

Augustine and the Guidance of Souls

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Synopsis

Introduction

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Excerpt #1 *De Academicis* 1.1.3, 2.2.3–4, 2.3.8 and 2.3.9 (emphasis mine):

Now philosophy nourishes and sustains *me* in that retirement *we* have so much hoped for.¹

You furnished all that was necessary for *my* venture. [...] *you* are the one who has inspired, advanced, and brought about whatever *I* now enjoy in *my* retirement.²

Let’s return to *ourselves* — *let us, I say, devote our attention to philosophy*, Romanianus. I should like to thank you: your son is beginning to do philosophy. I’m restraining him so that he may proceed with more strength and vigor after first getting the necessary training.³

Excerpt #2 *De beata uita* 2.14 (emphasis mine):

‘Navigius with his troublesome spleen ought to be more careful with sweet,’ I said.

He *laughingly* replied, ‘Such things will certainly cure me, for the dish you set before us, somehow concocted and spiced, is, *as Cicero says of Humettic honey* [*Hortensius* frg. 82I and 82H], bitterly sweet and does not bloat my stomach. Hence, after a taste of it, I gladly

¹ Ipsa [philosophia] me nunc in otio, quod uehementer optauimus, nutrit ac fouet, [...].

² Tu necessariis omnibus iter adminiculasti meum; [...] quidquid de otio meo modo gaudeo, [...] tu animasti, tu inpulisti, tu fecisti.

³ Sed ad nos redeamus, nos, inquam, Romaniane, philosophemur; reddam tibi gratiam, filius tuus coepit philosophari. Ego eum reprimō, ut disciplinis necessariis prius excultus uigentior et firmior insurgat.

swallow it all to the extent of my capacity. For I do not see how that conclusion can be refuted.⁴

Excerpt #3 *De Genesi contra Manichaeos 1.1.1* (emphasis mine):

If the Manichees were to choose the sort of people they meant to deceive, I too would also choose the appropriate words with which to answer them. But since they are hunting down both the well educated with their writings and the uneducated with their erroneous ways, and while promising them the truth are striving to turn them away from the truth, it is not with *elegant and well-turned phrases* that they are to be convicted of teaching nonsense, but with the evidence of reality. I fully agreed, in fact, with the opinion of some people who were genuine Christians and well versed in classical literature, who nonetheless saw clearly, on reading my other books which I had published against the Manichees, that *they would not be understood by the less well educated, or only with difficulty. They advised me out of the goodness of their hearts not to turn my back on the usual common way of talking*, if I had it in mind to purge from the spirits of less educated people also such pernicious errors as these. The learned too, after all, can understand *this ordinary and simple language*, while the unlearned cannot understand that other sort.⁵

Excerpt #4 **1 Corinthians 3:1–2:**

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it.

Excerpt #5 **Matthew 7:7–8:**

Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

⁴ Dulcia, inquam, magis metuere Nauigius deberet splene uitioso. — Hic ille adridens: Plane me [...] talia sanabunt. Nam nescio quo modo contortum hoc et aculeatum, quod posuisti, ut ait ille de melle Hymettio, acriter dulce est nihilque inflat uiscera. Quare totum etiam palato aliquantum remorso tamen, ut possum, libentissime in medullas traicio. Non enim uideo quomodo redargui possit ista conclusio.

⁵ Si eligerent Manichaei quos deciperent, eligeremus et nos verba quibus eis responderemus; cum vero illi et doctos litteris et indoctos errore suo persequantur et, cum promittunt veritatem, a veritate conentur avertere, non ornato politoque sermone, sed rebus manifestis convincenda est vanitas eorum. Placuit enim mihi quorumdam vere Christianorum sententia, qui cum sint eruditi liberalibus litteris, tamen alios libros nostros quos adversus Manichaeos edidimus cum legissent, viderunt eos ab imperitoribus aut non aut difficile intellegi et me benevolentissime monuerunt, ut communem loquendi consuetudinem non desererem, si errores illos tam perniciosos ab animis etiam imperitorum expellere cogitarem. Hunc enim sermonem usitatum et simplicem etiam docti intellegunt, illum autem indocti non intellegunt.

Excerpt #6 *De Genesi contra Manichaeos 2.2.3:*

If the Manichees were willing to discuss the hidden meaning of these words in a spirit of reverent inquiry rather than of captious fault-finding, then they would of course not be Manichees, but as they asked it would be given them, and as they sought they would find, as they knocked it would be opened up to them.⁶

Excerpt #7 *De Genesi contra Manichaeos 1.25.43:*

We also, one and all, have those six days in our personal lives, distinguished from each other in good works and an upright way of life, after which we should be hoping to rest.⁷

Excerpt #8 *De Genesi contra Manichaeos 1.25.43:*

1. We, 'One and all', have faith when we believe in visible things.
2. We have the solid foundation of the discipline by which we discern the difference between things of the flesh and things of the spirit.
3. We separate our minds from the stain and the stormy waves of fleshly temptations to bear the fruits of good works.
4. We see what unchangeable truth is in the soul and have the soul made a participant in the truth and bestow order on the body.
5. We begin to take part in the actions of this world in order to benefit the interests of brotherhood and good fellowship.
6. We dominate all changes of our own mind from the spiritual fruit.
7. The everlasting rest should be hoped for.

Excerpt #9 *De Genesi contra Manichaeos 2.23.36:*

But let us pay attention to what the apostle says: *But the fulness of the law is charity* (Rom. 13: 10), and let us see this same love contained in that twin commandment: *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself; on these two commandments hangs the whole law, and the prophets* (Matth. 22: 37-40).⁸

⁶ Haec secreta verborum si non reprehendentes et accusantes, sed quaerentes et reverentes Manichaei mallent discutere, non essent utique Manichaei, sed daretur petentibus et quaerentes invenirent et pulsantibus aperiretur.

⁷ Habet etiam unusquisque nostrum in bonis operibus et recta vita tamquam distinctos istos sex dies, post quos debeat quietem sperare: [...].

⁸ Sed si attendatur quod apostolus dicit: plenitudo autem legis caritas, et videamus eandem caritatem praecepto illo gemino contineri: diliges dominum deum tuum ex toto corde tuo et ex tota anima tua et ex tota mente tua, et diliges proximum tuum tamquam teipsum; in quibus duobus praeceptis tota lex pendet et prophetae, [...].

Excerpt #10 *Sermo* 9.7:

So the decalogue relates to two commandments, that is, to love of God and neighbour. Three strings relate to the first, because. God is three. But to the other commandment, that is, the love of neighbour, seven strings refer, how people should live together.⁹

Excerpt #11 *Sermo* 9.17:

But in order to keep that agreement, keep yourselves from detestable and corrupting practices, [...] If any pleasure of the world creeps into your thoughts, school yourselves in works of mercy, school yourselves in almsgiving, in fasting, in prayer. These are the means of purging ourselves of the daily sins which we cannot help creeping into our thoughts because of our human weakness.¹⁰

Excerpt #12 *Sermo* 335D (= Lambot 6).3:

Why is it, brother, that you are raging, why are you so churned up? It's against me, indeed, that you're raging, but yourself that you're losing. Oh, if only you would change your frame of mind! Oh, if only you would change your way of life! Because we are all going to die and rise again. I, indeed, place my hope in God, for whose sake I am suffering these things.¹¹

Excerpt #13 *Sermo* 301A (= Denis 17).7:

Perhaps you will say, 'We are like Carthage.' Just as there is a holy and religious community in Carthage, so also there is such a vast population in a great metropolis, that they all use others to excuse themselves. In Carthage, you can say: 'The pagans do it, the Jews do it;' here, whoever is doing it, Christians are doing it.¹²

Excerpt #14 *Sermo* 301A (= Denis 17).8:

And this is done by Christians; I'd rather not say, 'and by the faithful.' A catechumen, perhaps, has a low opinion of his worth. 'I'm just a catechumen,' he says. You're a catechumen? 'Yes, a catechumen.' Do you have one forehead on which you received the sign

⁹ Ad duo itaque praecepta, id est, ad dilectionem dei et proximi pertinet decalogus. Ad primum praeceptum tres chordae pertinent, quia deus trinitas. Ad alterum uero praeceptum, id est, ad dilectionem proximi, septem chordae: quomodo uiuatur inter homines.

¹⁰ Vt autem concordetis, abstinete uos a detestabilibus corruptelis, a detestabilibus inquisitionibus, [...] Si quae delectationes saeculi subrepunt in anima, exercete uos in misericordia, exercete uos in elemosinis, in ieiuniis, in orationibus. His enim purgantur quotidiana peccata, quae non possunt nisi subrepere in anima, propter fragilitatem humanam.

¹¹ quid est quod saeuis, frater, quid exagitaris? mihi quidem saeuis sed tibi peris. o si mutes mentem. o si mutes uitam! quia omnes morituri et resurrecturi sumus. ego quidem spem in deo habeo pro quo ista patior.

¹² forte dicitis: Nos Carthagini similes sumus. Quomodo apud Carthaginem est plebs sancta et religiosa, sic tanta turba est in magna ciuitate, ut se excusent omnes de aliis. Pagani faciunt, Iudaei faciunt, potest dici Carthagine; hic, quicumque faciunt, Christiani faciunt.

of Christ, and another which you carry along to the theatre? Do you want to go? Change your forehead, and get along there. So, as you can't change your forehead, don't ruin it.¹³

Excerpt #15 *Sermo* 62.4.7:

Do you ever wonder how people may be led astray by images, which they imagine are being honoured by Christians? 'God knows my mind,' he says. But your brother doesn't know your mind. If you are weak yourself, beware of catching a worse illness still; if you are strong, be careful of your brother's weakness.¹⁴

Excerpt #16 *Sermo* 286.7:

A believer is lying in bed, wracked with pain [...]; along comes trial and temptation by tongue; either some female, or a man [...] approaches the sickbed, and says to the sick man, 'Tie on that amulet, and you will get better; let them apply that charm, and you will get better. So-and-so, and So-and-so and So-and-so; ask, they all got better by using it.' He doesn't yield, he doesn't agree, he doesn't give his consent; he has to struggle, all the same.¹⁵

Excerpt #17 *Sermo* 335D (= Lambot 6).3:

But the one who says, 'I won't do it' – when a friend suggests it, a neighbour mutters something about it, or a neighbour's maid, sometimes even his own old nurse – who says, 'I won't do it; I'm a Christian God prohibits this sort of thing. These are the sacraments of demons. Listen to the apostle: I do not wish you to become the associates of demons (1 Cor. 10: 20)' – well, he gets this answer from the one who is suggesting it: 'Do it, and you'll get well. So-and-so and such-and-such did it. What? Aren't they Christians? Aren't they believers? Don't they hurry off to church? And yet they did it and got well.'¹⁶

¹³ Et hoc a christianis fit: nolo dicere, et a fidelibus. Catechuminus forte contemnit se. Catechuminus, inquit, sum. Catechuminus es? Catechuminus. Alia frons tua accepit Christi signum, et aliam tollis ad theatrum? Ire uis? Muta frontem, et uade. Ergo frontem, quam non potes mutare, noli perdere.

¹⁴ Quomodo putatis decipi posse simulacris homines, quae a christianis honorari putant? 'Nouit', inquit, 'Deus cor meum.' Sed frater tuus non nouit cor tuum! Si infirmus es, caue maiorem aegritudinem; si firmus es, cura fratris infirmitatem.

¹⁵ Iacet fidelis in lecto, torquetur doloribus, [...] uenit linguae tentatio, accedit ad lectum aut muliercula aliqua, aut uir, [...] et dicit aegroto, Fac illam ligaturam, et sanus eris: adhibeatur illa praecantatio, et sanus eris. Ille et ille et ille, interroga, sani inde facti sunt. Non cedit, non obtemperat, non cor inclinatur; certat tamen.

¹⁶ Qui autem dicit: non facio – suggerente amico, et mussitante uicino aut uicina ancilla, aliquando et de matricula ei<us> – qui dicit: non facio: christianus sum; deus prohibet hoc; sacramenta sunt daemonum; audi apostolum: nolo uos socios fieri daemoniorum, respondetur illi ab illo qui suggerit: fac et sanus eris; ille et ille fecerunt. quid? non christiani? non sunt fideles? non ad ecclesiam currunt? et tamen fecerunt et sani sunt.

Excerpt #18 *Sermo* 335D (= Lambot 6).5:

[...] a neighbour at your bedside, and a friend and a maid, even perhaps, as I said, your old nurse, bringing wax and an egg in her hand and saying, 'Do this and get better. Why prolong your illness? Tie on this amulet. I heard someone invoke the name of God and the angels over it and you will get better.'¹⁷

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¹⁷ adstat uicinus et amicus et ancilla, etiam dixi, forte de matricula, ceram uel ouum manibus ferens et dicit: fac hoc et saluus eris. quid prologas tuam aegritudinem? fac hanc ligaturam. ego audiui qui nomen dei et angelorum ibi inuocat et eris sanus.

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