptism was to become an important element in the ongoing North African baptismal debate. Tertullian refused to follow an interpretation evidently current at that time explaining the disciples' baptism as having occurred while they were caught in a storm on Galilee.[37]

Based upon Jesus' words to Nicodemus, Tertullian believed that the Holy Spirit was actually present with baptismal candidates in the water. As an angel disturbed the water at the pool of Bethsaida,[38] so an angel prepared the baptismal water for the Holy Spirit. 'Not that in the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit; but in the water, under (the influence of) the angel, we are cleansed, and (thus) prepared for the Holy Spirit'.[39]

Many interesting details are given in Tertullian's works as to how a baptism was performed at that time. Candidates were prepared by prayers, fasting and vigils.[40] They publicly renounced the devil and his angels[41] before three immersions in water (in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit).[42] On emerging from the water they were given milk and honey,[43] anointed with oil,[44] and given the sign of the cross.[45] This anointing was a possible allusion to the Old Testament anointing of priests, as all believers are priests in Christ. The rite was completed by the laying on of hands in accordance with Jacob's blessing upon Joseph's sons where Jacob crossed his arms, thereby making the shape of a cross.[46] This imposition of hands was held to confer the Holy Spirit upon the recipient of the sacrament.

In the minds of many early Christians, martyrdom was linked with baptism. As already mentioned in the introduction, martyrdom was dear to the heart of the

African Church and those worthy of the title were held in high regard. While Tertullian himself hoped for a martyr's crown, he was careful to distinguish between the case of a Christian who wantonly courts death and one who when brought before a magistrate is glad to suffer for his faith.[47]

Tertullian called martyrdom *secundum lavacrum*.[48] The key Scripture text for this is, 'I have a baptism to undergo'.[49] Jesus uttered these words after he had received John's baptism and prior to his own death. The words are interpreted as a reference to that coming death or baptism. The wound in Christ's side as he hung on the cross issued both water and blood and this is interpreted as symbolising the two baptisms.[50]

From the tone of his writings against such heretics as Marcionites and Valentinians it is clear that for Tertullian no heretic could, by definition, possess the Spirit. This was a most important conclusion. It follows therefore that heretical baptisms are invalid and individuals so baptised must receive true Christian baptism in order to be admitted to the Church. Tertullian makes clear his disdain of heretics, writing of them; 'I am not bound to recognise in them a thing which is enjoined on me, because they and we have not the same God, nor one - that is, the same - Christ: and therefore their baptism is not one (with ours) either, because it is not the same'.[51] About the year 200 a Carthaginian Council, comprising around 70 African and Numidian bishops, under the leadership of Agrippinus confirmed the authentic North African position to be a requirement of re-baptism for those who had received schismatic or heretical baptism. Thus the seeds were sown for the later Cyprian/Stephen and Catholic/Donatist conflicts on this very issue.

c) Post-baptismal Sin.

A high understanding of the significance of baptism gave rise to problems within the Church. As already mentioned, it seems likely that it was generally agreed that baptism secured four basic gifts; the remission of sins, deliverance from death, regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The problem thus created was the problem of the Christian sinner. How was post-baptismal sin to be dealt with?

There is no comprehensive treatment of this subject in the New Testament though various texts are relevant. John states that such sins can be forgiven upon confession,[52] however, 'There is a sin that leads to death'.[53] There is also a New Testament example of a whole Church being urged to expel a sinful member and having the power to restore such a member to fellowship.[54]

The Shepherd of Hermas (c.A.D.140-150) seems to represent the first serious attempt to deal with post-baptismal sin. Evidently there was a debate in the Roman Church at that time as to whether post-baptismal forgiveness was possible. For Hermas, the Church is like a stone tower. Some of the stones are beautiful while others are crumbling, meaning that the Church consists of saints and repentant sinners. While acknowledging that those baptised ought to 'sin no more', Hermas holds out the offer of a once only forgiveness of sins after baptism. 'If a man should be tempted by the devil and sin, he has one repentance'.[55]

Clement of Alexandria, (c.150-215), agrees with this idea of a second repentance. He quotes Hebrews 10:26-27 as establishing that it is not possible to continue in sin.[56] Clement distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary post-baptismal sins. The former cannot be forgiven but the latter can. In effect, though, Clement taught that the only unforgivable sin was to break completely from God and refuse any reconciliation. These views indicate that the Church at large was grappling with the problem of the Christian sinner. A system of Church discipline was evolving.

Tertullian is an important North African witness in the development of early Church discipline. His treatise, *De paenitentia*, was written in A.D.203 and is most famous for its reference to $\varepsilon\xi o\mu o\lambda o\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$. This term covers a process of public confession of sins and the undertaking of specified disciplinary acts and self-humiliation. *De paenitentia* represents current Carthaginian and wider Catholic understanding of post-baptismal sin at the beginning of the third century and as such is an extremely important document for the history of ecclesiastical penance.

Tertullian establishes that God is willing to pardon even his own people who fall into sin. The biblical support for this contention is the letters to the Churches in the

Apocalypse where the sins of the Christians in Ephesus, Thyatira, Sardis, Pergamum and Laodicea are noted yet they are each asked to repent.[57] The parables of the lost coin, sheep and son are also cited as examples of God's joy when one of his own returns to him.[58] The angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner repents. God's joy at such repentance is reflected in the joy of the shepherd who finds his lost sheep, the joy of the woman who finds her lost coin, and the joy of the father who finds his lost son. In the detail of this third parable Tertullian understands the feast prepared for the son by his father as typifying the eucharist after $\epsilon\xi o\mu o\lambda o\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$. 'Exomologesis, then, is a discipline which leads a man to prostrate and humble himself. It prescribes a way of life which, even in the matter of food and clothing, appeals to pity'.[59]

In the light of the Lord's willingness to pardon Christians who sin, a 'once only' second repentance is permitted within the Church. Penitent Christian sinners are thereby invited to undertake $\epsilon\xi o\mu o\lambda o\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$. Confession was made to bishop and congregation. Disciplinary acts were prescribed, for example the penitent wore sackcloth and ashes and ate only plain food. Fasting and prayer and almsgiving were also part of this process. Humiliation was not private but public. Penitents undergoing $\epsilon\xi o\mu o\lambda o\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ were suspended from the eucharist and required to kneel at the feet of their fellow presbyters and beg for their forgiveness.[60] A penitent could be thus occupied for several days or weeks, though sentences of several years were not unknown. Tertullian expresses his horror that there are some who will not undergo this 'treatment' but choose rather to continue to carry their sin, thereby embracing the second death.[61] Such clumsy yet straightforward ecclesiological machinery seems to have been viewed as an inevitable yet undesirable necessity. There is a degree of realism in facing the uncomfortable fact that not all Christians live a life free of sin.

The main scriptural proofs which Tertullian produced in favour of $\epsilon\xi o\mu o\lambda o\gamma\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ are three. He cites the experience of Nebuchadnezzar, driven from his throne and living like a wild animal for seven years, whereupon renouncing his sins he was forgiven and restored to his throne.[62] Secondly, Pharoah rejected the numerous opportunities given him to repent before God and release the Israelites under Moses.

Stubbornly he pursued them into the sea and was drowned. This is a salutory lesson to us all.[63] Thirdly, and somewhat less clearly, Tertullian cites Adam who was 'restored by ἐξομολόγησις to his own paradise.[64]

This process of confession, discipline and self-humiliation was of benefit only to those who were truly penitent. It was of no benefit to those who wished to abuse it, afterwards returning easily to their sins. Also it was appropriate only for the more serious mortal sins. Less serious venial sins could be forgiven by a simple act of confession and restitution. In *De paenitentia* there is no restriction on the power of ἐξομολόγησις , no sin is so serious as to be irremissible.

Two texts in particular were employed by Tertullian to establish the fact that a line must be drawn between the less serious venial and the more serious mortal sins. When Jesus breathed upon his disciples, thus imparting the Holy Spirit, he said; 'If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do no forgive them, they are not forgiven'.[65] The latter part of this text is interpreted as referring to mortal sins. In his first letter John distinguishes between sins which 'lead to death' and 'sins which do not'.[66] If there are then two categories of sin, one much more serious than the other, though such can be dealt with by ἐξομολόγησις , how are such mortal sins to be identified?

The rigorist definition of mortal sin came to be regarded as threefold; idolatry, adultery and murder. It may be that this threefold description is based upon the Jerusalem Council's requirement from Gentile converts.[67] They are of course also to be found in the Decalogue. There was eventual general agreement that sins falling under these headings constituted the most serious offences against God and the Church. Tertullian's *De pudicitia* is the first source to supply this threefold definition of mortal sin.

If it is acknowledged that there was general agreement in the Church as to the necessity and benefit of baptism and the distinction between mortal and venial post-baptismal sins (both of which are testified to by Tertullian), it soon became apparent that there were different estimates of the power of the Church to remit

such mortal sins and this in turn led to controversy and schism (and this also is testified to by Tertullian).

The key document for investigating North African problems in this whole area is the aforementioned *De pudicitia*. This treatise was a later work of Tertullian, written on the subject of post-baptismal sin and against an unnamed *pontifex maximus*.[68] Tertullian's ire was roused by a recent edict of this unnamed bishop in which the bishop declares, *Ego et moechiae et fornicationis delicta paenitentia functis dimitto.* . . . [69] This edict is something of a landmark in ante-Nicene discipline in that Tertullian, who would have accepted this when he wrote *De paenitentia*, has now changed his mind and hardened his resolve that sins such as fornication cannot be forgiven in the Church. This was the nub of the controversy. What was the power of the Church to forgive sins? For Tertullian, the rigorist, mortal sins were now unforgivable sins! For the first time, he distinguishes between *peccatum remissibile* and *peccatum irremissibile*,[70] the latter consisting most notably of idolatry, fornication and murder. Tertullian, and others, were not prepared to allow the sin of fornication to lose its place in the triumvirate of mortal sins. Previously, in *De paenitentia* Tertullian had pointed out that the Church of Thyatira had been commanded to repent from the specific sins of fornication and idolatry, (eating meat sacrificed to idols). Such sins, along with murder, were now irremissible.

There has been debate upon this subject in the past and often the assumption is made that there had been general agreement upon this threefold classification of the most serious sins. It is further assumed that *De pudicitia* illustrates that Tertullian was resisting a mounting pressure in the early third century to lessen the seriousness of fornication and allow Christians guilty of this sin forgiveness in the Church. It can be argued though that Tertullian and other rigorists were introducing new and higher moral standards. The issue is not a simple choice between two such alternatives. In all probability there were various opinions on this matter from earliest times. The writer to the Hebrews, for example, argued a rigorist line[71] and so Tertullian was not the first to adopt this position. Indeed Tertullian quotes with approval from Hebrews, which he attributed to Barnabas, as a preferable authority than 'that apocryphal "Shepherd" of adulterers'.[72] There is no 'second repentance'

for adulterers and fornicators and Barnabas learnt this from apostles and taught it with apostles. *De pudicitia* certainly illustrates how rigorist tendencies impinged upon the ecclesiastical penitential system in the early third century.

The identification of the *pontifex maximus* whose edict spawned this treatise is debatable. Callistus, bishop of Rome 217-222, is certainly a candidate as it is known from the writings of Hippolytus that he favoured a conciliatory policy towards those guilty even of mortal sins. It is perhaps more likely though that Tertullian is venting his sarcasm against Agrippinus, bishop of Carthage. The situation is further complicated by the fact that Tertullian broke from the Catholic Church, perhaps over this very edict, and became a Montanist. Sides were taken, rigorist against laxist, and on the anvil of penitential discipline the doctrine of the authority of the Church was hammered into a more precise shape.

In Rome, no less than in Africa, Scripture texts were produced to support both rigorist and laxist cases. Callistus argued for the *corpus permixtum* nature of the Church on the basis of two main texts; the parable of the wheat and the tares where the tares represent the sinners within the Church, and Noah's ark, an obvious type of the Church, which contained both clean and unclean animals.[73] Both of these examples were to figure throughout the North African debate.

Whether Callistus was the *pontifex maximus* and target of Tertullian's invective or not, it is known from Hippolytus that this Roman bishop did declare that the Church could forgive the sins of fornication and adultery. It is debatable as to whether this edict represented a slackening of a previously agreed standard or whether it was a defence against rigorist tendencies. It certainly drew the strongest protest from Hippolytus and other rigorists. 'For if a person who attends the congregation of any one else, and is called a Christian, should commit any sin, they say that the sin is not reckoned unto him, provided only he hurries off to the school of Callistus'.[74]

In Africa too, this change in policy was opposed by Tertullian.

> I hear that there has even been an edict set forth, and a peremptory one too. The sovereign Pontiff - that is, the

> bishop of bishops - issues an edict: "I remit, to such as have
> discharged (the requirements of) repentance, the sins both
> of adultery and of fornication."[75]

One of Tertullian's arguments for resisting such a change in policy well illustrates the use of Scripture in this early Church era. Seeking to resist the new idea that adultery can be forgiven in the Church, Tertullian turned to the Decalogue where he emphasised that the Divine order for serious sins is; idolatry, adultery, and murder. These sins are sins unto death. How can anyone claim to have the power to remit the sin of adultery when it is positioned between such serious sins as idolatry and murder?

> I behold a certain pomp and circumstance of adultery: on
> the one side, Idolatry goes before and leads the way; on the
> other, Murder follows in company. Worthily, without
> doubt, has she taken her seat between the two most
> conspicuous eminences of misdeeds, and has completely
> filled the vacant space, as it were, in their midst, with an
> equal majesty of crime. Enclosed by such flanks, encircled
> and supported by such ribs, who shall dislocate her from
> the corporate mass of coherencies, from the bond of
> neighbour crimes, from their embrace of kindred
> wickedness, so as to set apart her alone for the enjoyment
> of repentance?[76]

Convincing and important as this argument was to Tertullian it is interesting to note that the 'Divine order' he writes of is based solely upon the Septuagint order. In modern translations the command to refrain from adultery follows the command to refrain from committing murder.

In this same treatise, *De pudicitia*, Tertullian displays an obvious change of mind from his earlier work, *De paenitentia*. In the earlier work he wrote lucidly, expounding the notion of ἐξομολογήσις . Some of the main scriptural proofs he then produced concerned the three 'lost' parables.[77] In his later work he now gives a careful re-interpretation of these same three parables to demonstrate that they do not teach that God forgives and welcomes a penitent sinner back into His fellowship. Tertullian argues now that the context of these parables is Jesus' contention against the Pharisees concerning his mixing with publicans and sinners and this indicates

that their point is to illustrate the joy of God when a heathen finds Him for the first time. These same parables therefore are used by Tertullian at different times to support different ecclesiological positions. This raises the question as to what extent the establishment of subsequent Catholic orthodoxy employed similar re-interpretation of biblical texts?

In answer to the charge by his opponents that Jesus forgave all sinners including fornicators and adulterers, Tertullian argued that such biblical examples concerned Jesus alone and at no time were similar powers of forgiveness extended to the Church at large, 'This is lawful to the Lord alone'.[78] Similarly the power given to Peter by Jesus is interpreted as a personal conference upon Peter and not upon the whole Church.[79]

The individual involved in incest in Corinth is 'handed over to Satan' in order that in the last day 'the Spirit' may be saved.[80] Tertullian interprets this as referring, not to the spirit of the man, but to the Spirit in the Church which must be kept free of such contamination as this sin incurs. He cites instances of lesser sins in Corinth where Paul writes of coming with a whip to deal with them[81] and this more serious sin where condemnation is the only viable course. Thus some sins can be forgiven and others cannot. Once again the scriptural text is stretched upon a theological frame.

In tandem with his adoption of the 'New Prophecy' about 207, Tertullian developed his views on a number of issues, most notably Apostolic Succession, the nature of the Church, and, as already noted, penitential discipline. Despite his obvious move into the rigorist camp, he often stated what was doubtless the commonly held Christian belief of his day. The Church was *ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesiae numerus episcoporum*.[82] The test of a pure Church was its sacraments, and sinful individuals must be expelled from the Church because their sin was contagious, *quod sanctus minister sanctimoniam noverit ministrare*.[83]

Not surprisingly, martyrdom was also important to Tertullian. Every Christian must be ready to die as a martyr[84] and practise their faith openly in time of persecution[85] and if brought before the magistrate for their faith, must bear a faithful

witness.[86] State persecution led inevitably to martyrdom for some believers and this in turn led to a cult of the martyrs in North Africa. The glories of martyrdom were emphasised and certain privileges and honours were accredited to the martyrs. In the short term, under persecution, such views strengthened the Church, though also laying a foundation for longer term problems. Members of the Church who were arrested knew that if they escaped with their lives they would be honoured by the whole Church; if they died for their faith they did so in the knowledge that martyrdom was a second and more powerful baptism which cleansed them from all sin and granted them immediate access to heaven; *ad ipsum divinae sedis ascensum*.[87] Had not Paul himself desired to depart this life in order to be with Christ?[88] Anticipating later charges against the more extreme Donatists in this regard, Tertullian distinguishes between embracing martyrdom when persecuted and suicidal martyrdom by means of provocation.[89]

As in previously mentioned areas of Christian thought, we see a shift in Tertullian's teaching concerning martyrdom. In an early work, *De patientia*, he allows Christian flight in the face of persecution whereas in the later *De fuga in persecutione* he denounces such flight as an attempt to resist God's will.[90] The prayer of Christ in Gethsemane that the cup might pass from him is no support for flight from persecution as Christ also prayed for the Father's will to be done.

Two of Tertullian's works are devoted to this subject. *Ad Martyras* is an early work in which he addresses and comforts a specific group of Christians who have been imprisoned. *Scorpiace* is a defense of martyrdom against the Gnostics and Valentinians (the scorpions of the title). The three friends of Daniel are cited as examples illustrating the glories of martyrdom.[91] Interestingly, these Valentinians were arguing that a Christian could deny being a Christian and simultaneously maintain a clear conscience as Scripture only enjoined believers not to deny Christ himself.[92] The authorities however often required those who denied being Christians to demonstrate the truth of their denial by blaspheming Christ. Other Christians advanced the theory that the scriptural command to be subject to the governing authorities permits believers to deny their faith and Saviour without fear of

ecclesiastical or Divine censure.[93] These issues continued to excite the attention and fervour of North African Christians throughout the fourth century.

Prior to his adoption of Montanism, Tertullian had supported the notion of Apostolic Succession, arguing that no preacher should be accepted if he cannot produce authorisation from a Church of apostolic foundation.[94] He abandoned this view when he embraced the New Prophecy, arguing then that the Church had fallen since the time of the apostles and the true Church now resided with those who possessed the Spirit and special revelations. Therefore Tertullian saw himself as something of a 'Restorationist'. The Church was the spiritual body of believers. 'The Church of the Spirit and the Church of the bishops are now in total opposition'.[95] His clearest writing against the Catholic Church occurs in *De pudicitia* where he contrasts *Ecclesia Spiritus* with *Ecclesia numerus Episcoporum*.[96]

d) Use of Scripture.

Tertullian became acquainted in Rome with a Latin version of the Scriptures though it varied greatly from that used by Cyprian some fifty years later. The Greek Septuagint was also widely available in North Africa. It would appear that Tertullian used either a Latin version of the Scriptures based upon the Septuagint or one translated directly by him from the Greek. For example he quotes Isaiah 5:18; *Vae illis qui delicta sua velut procero fune nectunt*, as from the Septuagint. Jerome, working from the Hebrew, quotes the same verse as *Vae qui trahitis iniquitatem in funiculis vanitatis*.[97] In his writings Tertullian quotes from all but five Old Testament books: Ruth, Chronicles, Nehemiah, Obadiah and Haggai. The only New Testament books he overlooks in similar fashion are II Peter, III John and James.

The fact that no Punic version of the Bible is known has led to speculation that 'the Christianising of the Punic population meant at the same time their Romanising'.[98] Certainly the Scriptures were highly venerated; the Scillitan martyrs carried a copy of Paul's letters at their trial before Vigellius Saturninus in 180. For Tertullian and his fellow African Christians, Scripture clearly taught that the Church was the 'Bride of Christ, without spot or wrinkle'.[99] Allegorical or typological interpretation was a

useful tool in understanding the doctrine of the Church. As Eve was created from the side of Adam so the Church was created from the wounded side of Christ, and as Adam slept so Christ died, and as Eve was the mother of all living so the Church is the true mother of the living.[100] It would be quite unfair though to regard Tertullian as a rampant allegoriser. He was very aware that *allegoriae parabolae,* and *aenigmata* were the favourite interpretative key of gnosticising heretics[101] and urged caution in reading into texts, *sed malumus in scripturis minus, si forte, sapere quam contra.*[102]

Tertullian's concern in using Scripture was not to produce a comprehensive system of doctrine which was compatible with every tenet of Scripture but rather to convey the central truth, the *ratio* of Scripture. Nowhere in his writings does Tertullian adopt the form of continuous biblical commentary which was originating at that time. Rather he preferred to arrange topics thematically and then attempt to treat them exhaustively. His works range from short pamphlets to lengthy treatises. Often, as in his conflict with Praxeas, Tertullian's detailed allegories appear far-fetched to our modern eye; however within the context of third-century exegesis he is restrained and his overall doctrine is largely consistent with Scripture.

As with much patristic exegesis, Tertullian's main concern is practical, to edify the faithful and ensure their spiritual health within the Church. The most potent side effect of the allegorical approach was that a scriptural basis could be fashioned from isolated texts and partial texts for almost any doctrine or practice. Proof texts were numerous and often collated in a *florilegium,* thereby providing a battery of texts for use in theological debate. Many examples abound. Thus for Tertullian the water and blood which flowed from the spear wound in Christ's side is considered scriptural support for two baptisms, by water and martyrdom.[103] Even at this early date it was apparent that opposing views could each find scriptural support.

Tertullian and his fellow Africans argued for the holiness of the Church on the basis of Paul's words that the Church is the 'Bride of Christ ... without spot or wrinkle'[104] whereas Callistus argued for the *corpus permixtum* nature of the Church on the basis of Jesus' parable of the wheat and tares remaining together until harvest and

similarly Noah's Ark, being a figure of the Church, contained dogs, wolves, ravens and other unclean animals'.[105] In early Church schisms, the result was often a 'scriptural stalemate' with both sides hurling their respective scriptural texts at each other. It is apparent that in the patristic period generally the Church became gradually incapable, especially after 325, of allowing any meaningful variety of legitimate theological expression. Christian orthodoxy evolved into an increasingly authoritative corpus from which all opponents must necessarily be identified as heretics or schismatics. Being therefore outside the Church they were a legitimate target for undiluted invective. The verbal log-jams which resulted from the production of scriptural texts and counter-texts were often only cleared, and orthodoxy established, by the imposition of new and decisive elements. The adoption of Christianity as the official State religion was one example of such a new element.

Tertullian typifies some of the problems encountered in attempting to trace the use of Scripture in North African debate. In a word Tertullian typifies 'inconsistency'. When arguing against heretics, he is an ardent traditionalist, stating that an appeal to Scripture alone is insufficient unless accompanied by an appeal to apostolic tradition also.[106] This same Tertullian, when he himself was out of step with 'orthodox Christianity', was the first to claim what he had formerly denied to others, namely the right of private judgement and the freedom of faith and conscience.[107] In his use of Scripture Tertullian invariably attempts to display a commonsense approach, albeit always subservient to his theories.

In Tertullian can be seen the nub of the interpretation debate; Scripture can be made to support almost any argument! It would seem that Tertullian first set out his stall and only subsequently sought scriptural support for his wares. He interprets Scripture allegorically, typologically, and literally on various occasions. Allegory is used when it suits him; for example he sees the twelve Apostles prefigured in the 12 wells of Elim,[108] in the 12 stones on the High Priest's breastplate,[109] and in the 12 stones taken from the Jordan. Despite such fanciful interpretations he condemns second marriage as a form of adultery although it is plainly permitted by Paul.[110]

By accepting Scripture and loving it in its strangeness he became the most original and in many respects the most penetrating exegete of the whole ancient Church, whose detailed accuracy and understanding was outdone by none of the later theologians. The limitations which finally defeated him were the limits of his own comprehension of the faith, namely the limits of his proud and mercilessly rigid nature.[111]

Tertullian's advocacy of the New Prophecy was too extreme, even for his fellow North African Christians who remained firmly episcopal, and he left the Catholic Church about 207, condemning it as worldly and unscriptural. Some years later he also left the Montanists and seems to have died peacefully in old age about 220.[112] In the thirty or so years before Decius, the North African Church divisions which Tertullian illustrated seem to have healed. He has been called the 'father of Latin theology' and in some respects he might also be called 'the father of Donatism'.

AFRICAN TEXTS AND INTERPRETATION.

It was characteristic of scriptural interpretation in North Africa that it paralleled pastoral and catechetical concerns. Here Scripture was often moulded to dogmatic assertion. State persecution, heresy and schism, were all factors in concentrating minds upon the issues revolving around the central theme of the nature of the Church. The same scriptural texts and passages could be employed by protagonists to support their own stance.

While the North African Church did not follow the literal interpretative methods of Antioch, neither are ingenious allegorical traits as found in Origen common in its literature. Most African typological interpretations focus upon biblical characters and may more accurately be described as favouring a cautious typology and allegory. While there are no examples of exclusively North African interpretative tools, there are distinctive North African steps in the development of theories of Church and sacrament. These theories were supported upon a web of proof texts, scriptural

types and allegories which, though to the modern eye essentially unscientific, were accepted as normal in that era.

Limited knowledge of Hebrew and Greek forced a dependence upon Latin translations which were all to often based upon a faulty Septuagint translation. Although no one can be certain when and where the Bible was first translated into Latin there are sound reasons for placing this event in North Africa in the last quarter of the second century. Latin was the only official language in Africa whereas Greek was the cultural language of the other main Western Churches, Rome and Lyons, until at least the mid-third century. The Roman bishop, Cornelius, wrote to the Churches in Greek as late as A.D.250 though Pope Victor (cA.D.190) wrote in Latin. Tertullian wrote all but his very earliest works in Latin.

The many divergent scriptural quotations of early Christian Latin writers support the belief that there were various Old Latin translations in circulation. All Latin writings before Jerome are termed 'Old Latin'. Augustine wrote that the Latin translations could not be counted.[113] Jerome complained to Pope Damasus (366-384) that *tot enim sunt exemplaria paene quot codices*.[114] The quality of these numerous translations varied greatly and it has long been recognised that African reliance upon faulty Old Latin texts based upon the Septuagint produced odd interpretations.[115] These Old Latin translations were based on the popular language of their time and were therefore very different from models of classical Latin. There was a certain 'barbaric character' to the earliest Latin translations which though useful for common usage, offended the taste of some educated classes.

A cursory study of African primary sources indicates that neither Tertullian nor Cyprian nor Augustine used the same Old Latin version. The thirty or so extant manuscripts are broadly divided into three groups; African, European (mainly Italian), and Hispanic. Amazingly, these manuscripts contain twenty-seven variant readings of Luke 24:4-5.[116] As a general rule the African manuscripts exhibit greater divergences from the Greek text than their European counterparts.

No codex of the Old Latin Bible survives. In addition to numerous fragments, there are thirty-two mutilated manuscripts of the gospels, twelve manuscripts of Acts, four of the Pauline epistles and only one of the Apocalypse.[117] All these manuscripts date from the fourth to the thirteenth centuries, thereby indicating the tenacity with which Old Latin translations resisted the work of Jerome. Such Old Latin manuscripts are designated by small letters of the Latin alphabet. The most highly regarded African manuscripts are; 'e', 'h', and 'k', and the most important of these is 'k', containing about half of Matthew and Mark. This manuscript is dated about A.D.400 but agrees very closely with the scriptural quotations of Cyprian. It is thought that Augustine used a text similar to 'e'.

About A.D.382 the Roman Church, in the person of Pope Damasus, commissioned a new Latin translation from *Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus*, better known as Jerome. His translation was based upon a relatively good European Latin text which he compared with Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. The finished work, known as the Vulgate translation, is extant in some eight thousand manuscripts, many of which show signs of textual contamination. These manuscripts are designated by capital letters of the alphabet.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Our knowledge of the early and formative history of the North African Church is very uncertain. Even in the extant writing of Tertullian there are too few clues as to the public organisation of this Church. Certainly it was a successful Church in terms of expansion. It has been estimated that in the time of Agrippinus (A.D.220) there were about seventy to ninety bishops. This figure had risen to a hundred and fifty by the time of Cyprian (A.D.250), and two hundred and fifty by the end of the third century. At the end of the fourth century there were about six hundred African bishops.[118] Obviously the early African Church was a dynamic Church, intensely concerned with its role in society and how a Christian should live his life in a pagan setting. There was an apocalyptic and prophetic dimension in Africa which in turn

fed an appreciation of martyrdom. It is not without significance that the first record of Christianity in Africa is that of the Scillitan martyrs. There was also a strong veneration for Scripture and a suspicion of all things Roman. It was from this setting that the ecclesiological contributions of Cyprian, the Donatists, and Augustine each added to the North African recipe which produced that unique flavour of Christianity which has determined the appetite and taste of Western Christendom down to our present age.

The understanding of the sacrament of baptism and the capability to deal with the problem of the Christian sinner were crucial aspects of the ongoing development of the doctrine of the Church. Nowhere was this development more keenly debated than in North Africa. Here, a combustible mixture of rigorism, persecution, martyrdom, enthusiasm, logic, schism and dominant personalities fuelled the forward motion of the ecclesiological engine. This forward motion was more often than not upon hastily laid scriptural track. The North African theological convulsions were important as Western Catholic orthodoxy, in the areas of ecclsiology, ministry, and sacraments, was born out of this struggle.

It is to this ongoing struggle within the Church of North Africa from the dawn of the third century to the triumph and establishment of orthodox Western Christianity in the fourth century that attention will now be given.

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3. CYPRIAN.

AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS LIFE, WORK, AND THOUGHT.

Cyprian's was a short though nonetheless very significant bishopric at Carthage, principally because of the ecclesiastical issues which beset him throughout his term of office and forced him, in the heat of controversy, to forge a specific doctrine of Church and ministry. It was in this mid-third century that the theology of the Church developed at an unprecedented rate. No such development takes place in a vacuum. The catalyst for this development was the Roman State.

Neither the date nor the place of birth of Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus are precisely known. He is thought to have been born about A.D.200 and to have spent all his life in the city of Carthage. Jerome records that Cyprian was highly regarded as a teacher of rhetoric and this was certainly a common enough career in the third century in North Africa.

Again it is Jerome who informs us that Cyprian became a Christian under the influence of a priest called Caecilius.[1] Hence Cyprian's own adoption of that name. He had become disillusioned with his former occupation, because of the immorality and corruption of public life, and had begun to study the Bible and other Christian writings. The date of his conversion is not known with certainty but probably took place in 245 or 246.

Cyprian wrote to his friend and fellow convert Donatus concerning his recent conversion and while his story lacks the detail and drama of Augustine, it still conveys, even in translation, the impression of a powerful conversion experience.

> For as I myself was held enlivened by the very errors of my previous life, of which I believe that I could not desert myself, so I was disposed to give in to my clinging vices, and in my despair of better things I indulged my sins as if now proper and belonging to me. But afterwards, when the stain of my past life had been washed away by the aid of the water of regeneration, a light from above poured itself upon my chastened and pure heart; and afterwards when I had drunk of the Spirit from heaven a second birth restored me into a new man; immediately in a marvellous manner doubtful matters clarified themselves, the closed opened, the

shadowy shone with light, what seemed impossible was able to be accomplished, so that it was possible to acknowledge that what formerly was born of the flesh and lived submissive to sins was earthly, and what the Holy Spirit was animating began to be of God. Surely you know and recognise alike with myself what was taken from us and what was contributed by the death of sins and by that life of virtues.[2]

Cyprian appears to have thrown himself fully into his new lifestyle. He determined to read only the Scriptures and Christian works, he took a vow of chastity, and sold his estates for the benefit of the poor. In 248 Donatus, bishop of Carthage, died and the community nominated Cyprian as the new bishop. This was a surprisingly rapid promotion. He had been a Christian for only two or three years. Cyprian's consecration as bishop took place between June 248 and April 15 (Easter day) 249.[3] The election though was not unanimous. Some older presbyters, among them Novatus, voiced their opposition on the grounds that Cyprian was a *novellus*. Novatus in particular seems to have taken great personal exception to Cyprian's appointment. This opposition rumbled on and was soon to involve the Church of Rome also. The bishopric of Carthage was an important position within the Church at this time, implying both symbolic and actual leadership of the whole African Church. No sooner was he elected than the Roman State, in the person of the Emperor Decius (249-251), initiated a chain of events which impinged upon the new bishop to such an extent that ultimately he was responsible for causing the doctrine of the Church to develop at an unprecedented rate. The very scriptural texts and interpretations Cyprian used in his writings became enshrined in all subsequent North African ecclesiological debate.

The coastal area, especially Carthage, and the river valleys were fertile and well watered and thereby able to sustain a large urban population. Proconsular Africa, in which Carthage was situated, was both the most Roman and the most important of the provinces. It was also an important source of grain for the capital of the Empire. Up to two-thirds of the wheat crop was dispatched annually across the Mediterranean.[4] The High Plains, including southern Numidia and Mauritania were less hospitable and here the tide of occupation ebbed and flowed between farmer

and nomad. The people of these areas remained largely out of touch with Roman civilisation.

> The old Punic and Berber population was still strong in the countryside, but the cities together with the landowners and administrative classes were Roman. A substantial proportion spoke Greek (as late as the last quarter of the fourth century A.D. there was a Greek bishop of the important city of Hippo who spoke Latin with difficulty and embarrassment.)[5]

As the language of the Early Church was Greek, it was not until the third century that Latin made inroads into the writings of the Western Church. As already mentioned in chapter two, there is some evidence of this very transition in the North African Church in the writings of Tertullian. Following Tertullian, Cyprian was the most famous son of the African Church. In a very real sense Cyprian inherited the mantle of Tertullian whom he called 'the Master'.

While it is something of an oversimplification, it is nonetheless true to say that in general the 'orthodox' Catholic Church came to recognise the need for compromise with the realities of this world for the sake of unity, peace and mission. Such recognition did not come easily in North Africa. A substantial proportion of North African Christians, following the example of Tertullian and possibly also an older tradition of Christianity, tended to be enthusiastic in their condemnation of the world in many forms.

The existence of such a significant rigorist party resulted in the North African Church suffering serious schism with attendant argument and weakness. As the drama unfolded from the time of Cyprian, North African Christianity was only partially assimilated into a more uniform Western Catholicism in the fourth and fifth centuries.

In the year of Cyprian's consecration the new Emperor, Decius (249-251), initiated a policy of persecution against 'foreign cults' which included the Church. This was the most severe test which the Church had yet undergone, the first determined and widespread persecution. The whole Empire had been shocked by the Gothic attack upon Rome in 248, following the Thousand Year Celebrations in that city in 247.

Decius was determined to calm popular fear and advocated a widespread return to the traditional values which he believed had made Rome great. By his edict, all free inhabitants of the Empire, men, women and children, were required, in the spring and summer of 250, to sacrifice to the traditional gods of the Empire. The actual edict has not been preserved but it seems clear that the thrust behind it was a great surge of desire for a return to the traditional Roman religious beliefs and practices.

Decius' policy required everyone to obtain a certificate, a *libellus*, stating that they had sacrificed to the traditional gods before a local magistrate. The principle aim of the new Emperor's policy was not so much a direct onslaught against the Church but rather arose from a desire to unite the people in one solid demonstration of their common faith in the gods of the Empire. It was the refusal of the Church to pour a libation and eat sacrificial meat as required which brought the indignation of the State down upon it. There were some famous martyrs; Fabian (Rome), Babylas (Antioch), Alexander (Jerusalem). Origen (Caesarea) may also be added though he died some time later from injuries received at that time. The weaknesses of the Church were exposed.

> The Church was a mainly urban institution drawing a good deal of support from merchants and artisans. Vast numbers lapsed forthwith. Many denied ever having been Christians. The Church was only saved from ruin by the constancy of a few individuals, coupled with the authorities' lack of organisation and means to press home their initial advantage.[6]

Cyprian himself withdrew from Carthage for some fourteen months and shepherded his flock during this period by letter. Although a similar course of action was adopted by others, notably Dionysius of Alexandria, this provided further ammunition for Cyprian's critics in Carthage.

The persecutions halted in 251 with the death of Decius while fighting the barbarians, and the scene within the Church was one of chaos. Many Christians had lapsed and sacrificed to pagan gods as directed while others had simply fled. Writing of the Carthaginian situation, Cyprian tells us that a certain day had been nominated by the magistrates at Carthage in order for the people to make a sacrifice

to the god Jupiter. There were such numbers of would-be willing participants that many were urged to return the next day.[7] This only added to the confusion. Some Christians obtained a *libellus* by bribery therefore avoiding actually making a sacrifice. Others fled rather than sacrifice thereby risking the confiscation of their property and still others resisted and survived. Both these latter groups were generally held in high esteem and were known as *stantes* and *confessores* respectively. An additional headache was caused by the fact that some *confessores*, for example, Lucianus, began to engage in the distribution of *libelli pacis gregatim*.[8] In other words, they were freely handing out their own certificates of absolution to those who had apostatised during the persecution.

Cyprian's action amidst this confusion was to adopt a strict position. He refused to permit the lapsed to enjoy communion until a Council could meet. The clergy at Carthage were divided on the question and it would appear that the leaders behind the opposition to Cyprian's view, which included the deacon Felicissimus, were largely the same people who had opposed his consecration two or three years earlier on the grounds that he was a *novellus*. Felicissimus and his supporters were eventually excommunicated by a Council in the spring of 251. Cyprian's policy is stated in his work, *De Lapsis*, in which he argues that no human being has the power to remit apostasy, only God, and such action must be left to Him. Thus, for Cyprian, a penitential preparation for God's coming judgement is the only realistic policy open to the lapsed.

Similar problems were troubling the Church in Rome. No successor to Fabian was consecrated for sixteen months until the persecution finally died out. Like Cyprian, the presbyter Novatian held a rigorist view that the Church could not grant remission to individuals guilty of serious sins. Another presbyter, Cornelius, advocated the more lenient view that a bishop could in fact remit even serious sins. Cornelius was eventually elected bishop of Rome, perhaps mainly because of the large number of lapsed Christians. Novatian was elected rival bishop by a minority of rigorist believers. After embarrassing hesitations Cyprian chose communion with Cornelius.

This in turn led to further problems and the remainder of Cyprian's episcopate was taken up with the formulation of his doctrine of the Church and its discipline. By 254 the supporters of Novatian in both Rome and Africa were falling away as their leader failed to gain support elsewhere. Many applied for re-admission to the Catholic Church and Cyprian held that they must be re-baptised if they had been baptised in schism. All schismatic baptisms were invalid in his view. However the new bishop of Rome, Stephen (254-256), held that any baptism in the name of the Trinity was valid and that laying on of hands was sufficient to receive penitent schismatics into the Church. This debate on sacramental understanding was to have very far reaching consequences in North Africa.

A North African Council of eighty-seven bishops supported Cyprian's line on baptism in 256 and there was also support from Asia Minor. Stephen died the following year and the matter was allowed to drop though each Church held to its own practice. To his credit Cyprian refused to excommunicate those who did not agree with him. The Council of Arles in 314 eventually settled this question for the Church in the West by adopting the Roman position though this decision was itself taken in the midst of a Carthaginian crisis, the issue being whether at that time Caecilian or Donatus was the true bishop. The Donatists were later to argue this same sacramental issue with Augustine.

The discipline problems in the aftermath of the Decian persecution were undoubtedly instrumental in forcing Cyprian to develop his views on Church and ministry. Tertullian had insisted at the beginning of the third-century that the holiness of the Church was an empirical holiness. For him the Holy Church consisted of pure and spotless Christians. The post-persecution crisis of the mid-third century forced Cyprian to adapt this view. For him the Holy Church consists of pure and spotless bishops and those in communion with them. The demonstrable holiness of the Church was diluted and in Augustine and others was to diminish further.

Cyprian's doctrine was by far the most comprehensive of any previous writings on the subject. His insistence upon the unity of the Church was based upon the unity

of the bishops. Most interesting in this respect was his view that although the body of bishops decide together an agreed policy on difficult subjects, yet the majority of bishops cannot compel any individual bishop to act in a particular way within his own area. *episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.*[9]

Cyprian's view of the Church always strove to be logical. Based upon the premise that there is no grace outside the Church, he argued that a validly ordained minister who breaks from the communion of the Church loses all power to minister. From this new premise it also follows that heretical and schismatic baptisms are invalid. *quisque ille est et qualiscumque est, christianus non est qui in Christi ecclesia non est.*[10] For Cyprian this was an absolute principle which operated irrespective of an individual's moral standing or qualities.

Imperial policy changed once more with the new Emperor Valerian, the former censor of Decius. He issued edicts against the Church which ignited another persecution fire across the Empire. Cyprian was summoned before the proconsul of Africa and asked to give formal acknowledgement to the Roman gods. His reply encapsulated the predicament of the Christians; that the Christian *Deus* could not be worshipped along with other gods but that Christians were nevertheless loyal to the Emperor. He was exiled to Curubis, a coastal town on the gulf of Hammamet to the east.

On 14 September Cyprian appeared before the new proconsul Galerius Maximus. When questioned he refused to change his views and in consequence was executed by sword. 'Hardly as he died Cyprian was acclaimed a martyr and his blood and clothing became a source of reliquaries'.[11] His term as bishop of Carthage was short, traumatic and beset with ecclesiastical problems yet he left his mark upon the history of the Early Church and to this day is regarded as one of the leading bishops of that era. As we turn now to examine his teaching in more detail we shall see the recurring themes in the composition of the North African Church: hardening views on the nature of the Church, scriptural interpretation, State persecution and martyrdom, and penitential discipline.

SOURCES FOR CYPRIAN.

Extant sources for the history of the mid-third century are notoriously jejune. The primary sources for the life of Cyprian are his own surviving collection of eighty-two letters, sixty-five from his own hand, plus twelve treatises. These documents provide a unique insight into the Christian life and thought of the mid-third century. They are all the more important to us as contemporary history of this period is confined to the *Historia Augusta*, which is most likely a forgery dating from the fourth century, and even here there is a break from 244-259.

The twelve treatises contain few chronological clues yet the most famous, *De lapsis* and *De unitate* are reckoned as originating in 251. The latter is generally regarded as Cyprian's most original and innovative work. The fourth chapter though survives in two versions. The 'additions' in one version seem to emphasise the primacy of Peter and thereby provided a point of controversy for many years. There is a growing consensus of modern scholarly opinion that both texts were written by Cyprian.

> Either the Textus Receptus was written at the time of the first Council to determine the Church's policy towards the lapsed, while the later version was aimed at the attempt by Novatian to claim the episcopal chair at Rome; or the Primacy Text is the original, while the other version was a modified form designed to counter the exaggerated claims of Stephen.[12]

The most likely solution is that the version often referred to as the *Textus Receptus* is probably a revised version used by Cyprian during the baptismal controversy. The original version is therefore that which was for long regarded as interpolated. It is evident from other passages in Cyprian's writings that he did not accept the bishop of Rome as superior, having authority over other bishops. For example he refers to the disagreement between Peter and Paul as evidence supporting his own contention that all bishops are equal.[13] (Augustine was also to make much of this incident in *De baptismo contra Donatistas*.) For Cyprian the primacy of the bishop of Rome was that of a *primus inter pares*.

There are two contemporary sources for the life of Cyprian, his *Vita* by Pontius, one of his deacons, and the *Acta proconsularia Cypriani*. The *Vita* was written, according to Jerome,[14] after his martyrdom and is extant in many manuscripts. It has been noted for its 'fulsome turgidity'[15] and regarded with suspicion by many modern writers as being historically unreliable and comprising merely a panegyric. In its defence it has been argued that Pontius never intended to write a full biography of Cyprian but rather his efforts were directed at a later readership ensuring an elevated position for Cyprian in the minds of subsequent generations.

The *Vita* has handicapped every subsequent biography because of its silence on Cyprian's early life. For example, the date of his birth has remained a mystery though this is not unique for that period.

> Our knowledge of Cyprian's life diminishes steadily as one tries to work one's way back from the moment of his death. We have very full records of his martyrdom, a comparatively full account of his episcopate, a lesser knowledge of his life as a Christian before becoming a bishop, and very little knowledge indeed of his pre-Christian days. His biographer, Pontius, regarded the moment of his second birth as the most suitable point at which to begin the record of his life and death.[16]

The only other contemporary document on the life of Cyprian is the *Acta proconsularia Cypriani*. This is a short account of his exile and martyrdom based upon official Roman records.

LITERATURE ON CYPRIAN.

The importance of Cyprian, the first bishop-martyr of the African Church is undeniable. No history of the Christian Church in the third century can ignore him and every tome on Patrology devotes a section to Cyprian. Yet it has also been written of him, 'Cyprian has attracted rather less literature than he deserves'.[17] Also, 'Cyprian has been in the *clair obscur* since the beginning of the middle ages'.[18]

This is probably not because his importance is denied but more likely because there is such a remarkable degree of unanimity in the literature concerning him.

It has long been recognised that every account or evaluation of his life is impaired through incomplete knowledge, especially of his early life. As there is general agreement concerning the sequence of chronological events in his bishopric, the only area in which divergent views emerge is in sifting and weighing the significance of his teaching, notably in ecclesiology. This, however, is to depart from bare facts and enter an altogether more speculative arena; it is to express a modern opinion about the understanding of a third century bishop. Few writers have been able to resist this temptation and opinions about Cyprian's opinions abound in the literature, for example, 'He was tempted into the noble and alas! too fruitful error of arraying the Visible Church in attributes of the Church Invisible. But he said and showed how men might gravely dissent without one wound to peace'.[19]

As the *Vita* concentrates upon Cyprian's episcopate and largely neglected his earlier life, so all the literature has been forced to adopt a similar emphasis. Strangely though, Benson gives the impression that his earlier years could be enlightened;

> If the earlier part of this Life is somewhat thin, that is because I thought
> it not worth while to bring up its *primitiae* to the same level and same
> fulness as those days of Cyprian when the real problems of Church and
> World were upon him and he wrestling with them.[20]

Notwithstanding these limitations, lavish praise has been heaped upon Cyprian in much of the literature. Typical eulogies include; 'the first great father of the Latin Catholic Church',[21] and, 'a personality of extraordinary significance'.[22] There is general agreement concerning the nature of Cyprian's episcopate. The link between Imperial policy and his writings is of prime importance in this whole matter. Often in North Africa, and elsewhere, the State was the engine which propelled the ecclesiological train forwards upon hastily laid scriptural track. The Decian persecution was the catalyst which exposed the disciplinary and organisational problems within the Church which so taxed Cyprian. This has led to some debate as to whether Cyprian was a great theologian and visionary or a talented Christian

leader inundated with practical problems in the wake of persecution. The truth probably lies somewhere between these two extremes.

There is also some discussion in subsequent Christian literature as to the worth of the views expressed by Cyprian. Was he simply a product of his time, swept along by events beyond his control? Was he a deep theologian, arguing cogently and logically for his rigorist principles? As I have already stated, the State provoked a crisis with the fires of persecution which in turn produced urgent reactive theological investigation and pronouncement. The mould of ecclesiological orthodoxy was cast from this cauldron and the nett result had important implications in Africa and beyond. While there is complete agreement upon the major landmarks of Cyprian's episcopate, there is no such consensus in subsequent evaluation of his strengths and weaknesses as a bishop, nor on the helpfulness and influence of his views beyond Africa.

The point is well made by most writers that Cyprian was primarily a pastor and administrator. It was as a direct result of the Decian persecution and its aftermath that he developed the doctrine of the Church. This does not in any way denigrate his competence as a theologian. Although the pagan State indirectly provided the catalyst, Cyprian broke new ground with his development of the doctrine of the Church. He was able to argue powerfully that his doctrine was both scriptural and practical.

Cyprian has often been regarded as a greater Church leader than theologian. This seeming paradox is explained variously but most commonly in recognising his aversion to all schism. It was this facet of his thought and teaching which marked him for greatness. It could be argued that Tertullian, Hippolytus and Novatian were all greater theologians than Cyprian but unlike them, Cyprian never broke from the Catholic Church though he espoused the same rigorist principles. His refusal to excommunicate those who disagreed with him is seen as remarkable for the third century and is a mark of his stature as a great leader. This maintenance of unity

despite disagreement was certainly highlighted by Augustine in his debates with the Donatists in the early fifth century.

It was in addressing the controversies of his bishopric and in so doing forging his own views on Church and ministry that Cyprian was most prominent. Time and time again those writing about him emphasise his ability as an administrator: 'we have here a great individual spirit subdued to the ability of a great administrator. We see the same combination at work in the three controversies in which he was the central figure'.[23] (These three controversies were; the lapsed, schismatic baptisms and episcopacy.) It was these controversies which forced him to formulate theological and practical positions, notably with regard to his ecclesiology, and in doing so he displayed obvious ability as an organiser and administrator. It is interesting to note however that his views in each of these areas did not ultimately prevail. Orthodoxy was established on different lines, arguably in the interests of wider unity.

In addition to his prowess as an ecclesiastical theologian, skill as administrator and concern as pastor, he was a prolific writer. The consensus of opinion in the literature paints the Carthaginian bishop as essentially a pastor, with a practical approach to Christian living, responding with vigour to the crisis and controversies of his day. His practical conclusions are the logical outworking of a concerned bishop.

So what is the perceived theological legacy of Cyprian?

> By independent argument he established especially the old idea of the unity of the Catholic Church according to the development it had then reached, and he generally exercised a decisive influence on the doctrine of the Church. He firmly kept ecclesiastical discipline midway between laxity and rigorism.[24]

In all the literature upon Cyprian it is recognised that the hub of his ecclesiology is the conviction that the fundamental character of the Church is unity. For this reason he would not break from Rome. For the same reason he could not accept schismatic baptism as valid! All his writings on this subject are logical, everything

flows from the fact that the individual in communion with his bishop is axiomatic of fundamental Church unity.

As to his use of Scripture, the secondary sources consistently point to Cyprian's *Ad Fortunatum*. This is a compendium of scriptural quotations, arranged under twelve headings, to be used in strengthening Christians facing persecution. The greatest value of this work is in studying the oldest latin versions of the Bible. Another work, *Ad Quirinum* is a similarly arranged list of scriptural texts, extant in three books. The thrust of these books is an apology against the Jews, a statement of Christology, and Christian virtues and duties. Such collections of *florilegia* were not uncommon in the third century.

Specific references to Cyprian's use of Scripture in the secondary literature are rare. His exegesis is perceived to be unexceptional, most commonly the employment of a 'proof text' to prove a point. The most valuable secondary source for Cyprian's use of Scripture is the work of Michael Andrew Fahey,[25] 'Cyprian and the Bible: a Study in Third-Century Exegesis'. This is a most useful reference work. The bulk of this book, almost 500 pages, consists of an orderly examination of the books of the Bible, highlighting the references quoted by Cyprian. However, Cyprian's method of exegesis is only one of a number of important subjects condensed into a brief chapter of twenty six pages. The main value of this work therefore is as a source of reference for Cyprian's use of Scripture.

The relation of Cyprian to Donatism has been compared to that of Cyril to Monophysitism.[26] Both bishops remained active within the Catholic Church yet both were claimed by those in schism as founders in their respective sects. Although Cyprian steered a middle course between the *confessores* and the impenitent *lapsi*, his martyrdom clearly identifies him in the lineage of Tertullian. His unforeseen contribution to Donatism was his leadership of the North African rigorist tradition which engaged him in conflict with Rome on the matter of re-baptism of schismatics and heretics. His stance was endorsed by several North African Councils and it is something of the puzzle as to why this Church should change its opinion within the next half century. The secondary literature abounds

with the general observation that both Augustine and the Donatists could claim the authority of Cyprian for aspects of their respective positions.

Lavish estimations of Cyprian's influence have been written. 'But history has cast him for a wider role, that of influencing at a very deep level the theological thinking of the western Church for the subsequent seventeen hundred years'.[27] He has also been called, 'the father of Western Christianity'.[28]

Many modern writers try to set his thought in historical context. It is recognised that he depicts Latin Christianity in its infancy not its maturity. He is understood as representing an important stage in the development of African Christianity. This has been eloquently expressed by Archbishop Benson in his magisterial volume on Cyprian.

> When Tertullian began to write, theological Latin had to be formed. His free, unhesitating, creative genius rough-hewed a new language out of classical literature and African renderings of Hellenistic Greek. It stands like the masses of a fresh-opened quarry. Out of it Cyprian wrought shapely columns, cornices, capitals in perfect finish. The lamp which all runners in the sacred race have received is that which Tertullian lit and Cyprian trimmed.[29]

And yet the 'champion of Church unity' died in conflict with Rome. His own beloved African Church was split irreparably and that as a direct result of his own teaching! The Donatist schism was to rumble on until North Africa was taken over by the followers of Muhammad. Having said that, the foundations which he laid in his writings are those upon which monarchical episcopacy was built. Cyprian advanced the doctrine of the Church at an unprecedented pace though his primary objective was the peace of the Church in the wake of State persecution.

CYPRIAN: THE CHURCH, MINISTRY AND SACRAMENT.

a) Church in Crisis.

By the beginning of the third century the Christian Church had developed considerably from the Apostolic and immediate post-Apostolic period. Initially Asia Minor and adjacent Syria had been the most Christianised parts of the Roman Empire but other centres had emerged; Lyons, Rome, Alexandria and Carthage. Whereas congregations had initially tended to be autonomous, by now a collective or ecumenical Church government had developed. The parameters of the New Testament canon were also established, though interestingly Cyprian never quotes from Hebrews or James, and a basic Creed recognised. Each of these developments evolved over a period of time.

The Church had also tasted persecutions and internal divisions. All of these features interacted with each other in a constantly moving Church scene with the result that by the third century it was certainly possible to describe an Empire-wide institution as 'the Catholic Church'. The word $\kappa\alpha\theta o\lambda\iota\kappa\eta$ is first used of the Church by Ignatius of Antioch.[30]

In the early third century the Church developed those constitutional features which marked its existence throughout the Roman period. For example, Christians in cities, whether they met in one or in several congregations, regarded themselves as one community and looked to a single bishop for leadership. The logical and practical result of this developing pattern of leadership was that the bishops came to be regarded as the divinely appointed guardians of the deposit of the faith, and as such, it was they who could determine what was heresy. Further, as Christianity became established in the smaller towns and valleys, so came the development of a diocesan area, over which a bishop exercised monarchical ecclesiastical authority. Under the bishop were presbyters. They acted as the bishop's advisers and could, with his consent, administer the sacraments. Deacons assisted the bishop in the more practical matters such as the care of the poor within the diocese. Eusebius informs us that in the days of Cyprian and Cornelius, under the single bishop in Rome there were 'forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two

acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers, and more than fifteen hundred widows and distressed persons'.[31] (It has been estimated on the strength of these figures that there were between 30,000 and 50,000 Christians in Rome at this time).

Prior to A.D.200 the seeds of division between East and West were sown. The Roman Church was growing in influence. The only Western Church with Apostolic connections, it survived the Neronian persecution and successfully resisted Gnosticism and Montanism, and formulated the Creed. When Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D.135 in the Second Jewish War it ended any possibility of Catholic Church leadership developing there. Although Asia Minor and Syria contained important centres like Ephesus and Antioch, these areas experienced a much more debilitating struggle against Montanism. The other major Christian Church was that at Alexandria, in Egypt. About A.D.190, synods throughout the Church decided in favour of the Roman practice of celebrating Easter on a Sunday as opposed to the Eastern practice of marking Easter on the 14th Nisan each year, as in the Jewish Passover. This decision illustrates the growing dominance of the Church, and bishop, of Rome.

North Africa was a strategically important province in the Empire. It was a principal source of grain and Carthage was, after Rome itself, the second most important city in the West. As stated in the previous chapter, the origins of the Church in North Africa are not known but it was unique in some ways. Carthage became the first centre of Latin theology, surpassing even Rome in this respect. It was also blessed (or cursed, depending upon one's perspective) with abundant native enthusiasm and fervour. It could legitimately claim to be 'the Church of the martyrs'. The courage of these aforementioned martyrs, for example, Perpetua and Felicitas, may have been instrumental in the conversion of Tertullian, at any rate his rigorist attitude reflected much of the spirit of North African Christianity. As we have already noted, he defended his rigorist stance against the more tolerant view of the Roman bishop Callistus. While it would be an oversimplification to think that

all Carthaginian Christians agreed with Tertullian, nevertheless it is undeniable that rigorism seems to have been an important North African Christian trait.

The African Church was untouched by the persecution of Maximian and enjoyed a thirty-eight year peace from A.D.212-250 and this period is a possible factor in the establishment of a moderate party within this Church. Certainly the North African Church grew rapidly in this period as is demonstrated by the increasing number of bishops known to have attended Carthaginian Councils under the respective leaderships of Agrippinus, Donatus, and Cyprian. The great number of martyrs under Valerian point to the same conclusion. It was into this important Latin Church in Carthage that Cyprian was converted about A.D.245.

In the year after his consecration, A.D.250, the long peace of the Church was shattered by the launch of the Decian persecution, out of which Cyprian was to emerge above all as the apostle of Church unity. C. Quintus Messius Decius, an Illyrian and City Prefect of Rome, succeeded Philip as Emperor in the autumn of A.D.249. The contents of his persecution edict are not known, However the first phase involved the arrest and execution of Christian leaders. How swiftly the edict was enacted can be judged by the fact that Fabian, the bishop of Rome, was arrested, tried and executed on 20 or 21 January A.D.250.[32] This initial measure was followed by a universal requirement to sacrifice. The effects of this persecution have already been alluded to in the biographical outline at the beginning of this chapter.

A number of theories have been suggested to explain this persecution: that Valerian and Decius provoked each other into this course; to give expression to an already popular hostility against the Church; as a belated attempt to antagonise Philip who had been favourably disposed towards Christianity. It is most likely though that Decius' edict was not a direct attack upon the Church at all!

> At one time or another in the period 235-270, Rome lost the command of the Mediterranean to the Visigoths and Heruls, saw successively the Rhine, Danube and Euphrates frontiers overwhelmed, and the barbarians press into Gaul, Spain, Greece and Asia Minor, while her currency

dissolved in an inflation more in keeping with the Modern than the Ancient World.[33]

Decius' edict therefore may be understood as an attempt to unite the people of the Empire. It provided people with an opportunity by means of sacrifice to express their devotion to the traditional values of the old ways. There is no shortage of contemporary references to sacrifices made to the Roman triad Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, and also to Apollo, Diana, Venus, and the Emperor himself. In the realm of Church-State relations the predicament facing the Christians was that of declining to participate in State religion while simultaneously convincing all and sundry that they were loyal Roman citizens.

Whatever the motivation behind the edict, the result upon the Church was traumatic. In addition to bishop Fabian in Rome, other leading martyrs included Alexander (Jerusalem) and Babylas (Antioch). Origen (Caesarea) died later as a result of injuries received at this time. Christian reaction to the requirement to sacrifice varied from place to place. In Smyrna, bishop Euctemon obeyed the edict while in Carthage and Alexandria bishops Cyprian and Dionysius went into hiding. Many people denied ever having been Christians; *libellatici*, obtained a *libellus* by bribery; *sacrificati*, apostatised; some believers fled while still others resisted and survived. These latter believers were highly regarded and known as *confessores*. Cyprian records by name eighteen martyrs and seventeen confessors from Carthage during the Decian persecution.[34]

The persecution was shortlived and already on the wane when Decius was killed in battle against the Gothic King Kniva in June 251. There was a succession crisis, aggravated by the outbreak of severe plague in A.D.252. Cyprian, throughout the months of persecution, had kept in touch with his people by correspondance and now faced a major headache in re-asserting his position and organising the Church in Carthage. His first problem concerned the justification of his own action in fleeing to safety during the crisis. This was distinctly at odds with the resolve of many Christians who had remained in the city, resisting the authorities at great

personal cost. Those opposed to Cyprian's elevation to the episcopate were not slow to use his action as ammunition against him.

A letter had been received from the presbyters and deacons of Rome giving news of Fabian's death and questioning Cyprian's action in fleeing. Cyprian replied giving a detailed account of his conduct and enclosing copies of thirteen pastoral letters he had written from hiding, thus demonstrating his continued devotion to his congregation.[35] Chief among Cyprian's protagonists at Carthage were the presbyter Novatus, and Felicissimus, a wealthy and influential layman in the diocese. Other post-persecution problems also bore in upon Cyprian at this time.

A second dispute concerning Cyprian rapidly deepened as he attempted to restore his authority and bring order to the Church in Carthage. The key issue became one of how to deal with the *lapsi*.

> Argument about discipline inevitably provokes argument about authority in the Church, and where the point of dispute concerns discipline, punishment and absolution, and so membership of the Church, it soon becomes necessary to discuss the very nature of the Church. It was no accident that the patristic doctrine of the Church took shape not *in vacuo* but, mainly, in response to the challenge of particular schisms.[36]

If Cyprian's withdrawal from Carthage in the face of persecution raised the hackles of his opponents, his attitude to the *lapsi* upon his return to the city provided them with a stick with which to beat him. The North African situation was exacerbated by the fact that exaggerated reverence was paid to *confessores*. They had demonstrably triumphed over adversity and so it was commonly believed that thay possessed the Holy Spirit to an extraordinary degree. As such it was not unreasonable to accept that they had the power to grant certificates of re-admission to the *lapsi* who applied for them. Despite the large numbers of lapsed, Cyprian took a rigorist line in this matter and refused to accept such practices, arguing that no human being had the power to remit apostasy.

Cyprian's position was clear, the power of the keys was vested in the bishop though in difficult cases he might consult with the *confessores* in an advisory capacity.

Felicissimus and his supporters refused to co-operate with him in this course of action and withdrew fellowship from those who obeyed Cyprian. Cyprian countered this by instructing his commissioners to excommunicate Felicissimus and some of his party until a Council of bishops could discuss the whole issue. This Carthaginian schism worsened. Novatus travelled to Rome and sought support for the laxist party against Cyprian.

A parallel situation was developing in Rome where a new bishop was not elected until March 251. A prominent Roman presbyter, Novatian, corresponded with Cyprian, agreeing with the latter's policy on the lapsed. In the March election however, Novatian was overlooked and Cornelius was nominated as the new bishop. It was clear that the Church was facing a major crisis in the aftermath of the persecution.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 251, a Council of bishops met in Carthage and concurred with Cyprian's rigorist line and confirmed the excommunications. It was decided that certificates obtained from *confessores* would be ignored and each case would be considered on its merits. The majority of *confessores* grudgingly submitted. This decision was communicated to Rome. *Libellatici* were to be re-admitted to communion after time spans varying in direct proportion to their previous sufferings. *Sacrificati* were only to be re-admitted *articulo mortis*. Lapsed clergy, while being permanently deprived of their office, could also be re-admitted in similar circumstances. It was at this Council that Cyprian revealed the content of his two most famous works, *De lapsis* and *De unitate*, the latter initially written to his own flock as a warning against the manoeuvers of Felicissimus and Novatus.

The Roman schism resulted in the consecration of Novatian in opposition to Cornelius. Unlike Hippolytus, whose schism had been contained within Rome thirty-five years earlier, Novatian made strenuous though ultimately unsuccessful efforts to gain recognition and support outside Rome, especially with Dionysius of Alexandria. In Carthage also a rival bishop was consecrated. Following the excommunication of its leaders by the Council of Easter 251, the party of

Felicissimus maintained its identity and consecrated Fortunatus, one of the original five dissenting presbyters as its bishop of Carthage. He was consecrated by two heretical and three lapsed bishops. Felicissimus went to Rome to seek support for Fortunatus but correspondance from Cyprian to Rome arrived before him and thwarted this plan.

Cornelius took a slack, though some would say pragmatic, view in dealing with the *lapsi* whose sheer numbers made it inevitable that such a policy would be the more popular. Novatian, in order to distance himself from Cornelius, now advocated a rigorist line in the whole dilemma. Curiously Novatus, the champion of laxity in Carthage, and Novatian, the Roman rigorist, formed an alliance. Although their policies were different, they held in common the fact that they were each representatives of the minority parties in their own cities. After nervously sitting on the fence for some time Cyprian ended in communion with Cornelius rather than with Novatian. This hesitation included an exchange of representatives; Caldonius and Fortunatus from Carthage, and Pompeius and Stephanus from Rome. In three surviving letters[37] Cyprian explicitly recognises Cornelius as the legitimate bishop of Rome. The decision of the African Council was harsh enough to emphasise the evil of apostasy and was accepted by a subsequent Council at Rome. The Roman *confessores* eventually returned to the communion of Cornelius. Regarding the minority parties of Novatian and Fortunatus, neither dissident party had a long life in Africa. This is testimony to the strength of Cyprian given the natural propensity for rigorism in the North African Church.

Ironically a subsequent threat of further persecution in A.D.252 led Cyprian to issue a general pardon to all who were engaged at that time in acts of penance. This threat transpired to be a false alarm. Perhaps the most important long term consequence of this internal strife was the establishment of two principles; the Church had resident within it the power to remit even the sin of apostasy; and final authority lay with the bishops in Council.

Peace did not come so easily. The vexing question of the purity of the Church had been raised as a direct consequence of tackling the matter of forgiving apostasy. If

the holiness of the Church, which all agreed is a mark of the true Church, is measured by the actual holiness of its members then how can a Church which contains apostates and actively seeks their reconciliation be holy? In other words should the Church be regarded as a pure community or a congregation of sinners? The sheer numbers of lapsed Christians after the Decian persecution increased the pressure to relax the previously traditional practice not to re-admit such persons to communion. The decision of the African Council in March 251 to allow death-bed re-admittance under certain conditions was, for Cyprian, the course of greatest expediency. The acknowledgement that there were 'tares' and 'vessels of dishonour' in the Church was the price of Cyprian's theory of the unity of the Church centred upon the bishop. The 'pure and spotless' Church was now focussed upon pure and spotless bishops.

b) Ministry and Episcopacy.

By far the most famous aspect of Cyprian's thought is his ecclesiology; of all his sayings the most often quoted must be, *Extra ecclesiam non salus est,*[38] and, *Habere non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem.*[39] Undoubtedly it was the State persecution which triggered the process by which Cyprian was forced to develop and publicise his theory of Church and ministry. The post-persecution crisis was on his own doorstep in the person of Fortunatus and his supporters. Cyprian was forced to give leadership to the North African Church and also take sides in a similar dispute in Rome.

The role of the bishop had evolved over the two centuries since apostolic times in a decidedly monarchical direction. As a result there had been a gradual concentration of power and prestige in the hands of local bishops. Cyprian therefore did not introduce a dynamic element to an otherwise static situation, rather he forged the latest link in a chain of development stretching back to New Testament times.

In his writings to Polycarp and the Churches of Asia Minor Ignatius emphasised obedience to the local monarchial bishop as the expression of the Churches' unity. He wrote of the bishop as the main focus of a three-grade hierarchy in the Church consisting of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. This increasing power of bishops

was linked to the early requirement of authority and unity which in itself was closely tied to the notion of apostolic succession. Several writers express this notion.

> It is within the power of all in every Church who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who where by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and to (demonstrate) the succession of these men to our times.[40]

These developments were accepted throughout the early Church. In Africa, Tertullian challenged Marcion to produce a Marcionite Church which could trace its pedigree back to an apostle.[41] The distinction between *ordo* and *plebs* was already well established at Carthage where Cyprian generally used the term *sacerdos* to refer to a bishop as separate from a presbyter.[42] Out of the Roman 'recognition crisis' of A.D.251 Cyprian addressed two intertwined issues; the method of a bishop's election and his precise position within the Church.

On more than one occasion Cyprian considered the matter of the valid election of a bishop. He gave a full description of the African procedure in Epistle 67. Here he states that a valid ordination of a bishop necessitates three elements; acceptance by the people, by other bishops, and by God Himself. Citing the choice of Aaron[43] and Matthias,[44] Cyprian argues that the *plebs* should have a part to play in the choice and ordination of a bishop.

> The Lord orders the bishop to be appointed before the whole synagogue, that is, He instructs and shows that priestly ordinations ought not to be performed except with the knowledge of the people present that, in the presence of the people, either the crimes of the evil doers may be revealed or the merits of the good may be proclaimed and that the ordination which has been examined by the suffrage and judgement of all may be just and lawful.[45]

Although Cyprian frequently emphasised the part played by the laity in such elections it seems unlikely that the *suffragium* they exercised was in any sense a formal vote. It is much more likely that their knowledge of a candidate served only to make their acquiescence valuable.

The real choice it seems lay with the comprovincials. A careful distinction is made between the *suffragium* of the *plebs* and the *iudicium* of the *ordo*. Referring to the election of Cornelius as bishop of Rome, he writes;

> And bishop he was made, by a large number of our colleagues who were present at the time in the city of Rome and who have sent to us on the subject of his appointment testimonials which acclaim his honour and esteem and cover him with glory by their praises. Moreover, Cornelius was made bishop by the choice of God and of His Christ, by the favourable witness of almost all of the clergy, by the votes of the laity then present.[46]

This quotation identifies a threefold nomination of bishops, people, and the judgement of God, each being necessary in a valid election to the office of bishop. The 'judgement of God' probably means no more than the smooth progress of the election thereby demonstrating its legitimation. It can readily be understood that the real power lay with the bishops.

In his commentary upon the Petrine text of Matthew 16:18 Cyprian writes,

> From this source flows the appointment of bishops and the organization of the Church, with bishop succeeding bishop down through the course of time, so that the Church is founded upon the bishops and every act of the Church is governed through these same appointed leaders.[47]

Thus are combined the theories of succession and obedience. In his treatise *De ecclesiae unitate*, Cyprian clearly stated his views on the precise position of the bishop within the Church. The essential points may be enumerated as follows:

(a) The Divine Trinity is the basis of unity in the Church.

(b) Church unity is mirrored in the unity of the whole episcopal body. The bishops are the *glutinum* binding the Church together.

(c) The focus of episcopal unity is a single bishop in each locality.

(d) On difficult questions the whole body of bishops debate and decide together.

(e) No individual bishop can be compelled to a particular action in his own area by the majority of bishops.

(f) Rome is the special symbol of this Church unity.

In the opinion of Ignatius[48] the bishop was a defence against schism, for Irenaeus[49] he was primarily a guardian of Apostolic doctrine. In the opinion of Cyprian, the episcopate is a unity and each bishop represents that unity in his own locality. The line defining the pure Church has shrunk from the whole membership of the Church and is now restricted to the bishops alone. In the wake of the persecution, the problem of the 'Christian sinner' had forced this re-think. Tertullian's 'faithful men' have become, for Cyprian, the college of bishops.

Cyprian went further than any of his predecessors in applying Old Testament references concerning the privileges and responsibilities of the Aaronic priesthood to the bishops of his Church. The most curious aspect of Cyprian's view is his assertion on the one hand that bishops most usefully act in Council while on the other hand upholding the independence of each bishop in his own area. It seems obvious that the collegiality and independence of bishops could only be held together in some tension. Cyprian was practising what he preached with regard to the appointment of Cornelius. He did not wish to act alone in the matter of the recognition of Cornelius at Rome and the formation of a policy towards the lapsed until the North African bishops met in the spring of 251. Yet in censuring bishop Therapius for his hasty action regarding the reinstatement to communion of a lapsed presbyter, Victor, the African bishops in Council would not interfere with the former's diocese in order to reverse his decision.

> Nevertheless, after weighing the issue in a lengthy debate, we concluded
> that it sufficed to reprimand our colleague Therapius for this rash action
> of his and to direct him to avoid such actions in the future. Yet we were
> of the opinion that however reconciliation had been granted by the
> bishop of God it ought not to be taken away, and on this principle we

have allowed Victor to enjoy the admission to communion that had been conceded to him.[50]

For Cyprian, the unity of the Church is paramount, and therefore even if the bishops in Council cannot come to a common agreement on a particular matter then they must let the matter rest and respect each others' views. One such incident involved the admission on one occasion of penitent adulterers to communion.

> And you must remember that even amongst our predecessors there were certain bishops here in our own province who judged that peace ought not to be granted to adulterers and they, therefore, shut off completely any room for penitence in the case of sins of adultery. And yet that did not cause them to withdraw from the college of their fellow bishops, nor to shatter the unity of the Catholic Church, obstinate in their harshness and rigour though they remained. Accordingly, he who refused to grant peace to adulterers did not seperate himself from the Church simply because others were granting such peace. Provided that the bonds of harmony remain unbroken and that the sacred unity of the Catholic Church continues unimpaired, each individual bishop can arrange and order his own affairs, in the knowledge that one day he must render an account to the Lord for his own conduct.[51]

The threat of a serious breach between one bishop and his fellow bishops or of the entire episcopate falling into error were not real possibilities according to Cyprian. While he did allow the possibility of one bishop falling into error, he believed the collective episcopate to be incapable of such error as it was governed by the Holy Spirit. Important implications follow from this system. Focussing as it does upon the unity of the Church it follows that disunity is the most serious sin any Christian can commit. Schismatic bishops therefore are not recognised and neither are schismatic sacraments.

> In truth, heresies and schisms have their source and origin precisely in circumstances where people fail to obey God's bishop and where they forget the fact that in a Church there is but one bishop and judge who acts in Christ's stead for the time being. But if all the brethren gave the bishop their obedience as God's teachings prescribe, no one would make any move against the college of bishops; after God has made His choice and the people have cast their vote and fellow bishops have expressed their concurrance, no one would set himself up to pass judgement on the bishops now but on God Himself. No one would tear the Church of Christ apart by the destruction of her unity, no one would have the arrogant self-conceit to establish a new heresy outside and beyond the

Church. These things can only happen if there is anyone so irreligious, so irresponsible, so abhorrent in mind as to believe that a bishop can be made without God's choice. And yet the Lord says in His Gospel: *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and neither of them falls to the ground without the will of the Father?*[52]

Every validly ordained minister who breaks from the Great Church automatically loses all power to minister. The operations of God's grace are confined to the true Church. Hence, for Cyprian, *Extra ecclesiam non salus est*[53] and *Habere non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem.*[54]

Scriptural texts and illustrations used by Cyprian in support of this view of the Church include; 'but my dove, my perfect one is unique, the only daughter of her mother'[55] 'You are my garden locked up, my sister',[56] the ark of Noah in which only a few people were saved,[57] 'Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it'.[58] The rejection of Cain and his sacrifice prefigures schismatic bishops.[59] Christ's seamless robe is also used, by means of allegorical interpretation, to signify the unity of the Church. *Sacramento vestis et signo declarauit ecclesiae unitatem.*[60] Church unity is also signified for Cyprian in the making of the sacramental symbols.

> For when the Lord calls Bread made from the union of many grains His Body, He indicates our people whom He bore united; and when He calls Wine pressed from the clusters of grapes and many small berries and gathered in one His Blood, He, likewise, signifies our flock joined by the mixture of a united multitude.[61]

Cyprian's favourite figure though is that of the mother who joins and holds together all her children in one great family. *Opto equidem, dilectissimi fratres, et consulo pariter et suadeo ut, si fieri potest, nemo de fratribus pereat, et consentientis populi corpus unum gremio suo gaudens mater includat.*[62]

c) Baptism and Re-baptism.

'The Church's sacraments are those external rites, more precisely signs, which Christians believe convey, by Christ's appointment, an unseen sanctifying grace'.[63] Although the exact number of recognised sacraments has varied throughout the

history of the Church, there is no doubt that, in the early Church at least, the most important were baptism and the eucharist.

In the writings of many early Church leaders the eucharist is conceived of in terms of a sacrifice. Often the bread and wine of this sacrament are identified with the 'pure offering' of Malachi 1:10f., for example, in the writings of Justin,[64] Irenaeus,[65] and the Didache.[66] The eucharist came to be regarded as more than mere spiritual recollection of Christ's death but rather the bread and wine tended to be identified as the body and blood of Jesus.

Baptism was regarded by all as the rite of admission into the Church. By the second century it was administered in the threefold Divine Name, though many New Testament references suggest that it was originally administered in Christ's name only. The significance of the sacrament was of supreme importance as it was held primarily to convey the remission of sins. It was not uncommon to believe that the Holy Spirit was also conveyed by baptism.

The most succinct statement on baptism in the Early Church comes from Tertullian in his polemic against Marcion[67] in which he states the four basic gifts conveyed by this sacrament. These are; the remission of sins, deliverance from death, regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.[68] While no other early Christian writer groups these four gifts in this way many writers speak of one or more in varying combinations. There appears not to have been universal agreement upon all the details of the baptismal rite as a whole. In fact much of the mid-third century debate between Carthage and Rome revolved around this very point. Consequent upon his view of the Church, Cyprian held that baptism conveyed both remission of sins and the conveyance of the Holy Spirit while Stephen was more inclined to separate these two gifts. In theory at least Stephen prefered to view them as the distinct sacramental rites of baptism and confirmation. Cyprian's view of baptism was dictated by and flowed from his view of the Church and it is no exaggeration to say that a major schism was only averted by the death of Stephen in 257.

Notwithstanding the often quoted opinion of Tertullian on the subject,[69] it would appear from the available evidence that the practice of infant baptism was common by the third century, possibly from Jewish circumcision practices. Was infant baptism perceived as a sign of entry into the New Covenant, just as circumcision was the sign of entry in to the Old Covenant?

Whether infant baptism was introduced as a result of Jewish-Christian influences is not of prime importance here. It can be said with certainty though, that it was widespread by the third century. In replying to Fidus, a country bishop who had sought his advice, Cyprian debates only whether a child should be baptised eight days after birth (according to the Jewish analogy of circumcision), not questioning the more basic issue of the propriety of infant baptism.[70]

In North Africa in the third century the Novationists embittered local feeling by baptising those individuals they won over from the Church. This initiated debate on the whole question of baptismal validity, a question which led to open disagreement between Rome and Carthage and which was not settled in the Western Church until the Council of Arles in 314.

Novatian's justification of his actions is clear. He, like Cyprian, believed in one visible Christian Church, being the vehicle of God's salvation, and possessing, through its own penitential system, the power to absolve from some sins. However, Novatian held to the view that the holiness of the Church is measured by the actual holiness of its members. He argued that idolatry and holiness were incompatible and that the Church did not possess the power of absolving from this sin. Therefore the presence of such sinners within the Church negated the very title Church. As can be appreciated, this view of the Church had very clear implications for sacramental efficacy. Novatian disregarded the sacraments of those who, he held, had ceased to be ministers of the true Church. In consequence, he baptised converts to his communion even if they had already received Catholic baptism.

The problem was further exacerbated by the fact that the Church in Rome and North Africa held different views of the worth of such schismatic baptisms.

Cyprian baptised any individuals who returned to the Catholic Church, having already been baptised within Novatianism. Stephen held that even schismatic baptism, if conferred according to proper form, was valid and his practice was therefore to accept such individuals into the Catholic Church with the laying on of hands. He regarded schismatic baptism as valid, if not perfect. Cyprian's practice was an 'unforseen contribution to Donatism'.[71] As already stated, open schism between Cyprian and Stephen was only prevented by the death of the latter in A.D.257.

Cyprian's view on heretical and schismatic baptism was thoroughly North African. Tertullian had clearly stated in his treatise *De baptismo* that such baptisms were invalid.[72] Also the African Council of c.220 under the leadership of Agrippinus had established this as the African practice. It can certainly be argued that since his own conversion Cyprian had inherited this North African understanding and practice which had the imprimatur of a Carthaginian Council. It was a relatively small step for him to assume that this stance dated from apostolic times and was important for the wellbeing of the Church.

Cyprian's position is soundly reasoned out. It undoubtedly springs from the central tenet of his ecclesiology. If there is no salvation outside the Church, it then follows that all sacramental acts performed outside the Church communion must be null and void. How could unregenerate persons, not themselves in possession of the Holy Spirit, confer the gift of the Holy Spirit? For Cyprian, baptism outside the Catholic Church was not true baptism, and therefore a penitent returning to the fold of the Church from a sect in which they had been baptised was not being re-baptised but actually baptised for the first time.

Bishop Magnus, probably writing from Mauretania, requested advice from Cyprian regarding the reconciliation of people who had been baptised by Novatian. Cyprian's advice is clear.

> Since the Church alone has the life-giving water and the power of baptising and of cleansing men, he who says with Novatian that anyone

can be baptised and sanctified must first show and teach that Novatian is
in the Church or presides over the Church.[73]

Also, 'They who support Novatian or other schismatics of the same kind contend in
vain that anyone can be baptised and sanctified by a salutary baptism when it is
evident that the one baptising has not the permission for baptising'.[74]

Most significantly, Cyprian ties the gift of the Holy Spirit to the sacrament of
baptism, for example, in commenting upon John 20:21-23 he writes; *quo in loco
ostendit eum solum posse baptizare et remissionem peccatorum dare qui habeat
sanctum spiritum.*[75] However, this 'traditional view' of associating remission of sins
and the reception of the Holy Spirit with baptism was changing in the West. In
Rome a new understanding evolved which tended to identify the gift of the Spirit
with the rites which followed baptism.

The development of this 'modern view' can be seen in the third century. Cornelius
(251-3) criticised Novatian regarding the latter's own baptism. Novatian had been
baptised by affusion on what was thought at the time to be his death-bed.
Cornelius criticised him for not adding to this the laying on of hands by the bishop
which he calls, 'the sealing by the bishop'.[76] Baptism by pouring or affusion was
generally confined to the sick, and called 'clinical baptism'. Individuals admitted to
the Church in this way were often spoken of disparagingly as *clinici.*

The charge by Cornelius against Novatian is indicative of Roman thinking on the
importance of the rites which followed immediately after baptism. This view is that
the effect of baptism is a negative cleansing, the remission of sins; while the effect
of the laying on of hands is a positive sealing, the bestowing of the gift of the Holy
Spirit. Therefore, in theory at least, these two components of Christian initiation
are capable of being separated. With this basis it was only logical to infer that
'clinical baptism' is inferior to 'normal baptism' because the former, being
administered in an emergency, lacked the subsequent 'sealing' by the bishop.

Resisting as he did, the separation of baptism and sealing, Cyprian poured scorn on
the very word *clinici* and argued that those who have been only clinically baptised

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in sickness have also received the Holy Spirit in the same way as those who were fully immersed. In the important letter already quoted he writes;

> You have asked . . what I thought about those who gain the grace of God in infirmity and illness, as to whether they are to be considered as legitimate Christians because they have not been bathed in the water of salvation, but sprinkled with it. . . We . . . think that the divine benefits can in nothing be mutilated or weakened and that nothing else can occur there when, with full and complete faith of both the giver and of the receiver, there is received what is drawn from the divine gifts.[77]

Therefore Cyprian maintained the unity of the whole rite, including its subsidiary elements; baptismal regeneration was intrinsically connected with the reception of the Spirit.

The criticism by Cornelius of Novatian regarding his 'clinical baptism' is evidence of a Roman development towards baptism and 'confirmation'. It is important to bear in mind though that this third century Rome/Carthage controversy was not so much about clinical baptism as about baptism *extra ecclesiam*. There is something of a chicken and egg situation here as to whether Stephen's view on schismatic baptism fashioned his separation of baptism and reception of the Holy Spirit or vice versa. For him, schismatic baptism was a valid, though incomplete, rite. All that was lacking was the completion of the legitimate process by the imposition of hands by a Catholic bishop.

Both the North African and the Roman arguments were logical in that each followed from their own understanding of the form and significance of baptism. However it was in this one vital area that the seeds of the forthcoming controversy were sown. For Cyprian, to allow schismatic baptism would also be to allow their giving the Holy Spirit and this could not be accommodated within his view of the one visible Catholic Church. The Roman view though, with its separation of baptism and the giving of the Holy Spirit, could accept schismatic baptism as valid, requiring only the imposition of hands by a Catholic bishop. These opposing 'broad' and 'purist' theories could not co-exist and the resultant clash between Rome and Carthage was wholly inevitable.

The subject was raised in a series of letters addressed to Cyprian requesting his opinion on the subject of heretical baptism. Unfortunately these letters are known to us only by his replies. The first letter was from the layman Magnus, and Cyprian's gracious yet firm reply has already been quoted.[78] Further clarification was required by eighteen Numidian bishops, and Cyprian's response was to convene his fifth Council of Carthage, the first of three on baptism, in A.D.255. There were thirty-three African bishops in attendance. The conciliar declaration of this Council[79] did not recognise heretical baptisms as valid though this decision was apparently not unanimous, 'certain of our colleagues prefer to give honour to heretics rather than to agree with us'.[80]

In all of this correspondance, including a subsequent letter in response to Quintus, a fellow bishop, Cyprian's line is consistent in refusing to recognise ANY schismatic baptisms. Prior to Easter 256 a second Council on baptism was convened at Carthage. On this occasion the seventy-one bishops present were unanimous in agreeing with Cyprian and upholding the earlier decision of Agrippinus (c.220). Copies of some of these documents were forwarded to Stephen and a deputation of African bishops travelled to Rome seeking an interview with him. Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea, records that they were snubbed, being granted no meeting either public or private. It is interesting to note that Cyprian's views were not confined to North Africa alone. Firmilian wrote to assure the bishop of Carthage that he also was in full agreement with him in regarding as invalid all baptisms conferred by heretics.[81]

The crisis deepened when Stephen did reply by letter[82] in which he reiterated the Roman practice of accepting the validity of heretical and schismatic baptism. What was also inflamatory to Africa in this Roman correspondance was the fact that Stephen credited authority to his own view by virtue of the priority of Peter in whose line he stood. Cyprian's reply is unambiguous.

> And I am justly indignant in this respect at this so open and manifest stupidity of Stephen that he who so glories in the place of his episcopate and contends that he has the succession of Peter, on whom the foundations of the Church were established, should introduce many

other rocks and constitute new buildings of many churches while he maintains by his authority that baptism is there.[83]

Eusebius recalls a letter from Stephen to the bishops of Asia Minor, in particular to those of Cilicia, Cappodocia and Galatia, threatening, 'that he would have nothing to do with them, for this reason - they re-baptised heretics'.[84] The tone of the correspondance reflected the antagonism of both Rome and Carthage. In his letter Stephen attacked Cyprian personally, calling him, *pseudochristum et pseudoapostolum*.[85] Cyprian had previously written in similarly hostile language referring to Stephen, 'That is to be deplored that Christians are assisting antichrists and that prevaricators of the faith and betrayers of the Church stand within the very Church itself against the Church'.[86]

A further African Council on baptism was held in September 256 and was attended by eighty-seven bishops. Once again there was a unanimous agreement that schismatics entering the Church could only do so by undergoing a fresh baptism. It is obvious from his correspondance with Cyprian, that Stephen regarded the practice of re-baptism as a dangerous new development. He accused Cyprian of being an innovator.

Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, tried unsuccessfully to mediate. Interestingly, his view appears to have been a wider application of Cyprian's own theory of the workings of the collegiality of bishops. It was that heretics could be validly admitted without a second baptism, but that Churches which ruled otherwise must not be overruled. His attempt at mediation failed. The fact that there was no middle ground was perhaps all too predictable given that both sides subscribed to the view that the Church was necessarily one visible organisation. As we shall see, the issue was further complicated by the fact that both sides could quote and interpret Scripture in order to buttress their belief and practice.

This lively controversy brought the Church to the very brink of schism. To his credit Cyprian would not break communion with those who recognised heretical

baptism. Clearly he believed those who held such views were wrong yet, equally, he believed *salvo iure communionis diversa sentire.*

Much has been made of the fact that Cyprian's views were always logical. However his view on the independence of bishops may have been born in this confrontation with Stephen as a principle which ensured a plausible unity within the Church. 'The independence principle may be regarded as simply giving the same legitimacy to both sides in the dispute'.[87]

CYPRIAN: USE OF SCRIPTURE.

a) *De ecclesiae unitate.*

Cyprian's two most famous tracts, *De lapsis* and *De ecclesiae unitate* were read to the Council of Carthage in the spring of 251. Both were subsequently sent to Rome.[88] The burning issue of the day was the problem raised by the recent consecration of Cornelius in Rome, followed by the consecration of his rival Novatian. *De ecclesiae unitate* is plainly anti-Novatian and this has led to speculation that, at least in its present form, this tract was read to the Council of 251. It is generally agreed that this spring Council dispersed without giving final recognition to Cornelius.

In *De unitate* Cyprian sets out the theological premise which is the foundation of all his writings and decisions, namely, that there is but one visible Catholic Church, founded by Christ and established in the line of the apostles and within which exclusively resides Divine grace. The unity of the Church is therefore something to be guarded and preserved as a matter of utmost priority.

> The spouse of Christ cannot be defiled, she is inviolate and chaste; she knows one home alone, in all modesty she keeps faithfully to one chamber. It is she who preserves us for God, she who seals for the kingdom the sons whom she has borne. Whoever breaks with the Church and enters on an adulterous union, cuts himself off from the promises made to the Church.[89]

Cyprian establishes his view primarily by reference to five scriptural images. These are;

(i) Noah's Ark.

'If there was any escape for one who was outside the ark of Noah, there will be as much for one who is found to be outside the Church.'[90] Such exclusive language is not unique to Cyprian. Throughout this early period the word 'Church' was never used in the plural, except to denote local congregations. Everyone accepted that there was only one Church. This notion was firmly fixed in the minds both of Catholics and those who broke away from them. The claim lorded over schismatics by Catholics, and vice versa, was that they and they alone were the one true Church. Cyprian therefore is merely using the image of Noah's Ark to underline his claim, on behalf of the Catholic Church, to be this one true Church. It was this rigid and exclusive ecclesiological framework which ensured that all debate followed the same pattern, each side claiming to be completely right and the other side to be completely wrong. Cyprian believed the Catholic Church to be the one true Church symbolised in Scripture by the Ark of Noah. As with those individuals who were outside the Ark when the flood came, so all heretics (non-Catholics) are completely lost. The same claim was later used by the Donatists. Scripture could be used to legitimize each claim.

(ii) Christ's Robe.

'This holy mystery of oneness, this unbreakable bond of close knit harmony is portrayed in the Gospel by our Lord Jesus Christ's coat, which was not divided or cut at all'.[91] Quoting John 19:23-24, Cyprian sees in the details of Christ's seamless garment a scriptural type of the unity of the one Church. He points out that as this garment was passed down from Christ to the soldiers and could not be divided, so the Church has come to us from the Father and cannot be divided. This is contrasted with the action of the prophet Ahijah who tore his new coat into twelve pieces to symbolise the tearing apart of Solomon's kingdom.[92]

Such typology is not unknown in our own generation yet it leaves the field clear for the thoughts of the most fertile imaginations to claim all manner of ideas as 'scriptural'. Although Cyprian does not embark upon such extreme allegorical

interpretations as, for example, Origen, he nevertheless is quite at home in noting significance in the smallest of details of both the Old and the New Testament. His point here is logical. If the tearing of clothing in the Old Testament could symbolise God's action, can the same not be said for Christ's clothing in the New Testament?

(iii) Rahab.

> Do you think a man can hold his own or survive, when he leaves the Church and sets up a new place and a separate home for himself? For it was said to a woman, in whom the Church was prefigured: Gather to thyself in thy house thy father and thy mother and thy brethren and all thy father's household, and whosoever shall pass outside through the door of thy house, his blood shall be on his own head.[93]

Both here, and elsewhere,[94] Rahab is designated, a *typum ecclesiae*. Cyprian has no problem in plucking a text out of its context and using it as a hook upon which to hang his teaching.

(iv) The Passover Lamb.

Similarly he sees in the regulation for eating the first Passover support for his contention about the one Church. The express requirement of the law of Exodus touching the Passover rite,[95] that the lamb (whose killing prefigures Christ) should be eaten in one house, is rich in meaning for Cyprian. 'The flesh of Christ and the Lord's sacred body cannot be cast outside, nor have believers any other home but the one Church'.[96] Here Cyprian combines the obvious Christological interpretation with his favourite theme of Church unity. The merest detail amid the regulations for eating the Passover Lamb are emphasised and understood as significant and given relevant application for Cyprian's case.

(v) Mother and Child.

Indeed this oneness of the Church is figured in the Canticle of Canticles when the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Lord's name, says: One is my dove, my perfect one: to her mother she is the only one, the darling of her womb'.[97] The notion of the *mater ecclesia* did not originate with Cyprian but is one of the most frequently used images of the Church in the early Christian era. Cyprian's most famous phrase on

this theme derived from Tertullian; 'You cannot have God for your Father unless you have the Church for your Mother'.[98]

These then are the five main scriptural images used by Cyprian in *De ecclesiae unitate* to establish his basic premise that there is only one indivisible Church. This is further supported by numerous quotations from the New Testament. For example;

Mark 12:30.

Cyprian combines Mark 12:30 and Matthew 22:29-31 pointing out that Jesus' summary of the commandments demand both love and unity. 'But what unity is maintained, what love practised or even imagined by one who, mad with the frenzy of discord, splits with the Church, destroys the faith, disturbs the peace, casts love to the winds, desecrates the Sacrament'?[99] These words of Jesus are quoted often by Cyprian,[100] though not always to make the same point.

John 10:16.

Cyprian comments on the phrase, 'And there shall be one flock and one shepherd' as follows; 'And does anyone think that in any one place there can be more than one shepherd or more than one flock'?[101] As with most of the other scriptural references, this one is quoted on more than one occasion to further support the idea of the one Catholic Church.

Matthew 5:24.

'First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.' Cyprian comments;

> What sort of peace then do the enemies of the brethren promise
> themselves? What sort of sacrifice to they think they offer in
> competition with the priests? Do they think that Christ is with them in
> their gatherings, when those gatherings are outside the Church of
> Christ.[102]

John 15:12.

'My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you'. For Cyprian this is a proof text which relates love between believers to the broader consideration of Church harmony. Linking this reference to I John 4:16, he writes, 'Those who

have refused to be of one mind in the Church of God cannot therefore be abiding with God'.[103]

All of these sayings of Jesus are used by Cyprian to establish the central plank in his argument; there is only one Church, in unity, which alone possesses Divine grace. As has already been stated, Cyprian was not original or alone in believing this. In fact both Novatian and Cornelius also accepted without question the premise that there was only one Church. The debate centred around the question as to where this one Church was to be found. In *De ecclesiae unitate* Cyprian writes of the Catholic Church as an already existing unity which alone was founded upon the apostles and Jesus Christ. Therefore it is the sin of separation from this already existing Church which is so heinous.

Cyprian has two principle proofs of this basic argument for unity. One is the unity of God and the other is the status of Peter and the disciples.

1) The Character of God.

> Whoever breaks the peace and harmony of Christ acts against Christ; whoever gathers elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. The Lord says:I and the Father are one; and again, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit it is written: And these three are One. Does anyone think then that this oneness, which derives from the stability of God and is welded together after the celestial pattern, can be sundered in the Church and divided by the clash of discordant wills? If a man does not keep the unity, he is not keeping the law of God; he has broken faith with the Father and the Son, he is cut off from life and salvation.[104]

Here the character of God, the unity of the Triune God, is the model and basis for the unity of the Church. The schismatics are those who have deserted the already existing and unified Church.

2) Peter and the Apostles.

A second scriptural basis of the unity of the Church is based upon Christ's words to Peter[105] where the latter is given the keys of the kingdom. Cyprian quotes this passage to demonstrate that 'It is on one man that He builds the Church'.[106] His argument is that Christ established His Church upon Peter and then, after the

resurrection, assigned the same power to the other Apostles also. John 20:21-23 is quoted in this respect.

> He established by His own authority a source for that oneness having its origin in one man alone. No doubt the other Apostles were all that Peter was, endowed with equal dignity and power, but the start comes from him alone, in order to show that the church of Christ is unique.[107]

Although Cyprian quotes this passage only twice[108] he alludes to it many times in his writings. Peter is regarded as a symbol of unity. Cyprian was keen not to see in this passage support for Petrine primacy and there has been much debate upon this particular section of *De ecclesiae unitate* as already mentioned.[109]

The all important practical implication of these scriptural images and proofs is that there there must be unity in the episcopate. 'Now this oneness we must hold to firmly and insist on - especially we who are bishops and exercise authority in the Church - so as to demonstrate that the episcopal power is one and undivided too'.[110] For Cyprian the unity of the episcopate could be maintained even when there was honest disagreement. His view of the collegiality of bishops guaranteed as much. Open schism was, for Cyprian, a far more serious sin than holding unorthodox beliefs. He maintained communion with Stephen who he considered to be 'in error', yet totally condemned Novatian who was in schism.

For schismatics who arrogantly abandon the Catholic Church, Cyprian sees plenty of ammunition in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Chapter sixteen of Numbers is a stock passage for the condemnation of schism and is used by Cyprian. This passage relates the punishment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram who established a rival sacrifice to that of Moses and Aaron and this incident is used by Cyprian on at least five occasions.[111] He is at pains to point out that not only these three individuals but also their supporters were punished.

> Not only were the principal agents struck by the fury of God's anger, but their two hundred and fifty associates and followers, who had joined them in the same wild outrage, were summarily punished: they were consumed by the fire that was invoked by the Lord. This was to warn us

and show that any attempt made by the wicked deliberately to frustrate the appointment of God, is done against God Himself.[112]

A further Old Testament passage quoted in this respect is II Chronicles 26. Here the punishment of King Uzziah for taking upon himself to sacrifice in opposition to the rightful priest Azariah is understood as again demonstrating the sin of arrogance in rivaling God's declared and established mode of worship. Exactly the same lesson is drawn from the sins of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu.[113]

Cyprian sees many New Testament passages also as applicable to schismatics. For example, quoting Paul in II Timothy 3:1-9, Cyprian sees the apostles dire warnings about the 'proud boasters' coming in the last days as totally applicable to the schismatics of his own day. *Adimplentur quaecumque praedicta sunt.*[114] A similar interpretation is applied to Matthew 24:6; 'Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many'. Cyprian writes of this, 'Just as the devil is not Christ though he tricks people by that name, so a man cannot be reckoned a Christian who does not abide in Christ's true Gospel and faith'.[115]

Additional New Testament texts used in this respect are Matthew 7:23 where God in judgement condemns those who profess their loyalty and works,[116] and I John 2:19; 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us'. In applying this to the schismatics Cyprian adopts a saying of Tertullian, *Nemo existimet bonos de ecclesia posse discedere.*[117]

What is true of Cyprian's use of Scripture in *De unitate* is true of his use of Scripture in all his writings. 'His approach to the Bible... is that of the plain man who collects a series of texts to provide clear-cut answers to the theological, and still more the practical, questions of the moment'.[118] This reflects his withdrawal from philosophical arguments and quotations and his adoption, to a large extent, of the methods of his 'hero', Tertullian.

The overall context of biblical texts is of less importance to Cyprian. His understanding is simple and in some measure legalistic. For example, John 19:23-24 undoubtedly states that Christ's robe was seamless. Cyprian is equally

adamant that the Church cannot be divided and therefore he claims scriptural support for the latter point in the former text irrespective of the original context.[119] Similarly, the linking of Song of Songs 6:9 with the idea of the one *mater ecclesiae* is similarly straightforward, again ignoring the original context. Having said this and been critical of the approach, Cyprian was not alone in his use of 'proof texts' in this manner in the early Christian era.

This approach, coupled with the brevity and difficulty of his episcopate, militated against his developing into a profound Christian theologian. Paradoxically though, his writings have influenced subsequent leaders of the Western Church for many centuries.

Cyprian quotes freely from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In all his extant epistles and treatises he directly quotes 881 biblical texts, 427 Old Testament and 454 New Testament. These quotations are used 1,431 times, 633 Old Testament and 798 New Testament.[120] In his constant search for 'proof texts' he gives equal authority to Old Testament and New Testament. In his determination to pursue Christological and ecclesiological interpretations from Scripture, Cyprian may be criticised for failing to distinguish between Old Testament and New Testament as representing different stages of revelation. His approach is not unusual for the third century though and such criticism is modern.

It has been observed that in his references to the Old Testament Cyprian, like Tertullian, seeks to differentiate between the ceremonial law and the moral law, arguing that only the latter is still binding upon Christians. This distinction is not always obvious. For example, Cyprian defends the practice of affusion within the Church on the strength of its use in purification rites in Numbers 8 and 19.[121] However he sees no connection between Old Testament circumcision being performed on the eighth day and the timing of the baptism of infants.[122]

As regards the Christian ministry, Cyprian often quotes from Old Testament texts. For example, a priest or bishop must be appointed in the presence of a congregation because this was the setting for the appointment of Eleazar in Numbers 20:25-26.[123]

Similarly, no presbyter shall act as executor of a will because the Levites in the time of Joshua received no portion of land to manage but rather 'devoted themselves to divine services'.[124]

The punishment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram is regularly quoted by Cyprian as teaching the importance within the Church of obeying the bishop.[125] Also, the invalidity, or rather the contaminating influence, of the ministrations of an unworthy priest is proclaimed as Divine precept on the strength of the injunctions contained in Exodus 19:22, 28:43 and Leviticus 21:17, 21.[126]

Regarding his views of the ministry, Cyprian certainly understood this to be an equivalent embodiment of the Old Testament priesthood. Hence, in his view, the relevance of texts from Exodus and Leviticus for the ministry. His rejection of a lapsed priest was not on the grounds of their having placed themselves outside the Church, but rather that the Old Testament law insisted that a priest be without stain or blemish. The major weakness of this argument though is that these texts were only applied selectively by Cyprian. While he sought to apply such passages to the particular cases of priests who had lapsed in persecution, he did not attempt to apply them more widely against other forms of impurity in the person of priests. While this particular aspect of Cyprian's teaching concerning the ministry has clearly been rejected by subsequent generations, it is worth noting that many other facets of his teaching are rooted in the same foundation.

b) *De lapsis.*

Cyprian's literary works were mostly written for specific occasions and served practical purposes. *De lapsis* was written when Cyprian re-appeared from hiding after the Decian persecution. The resultant chaos within the Church in the aftermath of the persecution necessitated strong policy decisions regarding the lapsed. Cyprian faced the problem with his usual firmness and efficiency. References to this subject pepper many of his letters.[127]

The first five chapters of *De lapsis*, in which there are no biblical references, deal with the immediate aftermath of the persecution. Cyprian gives thanks to God for the restoration of peace to the Church. He praises both the confessors and those,

like himself, who withdrew in the face of the impending threat and expresses sorrow at the loss of so many in such a short time.

His sorrow over the weaknesses of the Church which the persecution exposed turns rapidly and at length to an emphasis upon the seriousness of the sin of idolatry. Cyprian is not prepared to resume as before and ignore the activities of Christians who lapsed during the persecution. Decius' policy had been to require all people throughout the Empire to obtain a *libellus* from the local magistrate stating that they had sacrificed to the traditional gods.

Cyprian's first point in his case is that God warned His people in Scripture of the prime importance of remaining faithful to Him.

> If that is what we have become, what do we not deserve for such sins, when the judgement of God warned us long since, saying: *If they forsake my law and walk not in my judgements: if they profane my statutes and observe not my commands: I will visit their crimes with a rod, and their transgressions with scourges.*[128]

Cyprian is adamant that the Church was forewarned about such persecution by God in Scripture and therefore should have responded with stronger mettle.

> At the first threatening words of the Enemy, an all too large number of the brethren betrayed their faith; they were not felled by the violence of the persecution, but fell of their own free will. Was it something unheard-of that had happened, something beyond expectation, that made men recklessly break their oath to Christ, as if a situation had arisen which they had not bargained for? Was it not foretold by the prophets before He came, and by His apostles since?[129]

Cyprian is not the first Christian writer to see God as active in the history and circumstances of the Church, using even persecution to turn His own people back to a healthy fear of Him. He sees a harmony of Old and New Testaments on this and other subjects and both are equally binding and relevant upon the Church.

Cyprian is unsparing in emphasising the seriousness of this idolatry which many Christians had indulged in. Various 'proof texts' are used to support his contention.

Was it not to arm our faith at all times, to confirm the servants of God by a voice from heaven that Holy Writ says: *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve?* Was it not to reveal the wrath of the divine displeasure, and to inspire the fear of punishment that it is written: *They have adored those whom their own hands have made; and man hath bowed himself down, man hath abased himself - and I shall not weaken towards them?* And again God says: *He that sacrificeth to gods shall be uprooted - save only if to the Lord.*[130]

Cyprian laments the fact that a great number of Christians sacrificed as required so easily. 'Many were defeated before the battle was joined, they collapsed without any encounter, thus even depriving themselves of the plea that they had sacrificed to the idols against their will'.[131]

Having stated the nature of the sin of idolatry and how widespread it was, Cyprian next spells out the dire consequences. Those who made such sacrifices to the gods willingly have forfeited their salvation. Referring to the words of Jesus he writes; 'You yourself are the offering and the victim come to the altar; there you have slain your hope of salvation, there in those fatal fires you have reduced your faith to ashes'.[132] Furthermore, the salvation of children was also deemed by Cyprian to have been affected. 'And to crown this accumulation of crimes: parents even carried their babies and led their youngsters to be robbed of what they had received in earliest infancy'.[133] Although no Scripture is used to support this contention, most commentators believe it reflects the fact that infant baptism, and possibly infant communion, was common at this time. Perhaps it is also possible to interpret these words as referring to some state of innocence pertaining to infants which was destroyed by participation in sacrifice to idols? Cyprian envisages the children of these idolators crying out against their parents on the day of Judgment. 'It was the Church, our Mother, whom they denied in our name, and God our Father'.[134]

It is obvious from the tone and content of these chapters in *De lapsis* that baptism was held to be the sacrament by which an individual, whether adult or infant, entered into the Church which was in itself the only vehicle of salvation. Baptismal regeneration is assumed. Given this view, Cyprian's onslaught against both schismatics and the lapsed is perfectly understandable. He is very keen to justify as honourable his own action of withdrawal in the face of persecution. There were

some in both Rome and Carthage who had criticised him in this. Cyprian's argument is that many who stayed and sacrificed to the gods as the Emperor's edict required did so for selfish economic reasons and that it is more noble to abandon home and personal property yet remain loyal to Christ. References from Isaiah and Revelation are used as 'proof texts' to support his argument at this point.

> A man had only to leave the country and sacrifice his property. Since man is born to die, who is there who must not eventually leave his country and give up his inheritence? It is Christ who must not be left, it is giving up one's salvation and one's eternal home that must be feared. Hear the warning of the Holy Spirit through his prophet: *Depart ye, depart, go ye out from thence and touch no unclean thing. Go out of the midst of her, break away, you that carry the vessels of the Lord.* (Isaiah 52:11) And those who are themselves vessels of the Lord, nay, the temple of God, why do they not go out of the midst and depart, to avoid being compelled to touch the unclean thing, to pollute and desecrate themselves with poisoned meats? Again, in another place, a voice is heard from heaven warning the servants of God what they should do: *Go out from her, my people, that thou be not a partaker of her sins, and that thou be not stricken by her plagues.*(Revelation 18:4)[135]

The whole argument to date is then underpined by various scriptural references, notably against the sin of idolatry. This same tactic is employed by Cyprian in demonstrating the sin of loving material possessions. He quotes on several occasions words of Jesus in the gospels which warn of the dangers of loving our possessions. For example,

> On the other hand, what rewards does not the Lord hold out as He invites us to scorn any property we have! For the small, insignificant losses of this world, what rich compensation He makes! *There is no man,* He says, *that leaveth house, or land, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive seven times more in the present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.*[136]

Cyprian does recognise that in the recent persecution Christians responded in a variety of ways and therefore there are varying degrees of seriousness of sin. One who surrenders, only after suffering to the limit of their endurance deserves every sympathy. 'Such a defence deserves our pity'.[137] However, he does not excuse those who obtained certificates in the persecution though they did not actually

sacrifice. Many had obtained such certificates by bribery. 'Nor let people flatter themselves that they need do no penance because they have kept their hands clean from the impious sacrifices, when all the time certificates of sacrifice have polluted their conscience'.[138] Cyprian argues that God does not simply judge by outward actions but also 'sees the heart and consience of every man'.[139] Characteristically a handful of 'proof texts' are quoted in support of this.

In an interesting section, Chapters 24 - 26, which is devoid of any biblical references, Cyprian cites some individual cases in which God has, through supernatural means, made clear His displeasure at the sins of those who lapsed. For example, 'There was one who, having of his own accord gone up to the Capitol to deny Christ, was struck dumb after his denial'.[140] Also a young girl, abandoned by fleeing parents and subsequently obliged by the magistrates to eat before an idol, afterwards was violently ill when given the eucharist.[141] Also, 'There was a woman too who with unworthy hands tried to open the locket in which she was keeping the Lord's holy body, but fire flowed up from it and she was too terrified to touch it'.[142] Such examples, for Cyprian, not only indicate the seriousness of the crime of those who have lapsed but also the necessity of some form of penance before they can be admitted once again to the congregation.

It is obvious from *De lapsis* that many believers would have preferred to forget the past and continue as before but this Cyprian would not allow. Some of the lapsed focused their anger and frustration upon their local priests and bishop.

> Yes, you rave - and what madness could be greater? You rave against him who is trying to shield you from the anger of God, you abuse him who invokes the Lord's mercy upon you, who feels your wound as his own, which you do not feel yourself; who weeps for you who, it seems, weep not for yourself. You are only heaping up and adding to your guilt, and if you pursue the high priests and bishops of God so unrelentingly, do you think that God will be moved to relent towards you?[143]

On several occasions Cyprian uses a medical analogy, seeing the sin of the lapsed as a wound needing attention. For example, 'When the wound is so serious, let it have the exacting and prolonged treatment it needs; let the penance meet the measure of

the crime'.[144] Also, 'The wound must be cut open, the infected parts cut out, and the wound treated with stringent remedies. Let the patient shout and cry never so much, let him protest in exasperation at the pain - he is grateful afterwards, when he feels his health restored'.[145]

Cyprian's remedy for the lapsed is straightforward. Their first step must be to realise that discipline is necessary. 'But he whose advice is more vigorous, administering rebuke and instruction at once, is setting his brother on the way to salvation. 'Those whom I love', says the Lord , 'I rebuke and discipline'.[146] Various analogies and proof texts are given by Cyprian to warn against the dangers of false peace in this whole matter.

> This is another persecution and another temptation, by which a subtle enemy attacking the lapsed still further approaches with a concealed devastation, so that lamentation is hushed, grief is made silent, the memory of sin vanishes, the grieving of the heart is repressed, the creeping of the eyes is halted, nor is the Lord implored with a long and full penitence, although it is written: *Remember the height from which you have fallen: and do penance.*[147]

The key words in Cyprian's treatment of the lapsed are 'crime' and 'penance'. The lapsed must recognise the crime of their denial and with humility they must be prepared to do penance. Only God can forgive them. The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can grant pardon for sins which were committed against Him. Cyprian directly refutes the claim of the confessors to be able to forgive sins. 'If, however, anyone in his impatience of delay thinks that he can condone the sins of all, presuming thus to override the Lord's commands, so far from benefiting the lapsed his rashness does them harm'.[148]

Citing Moses as an example, Cyprian argues that even though this great Old Testament prophet desired pardon for his people it was God's decision whether to forgive or not. 'For even Moses prayed on behalf of the sins of the people without securing pardon for the sinners he was pleading for'.[149]

Cyprian does not deny the glory of a martyr but argues that their influence is to be understood as referring to the final judgement only. 'We do not call in question the

power which the merits of the martyrs and the works of the just have with the Judge, but that will be when the day of judgement comes, when after the passing of this present world, Christ's flock stands before His tribunal'.[150]

Having set out his case, Cyprian then appeals to the lapsed to agree with him in that what he says is supported by Scripture.

> No - hear what we say and take it to heart. Why are your ears deaf to the rules of salvation that we propose? Why are your eyes blind to the road of penitence that we point to? What has so blinkered and estranged your mind that it does not see the life-giving remedies which we learn from the heavenly Scriptures and teach you?[151]

He urges the lapsed to confess their sin and seek forgiveness.

> Accordingly, how much greater is the faith and more salutory the fear of those who, though they have committed no crime of sacrifice or certificate, yet because they have merely thought of doing so, confess even this to the priests of God simply and contritely, and manifest their conscience to them. They get rid of the burden on their minds and seek treatment for their words, light and superficial as they are, knowing that it is written: *God is not mocked.*[152]

This humble action is the proper course of action for all the lapsed and even Ananias, Azarias and Misahel, though brave servants of God, 'persevered in humility and in making satisfaction to the Lord even in the midst of those tortures'.[153] In Cyprian's mind, there is nothing more disastrous than the stubborn sinner. The foolish, 'neither recognise their sins nor repent of them'[154] and the consequences are enormous, 'those who do away with penance for sin, shut the door against satisfaction altogether'.[155]

In one final concluding appeal Cyprian assures the lapsed that the Lord will forgive their sins because he has revealed Himself as being rich in mercy.

> To him who prays with all his heart, to him who mourns with tears and sighs of true repentance, to him who by good works of persevering charity pleads to the Lord for mercy on his sin - to such He can extend His mercy, since He has shown the mercy of His heart when He said: *When you return and mourn, then shall you be saved; and you shall know where you once were:* and again: *I desire not the death of the dying,* says the Lord, *but that he return and live.* And the prophet Joel,

at the bidding of the Lord, declares the Lord's loving-kindness: *Return,*
he says, *to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending
calamity.*[156]

De Lapsis was read to the Council of Carthage in the spring of 251 and became
the basis for uniform action with regard to the lapsed for the entire Church in North
Africa. As for his aruments, Cyprian is always trying to be logical and often pushed
his thinking to logical conclusions which were actually extremes. He recognised the
differing responses there had been throughout Africa to the Emperor's edict yet he
is adament that in all cases penance must be done for these 'crimes' committed
against the Lord. The abuse by many of the merit of confessors is checked. As for
his use of Scripture in *De lapsis*, Cyprian used a total of 43 quotations, 25 Old
Testament and 18 New Testament.[157] His most often quoted sources are Isaiah (7),
Revelation (5), and Jeremiah (4). No text is quoted more than once.

This pattern fits very comfortably into Cyprian's overall use of Scripture in his
writings in which he quotes from a very wide selection of Old and New Testament
books. Overall, he quotes from Matthew's gospel more than any other book,
followed by Psalms, John's gospel and Isaiah. The only Old Testament books
which he does not quote form are; Ruth, I Chronicles, Esther, Lamentations,
Obadiah, Jonah and Nahum.[158] Of the New Testament books he never quotes
from Philemon, Hebrews, James, II Peter, III John and Jude.[159]

In his writings he is always meticulous about differentiating clearly between the
words of Scripture and his own writing. This is in marked contrast to Tertullian.
Time and time again it is sufficient for him to cite a 'proof text' which he then
demonstrates as supporting his argument at that particular point. It is obvious that
he accepted Scripture as being authoritative and totally applicable to contemporary
Christian living.

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4. DONATISM.

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

a) From Cyprian to Diocletian.

Donatism was a problem child, conceived during the Church/State clashes of the early fourth century, and born in North Africa in the immediate aftermath. Before examining more closely the precise circumstances of that birth it is necessary to sketch a brief history of the latter half of the preceeding century. This period is known as 'the second long peace[1] and is bracketed by Imperial edicts. It also serves as a bridge between the time of Cyprian and the emergence of Donatism in North Africa. The two Imperial edicts referred to above are, that of Gallienus, in 261,[2] the first edict of toleration, and that of Diocletian, in 303,[3] which ushered in 'the Great Persecution'.

On the tranquil ecclesiastical canvass of this period there are two noteworthy traits. The first was the rapid growth of Christianity. Christians became commonplace in the army, as Imperial servants and government officials and although their distribution throughout the Empire was uneven they were influential in the most politically prominent provinces such as Asia Minor, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, central Italy, southern Gaul and Spain. In Edessa and the kingdom of Armenia, Christianity was already the dominant religion and it is generally acknowledged that up to half or even the majority of the population of Asia Minor professed to be Christian.[4] The second noteworthy trait relating to this half-century period was that it was bereft of significant literary theological activity. The foremost Church leader was perhaps Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, 247 - 264.

If the Empire was at peace in matters ecclesiastical the same cannot be said of the political arena. On 22 March 268 Gallienus was assassinated and the Empire plunged into crisis. Subsequent Emperors sought unsuccessfully to establish secure frontiers and restore effective rule. Claudius II, Aurelian, Tacitas, Probus and Carus were all broken by the enormity of this task. It was Diocletian (284-305) who finally gained political stability. A soldier of humble origins, he embarked upon a

more or less successful programme of administrative re-organisation. The leading idea of his system was an absolute centralisation, the suppression of all local political life, of every vestige of ancient liberties: in one word, Autocracy'.[5]

This re-organisation resulted in a division of power within the Empire between two Augusti, each with an assistant Caesar. Diocletian ruled in the East with the assistance of his son-in-law Galerius. In order to be nearer the threatened frontiers, he moved his Court from Rome to Nicomedia in Asia Minor. Maximian was made a second, and inferior, Augustus and ruled in the West with the assistance of Constantius. The number of provinces within the Empire was increased from sixty to ninety and this was accomplished by partitioning the existing provinces into more manageable areas called *dioceses*. Each *diocese* was governed by a *vicarius*, a representative of the Imperial *praetorium*. The wind of change also blew over matters fiscal, specifically currency, taxation and prices.

A secure frontier was only established by retreating. In what was effectively a 'land for peace' policy, everything beyond the Danube, Rhine and Euphrates was abandoned, including the *Agri Decumates*, parts of the two provinces of Moesias and the entire province of Dacia. Even after such a withdrawal the new frontier was still over 6,000 miles long!

b) The Great Persecution.

In March 303, in the nineteenth year of Diocletian's reign, the Christian Cathedral opposite the Imperial Palace at Nicomedia was dismantled and next day an edict was posted declaring that all Churches were to be destroyed, all Bibles and liturgical books surrendered, sacred vessels confiscated, and all meetings for worship forbidden.[6] This was the watershed between the second long peace and the Great Persecution.

The obvious question to be asked is: Why did Diocletian, after nineteen years as Emperor, embark upon a course of persecution of the Christians? He was surely aware of the earlier failures of Decius and Valerian. In addition, his wife Prisca was a catecumen, and possibly also his daughter Valeria. Eusebius had no explanation other than that God was angry with His Church which had abused the time of peace,

'as the result of greater freedom, a change to pride and sloth came over our affairs'.[7]
Diocletian was both a superstitious and serious pagan.

> Whatever may have been his toleration for the opinions of
> his subjects, his officials, and his family, he, for his part,
> preserved his attachment to the old customs of the Roman
> worship. He frequented the temples and sacrificed to the
> gods, without any mystic ideas, without ostentation, but
> with a deep devotion, deeming, no doubt, that he was thus
> fulfilling his duty as a man and, above all, as a sovereign.
> Such a state of mind could not make him really favourable
> to rival religions.[8]

The generally accepted theory as to what pushed him to instigate persecution was the influence of his younger, stronger, son-in-law Galerius, Caesar of Illyrium.[9] He is depicted as leader of a strong anti-Christian party and exercising more and more influence over an increasingly disinterested Diocletian. Galerius had already purged his own army, which was of Danubian origin, of all Christians who refused to sacrifice, and for some time before 303 had been urging Diocletian to commence serious persecution on a grand scale.

Lactantius, an African Christian who had been appointed professor of Latin literature at Nicomedia by Diocletian, records an incident in Antioch in 302 which indicates that the pressures for action against the Christian Church had been simmering for some time. Galerius was leading an expedition against the Persians and Diocletian consulted the omens. He was horrified to discover that no clear indication could be read and the *magister haruspicum*, Tagis, stated that this was because some Christians among the Imperial attendants had made the sign of the cross. Lactantius tells us that Diocletian commanded all present to sacrifice or be flogged and that all military commanders in Asia were subsequently instructed to ensure that all soldiers under their command made similar sacrifices or face expulsion from the army.[10] Eusebius corroborates this, stating that the initial steps in the path to persecution were 'only against members of the legions'.[11]

Although some historians doubt the reliability of Lactantius, there is agreement that the first signs of the forthcoming persecution were witnessed in the army. The perceived needs of military discipline may have provided the earliest momentum in

the move towards persecution. The earlier Persian conflict had started poorly for the Romans in 296, yet by the following year, Galerius had won a substantial victory. It was during this conflict that Manichaeism sought to gain a substantial foothold, especially in Arabia, Egypt and North Africa. Diocletian sent an edict to Julianus, proconsul of Africa, in March 297 stating the religious beliefs of the Tetrarchy which was that innovative proselytising creeds which tried to undo past tradition would be regarded as dangerous perversions and therefore liable to be severely punished. The writing was on the wall for Christianity.

Towards the end of 302 a Council was convened by Diocletian at Nicomedia consisting of important civil and military officials. Hierocles, governor of Bithynia and 'a Neoplatonist bitterly opposed to Christianity',[12] played a prominent role at this Council. It was decided to formally initiate persecution against the Christians. Diocletian, however, consulted the oracles once more, this time the Didymean Apollo. 'The oracle, as might have been expected, confirmed the vote of the politicians. The persecution was decided upon'.[13]

Once agreed upon, this policy was rapidly advanced by a series of four edicts in 303-4. The first, already referred to, on 23 February 303 was directed against Churches, Bibles, and sacred artifacts. The apparent plan was to kill Christianity by inanition. It may be that the matter would have rested there but for the outbreak of two fires at the Imperial Palace within a space of fifteen days. The Christians were blamed and thereafter treated as *hostes publicae*. Sterner edicts followed.

A second edict[14] ordered the arrest of all clergy. It seems to have been more rigorously enforced in the East and an amnesty was actually granted in the autumn, the *vicennalia* of Diocletian, as the prisons could not accomodate all who were arrested. A third edict[15] offered freedom to prisoners on condition of sacrifice to the traditional gods. Those who refused were to be subjected to torture.

> The local authorities evidently lost no time in ridding
> themselves of their unwelcome guests. Some of the clergy
> gave in, and others were tortured into compliance; but if we
> may generalise from a striking passage in Eusebius's
> Martyrs of Palestine, it appears that practically all those

who remained firm were compelled to go through the motions of sacrificing, protesting, the while, and then released, or merely dismissed with the information that they were deemed to have sacrificed.[16]

The persecution front was widened by a fourth edict[17] in 304 requiring all citizens of the Empire to sacrifice to the traditional gods. The severity of the persecution varied throughout the Empire. Undoubtedly the worst effects were felt in the East, where the standard charge of apostasy was usually expressed as *sacrificatio* or *thurificatio*, meaning sacrifice to the gods. In the West, by contrast, there are only very rare references to *thurificatio*. Here the most serious charge in the aftermath of the persecution was *traditio*, the surrender of Scriptures. It seems that the fourth edict was not enforced with any vigour in the West, largely due to the tolerant attitude of Constantius. There are no references in the West to the purchase of immunities as was the case in the Decian persecution. While Church buildings were destroyed in places like Britain and Gaul, the Christians themselves were largely unharmed.

In his book, *De martyribus Palaestinae*, written in 313, Eusebius lists forty-three individuals put to death by the governors of Palestine in the period 303-313. He also states that the persecution was much more severe in Egypt, especially in the Thebaid, and Africa, though of considerably shorter duration in the latter.[18] In fact doubts have been expressed as to whether the fourth edict, requiring all citizens to sacrifice, was ever enforced in Africa.[19]

Within a few months, on 1 May 305 to be precise, both Augusti; Diocletian and Maximian, resigned. This threw the government into considerable chaos and eased the pressure upon the Church. Initially, Constantius ruled the dioceses of Britain, Gaul, Viennensis and Spain. In the following months there was much manoeuvering for power to the extent that at one point there were six Augusti! One of these was Constantine, the son of Constantius, and he was to prove triumphant in the quest for power. He was also to prove pivotal in the formulation of future Church-State relations. In the short term, Galerius was the dominant ruler in the East, ruling the dioceses of Moesia, Thrace, Asiana and Pontica. While civil war raged in the West, Galerius continued the policy of persecution. On his death-bed in April 311, and in

conjunction with Constantine and Licinius, he issued an edict[20] of toleration of all Christians and thus ended what has since been known as 'the Great Persecution.'

c) Schism in North Africa.

The initial persecution edicts appear to have been carried out quite efficiently in North Africa. Within two years several Church buildings had been destroyed, many copies of Scriptures had been surrendered and undoubtedly the Church had been severely shaken. There were strong echoes of the Decian persecution. Official records of investigations at Cirta[21] and Apthungi[22] and genuine *Acta Martyrum* document these events.

It seems that in proconsular Africa there was a general compliance with the first edict. The bishops of Abitina, Zama and Furni, for example, openly surrendered Scriptures. Felix, bishop of Thibiuca, was very much an exception in choosing martyrdom rather than surrender Scriptures as requested. He was executed at Carthage on 12 February 304 for refusing to commit *traditio*.

> At this stage, the authorities were clearly on top, and to some extent they remained so as long as they held the initiative - and so long as the death penalty was merely hinted at. When on 5 December 304 the Proconsul Anulinus interrogated the confessor Crispina at Theveste (Tebessa) he could say with some justification, 'All Africa has sacrificed', so why should not she?[23]

The case of Crispina is the last datable African martyrdom in the Great Persecution. It took place on 5 December 304 at Theveste.[24] Even in Numidia, where the African persecution was most severe and the stiffest Christian resistance was offered, peace was restored as early as March 305 as evidenced by the fact that Silvanus could be openly elected bishop of the Numidian capital, Cirta, in that month. When the persecution ceased, the issue of *traditor* clergy became a consuming question for the Church in North Africa. It was in this environment that Donatism was born.

The double resignation in 305 of both Diocletian and Maximian shifted energies from the religious to the political arena and this undoubtedly brought relief to the

Church, especially in the West. Diocletian's innovative system of succession worked only once, in 305, thereafter becoming a casualty in the ensuing power struggle.

In the East Diocletian was succeeded by Galerius and a new assistant Caesar, Maximinus Daia, and both proved to be increasingly determined to crush the Church. Finally however, on 30 April 311 and six days before his death, Galerius recognised the failure of his persecution policy and declared an edict of toleration. Though Daia briefly and ferociously renewed the persecution, he desisted once more under threat from the Western rulers Constantine and Licinius and peace was restored again by the end of 312.

All did not instantly return to normal in the West after 305. There was still significant political uncertainty. The Christian community in Rome was unable to chose a successor to Pope Marcellinus for three years until 308. Africa was under the control of Domitius Alexander who was in revolt against Maxentius. The latter, having recaptured Africa, was then defeated and killed at the battle of Milvian Bridge by Constantine on 12 October 312.

This battle, and Constantine's victory, cannot be mentioned without underlining the magnitude of its consequences for Europe in general and Church-State relations in particular. Prior to the attack, Constantine witnessed a heavenly sign in the sky. He promptly had this sign, the *labarum*, represented on his helmet and the shields of his soldiers.[25] The 'conversion' of Constantine is usually linked to this event. Writing after the Emperor's death, in 337, Eusebius in his *Vita Constantini* was first to write that Constantine's vision was of a cross in the sky.[26] Despite subsequent modern debate as to the genuineness and extent of his 'conversion' there can be no doubt that from this point both pagan and Christian contemporaries regarded Constantine as a Christian. This fact was to have monumental consequences for the Church.

On 15 June 313 Constantine defeated Maximinus Daia and immediately showed active sympathy to the Christians. In 316 he fought his former ally and brother-in-law, Licinius, and as a result of two victories gained more territory before concluding a peace with his brother-in-law on 1 March 317 at Serdica. An uneasy

peace lasted for seven years and was eventually broken when the two once again fought for outright supremacy. Licinius represented the ancient Roman gods and his opponent the Christian God. The war began on 3 July at Hadrianople.[27] Constantine quickly seized the initiative and as a result of this first engagement Licinius was forced to retreat. The final battle took place on 18 September at Chrysopolis, near Chalcedon, and the victorious Constantine assumed complete control of a united Empire, East and West.

Against this rapidly changing political backdrop the African Church was coming to terms with a post-persecution hangover. The first indication of the impending storm occurred at Cirta where about ten bishops met under the leadership of Secundus, the senior bishop of Numidia, to appoint successors to those who had disappeared as a result of the persecution. At Secundus' suggestion, an enquiry was made into the recent conduct of bishops before the authorities.[28] Several bishops were accused of committing *traditio* and each made their excuses, pleading that no man but God alone could be their judge. Two attitudes surfaced. One side excused the weaknesses of bishops in face of persecution while the other side regarded those guilty of *traditio* as unworthy to maintain their clerical function. The seeds of the approaching schism sprouted quickly.

In Africa the two most prominent men to be accused of *traditio* were Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, and his Archdeacon, Caecilian.[29] Mensurius had co-operated with the authorities in that he conducted no public worship as commanded by the first edict. When explicitly ordered to surrender Scriptures to the authorities, he surrendered only heretical writings. In the East such actions would not have been noteworthy, but in Numidia such deceit was regarded as apostasy. Ecclesiastical policy in these matters was not anticipatory of such events but rather retrospective.

Two sides emerged and both adopted entrenched positions. The 'Catholic' position was pragmatic. In the face of persecution do not provoke. Do not offend. Ride the storm and make the best of a temporary adverse situation. The 'Numidian' position was uncompromising. To resist the authorities was glorious. While in prison, confessors held meetings in which they condemned *traditor* clergy. Surrender to or

co-operation with the authorities was apostasy. The nature and purity of the Church was at stake!

Matters came to a head when Mensurius died and his successor Caecilian was rather hastily consecrated the new bishop of Carthage by three country bishops. One of these three bishops, Felix of Apthungi, was generally believed to have surrendered Scriptures to the authorities and thus Caecilian's consecration was at best suspect. Felix was later cleared by both ecclesiastical and Imperial courts. The Numidian bishops consecrated Majorinus as a rival and, in their eyes, true bishop of Carthage. The issue was to some extent complicated by the fact that Majorinus belonged to the household of a certain lady, Lucilla, who was involved in a long-standing feud with Caecilian over devotion to a relic in her possession.[30] 'This was the beginning of the terrible Donatist schism, which so plainly revealed a centrifugal tendency carrying certain Christian groups outside Catholic unity, and some ethnic groups outside the Imperial unity'.[31]

The central issues were deemed important enough to merit schism. Certain interconnecting themes pulsed at the heart of the ensuing debate; differing concepts of spirituality, the nature of the Church, the consequences of serious sin, and sacramental efficacy.

d) History of Donatism.

The Donatist schism which began in 312 became a permanent feature of African Church life until the followers of Muhammad overwhelmed the area in the early seventh century. Some doubts though have been cast upon the identity of 'Pope Gregory's Donatists' and they have been dismissed as 'merely Numidian bishops who valued their automony'.[32] Majorinus died in 315 and was succeeded by Donatus 'the Great'. Donatus was a key figure in the establishment of this alternative Church. It was in him that the many strands of African Church life converged to produce a Gordian knot. Donatus was an activist from Casae Nigrae, some sixty miles south of Theveste, in the south of Numidia. In October 313 Pope Miltiades pronounced him guilty of re-baptising lapsed clergy and forming a schism. In Carthage he spearheaded personal hostility towards Mensurius and Caecilian; he led the opposition against the decisions of both Rome (313) and Arles (314) and also against

Aelianus and Constantine. His name became the rallying point for every man who had real or imaginary grievances against existing ecclesiastical, civil, and social powers'.[33]

Once Constantine was convinced that Caecilian was the rightful bishop of Carthage he introduced repressive measures against the Donatists, specifically confiscation of their property. In Carthage this led to attacks upon Donatists by the troops under the command of the *Comes*, Ursatius.[34] Donatus refused to surrender his Church buildings in Carthage and incurred casualties, most notably bishop Honoratus of Sicilibba. These Imperial measures did not achieve their aim but rather drove the two sides into permanent opposition. The Donatists proved both numerous and vitriolic, and by 320 Constantine and the Catholics came to a position of uneasy toleration of them. An extant letter from Constantine to the Catholic bishops of Africa formally states the policy of abandonment of persecution of the Donatists.[35] Optatus, the main source for these earliest years of the schism, is uninterested in Donatus' establishment of his Church and so details of the next few decades are severely limited. The Donatists grew in strength, especially in Numidia, and Donatus presided over a Synod in 330 which was attended by 270 Donatist bishops.[36] They also demonstrated that in their earliest period at least, they did not envisage being confined to North Africa, sending Victor of Garba to Rome, as the true bishop of that See.[37]

In the years following Constantine's death (22 May 327) there were three Imperial attempts to restore unity, in 340, 345 and 347, but all failed. The Donatist response to such overtures was summed up by Donatus' famous question in 347 to the Imperial emissaries, Paul and Macarius, 'What has the Emperor to do with the Church?'[38] Despite early displays of hostility towards the secular power the Donatists did on occasions seek Imperial support in their cause against the Catholics. They appealed against the decision of Constantine to make grants of money to the Catholic clergy of Africa in 313, and again against the decisions of the African Council of 314. Such inconsistency provided ammunition for Augustine and the Catholics.

Whereas the Donatists were never able to come to terms with the new situation created by a Christian Emperor, the Catholics gratefully allied Church and State. Eusebius, for whom Constantine is something of a hero, epitomises the latter position. The bishop of Caesarea saw the first Christian Emperor as the very instrument of God, defeating the enemies of the Church and ushering in a time of peace and Divine blessing. In describing the victory of Constantine and his son Crispus over Licinius at Chrysopolis in 324, Eusebius writes;

> Wherefore, mingling a hatred of evil with a love of goodness, the defender of the good went forth, with that most humane Emperor, his son Crispus, stretching out the right hand of salvation to all who were perishing. Then, inasmuch as they had God the universal King and Son of God, the Saviour of all, as their Guide and Ally, the father and son hath together divided their battle against the haters of God on all sides and easily won the victory; for everything in the encounter was made smooth for them by God according to His purposes.[39]

Such views were anathema to the Donatists who sought to keep the pure Church separate from the pagan State. Although at times the differences between Catholics and Donatists were minimised, neither side was subsequently able to bridge the chasm between their positions.

One unsavoury side of Donatism was the extreme violence of the Circumcellions whose activities are first noted around 340.[40] These were the 'shock troops' of the movement and were responsible for widespread murder of Catholics and destruction of their property. They exhibited kamikaze-like tactics in countless confrontations with Catholics and thereby, in their own eyes, earned for themselves highly prized martyrs crowns. Eventually their excesses led to the banishment of Donatus himself, in 348, by Macarius, one of two Imperial notaries sent to Africa. Donatus died in exile about 355. This in turn further fuelled Donatist feeling against the Catholic Church/State alliance.

Donatus was succeeded by Parmenian as Donatist bishop of Carthage in 355. His literary mind and intellectual integrity were acknowledged by both Optatus and Augustine. As a foreigner, probably of Spanish or Gallic birth, he was independant

to some degree of the previous extremes of Donatism. Indeed, literary debate between Parmenian and Optatus established the important point that the Donatists were not heretics but schismatics. Positive as this seemed though, the movement was then threatened from within. Rogatus, the Donatist bishop of Cirtenna in Mauretania Caesariensis, led nine colleagues in breaking with the main Donatist body in protest at the excesses of the Circumcellions. These extremists flourished in the brief reign of Julian (361-363) The Rogatists seem to have represented a conservative and non-violent strand of Donatism.[41] They never developed, suffering repression though not elimination, at the hands of the rebel Firmus in 372. The Donatist ground upon which the truly elect stood was becoming so narrow that few passed the 'authenticity test'.

Parmenian was also faced with the challenge of Tyconius, a Donatist layman and philosopher. He wrote extensively and in his most important extant work, *Liber Regularum*, he interpreted Scripture as speaking of the bipartite nature of the Church, containing both good and evil members. On the basis of such texts as, 'dark am I yet lovely',[42] and using his rule that all texts refer to Christ and his Church, Tyconius came to the conclusion that the Church was a *corpus permixtum* and that the separation of the 'wheat' and 'tares' could only take place in God's judgement at the Last Day.[43] This was contrary to mainstream Donatist teaching that the Church should be pure in the present. When Tyconius refused to change his views Parmenian excommunicated him about 385.[44] Tyconius neither joined the Catholics nor formed a separate sect. Throughout the remainder of Parmenian's leadership the Donatists continued to make gains at the expense of the Catholics.[45] Parmenian and Tyconius died within a short time of each other, the bishop in 391 or 392 and the layman about 393.

Primian succeeded Parmenian as Donatist bishop of Carthage and in this final decade of the fourth century Donatism reached the zenith of its power and influence. He was 'a man of extreme views and ruthless violence',[46] and secure in his support from the more extreme elements of his Church in Numidia and elsewhere. Such a leader, given the fissiparous nature of Donatism, was soon in trouble. An 'opposition Donatist party' formed in Carthage under the leadership of Maximian, one of

Primian's deacons and a descendant of Donatus the Great. Primian imposed penance upon Maximian and, when the deacon refused, excommunicated him. The situation deteriorated rapidly. Neighbouring bishops requested a hearing for Maximian but Primian refused. He still refused to discuss the issue in 393 when requested by a hundred Donatist bishops, mostly from Proconsular Africa. These bishops then excommunicated Primian and consecrated Maximian as bishop of Carthage. The Donatists of that city were now divided into Primianists and Maximianists. The bishops of Numidia and Mauritania backed Primian and their numerical superiority was decisive at a Donatist Council at Bagai in 394. Here, Maximian was excommunicated. The Maximianists, although persecuted by the Primianists, persisted as a viable entity within Donatism into the fifth century.

The Catholics seized the moment. A Council met in Hippo in 393 under the leadership of Aurelius, Catholic bishop of Carthage. Here it was agreed that any Donatist clergy returning to their fold could retain their clerical position and functions. This was a hopeful sign, considering the serious attempts at State intervention in the earlier years. Valentinian's edict in 373 had deposed any cleric who re-baptised. Gratian passed three successive anti-Donatist edicts; in 375 commanding the surrender of all Donatist church buildings, in 377 commanding also the confiscation of their houses, and in 378 expelling the Donatist Claudian from Rome. However these first two were never fully implemented owing to political instability revolving around the murder of Gratian in 383 and the wars between Maximus and Theodosius and the eventual restoration of Valentinian in 388. Such attempts at imposing Catholic ecclesiastical views by secular power culminated in the edict of Theodosius on 15 June 392, *haereticis erroribus*.[47] Under this edict all heretical clergy were to be fined and the places where they met were to be confiscated. Not for the first time in Africa, implimentation of this edict proved very difficult. In many areas the Donatists were the majority grouping and therefore not regarded as heretics.

In 395 Gildo usurped power in Africa and formed a powerful alliance with the Donatist bishop, Optatus of Thamugadi, 'the dictator of the Numidian Donatist movement'.[48] Their short reign of terror saw the re-emergence of the Circumcellions

and the terrorisation of Catholics and Maximianists alike, especially in southern Numidia. In 397 Gildo challenged Rome by withholding the corn supply to the capital. Both Gildo and Optatus were defeated and killed by Horonius in 398. The Donatists, however, still outnumbered the Catholics in many areas. For a number of years the ecclesiastical situation in Africa amounted more or less to a religious stand-off.

> The Catholics passionately desired to see the Donatists restored to the universal Church. The Donatists were equally determined to remain apart. In consequence, both sides tended to minimize the theological differences between them, the one in order to forward the work of reconciliation, and the other to avoid the operation of the Imperial laws.[49]

A fortuitous synchronism of events led to the initiative in African Church life swinging decisively from the Donatists to the Catholics in the last decade of the fourth century. Parmenian seems to have been the last of the more able Donatist leaders. This decline in leadership, and the protracted Catholic episcopate of Aurelius (about 391-427), coupled with the power of Augustine and the consecration of dynamic new Catholic bishops proved decisive in this period.

In 393 Aurelius held a Catholic Council at Hippo and tackled many of the most obvious abuses in his Church. Several key appointments were made, especially in Numidia.[50] By 398 new and able Catholic bishops were in place throughout Proconsular Numidia. In tandem with a rejuvinated Catholic Church, new Imperial edicts were once more directed against the Donatists. Following Gildo's defeat, the Donatists were named as dissidents in a rescript in June 399.[51] An attempt was made by the Catholics in 403 to hold a 'Peace Conference' but the idea was scotched by Primian. Petilian, Donatist bishop of Constantine, developed a reputation as one of the foremost propagandists for his Church in the opening decade of the fifth century. In 405 a set of Imperial edicts cracked down upon the excesses of some Donatists and established once more a firm policy of union by repression.[52] The Donatists were pronounced heretics, their property was to be handed over to the Catholics, and their services were prohibited. These edicts applied equally to Manichees, Jews and

pagans. The measures were later rescinded when the Goths, under Alaric, invaded Rome in 408 and it was rumoured that the Donatists were willing to support him.

Under threat of all previous anti-Donatist edicts being enacted against them, the Donatists were persuaded to attend one crucial Conference with the Catholics. On 1 June 411 two hundred and sixty-six Catholic and two hundred and seventy-nine Donatist bishops met in the Baths of Gargilius at Carthage under the presidency of Marcellinus, the proconsul, and at the instigation of the Western Emperor, Honorius (394-423). Each side was permitted seven speakers, with seven assistants and all proceedings were recorded.[53] The Donatists were represented by Primian (their Primate at Carthage), Petilian of Cirta (Constantine), Emeritus of Caesarea in Mauritania, Protasius, Montanus, Gaudentius of Tamugada, and Adeodatus. The Catholics were represented by Aurelius (their Carthaginian Primate), Alypius of Tagaste, Augustine, Vincentius, Fortunatus, Fortunatian, and Possidius of Calama. The Maximianists were not admitted to the Conference. The main debate concentrated upon the question of the true nature of the Church. After much preliminary wrangling over procedures, the debate proper began with a bitter clash over scriptural interpretations of various passages relating to the Church. Could the Church be 'pure and without wrinkle' in this world or were such descriptions of the Church only applicable in the next world? At the close of this Conference, Marcellinus declared his general verdict in favour of the Catholics and, following an appeal by the Donatists, this decision was upheld in January 412 by the Emperor Honorius. As a result of this Conference, Donatism was proscribed.

> By *Cassatis quae* of 30 January 412, Horonius nulled all rescripts that they [the Donatists] might have obtained in their favour, and confirmed all former laws by which they had been condemned. Their clergy were to be deported, and their Churches restored to the Catholics. It was the death blow to Donatism.[54]

Some Donatists returned to the Catholic Church but many others maintained their separatist stance. Despite the death of Marcellinus in 413, the work of forcible reintegration went ahead and a much sterner edict against the Donatists was issued in 414.[55] All Donatist Church buildings became the property of the Catholic Church

and all Donatist clergy were to be suspended and banished. That many Donatists returned to the Catholic side is evidenced by the fact that it was necessary in 418 for the Catholics to hold a Council in Carthage to regulate proceedings when Donatist bishops, clergy and congregations joined them.

From this point the force of the Donatist schism seems to have been spent. There were to be no more great Donatist leaders, and on the one occasion towards the close of the sixth century when they revived briefly, popes such as Leo and Gregory the Great were able to subdue them. It all proved to be a hollow victory for the Catholics however as in October 439 the Vandals captured Carthage and became masters of Africa. Imperial rule was broken and the schism became irrelevant.

SOURCES ON DONATISM.

There are two main sources for the origin and history of Donatism and both are Catholic; the writings of Optatus, Catholic bishop of Milevis, and the writings of Augustine, Catholic bishop of Hippo. This is not an ideal situation as both are somewhat biased in their views on the controversy. In addition there are two lesser sources in somewhat meagre extant Donatist writings and Imperial records.

a). Optatus.

The importance of Optatus with regard to Donatism is beyond question. His writings are, 'one of the most important sources for the religious history of the fourth century'.[56] He was the first writer to set out in detail the Catholic concept of the one true Church of Christ and he did so in writing against the Donatists. Few hard details are established with regard to Optatus. The dates of his birth and death are unknown. Such details as are known are gleaned from his own writings against the Donatists.

These writings comprise seven books. Their origin is related by Optatus himself:

> For many have often expressed a desire for a public discussion between champions drawn from both sides, in order to elicit the truth. And this might well have been done. At any rate, though the Donatists forbid their people to come to us, and close the way to any approval to us, and

> avoid a meeting, and refuse to speak to us, let there be a conference, my brother Parmenian, between us two in this way, that, as I have not thought little of, nor despised, your treatises, which you have wished to be read and quoted by many, but on the contrary have patiently listened to everything that you have brought forward, - so do you, in your turn, attend to the reply which, with humility, I make to you.[57]

As a public discussion between Catholics and Donatists was not possible Optatus determined to answer in writing *Adversus Ecclesiam Traditorum*, the five books of Parmenian.[58] Thus Optatus writes to Parmenian as his *avus*.

From internal evidence it is possible to ascertain that Optatus wrote his work between 366 and 367. It is probable though that subsequent updated editions were circulated. The generally accepted theory is that Optatus originally wrote six books in one large work, *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam*, about 366. Around 385 he revised the entire work in the light of its critical reception, adding at this time the seventh book and inserting relevant material throughout, for example, the mention of Siricus, bishop of Rome (384-399) in succession to Damasus.[59] Various Latin manuscripts of this work are extant, none of them though are complete.[60]

Augustine quoted Optatus often and held him in high regard. In more recent times the works of Optatus were initially translated into French in 1564, the most famous edition being edited by E. Du Pin in 1700 and 1702. The first English translation was in 1917 by Vassall-Phillips.

Book One is a brief outline of the history of the Donatist schism. The Second states the premise that there is only one Church, and indicates that this is the Catholic Church.

> You cannot then deny that you do know that upon Peter first in the city of Rome was bestowed the Episcopal Cathedra, on which sat Peter, the Head of all the Apostles, that, in this one Cathedra, unity should be preserved by all, lest the other Apostles might claim - each for himself - separate Cathedras, so that he who should set up a second Cathedra against the unique Cathedra would already be a schismatic and a sinner.[61]

In the Third Book Optatus gives detailed reasons as to why the harsh measures of the government against the Donatists are not the fault of the Catholics. The Fourth Book is a rebuttal of the false exegesis of Parmenian who used various Old Testament passages against the Donatists.

> It has been most clearly proved by divine witness that you are sinners. It has also been shown that your auxiliaries have fought against you, for you have brought up to your relief the saying of the Prophet: 'The sacrifice of the sinner, is as of one who would offer in sacrifice a dog.' (Isaiah 66:3) Now if you have any shame, recognise with grief that you are the sinners.[62]

In the Fifth Book Optatus writes concerning baptism and develops the so called *opus operatum* theory. In the Sixth Book he lists the appalling behaviour of the Donatists in attacking Catholic Churches and destroying their altars and chalices. The Seventh Book appears to contain additions and corrections to the original work.

Much of the importance attached to Optatus as a source for the Donatist controversy rests in turn upon the sources which he himself used. He claimed to base his account of the early days of the schism upon official documents and appended to his major work, *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam*, are some of the the documents which he cites. Of the six extant manuscripts he used, none is in a complete state and only one, the Colbertine MS. (C), has preserved any part of Optatus' Appendix. More than five of the first books in this MS. are completely missing and the seventh book ends with the following statement; *'Expliciunt Sancti Optati Episcopi Libri Numero VII vel Gesta Purgationis Caeciliani Episcopi et Felicis Ordinatoris Eiusdem. necnon Epistola Constantini Imperatoris. Amen*[63] There is a considerable section missing in this manuscript, between *Gesta Purgationis Caeciliani* and the *Gesta Purgationis Felicis*, perhaps as much as is extant or more.[64]

At the Council of Carthage in 411 the Catholics used various documents to set out their case against the Donatists. These consisted of a record of the Synod of Cirta in 305, Imperial correspondance regarding the Donatists, and some verbatim accounts of African court proceedings. Part of this dossier is appended to Optatus' main work

and it is these ten documents which are of crucial importance in assessing the usefulness of Optatus as a source for Donatism. As already mentioned above, the appended documents are only partially extant. For example the *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (320) is defective at the end and the *Acta purgationis Felicis* (315) is defective at the beginning. Also appended are six letters of Constantine and a letter from the Council of Arles (314). This latter document is not referred to anywhere in Optatus' work and this raises considerable doubt as to whether it was originally appended to his work.

b). Augustine.

The second major source of information on Donatism is the writings of Augustine. The Donatist movement pre-dated Augustine's birth by forty years yet he responded to the challenge of their teaching with customary vigour. His response represents a development of the doctrines of the Church and sacraments to a new level in Western thought. Most of his anti-Donatist writings were composed between 400 and 411 and he used the writings of Optatus as his 'principal historical foundation'[65] of the controversy. Augustine was obviously conversant also with the writings of the Donatist layman Tyconius, whom he quotes on several occasions.

There are twelve extant writings, the most important being *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas* and *Contra Litteras Petiliani*.[66] The former was written about 400 and consists of seven books. It deals with the central question of the validity of baptism outside the Church and grapples with the matter of the authority of Cyprian. The latter was written between 401 and 403 and is directed against Petilian, Donatist bishop of Cirta. One of the main subjects dealt with in this work is the efficacy of baptism administered by an immoral minister.

c). Donatist writings.

Unfortunately the Donatist cupboard is almost bare as far as extant sources are concerned. Their writings are known mainly from quotations in other writings, again mostly Optatus and Augustine. No works by Donatus himself survive though there are references to some of his writings and those of Parmenian, Petilian and Cresconius in the works of Optatus and Augustine. Sometimes only the briefest reconstruction is possible. For example, only the opening line of Donatus' protest

letter to Gregorius the *Praefectus praetorio* of Italy, who attempted to repress Donatism in 336: 'Gregory, pollution of the senate, and disgrace of the prefecture!'[67]

About 336 Donatus wrote *Epistula de baptismo* confirming the central plank of Donatist theology that Catholic baptism was of no value as the Catholic clergy were deprived of Divine grace. It is also known from both Augustine and Jerome that Donatus wrote a book on the Trinity.[68] None of his works are extant.

Throughout much of the fourth century the Donatists and Catholics engaged in a literary war. The Caecilianists' *Acta*,[69] recording in their view the origin and consequent main arguments in the dispute has largely survived and is known as *Gesta Purgationis Caeciliani et Felicis*. Augustine makes some references to similar Donatist Acta but they have not survived. Several hagiographic works are extant. These include; the *Acta* of Saturninus, Dativus, and Felix[70] who were each martyred in the Diocletian persecution for refusing to hand over Scriptures to the authorities. In addition the Acta of Maximianus and Isaac who suffered in anti-Donatist measures in the time of Constans are also extant.[71] This is thought to have been written by Macrobius, Donatist bishop of Rome, to fellow Donatists in Carthage with the aim of encouraging them in their resistance to the Macarian persecution in 347.

The only important Donatist writer whose work survives is Tyconius. In Tyconius the Donatist Church produced one of the great theological minds of the fourth century. He is the only member of his community whose ideas influenced Christian thought outside North Africa.[72] Tyconius was a layman, a philosopher and moderate Donatist thinker, who emphasised the moral value of the individual. His four main writings, of which only two have survived, are dated between 370 and 380 and are referred to by Gennadius.[73] Tyconius' *Liber Regularum*[74] has survived and is largely important as representing a strong Donatist argument for allegorical interpretation of all Scripture. A major part of his *Commentario in Apocalypsin Joannis* has also survived.[75]

Vitellius Afer was a lesser known Donatist who wrote in the mid-fourth century during the Catholic ascendancy following the Council of Carthage in 348-9. His

most famous work, *De eo quod odio sunt mundi Dei servi* has not survived though in it he is known to have argued for the need for separation from and persecution by the world.[76] It is known from snippets quoted in the writings of Optatus of Milevus that Parmenian wrote five books in which he set out the Donatist case. These seem to have been entitled *Adversus Ecclesiam Traditorum*. Despite the longevity of the Donatist dispute the all too familiar result of enquiry after sources is that they have simply not survived.

d). Imperial Records.

One final source of information comes from Imperial records, notably the Theodosian Code. This is a compilation, set out in sixteen books, of the laws and decrees of Rome as issued by the Emperors from 313, when Constantine consolidated power, to 438, in the reign of Theodosius II.[77]

The Donatists, in contrast to the Catholics, never came to terms with the 'Christian State'. Augustine and other Catholics came to support the proposition that the State should aid the Church in the suppression of heresy and schism. In North Africa this meant legislation against the Donatists. Such laws in dealing with heretics and other topics like the administration of baptism are all recorded in the Theodosian Code and as such constitute a significant source for the Donatist schism.

LITERATURE ON DONATISM.

There are at least six extant manuscripts of Optatus and the first printed edition was in 1549, at Metz, by a Canon of Warsaw called Cochlaeus. This edition was very imprecise as it was based solely upon one faulty fifteenth century manuscript known as *Codex Cusanus*. Various further editions were produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The benchmark of work on Optatus was set by Du Pin's edition, published at Antwerp in 1702. In 1893 Zwisa published a new critical edition at Vienna in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*. He was the first scholar to have access to all six known manuscripts. In addition Zwisa added a lengthy

preface and two indices. The only English translation of Optatus is by O.R. Vassel-Phillips in 1917 and is based largely upon Zwisa's text.

Doubts about the authenticity of the documents in Optatus' Appendix were first raised by scholars towards the close of the eighteenth century. It was pointed out that no other ancient writer alludes to any of them. Having been seriously questioned by Daniel Voelter,[78] and partially suspected by Otto Seeck,[79] they are now very largely accepted as authentic following the work of Abbé L. Duchesne.[80] He demonstrated that Optatus' dossier formed a single collection preserved in a single manuscript. 'This view, with some slight modifications, has prevailed, and the literary evidence concerning the schism's origins is no longer at the centre of the debate'.[81] It remains the case that some of the places whose bishops are listed in Constantine's letter to an African bishop, Aelafius, remain completely unknown. Indeed Duchesne proposed changing the name Aelafius to Aelius Paulinus as the former is also completely unknown.

Two other literary contributions must be mentioned. In 1980 Johannes Divjak of the University of Vienna discovered thirty new letters in two manuscripts in Marseille and Paris. Twenty-seven of these letters are by Augustine and one, Epistle 20, is relevant to Donatism.[82] This letter, written in 423, indicates how completely Catholicism then dominated the region of Fussala, a former Donatist stronghold.

A full and scholarly text of the three-day proceedings of the Conference of Carthage in 411 has been produced by Serge Lancel.[83] In his accompanying commentary on the debate at this Conference Lancel highlights the relationship between Augustine and the participating Donatists.

Tyconius' *Liber Regularum* represents the most important Donatist work available to modern scholars. This North African Donatist lived in the second half of the fourth century and occupied an enigmatic position within the schism as discussed at a later point in this chapter. There are two extant manuscripts of Tyconius' *Liber Regularum*, as well as an extensive epitome and several quotations in the works of various writers.

The most useful manuscript dates from the ninth century and is in excellent condition. It ends abruptly in mid-sentence with the loss of about two-thirds of Rule Seven. A second manuscript dates from the early tenth century and contains different divisions and paragraphs than the first. In addition to these two manuscripts, an abridgement of Tyconius' *Liber Regularum* appears on a late ninth-century manuscript. The Text of the Book of Rules was first published at Basle by Grynaeus in 1569. Other editions were produced in the seventeenth century by Schott and the eighteenth century by Galland. This latter edition was reprinted in Migne.[84] The definitive English translation of the Book of Rules was published by F.C. Burkitt in 1894.[85] A more recent scholarly debate on the 'real' nature of Donatism has been ongoing for some years now. Wilhelm Thummel has been in the vanguard of a new emphasis upon an interdisciplinary approach to Donatism.[86] Thümmel drew attention to the fact that the Donatists were strongest in Numidia, the least Romanised area of North Africa and that they had supported the rebels Firmus and Gildo. This evidence seemed to point towards a conclusion that Donatism was an expression of North African protest against occupying Roman influences. Paul Monceaux represents the climax of this approach to the schism.[87] W.H.C. Frend has also written concisely on the non-theological issues behind the schism,[88] incorporating in his many writings the fruits of archeological excavations at several Romano-Berber sites in North Africa.

Many scholars, though most notably Frend, have pointed to the origin of Donatism as lying in the social and economic circumstances of North Africa in the third and fourth centuries. The basis of Frend's theory is that the Donatists correspond largely to those inland areas of North Africa which were generally poorer, relatively un-Romanised and most under-priviliged. He argues therefore that the spark which lit the fire of Donatism was a protest against the wealth and Romanisation of the urban aristocracy. W.H.C. Frend labels Donatism, 'a nationalist movement with a sociological background.'[89] While he was not the first scholar to advance such ideas concerning the origins of this schism, Frend has polished it and presented it in its most appealing form. He acknowledges the help of earlier scholars such as Döllinger, Thümmel, Litzmann and Gautier and the archeological work of Graillot and Gsell in the 1930's in Algeria.[90]

Jean Baptiste Brisson emphasised the continuity in the theology of the Donatists with that of Cyprian.[91] Like Frend, he also interpretated Donatism as a local expression of resistance to the new Christian-Emperor era which Constantine epitomised. Such views were also strongly supported by H.J. Diesner.[92]

This socio-economic theory has not gone unchallenged. The late A.H.M. Jones mainly challenged the nationalistic element of the theory.[93] He finds the alliance between some Donatist bishops and the rebels Firmus and Gildo as insufficient to paint the entire Donatist movement in nationalistic and anti-Roman colours. The scholarly pendulum continued to swing away from the socio-economic theories of Donatism with the work of Emin Tengström. By concentrating upon specific texts from Optatus, Augustine and the Theodosian Code, Tengström came to the conclusion that the grounds for the socio-economic theory were extremely uncertain.[94] This process of 'redressing the balance' was supported by others, notably P.A. Fevrier.[95] Not surprisingly W.H.C. Frend disagrees with this trend.

> In P.A. Fevrier's view, the work of Emin Tengström had returned the study of the Donatists to the situation it occupied before *The Donatist Church* was written. It is difficult to agree. It is not simply that Tengström expected far too great accuracy of information and judgement from the polemics of Optatus and Augustine, but what he did not discuss could give a different interpretation of the evidence. Thus, the historian Zosimus (a Constantinopolitan pagan writing c430, who had no axe to gring regarding the events in fourth century North Africa) states clearly that Firmus's revolt in 372 was set off by economic grievances and in particular over-taxation. If the Donatists did not support Firmus, why should they have been dubbed 'Firmiani', and in those circumstances is one to suppose that 'the Christian Bishops' whom Ammianus says attempted to negotiate on behalf of Firmus were not Donatists?[96]

Perhaps in recent years there has been more balance to this scholarly debate.

> Tengström's critique, though far from uniformly compelling, prompts some reserve towards the Frend-thesis. But it must be acknowledged that, apart from the important reminder it contains of the decisive role played by force, it does nothing to explain the roots of the schism and little to account for its tenacity. Above all, it restricts itself to a

range of evidence too narrow to allow a satisfying account of Donatism to emerge as an alternative to the thesis it criticises.[97]

DONATISM: CHURCH, MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS.

The most important legacy of the Donatist schism was in the realm of Christian doctrine, specifically with regard to the Church and sacraments. Legacies, by their nature, are operative in succeeding generations and so with the Donatist schism the doctrinal ramifications became increasingly apparent to later generations. The origins of the schism had apparently little to do with doctrine and much more to do with contrasting theories of spirituality. As has already been mentioned, a scholarly debate on the 'real' nature of Donatism has been ongoing for some years now. This debate has ranged over all possible contributing factors; socio-economic conditions, State intervention, dominant personalities and nationalist fervour. Allowing that such factors cannot be ignored, it is the doctrinal implications of Donatism which will now be examined.

The doctrinal parameters were soon established.

> Beyond the many questions of Church organisation, religious persecution, and even social and tribal rivalry raised by Donatism, the central doctrinal question was: What is the causal connection between grace and perfection, or between the unity of the Church and the holiness of the Church?[98]

In the immediate post-Diocletian climate of North Africa, Donatists and Catholics adopted pastoral practices in response to the situation as they saw it. Scriptural evidence and tradition were later considerations as each side sought to give credence and authority to their views. In the heat of controversy the boundary between schism and heresy was often blurred and out of a combustible mixture of personality, perceptions, pride and practice, ecclesiology was redefined, thereby laying down Christian doctrine which became binding upon future generations.

The Nicene Creed, (325), testifies to the commonly agreed classic marks of the Church; it is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Of these the holiness and unity of the Church were intrinsically associated. The holiness of the Church was universally accepted. Irenaeus, (c.130-c.200), had gathered the main strands of second century ecclesiology together when he wrote that the Church was the new Israel and the mother of all Christians[99] and the exclusive realm of the Spirit. 'Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God.'[100] Schismatics and heretics alike ascribed to this basic tenet. The great ecclesiological controversy which the Donatists stirred up arose over definitions of the holiness of this one Church. How was this holiness to be measured? Consequentially, both the unity and holiness of the Church were examined and defined afresh by both sides in the controversy, each claiming that Scripture and tradition was on their side.

It was this quest by both sides to justify their respective positions in the ensuing dispute which brought the doctrinal issues to the fore. The Donatists held that the holiness of the Church was dependant upon the holiness of its individual members and clergy. They applied this doctrinal stance to events in Carthage in 312. Felix of Apthungi was generally believed to have surrendered Scriptures to the authorities and therefore as a *traditor* was judged to have forfeited his right to be a bishop. *Traditor* bishops cannot be bishops of the one holy Church per se. Following from this, all the clerical labours of a *traditor* bishop are invalid. Once again, applying this doctrine to the Carthaginian scene in 312 the Donatists viewed Felix's participation in the consecration of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage as a fatal flaw in that consecration. In consequence Caecilian was not acceptable and a 'rival bishop', Majorinus, was consecrated as the 'true bishop' of Carthage. This was all accomplished in supposed support of the holiness of the Church and without injury to the unity of the Church in that the 'Caecilianists' were now regarded as outside the Church, whereas Majorinus and those in communion with him were regarded as the true Church.

This Donatist doctrine of the holiness of the Church is too simplistic and inflexible. The issue is not 'black and white', there are grey areas. However, in the early fourth century, the first Donatist and Catholic protagonists each claimed to be totally in the

right and their opponents therefore totally in the wrong. Yet both sides in the controversy agreed on the fundamentals of doctrine. There was still only one Church, each claimed to be that Church. The essential point to grasp here is that the Donatists were completely locked in to the Cyprianic understanding of the holiness of the Church which is that this holiness resides principally and demonstrably in its bishops. While he acknowledged that sinful members did not invalidate the holiness of the Church, Cyprian had taught that the Church could never tolerate sinful clergy.[101] The thrust of the Donatist position was that following the Diocletian persecution the Catholic Church in North Africa was in the hands of *traditores* and as such was irrevocably contaminated. For the Donatists, the unity and catholicity of the Church is contingent upon the demonstrable and prior holiness of the Church.

Coupled with this understanding of the holiness and unity of the Church was the further question of proper management of the Church's sacraments. The fulcrum of the argument proved to be the administration of baptism. The question of whether to re-baptise schismatics and lapsed Christians proved central to the whole issue and for both sides the implications were enormous.

The Donatists forged a link between the purity of the administering cleric and the consequent efficacy of the sacrament he administered. Once again they claimed to follow Cyprian and emphasised the fact that Cyprian also had re-baptised those who had been baptised by heretics. They argued that they were following the example of Cyprian in condemning clergy and bishops who sin and regarding as invalid sacraments administered by such men. 'It (the Donatist movement) claimed - correctly - that it stood in the doctrinal tradition of St. Cyprian, the great hero of African Christians'.[102]

The Donatist doctrinal case sat securely upon this 'theological tripod'; the holiness of the Church resides in its holy bishops, *traditor* bishops have placed themselves outside the one true Church, and the efficacy of all sacraments performed by such lapsed clerics is lost. As a caveat against all who would question these interpretations, the Donatists claimed the imprimatur of Cyprian, hero and martyr-bishop of the authentic North African Church. The logical course of action

open to all good Christians was therefore to withdraw from the *'traditor* Church' of Caecilian. The import of the argument thus set out was inescapable; all true Christians must separate themselves from the tainted 'Caecilianists'.

> The moral pollution of the Church's bishops by the mortal sin of apostasy invalidated the ordinations they performed, concealed the efficacy of the baptism administered by their clergy, deprived the Church of its requisite holiness, and thereby brought on the fall of the Church. In the name of this demand for holiness, the Donatists felt obliged to separate themselves from the vast body of those who called themselves Catholic Christians; for there could be no fellowship between the Church of Christ (the Donatists) and the synagogue of Satan (the Catholics).[103]

As has been stated several times already, this schism did not originate nor continue in a rarified doctrinal atmosphere. There were other contributory elements. As each of these elements impinged upon the North African Church scene, the definitions, understandings and interpretations of doctrine were further tuned. There are numerous examples of both Catholic and Donatist doctrine being shaped by one or more of these elements acting as a catalyst.

When Augustine championed the Catholic cause against the Donatists at the turn of the fourth century he found it necessary to challenge their claim to stand in the tradition of Cyprian. Basically his argument amounted to the Donatists follow Cyprian's practice of re-baptising schismatics and heretics whereas the Catholics follow his love of unity in maintaining communion with those in opposition to them.[104] The fact that he had to tackle this Donatist claim regarding the mantle of Cyprian is an indication of both the status of the former Carthaginian bishop and also the similarities in Donatist doctrine.

The Donatists certainly painted themselves in the colours of the true heirs of authentic North African Christianity. Common roots can be traced from Donatism through Cyprian to Tertullian. The Donatists held the same concepts of Church, ministry and sacrament. Their common understanding of the Church was of an elect community at odds with a sinful world, the community of those possessing the Holy Spirit. The bishops of the Church were the demonstrable embodiment of its

holiness. The sacrament of baptism, when correctly administered, was the sacramental seal of Christ's forgiveness and the occasion when the Holy Spirit was given to individuals.

It was the Catholic position, as epitomised by Augustine, which represented new and intrusive elements to the North African Church. Traditional North African doctrine was melted and recast to suit the changed circumstances of the post-Constantinian era. Both sides argued over Cyprian with each claiming his mantle.

There can be no doubt that Constantine's victory at Milvian Bridge on 12 October 312 had major consequences for the Church. Whatever modern reservations may be expressed concerning his 'conversion' to Christianity, it is a fact that both pagan and Christian contemporaries regarded the new Emperor as a Christian and a Christian Emperor was a completely new element in the Church-State equation. The Donatist schism can be understood as a direct consequence of the Constantinian settlement. Viewed through a Donatist glass, they were defending an authentic North African tradition of Christianity against a new orthodoxy imposed by a Christian Roman Emperor.

The rise of Constantine marked the establishment of a new Roman ecclesiastical culture. The Catholic North African Christians accepted this new set of circumstances and declared their allegiance to this new regime. The Donatist North African Christians did not accept this change and bitterly resisted an imposed orthodoxy from the 'transmarine Churches'. The imposition of this 'Constantine factor' gave added impetus to the Donatist doctrines of Church, ministry and sacrament. Their dilemma was to maintain their view that Christians should be separate from the world in spite of the fact that the world increasingly professed to be Christian.

In the earliest stages of the controversy Donatist regard for the new Christian Emperor had not yet hardened to the later negative attitude, 'What has the Emperor to do with the Church?'[105] Africa was an important source of oil and cereals so it was certainly in every Emperor's interest to ensure peace and stability in that

province. In the winter of 312-3 Constantine instructed his *rationalis*[106] in Africa to put 3,000 *folles* at Caecilian's disposal. He obviously regarded Caecilian as the rightful bishop of Carthage as he also gave instructions that all Church property and lands in government control should be handed over to Caecilian.[107]

In a second letter to Anulinus, the proconsul, Constantine stated that he was prepared to exempt all Catholic clergy from *munera*.[108] The Donatists, convinced that Constantine had acted under the influence of Hosius, bishop of Corduba, quickly appealed to the Emperor through Anulinus within days.[109] At this very earliest stage of the Christian-Emperor era, the Donatists are prepared to appeal to the Emperor for justice. 'This is one of the decisive moments in the history of the early Church. Appeal had been made to the State in the person of a Christian Emperor. For the first time schism or unorthodoxy could become an offence punishable by law'.[110] Constantine passed the matter to Miltiades who added several Italian bishops to his commission and found in favour of Caecilian. Once again the Donatists, now led by Donatus himself, appealed to Constantine and a final decision in favour of Caecilian was delivered by the Council of Arles in 314. In 316, with the dispute ongoing, Constantine determined to go to Africa and personally hear the case and deliver his own judgement[111]. This visit to Africa never took place and on 10 November 316 Constantine informed Eumalius, the new *Vicarius Africae* that he regarded Caecilian as the sole legitimate bishop of Carthage.

From the Donatist standpoint, the thrice-negative fruits of this early dalliance with the new Christian-Imperial administration only served to drive them further from an accomodation with the new settlement. Following his decision of November 316, new and repressive legislation was passed by Constantine against the Donatists. Their leaders were to be exiled and their Churches confiscated.[112] Such actions merely entrenched both sides in their conviction that they were in the right. One quotation will suffice to demonstrate the Donatist bitterness towards the new Christian-Imperial order. In 336 Donatus defied Gregorius, the *Praefectus praetorio* of Italy who appears to have attempted to repress Donatism. Only the first line of Donatus' letter has survived, 'Gregory, pollution of the senate and disgrace of the prefecture'.[113]

Only on one other occasion did Donatus make appeal to the Emperor. About 346 he appealed to Constans to be recognised as sole bishop of Carthage. Constans sent two emmissaries, Paul and Macarius, but they proved so biased towards Caecilian's successor, Gratus, that Donatus dismissed them with the now famous retort, 'What has the Emperor to do with the Church?'.[114]

As a result of State coercion and persecution of the Donatists, some thought was given as to whether the North African Church was rent by schism or heresy. It was of course in the interests of the Donatists to have the entire North African situation regarded as a schism rather than a heresy, as the latter invited penalty under Imperial legislation. 'Schism may be defined as division within a Christian community, which may lead to external separation but does not involve disagreement over fundamental doctrines'.[115] If we accept this definition then the Donatists led a schism in North Africa after 312. A heresy on the other hand involves disagreement in doctrinal matters. This distinction between schism and heresy was not always appreciated by Augustine. In 401-2 the important Donatist layman, Cresconius, wrote to Augustine, criticising the latter's incorrect assumption that the Donatists were heretics. 'Heresy', he (Cresconius) argues, 'means adherence to a different faith, whereas Donatists and Catholics share the same confession of Christ born, dead, and raised; the two parties have in common one religion and the same sacraments'.[116]

The distinction between heresy and schism was first made by Optatus of Milevus, in writing against Parmenian.

> Catholicism is constituted by a simple and true understanding in the law, by a unique and most true mystery, and by unity of minds. But schism, after the band of peace has been broken, is brought into existence through passion, is nourished by hatred, is strengthened by envy and dissensions, so that the Catholic Mother is abandoned, whilst her unfilial children go forth outside and separate themselves (as you have done) from the root of Mother Church. ... They are not able to do anything new, or different from that which long ago they learned from their Mother. But heretics, exiles from the truth, deserters of the sound and most true Creed, corrupted by their wicked opinions and led astray from the bosom of the Holy Church, reckoning nothing of their noble birth, in order to

deceive the ignorant and ill-informed, have been pleased to be born of themselves. And they, who for a long time had been nourished on living food - which not assimilated has turned to corruption - have by impious disputations vomited forth deadly poisons, to the destruction of their wretched dupes.[117]

In the earliest years of the fifth century, as the Catholic position improved at the expense of the Donatists, Augustine embarked upon a deliberately soft approach in order to woo wavering Donatists into the Catholic camp. He went to some trouble to spell out the many points at which the Donatists agreed with the Catholics. In fact he goes so far as to state that their only two outstanding faults are; firstly, that they remained separate, and secondly, that they continued to practice re-baptism.[118] It is certainly possible that Cresconius was using this 'common ground' to ensure that the agreed nomenclature in the dispute is schism and not heresy. This allowed the Donatists to accomodate development within their own thought and in addition maintain a respectable self-defense against Imperial laws regarding heretics. The Constantinian settlement therefore is an important backdrop in understanding Donatist doctrine. The new alliance between Imperial rule and a universal Catholic Church provoked the ensuing struggle in North Africa and had some influence in casting the emerging Donatist outlook.

There is some evidence that Donatist doctrine was more flexible than is sometimes assumed. Towards the end of Constantine's rule the Donatists held a Council which was attended by 270 bishops. While all present agreed that a *traditor* sacrament was invalid, the question was raised as to the status of baptism administered by clergy who were still in communion with Caecilian and also those baptised before the separation. A strong case was made by some Donatists from Mauretania, notably Deuterius of Macri, that re-baptism was not necessary in such instances. Despite his personal preference for re-baptism, Donatus was persuaded after seventy-five days to accept the Mauretanian argument. The debate might well have led to a schism, but clearly Donatus' object was the unity of the Church in Africa, and he was prepared to meet reasonable requirements of colleagues if that would further this aim. This is one clear example of Donatist flexibility in doctrine.

The experience of the prominent Donatist layman, Tyconius, would not however testify to Donatist flexibility. He was excommunicated by Parmenian around 385 for challenging the traditional understanding of the Church as 'an unspotted bride'.

Perhaps more significantly, the Rogatist schism in the 360's and the struggle for supremacy between Primian and Maximian in 393-4, both seem to expose the insufficiency of the Donatist case. Circumcellion excesses in response to Imperial persecution in 364 led Rogatus, Donatist bishop of Cartenna in Mauretania Caesariensis, and nine moderate colleagues to break from the leadership of Parmenian. Ultimately this schism did not develop and was successfully contained with the aid of the rebel leader, Firmus. This schism illustrates the danger of tarring all Donatists with the same brush.

Although it may be argued that the Maximianist schism indicates no more than the unsuitability of Primian to hold the office of bishop of Carthage, the wider point to note is surely the inadequacy, on a practical level, of the Donatist doctrine of a 'pure Church'. The judgement of the Council of Cebarsussa (against Primian) stated the case for believing he is unsuitable to hold office and recommended separation from him.[119] The Council of Bagai (against Maximian) simply labelled Maximian and his supporters schismatics and therefore pronounced separation from them.[120]

DONATISM: USE OF SCRIPTURE.

The most serious handicap to the task of unearthing authentic examples of Donatist use of Scripture is the fact that there are no extant writings of the main Donatist leaders. In a situation somewhat akin to hearing only one side of a telephone conversation, Donatist lines of reasoning must be assessed through Catholic writers, most notably Optatus and Augustine. For example, it is known from references in Augustine's *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* that Donatus wrote a reasoned defence of his separation from Caecilian but, along with everything written by Donatus, this has been lost. Care must be exercised in sifting these Catholic

sources for Donatist use of Scripture as a tendency to caricature opponents views was not uncommon in the heat of literary debate.

The first Donatist bishop of Carthage (a misnomer as 'Donatism' was a later label) was Majorinus who was consecrated bishop of Carthage in 312. As he died in mid-313 it is hardly surprisingly he has no extant writings. Yet one Donatist quotation from Scripture does survive from this earliest period. Carthaginian Christians in opposition to Caecilian in 312 appealed initially to bishop Secundus of Tigisis to examine their 'problem'. In response Secundus and seventy other Numidian bishops convened at Carthage in late 312. They immediately declared Caecilian's consecration as unconfirmed and summoned him to apppear before them. This he refused to do. According to previous African custom, as in 256, each bishop in turn was asked to voice his opinion on the matter before them. It is the comment of one bishop, Marcian, which has been preserved as follows, illustrating the rigorist views of those in opposition to Caecilian;

> In his gospel the Lord says, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit , while every branch that does bear fruit he trims.' Thus, unfruitful branches are to be cut off and cast aside. So, those who being in schism are ordained by *traditores* cannot remain within the Church of God, unless they are reconciled through penance with wailing acknowledgement [of their fault].[121]

This reference to John 15 is illustrative of all that can be said of Donatist use of Scripture. The principal of pruning, supported by Scripture, is applied without reference to original context, mercilessly and specifically against Caecilian. On this one quotation, and with a remarkable economy of words, Marcian encapsulated what was to become the Donatist position. Using the Scripture reference as a peg Marcian hangs the case against the Catholics, incorporating their sin of schism and *traditio*, thereby justifying the Donatist policy of non-communion with Catholics. Thus Marcian can conclude his comment with the damning words; *Unde Caeciliano in schismate a traditoribus ordinato non communicare oporte.*[122]

Sources for the earliest years of this schism when Donatus was bishop of Carthage (313-355) are fragmentary though his Church increased to about three hundred bishops. When Augustine wrote his *Contra epistolam Parmeniani* about 400 he briefly alluded to the use made by Donatus of the parable of the wheat and tares.[123] Donatus' interpretation was pivotal in all subsequent Catholic/Donatist debate. The field represented the world and within the field the tares represented false Christians and the wheat represented God's elect. This proved to be a key passage of Scripture throughout the whole Catholic/Donatist debate, featuring prominently at the Council of Carthage in 411.[124] The Catholics interpretated this same parable in support of their contention that the Church was a *corpus permixtum*, containing both true and false Christians.

Parmenian followed Donatus as Donatist bishop of Carthage in 355 and occupied that see until his death in 391/2. Although he appears not to have been a native of Africa, he soon established himself as a very capable Church leader, surviving Firmus' revolt, the excommunication of Tyconnius and the Rogatist schism. His main Catholic rival was our principal source for this era, Optatus of Milevis. Like his predecessor, none of his writings are extant. He coined a new device for propagating Donatist teaching by composing what became known as the 'new psalms' in rhyming verse. Augustine was to copy this device for the Catholics at a later date. Parmenian's main literary work was entitled *Adversus ecclesiam traditorum*. It consisted of five books and set out the main tenets of the Donatist cause. Only fragments survive as quoted in the works of Optatus.

Both Catholics and Donatists agreed that there was only one true Church and each side claimed to be that Church. A key difference was that the Donatists interpreted this one Church as pure in the sense of separate from all impurities. Paul's words to Ephesian husbands was quoted in this respect by Parmenian and others; 'a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish, but holy and blameless'.[125] Other texts employed to signify this exclusive nature of the Church included; 'My dove, my perfect one is unique'[126] 'You are a garden locked up (*hortus conclusus*), a sealed fountain (*fons signatus*)'[127] These and other texts were employed by the Donatists to justify their demand for demonstrable purity among Christians. Isolated

texts and phrases proved to be the most valuable tools in fashioning a scriptural basis for such views.

Parmenian is most famous for his teaching on the Church which he derived from the scriptural image of the Church as the Bride of Christ.[128] Upon this system Parmenian wrote of the 'Endowments (*Dotes*) of the Church'.[129] His thought seems to have been that as the Church was the one Bride of Christ, so He has given it a dowry, the *Dotes* or *Ornamenta*. This teaching is unique in Patristic literature. Parmenian taught that there were six endowments; *Cathedra, Angelus, Spiritus, Fons signatus, Sigillum* and *Umbilicus*, and each was the possession of the Donatist Church. Optatus only accepted the first five and, not surprisingly argued that it was the Catholic Church which possessed them, not the Donatists.

What Parmenian meant by each endowment is as follows; *Cathedra* was the authority and unity of the episcopacy. *Angelus* seems to have referred to the angel hovering over the water at baptism. Possibly Parmenian was thinking in terms of Tertullian's understanding on this point.[130] *Spiritus* refers to the Spirit of God, active only within the true Church, making people sons of God and validating the sacraments. *Fons signatus*[131] is a sealed fountain or baptismal font. Only within the true Church can valid baptism be administered and to those outside the Church, the fountain remains sealed. *Sigillum* means 'seal' and again refers to the seal upon valid baptism. *Umbilicus* is taken by Parmenian as referring to altar and inexplicably he relates this to the Bride's navel.[132]

Interestingly, Optatus takes issue with Parmenian over these Dotes, only insofar as he criticises his conclusions, not his exegesis. He rejects the *Umbilicus* on the grounds that the navel is part of the body and 'to be an Ornament, it must not be part of the Body'.[133]

In consequence of their exclusive understanding of the Church, the Donatists held that association with *traditores* brought contamination upon oneself. One such text used by Parmenian in this respect concerns Jesus' harsh warning to the Pharisees, 'Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land

and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are'.[134] On this basis Parmenian found fault with Catholic attempts to convert others. Optatus neatly turned this around and argues against Parmenian personally, reminding him that as Donatist leader he himself was not a native to North Africa! 'I am lost in wonder that you, of all men, should have dared falsely to bring against another a charge, the very thought of which might well make you blush, were you to consider your own Consecration'.[135]

Parmenian also employed Psalm 140:5 (LXX) to warn of the contamination dangers of mixing with Catholics. David 'feared the oil of the sinner' and this text constituted scriptural support for the Donatist withdrawal from the Catholics. Optatus countered this by pointing out that as David was already anointed by Samuel, this text in fact records the words of Christ fearing the contamination of humanity.[136] The modern scholar finds both interpretations strange.

Surviving Parmenian arguments in support of Donatist sacraments are few. He argued that the Genesis flood was a type of baptism and that circumcision was also a forerunner of baptism.[137] As these events only happened once so there is only one true baptism. Parmenian went on to make the traditional Donatist case that as his was the only true Church, it followed that only within his Church could genuine sacraments be administered. In an echo of Cyprian he asks, *qui non habet quod det, quomodo dat?*[138] Tyconius shines alongside Parmenian in the Donatist firmament of that time though very little is known about his life. He was a Donatist philosopher and native of Proconsular Africa. His chief claim to fame lies in the fact that he is the only Donatist whose views had any influence outside North Africa. His four major books are listed by Gennadius.[139]

1) *De bello intestino.*
2) *Expositones diversarum causarum.*
3) *Liber regularum.*
4) *Commentarius in Apocalypsin Johannis.*

The first two works are lost and most of the third and fourth survive. The *Liber Regularum*[140] is most interesting, opening and explaining as it does the method of allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Gennadius wrote of Tyconius, *quibus*

omnibus agnoscitur donationae partis fuisse.[141] To the consternation of Parmenian, Tyconius taught that the Church was a mixed society of good and evil members. This seemed to strike at the foundation of all that Parmenian stood for and so pressure was brought to bear upon Tyconius to change his views. This proved unsuccessful and around 385 Parmenian called a Council and Tyconius was excommunicated. He died about 393, never having formed a separate sect. It is interesting that Tyconnius himself saw no contradiction in the fact that he held a bipartite view of the nature of the Church and yet remained a Donatist.

The chief importance of Tyconius is that in his *Liber Regularum* he set out to show that everything in Scripture points to the Church and therefore relates something about salvation. Tyconius laid down seven rules of interpretation of Scripture. In these he is pushing the previously agreed frontier of Messianic interpretation of the Old Testament to new limits. His seven rules are as follows;

1) *De Domino et corpore eius.* A Scripture verse may contain a reference to both Christ and His Church. This rule helped explain those passages containing a very clear Messianic reference plus other less clear material.

2) *De Domini corpore bipartito.* The Church is bipartite, Right and Left. Bible references to the Church may refer to either part of the Church, for example; 'Dark am I, yet lovely',[142] contains an allusion to both parts of the Church.

3) *De promissis et lege.* Tyconius' third rule was actually a short article dealing with justification. It was entitled 'On the Promises and the Law'.

4) *De specie et genere.* A distinction is drawn between Genus and Species. In other words Tyconius deals with passages where a general principle can be discerned from a specific situation or event. The general and particular can be mixed and overlapped in many passages.

5) *De temporibus.* The fifth rule is primarily concerned with times, seasons and numbers. 'In the sphere of quantity anything can virtually be made to mean anything else'[143] The most fantastic theories and conclusions could be built upon apparent incidental information in a passage. This approach was to form the basis of the medieval allegorical approach to Scripture. 'This conception of Scripture as a single vast volume of oracles and riddles, a huge book of secret puzzles to which the reader has to find clues, is the foundation of allegorical exegesis'.[144]

6) *De recapitulatione.* This rule explained that type and antitype can both be present within the same Scripture passage.

7) *De diabolo et eius corpore.* The final rule draws the distinction between the followers of the devil and the followers of Christ. Importantly, Tyconius taught that although the followers of Christ may not stray among the devil's followers, the latter can and do stray among the former.

Tyconius, like all the Patristic writers, is 'pre-critical' in his use of Scripture. The chief difficulty which Parmenian had with Tyconius' teaching was that the bipartite nature of the Church was pushed further than the Donatists could tolerate. Their traditional understanding could accept a bipartite Church in that they alone represented the 'wheat' and the Catholics represented the 'tares' and the two should immediately be separated. Tyconius however thought more in terms of two societies, the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas Diaboli* and his emphasis was upon individual moral character rather than a pure institution. For Tyconius the separation between good and evil was for the Last Day, not the present. It was this which incurred the wrath of Parmenian and secured his own excommunication. It is interesting to note the use Augustine made of the ideas and writings of Tyconius. Parmenian and Tyconius died within a short time of each other, the bishop in 391 or 392 and the layman in 393. With their passing Donatism had lost two of its greatest writers.

Around 395 the Donatists captured a young Catholic advocate in Constantine and submitted him to re-baptism. This young man, Petilian, interpreted this event as God's intervention in his life and eventually rose to the position of Donatist bishop of Constantine (Cirta) and the great rival of Augustine.

Petilian wrote a pastoral letter, *Epistula ad presbyteros,* to the Donatist clergy within his diocese about 400. Much of this letter survives in Augustines *Contra litteras Petilian.* (Book One was written in 400 in answer to the first part of Petilian's work. Books Two and Three answer Petilian's work point by point, often quoting exactly what Petilian had written.) Petilian's objective was to prove that Donatus' community was the true Church in North Africa and to put his followers on their guard against the Catholics. In this pastoral letter Petilian sets out the by now familiar Donatist position; the validity of baptism depends upon the worthiness of the officiating clergy; the Catholic Church is tainted by the sin of *traditio* which had been transmitted from Caecilian through subsequent consecrations down to the current

Catholic leadership, by their alliance with the secular authorities the Catholics further demonstrate their sin, the true (Donatist) Church is vindicated and purified by the fires of persecution.

In a published sermon, *Ad Augustinum*, Petilian made a blistering personal attack upon Augustine, charging him, among other things of still being a Manichee. This struggle embroiled both sides for several years and finally came to a head in 411 at the Council of Carthage. Petilian and Augustine were each members of their respective Church delegations at that Council.

Epistula ad presbyteros covered three main subjects; baptism, schism and persecution. His main contentions are; the validity of baptism depends upon the worthiness of the minister, the Catholics are in schism with the true (Donatist) Church through their laxity in the Diocletian persecution, and the Catholics are the party guilty of atrocities and persecution against the Donatists with the aid of the secular power.

Petilian's use of Scripture in his *Epistula* is very typical. He uses many quotations upon which he hangs damning interpretations which serve the dual purpose of condemning the Catholics and enhancing the standing of the Donatists. Judas Iscariot is interpreted as the forerunner of the Catholics. Quoting the gospel record of his death[145] Petilian writes, 'Judas was an apostle when he betrayed Christ; and the same man was already dead, having spiritually lost the office of an apostle, being destined afterwards to die by hanging himself.[146] This interpretation is further developed by appeal to David who foresaw the actions of this traitor.[147] Petilian drives home his point, 'Judas betrayed Christ in the flesh to the unbelievers; you in the spirit madly betrayed the holy gospel to the flames in sacrilege. Judas betrayed the Lawgiver to the unbelievers; you, as it were, betraying all that he had left, gave up the law of God to be destroyed by men'.[148]

Quoting from Acts, Petilian recalls how Paul was 'freed by baptism from the offence of persecution'.[149] This, for Petilian, is clear scriptural warrant for the Donatist practice of re-baptism (though he regarded it as true baptism). He appeals to the

Catholics, *cur non vis persecutor et traditor caecus falso baptismate ab iis quos insequeris baptizari?*[150]

As Parmenian was to Optatus so Petilian was to Augustine, yet the only certain occasion on which Petilian met Augustine was at the Council of Carthage in 411. Primian led the Donatist delegation of seven which included Petilian, and Aurelius led the Catholic delegation of seven which included Augustine.

The aforementioned Primian had succeeded Parmenian as Donatist bishop of Carthage in 391 or 392. By all accounts he was, though capable enough, a man of extreme views and violent temper. Much of his energies were expended in fighting off the challenge of Maximian, one of his own deacons. This schism within Donatism developed a largely provincial complexion. Eventually, and after early setbacks, Primian won the upper hand and at a Donatist Council at Bagai in 394 Maximian was excommunicated. In vintage Donatist fashion, 'the Maximianists were subjected to concentrated invective, abuse driven home on the spot by an apt reference to a Biblical text'.[151] Examples included, the fate of the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites into the Red Sea[152] and the oft quoted Old Testament rebels, Dathan, Korah and Abiram.[153]

Although it was Primian who led the Donatist contingent of 279 bishops to the Council of Carthage in May 411, the main Donatist speakers were Petilian and Emeritus, bishop of Caesarea. The only reference to Scripture used by Primian was his refusal of the offer of Marcellinus, the Proconsul, to sit! The Donatists would stand, argued Primian, because Christ had stood before His judge and the psalmist had written that the righteous do not sit with sinners.[154]

The Donatists further pressed their claims that they were the true Church 'without spot or wrinkle' and that the sin of *traditor* had descended upon all Catholics in similar fashion to Adam's sin contaminating all mankind. The main debate however centered on the question of the nature of the Church. The extant *Gesta* indicate that the debate opened with a bitter clash over the interpretation of the parable of the threshing floor.[155] The Catholics stated that their texts, especially the parables of the

field,[156] the threshing floor, the net,[157] and the sheep and goats[158] all refer to the imperfect and mixed state of the Church in the present age, while the texts of the Donatists refer to the perfect Church after God's Judgement.

The Donatists argued that the parable of the field was clearly to be understood as referring to the world and not the Church. They further contended that although the parable of the net was certainly about the Church, it only referred to undetected offenders within the Church, not the open toleration of known sinners (like the Catholics). The Catholic interpretation of the parable of the threshing floor was answered simply by quoting contrary texts. For example, 'What has chaff in common with grain?'[159] When Augustine pressed the Donatists on what this parable means, Petilian affirmed the Donatist position to be that it referred to hidden evildoers within the Church, not known sinners. Both sides presented a scriptural basis for their views but the conclusions drawn, even from identical passages, were diametrically opposed. The Catholics maintained that Scripture sanctions the toleration of known sinners within the Church. The Donatists maintained that Scripture teaches that the Church is pure and holy.

Donatism reflected an alternative expression of North African Christianity which ultimately lost out to an eventual Catholic majority. It represented a challenge both to the Catholic view of the nature of the Church, and its relations with the Empire and its institutions. In the theology of all Christians it was agreed that there was only one Church and in the 4th and 5th centuries this meant, in reality, that there could be only one visible institution. The defeated Donatists claimed that they had been unfairly overpowered by an unholy alliance of *traditor* clergy and Imperial might. They may have lost the war but they never lost the argument. It is to the Catholic side, and Augustine in particular, that we will now turn.

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5. AUGUSTINE.

AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS LIFE, WORK, AND THOUGHT.

Augustine was born in North Africa on 13 November 354 in the Numidian town of Thagaste, 200 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. His father, Patricus, was a *tenuis municeps*, a poor citizen.[1] His mother, Monica, was a Christian. Though as a child Augustine thought of himself as a believer and was marked with the sign of the cross and given the customary salt,[2] he was not baptised at that time, presumably because of his mother's fear of post-baptismal sin and defilement.[3]

It was Augustine's good fortune in 369 to receive a year's classical education in the university town of Madauros, paid for through the patronage of a local nobleman, Romanianus. His education continued at Carthage where he studied classical authors in order to become a teacher of rhetoric. He developed a phenomenal memory and capacity to give attention to detail. Patricus died in 370 and according to the accepted custom of that time Augustine, at the age of seventeen, took a concubine who bore his son, Adeodatus, in 372. In this same year Augustine completed his formal African education at Carthage.

Augustine taught rhetoric in Carthage for three years during which time he joined the Manichees. After a year teaching at Thagaste, Augustine returned to Carthage in 387 to teach and pursue his studies as a philosopher. Initially Augustine was an enthusiastic Manichee, attracting new converts[4] writing his first book,[5] but he later became disillusioned with local Manichee leaders and his own ability to rise above the lowest order in the sect, that of 'hearer'.[6] He was also bitterly disappointed upon hearing in person the chief Manichee bishop and fellow African, Faustus.

In 382 Augustine moved to Rome, again as a teacher, and here, by the influence of Symmachus, a Roman senator, and former Proconsul at Carthage, he was appointed to the influential post of professor of rhetoric at Milan. Under the influence of Ambrose, Augustine decided, in the summer of 386, to embrace Christianity. Both

he and his son Adeodatus were baptised by Ambrose on Easter Eve, 24-25 April, 387. Soon after his baptism Augustine and his friends returned to Africa, eventually arriving in 388.

He established a small ascetic community at Thagaste, mostly consisting of ex-Manichees. These men, several of whom, like Augustine himself, were to become Catholic bishops, lived as *servi Dei*, baptised laymen, dedicated to the study of Scripture and the contemplative life. In short, they lived a coenobitic life with a desired ideal to 'grow god-like in their retirement', *deificari in otio*.[7] Adeodatus is last mentioned in this period. Certainly he died about this time, though we do not have precise details. On a visit to the coastal town of Hippo Regius in the spring of 391 Augustine was coerced by the members of the Catholic congregation to accept ordination as a presbyter.[8] This was not uncommon in Africa at that time. Small communities, Manichee, Donatist and Catholic alike, were constantly liable to 'recruit' gifted local individuals into membership and leadership. Augustine's companion Alypius was to be made bishop of Thagaste in such circumstances around 394 and Augustine had deliberately avoided towns where the bishopric was vacant for fear of such treatment.

The bishop of Hippo, Valerius, was an elderly Greek, only able to preach in imperfect Latin. The Donatists were the dominant Christian party in Hippo and the Manichee party in the town was also influential. Contrary to all African custom by which the bishop alone preached in his own Church building, Valerius encouraged Augustine to preach in his place.[9]

In 395 Valerius wrote to the Primate of Carthage, Aurelius (392-430), asking that Augustine be consecrated as his co-adjutor.[10] This was contrary to the provisions of the eighth canon of Nicea,[11] yet Valerius was determined that Augustine should stay at Hippo. Augustine's former Manichee friends had also moved their community from Thagaste to Hippo and many of them were later to be influential in the North African Church. By 395, Aurelius, Alypius, Profuturus, Severus and Augustine himself had each become bishops. In all, ten Catholic bishops came from the *monasterium* which Augustine established at Hippo.

Augustine was to remain bishop of Hippo until his death on 28 August 430. In his thirty-five years as a Catholic bishop he threw himself fully into the work of strengthening the Catholic Church. Initially this meant a new devotion to Scripture. In the earliest years of his bishopric he gave serious consideration to the exegesis of Scripture, notably the letters of Paul. As a result of his studies, and the numerous controversies he became embroiled in, Augustine developed a comprehensive theology.

After Manichaeism, the Donatist controversy was the second great controversy in which Augustine was engaged. The Christians in Hippo, as in many African communities, were split between Donatists and Catholics. The schism was eighty-five years old when Augustine became a bishop and he set about establishing the Catholic cause in Hippo. His attack upon Donatism was fourfold; facts, tradition, Scripture, and ecclesiology. He disputed the facts of the Donatist charge that Caecilian had been consecrated a bishop by *traditores*. He emphasised the example of Cyprian who, though in dispute with Stephen over the question of re-admission of *lapsi*, nevertheless remained in communion with the Church in Rome. He rejected the Donatist puritan view of the Church on such scriptural grounds that the wheat and tares remained together in the field until harvest time and that Noah's Ark, as a figure of the Church on earth, contained both clean and unclean animals. He developed a progressive ecclesiology with particular reference to the validity of the sacraments, arguing that baptism was valid *ex opere operato* rather than *ex opere operantis* as the Donatist taught.

Most crucial in this whole struggle was the fact that Augustine's tenure at Hippo coincided with changing Imperial policy which actively sought to suppress all dissenters. This important factor enabled the Catholics of Africa to gain supremacy over the Donatists. Prior to 405 Augustine attempted to win the Donatists by agreeing much common ground with them. Gradually he changed his opinion in this respect and came to argue in favour of State coercion. From the time of Cyprian it is possible to trace a recurring pattern in the North African Church: State action, (initially a pagan State acting in terms of persecuting the Church), inciting Church reaction, (most notably in terms of developing ecclesiology). It will be evident from

a later section in this chapter that Augustine and the Catholics could not convince and defeat the Donatists on scriptural grounds alone. It was the State coercion of the early fifth century which gave the Catholics their victory and Augustine provided the scriptural justification for such action.

The Council of Carthage in 411 was presided over by Marcellinus, the Imperial tribune and friend of Augustine's. Both sides stated their case before him and in due course he declared in favour of the Catholics. On 30 January 412 the Donatist Church was officially banned by the Emperor Honorius and its property was also confiscated. Thus Augustine achieved his victory for the Catholics but it was a hollow victory, succeeding only in driving the Donatist Church underground. State orthodoxy could only be imposed at an official level.

From 413 to 427 Augustine poured immense energy into producing his most famous literary work, *De civitate Dei*. Its inspiration was the cataclysmic Alaric and Goth invasions of Rome in 410. Augustine interpreted this event as God's judgement upon the pagans of the Empire. He wrote of the security of God's kingdom in contrast to transient human kingdoms. No earthly State can be secure forever and the purpose of God is to work through His Church in the world to achieve His purposes.

The third great feature of Augustine's bishopric was his involvement in the Pelagian controversy. Pelagius was a British monk who had lived at Rome for a number of years. He called at Hippo to see Augustine about 411 while on his way to Jerusalem, claiming much the same status as had Augustine and his friends in 388. Augustine was not in Hippo at that precise time and the two men did not meet. However Pelagius' influence was left in Hippo in the person of Celestius, a lawyer and travelling companion of the monk.

Pelagius wrote his own commentary on the Pauline epistles in which he took issue with current interpretation of the concept of mankind's fallen nature in Adam. For Pelagius, Adam's sin consisted of setting a bad example for succeeding generations, he utterly denied the notion that a newborn baby could already be contaminated by

Adam's sin. Amongst other matters Pelagius emphasised that a man's spiritual advancement was dependant upon his free will in making his own decisions. Celestius became a presbyter in Carthage and was very active in advancing Pelagian ideas in Africa. Aurelius was enlightened as to the error of these ideas by Paulinus of Milan, the biographer of Ambrose, and as a result, Celestius was censured at a Synod in Carthage in 412. He promptly left Carthage and travelled to Ephesus.

Augustine initially adopted a low-key approach to this matter, publishing tracts against Pelagius' teaching and even corresponding, in respectful terms, with him. Through the offices of his friend, Orosius, Augustine persuaded Jerome to cause a very public uproar in Jerusalem by declaring that the teaching of Pelagius and Celestius had been officially condemned as heretical in Africa. Although Pelagius was supported in Jerusalem, the whole matter came before a Palestinian Synod at Diospolis in December 415.

Pelagius alone appeared at this Synod and satisfied the assembled bishops that he did not deny the need for God's grace in an individual's life. On hearing of these proceedings, Augustine believed that the investigation at Diospolis lacked depth. Further African Councils met in Numidia and Proconsular Africa in 416 and both condemned Pelagius and referred the matter to Pope Innocent I in Rome. Innocent promptly agreed with Augustine and the Africans but no action was taken as he died within three months.

Celestius travelled to Rome to assure the new Pope, Zosimus (417-19), that both he and Pelagius did believe in the need for infant baptism. Pelagius sent his new book to Zosimus explaining his thinking on human free will. The new Pope was impressed by Pelagius' high morality and his humilty before papal authority and informed the African Church that, in his opinion, Pelagius was orthodox. The African Church reacted to this news with such angry passion over several months that Zosimus had to assure them that he had taken no final decision on the matter.

During this breathing space Augustine made a direct approach to the Emperor at Ravenna. In consequence an Imperial edict on 30 April 418 banished the Pelagians

from Rome on the grounds that they were a threat to peace. Zosimus was forced to fall in line with Imperial policy in this matter and he issued a formal condemnation of Pelagius and Celestius. Eighteen Italian bishops refused to accept this volte-face and so were driven into exile. Pelagius and Celestius both died in obscurity. Zosimus was annoyed by Augustine's tactic of direct appeal to the Emperor and perhaps sought his revenge in the matter of the African priest Apiarius.[12]

Augustine seized the initiative and publicised his own teaching on human sin and God's salvation. Infants are in need of baptism, and although they have committed no actual sins, their baptism must be for inherited sin. The tranmission of such sin is bound up with the process of reproduction, hence virginity, for Augustine, is a higher state than marriage. As a corollary to sinful human nature, God, in his mercy and by His grace alone, elects some individuals to salvation. This teaching, notably about predestination, attracted many critics throughout the Church. For example, Vincent of Lerins (d. about 435) in his *Commonitorium*, regarded Augustine's teaching as a disturbing innovation, completely out of step with orthodoxy which he defined as that body of belief which is held *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*.[13] At a Council held at Orange in 529 it was decreed, in agreement with Augustine's teaching, that Divine grace is prior to any human response in salvation, but not irresistible.

Augustine died and was buried on 28 August 430. He spent the last three years of his life in his library in Hippo and here he gave himself to the task of putting his vast literary output in order.[14] His *Retractationes* is the result of his review of his main works. It comprises a catalogue of titles, arranged in chronological order, with an accompanying summary of content. Within a year of his death Hippo was evacuated and partly burnt and a new Arian Christianity came to power in Carthage. Possidius compiled a full list of Augustine's works and also an account of his life.

It is no exaggeration to state that all Western theology, at least until the time of the Reformation, lies in the shadow of Augustine. Many of his works inspired subsequent generations of Christian writers and teachers. The term 'Augustinianism' encapsulates his abiding influence. It is useful for modern Christians to note that

there is a distinction to be made between 'orthodox Augustine' (the authentic Augustine; his own writings and thought) and 'heterodox Augustine' (the development of Augustine's original teaching applied to modern problems which either did not exist at all for him or existed in a different form). However, whether we agree with Augustine or disagree with him, he cannot be ignored. He is assured of an honoured place in the very forefront of Church History.

According to Victor of Vita, Augustine wrote two hundred and thirty-two books in addition to his many letters and sermons.[15] Many of these are extant and useful primary sources for details of Augustine's life and teaching. These aside, there are three main sources for the life of Aurelius Augustine, bishop of Hippo. These are: the *Confessiones*, the *Retractationes*, and the *Vita Augustini* by Possidius. Together these works shed more autobiographical and historical light upon Augustine than any other Church Father. In addition, the *Dialogues of Cassiciacum*[16] which were composed between November 386 and March 387 also yield important clues as to Augustine's thoughts prior to his baptism.

The *Confessiones* are among the best known and most widely read works of Augustine. This work was begun after Ambrose's death, (4 April 397), and completed about 400. The first part, chapters 1-9, covers the period from Augustine's conversion to the death of his mother Monica at Ostia in 387. The second part, chapters 10-13, was added at a later date and describe Augustine's thoughts at that later time of composition. Throughout the *Confessiones* Augustine seeks to praise God for everything, good and bad, and his deepening knowledge of all things Christian is apparent. This work represents Augustine's growth in Christian maturity and is an invaluable source for his life.

The *Retractationes* is a lengthy, though unfinished, self-examination of Augustine's literary output. His motives and thoughts are analysed in some detail. Although he considered writing such a work as early as 412,[17] he did not begin the work until 426-7.[21] All his literary works were examined under the headings: books, letters, and treatises. Only his books were actually reviewed, which he numbered at 232 among 93 works. Each book was reviewed in chronological order. Although only partially

completed, the *Retractationes* is an important source of information on Augustinian primary sources.

The *Vita Sancti Augustini* of Possidius was written between 431 and 439 and comprises a biography of Augustine written on the basis of personal reminiscences.[19] Possidius himself lived in Augustine's monastic community at Hippo from 391. After 397 he became Catholic bishop of Calama, in Numidia, and played a prominent role in the Council of Carthage in 411. When Calama was invaded by the Vandals in 428, Possidius fled with other bishops to Hippo where he remained and tended Augustine in the latter's final illness. The *Vita* is a biography in the style of Suetonius and, despite the limits of this genre, is a useful source of both public and private aspects of Augustine's life.

Attached to the *Vita Augustini*, Possidius appended an *Indicihus* of Augustine's works.[20] This also is a valuable document in which Possidius lists 1,030 books, letters, and treatises which he attributes to Augustine and he acknowledges that there are others he has omitted. In addition, *Sermones* 355 and 346 contribute some details on Augustine's activity in forming monasteries at Hippo at the beginning of his episcopate. These sermons were delivered in 425 and 426 respectively.

The vast majority of Augustine's works are extant and provide a wealth of information about his thought on a wide range of subjects. His many works can be listed in a variety of ways; philosophical, theological, and spiritual. Other attempts at classification follow Augustine's own threefold division of books, letters and treatises. Often it proves necessary to subdivide the books under such headings as; autobiographical, philosophical, apologetic, dogmatic, pastoral, monastic, exegetical and polemical.

AUGUSTINE'S ANTI-DONATIST WORKS.

Several of Augustine's great polemical works against the Donatists are extant, especially *Contra epistolam Parmeniani, De baptismo contra Donatistas, Contra litteras Petiliani Donatistae,* and *De unico baptismo contra Petilianum.*

Contra epistolam Parmeniani was written about 400 in response to a letter from Parmenian to Tyconius. Parmenian criticised Tyconius for expressing the view that the true Church is universal and not merely confined to North Africa. Tyconius had referred this letter to the Catholics for an answer. In his reply Augustine relates the origins of the Donatist schism, upholds the universality of the Church, and defends the notion of the Church as a *corpus permixtum.*

De baptismo contra Donatistas is, arguably, the most important of Augustine's anti-Donatist works. This is a fundamental Catholic treatise against the claims of Donatism. It is a work of seven Books and as such comprises one of the longest of Augustine's writings on the Donatist schism. Specifically it examines the nature of baptism, arguing that individuals receiving heretical or schismatic baptism need not necessarily be re-baptised upon joining the Catholic Church. Augustine also argues that both the teaching and example of Cyprian support the Catholic position more than that of the Donatists. *De baptismo* was completed about 400 in fulfilment of a promise Augustine made in Book two of *Contra epistolam Parmeniani.*[21] A full examination of Augustine's arguments and use of Scripture in *De baptismo* will follow in a later section.

Contra litteras Petiliani Donatistae is a work directed against Petilian, Donatist bishop of Cirta, who had written a letter to his own bishops and against the Catholic Church. Book One is Augustine's immediate response and Book Two is his more considered response after obtaining and examining a copy of Petilian's letter. Book Three is a response to a second letter of Petilian's which was itself a response to Augustine's Book One. All three books were written between 401-403 and the two main subjects are the validity of baptism irrespective of the moral standing of the officiating minister, and the Imperial laws against Donatism.

De unico baptismo contra Petilianum was written in 410 as a reply to Petilian's treatise, *De unico baptismo*. While dealing with the central question of the nature of baptism, part of this work is devoted to an examination of the ordination of Caecilian.

SECONDARY LITERATURE AND SOURCE EDITIONS.

Although Augustine has inspired a vast quantity of secondary literature it is a surprising fact that there is no complete translation of all Augustine's works in English. From his lifetime to the present day, his name has been invoked to substantiate theological views from all sides of Western Christendom. Throughout this current century Augustinian studies have continued.

For over fourteen hundred years the secondary literature on Augustine drew unquestioningly from the aforementioned primary sources for information about his life. From the late nineteenth-century, however, questions were raised by Adolf von Harnack and others[22] against the reliability of these sources, and the *Confessiones* in particular. As the *Confessiones* were written at least ten years after Augustine's baptism, it is argued that they contain embellishments as the now-famous bishop of Hippo reflects upon his conversion. Should not a distinction be made between the facts Augustine relates with accuracy and the opinions he expresses as author of the Confessiones at a later date? Further exploration of this matter would clearly fall outside the parameters of this thesis.

The works of Augustine have been significant since his own lifetime. Collections of sermons evolved, notably *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, the only complete treatise on the Psalms in Patristic literature, and *Tractatus in Iohannem*, a collection of one hundred and twenty-four sermons. Until the Middle Ages many spurious sermons were added to and mixed with genuine Augustinian material. Since Renaissance times many scholars have attempted to separate the genuine from the false.

One of the best known editions of Augustine's works is that of the Benedictines of St. Maur. Their work was published between 1679 and 1700. Several 'definitive editions' of Augustine's sermons have been published. The best general edition of Augustine's works is still that of the Benedictines of St. Maur, with the exception of the sermons which are incomplete. The most readily available text is that of Abbe J.P. Migne in *Patrologia Latina* which is an imperfect copy of the Benedictine text. The most modern critical edition is that of the Viennese *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* and the *Corpus Christianorum* of Brepols. The production of a critical edition of Augustine's, or any ancient author's, work is a intensive labour, necessitating identification of a *stemma* or *stemmata* demonstrating the interdependance of extant manuscripts.

The discovery in Marseilles in 1980, by the Austrian scholar Johannes Divjak, of twenty-seven previously unpublished letters by Augustine was an exciting development in Augustinian studies.[23] Actually these letters were discovered in two manuscripts. New evidence has emerged from this correspondance concerning Donatism, Pelagianism, Priscillianism and a previously unknown political riot in Carthage in 422. These new letters appear to have been written between 416 and 428 and provide several references to Donatists in the aftermath of the Catholic victory in 411.

In epistle 22 Augustine writes concerning the succession to the Catholic bishop Deuterius at Mauretanian Caesarea in 419. It seems that the former Donatist bishop of the town, Emeritus, laid claim to the position, but that the majority of the people demanded, and received, Honorius, Catholic bishop of Cartenna as their new bishop (in contravention of the canons of Nicea). Augustine played the role of mediator. While Augustine's preference was that Honorius voluntarily decline the position at Caesarea, appeal was made to pope Boniface, but the outcome is unknown at the time of writing this letter. Other references to Donatism are contained in epistles 28 (in which the Catholic bishop of Sitifis reports to Augustine that the nearby Donatist community at Abessa has very largely become Catholic) and 23A (in which it is recorded that Vincentius Victor of Cartenna had switched his allegiance from the Rogatist bishop of that town and had become a supporter of Augustine).

Breviculus Conlationis cum Donatistis is a summary of the official reports of the Carthaginian Conference in 411.[24] It was written for the Catholics by Augustine. This work follows the chronological order of debate at the Conference and focuses clearly on the main issues. It is unashamedly a pro-Catholic account though Augustine could legitimately claim that it was based upon the official record of the Conference. The official record of the proceedings was itself very long and confused.

Undoubtedly Augustine ranks as one of the greatest Fathers of the Church and such evaluations are not uncommon in the secondary literature. The year after Augustine died, Pope Celestine I pronounced him, 'one of the best teachers in the Church'.[25] Certainly there appears to be a well established consensus that he deserves the wealth of secondary literature he has attracted.

The great bishop united in himself the creative energy of Tertullian and the breadth of spirit of Origen with the ecclesiastical sensitivity of Cyprian; the dialectical acumen of Aristotle with the soaring idealism and speculation of Plato; the practical sense of the Latins with the spiritual subtilty of the Greeks. He was the greatest philosopher of the patristic era and, without doubt, the most important and influential theologian of the Church in general.[26]

AUGUSTINE:- THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE IN 411.

a). Events leading to the Conference.

African Christians had been split between Catholics and Donatists for three-quarters of a century when Augustine returned from Italy in 388. The Donatists were no tiny minority. According to Jerome, 'nearly all Africa' accepted Donatus.[27] Quoting Tyconius, Augustine records that Donatus had presided over a Donatist Council comprising about 270 bishops which had deliberated for seventy-five days.[28]

Augustine accepted ordination as a presbyter in the Catholic Church at Hippo in the spring of 391 and four years later he was consecrated as co-adjutor of the elderly Valerius. The Donatist party outnumbered their rival Catholic party at Hippo at this time and throughout Africa the Donatists were at their peak of influence and strength. The most powerful Donatist bishop was Optatus of Thamugad who controlled all of southern Numidia and was secure under the protection of the military commander, Gildo. It was the political fallout following Gildo's revolt, coupled with much improved Catholic organisation and communication, which ultimately turned the tide in favour of the Catholics. Augustine made a very significant contribution to breaking the theological impasse in Africa. It is my intention in this section to consider Augustine's imput in combination with these aforementioned factors.

The Kabyle chief, Gildo, initiated a political crisis in 397 by seizing power in North Africa and confronting the Emperor Honorius. This was no sudden act of defiance. He was long suspected of being less than loyal in his management of the all important corn shipments to Rome.[29] The Roman State responded with power, sending a fleet to Africa at the beginning of 398 and easily defeating Gildo at Ammaedara in April afterwhich the usurper committed suicide. Gildo had been supported in his rebellion by some at least of the Donatist leaders, most notably Optatus. The Donatist bishop's ten-year episcopate ended when he was arrested and executed.

Important ecclesiastical ramifications followed. As a direct consequence of Optatus' links with Gildo the Donatists in general were suspected of disloyalty. It was at this time that Roman law against heretics was applied to the Donatists. Augustine records one case[30] in which a Catholic successfully appealed against the will of his late Donatist sister who had made a Donatist bishop, Augustinus, chief beneficiary. The judgement was given against the Donatists on the grounds that no heretic could gain from any legacy. As early as 396 Augustine had appealed to the magistrates of Hippo to note the illegal activities of his Donatist rival in the town.[31] Augustine's conflict with the Donatists gathered pace after Gildo's revolt as the tide began to turn in favour of the Catholics.

In tandem with this new political and legal pressure upon the Donatists, Catholic coherence improved under Aurelius, and these factors enabled the Catholics to seize the initiative against their rivals. From 397 Aurelius convened annual Catholic Councils at Carthage which bonded his Church for the confrontation with the Donatists. The stage was therefore set for Augustine to introduce his theories of Church and sacrament upon the North African situation.

Initially the Catholic bishops were most concerned with their own Church in their annual Councils. Their earliest debates focused upon the requirements to be placed upon certain classes of Donatists who joined their Church. They found themselves at odds, for example, with the harsh terms imposed by the Council of Capua[32] upon Donatist clergy who joined the Catholic Church. The African Catholic clergy sought certain exemptions from this ordinance[33] and much was made of the common theological ground between the two sides. This somewhat softly softly approach gained some success as a considerable number of Donatists came over to their side in the closing years of the fourth century. The Catholic bishops were soon encouraged to think in terms of actively engaging local Donatists in discussion.

The arrival, in 401, of Count Bathanarius as the new *Comes Africa* further developed Catholic confidence. He supported the new Catholic policy of encouraging their bishops to engage in 'friendly' discussion with their Donatist rivals.[34] Augustine pursued this policy with determination, engaging the Donatist bishop of Constantina, Petilian, for some time in public debate. The Donatists were not unaware of this change in emphasis and their reaction was swift and widespread, resulting in violence in many areas. There were numerous examples of beatings, blindings, hostage taking and vitriolic declarations.

At the annual Catholic Council on 25 August 403 it was agreed to invite the Donatist bishops to a Conference at which a solution to the schism might be found and invitations were subsequently issued from Catholic bishops to Donatist bishops. This appears to have been a genuine, though perhaps naïve, attempt to span the gulf between the two sides as the initiative was communicated through local magistrates in order to anticipate possible Donatist sensitivities at appearing to be responding to

Catholic overtures. At any rate this overture and the tone of extant partial replies indicate the prevalent depth of alienation between Donatist and Catholic.[35] To the Donatist way of thinking, they were being insulted. That they should stand condemned under law, only then to be summoned before local magistrates, many of whom were pagan, was more than they could stomach. The Donatist bishops abruptly declined the offer to meet at Conference and the Circumcellions embarked upon a reign of terror throughout southern Numidia. Possidius, Catholic bishop of Calama and Augustine's future biographer, was himself maltreated at this time. As a result of this violent reaction the Catholics resolved, at their meeting on 16 June 404, to request the Emperor to protect the loyal North African Catholics and also to enact the law of Theodosius[36] against those Donatists who had attacked Catholics. In effect this entailed a fine of ten pounds of gold.

Interestingly, it was at this same Council in 404 that Augustine rejected the urging of the more vociferous Catholics who wished to coerce dissident Donatists into submission to the Catholic cause. The example of success in his home town of Thagaste by the rigorous enforcement of the *Compelle intrare* in the days of Macarius was an argument which did not convince him at this time to follow suit throughout Africa. The Emperor responded by drafting a new law,[37] now lost, which ordered the suppression of Donatism, including the closing of their buildings and the exile of Donatist bishops and their assistants. Other laws followed in February and December 405.[38]

Such measures were only partially successful. While Augustine noted that some Donatists were glad of a reason to abandon their schism,[39] resistance was hardened in other areas and attacks upon Catholics continued. The Catholic Church at Bagai was burned by the Donatists[40] and the Catholics at Hippo found it necessary to appeal to the Donatist clergy for protection against Donatist attack.[41] As was so often the case in African Church-State relations, the law was never fully implemented against the Donatists. This period was marked by major disasters and unrest throughout the Western Empire and the Donatist bishops were never deported. Bathanarius was assasinated in 407 and succeeded in Africa by Augustine's close friend, Olympius. Although he confirmed the earlier laws against the Donatists,[42] he was replaced in the

following year by the pagan Jovian who issued an edict of toleration.[43] The new Catholic stratagem for supremacy stuttered. With renewed determination they sent envoys to Ravenna and as a result, on 25 August 410, a new edict against the Donatists was issued.[44]

On 14 October 410 Honorius consented to a Council attended by both sides in the African schism. Marcellinus was appointed Commissioner of the Council and he set the opening day as 1 June 411 in the Baths of Gargilius in Carthage. According to agreed procedure, each side appointed seven speakers, aided by seven non-speaking councellors and four commissioners entrusted with drawing up minutes of the entire proceedings. The Catholic speakers were, Aurelius of Carthage, Augustine of Hippo, Alypius of Thagaste, Possidius of Calama and the bishops of Constantina, Sicca and Culusi. The Donatist speakers were, Primianus of Carthage, Petilian of Constantina, Emeritus of Caesarea in Mauretania, Gaudentius of Thamugad and three others. Because the Donatists refused to 'sit among sinners' the entire proceedings were conducted with all parties, Catholics, Donatists and even Marcellinus standing throughout each day.

The earliest days of the Council were taken in organising precise procedures to follow and submitting preliminary positions. At the Donatist's insistence every signatory of both sides had to be vouched for in person before Marcellinus. There were 266 Catholic bishops present and 279 Donatists. Other obstructions included the question of which side was the plaintiff and which the defendant. It was only on 8 June that the discussion proper was enjoined in earnest.

Augustine spoke at length on the third day of debate and produced many biblical texts to support the Catholic contention that the Church is a mixed society and will remain so until the final Day of Judgement. He was also able to expose to ridicule the Donatist claim that the true Church of God should consist of a tiny grouping in Africa. *'Non autem invenerunt aliquod testimonium divinorum eloquiorum, ubi dictum est eam perituram de ceteris partibus mundi et in sola Africa Donati parte mansuram'.*[45] It was to prove an abiding weakness of Donatism that it never built any solid support outside its country of origin. Although a brief attempt was made at

the Carthaginian Conference to present a certain Felix as the Donatist bishop of Rome, this was quietly played down when immediately challenged by Aurelius.[46] The extant *Breviculus conlationis* was penned by Augustine at this time and is a useful summary of the debate and decisions of the Carthaginian Conference.

The debate moved also to the accusations brought against Caecilian a hundred years earlier. The Catholics demonstrated that Constantine had concluded upon the evidence of both Imperial and Church courts that neither Caecilian nor Felix were worthy of any condemnation. Marcellinus pronounced his verdict against the Donatists and in favour of the Catholics in all points. On 26 June, Marcellinus issed an edict in which he invited the Donatists to accept his decision and be united with the Catholics upon the generous terms the latter had offered. Otherwise he decreed that they must give up their buildings and their meetings were forbidden. In response the Donatists appealed to the Emperor who responded with a law on 30 January 412,[47] imposing fines and deportation from Africa upon Donatist clergy.

The sweet taste of victory was soured for the Catholics by immediate political events which claimed the life of the Conference Commissioner and Augustine's close friend, Marcellinus. Heraclian, who had governed Africa since 409, remained loyal to Honorius during the usurpation of Attalus, but revolted in 412 and was executed in Carthage in July 413. He was succeeded by Marinus who arrested Marcellinus as a close friend of Heraclian. Marinus had him executed on 13 September 413.[48] Donatist fortunes briefly revived but Marinus in turn was ousted and a new regime confirmed the earlier laws against the Donatists. Throughout Africa the Catholics pressed for union and had some success in gaining converts from schism.

b). State Coercion of Donatism.

Before examining the theological contentions raised by this schism it is worth noting Augustine's record as regards State coercion of the Donatists. This is an important element in the whole equation for at least three reasons; Augustine clearly changed his mind on the propriety of such action against Donatism, it was the implementation of such coercion which ultimately tipped the scales in favour of the Catholic cause, and his use of State coercion was used in subsequent Church history to justify persecution of some Christian minorities.

That Augustine's views on the question of intervention by the Christian State changed is beyond dispute. We have already noted that Augustine resisted a policy of active coercion at the Catholic Council of June 404. He obviously changed his mind by 409 when he wrote to Vincentius, Rogatist bishop of Cartenna, in the following terms;

> We see not a few men here and there, but many cities, once Donatist, now Catholic, vehemently detesting the diabolical schism, and ardently loving the unity of the Church; and these became Catholic under the influence of that fear which is to you so offensive by the laws of emperors, from Constantine, before whom your party of their own accord impeached Caecilianus, down to the emperors of our own time, who most justly decree that the decision of the judge whom your own party chose, and whom they preferred to a tribunal of bishops, should be maintained in force against you. I have therefore yielded to the evidence afforded by these instances which my colleagues have laid before me. For originally my opinion was, that no one should be coerced into the unity of Christ, that we must act only by words, fight only by arguments, and prevail by force of reason, lest we should have those whom we know as avowed heretics feigning themselves to be Catholics. But this opinion of mine was overcome not by the words of those who controverted it, but by the conclusive instances to which they could point.[49]

The Donatists themselves felt that although they had 'lost the war', they had not lost the argument. Seven years after the Conference of 411, in what reads as a poignant footnote to the theological arguments, the Donatists were able to blame their defeat on the use of State coercion. Augustine was in Caesarea in Mauretania in 418. There, in the main square of the town, he met the former Donatist bishop and spokesperson of 411, Emeritus. Although the vast majority of his flock had joined the ranks of the Catholics, Emeritus still had some loyal followers remaining in schism. Augustine led Emeritus to the Church where he wished to debate and regurgitate the rights and wrongs of the schism. Formal records of two sessions are extant[50] in which Emeritus would not be drawn into public debate and made a simple protest against the Catholic use of the Conference of 411. 'The Acts show whether I was conquered by the truth or overwhelmed by force'. He could not be induced by Augustine into further comment.

Augustine's theory and practice of coercion against the Donatists helped define Church-State relations in Western civilisation throughout the Middle Ages and later. He has been portrayed as 'le prince et patriarche des persecuteurs'.[51] As there could be no accomodation of minority expressions of Christianity in Africa so the repression of religious dissent and such minorities continued throughout much of Church history. The persecution of the Huguenots by Louis XIV was expressly justified by reference to the Catholic persecution of the Donatists.[52]

Of course Augustine was not the first to involve the State in the affairs of the Church. From the time of Constantine, Church-State relations could never be the same again and were to be intertwined for many centuries. Pre-Augustinian Imperial attempts at facilitating a solution to the North African schism all failed to achieve peace. Often what seemed to be appropriate and watertight legislation for the situation was reluctantly or only partially implemented in Africa and so the schism became an accepted feature in North Africa. Official declarations of unity meant little in areas like southern Numidia where Donatists outnumbered Catholics. Despite several attempts at legislating for a solution Donatism continued to thrive and operate openly.

In the last decade of the fourth century Augustine was clearly a supporter of religious freedom. Around 391 he wrote; 'Jesus Christ did nothing through violence, but accomplished everything through advice and warnings'.[53] In 393 the Maximianist schism developed among the Donatists in Carthage and quickly spread throughout Proconsular Africa and Numidia. The dissenters were quickly and ruthlessly crushed by the Donatist authorities with the help of the Roman authorities in the province. Augustine was later to make several references to this Donatist example and precedent in using force to coerce schismatics into line.[54] It is a moot point though as to whether Augustine was immediately struck in 393 by the attraction of using force against schismatics or whether he thought back on this example at a later date when the Catholics embarked upon a similar course of action against their Donatist rivals.

For about three years, 393-396, Augustine sought unsuccessfully to engage local Donatist bishoips in public debate. In these years he went out of his way to

emphasise the common ground between Catholics and Donatists. It is, he wrote, only arguments about the distant past which separate them.[55] Augustine wrote two important letters to Donatist bishops at this time; to Maximinus of Sinitum, near Hippo, in 392[56] and to Proculeianus of Hippo in 396.[57] This first letter was prompted by Maximinus' re-baptism of an ex-Catholic deacon in Mutugenna, described by Augustine as an act of *immanissimum scelus*. Despite this judgement upon this action Augustine addresses Maximinus as *dilectissimo et honorabili fratri*. The Donatist reply is unknown yet some fifteen years later he became a Catholic.[58] In this second letter also Augustine writes with much deference to Proculeianus. The Donatists however kept their personal distance from Augustine, refusing to debate publicly with him.

Augustine's ideas on State-Church relations may have begun to change about 396. In that year he lost a member of his own congregation at Hippo to the Donatists. This unnamed individual beat his own mother who remained a Catholic.[59] Augustine made an official complaint about this matter to Eusebius, the *vicarius* of Numidia, requesting him to guarantee that the Donatist bishop control the excesses of his own clergy. This marks the first step for Augustine on the road to approval of State intervention in the affairs of the Church. It was a small step though as he wrote that he was still against the coercion of anyone into the Catholic Church.[60]

Another significant step along the road to coercion was taken in 397 with the publication of his first major work against Donatism, *Contra epistolam Donati haeretici*. In this work Augustine argued that the Donatists were heretics on the grounds that they practiced re-baptism. Over twenty years later Augustine admitted that at the time of writing this work he was *nondum expertus* in Donatist theology.[61] The importance of this work cannot be overestimated. If the Donatists were indeed heretics as Augustine now stated, then they were liable to imperial laws against heretics.[62]

Theodosius died at Milan on 19 January 395 and Gildo, who was a younger brother of Firmus, followed his brother's actions and revolted against Rome in 397. On 31 July 398 Gildo was defeated by Mascazel and with his death Donatist opportunity

for mastery in Africa also died. The fact that many Donatist bishops, most notably Optatus of Thamugadi, had supported Gildo painted the whole Donatist Church in colours of disloyalty.

There appears to be little doubt that the period 399-401 marks the conversion of Augustine to the idea that it was appropriate for the State to use force in these matters. Two sermons which he preached at Carthage at this time illustrate his train of thought.[63] As God had used force to convert Paul to Christianity, so ought not the State to coerce schismatics and heretics into the true faith of the Church?[64] Although the main thrust of these sermons was directed against paganism, it is evident that Augustine had come round some way to the principle of using force to impose religious conformity. Augustine's earliest surviving work against the Donatists, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, was written at this same time, 399, and justifies the use of the secular power against the Donatists who are identified as heretics.[65] Firmus and his Donatist allies had broken Roman laws in their revolt, current laws against heretics could now be invoked, and the saving of souls demanded urgent action.

The perceptible change in Augustine's thought was confirmed by events in 404. Possidius, Augustine's friend and fellow Catholic bishop, was attacked by Circumcellions and only just survived.[66] Augustine held Crispinus, the Donatist bishop of Calama, responsible and brought a case against him, the charge being that he was a heretic. Possidius denied this charge, claiming that the difference between the Donatists and Catholics was one of schism only. Crispinus won his case. Augustine and Possidius appealed successfully against this decision to the Proconsul and Crispinus was found guilty as charged and fined ten pounds in gold.[67] Augustine and Possidius, agreeing that the principle that Donatism was heresy had been adequately proven, intervened and the fine was remitted.[68] Crispinus in turn appealed against this decision and travelled to the Emperor's court at Ravenna.

It was not this incident however, but that involving Maximian of Bagai which proved decisive in changing Imperial attitudes towards the Donatists. Maximian had been Donatist bishop of Bagai in southern Numidia but he had joined the Catholics. He was attacked by Circumcellions who inflicted terrible personal injuries. Maximian

recovered sufficiently and travelled to Ravenna to state his grievances before the Emperor.[69] His scars proved the most potent argument to date and a whole series of decrees were issed with the intention of stamping out Donatism.[70] The Donatists were equated with the Manichees, their property confiscated, meetings forbidden, clergy threatened with exile, their right to make legal contracts removed, and no right to receive or bequeath legacies. On the day these decrees were announced in Carthage, Primian, Petilian and other prominent Donatist leaders set out for Ravenna to lodge their appeal.[71]

Unity was declared by the power of secular force. At their Council in Carthage on 23 August 405, the Catholics conveyed their gratitude to the Emperor for his action. The imperial edict and supplementary *decreta* hit the Donatist Church hard. Augustine wrote to his former fellow student and now Donatist bishop, Vincentius, of the successes across Africa as many Donatist communities became Catholic.[72]

At this time we first see Augustine's use of the instructions to the servants in the parable of the marriage feast, 'Compel them to come in'. [73] A subtle extension of this text was for Augustine the link between State coercion and the salvation of fallen mankind. Left to exercise liberty, fallen man could only choose wrong. State correction was of benefit in that it was an instrument for bringing those outside the Church into the unity of the Church where saving grace was operative. This is another way of saying that if he could not convince the Donatists from Scripture alone, he would resort to coercion to ensure their compliance with his views. The end justifies the means.

Primian's appeal to the Emperor was heard at Ravenna in January 406 though impeded somewhat by the presence also of the Catholic bishop, Valentinus. The result was inconclusive and the Donatists were permitted to return to Africa, still protesting that they were not heretics. The following years witnessed increasing instability of government. Further measures were passed against the Donatists. On 15 November 407 current anti-Donatist legislation was applied in Rome for the first time. Three measures were introduced in November 408; the partisans of Gildo were proscribed,[74] disruption of Catholic services was forbidden,[75] and all meetings

of heretics were banned.[76] Further measures followed in January 409. Many Donatists however stood firm in the face of State persecution.[77] Augustine's own rival bishop in Hippo, Macrobius, actually returned in triumphal procession to the town surrounded by Circumcellions.[78]

Priscus Attalus, the *Praefectus Urbi* of Rome, renounced his allegiance to the Emperor Honorius on 3 November 409 and, early in 410, attempted to seize control of North Africa. The North Africans remained loyal to Honorius and in gratitude he issued a decree on 25 June 410 pardoning all Africans who owed tax arrears.[79] It seems likely that some sort of toleration edict which applied to the Donatists preceded this decree concerning tax arrears. The text of this edict has not survived but certainly the Catholics took great exception to it and a high ranking Catholic delegation left Carthage on 14 June 410 to appeal to the Emperor against it. The efforts of the delegation were successful and on 25 August Honorius instructed his *Comes Africa*, Heraclian, to crush all heresy 'in blood and proscription'.[80]

The final stage in the secular pressure upon Donatism was launched with the dispatch of Flavius Marcellinus from Ravenna to preside at a joint Catholic-Donatist conference in North Africa. The odds were stacked against the Donatists at the ensuing Carthaginian Conference in 411. Marcellinus was pre-disposed to the Catholic side, Augustine having dedicated his work, *De Peccatorum Meritis*, to him.[81] An imperial edict of 14 October 410 had instructed Marcellinus with the task of 'removal of superstition' in Africa, surely a phrase aimed at the Donatists.

As we have seen, the Conference decision was against the Donatists. Although they appealed once again to the Emperor against this decision, Honorius issued a final decree on 30 January 412 proscribing Donatism. The full weight of the law was now brought to bear upon the African schismatics.

Unlike previous decrees, on this occasion the law was effective. Whole congregations joined the Catholic Church. New evidence relates that all bar the city council members of Aba in Mauretania Sifitensis became Catholics.[82] While Augustine would not acknowledge that State force was the trump card in the

Catholic confrontation with the Donatists, nevertheless he did acknowledge that it was one of the contributory factors in the Catholic triumph.[83] In an action designed to prevent the creation of a new batch of Donatist martyrs, Augustine urged Marcellinus to temper State force with restraint.[84]

c). The Nature of the Church.

In theological terms, the bone of contention at the heart of this lengthy North African controversy was the question of the nature of the Church. Where was the true Church to be found? All Christians believed that there was one Church, which was interpretated as one visible organisation and so whichever side, Catholic or Donatist, which could endorse its claim to be this one Church, automatically cancelled the standing of their rival. Augustine addressed this basic question with a comprehensive approach by which he attempted to solve a number of interrelated problems. While his priority was to justify the Catholic claim to be the true Church of North Africa, this strand of the problem could not be tackled in isolation. Theories of Church, ministry and sacrament were intertwined. Further complications were provided by claim and counter-claim for the imprimatur of Cyprian and Augustine's developing perspective on Church-State relations. Augustine's contribution to the North African schism proved to be a catalyst and as a result of the ensuing ecclesiological debate the doctrines of Church and sacrament in particular evolved to new forms which proved far-reaching in subsequent generations of the Church throughout the Middle Ages and beyond.

Augustine was not the first Catholic bishop to challenge the Donatist position. Some thirty years earlier,[85] Optatus, the Catholic bishop of Milevis in Numidia, wrote six books against Donatism; *Valentiniano et Valente principibus*.[86] The original title is unknown though scholars today refer to them either as *Adversus Parmenianum Donatistam* or *De schismate Donatistarum*. It was a reply to an anti-Catholic work by Parmenianus which had been written in 362. In this work Optatus anticipated Augustine to a remarkable degree, both in collecting as many documents as possible with a relevance to the facts of the schism in its early phase and theologically questioning the Donatist doctrines of Church unity and sacramental efficacy.

Several points which Optatus raises in his anti-Donatist work were reiterated by Augustine, notably the universality of the Church and the basis of baptismal validity. In Book Two particularly Optatus points out that one of the marks of the true Church is its unity. He argues that as the Catholics are in communion with the universal Church and the Donatists are confined to North Africa, it is the Catholics, and not the Donatists, of North Africa who comprise the true Church.

> Is she (the Church) not to be in Spain, in Gaul, in Italy, where you are not? If you maintain that she is with you only, is she not to be in Pannonia, in Dacia, Moesia, Thrace, Achaea, Macedonia and in all Greece, where you are not? In order that you may be able to argue that she is with you, is she not to be in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Pamphylia, Phrygia, Cilicia and in the three Syrias, and in the two Armenias, and in all Egypt and in Mesopotamia, where you are not? And is she not to be throughout innumerable islands and so many other provinces which can hardly be counted, where you are not?[87]

In Book Five Optatus rejects the Donatist practice of re-baptising all Catholics who join them by reference to the decision of the Council of Arles in August 314 which had specifically declared against this practice of re-baptising reconciled heretics. Referring to Christ's words to Peter after he had washed his feet[88] Optatus writes, 'In saying 'once' He forbade it to be done again'.[89] Augustine was further to explore these ideas in his opposition to the Donatists. While Augustine could not claim originality in his rejection of re-baptism, he did advance the ideas even of Optatus. For example he drew a general parallel between ordination and baptism, ruling that the former were valid even if administered by schismatics. Nowhere in his writings did Optatus make this link, confining his views to baptism only. Augustine assumes a parity between baptism and ordination in this respect but never attempts to prove it. Not until the eleventh and twelfth centuries was his teaching accepted though and there are many examples of re-ordinations in the intervening centuries.

At the beginning of his work Optatus calls Parmenianus a 'brother' and is careful to distinguish the Donatist sin as one of schism as opposed to heresy. This somewhat diplomatic approach was evidently made in the hope of easing the way back to the Catholic Church for errant, though repentant, Donatists. Augustine did emulate this

approach in the initial stages of his contact with Donatism though he had hardened his position by the second decade of the fifth century. Interestingly also, a later section of Optatus' work is devoted to an examination of the scriptural passages and examples employed by the Donatists to support their stance against the Catholics.[90] The importance of Optatus for Augustine is undeniable. He is the only known Catholic Father prior to Augustine to examine and challenge the Donatist doctrines of Church and sacrament.

AUGUSTINE: CHURCH, MINISTRY AND SACRAMENT.

a). The Church.

The Nicene Creed affirms the four distinguishing marks of the Church; it is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. All Christians were agreed on this unity or oneness of the Church. As there is only one Christ, so there is only one Bride of Christ.[91] For Augustine, the Donatists' chief offence was that they had broken this unity of the Christian Church. Cyprian was venerated by all North African Christians, Catholic and Donatist alike, and Augustine never tires of pointing out to the Donatists that their hero always maintained the unity of the Christian faith, even with Stephen with whom he disagreed concerning the validity of heretical baptism. It was this aspect of Cyprian's teaching which is of prime importance to Augustine.

There is an important distinction between the unity of the Church as postulated by Cyprian and Augustine. For Cyprian the sin of schism cut the schismatic off completely from the Church. The Church remained one as it always was and would continue to be. In other words, the unity of the Church could not be destroyed by schism. Augustine's theory of the unity of the Church is more subtle. For him, schism harms the body of Christ. Both those in schism and those remaining in the unity of the Church suffer. There is a grey area in Augustine's theory in which schismatics may retain the true faith yet, by definition, offend against the unity of love and thereby render their faith of no benefit. Cyprian had simply discounted all schismatics as outside the Church per se.

Augustine's theory of the Church is more profound than that of his rivals, yet for this reason his answers to basic questions on the nature of Church oneness are more complicated. For example, Augustine states that an individual in schism is only disunited from the Church on the specific points on which he differs from the Church.[92] Based upon this, Augustine will not forbid Donatist baptism, rather he calls upon them not to baptise in schism. It is the fact that they are in schism that nullifies their ministry. Augustine presses this point to the extent that a Catholic, in life threatening emergency, could receive Donatist baptism with real benefit because in his heart he has no part in their schism. Deliberate and wilful schismatic baptism however is of no benefit as it is evidence of a 'perversity of mind'.[93]

Of the four Nicene marks of the Church, 'holiness' is emphasised in more Patristic writings than any of the others. The Church was regarded as holy in itself and also because it was the repository of Divine grace. Catholics, heretics and schismatics alike, all asserted their belief in the holiness of the Church. However, many of the earliest ecclesiological controversies arose over the definition of this holiness and its implications, especially in relation to baptism and penance. The Donatists argued that the holiness of the Church was an empirical reality in the life of every member of the Church. They were separate from the Catholics because the latter, as successors to those who apostasised under Diocletian, had cut themselves off from the one holy Church.

Central to Augustine's doctrine was the *corpus permixtum* nature of the Church. This he sets out to prove by various examples from the time of Cyprian and the Donatist Church itself. He points out that Cyprian himself had been forced to admit that before his time individuals had been admitted to the Church without undergoing re-baptism.[94] How can the Church of the Donatists be holy as they define holiness when it is descended from the contaminated Church of Cyprian's day? According to Augustine, the Donatists themselves were inconsistent on this point also. Felicianus had split from the Donatists in the schism of Maximianus in 392. Along with other Maximianists, Felicianus was excommunicated by the Donatist Council of Bagai in April 394. Felicianus and others later made their peace with Primian and were readmitted into the Donatist Church and restored to their sees as bishops without

receiving either re-baptism or re-ordination. How, asked Augustine, can the Donatists claim to be the one pure and holy Church when, by their own Concilar decision, it contained such sinners?[95]

Whereas Cyprian had been forced to restrict the demonstrable holiness of the Church to the bishops, the Donatists asserted such a definition of holiness upon every member of the Church. Augustine disagreed. He argued that the Church was a *corpus permixtum*, containing both good and evil. Adapting the language of Christ's parable, he taught that there were ears of corn outside the Church just as there were tares inside the Church and both share the same heavenly rain.[96] Nicolaus is an example of the former while Simon Magus is a example of the latter.[97] Neither tares in the Church nor schismatics outside it, destroy the holiness of the Church. Where open and obvious sin *is* exposed the Church operates her discipline (*correctio*) and all other hidden sins will be exposed by God's Judgement. The wheat and tares co-exist in the Church until God's intervention and cannot be separated by man.[98]

In essence, the Donatist versus Catholic debate on the holiness of the Church has been repeated throughout the history of the Church. The *una sancta* of the Church was accepted and revered by all. Rigorist groups have commonly declared that the wider Church has become contaminated by some particular practice or belief. Such contamination necessitates withdrawal from this Church and the formation of a 'purer' Church. Augustine's understanding of the Church as being 'without spot or wrinkle' was eschatological while the Donatists sought empirical holiness. Perhaps the greatest weakness in the Donatist cause was the disproportionate weight they gave to the matter of the *traditores*, making this one issue the measure of the holiness of the Church. There have been many such parallels in subsequent Church history.

'Catholicity', as a mark of the Church, was also a guarantee of true doctrine. Augustine pointed out that the Donatists, with the exception of their bishop in Rome, were confined to North Africa and as such can hardly claim to be the one true Church. The Donatists did make several attempts to establish a cause in Rome, for

example bishop Claudian was elected Donatist bishop of Rome in 376 following his exile from Africa several months earlier. Following the argument of Optatus several years earlier Augustine ridiculed Donatist belief that the true Church had perished all around the world, including the greatest apostolic sees, and remained only in North Africa.[99] Writing against them, Augustine coined the phrase, 'the judgement of the whole world is reliable'.[100] How could the Churches of the East, many of whom had never heard of Donatus, be contaminated and excluded from the true Church?[101] Nowhere in his writings does Augustine show any inkling that perhaps the Donatists had nationalistic aspirations. For him, 'the whole is always, with good reason, looked upon as superior to the parts'.[102]

Apostolicity received less attention than the other marks of the Church in this controversy yet apostolic foundation and apostolic succession were important criteria in establishing the true Church. Hence a unified system of authority evolved with the Churches of apostolic foundation regarded as warrantors of continuity with the golden age of the apostles themselves. The bishopric of Rome which traced its line of bishops back to Peter came to be held in highest esteem. The Donatists could lay no claim to apostolicity. They could not trace their own origins back to the apostles[103] and neither had any Donatists served as bishop of Rome.[104] The Catholics in North Africa were in communion with all the important apostolic sees, including Rome and the East, yet the Donatists were confined to Africa alone.

From all that has been cited above it is clear that Augustine's doctrine of the Church was more complex than anything previously advanced in Africa or elsewhere. He permitted the double possibility that there may be Christians outside the Church and also that not all who are within the Church are necessarily true Christians. Augustine was later to build on this concept and develop the theory of the *certus numerus* of those individuals predestined to eternal life as opposed to those who, though they may be baptised members of the Church, have no part in God's salvation. He developed the notion of the Visible and Invisible Church. While the Visible Church contains both good and bad individuals, so the elect of God who are predestined to eternal life may be found both within and outside the Visible Church. This is a much more profound theory of the Church than that of Cyprian. There is some tension

between Augustine's theory of the Church and his theory of predestination in that he himself never harmonised the two. The *communio sanctorum* and the *numerus predestinatorum* are not always identical in his writings. Augustine was perhaps only able to push his theory of predestination to the extent he did after the Donatist question had been settled and thereby avoiding the necessity of harmonising it with his general theory of the Church.

Perhaps the strongest factor in favour of Augustine's doctrine is that it made possible the admission of Donatists into the Catholic Church without their having to submit to Catholic baptism. As we have seen though, ingenious as his doctrine was, alone it was insufficient to win the theological debate and produce the practical outcome of penitent Donatists flocking to abandon their schism and join the Catholics.

b). Ministry.

On the basis of Jesus' words to Peter, Cyprian had understood that the Church was built upon Peter yet similar power was entrusted to all the apostles.[105] In the controversy over the treatment of the 'lapsed' Cyprian was forced to assess rival theories as to the holiness of the Church. Was the Church holy in the sense that Tertullian had taught, in that every member possessed this quality as an attribute, or was the Church holy in the sense that every member was engaged in the pursuit of holiness? While acknowledging that good and bad co-existed within the Church, Cyprian was not prepared to countenance any compromise as regards the personal holiness of the clergy. Contagion of sin was communicated by sinful clergy and so holy bishops became an essential element in a holy Church. Their holiness was also a guarantee of the purity of the sacraments they administered. It was a noticeable strength of Cyprian's teaching that he tied the unity and holiness of the Church to the unity and holiness of its bishops. Schism for him was easily identified in terms of opposition to the bishop.

Augustine's teaching on ministry flowed naturally from his teaching on the nature of the Church. The personal holiness of clergy and bishops which Cyprian, the Donatists, and so many North Africans emphasised was not for him a measure of whether Divine grace was dispensed. As the Church could not be entirely 'without spot or wrinkle' until the end of time, how then can the clergy and bishops be so?

Many times in his discussion of this matter with the Donatists Augustine asks how someone who receives baptism from an unworthy bishop, yet in ignorance of the unworthiness of that bishop, can be cleansed?[106] In essence, Augustine regarded the question of the morality of clergy and bishops as a matter of Church discipline rather than Church doctrine. He did not denigrate the importance of personal holiness and taught that it was incumbent upon every Christian to strive for the highest personal standards in all of life,[107] but neither was it an essential prerequisite for sacramental efficacy.

Once again following Optatus of Milevis, Augustine rested the holiness of the Church upon the holiness of the grace dispensed in its sacraments.[108] This operated independantly of the personal holiness of individual members or clergy and prepared the ground for his further teaching on sacramental efficacy.

c). Baptism and Re-baptism.

While the Donatist schism broadly revolved around theories of the nature of the Church, the controversy centred specifically upon the sacrament of baptism. It did so precisely because the Donatists clung so tenaciously to the Cyprianic practice of re-baptism. Augustine's definitive work on this question is his *De baptismo contra Donatistas* in which he gives careful consideration to this matter. Augustine had no argument with the basic understanding of the worth of baptism. It conveyed the remission of sins, deliverance from death, regeneration, and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. All sides were agreed on this basis.

Augustine set out the differing Donatist/Catholic positions on baptism by drawing attention to the following four statements;[109]

1). Baptism exists in the Catholic Church.
2). Only in the Catholic Church is baptism rightly received.
3). Baptism exists among the Donatists.
4). Baptism is not rightly received among the Donatists.

He pointed out that while the Catholics accept that all four statements are true, the Donatists only accept the third statement.

It is immediately apparent from the above statements that Augustine was articulating a doctrine whereby a sacrament was not confined to the limits of the Church as one visible organisation. This was completely contrary to the Donatist position which held to the idea that the validity of baptism depended upon the sanctity of the minister and that if he was unworthy in any way then the sacrament was void. Thus they practiced re-baptism for all who joined them having received baptism elsewhere. In adopting this line the Donatists, correctly, claimed to stand in the line of Cyprian. Tertullian also had understood that there was no grace whatsoever outside the Church.[110] The Donatists followed Cyprian, Tertullian, and even Irenaeus in restricting valid baptism to the arena of the one Church. Augustine was therefore arguing against longstanding North African understanding and practice as regards baptism. He maintained that as baptism could exist outside the Church, re-baptism was unnecessary.

In support of his contention Augustine likened baptism to a military mark.[111] Such a mark can be retained by army deserters or even obtained illegally by those not in the army. While it should neither be retained nor obtained by anyone outside the ranks of the army, yet it is not changed if such individuals rejoin or enlist in the army. So, argues Augustine, baptism is holy in itself.

It was Optatus, once again, who laid the foundation for Augustine's more fully developed theories. Optatus had established that as it is Christ himself who gives grace in this sacrament, then the validity of the sacrament derives from him alone and not from the human agent.[112] While Optatus marks a new stage in the development of sacramental understanding from the earlier Cyprianic position, Augustine accelerated the process to a decisive new level. For Augustine, the sacrament is everywhere complete, irrespective of the human agent, like the Gospels which are everywhere complete though they may be quoted to support false opinions.[113] As light from a lamp is constant whether perceived with good eyesight or with poor eyesight, so baptism is Christ's sacrament whatever the standing of the officiating minister.[114]

Augustine makes many comparisons in his arguments. There is no difference, he states, between the baptism of a false member of the Church and a heretic.[115] In both cases it is Christ's baptism which has been received but in both cases baptism has been received with no benefit. One needs conversion of heart and the other needs the unity of the Church. Whether inside or outside the Church, an individual may receive the *sacramentum* but only within the Church can an individual receive the *res sacramenti*.

Augustine's sacramental doctrine was a careful modification of Cyrian's in that he was careful to safeguard the latter's insistence upon the restriction of the activity of the Holy Spirit within the Church. As a modification of Cyprian's theory of Church and sacrament, it had two major attractions. Firstly, it drew a clearer line between valid and invalid baptism. If Augustine was correct in asserting that baptism was holy in itself, irrespective of the humans involved, then the only invalid baptisms were those not performed in the Divine name. Cyprian's doctrine had never tackled the example of someone who was baptised by an unworthy bishop within the Church and the greatest weakness of the Donatist position was that it depended upon a correct identification of pure and impure believers. Augustine removed the necessity of any retrospective examination or heart searching in order to determine the validity or otherwise of a baptism. The second, and very practical, attraction of his theory was that it eased the route back to the Catholic Church for penitent Donatists. Such individuals could rejoin the Catholic Church without rejecting their baptism or, in the case of bishops, their ordination. Their schismatic baptisms were only irregular, not invalid, and this was an important distinction.

Cyprian had married the doctrines of Church and sacrament in order to establish what baptisms were valid or invalid. Augustine divorced these doctrines and insisted that Christ alone was the guarantor of baptismal grace.

THE AUTHORITY OF CYPRIAN.

The authority of Cyprian was a key factor throughout the entire Donatist schism. His practice of re-baptism was an important obstacle to Augustine's assertion that schismatic baptism need not be repeated. In mid-third century North Africa, Cyprian had established a rigid theory of monarchial episcopacy, preserving at all costs unity and authority within the Church. He held that the Church was one, it was ruled by bishops, and it was the sole abode of sacramental efficacy. Salvation resides exclusively within the Church and the focus of Church unity was the bishop. Against the claims of some confessors, Cyprian had established the supremacy of the bishop within his own diocese and his principle duty to maintain the unity of the Church. All heretical baptisms were therefore invalid. Cyprian's theory of ecclesiastical government was standard in Africa until the time of Optatus, Catholic bishop of Milevis, who challenged the Donatists some three decades before Augustine.

The Donatists justified their separation from the Catholics upon a rigid application of the principle that the Church was pure and spotless. Felix's sin of *traditor* tainted all who were in communion with Caecilian and his descendants. Cyprian's writings on the invalidity of heretical baptism were particularly favoured by the Donatists who 're-baptised' all who joined them who had previously received Catholic baptism. Much of the argument in *De baptismo contra Donatistas* is concerned with Augustine's explanation of his divergence from Cyprian in this matter. Cyprian's 'error' in practising re-baptism is described as 'a speck on the brightness of a holy soul.'[116] In other words, while naming Cyprian's ideas as incorrect, nevertheless Augustine is at pains to emphasise the greatness of the martyr biship. Books Two, Three, Four, and Five of this work are all dedicated to examining and refuting Cyprian's doctrine of baptism, often by extensive reference to his own writings.[117]

The Donatists claimed the authority of Cyprian for their practice of re-baptism. Augustine acknowledges that in 256 Cyprian had presided over an African Council at Carthage at which it was decreed that all schismatics and heretics, upon joining the Catholic Church, should be re-baptised. The basis of Augustine's counter argument

is that Cyprian would have yielded to a contrary opinion in this matter if such had been expressed by a wider representative Church Council. Referring to the Cyprianic Carthaginian Council of 256, he points out that it was also agreed to maintain communion with those who differed from them.[118] Augustine emphasises Cyprian's example in maintaining communion with those who differed in opinion with him and, by the Donatist's own logic, it follows that Cyprian's Church was polluted by this communion. How can the Donatists then claim to be the one pure Church standing in the line of Cyprian?

Augustine believed that Cyprian followed the example of Agrippinus' Council because there was no other guidance available to him in the mid-third century. He refers to the overthrow of this decision by a wider Church Council in the years before his own birth in 354.[119] It is his contention that had Cyprian lived to encounter this wider Church opinion on this matter that he would have modified his views accordingly. By advancing this argument Augustine demonstrates that his view of authority was more complex that that of his opponents. While the Donatists were content to appeal to the practice of Cyprian or Agrippinus' Council, Augustine sifted the evidence of more widely representative Councils which could not be lightly dismissed. In the matter of re-baptisms, the greater conciliar authority was on the side of the Catholics and against the Donatists.

He points out that several of the bishops in Council with Cyprian in 256 acknowledged that the practice of re-baptism was a new innovation.[120] The fact that re-baptism was not practised before the time of Agrippinus also raises questions against the Donatist contention that they are a pure and spotless Church. How can such purity now be claimed in the early fifth century if the Church was polluted in the third century? Cyprian had clearly acknowledged that there were sinners in the Church[121] so how can the Donatists claim that theirs is a spotless Church? 'In this question is involved the shipwreck of the whole case of the Donatists'.[122] Either the Church perished in earlier times by the pollution of such members or, as Augustine affirms, those abiding in the unity of the Catholic Church are unaffected by the notorious sins of others.

In 256 Cyprian had given liberty to every bishop to express his view on this matter. Augustine now claims this same liberty. If a false Catholic comes to true faith in Christ, his former baptism is recognised and not repeated so why should a schismatic returning to the fold of the Catholic Church be treated any differently?

Despite his criticisms of Cyprian's practice of re-baptism, Augustine was careful to agree with Cyprian and others that the Church was the only vehicle of Divine grace, and that baptism was the only unique mark of initiation into the Christian faith. In baptism we are born from the womb of our mother the Church.[123] Our first birth is natural and human, our second birth is of God and his Church.[124]

SUMMARY.

Augustine's contribution to the doctrines of Church and sacrament were not so much contradictory to previous North African teaching as a development of all that had gone before. The lines of that development can certainly be traced through Optatus of Milevis. His achievement was in developing these doctrines with new insight and power while at the same time maintaining fidelity with the past. Most of his writings against the Donatists consist of letters to individuals and groups on various aspects of the schism. His most systematic treatise is undoubtedly *De baptismo contra Donatistas* which is largely concerned with refuting the practice of re-baptism as taught by Cyprian.

The main thrust of Augustine's charges against the Donatists consists of the fact that their chief sin was that of breaking the unity of the Church by their lack of love. It is doubtful though whether he ever understood that such charges would mean little to people who gloried in their independance and purity.

Augustine's doctrine of baptism was an interesting development of former beliefs but it is open to challenge. His assertion that schismatic baptism is true baptism, albeit given without profit, prompts at least two questions; What constitutes baptism?, and,

Are the sins of such schismatics fleetingly forgiven at the moment of their baptism? The distinction which Augustine makes between the gift of baptism, which Donatists and Catholics alike possess, and the use of baptism, which Catholics alone possess, could be understood to indicate that baptism consists chiefly of a water rite accompanied by the repetition of the triune name. Such at least seems to be the minimum requirement for the sacrament to be recognised. Can baptism be reduced to such a formula? Surely something of the personality and spiritual standing of the recipient is necessary to raise this sacrament above that of a purely mechanical operation?

What did Augustine believe happened to the sins of an individual Donatist when they received schismatic baptism? They received the gift of the sacrament which was unrepeatable but was there any spiritual effect? In *De baptismo contra Donatistas* Augustine seems to suggest that the sins of the schismatic are momentarily forgiven by his baptism. This theory is known as the reviviscence of sins.

> . . . the man who has approached the sacrament in deceit, his sins are indeed removed by the holy power of so great a sacrament at the moment when he received it, but return immediately in consequence of his deceit: . . both the holiness of baptism clothes him with Christ, and the sinfulness of deceit strips him of Christ; like the case of a man who passes from darkness through light into darkness again.[125]

Perhaps such a theory of momentary forgiveness enabled Augustine to hold in tension the ideas that schismatic baptism was valid yet useless for salvation. Many scholars however believe this is only a theoretical hypothesis which Augustine never pursued.[126] The question is complicated in that there can be no remission of sin without the activity of the Holy Spirit and yet surely the Holy Spirit is confined to the realm of the Church.

Augustine undoubtedly believed that Scripture taught that sins returned upon those who fell into serious sin.[127] Perhaps he advanced the notion of reviviscence of sins in schismatic baptism in response to criticism from his opponents. The Donatists did onject to his assertion that they possessed baptism but not the remission of sins. To

be consistent, they argued, he should allow that they possess both or neither.[128] The theory of revivescence of sins therefore may be Augustine's concession to this Donatist charge. Certainly it represents a softening of Augustine's main contention with the Donatists that a schismatic minister can only impart the baptism itself but not the spiritual benefit of the sacrament.

Where Augustine follows his sacramental arguments it is apparent that he is more comfortable focussing upon the recipient than the minister. The unworthiness of a minister is a barrier to the efficacy of baptism but one which God overcomes *per se ipsum* within the Catholic Church. In schism however, God does not work *per se ipsum* to compensate for ministerial shortcomings. Such are critical avenues which may be pursued in assessing Augustine's teaching on the sacraments.

AUGUSTINE: USE OF SCRIPTURE.

Statements by Augustine, and his contemporary Jerome, indicate that there were a great many conflicting Latin translations of the Scriptures in the early fifth century. Neither Tertullian, Cyprian, nor Augustine used the same Latin translation. Indeed Augustine confessed in *Retractationes*, written in 426-7 that he had inaccurately accused Donatus of falsifying Scripture, only to discover that he was using a different Old Latin version.[129] Augustine himself claimed to use a Latin version of Scripture which he called the *Itala*.[130] This has been variously interpretated as a reference to one particular rendering out of several Latin renderings, a number of differing renderings of the same translation, or Jerome's Vulgate. It is also possible that this word refers to a Latin translation which had originated in Italy.

Of the extant manuscripts that of *Codex Palatinus*[131] is reckoned to be nearest to that used by Augustine. Several biblical quotations in Augustine's works are markedly different from modern renderings when translated into English. This is so because his Old Latin translations were based upon Greek versions of Old and New Testaments. His Psalter numbering follows that of the Septuagint; being one less

from psalms 10 to 148. Psalms 9 and 10, and 114 and 115, are run into a single psalm, while 116 and 147 are each divided into two psalms.

Scripture is primarily a source of truth and authority for Augustine. He wrote of its 'supreme authority'.[132] Particularly against the Manichaeans who taught that Scripture was false and corrupt Augustine expressed his confidence in the truth and reliability of God's Word. The greater prominence given to the Bible in the Western Church than in the East has been attributed in no small measure to the work of Augustine.[133]

Augustine's doctrine and use of Scripture did not develop in isolation but rather emerged from his participation in various controversies. His use of Scripture is nearly always rooted in practical applications and so it is that in his controversy against the Donatists he provides new sets of scriptural clothes for the doctrines of Church and sacraments. Time and time again he alludes to a proof text, Bible character or incident, then launches into a contemporary and practical application against the Donatists.

De baptismo contra Donatistas was written about 400 and is arguably Augustine's most important work against the Donatists. His main contention in all seven books is that schismatic baptism need not be repeated if the recipient of such baptism desires to join the Catholic Church. In arguing for this, Augustine develops a more complex relationship between the doctrines of Church and sacrament. With the many strands of his argument he seeks to embalm the more simplistic position of the Donatists.

The authority of Cyprian is an added complication and overshadows all that he writes in this work. The famous martyr-bishop had refused to recognise schismatic or heretical baptism and had practiced 're-baptism' for all such who joined the North African Church. The Donatists, correctly, claimed to follow the example of Cyprian. They believed themselves to be on very secure ground in this matter and so Augustine concentrates much of his firepower upon this claim. This historical side of the baptismal question is examined at some length and Augustine carefully

scanned the content of several examples of Cyprianic correspondance on this matter.[134] It is Augustine's use of Scripture in setting out his arguments on these inter-related issues that will be the subject of this section.

De baptismo contra Donatistas comprises seven Books, incorporating a total of 409 scriptural references; 328 New Testament, 71 Old Testament, and 10 Apocraphal. The most quoted Old Testament books are Psalms and Song of Songs,[135] and the most quoted New Testament books are Matthew, John and First Corinthians.[136] While it is impossible to list every scriptural quotation it is possible to examine Augustine's use of Scripture in extablishing the main tenets of his case against the Donatists. Several key texts or characters are repeatedly employed to vindicate the Catholic position.

In Book One of *De baptismo* Augustine sets out his understanding of baptism in the first three chapters and, significantly, Scripture is not quoted at all. The body of the Catholic case stands four-square on a logical plinth, and Augustine then proceeds to dress it in garments woven from scriptural texts and allusions. The basic case is set out with something of a lawyer's training. Baptism cannot be repeated because the grace of baptism is in some sense retained even outside the Church. It is retained or given 'without benefit' outside the Church, and the same holds true for ordination.

Donatist practice also confirms this. Augustine cites the case of Felician, Donatist bishop of Musti in Proconsular Africa. He was one of the twelve bishops who consecrated Maximian as rival Donatist bishop to Primian at a meeting in Cabarussi in 393. On 24 April 394, the Donatist Council of Bagai expelled Maximian and all twelve consecrating bishops. In 397 Felician and Praetextatus were reconciled to Primian, who declared that their baptisms administered in schism were to be regarded as valid. It was on this latter point that Augustine seized, arguing that by this action Primian accepted the logic of the Catholic case. Augustine believed this to be one of the strongest cards in his hand and he played it on more than one occasion.[137]

As I have previously stated, Augustine set out the essential case regarding baptism in four premises;

1). Baptism exists in the Catholic Church.
2). Only in the Catholic Church is baptism rightly received.
3). Baptism exists among the Donatists.
4). Baptism is not rightly received among the Donatists.

While the Catholics accept all four premises as true, the Donatists only accept the third premise.

Augustine uses 45 scriptural quotations in Book One. The first cluster of texts occurs in chapter four and their use by Augustine illustrates a largely subjective method of interpretation which was widely employed in the patristic period. Augustine interprets a general text, Psalm 61:2-3, as teaching the fact that the Catholic Church is strong, like a fortress city built upon a hill.[138] The enemy, having deserted this Catholic city, are like wolves disguised as sheep,[139] those about whom Jesus had forewarned his followers, indicating that such people would proclaim false Christs.[140] Such subjective interpretations are a feature of many biblical texts used by both sides throughout this schism.

Augustine establishes that there are varying degrees of seriousness of sin and that the most serious sin of all is that of schism. Jesus' comment that it would be more tolerable for the men of Sodom in the day of judgement than the people of Capernaum is used to establish the general point.[141] For Augustine, schism is the most serious sin. As a man with complete soundness of body save for one serious wound needs attention to that wound, so the man in schism needs a cure for his schism. Three crucial texts are advanced in support of this; the idolaters overthrown at Sinai,[142] the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram,[143] and Paul's dramatic statement that love is an essential Christian quality.[144] These Old Testament examples had also been used by Cyprian to emphasise the seriousness of schism.[145] Paul's Corinthian statement that without love all is useless is repeatedly used by Augustine in this work to undermine the Donatists as those in schism and therefore without love.[146]

Fundamental to Augustine's case against the Donatists is the nature of the Church. For the Donatists the Church was a clearly defined body of holy believers whose company marked the exclusive kingdom of the Spirit's influence and sacramental efficacy. Augustine attempts to crack this definition with a combination of hypothetical examples, biblical texts and characters.

Caiaphas,[147] Saul,[148] and Simon Magus[149] are each advanced as examples of individuals who received Divine grace in some measure and yet in each case they were lost. Simon Magus in particular is held as an example of someone who received Catholic baptism and yet it was of no benefit because he lacked love. He is a common example in *De baptismo*.[150] These biblical examples fortify Augustine's conviction that while the Donatists agree with the Catholics on many points, they are lost because of their lack of love as demonstrated by their continuance in schism. The same point is demonstrated by reference to the Corinthian factions.[151]

In writing *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, Augustine clearly attempts to answer directly Donatist assertions. He makes explicit reference to their statements several times. They appear to have challenged the Catholics as to whether individuals receiving Donatist baptism were made sons of God or not. Their line of reasoning was that if the Catholic answer was in the affirmative then the Donatist Church was the true Church in Africa. If the Catholic answer was in the negative then the Donatists argued that the Catholics should 're-baptise' all who join them having received only Donatist baptism.

Augustine answers with a fresh battery of biblical examples of individuals who lost their birthright through quarrelling within the family. They are all typical of the Donatists; Esau lost his inheritance through quarrelling with his brother.[152] Asher was born of a handmaid though with the authority of a wife and received an inheritance in the promised land through maintaining brotherly goodwill.[153] By contrast, Ishmael, though also born of a handmaid with the consent of a wife, lost his inheritence through quarrelling with his brother Isaac.[154] In Augustine's view, the Donatists can either return to the Mother Church, or be cast out as dispossessed sons of a handmaid.

The noble line of such people as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Moses, the prophets, Jesus, the apostles, the martyrs and all good Christians are born of one mother. The ignoble line of such as Cain, Ham, Ishmael, Dathan, Judas, Simon Magus and all false Christians are born of another woman. Schismatics who return to the Catholic Church are like sons of the handmaid who receive their inheritance by maintaining brotherly love while false Christians within the Catholic Church will lose their inheritance because they remain false Christians even though they are of the true mother.[155]

Cornelius is cited as another important character who illustrates the truth of Augustine's case, that grace exists in some form outside the Church. This man's prayers and alms were acceptable to God yet he needed Peter to teach him about Christ, baptise him and bring him into the unity of the Church. What Cornelius had was not dispised and what he lacked was given in unity. As with other examples, Augustine makes use of this example several times.[156]

Having established that schism is a most serious sin and that membership of the Church is neither an inpenetrable barrier against sin nor the guardian of empirical holiness which the Donatists maintain, Augustine moves at the conclusion of Book One to the important argument concerning Cyprian's practice of re-baptism. The standard and oft-repeated framework of his answer is that in the mid-third century there had been various opinions on the question of schismatic and heretical baptism. Cyprian followed the practice of re-baptism because he believed it to be correct but no UNIVERSAL Council had had opportunity to deliberate on this issue. Augustine now turns to the specific question of what Cyprian himself wrote on this matter.

Whereas the Donatists made much of their claim to have inherited the mantle of Cyprian, practising re-baptism as he had, Augustine is adamant that an examination of Cyprian's teaching can prove the justness of the Catholic cause. The Donatist case rested upon the practice of Cyprian which itself rested upon a Carthaginian Council decision in 256 to re-baptise heretics. This decision in turn rested upon an earlier Carthaginian Council which met under the primacy of Agrippinus.

In Book Two Augustine argues that the practice of re-baptism began with the Council of Agrippinus. No earlier warrant can be quoted. Cyprian, he argues, accepted this earlier Council decision as no other argument was presented to him. It is scriptural however to be open to new light. On the basis of Paul's instruction to the Corinthians to be silent when new revelation is given to anyone,[157] Augustine relates how Cyprian's opinion was subsequently overthrown by a wider and therefore more representative Church Council. While he does not name this Council it is probable that he is referring to Arles (314) or Nicea (325).

Similarly, Paul had written to the Philippians explaining that where there was a variety of opinions upon any matter, God would make clear to them the truth.[158] Augustine turned to this text eleven times in *De baptismo*,[159] arguing that it is an important biblical principle which is applicable to Cyprian's doctrine of re-baptism. Augustine asserts that God has now made clear, through subsequent universal Church Councils, that re-baptism is inappropriate.

While Augustine does not baulk at correcting Cyprian he is careful to do so in the most reverential terms. Cyprian was not wrong to judge in this matter as he did with the light available to him, but it is with the benefit of hindsight that his practice of re-baptism is seen to have been misguided. Paul had taught Timothy that an essential quality for a bishop, in addition to his ability to teach, was that he be willing and able to learn.[160] Cyprian, as an outstanding martyr-bishop of the Church was in need of learning in this one doctrine. Augustine is casting no aspersion upon Cyprian's character by stating this as even Peter needed correction. As Christ had built the Church upon Peter,[161] it should be remembered that this same Peter was later corrected by Paul in the matter of eating with Gentile Christians.[162] It is Augustine's contention that Cyprian would have yielded to a contrary opinion in this matter if it had been so expressed by a wider Church Council. The case of Peter's correction is an important example of the scriptural principle Augustine is seeking to establish and he makes use of it seven times in *De baptismo*.[163]

Augustine quotes the words of Cyprian at the Carthaginian Council of 256 at which this matter was discussed in response to a no longer extant letter of enquiry from

Jubaianus, a Mauretanian bishop. At this Council each bishop was permitted to form and express his own individual opinion. Augustine claims to be doing no more than expressing his opinion on this matter, as Cyprian had allowed in 256, and repeats his central contention that Cyprian would have yielded on the practice of re-baptism to a wider Church Council. He further makes the point that Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, stands far superior to any bishop's letter and that even Church Councils can be corrected by later Councils.[164]

Agreeing with the Donatists that Cyprian was a worthy example to follow, Augustine elevated his maintainence of the unity of the Church at the expense of his practice of re-baptism. The fact that Cyprian remained in communion with Stephen despite the latters rejection of re-baptism for heretics and schismatics is hailed by Augustine as an example to be followed by all North African Christians. 'Love covers over a multitude of sins',[165] and Scripture commands believers to make every effort to 'keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace'.[166] Cyprian kept these precepts and so ought the Donatists.

Cyprian himself had acknowledged that only God can separate the wheat and tares.[167] So the Church is a mixed society containing both good and evil, like a house containing vessels of gold and wood.[168] By Donatist reasoning, the fact that Cyprian remained in communion with those who did not re-baptise, his own Church was polluted. How can the Donatists claim to follow Cyprian when he clearly, by teaching and example, accepted that the Church contained false Christians?[169] In Augustine's opinion, the most satisfactory outcome of the whole North African schism would be the reconciliation of the Donatists to the Catholic Church. If God is present where two individuals are together,[170] how much more if two communities can agree?

Augustine cites Cyprian's own writings where, on the basis of Peter's words,[171] he had stated that in the case of a heretic who re-joined the Catholic Church, and died before receiving baptism, the mercy of God covered all sin.[172]

In Books Three and Four Augustine continues to refute the Donatist arguments in favour of re-baptism as based upon Cyprian's letter to Jubaianus.[173] Augustine again claims liberty to investigate this matter further as Cyprian had stated that he would not break from communion with anyone who disagreed with him on the practice of re-baptism.

Contrary to the Donatists, Augustine suppressed the role of the human administrator of baptism. Quoting John the Baptist, he emphasised the fact that it is Christ Himself who baptises with the Holy Spirit.[174] Baptism is Christ's sacrament and as such He is the key figure who makes the sacrament genuine, not the human administrator nor the recipient. In thus elevating Christ's role in baptism, Augustine can apply a 'baby with the bath water' argument against Cyprian's doctrine, not permitting him to throw out as worthless a sacrament in which Christ is the main participant. To facilitate his own doctrine, Augustine makes an important distinction between having no sacrament and possessing it wrongly. Augustine pushes this point to the extreme, going so far as to state that baptism administered by Marcion was complete, in the Triune name, yet profitless because of his error.[175]

Building further upon this idea, Augustine maintains that it is possible to possess both a genuine sacrament and also an imperfect faith. Several Scripture texts and examples are produced to illustrate this point. The baptised Christians in Corinth were told that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit,[176] and these same Christians were in fact told bluntly by Paul that they were carnal and immature, unable to endure spiritual meat.[177] The Ephesians, also baptised, were blown here and there by every wind of teaching.[178] Scripture shows that part of a Christian's growth into personal maturity involves rejecting false things. Re-baptism, which is nowhere taught in Scripture, ought now to be rejected by the Donatists as an indication of their progress towards spiritual maturity. The important Philippian text is again employed to emphasise that progression in the Christian life is normal and scriptural.[179]

Augustine finds a further illustration in a parallel between the sacraments and the gospels. The former are complete everywhere, even if improperly understood or

used to ferment discord, and the latter are also everywhere complete though often quoted to support false opinions. Because the Church is a unique dove,[180] there is a 'dove baptism' and a 'hawk baptism'. The former is true baptism within the peace and unity of the Catholic Church while the latter is heretical baptism and is useless unless the recipient returns to the Catholic Church. Jesus breathed upon his apostles and gave them the Holy Spirit.[181] He then told them that they had power either to remit or retain sins on earth. Augustine argued that this power resides within their successors in the Catholic Church. Once again this assertion was aimed at undermining the Donatists who were in communion with no Church of apostolic foundation.

One interesting scriptural example is used by Augustine to illustrate God's mercy towards heretics and schismatics in His sacraments. Hosea records the mercy of God in looking after the adulterous woman, providing her with corn, wine and money.[182] So, argues Augustine, God acts in mercy towards heretics and schismatics concerning His sacraments.[183] The schismatic's greatest lack is love and if he will return to the fold of the Catholic Church God will make good all the blessings of the sacrament of baptism.

Similarly, while Cyprian had stated in his letter to Jubaianus that the Church is like Paradise, watered by the four rivers of the gospels.[184] Augustine points out that the rivers of Paradise flowed outside Eden too. While Egypt and Mesopotamia possessed these rivers, yet they did not possess the peace of Paradise. Baptism is equally useless to the false Christian within the Church as to the schismatic outside the Church. Certainly it is possible to teach within the Church what is useless. Conversely, something wholesome may be taught by someone without love. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached in Rome, yet out of malice by some.[185]

Springing from his understanding of Paul's Corinthian statement, Cyprian had written that even martyrdom outside the Church was of no profit.[186] Augustine builds upon this principle by arguing that baptism outside the Church is of no profit but nor is baptism within the Church profitable if the recipient harbours sin in his life. When Paul stated that the wicked shall not inherit the Kingdom of God[187] this can be

applied both to heretics outside the Church and the wicked within the Church. Augustine attempts to illustrate this point by returning to two of his favoured characters, Simon Magus and Cornelius.

Suppose a Catholic displays many obvious sins in his life and a heretic has no fault but that he is a heretic. Why should the baptism of the Catholic alone be recognised? Augustine states that baptism in itself can be neither good nor bad. It is like the rays of the sun which remain constant whether perceived with a clear eye or clouded. Cornelius, before he was baptised, was a better person than Simon Magus after he had been baptised. Before his baptism, Cornelius was filled with the Holy Spirit, and Simon, even after his baptism, was puffed up with an unclean spirit.[188] For Augustine, the different merits of these two men were manifested under the equal holiness of the same sacrament.

Augustine's thoughts on the merit of infant baptism are expressed in *De baptismo* 4.23 and are worth noting. Although infants cannot believe in their hearts or make confession of their faith, yet 'no Christian will say that they (infants) are baptised to no purpose'. The circumcision of Abraham and his son Isaac[189] is applied to infant baptism and Augustine points out that an angel enforced this requirement upon Moses' son.[190] Augustine argues that there is great variety in this matter; Abraham was justified by faith and then received the sign of circumcision,[191] Cornelius possessed the Holy Spirit even before he was baptised,[192] Isaac was circumcised when eight days old and came to faith later,[193] the dying thief believed and yet was prevented by his circumstances from being baptised,[194] where baptised infants die, God makes up what is lacking to ensure their salvation. In usual circumstances though an individual is able to speak for himself.[195]

The sacrament of baptism and conversion of the heart are separate events. Either one can exist without the other. An infant can be baptised without conversion of heart. The thief was converted without the sacrament of baptism. In both cases God makes up what is lacking. Conversion of heart though is never found where baptism has been despised.

In Book Five Augustine writes 'concerning the past custom of the Church' and 'the baptism of John'.[196] He examines the letters of Cyprian to Jubaianus,[197] Quintus,[198] and Pompey,[199] as well as the opinions of the bishops in attendance at the Carthaginian Council of 256.[200]

Once again Augustine points out that Cyprian acknowledged that the earliest Catholic custom was to receive those with heretical baptism without subjecting them to re-baptism. His fundamental point against the Donatists is clear; Either the Church perished then from the pollution of such men or those abiding in the unity of the Catholic Church are not injured by the sins of such men. Augustine believes the latter to be the case.

Cyprian had feared that to accept heretical baptism would give the impression that heretics were also 'in just and lawful possession of the Church'.[201] Augustine believed it was more a case of the heretics possessing lawful baptism but not possessing it lawfully. Paul had said that the law is good if used lawfully[202] and it is the same with baptism. Judas Iscariot took bread in the upper room and Satan entered him.[203] It is not that Judas took something bad, but rather that he received it badly. In the words of Paul, he ate and drank damnation upon himself.[204]

In answering Cyprian's arguments in favour of re-baptism, Augustine examines John's baptism. One of Cyprian's arguments for practicing re-baptism was that Paul had re-baptised certain Ephesian disciples who had received John's baptism.[205] While acknowledging that Christ showed great humility in submitting to John's baptism, Augustine distinguished between it and Christian baptism. He understands John's baptism to have conferred the expectation of remission of sins while Christian baptism actually confers such remission. Paul's action upon meeting the Ephesian disciples was not to repeat John's baptism but to give Christian baptism. In Christian baptism it is Christ Himself who gives the Holy Spirit and so it cannot be repeated.[206]

Augustine saw no difference between the baptism of a false Catholic and a heretic. As 'God does not hear sinners',[207] it follows that this is true of both false Catholics

within the Church and heretics outside the Church. Why then is the baptism of the former not repeated if they come to true faith as is the baptism of the heretic?

While the sacrament of grace can be given through the hands of wicked men, it is God Himself who gives the grace in the sacrament. Both Augustine and Cyprian agree that heretics cannot give remission of sins, but Augustine insists that they can nevertheless give baptism. Church custom in this matter is against Cyprian and although Scripture gives no specific instruction regarding heretical baptism, Augustine argues that Church custom originates in apostolic tradition and therefore has authority in deciding this matter.

The scriptural reference to the enclosed garden and sealed fountain,[208] so often interpretated by the Donatists as referring to the exclusive nature of the Church is interpreted by Augustine as referring only to the holy and just, not to sinners who are also baptised within the Church. A whole battery of texts are then applied to establish a firm scriptural basis for this 'Church within the Church' model. Only the pure in heart are without spot or wrinkle,[209] the true Christian among the false is the 'lily among the thorns,[210] the true Church are those who are 'circumcised of heart',[211] the true Christians are known only to God.[212]

Peter's comparison of Noah's Ark with baptism was an obvious biblical text in any debate concerning this sacrament.[213] Perhaps surprisingly Augustine refers to it only twice in *De baptismo*.[214] Cyprian had clearly taught from this passage that as there was one Ark, so there was only one Church, and as only those within the Ark were saved by water, so only those who receive baptism within this one Church are saved.[215] Augustine draws from this same passage the lesson that those in the Ark were saved because their hearts were right before God.

> Certainly it is clear that, when we speak of within and without in relation to the Church, it is the position of the heart that we must consider, not that of the body, since all who are within in heart are saved in the unity of the Ark through the same water, through which all who are in heart without, whether they are also in body without or not, die as enemies of unity.[216]

Thus Augustine is again allowing that the sacrament of baptism can exist outside the Church but at the same time saying that if the recipient remains in schism then his baptism is held without any benefit.

Augustine considered by the end of Book Five of *De baptismo* that his case had been proven. Nevertheless in Books Six and Seven he further examines the proceedings of the Carthaginian Council of 256. Each bishop in attendance was asked individually for his opinion on the question of re-baptism and Augustine quotes many of these comments. Often they consist of a Scripture text followed by short comments of two or three sentences.

Summary.

The bitter words of Emeritus to Augustine in 418 over the means by which the Catholics had triumphed in 411 spoiled what might have been Augustine's greatest hour in his conflict with the Donatists.[217] Notwithstanding Emeritus' protest, Augustine was undoubtedly responsible for fashioning new clothes for the doctrines of Church and sacrament. His basic thread was that of Scripture which holds all these garments together. On many occasions this thread appears briefly as in the use of a text almost in passing in the midst of his argument. For example in addressing a question to his opponents, Augustine alludes to Christ's words in John's gospel; 'Answer me this, you hungry wolves, who, seeking to be clothed in sheep's clothing, think that the letters of the blessed Cyprian are in your favour'.[218] Such use of Scripture adds nothing of substance to the argument advanced save to set it in a scriptural aura.

In other instances Augustine advances biblical texts and examples as the meat of his argument. In such cases Scripture is applied almost vituperatively against Donatist claims and doctrine. Key texts and examples surface repeatedly and are consistently applied as proof of Augustine's arguments. Simon Magus and Cornelius are favourite illustrations of the complexity of relationship between God's grace and its recipients. The correction of Peter by Paul in Antioch is another such example, demonstrating that even apostles could be mistaken.

There is no doubt that Augustine regarded Scripture as authoritative, hence the many references throughout *De baptismo*. The nature of this authority in his view is squarely within the framework of the Catholic Church. He went so far as to refer, before God, to 'your Scriptures commended by the authority of your Catholic Church'.[219] His use of Scripture is nearly always rooted in practical applications. In his confrontation with Donatism he accelerates the development of the doctrines of Church and sacrament and is careful to hang all his arguments on scriptural texts.

Augustine's care in listening to Scripture emerges at least once in *De baptismo*. Towards the end of Book Two he is arguing various hypothetical scenarios with his opponents concerning baptism. He asks which is worse, not to be baptised at all, or to be twice baptised? Augustine writes; 'when I have recourse to that Divine balance, in which the weight of things is determined, not by man's feelings, but by the authority of God, I find a statement by our Lord on either side'.[220] Against the former he interpreted Jesus' words to Nicodemus that without baptism a person cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.[221] Against the latter he refers to Jesus' words to Peter that a person once washed has no need of a second washing.[222]

Where Scripture is silent or conflicting texts are produced, Augustine falls back on the tradition of the Church. In the example just mentioned he wrote, 'The Church, lastly, herself holds as her tradition, that without baptism she cannot admit a man to her altar at all'.[223] Where Scripture was silent or unclear, Augustine had no hesitation in claiming the weight of Church tradition behind his criticisms of Cyprian's doctrine.

> We have the testimony of the blessed Cyprian, that the custom of the Catholic Church is at present retained, when men coming from the side of heretics or schismatics, if they have received baptism as consecrated in the words of the gospel, are not baptised afresh.[224]

His overriding contention is that love and unity must overcome all schism. Donatist sacraments and orders need not be repeated but Augustine is sure that until they return from schism to the one true Catholic Church they are not saved.

> I have no hesitation in saying that all men possess baptism who have received it in any place, from any sort of men,

provided that it were consecrated in the words of the gospel, and received without deceit on their part with some degree of faith; although it would be of no profit to them for the salvation of their souls if they were without love, by which they might be grafted into the Catholic Church'.[224]

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6. CONCLUSION.

The Council of Carthage in 411 may be regarded as marking the official victory of the Catholics over the Donatists for recognition as the true North African Church. While the nature of the Church and the sacrament of baptism proved the main battlegrounds in this schism, other factors were also involved. A Gordian knot emerged as conflicting concepts of Church, ministry, and sacrament interlocked. In essence the issue which had divided the North African Church for so long was the problem of post-baptismal sin.

The roots of the Donatist schism were deeply embedded within North African Christianity. Cyprian had followed Tertullian in arguing that heretical baptism, bereft of the Holy Spirit, was worthless. The Donatists, correctly, claimed to follow Cyprian in making this same assertion. Augustine and the majority of Catholics followed Stephen of Rome in his argument that such baptism, while conveying no benefit to the recipient, should not be repeated. The Donatists claimed, in conformity to their notion of God's intention, to be a pure Church expunged of obvious sinners while the Catholics understood the nature of the Church to be that of a mixed society of good and bad. The interface between both sides was not always clear. At points their positions agreed and overlapped but in crucial areas they were in open conflict. There is an added complication in that each side at times chose to misrepresent the other in order to enhance their respective poisitions.

The particular concern of this thesis has been to examine and assess the use of Scripture throughout the conflict. A mere study of the selection and frequency of individual texts employed is unrewarding in that the result is somewhat akin to an apparently random pattern of acupuncture needles protruding from human flesh. As underlying lines of nerves and muscles make sense of such needle locations, so the underlying lines of argument in the realms of Church, ministry and sacrament are essential for understanding the use and interpretation of scriptural texts in this

schism. With regard to the use of Scripture, six basic points can be made in conclusion.

1. SCRIPTURE IS DIVINE.

It is immediately apparent that all participants in this schism venerated Scripture. That Scripture was regarded as God's Word is a foundational presupposition of patristic exegesis. The long established Jewish assertion of the sacred character of Scripture was also assumed by Christians and extended to cover the New Testament also. In correspondance with Jerome, Augustine stated, 'For I confess to your charity that I have learned to yield this respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error'.[1] All Scripture is Divine and infallible, there being no question that God was the source of the Book. Given the unanimity on this matter it is not surprising that the extant sources available to us are liberally sprinkled with scriptural proof-texts and allusions, each employed to justify a practice or authenticate a position. Holy writ was much more powerful than any human authority in the Church. Such a belief represented, to this extent, a common hermeneutical position.

2. INTERPRETATIONS WERE LARGELY POLEMICAL.

There was no agreed exegetical key due to other a priori doctrinal presuppositions or ad hoc exigencies. Scripture was used like a quarry to extract materials for use in the defence of theological positions. Varying interpretations emerged. This point is illustrated by examining John's baptism. Tertullian argued that Jesus' disciples did not themselves receive Christian baptism because they had already received John's baptism and Jesus had stated that one bath (baptism) was sufficient.[2] Thus he seemed to equate John's baptism with Christian baptism. Cyprian argued for re-baptism partly on the basis that Paul had re-baptised certain Ephesian disciples who had only received John's baptism and had not heard of the Holy Spirit.[3] Cyprian therefore advanced his view in favour of re-baptism as

'scriptural' and at the same time indicated that, unlike Tertullian, he did not equate John's baptism with Christian baptism. Augustine argued that Paul's action in baptising these Ephesian believers was not re-baptism but rather that Paul was administering Christian baptism to these men for the first time.[4] Thus Augustine, like Cyprian, did not equate John's baptism with Christian baptism, but neither did he draw scriptural warrant for the practice of re-baptism on the basis of this incident as Cyprian did.

In one sense the use of Scripture in this schism reveals more about the Church-experience of the participants than exegesis of the biblical text. Scriptural interpretations were often inconsistent in the sense that declared interpretative rules were frequently broken. None of the writers considered in this thesis used Scripture systematically. Scriptural texts, characters and examples appear frequently to have been urgently amassed to justify a belief and practice, counter an opponents writing, or answer a private enquiry. Retrospective classifications of scriptural interpretation into Alexandrian or Antiochene schools is not particularly helpful in examining the Donatist schism. In this struggle the use of Scripture was more often polemical and so texts tended to be used or adapted as the situation dictated. Such use of Scripture blurs distinctions between historical, aetiological, analogical and allegorical classifications.

Tertullian represents an early 'episodic' method of exegesis and his use of the 'lost parables' changed dramatically when *De paenitentia*[5] is compared with *De pudicitia*.[6] His circumstances clearly moulded his interpretation.

The two extant versions of Cyprian's fourth chapter of his *De ecclesia unitate* are ample evidence of Scripture serving theory. If Bevenot and others are right, then Cyprian 'diluted' his initial understanding of Christ's declaration to Peter[7] in the light of subsequent disagreements with Stephen, bishop of Rome.[8]

Identical Scripture examples could even provide conflicting interpretations. For example, Cyprian had written that the Ark was like the Church. As with the Ark, only those within the Church can be saved.[9] Yet Callistus had pointed out that the

Ark contained both clean and unclean animals and so the Church is a mixed society, containing both good and bad.[10] Similarly Cyprian had pointed out that the as the Garden of Eden had been watered by four rivers, so the Church had four Gospels.[11] Augustine pointed out though that these same rivers also flowed outside Eden and watered other lands.[12]

Optatus criticised Parmenian for adopting isolated texts to warn of the danger of improper baptisms. 'You batter the Law to such purpose that wherever you find the word water, there you conjure out of it some sense to our disadvantage'.[13] Parmenian had used the phrase, 'Let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head,'[14] to illustrate the point that the Donatists followed the example of David in fearing contamination from sinners. Optatus countered this with an alternative interpretation. As David had already been anointed by Samuel, it cannot be his voice in the text. It is Christ who is speaking and his words are a prayer, not a command. His request is that he should not be anointed by any man, for all men are sinners. Optatus 'proves' his interpretation by a reference to a further text, 'The Lord your God shall anoint you with the oil of gladness differently from your brothers'.[15] This second text is interpreted by Optatus as a reference to Christ's anointing by the Holy Spirit. Such examples of use of Scripture abound in the North African sources.

Augustine ridiculed the Donatists for applying the text, 'I am darkened by the sun' as an explicit reference to themselves.[16] Yet he too was inconsistent in his use of Scripture. While he correctly challenged Jerome's 'pious collusion' theory concerning Peter's dispute with Paul at Antioch, he displayed feeble traditionalism in his opposition to Jerome's new translation of Scripture. At the Carthaginian Conference in 411 Augustine ignored Donatist protests that he was misrepresenting the words of the parable of the field.[17] Their point was that in the text Jesus clearly stated that the field represents the world but Augustine and the Catholics insisted that the field represents the Church.[18]

The writings pertaining to the subject matter of this thesis contain an abundance of scriptural quotations. In this early period the foundations of Christian faith and

order was in process of being laid down. Scripture was essential in this process to authenticate any practice or doctrine but in these formative years of Christian exegesis virtually any practice or doctrine could attract supportive scriptural interpretations.

3. BAPTISM WAS CENTRAL.

All sides were agreed in the patristic period on the importance of baptism. Jesus' statement to Nicodemus that those who wished to enter the kingdom of God must be born of water and the Spirit was applied to baptism by Tertullian, Cyprian, Donatists and Augustine alike.[19] Baptism was the universally recognised sign marking remission of sin and entry into Christ's Church. Debate and schism on this question arose in the third century as a result of pressures brought to bear by the problems posed by post-baptismal sin.

For Tertullian and Cyprian the matter was straightforward; How could unregenerate persons, not themselves in possession of the Holy Spirit, convey the gift of the Holy Spirit? The Donatists followed this aspect of their reasoning with precision. Had not Jesus given the disciples both the Holy Spirit and the exclusive right to forgive or withhold forgiveness of sins?[20] By such scriptural authority it was not difficult to disallow all schismatic baptisms and insist upon re-baptism in such cases.

In support of their case the Donatists advanced a whole armada of isolated texts which warned of the dangers of water. 'Keep away from strange water',[21] 'He that is washed by one dead, what is gained by his washing?',[22] 'Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean'.[23] Such texts were easily interpreted as warning of the contagion of heretical or schismatic baptism. Scriptural support was claimed by all sides. To a large extent the problem was that Scripture itself was silent on the question of re-baptism and as such was a largely unsuitable medium for solving this impasse.

Augustine's main line of attack was to establish a distinction between the rite of baptism and its benefits. Of all the scriptural texts and illustrations he used to clinch his view against the Donatists that of Simon Magus is most prominent. He refers to this character eight times in *De baptismo contra Donatistas*. Simon possessed the sacrament yet was later rebuked and commanded to repent of his wickedness by Peter. This example allows Augustine to make an important distinction between the sacrament and the operation of the Spirit. Simon possessed the former but knew nothing of the latter. Reconciliation to Mother Church was all that was required of those who had been baptised in schism.

In making this distinction between the rite and the benefits of baptism, Augustine revealed weaknesses in his own theory of the sacrament. The 'reviviscence of sins' concept appears to be one such weakness.[24] How can sins be momentarily relieved, only to be revisited upon the schismatic? Unfortunately Augustine does not tease out the practical implications of this concept. Surely there can be no remission of sin, even momentary remission, without the presence of the Holy Spirit?

4. THE CHURCH INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE.

Correct use of Scripture came to be aligned with the authority of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church emerged as the legitimate heir of the apostolic writers and as such could authoritatively interpret all Scripture. The early development of such an argument is evident in Tertullian. In what appears to be a clear development of Irenaeus' ideas, Tertullian wrote that Scripture, including its use and interpretation, belongs to the Church. 'For there it will appear that the truth of Christian discipline and faith are found, there also will be the true Scriptures, the true interpretations, and all the true Christian traditions'.[25] Christ taught the truth and entrusted this truth to the apostles who in turn entrusted it to the Churches they founded. In an interesting point based upon the parable of the wheat and weeds Tertullian pointed out that as the wheat was sown before the weeds so the Church with its proper use of Scripture existed before heresies arose.[26]

The *regula fidei* emerged as a result of this interaction of Church and Scripture. It should be noted though that this is something of a negative interpretive principle. While it excludes incorrect interpretations, it does not guarantee a correct interpretation. Of course as a Montanist, outside the fold of the Church, Tertullian claimed for himself what he had previously denied to those outside the Church, namely the right to interpret the Scriptures as he chose.

Augustine also accepted the principle that the use of Scripture is restricted to the Catholic Church. 'But I would not believe the Gospel did not the authority of the Catholic Church persuade me'.[27] This is a succinct statement of Augustine's regard for Scripture. It is tied to his concept of the Church. He believed the Catholic Church taught with a supreme authority from a pure tradition and with universal assent throughout the world. From his perspective therefore, the Donatist claim to be the one true Church was ludicrous. While believing that all Scripture is the Word of God, Augustine is adamant that the Catholic Church is the final arbiter in interpreting Scripture and determining practice. 'If it be done by the universal Church, to question it would be a piece of most insolent folly'.[28]

A vital element of Augustine's argument with the Donatists revolved around this very point. Twelve times in *De baptismo contra Donatistas* Augustine quotes Paul's advice to the Philippians, 'All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you'.[29] Consistently Augustine made the point from this text that while Cyprian's stance on re-baptism seemed right to him in the mid-third century, God has made clear to later generations of believers the error of re-baptism.

5. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH WAS A CRUCIAL ISSUE.

The question of the nature of the Church also became a crucial battleground in the Donatist schism. Arguments invariably progressed from the particular to the general. As the tradition of the Catholic Church was held up as the measure for all

scriptural interpretation, it was inevitable that sacramental controversy grew to encompass a consideration of the nature of the Church. Where was the true Church to be found? Once again Scripture was employed by all sides to bolster their respective positions. The concept of *contagio* was central to evolving North African ecclesiology.

The Church is to be 'without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish',[30] the 'perfect one',[31] 'a garden locked up . . a sealed fountain'.[32] This pure Church is free from pollution in the form of known sinners and such purity must be maintained. This latter qualification is important. The Donatists acknowledged that sinners could remain hidden within the Church. It was the presence of open sinners which could not be tolerated. Augustine was guilty of sometimes ignoring this qualification in his haste to ridicule his opponents position as completely untenable. Both sides appear to have missed a point of contact here in that the Catholics belittled the Donatist desire for a pure Church and the Donatist definition of 'sinner' was open to question.

Augustine and the Catholics advanced the view that the Church was a mixed society. It will only be without stain or wrinkle after the Last Judgement. The weeds and wheat must continue together until then. Both noble and ignoble articles coexist in a large house. The power of God was always greater than the power of evil and so He could preserve the true believers in the mixed society of the Church.

For Augustine the contagion of *concupiscentia* was the real source of contamination. This contamination affected the whole human race. By redefining the problem of sin in this new dimension Augustine drew the sting from the Donatist contention that individual sins rendered sacramental acts void. For him the sacrament of baptism was Christ's sacrament and as it is He who baptises, then the standing of the recipient or administrating bishop cannot nullify a sacrament.

As the concepts of Church, ministry and sacrament developed there are some interesting examples of evolving interpretations of texts in this regard. For example, 'In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and

clay: some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble'.[33] Cyprian quoted this text twice in his letters.[34] On both occasions he ties this text with the parables of the wheat and weeds, and the threshing floor.[35] For Cyprian the articles of gold and silver represent the true Christians in the Church while the articles of wood and clay represent sinners within the Church. Only God can separate these two groups and true believers must tolerate with patience the presence of sinners within the Church.

Tyconius refers to this text only once in his extant writings.[36] Like Cyprian he interprets this text as teaching that the Church is a mixed society. Unlike Cyprian he sees both good and bad within each of the four categories of Church member represented. Augustine also interprets this text in relation to the mixed Church. In *De baptismo* he outlines three types of relationship between the articles and the house.[37] The true Christians are the *domus Dei*, the ignoble articles only have the appearance of being in the *ecclesia*, and the heretics and schismatics are more obviously *ex domo* than the ignoble articles. For Augustine, sinners and true believers can be physically mixed (*corporaliter mixti*) but spiritually, in God's eyes, they are separate (*spiritualiter separati*).

Cyprian's basic interpretation of this text is followed by Augustine, both making the point that the Church is an *ecclesia permixta*. Both accept that God alone has the necessary power to separate the sinners from the true believers and this He will do in the final Judgement. Tyconius' influence can be seen in Augustine's notion of physical and spiritual levels of membership of the Church. Certainly this text was widely employed in refuting rigorist tendencies.

A similar scriptural key which Augustine employed in defeating the Donatists was that of the Catholicity of the Church. Whereas Petilian pointed out that the road leading to life was narrow and few find it, Augustine retorted that as the Maximianists were fewer still in number surely they are to be regarded as more righteous?[38] Christ had predicted that the disciples would be His witnesses 'to the ends of the earth' and yet the Donatists were confined to North Africa.[39] The Catholic Church is the mountain which grew out of a small stone.[40]

One final point must be made with regard to the question of the nature of the Church. Augustine emphasised the unity of the Church, and specifically Cyprian's maintenance of unity even with Stephen against whom he clashed openly on the question of re-baptism. Cyprian's example was used by Augustine against Donatist isolation. His Neoplatonist background naturally led him to seek the spiritual sense above the literal or historical. Augustine looked primarily in Scripture for what God intended to teach and as such he harmonised his use of Scripture with the rule of love of God and neighbour. The sin of schism was a great sin and most of the Donatist faults flowed from this source.

6. SCRIPTURE ALONE COULD NOT HEAL THE SCHISM.

The knot tightened as opposing strands of Church, ministry, sacrament and Scripture pulled in opposition to each other. The use of Scripture alone was insufficient to break the deadlock. Batteries of texts were opposed by batteries of texts. Each side could legitimately claim to be scriptural and neither Catholics nor Donatists were capable of producing a scriptural character or text which convinced and silenced their opponents. Neither side could use Scripture to produce a knockout blow.

Scripture was more often than not used to adorn powerful arguments which were applied to the perceived weak spots in opponent's positions. Cyprian gave as much weight to the decision in favour of re-baptism dating from the time of Agrippinus as he did to Scripture.[41] The Donatists' most potent argument against Augustine was a challenge regarding their baptism. If you accept our baptism, then we are in possession of the Holy Spirit and if you do not accept our baptism then you ought to re-baptise us.[42] Augustine seized upon Cyprian's dilemma in that individuals had been admitted to the Catholic Church prior to 250 without receiving re-baptism. Quoting Cyprian,[43] Augustine sought to demonstrate that the Church was 'mixed' from early times; 'The Lord is able in his mercy to grant indulgence, and not to

separate from the gifts of His Church those who, being admitted in all honesty to His Church, have fallen asleep within the Church'.[44]

Ultimately it was the coercive action of the Christian State which overwhelmed the Donatists. The conversion of Constantine was of enormous consequence in North Africa. From the earliest stages of the Donatist schism the Christian Emperor was involved. He ordered Anullus, Vicar of Africa, to restore property to the Catholics after the persecution and thereby recognised Caecilian as bishop of Carthage. Similarly, he granted immunity from municipal office to Catholic clergy. He appointed bishops under Miltiades to rule on the North African schism and personally summoned the Council of Arles which, like Miltiades, found against the Donatists. Finally, in November 316, Constantine again ruled against the Donatists.

A Christian Emperor ruled in tandem with Christian bishops. Together they expressed their common faith in one Lord, one faith, one baptism. 'One Church' in the post-Constantinian era meant one group of Christians in each locality, acquiescent to the new Christian State. The Donatists however drew a clear boundary between Church and State. The martyrs had paid the ultimate price in defending this boundary and in so doing secured spiritual prestige and personal salvation. By contrast, the *traditores* were overwhelmed by the kingdom of the World and although maintaining their physical lives, they had secured their spiritual death. As spiritual corpses they transmitted *contagio* to all around them. The main channels of such contagion were the sacraments which themselves represented the main conduits between the physical and the spiritual realms. In such terms, Donatism represents an older form of Christianity which never came to terms with the new order which developed in the post-Constantinian climate.

The new Christian State had a duty to support the Church and punish heretics. Given such a monochromic canvass, no meaningful variety of spirituality could blossom. It was State coercion which ensured victory for Augustine and the Catholics in 411.

Augustine found scriptural support for such action. He argued that the proverb, 'A servant cannot be corrected by mere words', implied use of force for correction.[45] More explicitly, 'Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death',[46] permits the true Mother Church to compel her wayward children to return to her. Evidently the Donatists had challenged Augustine on this matter and asked for one example of Christ using violence in this way. In reply Augustine cited Paul's conversion as an example of Christ 'first striking, and afterwards consoling'.[47] Perhaps most memorably, Augustine interpreted the parable of the great banquet as justification for a policy of coercion. The servants were commanded by their master to 'make them come in'.[48]

Such coercion of the Donatists was actually an act of mercy according to Augustine. If two men were in a house which was known to be on the point of collapsing and yet refused to heed your warning to flee you would be justified in forcibly entering their house and removing them, even if one of them committed suicide rather than be rescued. With such arguments Augustine justifies State coercion of the Donatists. It seems more than likely that Augustine's view of God's irresistible decrees and grace helped him justify coercion. The Christian State is God's instrument and to resist this God-fearing State is to resist Christ. Left to his own devices fallen man could only choose wrong. There is some tension though between Augustine's doctrine of the Church and his doctrine of predestination in that he himself never harmonised the two.

The above-mentioned factors were interactive. No one question was examined in isolation. Scripture proved pliable and was moulded to support all sides in this schism. An examination of the use of Scripture in North Africa reveals more about the experience, belief and practice of the writers than about interpretative rules. The doctrines of Church, ministry, and sacrament were advanced as a direct result of the problems raised by post-baptismal sin. Catholic orthodoxy on these matters evolved as a narrow band, permitting no varying shades of spirituality.

Uniformity equated with orthodoxy. Perhaps the last word on the use of Scripture in this schism belongs to the Donatists in the person of Emeritus addressing

Augustine in 418, 'The Acts show whether I was conquered by the truth or overwhelmed by force'.[49]

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APPENDIX 1.

CYPRIAN:- *De Ecclesiae Unitate*

Use of Scripture.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.	NUMBER OF QUOTATIONS
Exodus	1
Leviticus	1
Numbers	1
Josuha	1
1 Kings	1
2 Chronicles	1
Psalms	3
Canticles	1
Jeremiah	1
Daniel	1
TOTAL	12

APPENDIX 2.

CYPRIAN:- *De Ecclesiae Unitate.*

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.	NUMBER OF QUOTATIONS.
Matthew	14
Mark	4
Luke	4
John	7
Acts	2
Romans	1
1 Corinthians	3
2 Corinthians	1
Galatians	0
Ephesians	4
Philippians	0
Colossians	0
1 Thessalonians	0
2 Thessalonians	0
1 Timothy	0
2 Timothy	2
Titus	1
Philemon	0
Hebrews	0
James	0
1 Peter	0
2 Peter	0
1 John	3
2 John	0
3 John	0
Jude	0
Revelation	1
TOTAL	47

APPENDIX 3.

CYPRIAN:- *De Lapsis*   Use of Scripture.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.	NUMBER OF QUOTATIONS.
Exodus	2
Leviticus	2
Deuteronomy	1
1 Kings	1
Psalms	2
Isaiah	7
Jeremiah	4
Ezekiel	2
Daniel	2
Joel	2
TOTAL	25

APPENDIX 4.

CYPRIAN:- *De Lapsis*   Use of Scripture.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.	NUMBER OF QUOTATIONS.
Matthew	2
Mark	3
Luke	2
John	0
Acts	0
Romans	0
1 Corinthians	2
2 Corinthians	0
Galatians	1
Ephesians	0
Philippians	0
Colossians	0
1 Thessalonians	0
2 Thessalonians	1
1 Timothy	1
2 Timothy	1
Titus	0
Philemon	0
Hebrews	0
James	0
1 Peter	0
2 Peter	0
1 John	0
2 John	0
3 John	0
Jude	0
Revelation	5
TOTAL	18

APPENDIX 5.

CYPRIAN:- Complete Writings.   Use of Scripture.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS	NUMBER OF QUOTES.	NUMBER OF USAGES.
Genesis	19	26
Exodus	27	44
Leviticus	9	14
Numbers	13	15
Deuteronomy	22	35
Joshua	5	6
Judges	2	2
Ruth	0	0
1 Samuel	10	15
2 Samuel	1	2
1 Kings	5	6
2 Kings	1	1
1 Chronicles	0	0
2 Chronicles	2	3
Ezra-Nehemiah	1	1
Esther	0	0
Job	7	11
Psalms	90	141
Proverbs	39	50
Ecclesiastes	11	21
Canticles	3	5
Isaiah	75	112
Jeremiah	28	42
Lamentations	0	0
Ezekiel	10	19
Daniel	10	14
Hosea	8	11
Joel	2	5
Amos	3	3
Obadiah	0	0
Jonah	0	0
Micah	2	2
Nahum	0	0
Habakkuk	5	7
Zephaniah	4	5
Haggai	1	1
Zechariah	5	5
Malachi	7	10
TOTAL	427	633

APPENDIX 6.

CYPRIAN:- Complete Writings.   Use of Scripture.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.	NUMBER OF QUOTES.	NUMBER OF USAGES.
Matthew	88	178
Mark	8	19
Luke	50	84
John	64	117
Acts	20	26
Romans	33	53
1 Corinthians	46	79
2 Corinthians	13	17
Galatians	12	27
Ephesians	18	26
Philippians	7	11
Colossians	8	12
1 Thessalonians	3	4
2 Thessalonians	3	6
1 Timothy	11	16
2 Timothy	8	12
Titus	5	6
Philemon	0	0
Hebrews	0	0
James	0	0
1 Peter	9	15
2 Peter	0	0
1 John	17	36
2 John	1	1
3 John	0	0
Jude	0	0
Revelation	30	53
TOTAL	454	798

APPENDIX 7.

AUGUSTINE:- *De baptismo contra Donatistas.*

New Testament references.

N. T. BOOKS.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL.
Matthew	6	5	3	16	7	19	11	67
Mark	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	6
Luke	0	1	0	3	0	3	0	7
John	5	4	7	3	13	9	5	46
Acts	3	0	2	5	3	2	0	15
Romans	1	3	3	5	7	3	1	23
1 Corinthians	8	3	6	10	9	1	4	41
2 Corinthians	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	8
Galatians	3	2	1	4	3	4	3	20
Ephesians	3	1	2	7	5	5	5	28
Philippians	0	2	1	6	2	5	4	20
Colossians	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
1 Thessalonians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Thessalonians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Timothy	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	10
2 Timothy	0	1	1	6	2	0	2	12
Titus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
Philemon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hebrews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
James	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Peter	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
2 Peter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 John	1	0	1	1	4	4	2	13
2 John	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
3 John	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jude	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revelation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	33	23	32	75	61	60	44	328

APPENDIX 8.

AUGUSTINE:- *De baptismo contra Donatistas.*

Old Testament references.

O. T. BOOKS.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL.
Genesis	3	0	0	2	1	1	1	8
Exodus	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
Leviticus	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Numbers	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	4
Deuteronomy	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
1 Samuel	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
1 Kings	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Psalms	3	2	0	3	4	2	6	20
Proverbs	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	5
Canticles	1	0	1	2	2	4	2	12
Isaiah	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Jeremiah	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Ezekiel	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Hosea	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	4
Malachi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL.	11	6	10	9	8	15	12	71

APPENDIX 9.

AUGUSTINE:- *De baptismo contra Donatistas.*

Apocryphal references.

BOOKS.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL.
Wisdom	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	8
Ecclesiasticus	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
TOTAL.	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	10

NOTES.

CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION.

1   Acts 8: 30.

2   Gal. 4: 21-31.

3   Lk. 10: 26.

4   Lk. 11: 42.

5   Matt. 22: 29.

CHAPTER 2.
NORTH AFRICA:
CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND AND
TRADITIONS.

1   At Madura, 17 July A.D. 180.

2   Harnack 1905 (Vol. 2), 415.

3   Raven 1993, 133.

4   Frend 1965, 361.

5   Mk. 15: 21; Rom. 16: 13.

6   Acts 2: 10.

7   Acts 11:20.

8   Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 3.

9   'Ego imperium huius seculi non cognosco; sed magus illi Deo seruio, quem nemo hominum uidit nec uidere his oculis potest.'
Passio Scillitanorum 18.

10   'Speratum, Nartzalum, Cittinum, Donatam, Vestiam, Secundam et ceteros ritu Christiano se uiuere confessos, quoniam oblata sibi facultate ad Romanorum morem redeundi obstinanter perseuerauerunt, gladio animaduerti placet.'
Ibid., 25.

11   *Ibid.*, 19.

12   Augustine, *Sermones* 155.

13   *Loc. cit.*

14   'He prohibited conversion to judaism under heavy penalties, and laid down the same penalty in the case of Christians too.'
Aelius Spartianus, *Historia Augusta: Severus*, 17.1

15   Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, 1.1; *De spectaculis* 27; *Acta Perpetuae* 13.3.

16   '(Saturus) qui postea se propter nos ulfro tradiderat.'
Passio Scillitanorum 4.

17   Noteably in this respect, W.H.C. Frend.

18   Tacitus, *Annales* 10.96.

19   'I am convinced that their stubborness and unshakeable obstinacy ought not to go unpunished.'
        Pliny, *Epistularum ad Traianum* 96.3.

20   Tertullian, *De fuge in persecutione* 9; *Ad Scapulam* 5.

21   Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 53.

22   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.

23   Daniel 1993, 98.

24   Especially in *Adversus Praxean*.

25   'I always affirm that there is one substance in three united together.'
        Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 12.

26   Tertullian, *Ad martyras* 1; *De pudicitia* 5,14.

27   *Id., Apologeticum* 39.1.

28   *Ibid.*, 50; *Scorpiace* 6.

29   Quasten 1953 (Vol. 2), 248.

30   eg. John 19: 34; Tertullian, *De Baptismo* 9.16;
        1 John 5: 6: *De Baptismo* 16.

31   eg. *Didache* 7.

32   John 3: 5.

33   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.28.2.

34   *Id., De baptismo* 13.
        (Matt. 28: 19; John 3: 5.)

35   'all (who) thereafter (became) believers used to be baptised'. *Ibid.*, 13.

36   *Ibid.*, 12; John 13: 10.

37   *Ibid.*, 12: Matt. 14: 24.

38   John 5 :4.

39   'non quod in aqua spiritum sanctum consequimur, sed in aqua emundati sub angelo spiritui sancto praeparamur'.
     Tertullian, *De baptismo* 6.

40   *Ibid.*, 20.

41   *Id., De spectaculis* 4; *De idololatria* 6.

42   *Id., Adversus Praxean* 26.

43   *Id., Adversus Marcionem* 1.1.24.

44   *Id., De baptismo* 7.

45   *Id., De resurrectione carnis* 8.

46   *Loc. cit.*, 8. Also *De baptismo* 8, on Gen. 48.

47   *Id., Apologeticum* 41.

48   *Id., De patientia* 13.

49   *Id., De baptismo* 16, on Lk. 12: 50.

50   *Loc. cit.*, 16, on John 19: 34.

51   *'non debeo in illis cognoscere quod mihi est praeceptum, quia non idem deus est nobis et illis, nec unus Christus, id est idem: ergo nec baptismus unus, quia non idem.'*
     Ibid., 15.

52   1 John 1: 9.

53   1 John 5: 16.

54   1 Cor. 5: 1; 2 Cor. 2: 5-8.

55   *Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 4, 3, 1-6.

56   Clement, *Stromata* 2, 13, 56-57.

57   Tertullian, *De paenitentia* 8; Rev. 2-3.

58   *Loc. cit.*, on Lk. 15.

59   '*Itaque exomologesis prosternendi et humilificandi hominis disciplina est conuersationem iniungens misericordie illicem de ipso quoque habitu atque victu mandat.*'
       Tertullian, *De paenitentia* 9.

60   *Ibid.*, 10.

61   *Ibid.*, 10.

62   *Ibid.*, 12, on Dan. 4: 25f.

63   *Ibid.*, 12, on Ex. 14: 15f.

64   *Ibid.*, 12.

65   *Ibid.*, 2, 21, on John. 20: 23.

66   1 John 5: 16.

67   Acts 15: 29.

68   Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 1.

69 'I forgive sins of adultery and fornication to those who have performed penance.'
Loc. cit.

70 *Ibid.*, 1, 2.

71 Heb. 6: 4-6; 10: 26-31.

72 Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 20.

73 Hippolytus, *Refutationes omnium haeresium* 9. 12. 22-23. Matt. 13: 24f; Gen. 8: 20.

74 *Ibid.*, 9. 12. 30.

75 *'Audio etiam edictum esse propositum, et quidem peremptorium, pontifex scilicit maximus, quod est episcopus episcoporum, edicit: "Ego et moechiae et fornicationis delicta paenitentia functis dimitto".'*
Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 1.

76 *Ibid.*, 5.

77 Lk. 15.

78 Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 11.

79 *Ibid.*, 21. Matt. 16: 18.

80 *Ibid.*, 13; 1 Cor. 5: 5.

81 1 Cor. 4: 18-21.

82 'The Church, it is true, will forgive sins: but [it will be] the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man; not the Church which consists of nurerous bishops'.
Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 21.

83 *Id.*, *De exhortatione castitatis* 10.

84   *Id., De spectaculis* 1.

85   *Id., De fuga in persecutione* 3 and 9.

86   *Id., Apologeticum* 41.

87   'the act of ascending the divine seat.'
        Tertullian, *De patientia* 13.

88   *Id., Ad uxorem* 1. 1. 5, on Phil. 1: 20f.

89   *Id., Apologeticum* 50.

90   *Id., De patientia* 13;
        De fuge in persecutione 4.

91   *Id., De fuga in persecutione* 8,
        on Matt. 26: 39.

92   *Id., Scorpiace* 8, on Dan. 3.

93   *Ibid.*, 9, on Matt. 10: 32-33.

94   *Ibid.*, 14, Rom. 13: 1.

95   Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*
        21.

96   Quasten 1953 (Vol. 2), 331.

97   Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 21, 17.

98   'Woe to them who bind their own sins as it
        were with a long rope.'
        Tertullian, *De paenitentia* 11.

99   Harnack 1905 (Vol. 2), 415.

100   Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 18, on Eph. 5: 27.

101   *Id., De anima* 43. Gen. 2: 21f; 3: 20

102   *Id., Scorpiace* 11, 4.

103   'But we prefer, if it must be so, to be less wise in the Scriptures, than to be wise against them'.
Tertullian, *De pudicitia* 9, 22.

104   Tertullian, *De baptismo* 16. John. 19: 34.

105   Eph. 5: 27.

106   Hippolytus, *Refutation* 9, 12, 22-23; with reference to Matt. 13: 30 and Gen. 8: 20.

107   Tertullian, *De prescriptione haereticorum* 37.

108   *Id., Ad Scapulam* 2.

109   *Id., Adversus Marcionem* 4. 13.

110   *Id., De oratione* 4; *De baptismo* 3. 9.

111   *Id., De monogamia* 8 on 1 Tim. 5: 14.

112   Von Campenhausen 1964, 7.

113   Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 53.

114   Augustine, *De doctrine christiana* 2, 11.

115   See Jerome's preface 'Novum opus' to his translation of The Four Gospels.

116   eg. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 30, 3. 9.

117   Metzger 1976, 72.

118   *Id., Loc. cit.*

119   Harnack 1905 (Vol. 2), 286.

CHAPTER 3.
CYPRIAN.

1   Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 67.

2   Cyprian, *Ad Donatus* 4.

3   Epistle 59 was written after 15 May 252 and Cyprian had then been a bishop for a quadriennium (ie. between 3 years 3 months and 4 years). So the earliest date is June 248 and the latest date is April 249.

4   Frend 1972 (Oxford), 33.

5   Chadwick 1993, 90-91.

6   Frend 1965, 408.

7   Cyprian, *De lapsis* 8.

8   *Id., Ep.* 27. 1.

9   "The authority of the bishops forms a unity, of which each bishop holds its part in its totality.' Cyprian, *De ecclesiae unitate* 5.

10   'Whoever he may be, whatever his qualities, he can be no Christian who is not inside the church of Christ.' Cyprian, *Ep.* 55. (24. 1.)

11   Frend 1965, 427.

12   Hinchliff 1974, 110.

13   Cyprian, *Ep.* 71. 3.

14   Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 3. 68.

15   Bévenot 1971, introduction.

16   Wiles 1963, 140.

17   Frend 1984, 358.

18   Ehrhardt 1941-42, 178.

19   Benson 1897, ix.

20   *Loc. cit.*, x.

21   Ehrhardt, *op. cit.*, 178.

22   Von Campenhausen 1964, 36.

23   Wand 1979, 105.

24   Altaner 1960, 201.

25   Fahey 1971.

26   Frend 1972, 140.

27   Wiles 1963, 142.

28   Ehrahdt, *op. cit.*, title.

29   Benson, *op. cit.*, 531.

30   Ignatius, *Letter to Smyrna* 8.

31   Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6. 43. 11.

32   *Liber Pontificalis.*, xxi.

33   Frend 1965, 389.

34   Cyprian, *Ep.* 22. 2-3.

35   *Id., Ep.* 20.

36   Greenslade 1952, 108.

37   Cyprian, *Ep.* 44, 45 and 48.

38   *Id., Ep.* 73, 21.

39   *Id., De unitate* 6.

40   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3. 3. 1.

41   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1. 21. 5.

42   Bévenot 1979, 415.

43   Nu. 2: 25-26.

44   Acts 1: 15.

45   Cyprian, *Ep.* 67. 4.

46   *Id., Ep.* 55. 8. 4.

47   *Id., Ep.* 33. 1.

48   Ignatius, *Letter to Philadelphia* 7. 2.

49   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1. 10. 1.

50   Cyprian, *Ep.* 55. 21. 1.

51   *Id., De unitate* 5.

52   *Id., Ep.* 59. 5.

53   *Id., Ep.* 73. 21.

54   *Id., De unitate* 6.

55   Cant. 6: 9.

56   *Ibid.*, 4: 12.

57   1 Peter 3: 20-21.

58   Eph. 5: 25-26.

59   Cyprian, *De unitate* 13,.

60   *Ibid.*, 7.

61   *Id., Ep.* 69. 5.

62   'For my part I hope, dearest brethren, and I
        urge and press it upon you, that, if possible,
        not one of the brethren should perish, but that
        our Mother should have the happiness of
        clasping to her bosom all our people in one
        like-minded body.'
        Id., De unitate 23.

63   Kelly 1980, 193.

64   Justine, *Dialogue* 41. 3: 117. 1.

65   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4. 17. 5.

66   *Didache* 14. 1.

67   See Page 17.

68   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1. 28. 2.

69   *Id., De baptismo* 18. 5.

70   Cyprian, *Ep.* 64. 2.

71   Benson 1897, 521.

72   'Emulation of the episcopal office is the mother of all schisms.'
        Tertullian, *De baptismo* 17.

73   Cyprian, *Ep.* 69. 3.

74   *Ibid.,* 69. 8.

75   'In this passage he is showing that he alone has the power to baptise and grant forgiveness of sins who possess the Holy Spirit.'
        Ibid., 69. 11. 1.

76   Eusebius, *Historica ecclesiastica* 6.43. 15.

77   Cyprian, *Ep.* 69. 12.

78   See previous note.

79   Cyprian, *Ep.* 70.

80   *Ibid.,* 71. 1.

81   *Ibid.* 75.

82   *Ibid.,* 74. 1. Unfortunately, neither this letter nor any correspondance from Stephen is extant.

83   *Ibid.,* 75. 17.

84   Eusebius, *op. cit.* 7. 5.

85   Cyprian, *Ep.* 75. 17.

86   *Ibid.,* 69. 10.

87   Sage 1975, 334.

88   Cyprian, *Ep.* 54. 4.

89   *Id., De unitate* 6.

90   *Loc. cit.*

91   *Ibid.*, 7.

92   1 Kings 11: 30.

93   Cyprian, *De unitate* 8.

94   *Id., Ep.* 69. 4.

95   Ex. 12: 46.

96   Cyprian, *De unitate* 8.

97   *Ibid.*, 4.

98   *Habere iam non potest Deum patrem qui
        ecclesiam non habet matrem.
        Ibid.*, 6.

99   *Ibid.*, 15.

100   Cyprian, *Ep.* 20. 55; *De Dominica Oratione*
        28; *De opere et Eleemosynis* 16.

101   *Id., De unitate* 8.

102   *Ibid.*, 13.

103   *Ibid.*, 14.

104   *Ibid.*, 6.

105   Matt. 16: 18-19.

106   Cyprian, *De unitate* 4.

107   *Loc. cit.*

108   *Loc. cit.* 4 and *Ep.* 33. 1.

109   See Page 42.

110   Cyprian, *De unitate* 5.

111   *Id., De unitate* 18 and *Ep.* 3. 1; 67. 8; 73. 8.

112   *Loc. cit.*

113   Lev. 10.

114   'Whatever was foretold is being realised.'
       Cyprian, *De unitate* 16.

115   *Ibid.,* 14.

116   *Ibid.,* 15.

117   'Let no one think that good men can leave the
       Church.'
       Ibid., 9.

118   Wiles 1962, 141.

119   Cyprian, *De unitate* 7.

120   Fahey 1971, 43.

121   Cyprian, *Ep.* 69. 12.

122   *Ibid.,* 64. 4. 3.

123   *Ibid.,* 67. 4.

124   *Ibid.,* 1. 1.

125   *Ibid.,* 3. 1; 4. 4; 39. 7; 59. 4; 66. 3.

126   *Ibid.,* 72. 2.

127   *Ibid., Ep.* 15-19; 25; 27; 30; 33; 35; 36; 39; 55; 56.

128   Cyprian, *De lapsis* 6 on Ps. 88: 31-33.

129   *Ibid.,* 7.

130   *Loc. cit.*

131   *Ibid.,* 8.

132   *Loc. cit.* 8 on Mk. 8: 36.

133   *Ibid.,* 9.

134   *Loc. cit.*

135   *Ibid.,* 10.

136   *Ibid.,* 12 on Mk. 1: 22.

137   *Ibid.,* 13.

138   *Ibid.,* 27.

139   *Loc. cit.*

140   *Ibid.,* 24.

141   *Ibid.,* 25.

142   *Ibid.,* 26.

143   *Ibid.,* 22.

144   *Ibid.,* 35.

145   *Ibid.,* 14.

146   *Loc. cit.* on Rev. 3: 19.

147   *Ibid.*, 16.

148   *Ibid.*, 18.

149   *Ibid.*, 19 on Ex. 32: 31-33.

150   *Ibid.*, 17.

151   *Ibid.*, 23.

152   *Ibid.*, 28.

153   *Ibid.*, 31 on Dan. 3: 25.

154   *Ibid.*, 33.

155   *Ibid.*, 34.

156   *Ibid.*, 36 on Joel 2: 13.

157   Appendices 3 and 4,

158   Appendix 5.

159   Appendix 6.

CHAPTER 4.
DONATISM.

1   Wand 1979, 113.

2   Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 13. 2.

3   *Ibid.*, 8. 2. 4-5.

4   Walker 1970, 96.

5   Duchesne 1931 (Vol. 2), 3.

6   Eusebius, *op. cit.*, 8. 2. 4-5.

7   *Ibid.*, 8. 1. 7.

8   Duchesne, *op. cit.*, 7.

9   Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 11.
        31. 1.

10   *Ibid.*, 10.

11   Eusebius, *op. cit.*, 8. 4. 3.

12   Chadwick 1993, 121.

13   Lebreton and Zeiller 1942 (Vol. 2), 315.

14   Eusebius, *op. cit.*, 8. 6. 8-9.

15   *Ibid.*, 8. 6. 10.

16   Ste Croix 1954, 76.

17   Eusebius, *De martyribus Palaestinae* 3. 1.

18   *Ibid.*, 8. 13; 9. 1.

19   Ste Croix, *op. cit.*, 92.

20   Lactantius, *op. cit.*, 34.

21   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum.*
        Appendix 11.

22   *Ibid.*, Appendix 1.

23   Frend 1965, 501.

24   *Passio Crispinae* in Studi e Testi 9 (1902):
        23-25.

25   Lactantius, *op. cit.*, 44.

26   Eusebius, *Vita Constantini.*

27   *Codex Theodosianus* 7. 20. 1.

28   Optatus, *op. cit.*, Appendix 11.

29   Augustine, *Breviculus Conlationis*. 3. 25-27.

30   Optatus, *op. cit.*

31   Lebreton and Zeiller 1942 (Vol. 4), 326.

32   Markus 1972, 28.

33   Smith and Wace (Vol. 1), 883.

34   Augustine, *Ep.* 105. 9; *Contra litteras
        Pertiliani* 2. 92. 205.

35   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum*
        Appendix 9.

36   Augustine, *Ep.* 93. 43.

37   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 2. 4.

38   *Ibid.*, 3.3. *quid imperatori cum ecclesia?*

39   Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica.* 10. 9. 4.

40   E.g. Optatus, *op. cit.*, 3.4.

41   Augustine, *Ep.* 93. 49.

42   Cant. 1: 5.

43   Tyconius, *Liber Regularum.*

44   Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*
        1. 1. 1; *Ep.* 93. 44.

45   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 7. 1.

46   Frend 1972 (Oxford), 213.

47   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 21.

48   Brown 1961 (*History*), 91.

49   Bonner 1991, 224.

50   E.g. Alpius to Thagaste, Augustine to Hippo,
        Severus to Milevis, Profuturus to Constantine.

51   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 2. 34; Augustine,
        Contra Epistolam Parmeniani 1. 12. 19.

52   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 37-38; 16. 6.
        4-5; 16. 11. 2.

53   Augustine, *Gestorum Conlationis
        Carthaginiensis* 1. 4.

54   Kidd 1922 (Vol. 3), 24.

55   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 52.

56   Baynes 1925, 37.

57   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 1. 4.

58   Probably entitled *Adversus Ecclesiam
        Traditorum.*

59   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 2. 3.

60   Vassall-Phillips 1917, xxvii.

61   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 2. 2.

62   *Ibid.*, 4. 6.

63   Vassall-Phillips, *op. cit.*, 322.

64   cf. Duchesne 1890, 9.

65   Willis 1950, ix.

66   See Migne, PL 43.

67   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 3. 3.

68   Known as *De Spiritu Sancto* by Jerome and *De Trinitate* by Augustine.

69   Augustine, *Gesta Conlationis Carthaginensis.* See Migne PL 11, cols. 1223f.

70   Migne, PL 8, cols. 690-703, 766.

71   Loc. cit., col. 786.

72   Frend 1972 (Oxford), 201.

73   Gennadius, *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticus* 18.

74   Tyconius, *Liber Regularum.*

75   Tyconius, *Commentario in Apocalypsin.*

76   Gennadius, *op. cit.*, 4.

77   *Codex Theodosianus.*

78   See Voelter 1883.

79   Seeck, In 'Quellen und Urkunden uber die Anfange des Donatismus', Zeitschrift fur Kirchengeschicte 10. 1889.

80   See Duchesne 1890.

81   Frend 1985, 70.

82   Divjak Letters are in CSEL 88.

83   Lancel 1975.

84   See PL 18.

85   See Burkitt 1894.

86   See Thummel 1893.

87   See Monceaux 1901-23.

88   See Frend 1972 (Oxford).

89   *Ibid.*, xii.

90   *Loc. cit.*

91   See Brisson 1958.

92   See Deisner 1964.

93   See Jones 1959, 280f.

94   See Tengström 1964.

95   See Fevier 1966.

96   Frend 1985, 78.

97   Markus 1972, 27.

98   Pelikan 1971, 309.

99   Irenaeus, *Heresies* 5. 32. 2; 5. 34. 1.

100   *Loc. cit.*, 3. 24. 1.

101   Cyprian, *Ep.* 74.

102   Bonner 1991, 224.

103   Pelikan, *op. cit.*, 309.

104   See especially *De baptismo contra Donatistas.*

105   Optatus, *De cshismate Donatistarum* 3. 3.

106   Financial officer in charge of Imperial Estates in Africa.

107   Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 10. 15-17.

108   *Ibid.*, 10. 10.

109   15 April 313. See Augustine *Ep.* 88. 2 and Optatus, *op. cit.*, 1. 22.

110   Frend 1972 (Oxford), 147.

111   Optatus, *op. cit.*, Appendix vii.

112   Text lost. See Augustine, *Ep.* 105. 9; 88. 3; *Contra Litteras Petiliani* 2. 92. 205.

113   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 3. 3.

114   Optatus, *loc. cit.*

115   Bonner 1991, 218.

116   Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 12. 15.

117   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 1. 11-12.

118   Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatistas*
       1. 2.

119   See Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 4. 47. 57.

120   See Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 4. 16 and
       De Gestis cum Emerito 10-11 (PL 43, col.
       705)

121   Augustine, *Liber Contra Fulgentium
       Donatistam* 26. (PL 43, col. 774)

122   *Loc. cit.*, 26.

123   Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* 2.
       2. on Matt. 13: 24f.

124   See Migne PL 11, cols. 1223-1420. *Capitula
       Gestorum.*

125   Eph. 5: 27.

126   Cant. 6: 9.

127   *Ibid.*, 4: 12.

128   Is. 54: 1f; 62: 4f; Eph. 5: 22-23.

129   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 1. 10.

130   Tertullian, *De baptismo* 4. 6.

131   Cant. 4: 12.

132   *Ibid.*, 7: 2.

133   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 2. 8.

134   Matt. 23: 15.

135   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 2. 7.

136   *Ibid.*, 4. 7.

137   *Ibid.*, 5. 1.

138   *Ibid.*, 5. 4. ('How can he give, who has not anything to give?')

139   Gennadius, *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis* 18. (PL 43, col. 1071).

140   Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*. Text in PL 18, cols. 18-65.

141   Gennadius, *op. cit.*, 18.

142   Turner 1954, 278 on Cant. 1: 5.

143   *Loc. cit.*, 279.

144   Lampe 1957, 31.

145   Matt. 27: 4-5.

146   *'Agendum, inquam, nobis dicendumque est, quatenus perfidis traditor vita mortuus habaetur. Judas Apostolus fuit, cum traderet Christum: idemque honore apostoli perdito spiritualiter mortuus est, suo postea laqueo moriturus.'*
Augustine, *Contra litteras Periliani* 2. 8. 17.

147   Ps. 109: 8-9.

148   *'Judas Christum carnaliter tradit, tu spiritualiter furens Evangelium sanctum flammis sacrilegis tradidisti. Judas legislatorem tradidit perfidis, tu quasi ejus reliquias legum Dei perdendam hominbus tradidisti'.*
Augustine, *op. cit.*, 2. 8. 17.

149   Acts 9: 4-18.

150   Augustine, *op. cit.*, 2. 21. 47.

151   Frend 1972 (Oxford), 217.

152   Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 4. 16.

153   Nu. 16: 32.

154   Ps. 1.

155   Matt. 3: 12; Lk. 3: 17.

156   Matt. 1: 24-30; 36-43.

157   Matt. 13: 47-50.

158   Matt. 25: 31-33.

159   Jer. 23: 28.

CHAPTER 5.
AUGUSTINE.

1   Augustine, *Confessiones* 2. 3. 5.

2   Salt was often placed on the tongue of
        catechumens as an act of exorcism,
        accompanying the sign of the cross, prayers
        and laying on of hands.

3   Augustine, Confessiones 1. 11. 17.

4   Augustine, *De duabus animabus contra
        Manichaeos* 11 and 24; *De moribus
        ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus
        Manichaeorum* 2. 19. 71.

5   'On the beautiful and the Fitting' (no longer extant)

6   Augustine, *Confessiones* 5. 10. 18.

7   Augustine, *Ep.* 10. 2.

8   Augustine, *Sermones* 355. 2; Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 4. 1-2.

9   Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 5. 3.

10   *Ibid.,* 8. 2.

11   Augustine, *Ep.* 213. 4.

12   An African Catholic priest of Sicca Veneria who was excommunicated for an unspecified reason in 418. He appealed to Rome and was absolved by Pope Zosimus, much to the annoyance of the African Catholics.

13   Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium* 2: 'universality, antiquity, and unanimity'.

14   Augustine, *Ep.* 213. 1.

15   *Victor Vitensis, Historia persecutionis Africanae provinciae temporum Geiserici et Hunerici regis Vandalorum 1. 1. 3.*

16   Augustine, *Cassiciacum Dialogues (De beata vita* 1-5; *Contra Academicos* 2, 3-6; *De ordine* 1. 2. 5; *Soliloquia* 1. 1. 2-6.)

17   *Id., Ep.* 143. 2.

18   *Id., Retractationes* 2, 51; *De doctrina christiana* 4. 26, 53.

19   Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 28, 10-11.

20   *Id., Indiculus librorum tractatuum et epistolarum S. Augustini* PL 46, 5-22. crit. ed. A. Wilmart, *Miscellanea agnostiniani* Rome 1931, 161-208.

21   Augustine, *Contra Epistolarum Parmeniani* 2, 14, 32.

22   Eg. A. von Harnack, F. Loofs, L. Gourdan, W. Thimme, P. Alfaric.

23   The Divjak Letters. See CSEL 88.

24   *Breviculus conlationis cum Donatistas.* CSEL 53, 39-92.

25   Letter to bishops of Gaul in 431. (PL 45, 1756. 530.)

26   Altaner 1960, 433.

27   Jerome, *De virus illustribus* 53.

28   Augustine, *Ep.* 93. 10. 43.

29   Claudian, *De Bello Gildonico* 5. 70.

30   Augustine, *Contra epistolam Parmeniani* 1. 12. 19.

31   Augustine, *Ep.* 34, 35.

32   Council of Capua 391. No Donatist shall be received *cum suo honore.*

33   The Hippo Breviary 37.

34   Implemented by Annual Catholic Council on 13 Sept. 401.

35   Augustine, *Liber contra Donatistas post conlationem* 1. 31.

36   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 21.

37   Augustine, *Ep.* 185. 26.

38   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 37-8; 6. 3-5. (all 12 Feb. 405) and 16. 5. 39 on 8 Dec. 405.

39   Augustine, *Ep.* 185. 29-30; and *Ep.* 93.

40   *Id., Breviculus conlationis* 3. 23; 1. 133, 138., 189.

41   Augustine, *Ep.* 88. 86.

42   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 44, 46.

43   *Codex conciliorum Ecclesiae Africanae* c. 108.

44   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 51.

45   Augustine, *Ep.* 129, 3.

46   *Id., Capitula Gestorum Conlationis Carthaginiensis* 1. 157-62.

47   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 52.

48   See Augustine, *Ep.* 151. 6.

49   Augustine, *Ep.* 93. 16-17.

50   Augustine, *Sermo ad Caesareensis ecclesiae plebem* and *De Gestis cum Emerito.*

51   Lamirande 1962.

52   See Sparrow Simpson 1910, 147-50.

53   *'Nihil egit vi sed omnia suadenda et monendo'* Augustine, *De Vera Religione* 16. 31.

54   *Id., Contra Cresconium* 14. 4. and 40. 47.

55   *Id., Ep.* 108. 6.

56   *Id., Ep.* 23.

57   *Id., Ep.* 33.

58   See Augustine, *Ep.* 105. 4.

59   *Id., Ep.* 34; 35.

60   *Id., Ep.* 34. 4.

61   *Id., Retractationes* 1. 20.

62   For example *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 21.

63   *Id., Sermones* 24 and 62.

64   *Id., Sermones* 27. 7.

65   *Id., Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* 1. 10. 16.

66   *Id., Contra Cresconium* 3. 40. 50; Possidius, 12.

67   According to Theodosius' edict of 392.

68   Details in *Contra Cresconium* 3. 47. 51-48. 52; See also Augustine, *Ep.* 105. 4 and 88. 7.

69   Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 3. 43. 47; 185. 7. 26-28.

70   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 5. 37, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 46.

71   Augustine, *Ep.* 88, 10.

72   *Id., Ep.* 93, 16-17. (see beginning of this section)

73   Lk. 14: 23; In Augustine, *Ep.* 185. 6.

74   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 40. 19.

75   *Ibid.,* 16. 5. 44; Augustine, *Ep.* 100, 2.

76   *Ibid.,* 16. 5. 45.

77   Augustine, *Contra Cresconium* 3. 64-71.

78   *Id., Ep.* 108, 5. 14.

79   *Codex Theodosianus* 16. 28. 6.

80   *Ibid.,* 16. 5. 51.

81   Augustine, *Retractationes* 2. 33.

82   Divjak Letter 28. 1.

83   Divjak Letter 28. 2.

84   Augustine, *Ep.* 139.

85   probably 366-7.   (for text see PL 11, 883-1104)
English translation: Vassall-Phillips 1917.

86   Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 110.

87   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 2. 1.

88   John 1: 10. 'He that has been washed once
        has no need of being washed a second time'.

89   Optatus, *op. cit.*, 5.

90   *Ibid.*, 7.

91   Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 88;
        Sermones 2. 14.

92   *Id., De baptismo* 1. 2.

93   *Loc. cit.*, 1.

94   *Loc. cit.*, 3. 4. (ref. to Cyprian, *Ep.* 73, 23.)

95   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 1; 1. 5-7; 2. 11-12; 5. 6.

96   *Loc. cit.*, 4. 9.

97   Rev. 2:6; Acts 8.

98   Augustine, *De unico baptismo* 17. 12
         (Matt. 13.)

99   *Id., Ep.* 43. 9. 15:
        Contra litteras Petiliani 50. 62:
        Contra epistolam Parmeniani 2, 1. 2. 5.

100   *Id., Contra epistolam Parmeniani* 3. 4.
        '*securus judicat orbis terrarum*'.

101   *Id., Ep.* 87, 1, 2, 5, 6.

102   *Id., De baptismo* 2. 14.

103   *Id., De Civitas Dei* 20. 10.

104   *Id., Ep.* 53, 1. 2:
        Contra Cresconium 2. 37. 46.

105   Matt. 16:18; Cyprian, *De Ecclesiae unitate* 4.

106   For example Augustine, *Contra litteras Petiliani* 3. 15. 18.

107   *Ibid.*, 3. 4. 5.

108   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 2. 1.

109   Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 3.

110   Tertullain, *De baptismo* 15.

111   Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 4.

112   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 5. 7.

113   Augustine, *De baptismo* 3. 15.

114   *Loc. cit.*, 4. 20.

115   *Loc. cit.*, 5. 18.

116   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 19.

117   Especially in Cyprian's *Ep.* 73, 71, 74.

118   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 2; (See Cyprian *Ep.* 73, 62. 'It remains that we severally declare our opinion on this subject, judging no one, nor depriving any one of the right of communion if he differs from us.')

119   *Loc. cit.*, 2. 9. a reference to Arles (314) or Nicea (325).

120   *Loc. cit.*, 3. 5-9.

121   *Loc. cit.*, 4. 9. (See Cyprian De lapsis 5. 6. re. bishop's amassing personal fortunes while members of their congregations are starving.)

122   *Loc. cit.*, 5. 1.

123   Augustine, *Sermones* 119. 4. 4. '*vulva matris, aqua baptismatis*'.

124   *Id., Sermones* 121. 4. '*prima navititas ex masculo et femina, secunda navititas es Deo et ecclesia*'.

125   *Id., De baptismo* 1. 12.

126   E.g. R. Crespin and G. Bavaud.

127   See the parable of the unforgiving servant Matt. 18:23-25 and Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 12. 20.

128   See *De baptismo* 1. 11 15-17; 5. 23. 33; 6. 12. 19.

129   Augustine, *Retractationes* 1. 21. 3.

130   Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2. 22.

131   A 5th century manuscript of the four gospels written with silver ink on purple parchment known as 'k'.

132   Augustine, *Confessiones* 12. 16.

133   Portalié 1960, 121.

134   To Jubaianus (Book 3-5), to Quintus (5. 18-19), synodical letter to Numidian bishops (5. 20-22), letter to Pompey (5. 23-28), and the opinions of 87 bishops at Carthaginian Council of 256 (Books 6-7).

135   See Appendix 7.

136   See Appendix 8.

137   See Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 1; 1. 5.

138   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 4.

139   *Loc. cit.*, (Matt. 7:15).

140   *Loc. cit.*, (Matt. 24:23).

141   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 5, (Matt. 11:24).

142   Ex. 32.

143   Num. 16.

144   1 Cor. 13:2.

145   Cyprian, *De lapsis* 18; *Ep.* 67, 3; 69, 8-9.

146   Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 8, 9, 18; 2. 5; 3. 16; 4. 17; 7. 53.

147   John 11:51.

148   1 Sam. 18:10.

149   Acts 8:13.

150   See Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 9-10; 3. 16; 4. 10, 21; 6. 12.

151   1 Cor. 3:1-4; 1. 10-13.

152   Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 15. (Gen. 27:41).

153   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 15. (Gen. 30:12).

154   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 15. (Gen. 16:12).

155   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 16.

156   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 8; 4. 21-22, 24.

157   I Cor. 14:29-30.

158   Phil. 3:15.

159   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 5; 3. 15; 4. 11;
        5. 2, 27; 6. 1, 7, 22, 25, 39; 7. 23, 54.

160   2 Tim. 2:24; Cyprian *Ep.* 74, 10;
        Augustine, *De baptismo* 4. 5.

161   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 1 (Matt. 1:18).

162   Gal. 2:14.

163   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 1; 3. 7; 4. 6, 11;
        6. 2; 7. 1, 20.

164   *Loc. cit.*, 2. 3.

165   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 18; 2. 13; 6. 24. (1 Pet. 4:8)

166   *Loc. cit.*, 1. 9, 18; 2. 6; 6. 7, 22; 7. 51.
        (Eph. 4:3)

167   Cyprian, *Ep.* 55, 25. (Matt. 1:41)

168   2 Tim. 2:20.

169   Cyprian, *Ep.* 1, 1; *De lapsis* 6.

170   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2, 13. (Matt. 18:19)

171   1 Pet. 4:8.

172   Cyprian, *Ep.* 7, 23;
        Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 13.

173   Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.

174   John 1:33.

175   Augustine, *De baptismo* 3. 15.

176   1 Cor. 1:14.

177   1 Cor. 3:1-3.

178   Eph. 4:14.

179   Phil. 3:15.

180   Cant. 6:9.

181   John 20:21-23.

182   Hos. 2:2-8. (LXX)

183   Augustine, *De baptismo* 3. 18; 4. 16; 7. 45.

184   Cyprian, *Ep*. 73, 10.

185   Phil. 1:8.

186   Cyprian, *Ep*. 73, 21.

187   1 Cor. 6:10.

188   Augustine, *De baptismo* 4. 21.
        (Acts 10:44; 8:13, 18-19.)

189   Gen. 18:9-14.

190   Ex. 4:24-26.

191   Gen. 17.

192   Acts 8.

193   Gen. 17.

194   Lk. 2:43.

195   John 9:21.

196   Augustine, *De baptismo* 4. 26.

197   Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.

198   *Id., Ep.* 71.

199   *Id., Ep.* 74.

200   See Augustine, *De baptismo* 6-7.

201   Cyprian, *Ep.* 73, 24.

202   1 Tim. 1:8.

203   John 13:27.

204   1 Cor. 11:29.

205   Acts 19:35; Cyprian, *Ep.* 73, 24.

206   John 1:33.

207   John 9:31.

208   Cant. 4:12-13.

209   Eph. 5:27.

210   Cant. 2:2.

211   Rom. 2:29.

212   2 Tim. 2:19.

213   1 Pet. 3:20-21.

214   Augustine, *De baptismo* 4. 2; 5. 28.

215   Cyprian, *Ep.* 74, 11; 75, 15; 69, 2.

216   Augustine, De baptismo 5. 28.

217   See Page 144.

218   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 7. (John 10).

219   *Id., Confessiones* 7. 7.

220   *Id., De baptismo* 2. 14.

221   John 3:5.

222   John 13:10.

223   Augustine, *De baptismo* 2. 14.

224   *Loc. cit.,* 7. 45.

225   *Loc. cit.,* 7. 53.

CHAPTER 6.
CONCLUSION.

1   Augustine, *Ep.* 82.

2   John 13:10, Tertullian, *De baptismo* 12.

3   Acts 19:1; Cyprian, *Ep.* 73, 24.

4   Augustine, *De baptismo* 5. 9.

5   *Id., De paenitentia* 8.

6   Id., *De pudicitia* 7.

7   Matt. 16:18.

8   Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesiae* 4.

9   Cyprian, *Ep.* 75, 15; 69, 2.

10   Hippolytus, *Refutationes* 9. 12. 22-23.

11   Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.

12   Augustine, *De baptismo* 4. 1.

13   Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 4. 9.

14   Ps. 140:6. (LXX)

15   Ps. 44:8. (LXX)

16   Cant. 1:6,   Augustine, *Ep.* 93:24.

17   Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

18   Matt. 13:38. *Gestorum Conlationis
        Carthaginiensis* 3. 258.

19   Tertullian, *De baptismo* 13.
        Cyprian, *Ep.* 72, 1; 73, 21.
        Augustine, *De baptismo* 2, 14; 4, 21; 6, 12.

20   John 20:21-23.

21   Prov. 9:12. (LXX)

22   Ecclus. 34:25.

23   Nu. 19:22.

24   Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 12.

25   Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 19.

26   *Loc. cit.*

27   Augustine, *Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant Fundamenti* 6.

28   Augustine, *Ep.* 54.

29   Phil. 3:15; Augustine, *De baptismo* 2, 5; 3, 15; 4, 11; 5, 2; 5, 27; 6, 1; 6, 7; 6, 22; 6. 25; 6. 39; 7, 23; 7, 54.

30   Eph. 5:27.

31   Cant. 6:9.

32   *Id.,* 4:12.

33   2 Tim. 2:20.

34   Cyprian, *Ep.* 54, 3; 55, 25.

35   Matt. 13 and 3.

36   Tyconius, *Liber Regularum* 7.

37   Augustine, *De baptismo* 4. 12; 7. 51-52.

38   Augustine, *Contra litteras Petiliani Donatistae* 2. 45.

39   Acts 1:8.

40   Dan. 2. 35; Augustine, *op. cit.,* 2. 38.

41   Cyprian, *Ep.* 71, 3-4.

42   Augustine, *De baptismo* 1. 1.

43   Cyprian, *Ep.* 73, 23.

44   Augustine, *De baptismo* 5. 2.

45   Prov. 29:19.   Augustine, *Ep.* 185, *Ad Bonifacium de correctione Donatistarum* 6.

46   Prov. 23:14.

47   Augustine, *op. cit.*, 6.

48   *Ibid.*, Lk. 14:23.

49   Augustine, *De Gestis cum Emerito* 3. '*Gesta indicant si uictus sum aut uici, si ueritate uictus sum aut potestate oppressus sum*'.

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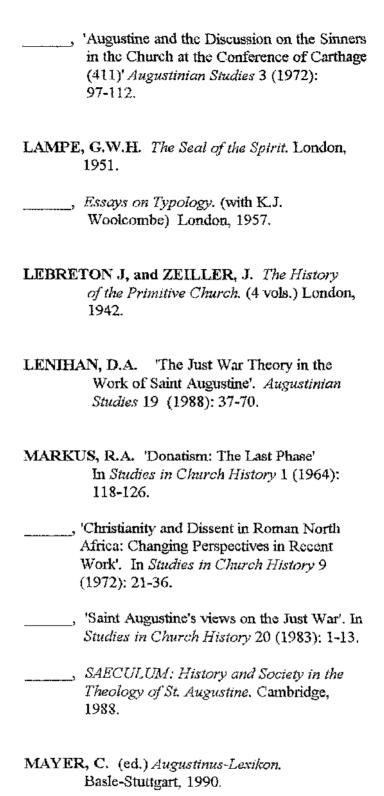D.P. Whitelaw.) 70-84 Pretoria, 1985.

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