

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Augustine and Calvinism****Augustine and Calvinism - posted by NewSpared, on: 2011/1/13 14:57**

Hi again.

I have been watching and listening to debates between Calvinists and Arminians (and, happily, material by people who don't want to be called by another human's name and simply study the Bible to find the truth). The name of Saint Augustine of Hippo comes up very often, but no one so far has been able to point me to a place in his writings where he shares any of the 5 points of Calvinism. I have read some of his books and treatises but have not found any of this. Of course, he wrote a lot.

Can anyone give me a reference (or references) to a book, chapter and paragraph?

John Calvin may have quoted Augustine to support his points? Where and how? I'm not keen on reading Calvin's works because of the quotes by him that I have read and because of the way he lived his life, but if you have, your help will be appreciated.

Lora

Re: Augustine and Calvinism - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2011/1/13 16:16

I have just googled "The writings of Augustine" and found a site called "augnet" that contains much of his translated writings. The following is a list of what I found. But you have to go to the site. www.augnet.org

His book list

Finding Augustine

His writings chart - 01

His writing method

Augustine published - 01

Beautiful and Apt

Earliest writings - 01

Dialogues - 01

On the teacher - 01

On holy virginity

On the good of marriage

On the work of monks

On the good of widowhood

On true religion

Eighty-three Questions - 01

Enarrationes in Psalmos

City of God: introduction

On Christian Doctrine - 01

On the Trinity - 01

Confessions: introduction

Teaching Unlearned - 01

Rule - 01

On the Epistle of John

On the Gospel of John

Enchiridion - 01

Retractions - 01

His Sermons - 01

His Letters - 01

His writings: links

Re: list of works - posted by NewSpared, on: 2011/1/13 17:06

Thanks. But this doesn't help me. I have been on this site - I can do Google search too. If anyone can tell me why exactly Augustine is blamed for Calvinism?

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2011/1/13 17:37

I got this from another website.

Limits Of God's Plan for Human Salvation. By St Augustine.

This is what came to be known as " Limited Attonment " in Calvinism. Augustine has chosen an easy verse to prove his point.

103. Accordingly, when we hear and read in sacred Scripture that God "willeth that all men should be saved," although we know well enough that not all men are saved, we are not on that account to underrate the fully omnipotent will of God. Rather, we must understand the Scripture, "Who will have all men to be saved," as meaning that no man is saved unless God willeth his salvation: not that there is no man whose salvation he doth not will, but that no one is saved unless He willeth it. Moreover, his will should be sought in prayer, because if he willeth, then what he willeth must necessarily be. And, indeed, it was of prayer to God that the apostle was speaking when he made that statement. Thus, we are also to understand what is written in the Gospel about Him "who enlighteneth every man." This means that there is no man who is enlightened except by God.

In any case, the word concerning God, "who will have all men to be saved," does not mean that there is no one whose salvation he doth not will — he who was unwilling to work miracles among those who, he said, would have repented if he had wrought them — but by "all men" we are to understand the whole of mankind, in every single group into which it can be divided: kings and subjects; nobility and plebeians; the high and the low; the learned and unlearned; the healthy and the sick; the bright, the dull, and the stupid; the rich, the poor, and the middle class; males, females, infants, children, the adolescent, young adults and middle-aged and very old; of every tongue and fashion, of all the arts, of all professions, with the countless variety of wills and minds and all the other things that differentiate people. For from which of these groups doth not God will that some men from every nation should be saved through his only begotten Son our Lord?

Therefore, he doth save them since the Omnipotent cannot will in vain, whatsoever he willeth.

Now, the apostle had enjoined that prayers should be offered "for all men" and especially "for kings and all those of exalted station," whose worldly pomp and pride could be supposed to be a sufficient cause for them to despise the humility of the Christian faith. Then, continuing his argument, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" — that is, to pray even for such as these — the apostle, to remove any warrant for despair, added, "Who willeth that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Truly, then, God hath judged it good that through the prayers of the lowly he would deign to grant salvation to the exalted — a paradox we have already seen exemplified. Our Lord also useth the same manner of speech in the Gospel, where he saith to the Pharisees, "You tithe the mint and rue and every herb." Obviously, the Pharisees did not tithe what belonged to others, nor all the herbs of all the people of other lands. Therefore, just as we should interpret "every herb" to mean "every kind of herb," so also we can interpret "all men" to mean "all kinds of men." We could interpret it in any other fashion, as long as we are not compelled to believe that the Omnipotent hath willed anything to be done which was not done. "He hath done all things in heaven and earth, whatsoever he willed," as Truth sings of him, and surely he hath not willed to do anything that he hath not done. There must be no equivocation on this point.

Re: - posted by Tears_of_joy, on: 2011/1/13 17:49

Here you go:

http://web.archive.org/web/20071231050656/www.inplainsite.org/html/three_men_and_calvinism.html

http://web.archive.org/web/20080215072001/www.inplainsite.org/html/calvins_catholic_connection.html

Re: Augustine and Calvinism - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/1/13 18:08

Hey NewSpared, I do not want to violate rules by posting links to other sites in thread posts. You can do a google search for Augustine's "Handbook on Faith Hope and Love". Chapter XXV titled "Predestination and the Justice of God", as well as other chapters, clearly shows that he had Calvinistic views regarding man's will.

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2011/1/13 19:03

Quote:

-----If anyone can tell me why exactly Augustine is blamed for Calvinism?

Interesting word choice with the word "blamed," perhaps indicates your current position on the matter? May I humbly submit that if all you know of what is known as "Calvinism" is the five points, then you have not really scratched the surface of what it entails. Calvinism is a worldview centered on God's sovereignty. The five points are merely a response to 5 specific, soteriological points the Remonstrants (Arminians) made.

Re: Augustine and Calvinism - posted by boG (), on: 2011/1/13 20:22

It is questionable whether St. Augustine denied Limited Atonement, even despite the previous quotation. For you will notice the phrase "For from which of these groups doth not God will that some men from every nation should be saved through his only begotten Son our Lord?" In other words St. Augustine just equated "all men" to mean "all groups of men." This is a typical position within Reformed churches.

However, oddly enough, it seems St. Augustine would be classified today as a 4-pointer. For he most emphatically rejected Perseverance of the Saints as applying to all Christians. Or, should we label this view 4½-points? For example, in one place St. Augustine says,

"If, however, being already regenerate and justified, he relapses of his own will into an evil life, assuredly he cannot say, 'I have not received,' because of his own free choice to evil he has lost the grace of God, that he had received."

And, elsewhere,

"It is, indeed, to be wondered at, and greatly to be wondered at, that to some of His own children—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also, when to children of another He forgives such wickedness, and, by the bestowal of His grace, makes them His own children."

It is also noteworthy to mention that St. Augustine, for this very reason, also said,

"But, moreover, that such things as these are so spoken to saints who will persevere, as if it were reckoned uncertain whether they will persevere, is a reason that they ought not otherwise to hear these things, since it is well for them 'not to be high-minded, but to fear.' Romans 11:20. For who of the multitude of believers can presume, so long as he is living in this mortal state, that he is in the number of the predestinated?"

In other words, who of the regenerate can presume security unto eternal glory? (See On Rebuke and Grace written by St. Augustine of Hippo in A.D. 426 or 427)

As for the first question, why is St. Augustine "blamed" for Calvinism? This is because of the following reason:

Quote:

-----Calvinism is a worldview centered on God's sovereignty.

More specifically, Calvinism is a worldview centered on a particular definition of God's sovereignty, i.e., Theological Determinism. And this is the peculiar view of God's sovereignty that St. Augustine also held.

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2011/1/13 20:39

Agreed, but it would be said that the contra-view also particularly defines sovereignty.

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2011/1/14 1:14

What makes Augustine an important figure in Calvinism is his doctrine of Original Sin. Of course Augustine lived in the 4th century, long before the Reformation. But his exposition of Original Sin that entered the human race through Adam and Eve is one of the bedrocks of Calvinism. Original Sin is found in the T in TULIP. T stands for Total Depravity.

Re: - posted by NewSpared, on: 2011/1/14 6:45

Thank you to UntoBabes and to the others for the links and explanation.

Giggles (Paul),

I have decided not to discuss Calvinism with Calvinists, but I don't want to look like I'm being impolite and ignoring you. So I'll just say this: if the 5 points were an insufficient or false representation of Calvin's views (written to respond to a specific question or for a specific occasion), then people like John Piper, John MacArthur and Eric Holmberg wouldn't use them in their sermons and presentations. You may say that although they are Calvinists, they don't understand the teaching correctly (still, I think they're smart enough and they've read enough). Alright. If those bright minds and Calvin admirers don't get it, then how can I, who see nothing but rotten fruit in Calvin's life, understand it better?

I do want to understand Augustine better though. For two reasons:

1. The wisdom he received from God has helped me a lot (his commentaries on the psalms, his treaty on widowhood, the confessions). (Although this does not make me idolise him and I have already detected some errors in his books.)
2. If people want to speak wisely in refuting Calvinism, they shouldn't just drop somebody's name in without exact quotes. But that happens too often.

Alright, I'm off to read now.

Blessings to you all with "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence - Caitelen Schneeberger" from youtube.

Lora

Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2011/1/14 9:45

In response to your request, this link will provide a plethora of quotes from Augustine's work on the topic.

<http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/augustinequotes.html>

Some interesting quotes as well.....

Augustine

For them, grace means the knowledge with which the Lord God helps us, by which we can know what our duty is. The true meaning of grace, however, is the love that God breathes into us, which enables us with a holy delight to carry out the duty that we know.

Augustine - Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, 4:11

Can you say, "We will first walk in His righteousness, and will observe His judgments, and will act in a worthy way, so that He will give His grace to us?" But what good would you evil people do? And how would you do those good things, unless you were yourselves good? But Who causes people to be good? Only He Who said, "And I will visit them to make them good," and, "I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my righteousness, and to observe my judgments, and do them" (Ezek.36:27). Are you asleep? Can't you hear Him saying, "I will cause you to walk, I will make you to observe," lastly, "I will make you to do"? Really, are you still puffing yourselves up? We walk, true enough, and we observe, and we do; but it is God Who He makes us to walk, to observe, to do. This is the grace of God making us good; this is His mercy going before us.

Augustine - Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, 4:15

"To will is of nature, but to will aright is of grace." - Augustine

"God bids us do what we cannot, that we may know what we ought to seek from him."- Augustine

"Grace alone brings about every good work in us."- Augustine

"Nature is common to all, but not grace."- Augustine

"The grace of God does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so."- Augustine

"The nature of the Divine goodness is not only to open to those who knock. but also to cause them to knock and ask."- Augustine

"Let God give what he commands, and command what he will."- Augustine

"Grace does not destroy the will but rather restores it."- Augustine

"In some places God requires newness of heart . But elsewhere he testifies that it is given by him . But what God promises we ourselves do not do through choice or nature; but he himself does through grace."- Augustine

"Indeed, God requires faith itself of us; yet he does not find something to require unless he has given something to find."- Augustine

'Can we possibly, without utter absurdity, maintain that there first existed in anyone the good virtue of a good will, to entitle him to the removal of his heart of stone? How can we say this, when all the time this heart of stone itself signifies precisely a will of the hardest kind, a will that is absolutely inflexible against God? For if a good will comes first, there is obviously no longer a heart of stone.' - Augustine

"Since these things are so, everything that is commanded to human beings by the Lord in the holy Scriptures, for the sake of testing human free will, is either something we begin to obey by God's goodness, or is demanded in order to show us our need of grace to do it. Indeed, a person does not even begin to be changed from evil to good by the first stirrings of faith, unless the free and gratuitous mercy of God produces this in him. . . . So, therefore, we should think of God's grace as working from the beginning of a person's changing towards goodness, even to the end of its completion, so that he who glories may glory in the Lord. For just as no-one can bring goodness to perfection without the Lord, so no one can begin it without the Lord."

- Augustine, Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, 2:23

Re: Augustine and Calvinism - posted by savannah, on: 2011/1/14 10:16

You ask "John Calvin may have quoted Augustine to support his points? Where and how?"

You ask again, "Can anyone give me a reference (or references) to a book..."

The link below is 'to a book' which Calvin quotes Augustine quite a bit to 'support his points'. If this isn't what you were looking for, it looks as though you do have some replies on your thread that may be of some assistance to you in your search.

http://www.the-highway.com/calvin%27s_calvinism_index.html

According to what you have written below, it almost had me asking the question of whether you had reached your 450th birthday yet! But maybe I'll just let that go, as many are sensitive regarding their age. It may be inappropriate and I do not want to offend anyone.

"...I, who see nothing but rotten fruit in Calvin's life."

"...because of the way he lived his life"

Re: - posted by NewSpared, on: 2011/1/14 14:34

"But maybe I'll just let that go, as many are sensitive regarding their age. It may be inappropriate and I do not want to offend anyone."

You said it. And you also stated your purpose - to offend me. What more can I say? There's no need.

Re: - posted by NewSpared, on: 2011/1/14 15:36

I see from "Limits Of God's Plan for Human Salvation" that UntoBabes pointed me to that Augustine gave Calvinists the idea of the many different meanings of the word "all" ('God desires all men to be saved'). Very cunning.

From the very good article "Three men and Calvinism" that Tears_of_joy gave me:

"Now it logically follows, that if infants are saved by baptism, then they are damned without it. And this is precisely what Augustine taught."

Sad, because we all know what David said when his and Bathsheba's first child died. And we know that according to Jesus, the Kingdom belongs to the children and to those like them.

Augustine also developed the idea of purgatory? Ugly.

Here's what else I learned from that article:

The sentence stood and Servetus burned. In 1561, Calvin wrote the Marquis Paet, high chamberlain to King of Navarre, "Honour, glory, and riches shall be the reward of your pains; but above all do not fail to rid the country of those scoundrels, who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus, the Spaniard."

"It can be proved that Arminius was not an Arminian." :)

Augustine: "Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return? The Lord Himself said, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in Wherefore is the power which the Church has received ... through the religious character and faith of kings ... the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges - that is, in heresies and schisms - are compelled to come in, and let them not find fault with being compelled."

I guess Calvin only took this further in his cooperation with the State to kill all those heretics and witches and force people to go to church.

Thank you to everyone.

Re: - posted by rnieman, on: 2011/1/14 15:38

You may want to try reading Augustine's "Enchiridion" also known as "Faith, Hope and Love." - I was told it gives a pretty concise description of Augustine's view on providence and unconditional election. Russ

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2011/1/14 18:57

No worries NewSpared. Without trying to draw you further into debate, I would suggest you define Calvinism (for your own study purposes). The word has gathered many applications and designations by this point in history. For some it means this and for others it means that. I commend your desire to go straight to the source for your study into Augustine; if you are sincere about your desire to understand Calvin's specific teaching, go to the source and read Calvin himself. I'm not how sermons from various preachers factor into what Calvinism (in the sense of Calvin's teachings) is. I have listened to a lot of Piper and he by no means limits the full range of what he calls Calvinism to the five points. Here is a brief article from him on the origin of Calvinism:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/the-origin-of-calvinism>

He quotes Warfield describing the Calvinist primarily as, "the one who sees God behind all phenomena, and in all that occurs recognizes the hand of God... 'who makes the attitude of the soul to God in prayer the permanent attitude...' and who casts himself on the grace of God alone, excluding every trace of dependence on self from the whole work of salvation." God is shown to be (1) behind all of life, (2) worthy of ever-present prayer, (3) inspiration to humility and brokenness, and lastly but not least, (4) the Source behind the thrust of the famous points.

To iterate, the five points are Calvinism applied specifically to soteriology. They are certainly encompassed within the broader

breadth of its doctrine but are by no means exhaustive is all I was sharing with you. Calvinism speaks on and to all facets of life. Piper corroborates his belief on this in this article, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/what-we-believe-about-the-five-points-of-calvinism> , saying, “the so-called Five Points were not chosen by the Calvinists as a summary of their teaching. They emerged as a response to the Arminians who chose these five points to oppose.” And later, he adds, “We would like to spell out what we believe the Scripture teaches on these five points. Our great desire is to honor God by understanding and believing his truth revealed in Scripture. We are open to changing any of our ideas which can be shown to contradict the truth of Scripture. We do not have any vested interest in John Calvin himself, and we find some of what he taught to be wrong. But in general we are willing to let ourselves be called Calvinists on the five points, because we find the Calvinist position to be Biblical.”

You’re already finding some good meat with Augustine but also some bones to spit out. If you desire to learn about his relationship with Calvin’s teachings, I simply encourage you to seek the sources themselves with an open heart. Blessings.