

THE CHURCH OF THE EMPIRE

versus the Christian Church
of North Africa 312 - 430 A.D.



BY Terry Sullivan

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cover symbols:

Dagmar Crucifix

Roman sword from Trajan's column

God & King Cross of the Dannebrog Knights

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Table of Contents

I	Secular Christianity	1
II	The Emperor and the Bishops	5
III	The New State Church of North Africa	13
IV	Constantine's Miracle	27
V	Founding of Constantine's Church	33
VI	The Urgent Necessity of a State Religion	49
VII	UNITY through Severity 347 A.D.	57
VIII	Augustine's Honesty--lack of	69
IX	The Restoration under Julian A.D. 363	77
X	Augustine the propagandist	91
XI	Augustine and the Manufacture of Scripture	107
XII	The Church of the New Age	119
XIII	Everybody's Church: <i>wheat & tares</i>	131
XIV	Corrupt Bishops	139
XV	Augustine and The Pope	145
XVI	The Church and the Holy Spirit	155
XVII	The True Church	161
XVIII	Legacy of the Imperial Church	169
XIX	The Worldly Church	173
XX	The Underground Church	175
Appendix A	Friendship with the World	179
Appendix B	Christian Church versus Secular State	181
Index		183
major references		199
Summary		200

I Secular Christianity

The Secular Christianity which was established by the Worldly Church of the Roman Empire is the enemy of Christian Society which must be built upon the true Christian morality that was preserved and revived and renewed in the Underground Church.

The Underground Church sometimes persisted inside the Worldly Church just as it continued outside of it. The artificial barriers--the man-made lines around what pretended to be "The Church"--never did define it.

Because it was a State Church in its basic structure, the Church of the Empire naturally split into two halves when the empire split in half. Then it was further divided into National Churches when the two halves of the empire were further broken up. The Russian Church, the Greek Church, the Church of England, the Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church are all direct or indirect descendents of the Church of the Empire as is the Roman Catholic Church. Long after the disappearance of the Roman Empire, these Churches continued the Secular Christianity that was first established by the Emperor Constantine in a durable institutional form. It was Judas Iscariot, not Constantine, who originated Worldly Christianity in that he was the first Christian to betray Jesus Christ to the World for the Love of Money. But the permanent establishment of Worldly Christianity as a perennial institution required the great power and wealth and violence of the Roman Empire.

State Church or church state

It was a state church in the east and sometimes more of a church state in the west. In the east, the Byzantine emperor or the Russian emperor was the head of the Church just as the Roman emperor had been. In the west, after the disintegration of the western empire, the Pope attempted to claim the *DONATION OF CONSTANTINE* and become the head of the State as well as the head of the Church. Some of the time he succeeded. And he still claims secular as well as ecclesiastical authority, as witness the inscription on the triple-crowned papal tiara: *to the infallible vicar of Jesus Christ, to the supreme governor of the world on earth, to the father of nations and kings*. Gibbon says that seven Christian emperors had the old imperial title of *Supreme Pontiff*, a title which the Pope later claimed by default as it were. (XXI p. 725) Calvin's church state at Geneva is a conspicuous example of the same tendency in the Reformation, whereas Luther made the Prince the head of the church.

In early America there was a state church in Virginia and a church state in Massachusetts. Since the founding fathers who launched the Revolution conspicuously attended church, while they secretly adhered to Freemasonry, (George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin et al) the predominant American church thereafter was a generic state church that mainly practiced Hypocrisy, much as it does today.

What east and west have always had in common is the insistence on the union of Secular authority with Church authority in an imperial style centrally controlled organization. That is the legacy of Constantine and the Imperial Church he established. The belief that preserving

true faith and good morals is the responsibility of government comes from that legacy. That is why modern Christians are so helpless without the power of the state. The sham virtue of the state which pretends to righteousness replaces any serious effort to build a Christian society.

Another practical consequence is that laying down your life for the brethren and killing and dying in the wars of Der Fuhrer have now somehow become the same thing in Catholic or Protestant or Eastern Orthodox belief. We believe in laying down our lives for the nation instead of living and dying for the Kingdom of God on earth that Jesus established.

Even when it is a dis-established church, at several removes from its original State Church status, like the Anglican Church in America, it tends to perpetuate the idolatrous theology and apostate morality of the State Church. There is the same belief in the State and the same readiness to support the wars of the State. There is the same Worldliness which refuses to see any contradiction between living the Christian life and pursuing all of the opportunities for power and wealth which the secular society seems to offer. The theology of the Worldly Church necessarily obscures the fundamental contradiction between the true Christian Church and the World. It perpetuates the false theology, pioneered by Eusebius, Optatus and Augustine, et al, which allows us to conform to the World, while we pretend to conform to Jesus Christ.

modern secular christianity

A state religion need not necessarily be an integral part of the government. There are many ways in which the church and the state can mutually support one another aside from the antique arrangement in which the state religion was part of the government or the even older arrangement in which church and state were practically identical with one another.

The modern arrangement requires an essential subservience to the state--in its wars especially--in exchange for tolerance at least and usually some form of state subsidy. The tax break which Constantine gave the clergy of his Imperial so-called "Catholic" Church was one of the reins by which he established state control over the subservient state church. And the modern state subverts the modern church in the same ways.

But more than the financial subsidy, there is an essential idolatry of secular power and a dependence upon secular power which infects the secular church. That is the legacy of the Church of the Empire. Protestant theology has gone further than Catholic theology in developing the logic of the Imperial Church. It regularly tends to a situation in which the nation becomes the actual focus of religious faith and in which the head of the state is regarded as the head of the national religion.

The historical continuity with the Imperial Church is the minor reason that the modern Secular Church still adheres to the false theology of the Imperial Church. It easily abandons tradition in other areas such as divorce, abortion, homosexuality and contraception. The major reason it perpetuates the false theology of the Imperial Church is that it succumbs to the same pressure and the same temptation that once caused an apostate part of the Christian church to go along with Constantine.

Among evangelicals, even those who come from a non State Church tradition, you see the basic belief in worldly Christianity grafted in. They believe in the American empire as the victory of Christianity, just as Eusebius and Augustine et al believed in the "Christian" Roman empire as the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ and his Church. They gather around the flag pole to pray, much as the Christians of Constantinople once prayed at the statue of Constantine in which the true cross had been placed. (Philostorgius II 17, Socrates I 17 & Theodoret I 34) Their miracle stories about George Washington reflect the same melded belief as the miracle stories about Constantine in these ecclesiastical histories. It is a faith in which the idolatry of the Empire has been fused with a faith in "Christianity" to produce the Faith of the Secular Christian.

true Christians in false churches

Conversely, it cannot be assumed that modern churches are necessarily apostate because they are descended from an apostate church. A man isn't necessarily a pirate because his great grandfather was a pirate. If the Church of Jesus Christ could be infiltrated by the evil spirit, it is also true that the Worldly Church is not immune to the Holy Spirit, no more than the World itself is immune. So it is that true Christians can be found in false Christian churches. The question of the actual boundaries of the church, of how it is organized, and of how it changes when times change, is a complicated one. It is apparent that groups which were once authentically Christian such as the Franciscans or the Quakers or the Catholic Worker movement can change dramatically for the worse over time, and even over a relatively short period of time. And I think the process can go the other way, or at least that authentic Christian groups can appear out of thoroughly corrupted churches. The early Franciscans, the early Quakers, the early Methodists and the early Catholic Workers are all examples of that. Mother Teresa's order is another example.

If Mother Teresa's saintliness proves something about the Catholic Church, "Mother" Luke Tobin and "Mother" Maureen McCormick of the Sisters of Loretto prove the reverse. Who can deny that, like Ted Kennedy, Mario Cuomo et al they are Catholics in good standing ? Who can deny that a church which tolerates such apostates, which is dominated by them, is ipso facto an apostate church ? It is notable that Mother Teresa's saintliness arose far away from the strongholds of the Catholic Church in Europe and North America. (a la Pelagius) And that she had to leave her order (the Sisters of Loretto !) to answer the call to saintliness.

Churches which are plainly heretical sometimes preserve part of the authentic Christian tradition. A cursory examination of Mormon theology would convince a reasonable person that they are well beyond the border of what "Christian" can possibly mean. And yet they preserve a custom of Christian community which is all but lost from more "orthodox" churches. The Jehovah's Witnesses are far from orthodox "Christian" in their belief, and yet they have borne heroic Christian witness even unto death in many places for refusing to go to war for the secular state. While more orthodox "Christians" did what Joe Stalin and Adolph Hitler told them to do, the Jehovah's Witnesses faced death bravely for refusing to do it.

reference: An article about Rudolf Graichen in the August 1st 1997 Watchtower (page 20) tells about some of the Jehovah's Witnesses who were persecuted first under Hitler and then under Stalin.

The martyrdom of Franz Jaggerstatter highlights the question. He was a devout Catholic who was executed in 1943 for refusing military service under Hitler. On the one hand he shows that a man raised in the Catholic Church, one who devoutly believed in it, can find the spiritual strength he needs to do the right thing. But it has also to be pointed out that 99 % of his fellow Catholics did the opposite. And that he received no support or encouragement from the Catholic Church for his authentic Christian witness. It is arguable that he was an authentic Christian martyr despite his church, not because of his church.

What he did hardly represented Catholic faith and morals, even though he thought it did. When a dead tree produces a green shoot, it shows that it isn't completely dead. When it only produces a single shoot, it obviously isn't very healthy either.

reference: In *Solitary Witness* by Gordon Zahn tells the story of Franz Jaggerstatter

the mark of persecution

An established church which uses the power of the state to murder the non-conforming Christians is clearly a Satanic church. A primary mark of the true church is that it is persecuted for its adherence to the Christian faith. A primary mark of the false church is that it sponsors that persecution. But times change. The established church becomes dis-established. Now it is persecuted. The hunter has become the hunted. Is it still the same church in its fundamental character ? Persecution begins to prune a church while wealth and power corrupt it. So there is a change in character when times change. A Christian church which heroically withstands persecution may thereafter be seduced by the time of peace and prosperity which comes when the persecution has ceased. It no longer maintains the rigorous standards that the hard times required.

The American Catholic Church, even though it was originally in the position of a disestablished and even a persecuted church in America, carried the seeds of **SECULAR CATHOLICISM** which flowered into **KENNEDYISM** when Catholics achieved the money and position they once lacked. That is the basic reason for the galloping corruption of morals that has overtaken the Catholic Church in the United States.

reference: *The Desolate City* (2nd edition 1990) by Anne Roche Muggeridge: *This book is an attempt to explain the complete and extraordinarily rapid collapse of the Catholic World in which I grew up.* I disagree with her explanation but she gives a fairly complete and accurate survey of the moral ruin of the modern Catholic Church in America and Canada.

History often brings about a role reversal in which the persecuting state church becomes the church which is persecuted by the new state church. The Church of the Russian Empire became a persecuted church after the Bolshevik Revolution. In the Ukraine, after World War II, Stalin forced the Catholic Church to merge with the Orthodox Church. Then suppressed it also. Just like the early Christians, Catholics were forced to set up secretive house churches, which were constantly harassed by the police. In China today, the government persecutes any Christian church that tries to be independent of the **PATRIOTIC** Churches. The **PATRIOTIC** Church of the Russian or Chinese Empire is the spiritual offspring of Constantine's patriotic Church of the Roman Empire. The patriotic churches of the American Empire are spiritual cousins.

II The Emperor and the Bishops

The actual history of the Imperial Church that was established early in the 4th century has been obscured and two thirds buried by the dishonest official history that replaced it. What actually happened after the Emperor Constantine established his Church of the Empire early in the 4th century is fundamentally different from the official version.

It was no coincidence that major ecclesiastical disputes erupted coincidentally with major political changes in the empire. The several emperors, from Constantine onwards, used these disputes as levers to consolidate their power over the conforming Christian church. The imperial aggression in respect to getting control of the church was the original half-hidden cause of the dispute. It is notable that these disputes, which are supposedly ecclesiastical in nature, are focused upon the major sees which are also the capitals of the several provinces: Carthage in North Africa; Alexandria in Egypt; Antioch in Syria; Constantinople, the new capital; Rome, the old capital.

Gibbon says in XX 643 that Constantine *could depend on the support of a powerful faction in those provinces which were still possessed or usurped by his rivals. A secret disaffection was diffused among the Christian subjects of Maxentius and Licinius; and the resentment which the latter did not attempt to conceal served only to engage them still more deeply in the interest of his competitor.* An Oliphant Smeaton footnote in the Modern Library edition says that "The persecution of Licinius was not by any means severe. Certain bishops were killed." Which indicates that Licinius was going after selected bishops--those who had become agents for Constantine. The official version is that Licinius persecuted the Christians because he was a meanie and thus forced Constantine to come to their defense. The reality is that Constantine recruited and bought these bishops and used them and that they were sometimes casualties of their premature adherence to his cause.

The matter has been neglected by the state church historians, but it appears that Maxentius was already making political deals with apostate Christian bishops before Constantine took over. He was involved with setting up the bishop of Rome and he returned confiscated church property to him in 310 A.D. These apostate bishops were already playing imperial politics. Mensurius, the Bishop of Carthage, whose deacon had allegedly authored anti-Maxentius propaganda, was ordered to Rome by Maxentius and "died"--so the story goes--before he could return home, thus creating the vacancy which was filled by Caecilian in that peculiar election of 312 A.D. This was supposedly what triggered the "donatist" "schism" in North Africa.

If Constantine's first priority was to undermine his rivals, his second priority, once he had succeeded in doing that, was to use the bishops to consolidate his control over the new provinces. Coincidentally with Constantine taking Egypt and Syria from Licinius in 323, there are major disputes in respect to Alexandria and Antioch, the primary sees of those provinces. The Council of Nicea in 325, which is supposedly called to settle these disputes, coincides with Constantine establishing his control over the eastern empire.

On the eve of a Roman / Persian war, there was a major persecution of Christians in Persia, circa 338, because of their perceived collusion with the Romans. Two of their bishops are said to have provoked the persecution by what appears to be an entirely unnecessary and reckless outspoken opposition to the Persian government. What non political and Christian purpose was served by this ill-timed opposition ? That is, what made them do it ? Roman imperial agents must have been involved. (Constantine died in 337.) Neander's church history says that *the hostile relations existing between the Romans and the Persian empires were the immediate occasion* of the persecution which broke out in 343 A.D. (Volume III, page 148)

And this episode is parallel to the premature rebellion against Maxentius in North Africa, which was put down with the usual brutality, in Carthage especially, circa 311 A.D. In Chapter XX of *Cambridge Ancient History* Professor N.H. Baynes implies that Constantine was behind this rebellion and that his strategy was to cut off the grain supply to Rome from North Africa, anticipating that he would have to lay seige to Maxentius in Rome.

There is a similar smell to the miraculous conversion of the province of Iberia (Georgia) in the extreme northeast corner of the empire--a contested area between the rival empires of Rome and Parthia (Persia). Aside from the alleged miracles, the story involves the conversion of the whole nation through the king--a characteristic motif of state church fables--and an "appeal" to the emperor Constantine for "missionaries." (cf the story told in Socrates I 20)

The Fifth Column

Constantine, and his father before him, had been doing this for some time. That is, they had been buying bishops and using them as a fifth column to undermine the power of their rivals within the empire and beyond. It is notable how much Constantine at first relies upon a small group of Gaulic bishops to get things done for him. He appears to have built an early model of the Imperial Church in Gaul long before he attempted it in other parts of the empire. And he recruited indifferently or even especially from the *Traditor* bishops who had betrayed the church during the persecution of Diocletian. Bishop Hosius, his # 1 bishop errand boy in the "donatist" dispute, had been deposed by a synod in Spain. And his other recruits, such as Caecilian had the character of *Traditors*. It stands to reason that he was looking for pliability, reliability, and bribe-ability in his bishop civil servants, not orthodoxy or sanctity or heroic independence. And that he found ready recruits among those bishops whose position in the old church had been undermined or taken away by such allegations. The "donatists" alleged that Caecilian and the 3 bishops that consecrated him were all *Traditors*.¹ A bishop who is already a compromiser and who is afraid of unemployment is far more likely to respond favorably to the emperor's proposition, than one who is a die-hard or one who is in good standing with the old church. (1 reference: *THE DONATIST CHURCH* by W.H.L. Frend page 18, fn 3.)

These supposedly doctrinal disputes were actually conflicts created by the aggressive establishment of the new Imperial Church and the resistance to it of non-conforming Christians. These "schisms" were created by Constantine's aggressive bishop buying and his attempts to force all Christians to join the new state church. The so-called *NOVATIAN* Church was simply the Christian Church which refused to conform to the new state church launched in the eastern

empire by the Council of Nicea. And this happened in other places where reliable information is even harder to find. The so-called *PRISCILLIANISTS* in Spain and the *MELETIAN* schism in Egypt are other examples. What these situations have in common is that the official accounts of them have the unmistakable aroma of unrefrigerated fish.

Meanwhile, there is no account at all to the effect that Christians resisted the new state church. Supposedly, all Christians rejoiced in their new status as the state church. The only party poopers were a few peculiar sectarians and fanatics like the "Novatians" and the "Donatists." No one questioned that bishops are now to be appointed by the emperor instead of being elected by the congregation. No one questioned that Christians would now fight in the wars of the empire, that the cross is now a military standard. No one questioned that the pagan mob is now to be welcomed into the church and on an indiscriminate basis. No one was uncomfortable with the doctrine that Caesar and Christ are now partners. No one is scandalized by the story that Jesus has enlisted with Constantine to help him win his wars.

False History

This is on the face of it a false history. It could not have happened that easily. It is a falsified history. The more you dig into it, the more obvious that becomes. The real history has been put in the trash and a false history has been produced and put in its place, where any history at all has survived. A major difference in respect to the situation in North Africa is **the presence of Augustine**. It is only because his voluminous writings have been preserved that a substantial amount of information about the "donatists" has been preserved, even while all of their own writings have been "lost." Elsewhere, the errand boys for the Imperial Church must have mostly been men like Consentius who writes to Augustine about his efforts to trap the "Priscillianists" with the assistance of the monk Fronto. (new letter 11 *) Except for his letters to Augustine, his "works" have been "lost" together with the records of those he persecuted.

Virtually all of the documents from that time have either been destroyed, or they have been falsified. The first thing you have to do with one of these ancient documents is to start guessing as to what part of it might possibly be the original document. You have to surmise as to what was left out while you keep a sharp eye out for what has been added. And this is true of the bible. The oldest manuscript of the bible, the Codex Sinaiticus has some 14,800 later alterations in it. There is good evidence that Augustine fabricated scripture. (see Chapter XI.)

Eusebius is given credit for preserving fragments of more than 100 early Christian writers. That is, copies of these books, originally collected by Pamphilus, were in the library and scriptorium which he presided over on behalf of the emperor. And they all disappeared. The emperor's librarian had them and we don't have them. His scribes failed to copy them and / or the Imperial Church thereafter failed to preserve them. The documents of the true Christian church were in the custody of the founder of the false Christian church and his toady. And unfortunately they were all "lost." But we can take the word of Eusebius for what was in them.

What little was preserved was "edited" as you discover when there is any surviving copy to compare it with. The falsifying of Christian history was a major activity of all of the Imperial Church writers, of Augustine, Jerome and Rufinus as well as the clumsier fabricators like Eusebius and Optatus. The Imperial Church needed a Department of Propaganda and they

staffed that Department together with a legion of lesser known scribes. And what has survived is falsified history in which the true character of the struggle is routinely concealed behind various disguises used by the emperors and blandly perpetuated by the state church historians.

Not only did the state church historians obscure the real history of the Church, they destroyed records and falsified documents to keep it obscure. Virtually all of the available history has been "edited" by the servants of the Imperial Church. All of the contrary accounts have been trashed in one way or another. Perhaps the only reliable history is that which can be deduced from the inadvertent admissions of the state church historians. (See pages 19-26 of the *Introduction* to Lawlor and Oulton's *Church History of Eusebius* where they describe how Eusebius regularly misquoted and re-wrote early Christian writings including the scriptures as well as falsifying the historical documents of the Empire, such as the Toleration Edict.)

It is typical of Imperial Church politics that the real reasons for things are concealed behind theological reasons. For example, it is apparent that the east / west division in the Church of the Empire was caused by, was made inevitable by, the east / west division in the Empire. Had the empire remained united under one sovereign, these supposedly weighty theological questions would have been made to disappear.

dependent scholarship

And there is a tradition of dependent scholarship which accompanies the dependent church. The Anglican or Catholic or Lutheran scholar can energetically pursue the sectarian issues that divide them but he is in no position to energetically pursue the contradictions of the State Church. The Anglican scholars are willing to question the establishment of the Papacy but they haven't any enthusiasm for questioning the establishment of the State Church. (cf the later discussion of the Newman / Milman quote) The tradition of conformity to establishment scholarship persists even when a scholar no longer risks losing his position--or even his head!-- as did the Imperial scholars if they wrote the true history of the Imperial Church.

(Look at how terrified Jerome was when he was suspected of being soft on Origen. So he falsified his own earlier admiration for Origen, denounced his old friend Rufinus, denied that Pamphilus was the author of a work about Origen etc. cf his works against Rufinus in *Dogmatic and Polemical Works* John Hritz, page 68-69, footnote 18)

Even if there was a pre-existing dispute in North Africa, the emperor's power and money are guaranteed to magnify and distort it in a gigantic way. The pretense of the official history is that the emperor was doing his best to pacify these ecclesiastical disputes in both the western empire and in the eastern empire. The contemporary evidence shows that the opposite was true. The official explanation cannot stand up to any serious scrutiny. For instance, Constantine, having "settled" the Arian question at Nicea, soon unsettles it by showing favor to Arius, Eusebius of Nicomedia et al. It is not credible that a total toadying boot-licker like Eusebius "Pamphilus" of Caesarea would have taken any of his several "Arian" initiatives without the encouragement of Constantine. The state church historians keep up a pretense that 1) the bishops are independent of the emperor and 2) the good emperor is deceived by these conniving bishops. But both of these propositions are manifestly false.

Arianism was a two party conflict within the Imperial Church. The conflict flows along the lines of imperial politics. And there are indications that the emperors deliberately encouraged the Arian dispute within the church establishment, off and on, as a means of control. The way both Constantine and Constantius vacillate on the Arian question, that is, on firing and then re-hiring various bishops, suggests that they were using it to manipulate and control the bishops. In his *Secret History* of Justinian and Theodora, Procopius says that they deliberately took opposite sides of ecclesiastical disputes as a policy which helped them manipulate and control the ecclesiastical establishment.

The fact of there being two rival positions is the tip off that it was basically political. When you allow people to decide these questions for themselves, you get a natural diversity of opinion which produces 20 positions, not 2 positions. It is only when politics or war is operative that differences of opinion are forced into two rival camps. The polarity of the "Arian" dispute is good evidence that it was tied to imperial politics.

the political football

The Arian dispute had to do with which set of bishops would be on the imperial payroll. Like a modern political issue which the two parties make a major fuss about at election time and then forget once the election is over with. That is, the "issue" isn't really the issue, it is only the football in a political contest.

It is notable that the bishops of Antioch and Constantinople were deposed by Constantine at the same time that Athanasius was deposed from Alexandria. That is, there was a focus on the three major provincial sees which belies the particular charges brought against any one of them. Bishop Paul of Constantinople was deposed as often as Athanasius before he was killed. The fuss is always focused on the principal sees in the provincial capitals. If you are a "heretic" bishop in some town in farthest Phrygia, no one really cares. If you are the bishop of a major see, you must have done something wrong. It was either heresy or interfering with the corn supply but your number is up. In these provincial capitals, the bishops are now major Roman officials in major divisions of the empire. The record shows that they took on the functions of provincial governors. Like their pagan predecessors they had a secular position as well as a position in the state church. So they are primary functionaries in the emperor's continuing struggle to govern the sprawling empire.

The church historians try to ignore it, but it is apparent that Julian the Apostate restored Athanasius to the See of Alexandria and then later deposed him again. It is not credible that Bishop George was arrested by the authorities and then taken out of a Roman prison and murdered without Julian's tacit authorization. Or that all the Arians could have been ousted from the churches in Alexandria and replaced by the Athanasians in defiance of an emperor who was firmly in control. At the same time, a new Athanasian bishop was installed in Antioch and Councils were called in both Antioch and Alexandria to promulgate Athanasian style Christian "orthodoxy." (cf Socrates III 2-7) Supposedly the bishops did all this on their own, but that cannot be true. Julian also restored Cyril as bishop of Jerusalem in 361 A.D. He had been deposed by Constantius in 360 A.D.

Obviously, Julian cared nothing for the Athanasian creed, but, like his predecessors, he was determined to make the state church obedient to his orders. He took the "Arians" out because they had been in under his predecessor and so were insufficiently dependent upon the new emperor. These new supposedly pro Athanasian councils were the established way of rounding up the bishops and getting them in line with the new government. He took Athanasius out again because, like his predecessors, he found him too formidable a personality to be a dependable ecclesiastical official.

The endless stream of councils, called by the emperors, to which some bishops are invited and some are not, appears to be only the most conspicuous way in which the Imperial Church was established and brought to order. We know something about them because there was usually some sort of record made. We know very little for sure because most of the records of these councils, like all the other records of the period, have been "lost" and what survives has obviously been tampered with. And below the spotlighted level of the big councils, where so much else must have been going on, we get only glimpses, such as from Augustine's letters to Alypius, the lobbyist of the African "Catholic" bishops at the imperial court in Ravenna.

There is obviously a half-hidden agenda especially at the early councils. For example the crucial question as to whether Christians will now serve in the Roman army came up at both Arles and Nicea. But what was actually done about this and the other things basic to the essential conflict between the state church and the non-conforming church has been deliberately obscured.

So these "heresy" issues were used the way issues are used in modern politics to camouflage the real character of the struggle. Did people really care that much about the Arch Duke Ferdinand? Is that why the whole world went to war? No more was the contest within the Imperial Church really about *homoousian* versus *homoiousian*.

It is notable that the first council to deal with this question, the council of Antioch which rejected *homoousian* circa 275 was held in a politically charged situation. Queen Zenobia of Palmyra had backed the then Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata. But *in the year 272 the city was taken by the emperor Aurelian, who decided in person that the church building belonged to the bishop who was in "epistolary communication" with the bishops of Rome and Italy.* So he ousted Paul on his way to conquering Palmyra. (Gibbon XXI 686 ; eb 9 XVIII 429 and XVI 719) So "theology"--who gets to be the bishop--is already tied up with the question as to whether Queen Zenobia or the Emperor Aurelian is in charge.

The charge of theological error came to be used as the excuse to replace one set of officials (bishops) with another by an administration that wanted to re-shuffle the cabinet and the bureaucracy for the usual reasons, such as rewarding your supporters and getting rid of those who had supported your rival. The reason the history books portray the Athanasians as the heroes is that they were the ones who were finally able to determine what history books would be allowed to remain in the library. Witness the fact that the Arian historian Philostorgius has only been allowed to survive in an "epitome" by the Athanasian bishop Photius. And Photius has to keep referring to him in every other paragraph as *the impious Philostorgius* and *this impious enemy of God* to get that much past the censors.

"Arianism"--which bishops kept their positions in the state church--became an issue in the power struggle between Constans and Constantius. Constans used Athanasianism against his brother, and used the western bishops against his brother. So when Constantius later became sole emperor, he forced the bishops of the west to swallow "Arianism" or "semi-Arianism" at the council of Rimini (Arminium) in 359 A.D. Which parallels what his father did at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. after he became sole emperor. It is hard to believe that these emperors cared two lemons about *homoousian* versus *homoiousian*. But they did care about conformity in the church establishment and obedience to the emperor. If the emperor says that everyone must wear a blue tie, it is not to be tolerated when you show up wearing a green tie. And when he says that everyone must now switch to a green tie, you had better do it.

Isn't that the explanation for the mandate from the Council of Nicea that everyone must now celebrate Easter on the same day as everyone else ? Why did they need this ? Because they need conformity and uniformity. They need it in the imperial army, they need it in the imperial bureaucracy and they need it in the imperial church.

And it is necessary to have such arbitrary exercises in order to work out who is going to stay on the pay roll and who isn't. The emperors were constantly be-deviled by disloyalty and treachery. The fellow who fawned on you one day would open the back door to the assassin the next. It isn't surprising that they subjected the bishops to the same suspicious scrutiny that they gave to their other officials. They correctly perceived that a bishop who could be bought by one imperial aspirant might be tempted to sell his loyalty again to a new aspirant. And the bought bishops were playing imperial politics also. They were betting on the winner--or so they hoped. Look how the western bishops backed Constans against Constantius. Backed him and / or fronted for him. What Constantius did to them later at Rimini was no more than they deserved. That is, by the rules of imperial politics, it was pay back time.

Martyrs or Rebels--Ins and Outs

It is important to carefully distinguish between martyrs and rebels. Because the accusation is invariably made that the martyrs were rebels, and the sentimental justification is invariably offered for defeated rebels, which presents them as now somehow martyrs. Jesus is accused of stirring up rebellion against the emperor. Nero persecutes the Christians as incendiaries who have set fire to Rome. But there were those who were "persecuted" because they were on the losing end of a war. The defeated "Christian" armies, whether Arian or Athanasian, were often "martyred"--that is, massacred. They were **losers**, not *martyrs*.

Similarly, it is important to distinguish the reasons why bishops are deposed by the emperor. Those that are out of favor because of a turnover in imperial politics should not be confused with Christian bishops who have been persecuted for their faithfulness to the true church of Jesus Christ. The so-called "persecution" that bishops like Hosius and Athanasius suffered was because of their support for Constans when he was competing with his brother for sole control of the empire. They bet on the wrong horse and lost their shirts--or whatever it is that bishops wear. Those promoted by imperial favor are often demoted by imperial dis-favor. Which does not put them in the same moral category with those who refused imperial favor.

Philostorgius (VII 2) said that the Athanasians were responsible for the murder of Bishop George. Socrates and Sozomen (III 2 and V 7) half-heartedly argue that the pagans did it. Gibbon says that Athanasius *dispersed secret invectives against Constantius (see the Epistle to the Monks) at the same time that he assured him of his profound respect.* (XXI footnote 116, page 704) And that he apparently carried on a secret correspondence with Magnentius, who was responsible for the assassination of Constans, his former patron. (XXI footnote 120, page 705) Like the other "saints" of the Imperial Church, his real character was substantially different from that which the official record tries to present.

There is a story in Philostorgius 2.11 that the original election of Athanasius was irregular. The story as he tells it is full of not very credible assertions (like all of this "history") but there are 3 basic assertions in it which echo what happened in the 312 A.D. election in Carthage: 1) it was somehow coerced contra the will of the majority of the bishops 2) only two bishops laid hands on him 3) the emperor immediately afterwards approved it.

Constantine alternately favored both Arius and Athanasius. He intended to have his man as bishop of Alexandria and didn't care which one so long as he got results. It is notable that he kept Caecilian away from Carthage for a while and apparently was at least talking to the "donatist" bishops. He would have offered them a deal had they been more compliant. He must have realized by that time that they were much the stronger party in North Africa.

You have to look at the disputed election of Caecilian in the context of what is well known about the ensuing century. Despite the fig leaf of concealment painted in by the ecclesiastical historians, it is quite apparent that bishops are now being appointed by the Emperor. And it isn't that difficult to look a little further into the matter and perceive that, right from the start, the bishops of the Imperial Church, especially the ones who occupy the major positions, owe their appointments to the Emperor. The pretence that the Emperor was just coming to Caecilian's rescue is a pretence. The story that the Emperor was a neutral observer, who was reluctantly forced to deal with ecclesiastical trouble, is a story.

III The New State Church of North Africa

The mandate for conformity and uniformity shows up as the essential cause of the "donatist" conflict. The "donatists" were orthodox Christians in every respect, as their enemies had to concede. The argument about re-baptism was almost irrelevant to this central issue and their position on re-baptism was the orthodox one anyway--it was the same as Cyprian's. Re-baptism wasn't the issue. The fact that they re-baptized Catholic converts was one of the issues. It was also a crime under the Roman laws which established and protected the so-called "Catholic Church." But it points to the real issue: their rejection of the "Catholic Church" as constituting the Emperor's Satanic church. That was the **ISSUE** !

It is clear enough that the peculiar 3 bishop consecration of Caecilian, without notice to the other bishops, was irregular and in violation of the long-established tradition of the African church. I believe that **Constantine's agents arranged this election**. That is the only thesis that fits the available facts, once you separate them from all the falsehoods. Those that did it wouldn't have dared do it without some **SUBSTANTIAL AUTHORITY** behind them and without some strong motive which is missing from the official story. Frend points out (page 17, fn 1) that none of the 3 consecrating bishops were actually "neighbor" bishops, contra the official version. What gave these 3 bishops from 3 different places the effrontery to come in and consecrate some deacon as the new bishop of Carthage, the Primate of Africa, contrary to the tradition of the African Church and in defiance of seventy African bishops and the Primate of Numidia who met immediately afterwards to void the election of Caecilian ? Like the Sherlock Holmes story in which the dog did not bark, there is something essential missing from this story: **the Emperor was secretly behind it**.

There is a parallel instance of this in Socrates history. (II 37) He relates that Eudoxius, the bishop of Germanicia in Syria, deceived the emperor Constantius to his face and then, supposedly on his own, but taking imperial bedchamber officials with him, (!) went to Antioch where he made himself the new bishop (the old one had just died) in defiance of the usual electors. He also called a council there. So here is one bishop from an obscure see, coming into the Primary See of Syria and behaving like he owns the place. Obviously, he would not have dared to do these things without the emperor's backing, and Socrates is parroting the unlikely official line. Sozomen, telling the same story, at least suggests the obvious truth of the matter: *It was reported that he acted with the concurrence of the emperor*. (IV 12) While he also gives the emperor's letter of denial: *Eudoxius went to you without our permission*. (IV 14) What you see there is the "deniability" that must have been as common in ancient politics as it is in modern politics. (!) didn't the emperor miss being tucked in ?

Constantine's payment to Caecilian

A major dispute about the primate of Carthage in North Africa occurs in 312 coincidentally with Constantine taking North Africa and Italy from the defeated Maxentius. There is a hasty and irregular consecration of Caecilian who becomes the new primate. There is a peculiar story that Caecilian's predecessor was involved in circulating anti-Maxentius propaganda as part of a North African rebellion against Maxentius circa 311 A.D.

There is a late 312 or early 313 authorization of about 3 million dollars to Caecilian from Constantine *for expenses to certain specified ministers of the lawful and most holy Catholic religion. . . . give orders that this money be distributed among all the above-mentioned persons in accordance with the schedule sent to thee by Hosius.* And if Caecilian needs more money he can get it from *Heraclides our procurator fiscal.* (Eusebius X 6 1)

Three million dollars is my estimate of what 3000 *folles* would be worth today based upon Gibbon's estimate in chapter XX (page 664 of the Modern Library Edition) that it was worth *eighteen thousand pounds sterling.* A British pound sterling--an actual pound of silver, 12 troy ounces--when Edward Gibbon published his history of the Roman Empire about 1780 would have been worth about \$ 160 in American dollars circa 2000 A.D.

3000 bags of gold

The Lawlor and Oulton note for this letter cites J.B. Bury's *History of the Later Roman Empire* as authority (II.3, p. 50) and says the *folles* was a bag of coins equal to 1 pound of gold which was *used in making large payments.* Which this obviously was. (A *folles*, in popular usage, could also be just one of the coins, but that is evidently not what is meant here--it wasn't lunch money.) Gibbon seems to assume a 1 to 6 ratio in gold to silver value whereas today it is almost 1 to 60--a troy ounce of silver sells for \$ 7, a troy ounce of gold for \$ 400. However, the gold to silver ratio has varied considerably over the centuries. J.B. Bury (op. cit. II.4 p. 55) estimates it at 1 to 14 in 397 A.D. and at 1 to 18 in 422 A.D. In Volume 2, chapter 28, page 61, Gibbon says: *a heavy fine of twenty-five pounds of gold, or more than one thousand pounds sterling* which is a 1 to 40 ratio in the value of gold to silver. Calculating from the current gold value would make the **3000 FOLLES**--36,000 troy ounces of gold-- equivalent to more than 14 million dollars in modern money.

Anyway, Constantine gave Caecilian a lot of money. That much is evident. I went to the trouble to ascertain the approximate value of this payment because the fact of the payment, how it was supposed to be distributed and what Constantine expected to get for it are some of the keys to understanding how the so-called "donatist schism" got started. Along with the money, Caecilian is given a list of African bishops, drawn up by Bishop Hosius, whom he is to pay.

Further on in the same letter, Constantine says that Caecilian should call upon *Anulinus the proconsul* and *Patricius the vicar of the prefects* if necessary to deal with *certain persons of unstable mind who are desirous of turning aside the laity of the most holy and Catholic Church by some vile method of seduction.* He has already given commands to these officials *when they were here.* This letter was written almost immediately after Caecilian's consecration and immediately after Constantine won control of Italy and North Africa, probably while he was still in Rome, supposing that is where these African officials would have visited him. Since Constantine was in Rome from October 28th 312 to January 17th 313, (Frend 145 fn 1) this letter was written some time before January 17th 313 A.D.

Constantine is obviously going forward on all cylinders with a program in favor of the lawful religion and relying upon the help of *certain specified ministers* listed by Bishop Hosius. The Roman officials in Carthage have been instructed to do whatever is necessary to deal with anyone who won't go along with the new primate of North Africa and his "Catholic Church." That is, Constantine anticipates resistance and is ready to deal with it.

Both Optatus and Augustine ignore the existence of this letter in order to argue that the Emperor Constantine knew nothing of the situation in North Africa before he received a communication from the "donatists" in 313 A.D. The omission of this letter by Father Vassall-Phillips shows a lack of honesty on his part. He takes two other letters from those found in Eusebius (X.5 - X.7) and adds them to his Appendix (XV & XVI) but he ignores this one, which contains major evidence of the early and important connection of Constantine to the so-called "Catholic" bishop of Carthage.

who murdered the bishop ?

There are a number of under-reported or just plain missing facts in the Carthage situation, circa 312 A.D. Frend 19 says that the Council of African bishops appointed an interim "*interventor*" who *was murdered in his church, allegedly by the Caecilianists*. Obviously, someone was serious about this situation. (cf Augustine letter # 44.8)

Constantine's final victory over Maxentius was the famous battle of the Milvian Bridge of October 28th 312 A.D. The consecration of Caecilian probably happened earlier that year, although no one gives a date for it. The thesis that Constantine's agents were already using his money in Carthage before Caecilian's consecration is based on several alternate or complementary assumptions: the proximity of Spain--which Constantine already controlled--to North Africa; the early success of Constantine's navy in cutting off North Africa from Italy; (Gibbon XIV fn 53) the unpopularity of Maxentius in North Africa and the probability that Constantine's agents were able to act effectively there well before the final defeat of Maxentius.

This letter establishes the fact that Constantine immediately endorsed Caecilian, sent him money etc. This was immediately after Caecilian's election, within a few months of it at most. It was immediately after Constantine's final decisive victory over Maxentius. It is entirely unlikely that he would do that if he did not already have an understanding with him. It is entirely unlikely that Bishop Hosius drew up a list of African bishops in three different provinces who are to be put on the payroll unless they had spent some time and gone to the trouble to find out what bishops they could count on. Constantine obviously has a Purpose which he expects all hands to help carry out. Once you see that, the rest isn't hard to figure out--it begins to fall into place.

The major charge against Caecilian was that he had cooperated with the authorities in preventing food from getting to the Christians locked up in the prison in Carthage in A.D. 304 during the Diocletian persecution. They starved to death in the prison as a result. It is notable that he is here cooperating with the emperor in launching a new state religion, he is ready to use the police, and he soon after was responsible for the army massacring the "donatist" Christians

in Carthage. The character he displayed in 304 is what recommended him to the Emperor in 312. He worked for the old Bishop of Carthage, Mensurius, who took the same position, that is, he cooperated with the government and betrayed his fellow Christians.

The unanswered questions about Caecilian's consecration are answered by the assumption that Constantine's agents arranged this obviously rigged election. What most scholars have done is to ignore these questions or to gloss over them. Optatus account, which Augustine closely follows, simply omits to mention that only three bishops consecrated Caecilian. He offers an incoherent and improbable account as to how Caecilian was selected. That is, he gives an account which has the characteristic clunk, clunk, clunk of falsified or fabulous history. Augustine's account, given in various places such as letter # 43, appears to be derived directly from the account of Optatus.

Constantine and Hosius apparently recruited Caecilian's predecessor, Bishop Mensurius, as part of their effort to undermine the authority of Maxentius in North Africa. (At the Carthage Council of 411, the "donatist" leader Petilian, referred to the "Catholics" as *Mensurists*.) That explains why Bishop Mensurius protected the deacon who circulated anti-Maxentius tracts in 311 A.D. It is not believable that Constantine had only a benign and detached concern with the see of Carthage, as the official story pretends. Or that he never formulated any plan to establish an official church in North Africa until the day after the final defeat of Maxentius. This letter belies his detachment from the situation in Carthage. It appears that they picked Caecilian and arranged for his installation and that Constantine and Hosius were directly responsible for the action which produced a split in the African Church.

the new organization

Even if part of this thesis is in doubt, there really isn't any doubt about the major part of it, for anyone who takes the time to carefully read through what has long been available. That is, there isn't any doubt that it was the Emperor's stubborn and sustained backing of Caecilian which precipitated the schism. The "schism" was created when the real Christian bishops of North Africa said " **NO!** " to the emperor's pressing invitation that they join the new imperial church. The Emperor's adoption of Caecilian was the beginning of a long battle between the Christians of North Africa and the Imperial Forces behind the new state church. The battle wasn't between the "donatist" Church and the "Catholic" Church. The battle was between the Christian Church and the Roman Empire.

Note that, whatever secular importance and authority the Primate of Carthage had before, it is greatly increased when he has become the **EMPEROR'S PAYMASTER** for other selected bishops. (The new "Catholic" primate that is. There continued to be a "donatist" bishop of Carthage for the rest of the century.) In itself it is a major step towards creating a state church bureaucracy which is centrally controlled by the primates who are in turn controlled by the emperor. The eventual result of this imperial system can be seen 100 years later in places like Alexandria where the primate has a small army on his payroll. And the emperor doesn't hand out cash like this to a bishop who doesn't reliably serve his interests.

Caecilian now has the emperor's money in his pockets, and he has the emperor's army behind him. It isn't surprising that he felt he could thumb his nose at the complaining bishops even if there were 70 of them. Whatever your position was before, it is going to change dramatically after the Emperor sends you 3000 bags of gold and then introduces you to the police officers and the soldiers who are awaiting your orders. That is what Constantine did for Bishop Caecilian. And there is every reason to suppose that he did that in other places as well, where there was no "great" "saint" Augustine to preserve the half truths of the story. (It is only by extracting the half truths from Augustine and trying to re-assemble them into whole truths that you can arrive at a semblance of the true story.)

the puppet ruler

It looks like the Emperor Constantine was attempting to take control of the Church in North Africa in much the same way as the Romans typically took control of conquered provinces. A new government is set up with a native ruler who is controlled by them. They give him money and back him with soldiers. That is how the Romans ruled Israel through Herod, the king they had set up. And some of the Jews went along with Herod because there were substantial advantages in doing that. But most of the Jews despised Herod because 1) he was a traitor to Israel 2) he was the agent of the Roman conquest 3) the Roman soldiers violently put down the patriotic Jews on behalf of his government. So the blood of his countrymen was on his hands. Caecilian, Constantine's ecclesiastical ruler in North Africa is in a similar position and he is despised and rejected by the non-conforming Christians of North Africa for the same three reasons that the patriotic Jews despised Herod. And Caecilian's successor will be in the same position as Caecilian, quite aside from his personal character.

It was the Emperor who gave a new authority to his subordinate bishops in the primary sees through which he governed the church. What importance did the "Patriarch" of Constantinople have in the Christian Church before the Emperor founded his Capital there and made him important? The importance of the Bishop of Milan in the time of Ambrose is due to the imperial court in that city. And the other primary sees took on a new importance and a new authority because of the structure of the new imperial church. Whatever importance the bishop of Rome had before, the "Catholic" bishop of Rome had a new importance as the principal ecclesiastical official in the capital of the western empire. Like Caecilian, he becomes the paymaster for subordinate bishops. He is now a major official in the centrally controlled bureaucracy of the new Imperial Church. So his power is established on a new and different basis from the position occupied by the old bishops of Rome. He is important because he is the Vicar of the Emperor. And his importance plummets when the emperor relies upon some other ecclesiastical agent instead. It was Bishop Hosius who presided at the council of Nicea, so far as Constantine wanted him to. There are any number of episodes which show who the real boss of the "Catholic Church" is. Pope Zosimus is made to reverse his position on the Pelagians after Augustine et al appeal to the emperor.

So what the emperor is building is a dependent bureaucracy which is the organizational antithesis of the de-centralized and independent church then in existence. They are two very different "church" structures. If there were no other basic issue, this incompatibility alone would guarantee a major conflict. The basis of the "donatist" versus "Catholic" dispute in North

Africa was a "schism"--an organizational split. So it is important to note that the conflict was in fact about a new "church" organization which the emperor had created; it was about the "donatist" refusal to join this new organization; they defined themselves as "donatists" by this refusal; that is, they were labeled as "donatists" when they refused to join the new "Catholic" church. And the same thing must have happened in other places.

It wasn't that the existing church organization split into two parties over the disputed election of one bishop. That is the official version and it is a quarter truth or a one eighth truth which just about equals a lie. What really happened is that a brand new church organization was launched, sponsored by the Emperor, and financed by the Imperial Treasury. And this new organization set out in an aggressive way to compete with and forcibly absorb the Christian Church which was already in existence. They had the emperor's money and they had the emperor's soldiers and they used both. By bribery and by coercion they managed to get some folks, bishops and others, into their new organization. Not surprisingly. And this also established the character of the Imperial Church from the beginning. It recruited people who were attracted to the money and the power, or who were at least willing to knuckle under to it. Put those things together and you have a working definition of what is meant by "worldly." Love of money, love of power, and moral cowardice are qualifications for belonging to the new state church. The character thereby stamped upon it is still visible many centuries later.

The "lawful" religion

The Emperor's letter to Caecilian refers to *the lawful and most holy Catholic religion*. What does it mean ? It means that the "Catholic" religion is the only "lawful" one. Any other Christian group is not "lawful." Is an outlaw group. By what "law" ? The law of the Roman Empire. The law which the absolute ruler of the Roman Empire has decreed. So what it adds up to is this: the so-called "Catholic Church" is the only legitimate Christian church because the Roman emperor says so. It is his endorsement that will henceforth distinguish the "Catholic Church" from all others, that will distinguish it from the "unlawful" "donatists." So the endorsement of the Roman Emperor has become the **MARK** of the "true" Church--of the *lawful* church anyway. If you still believe like the early Christians that the Roman Emperor is Satan's representative on earth, how can you join this "lawful" church ? That was the position of the "donatists" and the other nonconforming Christians. As given in the Lawlor and Oulton translation of Eusebius X 5 18, the letter from Constantine to Pope Miltiades refers to the *lawful Catholic Church*. As given by Father Phillips in Appendix XIII, *lawful* has been replaced by *most holy*. That altered text is a tacit recognition of the implications of **LAWFUL**.

In worldly terms, the competition between the new Imperial Church and the old church was an unfair competition. Imagine launching a business in competition with an already established business. Financially they are on their own. You can draw on the Treasury. You can call on the police to close their doors, like they were a laundry without a license. You can take their property away and make it your own ! You can send the army to kill them if they still refuse to concede. That is how the contest went on between "Catholic" and "donatist."

In spiritual terms, it was also an unfair competition. The Imperial Church was no match for the true church of Jesus Christ. When the imperial "Christians" got on the last boat out of there, 100 years later, together with the imperial paymaster, the Imperial Church was done in North Africa and the "donatists" could start calling themselves Christian and *catholic* once more. Frensdorff 303 says the number of "Catholic" Bishops had fallen from 164 to 3 by 460 A.D. In fact, with the Imperial government gone, "Catholic" would necessarily have to be re-defined.

In A.D. 430, both "Catholic" and "donatist" disappeared from North Africa--for opposite reasons. The "donatists" disappeared because those who labeled them "donatists" were no longer around. If the fellow gets fired, who persisted in calling you "Shorty" over the intercom, people working in the building might suppose that "Shorty" doesn't work here any more. But just because the nick-name has disappeared doesn't mean that you have disappeared.

Similarly, the heretical sects disappear from the history books when their persecutors cease persecuting them under a name which they never called themselves to start with. The names applied to the supposedly heretical sects such as *donatists*, *novatians*, *priscillianists*, *montanists*, *albigenses*, *waldenses*, *anabaptists*, *puritans*, *quakers* etc. are all labels stuck on by their persecutors. In some cases they eventually put up with the name when it no longer mattered. In other cases, the whole group abruptly vanishes from the history books when the persecution is abandoned. So the "donatists" disappeared when Augustine lost his enthusiasm for persecuting them after the conference of 411 A.D. Then they vanished entirely for over 150 years when the Imperial Government vanished from North Africa. Only to reappear when the Imperial Government finally came back and took up the persecution again.

The position of the "Catholic Church" in North Africa was analogous to the position of the so-called **CHURCH OF IRELAND**--that is, the Church of England in Ireland--during the 19th century when England ruled Ireland. It was the church of the landlords and their dependents but its charter came from the government and its life line was the money which subsidized the considerable shortfall that arose from maintaining a large ecclesiastical establishment which had no real following. The name of the church was phony because the pretensions of the church were phony. The same thing was true of the "Catholic Church" in North Africa. The real name of both was **GOVERNMENT CHURCH**.

Several later writers have at least partly adopted the thesis of Wilhelm Thummel that the surprising strength of the "donatist movement" was due to it's being a North African nationalist movement which resisted Roman rule. It does appear from Augustine's letters 66 and 84 that there were many North Africans who spoke only Punic. And it is quite likely that there was an element of nationalist resistance in the "donatist" resistance, because the "Catholic Church" was identified with the Roman Imperial government and with the Latin-speaking upper class. (as well as with their slaves) But the main cause for this thesis is that the scholars have bought the trivialization and the falsification of the "donatist" case against the "Catholic Church" for which Augustine is responsible. (see Gibbon's account in chapter XXI for example) The question they have tried to answer is: " Why did this struggle go on for a century over the disputed election of one bishop and a difference of opinion about re-baptism ?" And the answer they come up with is that there must have been some other force at work, such as nationalism, to explain the passionate and enduring resistance of the "donatists."

And that much is true. In fact, the other force at work was the spiritual strength of the real Christian church in its resistance to the Roman Empire, which it had demonstrated before and which it demonstrated again in meeting the challenge of the Imperial Church of Constantine and Augustine. That really does explain what happened.

The "Catholic Church" never succeeded in putting down any roots in Africa such that it could survive if it was not continually subsidized and mandated by the government. It is apparent from some of Augustine's letters that several imperial governments had lost enthusiasm for continuing to subsidize it and that it was already in a somewhat precarious situation before the Vandals drove the Roman government out of North Africa circa 430 A.D. In his most recent book, Frend says that the Catholic historians have been unwilling to recognize the real weakness of the "Catholic Church" of North Africa. *It was unfortunate perhaps, that the author [Yvette Duval] did not take enough account of the statement by Jerome in 393 [Jerome **DE VIRIS ILLUSTRIBUS** 93] that Donatus of Carthage had "deceived nearly all Africa" i.e. that throughout the fourth century Donatism was the majority religion there.* from **THE ARCHEOLOGY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY** page 365 William H C Frend 1996

Frend's older book page 210 quotes Possidius as writing that, as of 390, the majority of African Christians were still "donatists." In the 7th book of Optatus of Milevis (which I believe was actually written by Augustine, argument to follow) "Optatus"⁷ says that the Catholics were few in North Africa. In one of his sermons, Augustine let slip the information that the "donatists" were the majority of Christians, even in Roman cities like Constantine (Cirta) and Hippo. In letter # 93, he admits that Hippo *was once wholly on the side of Donatus [until it] was brought over to the Catholic unity by fear of the imperial edicts.* 93.17 When government mandated conversion is the main thing that the "Catholic Church" has going for it, it is in serious trouble.

And Augustine's own flock were converted away. In a number of his letters (e.g. # 34 and # 35) he complains of the illegal conversion of members of his flock and of their criminal re-baptism into the "donatist" church. Frend 211 says that *a rising young Catholic advocate named Petilian* was kidnapped and re-baptized by the "donatists." (Augustine's version) So he accepted it as the will of God [sic] and became a "donatist" champion contra Augustine.

Follow the Money

Before you can talk sensibly about being "in" the church or "out" of the church, you have to specify what is meant by "the church." The new so-called "Catholic Church" represented a radical change from the previous group which went under similar names. The "donatist" aversion to being "in" it resulted from their conservatism--their refusal to recognize this new and different organization as "The Church." They refused to be "in" the emperor's "church" because they were determined to remain "in the Church" that they already belonged to.

Optatus inadvertently testifies that the "donatists" recognized what was up and that they resisted it, that they were still resisting it 35 years later: *When the commissioners announced that they were going through the different provinces, [of North Africa] and that they would give*

alms [money from the emperor Constans] *to those who were willing to accept them, he* [Bishop Donatus] *declared that he had sent letters everywhere in advance to forbid that anything which had been brought should be distributed.* (Optatus Book III 3 Phillips 133-134) The acceptance of imperial funds by Bishop Caecilian and the refusal of imperial funds by Bishop Donatus points up what the "donatist schism" was actually about. (And this was happening throughout the empire, not just in North Africa.)

The old Christian bishop was dependent upon whatever funds he might receive from the congregation. He was dependent upon his congregation and independent of other bishops in the most basic matter of finances. Church property wasn't usually an alternative because, what little there was of it, was regularly subject to ruinous taxation or even confiscation. By contrast, Caecilian, the new "Catholic" bishop, has access to the Imperial Treasury--so long as he does what he is told. The new "Catholic" clergy were given major tax exemptions at a time when imperial taxes were a crushing burden. So prosperous pagans were lining up to become "Catholic" clergy. Because of new inheritance laws favoring the new church it soon acquired a substantial endowment. In Hippo, *Augustine administered property estimated at twenty times that of his father who was a "curialis."* (Frend 328-329) Augustine gave an estate belonging to the Church at Hippo to the no good bishop Antoninus when he appointed him to Fussala. (Letter to Fabiola # * 20.29)

In *UNITY* with the Emperor

The reason that the dispute over Caecilian's "election" could not be resolved is that it was an integral part of a larger aggression--the attempt to force *UNITY* upon all the Christians of North Africa. The stubborn persistence with which Constantine adhered to Caecilian despite the refusal of the church of North Africa to accept him shows that he was in fact pursuing a policy which he had worked out long before, a policy that he pursued in all the provinces of the empire. Because of Augustine and the preservation of his voluminous writings, we know much more about what happened in North Africa than anywhere else. Without Augustine we would know next to nothing about it--all of the non-Augustinian accounts have disappeared. We only know of their existence through Augustine's writings. That is presumably the reason why we know so little about the struggle between the Imperial Church and the non-conforming church in other provinces of the empire. The work of Optatus would have gotten "lost" if it weren't for his close connection with Augustine.

The attempt to coerce the Christians of North Africa into joining a new Imperial Church was what caused the "schism" in North Africa. Their refusal to be bullied into joining the emperor's new church was their actual offense, an offense against *UNITY* and *CATHOLIC*--the terms under which conformity and uniformity were demanded. Why couldn't they leave them alone ? Because they refused to conform to the new State-mandated religious order.

I do not believe that there was any serious split in the North African church until the emperor's power and the emperor's money created one. Those who went along with the new state church were put on the pay roll and thereafter called "Catholics." Those who refused were called "donatists" and they were thereafter treated as "schismatics" and outlaws. They were

schismatics because they refused to accept the emperor as the head of their church and because they refused to accept the mandates of the new state church such as that Christians were now obligated to join the army. As Bishop Donatus put it: **WHAT HAS THE EMPEROR TO DO WITH THE CHURCH?** (Optatus III.3, p. 131) That question and the challenge contained in it was the gravamen of their offense. Today that sounds like a quaint and peculiar question after centuries of churches bossed by emperors and kings and princes. But Bishop Donatus was standing on the firm foundation of traditional Christian faith and morals.

Optatus was naive enough to concede that the "donatists" were orthodox and that the real issue was "schism"--their refusal to accept **UNITY**. He denies the truth of their major reasons for refusing to accept **UNITY** and his theological arguments are aimed at the minor reasons they have given for refusing to join the Imperial Church. Later, Augustine wisely insisted upon moving the argument onto the ground of "heresy" instead of schism. By doing that he could endlessly argue and obscure fine points of theology and stay away from the gross subject as to where the two organizations came from which are on either side of the "schism." When you raise that question and honestly pursue it, you see the "schism" in a new light. It was a division between the old Church founded by Jesus Christ and the new Church founded by the Emperor Constantine.

In letter # 185.8, written about 417 A.D., Augustine shows that the fundamental issue is still **UNITY** and that **UNITY** is defined as conformity to the Emperor's church. As usual with Augustine, you have to fish this information out of a pile of pious horse manure but it is there: *so let all be called to salvation, let all be recalled from the path of destruction . . . by the edicts of Catholic princes . . . through those who obey the emperor's commands. . . . the laws which the emperors have passed to preserve the unity of Christ.*

The so-called **CATHOLIC UNITY** was created by and dependent upon the carrying out of imperial edicts. That is what Augustine says in letter # 93: *originally my opinion was that no one should be coerced into the unity of Christ . . . But this opinion was overcome . . . my own town, although it was once wholly on the side of Donatus, was brought over to the Catholic unity by fear of the imperial edicts.* 93.17 So, without the imperial edicts, you did not have a "Catholic Church" in the town of Hippo--it was *wholly on the side of Donatus*, absent the soldiers. That is why they could never stay away from using the soldiers for very long. Despite all of Augustine's wonderful eloquence, it was still the soldiers who made the converts. Note that the **UNITY OF CHRIST**, **CATHOLIC UNITY** and conformity to the Church of the Empire, with the vigorous encouragement of the Roman soldiers, all mean the same thing in Augustine's lexicon. The first two are pious euphemisms for the third.

forced unity

Augustine likes to go on and on and on about theological issues like baptism and the trinity which he is comfortable with discussing. But his obsession with the "donatists" gets into everything he writes. And, when you extract the half-truths he gives you, he also in effect admits that **FORCED UNITY** was the fundamental "Catholic" / "donatist" issue. In his commentary *On the Gospel of John* Tract XI 13 he says: *These men, too, dare to say that they are wont to suffer*

persecution from Catholic kings, or from Catholic princes. . . . they suffered only affliction of body, the persecution which they cause is more grievous. . . . 14 But they wonder that Christian powers are roused against detestable scatterers of the Church. Should they not be moved, then ? How otherwise should they give an account of their rule to God ? Observe, beloved, what I say, that it concerns Christian kings of this world to wish their mother the Church, of which they have been spiritually born, to have peace in their times. [lesson from what a heathen king did on behalf of the three Hebrew children] . . . yet they would not have Christian kings to act with severity when Christ is contemptuously rejected, by whom not three children, but the whole world, with these very kings, is delivered from the fire of hell !

Notice that he admits 1) persecution 2) by a Catholic king 3) because they are "scatterers." The translation of this is that the emperor did right to have his soldiers massacre the non-conforming Christians of North Africa because "the whole world," that is, the whole empire, is going to be saved by forcing everyone to join the emperor's "Catholic Church" ! That is the bloody and brutal reality which this pious horse manure tries to justify.

State Church scholars have followed Augustine's lead ever since in focusing on the supposed disputed theology and ignoring the key question as to what sort of "Church" organizations were involved, where they came from, and why they were divided. They have followed his lead in falsifying and obscuring the basic moral issues. The Emperor's patronage of the one organization is treated as incidental to the central dispute. That viewpoint is the direct result of the propaganda of Augustine, who invented all sorts of arguments to obscure the essential question of the dispute--whether true Christians had any business joining the Emperor's new church and why they were massacred to force them into joining it; what sort of a "church" it is which has to be established and maintained in this way.

the presence of the soldiery

For a scholar who takes the blinders off, there is an abundance of evidence as to what the real dispute was about. In letter # 23 in which he complains to a "donatist" bishop who has re-baptised a former "Catholic" deacon into the "donatist" church, he challenges the bishop to write a reply which he can read to the Catholic congregation together with his own letter. Then he promises not to read it *in the presence of the soldiery* (23.7) and further offers *If you do not believe that I am willing to postpone the discussion until after the soldiery have left, you may delay your answer until after they have gone.* Augustine shows that he is well aware that the question of re-baptism and the question of the threat of Roman soldiers have become entwined, and that everyone else is aware that the "Catholic Church" is the one which can call upon the assistance of the Roman soldiers. Which has the soldiers sitting in its congregation.

When Cyprian of Carthage and Stephen of Rome disagreed about "re-baptism" circa 250 A.D., neither could call upon the Emperor and his soldiers to put down the other, whether either would have done so or not. And their dispute was soon rendered moot by a persecution in which both were martyred. Now the situation is changed entirely. Now the Roman legions have weighed in contra "re-baptism." It was proscribed by Canon 9 of the emperor's council at Arles. Behind the surface of Augustine's earlier letter # 23 there is an implied threat: I could

sic the soldiers onto you for re-baptizing one of our deacons--*to rebaptize a Catholic is one of the worst of crimes.* (23.2) This is spelled out in letter 66.1 in reaction to another episode of reprehensible rebaptizing: *we might take steps to compel you to pay, according to the imperial decree, ten pounds of gold as the penalty of your outrage. . . . the fine imposed upon those who rebaptize members of the Church* The old laws which made it a crime for Christians to baptize anyone into the church have been dusted off and re-activated. Now they make it a crime for Christians to baptize "Catholics" ! Ten pounds--120 troy ounces--of gold was a serious penalty, especially for bishops who had no access to the Imperial Treasury. And the Roman authorities had ways of extracting these ruinous fines which the modern Internal Revenue Service can only envy.

One reason that Augustine makes such a fuss about the "donatists" re-baptizing converts from the "Catholic Church" is that they thereby manifest their deeply held conviction that the "Catholic Church" is a false church. Actually they rejected all of the sacraments of the "Catholic Church." According to Optatus, they scraped the foreheads of priests and re-consecrated them. What Augustine is demanding of them, with the law behind him, is that they at least halfway recognize the "Catholic Church" as a Christian church. But their whole century long resistance was predicated upon the belief that the "Catholic Church" was an anti-Church. And when you examine their case against the so-called "Catholic Church," alias the Emperor's Church, they were right !

the Satanic church

By focusing on the question of re-baptism, Augustine ignores the real issue. The issue is whether the "Catholic Church," which is ruled by the Emperor and which relies upon his money and his soldiers, is an apostate and heretical and schismatic church--in fact the "donatists" regard it as a Satanic church--such that those leaving it to join the Christian church must be baptized, just as if they were coming from a pagan cult.

By the standards of old-fashioned Christian theology, that is exactly what it is--a Satanic church. It clearly is a church which has conformed to *THE WORLD* in defiance of the plain injunctions of the New Testament. (cf the later argument about the Church versus *THE WORLD*) The orthodox Christian belief is that the ruler of the Roman Empire is by that very fact Satan's Vicar. And therefore the Emperor's Church is a Satanic Church. Augustine et al make a half-hearted attempt to disguise the Emperor's real relationship to the "Catholic Church" but a scholar who can't see through that poor a disguise is blind.

And the proof of the Satanic character of the Emperor's church is that the marks of Satan are there. The lies and the violence. The mass murder. The worship of man and his works, that is, the idolatry of the Empire and the Emperor. (cf the argument later about Augustine's *NEW AGE CHURCH*) The murderous persecution of the true church of Jesus Christ, the shedding of the blood of the saints. It wasn't just that they did these things once or once in a while. The very existence of the Emperor's Church required the use of legal terror, as Augustine in effect concedes. It is hardly evidence of fanaticism on the part of the "donatists" that they had a rule of baptizing--they did not concede that it was re-baptizing--anyone who came to them from the Emperor's "Catholic Church." (cf Augustine letter 44.12)

By focusing his argument on the question of re-baptism--you can't be baptized twice because you can't be circumcised twice etc.--Augustine distracts us from the real spiritual and moral issue--the apostate and heretical and Satanic character of the Emperor's "Catholic Church." So the emphasis on these "theological" issues becomes the disguise for his real case against the Christians who refused to join the Emperor's Church, or who left it for the "donatist" church when the soldiers weren't around.

The "rebaptism" controversy, which was supposedly central to the dispute is really a minor issue, and the "donatists" had tradition on their side anyway. Father Vassall-Phillips in effect concedes that Optatus and Augustine had come up with a new theology in respect to baptism that was contrary to that of Cyprian. *We see the influence of St. Cyprian throughout the writings of Optatus, though, like Augustine after him, Optatus did not fear to desert Cyprian, where (as in the question of the re-baptism of heretics) Cyprian was wrong.* (Optatus introduction page XXIV) Augustine said that Cyprian had changed his position but that what he wrote had been destroyed. (letter 93.38) That is, Augustine had to concede that his own position was adverse to the position that Cyprian had originally taken, and which was the one still found in Cyprian's extant writings.

So Augustine can hardly be presented as a defender of Christian orthodoxy, if orthodoxy depends upon Christian tradition. That is, Augustine is *orthodox* only if *orthodoxy* is compatible with major "improvements" upon traditional doctrines, such as supplementing traditional Christian pacifism--negating it--with a "just war" ethic.

the founding father & saint

Augustine is the founding "saint" of the Church of the Empire. He invented the foundational theology for the belief in Constantine's miracle and Constantine's Church, which is presented as bringing about the triumph in *ALL NATIONS* of Jesus Christ and his *CATHOLIC CHURCH* through the alliance with the Roman Emperors, beginning with Constantine.

Augustine provided the intellectual and theological version of the founding miracle of the Church of the Empire. The miracle story is designed to promote the belief in the world wide triumph of Jesus Christ and the "Catholic Church" through the alliance with the Roman Emperor. Augustine tells a theological and intellectual version of the same story with his *KING'S COVENANT DOCTRINE* and his *NEW AGE DOCTRINE*. (as discussed later)

IV Constantine's Miracle

It is demonstrably true that the Imperial so-called *Catholic* Church of the Roman Empire promoted a general change of Christian faith and morals and church discipline in many areas, and that it substantially modified basic Christian doctrines. As did the Imperial so-called *Orthodox* Church of the eastern empire.

(It is the false claim of mainstream Protestantism that the Reformation restored the original Christian faith, which was allegedly perverted, not by the advent of the Imperial Church, but long afterwards, by the Pope's assumption of secular power. Luther accepted the church of Constantine and the Reformers were followers of Augustine. Luther and Calvin both sanctioned the State Church, to which they owed their positions.)

Development of Doctrine ? or Corruption of the Faith ?

After he became a Catholic, John Henry Newman argued that *development of doctrine* does not necessarily mean corruption of faith and morals. But one of the prime examples he gives of a **DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE** is a striking instance of just how great a change there was.

In *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (5.1.3 page 172-173) "Genuine Developments Contrasted With Corruptions" he writes: "In like manner, it has been argued by a late writer, [Milman] whether fairly or not does not interfere with the illustration, that the miraculous vision and dream of the Labarum could not have really taken place, as reported by Eusebius, because it is counter to the original type of Christianity. *For the first time*, he says, *on occasion of Constantine's introduction of the standard into his armies, the meek and peaceful Jesus became a God of battle, and the Cross, the holy sign of Christian Redemption, a banner of bloody strife. . . . This was the first advance to the military Christianity of the middle ages, a modification of the pure religion of the Gospel, if directly opposed to its genuine principles, still apparently indispensable to the social progress of men.*"

And then Newman comments: "On the other hand, a popular leader may go through a variety of professions, he may court parties and break with them, he may contradict himself in words, and undo his own measures, yet there may be a steady fulfillment of certain objects, or adherence to certain plain doctrines, which gives a unity to his career, and impresses on beholders an image of directness and large consistency which shows a fidelity to his type from first to last."

In short, Jesus Christ, like Disraeli or Bill Clinton, may have shifted his policies from one time to the next. He may have been the Prince of Peace at one time but that didn't prevent Him from becoming the new war god of the Roman Empire at another time. Like a popular politician looking for votes, Jesus Christ sometimes took a position just the opposite of that which he had formerly espoused. Like Disraeli or Bill Clinton, he may have left some of his followers dismayed and confounded, but the more sophisticated understood what he was doing.

It is apparent that both Milman and Newman perceive the obvious contradiction between these two beliefs as to what Jesus Christ stands for, but neither one is able to state it

plainly. Newman lets Milman state it for him while he preserves his "neutrality" on a radical and fundamental change in Christian history and Christian faith and Christian morals. Milman does state it: *directly opposed to its genuine principles* and then backs away from it. Because both men are bound to the state church tradition, neither can say bluntly and unequivocally what is obvious to both of them: Constantine's "miracle" was a perversion of the Christian faith. Constantine's "Jesus Christ" is the negation of the real Jesus Christ, is the anti-Christ.

These men illustrate here the fallacy that "ideas" or purely intellectual truth can ever be the real Christian truth about anything. Without the Spirit of Truth you do not have the Spirit of Courage that is required to stand up for the Truth. It is obvious that the nit-picking intellectualism of the Imperial Church "theologians" served to hide from themselves and others their cowardly abandonment and betrayal of Christian faith and morals in a dozen major ways.

worldly power

The writer of the eb 9 essay on *Constantine* does a similar duck out: *he endowed the new religion for the first time with that instrument of worldly power . . . whether for good or for evil or for both . . .* (VI 301c) Like the world to which it has now conformed, the new Christianity is inevitably a murky mixture of good and evil with no way of separating the two. The murky analysis of these scholars arises from their own compromised positions.

The latest benefits of the merger of the Church with *worldly power* include 60 million killed in World War II. In conformity with the morality of the State Church, the Catholics and Lutherans of Germany marched off to carry out the grand vision of the new German Caesar to establish a world empire. Franz Jaggerstatter shows what the difference could have been. How easily these Christian nations submitted to Stalin and Hitler, how readily they embraced their mission of mass murder. Of course it was the great war which erupted in the middle of Christendom in 1914 that produced Bolshevism and Nazism in two supposedly Christian Nations. The endless wars of Worldly Christianity are the sure sign of its moral apostasy.

Newman's lack of moral courage here is not surprising. It is conspicuous in shaping the decision he made which he discusses in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*. There is a striking contrast with the courage that John Wesley showed in following his conscience in a similar predicament. Newman apparently could not imagine how to live outside the safe sinecure of a state church establishment. If he wasn't an Anglican in his rooms at Oxford, he had to be a Catholic in the best University they had to offer. It was beyond him to follow the Spirit of Truth, if it meant that he might wind up like Wesley did, out in a field somewhere preaching to a bunch of colliers. So his remarkable insights into the truth of the Christian faith are always subordinated, as here, by the final necessity of conforming to the establishment line.

Newman is twitting his former Anglican colleagues by diffidently pointing out that they are not in a position to argue about the corruption of basic Christian beliefs in the Catholic Church. *Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.* If there is idolatry in promoting Mary to **GOD THE MOTHER**, the new mother goddess of the Imperial pagan & "Christian" Church, there is a far more pernicious idolatry and perversion in the establishment of a State Church which promotes Jesus Christ into the **NEW MARS**. If the authority claimed by the

Pontifex Maximus over the Christian Church is a usurpation, what about the authority that the Emperor and the King assumed over the Church ? That is, the Anglicans had better refrain from seriously pursuing the question of "development of doctrine" in the Church. They are stuck with defending **MILITARY CHRISTIANITY** and the State Church just like the Catholics.

The Conquering Cross

As given in Socrates I.2 what happened is that as Constantine *was hesitating what divinity's aid he should invoke for the successful conduct of the war, it occurred to him that Diocletian had profited but little by the Pagan deities, whom he had so sedulously sought to propitiate; but that his own father Constantius, who had renounced the idolatrous worship of the Greeks, had passed through life far more prosperously. In this state of uncertainty, a preternatural vision, which transcends all description, appeared to him as he was marching at the head of his troops: he saw, about that part of the day when the sun after passing the meridian begins to decline towards the west, a pillar of light in the heavens, in the form of a cross, on which were inscribed these words, BY THIS CONQUER. . . . In his slumbers on the following night he saw Christ, who directed him to prepare a standard according to the pattern of that which had been seen; and to use it against his enemies as an assured trophy of victory.* Which he did and that is how he became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire, with the help of Jesus Christ.

As Milman points out, the **MILITARY CHRISTIANITY** of the middle ages begins with this miracle and ensuing vision which were given to the Emperor Constantine. It is a turning point in the history of Christianity. In fact it is a 180 degree turn. Henry Milman notes *the unimpeached and unquestioned authority of this miracle during . . . many centuries.* [*History of Christianity*, Volume 2, book 3, chapter 1]

So those that promoted the new Imperial Church not only came up with new scripture (as argued later) they also came up with new miracles whereby the new faith and morals of the Imperial Church was established.

You can argue as a matter of history that Constantine's miracle was a later fabrication. As Gibbon points out (chapter XX p 649 footnote 48) the story is found in Eusebius **LIFE OF CONSTANTINE** but not in his **HISTORY**. He notes that the Ecclesiastical writers of the 4th and 5th century were unaware of the story. (649 fn 52) He points out a passage in Cyril of Jerusalem which shows that Cyril did not know the story. (XXI fn 88 page 695) He argues from Eusebius himself that the *labarum* did not in fact appear in front of Constantine's army until his expedition against Licinius in 323 A.D. (XX 645 fn 36)

Faith of the Christian historian

But aside from the question of when the story was first told, a Christian historian has to decide whether he believes in Constantine's miracle or not. He has to confront the question that Newman lets Milman raise: Could this have really happened ? Isn't it *counter to the original type of Christianity* ?

It makes all the difference in how you write the history of the Christian Church. If you believe in this miracle, then you believe that Jesus Christ founded the Imperial Church of the

Roman Empire. If you dis-believe in this miracle, you believe that this was an anti-Church characterized by the lies and violence that mark Satan's establishment. It is not a minor question. Did the Imperial Church of Constantine represent a "development" of the Christian Church? Or was it a perversion of the Christian faith which produced an anti-Church?

That question is fundamental to the "Catholic" / "donatist" dispute. The reason the "donatists" insisted on re-baptizing those who came to them from the "Catholic Church" is that they believed it to be a "Church" of Satan. They believed it to be a Church of Satan because it was founded by the Emperor as a Church of War.

A devout Christian, who believes in the Jesus Christ of the gospels, would reject Constantine's "miracle" as a fraud and a blasphemy without hesitation. And therefore he would reject the "Church" which is built upon the acceptance of this "miracle" as a) apostate b) heretical and c) schismatic. It represents a fundamental apostasy of Christian morals in respect to taking up arms for the kingdoms of this world. It represents an extreme heresy, a blasphemy in fact, in the way it turns the Prince of Peace into the war god of an evil empire. Those who join this evil "Church" have necessarily parted company with the true Christian Church.

faithless history

Of course there is such a thing as faithless history, if you can call it "history." What is often presented as Christian history is only bad sociology. (Not that there is really any such thing as good sociology.) This new Oxford *HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY* offers good examples of this "objective" or faithless history. It notes as a fact (pp 389-390) that young people in the church have increasingly accepted contraception and abortion. So you can note that Christians once thought divorce was wrong. Now they think it is all right. Christians once thought war was wrong. Then they decided it was all right. They once thought that the emperor was Satan's man. Then they decided that he was Jesus Christ's man. So whatever "Christians" think is all right is Christian morality. Whatever they believe in is Christian faith. Christians used to believe that Jesus Christ was God. Now most of them don't. They used to believe in heaven and hell. Now they don't. So "Christian" means whatever anyone wants it to mean. It includes anything and everything which calls itself "Christian" whether the Mormons or the Bahai.

But you can't write anything resembling history without some kind of faith. It may be a faith in the Roman Empire--that is what inspired Edward Gibbon. But he does have a faith which gives him a focus and a way of deciding, among an infinite number of supposed "facts," which are really facts and which ones are relevant to his history. If you don't have some kind of faith, then you get lost in the data banks. You endlessly invent theses to fit various sets of "facts." There is no end to it and it never arrives anywhere.

Gibbon is a good example of a skeptical historian, even a cynical historian, in respect to the miracles of Christianity. He reserves his faith for the Empire. As to Christianity, he treats the miracles of early Christianity and the miracles of Imperial Christianity with the same detached skepticism. He mocks the state church historians for their stories of miracles, but he has no faith in the early Christian church either by which he might draw a contrast.

credulous history

The state church historians are credulous historians. They believe in any and all miracles. They believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and in his miraculous partnership with Constantine. They believe in the miraculous cures of Jesus of Nazareth and the miraculous poisoning of Arius and the miraculous arson of the pagan temple that Julian restored near Antioch. They believe in the miracle of Constantine and they believe in the Christian Empire which was thereby established. They combine faith with superstition into a kind of Christian credulity that has marked **CHRISTENDOM** ever since. It is a faith in the power of the Holy Spirit and a faith in the power of armies and an inability, a refusal, to distinguish one from the other. It is a combined faith in the Christian Church and the Roman Empire.

You can't write Christian History without a faith that Jesus Christ is the central fact of history, that his life and death really do mark the beginning of the history that matters. But if your faith in Jesus Christ includes a faith in the Emperor Constantine then it becomes an entirely different history. These are two contrary histories.

Of course there are "developments" in Christian history. Saul becoming Saint Paul is an important development in Christian history. But what is Constantine ? Does he represent a "development" or does he represent a betrayal ? A Christian historian has to face up squarely to that question. If he evades the question, he can never give a true answer to other basic questions about the history of Christianity. That is really what has happened. That is why the history we have is bad history. Because it is cowardly and dishonest history, as in the section of Newman's book that I quoted. Having evaded the essential question, Newman wanders off into what is essentially garbage, for all its sophistication. Here is a rare intellect, thoroughly knowledgeable about the history of the Church, who writes interminable twaddle because he doesn't have the courage to truthfully answer an essential question about the history of Christianity.

Constantine's "miracle" was not just a one time event that can be disregarded as a fable. It was, as Milman says, the beginning of **MILITARY CHRISTIANITY**. It was a **MODIFICATION OF THE PURE RELIGION OF THE GOSPEL . . . DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO ITS GENUINE PRINCIPLES . . .** And, if he could have brought himself to put a period there, his history of the church would have been entirely different from the one he wrote.

Whether Constantine's vision was real or not, the Imperial Church he founded was real. And the faith in Secular Christianity was real. It shaped history for 1600 years thereafter. This was the first of many military marvels and miracles upon which the faith of Secular Christianity was established. Constantine's mother discovers the true cross in Jerusalem through a series of miracles. Most of the cross is placed inside the statue of the Emperor Constantine in Constantinople where it becomes a center of devotion. (Philostorgius II 17, Socrates I 17 & Theodoret I 34) The presence of the true cross in Constantinople guarantees the military safety of Constantine's capitol. Constantine makes a bridle bit for his war horse with the nails from the cross. He takes the martyr's title of **VICTOR** to show that by his sword he has fulfilled the victory that the Christian martyrs won by submitting to the sword of Imperial persecution.

Mary the mother of battles

As Milman says, **MILITARY CHRISTIANITY** was thereby established. Like Jesus himself, his apostles are now enlisted in the wars of the empire. The Emperor Theodosius I supposedly won his great victory over Eugenius in 394 A.D. thanks to the miraculous help of Saints Philip & John. (eb9 XXIII 257c) Mary, the mother of Jesus, also thereafter plays an important role as a goddess of battles. Narses, the eunuch general of Justinian in the 6th century, never went into battle until he received a sign from the Virgin. (eb9 XVII 234c)

The *holy lance* with a point supposedly made from the nails of the Cross helps Otho the Great defeat the pagan Hungarians in a battle of the 10th century. These miracles and signs and wonders of Constantine and the other so-called "Christian" emperors, if they are accepted as an authentic part of the Christian faith, have the effect of transforming the Christian faith. They are far more potent than changes in church discipline or theology, but of course they are accompanied by the changes in morality and theology which are necessary to justify them. Seventy-five years later, Augustine became the major architect of the changes in theology which the new Church of the Empire required. He developed the theoretical framework for the new Secular Faith. But the practical changes in faith and morals had already been made.

If Jesus Christ is now Constantine's partner, then it is right for Christians to serve in Constantine's armies. It is right for Christians to fight in a "just war" or an unjust war according to Augustine's doctrine because no one except the emperor can decide whether or not it is just. It isn't up to the individual Christian to decide whether or not a war is just. If it isn't, the emperor must answer to God, but the duty of the individual Christian is to obey the emperor. (c. *Faust* 22.74-75) Peter's injunction that *we must obey God rather than man* is obsolete doctrine now that we have an emperor who calls himself a "Christian."

When Pope Pius XI blessed the army of Mussolini on its way to the rape of Ethiopia, he was re-affirming the partnership between Church and State that was established by Constantine's miracle 1600 years earlier. When German Catholics and German Lutherans put on their uniforms and went off to kill whoever Der Kaiser or Der Fuhrer ordered them to kill, they were acting in conformity with the teaching of Augustine of Hippo. But was it the teaching of Jesus Christ ? That is the question that Newman and Milman could not answer honestly.

The credibility of the later **cross in the sky** story is undermined by the original **cross of triumph** story which Eusebius tells in ix.9.10-11 of his *Church History* and in I.40 of his *Life of Constantine*: When he entered Rome in A.D. 312, Constantine immediately ordered a statue of himself with a cross in his hand to be set up **in the most public place in Rome** with an inscription stating that *BY THIS SALUTARY SIGN, THE TRUE PROOF OF BRAVERY, I SAVED AND DELIVERED YOUR CITY FROM THE YOKE OF THE TYRANT*. Constantine did erect a triumphal arch, made over from the arch of Trajan. It is still standing and many later visitors to Rome have seen it and read the inscription--which neglects to say anything about the cross of Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, no one except Eusebius seems ever to have seen the statue of Constantine holding the cross and the inscription which accompanied it. Even though it was presumably made of durable material, it vanished as quickly as the vision of the cross in the sky !

V Founding of Constantine's Church

Constantine's miracle is the foundational miracle of Constantine's "Church." The divinely decreed union of the Christian Church and the Secular State is established by the partnership of Christ and Constantine that is celebrated by Eusebius. In the next generation, it was Augustine who invented new theology for it. He also wrote new scripture for it. (see chapter XI *Augustine and the Manufacture of Scripture*.)

The official history of Constantine's Church is a false history. So a true history of the Christian Church has to begin by discarding it and replacing it. The official history says that Constantine became a convert to Christianity after Jesus Christ helped him win the decisive battle of the Milvian bridge on October 28th 312 A.D. Thereafter, he put his sword and all the resources of the Roman Empire at the service of Christianity. Put a **NOT** sign in front of all that and you can then begin to construct the true history of Constantine and his Church. Constantine was not a convert to Christianity in 312. Instead, he set out to convert Christians to his faith in the Roman Empire, through propaganda, bribery and coercion. He set out to conscript the Christians into the service of the Empire. And he got a lot of help from the bought bishops.

Constantine's Faith

What was Constantine's faith ? What did he believe ? It is clear from various histories that, as to religion, his personal faith was a peculiar mixture of pagan, pseudo-Christian and Imperial to the end of his life. His coins associated his reign with both Apollo and Jesus Christ. His statue in Constantinople was a figure of Apollo, with the head of Constantine. A hunk of what was supposedly the wooden cross of Jesus Christ was placed inside. He built a church and created an imperial cult around himself as **THE 13TH APOSTLE** ! Eusebius portrays him as the new Moses. Actions speak louder than words, and it is clear from all his actions that Constantine believed in the Roman Empire and the Roman Emperor. He believed much the same as his predecessors had believed, even though he developed his own strategy to achieve it.

He wasn't putting himself and the resources of the empire at the service of Christianity. He was conscripting Christianity into the service of the Empire. The government horses & carriages might be put at the service of the bishops of the new Imperial Church, but the bishops were expected to harness themselves to the Imperial Chariot like all the other civil servants. The Imperial Treasury paid their salaries, the imperial tax exemptions and the new laws on inheritance allowed them to enrich themselves, but the Emperor demanded in return that they loyally serve the empire, and that they obey the Emperor. He demanded that Christians sacrifice themselves in the wars of the empire like everyone else.

Constantine was trying to do just what his predecessors had tried to do. He was trying to accomplish just what Diocletian had tried to accomplish, and for the same basic reason of policy. He was trying to re-establish a strong State Religion with the Emperor at the head of it. Just like the emperors before him, he was trying to force everyone, including all of the Christians, to conform to the State Religion. Those who couldn't be persuaded or bought were

subjected to legal coercion and finally, by 317 A.D. to military attack. Like his predecessors, Constantine used terror to force people into the State Church, and slaughter to exterminate the hard heads who couldn't be intimidated. The difference is that one of the State Churches is now supposedly a "Christian" Church. Because the Emperor says it is. Because his bought bishops say it is. It is really just the old Imperial Religion with a new facade.

As argued in the next chapter, the state religion was absolutely necessary to hold the crumbling empire together, that is why it was so important to the Emperors who understood their duty to the empire. That is why it was such an urgent matter for Constantine, early in his reign, when he was trying to restore the empire. In the end, the new state religion failed to preserve the empire, just as the old state religion had failed to preserve it. But those were the stakes--the very survival of the empire.

There is a striking contrast between the *EDICT OF TOLERATION* given in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius at X 5 2 and the 5 letters which follow. The edict itself appears to have been tampered with in several places, as found in Eusebius, to make it sound like it only applies to Christians. Compared to the same edict as found in Lactantius which Lawlor & Oulton give in their notes to Eusebius. (L & O notes, page 310) In fact it appears that Constantine did more than halfway tolerate paganism. Socrates 1.18 says that Constantine *set up his own statues in the temples*. At the same time he established the so-called "Catholic Church" and began a legal attack on the non-conforming Christian church that eventually become a violent persecution. He was tolerant of religion which served the Empire. So he could be "tolerant" of everything except real Christianity.

setting up the Catholic Church

The five letters which follow, X 5 18 to X 7 2, indicate that the "Catholic Church" is to be established and favored. (These were originally private state letters, not public documents.) The letter to Caecilian at X 6 1--the *3000 folles* letter already discussed--gives a clear indication that Constantine is determined to use the police power against Christians who do not go along with the new Imperial Church. This and two other letters show that the financial resources of the Empire were committed to the establishment of his new "Catholic Church."

The first letter given by Eusebius, (X 5 15) supposedly written in 312 A.D., tells Anulinus, the Proconsul of North Africa, to see to it that property is restored--*any of those things which belong to the Catholic Church of the Christians*. The heading in Eusebius describes this as a *Copy of another Imperial Ordinance which he also made, indicating that the bounty had been granted TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ALONE*. The fifth letter, (X 7 1) also addressed to Anulinus and apparently written about the same time, instructs him that *Clerics . . . in the Catholic Church, over which Caecilian presides, shall be held totally exempt from all public offices*--that is, they aren't responsible for collecting taxes nor liable for making up any shortages. This was an enormously valuable tax break which immediately "converted" a stream of wealthy pagans who went from being pagan Senators to being "Christian" bishops at a single bound. Right from the beginning, the Emperor's so-called "Catholic Church" was characterized by so-called "bishops" who were in it for the money. And that was still the sign of the Secular Church 1000 years later when a bishop was a robber baron who had just changed clothes.

The L & O notes (page 315-318) puzzle over the apparent favoritism to the *Catholic Church*, over which *Caecilian presides* at a time when Constantine is supposedly unaware of any rival church in North Africa, because, so says Optatus, Constantine was oblivious of the situation until he was first approached by the "donatists" in 313 A.D. That is what happens to you when you are silly enough to believe what Optatus and Augustine assert. It is apparent that, by 312 A.D., the term "Catholic Church," as used by Constantine, clearly means the State-supported and State-approved Church which he recognizes exclusively as the only "lawful" Christian church. Constantine did not discover the Imperial "Catholic Church," he invented it !

The letter to Pope Miltiades, (alias Melchiades) instructing him to hold a meeting in Rome in 313 A.D. to deal with the "donatists" contains a statement of Constantine's intolerance in respect to non-conforming Christians: *a very serious matter that in those provinces which Divine Providence has chosen to entrust to my Devotedness . . . the multitude should be splitting up and the bishops at variance . . . it does not escape the notice of your Carefulness that the respect which I pay to the lawful Catholic Church is so great, that it is my wish that you should leave no schism whatsoever or division in any place.* (H.E. X 5 18) That is, no rival to the "Catholic Church" is to be tolerated. And Miltiades had better see to it.

In letter # 43, Augustine admits that the authority for this council in Rome was the Emperor's but he covers that fact by the assertion that the "donatists" had requested the Emperor to judge the matter. *Perhaps you will say that Melchiades, bishop of the Roman Church, along with the other bishops beyond the sea who acted as his colleagues, had no right to usurp the place of judge in a matter which had been already settled by seventy African bishops over whom the bishop of Tigris as Primate presided. But what will you say if he in fact did not usurp this place ? For the Emperor, BEING APPEALED TO, sent bishops to sit with him as judges, with authority to decide the whole matter in the way which seemed to them just. This we prove, both by the petitions of the Donatists and the words of the Emperor himself.* 43.14 So the false assertion that the "donatists" "appealed" to the Emperor to "judge" the dispute is used to obscure the authority which the Emperor assumed and asserted in this matter and which accurately reflects the power that he in fact wielded over the "Catholic Church." There are many similar examples in both Optatus and Augustine where the attempt has been made to obscure this basic fact about the "Catholic Church."

There was already a rival Christian bishop of Rome, afterwards mis-labeled as the "donatist" bishop of Rome, dating from Pope Marcellinus, who was said to have joined the Emperor Diocletian in pagan sacrifice, (cf Frend, p. 22, fn. 1) and from the Emperor Maxentius setting up a later pope. The African "donatists" regarded Miltiades as in an apostate line of bishops. Optatus (II.4) gives a list of "donatist" bishops of Rome beginning with *Victor of Garba* without giving any date. The "donatists" would hardly have been willing to submit their "case" to a council organized by a bishop they regarded as an apostate.

God's Vicar

The role that Constantine assigns himself in these matters is not one of humble service to the Church as some of the epistles written for him by Hosius and Eusebius pretend. He actually claims an ultimate spiritual authority over the empire and all its concerns, including its

religion, as several of his letters show. Note for example the sense of his power and responsibility which is conveyed by the phrase in his letter to Miltiades: *in those provinces which Divine Providence has chosen to entrust to my Devotedness* . . . The same attitude appears in several letters from Constantine found in the Appendix to Optatus. In the letter to Aelafius, 314 A.D. he says that *I consider it by no means right that contentions and altercations of this kind should be hidden from me, by which, perchance, God may be moved not only against the human race, but also against me myself, to whose care, by his heavenly Decree, He has entrusted the direction of all human affairs, and may in His wrath provide otherwise than heretofore.* (Ap III)

When you disregard the feigned humility and the phony piety that Hosius and Eusebius et al put into the letters of Constantine, you begin to see the real emperor and his real agenda. A few of his extant letters show his real attitude and intention in respect to the Christian church, and show that he was in fact **THE EMPEROR**, the absolute ruler of the Roman Empire, who intends to have his way--or else. His letter to Pope Miltiades *reads like a minute to a civil servant.* (Frend 148)

The authority he claimed is in itself entirely contrary to the authority that was already established in the Christian Church. There is no way that the emperor can assume such authority in the Christian Church. When he does, it makes it the anti "Church." And everyone who understands the matter understands that much. That is why the historians and the theologians of the State Church have the perennial task of concealing and falsifying the real relationship between Constantine and the Church he founded. In his *LIFE OF CONSTANTINE*, (3.10) Eusebius describes Constantine entering the Council of Nicea with *downcast eyes* and a *blush on his countenance*. His purple robe only adds a little color to the assembly and his soldiers camped outside are only a gentle reminder to the bishops to get serious about getting through the agenda.

When, contra Eusebius et al, you can find out anything truthful about what Constantine did, his actions tell the true story. **ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS**. How is it that by 317 A.D., 5 years after his supposed conversion to the Christian faith, his soldiers are killing Christians in Carthage ? What sort of a "convert" is this ? What sort of imperial patronage is this ? The correct answer to those questions reveals the truth about Constantine's faith and Constantine's church. (This massacre is described in *Passio Donatus et Advocatus*, a sermon by Bishop Donatus given about A.D. 320. English translation by Maureen Tilley in 1996. It is one of the most important and most neglected documents in church history.)

What kind of a "Church" is Constantine favoring which requires that those Christians who don't want to join it must be forced to join it, must be killed by the soldiers if they persist in refusing ? It is of course a State Church. And by his actions, Constantine shows that this new State Church is not compatible with the old Christian Church that was independent of the State.

Church versus State

That is true. Constantine understood it and Bishop Donatus understood it. It is the fundamental truth about the real Christian Church that it is the antagonist of the State Church. It is just what Tertullian had said 100 years before in his Apology, chapter 38: *Nothing could be*

more foreign to the Christian than the State. The independent Christian Church, which will not bow to the emperor, is rightly regarded by the emperor as his enemy. And that is how Constantine regarded it.

In his letter to Celsus circa 315-316 A.D. he says that *I have thought well to command your Lordship that in the meantime you should leave them alone, and understand that we must temporize with them. But after you have read this letter, you should make it plain both to Caecilian and to them, that when by the Divine Goodness I come to Africa, I shall render it most clear to all, both to Caecilian, and to those who are acting against him, by reading a perfectly plain judgment, as to what worship and what kind of worship is to be given to the Supreme God and with what manner of service he is pleased. Also, by diligent examination, I shall acquaint myself to the full with the things which at the present time some persons fancy they can keep dark through the allurements of their ignorant minds, and shall drag them into the light. Those same persons who now stir up the people in such a way as to bring it about that the supreme God is not worshipped with the veneration that is His due, I shall destroy & dash in pieces.* (Phillips Appendix VIII) He clearly indicates that he intends to be the dictator in religious affairs as in every other area that concerns the welfare of the empire. He is going to make it clear to everyone who is the boss of the Church of the Empire. Who else but the Emperor ?

And the same position was effectively claimed by the emperors that came after Constantine as the surviving legal record shows. Gibbon XX 657 says that: *the 16th book of the Theodosian code represents, under a variety of titles, the authority which they assumed in the government of the catholic church.* Gibbon XXI 697 says that the Emperor Constantius *accepted with complacency the lofty title of bishop of bishops.*

Trials

The threat to *destroy & dash in pieces* those that resist being instructed in religion by the Emperor forbodes what happened a year or two afterwards. Meanwhile he used the power of the Imperial government against the nonconforming Christians. In his letter to the Catholic Bishops 314 A.D. he says that *I have directed my men to bring these wicked deceivers of religion to my court that they may live there and there survey for themselves what is worse than death. I have also sent a suitable letter to the prefect who is my viceroy in Africa, enjoining him, that, as often as he finds any instances of this madness, he is to send the guilty, forthwith, to my court.* (Phillips Appendix V)

Constantine summoned Caecilian to his court at Milan and pronounced him innocent as Augustine relates in letter # 43.20: *the Emperor . . . compelled them [the "donatist" bishops] to come to Milan in charge of his guards. . . . having examined the matter with the diligence, caution, and prudence which his letters on the subject indicate, he pronounced Caecilianus perfectly innocent, and them most criminal.* So Constantine is the judge of the fitness of the bishop he has installed in Carthage. The pretence that Caecilian is independent of the Emperor cannot be maintained after such a proceeding as this. Caecilian was of course *perfectly innocent* of **CRIMES** under Roman law. His demonstrated willingness to serve the Emperor and his State Church at the expense of his fellow Christians was not a crime. Rather, it was a recommendation for the Emperor's service.

In a number of his letters, Augustine argues that the "donatists" brought "charges" against Caecilian. This is how he excuses the fact of the "Catholics" using the police and soldiers against the "donatists." But the accusations against Caecilian were the reverse of criminal charges. The accusation against Caecilian was that he had cooperated with the Imperial Edict of Diocletian. Which could not possibly be classified as a crime in a Roman Imperial court, even after the change in policy under Constantine.

At the conference in Carthage in 411 A.D., the "donatist" Bishop Petilian stated their position that Christians cease to be Christians when they take other Christians to court. There is good evidence that they believed themselves to be strictly bound by the injunction of Saint Paul laid down in 1 Corinthians 6.1-7 and that they practiced what they preached.

Another letter from Constantine shows that he is personally aware of and involved with the propaganda hearings which "proved" that none of the "Catholic" bishops were *traditors* but that all of the "donatist" bishops were *traditors*. In his letter to Probianus 315 A.D. he says that *we have learned from the Acts of the Proceedings that this Ingentius was prepared for torture, and was only saved by his statement that he was a decurion of Ziqua. Wherefore it is our will that you should despatch this Ingentius, under suitable escort, to my Court of Constantine Augustus, so that it may be made quite clear, in the presence and hearing of those who are concerned with this affair, and for some time past have been incessantly appealing to me, that it is to no purpose that they show their malice against Caecilian the Bishop and have been pleased to bestir themselves against him with violence. So will it be brought to pass that these disputes having ceased, as is right, the people may without any dissension serve their religion with the reverence that is its due.* (Phillips Appendix XIV. Ingentius is a witness in the hearing recorded in Appendix I which exonerated Bishop Felix of Aptunga from the charge of being a *traditor*.)

These were show trials, ordered by the Emperor, which generated propaganda documents for the new State church, documents that Augustine was still using 100 years later. One of them, *The Vindication of Felix of Aptunga* (Phillips Appendix I) shows that those who consecrated Caecilian were not *traditors*, as alleged by the "donatists." The other one, *The Proceedings before Zenophilus*, (Appendix II) shows that Silvanus and all the other "donatist" bishops were *traditors*. (This is also supposedly proven by the bogus *Acts of the Council of Cirta* Appendix XI.) On the basis of this and other allegations, the "donatist" bishops were banished to distant parts of the empire. The surviving accounts of these propaganda trials have substantial gaps and appear to have been heavily edited afterwards.

The pretence of these hearings is that the Emperor's Court will give an impartial judgment in a controversy between the Emperor's established church and those who have defied the Emperor by refusing to join it. The most striking peculiarity is that these bishops are being put on trial in a Roman Imperial court on the charge of not having been criminals in the time of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. That is, if they obeyed the law in the time of Diocletian, that now makes them guilty. And vice versa. Felix is found innocent--that is, he did not cooperate with the Roman authorities circa 304 A.D. But Silvanus is found guilty and all of the other "donatist" bishops are implicated along with him. That is, they are found guilty now of having obeyed the law in the time of Diocletian ! So declares this Roman Imperial Court !

Of course the only real crime of the "donatist" bishops was their refusal to cooperate with the Roman authorities in the time of Constantine. That is what these peculiar proceedings were about. It isn't surprising that the persons accused were absent from these "hearings." Their presence would be superfluous. They were Alice in Wonderland courts where you have the sentence first and the trial afterwards.

propaganda: the "donatists" and the emperor

Another major propaganda campaign begun by Constantine (or his ecclesiastical handlers like Hosius), and later carried on by Optatus and Augustine, aims at showing that it was the "donatists," rather than the Catholics, who appealed to the Emperor and asked him to take charge of the situation, appoint judges, call Councils etc.--all the things he did. The boldness with which Constantine first promoted his Imperial Church was replaced by a more cautious policy which attempted to disguise the Emperor's involvement. He learned the hard way that orthodox Christians regarded him as the Vicar of Satan, not the Vicar of God.

In book one, Optatus presents an obviously fabricated "petition" letter to prove that it was the "donatists" who first asked Constantine to get involved with the situation in Carthage *when the Emperor Constantine was still without any knowledge of these affairs* (Optatus 1.22, page 43). He presents them as requesting *judges from Gaul*--the emperor's boys. And the reason is apparent. The major accusation against the Catholics by the "donatists" is their connection with the emperor and their reliance upon the police and the army. Optatus avoids discussing this connection and instead argues that it was the "donatists" who approached the Emperor, who asked him to "judge" the matter, who asked for the soldiers, etc.

It is appalling how often scholars will treat these statements of Optatus with respect (such as in Lawton and Ouler notes to Eusebius book X 5-7, Frend etc.) when they are obvious fibs for an obvious propaganda motive. Optatus and Augustine simply omit to mention the earlier letters to Caecilian from Constantine--the *3000 folles* letter and the two letters that give church property and clerical immunity to the "Catholic Church." The *3000 folles* letter alone shows that Constantine was setting Caecilian up and that he expected trouble because of it some time before he heard any complaint from the "donatists." He was obviously neither oblivious of the situation in Carthage nor neutral in respect to it as Optatus pretends. The substance of this letter shows that he was already the major player in the situation.

The fiction of Optatus that the "donatists" requested *judges from Gaul* is meant to cover the fact that three of the Emperor's errand boy bishops were sent from Gaul to see to it that the Emperor's wishes were carried out, as mentioned in Constantine's letter to Pope Miltiades: *whom I have ordered to hasten to Rome for this purpose*. (cf. The role of Bishop Hosius at the Council of Nicea) Their presence points up the emperor's control over this council which initiated the Roman administration of the state church in the western empire.

This fabricated petition letter is the excuse offered by Optatus and Augustine for all the obvious interventions by the Emperor and the Imperial government. Constantine himself, in his letters, makes use of a similar allegation, or is made to do so in the surviving versions of these

letters, to the effect that the "donatists" have appealed to him. But it is apparent that Constantine was determined to take charge of the situation regardless of any appeal to him by the "donatists" or the lack thereof. His subsequent letters and actions show the same purpose and policy that is revealed by his first extant letter to Caecilian. Even if the "donatists" had "appealed" to him, all he had to say is "what business is it of mine ? " if he was really a neutral bystander. Instead, their alleged "appeal" becomes the pretext for the Council of Arles. It becomes his excuse for taking charge of the church in North Africa, just as the Arian dispute later became his excuse for calling the Council of Nicea and taking charge of the church in the eastern provinces of the empire. The perennial characteristic of imperial politics, whether ancient or modern, is that **trouble is the excuse for intervention**. Then intervention leads to control. Trouble isn't hard to find. If you can't find any, you start some yourself.

"lost" documents

Without quoting the obviously fabricated "petition" letter, Augustine repeats the allegation of Optatus in his letter # 76.2: *they sent to the Emperor Constantine a letter begging that bishops of churches beyond the sea should be appointed to arbitrate between the bishops of Africa*. On the basis of an official letter which he quotes in his letter # 88.2., he makes the same allegation. (Phillips Appendix XII) This is a letter from Anulinus to Constantine, circa 313 A.D. which says that he has forwarded the Emperor's letter to Caecilian. Then Anulinus reports that, a few days later, a delegation belonging to *the party of Majorinus* (the "donatists") gave him documents about Caecilian accompanied by a covering letter, and that he is forwarding these documents to Constantine.

The bogus petition letter found in Book One of Optatus cannot be the cover letter which accompanied the pouch of documents about Caecilian handed to Anulinus for forwarding to the Emperor. Father Phillips contents himself with pointing out the provable *errors*. But a sensible scholar can see that the letter is a forgery as is "Constantine's reply" (I.23). The signature can't be right and the date can't be right. The content of Constantine's supposed reply is copied from a letter of Constantine written after Arles. What the "donatists" actually sent to Constantine, through Anulinus, is described in both his letter (Augustine letter 88.2) and also in Constantine's letter to Miltiades (Eusebius *H.E.* x.5.18) as *documents . . . in numbers* which contain *many charges* against Caecilian. These documents have been "lost" of course, and replaced by the bogus petition letter asking for *judges from Gaul*. Judging from the ensuing century long conflict these documents contained the case against the character of Caecilian and against his irregular consecration and they challenged the Emperor's role in backing Caecilian.

Like Optatus, Augustine has to try and justify the heavyweight role of the Emperor and his officials in the dispute over Caecilian. In letter 43 he alleges that the "donatists" had submitted the whole question to the Emperor's judgment by sending him the document about Caecilian. To the obvious question: **WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF THE EMPEROR'S?** Augustine's reply is that he doesn't have to answer that because it was the "donatists" who asked the Emperor to be the judge. That tactic he copied from Optatus. That supposedly explains why, 100 years after Caecilian's irregular election, the Roman soldiers are still trying to force the "donatists" into the "Catholic Church." It all happened because the "donatists" wrote to the emperor.

The letter from Anulinus shows that Constantine was already working with Caecilian: *My duty has caused me, amongst the acts of my insignificance to send your Majesty's divine letter, after I had received and venerated it, to Caecilian and his subordinate clerics; at the same time I exhorted them that--now that Unity has been effected with general consent, since through the condescension of your Majesty their liberty was seen to be in every respect completely secure, and the Catholic Church was protected . . .* He is forwarding the two "donatist" documents while preserving Caecilian in his position. That is, he quite understands the emperor's policy in respect to Caecilian, the Catholic Church and the situation in North Africa. The letter from Anulinus shows that the "donatist" response to Constantine about the situation in Carthage, whatever was in these "lost" documents, came about after the Emperor Constantine had written at least three letters to Caecilian 1) giving him money, police power, and the help of the army 2) giving to the "Catholic Church" alone the property taken from Christians in the persecutions 3) giving major tax exemptions to the clergy of the Catholic Church.

It was only then that some ("donatist") Christian bishops sent him a bunch of documents--which have since been *LOST* to history of course--explaining why they could not accept Caecilian as bishop of Carthage. This is the half truth that Optatus and Augustine turn into the allegation that it was the "donatists" who first appealed to the emperor and that they filed "criminal" charges against Caecilian.

establishing the emperor's church

Note that something called *UNITY*, plus *PROTECTING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* and *PRESERVING CAECILIAN IN HIS POSITION* are all recognized by the Emperor's man in North Africa to be essential parts of the Emperor's program.

The Emperor's interference in this matter, which both Optatus and Augustine try to explain away, would in fact have been a novel outrage for orthodox Christians. The disappearance of the "donatist" documents is a good indication that there were subjects in it which the "Catholics" did not care to discuss. The emperor's right to name bishops was very likely one of them. Since when does the Emperor have the right to name bishops ? ! But he did. He now had the power anyway, at least within the "Catholic Church." Which shows what kind of a Church it was and who the real head of it was. And that buried issue goes to the heart of the "Catholic" / "donatist" conflict. Whatever the exact sequence of events, it is clear that Caecilian owed his position as bishop of Carthage to the Emperor Constantine and that he had this imperial backing from the beginning.

There is an obvious reason why Optatus and Augustine have to make the false accusation that the "donatists" asked the Emperor to decide the case of Caecilian. For the same reason, the "donatist" documents had to get "lost." They want to avoid admitting that the "Catholic Church" was the Emperor's Church from the very beginning. So they are trying to obscure the difference between their position and that of the "donatists" by alleging that the "donatists" were seeking the Emperor's patronage and / or that they asked him to intervene in the matter and / or that they asked him to appoint "Gaulic judges" to decide the matter. They say in effect that the "donatists" were quite willing to have the Emperor decide who the bishop of Carthage would be, so long as he decided in their favor.

Early on, Constantine seems to have openly bossed his new "Catholic Church" although the official historians have obscured this fact as best they could. But he must soon have come to realize that his conspicuous control of the Imperial Church caused it to have a major liability in the eyes of many Christians, in North Africa especially. Later, you routinely see the attempt to disguise the Emperor's power over the Imperial Church. But it is still plain enough for those who do not have to help maintain the propaganda line.

the propaganda line

The propaganda line of the "Catholic Church" was that it was an independent Church which the Emperor favored or helped because of his personal piety and his abhorrence of the violent attacks on the Catholics by the dissenters. So there is a regular effort in the works of Optatus and Augustine and in the extant letters of Constantine to conceal or explain away the Emperor's power over the "Catholic Church" and his aggressive campaign against the real Christian Church to destroy it and / or to force it to conform to the *LAWFUL* "Catholic Church." A secondary propaganda line is that the "donatists" sought imperial favor as eagerly as the "Catholics." So they wrote a false history as to how and when the Emperor first became involved with the church in North Africa.

In letter 185.6 Augustine says *they were themselves the first to do what they censure in us . . . saying that Christians ought not to demand any assistance from Christian emperors*. Note his admission that the "donatists" *CENSURED* the "Catholic Church" for relying upon the emperor. That much is true. It was their consistent position, fist to last. The rest is the propaganda line which the state church scholars have parroted ever since. In I.22 Optatus quotes the "donatists" as saying: *What have Christians to do with kings, or Bishops with the palace ?* But then he argues: "If it be a crime to be acquainted with kings, the whole of the odium falls upon you." As proven by the forged petition letter to the Emperor which he now gives.

The essential historical truth that emerges from an honest examination of this falsified history is that there was a fundamental difference between "Catholic" and "donatist" in respect to allowing the Roman Emperor to boss the Christian Church. That has to be emphasized because it is the key to understanding the situation. Allowing Augustine and Optatus to get away with obscuring that fact--helping them to keep it obscured--has caused one learned scholar after another to write garbage when they give an account of the "donatist schism." Garbage or worse. In fact it appears to be not just bad history but dishonest history in some cases. Instead of exposing the lies of Augustine, they conceal them, or even improve them.

The fiction that it was the "donatists" who brought the Emperor into the situation is used by Augustine to explain away the fact of an Imperial court holding the hearing which "cleared" Bishop Felix of the "donatist" allegation that he had been a *traditor*: *Some one may perhaps make an objection . . . that a bishop should be acquitted by trial before a proconsul; as if the bishop had himself procured this trial, and it had not been done by order of the Emperor, to whose care this matter, as one concerning which he was responsible to God, especially belonged. For **they themselves had constituted the Emperor the arbiter and judge** in this question regarding the surrender of the sacred books, and regarding the schism, by their sending petitions to him, and afterwards appealing to him; and nevertheless they refuse to acquiesce in his decision.* (from letter # 43.13)

the emperor judges the church

How was it the responsibility of the emperor or of an imperial court to decide an allegation of apostasy from the discipline of the Christian Church ? Even if they really had appealed to him, it was still not the business of an imperial court to consider the matter. Since the "donatists" regarded the emperor as Satan's regent, since the allegation was one of cooperation with the former emperor, it is not believable that they would have called upon the emperor to judge a matter of Christian Church discipline which 70 of their bishops had already decided. And the primary issue was not Felix's past, it was the irregularity of Caecilian's consecration in defiance of the North African Church. And most of them must have realized by this time that the Emperor himself--if he had not indeed arranged that irregular consecration--had immediately supported it with money and soldiers. It was already a conspicuous fact that the Emperor Constantine was the patron of Caecilian.

Augustine does not admit that the "Catholics" appealed to the emperor. But, on a common sense basis, that would be the necessary precondition for the emperor to take up the matter, if he really were in a position of neutrality in respect to church affairs. If both sides had appealed to him to arbitrate the matter, there would be at least some plausible pretext for his interference, which is otherwise lacking.

Note that Augustine slips in another argument here, which, in its fully developed form, is his **KING'S COVENANT DOCTRINE** (as I will show later on)--**THE EMPEROR, TO WHOSE CARE THIS MATTER, AS ONE CONCERNING WHICH HE WAS RESPONSIBLE TO GOD, ESPECIALLY BELONGED**. Since when is the emperor mandated to assume authority over the Christian Church and to be **RESPONSIBLE TO GOD** in a case involving defiance of the emperor and / or failure to defy the emperor ? Since the launching of the Imperial Church. The sacrilegious presumption of Constantine's miracle has been followed by the sacrilegious presumption of Constantine's Church.

Detaining the "donatist" bishops at the Imperial Court, making propaganda against them through peculiar hearings, calling Councils to coerce them into conformity, confiscating their churches--these were some of the measures that Constantine tried before he turned the soldiers loose on the non-conforming Christians of North Africa. And it must have been part of a wider program by which Constantine established the Imperial Church throughout the empire. It is only because the writings of Augustine were preserved that we know anything about it as it happened in North Africa. All of the "donatist" history was "lost." There must have been a similar history in other places which has similarly been "lost" with no "great" "saint" Augustine to preserve at least some record of it.

Who attended the council in Rome and what was done at it is, as usual, obscure. In Constantine's letter setting up the council, there is no mention of the 15 Italian bishops listed by Optatus (I.23) as having attended. Optatus (I.24) claims that *Donatus brought forth his witnesses*. But it appears that Bishop Donatus wasn't even there. The "donatists" said they were excluded from the council, according to two letters from Constantine, one to Chrestus given in H.E. X 5 22, and the other to Aelafius given in Appendix III of Phillips edition of Optatus: *they thought fit to answer with persistent obstinacy that the whole case had not been heard, but that these Bishops had shut themselves up somewhere and given the judgment as was most convenient to themselves*. This is Constantine's pretext for calling the Council of Arles.

Using the Councils

One thing hides behind another. In letter 43.20 Augustine says that Constantine *granted them the second trial at Arles*, in response to their complaint about the Council held at Rome. But how can that possibly account for the agenda of Arles, which included the excommunication of Christian pacifists, a reversal of the ban on Christians being magistrates etc. ? What does account for it is the perception that the Emperor was working hard to establish the new conforming "Church" of the Roman Empire with himself at the head of it. And that he was using these councils to rally the forces of the Imperial "Catholic" Church and to suppress the opposition to it from the non-conforming Christians.

Note the clear implication of Augustine's phrase: the Council of Arles was a sort of "second trial" of the donatist case. That is, the emperor Constantine was holding court again and ruling on major church matters. And that is the truth about Arles and the subsequent councils called by the emperors. It was the emperor's fiat that called the council and it was the emperor's judgment that ended it. Constantine used the calling of councils as the way to get the bishops to do his bidding. With the Emperor inside and his soldiers outside, you obviously had to be a very brave and stubborn man to resist giving the Emperor the decisions he wanted. And such bishops were not on the select invitation list. Or allowed to return home afterwards, if they persisted in being uncooperative. The "donatist" bishops "invited" to Arles were detained for a long time afterwards as it appears from several letters. (Phillips Appendix VI)

One council after another was called. All of these councils decided against the "donatists." That is entirely predictable once you understand the real background of these councils--once you recognize that they are under the Emperor's control and they are going to carry out the program he wants carried out. The fragmentary and doctored accounts of them are so murky that the one thing you can be sure of is that they were doing some business that they didn't want to be brought out into the open.

There was no organization in the early church except at the local level and no central authority. So there was no position or title for the emperor to usurp comparable to the title of *PONTIFEX MAXIMUS* or high priest which he had over the pagan state religion. The closest thing to an authority structure in the early church was the occasional council of bishops. So calling these councils and controlling them was the emperor's first expedient, even while he organized the bought bishops into a new state bureaucracy.

At Arles, the subject of Christian pacifism came up. From the scanty records which have survived, it is hard to show what obviously must have happened because of the historical situation: the emperor required an end to Christian pacifism from those who were joining him in the new Imperial Church establishment. The deal the emperor regularly made with conquered nations is that they would supply so many soldiers to the Imperial forces. He could not afford to settle for anything less from the "conquered nation" of the "Catholic Church."

Obviously, an important part of the story is what happened in these councils, if you could only find out what really did happen. The edited records that have survived indicate that they were re-modeling the faith and morals of the Christian Church under the direction of the pagan

Emperor of the Roman Empire. Hefele does mention (185) that *an ancient manuscript, which was compared by Surius, read: "in bello" rather than "in pace"--which is the puzzler. So it read: excummunicentur ut qui in bello arma projiciunt.* It makes sense that this is how Constantine wanted Canon # 3 to read, that these bought bishops gave him what he wanted, and that they then attempted to conceal what they had done because of the reaction from Christians. That is, they sold out the pacifism of the Christian Church and then tried to hide the fact.

Bribery

Constantine first tried bribery according to *A Sermon on the Passion of Saints Donatus and Advocatus*. (sections # 3 and # 4 as translated by Maureen Tilley.) Thirty years later his son Constans tried to win over the "donatists" the same way. (See the account in Optatus III.3 where Optatus keeps up the stupid pretense that this represented *alms for the poor*.)

Laws

In 317 A.D. a law was passed which ordered the "donatist" churches to be confiscated and given to the Catholic Church. The "donatist" bishops were to be sent into exile. (Frend 159) It shows you how serious Constantine was about establishing his church and how little patience he had with Christians who refused to conform to the new order. Why does a disputed election require the confiscation of the "donatist" churches ? Why do these bishops have to be sent into exile ? What requires it is the mandate to force all the North African Christians into the new state church. Augustine refers to the property measure in letter # 93: *The Emperor, as you know, in that case decreed for the first time that the property of those who were convicted of schism and obstinately resisting the unity of the Church should be confiscated.* 93.14 That is, if you won't join the State Church, we will force you to join it. He refers to it again in letter # 185: *Everything, therefore, that was held in the name of the churches of the party of Donatus, was ordered by the Christian emperors, in their pious laws, to pass to the Catholic Church, with the possession of the buildings themselves.* 185.36 In fact, the policy of giving all church property to the "Catholic Church" had already been set forth in the 313 A.D. letter to Anulinus.

So at the same time that the Emperor Constantine is ordering new churches to be built and old churches to be repaired, at the same time that he is turning over the Roman basilicas to his new "Catholic Church" he is closing and / or confiscating the churches of the "donatists." Are these contradictory policies ? No, it is all part of the same policy: establishing a state church as the one legal church of the Roman Empire. While pagan "converts" are crowding into the basilicas to get the white robe and the 20 pieces of gold promised by Constantine, (Gibbon XX 655) he is closing the churches of the real Christians. He is building up one kind of "Church" while tearing down another kind.

searching for books

In his *Life of Constantine*, III 64, 65, 66 Eusebius gives Constantine's edicts against the Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulians and Cataphrygians. *We have directed, accordingly, that you be deprived of all the houses in which you are accustomed to hold your assemblies. And our care in this respect extends so far as to forbid the holding of your superstitious*

and senseless meetings, not in public merely, but in any private house or place whatsoever. . . . 66 the law directed that search should be made for their books. This edict was issued later, after he gained control of the eastern empire. But there apparently were similar edicts proclaimed earlier against the "donatists" et al in the western empire.

closing the doors

In letter # 88.3 Augustine justifies this law because the "donatists" continued to oppose Caecilian: *he gave sentence against your party, and was the first to pass a law that the properties of your congregations should be confiscated.* But what the Emperor Constantine did is already spelled out by his early support for Caecilian and his edict that church property should be given exclusively to the "Catholic Church." Why does his judgment against them in the matter of Caecilian require that their churches be confiscated ? The answer of course is that this had been his policy from the beginning and their attitude towards Caecilian is just an excuse for implementing it. Constantine is determined to close the doors of the non-conforming Christian churches and then re-open them as "Catholic Churches" subservient to the authority of the Emperor.

It appears also that the property of individual Christians, such as their houses, could be taken if they refused to join the "Catholic Church." Under the old edicts against the Christians, houses could be confiscated or torn down if meetings were held there or books were found there. There was an imperial law which made it a crime for Christians to baptize Catholics. Anyone who did so was liable for a fine of ten pounds of gold ! (cf letter 66.1)

In letter # 105.3, written in 409 A.D. Augustine says: *If you are angry with us because you are forced by the decrees of the emperors to rejoin us . . . you forced the enactment of all these decrees.* These coerced unity laws passed in 405 A.D. were a reaffirmation of earlier laws dating back to the time of Constantine: 105.9: *Thus Constantine was the first to issue an extremely rigorous law against the sect of Donatus. His sons imitated him with similar edicts.*

Some months after the conference in Carthage held in June of 411 A.D., the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius published a new decree outlawing the "donatist" church and confiscating its property. 100 years after the Emperor Constantine began it, the Roman Emperors were still trying to force the non-conforming Christians to join the State Church.

economic coercion

It is also apparent that people were forced to join the "Catholic Church" through economic coercion. A large part of the populace were slaves working on large estates owned by absentee landlords. And these estates were Catholic strongholds. The laws which promoted the "Catholic Church" through tax exemptions, and the encouragement of bequests, led to large North African estates being owned by important churches in Italy and elsewhere. Gibbon XX 664 fn. 107 describes the rent rolls of the 3 major basilicae in Rome as including African estates. So the captive work force became "Catholic" whether they liked it or not. The tenant farmers were also dependent upon the Catholic landlord. In letter # 58 Augustine profusely thanks a landlord, a Senator, who has ordered his tenants to join the "Catholic Church." In letter # 57 he writes to Celer, a landowner: *Therefore, I ask you to support Catholic unity among your people in the region of Hippo . . . on your estates.*

violent persecution by Constantine

As his 313 A.D. letter to Caecilian shows, Constantine was already prepared to use the police and the army against *certain persons of unstable mind who are desirous of turning aside the laity of the most holy and Catholic Church by some vile method of seduction*. You see also the original of the allegation that those who resisted the Emperor's new "Catholic Church" are crazy religious fanatics who will stop at nothing. Thanks to the establishment scholars, this allegation has survived the emperor who made it by 1600 years. The threat to *destroy & dash in pieces* those that resist being instructed in religion by the Emperor is about to be made good.

mass murder in Carthage

The account of this violent persecution, which is never mentioned by Optatus and Augustine or the official historians that follow them, is a neglected and ignored document *Passio Donati et Advocatus* which contains a sermon by Bishop Donatus circa A.D. 320. (*A Sermon on the Passion of Saints Donatus and Advocatus* translated by Tilley) A Roman military force under the guidance of Bishop Caecilian attacked a number of "donatist" church congregations. In one of them the whole congregation was killed. The date of this massacre was probably March 12th 317 A.D. In at least two other places "donatist" bishops were killed.

The omission from the official histories of any record of these violent persecutions by Constantine is enough, all by itself, to turn them into false histories, as I will argue later.

What Constantine was trying to do was fundamentally similar to what Diocletian had tried to do 12 years earlier. He was trying to force everyone to join the State Church. He was using terror to force people into the State Church, and slaughter to exterminate the hard heads who couldn't be intimidated. That was the meaning of *UNITY*. It is also the fundamental "theological" issue involved.

Failure

Constantine's attempt to force the "donatists" into his new State Church was eventually a failure. Like Roman Emperors before him, he found out that the Christian Church was tougher than he was, that he didn't have money enough to buy them or power enough to over-power them. Like Diocletian, he had to abandon the attempt to force them to conform to the Imperial religion. In 321 A.D., on the eve of his showdown with Licinius, he allowed the "donatist" bishops to return to North Africa. In 330 A.D. he ordered that their confiscated churches should be returned to them. These letters are given by Phillips in Appendix IX and X.

But this was only the beginning of a long struggle between the non-conforming Christians of North Africa and the pseudo-Christian Roman Empire.

VI The Urgent Necessity of a State Religion

Why was it necessary for Constantine to murder the Christians of Carthage to try and force them into the new State Church ? Why had the Emperor Diocletian murdered the Christians of Carthage 12 years before to try and force them into the old State Church ? Why was conformity to a state religion such a top priority of those emperors who still cared about saving the empire, who hadn't yet succumbed to luxury and vice, who hadn't yet abandoned the care of the empire to the corrupt bureaucracy ? Why was it such an urgent necessity that they ordered such extreme measures to achieve it ?

And, in their own way, the emperors were obviously right. That is shown by the fact that the failure of Constantine's attempt to bring everyone into his new state religion soon led to the final collapse and disintegration of the empire. Because nothing else could fix the Roman Empire. The new state religion turned out to be almost as useless as the old state religion in holding it together. Augustine's *CITY OF GOD* is a lame apology for the failure of Christianity, as the new state religion, to save the Roman Empire from itself.

believing in the emperor

The empire requires an emperor who wields absolute power--who always needs more power than he has. To have any chance of holding this vast conglomeration together, he needs to hold in his own hands all the power of the empire, whether money or military or political or spiritual. No emperor has enough gold and silver to buy all the support he needs. Neither does he have enough soldiers to coerce everyone. That is why it is essential to his government that many people believe in the empire and the emperor enough to loyally serve him, enough to die for the empire and to kill for it. If they even half-believe in it, they may serve it for half price. Otherwise, the emperor and the empire depend entirely on mercenaries. Large armies of mercenaries and conscripts tend to run from small armies that have at least some belief in the battle. Without a state religion which people can believe, the empire is doomed. As the years go by the belief in the empire wanes. (It is striking how soon the American Empire has gone down the same road to where it has more and more to depend upon money and mercenaries.)

A state religion was characteristic of all the ancient states. The head of the ancient state was at least the high priest of the state religion. In many of the ancient empires he was revered as a god himself. When Rome became an empire, the emperors assumed the status of gods. *CAESAR WORSHIP* began with Augustus and it was the central political fact of the Roman Empire in the time of Diocletian, 300 years later. The cult of the emperor, joined to the cult of the state gods, provided the necessary spiritual focus for the army and the nation. The dissent of the Christians from this consensus made them subversives and traitors.

The imperial religion was the cement that held the empire together. The weakness of the old imperial religion is the major reason that the empire was falling apart faster than the emperors could put it together. As the empire expanded, the Roman religion expanded to provide a state religion which could command the faith and obedience of a multitude of men. But more and more it took on the characteristic weakness of watered down soup.

The old Roman strategy was to assimilate the state religions of conquered nations into the Roman state religion. The resistance of both Jews and Christians to this promiscuous idolatry was the major reason why they were so often persecuted by the emperors. The Emperor Caligula tried to force the Jews to permit a statue of himself as Olympian Zeus to be placed in the temple at Jerusalem in 40 A.D. Various emperors up to Diocletian tried to force the Christians to make at least a token acknowledgement of the cult of the emperor. Constantine's tactic was different but his aim was the same.

Constantine had sense enough to realize that the ancient religion of the empire no longer had the strength to serve as the cement which would hold it together. The old pagan religion was a good enough excuse for a party, but it had long since lost the power to compel the kind of passionate belief that makes men willing to lay down their lives for the empire and the emperor. He recognized the strength of Christianity. He didn't have the wisdom to see that the strength of Christianity would be lost when it was de-natured into a State Religion.

Constantine's patronage of "Christianity" was one of his major policies. His purpose was to establish a new state religion which would be strong enough to hold his crumbling empire together. His version of Christianity necessarily featured the emperor himself in a god like role, just as in the old state religion. While Constantine was still presenting himself to the pagans of the empire as the incarnation of Apollo, Eusebius presents him to the Christians as the Vicar of Jesus Christ on this earth. (see Eusebius, *Oration* II.1-5) His statue in Constantinople, in which the cross of Jesus Christ has been placed, symbolizes the Union of **the two kinds of power** for which Augustine afterwards produced a theological and scriptural foundation.

Where the emperor Caligula had tried to place his statue in the Temple, the emperor Constantine placed the Cross inside one of his statues. It is essentially the same maneuver. Both represent the fusion of the secular and the sacred. In Christian terms, it represents The Church which has merged with The World. This is the anti-church which Augustine had to defend with a new theology.

The state religion necessarily included the whole state. That is why Constantine turned over the basilicas of Rome to his new "Catholic Church" and built even more churches into which he herded the whole miscellaneous mob. (see *Everybody's Church*, chapter XIII)

Christian pacifism contra the empire

War was the nature of the empire. Success in war created the empire. The empire could only be maintained by perennial success in war. That required having a permanent commander-in-chief, an emperor, who could command all the resources of the empire. How could that square with a religion which centered around the Prince of Peace ? It couldn't. That is why real Christianity could not be tolerated. That is why the first step in turning Christianity into a state religion was to replace the Prince of Peace with the "Christ" who was the emperor's War God. That is why the theologians like Augustine who were the servants of the Imperial Church had to replace Christian pacifism with "just war" theology. After the war is over, the theologians can argue about whether it was just or not.

The Imperial State requires that men believe in it; that they worship it; that they die for it; that they kill for it. A Christian who believes in Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God he founded cannot give the Imperial State what it demands, what it has to have to stay in business. The Kingdom he believes in requires that a man be willing to die for it but it also requires that he refuse to kill. (cf John 18.33-37) But a man who refuses to kill and die for the empire is sabotaging the belief which sustains the empire. A Church which teaches him to do this, and which encourages and supports his decision to do it, is the mortal enemy of the empire. Either one must perish or the other will.

It is the State Church historians and theologians who have willfully misunderstood this truth, who have obscured and falsified it. They have regularly falsified the history of Constantine's "Catholic Church" to make it appear that it was independent of the State. In fact, it was dependent. That is the number one historical truth about Constantine's so-called **CATHOLIC CHURCH**: it was dependent upon the State. It was controlled by the State. It was subservient to the State. It was entwined with the State. Its structure, its theology and its morality were formed by that relationship. The mold which formed the Imperial Church was the Roman Empire. And it kept that shape long after the mold had been broken.

Constantine's Dilemma: the crumbling empire

To understand the task of Constantine's new state church, it is necessary to understand the gross reality of Constantine's State--the truth about his empire. While the state church historians have concealed and obscured the real character and history of the Imperial Church, the many historians who believed in the grandeur of the Roman Empire have obscured the truth as to what a horrible mess it was. They admire the literature or the grand buildings that Imperial Rome produced and ignore the slavery, the misery, the rampant criminality at the highest levels, the routine rape, robbery and murder that marked the Roman Empire from the time it became an empire to the time of its final collapse and disintegration. It was an idol of silver and gold set up in a stinking privy. The fine white marble facade of the Empire stood in front of the entrance to a slum, and a mine where slaves were worked to death. The "peace" of the empire was established by a perpetual massacre. *They make a wasteland and call it PEACE.*

There is an idolatry of the Roman Empire in Gibbon's history and in later historians. Even when they are conscientious scholars who include contrary facts, they are compelled to minimize the war, the slavery and the other gross evils of the Empire, so as to present it as a good and rational enterprise. They wave away what Tacitus and Suetonius tell us about the emperors as moral monsters. They discuss the *policies* of Augustus and Tiberius as if their depravities and their murders were incidental to the grand progress of the Empire. It is like discussing the *policies* of Hitler and Stalin while ignoring their characters, their mad visions and aspirations, and their crimes. Men have to worship something. When they do not really believe in God they worship the **Powers** of this world. G.K. Chesterton says in his *Autobiography* (p. 145) *the truth is that for most men about this time Imperialism, or at least patriotism, was a substitute for religion. Men believed in the British Empire precisely because they had nothing else to believe in.* But of course the belief in the Empire can be joined to the belief in Imperial Christianity. That describes those who believe in America as the fulfillment of Christianity.

The brisk account that Suetonius gives of *THE TWELVE CAESARS* is an astonishing portrait of the relentless moral depravity and criminality of the Roman upper class during the whole first century of the Christian era. The emperor who presided over this evil empire took the lead in setting the example of total depravity. Shielded by the imperial robes, the emperors were robbers and rapists and murderers on an imperial scale. It was a regular practice of the emperors to frame charges against men of wealth and have them executed in order to confiscate their estates for the imperial purse. The emperor openly helped himself to other men's wives while they had to grin and bear it. Tiberius built himself a special place on the island of Capri and devoted the final years of his reign to the pursuit of perverse pleasure. When two pagan altar boys complained of his assault upon them, he ordered their legs to be broken. And yet these emperors were made into gods and their statues were put into the temples for the worship of the multitude. The belief in the empire and the worship of the emperor were essential to the strength and cohesion of the state. What else was it but demon worship ?

criminal caesars

The notorious Nero wasn't much different or much worse than the emperors who came before him or those who came after him. The same vicious criminality that appears in Nero, appears in all the emperors. It evidently goes with the job. That character re-appears in all the emperors, including Constantine, who, like Nero, murdered his own family, and who, like Nero, murdered the Christians. There was no such thing as a good emperor, it is a contradiction in terms. How can a good man discharge his responsibilities to an evil empire ? A "good" emperor was one who only had a few murders to his dis-credit, not counting his routine massacres of political opponents, for prudence or just for entertainment. An eb9 article mentions a Roman ampitheater at *TREVES* where *Constantine caused several thousand Franks and Bructeri to be butchered for the public amusement.* XXIII 553

All the hokum about Roman Law obscures the fact that the emperor was the Law and he could execute anyone he wished for any reason. While a slave could be tortured and killed for nothing, those who had rank could commit crimes with impunity.

Government officials were the most powerful criminals in a corrupt and brutally violent enterprise that was run by and for criminals. Further down the bureaucracy it was worse. The total corruption and criminality of the state bureaucracy was a fact of the empire from the time of Augustus to the final collapse of the empire. Anyone who tried to make a living by honest work was preyed upon by a society which encouraged every dishonest way to make money and ruined every honest one.

We still recycle the fabrications of the Power-worshipping intellectuals who believed in the Roman Empire and that it represented a *HIGHER CIVILIZATION* which therefore had the moral right to turn their soldiers loose on the "barbarians." The Romans represented a higher morality like Hitler's soldiers represented a higher morality. Bad as the barbarians were, they were halfway decent compared to the Romans. They had not advanced to the refined sort of criminal depravity that was ingrained into the society of imperial Rome.

See the short essay at the end of chapter 38 *GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST* for a curious testimonial of Edward Gibbon's faith in the *CIVILIZATION* of Europe as the legacy of the Roman Empire. This rosy prognosis for European peace and prosperity preceded by a few years the horrors of the French Revolution and the wars of Napoleon. Like his life, his writing was always at a comfortable and complacent remove from London's east end. He obviously could not even have imagined anything like World War I and World War II erupting from such a *CIVILIZATION*. Or that the rise of Bolshevism and Nazism would make savage mankind appear to be morally superior because of their relatively more modest and amateurish programs of rapine and massacre. Gibbon's secular faith rendered him blind to the devils that European *CIVILIZATION* harbored, just as he was blind to the evil of the Roman Empire.

The Christian view that Satan was the real ruler of the Roman Empire becomes entirely believable to anyone who takes the trouble to learn the truth about the real character of the Roman Empire. The evil character of the empire is not a doctrine that requires any faith when it is a palpable fact. The Christians of Carthage who saw Christian families slaughtered by Constantine's soldiers didn't need a theologian to explain to them the Satanic nature of the rulers of this world, or the Satanic character of the Empire. The character of an evil empire was stamped upon it from first to last. And what other sort of character could the State "Church" have which accepted the gold and then carried out the orders of the emperor who ruled this evil empire ?

The life of a Roman Emperor tended to be nasty, luxurious, and short. The writer of the eb9 essay on *ROME* (XX 776c) states that: *Between the death of Severus in 211 and the accession of Diocletian in 284, no fewer than 23 emperors sat in the seat of Augustus, and of these all but three died violent deaths at the hands of a mutinous soldiery or by the orders of a successful rival. But life was even nastier for those who had to submit to these emperors.*

endless wars

The social and economic ruin of the provinces and towns of the empire was caused by the success of the empire, by its endless wars, as the same essayist relates: *While Rome had been extending her sway westward and eastward, while the treasury had been enriched, and while her nobles and merchants were amassing colossal fortunes abroad, the small freeholders throughout the greater part of Italy were sinking deeper into ruin under the pressure of accumulated difficulties. The Hannibalic war had laid waste their fields and thinned their numbers, and when peace returned to Italy it brought with it no revival of prosperity. The heavy burden of military service still pressed ruinously upon them, and in addition they were called upon to compete with the foreign corn imported from beyond the sea, and with the foreign slave labour purchased by the capital of wealthier men. Farming became unprofitable, and the hard laborious life with its scanty returns was thrown into still darker relief when compared with the stirring life of the camps with its opportunities of booty, or with the cheap provisions, frequent largesses and gay spectacles to be had in the larger towns. The small holders went off to follow the eagles or swell the proletariat of the cities, and their holdings were left to run waste or merged in the vineyards, oliveyards, and above all in the great cattle farms, of the rich, and their own place was taken by slaves. (757)*

The large cities of the empire were inundated by an impoverished and degenerate mob who were kept going by bread and circuses, who were ready to join any violent and criminal enterprise for a small donation. Catiline's conspiracy was aided by *Bankrupt nobles . . . Sullan veterans and the starving peasants whom they had dispossessed of their holdings, outlaws of every description, the slave population of Rome* (765) Rome turned into a giant slum. And the emperor had to cater to this miscellaneous mob. Julius Caesar *dazzled and delighted them by the splendour of the spectacles he provided, and by the liberality of his largesses*. He attempted in vain to mitigate *the twin evils which were ruining the prosperity of Italy--the concentration of a pauper population in the towns, and the denudation and desolation of the country districts*. (766)

the terrible mess

This was the terrible mess that all the emperors had to urgently try and do something about. And they failed. Constantine's failure is shown by the fact that nothing had really changed by the time of Augustine. There are some startling glimpses in the 29 new letters of Augustine of the criminal character of the imperial government of North Africa. Two letters are about two different cases where a man of high rank has raped a nun. One may possibly lose his manager's job, but neither will suffer any criminal penalty. In fact, one is seeking criminal penalties against clergy who attacked him while he was raping the nun. The no good bishop Antoninus has committed a number of serious crimes. Not only will he escape any criminal penalty, they are trying to persuade him to accept a lesser diocese than the one he insists upon. Gangs of slave traders, working with the connivance of government officials, kidnap people and sell them into slavery. When some of the Christians succeed in freeing some of their kidnapped brethren, the slavers demand their "property" back. (letter 10 *)

One letter brings out the fact that Augustine, as an Imperial bishop, is also a Roman magistrate who enforces the Roman law on slavery. That is what conformity to the State required of the Christians who joined the Imperial Church. Compare that with Tertullian's insistence that a Christian could not be a magistrate because he was morally forbidden to carry out the kinds of duties that magistrates had to perform. Allowing Christians to be magistrates was one of the new doctrines of the Council of Arles.

criminal government

In chapter XXV (page 882) Gibbon describes the criminal government of Count Romanus in North Africa, part of the corruption of Valentinian 's court, which led to the revolt of Firmus circa 373 A.D. When three cities of Tripoli asked for government protection against an invasion by the desert tribes, he declined unless they paid him a large bribe. When they complained to the Emperor's court, Romanus used bribery to have their complaint be retaliated against them. The result was that the president of Tripoli and 4 prominent citizens were put to death *and the tongues of two others were cut out by the express order of the emperor*.

The eb9 writer tells a similar story: *From all the writers who deal with the 4th century comes the same tale of declining strength and energy. From Lactantius to Zosimus we have one long series of laments over the depression and misery of the provinces. To meet the increased expenditure necessary to maintain the legions, to pay the hosts of officials, and to keep up the*

luxurious splendour of the imperial courts, not only were the taxes raised in amount, but the most oppressive and inquisitorial methods were adopted in order to secure for the imperial treasury every penny that could be wrung from the wretched taxpayer. . . . Among the graver symptoms of economic ruin were the decrease of population which seriously diminished not only the number of taxpayers but the supply of soldiers for the legions; the spread of infanticide; the increase of waste lands whose owners and cultivators had fled to escape the tax collector; the declining prosperity of the towns; and the constantly recurring riots and insurrections, both among starving peasants, as in Gaul, and in populous cities like Antioch. The distress was aggravated by the civil wars, by the rapacity of tyrants such as Maxentius and Maximus, but above all by the raids of the barbarians, who seized every opportunity afforded by the dissensions or incapacity of the emperors to cross the frontiers and harry the lands of the provincials. . . . Even more ominous of coming danger was the extent to which the European half of the empire was becoming barbarized. (eb9 XX 779c)

In Salvian's *On the Government of God* written circa 445 A.D. he describes the corruption and ruin of Roman society in Spain and North Africa. He makes it clear that the corrupt clergy of the Imperial Church were a major part of the problem.

Constantine's attempt to force everyone to join his new Imperial "Catholic" Church was a last ditch effort to spiritually unite the rotting and disintegrating empire. The Christians who refused to support this effort because they did not believe in the empire, or the official church of the empire, were the enemies of that empire. Not surprisingly, they were treated like enemies who had to be conquered for the safety of the empire.

The same attitude and the same policy re-appear in the reign of Constantine's son, the western Emperor Constans.

VII *UNITY* through *Severity* 347 A.D.

As murky and dishonest as it is, the account of Optatus permits you to see that the real cause of the "donatist" / "Catholic" conflict was the attempt by the emperors to force the "donatists" into *UNITY* with the new state church. Optatus uses the word over and over and what emerges is a clear enough picture of the essential quarrel: the "donatists" are the non-conforming Christians of North Africa who have resolutely refused to join the Imperial Church which they denounce as apostate, heretical and schismatic. And it is demonstrable that it was all three of those things, contra the sophistry of Augustine. In fact it was arguably a Satanic church, as the "donatists" alleged. It was characterized by lies, violence, love of power and love of money. And it murderously persecuted the true Church of Jesus Christ. That is a pretty good working definition of "Satanic."

In Book III, Optatus gives his presentation of

The Four reasons on Account of Which It Was Not Possible to Bring About Unity without Severity:

I Because the Schismatics Had Built Churches "that were not wanted"

II Because Donatus of Carthage Had Appealed to the Emperor to Bring About Unity

III Because Donatus of Bagaia Collected Bands of Armed Men to Stop the Work of Unity

IV Because None of Those Things with Which The Work of Unity Has Been Reproached Came to Pass In Opposition To The Will of God

By *UNITY* he means bringing all North African Christians into the state church. By *SEVERITY* he means the massacres of the "donatists" by the Roman army circa 347, under the orders of Paul and Macarius. That is what he is trying to justify here.

The *Churches "that were not wanted"* is an oblique reference to the fact that Churches had been confiscated and given to the "Catholic" organization to force people to attend the Catholic Church. Instead, the non-conforming Christians built other churches. Confiscating churches to force the "donatists" into the Catholic church was first done under Constantine but he backed away from it. It was apparently being tried again under Constans. They were still doing it circa 412. One of the 29 new letters is to a bishop who claims that all the "donatists" in his area have been "converted" by their churches being confiscated and them being ordered to attend the services, conducted by the Catholic clergy, at their old churches.

What Optatus is implying here is that the failure of the forced church policy led to the army being brought in. Which is probably true. It is notable that he gives this as the number one reason why "severity" was needed. The "building of unwanted churches" doesn't fit the image of violent fanaticism that has been projected onto the "donatists" as the justification for the violence that was done to them. Why didn't they take their churches back by force or seize the Catholic churches if they were so prone to violence? Here, as elsewhere, Optatus has inadvertently testified to the basic peaceableness of the "donatists."

The claim that Bishop Donatus of Carthage had appealed to the emperor *TO BRING ABOUT UNITY* is a fib which is characteristic of Optatus. Everything the "donatists" accuse the Catholics of doing is retorted by him: we didn't do this, you did ! He routinely claims that they were the ones who first appealed to the emperor, who first requested soldiers etc. As already discussed, he presents a falsified letter (I.22, p. 43) to prove that it was the "donatists" who first asked the Emperor Constantine to get involved. He says that it was the "donatist" bishops who asked for the army to come after the *CIRCUMCELLIONES*. These are the soldiers who were responsible for the massacres of 347 A.D. in the market towns and at the church in Bagai.

Optatus belies this claim himself when he presents Bishop Donatus as demanding from Paul and Macarius: *WHAT HAS THE EMPEROR TO DO WITH THE CHURCH?* (Optatus III.3, p. 131) This is the same bishop who supposedly appealed to the emperor to bring about *UNITY*--that is, to merge the "donatists" with the Imperial Church. It is clear from the accounts of both Optatus and Augustine that the "donatists" completely rejected the Emperor's "Catholic Church" and refused to have anything to do with it. They paid with their lives for resisting "unity" with it. Therefore it is not credible that Bishop Donatus ever requested the Emperor to bring about a unification between the two churches. The "donatist" accounts of the martyrdoms in A.D. 347 describe the *UNITY* demanded by the emperor as *SACRILEGIOUS*. (see the *passio* of Maximian and Isaac and that of Bishop Marculus) Maximian is martyred for tearing up a posted copy of the emperor's edict of unity. The emperor himself is referred to as *ANTICHRIST*. And they were in the tradition of the earlier Christian martyrs. Just before they were martyred July 30th 304 two 16 year old girls, Saints Maxima and Donatilla, told the official: *The command of the emperor will perish, but the command of the Lord will remain forever.* Felix the bishop said, *The Lord's command takes priority over human authority.* When the Roman magistrate tells the Abitinian martyrs that *You ought to obey the law of the emperors and the caesars* Tazelita says: *I respect only the Law of God which I have learned. That is what I obey. I die for it. I am consumed by it, by the Law of God. There is no other.* (Tilley *Donatist Martyr Stories*)

And the allegation that Bishop Donatus had appealed to the emperor for *UNITY* goes nowhere as an explanation for the ensuing massacres of the "donatists." Why did this lead to massacres ? Optatus makes this spurious and puzzling allegation to divert the blame away from the Catholics, who did pressure the emperors to bring about *UNITY* by military force.

Alleged Violence of the "donatists": I. *Circumcelliones* 347 A.D.

Of the 4 reasons Optatus gives to justify the use of *SEVERITY*, # 3 is the only one that could begin to justify the massacres carried out by the soldiers of Macarius. It implies that there was an armed rebellion among the "donatists" led by the notorious *CIRCUMCELLIONES*. (Reason # 4 is discussed in chapter XI.) Optatus is the original source for the allegation that the "donatists" were violent rebels in the middle of the 4th century. Optatus never gives dates and he ignores chronological order. So his allegations of "donatist" violence at the time when they recovered their churches under Julian, circa 363 A.D., is put into Book II.18 p 96-99. While his allegations about the violence of the *Circumcelliones* which supposedly provoked the massacres of 347 A.D. under Constans are put later, in Book III.4 p 143-148:

143 *Paul and Macarius came in order to console the poor everywhere, and exhort everyone individually to unity. But when they drew near to the city of Bagaia, the second Donatus summoned the fierce and terrible CIRCUMCELLIONES whom Optatus now describes: 144 no creditor was free to press his claim, and all were terrified by the letters of these fellows . . . A sudden host of madmen flew to the place. A reign of terror was established. Creditors were hemmed in with perils. . . [the escaped creditor] held himself to have gained something in escaping from the violence of these men. Even journeys could not be made with perfect safety, for masters were often thrown out of their own chariots and forced to run, in servile fashion, in front of their own slaves, seated in their lord's place. By the judgement and command of these outlaws, the condition of masters and slaves was completely reversed; 145 Taurinus ordered an armed force to go through the fairs, where these mad vagrants were accustomed to wander about. In the district round Octavum, a large number were put to death, of whom many were beheaded. Even to the present day we may count their bodies by the whitened altars or tables; 146 [Bishop] Donatus of Bagaia [got] together from them a furious horde with which to attack Macarius. Of the same class were those who, out of desire for a false martyrdom, hired men to strike and kill them to their own destruction [they also] cast themselves down headlong from the summits of lofty mountains, throwing away their good for nothing lives; 147 The fanatics had got together an enormous horde and it is known that they had prepared an ample commissariat. They had turned a basilica into a sort of public granary, where they awaited those upon whom they might expend their savagery; and they would have done whatever their madness might have urged, had not the presence of an armed force stood in their way. For when quartermasters were as is usual sent ahead of the soldiers, they were not received with due respect contrary to the command of the Apostle, who says: "Honour to whom honour is due, custom to whom custom, tribute to whom tribute. Owe no man anything." . . . Those who had been sent on horseback were maltreated by the men whose names you have blown about. [as martyrs--Bishop Donatus and his congregation] 148 The soldiers who had been thus molested went back to their quarters, and everyone resented that which two or three had endured. All were profoundly stirred up, and not even their officers could hold back these soldiers in their anger. In this way that came to pass, which you have recorded thus, to create prejudice against unity.*

the comic book original

This is everything that Optatus alleges in respect to the *CIRCUMCELLIONES*. This is the original foundation for all the learned foolishness that has been written since on the subject of the fierce fanatics of North Africa circa 350 A.D. It is Augustine's expanded and exaggerated and polished version of this self-refuting comic book original that is the foundation of all the slander that has been written ever since. Several thousand Christians were put to death for refusing to relinquish their Christian faith, and this smelly account is the epitaph for their martyrdom preserved by the Imperial Church and its subservient scholars.

Comment on 143: that is, they offered a kind of passive resistance to "creditors" who were terrified of their letters ? According to this, they also interfered with slavery. Note that he does not allege that they killed or robbed the master. As men who are supposed to be terrorists or bandits they are wonderfully restrained. The striking thing about Optatus account of the *CIRCUMCELLIONES* is that apparently not one of them owns a knife.

(In letter # 185.15 Augustine gives an embellished version of what is found here in Optatus: *What master was there who was not compelled to live in dread of his own servant, if he had put himself under the guardianship of the Donatists . . . Who dared to exact payment of a debt . . . bound to the mill and compelled to turn it around ;* It would be interesting to know something about the true history of the Circumcelliones.)

Comment on 145: that is, the Roman Army went through the market towns killing people; *whitened altars or tables*: that is, those who were killed were thereafter treated as martyrs whose tombs were used as altars.

Comment on 147-148: So this *furious horde* of *CIRCUMCELLIONES* confronts several Roman *quartermasters* who came to the church without the rest of the army. Whatever lack of "respect" they received, the only result of this confrontation with the *furious horde* is that "donatists" were later killed. Optatus does not even allege that there was an armed attack upon the Romans or that any of them were killed. Rather, he indicates that the *CIRCUMCELLIONES* were over awed by the army so that they made no attack: *they would have done whatever their madness might have urged, had not the presence of an armed force stood in their way.* (*Madness* was the standard allegation against those who were about to become the targets of imperial aggression. See, for example, Eusebius *C.H.* x.8 "The Madness of Licinius.")

Battle of Bagai

This is a battle ? This is a murderous fanatical horde ? And this is the climactic attack by the *CIRCUMCELLIONES* which supposedly justifies the massacre of the "donatists" by the Roman army. This is Optatus entire original account of the ferocious *CIRCUMCELLIONES* which is the basis of the story that the "donatist" Christians were violent rebels who provoked the Roman military violence by Paul and Macarius in 347 A.D.

If this does not prove them to be Christian pacifists, it shows that they weren't mad men. They had sense enough not to attack the army. Why didn't they ? If they were so desperate for martyrdom that they jumped off cliffs and hired people to kill them, why not take this perfect chance at martyrdom by resisting the Roman soldiers who have come to one of their churches ? In Optatus account, they never live up to the reputation he tries to give them. That is, Optatus has been loading us. Optatus is doing what he can to discount the "donatist" story of the martyrdom of Bishop Donatus and his congregation at Bagai, which has been *LOST* of course except for a surviving reference at the Council of Carthage in 411 : *in the single village of Bagai, the blood of numerous Christians was poured out.* (Migne 11.1413 end of # 258 DS)

There are conspicuous omissions in this account of Optatus. He omits to mention that the congregation was killed along with Bishop Donatus. Optatus omission of this fact shows that he was ashamed of it and had no good explanation for it. And yet the fact of a major slaughter in response to an attack would be his best argument that the "donatists" offered a violent resistance. If this was a battle, instead of a massacre of unarmed and peaceable Christians, there is no plausible explanation as to why Optatus would not have written it up. But Optatus says nothing about the "donatists" making any attack upon the soldiers. He makes no claim that any soldiers were killed or injured.

On page 46 he says that the quartermasters "were not received with due respect" and that they were "maltreated." On page 48 he says that "2 or 3" of them had been "molested." Whatever that is supposed to mean, it didn't prevent them from returning to their comrades and complaining of their treatment. They could still walk and they could still talk. This hardly squares with the implication that there had been some kind of military attack upon the soldiers by the *furious horde* of Circumcelliones.

Two or three quartermasters are somehow mistreated when they go to the church where a fanatical horde of Circumcelliones has assembled. They go back and complain to their comrades. Who are thereby so enraged that they . . . do something which Optatus does not want to describe or even specifically state. This is Optatus lame account of what the "donatists" describe as the martyrdom of Bishop Donatus and his congregation at the Church in Bagai by the Roman soldiers in 347 A.D. Optatus wants to characterize it as something quite different but he is unwilling to give any description of what actually happened.

peculiar allegations

It is obvious from the rest of this chapter and from the rest of this book that Optatus would have accused them of attacking the soldiers if he thought that his contemporary Catholic / "donatist" audience would let him get away with saying it. This is the place where he is putting down everything he can to show that the massacres carried out by the Roman army had been provoked by the violence of the "donatists." And therefore it is striking that there isn't one allegation of armed violence by one of the *CIRCUMCELLIONES*. Instead, there is all this other peculiar stuff--they intimidated creditors with letters; they made masters change places with their slaves; they wandered around the market towns; they jumped off cliffs; they gathered at a church where there was grain; they dis-respected the Roman quartermasters.

But that doesn't prevent later writers, including Frend, (178-179) from turning the slaughter of a church congregation into a battle. He describes the church at Bagai as *fortified* and says that *there was fighting and finally the soldiers rushed the basilica and massacred its defenders*. What is the justification for this description since it is belied by the original account found in Optatus ? Apparently Frend himself is improving the account, as he does in several other important places. Optatus clearly implies that the "donatists" at the church were passive because they were awed by *the presence of an armed force* and that they were at most guilty of "dis-honouring" or "maltreating" the quartermasters in some unspecified way.

If there was anything resembling an armed attack by the "donatists" on the soldiers what reason would Optatus have to avoid saying so, and with emphasis ? He is obviously coming up with every allegation of "donatist" violence he can think of to justify the actions of the soldiers so it is entirely implausible that he would neglect to state the most obvious excuse for their violence if he had any basis for stating it. The exoneration of the "donatists" from having committed violent acts is entirely convincing when coming from Optatus, even if it is inadvertent. The fact that the exoneration runs contrary to what he would like to say, what he is trying to say, and what he keeps hinting at, without being able to state it, makes it all the more convincing.

Gibbon, Volume I page 721 shows how this puzzling story was rationalized and improved upon by later scholars: *they attacked an advanced guard of the imperial cavalry.*

Optatus clearly indicates that the Circumcelliones did nothing because they were afraid of the army. It is anyway highly unlikely that a group of irregulars who wanted to attack a Roman army would have confronted them in an open battle. It is unlikely that they would have tried to use a church as a fort when there were mountainous areas nearby. Note that Optatus says nothing about this church being fortified. This is an inference that later writers have made out of his attempt to depict the church as some kind of a military provocation. A church full of grain is hardly what a band of fighting guerrillas would use for field rations. (20th century archaeological researches show that it was not unusual for grain to be stored at the churches in these agricultural areas, as it was at Bagai. Some of these churches were double churches with the second church being used as a mausoleum church. Such churches apparently were used for grain storage facilities at certain seasons.)

In short, what the account of Optatus reveals is that the "donatists" did nothing to provoke these massacres except for their stubborn refusal to join the apostate Imperial Church, a so-called "Christian" church which murdered the Christians who refused to join it. You can see why they did not want to join it.

Massacres in Market Towns

The fact that the army massacred people in the market towns and at this church clearly indicates that it was a massacre of civilians. What were the people in the market towns doing to provoke the army? The implication in Optatus is that the massacres were justified because the *CIRCUMCELLIONES* were *mad vagrants* who were *accustomed to wander about* in the vicinity of these fairs. So the soldiers beheaded anyone they could catch in the hope that some of them might turn out to be *CIRCUMCELLIONES*? If their offense was vagrancy, couldn't a few policemen handle it? Is beheading people really an appropriate response to vagrancy?

Frend's tendency to improve the unlikely accounts of Optatus leads him to say that: *At one of these markets, Octava in Numidia, which had long been a Christian centre, the crowd resisted.* (Frend 176) But Optatus says nothing about resistance and clearly indicates that people were executed, not killed in a battle: *a large number were put to death, of whom many were beheaded.* (Optatus 145) He makes no allegation at all that the soldiers were attacked when they came to Octava. He gives an entirely different explanation as to what led to this massacre: the soldiers went looking for Circumcelliones in these market towns at the request of the "donatist" bishops. Those who were killed were somehow identified as *CIRCUMCELLIONES*. Despite his eagerness to show that the massacres were provoked by the Circumcelliones the most he can accuse them of is wandering about in the vicinity of these towns.

It is unlikely on the face of it that a miscellaneous collection of people in a market town would attack a body of Roman soldiers. Throwing a few rocks at American policemen circa 1968 is one thing. Provoking heavily armed and homicidal Roman soldiers in North Africa circa 347 A.D. is another. Obviously, if there were any *CIRCUMCELLIONES* in the vicinity, they decided they would stick to jumping off cliffs. Since our original source says nothing at all about any

attack on the soldiers by a crowd, when it is clear that he would dearly love to say it, what possible scholarly justification can there be for making such a statement ? What Frend has done here is to adopt the account of Optatus as credible, but, realizing that it is not very credible as written, he has re-written it to make it sound more credible. This is scholarship ?

One major difference is that Optatus was under a restraint that his successors were not in that he had to confront those who knew something about what had actually happened only 25 years before. The accounts of the martyrdoms of Bishop Donatus of Bagai and Bishop Marculus were well known in North Africa at the time that Optatus was writing and he had to be careful to avoid alleging what many would at once declare to be false. Augustine later on, and other scholars after him would have much less fear of being contradicted by those who had personal knowledge of what happened in 347 A.D. So Optatus admits that both Bishop Donatus and Bishop Marculus were killed while, in his commentary *On the Gospel of John* Tract XI 15, Augustine suggests that Bishop Donatus jumped down the well and that Bishop Marculus jumped over the cliff. (as quoted and discussed on page 70)

Also, it appears that Optatus was writing for a North African audience during a period when the "Catholic Church" had to rely upon persuasion even to keep its own congregations from converting to the "donatist" church. During times of persecution by the government, it seems like the sky is the limit for what Augustine asserts in making what is in effect war time propaganda against the "donatists." Also, much of what Augustine writes seems aimed at providing a justification for outsiders, especially imperial officials, with little or no personal knowledge of the actual situation in North Africa. Letter # 185.12 to Count Boniface gives an extravagant account of "donatist" suicides by *VAST CROWDS* at pagan temples, suicidal highwaymen who force travelers to kill them, etc. (as quoted and discussed later). It is a far more exaggerated account than anything that Optatus dared to write. When Augustine makes wild allegations of "donatist" atrocities in letters addressed to "donatist" bishops, it appears that he is really producing a document to be sent overseas which will persuade the Imperial government to act.

exhorting everyone to *UNITY*

Optatus says that: *Paul and Macarius came in order to console the poor everywhere, and exhort everyone individually to unity.* Meaning that they they were determined to bring them into "unity" with the "Catholic" Church by bribery or by military force. From the following account, it is clear enough that the soldiers encountered only passive resistance and that their violence was a necessary part of their mission to intimidate the non-conforming Christians.

Caecilian's successor as Catholic bishop of Carthage, Bishop Gratus, told the Council of Carthage in 348 that *it has been ordained for the most pious Emperor Constans to realize the desire for unity and to send us as ministers for this work the servants of God, Paul and Macarius.* (Migne 8.773 Don Sullivan translation) So Bishop Gratus explicitly acknowledges that the Emperor Constans sent Paul and Macarius to Africa to effect *unity*, that is, to force the "donatists" to join the Imperial Church. That was their mission. The false allegation of Optatus that the "donatists" were violent rebels has been used to obscure the question as to why the soldiers were sent out in the first place.

WHC Frend has written one of the most factual books available about the so-called "donatists" but he has the same basic defect as other scholars of this period in that he refuses to take account of the obvious fact that both Optatus and Augustine tell lies when they are engaged in making propaganda against the "donatists." Even when he footnotes instances of falsehood he continues with a policy of unscholarly credulity which he states in his introduction:

the policy of credulity

Frend XV-XVI *I have accepted as narrative the account of the origins and development of the movement found in the works of St. Augustine and ["Saint"] Optatus of Milevis. That is to say, when Optatus describes a Donatist armed attack on the Catholics in Lemellefensis [Lemella] in 362, I accept this event as having taken place. Similarly, when Augustine asserts that Donatist clergy led the Circumcellions I see no reason to doubt this. The Donatists were sharp enough to take Augustine up on any inaccuracies of quotation, but his facts are not challenged. (incident at Lemella is discussed in Chapter IX.)*

Just before this on XIV Frend notes *the complete loss of the correspondence and written works of Donatus and his successor Parmenian. We are still dependent on Catholic sources even for the barest outline of their personalities.* Both Donatus and Parmenian wrote long works explaining the position of the "donatists." And these books have been "lost." All of their letters have been "lost." Despite this, Frend has the effrontery--the silliness really--to pretend that the "donatists" have had all the opportunity they needed to refute the lies of Augustine and Optatus. Augustine's "facts" were not challenged because Augustine and his successors could cause the challenges to disappear from the Imperial libraries, and from all other libraries. Augustine had these works in his library. His library has been preserved. But everything the "donatists" had to say for themselves has been "lost" or "edited." All the records of the "donatist schism" have passed through the hands of their persecutors. Most of them perished and the few surviving records have obviously been "edited."

In fact Optatus III.4, p.145 says that the "donatist" bishops requested that the Roman authorities punish the Circumcelliones. So how can Frend simply take the word of Augustine for a "fact" which Optatus contravenes and for which he has no other evidence? I think this assertion of Optatus is not true--it is one of his characteristic allegations that it was the "donatists" who appealed to the emperor, the "donatists" who asked for soldiers etc. But you can hardly assume as a "fact" what your original authority contravenes.

Frend's policy of taking the accounts of Optatus and Augustine at face value is both unscholarly and anti-historical. But he does worse than that when he writes up texts so as to make smooth and plausible narrative out of that which is doubtful or improbable narrative in the original. On page 177 Frend interprets Optatus *reason # 2* to mean that Bishop Donatus of Carthage had asked the Emperor Constans for recognition and says: *In the light of events in the next two years this must seem an extraordinary move but Optatus precise description admits of no other interpretation.* The **OTHER INTERPRETATION** is that Optatus is fibbing as usual about who contacted the emperor, who called the police etc. It isn't an isolated instance. It is a regular pattern of lies in the books of Optatus. He regularly makes this kind of statement for obvious

propaganda reasons. Then, in several instances, there is simple and direct proof that Optatus' assertion is "in error" as Father Phillips likes to say, such as the falsified "donatist" "petition" to Constantine in 313 A.D. In this instance the *extraordinary move* by Bishop Donatus is an incredible assertion. And a study of Optatus shows that he regularly made false allegations of this sort for obvious propaganda reasons. So where is the difficulty in saying that what Optatus says here is false ?

What Optatus actually says is that Donatus *appealed to the Emperor to bring about unity*. III.1 p.120 And thereby somehow provoked the military expedition. Unable or unwilling to recognize the absurdity of this propaganda claim, the scholars interpret it to mean that Donatus was asking the Emperor for recognition. Which is an even sillier assertion than the one that Optatus makes. The whole point of this claim by Optatus is to take away the blame from the Catholics for the massacres of A.D. 347: *none of these things was done at our instigation, none by our advice, none with our privity, none by our aid* III.2 p.122 *I shall be able to show that the makers of unity did nothing at our instigation, nor of their own wickedness, but that everything happened through provocatory causes, which were set in motion by Donatus of Carthage* III.3 p.131 So Bishop Donatus is to blame for the massacre of the "donatists" by a Roman army, led by a Catholic commander, who was trying to force them to join the Imperial Catholic Church. This stupid excuse for mass murder is what Frend and other scholars have to explain and interpret because they somehow cannot recognize that Optatus is a liar.

Optatus isn't simply an occasional liar. He tells lies in certain patterns that become predictable after you read a little of his work. He rebuts all accusations against the "Catholic Church" by asserting the contrary: we weren't *TRADITORS*, you were; we didn't appeal to the emperor, you did; we didn't ask for the soldiers, you did. Conversely, whatever accusation has been made against the "donatists" has been admitted by them, so no further proof is needed. Whoever is accused of something has not only admitted it, but has boasted of it, for no very plausible reason. It is like the scene, typical of trash literature, in which the villain, lulled into a false sense of security, admits everything and even boasts of it, saving the author the trouble of providing any further exposition. So Bishop Purpurius not only admits that he murdered his nephews, he publicly boasts of it and threatens to kill anyone who gets in his way. (Optatus I.13; cf the Council of Circa "record" in Appendix XI. The "donatists" say there was no such Council.) So the hearsay testimony about Silvanus says that he not only admitted that he handed over silver objects, he boasted of it. (Silvanus hearing, Appendix II.)

If you have caught your colleague telling lies on several occasions, what do you assume--these are the only times he has told lies ? On all other occasions he has told the truth ? Silliness. If you have caught him 2 or 3 times, the reasonable assumption is that he has done it 20 or 30 times when you didn't catch him. But Frend makes the assumption that the times he has caught Optatus and Augustine in falsehoods are the only times they have made "mistakes." And that otherwise what they say is to be taken as credible. Even when it is plain that they were guilty of falsehoods, not honest mistakes. Even when they obviously have a strong motive for falsifying. Even when there is proof that they have falsified in other places under similar pressure. Even when the assertion is very unlikely on the face of it. Even when you see clearly that they could not afford to tell the truth in this situation.

don't mention the massacre

The major omissions of Optatus and Augustine are even more discrediting than the half truths and the lies. Neither one mentions the massacre in Carthage in 317 A.D. for which Constantine and Caecilian were responsible. In his account of what happened at Bagaia in 347 A.D. Optatus omits to mention the massacre of the entire congregation at the Church. And Augustine omits to mention it in *On the Gospel of John* Tract XI 15, quoted below, while disparaging the "donatist" account that Bishop Donatus of Bagaia was martyred. In many of his letters he re-hashes the arguments about the election of Caecilian in 312 A.D. but he never so much as mentions the massacres of 317 A.D. for which Caecilian was personally responsible. Frend got this information from other sources (*passio donatus*) and he uses it in his account, but he refuses to learn any lesson as to the credibility of Optatus and Augustine from these gross omissions and he doesn't even point out the omission as significant.

There is a bias in Frend and in other scholars in respect to the great Augustine that adds up to soft-headedness. It is a kind of servility to establishment scholarship and the tradition of the State Church for which Augustine is the founding "Saint." When they catch Augustine telling a lie, they look the other way. They discreetly note the "mistake" in a footnote. If they have to, they produce an involved and sophisticated explanation for apparent discrepancies. That is, they cover up his lies.

The murder of three bishops and the massacres of entire church congregations in 317 A.D. is a fact which all by itself alters the entire history of the "donatist schism." The omission of this fact produces a false history. It shows that Augustine's theological arguments are camouflage for terrible historical events which make the question of "re-baptism" and the question of Caecilian's election irrelevant. Frend says as much even though, characteristically, he doesn't follow through: *The incident contributed to divide the African Christians permanently into two rival Churches. Pleas that "Christ was a lover of unity" carried no weight with those who saw the Catholics working in alliance with pagan magistrates and soldiers.* (160) At least Frend mentions this "incident," unlike previous historians, but "incident" hardly describes the cold-blooded murders of hundreds of non-conforming Christians by the orders of the Emperor Constantine and at the behest of his new "Catholic Church."

Caecilian's crime

If your dinner guest takes out a revolver and shoots your child, do you sit down after dinner to debate a point of theology with him? The original "donatist" allegation against Caecilian, circa 312 A.D., was made redundant and obsolete by his responsibility for the massacre of fellow Christians in 317 A.D. There isn't any need for further argument, any more than you need to argue as to whether Judas Iscariot still has the powers of an Apostle after Good Friday. Caecilian is now the official head of a North African branch of the Imperial "Church" which has clearly signalled its intention to replace the old Christian Church--which manifestly intends to destroy it!

The basic issue now isn't that Caecilian once did something wrong before he became a bishop or even that he did something worse after he became a bishop. The basic issue is that Caecilian and all of the other Catholic bishops have joined an ongoing conspiracy against the Christian Church by 1) joining the Emperor's Church 2) doing everything they can, including mass murder, to try and destroy the non-conforming church. Judas Iscariot at least despaired, if he did not repent. But there is no repentance of past wrongs in Caecilian or in his church. Their past actions are a necessary part of a policy, which they intend to continue, which requires the destruction of the real Christian Church of North Africa and its permanent replacement by the Imperial Church. The massacres of 317 A.D. are repeated in 347 A.D. The police and army attacks on the non-conforming Christians persist for 100 years as the permanent policy of a State Church establishment that intends to be the permanent replacement for the old Christian Church. They were still persecuting the Christian Church when the Imperial government was driven out of Africa in 430 A.D. When the Imperial government returned, 150 years later, the persecution was renewed ! The various branches of the pseudo-"Christian" State Church were still persecuting the non-conforming Christians 1200 years after they first began doing it in the time of Constantine !

The inclusion of this one fact as to the massacres and murders of Christians in North Africa in 317 A.D. gives the lie to all the "Christian" "history" which presents the Emperor Constantine as a "convert," as the friend and protector of the Christian Church. Why did his soldiers massacre the Christians of Carthage ? Was this church congregation made up of *persons of unstable mind who are desirous of turning aside the laity of the most holy and Catholic Church by some vile method of seduction* (his letter to Caecilian) and is turning the soldiers loose on them the way to deal with it ? Is that the reason that bishops were killed on the spot by the soldiers ? (Frend 159-160)

This episode makes it plain that the only "Christian Church" the Emperor Constantine believed in was the Imperial Church which he had established with himself as the boss of it. Any rival Christian Churches he intended to destroy. He desisted from this effort later on because he discovered, as Roman Emperors before him had discovered, that the Church of Jesus Christ was not so easy to destroy. But this episode in Carthage shows what his intentions were. And it shows the existence of a state policy that was continued thereafter, by one means or another, by the supposedly "Christian" emperors who followed him.

VIII Augustine's Honesty--lack of

On 212-213 Frend writes: *There is a contrast between what Augustine wrote about the period after the downfall of Gildo and what he wrote at the time [in his] correspondence of the period 392-397. His letters show that the Donatists did not oppress their Catholic neighbours.* That is, Augustine has given two contrary accounts as to whether the "donatists" attacked the Catholics when they had the chance. But Frend refuses to recognize that, if Augustine lied once about how violent the "donatists" were, there is every reason to suppose that he lied twice. So there is every reason to not accept at face value his statements about "donatist" violence.

What Augustine was guilty of in this instance was not a one time falsehood. It was a years long policy of falsifying history. *I see no reason to doubt this* Frend says of one of Augustine's statement's about the violence of the "donatists." If he would read his own book more carefully, he would find a reason. What this tells you about Augustine of Hippo is that he was a falsifier of history. And if he did it once, he did it twice. What it tells you about Frend is that, like other establishment scholars, he does not have the moral courage to challenge this falsification of history by Augustine.

falsifying documents

On page 158 Frend says that *Augustine glossed over this letter from Constantine* in which Constantine shows that he views himself as "God's own Vicar." Since that is the fundamental real quarrel between the so-called "donatists" and the so-called "Catholics"--the Emperor Constantine's attempt to make himself the ruler of the Christian Church--it isn't surprising that Augustine has "glossed over" a letter which shows what Constantine's real attitude was towards the new "Catholic Church," contra all the humble epistles that Hosius and Eusebius wrote in his name later on. So Augustine is covering up Constantine's relationship with the "Catholic Church." And Frend is covering up for Augustine by failing to pursue the obvious implications of this "glossing over."

In fact Augustine isn't just "glossing over" what is in Constantine's letter: he is giving a false version of it. And that tells you something about Augustine of Hippo: like other intellectual agents of the Imperial Church, he falsifies documents when he has to. That isn't a minor matter. Neglecting it has meant that scholars who follow Augustine as Frend is doing are aiding and abetting Augustine in the falsification of the documents from which the history of the Christian Church has to be written.

On page 202 Frend says that *Augustine and many who have followed him appear to have misunderstood Tyconius, and attributed to him ideas which it is most unlikely that he held. He certainly did not write "invictissime" against the Donatists, whatever his differences with Parmenian may have been on the precise manner of the separation of the just from the false brethren within the Christian Church.* Page 202 also notes that *the two books most interesting for the study of Donatism are lost.*

Augustine "appears to have misunderstood" Tyconius so everyone else following Augustine has also "misunderstood" him. Unfortunately what Tyconius wrote has been "lost" but fortunately Augustine has preserved some of it for us. After a while this kind of thing gets a little monotonous. After a while it falls into an obvious pattern. Like Eusebius "preserving" a little bit of this early Christian writer or that one whose books have otherwise been unfortunately "lost." Is Augustine a dummy ? Is that why he "misunderstood" Tyconius ? No, Augustine is not a dummy and he didn't misunderstand Tyconius. Rather, he falsified what Tyconius said.

A little further on, Frend recounts that *about the year 385, Parmenian summoned a Council and he [Tyconius] was excommunicated. We know the facts only; of the background, nothing has survived.* These "facts" are from Augustine *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*. Do we, in fact, know the facts ? Since Augustine is the source of these "facts," since Frend has already caught Augustine lying about Tyconius and his difference with Parmenian and since there is no "background" information to make these facts more understandable or more probable, why believe it ? Why assume you have the "facts" when there are several strong reasons for suspecting that you do not have the facts ? That you have, not the facts, but the fictions that Augustine was making up in his all out propaganda effort against the "donatists."

Augustine went to a great deal of trouble to argue that highly respected North African Christians like Cyprian and Tyconius were not really in sympathy with the "donatist" position. It was a necessary task in his propaganda against the "donatists." When you see that and look a little further, it isn't hard to see that Augustine was as unscrupulous and dishonest in this line of argument as in his other lines of argument.

Augustine falsified the Christian theology of Tyconius in a far more fundamental way when he took his thesis of *the city of God* versus *the city of Satan* and twisted it around to justify a ***City of God*** which had merged with the City of Satan. The major work of Augustine sets forth a theological justification for the Imperial "Church" which had in fact merged with Rome, ***BABYLON THE GREAT*** which sits on the seven hills. (Revelation 17.9)

Martyr or Suicide

On page 179 Frend discusses the martyrdom of Bishop Marculus who was taken from the prison and thrown over a cliff on November 29th 347 A.D. footnote 5 says: *The Catholics claim that he threw himself over. Optatus, however, agrees [with the "donatist" story] that both he and Donatus of Bagai were "occisi."* "Catholics" ? Which "Catholics" ? Who else but Augustine is the source of the revised story ? And how many times does Frend have to catch him telling lies before he arrives at the conclusion that Augustine is a liar ? And why can't he say it: ***AUGUSTINE IS OBVIOUSLY LYING HERE.*** The inability to say it is what destroys the value of Frend's book, as argued later.

In his commentary ***On the Gospel of John*** Tract XI 15 Augustine suggests that Bishop Donatus jumped down the well and that Bishop Marculus jumped over the cliff: *For see what they do and what they suffer. They slay souls, they suffer in body. They cause everlasting deaths, and yet they complain that they themselves suffer temporal deaths. And yet what do they*

suffer ? They allege to us some martyrs of theirs in persecution. See, Marculus was hurled headlong from a rock; see Donatus of Bagaia was thrown into a well. When have the Roman authorities decreed such punishments as casting men down rocks ? But what do those of our party reply ? What was done I know not. What, however, do ours tell ? That they flung themselves headlong, and cast the infamy of it upon the authorities. Let us call to mind the custom of the Roman authorities, and see to whom we are to give credit. Our men declare that those men cast themselves down headlong. If they are not the very disciples of those men, who now cast themselves down precipices, while no man persecutes them, let us not credit the allegation of our men. What wonder if those men did what these are wont to do ? The Roman authorities never did employ such punishments. For had they not the power to put them to death openly ? But those men, while they wished to be honored when dead, found not a death to make them more famous. In short whatever the fact was, I do not know. And even if thou hast suffered corporal affliction, O party of Donatus, at the hand of the Catholic Church, as an Hagar thou hast suffered it at the hand of Sarah. "Return to thy mistress."

what happened to the bishops ?

It is apparent that, for all his cleverness and eloquence, Augustine cannot give a plausible explanation of what happened to the two bishops. Notice the conspicuous omissions from his account: 1) he says nothing about the rest of the church congregation killed at Bagaia along with Bishop Donatus 2) he says nothing about the presence at and the role of the Roman soldiers in the death of Bishop Donatus and his congregation. Did they stand by, munching on grain, while the bishop and his congregation jumped into the well ? 3) He says nothing about the role of the Roman jailors in the supposed "suicide" of Bishop Marculus. Did they take him out to the cliff at his request and watch him jump ?

As to the good character of the Roman authorities, the customary extra legal violence of the Roman government and all its servants is a given in these situations. It is a fact of history. It would be an incredible assertion that they did anything else. Notice that he says nothing about there having been any "donatist" attack on the soldiers at the church at Bagaia. Like Optatus, he fails to make the allegation which is necessary to turn a massacre into a battle. Instead he makes an allegation of suicide by the bishop and ignores what happened to the congregation.

Notice also that he uses the general allegation that the "donatists" and / or the "Circumcelliones" jumped off cliffs and jumped down wells as his proof for this patently false story that Bishop Donatus and Bishop Marculus were suicides. It shows why they needed this kind of general allegation about the suicidal Circumcelliones and how they were using it to cover up the crimes of the Roman authorities and the "Catholic Church" against the Christians.

And Augustine uses this kind of a story elsewhere as a cover story for the violent crimes of the Roman authorities against the Christians. Letter # 173 to a "donatist" priest says that he injured himself while being arrested because he *dashed himself with violence to the ground*. And that also *you threw yourself down a well . . . and they lifted you out of the water*. Frend 298 blandly relates this story as true and draws conclusions from it: *the priest Donatus of Mutugenna throwing himself down a well rather than see Augustine . . . was perhaps typical of many such acts*

of fanaticism. There is something wrong with Frend's nose if he cannot detect the unrefrigerated fish smell that clings to this story. (Cf. Should the official report say that the prisoner *committed suicide* or that he was *shot while trying to escape* ?) A scholar who cannot smell the falsity in this account and who cannot honestly discuss Augustine's dishonesty should get into another line of work. The Christians killed in Carthage in 317 A.D. were thrown down a well. (Frend 160 n. 2) Bishop Donatus of Bagai and his congregation were thrown down the well in 347 A.D. Since there is no doubt that "donatist" Christians were murdered that way, there has to be very serious doubt about the stories of those responsible for those murders that "donatist" Christians were prone to commit suicide that way. (Augustine has a mental quirk about people killing themselves in unlikely ways which take the blame away from others. Look at letter # 47.5 where one fellow is killed, hypothetically, by pulling a wall down on himself. He speculates as to whether Saint Paul would have been guilty *if the villains who plotted his death had thrown themselves on the weapons of the soldiers.*)

Turning a Christian martyr into a suicide isn't a little "mistake" which can be passed over in a footnote. It is an important clue which shows you that the history of the "donatist schism" found in Augustine has been falsified by him. Is this a minor matter ? You can get an accurate weight from a scale which is off if you make an adjustment. If you ignore the problem with the scale you are guaranteed an inaccurate result. People who try to derive true history from Augustine and Optatus without recognizing the substantial "inaccuracy" of these writers and adjusting for it have a guarantee on their work: it is bad history.

Jumping over Cliffs--with assistance

Rest of footnote 5, page 179: *His death in this manner by whosoever agency would explain the particular method chosen by the Circumcelliones to commit suicide.* To a sensible scholar, the false propaganda story that Bishop Marculus jumped over a cliff, while in the custody of the Romans who had already done violent things to him and the other bishops, and who had already killed one of the bishops in their custody, would explain the unlikely story about the Circumcelliones jumping over cliffs. If they used this story once, they used it twice. If they threw Bishop Marculus over a cliff, they killed other less prominent "donatists" the same way. And then put out the story that they jumped, to avoid making martyrs of them. That is the obvious reason why they took the bishop out of the prison to kill him by throwing him over a cliff. The authorities were well aware of the importance of martyrs to the "donatist" Church. They tried to prevent the bodies of martyrs from being recovered by the faithful. See the *passio marculi*. See the story of Maximian and Isaac (*Tilley*) and Eusebius viii.6.7 and viii.7.6 re: bodies of the martyrs dumped out at sea. Gratus, the Catholic bishop of Carthage, was already giving the Catholic bishops the line that the martyrs were suicides at a conference in A.D. 348, the year after the martyrdom of Bishop Marculus. (Migne 8.775 DS)

Augustine told the authorities to avoid making martyrs of the "donatists." In letter # 100, circa A.D. 409, Augustine asks the proconsul Donatus to *forget that you have the power of capital punishment* but *let the Donatist heretics learn at once through the edict of your Excellency that the laws passed against their error, which they suppose and boastfully declare to be repealed, are still in force. . . . You will, however, most effectively help us to secure the fruit of our labours and*

dangers, if you take care that the imperial laws for the restraining of their sect, which is full of conceit and of impious pride, be so used that they may not appear either to themselves or to others to be suffering hardship in any form for the sake of truth and righteousness. That is, don't make martyrs of them. Letter 43.24 mentions that the Circumcelliones . . . treat with honour the dead bodies of those who cast themselves down from dangerous heights. That is, they treat them as Christians who have been martyred for their faithfulness to the Church by being thrown over the cliff by the soldiers. That is very likely what did happen to them--contra the official version.

It is entirely unlikely that a suicide cult developed among Christians who, by all accounts, were orthodox before they got into the Emperor's bad books. They were accused by their *TRADITOR* brethren of being overly eager for martyrdom. Maybe some of them were. That is something entirely different from abandoning Christian morality in respect to suicide. The allegation is not credible. And who are the authorities for it ? Two men who are easily proven to be liars in respect to the "donatists." Whose job it is to make propaganda against them. Who are paid propagandists for the State Church. Who need to cover up the judicial and military murders carried out by the Roman authorities on behalf of the Imperial "Catholic Church."

human lemmings

In section 12 of his letter # 185 to Boniface, written in 417 A.D. Augustine takes Optatus' account of the suicidal "donatists" to the limit: *vast crowds of them used to come in procession to the most frequented ceremonies of the pagans, while the worship of idols still continued, not with the view of breaking the idols but that they might be put to death by those who worshipped them. . . . Some went so far as to offer themselves for slaughter to any travellers whom they met with arms, using violent threats that they would murder them if they failed to meet with death at their hands. Sometimes, too, they extorted with violence from any passing judge that they should be put to death by the executioners . . . Again, it was their daily sport to kill themselves, by throwing themselves over precipices, or into the water, or into the fire.*

Augustine has taken the one sentence allegation of suicidal Circumcelliones found in Optatus III.4 and turned it into an hysterical whopper. Having admitted in 185.1 that they are orthodox Christians who *carry on their unhappy strife solely on the question of communion* he now depicts them as *VAST CROWDS* of organized mad men marching *in procession that they might be put to death* as human sacrifices in pagan temples. Suicide is no longer an occasional religious activity, it is *their daily sport*. Apparently, when you get a wrong idea about re-baptism in your head, there is no telling where it might lead. He neglects to explain why he and the Emperor were so keen on bringing these human lemmings into the "Catholic Church" that they passed laws forcing them to join. They must have been truly hard up for converts.

A sensible historian has to assume that human nature is a constant, that people in North Africa in the 4th century were not fundamentally different from people at other times and places. He has to assume that the character of the Christians, which was well known and well documented, did not suddenly produce mass insanity after they rejected the Emperor's Church. And so Augustine's wild allegations about the "donatists" are manifestly incredible. Are grotesque lies and caricatures that tell you nothing about the "donatists" and everything you need to know about the "great" "Saint" Augustine of Hippo: He is one big liar.

Actually, the real human lemmings are those who believe in the state and who march off in bunches to kill and be killed in its wars. Getting yourself killed in one of the endless wars of the empire, which is now mandated by the "Catholic Church," is the real sacrificing of yourself in a pagan ceremonial. The allegations of Augustine slander the pagans as well as the "donatists." It is doubtful that they still had human sacrifices in their rituals at this time. What he wants to take away from the "donatists" is the fact that many of them were Christian martyrs at the hands of the Romans on behalf of the "Catholic Church." The allegation that they were suicidal is intended to hide the guilt of those who were responsible for murdering them.

So how sensible a scholar do you have to be to doubt the truth of the stories about Circumcelliones jumping over cliffs, jumping into wells, forcing people to kill them, getting themselves sacrificed in pagan temples etc. ? Why are highly educated and intelligent scholars such total chumps when it comes to these smelly stories ? Why is it so hard for them to entertain a doubt as to whether orthodox Christians in North Africa circa 347 A.D. really did all these things ? What scholars have done with this story is to let themselves be suckered into treating what is obviously propaganda as if it were reliable history.

fanatical Christians

By every account the "donatist" Christians of North Africa began the fourth century as orthodox Christians, steeped in the Christian pacifist tradition of Tertullian and Cyprian. So why believe that they had suddenly turned into violent and suicidal sectarians ? One reason scholars believe it is because they are uncomfortable with serious Christians. They have adopted the modern viewpoint that anyone who really believes in Christianity, who is passionate and serious about it, must be mentally or emotionally unbalanced and inclined to violent fanaticism. So the allegation of fanaticism is credible to them and they are inclined to believe it without much proof or any proof worthy of the name. Frend, in order to explain the "donatists," winds up saying in effect that they were in a tradition of fanaticism going back to Cyprian and Tertullian. In other words, all early Christians were fanatics until the State Church provided a more sensible alternative. That is really what he is saying, and what he has to say if he is going to accept the Imperial Church as "Christianity." And he does say it:

Frend IX (Preface to the Second Impression 1970) *Brisson's work has demonstrated how far-reaching were the doctrinal links that bound Donatism to the main stream of African theological tradition represented by Tertullian and Cyprian. The African Catholics were the true schismatics, and the fanaticism of popular Donatism must always be understood in relation to previous North African ecclesiastical history. Frend 324 Today it can be realized that Augustine and his colleagues were laying the foundations for a subtler and perhaps finer view of the Church than that taught by Cyprian and the Donatists. It contained a measure of hope for those not in Catholic communion. It established the holiness of the attributes of the Church irrespective of the human agents who ministered them.*

Jesus Christ and his apostles had already laid the foundation of the church. Augustine and his "colleagues"--the emperors--weren't qualified to replace them. I don't know what "subtler" means in this context but the Imperial Church was coarser, not finer, than its predecessor.

Forty Roman basilicas crowded with pagan drunks does not fit any sensible definition of "finer." (cf letter # 29, as discussed later) The massacre of Christians by other "Christians" which began back then and continues to the present time is something other than "finer." Now, instead of persons who have the Holy Spirit, you have "holy attributes." You have a holy thing. That is, you have idolatry. Clearly, Frend believes in the Church of Constantine. Whether his arguments are any good or not, his faith is apparent. He doesn't believe in it very much but that is the advantage of the Secular Church--you don't have to believe in it very much.

Frend 324 *At the death of Augustine the alliance between Church and Empire had become complete. This was the real heart of the controversy. . . . between Donatist and Catholic. Amen ! Preach It !* The alliance was complete and then anti-Church and evil Empire started down a long road of moral and social disintegration together with mutual recriminations as to who was responsible. The alliance of the Roman Empire and the Church of the Roman Empire led to the alliance between the British Empire and the Church of England. It led to all these other Church & Empire alliances which define the kind of Secular "Christianity" that establishment scholars are comfortable with.

The Imperial Church took on all of the characteristics of the empire it joined. The whole enterprise was constantly riven by civil war and subject to a constant moral and social disintegration that caused it to fragment and fall apart as fast as it could be forced back together by bloody "victories" in endless wars. The Roman Peace, that is, the endless warfare of the empire, enveloped the Church which had abandoned the peace of Jesus Christ to join the empire.

Who is the real fanatic, the one who dies for his refusal to go to war, or the one who is willing to kill and to die in the wars of the State ? Who was the fanatic as between Franz Jaggerstatter and a fellow Catholic who served in the German army ? Both died but the second one killed for Hitler before he died. That is the characteristic of the Worldly Church that establishment scholars believe in contra the *fanaticism* of those who refuse to follow Caesar's orders.

The real circumcelliones

The main thing the *CIRCUMCELLIONES* did, as their name implies, was to hold religious services at the tombs of martyrs. Frend offers some speculation, based on nothing, that these were wild and alcoholic bacchanals after which they all jumped off a cliff or something.

In fact Christians had been holding services at the tombs of martyrs from the beginning. Since the "donatist" churches, when they had any, were confiscated, and their houses were destroyed if they were caught holding house services, it isn't surprising that they continued to hold services in places where martyrs were buried. They weren't short of martyrs' tombs. While the emperor Constantine was building a basilica over the tomb of Saint Peter for the Catholics, he was confiscating the churches of the "donatists." (And this evidently happened in Rome and other places.) So they didn't have much of an alternative to being *CIRCUMCELLIONES*. The allegation that their services were wild orgies is the old pagan slander of the Christian service. Only now it is in the mouths of "Christian" scholars.

The control of the Imperial Church over scholars and the centuries-long and continuing influence of the State Church tradition upon scholarship is reflected in the respect given to the official church history--a respect which it manifestly does not deserve. While they discreetly demur and criticize, mainstream scholars lack the courage to challenge the fundamental falsity of the official history preserved by the Imperial Church and its scholarly agents, particularly Augustine. When they catch Augustine lying, they are unable to believe it and / or afraid to say so.

Scholars still dutifully copy the accusations of Optatus and Augustine against the "donatists" while they ignore the self-refuting character of this evidence. You start off with an obviously doubtful and falsified account and then heavyweight scholarship, accepting it as true history, keeps piling tomes on top of it. So now you have a stack of leather bound volumes resting on one comic book original.

Alleged Violence of the "donatists" II

Optatus account of "donatist" violence against Catholics when Julian the Apostate returned the churches that had been confiscated is given in book 2.10, pages 96-99:

96-97 *You came raging; you came full of wrath, rending the members of the Church; subtle in your deceits; savage in your slaughters, provoking the children of Peace to war. A large number you banished from their homes. Approaching with a hired band, you rushed upon the Basilicas. Many of your party throughout numerous districts (which it would be too long to mention by their names) worked massacres so bloody, that the judges of the time sent a report to the Emperor concerning deeds of such atrocity.*

But the Judgment of God intervened and came to our aid, so that the Emperor who had already long ago ordered you to come back, and who, at your instigation, had arranged, or was even then arranging for our persecution, died in the midst of his profanity and sacrileges.

Catholics were slaughtered in the above-mentioned districts. You remember how your people ran to and fro from place to place. Were not Felix of Zaba and Januarius of Flumenpiscinum of your party, and the others who rushed all together as swiftly as they could, to a fortified place called Lemella ? So soon as they saw that the Basilica, notwithstanding their clamours, was closed against them, they commanded their followers to climb to the top, strip the roof, and throw down the tiles. These orders were executed without delay. In the defence of the altar a number of Catholic deacons were wounded with tiles--of whom two were killed--Primus the son of Januarius and Donatus the son of Ninus. Your fellow-Bishops, whose names I have just given were present and urged them on, so that, without doubt, of your party has it been said:

"Their feet are swift to shed blood" ¹

Primus, the Catholic Bishop of the place, complained of all this--whilst you listened disingenuously to his complaints--at your Council held in the City of Theneste.

98 *In the presence, and at the order, of your Bishops, Catholic deacons were slain over the altar.*

98-99 *The same things happened also at Carpi. Do not such deeds appear to you indelible stains ?*

¹ *When you came into the cities of Mauritania, the people were overwhelmed with dread, so that children who were near to birth died in their mothers' wombs. Does not this seem to you to be a "wrinkle" ¹ such as cannot be stretched or made smooth by any reparations whatsoever ? What have we done of such a character as this ? We wait for the vengeance of God.*

(¹ Optatus is here retorting "donatist" charges against the "Catholics"--cf Proverbs 6.17-18, Ephesians 5.27)

And yet you create a prejudice against Macarius, although anything that he may have done with harshness on behalf of unity may well be regarded as of light account, when compared with these monstrous, bitter, bloodstained acts of war done by you on behalf of dissension. Why should I

mention Tipasa, a city of Mauritania Caesariensis, whither rushed from Numidia, Urban of Forma and Felix of Idicra, two burning torches, set on fire by hatred ? These men upset the minds of quiet people, who were established in unity, and, aided by the favour and fury of certain officials, in the very presence of Athenias the magistrate, with colours flying, broke up the Catholic assemblies, with bloodshed. Catholics were driven out from their homes. Their men were wounded. Their women were dragged into captivity. Their infants were slain. Mothers miscarried.

It certainly seems plausible that some time, some place, "donatist" Christians attacked "Catholics." It is quite unlikely that, among so many thousands of people, over more than a century of bloody persecutions, some of them would not have rebelled or retaliated.

But the accounts of Optatus that allege "donatist" violence are obviously not credible accounts. They have characteristically the clunk, clunk, clunk of false and fabulous stories and never the ring of true history.

Although it is hard to discern what he is actually alleging because it is hard to separate what he means for a factual allegation from his rodomontade. He seems to have studied Horace *Ars Poetica* and copied all the faults Horace describes. He is the master of the *purple patch*. There is almost a purple haze hanging over some of his more determined efforts. He regularly employs the *parturiunt montes nascetur ridiculus mus*. [The mountains go into labor, then a mouse is born.] As here in his account of the massacre of two deacons at Lemella. (Lemellefense)

There were bloody massacres in numerous places. Too many to mention by name. But, for example, in Lemella, two deacons were killed. With roofing tiles.

weapons of the "donatists"

Why is it that the violent "donatists" never have any weapons ? Frend describes this as an *armed attack* but what sort of weapons are roofing tiles ? Even if they lacked swords or spears, there must have been axes or pitchforks readily available in these rural areas or even rocks and tree limbs if they had nothing better.

This could hardly have been a military operation which ended in two men being killed with roofing tiles. It appears that the "donatists" were trying to repossess the church and that, finding themselves locked out, they made a way through the roof.

Then what happened ? 1) tiles falling from the roof accidentally killed two deacons inside ? 2) they threw the tiles at those inside ? 3) once inside, they used the tiles to beat two deacons to death ?

It appears to be rodomontade rather than a serious allegation, but Optatus takes it one step further: *In the presence, and at the order, of your Bishops, Catholic deacons were slain over the altar*. So these ultra orthodox Christians were willing to carry out a human sacrifice on the altar of a Christian church that they meant to use for their own services.

I can't think up any other plausible scenarios. And none of these is very plausible either. Surely the people inside could have gotten out of the way of any falling tiles had they wanted to. Or even taken shelter behind a pew from tiles being thrown at them. Or were they the Catholic branch of the Circumcelliones ? Did they stand there and insist on being killed ?

So were they beaten to death with roofing tiles ? If the "donatists" were infuriated enough to beat these two men to death with roofing tiles, it is puzzling as to why they stopped with two and as to why they didn't pick up more efficient weapons like swords and axes. There is obviously something wrong with the psychological profile of this "massacre." If Optatus had a whole list to choose from, why did he pick this one ?

The violence against the "donatists" focused on their bishops. At least three of them were killed in 317. At least three more were killed in 347. If the "donatists" wanted revenge, why wouldn't they kill a Catholic bishop or two ? Maybe he escaped, but it is notable that it is Primosus the Catholic bishop of Lemella that told this story, or some story, later on.

massacre by miscarriage

Comment on: *at Carpi . . . the cities of Mauritania, the people were overwhelmed with dread, so that children who were near to birth died in their mothers' wombs.* Is this what he means by a massacre ? If he had any real "massacre" stories to tell, why does he bother with this one ?

Comment on: *Tipasa These men upset the minds of quiet people, who were established in unity, and, aided by the favour and fury of certain officials, in the very presence of Athenias the magistrate, with colours flying, broke up the Catholic assemblies, with bloodshed. Catholics were driven out from their homes. Their men were wounded. Their women were dragged into captivity. Their infants were slain. Mothers miscarried.* Here is another massacre which could not have happened in the way he describes it. The men are only "wounded" while the infants are slain. Then these rigorous and puritanical Christians drag the women into captivity.

Anyone who has read some history has read accounts of massacres. There is a kind of predictable escalation: armed men are killed; perhaps disarmed men as well; even boys; even women and children. But this alleged massacre is aimed at the infants and excludes everyone else. The men are "wounded" but none are killed so far as he states. So here is the second massacre tale and it has the same clunk, clunk, clunk resonance as the first story.

If he had a list of massacres to choose from, why choose these ? Why is it too much trouble for this long-winded writer to give a one paragraph list of the many places where "massacres" occurred ? Optatus is writing circa 373 A.D. about events that happened circa 363 A.D. And he seems to be writing primarily for a North African audience. So he hasn't much leeway in his accounts of these "massacres." If he asserts that there was a "massacre" in such and such a place in 363 he is very likely to be confronted by someone who lives there or who did live there 10 years before. So there is an obvious reason why the list of the places where massacres happened was *too long to mention by their names*. And that explains why his account of these "massacres" is a criddle as any sensible scholar can see who takes the time to study it.

But instead of acknowledging that Optatus peculiar and doubtful accounts fail to support his allegation of many "massacres" in many places, Frend re-writes the accounts to make them sound more plausible.

the absurd complaint

Aside from internal evidence, there is the historical question as to whether the administration of Julian the Apostate tolerated or encouraged mob violence against the Catholics of North Africa by the "donatists," as Optatus implies. In Gibbon's history he describes Arian Catholics being attacked by pagan mobs in Syrian cities after the Arian Catholics burned a pagan shrine. (XXIII 790) And, judging from the ecclesiastical historians, as argued earlier, the Arian Bishop George was killed in Alexandria, probably by an Athanasian Catholic mob, probably with the tacit consent of Julian. But he says nothing about Christian mobs attacking Catholics, whether Arian or Athanasian, in North Africa. And he notes what Optatus had to say as the *furious and absurd complaint of Optatus*. (XXIII 795 footnote 136)

Optatus himself indicates that *certain officials* including *Athenias the magistrate* were present in Timpasa while the "donatists" did whatever they did to the Catholics. So there were government officials monitoring what happened that day. He also indicates that there wasn't a persecution of North African Catholics under Julian, that it was still pending when Julian died: *the Judgment of God intervened and came to our aid, so that the Emperor . . . who had arranged, or was even then arranging for our persecution, died.*

Something must have happened at Tipasa. Had the homes of the "donatists" been confiscated and given to the Catholics and were they now being returned because of Julian's order ? Since he mentions it several times, it seems likely that at least one woman had a miscarriage.

But why believe anything more from this obviously falsified and grossly exaggerated account? If it even sounded like a true account, it would be put in doubt by the ridiculous and obviously exaggerated stories that fill up the rest of Optatus books. Since it is itself an incredible account, why treat it as credible ? But Augustine adds to it and Frend reads it as if it were gospel.

Notice that, in connection with all of his allegations of "donatist" violence, Optatus gives exactly two names of Catholics who were killed by "donatists"--the two deacons killed at Lemella. He makes accusations of leading or encouraging lethal violence against four out of more than 300 "Donatist" bishops. Even on the assumption that there is some truth or half truth to these doubtful allegations, it is clear that the charge of "numerous massacres" falls by its own weight. So does the implication that the bishops of the "donatist church" had a policy of encouraging violence against Catholics.

Many of your party throughout numerous districts (which it would be too long to mention by their names) worked massacres so bloody, that the judges of the time sent a report to the Emperor . . . Catholics were slaughtered in the above-mentioned districts. Which it would be too long to mention by their names. Summary of the case of Optatus against the "donatists" circa 363 A.D.

When the prosecution rests its case half way through a criminal trial, the defense can make a motion to have the charge dismissed on the grounds that the evidence fails to sustain the allegation in a minimal way. If the judge grants the motion, the defense does not even have to call any witnesses or to present any further defense. The trial is over. A fair-minded judge would grant such a motion in this case, even though--especially because--the entire case of the defense has been "lost" by the prosecution. Because, on the face of it, there isn't enough evidence to require a defense. The allegations of Optatus refute themselves.

Comments by Frend on Lemellefensis (Lemella)

when Optatus describes a Donatist armed attack on the Catholics in Lemellefensis in 362, I accept this event as having taken place. Frend XV-XVI "Armed" with roofing tiles ?

Frend 189 *armed band . . . stormed the walled settlement of Lemellefense. The Catholic church was sacked and two deacons were slain.* If they were re-possessing a church, they would hardly have "sacked" it.

Frend 319 (frend notes 96) *Donatist bishops and priests were always in the forefront of the Circumcellion bands. They led the great forays of 362 and 363 in reprisal against the persecution of Paul and Macarius, and when challenged, Parmenian replied that their acts could not be placed on the same level as those of the Imperial officials.* That refers you to footnote 2 page 196 which quotes Optatus II.18 p.97 in respect to soldiers versus bishops as showing that bishops were justified in leading violence.

The reference is to an ambiguous quote of Parmenian found in Optatus. Since Parmenian's books have disappeared, thanks to his enemies, since they have preserved a few fragments like these which they thought they could use, since there is no reason to believe that the quote is accurate or that it means what Optatus wants it to mean, it is indecent to assume that it means anything resembling what Frend here makes it mean--an admission that "donatist" bishops engaged in military actions.

There is an obvious bias in this kind of scholarly judgment which reminds me of the judges I have encountered in politically charged situations, some of them highly intelligent and otherwise decent jurists, who must pretend to believe patently bogus charges and dishonest testimony because their own careers are tied to the establishment whose immorality is being challenged. They must say what they cannot believe and leave unsaid what they know to be true. Similarly, it is not believable that these scholars are so blind to the obvious falsities of Optatus account.

It is obviously a willful blindness and the reason is this: they can't disbelieve Optatus, without disbelieving Augustine. They can't disbelieve Augustine without taking on the entire academic and religious establishment, an establishment to which they belong. So they state their honest opinion in footnotes and in the middle of chapters. Otherwise they stick with the official line.

To arrive at a true history of the "donatist schism" a scholar has to begin by dis-believing Optatus when Optatus is obviously fibbing.

A scholar who refuses to do that will never arrive at a true history of the "donatists" or a true history of the Christian Church.

Since Augustine has subsumed the account of Optatus into his own work and improved upon it, everything that Augustine says about the "donatists" has to be subjected to the most suspicious and critical scrutiny. Instead, scholars go by the standard assumption of establishment scholars: If "Saint" Augustine said it, it must be the truth, absent a proven and undeniable "mistake" here and there. Otherwise, the most doubtful and unlikely accounts are validated because "Saint" Augustine wrote them.

Like so many other books on the subject, Frend's book is basically a junkyard, despite all his scholarship. You can find good stuff in a junkyard. But it is still a junkyard. The real shame is this: Frend had the information he needed and the intellectual ability he needed to write a very good book, even a great book about the true history of the "donatists." But he lacked the moral courage to do it. Some true history of the "donatists" is actually included in his book in scraps and pieces and footnotes, but you have to pick it out from all the *lies, half-truths and omissions* that he has dutifully copied from Optatus, Augustine and other establishment scholars.

Alleged Violence of the "donatists"

III Rebellions of Count Firmus in 373 and Count Gildo in 397

It is entirely predictable that Augustine would try to associate the "donatists" with two rebellions in North Africa that occurred towards the end of the 4th century, the Revolt of Count Firmus circa 372-375 A.D. and the revolt of Count Gildo that ended with his death in 397 A.D.

It is also predictable that Frend should repeat these accusations while he contents himself with footnoting and then ignoring the contrary evidence.

Frend 73 says that *Augustine leaves no doubt that these bishops were Donatists*--the bishops who accompanied Count Firmus to a peace parley with Theodosius.

That is a good reason to doubt it.

However, the presence of these bishops at a peace parley doesn't prove much. The fact that they were helping to negotiate a peace doesn't prove that they had been supporting the war.

Count Gildo

The allegation that the "donatists" supported Count Gildo's rebellion revolves around the role of Bishop Optatus of Timgad. (Thamugadi) If Bishop Optatus was a "donatist" bishop

and if he did support the rebellion of Count Gildo, then, on the face of this allegation, there were more than 300 other "donatist" bishops who were not supporting the rebellion of Count Gildo. (Frend 276, footnote 5 says there were 316 "donatist" bishops as of 411 A.D.)

And you have to remember that the "donatist church" was an entirely different kind of organization from the "Catholic Church." It didn't have the same kind of centralized financing and control. While the "Catholic" organization was supported by the government, the "donatist" organization was subjected to repeated government attacks that tended to further dis-organize it. Its bishops were exiled, its property was taken. So they had no levers of legal control by which they could discipline a "donatist" bishop who had gone astray. Unlike the "Catholics" they couldn't withhold his salary or ask the emperor to fire him or have him arrested. They could only shun him and denounce him.

There are other contrary facts mentioned by Frend which indicate that Count Gildo was a Catholic rather than a "donatist." His family was Catholic, his daughter was a correspondent of Jerome. (Frend 208) And *by an irony of fate, Gildo was eventually buried in the Catholic church at Lamzelli*; (Frend 225 footnote 7) Is this an "irony" ? Or is it evidence that he was in fact a Catholic, contra Augustine ?

Since elsewhere in the empire Catholic bishops, whether Arian or Athanasian, played imperial politics and supported one imperial claimant or another, it is quite probable that they did the same in North Africa. Since the "donatists" had a major moral objection to the Emperor, since they called him the *Antichrist*, it is quite probable that they stayed out of imperial politics.

The "Prejudiced" Witness

Frend does preface his account by saying that: *Augustine must be considered a prejudiced witness*. (Frend 208) But Augustine isn't just a "prejudiced" witness. Like other scholars, Frend refuses to fully recognize the position Augustine is in as the spokesman for the Imperial Church in North Africa with a special mission, as its chief writer of propaganda, to discredit the non-conforming Christians of North Africa, and to justify the violent repressive measures of the Roman authorities. He does not recognize that Augustine's personal position and the position of his church depended upon success in the war they were waging against the non-conforming Christians of North Africa--a desperate war which they were losing--which they did finally lose. That Augustine was under a great deal of pressure from the Imperial Government and the Catholic Church establishment to do a job which he found that he was not able to do.

So he had compelling personal reasons for turning out the most powerful propaganda he could. That is, he had very strong reasons for disseminating false accounts of the "donatists," for making trumped up allegations of "donatist" violence, for producing fictionalized conversion counts, for exaggerating his success in putting them down etc. And there is abundant evidence that this is just what he did. At other times, especially when the enforcement of Imperial edicts was neglected by the government, he employed flattery and sophistry to win the "donatists" over, for example the sermon in which he praises the long dead Bishop Donatus. (Sermon 37.3) Or the sly arguments he makes in book seven of "Optatus." (as argued later)

So Frend buys Augustine's account of a "schism" in the "donatist" church which exactly parallels the "schism" between the Catholics and the "donatists." (Frend 213-219) The "donatists" condemn the schismatics as schismatics without even considering their allegations against the moral character of the "donatist" Bishop of Carthage. They use the police to violently dislodge the schismatics from the Church etc.

By Augustine's account, the "donatists" now have the support of the government: *The Proconsul decided in favour of Primian's contention, a fact which shows that at this time the Donatists had achieved something in the nature of recognition that they were the "Catholic Church" in Africa. The Catholics looked on, apparently unable to assert their own claims.* (219) Which is surprising since *this was at precisely the time when the Imperial Government were confirming the privileges of the African Catholics; see Codex Theodosianus XVI 2.9 of 23 March 395 to Hierus, Vicarius Africae.* (fn 4) The supposed government favoritism to the "donatists" was short-lived: *the Catholics were able to take full advantage of the favour of the Imperial Government. . . . command of the armies in Africa was in the hands of pro-Catholic officers.* (225)

Because of his respect for Augustine, he cannot bring himself to seriously consider that these surprising facts may be contrary facts, that one may disprove the other. He cannot bring himself to consider the obvious probability that Augustine is giving us false history. Even when he notes the major "contrast" between Augustine's letters of 392 to 397 A.D. and his later history of Count Gildo's rebellion, (Frend 212-213 as quoted above) he doesn't recognize that he has a serious moral obligation to pursue the implications of this "contrast," if he pretends to be a conscientious scholar and an honest historian.

The Issue of the Emperor

Because he ignores his own best information and subordinates his judgment to that of Augustine, Frend never confronts the real character of the Imperial Church to which Augustine belongs and its essential dependence upon the government. Nor does he consistently recognize that the essential character of the "donatist" church is its independence of the government, that it is defined by that character. The reason that they refuse to join the so-called "Catholic Church," even when they are killed for refusing, is that it is really the Emperor's "church."

He seems to recognize this at times: *At the death of Augustine the alliance between Church and Empire had become complete. This was the real heart of the controversy. . . . between Donatist and Catholic.* (Frend 324) But then he repeats Augustine's depiction of them as just as eager for Imperial favor as the "Catholic Church" and just as willing to take up arms for political ends: *The Donatists lent their support to the rebel [Firmus] as legitimate Emperor.* (Frend 198) So once again we have the crazy and careless rebels, ever ready to jump off cliffs, jump down wells, or join a riot or a rebellion.

He doesn't see the need to reconcile this assertion (which is based on Augustine of course) with what he has elsewhere presented about the "donatists." So he is saying that the same ultra orthodox Christians who refused to take money from the Emperor Constantine and his son Constans, who faced death rather than join the Emperor's church, are now willing to take up arms in the cause of a two bit African count.

The "donatist" attitude towards the emperor and towards the false Christians who had joined the emperor's state church is the primary fact about the "donatist schism." It is Frend's peculiar habit to obscure it in some places while he documents it in others. On page 326 he quotes from Tyconius condemnation of the "Catholics" as *evil priests working with the kings of this world. Relying on royal favour they have renounced Christ, and as it were, condemned by the law, [of God] they confess and speak through their works that "We have no other king but Caesar."* On page 146 he notes that a "donatist" pamphlet described Constantine as the Devil. He repeats the quote of Bishop Donatus himself as found in Optatus: **WHAT HAS THE EMPEROR TO DO WITH THE CHURCH ? !** (Optatus III.3, p. 131) Optatus I.22 p.42 quotes Parmenian, the successor of Bishop Donatus as putting a similar question: **WHAT HAVE CHRISTIANS TO DO WITH KINGS, OR BISHOPS WITH THE PALACE ?** In Optatus III.12 p.173, he denies a "donatist" allegation that the emperor's image was put on the altar during services in the camp of Paul and Macarius.

That was the basic difference in the position of the "Catholic" Church as Frend says on page 325: *Where previous generations of African Christians had seen the Emperor and his officials as personifications of the Devil, Augustine told the Donatists "There is no braver soldier of Christ than the Emperor."* So how in the world can Frend rubber stamp the obviously doubtful allegations of Augustine to the effect that the "donatists" abruptly abandoned their principled position in respect to imperial politics when Count Firmus came along or when Count Gildo came along ? As I have illustrated, you cannot trust Frend's rehash of Augustine. He regularly gives him a pass in just those places where he should most carefully scrutinize what he has written. When they don't absolutely worship him, the scholars give "Saint" Augustine the kid glove treatment. So his false history is validated by their willful lack of honest critical scholarship.

The Buried Issue of Christian Pacifism

The reason Frend accepts any allegation of "donatist" violence from Optatus and Augustine is that he assumes the "donatists" to be passionate sectarians who are prone to violence. So an allegation of violence is proof enough that it happened. He requires no further proof. He sees *no reason to doubt it*. If I know that you are a bank robber, I don't doubt the story in the newspaper which alleges that you recently robbed a bank.

He never even mentions the possibility that the "donatists" believed in Christian pacifism. Even when he is arguing that they were in the tradition of Tertullian and Cyprian, it doesn't occur to him that they must have been pacifists like Tertullian and Cyprian. There isn't even a listing for *pacifism* in the index of his book. And he doesn't even mention the possibility that **SERVICE IN THE ARMY** might have been a fundamental issue between the emperor's new state church and the Christians who refused to join it.

The fact that service in the army came up at Arles, the same council that was called to deal with the "donatists," doesn't suggest to him that the questions were connected. He isn't troubled with a suspicion that something important was done at Nicea on this question which the state church historians have deliberately obscured. He is content to chew on whatever bone they throw him, without asking what happened to the meat.

Like other scholars in the state church tradition, Frend accepts the work of Eusebius and Augustine as true history, absent a "mistake" here and there. So he buys their account of Christian pacifism, that it was mainly an objection to fighting for a pagan empire. So it was quickly abandoned when the emperor became a Christian. That is, he goes along with these falsifying state church "historians" in burying the issue of Christian pacifism.

Aside from the obscured and falsified history, it is apparent as a matter of historical common sense, that Constantine could never have adopted a pacifist religion as the new state religion. So his first priority would be to eliminate any pacifist tendencies from his new Imperial Church. The Roman empire was built by war and required constant war to keep it going. Which meant that it was constantly in need of soldiers. The official church of the empire must support and encourage that war effort. The bishops themselves, like other important officials, might enjoy an exemption, but there wasn't going to be any nonsense about pacifism in their flocks. (The exemption from military service allowed to the monks by some emperors and cancelled by others was apparently a concession to the residual pacifism of the original church.)

The scholars raise no question as to whether Augustine, as a supposedly Christian bishop, bound to defend orthodoxy, had the freedom to formulate a new *JUST WAR* morality in respect to Christians going to war 350 years after the *Prince of Peace* instructed his followers to *love your enemies*. They casually assume that Christian participation in war was still an open question. Even though Christians wanted to excommunicate one another for not celebrating Easter on Sunday, they had no dogmatic position as to whether a Christian should take up a metal sword and whack whoever the emperor told him to whack.

pacifist inclinations

One modern scholar refers to *the pacifist inclinations of early Christian thought*. As if the early Christian Church was a broad-minded school of speculative philosophy. As if it was similar to a Department of Ethics in a modern university where people say *I respect your opinion, but it seems to me that . . .* So the thesis is that thousands of Christians went to their deaths because of an arbitrary and transitory *OPINION* as to whether it was right to acknowledge the Emperor and serve in his army. (A series of 20th century books by Adolph Harnack, C.J. Cadoux and Jean-Michel Hornus review the pacifism of the early Christian church.)

There is good evidence that Christians, including the so-called "donatists," were pacifists at the beginning of the 4th century when the Emperor Constantine launched his new Imperial Church. The real Christians were still pacifists at the end of the 4th century, when Augustine was depicting them as violent rebels. They taught their congregations to refuse military service and to remain personally nonviolent in conflict situations and this was basic Christian morality. It was apostasy to depart from it. Maximilian, Marcellus, Typasius and Fabius were some of the North African Christians martyred for refusing military service under the Emperor Maximian at the end of the 3rd century, just four years before the general persecution of Diocletian and just 12 years before Constantine established the Imperial Catholic Church, which abandoned Christian pacifism. Pacifism defined Christian faith and morals and it continued to define non-conforming Christianity right on through the time of the Reformation. Pacifism is the essential mark of the true Christian church just as the sanction given to war defines the anti-church.

Neander, describing the persecution of Christians in Persia in 343 A.D. says one of the accusations against them was that *they forbade men to do military service for the king [or] to strike any one*. (Augustus Neander *Church History*, III.151 citing Assemani) If this was true of Christians in the east in 343, it was true of Christians in the west. That isn't to say that there was no argument on the subject or no deviation in behavior. Obviously Tertullian was arguing against somebody when he set forth the duty of a Christian not to fight in war. It would not be credible that no bandits or rebels ever attended a Christian church in North Africa or that no "donatists" ever became rebels. Every doctrine of Christian faith and morals was challenged by someone and there was an endless variety of groups within the overall Christian tradition which took positions at odds with the orthodox position. The issue of Christians in the army was complicated because there were many soldier converts who might remain in the peace time army. And soldiers were so ubiquitous in the empire that they had all sorts of jobs which kept them far away from the active waging of war, such as the soldiers who worked at a customs house and who spoke to John the Baptist. It is clear from the writings of Tertullian that this could lead to some morally complicated situations. But the question is whether the "donatist" Church preached and substantially practiced *love your enemies turn the other cheek* etc. There is good evidence that they did. The best evidence is that allegations to the contrary by Optatus and Augustine are clearly false. Their best efforts to depict the "donatists" as violent rebels indicate instead that they were not violent. It is apparent that Augustine and Optatus had to fabricate false stories about "donatist" violence because they had no true stories to tell.

apostasy at Nicea

There are three major reasons for the obscuring of this issue. The first is that scholars have not recognized the apostate character of the so-called "Church" which Constantine summoned to Arles and Nicea and which did abandon Christian pacifism. They have failed to recognize that this was the new state church and that it was no longer the Christian Church. The second reason is that almost all of the surviving history of this period comes from state church propagandists like Eusebius, Optatus, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine et al who have lied about the pacifism of the non-conforming Christians. They have presented the non-conforming Christians as violence-prone at the same time that they have concealed the violence of the state church and its surrender of Christian pacifism. The third reason is the failure or the willful refusal of establishment scholars to recognize the falsified character of this surviving history, and the deliberate wholesale "losing" of the documents from which the alternative history could be learned. And so the whole issue has been obscured.

When a pagan Roman Emperor, the commander-in-chief of the Imperial armies, presided in state over a general council of bishops that he had put on the Imperial pay roll, it is not surprising that this so-called "Church" abandoned Christian pacifism, as quietly as it could. That does not mean that the real Christian Church had thereby abandoned pacifism. The real Christian Church was excluded from this council. Their refusal to abandon Christian pacifism, their well-founded suspicions as to the character of the Emperor's new church, were the reasons why they were not invited--why they were thereafter persecuted.

Augustine inadvertently admits that the "donatists" claimed to be nonviolent. Describing his conversation with Bishop Fortunius in letter 44.9, he says that *he affirmed that even a bad man should not be killed by Christians . . . He therefore required me to show him one who, being a righteous man, had in the New Testament times put any one, even a criminal and impious man to death.* In 185.10 he says *But if they think that no one can be justified in using violence--as they said in the course of the conference that the true Church must necessarily be the one which suffers persecution, not the one inflicting it.* In his attempt to justify the massacres of Macarius, Optatus (III.7) indicates that the "donatists" interpreted *Peter put up thy sword* as mandating Christian pacifism in the *times after the gospel*.

In letter 105.3, relating several stories about converts to the "Catholic Church" being mistreated by the "donatists" Augustine says that one of them was rescued by Proculeianus the "donatist" bishop of Hippo. Assuming there is any truth to the story of this man's mistreatment, it also comes out that the "donatist" bishop put a stop to it. In letter 87.8 he testifies in passing that the "donatist" bishop Emeritus and his colleagues do not support violent acts: *the lawless acts of violence perpetrated by individuals of your party, which you yourselves, who refrain from such things, bewail and deplore.* Assuming for the sake of the argument, what is doubtful, that these violent acts did happen, what connects them with "your party" ? Unlike the Catholics, who are directly tied in with the Roman government and therefore with the violence of the Roman soldiers, what connects Christian bishops with the actions of others that they "*bewail and deplore*" ? How are they responsible ? Augustine refuses to own up to his responsibility for the actions of soldiers upon which his church depends (cf letter # 23.7) and who act upon the instructions of officials whom he has solicited. (cf letters # 86 and # 100). But the "donatists," who have never had any organizational existence as the **Donatists**, whose independent church organizations have been disrupted and scattered by government attacks, who have no financial or governmental control over other dissident North Africans, are held to account for the actions of every bandit or rebel in North Africa, even when they denounce him, even when they speak out against violent acts.

Christians were still pacifists

A responsible scholar of this period is obligated to make the entirely probable assumption that Christians were still pacifists when the Emperor's church was launched. And so the burden of proof must be upon those who assert that the nonconforming Christians readily turned to violence in resisting the new State Church. And especially that they had the approval of the "donatist" bishops for violence against the Catholics. The character of an individual or of a group is not formed overnight and it does not turn into the opposite character overnight. If someone says my old friend robbed a bank, I would demand some pretty good evidence before I believed it, because I know his character and his history.

A similar assumption of innocent until proven guilty has to be given to the "donatists." And some better proof is required than the obvious lies of their avowed enemies. But Frend and other scholars from the state church tradition tend to rubber stamp the doubtful and improbable allegations of Optatus and Augustine. That is a sorry substitute for a true history of the Christian Church during one of the most important periods in its history--a period in which

the Imperial Church was launched and in which Augustine et al formulated the new theology of Secular Christianity. If you get that wrong, then your whole history is wrong. And that is just what it is: a tradition of false history--of deliberately falsified history--going back to Augustine.

This missing question of Christian pacifism is central to understanding the "donatist schism." Why did they so strongly resist joining the Emperor's Church ? The six books of Bishop Donatus in which he explains their reasons have been "lost." The five books of Bishop Parmenian in which he explains their reasons have been "lost." But, if they were orthodox Christians, they almost certainly objected to instructing their congregations to take up the sword on behalf of the empire. It is equally certain that those who joined the Emperor's new "Church" would have to leave pacifism behind. And it is apparent that they could not honestly discuss this fundamental issue of basic Christian morality, so they had to sweep it under the rug.

Along with their objections to having the Roman Emperor as the head of the Christian Church, the "donatists" almost certainly argued that Christians were forbidden to go to war, cf John 18.33-37: *Art thou the King of the Jews? . . . 36 Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews.* The foundational heresy of the Imperial Church was the assertion that the "Church" had now properly annexed **THE WORLD**. So the Kingdom of Jesus Christ had properly entered into **UNITY** with the Roman Empire, so now it was proper for Christians to take up arms in defense of that empire. This doctrine, based upon a phony miracle story and a false theology, was the essential founding doctrine of the Imperial Church.

It is impossible to arrive at an understanding of what actions were taken by the so-called "donatists" during the so-called "donatist schism" if you neglect the key question as to whether the "donatists" were Christian pacifists. If they were, then the violence against the "donatists" by the "Catholics" and the Roman soldiers requires an entirely different explanation from the false explanation that Optatus and Augustine provide and which the scholars have repeated. Optatus and Augustine justify the violence, when they even admit that it happened, by alleging that the "donatists" were violent rebels. If they weren't, then there was no good reason for the army violence against the "donatists." There was only a bad reason. What was it ? In short, burying the issue of Christian pacifism is one of the ways by which the true story of the "donatist schism" has been replaced by a false story.

The official history of the church follows Augustine in asserting a double falsehood in respect to the pacifism of the early Christian church and what happened to it in the fourth century: I. It was easily discarded by the Christians who joined the new Imperial Church. II. It was quickly discarded also by the Christians who refused to join the new Imperial Church and who instead took up arms against it. This is false history.

And, if the history of the "donatist schism," as it has come down to us, is a false history, then the history of the Christian Church, as it has come down to us, is a false history. Recognizing that is the necessary beginning of the effort to write a true history.

X Augustine the propagandist

In one of his earliest mentions of the Circumcelliones, in a letter to a "donatist" bishop, Augustine seems to ascribe their excesses to the time of Macarius just as Optatus does. And he uses the allegation just like Optatus does to counter the story of the massacres by Macarius. 23.6: *Let us put away from between us those vain objections which are wont to be thrown at each other by the ignorant on either side. Do not on your part cast up to me the persecutions of Macarius. I, on mine, will not reproach you with the excesses of the Circumcelliones. If you are not to blame for the latter, neither am I for the former; they pertain not to us.*

In another early letter, written in A.D. 395, he seems to be describing an actual instance of something done by the Circumcelliones. 29.12: *At Hasna, where our brother Argentius is presbyter, the Circumcelliones, entering our church, demolished the altar. The case is now in process of trial; and we earnestly ask your prayers that it may be decided in a peaceful way, and as becomes the Catholic Church, so as to silence the tongues of turbulent heretics. I have sent a letter to the Asiarch.*

In his later letters, Augustine typically makes vague and sweeping and extravagant allegations as to what the Circumcelliones have done. This is one of the few instances where he describes a specific action at a specific place and it is probably authentic, that is, there is at least a half truth to be found in it. It isn't a pure invention. The church in question is almost certainly one of those confiscated by the government from the "donatists" and given to the "Catholics." **Our church** has therefore to be understood in a highly qualified way. The description of them destroying the altar may be true. In book 2.19 Optatus describes them doing this and various other things to purify a church from what they considered to be the sacrilegious ceremonies of the "Catholic Church." Allowing for the exaggeration of Optatus account, (dogs driven mad when given the communion wine etc.) it probably does reflect their attitude. It is notable that Augustine alleges something done to an altar, which they considered to be polluted, rather than an attack on any person. That also rings true.

Notice that there is a trial and some sort of regular proceeding to deal with whatever happened at Hasna. Contra his later stories about the unlimited violence of the "donatists" which implies that the "Catholics" are entirely at their mercy and that anarchy reigns in North Africa. In this instance they have to stand trial for destroying an altar table which was arguably their own property. In Augustine's later letters they are described as burglarizing houses and murdering Catholics, apparently with no fear of the authorities.

IV Augustine's later allegations of violence

In letter # 185.25-28 Augustine alleges that Bishop Maximianus, the Catholic Bishop of the Church at Bagai was attacked and beaten and wounded with a dagger while at his church. Recovering from the attack, he goes to see the emperor and the result is a set of laws, apparently passed about 401 A.D. which proscribe the "donatists"--which renew the

old proscription: *hence, therefore, it came about that a religious and pious emperor, when such matters were brought to his knowledge, thought it well, by the enactment of most pious laws, entirely to correct the error of this great impiety, and to bring those who bore the standard of Christ against the cause of Christ into the unity of the Catholic Church, even by terror and compulsion, rather than merely to take away their power of doing violence, and to leave them the freedom of going astray and perishing in their error.* 185.28

Note that: *rather than merely to take away their power of doing violence.* Instead of "merely" enforcing the laws against assault and battery in the town of Bagai they will use this one incident as the pretext to make all the "donatists" in North Africa join the "Catholic Church" ***EVEN BY TERROR AND COMPULSION.***

Augustine explains that they had already met in a Council (at Carthage June 401 A.D.) and had already sent envoys to the Court to obtain legal measures against the "donatists" such as a renewal of *the law which Theodosius, of pious memory, enacted generally against heretics of all kinds, to the effect that any heretical bishop or clergyman, being found in any place, should be fined ten pounds of gold, and confirm it in more express terms against the Donatists, who denied that they were heretics.* But the testimony of Bishop Maximianus that he had been attacked personally then became the justification for sweeping legal measures.

Notice the argument as to whether the "donatists" were "heretics" as well as "schismatics." Optatus conceded that they were "schismatics," rather than "heretics," and so did Augustine in some letters, but Augustine has to argue that they are "heretics" as well, because the enforcement of the Imperial edicts is triggered by that accusation. So his theology is adapted to justifying the mandate for legal persecution of the non-conforming Christians.

HERESY is now a crime which is defined by the Emperor in consultation with the state church bureaucracy. That is, those who are guilty of the worst heresy of all have the power to bring criminal sanctions against those who see them as the heretics. For many centuries thereafter **HERESY** is so defined. It is the characteristic allegation made by the state church against those who refuse to conform to the state church. That is why the real Christian church is often found behind the "heretic" label.

terror and compulsion

Assuming, for the sake of the argument, that there is any truth to this story of the attack on the bishop, how does it justify a general proscription of the "donatists" throughout North Africa? Instead of the bishop going to the nearest police station, he goes to see the emperor. Instead of the arrest of those who attacked the bishop, the emperor issues laws to ban the "donatists" entirely. Not just to ban them but to bring them *into the unity of the Catholic Church, even by terror and compulsion.* Why does an attack on one man require such a remedy? Which leads to the conclusion that the story is only a pretext to justify these measures.

And this is how Optatus and Augustine use the allegations of "donatist" violence. They are used to cancel the true story of Imperial Catholic violence against the "donatists" and they are used to justify the laws which compel them to join the "Catholic Church."

Note the contrast between what the "donatists" suffered at the Church at Bagai in 347 A.D. and the alleged attack upon the Catholic bishop of Bagai circa 401 A.D. He is soon recovered from his injuries, supposing he really had any, and on his way to complain to the Emperor, who bans the entire "donatist" church in response. When Bishop Donatus and his entire congregation were killed in 347 A.D., the emperor's soldiers did it at the behest of the "Catholics" and the "donatists" themselves are blamed for what happened to them. The soldiers guilty of mass murder were not punished. It is not hard to see which side the government is on.

in unity with the burglars

The long-winded Optatus wrote that the list of the places where massacres happened in 363 A.D. was *too long to mention by their names*. In letter 185.29 the even longer-winded Augustine offers a similar list of atrocities *which it would take too long to go through in detail*. . . . *some of them had their eyes put out, and one bishop his hands and tongue cut off, while some were actually murdered. I say nothing of massacres of the most cruel description, and robberies of houses, committed in nocturnal burglaries, with the burning not only of private houses, but even of churches--some being found abandoned enough to cast the sacred books into the flames*. He can give the gory details, but not the details of name and place and date. So these ultra orthodox Christians are also into burglary and burning the sacred books. What pushes them into burglary are the new laws of 401 A.D. which are designed to force them *into the unity of the Catholic Church even by terror and compulsion*. (28) So this new round of forced unity is retroactively justified by the actions of these people. The way to deal with burglars is to force them to join the Catholic Church. It shows that those who spurn "Catholic Unity" are capable of any crime.

In letter # 43.24 Augustine says that *I forbear from specifying the tyrannical acts of violence and public depredations in districts, towns, and properties throughout Africa; for it is better to leave you to speak of these to each other, whether in whispers or openly, as you please*. Nice rhetorical turn there, but why is he suddenly so shy of telling atrocity stories against the "donatists" ? He is perfectly willing to make general allegations over and over, but, like Optatus, he *forbears from specifying* names, dates and places.

Frend notes the "contrast" between Augustine's allegations against the "donatists" such that his earlier letters belie his later letters. Aside from that "contrast" it is apparent that his allegations are not believable. That is, they wouldn't be believable unless the "great" "Saint" Augustine was making them. Making him a "Saint" puts an **IMPRIMATUR** on his **PROPAGANDA**.

persecuting schismatics

Even if Augustine's bogus allegations of "donatist" violence were true, it does not explain nor justify nor excuse the persecution of the "donatists" to force them into the Catholic Church. And Augustine lets it leak out here and there that "schism" is the real reason for the persecution, even while he mixes it in with allegations of violence to confuse the issue: *The civil powers defend their conduct in persecuting schismatics . . . HE BEARETH NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN. FOR HE IS THE MINISTER OF GOD, A REVENGER TO EXECUTE WRATH UPON HIM THAT DOETH EVIL*. *The whole question therefore is, whether schism be not an evil work, or whether you have not caused schism, so that your resistance of the powers that be is in a good cause and not an evil work, whereby you would bring judgment on yourselves*. 87.7

Again, you will say that *the Roman emperors are incited against you by us*. Nay, rather blame yourselves for this, seeing that, as was long ago foretold in the promise concerning Christ, *YEA, ALL KINGS SHALL FALL DOWN BEFORE HIM* [psalm 72.11] *they are now members of the Church; and you have dared to wound the Church by schism, and still presume to insist upon rebaptizing her members. Our brethren indeed demand help from the powers which are ordained, not to persecute you, but to protect themselves against the lawless acts of violence perpetrated by individuals of your party, which you yourselves, who refrain from such things, bewail and deplore; . . . But these emperors, whatever the occasion of their becoming acquainted with the crime of your schism might be, frame against you such decrees as their zeal and their office demand. FOR THEY BEAR NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN; THEY ARE THE MINISTERS OF GOD TO EXECUTE WRATH UPON THOSE THAT DO EVIL.* 87.8 (see Chapter XI for the evidence that Augustine fabricated this *BEAR NOT THE SWORD IN VAIN* scripture, now found at Romans 13.4)

Operation Unity

The violent measures taken against them by the Roman government were not in response to "donatist" violence. Rather, the bogus allegations of "donatist" violence were part of the propaganda cover for "Operation Unity"--an aggressive attempt to force them into the "Unity" of the "Catholic Church." The Imperial edicts were not aimed at people who were rebels nor designed to apprehend burglars and arsonists. Instead they were aimed at peaceful citizens who had refused to join the "Catholic Church."

Augustine's attempts to portray the "donatists" as violent do not provide the justification for the violent way they were treated in order to force them to become "Catholics." If a man commits a crime of violence, you try him for the violent crime. Instead, they went after people who had not been convicted of any crime and forced them to become "Catholics." Augustine's constant allegations of "donatist" violence are designed to distract people from the real violence in the North African situation, the sustained campaign of coercion by the government and the Catholics.

The perennial story of the violent Circumcelliones is the perennial pretext for the renewal of the forced unity decrees. In letter 88, written in 406 A.D., where he summarizes his version of the "donatist" dispute, he says that *the clemency of the Catholic Church would have led us to desist from even enforcing these decrees of the emperors, had not your clergy and Circumcelliones, disturbing our peace, and destroying us by their most monstrous crimes and furious deeds of violence, compelled us to have these decrees revived and put in force again. . . . A certain presbyter . . . was cruelly beaten without form of law, rolled over and over in a miry pond . . . and exhibited as an object of ridicule.* 88.6 Like the *ridiculus mus* stories of Optatus, the alleged mistreatment of one presbyter is the proof of a terrorist campaign which requires as a remedy that the terrorists now be compelled to join the "Catholic Church." Note that phrase: *cruelly beaten without form of law*. He is distinguishing it from the legal beatings that the "donatists" received to make them convert.

In 88.7 he says: *Our bishop, however, did not complain to the emperors of the wrongs and persecution which the Catholic Church in our district suffered in those days. But when a Council had been convened* [Carthage 403 A.D.] . . . Instead of calling the police when a local man is

beaten up and rolled in the mud, the bishop has the option of notifying the emperor or ignoring it until another of these "Unity" conferences is held. That is, the story about the presbyter being attacked doesn't really have anything to do with this "Unity" conference.

murder is heresy

A similar atrocity story, referred to in letter 88.7 and told in letter 105.4, is supposedly the reason why the "donatist" bishop Crispinus of Calama is convicted *as a heretic*: *After this, when the notorious atrocities of your clergy and Circumcellions continued, a case was brought to trial; and Crispinus being condemned as a heretic . . .* 105.4 : *Yet, when Crispinus was convicted in the proconsular court as a heretic of this very deed, he was let off the fine of ten pounds of gold at the request of this same Bishop Possidius.* "this very deed" was the attempted murder of Bishop Possidius, the "Catholic" bishop of Calama by a gang who *left him half-dead and tried to burn down the house from which he had escaped*. So sending your boys out to kill the rival "Catholic" bishop is a form of "heresy." But the "Catholic" bishop let him off the fine out of Christian forgiveness ? (It is notable that the "donatists" are forever leaving people "half-dead" in Augustine's accounts. Unlike the "Catholics" and the Roman soldiers, they never seem to be able to finish them off.)

From what Augustine says in 88.7, there appears to have been a provision or practice whereby the fine of ten pounds of gold for a heretic bishop was waived if there were no incidents of violence in his town. Augustine gives the "Catholic Bishops" the credit for this measure--which is doubtful--but it shows why it was important to have allegations of violence, and why they would trump them up in order to pressure Imperial authorities into going after people whose only crime was their lack of enthusiasm for the Imperial Church. As he tells it, the alleged attack on the bishop of Bagai, who went straight to the emperor to report it, triggered a general enforcement of the Unity edicts. So it shows that they had a strong incentive for exaggerating or inventing such incidents.

In letter # 105.3, written in 409 A.D., Augustine uses the story one more time to justify the renewal of the unity edicts in 405 A.D.: *If you are angry with us because you are forced by the decrees of the emperors to rejoin us, you brought this on yourselves by stirring up violence and threats whenever we wished to preach the truth . . . call to memory the deeds of your Circumcellions and the clerics who have always been their leaders, and you will see what brought this on you. Your complaints are baseless because you forced the enactment of all these decrees.* If "violence and threats" are really the problem, why don't the authorities enact decrees against "violence and threats" ? That is, why don't they enforce the ordinary criminal laws ? Instead, it supposedly explains why *you are forced by the decrees of the emperors to rejoin us*. Obviously, these allegations, even if they were true, are a pretext for the actual violence and threats used to make people join the state church.

conforming to the state

In fact this policy of forcing people to conform to the state religion was an ancient policy of the Imperial government. It was ancient when Constantine first adopted it against the non-conforming Christians. And the pretext that those being coerced are trouble-makers and violent rebels is also ancient. You see it in Constantine's 313 A.D. *3000 folles* letter to Caecilian. The vague allegation of their mis-deeds is being used as a cover story for the aggression against them, just as it was being used 100 years later.

In letter 105.3-4 Augustine tells several stories of "donatists" using coercion against individuals who convert to the "Catholic Church" which leads him to this conclusion: 105.5: *If you, private citizens, so boldly and violently force men either to accept error or to remain in it, how much greater right and duty have we to resist your outrages by means of the lawfully constituted authority, which God has made subject to Christ, according to His prophecy and so to rescue unfortunate souls from your tyranny, to free them from long-continued false teaching and let them breathe the clear air of truth ! As for those who, according to you, **are compelled to join us against their will**, many of them wish to be compelled, as they admit to us both before and after conversion, for only thus can they escape your oppressive treatment.*

the excuse for police violence

So these doubtful accounts of various incidents involving a few individuals justify *the lawfully constituted authority* in forcing people into the "Catholic Church." Why ? If force is being used against "Catholics" the government can prevent it or punish it. But how does it follow that they must therefore use force to compel people to join the "Catholic Church" ? Is this a legal version of the dictum that "two wrongs make a right" ? So the allegation of violent incidents for which the "donatists" are responsible is being used by Augustine as the excuse for the violence of the forced unity policy. As discussed later, Catholic clerics as well as Roman police held people prisoner and used coercion on them to force them to become "Catholics." Augustine is justifying this by making these bogus allegations.

That set of ideas he uses here--*the lawfully constituted authority, which God has made subject to Christ, according to His prophecy*--refers to the **KING'S COVENANT** and the **NEW AGE** doctrines which he invented--as discussed later. It is his theological version of Constantine's miracle--the logical development of the belief that Jesus and the Emperor are now partners.

Like Optatus before him, Augustine uses the violent Circumcellions as the pretext for the violent measures against the non-conforming Christians by the Imperial Government: That is why we had to exile their bishops, why we had to take their churches, why we had to turn the soldiers loose on them. We had to force all of them to join the Catholic Church because there are some violent men among them. Like Optatus, he makes vague and sweeping allegations of "donatist" violence which are illustrated by a few trivial incidents, which, half true or not, clearly disprove the sweeping allegations. **"The Circumcellions are murdering Catholics all over North Africa. For instance, a deacon was rolled in the mud at Hippo. That is why we had to appeal to the emperor to enforce the Unity edicts. You brought this on yourselves !"**

lime in the eyes

Some of Augustine's propaganda efforts are beyond description. These sections of letter # 88, written in 406 A.D., mix together allegations of criminal attacks and military attacks with a description of how tenderly they forcibly convert people who have been throwing lime and acid in their eyes. The only answer is a Unity conference which will arrive at a final decision which was reached long ago: 88.8 *Not only, however, have you failed to do this [agree to a "Unity" conference] but your party go on inflicting yet greater injuries upon us. Not contented with beating us with bludgeons and killing some with the sword [name a few ?] they even, with incredible ingenuity in crime, throw lime mixed with acid into our people's eyes to blind them. For pillaging our houses, moreover, they have fashioned huge and formidable implements, armed with which*

*they wander here and there [a little heavy for carrying around ?] breathing out threats of slaughter, rapine, burning of houses and blinding of our eyes. By which things we have been constrained in the first instance to complain to you, venerable sir, [Januarius, the "donatist" primate] begging you to consider how, **under these so-called terrible laws of Catholic emperors, many, nay all of you, who say that you are the victims of persecution**, are settled in peace in the possessions which were your own, or which you have taken from others, while we suffer such unheard-of wrongs at the hands of your party. **You say that you are persecuted**, while we are killed with clubs and swords by your armed men. **You say that you are persecuted**, while many of us have our eyesight destroyed by the lime and acid with which your men are armed for the purpose. Moreover, if their course of crime brings some of them to death, **they make out that these deaths are justly the occasion of odium against us and of glory to them**. They take no blame to themselves for the harm which they do to us, and **they lay upon us the blame** of the harm which they bring upon themselves. They live as robbers, they die as Circumcelliones, **they are honoured as martyrs** ! Nay, I do injustice to robbers in this comparison, for we have never heard of robbers destroying the eyesight of those whom they have plundered. They indeed take away those whom they kill from the light, but they do not take away the light from those whom they leave in life.*

Question: what is the cause of their deaths for which they are *honoured as martyrs* ? Do the "Catholics" and / or the Roman authorities have anything to do with it ? I have **put in bold face** the allegations which the "donatists" have made, as they have been filtered through Augustine's arguments. Since the official history has not allowed them to speak for themselves, this is the only chance they have to state their case.

88.9 *On the other hand, if at any time we get men of your party into our power, we keep them unharmed, showing great love towards them; and we tell them everything by which the error which has severed brother from brother is refuted And thus some of them we persuade If they refuse to be reconciled to the unity of Christ, they are allowed to depart, as they were detained, without suffering any harm. We also exhort our laity as far as we can to detain them without doing them any harm, and bring them to us for admonition and instruction. Some of them obey us and do this, if it is in their power. Others deal with them as they would with robbers, because they actually suffer from them such things as robbers are wont to do. Some of them strike their assailants in protecting their own bodies from their blows. While others apprehend them and bring them to the magistrates. And though we intercede on their behalf, they do not let them off, because they are very much afraid of their savage outrages. Yet all the while, these men, though persisting in the practices of robbers, claim to be honoured as martyrs when they receive the due reward of their deeds. Question: from whom do they receive this due reward of their deeds for which they claim to be honoured as martyrs ?*

They let them go unharmed--that is, the "Catholic" "doctors" give up on them and turn them over to the magistrate if they refuse to convert. It is what the magistrates do to them that leads to their *claim to be honoured as martyrs*. Are they robbers or not ? If they are, why are they subjected to forcible conversion instead of being tried for robbery ? If they aren't, why are they being arrested like criminals ?

unity is the answer

88.10 *Accordingly our desire, which we lay before you, venerable sir, by this letter and by the brethren whom we have sent, is as follows. In the first place, if it be possible, let a peaceable*

conference be held with our bishops, so that an end may be put to the error itself, not to the men who embrace it, and men corrected rather than punished; and as you formerly despised their proposals for agreement, let them now proceed from your side. How much better for you to have such a conference between your bishops and ours, the proceedings of which may be written down and sent with signature of the parties to the Emperor, than to confer with the civil magistrates, who cannot do otherwise than administer the laws which have been passed against you ! [= the law is already against you, so what have you got to lose ? !] . . . How much better qualified therefore will the Emperor himself be to decide regarding your case, when the report of that conference has been read before him, seeing that he is not bound by these laws, and has power to enact other laws instead of them; although it may be said to be a case upon which final decision was pronounced long ago ! Yet, in wishing this conference with you, we seek not to have a second final decision, but to have it made known as already settled to those who meanwhile are not aware that it is so.

another sham proceeding

Notice that the conference he wants them to attend will deal with *a case upon which final decision was pronounced long ago !* The conference will arrive at a pre-determined conclusion--a renewed attempt to force the "donatists" into "unity" with the state church. The so-called "Conference" of A.D. 411 was actually a show trial of the "donatists" by their persecutors as the "donatist" opening statement indicates--*We have been given a mandate by our brothers and colleagues to defend ourselves before this tribunal.*

88.11 *Nevertheless, you who have by schism severed yourselves from the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, refuse to be expelled from our ecclesiastical buildings, when the decree to this effect proceeds not from judges such as you employed in dealing with schismatics from your sect, but from the kings of the earth themselves, who worship Christ as the prophecy had foretold, and from whose bar you retired vanquished when you brought accusation against Caecilianus.* Note: *Refuse to be expelled from our ecclesiastical buildings.* That is, their churches which the government has confiscated in the name of the state church.

the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed is one of Augustine's theological definitions of the State Church of the Roman Empire--as discussed later, in Chapter XIII--the **CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS** or **EVERYBODY'S CHURCH**.

the kings of the earth themselves, who worship Christ as the prophecy had foretold refers to his **KING'S COVENANT DOCTRINE** and his **NEW AGE DOCTRINE** as discussed later, in Chapter XII.

88.12 *If however, you will neither instruct us nor listen to us, come yourselves, or send into the district of Hippo some of your party, with some of us as their guides, that they may see your army equipped with their weapons. Nay, more fully equipped than ever army was before, for no soldier when fighting against barbarians was ever known to add to his other weapons lime and acid to destroy the eyes of his enemies. If you refuse this also, we beg you at least to write to them to desist now from these things and refrain from murdering, plundering, and blinding our people. We will not say, condemn them. For it is for yourselves to see how no contamination is brought to you by the toleration within your communion of those whom we prove to be robbers, while contamination is brought to us by our having members against whom you have never been able to prove that they were traditors. If, however, you treat all our remonstrances with contempt, we shall never regret that we desired to act in a peaceful and orderly way. The Lord will so plead for His Church, that you, on the other hand, shall regret that you despised our humble attempt at conciliation.*

Dear Circumcelliones: Please stop murdering and plundering the Catholics. Especially, I want you to refrain from blinding them by throwing lime and acid in their eyes. As ever, Januarius. Of course he means to show that the "donatist" primate is responsible for all the alleged crimes against the "Catholics" and could call off the criminals if he wished. That is why they all have to be forced into the "Catholic Church." The "error" of the "donatists" in rejecting the State Church is the root cause of all these crimes. Augustine's argument here is absurd on the face of it: the cause of the vicious criminality of those who allegedly burglarize houses and deliberately blind other people is the refusal of the "donatist" bishops to join the official church. An agreement among bishops will bring a halt to all these crimes. (Also, Augustine is confused on his chemistry: lime & acid would neutralize each other, if mixed. And just imagine soldiers on the march having to carry vials of caustic fluids with them !)

Notice how Augustine depicts the Catholics as the helpless victims of a "donatist" "army" at a time when the Catholics in fact have the backing of the Imperial government and are about to get a renewal of the Unity edicts. As if the Roman magistrates and police were powerless to prevent this "donatist" crime wave at the same time that they are able to take energetic measures against the "donatists" just for non-conformity.

As argued later, this letter, while nominally addressed to a "donatist" bishop, is actually an indictment of the "donatists" which is written to be read by the officials of the Imperial Court who are being pushed to renew the forced Unity edicts. It is a set of atrocity tales which are being used to pressure the government into taking action.

Calling the **DOCTOR**

Even Augustine's prettied up description cannot alter the sinister character of the proceedings by which captured "donatists" are subjected to "Catholic" brainwashing sessions under the pretext that they are "robbers" : *if at any time we get men of your party into our power, we keep them unharmed, showing great love towards them; and we tell them everything by which the error which has severed brother from brother is refuted. . . . And thus some of them we persuade . . .* The last section of his letter to Count Boniface refers to similar proceedings and gives a revealing indication of what he really meant by **DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH**: *the Lord will grant you understanding, that you may have some answer which you can make for the correction and healing of those men who are commended to you as to a faithful son by our mother the Church, that you may correct and heal them, by the aid of the Lord wherever you can, and howsoever you can, either by speaking and replying to them in your own person, or by bringing them into communication with the doctors of the Church.* 185.51

Earlier in the same letter he explains that "donatism" is a kind of "madness" for which the "Catholic Church" can provide a **DOCTOR**: 185.7: *the laws . . . are in reality their truest friends; for through their operation many of them have been, and are daily being reformed, and return God thanks that they are reformed, and delivered from their ruinous madness. And those that used to hate are now filled with love; and now that they have recovered their right minds, they congratulate themselves that these most wholesome laws were brought to bear against them . . . For the physician is irksome to the raging madman.* Some 1600 years before the Soviet government thought of it, the Imperial Church was classifying non-conformists as mental cases and subjecting them to involuntary treatment to cure the "madness." (cf. Maximin's *Rescript*, Eusebius *H.E.* ix.7.11)

daily experiments in fear and pain

In section 21 of the same letter Augustine testifies enthusiastically to the wholesome spiritual results to be achieved by torture and coercion: *For many have found advantage (as we have proved, and are daily proving by actual experiment) in being first compelled by fear or pain, so that they might afterwards be influenced by teaching;* Quote from Terence "which is not found in the extant plays of Terence" (Schaff footnote): *"Unless by pain and suffering thou art taught, Thou canst not guide thyself aright in aught."*

Since he got away with interpolating Saint Paul (as argued later) Augustine decided he might as well interpolate Terence. That is probably why modern education achieves such pitiful results--not enough use of the rack, the thumb screw and the **RED HOT PINCERS !**

conversion through coercion

In letter 93, written about 408 A.D., Augustine presents a variety of arguments to defend the use of police and military coercion as the necessary **way of salvation** for the Christians who refuse to join the state church: *Oh, if I could but show you how many we have even from the Circumcelliones who are now approved Catholics . . . who nevertheless would not have been brought to this soundness of judgment had they not been, as persons beside themselves, bound with the cords of those laws which are distasteful to you !* 93.2 *When, however, wholesome instruction is added to means of inspiring salutary fear, so that not only the light of truth may dispel the darkness of error, but the force of fear may at the same time break the bonds of evil custom, we are made glad, as I have said, by the salvation of many, who with us bless God, and render thanks to Him, because by the fulfillment of His covenant, in which He promised that the kings of the earth should serve Christ He has thus cured the diseased and restored health to the weak.* 93.3

Note: *by the fulfillment of His covenant, in which He promised that the kings of the earth should serve Christ.* He not only defends police terror against non-conforming Christians, he turns it into a major new doctrine, the doctrine of the **KING'S COVENANT**.

testimonials

Augustine shows that coercion is good for you: *How many, believing that it mattered not to which party a Christian might belong, remained in the schism of Donatus only because they had been born in it, and no one was compelling them to forsake it and pass over into the Catholic Church ! To all these classes of persons the dread of those laws in the promulgation of which kings serve the Lord in fear [King's Covenant doctrine] has been so useful, that now some say we were willing for this some time ago; but thanks be to God, who has given us occasion for doing it at once, and has cut off the hesitancy of procrastination ! Others say: We already knew this to be true, but we were held prisoners by the force of old custom; thanks be to the Lord, who has broken these bonds asunder and has brought us into the bond of peace ! Others say: . . . fear made us learn the truth . . . Others say: . . . His scourge took away our timid hesitation . . . Others say: . . . thanks to the Lord, who has gathered us in from a state of schism, and has taught us that it is fitting that the one God be worshipped in unity* 93.17-18

It is a series of unsigned generic testimonials from various categories of people who have been saved, thanks to the fear and pain of the imperial edicts that forced them to join the "Catholic Church." The emperor's soldiers laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit ! *Amen ! Hallelujah ! PASS THE PINCERS !*

Note how the imperial edicts are really the Lord's doing. The punitive laws are *HIS SCOURGE*. So what the Emperor does and what The Lord does are one and the same thing. The coercion of the Roman soldiers which makes people join the Emperor's Church is God's Will. Jesus Christ endorses torture to bring people to His Truth. That is the doctrine of "Saint" Augustine. Since Jesus Christ embraced the military in the time of Constantine, it isn't surprising that he now also uses the police. That is Augustine's essential contribution to the theology of the Christian church--the theology of the anti-church.

In letter # 89.7, Augustine declares the benefits of the one-two State-Church punch by which the convert is first prepared by "human authority" to be more receptive to the medicines that the doctors of the church have to offer: *Therefore let it not be said that nothing is accomplished when strong measures are employed. For when the entrenchments of stubborn custom are stormed by fear of human authority, this is not all that is done, because at the same time faith is strengthened, and the understanding convinced, by authority and arguments which are Divine.*

Charter of the Inquisition

The methods that Augustine describes here were being used by the Inquisition 1000 years later. The accounts of what was done to the Anabaptists in the 16th century show the persistence of this persecuting spirit. It is no accident that Augustine celebrates the union of the police power with the spiritual power just as Eusebius celebrated the union of the military power with the spiritual power. Just as the soldiers convert the heathen, so do the police convert the nonconforming Christians.

This doctrine of Augustine's--conversion to the state church through violence--endured for 1500 years thereafter. It was "Catholic Church" doctrine, and Henry the VIII's doctrine and Calvin's doctrine and Luther's doctrine. It was Prince Vladimir's doctrine and Czar Peter's doctrine. It isn't remarkable that the Bolsheviks found themselves in sympathy with it. It is a throwback to the totalitarianism of the old Roman Empire which controlled everything that men did and which told them what to believe at the point of a sword. Augustine's illusion is still the common illusion of people raised in the tradition of Secular Christianity: the true church will be established by the soldiers; morality can be sustained by the law.

These people never learn that you always defeat yourself spiritually through such victories. By using fear and coercion you guarantee that all the conformists and cowards and hypocrites will join your "church" while the persecuted church is thereby pruned of its weakest members and the rest are forced to become stronger in their faith. In the 9th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, there is a remarkably prescient essay on *COMMUNISM* written about 1890, thirty years before the Bolshevik Revolution. What the writer points out is that the utopian model community would take on an entirely different character if it were done on a basis of state wide coercion from which there was no escape.

Augustine is blind to the radically altered character of something called "Christianity" when it is forcibly enjoined by the police. Real Christianity makes a total claim upon the individual, but it has to be totally voluntary, because real love has to be voluntary. The use of the police and the military power to enforce something which pretends to be "Christianity" is a complete perversion of Christianity. It is totalitarianism. Did Joe Stalin represent a government-mandated version of *from each according to his means, to each according to his needs* ? No more did Augustine's government-sponsored church represent *love God, love your neighbor* with legal teeth to make you do it. Just as Military Christianity is Anti Christianity, so Police Christianity is Perverted Christianity. The proof of that is the bloody and brutal realities of Constantine's Imperial Church. All of Augustine's clever propaganda fails to hide it except from those who can't afford to see it.

In some of his writings, Augustine pretends to be reluctant to use force. He may have had a personal squeamishness towards violence but he is an enthusiastic supporter of what the police and the army do to the non-conforming Christians. He deeply believed in severe corporal punishment, eloquently defended the use of it, and encouraged the authorities to inflict it.

Not only do they take Augustine's pretenses at face value, but the establishment scholars are blind to the reality of the persecuting state church that employed Augustine. No doubt there were nice Nazis and benign Bolsheviks who had a personal horror of violence. But they were part of a murderous governmental machine which carried out terrible policies. Even if Augustine were personally as kind a person as he pretends, it does not change the fact that he belonged to a state church which murdered non-conforming Christians, and confiscated their property, which beat them up to force them to convert etc. All Augustine did was write books and letters and all Adolph Eichmann did was shuffle papers and sign invoices, but they both played essential roles in bureaucracies that carried out mass murder. They willingly belonged to something which could only maintain its power by such actions. As the major propagandist for the state church of North Africa, Augustine did whatever he had to do to conceal mass murder, for example, his specious account of what happened at Bagai in A.D. 347.

Salvation through the Law

Let the kings of the earth serve Christ by making laws for Him and for His cause. 93.19 Augustine's doctrine here is the reverse of what Saint Paul is arguing in all of his epistles: *No one is saved by the Law.* cf Galatians 13.11 etc. Augustine really does believe that no one is saved without the law, that we need a God of coercive power to make us good. He believes that fear accomplishes what love cannot accomplish. That attitude permeates his whole peculiar system of theology. He believes in a God of Power who commands us and coerces us. He really does not believe in what is voluntary or what is done out of love, without any admixture of fear and coercion. His peculiar personality and his peculiar personal beliefs are an indictment of the Imperial Church in which this kind of a person became a founding father. He is a striking example of what Constantine's church had produced in the first century of its career. If this is the best, what were the worst like ? More about that later. See Chapter XIV ***Corrupt Bishops.***

What appears in the character of Augustine, Eusebius, and Jerome and the others who belonged to the Imperial Church is a moral weakness which caused them to identify with the power of the great empire and the worldly strength of the great church of the empire. Augustine could never have belonged to a persecuted and impoverished church or one which did not have the approval of the authorities and the backing of the police and the army. And that describes most people, unfortunately. That is why a mass church is always an anti church.

Augustine identifies God with the state and its coercive laws. cf 105.13 *This is what God Himself does for you through us . . . by the laws of secular powers.* He thereby re-defines the Christian church to bring it into conformity with the fact of the Imperial Church.

Propaganda Letters

It is apparent that letter # 88 is really a propaganda letter. It is not intended to persuade the "donatist" primate of anything. Rather it makes an extreme case against the "donatists" to be presented to the Imperial officials that Augustine wants to pressure into calling a Unity conference and renewing the decrees against the "donatists."

In reading Augustine's letters, you have to keep asking the question: who is this really aimed at ? Because much of the time he is writing for an audience other than the person whom he is ostensibly addressing.

In letter # 72 circa 404 A.D. from Jerome, Jerome complains that he has yet to receive Augustine's letter but that everyone in Italy seems to have a copy of it, and that it has apparently been in circulation for several years. He has been told he says that Augustine wrote this letter, which challenges Jerome's interpretation of a scripture, because Augustine is *intending to become famous at my expense* 72.2. *henceforth you make sure that I be the first to receive whatever you may write to me.* 72.5

Letter # 73, from Augustine to Jerome, shows Augustine at his most humble, most apologetic and most flattering. But letter # 74, a cover letter, shows that he has sent a copy of this humble epistle to another bishop along with a copy of Jerome's letter so that the bishop might compare the two: *by reading which your pious wisdom may easily see both the moderation of tone which I have been careful to preserve, and the vehemence on his part by which I have been not unreasonably filled with fear.* So even while he is supposedly squaring himself with Jerome by an apologetic letter, he is also scoring points off him with a wider audience. His apparent reason for sending these two letters to Bishop Praesidius is to advertise his Christian meekness contra Jerome's irritability with him.

That same Goody Two Shoes, pious & humble, exemplary Christian posturing shows up at the end of his letter to the "donatist" bishop Januarius. At the same time he lets him know what is coming to him: *you, on the other hand, shall regret that you despised our humble attempt at conciliation.* 88.12

Two-faced

His correspondence shows that Augustine is two-faced. He sends Jerome this pious, humble, tender and apologetic letter at the same time that he calculates its effect on others, at the same time that he is circulating attacks on Jerome's positions.

The letters he writes to powerful people reek of incense and drip holy oil. He expresses the deepest love and admiration for the recipient. By contrast, letter # 79 404 A.D. to a Manichaean teacher is a blunt warning that he had better leave town forthwith or he will get a nasty surprise: *And if you are not prepared to do this, begone from this place, and do not pervert the right ways of the Lord, ensnaring and infecting with your poison the minds of the weak, lest, by the Lord's right hand helping me, you be put to confusion in a way which you did not expect.* In Augustine's parlance the *Lord's right hand* means the police. And he is not kidding. As a Catholic bishop, he has the powers of a magistrate, and there are strict laws against "heretics" including the Manichaeans. Note the entire change of tone from the flattering and humble letters he sends to powerful people.

He also leaves things out of his letters which are instead conveyed by the messengers who take the letter. It indicates that he left some of his actual measures against the "donatists" off the record. For example, two letters written about 400 A.D. to two Catholic landlords who are being pressed by him to take anti-donatist measures on their estates: 57.2 *The priest whom I have sent will confide the rest to your Prudence in greater detail.* 58.3 *As to the snares which these heretics contrive in the perversity of their hearts, I have resolved not to speak of them in this letter, because I have been only amused at their imagining that they could gain any advantage over your mind, which Christ holds as His possession. You will hear them, however, from my brethren, whom I earnestly commend to your Excellency. They fear lest you should disdain some things which to you might seem unnecessary in connection with the great and unlooked for salvation of those men over whom, in consequence of your work, their Catholic Mother rejoices.*

Augustine the Propagandist

Aside from circulating his letters, Augustine uses every means he has to make propaganda against the "donatists." Some of his propaganda pieces were intended to be read in Catholic Churches. In letter # 23 in which he complains to a "donatist" bishop who has re-baptised a former "Catholic" deacon into the "donatist" church, he challenges the bishop to write a reply which he can read to the Catholic congregation together with his own letter. And he had various ways of reaching a larger audience. In letter 35.3 he says that he is going to publicize this case *by the public registers.* Frend (237) says that *the use of the walls of confiscated Donatist churches for displaying copies of Imperial edicts or his own anti-Donatist works, show that he meant to reach the widest possible public.*

And some of his most melodramatic atrocity stories are found in these letters. In letter 34.3 he wrings his hands over the case of a "Catholic" deacon who has gone over to the "donatists" so that he might be free to murder his mother: *what else may we expect than that now he shall feel himself, as a Donatist, so armed as to have no fear in assailing that unhappy woman, decrepit with age and helpless in her widowhood, from wounding whom he was restrained while he remained a Catholic ? For what else had he purposed in his passionate heart when he said to his mother: "I will pass over to the party of Donatus, and I will drink your blood ! ? "* If, therefore, these things find favour in your eyes, let him be urged by those who are now his clergy and his sanctifiers to fulfil within eight days the remaining portion of his vow. 34.3 So forget about "re-baptism" etc. The difference between the "Catholics" and the "donatists" is that the latter welcome deacons who want to murder their mothers, while the "Catholics" stand firmly against matricide.

Letter # 35 tells of Primus, another rascal, formerly a subdeacon, who has left the Catholic Church accompanied by two nuns to join the "donatists." *Now, among bands of Circumcelliones and troops of homeless women, who have declined matrimony that they may avoid restraint, he proudly boasts himself in excesses of detestable revelry, rejoicing that he now has without hindrance the utmost freedom in that misconduct from which in the Catholic Church he was restrained.* 35.2 Like the "Priscillianists," the "donatists" are depicted as being either extremely puritanical or completely depraved, or both. They are presented as purists who despise common humanity, as suicidal crazies, as violent criminals and as debauched profligates. Primus doesn't just do these things or shamefacedly confess to them. He *proudly boasts* of his mis-deeds--like the shameless "donatists" of Optatus.

One reason that Augustine continually slanders the "donatists" is that he has to keep up the pressure on the corrupt and inert government to take effective measures against them. Only by these melodramatic horror stories can he get the attention of the distracted and pleasure-loving imperial court and a renewed effort to enforce the "Unity" edicts. A second major reason why he depicts the "donatists" as violent rebels and criminals is to take away from them their argument that they are the true Christian Church because they are persecuted for their faithfulness to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Persecution of the righteous: the mark of the true Church

As usual, we have "lost" the "donatist" argument and it can only be inferred from what Augustine has preserved in his polemical letters against them. In letter # 44, he indicates that this was the argument made by the "donatist" Bishop Fortunius, contra the persecutions by Augustine's Imperial "Catholic" Church: 44.4: *he went on to magnify **the persecution which he affirmed that his party had often suffered**; intending thereby to prove that his party were Christians because they endured persecution.* 44.7: *Thereafter he began to insist upon my answering categorically this question: Whether I thought the persecutor or the persecuted to be in the right ?* 44.7: *By these instances I laboured to persuade him, if possible, to give up affirming that **the suffering of persecution is the most infallible mark of Christian righteousness.*** 44.11: *Among other things it was alleged that our party was still intending to persecute them; and he [Fortunius] said that he would like to see how I would act in the event of such persecution, whether I would consent to such cruelty, or withhold from it all countenance. I said that God saw my heart, which was unseen by them.* It seems like Fortunius pretty well had him pegged also.

Augustine's job wasn't just to produce propaganda against the nonconforming Christians. He had a police and judicial responsibility to go after them. Lactantius describes how the emperor Maximin gave his pagan state religious officials the task of pushing the persecution. (*Mort* 36.4,5) Imperial Catholic Church officials now had the same responsibility.

The suffering of persecution for righteousness sake is one of the primary marks of the Christian community as prophesied by Jesus Himself, cf John 15.19-20 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own. But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* 20 *Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.* (cf also Luke 21.12 Matthew 24.10 etc.) These verses from John define the Christian Church: it is a community of those who have been called out by Jesus Christ and it is necessarily hated by the World which is ruled by Satan, just as Jesus was hated.

The "donatist" statement read at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 411 starts off by emphasizing that essential distinction between the true church and the false church: *Januarius and all the other bishops of the universal truth who suffer persecution, not those who perpetrate it.* (Migne 11.1407 # 251 DS translation) Note *universal*, that is *catholic*.

Righteous Persecution Doctrine

Augustine has to justify the anti-Church which has entered into an alliance with the World and with the Ruler of this World. He has to justify a "Church" which has joined with the World in persecuting the Christians. Once again he turns to the Old Testament for a model, which he finds in Sarah's cruel treatment of Hagar, the slave woman who had borne a son to Abraham. Letter # 185.11. He then argues that *there is a **RIGHTEOUS PERSECUTION** which the Church of Christ inflicts upon the impious.* The point of the comparison is that the legal Church of the Empire has a status which justifies the atrocious treatment of the illegal church, just as Sarah was justified in her atrocious treatment of Hagar, because Hagar was only a slave woman and not the legitimate wife of Abraham. This comparison carried weight for upper class Romans like Augustine who were comfortable with slavery and accustomed to the routine mis-treatment of slaves. His attitude appears in new letter # 8 * where he suggests whipping a slave girl--who has done nothing--to appease the anger of a woman against her son.

The same argument shows up in other places. In his commentary *On the Gospel of John* Tract XI 15 (as quoted earlier in chapter VIII) Augustine says: *And even if thou hast suffered corporal affliction, O party of Donatus, at the hand of the Catholic Church, as an Hagar thou hast suffered it at the hand of Sarah. "Return to thy mistress."* Actually, Hagar was driven out into the desert by her mistress because of Sarah's jealousy of her son by Abraham. (Genesis 21.) Augustine, like many who followed him, could take the worst behavior in the Bible and then twist it into a justification for the gross immorality of the actions of the state church to which he belonged.

Augustine's construction of an argument for a persecuting church shows the characteristic service he performed for the Church of the Empire. He uses old scripture to arrive at a new theology which negates the basic Christian doctrine that true Christians can expect to be persecuted by the World which necessarily hates them. Augustine's new theology justifies the Worldly "Christian" who persecutes the non-conforming Christians for their rejection of Worldly Christianity.

In 185.23-24 he argues further: *Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return . . . ?* Jesus used force on Saint Paul. Jesus told a parable in which some of the guests were compelled to come in. (Luke 14.23)

So Augustine mis-used the scriptures to invent new doctrines which justified the persecution of the non-conforming Christians by the Empire on behalf of the Imperial "Catholic" Church.

When he couldn't find the scriptures he needed, HE MADE UP HIS OWN--

XI Augustine and the Manufacture of Scripture

When you carefully examine his writings, it becomes apparent that, in his role as the apologist for the Imperial Church and the propagandist against the non-conforming Christians, Augustine is a regular liar and a regular falsifier of history. So it should come as no great surprise that he falsified the bible as well.

If you stop thinking of him as "Saint" Augustine, it isn't that difficult to discover that Augustine, under the pressure of producing effective anti-"donatist" propaganda, became a falsifier of church history and a falsifier of scripture. The most startling thing I found in the books of Optatus of Milevis is good evidence that Augustine manufactured scriptures to support the authority of the Emperor and the authority of the "Catholic" Bishop of Rome ! He composed Romans 13.4 to justify the massacre of the non-conforming Christians of North Africa by the Roman soldiers !

In general the argument is this: I. Optatus, writing about 375 A.D., did not have these verses in his bible. II. But his crippled arguments show the need in a peculiar and emphatic way for the "crutch" that these verses provided to a later writer of the same arguments. III. A much cleverer man than Optatus, who inherited his books and his job of confronting the "donatists," "found" the verses that Optatus could not find. That is, Augustine fabricated these verses to fix up the poor arguments that Optatus was trying to make.

It isn't just that these verses are missing from Optatus. They are conspicuously missing. They are missing so conspicuously that they point to a cause and effect relationship between the deficiencies of his arguments and the later appearance of verses which meet those deficiencies.

In many places in Optatus you find the crude originals of the lies about the "donatists" that Augustine later set forth in his own more elaborate versions. But the real usefulness of the work of Optatus is that his crippled arguments for church and imperial authority and his fundamentally defective **WILL OF GOD** argument, justifying the massacre of the "donatists" by Macarius, show where, when and why the bogus bible texts had to be invented which have been used ever since to justify the authority of the state church and to validate the use of violence in a "Christian" cause. And internal and external evidence gives a good indication as to who invented them. The obvious defects in the arguments of Optatus "inspired" **SOMEONE MUCH CLEVERER THAN OPTATUS**, who inherited his books and his job, to "discover" the *Thou Art Peter* verse (Matthew 16.18) and the secular authority verses that are now found in Romans 13.1-7.

Cephas the head or Peter the rock

In Book II, section 2 (Phillips pages 66-73) Optatus argues that it is the Catholics who are in possession of the *Cathedra* or Chair of Peter. He means that the Catholics are in possession of the basilica which Constantine has built over the grave of Saint Peter. Thanks to Constantine, the Catholics own this and 40 other basilicas in the city of Rome, whereas the other bishop of Rome, recognized by the "donatists," has to hold services in a kind of cave closed up with trellis work, which is derisively called *the mountain*. And so his congregation is

referred to as *the mountaineers*. (72) By the measure of who has the beautiful basilicas and who doesn't, they obviously don't have much of a claim to be the real Christian church. That is what Optatus is arguing.

On page 73 he appears to be quoting Matthew 16.18-19 *to thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and these keys the gates of Hell shall not overcome*. What is startling is that he lacks this verse: **THOU ART PETER AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH**.

Instead, he has offered a different authority pun, not as the words of Jesus but as his own assertion: *upon Peter first in the City of Rome was bestowed the Episcopal Cathedra, on which sat Peter, the Head of all the Apostles (for which reason he was called Cephas) . . .* (66)

That is, Peter was called **CEPHAS** because he was the **KEPHALE**--the Greek word for **HEAD**. In a footnote, Father Phillips notes that it is "etymologically atrocious" to derive an Aramaic name from a Greek word. But he fails to point out the striking fact that Optatus does not have the *Peter / Rock* pun or the rest of the *Church* verse and that instead he has another authority pun which is coming from his own mouth, not the mouth of Jesus Christ.

And the argument of Optatus is a cripple. His argument for the authority of the Catholic bishop of Rome is really no more than an argument for the power and money of the emperor who built Saint Peter's basilica for the Catholics. He taunts the "donatists" with the fact that their bishop in Rome has never been able to hold services in either of the basilicas--Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's--which are the Shrines of the two apostles. (71) So the Catholics have the authority of Saint Peter's "chair" because they have exclusive access to the basilica built over his grave--by the emperor's fiat. The emperor's patronage has given them the material basis of the Apostolic Succession. (Actually, there is good archeological evidence that Saint Peter's basilica was not built over his real tomb.)

So here is a poor argument for the authority of the "Catholic" Bishop of Rome, contra the "donatist" bishop of Rome. Which includes an "atrocious" authority pun from a non-authoritative source. And this book was later studied by Augustine of Hippo who was charged with the task that Optatus had failed to carry out in meeting the "true Christian church" arguments of the "donatists." A much cleverer man than Optatus studied this argument and asked himself the question: *How can I fix this ?* And he did. That thesis neatly solves the mystery as to why the *Thou Art Peter . . . rock . . . church* text, which failed to appear in Optatus, later appeared in Augustine. The poor argument of Optatus shows what was needed. And it shows when and where the need became obvious. The thesis as to who "found" this necessary and important verse follows right along. The verse makes its appearance in letter # 53 as part of Augustine's version of the same argument that Optatus made for the authority of the Catholic bishop of Rome contra the "donatist" bishop and his "*mountaineer*" congregation. 53.2 (As discussed later, in Chapter XV, it is an argument for one bishop of Rome contra another, not an argument for the extended authority of the Catholic bishop of Rome.)

There is a basic reason why the *Thou Art Peter* verse could not be later stuck into a "revised" edition of Optatus, as you see from reading him. Here and elsewhere, the arguments of Optatus are tied into his bible verses in such a way that you can't change the verses without

re-writing his arguments. When you start adding up all the problems with the arguments of Optatus, it becomes apparent that the whole work would have to be done over to fix them. The relative obscurity of the books of Optatus, who was soon put in the shade by the great Augustine, is another reason why the obvious problems with some of his texts were ignored and then forgotten. (There are two examples later on where half-hearted attempts to amend Optatus original work appear to have been made, as I will show.) (See chapter XV, *Augustine and The Pope* for the appearance of the *rock* text in Augustine.)

The Emperor's Authority

Some years ago I became convinced that Romans 13.1-7 was an interpolation, that Saint Paul never wrote it or anything like it as it now reads. And I have collected a good bit of evidence and argument against the integrity of those verses.

The doctrine it states is not a Jewish doctrine. It is not a Christian doctrine. It runs counter to what Saint Paul says about secular authority in other places, such as 1 Corinthians 6.1-7. The assertion that a pagan magistrate is somehow a "Minister of God" is contrary to what Paul taught. How could he deny the moral effectiveness of the old Jewish law and then affirm the moral effectiveness of the laws of the idol-worshipping pagans ? The assertion that good men had nothing to fear from the sword of the pagan magistrate is ridiculous. It is contrary to the whole experience of Paul and the Christian community.

The genuine Christian belief is that secular authority belongs to Satan--especially that of the evil empire of Rome, which is described as the *WHORE OF BABYLON, THE BEAST* etc. cf Luke 4.6-8 John 12.31 14.30 16.11 Acts 4.26-28 Acts 4.19 and 5.29 1 Corinthians 6.1-7 Revelation 12.9 13.2-4 17.9 17.18 But Romans 13.1 asserts that all secular authority--even that of the pagan ruler--comes from God. That isn't a subtle difference. And this basic difference in doctrine is central to the "donatist" / "Catholic" "schism."

That is what Optatus is up against when he sets out to justify the fact that the "Catholic" church has accepted the authority of the Roman Emperor and participated in the persecution of the North African Christians who refused to have any part of *UNITY* with the new state church. What completes the "donatist" case is that Macarius, who commanded the soldiers that massacred the "donatists" in 347 A.D., attended the Catholic Church. As one Christian to another, how can you possibly justify this ?

In III.3 Optatus argues that Bishop Donatus took an un Christian attitude when he refused the Emperor's *alms* and asked: *WHAT HAS THE EMPEROR TO DO WITH THE CHURCH?* Then Optatus quotes *the teaching of the blessed Apostle Paul: PRAY FOR KINGS AND FOR POWERS, THAT [WITH THEM] WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND TRANQUIL LIFE.* (1 Timothy 2.2) *For the State is not in the Church, but the Church is in the State, that is to say in the Roman Empire, which Christ calls Libanus in the Canticle of Canticles, saying . . .* ("with them" is an interpolation)

While reading this tendentious argument you suddenly realize that Optatus does not have the verses he needs to establish the authority of the Roman Emperor over Christians. He does not have Romans 13.1-3. All he has is the Apostle's injunction to pray for rulers and he is trying to stretch that into some kind of a mandate for Christians embracing the emperor.

In # 12 of his **LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS**, Polycarp puts that injunction in the light of the attitude of the early church towards rulers: we must pray for rulers and all of the other **ENEMIES OF THE CROSS**: *Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings and powers and princes, and for them that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross . . .*

So Optatus has come up with a crippled argument in support of the emperor's authority. He does not have any clear and convincing New Testament verses which would validate the emperor's moral and spiritual authority over Christians. Thesis: some years later, a much cleverer fellow than Optatus, studied this weak argument and "remembered" some verses from the Apostle Paul on behalf of secular authority which Optatus had "forgotten." It makes perfect sense that he did. He followed in the footsteps of Optatus as the champion of the Imperial Church. The major work of his life was to meet the challenge of the "donatists" who surrounded his own see in North Africa. His major theological challenge was to validate a "Church" which depended upon the authority of the Roman Emperor.

To validate the authority of the Imperial "Catholic" Church, he had to validate the legitimacy of the authority that the Emperor had assumed over the new Imperial Church. That was what established the legitimacy of the **UNITY** which the "donatists" had rejected. Unless you can prove that authority, you can't argue that the "donatists" had any obligation to accept the authority of the new imperial church. It was in fact the "Catholics" who had broken away to join the new "church" organization of the Emperor. By what right ? None at all unless the Emperor's authority made it right. He had to do this with a New Testament that bristled with antagonism towards **THE WORLD** and towards **THE RULERS OF THIS WORLD**.

Getting away with it: the variable text

In letter 93.38 Augustine argues that forgeries of scripture have little chance of success: *some have been found forging many things under the names of the apostles. It is true indeed, that they made such attempts in vain, because the text of canonical Scripture was so well attested, and so generally used and known.* But another letter offers a different appraisal of the chance of getting away with it, and suggests that there was no such thing as a standard Latin text of the bible in his time. In a letter to Jerome written in 403 A.D. (# 71) Augustine says that every Latin manuscript of the bible reads differently from every other: *the variations found in the different codices of the Latin text are intolerably numerous; and it is so justly open to suspicion as possibly different from what is to be found in the Greek, that one has no confidence in either quoting it or proving anything by its help.* (71.6) You can see that in the "quotes" that Optatus makes from the bible. 9 out of 10 of them vary significantly from the text we have today. Is he quoting a variant text or making up his own ? So Augustine could "quote" the text of Matthew or Romans as he needed to quote it for purposes of war time propaganda against a formidable foe. In one of the 29 new letters he instructs a Catholic bishop to change the text of his bible if it doesn't have a reading which Augustine says is the correct reading. (As for the Greek text, there are only 14,800 alterations in the Codex Sinaiticus, the earliest 4th century Greek bible.)

The ordinary Christians were illiterate and had no copies of the bible anyway. The "donatist" bishops who could challenge Augustine were exiled and their scriptures were confiscated and destroyed. And their challenges could be ignored. Optatus had already accused them of possessing falsified scriptures, that is, scriptures which varied from what Optatus had. By the time of Augustine, the scriptures of the two groups had diverged.

In letter 87.8 , after quoting his Romans 13.1-7 text to a Donatist bishop, Augustine challenges him: *You answer perhaps, that Christians ought not to persecute even the wicked. Be it so; let us admit that they ought not; but is it lawful to lay this objection in the way of the powers which are ordained for this very purpose ? Shall we erase the apostle's words ? Or do your MSS not contain the words which I mentioned a little while ago ?* They almost certainly did not. They almost certainly had been "erased" from their "donatist" bible MSS. That is, they had been added to the "Catholic" MSS. But never underestimate the effrontery of the "great" "Saint" Augustine. He is as bright as Lucifer and as bold as Satan. Who were his mentors, I believe.

According to one authority, the interpolated text of 1 John 5.7-8 dates from the middle of the 4th century. This interpolated text was the standard text for many centuries. Which shows that it was possible to get away with interpolating major epistles as late as the 4th century. Erasmus omitted it from his 1516 New Testament because it was missing from the manuscripts.

The earlier authority for the *Peter . . . rock* text breaks down upon the suspicious scrutiny which Optatus shows that it deserves. It turns up in chapter 4 of Cyprian's work, just before the *Chair of Peter* variant text which non-Catholic scholars have judged to be a later interpolation. (Bevenot argues that the variant text was the original but that Cyprian himself re-wrote it.) It is reasonable to assume that the *Peter . . . rock* text is also an interpolation in Cyprian's book and quite possibly by Augustine himself. In letter 93.38 Augustine argues that it is easier to alter Cyprian than to alter the canonical scriptures. Note that these same two arguments are found together in Augustine's improved version of Optatus *Chair of Peter* argument in letter # 53. The *Peter . . . rock . . . church* verse is not found in the original text of Tatian's **DIATESSARON** but it makes a belated appearance in Catholic-edited versions.

The Sword does the Will of God

The fourth reason Optatus gives at the start of Book III as to why *It Was Not Possible to Bring About Unity without Severity* is that *IV None of Those Things with Which The Work of Unity Has Been Reproached Came to Pass In Opposition To The Will of God*. And what he is arguing is that the massacres which the Roman soldiers carried out under the command of Macarius were in accordance with **THE WILL OF GOD**.

What he has to justify is that Christians were killed by other Christians. In III.7 p. 156 he gives three examples from the Old Testament, involving Moses and Phineas and Elias, that justify supposedly similar actions but then he runs into a major problem: *So you see that similar things were done by Moses and Phineas and Elias and Macarius, because the Commands of one God were vindicated by them all. But I see you now distinguishing between times and saying that the times before the Gospel were different from those after the Gospel . . . Peter put back into his sheath the sword . . .*

That is, he recognizes that the "donatists" will argue that the morality of the new covenant is different from the morality of the old covenant. That *put up the sword love your enemies turn the other cheek return good for evil* etc. have replaced *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*. And from here on, his argument in effect jumps over the cliff like a Circumcellion and self destructs. Because he needs a New Testament verse which says that a Christian is doing the Will of God when he takes out the sword and starts whacking off people's heads.

AND HE DOES NOT HAVE ONE !!!

So he wanders off into an argument that *Macarius did not draw forth the sword which Peter sheathed* because of what Isaiah said about it not being a war because they weren't being persecuted as Christians etc. So, once again, one of his major arguments has come up limping. Primarily because he does not have a New Testament verse which would echo the doctrine of the Old Testament episodes he has cited: using the sword on behalf of *UNITY* is the Will of God. And there he had to leave it. Another crippled argument waiting to be shot by the first educated "donatist" that came along.

Book # 7 to the rescue

But, some years later, a 7th book was added to the work of Optatus. And, in this 7th book, is a new argument for what Macarius did. And-- wonderful to relate ! -- here is that missing New Testament verse which says that a man with a sword is doing the Will of God !!! Like an answer to a prayer--or something. It truly is a miraculous occurrence--or something. The verse is more or less what we now have as Romans 13.4 and it here reads: ***THE JUDGE DOES NOT BEAR THE SWORD WITHOUT REASON FOR HE IS A MINISTER OF THE WILL OF GOD.*** So here we have an affirmation by the Apostle Paul himself that the use of the sword by Macarius on behalf of *UNITY* was quite possibly in accordance with *The Will of God*. So the problem of the ***WILL OF GOD*** argument in Book III has been solved, albeit some years later and in a separate book.

The fully developed version of the doctrine that the magistrate's sword is the Will of God appears in Augustine's letter 87, section 7 as quoted earlier. The basic doctrine that the Emperor or his delegate is carrying out God's Will when he uses the police and army to go after the heretics turns up relentlessly in Augustine's letters. It is one of Augustine's essential doctrines by which he justifies the "Catholic Church" and the Emperor's use of the sword against the non-conforming Christians. He derives this doctrine from his new text of Romans 13 and also from the psalms as his King's Covenant Doctrine, as discussed later.

This new argument for what Macarius did is found as the last two chapters of Book VII. But Father Phillips moves it into an Appendix to Book III (page 175) on the basis of its subject matter. And it is in fact a revised edition of the argument that Optatus was trying to make--and failing to make--in Book III. So in terms of subject matter, putting it there is certainly justified. But there is a major problem in respect to the 7th book: Who wrote it ?

The Mystery of the Seventh Book

On page 269 Father Vassal-Phillips gives an ***INTRODUCTION TO BOOK VII*** which discusses the problems with it. Jerome said that Optatus wrote six books. And parts at least of the 7th book appear to have been written by someone other than Optatus. Some think the entire 7th book was by someone other than Optatus. Various scholars such as Du Pin and Ziwsa have argued about it. Father Phillips follows Du Pin in deciding that the book is by Optatus except for several substantial chunks and a few smaller ones which are perhaps from a "donatist interpolator." These he puts into a "pseudo-Optatus" Appendix.

The thesis that a "donatist interpolator" was responsible for the passages that look funny to the Catholic scholars is a horse laugh. They have never seriously considered the challenge of interpolation. I can take out my copy of Optatus and interpolate it all I want. But then what ? I have to get my version into circulation at the same time that I get rid of the original version in the possession of others. There is no way I can do it. A "donatist" not only had to get a copy of Optatus work and re-write it, he had also to substitute his re-written version for the manuscripts in the Catholic and Imperial libraries. He had to sneak his re-written version into the library at Hippo and sneak the old version out. Then go on to all the other libraries and do the same.

Only the Imperial Church in its heyday had the power to rewrite books and make the alternate versions disappear. Constantine decreed the destruction of the writings of Arius and the death penalty for anyone caught with a copy. (Gibbon XXI 693) It is remarkable how much did disappear. Despite the prestige and the popularity of Origen, many of his major works disappeared after the emperor Justinian decided he was a heretic. For some of his works we have only Rufinus version of Origen, re-written to bring him into conformity with prevailing "orthodoxy." We don't have Origen's original text except for a few fragments found in a cave 15 centuries later. Scholars recognize that the *He was the Christ* . . . paragraph in Josephus must be a later interpolation. But that is how all the surviving texts read. Bishop Theodoret systematically collected and destroyed Tatian's *Diatessaron* and most of the surviving texts have passed through the hands of Imperial Church editors.

controlling the books

And there are many other examples which show how effectively the Empire and its propaganda department could control what books would be available or what " *EDITIONS* " of these books would be available. What was done by way of censorship in the old Soviet Union was feeble and ineffectual compared to what was done in the "Christian" Roman Empire. Before the invention of the printing press, it was much easier to control the books.

It is an historical fact that the Imperial Church was able to preserve its own books and "edit" or "lose" the works of its opponents. While the "donatists" were not able to keep any of their own books in circulation, or even to preserve copies of them--so far as we know. The thesis that they had the means to successfully interpolate a major Catholic book about the "donatists" and then cause it to replace the original version is silly.

And the only reason the Catholic scholars want to blame these passages on a "donatist" interpolator is that they are uncomfortable with the argument, even though it is in fact a very good argument for those who perceive what the real situation was. In effect these arguments say: suppose certain parties were *traditors*. Does that mean they are never to be forgiven ? Didn't the rest of the apostles forgive Peter for his betrayal of Jesus ?

The explicit supposition of these arguments is that we are talking about "donatist" *traditors*. But the argument actually fits Catholic *traditors* just as well. In fact it fits them better. And the Catholic scholars don't like it a bit that "pseudo-Optatus" seems to be arguing from any such premise.

They are perfectly comfortable with Optatus belligerent and uncompromising assertions that it was the "donatists," not the Catholics, who were *traditors* as proven by the Emperor Constantine's own impartial investigation of Caecilian and by Imperial Court "hearings" in respect to Silvanus and Felix. They aren't about to concede that "Peter" has done anything which requires forgiveness. And so they regard this serpentine argument in favor of forgiving the *traditors* as unworthy of their cause. But they are latter day partisans. They don't have the problem of trying to win over an audience that knew the "donatist" version of this history and that tended to believe it.

Someone a lot smarter than Optatus recognized that he would never convince the "donatists" that the founders of the "Catholic Church" had not been *traditors*. And that is the reason for this new argument which is much more persuasive than anything Optatus ever produced. It doesn't admit that the Catholics had ever been *traditors* but the argument glides around that issue to make a quite different and much better argument.

What the Catholic scholars are forced to recognize is that Optatus could never have written some of the arguments that are used in book seven. And that is true. But, if it wasn't a "donatist interpolator," who was it ?

Augustine wrote it

There is in fact a neat and obvious solution to the problem of book seven which Father Phillips and the other Catholic scholars could not even consider. If they thought it, they would immediately unthink it. If the idea even came into their minds, they would immediately reject it with horror. The idea is that book seven was written by a very clever Catholic interpolator. The idea is that "Saint" Augustine wrote it.

Book seven is obviously not by Optatus. Quite aside from the question of "style" the author of book seven is about 10 times smarter than the author of books 1-6. Optatus, in the full stride of one of his arguments, is like an old cow crashing through a thicket. The writer of book seven is like an asp sliding silently through the grass.

And the clincher is that the mind of Augustine is in there. I would challenge anyone who has read Augustine to read book seven of "Optatus" work against the "donatists" and fail to find in there the peculiar mind print of Augustine. The intellectual sophistication--the sophistry--of Augustine is in there. The characteristic moral fatalism that turns up elsewhere in his theology shows up in his arguments here--a person is what he is forced to be, what he is made to be. It is those who make him do it that are responsible. (page 309)

And, once you stop calling him "Saint" Augustine, it is entirely plausible that Augustine wrote it. He had the means, the motive and the opportunity. He had the urgent necessity for doing something against the "donatists." His own work against the "donatists" was built upon the foundation which Optatus had laid--a foundation which tended to crumble in a lot of places. So he made what use of Optatus he could. And first he set out to remedy the defects of Optatus. He learned from Optatus mistakes and failures.

The Sword is Good for You !

The verse that is now found as Romans 13.4 is one of the strongest arguments against the integrity of Romans 13.1-7. It goes far beyond any argument as to submitting to secular authority. It actually asserts in effect that good men have nothing to fear from the sword of Herod, Pilate, Nero, Diocletian, Hitler, Stalin et al. He only uses his sword to punish those who do evil. It is downright puzzling that Paul should have said this at a time when James had just had his head cut off by the sword that is only used on evil-doers; at a time when Paul himself was about to suffer the same fate; at a time when Christians all over the Roman Empire were being done to death by the sword of the magistrate. It is astonishing that he assured the readers of *Romans*, several of whom had been in jail with him, that the magistrates were *God's Ministers* and punished only those who did evil. Revelation 2.10, written at the same time, states plainly that *the devil shall cast some of you into prison*. Does the sword somehow do the will of God while the jailor carries out the will of Satan ? How can the magistrate be *God's vicar* ? **He is the devil's vicar !** As all the Christians knew first hand !

The commentary on this verse shows the difficulties it presents. The Bishop of Oxford, the Right Reverend K.E. Kirk D.D., who wrote an otherwise insightful commentary on *Romans* circa 1937 as part of the Clarendon Bible, suggests that *S. Paul's experiences (perhaps because of his Roman citizenship) at the hands of imperial officials were uniformly good*. This comment is something of a howler, cf. ***I don't understand why everyone complains about Hitler, he always treated me good***. Saint Paul's own account of his experiences in 2 Corinthians 11.23-25 rather undermines this assumption. And since when is Saint Paul or anyone else authorized to invent new doctrines on such a basis ?

And how obtuse would Saint Paul have to be not to take account of the sufferings of other Christians, including those he himself had persecuted before his conversion ? It is at least poor diplomacy to assure the persecuted Christians of Rome, who had heard of him as a former persecutor of the Christians, that the Roman policeman was their friend. The verse is puzzling and peculiar. What can it even mean ? How could Saint Paul have written it ?

Saint Paul never wrote it

But the satisfactory answer to that question is that Saint Paul never wrote it. Rather, it was written some time late in the 4th century to justify the massacre of non-conforming Christians in North Africa by a Roman commander who belonged to the Emperor's "Catholic" church. It was written to provide the missing leg for Optatus ***WILL OF GOD*** argument. That explains where the verse came from and what it really means. The peculiar moral doctrine of the verse fits the peculiar character of the Macarius episode like a key fits a lock. The crippled argument of Optatus, who labored in vain to justify this massacre from Old Testament precedents, was cleverly supplemented by "Optatus"⁷ who "found" a New Testament verse by the great Saint Paul himself which says just what Optatus was trying to say.

With one exception, this is the only place that the verses now found as Romans 13.1-7 make an appearance in the work of Optatus. If Augustine considered re-working the rest of Optatus, he gave up the idea. And the reasons are obvious when you look at Optatus. There

are just too many problems with the work of Optatus and there is no way that the missing verses can be used unless you re-write the whole section. That is what has been done in Book Seven in respect to the Macarius *WILL OF GOD* argument.

The Stuck In Verse

There is one place in the original six books of Optatus where one of the Romans 13.1-7 verses makes an appearance--a version of what is now 13.7-8. In Book III 4, page 147, Optatus is describing how the Roman quartermasters came to the church at Bagaia: *they were not received with due respect contrary to the command of the Apostle, who says: "Honour to whom honour is due, custom to whom custom, tribute to whom tribute. Owe no man anything."*

This verse doesn't really add anything to his argument and it has the appearance of being stuck in. He has already argued that the soldiers were somehow provoked and it isn't all that clear how much honour, custom or tribute is due to a quartermaster who comes to take your grain and / or massacre the entire congregation.

If it belongs anywhere, it seems rather to belong back where Bishop Donatus was being a smart-alec in respect to the emperor's envoys. But you couldn't stick it in there without re-writing the argument. It can be stuck in here because, if it doesn't add anything, it doesn't interfere with anything either.

I don't need to account for it to validate my other assertions, but my thesis is that it was stuck in by a Later Catholic Interpolator. That is, I doubt that either Optatus or "Optatus" ⁷ put it here.

I am sure I am not the first scholar to be struck by the absence of Romans 13.1-7 from Optatus argument for the emperor's authority, and by the absence of 13.4 from his first argument in defense of Macarius. The insertion of a verse from that set somewhere in the work of Optatus helps to obscure the fact of the missing set of verses.

But all it really accomplishes is to point up more sharply the question of the missing verses: if Optatus had 13.7, why did he not have 13.1-6 ? If he had them, why couldn't he think of them just where he most needed them ? Why didn't he use 13.1-3 when he was arguing for the authority of the emperor ? Why did it take him 10 years (or more) to "remember" the 13.4 verse that he needed for his Macarius argument ?

There is an authentic Christian doctrine in respect to not resisting evil and not being a violent rebel. Jesus even tells us to submit to the soldier and carry his pack an extra mile. But that is far short of Augustine's doctrine which says that the secular state has the same spiritual authority as the church--has authority over the church even. That "development" of the basic doctrine is what Luther used to attack the authority of the pope. Lutherans and other Protestants still basically regard the head of the state as the ultimate spiritual authority, as the proper authority over the church.

There are other supposedly early texts in which there are apparent allusions to the text of Romans 13.1-7. The apparent allusion in *THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP*, presumably one of the revisions put in by Eusebius (4.15), is a feeble version of the final doctrine but it may have inspired Augustine to do better. Or it may have been added to Eusebius later. As found there, it is an obvious anomaly--Polycarp supposedly testified to the divine authority of the official responsible for maintaining the cult of the emperor and feeding the Christians to the lions. (By contrast the Abitinian martyrs 150 years later are still addressing the Roman magistrate as *SATAN*. see the *Donatist Martyr Stories* translated by Maureen Tilley.)

References to Romans 13.1-7 appear in the extant Latin manuscripts of Irenaeus *AGAINST THE HERESIES* in IV.6 and V.24. I now assume they are later interpolations. There isn't much of a problem with assuming that, since there is no such thing as an early and authentic manuscript of Irenaeus. It is not credible that the surviving manuscripts of Irenaeus have not been "edited," that the state church scholars neglected the opportunities they had over many centuries to bring Irenaeus into conformity with "orthodoxy." One book remarks that *the loss of the complete text of Irenaeus's Greek is a mystery to scholars*. (page 12 of *ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS* Dominic Unger, Paulist Press, Volume I, Book I *Ancient Christian Writers* # 55) Texts which have disappeared from the custody of the Imperial Church scholars hardly present a mystery. It would be more of a mystery if they had not disappeared. Like so many other early Christian writings which got *LOST*, the Greek text of Irenaeus was last seen in the custody of the Imperial Toady Eusebius. The integrity of a manuscript depends upon the integrity of those who have it in their custody. The truth about the Imperial Church and those who worked for it is that they were in a position which required their entire lack of integrity. Where they have had an exclusive and unmonitored custody of a manuscript over a long period of time, the only sensible assumption is that it has been thoroughly "edited." On the historical record, it is apparent that, East or West, the state church could not be trusted with manuscripts.

It is quite possible that the interpolation dates from the time of Augustine. The same book (page 15) mentions the possibility that the surviving Latin version first appeared *in the latter half of the fourth century in North Africa. The argument here is that Augustine quotes from the [Latin] translation and is the first to do so.* Very likely Augustine did his own "translating," at least of the parts he wanted to use. He was good at that. [see **Addition: Satan Lied to Jesus**]

A similar sanction of secular authority turns up in 1 Peter 2.13-14: *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.* Imagine Peter writing that, with Emperor Nero, King Herod and Governor Pontius Pilate in mind, (cf. Acts 4.27) after he disobeyed the Sanhedrin and told them: *We must obey God rather than men* in Acts 5.29. It may or may not be an interpolation, however, because it is doubtful that Peter wrote either of the epistles attributed to him long afterwards.

twisting scripture

Besides writing new scripture to make his case for the Church of the Empire, Augustine twists the interpretation of old scripture to arrive at the new theology of the State Church. That is the important service he performed for Constantine's new church.

The effort that Optatus and Augustine made to justify the massacres by the soldiers of Macarius shows how they set out to erase the line between *the times before the gospel and the times after the gospel*, that is, they deliberately obscured the fundamental difference between what is found in the books of the Old Covenant and the Christian faith and morals found in the books of the New Covenant.

The improper substitution of *TESTAMENT* for *COVENANT*, which was the work of Augustine and other Imperial Church scholars, facilitates the treatment of "the bible" as a unified work which allows you to replace the teachings of Jesus Christ with whatever you can dig up from the Old "Testament," as you see Optatus and Augustine doing in a number of instances. Augustine's "King's Covenant" doctrine is actually a new New Covenant doctrine which destroys and replaces the Christian doctrine of the New Covenant.

Anything in the Old Testament can be taken out of its original context by classifying it as "prophetic." That is how Augustine can use something written about kings 1000 years before the time of Jesus Christ to validate the king's anti-church which appeared 300 years after the time of Jesus Christ.

The apologists for the Imperial Church had to do that to justify a "Christian" "Church" which joined the empire in the deliberate and cold-blooded massacre of Christians. They had to do it to justify the war, the wealth and the slavery, which were contrary to the Christian gospel but which were characteristic of the Imperial Church. Augustine manipulated Old Testament texts to justify the alliance between The Church and *THE WORLD* which was contrary to the church that is found in the books of the New Covenant, which was contrary to the actual Christian church as it existed before Constantine came along, and which was contrary to the faithful church which continued to exist among the non-conforming Christians.

Notice the allegation of Optatus that the non-conforming Christians interfered with slavery. Whereas Augustine took the same attitude towards it as did other upper class Romans--*a slave's relation to his master was divinely ordered . . . he might be beaten . . . it was wrong for him to seek to better his condition . . . the poor live at the expense of the rich.* (Frend 329-330)

In describing the outrages of the Circumcelliones in III.4, page 143, Optatus says that *masters were often thrown out of their own chariots and forced to run, in servile fashion, in front of their own slaves, seated in their lord's place. By the judgement and command of these outlaws, the condition of masters and slaves was completely reversed.* It obviously did not occur to Optatus that there was anything wrong with the usual practice whereby slaves were compelled to run along in front of the master's chariot in the North African sun. It was only an outrage if the master was made to do it in place of the slave.

There is good evidence that the early Christians did not tolerate slavery in their own community and opposed it as best they could in the larger society. (see *Essenes and Christians*). And that this strict ban on slavery has been obscured by the agents of the Imperial Church who sanctioned the war, the wealth and the slavery of the Roman society to which they conformed.

Satan Lied to Jesus addition to page 117

A translation of Irenaeus V.24.1-3 based upon a *reconstruction* of the original Greek text published by *Sources Chretiennes* is found in Robert M. Grant *Irenaeus of Lyons* published in 1997. As found there, Irenaeus argues that: *it is clear that the devil lied when he said, "It has been delivered to me [power over this world] and I give it to whom I will"* (Luke 4:6). Aside from the question as to whether any of this *reconstruction* came from the original books of Irenaeus, it is notable that it makes a direct argument against the doctrine found in Luke 4.6 and Matthew 4.8-9. This same specious argument is still used by modern Secular Christians because they have to believe that God, not Satan, appoints the Emperor. They have to believe in **GodBlessAmerica**. And the doctrine of Luke 4.5-6 negates that belief.

Is it *clear that the devil lied* to Jesus ? Did Satan assume that he could fool Jesus ? Apparently, he did fool Him, because Jesus took the temptation at face value and said nothing contrary to Satan's claim. Apparently Jesus was still fooled when he referred to Satan as *the prince of this world* in John 12.31, 14.30 and 16.11. And Jesus presents *this world* as the antagonist of Himself and his true followers. (See **Appendix A Friendship with the World is Enmity with God**) In 2 Corinthians 4.4 Paul goes so far as to call Satan *the god of this world*. So Paul was fooled also. And Revelation, which describes a great battle between Jesus and his followers and *the kings of the earth* who are controlled by *the beast* in 19.11-21. In Revelation 13.2-4 the authority of *the beast* comes from the dragon. Who is none other than Satan himself as 12.9 shows. That is, the authority of the Roman Empire comes from Satan. The Roman Empire was the epitome of the state, the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Like Eusebius, Augustine believed in the Empire. It is possible that Irenaeus did also, but much more likely that they made him into a posthumous convert.

This specious **Satan Lied** argument points up the fact that, to justify the doctrine of Romans 13.1-7, you have to somehow negate and explain away Luke 4.6, Matthew 4.8-9, John 12.31, 14.30, 16.11 and many other New Testament verses. In fact, you have to negate a doctrine which permeates the New Testament and which was the common belief of the early Christians. If Irenaeus did believe that God, not Satan, was the source of worldly power, and the patron of the pagan Roman Emperors, then Irenaeus was the *heretic*, much more than any of those he denounced in *Against All Heresies*. But the fact that his original text was *LOST* and replaced by *translations* and *reconstructions* edited by Imperial Church agents means that he must be given the benefit of the doubt. The *fragments* which have survived have passed through the hands of Eusebius and Epiphanius, two of the worst of the Imperial clergy. That alone destroys their integrity. Imperial Church flunkies could interpolate Irenaeus more easily than they could interpolate Paul. The obvious reason for doing it is to counter the standard doctrine of other early Church fathers like Tertullian that Satan, not God, is **the ruler of all of the kingdoms of this world**.

Does the power of the Emperor come from God or from *the god of this world* ? Is it Jesus or Satan who sanctions the endless wars of the *Pax Romana* ? This is a Watershed Doctrine. It marks the Great Divide between the early Christian Church and the Imperial Church established by Constantine. So obviously the apologists for the Church of the Empire had to invent a theological sanction for the Empire. They could discard the book of Revelation, at least for a time--which they did--but they could not avoid dealing with the doctrine found in Luke 4.6. The **Satan Lied** argument was the best they could do. Of course you can negate everything in the New Testament with such arguments. Which is just what Augustine and company tried to do.

XII The Church of the New Age

Although he is forced to lie on its behalf in his propaganda against the "donatists" it appears that Augustine really does believe in the "Catholic Church." And, in his saner moments, when he has temporarily laid aside the propagandist's hat and his complaints about lime in the eyes and deacons who murder their mothers, etc. he gives a clear indication as to what he believes about the "Catholic Church" contra the "donatists." He concedes that the "donatists" are orthodox, that they have valid sacraments. His complaint is their refusal to recognize Catholic sacraments as valid. But his essential difference with them is this: they have an entirely different idea of the Church, and they reject **THE CHURCH** which he believes in.

93.46 *You are at one with us in baptism, in creed, and in the other sacraments of the Lord. But in the spirit of unity and bond of peace, in a word, in the Catholic Church itself, you are not with us.* How can that be ? How can they be orthodox Christians and have a different view on something so basic ? How can their orthodox creed not include an orthodox definition of the Church ?

Because they have the old orthodox view. They are stuck in the past. That is why they reject Augustine's Church, which is the Church of the new age, the Church of the fulfillment of the promise, the Church of the King's covenant, the Church of all Nations, the Church of the whole world. These are some of the terms that Augustine uses to explain and define and defend the Imperial "Catholic" Church.

But notice this: he is implicitly conceding that his Church represents a **novel departure** from the Church as it was before Constantine. He doesn't state that and he even avoids stating it. But, all the same, he admits it plainly enough if you study what he wrote. That is why he concedes on the one hand that the "donatists" are orthodox while he complains that they refuse to recognize what he means by **THE CHURCH** :

185.2 *For in the sacred books, where the Lord Christ is made manifest, there is also His Church declared; but they, with wondrous blindness, while they would know nothing of Christ Himself save what is revealed in the Scriptures, yet form their notion of His Church from the vanity of human falsehood instead of learning what it is on the authority of the sacred books.* So even though they are orthodox Christians, they have an entirely different *notion of His Church* from that which the Catholics have. How could that have come about ? Why do they have to learn a new notion of the Church from the *sacred books* ? By which he means that they should derive an idea of the Church from the books of the Old Testament which replaces the idea of the Church found in the New Testament. See that it isn't just a question of Caecilian's election or an argument about re-baptism. It is an entirely different "notion" of what is meant by the Church.

The Church of All Nations

Then to support his definition of the church, contra the "donatists," Augustine quotes two texts from the Old Testament. 185.3: *They recognize Christ together with us in that which is written: THEY PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET . . . CAST LOTS UPON MY VESTURE; and yet they refuse*

to recognize the Church in: ALL THE ENDS OF THE WORLD SHALL REMEMBER AND TURN UNTO THE LORD; AND ALL THE KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS SHALL WORSHIP BEFORE THEE. FOR THE KINGDOM IS THE LORD'S AND HE IS THE GOVERNOR AMONG THE NATIONS. (Psalm 22.27-28)

They recognize Christ together with us in that which is written: THE LORD HATH SAID UNTO ME, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE and they will not recognize the Church in that which follows: ASK OF ME AND I SHALL GIVE THEE THE HEATHEN FOR THINE INHERITANCE AND THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH FOR THY POSSESSION. Psalm 2.7-8

That is, they only recognize the prophecies of Jesus Christ in these Psalms. They don't recognize the prophecies of the Church of Constantine which Augustine finds in these Psalms. They will not join Constantine's new "Catholic Church" nor will they recognize that a church of this character was prophesied in these texts that Augustine cites.

Then Augustine quotes Luke 24.47 *AND THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM* because it is a New Testament verse which echoes the "all nations" theme of his quotes from the psalms, even though it doesn't have the implications of ruling all nations, bringing all kindreds into the Church, conquering and controlling the heathen, and world conquest, which are found in the quotes from the psalms.

He purposely confuses the mission to preach Christianity among all nations with the claim of the "Catholic Church" that the final triumph of the Church of Jesus Christ had been achieved when Constantine established it as the State Church of the empire. Augustine's argument is that the establishment of the Church as a bureaucracy of the Roman Empire, which rules all nations, means that the Church of Jesus Christ has fulfilled its destiny to be established in all the nations. The *CATHOLIC* character of the Christian Church--its mission to all nations--is his main argument for the State Church of the Roman Empire. The Emperor's armies are now delivering the Christian message to all parts of the earth in an emphatic way. By *CATHOLIC* Augustine means *IMPERIAL*--having to do with the world wide empire.

Jesus joins the police

And Augustine shows in many letters that he deeply believes in this--he believes that the union of Imperial military power and police power with the Christian mission was ordained by God. He believes in Constantine's miracle. And he is the architect of the new theology which provides the intellectual framework for the new faith which is based upon the logical consequences of Constantine's miracle.

Augustine believes what Eusebius believed: Jesus Christ helped Constantine conquer and consolidate the empire, then Constantine established the *CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST TRIUMPHANT* throughout the empire. Constantine has fulfilled the mission of Jesus Christ and created a New Christian World Order. The Christian emperors who followed Constantine have the same relationship. Augustine isn't the foolish flatterer of the emperor that Eusebius is, but he has the same basic faith and he goes far beyond Eusebius in finding scripture and thinking up theology that provide a foundation for this belief.

Augustine has no good argument for an Imperial Church. So he focuses instead on the world wide character of the official church of the empire. That is why *CATHOLIC* became the key word for justifying what is in fact the Imperial Church. That is why he and Optatus falsified the catholic character of the church to which the "donatists" belonged, and why they kept sticking the sectarian label on them. The triumph of the Roman Empire over all the nations of the world has become the triumph of Jesus Christ and His Church over all the nations of the world because of its merger with the Roman Empire. This is the new theology that Augustine invented to justify the new Church. This is his essential definition of The Church which the "donatists" *refuse to recognize*. They say: you betrayed the church to the emperor ! He says: with the emperor's help, the church has conquered the world !

Augustine has no good argument for a Church which is bossed by the Emperor. To justify the role of the emperor, while concealing it and explaining it away, he uses all the Old Testament verses he can find about the kings serving the Lord. Which means the Church, he says. They are serving the Lord, by persecuting the Christians who refuse to join the "Catholic Church." He ignores the question as to whether it is right for the Church to serve the king's agenda, which is the obvious truth of the matter. He has no bible verses which support that idea. So he keeps to the fiction that the Emperor is serving the "Catholic Church" and not vice versa.

the new power of the church

Augustine depicts "the king" as serving the church rather than as exercising power over it. That is partly an attempt to camouflage the spiritual disgrace of the "Catholic Church" by the standard of traditional theology. But it is also the way that Augustine really sees it--he sees the Church as the most important partner in the "king's covenant." He shows in various letters that, as he understands the Church, it now rightly wields the secular power. *So, then, if you want to know on whom we rely, think of Him whom the Prophet foretold, saying: ALL THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SHALL ADORE HIM; ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM. That is why we make use of this power of the Church which the Lord both promised and gave to it.* (psalm 71.11 Protestant bible: 72.11) letter 105.6 The Lord promised this power in the psalms. And actually gave this power in the time of Constantine. Note: *we make use of this power*. Augustine sees himself and his Church as wielding the imperial power.

The accusation of the "donatists" is that the "Catholic Church" relies upon the Emperor and his soldiers. Augustine cannot deny it, but he gets around the truth of that accusation as best he can. Christ belatedly conferred secular power upon the Church, three centuries after he taught his followers to shun it. The claim to secular power is one of the claims later made by the Pope, of the inscription on the papal tiara.

Augustine uses every text he can find which will justify a mass church and an *ALL NATIONS* church. And these were the defining characteristics of the new State Church of the Roman Empire. It is a Church which the King establishes, by his decrees, contra the non-conforming church, as he argues in 88.11: *Nevertheless, you who have by schism severed yourselves from the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, refuse to be expelled from our ecclesiastical buildings, when the decree to this effect proceeds . . . from the kings of the earth themselves, who worship Christ as the prophecy had foretold.* That is, the King is serving Christ by

confiscating the "donatist" churches and giving them to the "Catholics" as the prophecy in Psalm 2 had foretold. *The seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed* is Augustine's way of defending the mass membership which was mandated in the State Church of the Roman Empire--as discussed later in Chapter XIII: **EVERYBODY'S CHURCH**.

In letter 23.2 Augustine declares his belief in a Church which has conquered the whole world: *For I know what the Catholic Church is. The nations are Christ's inheritance, and the ends of the earth are His possession.*

The real Christian nation

Augustine has trashed the old conception of the Church and entirely altered its relationship to "nations," that is, to secular power, in order to justify the fact of the Imperial Church. So in Matthew 24.9 Jesus prophesies that *ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*. According to Augustine's new age definition that is all in the past and the enmity between the Christians and the nations is at an end.

In John 11.52 he says that Jesus will die for the Jewish nation *And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad*. The basis on which they are gathered into one is that they are *the children of God*. This unity which is some day to be achieved can hardly be the "Unity" of the Roman Empire and its subordinate "Church." What sort of "unity" can you have which is established by military power? Which includes the whole population indiscriminately? Which serves a political purpose, not a spiritual purpose?

Acts 2.5 describes the crowd at Pentecost many of whom would soon be converted: *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven*. And that is the characteristic theme of the New Testament: devout men out of every nation. From the beginning the Church was a Church in all nations, made up of men from all nations. But it wasn't a church OF all nations--it did not include whole secular nations. No more was it a church of one nation or one empire. Nor did it serve a political agenda like the Emperor's Church.

In Galatians 3.7-8 Saint Paul says: *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.* (Genesis 12.3) The blessing cannot possibly mean the bloody forcing of all the nations into the Roman empire on an indiscriminate basis. The basis of the church was faith. Like the Empire itself, the Imperial Church was put together by force, not faith.

In 1 Peter 2.9-10 the writer says that Christians themselves are a new nation, chosen out of all nations: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy*. There is no way that this description of the Christian Church can be tortured into a validation of the Church of the Empire. That is why Augustine ignores all these New Testament descriptions of the Christian Church and replaces them with a "description" which he has derived from the Old Testament Psalms which he interprets as a prophecy of the 4th century Imperial "Catholic" Church.

In communion with the rest of the world

Augustine is defining The Church by these "prophetic" Old Testament scriptures contra the "donatists" 185.3: *So is His Church made manifest, not in Africa alone, as they most impudently venture in the madness of their vanity to assert, but spread abroad throughout the world.* Here he has falsified their position. Both he and Optatus accuse them of claiming that the only true Christian Church is the "donatist" Church of North Africa. But both Augustine and Optatus show in other places that this isn't true. In letter 44.3, for example, reporting on his conversation with the "donatist" bishop Fortunius, Augustine says that Bishop Fortunius claimed that **HIS COMMUNION WAS IN ALL PARTS OF THE EARTH.** The "donatists" rejected the Emperor's "Catholic" Church, not because of its universality, but because of its peculiarity--its dependence upon the Roman emperor and its merger with the Roman state. And they themselves believed in the church catholic to which they belonged, as shown by their statement to the Council of Carthage in 411 AD: *Januarius and all the other bishops of the universal truth.*

In Optatus Book II, section 2 (Phillips pages 66-73) he makes an argument on behalf of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome who has exclusive access to Saint Peter's basilica. But he also gives a list of the "donatist" bishops of Rome and it comes out that there are non-conforming Christians in Rome with whom the North African Christians are in communion. In letter 53.2, Augustine refers to this same situation. They both mention only the one congregation, derisively referred to as *the mountaineers*. But there were large numbers of non-conforming Christians in Rome just as there were in North Africa. Socrates book 7, chapters 9 and 11 says there were many churches of the *Novatians* which were confiscated by the Catholic bishop of Rome soon after Cyril did it in Alexandria. He says they went back to holding their services in house churches. Their other alternative was the Roman catacombs, in which, just like the early church, they were literally an **UNDERGROUND CHURCH.**

Although both Optatus and Augustine regularly falsify this issue, it is clear from what they have let slip through that the "donatists" saw themselves as **Christians** who were in **Catholic** communion with Christians in other places. (cf # 19 *Acts of the Abitinian Martyrs* as translated by Tilley: *Based on this account, one will be able to recognize which church is the Catholic Church.*) Since they were denied the access to the Imperial mail service and the other state privileges that the Imperial so-called "Catholic Church" enjoyed, since their bishops were under the suspicious scrutiny of the police, since non-conforming Christians in other places had been pushed out of their churches, it is no doubt true that they had difficulties in exchanging *letters of communion, which we call regular* (44.3) with churches in other places, especially when you define the Church as the state church officials to whom the soldiers have given possession of the buildings. But it is plain that they never called themselves "Donatists" (contra Optatus) and that they never claimed that their church in North Africa was uniquely the Christian Church. What they claimed instead was that the official bureaucracy "church" of the Roman Empire was an apostate church. That is the allegation that Optatus and Augustine are trying to discredit by saying that they excluded the "whole world" from their communion. They did exclude The Worldly Church from their communion. They did insist upon the fundamental antagonism between the church and **THE WORLD.** But that is something quite different, as argued later.

In book III.3, (page 138) Optatus describes Bishop Donatus asking of visitors: *How goes my party in your part of the world ?* It is unlikely that he said "my party" or that he was asking only about North Africa. The rest of what Optatus says here is probably true--Bishop Donatus saw the struggle of the Christians of North Africa as part of an empire-wide struggle by non-conforming Christians against the Emperor's "Catholic Church." What Bishop Donatus rejected was the Imperial Church wherever it had been forcibly established throughout the provinces of the empire. Augustine and Optatus misrepresent this as a rejection of the Christian Church outside of Africa.

King's Covenant doctrine / New Age doctrine

In letter 93.3 Augustine rhapsodizes over *the salvation of many* who have been rescued from "donatist" madness by *the force of fear* and *the cords of those laws* which are *the fulfillment of His covenant, in which He promised that the kings of the earth should serve Christ* (Psalm 2). This is his King's Covenant doctrine and it is coupled with his New Age Doctrine which he argues later in the same letter: we are in a *NEW AGE* from that in which the *apostles and martyrs* were opposed to kings. Now the covenant has been fulfilled whereby the king serves the Church. Augustine here develops the doctrine which is implicit in the story of Christ and Constantine as told by Eusebius et al. The old church and the old theology belong to an age which is past. Now that the emperors are "Christians" we have entered into a *NEW AGE* in which Christ and Constantine are partners and The Church and The World are United. Augustine's church is literally *NEW AGE* and, by contrast, the "donatist" church is old hat. Augustine is really arguing for a new "New Covenant," alias "King's Covenant" church, which has replaced the New Covenant church established in the time of the apostles. In the new "New Covenant" church, the king is the central figure.

You say that no example is found in the writings of evangelists and apostles of any petition on behalf of the Church to the kings of the earth against her enemies. Who denies this ? None such is found. But at that time the prophecy, BE WISE NOW THEREFORE, O YE KINGS; BE INSTRUCTED, YE JUDGES OF THE EARTH; SERVE THE LORD WITH FEAR [Psalm 2.10] was not yet fulfilled. Up to that time the words which we find at the beginning of the same Psalm were receiving their fulfillment, WHY DO THE HEATHEN RAGE, AND THE PEOPLE IMAGINE A VAIN THING ? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED. [2.1] Truly, if past events recorded in the prophetic books were figures of the future, there was given under King Nebuchadnezzar a figure both of the time which the Church had under the apostles, and of that which she has now. In the age of the apostles and martyrs, that was fulfilled which was prefigured when the aforesaid king compelled pious and just men to bow down to his image, and cast into the flames all who refused. (Daniel 3) Now, however, is fulfilled that which was prefigured soon after in the same king, when, being converted to the worship of the true God, he made a decree throughout his empire, that whosoever should speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, should suffer the penalty which their crime deserved. The earlier time of that king represented the former age of emperors who did not believe in Christ, at whose hands the Christians suffered because of the wicked; but the later time of that king represented the age of the successors to the imperial throne, now believing in Christ, at whose hands the wicked suffer because of the Christians. [letter 93.9]

He uses the same argument in his letter to Boniface in 417 A.D. to justify the laws against the "donatists": *when they say that the apostles never sought such measures from the kings of the earth, they do not consider the different character of that age, and that everything comes in its own season.* (letter 185.19)

So the age of the martyrs is past. Never mind the "donatists" or the other heretics who persist in committing suicide in front of the soldiers. Now we are in the age of Christian kings *at whose hands the wicked suffer because of the Christians.* In several of his letters he explicitly denies that the "donatists" are legitimate martyrs, even when they are killed by the Roman authorities for clinging to the old Christian faith. Because it is old.

Note that "the wicked" who "suffer" here actually means the non-conforming Christians who have remained faithful to the old Christian Church and who have refused to join the new Imperial "Catholic" Church. And "the Christians" means those who have joined the Emperor's Church, with or without coercion. So Augustine has derived a doctrine from Psalm 2 which cancels the traditional doctrine of the Christian Church in respect to **THE WORLD** and **THE RULERS OF THIS WORLD** and which also justifies the violent persecution of devout believers in Jesus Christ **ONLY BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO JOIN THE EMPEROR'S "CHURCH"** !

the kings versus the Prince of Peace

Augustine's King's Covenant doctrine runs contrary to what is found throughout the New Testament as to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Kings, both then and as prophesied for the future. In the prophetic book of Revelation there is sketched a fundamental opposition which finally comes to a head in the end times. For example Revelation 19.19: *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.* And the writer of Revelation makes it clear that it is the spiritual sword of Jesus Christ, the sword which comes out of his mouth, that is, the true Word of God, by which Jesus conquers the kings. (19.15, 19.21)

These scripture-twisting arguments are the characteristic way that Augustine justifies the relationship between the Roman Emperor and the "Catholic Church" even while he avoids a plain statement about the actual relationship between the Emperor and the Church. The **KING'S COVENANT DOCTRINE** and the **NEW AGE DOCTRINE** are how he justifies the Emperor's use of official terror against the non-conforming Christians to force them into the "Catholic Church." The fundamental perversion of the Christian faith which came about in the time of Eusebius and Constantine was thereby supported with falsified scripture and bogus theology by Augustine.

In order to establish the **KING'S COVENANT DOCTRINE** and the **NEW AGE DOCTRINE** he employs an enabling argument which lets him erase the line between the books of the old covenant and the books of the new covenant. That way he can use anything he finds in the Old Testament as "prophecy" to negate Christian orthodoxy. What was "prophesied" in a psalm mandates the new church of the 4th century which rightly replaces the old church.

In letter # 76 he cut-quotes Luke 24.44: ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, AND IN THE PROPHETS, AND IN THE PSALMS CONCERNING HIM; (same quote 93.21) What he has done here is to leave out the first part of verse 44: THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH I SPAKE UNTO YOU, WHILE I WAS YET WITH YOU, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED . . . Which changes the tense. What Jesus is really saying is that the fulfillment of old covenant prophecy about the Messiah has NOW been accomplished by his death and resurrection just as he had once foretold. But Augustine makes him say that the fulfillment of various unspecified psalms in respect to various unspecified subjects is in the future. Which means the new church established in the time of Constantine, Augustine asserts. This "fulfillment" means Augustine's misinterpretation of old psalms. This enabling doctrine allows him to use anything he finds in the Old Testament to validate the doctrines which he has invented to replace Christian orthodoxy.

You have to acknowledge Augustine's scripture-twisting skills. Look what he does with Luke 24.44 plus part of the second psalm. Instead of Luke 24.44 being a declaration of the spiritual achievements of Jesus Christ it is now a testimony to the accomplishments of the Emperor Constantine ! He puts into the mouth of Jesus Christ an endorsement of verses which predict the false "Church" of Constantine and Augustine. In this one example you can see the kind of service that Augustine performed for the Church of the Empire and why ever after he is the "Great" "Saint" Augustine !

He leaves out verses like Psalm 2.9 *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* Which doesn't fit with his interpretation of verse 2.8--the church has conquered the world and all the heathen have been brought into it. Which shows that the verse could not be a reference to the Emperor's state church.

the church of the fulfillment

Augustine's Church of All Nations, alias, the Church of the Whole World is also the Church of the **FULFILLMENT**. It fulfills the prophecy that Kings would serve the Lord. In letter 52.1 he says that the *CITY SEATED ON A MOUNTAIN . . . is the Catholic Church itself, called in Greek katholike, because it is spread through the whole world.* In letter 87.1 he says that *I grieve that you should be severed and shut out from the Catholic Church, which is spread abroad throughout the whole world, as was foretold by the Holy Spirit.* So it is the Church which fulfills the prophecies found by Augustine in the psalms. It is the Church of the new age that has come about because of the Christian emperors. Over and over he uses these phrases "promise" "fulfillment" "prophesied" because he is not talking about the church as it was established by the apostles. He is talking about the "Church of the Fulfillment of the Promise" which appeared in the time of Constantine. And this Church, which has been established by the fiat of the ruler of this world, is the church of all nations.

the final triumph

Augustine apparently believed that the final triumph of the Church was already at hand as indicated in letter 93.22: *how many barbarous nations the gospel has already penetrated, within a space of time so short, that not even Christ's enemies can doubt that in a little while that shall be*

accomplished which our Lord foretold, when, answering the question of His disciples concerning the end of the world, He said: THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS, AND THEN SHALL THE END COME. [Matthew 24.14] This was in response to someone who had pointed out to him that there was a large part of the world where the "Catholic Church" had yet to be established. Contra the triumphant proclamations of Eusebius, Augustine and Optatus et al. For example Optatus exclaims: *The whole world rejoices concerning Catholic unity excepting a portion of Africa.* (Phillips 161)

Augustine believed himself to be part of a world empire and a world-wide church which was on its way to world conquest. With the power of the empire behind it, the "Catholic Church" was well on its way to conquering the world and the end was in sight.

What happened instead is that the sword of the real Christian gospel was blunted and broken when it was degraded into the ideology of conquest of a waning empire. The rise of Islam as a fighting faith was a direct response to the challenge of Christianity as a fighting faith. Militant Islam became the antithesis of the **MILITARY CHRISTIANITY** launched by Constantine. Islam appeared in the old Persian empire as a kind of bastard Christianity. In its basic qualities it was the mirror image of the bastard Christianity which had appeared in the old Roman empire. It embodied the same Demonic mixture of Secular power and supernatural faith in an imperial or **ALL NATIONS** vehicle that easily crossed national boundaries. The difference is that the State Christianity of the Roman Empire was a perversion of true Christianity, whereas Mohammedanism was a State religion and a military religion from the start. eb9 XVI 561 d : *In Islam, the political society and the religious are identical.*

Any creed, however benign it may seem, takes on an altered character when it becomes the ideology of an Imperial State. The idealistic and humanitarian socialism of the 19th century turned into Nazism and Bolshevism. Somehow a creed which aimed at ending the miseries of society led to campaigns of mass murder that destroyed the lives of millions.

But **MILITARY CHRISTIANITY** led to as many murders in its day as any of these other virulent ideologies. How different the history of the world would have been if Christianity had been taken to India by people like Mother Teresa instead of the "Christian" armies of the British Empire.

The anti-church which depended upon the military power of the Roman Empire was circumscribed by the limits of that power. When the empire was divided, it was divided. When rival "Christian" armies took the field, the perpetual civil wars of the empire became a perpetual feature of Christendom. It did fulfill a true prophecy: *all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

the king's church

In a number of his letters Augustine re-states and further defines how the new church is established by the King's Covenant in the new age as prophesied in the psalms-- 87.7: *The civil powers defend their conduct in persecuting schismatics by the rule which the apostle laid down: WHOSO RESISTETH THE POWER . . . [Romans 13]* 87.8: *ALL KINGS SHALL FALL DOWN BEFORE HIM [psalm 72.11]* 105.5: *the lawfully constituted authority, which God has made subject to Christ, according to His prophecy.*

Augustine's fabricated text of Romans 13.1-3 (found in his letters at 87.7 and 93.20, among other places) justifies the actions by which *the formidable power of the authorities of this world . . . assists the proclamation of the truth . . . it is the means of profitable admonition to the wise, and of unprofitable vexation to the foolish among those who have gone astray. FOR THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD: WHOSOEVER THEREFORE RESISTETH THE POWER, RESISTETH THE ORDINANCE OF GOD; FOR RULERS ARE NOT A TERROR TO GOOD WORKS, BUT TO THE EVIL . WILT THOU THEN NOT BE AFRAID OF THE POWER ? DO THAT WHICH IS GOOD, AND THOU SHALT HAVE PRAISE OF THE SAME.* [Romans 13.1-3] *For if the power be on the side of the truth, and correct any one who was in error, he that is put right by the correction has praise from the power. If, on the other hand, the power be unfriendly to the truth, and cruelly persecute any one, he who is crowned victor in this contest receives praise from the power which he resists. [?] And thus is established the Imperial Church which is really the Church of All Nations predicted in the bible.*

But you do not that which is good so as to avoid being afraid of the power; unless perchance this is good, to sit and speak against not one brother, but against all your brethren that are found among all nations, to whom the prophets, and Christ, and the apostles bear witness in the words of Scripture, IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED; [Genesis 26.4] and again FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN EVEN UNTO THE GOING DOWN OF THE SAME, A PURE OFFERING SHALL BE OFFERED UNTO MY NAME; FOR MY NAME SHALL BE GREAT AMONG THE HEATHEN, SAITH THE LORD [Malachi 1.11] . . . and again, ALL TRIBES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIM AND ALL NATIONS SHALL CALL HIM BLESSED. BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO ONLY DOETH WONDROUS THINGS; AND BLESSED BE HIS GLORIOUS NAME FOR EVER, AND THE WHOLE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY: SO LET IT BE, SO LET IT BE [Psalm 72.17-19] And you sit at Cartennare, and with a remnant of half a score of Rogatists you say "Let it not be ! Let it not be ! " 93.20

the big victory

Augustine means that those who speak against the Emperor's "Catholic Church" are attacking the Church of All Nations which the Old Testament predicted and which has finally appeared thanks to the Emperor Constantine and his successors. These narrow-minded traditionalists are missing out on the big victory celebration. This is the Church and the Empire which together rule over *ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH*. It will soon reign *AMONG THE HEATHEN* by the same process of forced conversion. *ALL TRIBES OF THE EARTH* are submitted to the great empire and herded into the great church. The only ones who dissent from this grand triumph of the Christian faith are a miserable remnant of "Rogatists" in the town of Cartennare or a bunch of contemptible "mountaineers" meeting in their cave at Rome, who are allied with the "donatists" of North Africa. Obviously, these people deserve whatever they get at the hands of "God's Minister"! Actually, it turned out that it was the "Catholics" who were the miserable remnant in North Africa. And if you took away the mob of pagan revelers who had flocked into the Roman churches, who did they have for a congregation ? (as argued later)

Contrary Doctrines

The King's Covenant doctrine is incompatible with the New Testament **KINGDOM OF GOD**. It is also incompatible with the exclusive Kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament. Every state is now God's chosen nation. Every heathen king is also the **LORD'S ANOINTED**. It mandates that worship of the nation which is the common idolatry of mankind.

The King's Covenant & New Age doctrines, derived from Psalm 2 have the same practical effect as Romans 13.1-7 in making the Roman Emperor God's Vicar on earth. But there is a contradiction between them and Romans 13, because the chronology of the second psalm doctrine doesn't square with the supposed time of the Romans 13 doctrine. The second psalm doctrine says that, in the time of the apostles and martyrs, the kings were the enemies of Jesus Christ. That didn't change until the advent of Constantine--the new age of the Christian kings. But Romans 13.1-7 has Saint Paul saying that the **persecuting pagan emperor** is already somehow **GOD'S MINISTER**. Which puts Saint Paul out of step with the rest of the first century church. They still rightly viewed the kings as the enemies of Jesus Christ and his church. This doctrine--the first half of Augustine's Psalm 2 doctrine is referred to in Acts 4.25-26. But you can hardly have that as Christian orthodoxy in the time of Saint Peter while you have the opposite doctrine stated by Saint Paul in Romans 13.1-7. That situation arises because Augustine invented one doctrine too many on behalf of the Emperor's spiritual authority, and so he put them on a collision course.

Augustine's doctrine that God's authority is wielded by the emperor was copied from the pagan philosophers who believed that **rulers represent the gods**. And it makes much more sense to believe this, because the pagan gods were carnal, jealous, spiteful and larcenous. In pagan theology, it isn't a problem that the rulers are rats. And this was a necessary doctrine for all the intellectuals who shrank from challenging wicked and powerful rulers, even if they weren't on the payroll--most of them were.

Idolatry of the State in the Reformation

Although Augustine's theology became the official theology of the Roman Catholic Church, over the centuries it was modified and obscured in practice. The revival of strict Augustinianism came about because Luther, Calvin and other Reformers were followers of Augustine. Luther's doctrines of *Bondage of the Will* and salvation by *Passive Righteousness*, without any works or acts or efforts of our own, are derived directly from Augustine's moral fatalism. And even more than Augustine, Luther emphasized the authority given to rulers in Romans 13.1-7. He used it as the mandate for the spiritual authority of the German Princes in their struggle to overthrow the total authority claimed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Calvin's *Predestination* comes from Augustine. But Calvin's doctrine on rulers and laws is based not only on Augustine's theology but also on his own so-called *classicism*--that is, his study of the pagan or *classic* philosophers. The doctrine found in his *Institutes* was copied from the essentially similar doctrine which is found in his earlier book, the *Seneca Commentary*. Where he quotes **Plutarch**: *Princes are God's ministers, for the welfare and care of men*. And then adds "Our religion too, has such a confession: Power comes from God alone, and those that exist have been ordained by God." [*Comm. Sen. de. Clem.* p 31] (Contra Luke 4.5-6: secular rule comes from Satan.) Like Augustine, Luther and Calvin stayed close to secular power. Their theology justifies that power and their own identification with that power. Their latter day followers identify with the Nation and jump at the invitation to the White House.

XIII Everybody's Church: wheat & tares

Aside from its *UNITY* with the imperial bureaucracy and its subservience to the emperor, what distinguished the "Catholic Church" of Constantine and Augustine was that it had become a state wide "Catholic" church which was designed to include the entire population of the Roman empire. It was designed to be **EVERYBODY'S CHURCH**. From the outset, Constantine launched a vigorous and well-financed campaign designed to bring everyone into his new state church. He laid out the money to repair old churches and to build new ones. He gave the large public meeting halls which were called *basilicas* to the "Catholic Church" to accommodate those whom he cajoled or coerced into joining the new church. He confiscated the churches of the non-conforming Christians and gave them to the "Catholic" church. He took increasingly harsh measures against non-conforming Christians like the "donatists," to force them into the State Church.

The easy-going pagans were persuaded and pressured rather than martyred. They were still tolerated by Constantine and his successors. But there was a steady change away from the old policy of state support for the pagan temples. Eventually their public festivals were outlawed by Theodosius I and then by his son Honorius early in the 5th century. (cf Augustine letter # 91.7) Constantine decreed that new converts should receive a white robe and 20 pieces of gold. (Gibbon XX 655) He decreed far more substantial rewards for those upper class Romans who came into the Church at the higher levels. The Imperial favor shown to the "Catholic Church" led to an influx of easy converts at all levels of the new Church.

Because of the disappearance of their writings, the "donatist" case against the mob church of the empire has to be inferred from the arguments that Augustine makes against them. But it is clear enough that, among their other reasons, they rejected the "Catholic Church" because of its mob character and because it had abandoned the strict standards of admission and belonging which were characteristic of the old Church. That is the reality behind the various *WHEAT AND TARES* arguments which turn up in the anti "donatist" letters of Augustine.

no scruple to receive all the whole state

There is a striking parallel in the criticism made by non-conforming Christians--the so-called *Brownists*--in the time of the Reformation, 13 centuries after the Emperor Constantine established the first state church, and 11 centuries after the bishop of Rome established the first church state. Unlike the main group of "Puritans," John Greenwood and Henry Barrowe (who were martyred April 6th 1593) condemn "Mr Calvine" because "he made no scruple to receive all the whole state, even all the profane ignorant people, into the bozome of the church, to administer the sacramentes vnto them." They condemn the Church of England because it comprehends "all the profane and wicked of the land." (eb9 XII 724bc *INDEPENDENTS*) An opponent labeled them *the Donatists of England*. (724 fn 5) They were fundamentally at odds with the other Puritans who believed that the church should include the whole population of the state by the coercion of the laws, and for whom Calvin's Church State in Geneva was a model. What Cromwell later established in England was at least a serious attempt at a church state.

It must have been the indiscriminate admission to the sacraments of the new "converts" which led to the "donatists" absolute rejection of Catholic sacraments as being not simply invalid but even blasphemous and sacrilegious, an attitude which is described in the work of Optatus. (Book 2.19, page 99)

In letter 93.39, Augustine is refuting a criticism that *participation in the sacraments was allowed to sinful men*, by arguing that Cyprian did it. He appears to be defending the changes that came about in the administration of the sacraments, as in other areas of church life, because of the changed character of the Church of the Empire.

A little earlier, in 93.37 he refers to the same argument: *For if, as you suppose, the Church which had been spread abroad throughout the world perished through her admitting sinners to partake in her sacraments (and this is the ground alleged for your separation . . .*

open admissions

I was living in New York City in 1970 when the City College of New York was forced to adopt an open admissions policy by the political pressures of the time. It meant that every student who graduated from any New York City high school had to be admitted as a freshman to CCNY regardless of his or her academic deficiencies. In fact many of these students were scarcely able to read and write, having been passed on through the system just to get rid of them. Mostly they were negroes and hispanics from the poor districts of New York.

The result was that CCNY had to accommodate a mass influx of students who were simply not capable of doing college level work. What had once been a prestigious university with a reputation as a working class Harvard was forced into a situation which eroded academic standards. Remedial reading courses and *ethnic studies* failed to satisfy the demands of the handicapped students and so there was a militant student occupation of the campus which disrupted its operation for most of a school year.

Any institution, whether a school or a business or a church, has to have standards and a way of maintaining them. Otherwise, there will be a rapid deterioration of character. Some such disruption of function and breakdown of standards was the inevitable result of Constantine's policy of herding a miscellaneous mob into the new "Catholic Church." And they were still trying to cope with the result 80 years later in the time of Augustine.

drunks

In letter # 29, written in 395 A.D., Augustine describes his efforts to persuade the "Catholics" of Hippo to quit the custom of celebrating holy days with heavy drinking which went on even in the church itself. He also briefly explains how this custom came about: *Lest, however, any slight should seem to be put by us on those who before our time, either tolerated or did not dare to put down such manifest excesses of an UNDISCIPLINED MULTITUDE, I explained to them the circumstances out of which this custom seems to have necessarily risen in the Church,--namely, that when, in the peace which came after such numerous and violent persecutions, crowds of heathen who wished to assume the Christian religion were kept back, because, having been accustomed to celebrate the feasts connected with their worship of idols in revelling and*

drunkenness, they could not easily refrain from pleasures so hurtful and so habitual, it had seemed good to our ancestors, making for the time a concession to this infirmity, to permit them to celebrate, instead of the festivals which they renounced, other feasts in honour of the holy martyrs, which were observed, not as before with a profane design, but with similar self-indulgence. 29.9

He also has to explain away the fact that this kind of "celebration" is a "daily excess" at Saint Peter's basilica in Rome: *as the examples of daily excess in the use of wine in the church of the blessed Apostle Peter were brought forward in defence of the practice, I said in the first place, that I had heard that these excesses had been often forbidden, but because the place was at a distance from the bishop's control, and because in such a city the multitude of carnally-minded persons was great, the foreigners especially, of whom there is a constant influx, clinging to that practice with an obstinacy proportioned to their ignorance, the suppression of so great an evil had not yet been possible. 29.10* It is startling that the Catholic bishop of Rome has no control over the daily bachanal in Saint Peter's basilica !

As a result of his several sermons and conversations, the people assembled for psalm-singing instead of drinking, he relates. Meanwhile, in the nearby *church of the heretics* revelry was going on as usual. 29.11. The fact that it is Augustine who makes this allegation in respect to the otherwise puritanical "heretics," who never bribed or coerced the pagan mob to join their church, is reason enough to disbelieve it. He could hardly admit that the "heretics" put the "Catholics" to shame in this matter.

What Augustine is describing here is the general deformation of morals in the Imperial Church which inevitably resulted from the admission of an *UNDISCIPLINED MULTITUDE* on an indiscriminate basis in obedience to the command of Constantine. One of the gross concessions made to the new converts from popular paganism was this: you can bring your drunken festivals with you. In a sermon dated about A.D. 320, Bishop Donatus complained that *holy assemblies are transformed into splendid banquets. O most faithful brothers and sisters, it is a crime even to publish what was said and done among the banquets of lascivious youths where despicable women were present. [Passio Donatus et Advocatus as translated by Maureen Tilley]*

You can see how and when and why the character of the Church changed when it became a state religion. You can't very well force and / or bribe the whole populace to join the state church and at the same time seriously pretend to maintain any moral standard for membership. A Church which had strict standards was replaced by one which had no standards. The "donatists" are accused of wanting a church of impossible *PURITY*, but how *PURITAN* you are is measured by the filthiness of what you spurn. Are you a *PURITAN* if you say *NO THANKS!* to a glass of drinking water which is half sewer water ?

gods and goddesses

It wasn't just the wine that they brought with them into the new state church. The pagan revellers were also allowed to bring their gods and goddesses with them, although dressed in "Christian" disguises. Allowing for his bias, there is substantial truth in the descriptions that Gibbon gives in his chapter 28: *The most respectable bishops had persuaded themselves that the*

ignorant rustics would more cheerfully renounce the superstitions of Paganism, if they found some resemblance, some compensation, in the bosom of Christianity. The religion of Constantine achieved, in less than a century, the final conquest of the Roman empire. But the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals. Gibbon rightly calls it "the religion of Constantine." It was not the old Christian religion.

Where "saint" once described the ordinary member of the Christian Church who had received the Holy Spirit, the Saints now meant long dead persons whose statues were set up and revered in ceremonies that suspiciously resembled the old pagan cults surrounding a variety of gods and goddesses. Just before this Gibbon says: *If, in the beginning of the fifth century, Tertullian or Lactantius, had been suddenly raised from the dead, to assist at the festival of some popular saint or martyr, they would have gazed with astonishment and indignation on the profane spectacle which had succeeded to the pure and spiritual worship of a Christian congregation.* In the time of Augustine, the "donatists" and the other non-conforming Christians who remained faithful to the church of Tertullian, still *gazed with indignation* on the rites that had been introduced into Everybody's Church. That is what Augustine has to defend.

He puts the best scriptural and theological face on it that he can, but it is apparent that Augustine was forced to defend a Church which had abandoned the old standards. Whatever moral grounds can be argued for a policy of indiscriminate membership, in the time of Constantine it was adopted for political reasons. Constantine was pressing the miscellaneous population of the empire into the new mold of his new state church. And their promiscuous presence rapidly eroded the standards of the old church.

wheat and tares

So Augustine has to argue for a church which everyone is expected to join. He never really explains it, but it is apparent that they had no choice in the matter, that it was the Emperor's original decision to herd the whole population into his new "Catholic Church" which led to the situation that Augustine has to defend contra the "donatists." In 93.27-28 he accuses the "donatists" of *separating yourselves from the communion of the whole world. . . . from the communion of all nations.* And he means that they have stayed out of the official church which has been established everywhere in the empire, and that they have shunned the congregations into which everybody has been herded.

The first character is what is really meant by "Catholic." The second character is what is meant by "Unity." Augustine avoids spelling out that it is the emperor's authority which in fact defines this united imperial church and that it means "everybody's church." It is everybody's church because the emperor says that everybody should join it--or else.

As Father Phillips points out, *St. Optatus . . . regarded what we now call the Marks of the Church as two. The true Church is One and Catholic (of world-wide extension).* O 84 fn 5 This definition fits the Imperial Church which was united under the authority of the emperor and which was co-extensive with the empire which had conquered the world. It was Augustine who later added the claims for "holy" and "apostolic."

Meanwhile, they discarded the traditional marks of the Church such as **persecution by the World** (John 15.20) and **love one another** (John 13.35) which was the mandate for the sharing seen in the original church. The Imperial Church had joined **the World** in persecuting the Christians. The luxurious habits of its wealthiest members did not allow them to share anything with their slaves beyond subsistence wages. And how can you **share** with a bunch of alcoholics ? After they spend everything they have, they will spend everything you have, then steal your shoes to buy more !

In letter 76.2, written in 402 A.D., he attacks "the donatists" for *Your imagination that you are separating yourselves before the time of the harvest, from the tares which are mixed in with the wheat, proves that you are only tares. For if you were wheat, you would bear with the tares, and not separate yourselves from that which is growing in Christ's field.* 76.2 He said: *"The field is the world"; He said not: "The field is Africa."* What he is arguing here, contra the "donatists" is that both wheat and weeds belong in the church, and that the "donatists" are wrong in maintaining a strict standard of membership in the church, and wrong in rejecting the Church of the Empire because of its promiscuous congregation. In an earlier letter, # 53.6, written in 400 A.D., Augustine trots out a summary of arguments ending with the **WHEAT AND TARES** argument: *We rely, however, not so much on these documents as on the Holy Scriptures wherein a dominion extending to the ends of the earth among all nations is promised as the heritage of Christ, separated from which by their sinful schism they reproach us with the crimes which belong to the chaff in the Lord's threshing-floor, which must be permitted to remain mixed with the good grain until the end come, until the whole be winnowed in the final judgment. From which it is manifest that, whether these charges be true or false, they do not belong to the Lord's wheat, which must grow until the end of the world throughout the whole field, that is, the whole earth. . . . these unhappy Donatists have brought the reproach of many false and empty accusations against Christians who were blameless, but who are throughout the world mingled with the chaff or tares, that is, with Christians unworthy of the name.*

the field is the **WORLD**

The **WHEAT AND TARES** argument is based upon the Parable of the field in which the enemy had sowed weed seed among the wheat. It is told in Matthew 13.24-30. Jesus explains it in 13.36-43: *the field is the world.* But the image of a field in which both good and bad are found is used by Augustine in defense of the imperial church into which the whole population had been herded without any discrimination as to good and bad.

This text was argued by "Catholics" and "donatists" at the Council of Carthage in 411 A.D. (Migne 11.1409 DS) Augustine identified the field with the Church and the "donatists" challenged him by pointing out that this field is an image of **THE WORLD**, not of **THE CHURCH**. There is a modified form of the argument in several of his letters where he instead argues that the church is the wheat but that it is mixed with the tares in the world. But that doesn't really cover the case of what the imperial church did when they brought the whole population into the church. That is what Augustine has to defend. He does it with a series of bible references: "wheat and tares" "wheat and chaff" 105.15 *We tolerate them (sinners) in this world, in which the Catholic Church is spread abroad among all nations, which the Lord called His field, like the cockle among the wheat; or on this threshing floor of unity, like chaff mingled with the good grain.*

He mixes up two different texts so as to confuse the issue. Jesus said nothing about "chaff" in his example of the field. It is another text which quotes John the Baptist. (Matthew 3.12 and Luke 3.17) Wheat is necessarily accompanied by "chaff" but wheat is not necessarily accompanied by "tares." Actually, the idea of the "chaff" verses appears to be that Jesus had already begun the process of separation at the very beginning of his ministry. Augustine's doctrine is that no separation is to take place until the very end of the world. He needs that doctrine to justify the admission into the church of the whole population. That was the reality found in the Church of the Empire, aside from all argument. So he had to defend it somehow.

Augustine's mis-reading of the *WHEAT AND TARES* parable to justify the **CHURCH OF NO STANDARDS** is still commonly resorted to by those who have to try and justify the mass church which is so manifestly apostate. Spokesmen for the worldly church use the same distortion of that parable which Augustine came up with long ago. How else can you justify a "Church" which has a 90 % apostasy rate even by its own minimal standards ?

Augustine also compares the Imperial Church to the net with all kinds of fish in it: 93.34: *it is the same Church also which within the Lord's net is swimming along with the bad fishes, but is in heart and in life separated from them but the actual visual separation she looks for only on the sea shore, that is, at the end of the world.* The "donatists" argued that the separation on the shore means you do it as soon as you can see to do it. In 93.30 he interprets the phrases which say that "Abraham's seed" will be as numerous as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand as referring to his new age church. By the sand is meant *that great multitude of weak and carnal persons within the Church.* Since when does the Christian Church have to accommodate a *great multitude of weak and carnal persons* ? Since Constantine made it the official church of the empire. Since he gave it the basilicas and herded the pagan mob into them.

A so-called "Church" which coincides with the empire has to include everyone that the empire includes, whether they want to be included or not and whether you want to include them or not. That is the essential character of the state church as the "Brownists" argued. Having taken them in, it has to cater to them. The result is **A MASS CHURCH ON A MINIMAL BASIS.** The resulting character of this church is the very antithesis of the character of the early church, which forced no one to join and which excluded those who did not meet the standards for belonging to the church. Now everyone belongs because everyone belongs.

The mass church on a minimal basis has been with us ever since. The Roman Catholic Church claims some 800 million members world wide. But not even 10 % of them follow basic church teaching on contraception etc. or even show up at church on Sunday. As to following the strict standards of the original Christian Church, in respect to war, wealth etc., it is more like one half of a per cent. The same phenomenon shows up among the Protestants. Worldly Christianity can also be characterized as Nominal Christianity, as External and Hypocritical Christianity. It is the inoculation principle applied to religion. By inoculating people at birth with a nominal Christian faith, you protect them from ever catching a serious religious fever. So Nominal Christianity is also Harmless Christianity. Harmless in relation to the World which it is supposed to challenge. Lethal in relation to the faith and morals of those who belong to it.

the church is a garden

As filtered dimly through Optatus and Augustine, it appears that the "donatists" argued for an entirely different model of the church. Optatus page 91 attributes to Parmenian the teaching that the Church: *is a garden enclosed*. The old church was regularly weeded. It was a vine which was rigorously pruned. It was a vineyard which was carefully tended. How could it have turned into a field full of weeds ?

It is this position which Augustine has to challenge, by arguments which justify the kind of practices that allowed a drunken mob of pagan revellers to join the "Catholic" church at Hippo. He does the best he can 39.4: *on the ground of his own righteousness to withdraw himself from the unity of the Church which God promised and has fulfilled in all nations*. cf God promised a church which would welcome drunks with open arms, even if they insisted upon bringing their bottles in with them. When I volunteered at a Catholic Worker soup kitchen we had a lot of drunks come in. But we also had a rule that they couldn't bring their bottles in with them. And this was only a soup kitchen, not a church. It is apparent that the Emperor's "Catholic Church" could not maintain even such a minimal standard as that among those who were admitted to full membership and to the sacraments of the Emperor's church on the easiest terms.

Augustine does try to appropriate the idea of the vine in one of his arguments: *It is then no wonder if from that vine which has grown and FILLED ALL LANDS* (psalm 79.10; protestant bible 80.10) *those branches have been cut off which refused to bring forth the fruit of charity*. (letter # 52.2) By adding the image from a psalm of a vine which has "filled all lands" he converts the image of the carefully tended Christian community found in John 15.1-8 into a justification for the sprawling and promiscuous Church of the Empire.

don't eat with him

The surviving record of the 411 Council of Carthage shows the "donatist" bishops arguing a number of texts which defend *the purity of the Church*. (Migne 11.1408 Don Sullivan translation) In traditional terms, the "donatists" were entirely in the right to insist upon a strict standard for admission to the church and to insist upon maintaining a strict standard of faith and morals within the church. Saint Paul lays down a strict standard for membership in the church, as in 1 Corinthians 5.9-13, and makes it clear that, even if we cannot avoid them entirely so long as we live in this world, those who do not meet the standard are not to be allowed into the communion of the church: *if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat*. Don't let drunks or extortioners into the church or sit down at the table with them.

The descriptions of the Christian Church before the time of Constantine show that they did maintain a strict discipline and a high moral standard within the church and that they regularly excommunicated people who did not measure up. Augustine prefers to describe The Church from "prophetic" texts taken from the Old Testament while he ignores or explains away the descriptions of the church by the apostles. Because the Imperial Church was in fact a radical departure from the church of the apostles.

It is notable that the bishops of the emperor's church excommunicated one another over intellectual quibbles that had no moral consequences while they ignored the grossest deviations from Christian morals among the bishops themselves as well as among the rank and file. They defined the Christian faith as a set of intellectual items. So having the correct opinion about a set of doctrines means you have the Faith, regardless of whether you have the Spirit.

That is still characteristic of the Churches which grew out of the Church of the Empire. The truth of the faith is defined by intellectual formulas. The Spirit of Truth and Love and Courage which defined the old church is optional. Is an embarrassment.

XIV Corrupt Bishops

In the Christian Church before the time of Constantine, the position of bishop was a position of high honor that a lot of Christians went to some trouble to avoid. Because the next bishop was usually the next martyr when the next persecution broke out. That changed dramatically in the so-called "Catholic Church." Apollinaris Sidonius circa 480 A.D. was governor of Rome and a patrician and a senator before he became a bishop.

The entire structure of the Imperial Church was a radical departure from the structure of the old Church, as the eb 9 writer relates: *Henceforth the church was officially modelled on the lay institutions of the later empire; her dioceses corresponded in position and extent to those of the civil administration; the chief clergy became important magistrates. The bishop of each city with his clergy took the place of the older curials, the members of the civil municipality;* (IX 528 bc) While a "bishop" in one of the non-conforming Christian churches continued to be simply the senior pastor of one congregation, the "bishops" of the official church acquired the power of important officials in the government bureaucracy. Their position no longer depended upon the congregation. They owed their offices to government favor. While the pretence was still maintained of bishops being elected by the Christian community, Bishops were in fact appointed by the Emperor or the church official who acted for him. The pagan mob was bribed to acclaim his *unanimous* election.

Whatever his other spiritual and moral defects, Augustine himself was a man of remarkable abilities with a sincere personal dedication to the cause of the "Catholic Church." He also was a rare exception to the general run of Catholic bishops who went from being pagan senators to being Catholic bishops on one week's notice because it paid better. There weren't that many actual *SENATORS* left in the age of the absolute emperors, but, by the end of the 4th century, almost all "Catholic" bishops came from the *CURIALES*--the hereditary ruling class of the Empire. The day of the fisherman bishop and the carpenter bishop was gone forever as far as the Imperial Church was concerned.

bishops on the payroll

Constantine's letters to Caecilian circa 313 A.D. are the founding documents of a corrupt state church bureaucracy. The 3000 bags of gold and the list of bishops who are to receive the gold set up the mark of the Catholic clergy: they are on the emperor's payroll. The exemption from public service, which meant an exemption from liability for taxes, created a major tax shelter which rich men were quick to take advantage of. They became bishops without ever having been Christians. Ambrose wasn't baptized until the week before he became a bishop. Even when they had some character, it was something other than the moral and spiritual character which a Christian bishop needed. Synesius was made a bishop despite his lack of faith in the Resurrection and his inability to accept celibacy. (Gibbon XX 667, footnote 119) A few of them like Augustine and Ambrose had at least some intelligence and at least some dedication to the institution that employed them. The rest were worldly men who put up with the nuisance of wearing fancy robes in order to double their incomes.

Frend page 183 (see 177 also) says: *From an independent and friendly source, Hosius of Cordoba, we learn that the Africans more than any other Catholic bishops spent their time at Constans court, lobbying for sinecures for their friends, and indulging in extravagance and nepotism. Gratus was unable to control them.* (Canon 8 of Council of Serdica Mansi Concilia III. 67) *The decrees of Gratus Council at Carthage (circa 349 A.D.) show that discipline was lax in other respects. Clergy were in the habit of wandering from see to see offering their services where prospects of gain were best. Bishops for similar motives attempted to usurp each other's congregations. Others were acting as money lenders, a fact which gains significance when placed against the background of the prevailing economic misery in the countryside.* Remember the allegation of both Optatus and Augustine that the Circumcelliones interfered with the collection of debts. And Saint Paul's admonition to have no fellowship with extortioners. How quaint that sounds as applied to the Worldly Church. In fact, the African bishops seem to have been out of control in respect to the discipline of the church, as witness the startling failure to effectively discipline Bishop Antoninus. (cf new letter # 20 *) Because they had a double identity as state officials, they weren't very vulnerable to church discipline alone. And they seemed to have enjoyed the immunities of upper class Romans in a totally corrupt system.

Corruption wasn't an accidental or temporary characteristic of an order of men who belonged to the perennially corrupt bureaucracy of the Roman empire. It was the permanent character of the "Catholic" bishops of North Africa. Frend 311 says that, circa 593 A.D, when the return of the Byzantine empire temporarily restored the "Catholic" Church of North Africa: *As in the past, simony, corruption and vice prevailed among the Catholic bishops of North Africa.* In chapter 20 and again in chapter 32, Gibbon notes the corrupt character of the imperial bishops, who defied any attempt to reform them. The exile and death of Chrysostom resulted from his foolish and failed attempt to reform the bishops in the area around Constantinople: *a deep corruption of simony and licentiousness had infected the whole episcopal order.*

Corruption is the predictable and almost inevitable characteristic of even small bureaucracies. That gets multiplied by 10 in a big city bureaucracy. And by at least 100 in the ancient bureaucracy of a sprawling and decaying empire. The integration of the bought bishops of the emperor's "Catholic Church" into this perennially corrupt bureaucracy meant that the corruption of the bishops was the inevitable character of the Catholic bishops.

The story is repeated in one way or another for 1500 years thereafter. Anthony Trollope's sympathetic and friendly and apologetic depiction of the clergy of the 19th century English state church in *Barcester Towers* and his other church novels inadvertently shows how habitually corrupt the whole order was. The Reverend Stanhope has been living in Italy for 12 years on the income from his preferment at Barcester Cathedral, while hired clergy do the work. (chapter 9) Typically, the clergy who do the work are paid subsistence wages while those who hold the preferment receive large incomes for doing nothing.

absentee bishops

It is notable that the African bishops are often away from their sees. Augustine's letters show he was absent from Hippo for long periods as was the bishop who preceded him. The establishment of ecclesiastical sinecures was one of the ways that the church was re-shaped by

the emperor's gold. The class of absentee bishops and that of absentee landlords had a substantial overlap. Ecclesiastical sinecures and absentee "bishops" and "abbots" who drew large incomes from establishments they rarely even visited was a conspicuous feature of the Worldly Church for many centuries thereafter. (cf eb9 XXIII 523a, article on *Trappists*) Luther's opponent, Pope Julius II, had held the revenues of 10 bishoprics and abbacies when he was a cardinal. The lure of the income from church estates in Germany and England, which was often held by Cardinals in Rome, was the major motor of the Reformation.

Even when the Church ceases to be a state establishment, the habit of luxury is so ingrained that it persists, long after the Church has lost access to the emperor's gold. You can read the same story in last week's *Wanderer*. Millionaire cardinals and TV evangelists living in mansions still characterize the Worldly Church which has grown out of the Church of the Empire. It wasn't just the bishop who was corrupt. In the more prominent sees the bishop had an army of retainers. Even when the establishment was limited by law it tended to be a mini-bureaucracy. The "Catholic" bishop of Carthage was surrounded by some 500 ecclesiastical ministers--after they cut it down to reduce the expense ! (Gibbon XX 662) The church bureaucracies are still a major source of the moral corruption and the spiritual decay that is rotting away the church.

The corruption of money and military power was ingrained in the Church of the Empire, as illustrated by the actions of Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria and his nephew Cyril who succeeded him. Theophilus brought an armed band with him to Constantinople to depose Chrysostom. Gibbon (XXXII 211) says that as Archbishop of Alexandria he *displayed the fruits of rapine in monuments of ostentation*. (210) In an earlier chapter he says that his *hands were alternately polluted with gold and with blood*. (XXVIII 58)

Cyril's attack upon the Jews of Alexandria

His nephew "Saint" Cyril has left a letter (# 96) which lists the bribes given to various persons at the court in Constantinople to secure the decree against Nestorius, against whom he led his small army of retainers. His armed followers closed the churches of the *Novatians*. They looted the synagogues and homes of the Jews and drove them out of Alexandria. (eb 9 VI 751; Gibbon XLVII 815 Socrates 7.13) It should be pointed out that the peaceable congregations of the real *Christians* of Alexandria, the so-called *Novatians*, were entirely blameless in respect to the 414 AD attacks upon the synagogues. They suffered the same or worse from the violent mob which made up Cyril's so-called *Church*. About the same time the Catholic Bishops of Rome began confiscating the churches of the *Novatians*. (Socrates 7.9 & 11)

The fact that this violent and rapacious ecclesiastical bully is still listed as a Catholic *Saint* shows how far they still are from recognizing and repenting of the crimes of the Imperial Church. He was the kind of **thug Saint** that the Church of the Empire produced and the story of his crimes provides an accurate measurement of the ingrained violence of the criminal *Church* establishment to which he belonged. He was one of the worst, but he was not an isolated example. He and his uncle Theophilus deployed their violent followers against pagan temples, Christian churches, Jewish synagogues and even rival Catholics.

In 388, Ambrose wrote an epistle defending the bishop of Callinicum who burned a synagogue and a *Valentinian* church. Gibbon XXIII 775 notes the *lucrative modes of oppression* of the Jews *which were invented by the bishops and eunuchs of the court of Constantius*. It is hardly surprising that the Worldly Church which engaged in the violent persecution of non-conforming Christians would give the Jews the same treatment or that both became established policies of Christendom. The nonconforming Christians and the Jews were both the targets of the Inquisition. In *Ivanhoe*, Sir Walter Raleigh describes how money was extorted from Jews like Rebecca's father.

The rabid anti Jewish sermons of "Saint" John Chrysostom were echoed 1000 years later in the virulent hatred of Martin Luther's 1543 treatise *ON THE JEWS AND THEIR LIES*. He set forth a detailed program of violent attacks against the Jews which the Nazis copied and carried out. The *kristallnacht* of November 9th-10th 1938, which launched the campaign of violence against the Jews, was in honor of the birthday of Martin Luther. The ultimate violence against the Jews in Hitler's Germany was the climactic episode of an old story.

Augustine's new letter # 20 * shows how serious was the shortage of decent clergy in the African church. He appointed a 20 year old monk as the new bishop of Fussala, a "donatist" town where the churches had been given to the "Catholics" after the Conference of 411 A.D. Antoninus thereafter commits a series of rapacious crimes against the people of Fussala with apparent immunity from prosecution. In fact, Augustine has to defend against the appeal Antoninus has brought because they took one of his ecclesiastical sinecures away from him. Augustine is personally to blame for this young man's bad character. He had separated him from his mother and put him into the monastery at Hippo some years before when he came there as a boy. That episode was the practical effect of Augustine's peculiar animus against marriage and family life. What sort of a "Church" was it that entrusted important pastoral responsibilities to such a warped character ?

New letter # 22 * complains about the shortage of clergy because the tax privileges originally given to the Catholic clergy by Constantine had been curtailed to close a major tax loop hole. Augustine notes that *in the time of idolatry* n 30 there were plenty of priests. That is, the privileges of the pagan priesthood of the official state church insured an abundance of clergy. It shows how much the "Catholic Church" relied upon Government subsidies and tax breaks to recruit its bishops. Just as it depended upon the soldiers to make converts. It is hardly surprising that "the donatists" looked upon the "Catholic Church" as an apostate church ! When Constantine put his gold and his soldiers at the service of Bishop Caecilian and the "Catholic Church," he stamped upon it a character entirely at variance with the original character of the Christian Church. It wasn't just a matter of an apostate bishop surrendering a few books. These bishops surrendered the whole church to the Roman authorities !

love of money

A church which is tied to the power of the military and which must tolerate the love of money because of its alliance with the wealthy, is by that very fact an anti-church. It is apparent that the Church of the Empire had to abandon the discipline and doctrine of the old church in respect to money, just as it had to abandon Christian pacifism. The position it had accepted left

it no choice. It entered into an alliance with the wealthy class of the Roman empire, as Frend notes in several places, even as it was imposed upon their slaves. Frend 326 *In practice we find evidence for the close association of the Catholics with the official classes . . . the African Catholics depended for their own survival on the survival of the Roman authority.* 327-328 *self-interest and accumulation of wealth allied the Catholics to the great landowners . . . Augustine's sermons . . . speak to leisured and propertied folk, people with their villas equipped with marble and tapestries who could understand allegories drawn from the life of an owner of some wealthy estate. . . . He could maintain, however, that riches were in themselves no bar to entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who argued the necessity of poverty were denounced as heretics. Augustine, indeed, was never tired of emphasizing the wealth of his heroes such as Joseph of Arimathea and the martyr Crispina. . . . the wealth of some of the sees was a motive behind episcopal translations. . . . the Catholic monasteries in Africa were established of set purpose in fertile and populated areas, as near Hippo . . . where orchards promised a good return . . .* fn. 5: *Social inequalities were maintained in these monasteries. (contra Acts 2.44 4.34-35 everyone sharing; Galatians 3.28 neither bond nor free; James 2.2-7 not catering to the rich.)*

Frend 328-329 *the wealth of the Catholic Church was considerable . . . Augustine administered property estimated at twenty times that of his father who was a curialis . . . A landowner on a large scale itself, the Catholic Church was at one with the romanized landowning interest as a whole. Some bishops acted as bailiffs on senatorial estates . . . without the aid of the senatorial landowners it would have been impossible to put down Donatism in the countryside. . . . Thus practical issues prevented the Catholics from making any serious move to alleviate the prevalent social misery and oppression.* Frend 65: *large estates in the neighbourhood of Hippo* Frend 330: *The duties imposed by wealth were acknowledged in theory but neglected in practice.*

By contrast the non-conforming Christians maintained the basic doctrine of the Christian Church in respect to money, wealth and riches: Frend 331 *Their sermons emphasized the necessity of personal poverty . . . evangelical poverty was enjoined on clergy and people alike.*

In *De gestis Pelagii* 23 Augustine shows that one of the major areas of contention between himself and the Pelagians, Pelagius and Coelastius especially, was their teaching in respect to Christians and money. Although his statements must be presumed to be caricatures of their actual arguments, they still indicate the substance of the Pelagian position. He says they taught *that rich men who have been baptized are not credited with any good that they may seem to have done, unless they give up all they have; nor otherwise can they enter the Kingdom of God.* That is, they taught that you cannot be a rich Christian. That a rich man's largesse, his "alms" to the poor and his "tips" to those who serve him do not fulfill his obligation to love his neighbor and to share with his brothers and sisters in Christ.

Neander III 151-152 citing Assemani says that the accusation against the Christians of Persia circa 343 A.D. was that: *According to them, whoever accumulates riches is guilty of a great sin. They place poverty far above wealth; they praise poverty, and they defame the rich.* That rings true as the authentic Christian attitude towards money that was characteristic of the old church. It accurately measures the apostasy of the Church of the Empire on a fundamental moral issue.

Jesus and money

There are 30 places in the New Testament where Jesus and his followers tell us that we have to avoid wealth, that we have to share with our Christian brothers and sisters and that we have to rescue the poor. You put your faith in God or you put your faith in money--you can't have it both ways. There is no such thing as a rich Christian. You can't be rich in a world full of poor people except by neglecting the plain Christian duty to love others and to rescue them.

The love of money is the root of all evil Saint Paul says. Jesus tells us that you have to serve God or money, you cannot serve both. It is harder for a rich man to get into heaven than it is for a camel to get through the eye of a needle.

In the real Christian church, being a follower of Jesus Christ and having a lot of money are two diverging roads. But the moral discipline of the early church in respect to money was abandoned by the Church of the Empire.

In his *APOLOGY* at 39.11 Tertullian says: *Everything is in common among us*. Which shows that the belief in Christians sharing was still an essential part of the orthodox faith in the beginning of the 3rd century. In # 26 of his essay on The Unity of the [Catholic] Church, Cyprian reminds his congregation of the economic sharing that was typical of the early church. Obviously there was a moral struggle going on in his time in respect to property and sharing. The advent of the Church of the Empire meant that there was now an official church which had given up that struggle and which had adopted a new doctrine in respect to money.

The Church of the Empire was governed by rich men who intended to go on being rich, who sought to get richer, who encouraged other rich men to join their club. Augustine and the other theologians of the worldly church necessarily defended a church of this character, which effectively negated the teaching of Jesus Christ about money. They explained away these teachings in ways that secular Christians still follow. They found or invented loopholes in the verses where Jesus and his apostles preached against wealth and riches.

One of the foundation doctrines of modern Secular Christianity is the abandonment of Christian morality in respect to money, wealth and riches which began with the Church of the Empire. Military Christianity was soon joined by Millionaire Christianity.

The *SECULAR CATHOLICISM* or *KENNEDYISM* which has eroded the faith and morals of the Catholic Church in America is the enduring legacy of the compromised faith and morals of the Church of the Empire. It teaches you that you can pursue the wealth and power of this world while you preserve Christian faith and morals. That is, it teaches us an anti-Christian moral doctrine which originated in the anti-church of Constantine and Augustine.

Although the Roman Catholic Church later on went to a lot of trouble to obscure the issue, Augustine's claims for the Imperial Catholic Church did not include a claim for the extended authority of the bishop of Rome. Nor did he define the "Catholic Church" on the basis of its being subject to the special authority of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome. In his time, it was Imperial authority which defined the Catholic Church.

There are scattered phrases in his writings, quite possibly later interpolations, which might be interpreted as arguments for papal authority. But the substance and the logic of his many arguments for the authority of the "Catholic Church" do not depend on any argument for the special defining authority of the bishop of Rome.

The arguments which Augustine does make for the Bishop of Rome are: I. contra the "donatist" Bishop of Rome; II. one seventh of his argument for "communion" with the "apostolic" churches to which Saint Paul wrote epistles; III. part of his argument for the authority of the official Church in which the Bishop of Rome was an important official; IV. surrogate arguments for the emperor's authority, which did define the "Catholic Church."

rival bishops

In letter 53, written about 400 A.D., Augustine is responding to Bishop Generosus, the "Catholic" bishop of Constantine, (old Cirta) who has forwarded a letter he received from the "donatist" bishop of Constantine arguing with him that he is not in the *episcopal succession of the Christianity of your town*. And the "donatist" has a good argument because, in Cirta as elsewhere, new "Catholic" bishops were appointed to sees already occupied by "donatist" bishops who could claim a long line of predecessors. Bishop Silvanus of Cirta had been sent into exile with other "donatist" bishops by the Emperor Constantine and the "Catholic" bishop appointed to the see had therefore the Emperor's authority rather than any real church authority for claiming his right to that position. Augustine leaves that argument for 53.4 where he re-hashes the case against Silvanus found in Optatus--he was proved to be a *traditor* by the Imperial courts. This is his best version of the one argument he can truthfully make on behalf of the "Catholic" bishop of Constantine / Cirta: ***you are the rightful bishop, because the Emperor says you are the rightful bishop, and his courts and his soldiers are ready to back your claim.***

In 53.1 he makes his **CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS** argument: *He (the "donatist" bishop) wrote that an angel had enjoined him to declare to you the episcopal succession of the Christianity of your town; to you forsooth, who hold the Christianity not of your own town only, nor of Africa only, but of the whole world, the Christianity which has been published, and is now published to all nations. This proves that they think it a small matter that they themselves are not ashamed of being cut off . . . if an angel from heaven were to say to thee: "Let go the Christianity of the whole earth, and cling to the faction of Donatus, the episcopal succession of which is set forth in a letter of their bishop in your town," he ought to be cursed in your estimation; because he would be endeavouring to cut you off from the whole Church and thrust you into a small party, and make you forfeit your interest in the promises of God.* 53.1 Augustine is arguing here for the authority of the empire wide organization of the official church of the empire, as wielded by any one of its bishops. By validating this bishop's authority, Augustine is also validating his own authority.

Augustine's authority

And it is astonishing how much authority he does in fact claim for himself. In his 7 books written about 400 A.D. titled *ON BAPTISM AGAINST THE DONATISTS*, Augustine takes on Cyprian and the entire Council of Carthage, circa 250 A.D. In books VI and VII he "refutes" them, bishop by bishop. Whatever his arguments are worth, what right does he have to make them? The truth of the Christian faith does not depend upon the eloquence of the speaker or the apparent reasonableness of his arguments so much as it depends upon his claim to speak with authority. What is Augustine's authority, what is his presumption, whereby he can argue against an entire Council, presided over by an acknowledged major Saint of the African Church? What authority does the bishop of Hippo have?

His authority for reversing the decision of this Council is *the rule that has been established by the statutes of the universal Church*. (Book 2.1) That has to mean Canon 9 on "re-baptism" which the Emperor's "Catholic Church" passed at Arles. So what the Emperor's collection of bishops decided at the Council of Arles, without the assistance of the then "Catholic" bishop of Rome, cancels what Cyprian and all the North African bishops decided 64 years earlier. Beyond whatever authority he is claiming for himself, the emperor's council, absent the pope, is Augustine's standard of authority.

the primacy of Peter

In this same passage he discounts the primacy of Peter, in order to discount the authority of Cyprian: *neither did Peter . . . assume anything insolently and arrogantly to himself, so as to say that he held the primacy*. But then he seems to affirm it in two places which immediately follow: *the Apostle Peter, in whom the primacy of the apostles shines with such exceeding grace . . . the primacy of his apostleship is to be preferred to any episcopate whatever*. These assertions run counter to his first assertion and undermine his argument. They aren't necessary to his argument and their only purpose seems to be to negate his denial of Peter's primacy. So there is good reason to suspect that Augustine himself has been interpolated in this passage. Considering the later history of the Roman church, it would be a miracle if he hadn't been interpolated, on this point especially, assuming he were not already in conformity with the Roman Catholic claim for the authority of the Papacy. Obviously it was part of the price he had to pay for having his writings preserved while so many other writings were being "lost."

The references to Peter's primacy in this passage have no bearing on Augustine's claim to have whatever authority he needs to refute Cyprian and his council. He does not invoke the authority of the pope of Cyprian's time, nor the authority of the pope of his own time to back up his own arguments. And it is conspicuous that the decision of the council of Arles was arrived at independently of the pope of that time.

And this is characteristic of his arguments. In three other places in this same work, Augustine is really giving the final authority to the thing, the "Catholic Church" itself, rather than to any person. It is notable that he does not mention the bishop of Rome: IV.1 *So, therefore, the baptism of the Church may exist outside, but the gift of the life of happiness is found alone within the Church, which has been founded on a rock, which has received the keys of binding and loosing*. VII.85 *But they are outside the rock, to which the Lord gave the keys, and on which*

*He said that He would build His Church. VII.99 there are some in the house of God, which is said to be built upon a rock, . . . which house also received the keys and the power of binding and loosing. Note that it is the **HOUSE** itself which has received these powers--the **HOUSE** the **ROCK** the **CHURCH**. He claims for the "Catholic Church" itself ultimate power and authority. And this view consistently shows up in Augustine. He believes in the institution to which he belongs. It is essentially an idolatry of the organization. He believes in the "Catholic Church" of the Roman Empire the way others focus their belief on the Empire itself. And he believes in his own authority to speak for the Church. It is conspicuous that he makes definitive pronouncements upon major questions of faith and morals without deferring to the opinion of the bishop of Rome and without invoking the opinion of the bishop of Rome in support of his own.*

episcopal succession

In 53.2, Augustine, instead of trying to argue about the episcopal succession in the town of Constantine, changes the subject to the episcopal succession in Rome. His argument is drawn directly from Optatus (Book II, section 2 Phillips pages 66-73) but he now has the **ROCK** verse which is missing from Optatus: *For if the lineal succession of bishops is to be taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church, the Lord said: UPON THIS ROCK WILL I BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT. The successor of Peter was Linus and his successors in unbroken continuity were these: Clement. . . Marcellinus . . . Miltiades . . . Siricius, whose successor is the present Bishop Anastasius. In this order of succession no Donatist bishop is found. But reversing the natural course of things. the Donatists sent to Rome from Africa an ordained bishop, who, putting himself at the head of a few Africans in the great metropolis, gave some notoriety to the name of "mountain men" or Cutzupits, by which they were known. 53.2* What Augustine is arguing is that the interloping "Catholic" bishops in the various towns of North Africa are not important compared to the interloping "donatist" bishop sent to Rome, where the pedigree of the "Catholic" bishop can be traced all the way back to Saint Peter.

Like Optatus, he is making this argument contra the authority of the "donatist" bishop of Rome. He has the same derisive put down of their "mountain men" congregation in Rome. The difference is that, instead of stressing the Catholic possession of the "Chair of Peter"--Saint Peter's basilica--he stresses "the list" which shows continuity back to Saint Peter and which includes no "donatist" bishop, he says. It doesn't include any "donatist" bishop because Optatus and Augustine are making the list and they say it doesn't--that is how you know. (Father Phillips says Augustine copied the somewhat erroneous list of Optatus. page 68, footnote 2. In my edition of Augustine's letters the errors have apparently been fixed by an editor.)

The "donatist" reply would be that the line of Roman bishops put on the payroll by Constantine and his successors had become an apostate line for that very reason and also because it was the apostate line of Pope Marcellinus who joined Diocletian in pagan sacrifice. Frend page 22 says that *Pope Marcellinus is reported in a number of sources actually to have sacrificed to the gods, and for nearly three years between 308 and 311 the city was the scene of a struggle between Pope and anti Pope. The "donatists" would appear to be on firm ground when*

they claimed this. The Roman Breviary for April 26th says he was slandered because of his leniency towards the lapsed and that he was a martyr. Another account (cf Frend's footnote) says that he did join Diocletian in pagan sacrifice but later repented and was martyred.

Faithful Christians would have rejected a bishop of Rome who joined the Emperor's new church, whatever they thought about Marcellinus. But the two issues must have been connected in Rome just as they were in Carthage, cf *instead of repenting your apostasy in the time of Diocletian, you compounded it by taking Constantine's gold to betray the church.*

But whatever the "Catholic" / "donatist" dispute in Rome itself, neither Optatus nor Augustine is arguing for the authority of the Bishop of Rome over the rest of the Church--over the African Church. The Catholic Church later stretched Augustine's argument contra the "donatist" bishop of Rome into an endorsement of the general authority of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome which Augustine did not make.

the emperor's authority

The emperor was the boss of the "Catholic Church" and the bishop of Rome was one of his subordinate officials. That is the basic fact, which should not be obscured by the freedom of action that the pope had when dealing with church matters that the emperor didn't care about. Like a general or a governor, he had some independence, and it increased under a lazy emperor. But he was still a servant of the state.

In letter # 43, Augustine, instead of invoking the over-riding authority of the Bishop of Rome, argues that this Council in Rome had authority because 1) the Emperor appointed it 2) the Emperor had been appealed to by the "donatists": *Perhaps you will say that Melchiades, bishop of the Roman Church, along with the other bishops beyond the sea who acted as his colleagues, had no right to usurp the place of judge in a matter which had been already settled by seventy African bishops over whom the bishop of Tigris as Primate presided. But what will you say if he in fact did not usurp this place ? For the Emperor, **BEING APPEALED TO**, sent bishops to sit with him as judges, with authority to decide the whole matter in the way which seemed to them just. This we prove, both by the petitions of the Donatists and the words of the Emperor himself.* 43.14 The second claim--that the "donatists" "appealed" to the emperor to "judge" the matter--is false. It serves as a fig leaf to conceal the naked authority which the Emperor Constantine asserted over the Church.

Either way, there is a conspicuous omission here in that he claims no authority for the Bishop of Rome over an African church matter. As Augustine states it, the Pope's authority to hold this council is derived from the decree of the emperor, not from his own authority.

When you read the letter of Constantine to Pope Miltiades (Eusebius X 5 18) it is easy to see who the authority is in respect to this council--it is not Miltiades. As Frend points out, Constantine's letter to Pope Miltiades *reads like a minute to a civil servant.* (Frend 148) And that is what he was in relation to the head of the Imperial Church. It is notable that either Constantine himself or Bishop Hosius presided at the Councils of Arles and Nicea (Gibbon XXI 693) and that the bishop of Rome was not present at either. The Catholic historians go to a lot of trouble to explain away this fact. Obviously it does have to be explained away. But it is by no means an isolated fact.

In this important international church matter, it is apparent that the Emperor assumed decisive authority over all the bishops, including the bishop of Rome. And Augustine doesn't argue anything counter to it. The fact of imperial power over the "Catholic Church" was apparent then and thereafter and the imperial claim to supreme ecclesiastical authority was characteristic of Constantine's successors.

apostolic communion

In Optatus book II.6 p.78 he argues that, unlike the "donatists," the "Catholic Church" is in communion with the churches of Asia, especially the 7 churches addressed in the first part of Revelation. This is a peculiar and feeble argument as Optatus makes it, but it inspired Augustine to one of his major arguments: the Catholic Church, unlike the "donatists" is in epistolary communication with the 7 churches written to by Saint Paul in his epistles *to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, to the Colossians . . . It is clear that we today are in communion with all those Churches, as it is clear that you are not in communion with those Churches.* 49.2 and 53.3

Augustine assumes that the official "Catholic Church" found in these places is the church. Notice how he ignores the existence of the "donatist" Bishop of Rome. Since these towns were in the empire, no doubt the non-conforming Christians had been ousted from the church buildings by the imperial edicts, just as they were in Rome and Carthage. But their official disappearance does not prove their actual disappearance from these places.

In letter 44.3 Augustine relates his conversation with the "donatist" bishop Fortunius: *I asked him whether he was able to issue letters of communion, which we call regular, to places which I might select; and I affirmed, what was obvious to all, that in this way the question might be most simply settled. In the event of his agreeing to this, my intention was that we should send such letters to those churches which we both knew, on the authority of the apostles, to have been already founded in their time.* The access of the Emperor's Catholics to the Imperial Mail Service and their possession of the official address of the confiscated churches in these places, made it likely that Augustine could have won this bet. But it compares the legal and social standing of an officially sponsored group with that of an outlawed and persecuted group.

Note that Augustine makes no special argument here in respect to communion with Rome; his argument is instead for the world wide church, as represented by the 7 churches which received the epistles of Saint Paul. In letter 51.5 [Parsons] he omits the Roman church from his argument: *what bishop of the Corinthians did any one of you either hear or condemn ? what bishop of the Galatians, of the Ephesians, of the Colossians, of the Philippians, of the Thessalonians, and of all those other cities of which it is said: ALL THE KINDREDS OF THE GENTILES SHALL ADORE IN HIS SIGHT ?* The apparent reason is that the "donatists" of Rome had in fact condemned the "Catholic" bishop of Rome and supported a rival bishop of Rome. So Augustine has to leave Rome out of this argument.

Augustine uses this argument in other letters: 52.2: *the sect of Donatus, restricted to Africa alone, is an object of scorn to the rest of the world . . . it has been cut off from the root of the eastern Churches from which the Gospel came into Africa.* 52.3 *But, now, when these latter [the "Catholics"] are found to be in communion with the apostolic Churches, whose names they have and recite in the sacred books, while the former are outside and are severed from that communion.*

The argument is really that the validity of the "Catholic Church" is demonstrated by its world wide communion, especially with the eastern Churches and especially with those mentioned in the times of the apostles. That seems to be the reason why communion with the Roman church is also used as proof of the validity of the "Catholic Church" of North Africa. Note that he refers to *APOSTOLIC CHURCHES* plural rather than to the seat of the apostle in Rome. Similarly, in letter 232.3, he refers to the *apostolic sees spread throughout the world*.

In letter 43.7 Augustine does invoke the *apostolic chair* of Rome on behalf of the credentials of the first "Catholic" bishop of Carthage--*because he [Caecilian] saw himself united by letters of communion both to the Roman Church, in which the supremacy of an apostolic chair has always flourished and to all other lands from which Africa itself received the gospel*. The Council in Rome, called by the Emperor, to which he sent his Gaulic bishops, and which was presided over by Miltiades was the first forum which affirmed the position of Caecilian, as Augustine says in this same letter. It is notable that the rest of the argument does not rest on communion with Rome alone, but cites *all other lands from which Africa itself received the gospel*. That is really the essence of Augustine's claim for the "Catholic" Church: our Church is the Church of the Universal Empire found in all lands.

A footnote in Salvian's *The Government of God* (page 214, footnote 45) says that *in Salvian's time the orthodox church of Africa claimed an apostolic origin in their controversy with the Donatists* contra Cyprian's list of apostolic sees. He seems to mean that the Catholics claimed that Carthage was an apostolic see. Apparently that claim was abandoned after 430 A.D., so we hear no more of it.

surrogate arguments

The fundamental challenge that both Optatus and Augustine had to meet in respect to the authority of the "Catholic Church" was this: how can you argue for its real authority--the fiat of the Roman Emperor--while never plainly admitting that ? Without the authority of the Emperor, the "Unity" or "Oneness" of the "Catholic Church" did not exist. As soon as you had two emperors, you had two "Catholic Churches." It's "Catholic" or "universal" character, based upon the empire, depended upon the unity and the continuity of the empire. The disintegrating empire soon produced a diversity of "Catholic" churches and rival armies. The "Christian" armies that pillaged Rome in Augustine's time, that were knocking on the gates of Hippo while he lay on his death bed were the bitter fruit borne by the union of ecclesiastical and military power which was begun by Constantine and which was justified in all his works by Augustine. Having learned Roman military tactics and the ideology of *MILITARY CHRISTIANITY* from the Imperial government and the Imperial church, the barbarian tribes came to teach a gospel lesson to their old masters: *they who take up the sword shall perish with it*.

The characteristic of the state church, as of the state itself, is its untruthfulness. So they produced a series of surrogate arguments for the authority of the emperor and his imperial church: it is THE CHURCH because it is the *CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS* ! The *CHURCH OF THE WHOLE WORLD* ! One of their arguments is on behalf of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome and his 40 basilicas versus the "donatist" bishop of Rome and his crummy cave. Unfortunately what the "donatist" bishops of Rome had to say for themselves has been "lost" from the official history. It would be interesting to find out whether they claimed to be sitting in the "chair of Peter" and whether they thought that gave them any authority over the rest of the "donatist" church.

the real authority of the pope

Early in the 4th century, the "Catholic" bishop of Rome became a major official in Constantine's new church. He was the head of one of the major divisions of the Emperor's Church. The "primacy" that Rome acquired in the 4th century was given to it by the emperors because of Rome's importance as the ancient capitol and the major city of the western empire. And Augustine evidently recognized that fact. But there isn't much evidence that he ascribed authority to the bishop of Rome over the bishops of Africa, independently of the emperor, or because of a pre-Constantinian church tradition. Whatever authority the bishop of Rome attempted to wield over the church of North Africa derived from official administrative arrangements within the structure of the Imperial Church. It varied with the variations in the Imperial Government as to how many emperors there were, where they established their courts, and who controlled the province of North Africa. If a Roman emperor in the west ruled the province of North Africa, the Imperial bishop in Rome would be given some authority over the Church of North Africa. But questions like these have been obscured by the determined attempt to ignore the fact that the "Catholic Church" was a state church and that its hierarchy was part of the imperial bureaucracy. The authority of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome was the authority of the emperor. Deference to papal decrees was deference to the emperor.

The power and prestige and authority of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome changed in important ways in the 100 years that passed after Constantine conquered Italy in 312 A.D. The Emperor Constantine put the full power and wealth of the Empire behind his initial effort to launch his official "Catholic Church." But there was not a continuous development in one direction thereafter. Some emperors, like Julian, disfavored the "Catholic Church." Some favored the Arian part of it at the expense of the Athanasian part. A rescript of the western emperor Gratian, issued A.D. 378, made the bishop of Rome a court of appeal for the western church. There was an even stronger edict by Valentinian III, in A.D. 445, when the emperor had lost control of North Africa and Spain. This imperial edict gave Pope Leo I the authority and the imperial power to overrule Hilary, a bishop of Gaul.

Some emperors personally governed the state and directed the army. Other emperors turned all that over to their ministers and their generals and spent their days in the banquet hall, the bathhouse and the bedroom. Similarly, some Emperors took up the "Catholic Church" as their hobby, took an active part in the direction of the Church and decided matters of theology themselves. Others resigned the care of all that to the Imperial Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy.

The major factor in the position of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome was the residence of the emperor. When there was a united empire under one emperor who had his court at Constantinople, the "Catholic" bishop of Rome played second fiddle to the bishop of Constantinople. When there was an independent emperor in the western empire, the "Catholic" bishop of Rome paid less deference to the bishop of Constantinople. But then he was more directly subject to the authority of the western emperor, or his agent. Pope Siricius, the "Catholic" bishop of Rome circa A.D. 390, was at best the equal of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who was the major figure at that time in the western church, because the western emperors had moved their court to the city of Milan.

There appear to have been a large number of non-conforming Christians in Rome just as there were in North Africa. When the falsifying historians of the Imperial Church mention them at all, they are labeled as *Novatians* and *Donatists* etc. The history of this underground church has deliberately been "lost." But it is apparent that there continued to be Christian bishops in Rome whose ecclesiastical authority did not depend upon the power of the emperor --which existed despite the power of the emperor. Meanwhile, the authority of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome was greatly augmented by the power of the emperor some of the time. At other times it was disregarded or over-ruled.

There is no way that the Bishop of Rome could have wielded a purely spiritual authority over an ecclesiastical establishment that had long depended upon the money and the soldiers of the Emperor. If the Pope had any power over this Imperial Church, he had it because of his position within the Imperial structure. The "Catholic" Bishop of Carthage would hardly have deferred to the "Catholic" Bishop of Rome unless the emperor told him to; unless the Bishop of Rome had more gold and soldiers at his disposal than the Bishop of Carthage.

two kinds of authority

The position of every bishop in the Imperial Church was different from the position of a bishop in the old Christian Church in a very basic way in that he had gained secular authority and thereby lost spiritual authority. The "Catholic" Bishop of Carthage had gained secular authority through the Emperor's gold and the Emperor's soldiers. At the same time he had lost moral and spiritual authority by joining the Emperor's Church. That was the situation of the "Catholic" Bishop of Rome also.

Augustine joined with other bishops in getting the emperor to force the bishop of Rome to reverse his decision and to ban Pelagius from Rome. It shows his attitude: he saw the Roman bishop's authority as derived from and dependent upon the Emperor. Which in fact it was, all theory aside. The emperor or the king who replaced him. For example, in 525 A.D., Pope John I was compelled by Theodoric, the "Arian" king of Italy, to lead a delegation to Constantinople to oppose the edict of the "orthodox" emperor Justin I against the Arians.

Augustine can't state plainly that the "Catholic Church" depended upon the authority of the Roman Emperor. So there is a gap in his arguments for the authority of the "Catholic Church" because he leaves out a statement of the authority which makes it the one and only "lawful" Church of the Empire. So his claim for the "Catholic Church" becomes arbitrary. Anything can call itself the "Catholic Church" but what makes it that ? When the organization splits, which part is still the "Catholic" church ? How do you identify it ? There has to be an authority which unifies this kind of a centralized and bureaucratic church. Absent the emperor, who is it ? That gap in his explicit arguments for the ultimate authority of the "Catholic Church" contra the rest of the Christian Church facilitated the later assumption that it was the Pope's authority which defined the "Catholic Church." Whereas, in Augustine's time he was only one of the important officials in the "Catholic Church" which was normally subordinate to the authority of the emperor himself, which was established and defined by that authority.

filling the gap

The collapse of imperial authority in the western empire later on created an actual gap of both ecclesiastical and secular authority into which the bishop of Rome stepped. His claim to supreme ecclesiastical authority was actually inherited from the emperor, as his title of **SUPREME PONTIFF** shows. Seven Christian emperors had the title (Gibbon XXI page 725) before the Pope claimed it by default. His claim to a monopoly of ecclesiastical authority was based upon the disappearance of the emperor who did in fact have a monopoly of ecclesiastical authority over the Imperial "Catholic" Church.

It was also based upon the disappearance of any effective rivals. Carthage was in the hands of the Vandals and lost to the empire. All the other sees which were important to the administration of the Imperial Church were left in the eastern half after the final division of the empire. The rivalry of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch kept any one of them from claiming a monopoly of ecclesiastical authority. And there continued to be an emperor in the east who was the head of the state church, and who effectively kept in check the claims of the Popes of the east.

The Roman Pope rightly claimed the authority over the western division of the Imperial Church because he was the de facto substitute for the emperor himself. For the same reason, the Pope claimed secular authority as well--the historical fraud of the **DONATION OF CONSTANTINE** was a belated attempt to supply some legal basis for this claim. Even today the Pope claims secular power, at least in theory, as shown by the inscription on the triple-crowned papal tiara: *to the infallible vicar of Jesus Christ, to the supreme governor of the world on earth, to the father of nations and kings*. The tiara has been temporarily put on a shelf in the Vatican museum, but the secular power once wielded by the Papacy and the union of ecclesiastical authority and secular power which marked the Imperial Church are still basic to the conception of the Papacy.

The rebellion of the German princes against the Holy Roman Empire, which split the state church at the time of the Reformation, was justified on the basis of the spiritual authority of the prince which Luther derived from Romans 13.1-7. That is how he countered the claim of the pope which is based upon the *rock* text. But both parties believed in the union of secular and spiritual authority.

divided doctrines

So the scriptures and doctrines that Augustine invented to justify the defining authority of the emperor over the Christian church were used to challenge the power of the papacy. The two conflicting doctrines of authority which are central to the Protestant / Catholic struggle are both based upon scriptures that Augustine invented. Augustine never intended to give the bishop of Rome the supreme authority which the pope later claimed. But neither did he foresee the divisions of the empire and the divisions of the imperial church along with it. He did make a claim for the supreme authority of the Imperial Catholic Church. That was his belief. Like the empire and like the imperial church, Augustine's doctrines were also divided later on.

XVI The Church and the Holy Spirit

Towards the end of letter 185, Augustine makes two statements that seem to be a counter claim to the claim of the "donatists" in respect to the Holy Spirit: 185.47 *not that they could have the Holy Spirit even outside the unity of the body of Christ* 185.50: *the Catholic Church alone is the body of Christ, of which He is the Head and Saviour of His body.* (Ephesians 5.23) *Outside this body the Holy Spirit giveth life to no one.* Note that he does not quite deny that the Spirit may exist outside of the "Catholic" Church. But somehow the effect isn't there. It is the "body" that matters--the visible organization. And what organization is more conspicuously visible than the Imperial Church ? This doctrine is actually the reverse of Saint Paul's doctrine in 1 Corinthians 12.13 that *by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.* That is, we do not belong to the **BODY OF CHRIST** unless we as individuals have received the Spirit of Christ.

It is the claim of the "donatists" that they remain the true church because they still have the Holy Spirit. And they believe that those who have joined the Emperor's Church have lost the Holy Spirit through their apostasy. As Parmenian said: ***What SPIRIT can there be in that Church, excepting one which should give birth to sons of Hell ?*** (Optatus II.7 p.82) What Augustine has done is to reverse their argument. They argue that the presence of the Spirit defines the Church. He is arguing that the official state organization controls the Spirit, has a monopoly upon the Spirit.

idolatry of the organization

Augustine believes in the institution to which he belongs. He teaches an idolatry of the Imperial **CATHOLIC CHURCH** just as others focus their idolatry upon the Empire itself. That assertion reflects one of the basic arguments between Augustine and the "donatists" in respect to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Does the Spirit dwell within the organization, despite the apostasy of the persons in that organization ? Or does the Holy Spirit only dwell within persons who are able to receive the Holy Spirit ? The difference is fundamental: a holy thing which has the Holy Spirit--even though the persons do not--versus an **ASSEMBLY OF SAINTS** who have been called together by the Holy Spirit of Jesus.

The Emperor decreed that his "Catholic Church" was the only **LAWFUL** church, that it was exclusively The Christian Church to the exclusion of all others. Augustine's task was to re-state that in theological terms. When you examine his assertions, what appears is a lack of foundation for them. There isn't any valid substitute for the foundational argument he has to leave out: this is The Church because the emperor says it is; the Roman Emperor has authority over the Holy Spirit. Obviously, he wouldn't dare say that. But that is what he means ! Optatus, followed by Augustine, had to re-define the sacraments of the Church and arrive at novel doctrines in respect to the indwelling Holy Spirit. They had to argue that the Holy Spirit is present in the thing rather than the person. They cannot say the Holy Spirit is to be found in the worldly bishops and half-pagan revelers who have joined the Emperor's Church. It would be mockery to call them **SAINTS** in the old meaning of the term.

So the Holy Spirit becomes a presence in the organization. The "Church" itself remains "Holy" even when no one in it is holy, even when the Church is obviously sponsoring gross unholiness. Even when those in the organization are thoroughly corrupt, are downright criminal, not to worry. Somehow, in some secret compartment of *THE CHURCH* the Spirit is still there in a solid and durable way which does not depend upon personal holiness.

you can't give what you don't have

The "donatists" said that "Catholic" sacraments were invalid because its ministers no longer had the Holy Spirit. This is reflected in the arguments of Optatus *As long as you ask: "How can he give who has not anything to give ? " understand that it is the Lord who is the giver.* (V.4 Phillips page 221) This "donatist" argument is that you cannot give what you don't have to give. You can't give the Holy Spirit to another if you have lost the Holy Spirit yourself. The "Catholic" counter argument is that "grace" comes down from above regardless of the human agency involved. But obviously it has to depend upon something. So it is made to depend upon proper rituals and precise verbal formulas. Which is characteristic of magic.

The "donatists" were on solid traditional ground in arguing that the Holy Spirit must be passed on from a person who already has the Spirit to a person who is prepared to receive the Spirit. That is what you see in the New Testament. In John 20.22 Jesus *breathes* upon the disciples and says *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. In Acts 10.44 Cornelius and his friends receive the Holy Spirit while Peter is speaking, without the usual ceremony of the laying on of hands. It is not the ritual that matters.

John's presentation of the Holy Spirit in 20.22 shows that the disciples received the very *breath* or *spirit* of Jesus Christ. They were thereafter enabled to live a new life because the Spirit of Jesus Christ lived within them. The Holy Spirit is identical with the *Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ*, as is clearly indicated in Acts 16.7 Romans 8.9 1 Corinthians 2.16 1 Corinthians 6.17 2 Corinthians 13.5 Galatians 4.6 Philippians 1.19. My personal relationship with Jesus Christ does not depend upon a church ritual nor upon reciting some formula but upon my actually receiving the *Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ*. cf. 2 Corinthians 13.5 *Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you ?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test.*

There are instances where the Holy Spirit passes directly into the believer without any ceremony or human intermediary. The stranger, *not of our company* who was casting out demons in the name of Jesus had apparently received his gift directly from God. Saint Paul was entirely outside the early church community when Jesus took him for an apostle. But this is the opposite of Augustine's church where everything is under official control. Where sacraments are set rituals controlled by officials.

idolatry of the book

The Protestant Reformation substituted an idolatry of the book for the prevailing idolatry of the organization. Instead of an infallible church, they have an infallible bible. One Holy thing replaces another Holy thing. But the Christian faith is that the Holy Spirit is present in persons. Persons who are able to receive the Spirit. Jesus breathes his breath, his spirit into those who are to be his followers. (John 20.22) It is the Holy Spirit, not the bible, who teaches us all

things. (John 14.26) In his first epistle, John says that *ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* (1 John 2.20) The Spirit of Truth is the source of Truth. If you have that Spirit, He will teach you the truth. (cf Ephesians 3.3-5)

When John the Apostle writes in the power of the Spirit, he produces an inspired writing. But these writings are of no use except to the person who also has the Spirit. A man or woman with a foolish spirit or a false spirit reads foolishness into the gospel and reads falsehood out of it. You see it every day.

And this written record was falsified. The writings of John were tampered with. What spirit inspired those who took John 8.1-11 out of his gospel? What spirit inspired those who added 1 John 5.7-8 to his epistle? It is only the Spirit who can give us the discernment to separate the false from the true in the bible itself. John's account of the Holy Spirit in 20.22 tends to modify the concept of the Trinity. Which is the apparent reason that a bogus testimony to the Trinity was later inserted in 1 John 5.7-8.

It was the evil spirit that inspired Augustine to add Romans 13.1-7 to the epistle of Saint Paul. And it was the evil spirit that inspired him to use this and other bible texts to justify the murderous attacks by the state church on the real Christians of North Africa. He is the text book case of how the so-called *Church* and the so-called *Bible* are used by Satan against Jesus and his followers.

What is now called "the bible" was put together by apostates like Jerome and Augustine who served the anti church of the Roman Empire. What they put in and what they took out has the authority of the Church of the Empire behind it. The bible passed through the hands of false Christians who altered it as much as they dared to conceal their betrayal of Jesus Christ.

The *AUTHORITY* of the *AUTHORIZED* version of the bible is that of 47 Bishops, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Rectors, Masters and Professors who belonged to the Anglican Establishment circa 1611. Some were good scholars, no doubt, but the best scholarship cannot replace the authority of the Spirit of Truth and the authority of the true church. Instead we have the *AUTHORITY* of King James himself, the head of this State Church Establishment. He also bequeathed us a book called the *Basilicon Doron*, in which he sets forth the testament of his *Christian faith* in the divine right of kings. The authority for the King James bible is no better than the authority for King James to be the head of the Christian Church. Arguably, he had the same claim to that authority as the Emperor Constantine. Which is to say, none.

sacramentum

The essential quality of the Christian life was that you lived it through the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. The primary encounter with Jesus Christ was through communication with his indwelling spirit. In the early Church the new Christian, after a long period of preparation, received Communion for the first time at the Easter service after he was baptized and after hands were laid upon him. The *sacramentum* was the soldier's oath to serve Jesus Christ and be faithful to him even unto death. And it was a serious business. The new Christian often did face death because of the regular persecutions.

The Church of the Empire was entirely different. It was a State Church which included the whole population, whether you wanted to belong to it or not. You were born into it just as you were born a citizen of the empire. What could the *sacramentum* mean in a church which had surrendered to the World ? So baptism was altered by the Imperial Church. A number of new practices appear at this time: deferring baptism until you were on your death bed; infant baptism; the separation of baptism from the other sacraments.

Augustine's new doctrine that baptism is necessary to take away Original Sin leads to a so-called sacrament where a mechanical ritual has a magical effect on a passive recipient. The spiritual state of the one who administers it and the spiritual state of the one who receives it don't matter. The assertion of Augustine that the administration of the sacraments required only a proper ceremony became a standard doctrine by the time of Pope Gregory I (590-604) who said that: *A mass celebrated by a wicked priest is not to be considered of less effect than one celebrated by a good priest. Neither would a mass of St. Peter have been better than that of Judas the traitor, if they had offered the sacrifice of the mass.* When your clergy are corrupt and worldly men, you obviously have to have some such doctrine as this.

Augustine's arguments against re-baptism are beside the point. The "donatists" were not re baptizing because the converts from the Imperial Church had never been validly baptized. Cf letter # 51.4: *Again, you are wont to say that we have not the baptism of Christ, and that beyond your communion it is not to be found.* By traditional and orthodox standards they were right. When a pagan senator, who is in it for the tax break, "baptizes" a pagan drunk who has come to get the robe and the 20 pieces of gold, it is obviously not the *sacramentum* of the old Christian church, regardless of what words you say or how much water you pour. Pagan ceremonial and magic have replaced the sacrament given to us by Jesus Christ.

In the old church, *Holiness* meant the presence of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. That presence was found in persons, not in a thing, or a building, or an official organization. The worship of "holy" things is idolatry. It substitutes a thing which can be owned and controlled for the relationship which the Christian must have with the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

In the old church, any person might receive the Holy Spirit and therefore the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. The new doctrine effectively restricts all such powers to official persons at the highest levels of the organization. It attributes holiness to the organization or to the official person, the king or the emperor or the pope, who personifies the organization. It is his position at the top of the organization that supposedly gives him the power of the Holy Spirit, regardless of how unholy he is as a person. Conversely, the person who really does have the Holy Spirit does not have any authority thereby. This is just the reverse of the belief found in the early Church.

official control

The Church of the Empire began systematically to curtail the activity of and the authority of the Holy Spirit within the Christian Church. Obviously the authority of the emperor and his bishops would be undermined if the lowliest brother or sister could claim the authority of the Spirit, as they did in the early church.

At the same time the official control of the sacraments is established as a dogma. In the earlier church, the communion service was carried out by a presider, elected by the congregation, who might even be a deacon or a subdeacon in times of persecution when the bishop had been hauled off to jail. (cf Phillips page 26, footnote 4) (cf Justin Martyr's description circa 140 A.D.)

In the Imperial Church the bread and wine can only be consecrated by an official priest. The power is controlled by the official church. The consecrated bread is locked up in a tabernacle in a church building which belongs to the Official Church by the decree of the Emperor. The presence of Jesus Christ in this "Church" is guaranteed because you have Him locked up in the tabernacle. Otherwise, he might be inclined to leave when the bacchanal begins. You thereby regress to the type of state religion that was characteristic of Judaism when Jesus Christ came along. It was controlled by the King and / or by an official priesthood and it centered around The Temple and the Tabernacle.

Optatus was just as ready to "improve" scripture as Augustine though he wasn't as good at it. In most of his bible "quotes" he has added something or left something out to suit his polemical purpose. He gives this version of Matthew 5.24 to which a verse about the priesthood has been added: *Lay down thy gift before the altar and go back, agree with thy brother, [that the priest may be able to offer on thy behalf]*. VI.1 p.247 Father Phillips says: *this is the most extraordinary instance of St. Optatus' habit of quoting the Scriptures from memory*. But it shows: *how unquestioned at the time was the Catholic doctrine on the Mystery of the altar*. Here, as elsewhere, Father Phillips will not recognize that Optatus is inventing new scriptures to establish new doctrines. But he wasn't a patch on Augustine.

This official control of the priesthood and the Eucharist as the primary way by which the believer meets Jesus Christ, was used thereafter as a means of political control. At the same time that the "Catholic Church" waived the old requirement that the minister of a sacrament must himself have the Holy Spirit, they imposed a requirement that the minister have the official ordination controlled by the state church. So his power depends upon the official bureaucracy, not upon the Christian congregation which was the old church.

Luther is given credit which he does not deserve for destroying the power of the Imperial Church. What he really helped bring about was the establishment of a rival state church. He thoroughly believed in the State Church and his own claim to teaching authority was tied to it. In his 1535 *Lectures on Galatians* he wrestles with Galatians 1.1 where Paul says that his call came from God not man. Luther's problem is that his own claim to be an authoritative teacher of the bible is based upon his appointment as a **DOCTOR OF DIVINITY** by the Elector of Saxony. Luther has to admit that his calling is from a man but he argues that it is really from God: *when the prince or some other magistrate calls me, then, with firm confidence, I can boast against the devil and the enemies of the Gospel that I have been called by the command of God through the voice of a man; for the command of God comes through the mouth of the prince*. (Luther's Works V.26 p.18) He called for the magistrate to arrest the itinerant preachers who lacked official position and who claimed the call of the Holy Spirit to teach the bible. (LW V.13 p.66 psalm 82.4; V.21 p.7 Mt. 5) Like Augustine, he gave the secular ruler authority over the Holy Spirit.

XVII The True Church

In letter 185.1 to Boniface, Augustine admits that the "donatists" have never adopted the Arian position, and that *they carry on their unhappy strife solely on the question of communion*. So if there isn't a dipthong's worth of difference between "donatist" doctrine and "Catholic" doctrine, what is the basis of Augustine's persistent assertion that the "Catholic Church" has the "truth" contra the "donatists" ? Whatever intellectually correct theology is worth as a defining characteristic of the "true church," this assertion has to have some other basis.

A little further on in 185.11 he says that *there is a righteous persecution, which the Church of Christ inflicts upon the impious. . . . she persecutes her enemies and arrests them, until they become weary in their vain opinions, so that they should make advance in the truth . . .* Since, by his own account, they have never subscribed to *homoousian*--unlike the "Catholic" bishop of Carthage at the Council of Rimini--what vain opinions are they guilty of ? What truth have they lost track of ?

He is in effect arguing that their refusal of *UNITY* with the "Catholic Church" amounts to some kind of fatal heresy: *the difference between the error of the Donatists and Catholic truth* 185.29 *His sheep who were dispersed abroad in deadly error.* 185.31 Here you see an early version of the assertion that the "Catholic Church" has a monopoly on the truth even contra catholic Christians of North Africa who are orthodox in their faith and morals. In fact he has to make some such claim because the Christian Church was defined by Truth as well as by Holiness. cf John 14.6: *I am the way, the truth and the life*. Truth must characterize the true church. But how can the responsibility for preserving this truth have devolved upon the Roman Emperor ? !

In letter 61.1 he refers to *their dissent from the unity and truth of the Catholic Church*. In 93.10 also he depicts them as *dissenters from the truth and unity of Christ*. So somehow the Emperor's Church is now the "true" Church. If you are outside the *UNITY* of the Imperial Church you have lost track of the *TRUTH* as well.

The "donatists" argue that the "Catholic Church" is a false church because the Catholic bishops were *TRADITORS* who lost the Holy Spirit. Augustine's argument ignores the question as to whether a person possesses the Holy Spirit, alias the *SPIRIT OF TRUTH*. Instead he argues that *TRUTH* is present in an institutional way. *Catholic truth* has become a quality which belongs to an organization. It is a mechanical or "objective" quality which does not require that any person in the organization actually have the Holy Spirit. What Augustine is doing instead is putting forth a claim for *TRUTH* that is attached to a thing, rather than to a person or a community of persons. Which is attached to a government corporation recognized by the emperors as the official church, although he avoids saying that. He is essentially promoting the idolatry of the Church as an imperial organization. People worship the Church of the Empire as a holy thing just as they worship the Empire itself as a holy thing.

Augustine is re-defining the church as the imperial organization. He has to do that, because that is in fact "The Church" which pays him to be the propagandist for it. He has to bend Christian doctrine to make it fit this new organization which claims to be the church. In letter

185.42 he twists Paul's *body of Christ* image to make it mean the imperial organization. So those who remain separate from the imperial church are cut off from the body of Christ. If you have a true faith in Jesus Christ, if you have the Spirit of Truth, how are you cut off from Jesus Christ because you won't join the imperial church ? The answer Eusebius would give, which Augustine is too shrewd to give, is that, since the Roman Emperor and Jesus Christ are now partners, followers of Jesus Christ must join the Emperor's Church. That answer reveals the perversion of the Christian faith by the Emperor's so-called "Catholic Church."

The old "church" was the community of Christians in a particular place. It was an assembly of those who had been called out by the Spirit. It had no institutional existence apart from the persons who belonged to it. If they remained steadfast in their faith and morals, if they still possessed the Holy Spirit of Truth, then they were the church. They were one in faith and morals, one in the Spirit, with churches in other places, even though they had no organizational connection with them. So this community had an entirely different "in or out" from the "in or out" of Augustine's church. In the Emperor's church it does not matter if you have lost the Spirit or never had the Spirit to begin with; it doesn't matter if you have gone entirely astray in your faith and morals, or never had any to begin with, so long as you do the minimal things to keep up your membership in the organization. A pagan reveler who has wandered in there with his bottle to pick up the promised white robe and twenty pieces of gold is a member in good standing of the "Catholic Church." A man who shuns the Catholic Church and attends the "donatist" church, because he doesn't want to go to church with a bunch of drunks, is outside the dead corpus of "Catholic" "truth and unity."

Salvation through the Catholic Church

In several places Augustine is arguing a preliminary version of the doctrine that there is no salvation outside of the Catholic Church. And yet his own theology in respect to the "donatist schism" offers no support for this assertion. He concedes that the "donatists" have valid sacraments. His main complaint against them is that they do not concede the validity of "Catholic" sacraments. He concedes that they are orthodox Christians. Their one essential offense is their rejection of *UNITY* with the Catholic Church. If you have valid sacraments and orthodox faith, why does a refusal to join the "lawful" church imperil your salvation ? Why is this "unity" essential for salvation ?

Why does "salvation" depend upon "unity" which depends upon getting straight with the emperor ? As 185.8 implies: *so let all be called to salvation, let all be recalled from the path of destruction . . . by the edicts of Catholic princes . . . through those who obey the emperor's commands. . . . the laws which the emperors have passed to preserve the unity of Christ.* Then 185.11 says: *there is a righteous persecution, which the Church of Christ inflicts upon the impious. . . . she persecutes her enemies and arrests them, until they become weary in their vain opinions, so that they should make advance in the truth . . . because we take measures for their good, to secure their eternal salvation . . . the Christian charity of the Church endeavors to deliver them from that destruction, so that none of them should die.*

In letter 87.3 he concedes that the "donatists" are orthodox Christians: *For we do not lay any charge against you but the one of schism, which by your obstinate persistence in it you have now made heresy.* He says the same thing in 185.1. But here he is making the peculiar argument

that their *eternal salvation* is at risk. Apparently, if they aren't straight with the Emperor, they aren't straight with God. That is why it is "charity" for the Church to persecute them. In 185.33 he argues for the anti-"donatist" repression for the sake of those *that are delivered by the laws under consideration from that fatal and eternal destruction.*

salvation through the emperor

In 87.9 he attempts some explanation: *For when you join yourselves to us, that is, to the Church of God, the heritage of Christ, who has the ends of the earth as his possession, you are restored so that you live in vital union with the Root. For the apostle says of the branches which were broken off: GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN . . . For **the sacraments which you have not changed are approved by us as you have them**; . . . We therefore do not insist upon rebaptizing you, because we only wish to restore to you connection with the Root;* So the Root of the Christian Church, is not the Spirit which comes to us through valid sacraments. Rather it is the official organization which the Imperial decrees establish.

Augustine is supposedly a proponent of the "objective" benefit of the sacraments, regardless of who administers them, but, in letter 61.1, he seems to be saying that the good effect of a sacrament is not only negated but reversed for those outside the Catholic Church: *the terms on which we would welcome clergy of the party of Donatus desiring to become Catholics . . . their dissent from the unity and truth of the Catholic Church . . . which is spread throughout the whole world . . . that they may have within the peace of the Church that holy sacrament for their salvation, which they meanwhile have beyond the pale of the Church for their destruction. . . . For what truth is there in the profession of Christian charity by him who does not embrace Christian unity ? Cf "A new commandment I give you, that you can only love one another within the organization controlled by the Emperor."*

What he says in letter 185.39 implies that "donatist" baptism is not somehow effective baptism: *there is nothing that remains behind in baptism to hinder the forgiveness of every bygone sin (so long, that is, as baptism is not received to no effect without the Church, but is either administered within the Church, or, at least, if it has already been administered without, the recipient does not remain outside with it);* He sounds like he could easily become a re-baptizer ! In 185.50 he seems to be implying that the eucharist is unworthily received among the "donatists." Because they reject "unity" *they eat and drink damnation to themselves.*

In 93.2 he justifies the coercion of the law because it saves people--*why should not such persons be shaken up in a beneficial way by a law bringing upon them inconvenience in worldly things, in order that they might rise from their lethargic sleep, and awake to **the salvation which is to be found in the unity of the Church** ? How many of them, now rejoicing with us, speak bitterly of the weight with which **their ruinous course** formerly oppressed them, and confess that it was our duty to inflict annoyance upon them, in order to prevent them from perishing under the disease of lethargic habit, as under a fatal sleep !* So even with valid sacraments and orthodox clergy, those outside the emperor's fold are doomed without "the salvation which is to be found in the unity of the Church." And if you don't believe it, just wait until the emperor's soldiers get through with you ! Then you will understand what is meant by "salvation" !

In letter # 46, addressed to some "donatists," after reciting the list of documents he has shown them (from his description, they are the same set found in Optatus) he exhorts them: *I appeal to your souls concerning their obtaining eternal life and escaping eternal death. At length awake !* 43.6 But why is it that they risk losing eternal life because they believe a different set of facts in respect to the election of Caecilian from those which Augustine has presented ? Since he recognizes their sacraments as valid, what puts them at risk ?

the emperor's fold

In letter 185.43 he stresses again that those who come into the Emperor's fold are thereby saved: *This our brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found; Before that he was outside the framework of the body of Christ . . . you receive the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, without which no one can see God; you must necessarily perish unless you come over to Catholic unity.* 44 *who are lying in this deep death of severance from the Church.*

He never adequately explains the grounds for the assertion that salvation is the exclusive gift of the "Catholic Church." It seems to be a counter assertion to what the "donatists" say: you won't find salvation in the Church of the Empire. It is a kind of hyperbole and flat out assertion for which he does not have any good theological argument. His problem is this: he really does not have a good explanation as to why the Emperor's fiat defines the true Church, or why you are spiritually lost because you won't do what the soldiers want you to do. That is what he believes and that is what he asserts but he has no good argument for it.

It is noticeable that, horror stories aside, Augustine offers no good explanation as to why someone cannot live a good Christian life as a "donatist" or why he is risking his salvation by joining them. These dubious stories have the character of "Satan will get you ! if you join the donatists !" Cf. "Those who join the donatists will murder their mothers !"

In letter # 185.12 written in 417 A.D. to Count Boniface he pulls out all the stops to show what horrible excesses "donatism" leads to. How *vast crowds* got themselves killed in pagan ceremonies or otherwise commit suicide. (as quoted earlier) He goes on to explain that the devil prompted them to do these things and that it was only *by the force of those very imperial laws they are in the first instance rescued against their will from that sect in which, through the teaching of lying devils, they learned those evil doctrines, so that afterwards they might be made whole in the Catholic Church.* 185.13 So the laws which force people to become Catholics save them from a diabolical suicide cult he tells Count Boniface. What "evil doctrines" do they hold which are somehow compatible with holding an orthodox Christian faith ?

But his only real "theological" argument for the "Catholic Church" is that somehow "Catholic" is the only thing that matters, and / or that "Catholic unity" is the only thing that matters. If you have that, you have everything. If you don't have it, nothing else does you any good. But what does he mean by it ? He means what he can never honestly and plainly state: it is the "church" of the universal Roman Empire, the church which is united under the authority of the Roman Emperor. That is why he writes around it--round and round and round it.

Augustine's Real Propositions:

- I The Catholic Church is **UNITED** under the authority of the emperor.
- II The Catholic Church is established and protected by the emperor's sword.

III The Catholic Church is established throughout the Roman Empire--throughout the whole world--as the only lawful Christian Church, the official church of the Roman Empire.

IV The Catholic Church is the Church of the new age of the Christian Kings which fulfills the prophecies of the old testament.

V The Catholic Church is the Church of all nations, as prophesied.

VI The Catholic Church represents the world wide triumph of Jesus Christ and his Church in partnership with the Roman Emperor and the Roman Empire.

VII Everyone belongs to the Catholic Church. If they won't join voluntarily, it is right to compel them to join.

VIII Those who cling to the old model of the Christian Church, which has been made obsolete by the new age of the Christian Emperors, are rightly condemned as heretics and rightly persecuted by Christian Emperors.

What I have given here is a plain statement of the actual position of Augustine as it is found in his letters. For propaganda reasons, Augustine almost never states all of these connected propositions plainly. Some of them such as # I are implicit in his arguments but never stated. Others are partly stated. He states some of them almost as clearly as I have given them here, such as IV and V. The others he circles around. He uses surrogate arguments. But when you add up what he is actually arguing for, this is what he really does believe.

It is not a theoretical model, it is the closest he can come to a Christian theological model for the reality of the Imperial Church of the Roman Empire. He has to idealize the reality of the Church he belongs to. He can't say very much about the righteousness of Roman soldiers throwing "donatist" Christians over a cliff. So he talks about ancient kings who served righteousness via the sword. He can't say much that is positive about the sprawling Roman empire. So he quotes all the verses which talk about the Lord reigning over all nations, about the church being found in the whole world. He can't say much about the change in faith and morals between the old Christian Church and the new Church of the empire. So he leans heavily on new arguments about *WHEAT AND TARES*, all nations, etc.--whatever he can think of to justify the gross reality of the Imperial Church.

The Spirit of Truth

In the old church, "Truth" was the result of the indwelling Spirit of Truth: John 14.26: *the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* John 16.13: *the Spirit of Truth . . . will guide you into all truth.* 1 John 2.20: *ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* 1 John 2.27: *the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.*

It can't be the true church if it has lost the Spirit of Truth. How do you hold onto the Truth of the Christian faith when you have lost the Spirit of Truth ? By being intellectually correct ? By rigidly preserving precise dogmatic formulas in terms borrowed from Greek philosophy and Roman Law ? By murdering people who deviate from these correct formulas and burning their books ? Is that how the Spirit of Love and Truth teaches us to act ?

Is The Holy Spirit contained within the thing, like a genie trapped in a bottle ? If there is no person in that church who has the Holy Spirit than that church no longer has the Holy Spirit. If there is such a person, then the Spirit will cause him to rise and denounce the apostate church. He will change it, or they will expel him. Because, like oil and water, they don't mix.

the church of lies

It can't be the true church if it is characterized by lies and violence. And this isn't a matter of theoretical argument. The Imperial Church was manifestly a "Church" of lies and violence as a matter of historical record. Whatever his starting bias, any honest and competent historian who digs into the matter would have to arrive at a very serious doubt as to how much violence the "donatists" were responsible for. But there is no doubt at all that the "Catholic Church" of Optatus and Augustine was a red-handed Church which was guilty of the cold-blooded mass murder of fellow Christians. And guilty of writing lying history which omitted to mention these murders or which falsified what happened in order to justify them. And this murderous character marked the Imperial Church and its successors for centuries thereafter.

Who is the father of lies and murder ? Jesus Christ ? Not hardly. So how can a church which is characterized by lies and murder any longer claim to be the true church of Jesus Christ? It can't. How can a church which depends upon lies be the true church ?

I believe there has to be an "objective" standard by which the claim of the Church is judged. The Spirit is in this church or it isn't. You can tell by looking. It requires some discernment but the Signs of the Spirit are unmistakable and recognizable. This Church is marked by a Spirit of Truth, Love and Courage or it isn't. Just as the marks of a Satanic Church are obvious. That is why a Church which is marked by lies and violence, by the corruption of wealth, by the lust for power is ipso facto a false church. A church which conforms to this World and which submits its moral judgment to the rulers of this world is ipso facto a false church. When you kill on the command of Caesar, on the command of Hitler, how can you deceive yourself into believing that you are still somehow in obedience to Jesus Christ ?

apostolic succession

If the Holy Spirit is passed from one person to another or directly from God to that person, then this is the succession that matters. Paul was not in the apostolic succession in that he had no personal contact with the original apostles before he received the Holy Spirit.

The receiving of the Holy Spirit by Cornelius and his household while Peter was yet speaking and before he had fully accepted the proposition that the gentiles should be brought into the Church shows also that the Spirit operates independently even of the Apostles themselves. The Spirit then is hardly under the control of the supposed successors of the Apostles, especially when these supposed successors have sold out to the Empire.

What the Imperial Church did was to establish an imaginary physical link to the apostles to replace the real spiritual link which had been broken.

Augustine's claim that the "Catholic Church" alone possessed the apostolic succession was clearly a bogus claim. In fact the "donatist" bishops of North Africa had a better claim to the apostolic succession than did the interloping "Catholic" bishops appointed by the emperor.

changes in the bible

I have already discussed the apparent addition to the New Testament of verses which supported the authority which the Emperor assumed over the Church and on behalf of the "Catholic" bishop of Rome versus the "donatist" bishop of Rome. There is every reason to suppose that other additions or deletions were made. The only thing that made it difficult for them to make wholesale changes was that manuscripts of the bible were so widespread and many of the texts so well known. It was easier for them to add an ambiguous phrase than to remove a plain and well known teaching. There appear to be "loophole" phrases which have been added to the New Testament in areas such as the teaching of Jesus in respect to money. They couldn't simply cancel his well known teachings about money, but they could obscure them by adding a phrase which allows them to be explained away as they have been explained away ever since by the theologians of the Worldly Church.

One major doctrine of the Imperial Church is that prophecy ends with the apostles and revelation is complete. The official church could not tolerate having the Holy Spirit on the loose. It could not tolerate any spiritual authority which was not regulated and controlled by the official church, which was not subordinated to the emperor and his ecclesiastical bureaucracy.

One result of this is that the canon of the New Testament is fixed so that only apostles are included. The only exceptions are those like Luke and Mark who are supposedly the amanuenses of apostles. Books like the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* which were regarded as inspired scripture by some of the early Church fathers are therefore excluded, even though these books were included in the earliest manuscript of the bible, the Codex Sinaiticus. Other books like *Revelation* and *Hebrews* are attributed to apostles, despite good evidence that they were not written by apostles, to justify their inclusion, while not letting it become a precedent that non-apostolic writings may be inspired writings.

changes in doctrine

It is apparent that a major warping of Christian faith and morals occurred when Constantine forced parts of the Christian Church into the mold of the Church of the Empire. And the "Great" "Saint" Augustine played a major role in re-writing Christian faith and morals to adapt them to the new Imperial "Catholic" Church. But it is difficult to trace out with any certainty just what changes were made. There is almost no history which is independent of the State Church scholars. Even the founding documents of the Christian Church, the New Testament scriptures themselves, have been tinkered with to make room for the new doctrines of the Imperial Church and to obscure the original doctrines.

The sensible assumption is that "Saint" Augustine was a heretic whose writings had to justify the apostate imperial church. And therefore everything he wrote is suspect. Everything he wrote has to be read by contraries as a probable perversion of Christian faith and morals. And that is especially true when there was an obvious pressing reason why a doctrine had to be changed to accommodate the emperor. Christian pacifism for example. But the work of

Augustine is important to the reconstruction of original Christian orthodoxy because he has inadvertently preserved scraps and pieces of the arguments which the non-conforming Christians made against the Church of the Empire. And it was through such struggles that the real Christian Church defined itself.

A review of the sacramental practices in the Christian Church has to be based upon two assumptions: 1) Augustine and company were apostate and heretical "Christians" who had to justify the perversions of the Imperial Church 2) the accounts of the early church and the accounts of the changes made after Constantine have been falsified and re-falsified.

The naive trustfulness towards the "great" "saint" Augustine that most Church historians have assumed must be replaced by an attitude of suspicious scrutiny towards everything that Augustine and the other agents of the Imperial Church have written.

XVIII Legacy of the Imperial Church

It developed later on that, instead of the emperor dictating to the bishops, the pope or the bishop dictated to the emperor or the king. That is the result of the shifting fortunes in the perennial struggle for secular power within the State. Just as the nobility and the king and the merchants struggle against one another, the church struggles to maintain its power and to add to it. It is an entirely different battle from the spiritual and moral battle carried on by the Christians who remained outside the Imperial Church.

The bishops of the Secular Church are now regular players in the contest for secular power in the empire and in its successor states. The fortunes of this church rise or fall depending upon success or failure in the endless battle which is waged with influence and money and soldiers. It can't do anything else, because it is a Secular Church which depends upon secular power. It is still the Imperial Church long after the Emperor is gone. Just as an exiled king devotes his life to recovering his former position, the Imperial Church is always striving to return to the position of power once given to it by the Emperor. The tiara has been put on the shelf for the time being, but the claim has never been abandoned.

Defenders of the State Church justify it with the fiction that the Church dictates to the state instead of taking dictation from the state. Convicts who get pulled into homosexual relationships make use of a similar fiction: so long as you always take the male role and never the female role, you haven't compromised your manliness.

Clovis

In 1996, Pope John Paul II visited France to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the Baptism of Clovis, which brought about the supposed "conversion" to "Christianity" of the French nation. He thereby recognized the historical and spiritual connection between the modern Roman Catholic Church and the Church of the later empire.

The eb9 essayist describes the baptism of Clovis and the reality of the "Christian" nation he founded: *Some thousands of his wild warriors followed him to the font, as willingly and with as little thought as they would have followed him to death or victory. From this moment the firm alliance between the church and the Frank began, an alliance which affected both; the church became more warlike and aggressive, the Frank grew more civilized, and learnt the art of ruling. . . . the grim Frank, vigorous and ambitious, knew neither scruple nor pity, and the clergy round his throne passed over crimes which they were powerless to prevent. . . . Not without reason does France inscribe on the first page of her history this German conqueror, a robber, a liar, a murderer,--for it is from him that modern France rightly dates her beginning.* IX 529 a

The worst features of the old Imperial system were perpetuated in the new nations. The corrupt alliance of Church and State marked the new society as it had the old. Grants of land to the higher clergy created an ecclesiastical aristocracy. The Pope sanctioned Pippin's usurpation of the throne and in return Pippin helped him acquire the Papal States.

Charlemagne

Just as the state bishops had to overlook the crimes and the debaucheries of the emperor, so they disregarded the vices of the kings. The "Christian" emperor Charlemagne was married and divorced 5 times.

Not long ago, the Boston Cardinal Bernard Law personally gave Communion to Ted Kennedy in a public ceremony. That is of course typical of how the Boston Cardinal has catered to the Kennedys through the years despite their conspicuous apostasy on divorce and abortion. It is typical of the actions of other American Bishops in dealing with other notorious public apostates like Mario Cuomo and Daniel Patrick Moynihan and other "Catholic" politicians of the pro abortion wing of the Democratic Party. It shows the ingrained habit of shameful pandering to the rich and powerful that began with Eusebius and Constantine.

The Tower of Babel

In Genesis 11.1-9 The Lord *confounded the language* of the men who were building a tower to reach heaven. Something like that happened when the Roman Empire was divided by war and the Latin language was divided into French and Spanish and Italian. The Church which claimed to be the "Catholic" or "Universal" Church of the Empire was similarly divided by states perpetually at war whose perpetual murderous hatred for their "Christian" brethren on the far side of the frontier caused them to diverge in language and in custom. (cf eb9 X 483 ab) The pernicious legacy of the Church of the Empire persisted in all divisions. How can you have a universal Church whose members regularly engage in deadly warfare with one another ? The bogus *PEACE* of the Roman Empire spawned the perennial wars of Europe.

Vladimir

In the eastern empire, the unholy alliance of church and state went on as before. The founder of "Christianity" in Russia, Prince Vladimir, is described as a *monster of cruelty and debauchery*. (eb9 XXI 89) He already had several wives but that didn't prevent the emperor from giving him a Byzantine princess to wed on condition that he be baptized. Then he ordered all the inhabitants of Kiev to the river to be baptized. And so Russia became "Christian" in 988. The Imperial Christianity of the Russian Empire was the direct descendent of the Imperial Christianity which originated with Constantine.

Similarly, the emperor Justinian I (died 565) had commanded the forcible baptism of 70,000 in one day. (eb9 XIII 796c) Mass conversion by force was the ancient habit of the Church of the Empire for which Augustine once labored to construct a theological justification. What sort of "Christianity" is thereby established ? What else can it be but Secular Christianity ?

That is the argument that was made by the so-called "donatists" and that was still being made by the so-called "Brownists" or **Independents** in Elizabethan England as the eb 9 essayist relates: *separation from the church was a capital crime, equal to a denial of royal supremacy . . . In the summer of 1583, two men Thacker and Coppin were executed at Bury St. Edmunds for refusing*

to conform to the church and "dispersinge of Brownes bookes and Harrison's bookes." (eb9 XII 724a) . . . the Anglican policy of Elizabeth, and James, and Charles I proceeded on this principle, that to allow diversity was to destroy unity, to permit the growth of elements that would prove fatal to the church, involve the denial of the royal authority and the break-up of the state. (726a) Two of the non-conforming Christians, Barrowe & Greenwood, who left a record of their Prison Conferences before they were martyred April 6th 1593 said that: "Christ's church always consisteth of a holy free people, separate from the world, rightly called and gathered unto Christ, walking forth in faith and obedience." (724c & fn 2)

And that is the Christian objection to the character of the state church in all its permutations. It coerces everyone to join. It can therefore have no standard for belonging except the most minimal kind of external conformity, of pretended conformity. It is necessarily a mass church on a minimal basis and that minimum can only be maintained by legal coercion. But it cannot be long sustained, so even the minimum standard of morality breaks down to be replaced first by hypocrisy and then by open licentiousness.

Robinson, another of their ministers, argues that forced conversion, is not the first step on the road to true faith--as Augustine argued--but the first step on the road to no faith at all: *By this course of compulsion many become atheists, hypocrites, and familists, and, being at first constrained to practise against conscience, lose all conscience afterwards. (725d)*

Conversion by the sword set the example which the Moslem armies later followed.

XIX The Worldly Church

The fundamental heresy, apostasy and schism that is built into the Imperial Church is the belief, the claim, that **THE CHURCH** has rightly merged with **THE WORLD**. It is the heresy of triumphalism. The battle is over and victory is won. It justifies the apostasy of worldliness. The crudest form of this theology is found in the *Life of Constantine* by Eusebius. Fifty years later, Augustine produced a much more sophisticated and bible-based version of the same heresy. He manipulated Old Testament texts to justify the alliance with **THE WORLD** which is clearly prohibited in the New Testament.

The inscription on the papal tiara: *to the supreme governor of the world on earth* is a later development of the same false doctrine. It in effect asserts that the World has been conquered by the Imperial Church and that Satan has been replaced as the ruler of this world by whoever is the head of the Imperial Church. (There is a sinister half truth in that assertion.)

The United Imperial "Catholic" Church didn't last long, but it left a dozen progeny and the Secular Christianity which it launched has become a permanent addition to Christianity, one that is still with us. For 1500 years thereafter Christians owned slaves. They still justify Christians going to war by reading "the bible" as Optatus and Augustine read it to justify Macarius. The reversal of doctrine in respect to *the love of money* and the alliance with **THE WORLD** which Augustine justified is the foundation of the worldly life style, characteristic of Secular Christianity, which is the primary cause of the erosion of Christian morality.

Gibbon Chapter XX 634 says: *The victories and the civil policy of Constantine no longer influence the state of Europe; but a considerable portion of the globe still retains the impression which it received from the conversion of that monarch; and the ecclesiastical institutions of his reign are still connected, by an indissoluble chain, with the opinions, the passions, and the interests of the present generation.*

the church of the world

In his many letters about "the donatists" Augustine proclaims his own faith in the Church which has been established throughout the world: 43.24 *separation from the heritage of Christ now spread, as was so long ago promised, throughout the world. 43.24 we have a greater book--the world itself. In it I read the accomplishment of that of which I read the promise in the Book of God: quotes psalm 2.7-8 again He that has not communion with this inheritance may know himself to be disinherited, whatever books he may plead to the contrary. He that assails this inheritance is plainly enough declared to be an outcast from the family of God. 43.27 His decree has promised the whole world, and the Church has filled it; and it includes both bad and good.*

Optatus also identifies with the world wide triumph of the Imperial Church which has been established *in the whole world* Father Phillips keeps adding the word "Catholic" as a qualifier, (O 56) but Augustine and Optatus didn't need any such qualifier. They really believed that the triumph was complete and that the whole world had joined the Church of the empire.

In 185.4. Augustine says that the "donatists" had *separated themselves from the Catholic Church, that is, from the unity of all nations*. Then he says: *it marks abandoned impudence to desire to condemn the communion of the whole world on account of charges alleged against a man*. So Augustine really does believe that the opposition between the Church and the World has been replaced by a *communion of the whole world* which includes everybody and his brother, whether they want to belong or not. It is the spiritual *unity of all nations*.

What he and the other theologians of the Imperial Church thereby abandoned was the basic Christian doctrine in respect to "the world" which is set forth in the New Testament, in John 15.19-20, as quoted before. This *communion of the whole world* is something quite other than the *communion of saints*. It is notable that the *communion of saints* which was included in the Apostle's Creed was left out of the creed formulated by the Council of Nicea.

By the mercy of God the Worldly Church has sometimes been reduced to poverty and lost all its power, and, in that condition the full effects of worldliness are held in abeyance. But it has no spiritual resistance to the love of money and the pursuit of power. So there occurs a predictable surrender to worldliness in times of prosperity which means that in one generation there can be a near total erosion of faith and morals. In America there has been a wholesale destruction of the Catholic Church that once provided some spiritual and moral shelter for the immigrants. There are no nuns left in Catholic hospitals. Like other hospitals they charge \$50 for an aspirin and put abortionists on the staff. With about 3 exceptions, the Catholic universities have become anti-Catholic universities. What survives of the old Catholic school system has become a breeding ground for worldly apostates, who leave the church, or, what is worse, who stay in it to help modernize its faith and morals.

That readiness to go along with the world instead of confronting it is a central theme of one of the major documents to come out of Vatican II, the 1960s major council of the Catholic Church. *The Church in the Modern World* repeatedly emphasizes a spiritually indiscriminate enthusiasm for working with all sorts of men and all sorts of institutions, however secular. And what was done on paper has been done as a matter of fact. The *kennedyism* endorsed by this document has long since deeply infected the American Catholic Church. There has been a galloping erosion of Christian faith and morals in the Catholic Church since Vatican II--although it really began long before Vatican II. The prosperity of the modern world has triggered a new attack of the ancient disease of Secular Christianity which was endemic and epidemic within the Worldly Church. [*The Roots of Abortion*, page 16 on, has more about *kennedyism*--Secular Catholicism--Vatican II, and *The Church in the Modern World*]

Through all its ups and downs, the Worldliness of the old Imperial Church seems to persist as a perennial deadly spiritual virus within the Christian churches. We have had 40 million abortions in America and two thirds of the Catholics and the Baptists won't even vote against it, much less do anything to stop it, even in their own families ! The other third content themselves with the token gesture of voting for nominally "pro life" politicians. The nominal Christianity of the American empire is a direct legacy of the nominal Christianity that marked the Imperial "Catholic" Church of Constantine and Augustine.

XX The Underground Church

If Jesus Christ could not establish a Church which was Satan-proof, neither could Satan establish a "Church" which was Jesus Christ proof. The evil spirit infiltrated the true church but the Holy Spirit infiltrated the false church.

Tyconius said there could be secretly wicked inside the true church and true Christians outside it. (Frend 317) That is something different from allowing the openly wicked to be in the church while the true Christians must stay in hiding or face martyrdom or exile. But it shows the complexity of the question.

Even when it ceased to be a state church in fact, the Imperial Church continued to be a worldly church. Like the king in exile, who lives for the day when he can return to his throne, the worldly church depends upon worldly power and caters to worldly power. It has no scruples about money or military power. The characteristics stamped upon it in the time of Constantine remain. One is that good and bad are mixed up in the church with no way of separating the two.

Men and women who witness to the truth thereafter appear in the Worldly Church but they are repulsed or persecuted. The moral darkness of Christendom is contrasted with the light of a handful of saints who are tolerated so long as they stay in the cloister or the monastery.

The Two Adalberts

Volume I of the 9th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica has two listings for two Adalberts, both bishops, who seem to illustrate how Worldly the Church was and yet how saints nevertheless could appear within it. Adalbert, who became the Archbishop of Bremen and Hamburg in 1043 *through the friendship of the emperor Henry III*, was an ambitious and worldly man who set out to establish an independent Patriarchy. The other Adalbert became bishop of Prague in 983, but was driven out when he tried to prohibit polygamy and clerical incontinency among the newly converted Bohemians. He eventually became a missionary to North Germany and was stabbed to death by a heathen priest in 997. What was typical of the Church during a long period is that somehow saints appeared within the boundaries of the Worldly Church. But they were obviously not at home within such a Church and so they were exiled from it. The Worldly Church hated them, just as the World hated them.

I have tried to overcome the false history and sophisticated moral arguments of Augustine by drawing a clear line between the Church of the Empire and the non-conforming Christians who refused to join it. And I believe this was a true picture for most of the 4th century in North Africa and other provinces of the empire as well. But the lines were blurred thereafter as times changed. The divisions and changes within the empire caused divisions and changes within the Imperial Church. The persecutions of non-conforming Christians were usually abandoned after a while. The financial subsidies and other favors to the ecclesiastical bureaucracy were curtailed. The Church of the Empire was eventually reduced to as much of an establishment as could survive inside the beleaguered walls of Rome and Constantinople.

That doesn't mean that the Imperial Church reformed itself. But without the Emperor it soon became a weakened and dis-organized organization which had to leave space for non-conforming Christians in many places where it still exercised a nominal jurisdiction. The letter of Pope Leo I, written about 442 to the Bishop of Aquileia, is a curious testimonial to the fact that the so-called *Pelagians* were numerous in that part of Italy, after the death of Augustine and despite the supposed success of his polemics against them.

There were Christians within the general boundaries of the Imperial Church who found a way to live as Christians despite the apostasy of the Imperial Church. The monks in some of their remote establishments preserved a kind of Christian community and a kind of Christian pacifism. The non-conforming Christian Church persisted outside the walls of the Imperial Church as well. The true church persists as an underground church which can even pass the barriers erected by the secular church.

There is a Providence whereby the persecutors lose their power to persecute. The Jewish religious establishment which persecuted the early church was itself overwhelmed in the disaster that destroyed Israel in the war of 66 to 70 A.D. The persecutors of the "donatists" in North Africa soon lost their power to persecute also. Which creates a major problem for the historian. Because the "donatists" were defined by their persecutors and by their resistance to those persecutions, they disappear from the history books when the persecution comes to an end.

disappearing from the history books

The major problem is that so much of the real history has been "lost" and the rest has been falsified. Some scholars have naively supposed that the "donatists" just faded away after the Conference of 411 A.D. where the emperor's minister ruled against them. Since Augustine thereafter declared victory and stopped writing about them, they must have disappeared. It shows how the true history of the church can disappear when the spotlight of official history is switched off. Nearly everything that we know about the "donatists" comes to us through Augustine. So when he ceased writing about them, their history ceased. Until the hidden library of the non-conforming Christians is found, we have to infer what we can from what little has survived.

It is the nature of history that it focuses on the king and upon those who enjoy the king's favor. It tells the story of the victors. The official history is preserved in the official archives. Other history survives if at all in jars buried in the ground or hidden in caves or concealed in the pages of other books, or tucked away in old libraries. This real history has a way of re-appearing over time in bits and pieces but it is a difficult task to re-assemble it. Then you have to guess at what is still missing.

Almost nothing is known of the "donatists" during the period of 150 years after the Roman government was driven out of North Africa and before the Byzantine empire returned. But the one thing that appears certain is that the non-conforming Christians of North Africa were still around. They are found under the label of the persecuted *Catholic* Church of North Africa when the official "so-called" Catholic Church was driven out.

The conquest of North Africa by the Moslems caused the near disappearance of any history of the Christians there. But it didn't necessarily cause the disappearance of the Christians. The persecution of Christians by Moslems was no worse than the persecutions of the Roman Empire and the Imperial Church that they were already accustomed to bear. Persecutions were intermittent. In many places Christians were tolerated by Moslem rulers who were more concerned with secular matters than with the religious conformity of their subjects.

The Imperial Church, which depended upon the favor of the government, necessarily withered when it had to continue under a hostile government. But the real Christians of North Africa, who were long since accustomed to persecution from the government, were a different case entirely.

There is reason to suppose that at least some of the "donatists" from North Africa migrated to Europe sooner or later. It isn't a difficult sea passage to Spain from Morocco or to France and Italy from Tunisia. And since they never did call themselves "donatists" they could easily enough blend in with a large population of non-conforming Christians in all parts of Europe. Since they were no longer defined by and held together by a sustained persecution from the Church of the Empire, they wouldn't necessarily remain a compact and recognizable community.

There is good evidence that there was a substantial Underground Church throughout the former provinces of the Roman Empire and that it persisted thereafter in the emerging countries of Europe. The "donatists" proved how tough and durable the non-conforming Christians could be when the full power of the Roman Empire was thrown against them. So there is every reason to suppose they endured long after the persecuting empire lost sight of them.

The enfeebled Roman Empire of the West lost control of Spain and France after the death of Augustine. Over a period of several centuries, the Bishop of Rome's secular authority seldom extended further than the adjacent provinces of Italy. Whatever persecutions non-conforming Christians endured from barbarian kings, the Church of Rome had little power to persecute. Unfortunately for the historian, that has led to the obscuring of this whole period of history which is properly called *the Dark Ages* for that reason. It is the fact that the primary source of information about the non-conforming Christians is the records kept by those who persecuted them.

The sketchiness of the history of the non-conforming Christians proves nothing. The phenomenon of the disappearing "donatists" proves how unreliable the official history is, how dependent it is upon the preservation of one writer who was acceptable to the official church.

And whatever happened to the particular persons or communities, there was no effective barrier to the Holy Spirit who could animate the underground church in Europe just as He did in North Africa. That is what happened as I will discuss more fully in ***THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH***.

<p>Appendix A Friendship with the World is Enmity with God (James 4.4)</p>
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The fundamental opposition between the true church and the state is one aspect of the fundamental opposition between **the kingdom of God** and the **world**. No doctrine is more clearly set forth in the pages of the New Testament. No doctrine has been so thoroughly obscured by the church which had to justify its deal with the empire, and which now has to justify its conformity to the world.

Jesus ends his time of preparation by refusing Satan's offer to make him the ruler of all the kingdoms of the world, a worldly **king of kings** who would owe his power to his Satanic majesty. (Mt 4.8 and Lk 4.5) Then he begins his time of teaching with the proclamation that *the kingdom of God is at hand*. (Mt 4.17, Mk 1.15) He really means it! It is here and now! (Luke 10.9-11, 11.20) And yet it is still to come. (Lk 21.31) (Rev 12.10) It is here on this earth (Mt 6.10) but it is *not of this world*. (Jn 18.36) It is not a political kingdom, established by armed men (Jn 18.36) rather, *the kingdom of God is within you*. (Lk 17.21) Not until the end, will the kingdoms of this world become part of the kingdom of God. (I Cor 15.24) (Rev 11.15)

His kingdom is *not of this world*, that is why his followers do not take up arms. (Jn 18.36) The **WORLD** *hates him because I testify of it that its works are evil*. (Jn 7.7) Its works are evil and Satan is *the prince of this world*. (Jn 14.30, Lk 4.6) The world also hates those who follow Jesus because they do not belong to the world. (Jn 15.18 1 Jn 3.13). *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil*. (Jn 17.15) And there they are--in the world, but not of the world. How are they to do it ? Christians must rely upon the wisdom of God and *not the wisdom of the princes of this world*. (1 Cor 2.6, 3.19) They must be non-conformists! They must stop conforming to the world ! (Rom 8:29, 12:2)

It is the Holy Spirit that makes you a Christian and, at the same time, an enemy of the world and the prince who rules it. It is the *Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you*. (Jn 14.17) The **world** lives by lies. They are the foundation of war; of conventional politics; of business and commerce; of the abortion industry. They are the characteristic sign of the way the world does business, but we are so accustomed to it, so de-sensitized to it, that we hardly notice it. The *truth* is the world's bane, its nemesis, and it naturally hates the man or woman who is animated by this **spirit of truth**. *Truth is the first casualty in war*.

Jesus belongs to us, not to the **world**. (Jn 14.19-27) He came to *deliver us from this present evil world*, not to show us how to get along with it. (Gal 1.4) He *manifests* himself to us and *dwells* with us; he gives us a *peace* which the restless world lacks. *The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me*. (Jn 14.30) So, if Jesus dwells with us, how often should we entertain the prince of this world as a visitor? How much, besides *nothing*, can we afford to have of that which belongs to the prince of this world ? What is he the prince of? Of war, surely, just as Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Of wealth, surely. Why else does Jesus warn us again and again about money? *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*. (Mt 6.24, Lk 16.13, 16.19-25) Of power, surely--what else can he mean when he rebukes their competitions for place and power by showing them that they must be like children, like servants. What sort of a prince is it that washed their feet for them? (Jn 13.4-15) No prince of this world ever did such a thing.

There has to be a **fundamental antagonism** between the follower of Jesus and the world. *The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world* says Saint Paul. (Gal 6.14) He exhorts us to live *blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.* (Phil 2.15) *Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* (James 4.4) *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* (1 Jn 2.15) *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.* (1 Jn 3.13) *And we know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* (1 Jn 5.19)

In the world ye shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. (Jn 16.33) Does that mean that the battle is over and done, that all we have to do now is enjoy the good things Jesus has won for us, the spoils of his victory? That seems to have been the belief of Eusebius, Optatus and Augustine who believed that they had witnessed the final triumph of Jesus over the world. This belief erases the central challenge of the Christian life, to follow Jesus into the battle with the **world**.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. (Jn 17.18) What comes out here, as in every chapter of the New Testament, is the call to the individual Christian to follow the **example** of Jesus in doing battle against the evil power of the world. The supreme act of his life is the one on one spiritual battle with the evil one himself, *the prince of this world.* (Jn 12.31, 14.30, 16.11) But then He calls us to carry on that battle by means of the power of His Spirit inside us. (Jn 15.16-20, 16.7-13) This battle isn't against the natural world but it is against the world of evil men and the prince they serve--*against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* (Eph 6.12) Is this battle over and done? No it has only begun! And it is up to us to fight it! *The spirit of anti-Christ is already in the world, John tells us, but greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* (1 Jn 4.3,4) *Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.* (1 Jn 5.4)

Tertullian on Christianity versus the state:

Nothing could be more foreign to the Christian than the state. APOLOGY, chapter 38, written about 200 A.D.

All authorities and ranks of this world are not merely strange to God, but also hostile to him.
Tertullian ON IDOLATRY chapter 18

William Lloyd Garrison on Christianity versus the state:

We do not acknowledge allegiance to any human government. We recognize but one King and Lawgiver, one Judge and Ruler of mankind. Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind. . . . The dogma that all the governments of the world are approvingly ordained of God, and that the powers that be in the United States, in Russia, in Turkey, are in accordance with his will, is no less absurd than impious. It makes the impartial Author of our existence unequal and tyrannical.

(from: The Declaration of Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention, Boston 1838)

John Henry Newman on Christianity versus the state:

Earthly kingdoms are founded, not in justice, but in injustice. They are created by the sword, by robbery, cruelty, perjury, craft and fraud. There never was a kingdom, except Christ's, which was not conceived and born, nurtured and educated, in sin. There never was a state, but was committed to acts and maxims, which it is its crime to maintain and its ruin to abandon. What monarchy is there but began in invasion or usurpation? What revolution has been effected without self-will, violence or hypocrisy? What popular government but is blown about by every wind, as if it had no conscience and no responsibilities? What dominion of the few but is selfish and unscrupulous? Where is military strength without the passion for war? Where is trade without the love of filthy lucre, which is the root of all evil? (from: "Sanctity the Token of the Christian Empire" in Sermons on Subjects of the Day p. 273)

Leo Tolstoy on Christianity versus the state:

Christianity in its true meaning destroys the state. Thus it was understood from the very beginning and Christ was crucified for this very reason; and thus it has always been understood by men who are not fettered by the necessity of proving the justification of the Christian state. Only when the heads of the states accepted the external, nominal Christianity did they begin to invent all those impossible finely spun theories according to which Christianity was compatible with the state. But for every sincere and serious man of our time it is quite obvious that true Christianity--the teaching of humility, of forgiveness of offences, of love--is incompatible with the state, with its magnificence, its violence, its executions, and its wars. The profession of true Christianity not only excludes the possibility of recognizing the state, but even destroys its very foundations. (from: The Kingdom of God is Within You [1893] chapter 10)

the reply of the pirate to Alexander the Great:

Because I do it with a little ship, I am called a robber. You, because you do it with a great fleet, are called an emperor.

The Christian versus the state

the witness of Franz Jaggerstatter, who was executed by beheading on August 9th 1943,
for refusing to serve in the German army

I can easily see that anyone who refuses to acknowledge the Nazi Folk Community and also is unwilling to comply with all the demands of its leaders will thereby forfeit the rights and privileges offered by that nation. But it is not much different with God: he who does not wish to acknowledge the community of saints or who does not obey all the commandments set forth by Him and His Church and who is not ready to undergo sacrifices and to fight for His Kingdom either--such a one also loses every claim and every right under that Kingdom. . . . Now anyone who is able to fight for both kingdoms and stay in good standing in both communities and who is able to obey every command of the Third Reich--such a man, in my opinion, would have to be a great magician. I for one cannot do so. And I definitely prefer to relinquish my rights under the Third Reich and thus make sure of deserving the rights granted under the Kingdom of God. (from: In Solitary Witness by Gordon Zahn, page 234)

Index

Abitinian martyrs, Christians from Abtinia, who were starved to death in a prison in Carthage in 304 AD, allegedly with the cooperation of Caecilian 15; Tazelita says: *I respect only the Law of God* 58; addresses magistrate as *Satan* 117; call themselves *catholic* 123;

Adalbert: the two Adalberts illustrate the Underground Church 175;

all things common: as taught by Tertullian and Cyprian 144;

Ambrose, bishop of Milan: his importance due to emperor's court 17, 151; his belated baptism 139; sanctioned burning of a Jewish synagogue 141;

American Catholic Church, moral erosion of 4, 144, 174; see *kennedyism*;

Antoninus, Catholic bishop, protege of Augustine, criminal acts, new Augustine letter 20*: 140, 142;

Anulinus, Constantine's proconsul in North Africa 14; instructed to restore confiscated property to the Catholic Church alone 34; tax breaks for Catholic clergy 34; letter to Constantine 40-41; agent of Constantine's policies 41;

apostolic churches: question of *communion* raised by Augustine 145, 149-150, 167;

Apostolic Succession: chair of Peter argument by Optatus 108; and the Holy Spirit 166-167;

Arius, Arian, Arianism: Arian dispute used as lever of imperial control 8-12; miraculous poisoning of Arius 31; excuse for imperial intervention 40; Arian bishop George killed in Alexandria 80; Constantine's decree against the writings of Arius 113; Arian king Theodoric compels Pope John I to lead delegation to Constantinople 152;

Arles: Council called by Constantine in 314 AD 44; excommunicated pacifists 44-45; Christians can now be magistrates 54; Canon 9 against rebaptism 23, 146; apostate character 87;

Assemani on Christian pacifism 87; on Christian condemnation of wealth 143;

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, opponent of Arius: deposed by Constantine 9; restored and then deposed again by Julian 9-10; disperses *secret invectives* against Constantius 12; his irregular election 12;

Athanasians 83, 151; responsible for murder of Bishop George 9, 12, 80;

Augustine, *great saint*, bishop of Hippo, 4th and 5th century, major polemical writer contra the "donatists": 594 citations, including: his lack of honesty, Chapter VIII 69-76, 65-66, 73; writer of propaganda, 90, Chapter X 91-106; manufacture of scripture Chapter XI, 107-118; on forgery of scripture 110; real author of 7th book of Optatus 114; his scripture-twisting skills 126; New Age and King's Covenant Doctrines Chapter XII 119-130; King's Covenant Doctrine 25, 43, 96, 98, 100, 112, 118, 119-130; *wheat and tares* argument for Everybody's Church, Chapter XIII 131-138; and the Pope, Chapter XV, 145-154; historical importance of his writings 7, 21, 43, 131, 167-168, 176, 184; follows Optatus and improves upon his arguments 16, 20, 59-60, 63, 70-73, 107-110, 111-114, 123, 134, 145, 147, 149, 155-156, 164, 184; *City of God* 49; allegations of suicidal "donatists" 73; his exaggerated account of the Circumcelliones 73-75; allegations of "donatist" violence 93; Augustine's case for persecution of the "schism" of the "donatists" 93-94; mental quirk about people killing themselves 72; *Just War* doctrine 86; two-faced character 103; faith in torture 100-102; *prejudiced witness* 83; his real mission as chief propagandist of Imperial Church 73-74, 83; propaganda letters 103-104; what he meant by *doctor of the church* 99; his faith in the world wide triumph of the Imperial Church 127; summary of his actual arguments for the Church of the Empire 164-165; see *Pelagius*;

Aurelian, Roman Emperor, deposed bishop of Antioch 10

Bagai, town in North Africa, where the Roman soldiers of Paul and Macarius massacred Bishop Marculus and his congregation in 347 AD 59-60; Council of Carthage 411 AD: *in the single village of Bagai, the blood of numerous Christians was poured out* 60; spurious account of Optatus 59-61; Gibbon's version 62; see *Donatus of Bagai*; **LATER INCIDENT**: allegation that "Catholic" bishop was attacked becomes the excuse for a *unity* Council 91; contrast with earlier incident 92;

baptism: changes in the time of the Imperial Church 158; see *sacraments*

Barrowe & Greenwood define the Church 171;

bible: integrity of Latin bible questioned by Augustine 110; question of integrity 166; idolatry of the book 156; authority of King James version 157; see *Codex Sinaiticus*

bishops: 230 entries including: martyrs of the early church 139; corruption of Catholic Bishops Chapter XIV 138 on; election of bishops replaced by Imperial Appointment 7, 12, 139; change in position after Constantine, now from the class of the *curiales* 139; North African bishops described by Hosius 139; bishops as money lenders 139; secular versus spiritual authority 152;

Caecilian, Catholic bishop of Carthage whose irregular appointment became a major issue in the *Donatist-Catholic* dispute: 111 citations including: Constantine's agents responsible for his appointment 5, 13; receives 3000 folles from Constantine 13-14; *traditor* in 304 AD 14; military support from Constantine 14, 16-17; date of his election 15; Constantine's letter to Anulinus endorsing *the Catholic Church over which Caecilian presides* 34-35; Constantine summons him to Milan and exonerates him from "donatist" accusations 37; the case against Caecilian 38; lost documents about him 40; his relationship with Constantine 41-43; his role in the massacres of 317 AD 66-67;

Caecilianists responsible for the murder of the bishop selected by the Council of African Bishops 15;

Caligula, Roman Emperor: tries to put statue into the Temple at Jerusalem 50;

Calvin: church state at Geneva 1, 27, 101; criticized by Greenwood and Barrowe 131; doctrine on rulers and laws in *Seneca Commentary* 129;

"Catholic": 581 citations, including: founding documents of Catholic Church 34; exclusive right to confiscated church property 34; origin as a state church 35; dependence upon the state 51; policy of persecution 66-67; *Catholic* means *Imperial* 120-121;

Charlemagne: his five divorces 169;

Chesterton, G.K.: on faith in the empire 51;

Church of All Nations: see *Everybody's Church*, Chapter XIII 131 on;

Church of the Fulfillment of the Promise: Augustine's doctrine 126;

Church defined by Augustine: 119-120

Church, Imperial: characterized by lies and violence 165-166;

Church, True = True Church: defined 165

Church, Underground, see Underground Church

Church, Worldly, see Worldly Church;

Circumcelliones: account of them in Optatus 58-62; wild account in Augustine 73, 84; defined 75; Augustine's half truthful account of an early incident 91; Augustine's later allegations of *the notorious atrocities of your clergy and Circumcellions* 94-95; Bishop Possidius incident 95;

Cirta renamed *Constantine*: fictitious council of 38, 65; episcopal succession, "donatist" versus "Catholic" 145

Clovis: acknowledged by Pope as founder of Catholic Church in France, his character 169;

Codex Sinaiticus: 14,800 alterations 110; included *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Epistle of Barnabas* 167

confiscation of churches: from non-conforming Christians, and given to Catholic Church: Emperor Maxentius returned church property to Bishop of Rome in 310 AD; Constantine's policy of 312 AD, gave church property to Catholic Church alone 34; Constantine's edict of 317 AD confiscated Christian churches and gave them to the Imperial "Catholic" Church, comments by Eusebius and Augustine 45-46; same policy in Rome 75; policy reversed and "donatist" churches in North Africa are restored by Constantine 330 AD 47; churches and temples restored by Julian in 363 AD 57; confiscation policy renewed by decree of Emperors Honorius and Theodosius in 411 AD 46;

Constantine, 4th century Roman emperor: 330 citations including: his statue in Constantinople in which pieces of the cross are placed 3, 31, 33, 50; fictitious statue in Rome 32; statues in pagan temples 34; makes bridle bit for his war horse from the nails of the cross 31; claims martyr's title of *Victor* 31; claims to be the 13th Apostle 33; *God's own Vicar* 34-35, 50, 69, 129; presented by Eusebius as the Vicar of Jesus Christ 50; establishment of the imperial church 14-18, 21, 22, 33-47; appointment of bishops 7, 12, 39-40, 145; his right to name bishops 41; how he used the bishops 4, 5-12; how he used the councils 4, 17, 35-36, 39-40, 43, 44, 87; at Nicea as described by Eusebius 36; dictator in religious affairs 37; his policy in North Africa 41; tries to bribe "donatists" 44; very large payment to Bishop Caecilian to be distributed to the *list* of bishops; 14; summons "donatist" bishops to his court in Milan 38; summons Caecilian to his court and exonerates him from "donatist" accusations 37; uses military force against nonconforming Christians 12-14, 47, 66-67; letter to Bishop Caecilian 14, 47, 67; letter to Pope Miltiades (Melchiades) 18, 35-36, 39-40, 148; letters to and from Anulinus about the situation in North Africa 34, 40-41, 45; letter to Aelafius 36; cross in the sky story 27-32; urgent necessity of his state church 47-55; suppression of Christian pacifism 50-51; Edict of Toleration 34; butchers captives at Treves 52; described as the devil in a "donatist" pamphlet 85; constructs basilica of Saint Peter 107-108; decrees the destruction of the writings of Arius 113; herds the pagan mob into the basilicas 131-136;

Constantine, city in North Africa, see *Cirta*

Consentius new letter 11* to Augustine about persecution of the nonconforming Christians in Spain 7

Constantius, Father of Constantine: 29

Constantius, Son of Constantine, eastern emperor, later sole emperor: deposes Cyril 9; sets up Eudoxius as bishop of Antioch, then denies it 13; forces bishops to accept *semi-Arianism* at council of Rimini (Arminium) in 359 AD 11; takes title of *bishop of bishops* 37;

Constans, son of Constantine, brother of Constantius, western emperor: uses Athanasianism against his brother 11; assassinated by Magnentius 12; *alms* refused by Bishop Donatus 21, 45; Sends a military force under Paul and Macarius to North Africa in 347 AD to coerce the *donatists* into joining the imperial church, resulting in the massacre at Bagai 55-58, 63, 183; his *alms* refused by Bishop Donatus 63-64, 84; his court 140

Councils 4 9-10 11 13 15 16 23 35 54 60 63 70 85 92 94
106 135 137 140 146 148 150 161 174 see Arles, Nicea etc.

cross in the sky story (*labarum*) discussed by Newman and Milman 27-32;

Cyprian: Saint Cyprian, bishop of Carthage circa 250 AD 13, 70; his position on re-baptizing, contra that of Optatus and Augustine 23, 25; Council of Carthage in 250 AD which endorsed re-baptism is challenged by Augustine's work 146; pacifist tradition 74, 85; *Chair of Peter* and *Peter . . . Rock* texts interpolated into his writings 111; position on administration of the sacraments 132; economic sharing 144;

Cyril of Alexandria, nephew and successor of Theophilus: list of bribes 141;

Diatessaron of Tatian 111 113

Doctor of the Church, who could cure "donatist" madness by torture: 99;

documents missing or forged 7-8 40-41 69 87 89

Donation of Constantine, historical fiction supporting Papal claim to secular authority 1, 153; see *tiara*;

Donatists, Donatism 546 references including: "donatist" "schism" precipitated by Constantine's establishment of the Imperial "Catholic" Church of North Africa 12-25; defined by their refusal of *UNITY* with the Emperor's *Catholic* Church 18; *heretic* label for non conforming Christians of North Africa 19; "donatist" principled position against accepting imperial funds 21, 45, 109; attitude towards Emperor 22, 42; Constantine instructs Pope Miltiades to hold a meeting to deal with the "donatists"--*leave no schism whatsoever* 36; assertion that the "donatists"

appealed to the Emperor: by Augustine 36 by Optatus 40; rival bishop of Rome 36, 107-108, 147-148; list of "donatist" bishops of Rome given by Optatus 36; Constantine's guards bring "donatist" bishops to his court at Milan 36; "donatist" bishops put on trial 314 AD 39; documents from *the party of Majorinus* = the "donatists"--about Caecilian, given to Anulinus to be sent to Constantine 41-42; Constantine's measures against the "donatists", forced them to attend Council of Arles 43-44; attempts to bribe them 45; "donatist" church outlawed again by decree of Emperors Honorius and Theodosius in 411 AD 46; military attacks on "donatist" churches in 317 AD; 47; exiled bishops allowed to return in 321 AD 47; their churches returned to them by Constantine in 330 AD 47; the "donatists" rejected *unity* with the Imperial "Catholic" Church as Optatus makes clear 57; military attacks on "donatists" in 347 AD by army of Paul and Macarius sent by Emperor Constans 57 on; "donatist" martyrs declare their disbelief in the emperor and his laws 58; Augustine's letters of 392-397 AD show that the "donatists" did not attack the "Catholics", contra his later stories 69; true story of "donatist" martyrs concealed 72; Augustine's stories about the suicidal, self-martyring "donatists" 73; allegations by Optatus of "donatist" violence during the restoration by Julian 363 AD 77-81; they identify the Emperor with *Satan* 85; the "donatists" were Christian pacifists 85-89; structure of "donatist" church organization compared with "Catholic" church 88; Augustine's stories of "donatist" violence 91-94; policy of forced conversion of "donatists" in the time of Augustine 95-103; "donatist" argument that persecution by the world is the mark of the true church 105-107; argument justifying the massacre of the "donatists" by the army of Macarius pushes Augustine to invent Romans 13.4 107, 111-115; "donatists" in Rome called *mountaineers*; *chair of Peter* argument 107-108; Augustine's real case against the "donatist" church 119; 123 "donatist" claim to be *catholic* 123; "donatist" case against the church of the mob 131-136; they define the church as *a garden enclosed* 136; "donatist" claim to apostolic succession 145; "donatist" bishops of Rome, their case against the apostate line of Marcellinus, who is said to have joined the Emperor Diocletian in pagan sacrifice 147-148; "donatist" argument about the Holy Spirit 155; "donatist" argument against the validity of Catholic sacraments 156; "donatist" case for rebaptizing Catholics 158; why the "donatists" disappeared from the history books 19, 176; persistence of the "donatists" and other nonconforming Christians as an underground church 177;

Donatus, "donatist" bishop of Carthage: *deceived nearly all Africa* 20; Hippo *wholly on the side of Donatus* 20, 22; refuses emperor's *alms* 21; quoted: *What has the Emperor to do with the Church ?* 22, 58, 85, 109; his sermon of 320 AD describes the massacre of 317 AD 36, 47; excluded from Council 43; describes attempts at bribery 45; Optatus fib that he *appealed to the emperor to bring about unity* 57-58; Frend's interpretation of the claim that Donatus *appealed to the emperor* 64; disappearance of his writings 64, 89; allegation of Optatus that he provoked the massacres 65; claim to be *catholic* 124; sermon of 320 AD against Catholic ceremonies--*banquets of lascivious youths where despicable women were present* 133;

Donatus, martyred "donatist" bishop of Bagai: he and his congregation were massacred at the church in Bagai and thrown down a well by Roman soldiers sent by the Emperor Constans and led by Paul and Macarius in 347 AD 57-59, 63; false allegation by Optatus that he *Collected Bands of Armed Men--the Circumcelliones--to Stop the Work of Unity* 57; Augustine's version of the martyrdom of Bishop Donatus 63, 66; contradicted by Optatus 70-71; lame justification by Optatus pushes Augustine to fabricate Romans 13.4 111-112; see *Bagai*

drunks: at church in Hippo 132; in St. Peter's 133; drunken festivals 134; Saint Paul's admonition 137;

eb9 = Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th edition, 1890: quote from article on **Constantine** 28; quote from article on **Rome** 53-55; quote from article on **Independents** (*Puritans*) 131, 170-171; quote from article on **France** (*Clovis*) 169;

emperors: depravity of 51-52; short-lived 53; described by Suetonius and Tacitus

empire worship as demon worship 51-52;

Eudoxius, becomes bishop of Antioch with concealed backing of Constantius 13

Eusebius of Caesarea: disappearance of early Christian writings 7; misquoting and rewriting of early Christian writings 8; falsified Edict of Toleration 8, 34; his character as a boot-licker and foolish flatterer of the emperor, how he identifies with power 8, 103, 120; *labarum* or cross in the sky story 27-29; statue with cross of triumph story 32; letters of Constantine relevant to "donatist" / "Catholic" conflict in Book X of his *Church History* 14-15, 18, 34, 35 40; description of Constantine entering Council of Nicea 36; Constantine's edicts against heretics, *Life of Constantine* 45; presents Constantine as Vicar of Christ in his *Oration* 50; bodies of martyrs dumped at sea 72; Polycarp revisions 117; Roman Emperor and Jesus Christ as partners 162; crude theology of his *Life of Constantine* 173;

Everybody's Church = The Church of All Nations: in Augustine's letter 88 *the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed* 98 121-122; mass church on a minimal basis 136; see Chapter XIII;

faith: role of faith in the writing of history 31;

Felix of Aptunga: vindication by imperial court 38;

Firmus, Count of North Africa who led a rebellion 82

Fortunius, "donatist" bishop who talked with Augustine, as reported in letter 44: *even a bad man should not be killed by Christians* 88; ***the persecution which he affirmed that his party had often suffered*** 105; claims that his communion was in all parts of the earth 123; could he send *letters of communion* ? 149

Frend, WHC, author of *The Donatist Church*: his book criticized 63-64, 82-85; his interpretation of the claim that Donatus *appealed to the emperor* 64; on the *contrasts* found in Augustine 69; his policy of credulity towards Augustine and Optatus 63; his deference to Augustine 64-65, 81;

folles--payment of 3000 folles to Caecilian, calculation as to what it was worth 14 34 39 95

garden enclosed: Parmenian's definition of the Church 136;

Garrison, William Lloyd: Christianity versus the State 181;

Gibbon, Edward, historian of the Roman Empire: *Supreme Pontiff* title shared by emperor and pope 1; how Constantine used the bishops 5; interference of Queen Zenobia and Emperor Aurelian 10; Athanasius dispersed secret invectives 12; his calculation as to what 3000 *folles* was worth 14; on cross in the sky story 29; his faith in the Roman Empire and *civilization* 30, 51, 53; comment on Bagai massacre 62; comment on allegations of Optatus 80; description of Catholic neo pagan ceremonies 133-134; character of Archbishop Theophilus 141; extortion from the Jews 141; on Constantine's conversion 173;

Gildo, Count of North Africa, rebellion of 82-83;

Hagar and Sarah argument of Augustine 71, 106;

heresy: used as political issue 10; labels put on nonconforming Christians 19; foundational heresy of Imperial Church 89, 172; fined 10 lbs. of gold by edict of Theodosius 92, 95; legal definition 92; schism becomes heresy 92, 162; Emperor Justinian decides that Origen is a heretic and bans his works 113; see *schism*;

Holy Spirit: and the Church, Chapter XVI, 155 on; received by individuals or by institutions, in things or in persons, "catholic" / "donatist" argument 155; the Spirit of Truth 155-156; controlled and restricted by Church of the Empire 158; doctrine on inspired writings 167;

holy lance 32

homoousian versus *homoiousian* 10 11 161

Hosius: Bishop Hosius, agent of Constantine, character of a *traditor*, deposed by synod in Spain 6, 11, 14-15, 16; drew up list of bishops to be paid by 3000 folles given to Caecilian 14; presides at Nicea 17, 39, 148; description of "Catholic" bishops of North Africa at the Court of Constans 140

Imperial Church: characterized by lies and violence 165-166; legacy of: Chapter XVII, 169 on;

Independents or Brownists: non-conforming Christians compared to "donatists": 170

interpolation: challenge of 113;

Jaggerstatter, Franz: anti-war martyr under Hitler 4; question of *fanaticism* 75; quoted on the Kingdom of God versus the German State 182;

James, King of England: *authorized* bible 157; claims to be head of the Christian Church in *Basilicon Doron* 157; persecuted non-conforming Christians 171;

Januarius, "donatist" bishop: Augustine's letter to him 96-98; his statement at the Council of Carthage in 411 AD 106;

Jehovah's Witnesses 3

Jerome: Origen controversy 8; quoted on Bishop Donatus 20; correspondent of Gildo's daughter 83; complains to Augustine 103; letter to him from Augustine about Latin Bible 110; says Optatus wrote 6 books 112: bad authority for the text of the bible 157

Jews: extortion from by bishops and eunuchs of Court of Constantius 141; anti-Jewish sermons of Chrysostom model for Martin Luther 141; attack on a synagogue sanctioned by "Saint" Ambrose 141;

Julian *the apostate*, 4th century Roman Emperor: restored confiscated "donatist" churches, peculiar account of Optatus Chapter IX, 77-81;

Just War: Augustine's doctrine 86;

Kennedyism or Secular Catholicism 4, 144, 174 ;

King's Covenant doctrine: see Augustine also: as found in letter 105 96; and New Age doctrine 124-125; incompatible with the chronology of Romans 13.1-3 129;

labarum see **cross** in the sky

Lemella (Lemellefensis) town in North Africa where *massacre* of two Catholic deacons allegedly took place 77, 80-81; Frend's comments on 81;

Licinius, eastern emperor, defeated and executed by Constantine: his limited persecution of Christian bishops 5

lime in the eyes: Augustine's propaganda story 96 on

Luther: sanctioned state church to which he owed his position 27; uses Romans 13 to attack authority of the Pope 116, 141; follower of Augustine 129; rabid anti-semite, followed Chrysostom, wrote *On the Jews and Their Lies* 1543, inspired the Nazis 141; doctrine on the call to preach 159;

Macarius, commander, along with Paul, of the Roman army which massacred the nonconforming Christians of North Africa in 347 AD: opposed by Bishop Donatus 58; account in Optatus 59; endorsed by Gratus, "Catholic" bishop of Carthage 63; lame attempt by Optatus to justify his actions 111-112; his actions justified by the Romans 13.4 *will of god* argument invented by Augustine 107, 115, 111-112;

Marcellinus Bishop of Rome: accused of joining Diocletian in pagan sacrifice 35; first in apostate line of Roman bishops 35;

Marculus: "donatist" bishop and martyr, thrown over a cliff 63; Augustine's false account 70-71

marks of the Church: *persecution* 4, 105, 134; *lawful* 18; marks of Satan's Church 24; *pacifism* 86; Optatus: *unity* and *universality*, Augustine: also *holy* and *apostolic* 134

martyrs: falsely called suicides by Augustine and others 70-72; their bodies dumped at sea 72;

Massachusetts, church state of 1

Matthew 16.18-19 *Peter . . . Rock* text added by Augustine to improve the argument of Optatus 107-108; as found in Cyprian 111; in Tatian's *Diatessaron* 111;

Maxentius, Roman Emperor: and the Bishop of Rome 5, 35; and the death of Bishop Mensurius 5; rebellion against him in North Africa 6; defeated by Constantine 15

Maxima & Donatilla, martyrs in 304 AD *the command of the emperor will perish* 58;

Melchiades see Miltiades, Catholic Bishop of Rome

Meletian: heretic label put on the nonconforming Christians of Egypt 7;

Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage: suspicious death of 5; employed Caecilian 16; recruited by Constantine and Hosius 16;

Mensurists: label put on *Catholics* by the *Donatists* 16

Military Christianity: 28-32;

Millionaire Christianity: 144;

Milman, Henry, 19th century church historian: quoted by Newman on cross in the sky story 27-29;

Miltiades (Melchiades) Bishop of Rome: letter to him from Constantine 18, 35-36, 39-40, 148; apostate line of Roman bishops 35, 147; presides over council called by Constantine 150;

Milvian Bridge, battle in which Constantine triumphed over Maxentius 312 AD 15

Muggeridge, Anne Roche Muggeridge, author of *The Desolate City* 4 see *kennedyism* = Secular Catholicism;

Neander, church history based upon Assemani: rivalry with Rome leads to persecution of Christians in Persia 6; witness to 4th century Christian pacifism 87; negative attitude of Christians towards riches 143;

New Age doctrine: in letter 105 *the lawfully constituted authority, which God has made subject to Christ, according to His prophecy* 96; see Chapter XII, 119 on; see Augustine;

Newman, Cardinal John Henry, Anglican convert to Catholic Church: *development of doctrine* 27; cross in the sky story 27-31; quoted as to the basic moral character of states 181;

Nicea, Council of, 325 AD: called by Constantine after his conquest of the eastern empire 5, 40; supposedly settles Arian question 8; question of service in the army 10, 85; *homoiousian* versus *homoiousian* 11; presided over by Constantine and Bishop Hosius 17; Constantine's modest entrance described by Eusebius 36; apostate council 87;

North Africa: deterioration of 54;

Novatian, Novatians, Novatian Church: nonconforming Christians of the eastern empire 6-7; one of the *heretic* labels put upon the nonconforming Christians by the persecuting Imperial Church 19; Constantine's edict against 45; their churches in Alexandria attacked by followers of Cyril 141;

Optatus, Bishop of Milevis, Augustine's predecessor as opponent of the "donatists": 311 citations, including: ignores Constantine's letter 15; defective account of Caecilians's consecration 16; on the refusal of *alms* by Bishop Donatus 20-21; his connection with Augustine 21; question of *Unity* 22; on "donatist" reconsecration of priests 24; fabricated "donatist" petition letter 39-41; his account of the Roman council 43; no mention of 317 AD massacre 47, 65; *unity through severity* Chapter VII, 56 on; his account of the Circumcelliones 58-62; what sort of liar he

is 65; admits that two *donatist* Bishops were killed 65; omissions of 66; his account of the restoration under Julian, Chapter IX, 76 on; Gibbon's comment on 80; incredible account 78-80; given benefit of scholarly credulity 81; inadvertent witness to *donatist* pacifism 88; purple prose 78; account of *donatists* purifying churches 91; key bible verses conspicuously missing Chapter XI, 106 on; *Peter the Rock* missing 107; Romans 13 missing 109 on; sword does *the will of God* 111 on; misquotes bible 110, 159; mystery of the 7th book 112; his style compared to that of Augustine 114; his attitude towards slavery 118; list of *donatist* bishops of Rome 123; his marks of the church 134; apostolic letters argument from Book of Revelation 149;

pacifism, of Christians: versus Military Christianity Chapter IV, 26-32; versus *just war* 25, 86; negated by Councils of Arles and Nicea 43-44, 87; incompatible with empire 50; buried issue of Christian pacifism 85-90; **mark** of the true church 86; pacifism of the *donatists* 88; books by Harnack, Cadoux and Hornus 86, 184; Christian pacifist martyrs in North Africa 86; in the east as cited by Assemani and Neander 86; basic to *donatist* dispute 89;

Pamphilus Christian martyr and scholar who built up a library at Caesarea which was later administered by Eusebius: disappearance of early Christian books 7; his relationship to Origen 8;

Parmenian, "donatist" bishop and spokesman: disappearance of his writings 64; his relationship to Tyconius 70; allegation that he justified militarism 81; quoted: *What have Christians to do with kings, or Bishops with the Palace?* 85

Paul, bishop of Constantinople 9

Paul, bishop of Antioch circa 275 AD backed by Queen Zenobia, deposed by the Emperor Aurelian 10

Paul, Saint: contra Christians going to court 38; *no one is saved by the Law* 102; Romans 13.1-3 a forgery 109-112; never wrote Romans 13.4 115; his standards of admission to the Church 137;

Paul and Macarius, see Macarius--

Pelagius, opponent of Augustine: Pope Zosimus forced to reverse his position 17, 152; and Coelistius, their teaching on money 143; persistence of the Pelagians in the time of Pope Leo I 176;

persecution: as a mark of the true church, argued by Augustine and the "donatists" 4, 11, 22-23, 24, 71, 88, 97, **105-106**, 125, 133-134, 161; "donatist" claim 96;

Petilian, "donatist" bishop and spokesman: refers to *Catholics* as *Mensurists* 16; Christians don't take other Christians to court 38;

Pippin: gave papal states to the Bishop of Rome 169;

pirate's reply to Alexander the Great 182;

Pope, Catholic bishop of Rome: Augustine's attitude towards, Chapter XV, 145 on; claims ***Donation of Constantine*** 1; claimed title of *Supreme Pontiff* 1; Pope Zosimus forced to reverse his position on the Pelagians 17; Pope Marcellinus and pagan sacrifice 35; see *Marcellinus*; Pope Melchiades see *Miltiades*; Pope absent from Arles and Nicea 148; Pope Leo I and the persistence of the Pelagians 176;

Philostorgius, Arian church historian of the 5th century: Constantine's statue in Constantinople 3, 31; survives in an *epitome* by Photius 10; wrote that the Arian bishop George of Alexandria was killed by the Athanasians 12; election of Athanasius irregular like that of Caecilian 12;

Primian, "donatist" bishop of Carthage, circa 400 AD: Augustine's unlikely story that he won recognition from the government 84;

Priscillian, Priscillianists: heretic label put on the nonconforming Christians of Spain 7, 19, 105;

Procopius *Secret History* of Justinian and Theodora 9

Proculeianus, "donatist" bishop of Hippo: story that he rescued converts 88

rebaptism: Cyprian's position 12, 25; Petilian 20; Cyprian versus Stephen 23; proscribed by canon 9 of Council of Arles 23, 146; fine of 10 pounds of gold 24; "donatist" position 24, 158; Augustine's argument 25;

Rimini council of Rimini (Arminium) called by Constantius in 359 AD 11, 161

Robinson: coercion leads to bad conscience 171;

Roman Empire evil character 53; collapse of 53-55;

Romans 13.1-7: missing from Optatus 116; manufactured by Augustine 107, 109-117; as found in letter # 93 127-128; used by Luther 153, 157; chronology incompatible with King's Covenant doctrine 129; as found in Polycarp 109;

Romans 13.4 as found in Augustine's letter 87, invented to justify using the sword on those guilty of the *crime of schism* 94; required by the defective argument of Optatus that the sword does *the will of God*, in defense of the massacres of 347 AD by Roman soldiers led by Macarius 111-112; historical and New Testament problems with the verse, why Paul never wrote it 115;

Romanus, Count: criminal government of 54;

Rome giant slum 54;

Rufinus: denounced by his old friend Jerome 8; re-wrote Origen 113

sacraments: official control 158-159; versus *sacramentum* of early church 157; validity of "donatist" sacraments conceded by Augustine 162-163; validity of "Catholic" sacraments denied by "donatists" 156 see *baptism*;

Salvian, 5th century Christian writer who wrote *On the Government of God*: witness to the corruption and ruin of Roman society in Spain and North Africa 55; claim that Carthage was an apostolic see 150;

schism: the real "donatist" / "Catholic" issue 16, 21-22, 85, 109; Emperor Constantine's instruction to Pope Miltiades: *leave no schism whatsoever or division in any place* 35; the Emperor Constantine confiscates the property of those *convicted of schism* and gives it to the *Catholics* 45; the Catholics were the real schismatics 74; the sword of Romans 13.4 versus the *evil work* of *schism* 93-94; schism becomes heresy for legal reasons 162; see *heresy*; see *unity*;

Secular Christianity--The Church which has conformed to *The World*, contra the teaching of Jesus and his apostles: defined in Chapter I and Appendix A: 1 31 89 101 144 170 173 174 184 see *Worldly Church*

Seventh book of Optatus: argument that it was written by Augustine 112-114;

show trials of "donatists" 38

slavery: Supported by Augustine and Optatus, opposed by the "donatists" 118

Smeaton, Oliphant, footnote in Gibbon about the persecution of Licinius 5

Socrates Scholasticus, church historian of the 5th century 3 6 9 12 13 cross in the sky story 29; 31

Sozomen, church historian of the 5th century: his version of the story about Bishop Eudoxius and the Emperor Constantius 13

State versus Church: Appendix B, 181-182;

Supreme Pontiff 1 153

Suetonius, historian of the Roman Empire: his account of the Caesars 51-52;

Tacitus, historian of the Roman Empire: his account of the Caesars 51-52;

tares and wheat argument, Augustine versus the "donatists": 134;

tax break for Catholic Churches, tax exemption for Catholic Clergy: 2, 20-21, 33-34, 41, 46, 139, 142, 158;

tenants and slaves on North African estates forced to join Catholic Church 46;

Terence endorses *pain and suffering* as quoted by Augustine 100;

Tertullian: on Christians versus the state 36, 181; Christians cannot be magistrates 54-55; pacifist tradition 74, 85, 87; all things common 144;

testament versus *covenant*: 118

Theodoret, bishop and church historian of the 5th century: about Constantine's statue 3, 31; collects and destroys Tatian's *Diatessaron* 113;

Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria: deposes Chrysostom 141; his corruption described by Gibbon 141; see Cyril;

Tiara, triple crown of the papacy: claim to secular authority 1, 121, 153, 169, 173; see also Donation of Constantine;

Tolstoy, Leo, on Christianity versus the State 181;

Tower of Babel: division of Latin into many languages and loss of unity 170;

traditors: those who handed over sacred books and otherwise betrayed the church in times of persecution: 6 38 42 65 98 argument of Augustine 113-114 145 161

Trollope, Anthony: his depiction of state clergy in *Barcester Towers* 140;

Tyconius: misrepresented by Augustine 69-70; describes Catholic position as *no other king but Caesar* 85; on the church 175;

Underground Church: Chapter XX, 175-177; 1; 152;

UNITY: basic "donatist" / "catholic" issue 21; Catholic Unity established in Hippo *by fear of the imperial edicts* 20, 22; means unity with the Emperor 21; requires the soldiers 22-23; Unity and Catholic mean uniformity and conformity to Emperor's Church 21; *coerced into the unity of Christ* 22; Anulinus to Constantine: *now that Unity has been effected* 40; Unity + protecting Catholic Church + preserving Caecilian in his position 41; *property of those who resist Unity should be confiscated and given to the Catholic Church* 45; renewed Unity laws of 405 AD 46; Unity defined 47; Unity Through Severity, account by Optatus, Chapter VII, 57 on; Unity with Catholic Church denounced by "donatists" as *sacrilegious*, Maximian

martyred for tearing up a copy of the Edict of Unity 58; mission of Paul and Macarius to use money and military force to establish *UNITY* 59; Augustine's belief in the Unity of the whole world 127; *the threshing floor of unity* 135; unity with the drunks 137; *the emperor's commands . . . preserve the unity of Christ* 162; *the Catholic Church = the unity of all nations = the communion of the whole world* 174; see also *schism*

Virginia, state church of 1

Vladimir: given a Byzantine princess as part of his deal with the Empire and baptizes all of his subjects, described as a *monster of cruelty and debauchery* 170

wealth: of Augustine's church 141-142; Augustine's teaching contra the early church 143; Neander citation from Assemani 143; teaching of Pelagius as caricatured by Augustine 143; see *all things common*;

Worldly Church defined by conformity to world 1, 18, 24, 89; **Worldly Church** Chapter XIX, 173 on; triumph of Worldly Church believed in by Optatus and Augustine 173-174; *World versus Church*, gospel texts 179-180 see Secular Christianity

Zahn, Gordon: author of *In Solitary Witness* about the martyrdom of Franz Jaggerstatter 4, 182;

Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra: supports Paul of Samosata as Bishop of Antioch 10;

Zenophilus, judge in proceedings against "donatists" 38

Zosimus Pope Zosimus, forced to reverse his position on the Pelagians after Augustine and others appeal to the emperor 17, 152

The Church of the Empire

versus the Christian Church of North Africa 312 - 430 A. D.

An historical analysis of the Church founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine and the 100 year persecution of the non-conforming Christian Church of North Africa. Based upon Optatus, Augustine, Eusebius and other documents and histories of the period.

This book focuses on the 4th century *CHURCH OF CONSTANTINE* and Augustine in which apostates from the Christian Church became the state church of an evil empire. That was the foundation of the Worldly Church, which promotes the Secular Christianity that has persisted through the Protestant Reformation and down to modern times. Modern secular churches, whether east or west, whether Protestant or Catholic are the spiritual heirs of the anti church of the Roman Empire. Absent a real reformation, they are the enemies of a true Christian Society, that is, of the Christian community which alone can be properly called *THE CHURCH*.

In the time of Eusebius, Constantine's bogus miracle transformed the Prince of Peace into the new war god of the Roman Empire. That marked the beginning of *MILITARY CHRISTIANITY*, of Christianity as an imperial ideology and a fighting faith. The *CHURCH OF THE EMPIRE* was an anti church which conformed to *THE WORLD*, which embraced political power and money, just as the churches of the American Empire do today. The State Church was *EVERYBODY'S CHURCH*--a mass church on a minimal basis. The modern church, which cannot demand morality because it has to remain popular, is the spiritual heir of the original state church.

The official histories have concealed the martyrdom of non-conforming Christians by the Emperor Constantine in Carthage in 317 A.D. They were thrown down a well for refusing to join the Emperor's anti church. His son Constans did the same thing at the church in Bagaia in 347 A.D. to try and force them to join the official so-called *CATHOLIC CHURCH* of the Roman Empire. Contrary to the official history, the Emperor Constantine was a persecutor of the real Christian Church as were the sons and grandsons who followed him as emperor.

Later in the 4th century, Augustine was personally responsible for the attacks by the police and the army upon the non-conforming Christians of North Africa. As the chief propagandist for the Imperial Church of North Africa, Augustine falsified the history of the so-called "donatist" "schism." He labored to construct a new theology for the *CHURCH OF THE EMPIRE*, which he justified as the *CHURCH OF THE KING'S COVENANT*, the *CHURCH OF THE NEW AGE*, etc. by scripture-twisting arguments. Augustine fabricated the *THOU ART PETER* verse now found in Matthew 16.18 to argue for the authority of the so-called "Catholic" bishop of Rome contra the so-called "donatist" bishop of Rome. He fabricated the verses now found in Romans 13.1-7 to justify the authority of the Emperor over the Church and the massacre of Christians to force them into the State Church. (evidence from Optatus of Milevis and other sources) His falsified scriptures are still used by the Worldly Church to justify Secular Christianity.

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major references: (others are noted in the text)

Gibbon *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 3 volumes, Modern Library edition. In footnote 27 of chapter XXXIII Gibbon says: *My personal acquaintance with the bishop of Hippo does not extend beyond the Confessions and the City of God.* But most of the information about Augustine's long struggle with the "donatists" is found in his letters and sermons. So, despite his awesome scholarship on other subjects, Gibbon is not a reliable source for this history.

The *Church History* of Eusebius (Lawlor and Oulton) and his *Life of Constantine*. There are 5 letters in Eusebius Church History (book 10.5-7) which directly refer to the situation in North Africa at the time when the "donatist schism" began.

Optatus of Milevis wrote a work *Against the Donatists* circa 373 A.D. He was Augustine's predecessor in the polemical battle against the so-called "donatists" of North Africa. The particular edition referred to is an English translation published in 1917 by Father O.R. Vassall-Phillips. It includes an index of relevant documents at the end of the book, some of them part of Optatus original appendix (half of which was "lost") and others not. What you discover from reading this book is that Optatus is a big liar. *Lies, half-truths, and omissions* are the regular features of his book. Fortunately, he is a foolish and obvious liar, and so it is possible to extract some important information from him. He is the original source for most of the "information" that has been put out in respect to the "donatists." Augustine's account of the "donatists" follows that of Optatus in nearly all of his major arguments. Even the wording of his arguments indicates that he has copied Optatus. The lies of Optatus have been dressed up by Augustine, and then endlessly recycled by all the scholars that got their information on the "donatists" from Augustine. Even when they have read Optatus, they are too much in awe of Augustine and of the weight of establishment scholarship generally, to do more than gingerly lift up a corner of the rug while suggesting that there might be a little dust under there. What is under there is a prime collection of horse manure plus quite a few skeletons. A new English translation of Optatus by Mark Edwards was published after I wrote this book. See Translated Texts for Historians Volume 27 Liverpool University Press.

Donatist Martyr Stories Translated by Maureen Tilley 1996 Translated Texts for Historians Volume 24 Liverpool University Press.

early Latin texts found in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* were translated for me by my cousin Donald D. Sullivan, retired Professor of History at the University of New Mexico.

Pacifism in the early Christian church: Adolph Harnack *Militia Christi*: C.J. Cadoux *The Early Christian Attitude to War*; Jean-Michel Hornus *It is Not Lawful for Me to Fight*. And see the Introduction by David Gracie to his translation of Harnack.

29 new letters (newly discovered letters) and other letters and works of Augustine, especially his many writings against the "donatists." Augustine's writings are voluminous and what he has to say about the "donatists" turns up in everything he writes--in his letters, in his sermons on the gospel of John, in his sermons on the psalms, and in several special works. I have concentrated on examining his letters because they seem to contain most of what is found in the formal works and they provide some revealing scraps of information.

church historians of the 5th century: Evagrius Philostorgius Socrates Scholasticus Sozomen Theodoret

THE DONATIST CHURCH by W.H.L. Frend, 1985 edition is a modern history of the so-called "donatists" of North Africa. (criticized, page 61 ff)

eb 9 refers to the 9th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica published in 1890. Roman numeral is the volume number. page numbers are supplemented by *a,b,c,d* to indicate the page quadrant. So "c" means the top half of the second column.