1. AUGUSTINE’S THEOLOGY – a short precis

Augustine’s theology is summarized as follows: his theory of knowledge revolved around two ideas: whether knowledge was possible and if it is possible, how was it acquired? He rested in the innate qualities of the mind that were given to men by God. God is the eternal, transcendent, infinite and perfect being. He is the supreme light by which all knowledge takes place. The Triune God is the creator of all that exists. God made the universe out of nothing. This presupposes the relationship that exists between God and time. God created time because only God is eternal. Evil exists in the world because God ordained it, and it is a corruption of the relationship men have with God. It is not a “thing” but a relationship, or rather a corruption of nature. Evil springs from free will which is bound to the nature it occupies. In fallen men the will is evil and only does evil. When men are regenerated, they have the capacity to choose good or evil. The will was corrupted as a result of original sin which envelopes all humanity in a mass of damnation, unless otherwise rescued by Christ. That which saves men is called grace, and this grace is extended because of God’s predestination. Grace is irresistible since predestination is the act of the divine will. After one is saved by grace, merit then occupies a principle place where men must strive to be holy. This holiness, though, is a work of God. This divine grace comes to men in and through Jesus Christ, but in the context of the communion of the church. The visible church comprises local meeting houses of the membership of those that have professed faith in Christ and their children; all those people who are part of the church and are alive today. The invisible church are all the elect from all time. His ideas surrounding the sacrament of baptism are vague and confused at times, though against the Donatists he made the point that baptism is not affected by the one administering it. If it is done in the name of the Trinity, and the formula is correct (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) then it should be considered a valid baptism by ordained men.

http://www.apuritansmind.com/


... Thus, when the wave of religious assertion which we call Puritanism is considered in the broad perspective of Christian history, it appears no longer as a unique phenomenon, peculiar to England of the seventeenth century, but as one more instance of a recurrent spiritual answer to interrogations eternally posed by human existence. The peculiar accidents of time and place did indeed entice Puritanism into entertaining a variety of ideas which were the features of its epoch, yet it was animated by a spirit that was not peculiar to the seventeenth century or to East Anglia and New England. The major part of this volume will necessarily be occupied with local and temporal characteristics, but these were not the substance or the soul of the movement. As Puritanism developed it became more and more encased in technical jargon and increasingly distracted by economic and social issues; as it waned it partook more of the qualities of one age and became less of a gospel for all time. But as long as it remained alive, its real being was not in its doctrines, but behind than; the the impetus came from an urgent sense of man’s predicament, from a mood so deep that it could never be completely articulated. Inside the shell of its theology and beneath the surface coloring its political theory, Puritanism was yet another manifestation of a piety to which some men are probably always inclined and which in certain conjunctions appeals irresistibly to large numbers of exceptionally vigorous spirits.
I venture to call this piety Augustinian, not because it depended directly upon Augustine – though one might demonstrate that he exerted the greatest single influence upon Puritan thought next to that of the Bible itself, and in reality a greater one than did John Calvin – nor because Puritan thought and Augustine’s harmonize in every particular. Some aspects of his work, this defense of the authority of the church and of the magical efficacy of the sacraments, were ignored by Puritans as by other Protestants.

I call it Augustinian simply because Augustine is the arch-exemplar of a religious frame of mind of which Puritanism is only one instance out of many in fifteen hundred years of religious history. For a number of reasons many persons in late sixteenth-century England found themselves looking upon the problems of life very nearly as Augustine had viewed them, and, for reasons difficult to expound, the number of persons increased during the next six or seven decades. In the 1630’s some twenty thousand of them, avowedly inspired by their religious views, settled New England and thus served to leave the impress of Augustine upon the American character. In England as these spirits became more numerous, they came into conflict with other Englishmen, some of whom were certainly no less pious and no less Christian, but in very different fashions. When Puritans debated with Richard Hooker, the apologist of the Anglican church, they spoke at cross-purposes, for his intellectual affinities were entirely with Thomas Aquinas and scholastic tradition. The Puritans were also scholastics, but though they and Richard Hooker might use the same terms, their emphases were irreconcilable, and as between the two there can be no doubt that in the writings of Richard Hooker’s enemies we shall find the turn of mind and sense of values, even sometimes, the very accent, of Augustine. There survive hundreds of sermons, but we can read the inward meaning of them all in the Confessions [of St. Augustine].

Puritan theology was an effort to externalize and systematize this subjective mood. Piety was the inspiration for Puritan heroism and the impetus in the charge of Puritan Ironsides; it also made sharp the edge of Puritan cruelty and justified the Puritan in his persecution of disagreement. It inspired Puritan idealism and encouraged Puritan snobbery. It was something that men either had or had not, it could not be taught or acquired. It was foolishness and fanaticism to their opponents, but to themselves it was life eternal. Surely most of the first settlers of New England had it; in later generations most of those who did not have it pretended to it. (pp.4-5)

GOD – Puritan thinking on the subject of the Deity always confronted the initial difficulty that in one sense thinking about Him was impossible. The Puritan God is entirely incomprehensible to man. The Puritan system rests, in the final analysis, upon something that cannot be systematized at all, upon an unchained force, an incalculable power. God can never be delineated even momentarily in any shape, contour, or feature recognizable to human discourse, nor may His activities be subjected to the laws of reason or plausibility. He is a realm of mystery, in whom we may be sure that all dilemmas and contradictions are resolved, though just how we shall never in this world even remotely fathom. HE is the reason of all things, and though man can “explain” the behavior of things, they cannot pretend to expound the reason of reasons. The seventeenth-century theologian, like the modern scientist, was perpetually explaining his world without being able to give the reason for its being precisely the kind of world which he explained. (p. 10)
SIN – Puritan divines counted that day lost in which they did not spend ten or twelve hours in their studies. They sacrificed their heath to the production of massive tomes which demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that man, created upright, fell of his own untrammeled choice into a corruption so horrible as to deserve the worst of punishments and so abject as to preclude all hope of recovery by his unaided efforts. ... The doctrines of original sin, of the depravity of man, and of irresistible grace were not embraced for their logic but out of a hunger of the human spirit and an anxiety of the soul.

On this score the Puritans exhibit most clearly their descent from Augustine. The same subjective insight, the same turning of consciousness back upon itself, the same obsession with individuality, the same test of conclusions not so much by evidence or utility as by the soul’s immediate approbation or revulsion – these qualities which appear in Augustine almost for the first time in Western thought and give him his amazing “modernity,” reappear in force among the early Puritans. Like his, their meditations are intensely introspective, and in their own breasts they find the two fundamental issues: the natural emptiness of the heart and its consuming desire for fullness. From the depths of imperfection, the soul conceives of God as flawless perfection, whom it cannot hold responsible for its own desolation. . . . The soul must therefore conclude that it is itself the cause for its plight; becoming further aware that the will nevertheless deliberately persists in evil, the soul cries out in anguish, “O rottenness! O monstrosity of life and profundity of death! Could I like that which was unlawful only because it was unlawful?” From such an insight flows the piety of Augustine, from the double conviction that in a world emanating from all-good, all-perfect Being, man lives at odds with it, and that nevertheless the mailed soul, even while persisting in evil, longs for deliverance from the body of this death, for restatement in the created harmony. (pp. 21-22)

REGENERATION - . . . The moment of regeneration, in which God, out of His compassion, bestows grace upon man and in which man is enabled to reply with belief, was the single goal of the Augustinian piety. Without it individual life was a burden, with it living became richness and joy. Other people have found other names for the experience; to lovers it is love, to mystics it is ecstasy, to poets inspiration. Even ordinary men have their ups and downs, know seasons when they are filled with something more than their usual vitality. That there is some such phenomenon hundreds have testified, though their explanations have varied from calling it a merging of the self with an all-pervading substance to taking it for a physiological crisis caused by the excess secretions of a ductless gland. To the Puritans there was of course only one interpretation. It was an act of communion in which the infinite impinged upon the finite, when the misery of the fragmentary was replaced by the delight of wholeness. Regeneration was the “able to fill up all the emptie chinks, void places, the unsatisfied grasping & yawnings of the spirit of a man.” It was the resolution of the problem of sin, and of all other problems that torture humanity.
3. MASSACHUSETTS BAY – “A City Set upon a Hill”

The passengers of the Arbella who left England in 1630 with their new charter had a great vision. They were to be an example for the rest of the world in rightful living. Future governor JOHN WINTHROP stated their purpose quite clearly: "We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

The Arbella was one of eleven ships carrying over a thousand Puritans to Massachusetts that year. It was the largest original venture ever attempted in the English New World. The passengers were determined to be a beacon for the rest of Europe, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in the words of the governor.

Woodcut by John Foste Boston, 1677  The earliest known map of New England from 1677. West is shown at the top with north to the right.

John Winthrop travelled to the New World aboard the Arbella. He was elected and dismissed as governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony several times.

This engraving shows the Harvard campus as it looked during the 18th century.

An elected legislature was established, echoing the desire for self-government already seen in other English colonies. Although ministers were prohibited from holding political office, many of the most important decisions were made by the clergy. In 1636, HARVARD COLLEGE was instituted for the purpose of training Puritan ministers.

By the end of the 1630s, as part of a "GREAT MIGRATION" of Puritans out of England, nearly 14,000 more Puritan settlers came to Massachusetts, and the colony began to spread. In 1691, Plymouth colony, still without a charter, was absorbed by their burgeoning neighbor to the East.

The great experiment seemed to be a smashing success for the first few decades. In the end however, worldly concerns led to a decline in religious fervor as the 1600s grew old.

http://www.ushistory.org/us/3c.asp
5. From John Winthrop's sermon, *City upon a Hill*, 1630

**John Winthrop's City upon a Hill, 1630**

Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke and to provide for our posterity is to followe the Counsell of Micah, to doe Justly, to love mercy, to walke humbly with our God, for this end, wee must be knitt together in this worke as one man, wee must entertaine each other in brotherly Affection, wee must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities, for the supply of others necessities, wee must uphold a familiar Commerce together in all meekenes, gentlenes, patience and liberallity, wee must delight in eache other, make others Conditions our owne rejoyce together, mourne together, labour, and suffer together, allwayes haveing before our eyes our Commission and Community in the worke, our Community as members of the same body, soe shall wee kepe the unitie of the spirit in the bond of peace, the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as his owne people and will commaund a blessing upon us in all our wayes, soe that wee shall see much more of his wisdome power goodnes and truthe then formerly wee have beene acquainted with, wee shall finde that the God of Israel is among us, when tenn of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when hee shall make us a prayse and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantacions: the lord make it like that of New England: for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are upon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a byword through the world, wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of god and all professours for Gods sake; wee shall shame the faces of many of gods worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whether wee are going: And to shutt upp this discourse with that exhortacion of Moses that faithfull servant of the Lord in his last farewell to Israel Deut. 30. Beloved there is now sett before us life, and good, deathe and evill in that wee are Commaunded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commandements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whether wee goe to possesse it: But if our heartes shall turne away soe that wee will not obey, but shall be seduced and worshipp other Gods our pleasures, and proffitts, and serve them, it is propounded unto us this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this vast Sea to possesse it;

Therefore lett us choose life,

that wee, and our Seede,

may live; by obeyeing his

voyce, and cleaveing to him,

for hee is our life, and

our prosperity.
From Winthrop's manuscript of the sermon he delivered

Governor John Winthrop  East Anglia – Home of many of the early Puritans

Arabella
PLATO - The dichotomy of man’s nature — a man’s good part rules over his bad part - Republic

ST> AUGUSTINE - 354-430 Confessions

Famous paradoxical nature of the sex habit – wanted to get rid of it but also totally attracted to it

Reportedly said - Lord, grant me chastity and self-control, but not yet

Philosopher, rhetorician, etc.

Scripture - a voice said, “Pick it up and read”

Basics - Man’s heart is restless – until it rests in God

Babies are interested only in self  It’s good that they are so physically limited; otherwise their selfishness could cause real damage

Augustine in youth - Stealing pears — didn’t eat them - the joy was in doing something forbidden.

St. Paul: Romans 7:15 –
I do not understand my own actions. For I do not what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Puritans were Anglicans – wanted to purify – (not separate from – as did Pilgrims) Their emphasis on preaching & thought and living a pure life – not the trappings or the rituals

John Winthrop’s sermon – city on a hill (Regan used the phrase)

Salem/Boston – community – standards – Groupthink? -

Rigid – rejection of non-conformists - Anne Hutchins – Quakers – Hang them (bridge collapse)

Five sodomitical boys arrive in Salem – Hester Prynne - The Minister’s Black Veil

Congregational organization

Municipal - - only church members voted - - get excommunicated & lose right to vote

The NEW ENGLAND TOWN MEETING – in church (biggest building – power of church – fund minister) 1795 Massachusetts orders towns to make maps – roads, meeting houses and mills

Dresden/Bailey – Congo-Presby-Anglican

Bay colony vs – southern Maine Gorges/Mason charters - land grab, military protection
7. Catholics on the Kennebec

Early Boston was Anti Catholic

Jesuits in New England

European Christians in New England

Jesuit Pierre Biard visits the Kennebec  Father Gabriel Druillettes writes to John Winthrop Letter of Sebastian Rale to his nephew Anglican Jacob Bailey writes about natives in his area Bath’s Know Nothing event

1. Early Boston was Anti-Catholic (Wikipedia)

JESUITS - In 1647 the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law prohibiting any Jesuit Roman Catholic priests from entering territory under Puritan jurisdiction. Anti-Catholic sentiment had appeared in New England with the first Pilgrim and Puritan settlers. Any suspected Jesuit who could not clear himself was to be banished from the colony; a second offence carried a death penalty. There were about two dozen Jesuits in 1760, and they kept a low profile.


The presence of the Jesuits in New England dates from the summer and fall of 1611 when Father Pierre Biard explored the rivers of Maine and offered the first recorded Mass at the mouth of the Kennebec River. Returning with three other Jesuits in 1613, he founded Saint Saviour Mission at Fernald Point in Southwest Harbor. Tragically, the mission was wiped out by English colonists from Virginia. Jesuit Brother Gilbert du Thet was killed in the defense of the mission and buried there.

Colonial Wars Nevertheless, the Jesuits returned to establish missions on the major rivers of Maine. Father Gabriel Drouillettes founded a mission in the early seventeenth century in Augusta. But Father Sebastian Rasle, who defended the land rights of Native Americans during the struggle between England and France for the control of North America, became the most famous Jesuit in the colonial history of New England. In defending the mission, he was brutally killed by the English, on August 23, 1724, in Norridgewock.
The Biblical Basis

Leviticus 20:10 - And the man that committeth adultery with [another] man's wife, [even he] that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 18:22 – Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with women. It is an abomination.

Leviticus 20:13 - If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

June 23 [1629] – Tuesday

The wind fair northeast a fair gale. This day we examined five beastly sodomitical boys who confessed their wickedness not to be named. The fact was so foul we reserved them to be punished by the governor when he came to New England, who afterwards sent them back to the company to be punished in old England as the crime deserved.

From: The Reverend Francis Higginson’s Journal of his trip to New England on board the ship Talbot, June 29, 1629

Punishment for adultery -

The Scarlet Letter – How Hester won her “A”

Excommunication 1640 Boston/Salem– meaning you also lost right to vote – political status.

Excommunication in Phippsburg – 1790’s – Mark Langdon Hill accused of entering hired men’s rooms at night and committing unspeakable acts. He refused to admit his action. He was called before [the deacons] and refused to admit his wrongdoing. Was excommunicated, but later admitted it before the church, begged forgiveness and was reinstated.

Excommunication in Bath 1850 – Bro. Hagan was seen in an unsavory place with a woman of ill repute. Two members of the church went to him, (My great-great grandfather being one, he refused to talk with them. He was excommunicated from the Methodist Church.)