

Possible New Understandings of the Theology of Grace by Means of a Theological Analysis of Saint Augustine's *De correptione et gratia*

MILOŠ LICHNER SJ

Abstract

This article examines Augustine of Hippo's theology of grace between the years 425–427 in the context of the 'Semipelagian' debate in works addressed to the monks of Hadrumetum (*De gratia et libero arbitrio*, *De correptione et gratia*). It explores the original context and the background to Augustine's notions of free will, predestination, grace as necessary (*adiutorium sine quo non*) and grace as leading to perseverance (*adiutorium quo*), highlighting the contemporary situation of the spiritual needs of members of the Hadrumetum community. What becomes clear from a close-reading of these texts and their theological analysis is the fact that Augustine's theology of grace is essentially governed by deeper questions of the spiritual theology of monastic life where the importance of the virtue of humility is stressed over against the self-promoting conceitedness of certain ascetic tendencies.

Keywords: *Saint Augustine of Hippo, grace, Semipelagianism, theology of monasticism, humility.*

Kulcsszavak: *Hippói Szent Ágoston, kegyelem, szemipelágianizmus, monasztikus szerzetesség teológiája, alázat.*

In this article, I will focus on the issue of grace in the works of Saint Augustine and the way he understood it in the years 425–427. In this period of time, Augustine addressed two pieces of writing to the monks of Hadrumetum:

Professor MILOŠ LICHNER is a Jesuit priest and theologian, he teaches systematic and patristic theology at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Trnava (Slovakia), for 8 years he was dean of this faculty, currently he is vicepresident of Trnava University and president of the European Association of Catholic Theology; milos.lichner@truni.sk

De gratia et libero arbitrio and *De correptione et gratia*.¹ First, I will introduce a fundamental methodological basis that will help us to understand this work. The core of this article is dedicated to a treatise on *Rebuke and Grace* – the key work on this issue.² The aim of this essay is to introduce possible understandings of the issue of grace on the basis of analysis of this treatise so often commented upon and analysed in the history of theology. Various theologians have called it a key to Augustinian teaching on grace. This study will point to a potential new pastoral and spiritual perception of the topic of grace.

This issue is sometimes considered as Semipelagianism, a term established in the 16th century during the debates entitled *De auxillis*.³ I think that it is incorrect because, for example, Augustine and Cassian agreed about more points than they disagreed on. In addition, Augustine never talked about semi-Pelagians. Instead, he used terms such as *fratres* (brothers)⁴, *dilectissimi* (beloved)⁵ or *nostri* (ours)⁶. To make this discourse more comprehensible, we will use the term *monks of Hadrumetum*.

I. METHODOLOGICAL NOTES REGARDING THE COMPREHENSION OF *DE CORREPTIONE ET GRATIA*

1.1. The use of Holy Scripture in *De correptione et gratia*

The first important step in our effort to understand the treatise *De correptione et gratia* consists of the comprehension of the means of biblical hermeneutics used by Augustine. A common view of this work points to a significant num-

¹ This article is based on a lecture given at Sapientia College of Theology, Budapest on 17th October, 2018.

² Cf. VITTORINO GROSSI: *Correptio-Correctio-Emendatio* in Agostino d'Ipbona : Terminologia penitenziale e monastica. In: *Augustinianum*, 37, p. 215–222; TARSICIUS. J. VAN BAVEL: *Correctio, corrigere*. In: *AL*, 1, col. 22–27.

³ REBECCA H. WEAVER: *Semipelagianism*. In: *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* 1 – 2. Second edition Ed. Everett Ferguson. New York; London, 1997, p. 1046–1047.

⁴ *gr. et lib. arb.* 1,1 and 24,46, *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 24, p. 90–91.204–205; *corrept.* 1,1, *BA* 24, p. 268–269.

⁵ *gr. et lib. arb.* 1,1 *BA* 24, p. 90–91.

⁶ *perseu.* 24,66, *BA* 24, p. 758–759.

ber of direct and mutually interconnected biblical quotations or paraphrases. If we want to understand Augustine's way of thinking, it is necessary to consider his hermeneutical intertextual approach towards Scripture: the theologian of Hippo interprets a certain biblical text through other biblical verses – all this within the context of the entire Bible. He uses the ancient method of interpretation, on the basis of which a certain literary *corpus* formed a closed unit and was interpreted within this unit. Augustine was familiar with this method of interpretation and transformed it to *scriptura per scripturam intellegi*, which means that parts of the Scripture that are difficult to explain are explained through other, more explicit, biblical passages. This justifies a large number of biblical quotations in the treatise.

In the spirit of this exegesis, every word has a great significance. When, for example, Augustine reads in 1Sam 10:26 (“Saul also went home to Gibeah, accompanied by warriors whose hearts the Lord had touched” – *tetigit corda*⁷), he decides on a literal exegesis of the phrase *tetigit corda*, because he does not find any other passage in Scripture to offer the allegorical interpretation of the verb *tetigit*. Likewise, when Augustine looks for the *intentio* of apostle Paul in Rom 8:28: “All things work for good for those who are called according to his purpose”, he finds it in a different verse of Mt 22:14: “Many are invited, but few are chosen”. Of course, according to contemporary historical-critical exegesis, *intentio* found by Augustine is not Paul's. *Intentio apostoli* searched for by Augustine is the *intentio* of the whole Scripture that tells us about the undeserved gift of Jesus Christ's grace given to us for free. Hence, we can say that according to Augustine, *intentio apostoli* is clearly understood in the context of 1Cor 1:29 (“So that no human being might boast before God”).

Of course, as Aimé Solignac has pointed out, such an exegetic approach bears a risk that one may spontaneously create intertextual correlations that do not actually exist – even Augustine could not always avoid this danger.⁸

1.2. *The monastic context of the Hadrumetan crisis*

A brief sketch of the context can help us to understand the circumstances concerning the treatise *De correptione et gratia*. I think that this historical excursus is important, since the treatise has often been interpreted out of context

⁷ *corrupt.* 14, 45, BA 24, p. 370.

⁸ Cf. AIMÉ SOLIGNAC: Les excès de l'‘intellectus fidei’ dans la doctrine d'Augustin sur la grâce. In: *NRTb*, 110, 1988, p. 825–849.

and understood as Augustine's universal statement about grace. According to my interpretation, this opus should be read and understood in the context of the formation of ancient monkhood and the development of comprehension of monastic spirituality.

The Hadrumetan crisis started around the year 425 when the monk Florus from the monastery of Hadrumetum discovered, in the library of Evodius, bishop of Uzala, a letter (*ep.* 194) written by Augustine in 418 to the priest Sixtus, later Pope Sixtus III.⁹ In this letter, Augustine explains his teaching on undeservable grace of faith, justification, responsibility, and freedom of human will, his teaching on absolute grace of election and predestination, and that on original sin and the baptism of children. Florus rewrote the letter, along with his confrere Felix, and sent a copy of it to his monastery in Hadrumetum (today's Sousse in Tunisia).¹⁰

Its content provoked a certain level of concern in the monastery. Some of the monks were convinced that Augustine's teaching on grace underestimates and minimises human strain (primarily their monastic life full of ascetism). Others thought that Florus falsified Augustine's ideas. The superior of the monastery, abbot Valentinus, contacted bishop Evodius, who wrote a letter in which he tried to explain things to the monks and calm them down.¹¹ His explanation, however, did not satisfy them. Neither did another attempt by the abbot, who invited priests Sabinus and Januarius.¹² Since the monks kept demanding an explanation, two of them – Cresconius and Felix – were sent to meet Augustine in Hippo Regius, but without the accompanying letter by the abbot.

These two monks spent Easter with Augustine and studied some of his works and official ecclesial documents concerning Pelagianism under his guidance. They returned to the monastery with Augustine's answer – a treatise *De gratia et libero arbitrio*.¹³ Augustine enriched his answer with official Church regulations, decisions about the Pelagian issue and two epistles (*ep.* 214-215¹⁴). In

⁹ *ep.* 194, CSEL 57, p. 176–214.

¹⁰ Cf. SERGE LANCEL: Hadrumète. In: DHGE, 22, 1988, col. 1493–1495.

¹¹ Cf. *Epistula Evodii episcopi ad Abbatem Valentinum Adrumetinum*, BA 24, p. 46–53; JOSEF LÖSSL: De correptione et gratia (Ueber Zurechtweisung und Gnade). In: VOLKER H. DRECOLL (ed.), *Augustinus Handbuch*. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2007, p. 341; VITTORINO GROSSI: La crisi antropologica nel monastero di Adrumeto. In: *Aug.* 19, 1979, p. 103–133.

¹² *epistula sancti Ianuarii*, BA 24, p. 228–245.

¹³ *gr. et lib. arb.*, BA 24, p. 90–207.

¹⁴ *ep.* 214, BA 24, p. 52–60 a *ep.* 215, BA 24, p. 60–73.

epistle 214, he explains that he has been misunderstood. On the one hand, he wanted to demonstrate to Sixtus that grace is necessary for the salvation of the world, while on the other he wanted to point out that free will is also needed for the world to be judged because Christ came to save the world, not to judge it. However, Augustine insists that the Church also professes that Christ will come at the end of the world as a judge of the living and the dead. Therefore, he asserts that both grace and free will are equally necessary: grace must not be denied and free will must not be overestimated by affirming that it is independent from the grace of God.¹⁵

The treatise *De gratia et libero arbitrio* anticipates and in a certain sense completes the theological message of the work *De correptione et gratia*. Hence, it is necessary to briefly outline its fundamental features. *De gratia et libero arbitrio* is based on Augustine's theory that grace does not destroy free will because Scripture clearly teaches that people have free will¹⁶ and Augustine quotes many biblical verses that prove this.¹⁷ However, the Hipponian theologian reminds us that these biblical quotations must not be understood as if there were no space for God's grace to live a good life¹⁸, and as if a man could

¹⁵ *ep. 214, 2, BA 24, p. 54*: « Primo enim Dominus Iesus, sicut scriptum est in euangelio Ioannis apostoli, non uenit ut iudicaret mundum, sed ut saluaretur mundus per ipsum. Postea uero, sicut scribit apostolus Paulus, iudicabit Deus mundum, quando uenturus est, sicut tota Ecclesia in symbolo confitetur, iudicare uiuos et mortuos. Si igitur non est Dei gratia, quomodo saluat mundum? Et si non est liberum arbitrium, quomodo iudicat mundum? Proinde librum uel epistolam meam, quam secum ad nos supradicti attulerunt, secundum hanc fidem intellegite, ut neque negetis Dei gratiam, neque liberum arbitrium sic defendatis, ut a Dei gratia separetis, tamquam sine illa uel cogitare aliquid uel agere secundum Deum ulla ratione possimus; quod omnino non possumus. Propter hoc enim Dominus cum de fructu iustitiae loqueretur, ait discipulis suis: "sine me nihil potestis facere". »

¹⁶ *gr. et lib. arb. 2, 2, BA 24, p. 92–93*: « Reuelauit autem nobis per Scripturas suas sanctas, esse in homine liberum uoluntatis arbitrium. »; *porov. gr. et lib. arb. 2, 3, BA 24, p. 96–97*: « Ecce apertissime uidemus expressum liberum humanae uoluntatis arbitrium. »

¹⁷ *gr. et lib. arb. 2, 2-3,5, BA 24, p. 92–104*.

¹⁸ *gr. et lib. arb. 4, 6, BA 24, p. 104*: « Sed metuendum est ne ista omnia diuina testimonia, et quaecumque alia sunt, quae sine dubitatione sunt plurima, in defensione liberi arbitrii, sic intellegantur, ut ad uitam piam et bonam conuersationem, cui merces aeterna debetur, adiutorio et gratiae Dei locus non relinquatur; et audeat miser homo, quando bene uiuit et bene operatur, uel potius bene uiuere et bene operari sibi uidetur, in se ipso, non in Domino gloriari, et spem recte uiuendi in se ipso ponere, ut sequatur eum maledictum Ieremiae prophetae dicentis: "maledictus homo qui spem habet in homine, et firmat carnem brachii sui, et a Domino discedit cor eius". »

praise himself without considering the role of God, because “cursed is the man who trusts in human beings” – this conviction is drawn by Augustine from Jer 17:5.¹⁹ Grace is needed for conversion, which Augustine demonstrates on the basis of the example of Saint Paul.²⁰ Grace is also necessary to perform the deeds of love that follow after conversion²¹ and, finally, eternal life is a reward given by God in the first place, too. If there are any human merits, they happen by the means of grace. If grace was not there, people would fall into sin:

“Upon the witness of God we manifest that grace is not given to us on the basis of our merits: indeed we see that not only it is given regardless of any good deeds, but also in spite of many bad deeds, every day. Certainly, once it happens, our deeds become good, too, but all this is a result of grace. If grace disappeared, a man would fall, not upright but headlong, upon his free will: therefore, even when a man starts doing good deeds, he should not attribute it to his own merit but to God, about whom the Psalm 26:9 says: “Be my helper, do not forsake me”. When he says “do not forsake me”, he points to the fact that, if he was abandoned by God, he would not be able to do anything good by himself.”²²

“Hence, if the gifts of God are based on your merits, God does not crown your merits as your merits but as the gifts of His own”.²³ This is the strong conviction of Augustine, substantiated by the second part of the fifth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John (Jn 15:5b): “because without me you can do nothing”.²⁴ Therefore, good deeds come from God,

¹⁹ *gr. et lib. arb.* 4,7, *BA* 24, p. 106–107: « Nos ergo ad bene operandum spem non habemus in homine, firmantes carnem brachii nostri: nec a Domino discedat cor nostrum (...) »

²⁰ *gr. et lib. arb.* 5,12, *BA* 24, p. 116–119.

²¹ *gr. et lib. arb.* 6,13–14, *BA* 24, p. 120–122.

²² *gr. et lib. arb.* 6,13, *BA* 24, p. 120: « His et talibus testimoniis diuinis probatur, gratiam Dei non secundum merita nostra dari: quandoquidem non solum nullis bonis, uerum etiam multis meritis malis praecedentibus uidemus datam, et quotidie dari uidemus. Sed plane cum data fuerint, incipiunt esse etiam merita nostra bona, per illam tamen: nam si se illa subtraxerit, cadit homo, non erectus, sed praecipitatus libero arbitrio. Quapropter nec quando coeperit homo habere merita bona, debet sibi tribuere illa, sed Deo, cui dicitur in Psalmo: “adiutor meus esto, ne derelinquas me”. Dicendo: “ne derelinquas me”, ostendit quia si derelictus fuerit, nihil boni ualet ipse per se [...] ».

²³ *gr. et lib. arb.* 6, 15, *BA* 24, p. 124: « Si ergo Dei dona sunt bona merita tua, non Deus coronat merita tua tamquam merita tua, sed tamquam dona sua. »

²⁴ *gr. et lib. arb.* 6, 13, *BA* 24, p. 122.

not from a man, “so that no human being might boast before God”, as Augustine usually quotes the words of the apostle Paul. That is why, also, faith is based on grace, not only on God’s reward for our previous faith; the theologian of Hippo substantiates this theory by quoting 1Cor 7:25b: “I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy”.²⁵ In this perspective, grace transforms bad will into good will. Although Augustine believes that it is true that the orientation of human hearts is in God’s hands and He directs it in accordance with His own will²⁶ as written in Prov 21:1: “A king’s heart is channelled water in the hand of the Lord; God directs it where he pleases”, he still insists on the freedom of human will as a second fact given by Scripture. Augustine never tried to define more precisely the correlation between these two truths of Scripture because he was convinced that their inner mutual relation is concealed to us.

Shortly after writing the treatise and the departure of the two monks, monk Florus came to Hippo Regius, bringing the abbot’s explanatory letter (*ep.* 216²⁷) to Augustine. The epistle proves that Augustine’s work *De gratia et libero arbitrio* was accepted in the monastery with satisfaction. Its last sentences also tell us that the monastery was very probably not governed by Augustine’s rule *Praeceptum*, which we may deduce from the fact that the title *abbas* is not typical for Augustine and the abbot requires certain explanations regarding their own rule at the end of the letter.²⁸

Furthermore, Augustine learned indirectly through this monk about a new problem in Hadrumetum monastery. After reading the treatise *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, one of the monks (*quendam*) argued that, if the issue of grace should really be explained according to Augustine, the abbot should not reprimand anybody, because the one who was guilty simply lacked the grace given by God; thus, the abbot should only pray that the grace of God would be

²⁵ *gr. et lib. arb.* 14, 28, *BA* 24, p. 150 – 152.

²⁶ *gr. et lib. arb.* 21, 43, *BA* 24, p. 196: « His et talibus testimoniis diuinorum eloquiorum, quae omnia commemorare nimis longum est, satis, quantum existimo, manifestatur, operari Deum in cordibus hominum ad inclinandas eorum uoluntates quocumque uoluerit, siue ad bona pro sua misericordia, siue ad mala pro meritis eorum, iudicio utique suo aliquando aperto, aliquando occulto, semper tamen iusto. Fixum enim debet esse et immobile in corde uestro, quia non est iniquitas apud Deum. »

²⁷ *ep.* 216, *BA* 24, p. 216 – 227.

²⁸ *ep.* 216, 6, *BA* 24, p. 226.

given to a guilty man, so that he could fulfil the order.²⁹ It is this objection we can thank for one of the most complex of Augustine's works on grace, *De correptione et gratia* (years 426–427), which was sent to the monastery along with an accompanying letter (*ep.* 216A).

We have no later messages from the monastery of Hadrumetum and we can only presume that the crisis passed. It seems that the monastery survived the subsequent period of Vandalic oppression. Besides, its existence is mentioned in historical resources of 525. Crisis broke out somewhere else – in the southern part of France, among theologians of Marseille. Let us get back to the monks of Hadrumetum, as their reaction requires an explanation of their theological background.

1.3. The theology of Augustine's opponents in Hadrumetum

Who were these monks? And what was their ideal theological world like? Abbot Valentinus calls them *imperiti* (*ep.* 216, 2) and *ignari* (*ep.* 216, 6). If we consider the fact that the monks in the monastery knew nothing of Pelagianism and the priest Januarius offered recommendations regarding the readings appropriate for them at the end of his letter³⁰, we can assume that they were simple men not very educated in theology; men completely dedicated to ascetism, whose world started to crumble when they read the letter of Augustine addressed to Sixtus.³¹

No documents written by the monks of Hadrumetum have been left to us, only several questions answered by Augustine in his two treatises addressed to Hadrumetum. However, we do have several texts by Prosper in which he presents the theology of Marseille masters, including Cassian, who rejected the ideas of the treatise *De correptione et gratia* and to whom Augustine dedicated his two later works *De praedestinatione sanctorum* (On the Predestination of the Saints) and *De dono perseverantiae* (On the Gift of Perseverance). Hence,

²⁹ *retr.* 2, 67, *BA* 12, p. 558: « Rursus ad eosdem scripsi alterum librum quem: “De correptione et gratia” praenotaui, cum mihi nuntiatum esset dixisse ibi quemdam, neminem corripendum, si Dei praecepta non facit, sed pro illo ut faciat tantummodo orandum [...] »

³⁰ *BA* 24, p. 244.

³¹ Cf.: « Nunc autem ueniunt plerumque ad hanc professionem seruitutis Dei et ex conditione seruili, uel etiam liberti, uel propter hoc a dominis liberati siue liberandi, et ex uita rusticana, et ex opificum exercitatione et plebeio labore, tanto utique felicius quanto fortius educati: qui si non admittantur, graue delictum est. » (*op. mon.* 22, 25, *CSEL* 41, p. 570.)

we can presume that the worldview of the Marseille monks was not very distant from that of the monks of Hadrumetum.

Aside from this, both groups had many points in common with Augustine. They affirmed that we had all sinned in Adam, like Augustine; they affirmed that salvation is achieved through baptism, like Augustine; they believed that the number of the saved would not be great, just like Augustine³²; but they had a different opinion regarding the means of salvation. According to the theologians of Marseille, one is saved through his or her free response to God's gift of rebirth in baptism, achieving salvation through ascetic life based on his or her own effort. Their conception of monastic life was strongly voluntarist and based on one's own personal merits. We can assume that the monks of Hadrumetum shared the same opinion.

The monastic movement flourished at the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th centuries in both the East and the West³³ and seems to have followed a previous period of martyrdom that had culminated only several decades ago. In his treatise *De opere monachorum*, Augustine notes that monks come from various social layers.³⁴ They saw themselves as the direct followers of martyrs from the period of persecution of Christians and, in documents from those times, we find descriptions like *martyrium sine cruore* or *sine sanguine*.³⁵ An ascetic volitive approach towards salvation was rather standard among monks and lay people at the end of the 4th century. For example, we might mention the correspondence of St. Jerome, who advised Julia Eustochium to learn "the holy pride" and to realise that she was better than other Christians: *disce in hac parte superbiam sanctam, scito te illis esse meliorem*.³⁶ Although others such as Pelagius and Julian of Eclanum would never agree with such words, we know that both of them turned exclusively to Christians coming from the aristocra-

³² Cf.: „et sine illo Sacramento nemo intret in regnum Dei“ – *correct.* 8, 19, BA 24, p. 308.

³³ Cf. JACQUES BIARNE: Moines et rigoristes en Occident. In: JEAN-MARIE MAYEUR, et al. (eds.), *Naissance d'une chrétienté (250–430) : Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*. II, Paris: Desclée, 1995, p. 747–768.

³⁴ *op. mon.* 22, 25, BA 3, p. 386: « Nunc autem ueniunt plerumque ad hanc professionem seruitutis Dei et ex conditione seruili, uel etiam liberti, uel propter hoc a Dominis liberati siue liberandi, et ex uita rusticana, et ex opificum exercitatione et plebeio labore, tanto utique felicius quanto fortius educati: qui si non admittantur, graue delictum est. »

³⁵ Cf. ROBERT MARKUS: *The End of Ancient Christianity*. Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 63–83; JACQUES BIARNE: Moines et rigoristes en Occident. In: *Naissance d'une chrétienté (250–430) : Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*. II. *op. cit.*, p. 747–768.

³⁶ HIERONYM, *ep.* 22,16, CSEL 54, p. 163.

cy and invited them to become a spiritual elite for Christianity, in accordance with their aristocratic origin.³⁷

Thus, Augustine's words about the merits of a man before God must be interpreted in the context of the rejection of a form of Christianity that excessively emphasises the volitive aspect at the expense of undeserved grace. If actually doing the deeds of love opened the way to salvation, what would be the difference between a New Testament Pharisee who claims the right to salvation on the basis of his good deeds and an ascetic monk who claims the same on the basis of good spiritual deeds? Accordingly, I am convinced that Augustine does not offer a universal teaching on grace, but offers reaction to a concrete form of asceticism in his times.

The theologian of Hippo addressed the treatise on *De correptione et gratia* to the monks of Hadrumetum and through them also to Christians who were fully engaged in an ascetic way of life. He emphasises that we all belong to a "mass of perdition" (*massa perditionis*), from which we cannot be saved on the basis of our origin or ascetic performance, but only by God's mercy. In this respect I recall that it was Albert De Veer who pointed out that the term "massa" is not a concept that expresses a number. It is a concept that underlines an origin - the common substance inherent to all people.³⁸ Hence, Augustine uses this word in the sense of ancient Latin translations of the letters of the apostle Paul, where this term had been used to describe a primary material used by potters in their work (e. g. Rom 9:21: "Or does not the potter have a right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for a noble purpose and another of an ignoble one?") or to prepare the dough for bread (1Cor 5:6: "Your boasting is not appropriate. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough?").

1.4. Augustine's inspiration to write DE CORREPTIONE ET GRATIA

In addition to the moral and ascetic background of the issue of grace, it is necessary to consider Augustine's initial position. If he says that *adiutorium quo* is given only to predestined ones, it is crucial to consider his "eschatological point of view", that is, that he talks about victorious grace and invincible power from an eschatological, retrospective point of view. Only when a man

³⁷ Cf. JEAN-MARIE SALAMITO: *Les virtuoses et la multitude : Aspects sociaux de la controverse entre Augustin et les pélagiens*. Grenoble, Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2005.

³⁸ Cf. ALBERT DE VEER: *Massa perditionis*. In: *BA*, 22, p. 736.

wins over temptation does he retrospectively acknowledge in humility that the grace of God was strong inside of him and that he won thanks to this grace. It would be wrong to think that grace struggles with the human will and only becomes victorious when that will is defeated. The human will is the instrument of God's grace that works in the form of small touches. When the will resists temptation, grace becomes invincible, because it struggled and won out, not against will but with its help. It becomes *adiutorium quo*, grace by the means of which victory is achieved: grace has won because will has won.

However, this does not mean that Augustine did not know any other grace but the "effective" one (given this attribute by scholastics on the basis of incorrect interpretation of Augustine). He knew that we do not always listen to God and that in this sense, grace does not always lead us to the deeds to which it primarily directs us. Nonetheless, I dare to insist that the principal idea of Augustine is the humble attitude of a man who accepts the salvation of God for free, regardless of his ascetic merits. Such a man knows that he would never be able to reach salvation by himself and that he must not be emancipated from God.

This fundamental position of Augustine's was explicitly described in his other treatise written to Julian of Eclanum, a supporter of the principle of free will that allows people to emancipate themselves from God (*libertas arbitrii qua a Deo emancipatus homo: c. Iul. Imp. I, 78*), which is an opinion absolutely unacceptable to Augustine. In a similar spirit, right at the beginning of *De correptione*, Augustine mentions the authority of God, from which we should not emancipate ourselves if we want to reach salvation.³⁹ In this context, Augustinian analyses offered by Pierre-Marie Hombert are interesting. They emphasise that the essential aspect of Augustine's teaching on predestination is the guidance of a man towards humility.⁴⁰

2. DE CORREPTIONE ET GRATIA

After the comments presented above, we can now turn to the main topic of this discourse. The treatise focuses on the idea of the absolute superiority of grace and on the fact that despite this status, it is not enough just to command

³⁹ *corrupt.* 1,1, BA 24, p. 268–269.

⁴⁰ PIERRE-MARIE HOMBERT: *Gloria Gratiae : Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce*. Paris, Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996, p. 332.

people to do good deeds, but also necessary to encourage them or reprimand those who fail to do so.⁴¹

2.1. Objections against rebuke

Augustine starts his treatise with a reminder of the fundamental idea of his previous work: the absolute superiority of grace over law. The truth is that law brings knowledge but only grace offers the ability to avoid evil and do good.⁴² Grace is an internal help of God designed for man, so that his free will is inclined to do good. In addition, grace gives birth to the desire to do good deeds.⁴³ In this regard, Augustine bases his work mainly on 2Cor 13:7 “But we pray to God that you may not do evil, not that we may appear to have passed the test but that you may do what is right”, which he understood in the sense that Paul asked for grace to be given to his faithful but did not cease to rebuke, instruct and encourage them.⁴⁴

If it is true, the first objection would be that if, according to Paul, the grace of God does all this inside of us, why is there a commandment to do good? Augustine rejects this objection, according to which guidance and prayer would be redundant. Grace does not sentence people to passivity. They are internally moved to be active, not to remain passive and do nothing (*aguntur enim ut agant non ut ipsi nihil agant*). If they do not have grace, they are supposed to

⁴¹ Cf. VOLKER H. DRECOLL: Gratia. In: *AL*, 3, 2004, p. 182–242; ADOLAR ZUMKELLER: Correctione et gratia (De-). In: *AL*, 2, 2004, p. 39–46; LENKA KARFIKOVA: *Milost a vůle podle Augustina*. Praha : Oikoymenh, 2006, p. 267–273; PIERRE-MARIE HOMBERT: *Gloria Gratiae : Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustiniennne de la grâce*. op.cit., p. 253–339.

⁴² *corrept.* 1, 2; *BA* 24, p. 270–271: « Qui ergo legitime lege utitur, discit in ea malum et bonum, et non confidens in uirtute sua confugit ad gratiam, qua praestante declinet a malo, et faciat bonum. »

⁴³ *corrept.* 2, 3, *BA* 24, p. 272–273: « Intellegenda est enim gratia Dei per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qua sola homines liberantur a malo, et sine qua nullum prorsus siue cogitando, siue uolendo et amando, siue agendo faciunt bonum: non solum ut monstrante ipsa quid faciendum sit sciant, uerum etiam ut praestante ipsa faciant cum dilectione quod sciunt. »

⁴⁴ *corrept.* 2, 3, *BA* 24, p. 272–273: « Et tamen etiam loquebatur eis, et faciebat illa omnia quae commemorauit: monebat, docebat, hortabatur, increpabat; sed sciebat haec omnia non ualere, quae plantando et rigando faciebat in aperto, nisi eum pro illis exaudiret orantem, qui dat incrementum in occulto. »

ask for it in prayer.⁴⁵ From this point of view, commandment and instruction are perfectly justified within the system of grace.

But what to do - continues the argument of the monks of Hadrumetum - if the one whom we want to reprimand, does not receive the grace of God to do good? Does it make a difference if his superior reprimands him? Augustine replies that it is right to rebuke, because the guilty person decided for evil of his own will (*tuum quippe uitium est quod malus es*⁴⁶) and this rebuke may turn out to be salvific. A reproof makes the sinner realise the abhorrence of his sin, which can awaken his desire to change and to pray for grace.⁴⁷ Of course, the success of rebuke and subsequent repentance depends on God's grace, as pointed out by Augustine on the basis of 2Tim 2:25-26: "...correcting opponents with kindness. It may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of the truth and that they may return to their senses out of the devil's snare, where they are entrapped by him, for his will"⁴⁸. Although we do not know the result of our rebuke and prayer and cannot explain why some people convert and others do not, it is necessary to continue with both of them.⁴⁹

But the monks of Hadrumetum continue: If Paul's first sentences in 1Cor 4:7 are true ("Who confers distinction upon you? What do you possess that

⁴⁵ *corrept.* 2, 4, BA 24, p. 274–275: « Sed potius intellegant, si filii Dei sunt, spiritu Dei se agi, ut quod agendum est agant; et cum egerint, illi a quo aguntur gratias agant. Aguntur enim ut agant, non ut ipsi nihil agant; et ad hoc eis ostenditur quid agere debeant, ut quando id agunt sicut agendum est, id est, cum dilectione et delectatione iustitiae, suauitatem quam dedit Dominus, ut terra eorum daret fructum suum, accepisse se gaudeant. Quando autem non agunt, siue omnino non faciendo, siue non ex caritate faciendo, orent, ut quod nondum habent accipiant. Quid enim habebunt, quod non accepturi sunt? aut quid habent, quod non acceperunt. »

⁴⁶ *corrept.* 4, 6, BA 24, p. 278–279.

⁴⁷ *corrept.* 5, 7, BA 24, p. 278–279: « Non uis enim tibi tua uitia demonstrari; non uis ut feriantur, fiatque tibi utilis dolor, quo medicum quaeras; non uis tibi tu ipse ostendi, ut cum deformem te uides, reformatorem desideres, eique supplices, ne in illa remaneas foeditate. »

⁴⁸ *corrept.* 5, 7, BA 24, p. 280–281: « Haec est correptionis utilitas, quae nunc maior, nunc minor pro peccatorum diuersitate salubriter adhibetur; et tunc est salubris, quando supernus medicus respicit. Non enim aliquid proficit, nisi cum facit ut peccati sui quemque poeniteat. (...) Unde et apostolus Paulus posteaquam dixit, cum modestia corripiendos esse diuersa sentientes, protinus addidit: Ne quando det eis Deus poenitentiam ad cognoscendam ueritatem, et respiscant de diaboli laqueis. »

⁴⁹ *corrept.* 5, 8, BA 24, p. 282–281.

you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?”), then when someone does not obey God, it is because he has not received the gift of obedience from Him. Thus, does it make sense to reprimand him?

Augustine’s explanation is rooted in theological anthropology. God created the first man without sin. Therefore, sin has its origin in a man who voluntarily turned away from God. Because (as Paul writes) we have sinned through Adam (Rom 5:12), unbaptised persons may be reprimanded as well – at least for the consequences of original sin – in the hope that this rebuke may lead to the salvific conversion of sinners.⁵⁰ If we talk about the sins of baptised persons, Augustine believes that they have been given grace but lost it as a result of their sins, and they should be reprimanded in the hope that they will repent of their evil deeds.⁵¹

2.2. Perseverance as a gift of God

At this point, Augustine himself submits a new argument against rebuke: namely, that the sinner does not bear any responsibility for his repeated fall into sin, because, although he received “faith working through love” (as it is written in Gal 5:6c), he did not receive the gift of perseverance to the end (*usque ad finem perseuerantiam*), which makes it impossible for him to persevere. How can we reprimand someone who did not persevere because he had not received the gift of perseverance from God – the origin of all gifts?⁵²

This serious objection is answered by Augustine affirmatively when he writes that perseverance (*perseuerantia*) is indeed the gift of God (*magnum esse dei munus*) as it is written in Jas 1:17: “All good giving and every perfect gift is

⁵⁰ *corrept.* 6, 9, *BA* 24, p. 284–285: « Ac per hoc prima prauitas qua Deo non obeditur, ab homine est; quia ex rectitudine, in qua eum Deus primitus fecit, sua mala uoluntate decidens, prauus effectus est. An uero ideo prauitas ista corripienda non est in homine, quia non eius propria qui corripitur, sed communis est omnibus? (...) Peccata quidem ista originalia ideo dicuntur aliena, quod ea singuli de parentibus trahunt: sed non sine causa dicuntur et nostra, quia in illo uno omnes, sicut dicit Apostolus, peccauerunt. Corripiatur ergo origo damnabilis, ut ex dolore correptionis uoluntas regenerationis oriatur (...). »

⁵¹ *corrept.* 6, 9, *BA* 24, p. 286–287: « Qui si correptione compunctus salubriter ingemit, et ad similia bona opera uel etiam meliora reuertitur, nempe hic apertissime utilitas correptionis apparet. »

⁵² *corrept.* 6, 10, *BA* 24, p. 286–287.

from above, coming down from the Father of lights”.⁵³ In spite of this, rebuke is legitimate, since the one who does evil, does it willingly and there is still hope that God might grant him the gift of repentance. Augustine’s conviction is rooted in 2Tim 2:25-26: “it may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of the truth”. Augustine is strongly convinced that many biblical quotations such as the words of Christ addressed to Peter: (“But I have prayed that your own faith may not fail”, Lk 22:32), clearly indicate that Christ actually prayed for Peter’s perseverance.⁵⁴ If one asks why a person who received the grace of rebirth in baptism did not also receive the grace of faith, Augustine directs his answer to the gift of faith: some may not have received the gift of faith and others may not have received the gift of perseverance in faith. If someone receives the gift of baptism, it is given to him for free as the grace of the Saviour.⁵⁵ Humanity is currently on the level described by Augustine as *perditionis massa*. Hence, God is obliged neither to give faith nor to grant perseverance in faith. Our inner connection with Adam means that we are guilty before God and have no “legal” right to claim his love.⁵⁶

2.3. *The mystery of how free predestination by God is salvific for us*

In another part of his treatise, Augustine deals with the mystery of the inflexible and supremely free predestination of God, commenting upon the well-known verses of the Letter to the Romans 8:28-30:

“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.”⁵⁷

⁵³ *corrupt.* 6, 10, BA 24, p. 288–289.

⁵⁴ *corrupt.* 6, 10, BA 24, p. 288–292.

⁵⁵ *corrupt.* 7, 12, BA 24, p. 294–295.

⁵⁶ *corrupt.* 7, 12-13, BA 24, p. 294–296.

⁵⁷ *corrupt.* 7, 14, BA 24, p. 296–299. Augustine uses this version of the letter to the Romans 8:28-30 „Scimus quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia cooperatur in bonum, his qui secundum propositum uocati sunt: quoniam quos ante praesciuit, et praedestinavit conformes imaginis Filii sui, ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus: quos autem praedestinavit, illos et uocavit; quos autem uocavit, ipsos et iustificavit; quos autem

Augustine understood this text in the sense that before the very beginning of history, God called some people on the basis of his decision (*secundum propositum*), i.e. on the basis of his free choice not influenced by human deeds.⁵⁸ Persons chosen this way cannot be damned and they have a share in all the blessings necessary for eternal salvation. Jesus prays to his Father for the predestined ones, that none of them is lost and that they may all reach eternal life. In evidence, Jn 6:39a: “And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me”, supplemented by Jn 3:15b: “so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life”.⁵⁹

Augustine’s thinking is influenced by the verse from Mt 22:14b (“Many are invited, but few are chosen”) that helps him to interpret Rom 8:28-30. For this reason, he discerns between those who are only invited (*uocati*) and those who are elected (*electi*). None of the predestined ones can be lost, because it would mean that God is fallible.⁶⁰

To prove that his interpretation is correct, Augustine paraphrases a verse from Wis 4:10-11: “The one who pleased God was loved, living among sinners, was transported. Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul”.⁶¹ Augustine continues in the line of his predecessor Cyprian⁶², according to whom the premature death of an adult person is the manifestation of God’s grace. Anne-Marie La Bonnardière points out that Augustine often connects this text with the verse from Rom 11:33. He uses it to justify the refusal to explore God’s will, because according to Augustine, not knowing this is salvific for a man (*sed hoc quoque nobis saluberrimum esse credamus*).⁶³

iustificauit, ipsos et glorificauit”; cf. GEORGES FOLLIET: (Deus) *omnia cooperatur in bonum*, Rom. 8,28 : Les citations du verset chez Augustin. In: *Sacris erudiri*, 37, p. 33–55; FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH THONNARD: Grâce opérante et grâce coopérante selon saint Augustin. In: *Note complémentaire 4*, BA 24, p. 776.

⁵⁸ *corrupt.* 7,13, BA 24, p. 296–297.

⁵⁹ *corrupt.* 9, 21-22, BA 24, p. 314–315.

⁶⁰ *corrupt.* 7, 14, BA 24, p. 298–300: « Multi uocati, pauci electi. Quicumque enim electi, sine dubio etiam uocati: non autem quicumque uocati, consequenter electi. Illi ergo electi, ut saepe dictum est, qui secundum propositum uocati, qui etiam praedestinati atque praesciti. Horum si quisquam perit, fallitur Deus: sed nemo eorum perit, quia non fallitur Deus. »

⁶¹ *corrupt.* 8, 19, BA 24, p. 308–311: « Neque enim hoc non donat Deus quibus uoluerit, aut uero scriptura illa mentitur, quae de morte uelut immatura hominis iusti ait: “Raptus est, ne malitia mutaret intellectum eius, aut ne fictio deciperet animam eius”. »

⁶² CYPRIANUS: *De mortalitate* 23, CSEL 3A, p. 311.

⁶³ *corrupt.* 8, 17, BA 24, p. 304–305.

Of course, one would like to know the key according to which God chooses and distributes grace of perseverance. However, Augustine rejects the righteousness of this claim, because people are not capable of penetrating the essence of God. To confirm this theory, he quotes a verse from Rom 11:33: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgements and how unsearchable his ways!”⁶⁴ At the same time, Augustine warns that this must not lead us to the wrong interpretation of Christ’s prayer for Peter in the sense that Peter’s perseverance depended on his will and not on the prayer of Christ. Thus, we do not receive grace through human will, but through grace we obtain freedom; and upon grace we receive the gift of delectable perpetuation (*delectabilem perpetuitatem*) and insuperable fortitude (*insuperabilem fortitudinem*) to persevere.⁶⁵

Augustine’s argument, according to which neither the deaths of children of Christian parents who die unbaptised nor the gift of baptism granted to children of non-believers, testifies to the absence of merits of the former or the presence of merits of the latter⁶⁶, can easily be transposed to the level of monastic life. A monk who might consider his life to be ascetic and holy must realise that his stability in spiritual life is the result of sheer grace granted to him without preliminary merits. Consequently, he ought to remain humble because the gift of perseverance in the good does not necessarily mean the gift of ultimate perseverance. We do not know if somebody is predestined or not.

⁶⁴ *correct.* 8, 17, BA 24, p. 304–305: « O altitudo diuitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei! quam inscrutabilia sunt iudicia eius, et inuestigabiles uiae eius! »

⁶⁵ *correct.* 8, 17, BA 24, p. 304–305: « Rogauit pro te, Petre, ne deficiat fides tua? An audebis dicere etiam rogante Christo ne deficeret fides Petri, defecturam fuisse si Petrus eam deficere uoluisset, hoc est, si eam usque in finem perseuerare noluisset? quasi aliud Petrus ullo modo uellet, quam pro illo Christus rogasset ut uellet. Quando rogauit ergo ne fides eius deficeret, quid aliud rogauit, nisi ut haberet in fide liberrimam, fortissimam, inuictissimam, perseuerantissimam uoluntatem? Ecce quemadmodum secundum gratiam Dei, non contra eam, libertas defenditur uoluntatis. Voluntas quippe humana non libertate consequitur gratiam, sed gratia potius libertatem, et ut perseueret delectabilem perpetuitatem, et insuperabilem fortitudinem. »

⁶⁶ *correct.* 8, 18, BA 24, p. 306–307: « [...] quod filios quosdam amicorum suorum, hoc est regeneratorum bonorumque fidelium, sine baptismo hinc parvulos exeuntes, quibus utique si uellet huius lauacri gratiam procuraret, in cuius potestate sunt omnia, alienat a regno suo, quo parentes mittit illorum, et quosdam filios inimicorum suorum facit in manus Christianorum uenire, et per hoc lauacrum introducit in regnum, a quo eorum parentes alieni sunt, cum et illis malum, et istis bonum meritum nullum sit paruulis, ex eorum propria uoluntate. »

This is something that we find out later, after his departure from the monastery. In this way, Augustine interprets the verse from 1Jn 2:19.⁶⁷

Hence, our spiritual life must be lived in a certain kind of “salvific fear” recommended by Paul in Phil 2:12-13, since God is the one who works in us both the desire and the action. Augustine often returns to the topic of “salvific fear”. He uses it to address his theological message to those who are considered to be more saintly and ascetic. Humility, trust and hope in God – these are necessary Augustinian prerequisites to lead a saintly life and persevere in it. This conclusion leads the theologian of Hippo to return to the primary topic of the necessity of rebuke. Rebuke always serves good to those who are invited upon God’s decision, including rebuke *etiam quod corripitur*. Therefore, superiors should reprimand with love, though they may not know whether the reprimanded person belongs to the elect of God. If he does, this is the way to receive the grace of God. If he does not, then to rebuke means to judge.⁶⁸

2.4. Monastic humility and Adam’s refusal to be humble

In the core part of the treatise *De correptione et gratia*, Augustine deals with the issue of the non-perseverance of our forefather Adam and the support given to him by God.⁶⁹ An interesting question is why Augustine in his work dedicated to reproof in the monastery pays so much attention to Adam. He mentions one peculiar objection in this regard: God does not owe anything to anyone; he is not obliged to grant the gift of perseverance to anybody; but why wasn’t this gift granted to Adam? This objection is based on the fact that hereditary

⁶⁷ *corrupt.* 9, 20, BA 24, p. 312–313.

⁶⁸ *corrupt.* 9, 25, BA 24, p. 324–326: « Nemo ergo dicat non esse corripiendum qui exorbitat de uia iusta, sed ei redditum et perseuerantiam a Domino tantum esse poscendam (...) Si enim secundum propositum uocatus est iste, procul dubio illi, etiam quod corripitur, Deus cooperatur in bonum. Utrum autem ita sit uocatus, quoniam qui corripit nescit, faciat ipse cum caritate quod scit esse faciendum: scit enim talem corripiendum, facturo Deo aut misericordiam, aut iudicium: misericordiam quidem, si a massa perditionis ille qui corripitur, gratiae largitate discretus est, et non est inter uasa irae quae perfecta sunt in perditionem, sed inter uasa misericordiae quae praeparauit Deus in gloriam; iudicium uero, si in illis est damnatus, in his non est praedestinatus. »

⁶⁹ Cf. JEAN LÉBOURLIER: Essai sur la responsabilité du pécheur dans la réflexion de saint Augustin. In: *AM*, 3, p. 287.

guilt is based on Adam's fall and its consequences. Did Adam receive the grace of the gift of perseverance? If he did, why didn't he persevere?⁷⁰

Augustine points to the fall and perseverance of angels: some of them fell of their own will, others persevered in truth and received the gift of never falling again - the gift that would have been given to the devil and his angels as well if they had remained faithful.⁷¹ Likewise, Adam was invested with free will, so he could (if he wanted to) persevere in justice (*in statu recto*). But he allowed his free will to turn away from God (*per liberum arbitrium Deum deseruit*), so he was punished and the whole human race was punished through him. As a result, even if God does not deliver anyone, nobody could criticise His just judgement.⁷²

What kind of grace did Adam have? Could he theoretically have done without it, relying only on his free will? Augustine answers that Adam did have grace, but of a different kind (*magnam, sed disparem*), because he was not experiencing the war between his flesh and his spirit, which, according to Augustine, is described in Rom 7:23-25: "But I see in my members another principle at war with the law of my mind, taking me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with my mind, serve the law of God but, with my flesh, the law of sin".⁷³

⁷⁰ *corrept.* 10, 26, BA 24, p. 328–329: « Quomodo enim et accepisset perseuerantiam, et non perseuerasset? Porro, si propterea non habuit, quia non accepit, quid ipse non perseuerando peccauit, qui perseuerantiam non accepit? Neque enim dici potest, ideo non accepisse, quia non est discretus a massa perditionis gratiae largitate. Nondum quippe erat illa in genere humano perditionis massa antequam peccasset, ex quo tracta est origo uitiatia. »

⁷¹ *corrept.* 10, 27, BA 24, p. 330–331: « Ceteri autem per ipsum liberum arbitrium in ueritate steterunt, eamque de suo casu numquam futuro certissimam scire meruerunt. (...) Certum est igitur hoc eos nosse per speciem, quod nos per fidem, nullam scilicet ruinam cuiusquam sancti angeli iam futuram. »

⁷² *corrept.* 10, 28, BA 24, p. 332–333: « In quo statu recto ac sine uitio, si per ipsum liberum arbitrium manere uoluisset, profecto sine ullo mortis et infelicitatis exexperimento, acciperet illam, merito huius permansionis, beatitudinis plenitudinem, qua et sancti Angeli sunt beati, id est, ut cadere non posset ulterius, et hoc certissime sciret. (...) Quia uero per liberum arbitrium Deum deseruit, iustum iudicium Dei expertus est, ut cum tota sua stirpe, quae in illo adhuc posita tota cum illo peccauerat, damnaretur. (...) Unde etiamsi nullus liberaretur, iustum Dei iudicium nemo iuste reprehenderet. »

⁷³ *corrept.* 11, 29, BA 24, p. 334–335: « Ille uero nulla tali rixa de se ipso aduersus se ipsum tentatus atque turbatus, in illo beatitudinis loco sua secum pace fruebatur. »

That is why, also, grace given to contemporary people is more powerful (*potentiore gratia*). It means participation on the grace of Jesus Christ who received it for free thanks to his connection with the Word of God; grace that kept the human side of Christ in the state of unshakeable justice. Through this Mediator who could never become evil, God makes those whom He redeemed from evil by His blood, everlastingly good.⁷⁴

Adam had grace in which if he willed to abide, he would never be evil. He did not have to ask God to give him the grace of good will; however, he could freely reject the assistance of God.⁷⁵ Adam decided to forsake this assistance and he remained forsaken (*se deseruit, et desertus est*). The grace granted to Adam didn't give him the will to want good, whereas we are granted grace by which we desire good.⁷⁶ So, is God guilty of not having given the grace of desire to Adam?

No, because Augustine says not that Adam didn't need God's assistance to do good, but emphasises that he didn't lack this aid. Adam didn't need the grace of desire because he was in a different condition than we are today; neither did he need to demand this grace. This wasn't because he could do without it, but because it was at hand for him – accessible (*quia non deerat*).⁷⁷ While we pray to praise God and ask for grace, Adam's prayer was the prayer of praise. As Augustine affirms, Adam did not have to beg for grace because it was right beside him.⁷⁸ Adam did not have to pray like we do in the Lord's

⁷⁴ *corrept.* 11, 30, BA 24, p. 336–337: « Deus ergo naturam nostram, id est animam rationalem carcamemque hominis Christi suscepit, susceptione singulariter mirabili uel mirabiliter singulari, ut nullis iustitiae suae praecedentibus meritis Filius Dei sic esset ab initio quo esse homo coepisset, ut ipse et Verbum quod sine initio est, una persona esset. (...) Ista natiuitas profecto gratuita coniunxit in unitate personae hominem Deo, carnem Verbo. Istam natiuitatem bona opera secuta sunt, non bona opera meruerunt. (...) Per hunc Mediatorem Deus ostendit eos, quos eius sanguine redemit, facere se ex malis deinceps in aeternum bonos, quem sic suscepit, ut numquam esset malus, nec ex malo factus semper esset bonus. »

⁷⁵ *ench.* 28, 107, BA 9, p. 298–299: « Sic ergo factus est homo rectus, ut et manere in ea rectitudine posset non sine adiutorio diuino, et suo fieri peruersus arbitrio ».

⁷⁶ *corrept.* 11, 31, BA 24, p. 338–339.

⁷⁷ *corrept.* 11, 32, BA 24, p. 340–341. Cf. PIERRE-MARIE HOMBERT: *Gloria Gratiae : Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce*. op. cit., p. 294, note. 133.

⁷⁸ *corrept.* 11, 32, BA 24, p. 342–343: « Fit quippe in nobis per hanc Dei gratiam in bono recipiendo et perseueranter tenendo, non solum posse quod uolumus, uerum etiam uelle quod possumus. Quod non fuit in homine primo: unum enim horum in illo fuit, alterum

prayer: “but deliver us from evil”. Neither had he to cry for help, but he should have acknowledged that it was the gift of God. What Augustine wants to say is that if Adam persevered, which he could have done, he could boast not in himself but only in God.

Thus, Adam could have been more saintly than us, but he could not be less dependent on the grace of God. It is hard for us to imagine Adam emancipated from God in Eden. In the fourteenth book of *De ciuitate Dei*, dated by Gustave Bardy approximately to the year 420 (though it could have been written later⁷⁹), Augustine clearly says that even in Eden it was unthinkable for a man to live well without the assistance of God.⁸⁰ The principle of the sovereignty of God’s grace did not exist only after Adam’s fall; even the angels who persevered were supposed to testify that “whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord” (1Cor 1:31). Further, I am convinced that this is the reason why Augustine wrote around the year 417 in the twelfth book of *De ciuitate Dei*, that good angels are “*amplius adiuti*” (“more strongly aided”).⁸¹

However, it was necessary for Adam to acknowledge that this grace is also the gift of God. According to my interpretation, the fact that Augustine asserted that God’s assistance was given as grace (*secundum gratiam*) and not as a reward (*secundum debitum*)⁸² must not lead us to the conclusion that God had

non fuit. Namque ut reciperet bonum, gratia non egebat, quia nondum perdidit; ut autem in eo permaneret, egebat adiutorio gratiae, sine quo id omnino non posset; et acceperat posse si uellet, sed non habuit uelle quod posset: nam si habuisset, perseuerasset. » cf. JEAN CHENE: Les deux économies de la grâce d’après le *De correptione et gratia*. In: *BA*, 24, note. 11, p. 796.

⁷⁹ Cf. GUSTAV BARDY: Introduction. In: *BA*, 33, p. 29.

⁸⁰ *ciu.* XIV, 27, *BA* 35, p. 462–463: « [...] ita bene uiuere sine adiutorio, etiam in Paradiso non erat in potestate [...] » cf. GUSTAV BARDY: Introduction. In: *BA*, p. 28.

⁸¹ *ciu.* XII, 9, 1, *BA* 35, p. 174–176: « Isti autem, qui, cum boni creati essent, tamen mali sunt [mala propria uoluntate, quam bona natura non fecit, nisi cum a bono sponte defecit, ut mali causa non sit bonum, sed defectus a bono], aut minorem acceperunt diuini amoris gratiam quam illi, qui in eadem perstiterunt, aut si utrique boni aequaliter creati sunt, istis mala uoluntate cadentibus illi amplius adiuti ad eam beatitudinis plenitudinem, unde se numquam casuros certissimi fierent, peruenerunt; sicut iam etiam in libro, quem sequitur iste, tractauimus. »

⁸² *corrupt.* 11, 32, *BA* 24, p. 340–341: « Nunc autem quibus deest tale adiutorium, iam poena peccati est: quibus autem datur, secundum gratiam datur, non secundum debitum; et tanto amplius datur per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum, quibus id dare Deo placuit, ut non solum adist sine quo permanere non possumus, etiam si uelimus, uerum etiam tantum ac tale sit, ut uelimus. »

to grant necessary assistance to Adam. Adam received grace as well (*secundum gratiam*); Augustine wanted only to suggest that if Adam persevered, he should have boasted in the Lord. In Augustinian theology, it is unimaginable that God should have to give Himself or that He should give something to a man. God gives Himself only because he loves people and if he “owes” anything, he owes it within love – the only power urging Him to do things.

I think that the best explanation of this issue can be found in the second book of *The Sentences* by Peter Lombard, in which he describes the case of Adam and his perseverance in the following way: “He truly had nothing to move his legs without grace that operates and cooperates, but he still had something upon which he could remain standing.”⁸³ Thanks to grace, Adam was able to not turn away from God (*discedit a Deo*), but he was not able to walk without Him any further; he could not do good to boast in himself. Hence, humility was supposed to be Adam’s virtue. It is also our virtue today, but to a much wider extent, because we are in the position of sinners.

Humility was supposed to be Adam’s crucial virtue, the same virtue that should have been natural for Christians. As Henri Lubac commented, “... one more reason to be humble, but not more humble than Adam”.⁸⁴ This points to the fact that humility is not the result of original sin. True and genuine humility has its roots in Eden and Adam should have been humble before his sin. Humility is not a negative virtue testifying to human disability; quite the contrary – it transforms into praise, because people acknowledge that they have been created by God and that he created them for Himself. Augustine writes

⁸³ PETER LOMBARD: *Sententiarum quatuor libri* II, distinctio 29,1, *PL* 192, col. 719: « Non enim habebat quo pedem mouere posset sine gratiae operantis et cooperantis auxilio; habuit tamen quo poterat stare. » Porov. *Sententiarum quatuor libri* II, distinctio 24, 1, *PL* 192, col. 701–702: « [...] datum est per gratiam auxilium, et collata est potentia per quam poterat stare, id est, non declinare ab eo quod acceperat; sed non poterat proficere in tantum, ut per gratiam creationis sine alia mereri salutem ualeret. Poterat quidem per illud auxilium gratiae creationis resistere malo, sed non perficere bonum. Poterat tamen per illud bene uiuere quodammodo, qui poterat uiuere sine peccato; sed non poterat sine alio gratiae adiutorio spiritualiter uiuere, quo uitam mereretur aeternam [...] His testimoniis euidenter monstratur quod homo rectitudinem et bonam uoluntatem in creatione accipit, atque auxilium quo stare potuit. » Cf. HENRI DE LUBAC: *Augustinisme et théologie moderne*, p. 124, note. 3.

⁸⁴ HENRI DE LUBAC: *Augustinisme et théologie moderne*. Paris, Cerf, 2008, p. 121: „(...) à un titre de plus être humble, mais non plus humble.“

in his *Confessiones*⁸⁵ that man has been created for God to praise Him, and he should acknowledge it. I would like to point out that humility is *humilitas* in the Latin language, derived from the word *humus* – soil. A humble man is a man whose life is rooted in the soil - therefore, he is not God.

2.4.1. *Adiutorium sine quo non* and *adiutorium quo*

To explain this issue in a better way, Augustine distinguishes between God's assistance by grace without which something does not happen (*adiutorium sine quo non*), and that through which something happens (*adiutorium quo*). He likens this to the example of food without which it is impossible to live, though the presence of food will not preserve the life of a person who wants to die.⁸⁶

The first grace was given to Adam as the grace of perseverance, without which he would not have been able to persevere despite having free will. It was not a kind of assistance by grace that would enable him to persevere. But to the predestined ones God gives grace *adiutorium quo* that provides them with perseverance.⁸⁷ Augustine's argument is based on two verses of Jn 15:5b.16a: "... because without me you can do nothing." "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain." According to Augustine, people need the assistance of grace to be able to face the temptations that oppress them. That is why, once this liberating grace

⁸⁵ *conf.* I, 1, 1, BA 13, p. 272–273: « Tu excitas, ut laudare te delectat, quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te. »

⁸⁶ *corrept.* 12, 34, BA 24, p. 342: « Itemque ipsa adiutoria distinguenda sunt. Aliud est adiutorium sine quo aliquid non fit, et aliud est adiutorium quo aliquid fit. Nam sine alimentis non possumus uiuere, nec tamen cum adfuerint alimenta, eis fit ut uiuat qui mori uoluerit. Ergo adiutorium alimentorum est sine quo non fit, non quo fit ut uiuamus. (...) Alimenta uero non consequenter faciunt ut homo uiuat; sed tamen sine illis non potest uiuere. » cf. JOSEPH LÖSSL: De correptione et gratia (Ueber Zurechtweisung und Gnade). In: *Augustinus Handbuch.* op.cit., p. 343.

⁸⁷ *corrept.* 12, 34, BA 24, p. 346: « Primo itaque homini (...) datum est adiutorium perseuerantiae, non quo fieret ut perseueraret, sed sine quo per liberum arbitrium perseuerare non posset. Nunc uero sanctis in regnum Dei per gratiam Dei praedestatis, non tale adiutorium perseuerantiae datur, sed tale ut eis perseuerantia ipsa donetur: non solum ut sine isto dono perseuerantes esse non possint, uerum etiam ut per hoc donum non nisi perseuerantes sint. »

makes them good, it preserves their goodness to the end.⁸⁸ Hence, the bishop of Hippo arrives at the following spiritual attitude: man really has no reason to boast before God. Augustine supports his arguments with one of his favourite quotations from 1Cor 1:31: “Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord.”⁸⁹

Adiutorium sine quo non, the grace once granted to Adam is henceforth granted to other people. In addition, according to Augustine, God also gives his elect *adiutorium quo*, thanks to which the elect irreversibly and insuperably (*indeclinabiliter et insuperabiliter*) win out over temptation.⁹⁰

2.5. The limited number of those who receive grace

In regard to the number of persons to whom God gives the grace *adiutorium quo*, Augustine believes that their quantity is fixed.⁹¹ This part of his teaching provoked the disagreement of the monks of Hadrumetum. Why bother with the spiritual battle in the monastery if a man who wins over temptation cannot change this fixed number?

If we are to understand Augustine’s vocabulary, it is necessary to consider several facts. The number of people who are granted the assistance of the grace *adiutorium quo* is fixed.⁹² Augustine’s vocabulary is anti-Manichean in this

⁸⁸ *corrept.* 12, 35, BA 24, p. 348: « Maior quippe libertas est necessaria aduersus tot et tantas tentationes, quae in paradiso non fuerunt, dono perseuerantiae munita atque firmata, ut cum omnibus amoribus, terroribus, erroribus suis uincatur hic mundus: hoc sanctorum martyria docuerunt. »

⁸⁹ *corrept.* 12, 37, BA 24, p. 352–354: « lacuit enim Deo, quo maxime humanae superbiam praesumptionis exstingueret, ut non gloriatur omnis caro coram ipso, id est, omnis homo. (...) ta ergo non gloriatur omnis caro coram ipso. Non enim gloriantur iniusti, qui non habent unde; nec iusti, quia ex ipso habent unde, nec habent gloriam suam nisi ipsum, cui dicunt: Gloria mea, et exaltans caput meum. Ac per hoc ad omnem hominem pertinet quod scriptum est: Ut non gloriatur omnis caro coram ipso. Ad iustos autem illud: Qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur. »

⁹⁰ *corrept.* 12, 38, BA 24, p. 356: « Subuentum est igitur infirmitati uoluntatis humanae, ut diuina gratia indeclinabiliter et insuperabiliter ageretur; et ideo, quamuis infirma, non tamen deficeret, neque aduersitate aliqua uinceretur. » Cf. CAROL HARRISON: Delectatio uictrix : Gracia y libertad en san Agustin. In: *Augustinus*, 40, 1995, p. 105–110.

⁹¹ *corrept.* 13, 39, BA 24, p. 358–359: « Haec de his loquor, qui praedestinati sunt in regnum Dei, quorum ita certus est numerus, ut nec addatur eis quisquam, nec minuatur ex eis [...] ».

⁹² *corrept.* 13, 39, BA 24, p. 358–359: « Haec de his loquor, qui praedestinati sunt in regnum Dei, quorum ita certus est numerus, ut nec addatur eis quisquam, nec minuatur ex eis (...). »

regard: there is only one God who rules over everything and there is no other god who could influence his decisions or modify them. This is why the theologian of Hippo insists on the number (*numerus*) determined by God, who *nec addatur – nec minuatur*. Augustine distinguishes between two ontologically different systems that cannot be mixed. There is the decision of God to create mankind and save it, the decision from eternity. This decision of God exists in a changeless presence along with the last judgement and final glorification of the predestined ones: this is the fixed number mentioned above. It appears that for this reason, the will of God is certain (*certa*) and very effective (*efficacissima*). Then, there is a historical temporality, in which the “first” part of God’s decision is made and developed. The history of salvation “takes place” within temporality, but from God’s point of view, the beginning and the end of this history have already been “decided”. Thus, the action of God is not stipulated by chronological time, because time itself and the people who live in it have been created by God, too. The fixed number of people who will be saved and condemned is not based on the decision of predestination but on foreknowledge of God, because the beginning and the end of the history of salvation is “one mere moment” for God.

If we want to understand Augustine, we must not put “atemporal” decisions of God on the same level as the ways in which we come to know them in time. In addition, it is important to mention that Augustine does not talk about *ante praeuisa merita* (previous to any foreseen merits), nor about *post praeuisa merita* (subsequent upon God’s foreknowledge of man’s merits). Theologically, he acknowledges only *sine ullis praecedentibus meritis* (without any previous merits)⁹³ The statement that the grace *adiutorium quo* is given to the elect is made from God’s point of view, not that of humanity. Augustine points to the fact that God’s decision about the number of the predestined is hidden mainly for spiritual reasons, so that people do not become conceited (*ne forte quis extollatur*).⁹⁴ This uncertainty does not leave any space for spiritual conceit, because believers do not know whether they belong to the group of the predestined or not: the conceit of an ascetic man, as well as the despair of a sinner, are eliminated. Nobody knows whether another person is or is not predestined. If it was not like this, nobody would preserve the attitude of fear, which Au-

⁹³ Cf. AGOSTINO TRAPÈ: *S. Agostino : Introduzione alla dottrina della Grazia* II, p. 181–187.

⁹⁴ *corrept.* 13, 40, BA 24, p. 360–361.

gustine believes to be very useful in the battle against conceit.⁹⁵ Augustine was convinced that spiritual life may result in a certain kind of false certainty based on one's own merits, which leads to conceit (*ut superbiam possit generare securitas*), and wanted to avoid this danger. True certainty can only relate to angels who persevere and it will be granted to people at the end of time.

2.8. 1Tim 2:4 – Pastoral practice and predestination

After this explanation of predestination, Augustine returns to the original issue of the monks of Hadrumetum, emphasizing that rebuke not only isn't in contradiction with his teaching on undeservable grace, but it actually works to the benefit of it. For the predestined, rebuke is "*salubre medicamentum*", while for the others it is "*poenale tormentum*".⁹⁶ But how should we understand the biblical verse from 1Tim 2:4: "who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth", according to which God wants the salvation of all people? In his treatise *De correptione et gratia*, as well as in his earlier work *Enchiridion*, Augustine offers a rather restrictive exegesis⁹⁷, according to which the word *omnes* (all) means all predestined, that is, those who will actually reach eternal salvation.

What led him to such an exegesis? Apart from other reasons, Augustine draws inspiration from certain verses of the Bible, for example from Lk 11:42: "You pay tithes... of every garden herb" – *omne olus*" and 1Cor 10:33: "just as I try to please everyone in every way" – *Sicut et ego omnibus per omnia placeo*⁹⁸, where *omnes* has a substitutive meaning. In this treatise, Augustine understands the verse from 1Tim 2:4 in the way that the elect belong to various groups of people.⁹⁹ But Augustine's attitude often changed, offering various different understandings of this verse. For example, in the epistle No. 217, 19

⁹⁵ *corrept.* 13, 40, *BA* 24, p. 360–361: « Nam propter huius utilitatem secreti, ne forte quis extollatur, sed omnes etiam qui bene currunt timeant, dum occultum est qui perueniant [...] Quorum si nemini contigisset, tamdiu haberent homines istum saluberrimum timorem, quo uitium elationis opprimitur [...] ».

⁹⁶ *corrept.* 14, 43, *BA* 24, p. 366–367: « (...) ut si is qui corripitur, ad praedestinatorum numerum pertinet, sit ei correptio salubre medicamentum; si autem non pertinet, sit ei correptio poenale tormentum. »

⁹⁷ *ench.* 103, 27, *BA* 9, p. 289–293.

⁹⁸ *corrept.* 14, 44, *BA* 24, p. 368.

⁹⁹ *ench.* 27,103, *BA* 9, p. 288–293.

addressed to Vitalis (between the years 426 – 428), Augustine expresses his opinion that only people whose salvation is desired by God will be saved.¹⁰⁰

But how to perform pastoral care on the basis of such an exegesis? According to Augustine, it is necessary that pastoral action be based on inner desire for the salvation of all people. This attitude should be natural for every Christian and the desire for the salvation of one's neighbour should inspire every regulation of the Church, including the one concerning punishment. Punishment described by Augustine as *damnatio*, which includes *excommunicatio* of lay people, *proiicere* of monks or *degradatio* of priests (ecclesial relevance of punishments is basically the same), always aims at the chastening of sinners.¹⁰¹ But because we do not know who belongs to the number of the predestined, Augustine says it is our duty to be inspired by the example of Jesus Christ who died "*pro omnibus*" on the cross and, to strive for the salvation of all people through our prayer and rebuke.¹⁰²

In general, Augustine's thinking is influenced by his Manichean past and by his battle against the Manicheans when he paid more attention to the concrete effectiveness and the power of God's decision. His past did not allow him to acknowledge a theological possibility of the situation in which God would want to save certain people but he would not succeed, because he would be influenced by some kind of external power stronger than Himself. Augustine says that God does whatever He desires and He does not desire anything that

¹⁰⁰ *ep.* 217, 19, *CSEL* 57, p. 417: « Sed sicut illud quod dictum est: "omnes in Christo uiuificabuntur", cum tam multi aeterna morte puniantur, ideo dictum est, quia omnes quicumque uitam aeternam percipiunt, non percipiunt nisi in Christo: ita quod dictum est, "omnes homines uult Deus saluos fieri", cum tam multos nolit saluos fieri, ideo dictum est, quia omnes qui salui fiunt, nisi ipso uolente non fiunt; et si quo alio modo illa uerba apostolica intellegi possunt, ut tamen huic apertissimae ueritati, in qua uidemus tam multos, uolentibus hominibus, sed Deo nolente, saluos non fieri, contraria esse non possint. »

¹⁰¹ *corrupt.* 14, 46, *BA* 24, p. 372–374: « Quia et ipsa quae damnatio nominatur, quam facit episcopale iudicium, qua poena in Ecclesia nulla maior est, potest, si Deus uoluerit, in correptionem saluberrimam cedere atque proficere. Neque enim scimus quid contingat sequenti die; aut ante finem uitae huius de aliquo desperandum est (...) ab illo, cui nihil est impossibile, ipsa forsitan separatione sanandam. »

¹⁰² *corrupt.* 14, 46, *BA* 24, p. 374: « Nescientes enim quis pertineat ad praedestinatorum numerum, quis non pertineat, sic affici debemus caritatis affectu, ut omnes uelimus saluos fieri. (...) Ad nos ergo qui nescimus quisnam sit filius pacis, aut non sit, pertinet nullum exceptum facere, nullumque discernere; sed uelle omnes saluos fieri, quibus praedicamus hanc pacem. »

he does not do. The Psalm 135:6 taught him that “*omnia quae uoluit, fecit*” (whatever the Lord desires he does)¹⁰³. That is why, he emphasizes that God has the power to move the human heart the way He desires.¹⁰⁴ However, on the other hand, we need to realize that Augustine would never accept a God who would behave in an arbitrary way. God always acts with love and under its influence. The idea presented in *De correptione et gratia* is clear: Holy Scripture does not allow us to think that one could live holy earthly life and deserve eternal life only thanks to his own effort, without the assistance of God’s grace.

According to the Augustinian theology of monastic life, monks do not deserve the grace of religious life, they do not deserve the grace of holy life and they do not deserve the grace of perseverance in such a life to the end. People only receive this gift thanks to God’s grace. They can do nothing to deserve it and they can do nothing to deserve perseverance. Therefore, they cannot boast about living holy life. In this regard, I would like to draw attention to the opinion of Jean-Marie Salamito, according to which we can assume that Augustine, Julian of Eclanum and the monks of Marseille maintained the same theological position regarding the small number of chosen and saved people.¹⁰⁵ And we can also assume that the monks of Hadrumetum shared the same attitude. We can see that Augustine does not disclaim the general principle of salvation. He rejects a certain kind of monastic Pharisaism, which we understand as a concept according to which salvation is the reward given by God who **MUST** grant it to anyone who deserves it. What would be the difference between a Pharisee of the New Testament who wants to reach salvation only thanks to his own effort, and a monk who wants to obtain it thanks to the quality of his spiritual life, if God was obliged to grant salvation to both of them?

The theologian of Hippo concludes his work with one more interesting exegesis of this biblical passage that has not been thoroughly examined within the framework of the Augustinian corpus, yet. According to this interpretation, although we do not know who will be saved, God commands us to desire the salvation of all people with whom we get in touch. God Himself awakens this desire inside of us by pouring the love of the Holy Spirit into our hearts (para-

¹⁰³ *ench.* 24, 97, *BA* 9, p. 274–275.

¹⁰⁴ *corrept.* 14, 45, *BA* 24, p. 370–371: « Numquid aliquis dicturus est, non iturum fuisse cum Saul, quemquam eorum quorum tetigit corda Dominus ut irent cum illo; aut isse aliquem pestilentium, quorum ut hoc facerent corda non tetigit? »

¹⁰⁵ JEAN-MARIE SALAMITO: *Les virtuoses et la multitude. Aspects sociaux de la controverse entre Augustin et les pélagiens*, p. 276.

phrasing Augustine's favourite quotation from Rom 5:5: "the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us"). Augustine quotes the verse from Gal 4:6: "As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, Abba, Father!", along with the verse from Rom 8:15: "but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, Father!", explaining that the Spirit of God, whom we received, awakens our desire for the salvation of all people. Hence, God deserves and wants the salvation of all people and He wants to achieve it through us.¹⁰⁶ This final exegesis of Augustine becomes theologically very interesting if we take into account another of his favourite quotations from Prov 8,35 (quoted according to Septuaginta): *praeparatus uoluntas a Domino* – the will is prepared by the Lord.

How should we understand that God prepares our will for the desire by pouring the Holy Spirit out into our hearts where he awakens our thirst for the salvation of all mankind, if God's grace is not given in vain!? Do we find some unexpected extension of Augustine's attitude here? Unfortunately, Augustine will not be able to answer this question, but it would be interesting to interpret the teaching on grace from this point of view. It would not be the first time that Augustine had left several unfinished thoughts, some of which have been adopted by later theologians and some have not.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to stress my crucial argument that the intention of the treatise *De correptione et gratia* is not to elaborate some abstract theory of predestination, but to lead people to inner conversion and to the humble reception of Christ's grace. When Augustine talks about predestination in his work *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, each passage ends with a quotation from Eph 2:(8)9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not

¹⁰⁶ *correct.* 14, 47, BA 24, p. 376–377: « Quia ergo nos qui salui futuri sint nescientes, omnes quibus praedicamus hanc pacem saluos fieri uelle Deus iubet, et ipse in nobis hoc operatur, diffundendo istam caritatem in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est nobis, potest etiam sic intellegi quod omnes homines Deus uult saluos fieri, quoniam nos facit uelle: sicut misit Spiritum Filii sui clamantem: Abba, Pater, id est, nos clamare facientem. De ipso quippe Spiritu, alio loco dicit: Accepimus Spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus: Abba, Pater. Nos ergo clamamus, sed ille clamare dictus est, qui efficit ut clamemus. »

from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast”. Therefore, Augustine’s theory on grace should be understood in the spiritual context of the speech on conceit and humility.¹⁰⁷ The theology of grace and predestination seen through the prism of religious life prevents monks from considering themselves to be the creators of their own salvation, independently from God. When it comes to salvation, monks are only left with insecurity (*insecuritas*). To underline this fact, Augustine insists that we have all sinned in Adam. The monk to whom the theologian of Hippo addresses his treatise *On grace and rebuke*, cannot be sure of his own salvation, in spite of all his efforts. Furthermore, he has no right to claim the love of God. He cannot boast about his deeds, because he does not know if he is predestined. His life is situated in the historical and spiritual position between “being able not to sin/being able not to die” (*posse non peccare/posse non mori*) and the eschatological completion of “not being able to sin/not being able to die” (*non posse peccare/non posse mori*): his position is defined as “not being able not to sin/not being able not to die” (*non posse non peccare/non posse non mori*).¹⁰⁸ Humility of heart is the only virtue that remains. A humble monk behaves in a humble way, praying and reprimanding his brothers and desiring their salvation. I believe that Augustine’s attitude towards predestination was best expressed by François Cayré: “Live as if you were predestined to find out one day that you really are.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *praed. sanct.* 2, 6, *BA* 24, p. 474–475: « Cauendum est, fratres dilecti a Deo, ne homo se extollat aduersus Deum, cum se dicit facere quod promisit Deus »; *praed. sanct.* 7, 12, *BA* 24, p. 500–501; *praed. sanct.*, 10, 19, *BA* 24, p. 522–523; *perseu.* 14, 36, *BA* 24, p. 684–686: « Nec rursus, praedicatione fidei proficientis et usque ad ultimum permanentis, impedienda est praedicatio praedestinationis, ut qui fideliter et obedienter uiuit, non de ipsa obedientia tamquam de suo non accepto bono extollatur, sed qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur »; *perseu.* 22, 59, *BA* 24, p. 742–744: « Si qui autem adhuc in peccatorum damnabilium delectatione remoramini, apprehendite saluberrimam disciplinam; quod tamen cum feceritis, nolite extolli quasi de operibus uestris, aut gloriari quasi hoc non acceperitis: “Deus est enim qui operatur in uobis et uelle et operari”, pro bona uoluntate [...] ».

¹⁰⁸ *corrept.* 12, 33, *BA* 24, p. 344–345; *ciu.* XXII, 30, 3, *BA* 37, p. 710–711; cf. VITTORINO GROSSI: L’antropologia cristiana negli scritti di Agostino (*De gratia et libero arbitrio, De correptione et gratia*). In: *Studi storico religiosi*, IV/1, p. 104–108.

¹⁰⁹ FRANÇOIS CAYRÉ: *Patrologie et Histoire des dogmes* I. Paris, 1953, p. 816–817: « Vivez en prédestinés pour apprendre un jour que vous l’étiez. »