

XI Augustine and the Manufacture of Scripture

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

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

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

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

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

Cephas the head or Peter the rock

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Emperor's Authority

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Getting away with it: the variable text

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

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

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

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

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

The Sword does the Will of God

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

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

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

AND HE DOES NOT HAVE ONE !!!

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

Book # 7 to the rescue

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

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

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

The Mystery of the Seventh Book

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

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

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

controlling the books

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Augustine wrote it

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

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

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

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

The Sword is Good for You !

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

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

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

Saint Paul never wrote it

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

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

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

The Stuck In Verse

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Satan Lied to Jesus [addition to page 117]

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

Is it *clear that the devil lied* to Jesus ? Did Satan assume that he could fool Jesus ? Apparently, he did fool Him, because Jesus took the temptation at face value and said nothing contrary to Satan's claim. Apparently Jesus was still fooled when he referred to Satan as *the prince of this world* in John 12.31, 14.30 and 16.11. And Jesus presents *this world* as the antagonist of Himself and his true followers. (See **Appendix A Friendship with the World is Enmity with**

God) In 2 Corinthians 4.4 Paul goes so far as to call Satan *the god of this world*. So Paul was fooled also. And Revelation, which describes a great battle between Jesus and his followers and *the kings of the earth* who are controlled by *the beast* in 19.11-21. In Revelation 13.2-4 the authority of *the beast* comes from the dragon. Who is none other than Satan himself as 12.9 shows. That is, the authority of the Roman Empire comes from Satan. The Roman Empire was the epitome of the state, the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Like Eusebius, Augustine believed in the Empire. It is possible that Irenaeus did also, but much more likely that they made him into a posthumous convert.

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

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

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

twisting scripture

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This article is a chapter from my book The Church of the Empire, an historical analysis of the Church founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine and the 100 year persecution of the non-conforming Christian Church of North Africa. Based upon Optatus, Augustine, Eusebius, and other documents and histories of the period.

To order a CD-ROM containing The Church of the Empire, please send a \$20 check or money order to Terry Sullivan 1526 East 35th Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80205.