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9 Scripture in Augustine's Earliest Treatises

In all ages of the Church, her teachers have shown a disinclination to confine themselves to the mere literal interpretation of Scripture. . . . It may almost be laid down as an historical fact, that the mystical interpretation and orthodoxy will stand or fall together.   John Henry Newman[1]

Faustus said: Do you accept the Old Testament? If it contains my inheritance, I accept it; if it does not, I do not accept it. For it is certainly extreme perversity to claim for oneself the documents that testify to one's being disinherited. Or are you unaware that the Old Testament promises the land of the Canaanites but promises it to the Jews, that is, to the circumcised, to those who offer sacrifices and abstain from pork and the other meats that Moses calls unclean, to those who observe Sabbath, the feasts of unleavened bread, and the other things of this sort which, as a lawgiver, Moses commanded them to observe? No Christian has approved of these, nor does any one of us observe them. Hence, it is fitting that we give back the documents of the law along with the inheritance we have been denied. That is the reason, I think, we should reject the Old Testament, unless you teach me something that is wiser (*nisi tu me prudentius aliquid doceas*). But the second reason is that its inheritance is so miserable and bodily and remote from the advantage of the soul that, after that blessed promise of the New Testament, which promises me the kingdom of heaven and eternal life, I would turn my nose up at it even if its lawgiver thrust it upon me at no cost.[2]

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1 J. H. Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (London: Rivington, 1833), 104–5.
2 Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 4.1 (CSEL 25/1:268; R. Teske, trans., *Answer to Faustus: A Manichean*, part I, vol. 20, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. B. Ramsey (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2007), 82): "Faustus dixit: Accipis testamentum vetus? Si est mihi in eo hereditas, accipio; si non est, non accipio. Inprobitas enim haec quidem nimia est usurpare tabulas, quae testentur exheredatum. an ignoras testamentum vetus Chananaeorum terram repromittere, sed eam tamen Judaeis, id est circumcisis et sacrificantibus et abstinentibus a porcina ac reliquis carnibus, quas inmundas Moyses appellat, sabbata observantibus et azymorum sollemnitatem ac reliqua hujusmodi, quae ejus ipse testator eis observanda mandavit? Quae quia Christianorum placuere nemini – neque enim quisquam nostrorum ea custodit – dignum est, ut cum refusa hereditate reddamus et tabulas. Haec ergo causa est, cur ego testamentum vetus abiciendum puto, nisi tu me prudentius aliquid doceas. Secunda vero causa est, quod tam etiam misera ejus et corporalis ac longe ab animae commodis hereditas est, ut post beatam illam novi testamenti pollicitationem, quae caelorum mihi regnum et vitam perpetuam repromittit, etiam si gratis eam mihi testator suus ingereret, fastidissem."

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With rhetorical prowess Faustus of Milevis, Augustine's Manichean antagonist, delineates the standard Manichean objections to the Christian appropriation of the Old Testament. He cloaks his censure of the Jewish Scriptures in the forensic discourse of a disputed last will and testament. Faustus compares his disavowal of the Old Testament to the formal repudiation of an inheritance. First, he holds that he has no legal right to the inheritance. It does not belong to him. Faustus neither keeps the Mosaic code nor expects the rewards belonging to those who abide by it. Faustus envisions the Christian faith to be completely shorn of any elements of the Jewish religion, having nothing in common with its earthly laws and temporal promises. As such, Faustus refuses the inheritance (*refusa hereditate*) and returns the paperwork (*reddamus et tabulas*). Then, as the *coup de grâce*, Faustus points out that even if he *did* have a legal right to the inheritance, he would reject it out of hand on account of its tawdry earthly nature, which is unbecoming of a spiritual faith.

For nine years as a Manichean "hearer," Augustine shared this hostile posture to the Old Testament. His conversion to Catholic Christianity entailed a fundamental reorientation towards the Old Testament. That is to say, unlike Faustus, Augustine came to accept as his own the inheritance of the Law and the Prophets. For the Manicheans, the Old Testament and its God were corporeal, violent, and perverse. They were, in Paula Fredriksen's term, a "radical Paulinist sect," which exaggerated the Apostle Paul's distinctions (e.g., grace vs. law, spirit vs. flesh, and works vs. faith) into an unbridgeable opposition. Positive Pauline statements about the Jewish law, the temple, or Israel's history were explained as subsequent Judaizing textual interpolations.[3] What the Manicheans considered the authentic parts of the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles had nothing in common with the Old Testament:

> Its unelevating stories of bodily theophanies, bloody battles and sexual couplings were, literally, too carnal to be believed. If the Catholics in their confusion and hypocrisy chose to keep the Jews' book while themselves not keeping the Law, that was their business. The Manicheans, harkening to the Apostle, knew that the flesh and all its works were evil, that the law brought sin and death; they knew that they had been called in the Spirit to newness of life.[4]

In short, Manichean rejection of the Old Testament fit into a larger radically dualistic worldview.

In the Cathedral of Milan Augustine repeatedly heard Ambrose preach. The result was a profound theological breakthrough. Ambrose taught Augustine how to read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture – that is, as a proclamation of Christ containing the mystery of the economy of salvation. It is no exaggeration to assert

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3 P. Fredriksen, "Allegory and Reading God's Book: Paul and Augustine on the Destiny of Israel," in *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period*, ed. J. Whitman (Leiden: Brill, 2000): 125–49, esp. 139.

4 Fredriksen, "Allegory and Reading God's Book," 139–40.

that Augustine's conversion was predicated on his ability to recognize the unity of Scripture. In the *Confessions* (*Confessiones*) Augustine recalls his encounter with Ambrose:

> I was also pleased that when the old writings of the Law and the Prophets came before me, they were no longer read with an eye to which they had previously looked absurd, when I used to attack your saints as if they thought what in fact they did not think at all. And I was delighted to hear Ambrose in his sermons to the people saying, as if he were most carefully enunciating a principle of exegesis (*regulam*): 'The letter kills, the spirit gives life' (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6). Those texts which, taken literally (*ad litteram*), seemed to contain perverse teaching he would expound spiritually (*spiritaliter*), removing the mystical veil (*mystico velamento*).[5]

Spiritual interpretation, figurative exegesis, opened new vistas previously closed to Augustine. Interpreting the Old Testament *secundum spiritum*, with Christ as the hermeneutical key, gave back to Augustine the "religion that had been instilled in me as a child."[6]

The aim of this essay is to give an account of the theological framing that allowed for Augustine's reorientation towards Scripture. When Augustine went to hear Ambrose expound Scripture "spiritually" (*spiritaliter*), what did this involve? I will limit my focus to Augustine's early theology of Scripture – that is, the critical period after his conversion and baptism (387) up until shortly after his ordination in the winter of 391. It is no surprise that Augustine's theology of Scripture during this time was the outworking of intensely polemical rejoinders to his former co-religionists, the Manicheans. Three early texts are essential to considering how Augustine thought about Scripture and its authority, unity, and interpretation: (1) *De moribus ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* (*The Way of Life of the Catholic Church* and *The Way of Life of the Manichaeans*, written in 387) contains one of Augustine's earliest presentations of Catholic hermeneutics. The two books that comprise this work serve to contrast the moral life and interpretive practice of Manicheans and Catholics. (2) *De vera religione* (*True Religion*, written in 390) is Augustine's first systematic presentation of the Catholic faith, structured within a Christian-Platonist theology of ascent. Augustine addressed this work to his former patron, Romanianus, perhaps hoping this treatise would undo the damage he had done by enticing Romanianus into the Manichean fold. (3) *De utilitate credendi* (*The Usefulness of Believing*, written in 391) is another poignant personal appeal to a friend, Honoratus, who had followed Augustine into the Manichean sect. Here Augustine's scriptural hermeneutics are presented within an overture that contends for the necessity of faith

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[5] *Conf.* 6.4.6. (CCSL 27:77; Chadwick, trans., *Confessions*, Oxford World's Classics [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991], 94).

[6] Augustine, *De utilitate credendi* 1.2 (CSEL 25/1:4; R. Kearney, trans., "Advantage of Believing," in *On Christian Belief*, WSA I/8:107–48, 117); cf. Augustine, *Contra Academicos* 2.2.5 (CCSL 29:20–21); Augustine, *De duabus animabus* 1 (CSEL 25/1:51); and *Conf.* 1.11.17 (CCSL 27:9–10).

and trust in authority in order to arrive at knowledge of religious matters. The main lines of Augustine's early theology of Scripture emerge in broad strokes within these three texts.

Drawing on these three texts and after briefly identifying and considering the passages of Scripture to which Augustine most readily referred in them, this essay will explore three central hermeneutical strategies that form Augustine's response to Manichean vilification of the Old Testament. These three strategies form the basic structure of Augustine's early theology of Scripture that allowed him to affirm the unity of Scripture. First, Augustine contends that Scripture has a unity of purpose; all of Scripture aims to build up love and teaches how this end is to be achieved. Second, Augustine develops the metaphor of God as a teacher and Scripture as a divine pedagogy. Although the two Testaments are distinct, this is a distinction that serves the best interest of the student who needs first to be instructed by temporal and material images and stories in order then to ascend to eternal, spiritual truth. Third, the unity of Scripture is readily perceived when the exegete avails himself of figurative exegesis. Old Testament stories, laws, and prophecy that might on the surface seem material and crass need to be turned over to see how they glisten with spiritual truth. Augustine's mature corpus fills out this incipient hermeneutical paradigm with greater distinction (particularly in *De doctrina christiana*), and he would have opportunity to apply this hermeneutic with precision after a sabbatical that he took immediately after his ordination in 391. During that sabbatical he devoted himself to a detailed study of Scripture. Nevertheless, the essential features of Augustine's hermeneutics are already clearly defined in these three early texts.

Augustine's Early Use of Scripture

Of the three early texts in which Augustine most explicitly develops a theology of Scripture, *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* contains the most direct engagement of Scripture, both by quotation and reference. The vast majority of the references to Scripture in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* occur in book 1. Here, Augustine explains how Scripture is to be read as a unity. Augustine aims to demonstrate that the Gospels, the Apostle Paul, and the Old Testament are in harmony. As such, he triangulates passages from these parts of Scripture. The commandment to love God with one's whole heart, soul, and mind is the goal (*finis*) of all of Scripture and is clearly taught in Matt 22:37–40, Rom 8:28–39, and Deut 6:5.[7] These three texts take pride of place in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.*, and Augustine frequently refers to them as articulating the purpose of Scripture.

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7 Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* 1.11.18 (CSEL 90:14).

De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum establishes a pattern that Augustine follows in his other early works: Matthew is the gospel most frequently quoted and, among the New Testament letters, Paul's Romans as well as 1–2 Corinthians are the most referenced. Wisdom features prominently, but Augustine also quotes from other texts in the wisdom tradition.[8] The Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Pauline Epistles equally uphold the necessity of the four cardinal virtues that lead to charity (see infra). The value of temperance is taught by the Apostle Paul in 1 Tim 6:10, where he warns against covetousness.[9] Temperance is also the distinguishing mark in the Pauline antithesis between the old man and the new man (cf. Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–11).[10] Augustine quotes from 1 Cor 15:47–49 and 2 Cor 4:16 at some length to explain how the transformation from the old man to the new man involves the acquisition of temperance. In the same vein, Augustine quotes the Pauline injunction to set one's eyes on things above (2 Cor 4:18)[11] and not to be conformed to this world (Rom 12:2).[12] However, according to Augustine, the *contemptus mundi* proper to temperance is also taught in the Old Testament. In this regard, Augustine refers to the refrain of Eccl 1:2–3's "vanity of vanities."[13]

Fortitude is urged in Rom 5:3–4, which Augustine quotes,[14] but also by the examples offered in the books of Job and Maccabees, examples to which Augustine refers at length.[15] Justice is taught by Christ who warns against serving two masters (Matt 26:24), by the apostle Paul who censures those who serve a creature rather than the creator (Rom 1:25), and by Moses who commanded, "You shall adore the Lord your God and serve him alone" (Deut 6:1; 10:20).[16] Finally, prudence is counseled in Christ's repeated injunction, "Be on guard" (Matt 24:42; 25:13; 26:38, 41); in Paul's admonition that a little yeast leavens the whole lump (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9),

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8 See, for example, the extensive quotation of Wis 6:12–20 in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.17.32 (CSEL 90:21).

9 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.19.35 (CSEL 90:40).

10 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.19.36 (CSEL 90:41). Paul's distinction between the "old" and the "new" man is referenced a number of times by Augustine in compositions penned before his ordination. In addition to the discussion in Augustine, *De vera religone*, infra, Augustine draws on the Pauline antithesis in Augustine, *De musica* 5.10 (PL 21:1152) and Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1.23.40 (CSEL 91:108).

11 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.20.37 (CSEL 90:42).

12 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.21.39 (CSEL 90:44).

13 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.21.39 (CSEL 90:44). Ecclesiastes 1:2–3 is a passage that Augustine references a number of times in his early works; cf. Augustine, *De quantitate animae* 33 (CSEL 89: 172–73); *Ver. rel.* 21.41, 33.61 (CCSL 32:212, 227).

14 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.23.42 (CSEL 90:47).

15 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.23.42–43 (CSEL 90:47–9). Quoting Sir 27:4–6, Augustine asserts that the heroic mother's fortitude in 2 Macc 7 must have derived from her reading of Sirach, (*Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.23.43 [CSEL 90:48–9]).

16 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.24.44 (CSEL 90:49).

and, finally, in Sirach's exhortation, "One who scorns little things falls little by little" (Sir 19:1).[17]

A constant refrain in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* is Christ's teaching that the two-fold love of God and neighbor is the consummation of the Law and the Prophets (Matt 22: 37–40).[18] Augustine sees the same teaching enunciated in the apostle Paul's insisting that "Love does no harm to one's neighbor" (Rom 13:10) and "We know that for those who love God all things move toward the good" (Rom 8:28).[19]

Twice in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* Augustine offers lengthy quotations from the apostle Paul to demonstrate how Manichean moral rigidity differs from Catholic self-denial, which does not require austerity beyond that of which each individual is capable. First, with regard to fasting, Augustine quotes extensively from Paul's teaching about eating in a way that does not cause scandal (Rom 14; 1 Cor 8).[20] Second, concerning the permissibility of marital life, Augustine quotes a lengthy passage from 1 Cor 6:12–7:7.[21]

Book 2 of *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* is more stinting in its engagement with Scripture. After all, the intention of the second book is to expose the hypocritical practices of the Manicheans. Nevertheless, when explaining the difference between Catholic temperance and Manichean teetotalism and vegetarianism, Augustine quotes all of Rom 14 (in fact through to 15:3) as well as 1 Cor 8:4–13; 10:19–25; 10:28–11:1.[22]

De vera religione evinces a selective use of the Gospels and Pauline Epistles. As in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.*, by far the most quoted texts from Paul are Romans and 1 Corinthians. Among the Gospels, Augustine most readily quotes Matthew and John. (He does not quote Mark even once.) I note the four most significant uses of the New Testament in *Ver. rel.* First, the incarnational motif, which functions as the linchpin to the treatise, includes three quotations of John 1:9: "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world."[23] Second, 1 John 2:15–16 features prominently with three references.[24] Augustine maintains that Christ demonstrates his victory over the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life in his own triple temptation described in Matt 3.[25] Third, Paul's contrast between the old man and the new man (cf. Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–11) receives sustained

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17 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.24.45 (CSEL 90:50).

18 Cf. *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.28.57, 1.29.59, 1.30.62 (CSEL 90:60, 62, 65).

19 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.25.50, 1.28.57 (CSEL 90:55, 60).

20 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.33.71 (CSEL 90:76).

21 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.34.78 (CSEL 90:83–84).

22 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 2.14.32–34 (CSEL 90:36–9).

23 *Ver. rel.* 39.73, 42.79, 52.101 (CCSL 32:235, 239, 253). In the same vein, Augustine uses John 1:14 in *Ver. rel.* 16.30.

24 *Ver. rel.* 3.4, 38.70, 55.107 (CCSL 32:191, 233, 256).

25 *Ver. rel.* 38.71 (CCSL 32:233–34).

treatment.[26] Finally, Augustine comments at length on Matt 25:1–30.[27] Here he simultaneously remarks on both the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents.

De vera religione demonstrates sparing use of the Old Testament. Apart from the Psalter (which is quoted the most), Augustine references Wisdom of Solomon three times.[28] There is one reference to the disclosure of the divine name (Exod 3:14)[29] and two references to the refrain "vanity of vanities" from Ecclesiastes.[30]

Surprisingly, *Util. cred.* has very little direct engagement with Scripture: in fact, no verse or passage from the Old Testament is ever quoted. It is principally in 3.5–9 that Augustine quotes Scripture. In these paragraphs, Augustine explains the four senses of Scripture (*historiam*, *aetiologiam*, *analogiam*, and *allegoriam*) and draws on scriptural examples for each sense. However, he only uses the Gospel of Matthew as well as Paul's letter to the Galatians and his two to the Corinthians to illustrate his schema.[31]

Augustine's physical access to the texts of Scripture during this period was almost certainly from manuscripts of individual books or collections of books. Given the foregoing analysis, Augustine clearly had manuscripts of the Pauline epistles, the gospel of Matthew, and (part of) the wisdom tradition at his disposal. During this period, Augustine worked with manuscripts that are now part of the *Vetus Latina* tradition since, at the end of the fourth century, an "authorized version" of Scripture as such did not yet exist. This complexity also makes it difficult to be conclusive regarding those version(s) of the various component parts of the canon to which Augustine was privy.[32]

Love as the End of Scripture

In 387, following his baptism in Milan and while in Rome waiting to return to Africa, Augustine wrote *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* The very structure of this book was meant to juxtapose Catholic and Manichean theology and praxis and, thus, it consists

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26 *Ver. rel.* 5.9, 26.48–49, 27.50, 52.101 (CCSL 32:194, 217–18, 220, 253).

27 *Ver. rel.* 54.104–106 (CCSL 32:254–55).

28 Wis 8:1 is referenced in *Ver. rel.* 39.72, 51.100 (CCSL 32:234, 252); Wis 9:15 is referenced in *Ver. rel.* 21.41 (CCSL 32:213).

29 *Ver. rel.* 49.97 (CCSL 32:250).

30 *Ver. rel.* 21.41, 33.61 (CCSL 32:212, 227).

31 There are lone quotations of Matt 7:7 in *Util. cred.* 14.30 (CSEL 25/1:37) and John 14:1 in *Util. cred.* 14.32 (CSEL 25/1:41).

32 Cf. J. J. O'Donnell, "Bible," in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. A. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999): 99–103; and A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Biblia Augustiniana*. (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1960–75). For more on the *Vetus Latina* tradition in North Africa, see the chapter by Houghton in this volume.

of two books. The first gives a spirited defense of Catholic theology and practice, and the second exposes the contradictory claims and hypocritical practices of the Manicheans. This work is significant for this essay due to the emphasis it places on the unity of the Old and New Testaments. In book 1 of *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.*, Augustine lays down a foundational principle that undergirds his understanding of the unity of the two Testaments – namely, that all of Scripture shares a common aim, which is the building up of love.[33] Both Testaments have one author and one purpose, insists Augustine at the outset of *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.*: the goal (*finis*) at which Scripture aims is that its readers might advance in charity: "Let us, then, hear what the goal is of good persons that you, Christ, set for us. There is no doubt that it will be the goal to which you command that we make our way with the highest love. He says, 'You shall love the Lord your God' (Matt 22:37)."[34] Augustine continues, "Towards that goal we must by all means make our way; to it we must direct all our plans."[35] The central objective of the rest of *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* book 1 is to illustrate the shared teleology animating both Testaments. Augustine delineates a long list of New Testament teachings that he sees equally present, although perhaps more obliquely, in the Old Testament. He concludes, "There is one God of the two Testaments. For, just as those testimonies that we quoted from the two Testaments are in harmony (*congruent*) with one another, so the others are as well."[36] Love forms the leitmotif sounding throughout the diversity of Scripture.

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[33] The "hermeneutics of charity" is more famously associated with *Doctr. chr.* 1.36.40 (395/396); cf. *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), 30: "Whoever, therefore, thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbor does not understand it at all. Whoever finds a lesson there useful to the building of charity, even though he has not said what the author may be shown to have intended in that place, has not been deceived." Nevertheless, the lineaments of this interpretive principle are already at play in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* G. Bruns, "The Problem of Figuration in Antiquity," in *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, eds. G. Shapiro and A. Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984): 147–64, esp. 160–61, notes that for Augustine the doctrine of charity is "not so much the goal of scriptural understanding as its point of departure, because the doctrine defines the spirit in which the Scriptures are to be taken; that is, what the doctrine of charity defines is just the presupposition of a Christian reading of the Scriptures. Augustine's attitude is, once more, hermeneutical rather than analytical. The question is not what Scripture means in itself (as if on a presuppositionless reading) but how it is to be understood – and the point is that, granting the presupposition of charity, it is capable of being taken in diverse senses."

[34] *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.8.13 (CSEL 90:15; R. Teske, trans., *The Manichean Debate*, WSA I/19:36): "Audiamus ergo quem finem bonorum nobis, Christe, praescribas; nec dubium est quin is erit finis, quo nos summo amore tendere jubes. 'Diliges,' inquit, 'Dominum Deum tuum.'"

[35] *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.8.13 (CSEL 90:15; Teske, *WSA* I/19:37): "Eo est omnino tendendum, ad id omnia consilia nostra referenda."

[36] *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.17.30 (CSEL 90:34; Teske, *WSA* I/19:45): "Utriusque Testamenti Deus unus est. Nam ut ista sibi congruunt, quae de utroque posuimus, ita etiam cetera." M. Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figural Exegesis*, OSHT (New York: Oxford University

The revelation of divine love is the common theme of Scripture and grounds its unity, but this unifying principle is not always immediately apparent – it must be sought: "Love asks; love seeks; love knocks; love reveals; love, finally, remains in what has been revealed. The Old Testament does not deter us from this love of wisdom and from diligence in seeking it, as you constantly say with your lies; rather, it most vigorously urges us on to this."[37] Augustine enjoins the Manicheans,

> I beg you, pay a little attention; see the harmony (*concordiam*) of the two Testaments that sufficiently discloses and teaches the manner of our way of life and the end to which all things are to be directed. The gospels stir up the love of God when they say: Ask, seek, and knock (cf. Matthew 7:7–8). Paul stirs up love when he says, "in order that, rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to grasp" (Ephesians 3:17–18) The prophet also stirs up love when he says that wisdom can be easily known by those who love it, seek it, desire it, keep watch for it, think of it, and are concerned about it [cf. Wis 6:13–21]. The salvation of the soul and the path to happiness are revealed by the harmony of the two books of scripture.[38]

Scripture forms a unity in its aim of building up love. Further, it teaches how love is to be cultivated – namely, through growth in virtue. Augustine proceeds to exhibit how the four cardinal virtues, which form a "rule of life," are taught not only in the Gospels and the letters of Paul, but also by the prophets of the Old Testament.

Temperance, which checks earthly appetites and quiets carnal desires, is ordered to the "integrity and incorruptibility of the love by which we are united to God."[39] Augustine points out that Paul's exhortation to strip off the old man and to put on the new man (1 Cor 15:47–49), his call to strive for that which is eternal (2 Cor 4:18), and his warning not to be conformed to this world (Rom 12:2) all receive hearty endorsement in the Old Testament, such as in the repeated refrain of Eccl 1: 2–3 not to seek permanence in that which is finite: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The prophets of the Old Testament provide unambiguous teaching for those "who

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Press, 2012), 83–84, writes, "[*Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.*] conducts a show-and-tell of biblical quotes that juxtapose partly obscure testimonies of the Old with fully open testimonies in the New. Augustine stresses their unity by deploying a wealth of verbs with the prefix *con* – ('together'): the Testaments 'come together' (*convenire*; 1.9.15), 'sing together' (*concinere*; 1.14.27), 'sound together' (*consonare*; 1.16.28), and 'fit together' (*congruere*; 1.17.30), and many passages display a unique kind of 'harmony' (*concordia*, 1.18.34)."

37 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.17.31 (CSEL 90:36; Teske, *WSA* I/19:46).

38 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.18.34 (CSEL 90:38–39; Teske, *WSA* I/19:47): "Obsecro, vigilate paululum, videte testamenti utriusque concordiam, qui sit in moribus vitae modus et quo sint referenda omnia, satis aperientem et docentem. Amorem Dei concitant evangelia, cum dicitur: petite, quaerite, pulsate; concitat Paulus dicendo: ut in caritate radicati et fundati possitis comprehendere; concitat etiam propheta, cum dicit, facile sapientiam ab his qui eam diligunt, quaerunt, concupiscunt, vigilant, cogitant, curant, posse cognosci. Salus animi et via beatitudinis utrarumque Scripturarum pace monstratur."

39 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.19.35 (CSEL 90:39; Teske, *WSA* I/19:47).

desire to flee this world." Augustine summarizes, "A man who is temperate in such mortal and passing things, then, has a rule of life supported by both Testaments."[40]

Fortitude must contend especially with the challenges of the body, which in this mortal coil are the "heaviest chain."[41] Paul teaches the value of fortitude for the perfection of charity when he writes, "Tribulation produces patience, but patience produces testing, and testing produces hope (Romans 5:3–4)."[42] This value of fortitude is equally attested to in the Old Testament by such characters as Job and the mother of seven sons whose martyrdom is recounted in 2 Maccabees. Job lost all his wealth and then "amid great torments of the body and a terrible wasting away of his members not only endured human woes but even discussed divine things."[43] Scripture is filled with such injunctions to "fortitude that the one Holy Spirit had written in those books of the Old Testament."[44]

Justice is above all rightly ordered love towards God. Christ taught justice when he said: "You cannot serve two Masters" (cf. Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13). Paul taught justice when he rebuked those who serve "a creature rather than the creator" (Rom 1:25). Furthermore, justice was at the heart of the Jewish Law: "You shall adore the Lord your God and serve him alone" (Deut 6:13; 10:20). Justice, Augustine concludes, "is confirmed by the authority of both Testaments."[45]

Prudence, "the discernment of what we should seek and what we should avoid," is, likewise, counseled in both Testaments.[46] Christ warns his disciples, "Be on guard" (Matt 24:42), John writes, "Walk so that the darkness does not overtake you" (John 12:35), and Sirach teaches, "One who scorns little things falls little by little" (Sir 19:1).[47]

The highest good to be sought, Augustine concludes, is to love God with one's whole heart, soul, and mind. Growth in the cardinal virtues directs one towards this end:

> God brings it about that this love is preserved whole and entire, which is a mark of temperance; that it is crushed by no difficulties, which is a mark of fortitude; that it serves no one else, which is a mark of justice; and that it is watchful in discernment, so that falsity or deceit does not overtake it little by little, which is a mark of prudence. This is the one perfection of a

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40 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.21.39 (CSEL 90:45; Teske, *WSA* I/19:50): "Habet igitur vir temperans in hujuscemodi rebus mortalibus et fluentibus, vitae regulam utroque testamento firmatam."

41 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.22.40 (CSEL 90:45; Teske, *WSA* I/19:50).

42 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.23.42 (CSEL 90:47; Teske, *WSA* I/19:51).

43 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.23.42 (CSEL 90:47; Teske, *WSA* I/19:51).

44 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.23.43 (CSEL 90:49; Teske, *WSA* I/19:51–52): "Immo vero et haec et alia plura perceperat, quae uno Sancto Dei Spiritu ut in istis novi testamenti sic in illis, qui soli adhuc erant, libris divina fortitudinis praecepta conscripta sunt."

45 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.24.44 (CSEL 90:49; Teske, *WSA* I/19:52): "Quae norma vivendi, ut docuimus, utriusque Testamenti auctoritate roboratur."

46 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.24.45 (CSEL 90:50; Teske, *WSA* I/19:52).

47 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.24.45 (CSEL 90:50; Teske, *WSA* I/19:52).

human being, and by it alone one comes to enjoy the purity of truth. This perfection sings out to us (*concinitur*) from both Testaments; we are urged to this perfection by each of them.[48]

The unity of Scripture is evident, suggests Augustine, when its underlying *ratio* is understood: the sole purpose of Holy Writ is to lead the soul to perfection in charity.[49] Augustine takes Christ's own words as the culmination of the argument that love is the aim of both Testaments: "Listen to Christ himself; listen, I repeat, to 'Christ' listen to 'the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1:24). He says, 'The whole law and all the prophets depend on these two commandments.'"[50]

Nevertheless, this architectonic unity contains a distinction. Augustine develops the analogy of God as a doctor. The divine physician provides a regimen to restore the soul to health. The discipline (*disciplina*) God gives the ailing is Scripture, which is a "medicine of the soul" (*animi medicina*). But the prescribed medicine is divided into two parts: first a dose of deterrence (*coercitionem*), followed by a dose of instruction (*instructionem*).[51] "Deterrence is produced by fear, but instruction by love."[52] God desires only to help his patients; he has only love for them. But the gravity of the patients' ailments requires the more bitter initial treatment of deterrence, so the patients can subsequently benefit from instruction. The "rule of discipline" (*disciplinae regulam*) is expressed differently by the two Testaments, and, while there is some deterrence and some instruction in both Testaments, it is fear that dominates in the first and love that dominates in the second. To support this distinction Augustine points to Paul's description of the servitude of the law and

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48 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.25.46 (CSEL 90:51; Teske, *WSA* I/19:52–53): "Deum, a quo existit, ut incorruptus in eo amor atque integer custodiatur, quod est temperantiae, ut nullis frangatur incommodis, quod est fortitudinis, nulli alii serujat, quod est justitiae, vigilet in discernendis rebus, ne fallacia paulatim dolusue subrepat, quod est prudentiae. haec est hominis una perfectio, qua sola impetrat ut veritatis sinceritate perfruatur, haec nobis Testamento utroque concinitur; haec nobis hinc atque inde suadetur."

49 How this principle underwrites Augustine's understanding of the unity of Scripture is captured in Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 84: "The Bible's complex unity spins on the axis of love. ... Anyone who claims to be Christ's disciple must agree with Christ about loving God and neighbor, and simultaneously commits both to Christ and to the Old Testament. Both spiritual reason and biblical authority converge upon this point: love binds the Testaments together and opens up their meaning."

50 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.29.59 (CSEL 90:62; Teske, *WSA* I/19:57–58).

51 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.28.56 (CSEL 90:58–59; Teske, *WSA* I/19:56). One finds the same claim in *Ver. rel.* 17.33 (CCSL 32:207; E. Hill, trans., "True Religion," in *On Christian Belief*, *WSA* I/8: 15–104, 49): "Since piety begins in fear and is perfected in charity, the people that was restrained by fear in the time of slavery was burdened in the old law with many sacraments."

52 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.28.56 (CSEL 90:59; Teske, *WSA* I/19:56): "Coercitio timore, instructio vero amore perficitur."

the freedom of grace.[53] The difference between the divine physician's methods is situated within a unity of purpose – namely, the convalescence of the patient. The analogy of Scripture as the medicine of the soul that contains distinct dosages allows the "wonderful order and divine harmony of those Testaments" to be clearly seen.[54] The heart of Scripture is the command to love God and neighbor.[55] All of Scripture converges on this end, so that "the scripture that they tear to shreds is the scripture of Christ."[56]

The Divine Pedagogy of Scripture

Scripture's unity entails that its divine author has a master plan, a grand vision for the entire sequence of salvation history. While isolated incidents, characters, and rites on their own may seem incongruous (even scandalous), they find a fitting place within this greater cosmic drama. The dominant rhetorical trope that Augustine develops in his early writings (and retains throughout his mature corpus), is the image of a wise teacher who gradually leads his pupils to new understanding by building on previous instruction. Revelation itself is a divine pedagogy, by which God guides humanity to eternal, spiritual understanding through the use of temporal and material signs.

De utilitate credendi, Augustine's first work after being ordained in 391, addressed his friend Honoratus, who, along with Augustine, had been enticed into Manicheanism. In common with Augustine's other early anti-Manichean works, *Util. cred.* counsels the priority of authority over reason in the path of coming to know eternal truth. Honoratus was deeply suspicious of the Catholic Church's retention of the Old Testament and was also critical of the Catholic insistence that faith is the epistemological starting point in matters of religion. As such, the first half of *Util. cred.* defends the value of the Old Testament, while the second half argues for the place of faith in all matters of knowing and, a fortiori, in matters of coming to know eternal truth. In this work Augustine maintains that the unfolding of salvation history within the narrative, laws, and prophesy of the Old Testament serves a pedagogical role in leading the believer from the temporal to the eternal and from the perceptible to the spiritual.

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53 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.28.56 (CSEL 90:59; Teske, *WSA* I/19:56): "Quanquam enim utrumque in utroque sit, praevalet tamen in vetere timor, amor in novo: quae ibi servitus, hic libertas ab apostolis praedicatur."
54 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.28.56 (CSEL 90:59; Teske, *WSA* I/19:56): "de quorum Testamentorum admirabili quodam ordine divinoque concentu."
55 Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 13, comments, "Figurative reading released a kind of centripetal spiritual force that unified Scriptures' many far-flung images, sayings, rites, events, and characters and drove readers back to its central load-bearing (i.e., its 'end') of love for God and neighbor."
56 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.1.2 (CSEL 90:5; Teske, *WSA* I/19:32).

A preferred image in the anti-Manichean writings is that of the Old Testament as food suited to spiritual infants who are not yet able to take in the pure milk of truth. The Manicheans tear apart the Old Testament, not aware of its vital role (*utiliter*): "They clearly do not appreciate how necessary it is to accept these [Scriptures] and how beneficial it is for souls that are still crying babies, as it were, to drink from them and absorb them into the marrow of their bones."[57] The materiality and temporality of Old Testament narratives, rites, and promises contain hidden but essential spiritual nutrients, albeit in a mode accessible to those whose preoccupation is still the perceptible.

The metaphor of the Old Testament as an element of divine pedagogy has particular valance for Augustine because the apostle Paul similarly describes the law in pedagogical terms: "The Law was our tutor in Christ" (Gal 3:24). Indeed, it was particularly the Mosaic law that the Manicheans found reprehensible. Invariably, the Manicheans would quote Paul against the Catholics: "You who are justified in the law are emptied of Christ; you have fallen from grace" (Gal 5:4). The law, Augustine retorts, came from God and had value in its time. Humanity needed to be constrained from sin by the fear of punishment lurking behind the Law. While Christ sets humanity free from such fear, he does not thereby condemn the law: "But the time comes when he invites us to submit to his love and not be slaves to the law from fear."[58] Augustine continues, "So the one who later gave men and women a teacher to love first gave them a tutor to fear."[59] The apostle Paul explains this principle elsewhere, notes Augustine, when he writes that the veil covering the Old Testament is taken away in Christ (2 Cor 3:14). Notice, insists Augustine, that Paul does not say that the Old Testament is taken away but only that the veil that *covers* the Old Testament is taken away: "The cover that hides the good things there has been taken away."[60] He continues:

> This is what happens for those who are earnest and devout in searching for the meaning of those writings, and not undisciplined and ill-intentioned. They are shown how things are related to each other, and the reason (*ordo*) behind what was said and done, and the harmony (*tanta congruentia*) of the Old Testament and the New, which is so complete that there remains no point of disharmony (*non consonet*), and the deep secrets of the figurative meaning (*figurarum tanta secreta*).[61]

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57 *Util. cred.* 2.4 (CSEL 25/1:6; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:118): "Qui profecto nesciunt, quatenus sint accipienda illa et quemadmodum hausta utiliter in venas quasi vagientium adhuc animarum medullas que descendant."

58 *Util. cred.* 3.9 (CSEL 25/1:12;, Kearney, *WSA* I/8:122).

59 *Util. cred.* 3.9 (CSEL 25/1:12–13; Kearney, *WSA* I/8, 123).

60 *Util. cred.* 3.9 (CSEL 25/1:13; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:123). See also *Ver. rel.* 17.33.

61 *Util. cred.* 3.9 (CSEL 25/1:13; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:123): "Hoc modo agitur cum jis, qui studiose ac pie, non turbide atque inprobe scripturarum illarum sensum requirunt, demonstratur que sedulo et ordo rerum et causae factorum atque dictorum et veteris testamenti ad novum tanta congruentia, ut apex nullus, qui non consonet, relinquatur, et figurarum tanta secreta."

Learning to see the warp and woof of the whole tapestry of Scripture allows one to make sense of particularities that in isolation seem unbecoming of God and contrary to the Christian faith. The temporal law with its earthly commands, promises, and punishments finds completion and intelligibility in Christ. From this vantage point, God's pedagogical purpose is understood.[62]

Augustine was convinced that the Old Testament authors "were great and divinely inspired, and that the law was established and promulgated at God's command."[63] The challenge for the spiritually mature reader of Scripture is to recognize the pattern of divine teaching that holds the whole of Scripture together. To recognize this pattern is immediately to see that "there is nothing wiser or purer or more sacred than all those writings that the Catholic Church preserves under the name of the Old Testament."[64] Scripture, because it is from God, contains the truth in its entirety (*omnino veritas*) and yet is given in a mode that is well adapted to the student (*adcomodatissima disciplina*): "Believe me, everything in scripture is profound and from God. The truth is there in its entirety, and teaching finely adapted to the renewal and restoration of souls and clearly presented in such a way that there is no one who cannot draw from it."[65] The divine author arranges within the diversity of Scripture a coherent and ordered plan that is well suited to the state of the student.

Scripture and the incarnation run along parallel theological tracks, according to Augustine: both function under the rubric of divine pedagogy; both attest to the

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62 Fredriksen, "Allegory and Reading God's book," 142–43, suggests that Augustine's understanding of Christ as the end of the law resulted in a less supersessionist theology than that of either his Catholic predecessors or his Manichean opponents: "Against the anti-Judaism both of his dualist opponents and of Catholic tradition itself, Augustine lifts up the positive things Paul has to say about the Law, and maintains that the Law, because God-given, is and always has been the means to salvation whose *finis* is Christ (Rom 10:4). ... His view of the Law as constant, God-given and good both before and after the coming of Christ affects the tone of his typologies: if the Old Testament is a concealed form of the New and vice versa, then they are each alike in dignity and positive religious value." While Frederiksen's comment contains valuable insight, it is not clear that the signatory and sacramental quality of the Old Testament, which finds its *fulfillment* in Christ, can lead to the conclusion that the two Testaments are "each alike in dignity and positive religious value." Rather, T. Toom, "Augustine on Scripture," in *T&T Clark Companion to Augustine and Modern Theology*, eds. C. C. Pecknold and T. Toom (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013): 75–86, seems closer to Augustine's conception of the relation between the Testaments: Augustine "gives certain hermeneutical priority to the New Testament as the revelation of the meaning of the Old."
63 *Util. cred.* 5.12 (CSEL 25/1:17; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:125–26): "Ego quidem illos viros et omnia utiliter memoriae mandasse et magnos ac divinos fuisse et illam legem Dei jussu ac voluntate promulgatam esse et conditam credo."
64 *Util. cred.* 6.13 (CSEL 25/1:17; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:126): "Nihil me existimare prudentius, castius, religiosius, quam sunt illae scripturae omnes, quas testamenti veteris nomine Catholica Ecclesia retinet."
65 *Util. cred.* 6.13 (CSEL 25/1:18; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:127 [trans. altered]): "Quicquid est, mihi crede, in Scripturis illis altum et divinum est: Inest omnino veritas et reficiendis instaurandis que animis adcomodatissima disciplina et plane ita modificata, ut nemo inde haurire non possit."

divine "accommodation" that comes to meet humanity in its weakness and spiritual immaturity. Scripture and the incarnation are linked in God's providential design, which deigns to accommodate those who are as yet unable to rise up to drink in the pure light of truth.[66] Speaking in the charged (and autobiographical) cadence that reminds one of the mystical ascent passages of the *Confessions*, Augustine writes, "But when it comes to divine realities, [reason] turns away; it cannot see; it gropes, is set afire, gasps with love, is struck by the light of the truth, and turns back, not by choice but out of fatigue, to its own familiar darkness" (*tenebrarum*).[67] However, it is precisely in this darkness, in this realm of shadows – when reason lags behind, unable to ascend to divine realties – that God comes to aid the soul by leading it to himself through the authority of Scripture:

> Hence, when we desire to take refuge in the darkness (*tenebrosa*), that shadiness of authority (*opacitas auctoritatis*) comes to meet us and charms us (*blandiatur*) through the providential plan of ineffable wisdom (*per dispensationem ineffabilis sapientiae*) both by miraculous events and by words of the holy books, as if by the gentler signs (*signis temperatioribus*) and by shadows of the truth.[68]

In the Old Testament the bright light of truth assumes the modality of "shadows," so that by these "gentler signs" the soul may be enticed (*blandiatur*) to ascend from what is perceptible and flee towards what is intelligible and eternal.[69]

The temporal commands, punishments, and promises of the law, as well as the earthly and sometimes even scandalous behavior of the patriarchs and prophets, have an anagogical purpose: God "uses" them to pull the fleshly minded student from the temporal to the eternal. The grand dispensation of wisdom (*dispensationem sapientiae*) invites a larger perspective; that is to say, a hermeneutic attuned to divine pedagogy will recognize the grand arc of salvation history within the sometimes strange stories of the Old Testament.[70] With generosity (*liberalius*) the divine

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66 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.7.11 (CSEL 90:13–14; Teske, *WSA* I/19:36).

67 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* (CSEL 90:14; Teske, *WSA* I/19:36): "At ubi ad divina perventum est, avertit sese: intueri non potest, palpitat, aestuat, inhiat amore, reverberatur luce veritatis, et ad familiaritatem tenebrarum suarum, non electione, sed fatigatione convertitur."

68 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* (CSEL 90:13–14; Teske, *WSA* I/19:36): "Ergo refugere in tenebrosa cupientibus per dispensationem ineffabilis sapientiae, nobis illa opacitas auctoritatis occurrat, et mirabilibus rerum, vocibusque librorum veluti signis temperatioribus veritatis umbrisque blandiatur."

69 Cf. *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.2.3 (CSEL 90:5; Teske, *WSA* I/19:32): "But the minds of human beings obscured by their familiarity with the darkness, by which they are veiled in the night of sins and vices, cannot direct a suitable gaze toward the clarity and purity of reason. Hence, it has been most salutarily arranged that authority, shaded as it were by the branches of humanity, leads the wavering eye into the light of the truth."

70 Augustine's attention to the historical character of the economy of salvation as well as his commitment to the *ad litteram* interpretation of Scripture became more pronounced as he matured. This is evident in the trajectory of the commentaries on Genesis. The heavily allegorical interpretation of *Gen. Man.*, which dates from 389, slowly gave way to the more literal focus of *De Genesi ad*

teacher deigns to accommodate the student "in marvelous and incomprehensible ways (*miris et incomprehensibilibus modis*), through certain most hidden sequences (*secretissimas successiones*) of things."[71] The "shadows" of the Old Testament have their place in the mystery of the divine economy; they "meet us" and "charm us" in order that humanity may ascend, even within the "familiar darkness" in which it finds itself. Augustine continues, "We shall never be able to understand how beautiful, how great, how worthy of God, how – finally – true is that which we seek unless we begin from things that are human and close by."[72] God deigns to use the "lowly manner" of Scripture's images, figures, and shadows in order to reach minds that still "creep along the ground:"

> But many things are said in a rather lowly manner and in a way better suited (*accommodatius*) to minds that creep along the ground in order that they may rise through what is human to what is divine (*per humana in divina consurgant*), and many things are also said in a symbolic (*figurate*) manner in order that a studious mind may have more useful exercise in the questions it asks and may have richer delight in the answers it finds.[73]

Here Augustine articulates a mainstay of his early theology in its most epigrammatic form: to "rise through what is human to what is divine." Most immediately this principle animates Augustine's theology of the incarnation, but it equally serves to inform his understanding of the pedagogical purpose of Scripture within the divine plan of salvation. Scripture serves in God's "marvelous providential plan" (*mirifica dispositio*) as divine accommodation to the weakness and flesh-bound way of human thinking.[74]

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litteram imperfectus liber of 393 and, finally, to the twelve books of *De Genesi ad litteram*, which were finished in the late 410s. G. Bonner, "Augustine as *Biblical* Scholar," in *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, eds. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, vol. 1., *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970): 541–63, 553, comments, "History, for [Augustine], is the record of human and divine actions. Divine history is *res gesta*, the action of God in the past, and this is contained in the Bible in the historical books of the Old Testament and the writings of the New."

71 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.7.12 (CSEL 90:14; Teske, *WSA* I/19:36).

72 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.7.12 (CSEL 90:14; Teske, *WSA* I/19:36): "Quod quidem quam sit pulchrum, quam magnum, quam Deo dignum, quam postremo id quod quaeritur verum, nequaquam intelligere poterimus, nisi ab humanis et proximis incipientes."

73 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.17.30 (CSEL 90:34–35; Teske, *WSA* I/19:45): "Sed quia multa dicuntur submissius, et humi repentibus animis accommodatius, ut per humana in divina consurgant; multa etiam figurate, ut studiosa mens et quaesitis exerceatur utilius, et uberius laetetur inventis."

74 A principle found in Augustine's early works, namely, that Scripture (and the incarnation) are of penultimate and pedagogical *use*, and are things through which we witness God's condescending speech reaching down through earthly and temporal means in order to invite a transposition of desire towards heavenly and eternal realities, logically culminates in *Doctr. chr.* 1.39.43 (CCSL 32:31). Here Augustine advances the thesis that one perfected in faith, hope, and love has no need of Scripture, except to instruct others. I. Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture. L'herméneutique augustinienne* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004), 52–53, writes, "Dans l'optique augustinienne, on va à l'éternel

In Augustine's early works, this principle – *per humana in divina consurgant* – finds its most sophisticated articulation in *Ver. rel.* God uses all manner of ways (*omnibus modis*) to draw people to himself, but such ways are calibrated in a mode appropriate to the time (*temporum opportunitatibus*).[75] In *Ver. rel.*, Augustine begins to articulate the *mirifica dispositio* of the divine plan by using the phrase *dispensatio temporalis* to account for how the divine teacher instructs in different modes as befits the time and limitations of the student.[76] So, while the two Testaments each have their own *sacramenta* (the many *sacramenta* of the law and the few of the New Testament), it is still within the prerogative of the same head of a household to give arduous burdens to his servants and lighter ones to his sons.[77] Similarly, a doctor will administer different medicines to different patients, depending on their condition, while the art of medicine on which he draws and the health for which he aims remain the same: "Because our state of health is variable, so too divine providence, while being in itself absolutely unchanging, nonetheless comes to the aid of changeable creatures in varying ways, and in accordance with the diversity of diseases commands or forbids different regimes."[78] Augustine carefully distinguishes between the divine will for humanity's health and convalescence, which is unchanging, and the gradual amelioration of human state, which is changing.

The divine medicine required for the healing of the soul is "applied step by distinct step" (*geritur gradatim distincte*).[79] Earth-bound and time-bound loves, explains Augustine in *Ver. rel.*, have injured the soul, and so the divine physician applies "a certain time-bound method of healing" (*quaedam temporalis medicina*). This "temporal medicine" is administered "through history and through prophecy" (*per historiam et per prophetiam*).[80] In this manner, God cures the patient through

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par la temporel, plus qu'on ne trouve l'éternel dans la temporel. … L'Écriture n'est qu'une médiation, nécessaire, il est vrai, mais provisoire."

75 *Ver. rel.* 16.30 (CCSL 32:205; Hill, *WSA* I/8:47).

76 Augustine uses the phrase *dispensatio temporalis* repeatedly in *Ver. rel.*: cf. 7.13, 10.19, 26.48, 55.110 (CCSL 32:196, 199, 217, 257–58). This phrase is largely limited to Augustine's writings before 400; cf. Cameron, *Christ meets me Everywhere*, 87.

77 *Ver. rel.* 17.34 (CCSL 32:208; Hill, *WSA* I/8:49–50). The image of the governance of a household is compelling precisely because *dispensatio* and the related to *dispositio* originally referred to such domestic governance. See K.-H. Schwarte, "Dispositio," in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, ed. C. Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1999), 2.3–4:498–504; cf. Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 3.9.27 (CCSL 29:291): "Et utrumque horum, id est turpitudo servi et mundatio cloacae, jam conjunctum et redactum in quandam sui generis unitatem ita dispositae domui coaptatur atque subtexitur ut ejus universitati ordinatissimo decore conveniat."

78 *Ver. rel.* 17.34 (CCSL 32:208; Hill, *WSA* I/8:50): "Ut enim ars medicinae, cum eadem maneat neque ullo pacto ipsa mutetur, mutat tamen praecepta languentibus, quia mutabilis est nostra valetudo, ita divina providentia, cum sit ipsa omnino incommutabilis, mutabili tamen creaturae varie subvenit et pro diversitate morborum alias alia jubet aut vetat."

79 *Ver. rel.* 24.45 (CCSL 32:215; Hill, *WSA* I/8:58).

80 *Ver. rel.* 25.46 (CCSL 32:216; Hill, *WSA* I/8:59).

the very matter that caused the illness in the first place: "We have to try and make use of the flesh-bound shapes, by which we are being held back, to come to a knowledge of those which the flesh does not present us with."[81] The developed analogy of the divine physician in *Ver. rel.* functions rhetorically in the same manner as the divine pedagogue in *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.*: God gives healing and instruction through the very materiality and temporality that once hindered health and understanding. In both cases the operative principle is: *per humana in divina consurgant*.

Both Scripture and the incarnation serve to aid the soul in its ascent to eternity. The earth-bound promises and punishments of the patriarchs and prophets as well as the flesh of the eternal Word serve to instruct the "fleshly minded" (*carnalibus*), those "incapable of gazing directly at Truth with the mind and given over to the sensations of the body."[82] If we cannot cling to God in his eternity, writes Augustine, "let us make use of the steps which divine providence has been good enough to construct for us."[83] Scripture and the incarnation are perceptible, material, and temporal steps; they are the *dispensatio temporalis* by which ascent is made possible: "But then, through sounds and letters, smoke, a column of fire and cloud, like visible words (*verba visibilia*) as it were, the inexpressible mercy of God did not disdain to play with us in our childhood after a fashion with parables and similes, and to cure our inner eyes with this sort of mud (cf. John 9:5)."[84] The reference to the story of Christ healing the blind man by applying mud to his eyes is, for Augustine, a rich metaphor of God's accommodation to meet the "fleshly minded" through earthly means. In the incarnation and in Scripture, God applies mud to spiritual children not yet capable of gazing directly on truth. Augustine connects the manner in which God led his people through the wilderness ("smoke, a column of fire, and cloud") with how he now guides his people in the new dispensation ("through sounds and letters"). Both are signs – "visible words" – that occur within the temporal and function as "steps" to the eternal.

There is no hermeneutical principle more profound or more significant, insists Augustine, than rightly discerning the mystery of the *dispensatio temporalis*: "And there is the question that has above all to be asked: What advantage is it to the

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81 *Ver. rel.* 24.45 (CCSL 32:215; Hill, *WSA* I/8:58–59): "Ergo ipsis carnalibus formis, quibus detinemur, nitendum est ad eas cognoscendas, quas caro non nuntiat."

82 *Ver. rel.* 16.30 (CCSL 32:205; Hill, *WSA* I/8:47): "Ita enim demonstravit carnalibus et non valentibus intueri mente veritatem corporeis que sensibus deditis."

83 *Ver. rel.* 50.98 (CCSL 32:250; Hill, *WSA* I/8:94): "Utamur gradibus quos nobis di vina pro videntia fabricare dignata est."

84 *Ver. rel.* (CCSL 32:250; Hill, *WSA* I/8:94): "Per sonos ac litteras, ignem, fumum, nubem, columnam, quasi quaedam verba visibilia, cum infantia nostra parabolis ac similitudinibus quodam modo ludere et interiores oculos nostros luto hujusce modi curare non aspernata est ineffabilis misericordia Dei."

human race that divine providence should have spoken to us through creatures (*per creaturam*) both rational and reproductive and merely material, which are at his service and disposal?"[85] To understand this divine plan is to perceive the divine intention that unites all of Scripture. The pride of the Manicheans refuses to admit the divine pedagogy that accommodates itself to humanity – an accommodation by which God communicates his Word through the weakness and vulnerability of human words. It remains the case, however, that "once this single matter is definitively cleared up, all childish impudence is excluded from our minds, and sacred and holy religion is allowed entry."[86] The hermeneutical principle of the *dispensatio temporalis* is for Augustine a master key with which one might access all of Scripture.

Allegory: From the Letter to the Spirit

Augustine's repeated charge is that the Manicheans simply do not understand how to read Scripture: "Are those scriptures of the law, that they attack so foolishly and so ineffectually as though they were open to all (*planissimae*), entirely transparent?"[87] Scripture needs to be handled with a degree of subtlety and sophistication that the Manicheans lack. Their flat-footed literalism leads them to "a massive onslaught of speeches and curses [as] they tear at things they do not understand."[88] No doubt speaking from the experience of his earlier theological misperceptions, Augustine upbraids the Manicheans:

> We certainly interpret the law and the prophets far, far differently than you suppose. Give up your error. We do not worship a God who is repentant, jealous, needy, or cruel; we do not worship a God who seeks pleasure from the blood of human beings or animals, nor a God who takes pleasure in sins and crimes, nor a God who limits his ownership of the earth to a certain small piece of it. For you are accustomed to inveigh violently and at length against these silly ideas and other similar ones. Hence, your attack does not touch us. Rather, you tear into certain opinions of old wives or even of children with language that is more inept the more violent it is. If anyone is moved by it and crosses over to you, he does not condemn the teaching of our Church but shows that he is ignorant of it.[89]

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85 *Ver. rel.* 50.99 (CCSL 32:251; Hill, *WSA* I/8:95): "Et quod maxime quaerendum est: quid prosit generi humano, quod sic nobis cum per rationalem et genitalem et corporalem creaturam sibi servientem divina providentia locuta est."

86 *Ver. rel.* (CCSL 32:251; Hill, *WSA* I/8:95): "Quo uno cognito omnis ab animis protervitas puerilis excluditur et introducitur sacrosancta religio."

87 *Util. cred*. 6.13 (CSEL 25/1:17; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:126): "An istae Scripturae legis planissimae sunt, in quas isti quasi vulgo expositas inpetum faciunt frustra et inaniter?"

88 *Util. cred.* 6.13 (CSEL 25/1:18; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:126): "magno inpetu orationis maledictisque lacerantes, quia eis inperiti plaudunt, aliquid se proficere existimant."

89 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.10.16 (CSEL 90:19–20; Teske, *WSA* I/19:38–39): "Longe prorsus aliter longe quam putatis lex et prophetae intelliguntur a nobis. Desinite errare; non colimus poenitentem

The inability of the Manicheans to conceive of the divine presence as spiritual and transcendent also befogs their approach to Scripture, which, Augustine complains, they always interpret in the "literal sense" (*littera sonat*), so that they do not "pass beyond the childhood of the mind" (*mentis pueritiam*).[90] Ultimately, Manichean literalism is childish, insists Augustine: God is neither contained in place nor diffused through space; the divine substance likewise does not change. It is childish to contend that the analogies and metaphors of Scripture are literal descriptions of God moving and changing, turning his eyes, repenting, or delighting in sacrifices. Scripture does not teach things unfitting of God. Rather, a mature reader ought to seek with "diligence and piety" the true sense intended by the letter of Scripture.[91]

Augustine admits that the vast majority of those who read Scripture are uninformed and lack sophistication with texts; they are particularly susceptible to the wiles of popular Manichean attacks and are frequently left scandalized by sacred writ: "There are not many, however, who are able to defend [Scripture] in a popular way on account of the mysteries (*mysteria*) they contain."[92] Drawing out the "mysteries" of Scripture requires an awareness of the different senses operative in the text. Augustine enumerates four senses: Scripture can be interpreted according to history (*historiam*), explanation (*aetiologiam*), analogy (*analogiam*), and allegory (*allegoriam*).[93] History concerns "what happened," either in reality or in a narrative (*gestum sit*). Explanation concerns the reason *why* something is written (*de causa*). Analogy demonstrates the congruity of the two Testaments. Finally, allegory invites one to understand the text not in a literal way (*ad litteram*) but in a figurative sense (*figurate intellegenda*).[94]

Deum, non invidum, non indigum, non crudelem, non quaerentem de hominum vel pecorum sanguine voluptatem, non cui flagitia et scelera placeant, non possessionem suam terrae quadam particula terminantem. In has enim atque hujusmodi nugas graviter copioseque invehi soletis. Quare nos invectio vestra non tangit; sed aniles quasdam vel etiam pueriles opiniones eo ineptiore quo vehementiore oratione pervellitis. Qua quisquis movetur et ad vos transit, non ecclesiae nostrae damnat disciplinam, sed eam se ignorare demonstrat."

90 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.10.17 (CSEL 90:20; Teske, *WSA* I/19:39).

91 *Mor. eccl. mor. Manich.* 1.10.17 (CSEL 90:20; Teske, *WSA* I/19:39): "quaerite potius diligenter et pie quomodo illa icantur."

92 *Util. cred.* 2.4 (CSEL 25/1:6; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:119 [trans. altered]): "Defendi autem populariter, propter mysteria quae his continentur, non a multis admodum possunt."

93 Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber* 2.5–3.6 (CSEL 28/1:461–62).

94 *Util. cred.* 3.5 (CSEL 25/1:8; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:120). Like most ancient authors, Augustine does not typically (or consistently) distinguish between varying kinds of figurative exegesis (typological, moral, anagogical, or allegorical). Allegory and figuration function synonymously as they do in *Util. cred.* 3.5, where they are used interchangeably. To put it simply, figurative exegesis is to read Scripture in the light of Christ, and so the basic distinction Augustine draws is between the literal and the figurative or between the historical and the spiritual. C. Harrison, "Augustine," in *From the Beginnings to 600*, eds. J. C. Paget and J. Schaper, vol. 1, *The New Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 676–96, 693, notes, "Augustine's own terminology

It is the fourth way of interpreting Scripture, the figurative, that does the heavy lifting in Augustine's response to the Manicheans. Christ himself warranted the use of allegory by teaching the Paschal Mystery through the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matt 12:39–40).[95] But the two key texts to which Augustine nearly invariably refers are 1 Cor 10:1–11 and Gal 4:22–26.[96] In 1 Cor 10, Paul contends that Christ was sacramentally present to the people of Israel in the desert, providing spiritual food and drink. As such, the very history of the Exodus becomes an allegory pointing to the future Christian people.[97] Galatians 4 contains an extended analogy regarding Abraham's two sons, one born of a free woman (Sarah) and the other of a slave (Hagar). And Paul explains, "These things are said as an allegory" (Gal 4:23); the two women represent two covenants, that of the law and that of grace. For Augustine, Paul's developed use of allegory models how the Christian exegete should handle the Old Testament. While Christians no longer ritualistically observe the Old Testament law, a figurative reading of the law reveals profound mysteries (*tanta mysteria continentur*).[98] In fact, such mysteries are the actual end (*finis*) of the law, such that it is allegory that allows one to discern the true meaning of the text.

Augustine's understanding of figurative exegesis is markedly different from common contemporary treatments of it. The contemporary distinction between "literal" and "figurative" typically functions as a distinction between "what the text really means" (that is, authorial intent) and subsequent creative adaptions of the text added to (and perhaps even opposed to) the literal sense. Here, literal exegesis is regarded as objective and (in theory) scientifically accessible, while figurative exegesis is subjective and artistic. As such, for post-Enlightenment hermeneutics, a degree of tension necessarily animates the relationship between the "literal" and the "figurative." However, for Augustine (and other ancient exegetes), the "literal" is simply what we might call the plain meaning of the text. (When I read the three letters C-A-T on a page, my mind conjures up a four-legged feline.) Augustine uses the word *proprius* when speaking of the "literal" sense; *proprius* is that which is one's own or that which is proper to itself. The literal, then, is the plain meaning that is proper to the word itself. Of course, words often do not function in such linear fashion. (A "catty lady" is unintelligible in terms of Augustine's literal sense.) Figurative exegesis, then, tries to make sense of what cannot be made intelligible

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is fluid: he uses a variety of terms such as *allegoria*, *figura*, *typus*, *similitudo*, *sacramentum*, *imago*, *mysteria*, *umbra* and so on to refer to the way in which the words of scripture function as signs which should be read so as to discover the meaning or *res* which they not only point to, but also contain."

95 *Util. cred.* 3.8 (CSEL 25/1:10; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:121).

96 For a broader introduction to Paul's use of allegory as a means of theologically articulating the new Christian community's relation to Israel, see Fredriksen, "Allegory and Reading God's Book."

97 *Util. cred.* 3.8 (CSEL 25/1:11; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:122): "Qui etiam ipsam Exodi historiam futurae christianae plebis allegoriam fuisse significat."

98 *Util. cred.* 3.9 (CSEL 25/1:13; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:123).

from the *littera*.[99] Figurative exegesis is not a subsequent addition to the literal, but an attempt to find meaning in the literal. Figuration for the ancients is not a movement *away* from the letter of the text but an attempt to bring meaning to the text. Gerald Bruns explains how figuration for the ancients does not draw one away from the letter of the text but enlarges upon what is written, "reinscribing what is written – in order to make sense of it."[100] If the literal meaning of a passage is strange and scandalous, figurative exegesis allows one to turn the text around in order to make sense of it.[101]

Augustine's claim that figurative exegesis discloses the true meaning and end (*finis*) of the law may strike a modern reader as a violent imposition on the text. We assume a disjunction between the "literal" and the "figurative;" the true meaning ("literal") of the law is its historical character (discovered with the appropriate historical-critical methodology), and if we choose subsequently to interpret the law's meaning christologically ("figuratively"), we need at least to be intellectually honest and admit that we are importing a "spiritual" meaning to the text. But this is not a distinction Augustine makes. The "spiritual" meaning is the true meaning, not a subsequent addendum. Meaning is not principally a historical category but an intelligible category. This entails an a priori attention to the nature and purpose of Scripture, which is to lead the reader to Christ. To discern the presence of Christ in all of Scripture is to come to a recognition of its depth and divinity (*altum et divinum*).[102] Again, Augustine does not understand allegory as importing a foreign meaning to the *littera*; rather, allegory is coming to understand the *littera* in their deeper sense. It is to understand what Paul meant when he said that God's deliverance of Israel through the sea, the nourishment of his people on manna, and the

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99 Figuration – the use of allegory and metaphor – is, for the ancients, inherent to human thought and speech. C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 45, writes, "Allegory, in some sense, belongs not to medieval man but to man, or even to mind, in general. It is of the very nature of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in picturable terms."

100 Bruns, "Figuration in Antiquity," 147.

101 Here the modern exegete is immediately concerned with "importing" a meaning that is foreign to the text. But this imagines the text to be a dead object; a cadaver that can be subjected to critical analytic interrogation. It presupposes that "meaning" is somehow embedded deep within the text and that the right "tools" and "method" can force out its secrets. But this not the relationship ancients had with their texts. According to them, meaning does not lie within the text but with the interpreter who comes to understand the text. That is to say, their primary mode of engagement was hermeneutical not analytical. The ancient does not imagine that there is an objective meaning *in* a text (synonymous, perhaps, with authorial intent); rather, without an interpreter the text stands mute. The interpreter serves the text, giving it a voice, as Bruns, "Figuration in Antiquity," 151–52, explains: "The interpreter stands with the text in a relation that is more phenomenal than logical. To interpret what is written is to speak for it. . . . To be an interpreter of the text is to be answerable for it; it is to say what the text does not say and perhaps is not able to say."

102 *Util. cred.* 6.13 (CSEL 25/1:18; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:126).

gift of water from the rock were "written down for our instruction" (1 Cor 10:11). These narratives, explains Paul, serve "as types" (Greek "*typikōs*"; Augustine's Latin translation read *in figura*) whose meaning is illuminated in Christ. Augustine (and the broader tradition of patristic exegesis) extends this Pauline interpretive principle: "Any devout person, therefore, understands that there is nothing more harmful than to take everything there according to the literal meaning (*ad litteram*) of the words but that there is nothing more beneficial than to have it unveiled by the Spirit. So it is that 'the letter kills but the spirit gives life' (*littera occidit, spiritus vivificat*; 2 Cor 3:6)."[103] Augustine frequently deploys this Paulinism in his early engagement with Scripture. After all, it is 2 Cor 3:6, wielded so effectively by Ambrose, that allowed Scripture to become available once more to Augustine.

Allegory, as a movement from the letter to the spirit, correlates neatly with Augustine's broader conception of ascent as a movement from the perceptible to the intelligible and from the temporal to the eternal. Augustine distinguishes the faith to be had in Scripture's historical narratives (*historiae*) from the faith to be had in the intelligible reality (*intellegentiae*) to which the historical narratives point.[104] Just as in the spiritual life one ought to ascend from the temporal and perceptible to the eternal and intelligible, so too with exegesis, one ought to ascend from the historical narrative to the eternal realities of wisdom at which they aim. Allegory is for Augustine an anagogical exercise.

Nevertheless, Augustine is keenly aware that the ascent proper to allegory is neither simple nor linear. After all, the definition of "allegory" is a reference to something by means of something else. (*Allegoria* is etymologically derived from the Greek words *allos*, meaning "other," and *agoreuein* meaning "to speak.") The character of this allegorical reference can be complex:

> What is the correct way of interpreting an allegory, which we believe Wisdom spoke in the Holy Spirit? Does it suffice to lead us (*perducere*) from ancient visible realities to a more recent visible reality? Or apply them even further, to the affection and nature of the soul? Or even to unchanging eternity? That is to say, do some allegories signify visible deeds, others the motions of souls, and others the laws of eternity? And are there even some to be found in which all these can be traced?[105]

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103 *Util. cred.* 3.9 (CSEL 25/1:13; Kearney, *WSA* I/8:123): "Omnis pius intellegat nihil esse perniciosius, quam quidquid ibi est accipi ad litteram, id est, ad verbum; nihil autem salubrius, quam spiritu revelari. Inde est: littera occidit, spiritus autem vi vificat."

104 *Ver. rel.* 50.99 (CCSL 32:251; Hill, *WSA* I/8:94): "Distinguamus ergo quam fidem debeamus historiae, quam fidem debeamus. intellegentiae." It is important to remember that Augustine's distinction between faith in the historical narrative and faith in the eternal intelligible realities are species of the same faith; cf. Cameron, *Christ Meets me Everywhere*, 93.

105 *Ver. rel.* 50.99 (CCSL 32:251; Hill, *WSA* I/8:95 [trans. altered]): "Qui sit modus interpretandae allegoriae, quae per sapientiam dicta creditur in Spiritu Sancto: utrum a visibilibus antiquioribus ad visibilia recentiora eam perducere sufficiat; an usque ad animae affectiones atque naturam, an usque ad

Allegory, as a movement from *historiae* to *intellegentiae*, is not straightforward, and Augustine seems to have more questions than answers. Allegory is not a grid that one can neatly place over a historical narrative to give it new meaning; rather, it requires a subtle and spiritually mature interpreter. While the general character of allegory entails an ascent from the temporal to the eternal, Scripture evinces many different types of allegory; allegory is discovered in historical narratives, events, sayings, and sacraments. Additionally, allegory is couched in the language and idiom of the biblical languages, which only adds to the complexity.[106] The sinuosity involved in transferring meaning from the literal to the figurative is, nevertheless, an essential and unavoidable task in making sense of any text. For Augustine, allegory serves a further purpose in disclosing a unified vision of Scripture; figurative exegesis offers a hermeneutic to account for obscure and un-seemly passages in Scripture. Once such texts are "turned over" and interpreted christologically, their place within the *dispensatio temporalis* of God's creative and redemptive plan is made apparent.

Conclusion

Augustine's early theology of Scripture is multifaceted and polemically occasioned. Nevertheless, broad, but consistent, rules for handling Scripture emerge, which are expanded and repeatedly deployed in Augustine's long episcopal career devoted to expositing and preaching the Bible. The central concern animating Augustine's early theology of Scripture was to insist on the unity of Scripture. The same God who gave the law and spoke through the prophets revealed himself in Christ Jesus. Three hermeneutical strategies converge in Augustine's early theology of Scripture, underwriting his defense of Scripture's unity against the Manicheans. First, the aim of all of Scripture is that the believer may grow in charity. The "harmony" of Scripture is recognized by those who hear the organizing melody of love by which all of Scripture "sings together." Second, Scripture, when read as a unified whole, reveals a divine plan – the *dispensatio temporalis* – by which God accommodates himself to the limitation of human weakness. The "lowly manner" of Scripture, like the incarnation, meets the fleshly minded – those who still creep along the ground – where they are. Those who are, as yet, incapable of looking directly at the brilliance of truth, are invited to find the divine Word in the shadows of the Old Testament and are, thereby, offered the means to ascend "through what is human to what is divine." Third, allegory, or figurative exegesis, puts the Old Testament at the disposal

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incommutabilem aeternitatem: an aliae significent gesta visibilia, aliae motus animorum, aliae legem aeternitatis; an aliquae inveniantur, in quibus haec omnia vestiganda sint."
106 *Ver. rel.* 50.99 (CCSL 32:251; Hill, *WSA* I/8:95).

of the Christian faith. It was hearing Ambrose exposit Scripture with the guiding principle that "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life" that presented Augustine the possibility of claiming the Old Testament as his own. For Augustine, the "literal" is not opposed to the "figurative;" rather, figurative exegesis infuses meaning, unity, and purpose into the literal text. Far from drawing one away from the literal, figuration attempts to bring understanding to the *littera*. Taking his cue from the Apostle Paul, Augustine contends for the indispensable role of allegory in maintaining the unity of Scripture.

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