

THE TOWERING FIGURE OF AUGUSTINE

Church History 1, Outline 7

There is no doubt that Augustine was the most important theologian in the Western tradition. He is the towering titan who arose at about the time that Eastern and Western theologies began to drift apart, and his work was so broad and expansive that he set the stage for the next thousand years of theology.

Major contribution: monergistic understanding of salvation

I. Life and Ministry of Augustine

Our major source for information about Augustine comes from his autobiography, *Confessions*.

A. Early Life

1. Raised Catholic

2. Unbelief

3. Manichaeism

4. Skepticism

5. Neoplatonism

6. The Gospel

B. Augustine the Christian

II. Two Controversies

A. On the Church--The Donatist Error

1. Basic components of Donatism:

- a. A puritanical ethic.

- b. Separatism and schism.

- c. Complete separation of church from state. “What has the emperor to do with the church?” asked Donatus in AD 347.

- d. A commitment to Western North African values, including penance, suffering, martyrdom.

2. Augustine on the Church:

- a. Invisible church/Visible church

- b. Sacraments not dependent on holiness of administrator

B. On Salvation--The Pelagian Error

1. Augustine accused Pelagius of three heresies:

a. He denied original sin, a cardinal doctrine in Romans and Ephesians

b. He denied that God's grace is essential for salvation

c. He preached sinless perfection

2. Augustine's soteriology:

a. Original Sin

b. Free Will

c. Grace

d. Predestination

e. Regeneration

f. Perseverance

III. Two More Major Writings

A. *On the Trinity*

B. *The City of God*

* *This material was developed by and is used with the consent of Dr. Chad Brand - SBTS, KY*