

Peter Martyr Vermigli's Augustinian notion of concupiscence

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This article joins a growing body of scholarship by exploring largely forgotten Reformation figures, such as Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), and examining how Vermigli made use of the church fathers – Augustine, in our case – in his own context. It argues that Vermigli fundamentally affirms Augustine's understanding of concupiscence by viewing the primal sin that caused concupiscence as implying the loss of original righteousness, which in turn gave rise to inherited guilt. Vermigli, following Augustine, views the condition of concupiscence as a manifestation of original sin, which results in the total depravity of humanity. However, God's redemptive work does not end with depravity – concupiscence also calls for the justification of believers by the grace of Jesus Christ. The constitution of Vermigli's understanding of concupiscence demonstrates that he essentially affirms Augustine's position, even though there are places where he does not slavishly follow Augustine and instead develops a distinctive Reformed understanding of the subject.

Contribution: This article fills a void in Vermigli studies by analysing how he utilises Augustine to substantiate a Reformed position on concupiscence in contrast to Pighius' view. The analysis reveals the structure of Vermigli's hamartiology and illuminates the places where it is in continuity with or deviates from Augustine's perspective.

Keywords: Vermigli; Augustine; concupiscence; sin; justification; Calvin.

Introduction

Peter Martyr Vermigli's *Loci Communes*, or *Common Places*, published by the Reformed minister Robert Masson (also known as Robert Le Maçon) 14 years after Vermigli's death in 1576, is a compilation of his Bible commentaries and systematic discussions of theological topics (McLelland 2009). The recent publication of a new series of English translations of portions of the *Loci Communes* has made Vermigli's largely understudied work more accessible to the public.¹ This new series of translations thus far consists of three volumes; this study primarily references the first, which contains his treatise on sin (Vermigli 2019, hereafter cited in abbreviated form as LC),² while the second and third volumes include his treatise on free will, law and providence (Vermigli 2021, 2024). Despite being one of the most revered Reformed theologians of the 16th century, much of his theological thought has been overshadowed by John Calvin and has remained largely unknown to the public. Thus, this article seeks to contribute to a growing body of scholarship by exploring largely forgotten Reformation figures, such as Vermigli, and examining how he made use of the church fathers (Augustine, in our case) in his own time.

Vermigli was known as an outstanding preacher [*praedicatorum eximium*] in the Augustinian order before his conversion to Protestantism sometime between 1537 and 1540 (Castaldo 2019). After his conversion, Vermigli continued to make use of his expertise in Augustine to fend off erroneous teachings by his theological opponents. Through the methods of comparison, historical analysis and interpretation of Vermigli's and Augustine's works on sin and grace, I show how Vermigli developed a mature view of concupiscence in relation to Augustine's understanding of sin and grace while refuting the position of the Pelagian thinker Albert Pighius (c. 1490–1542) on the

1.The original Latin edition of *Loci Communes* was published in 1576 under the title *Loci communes, ex varijs ipsius aucthoris et libris in vnum volumen collecti, et quatuor classes distributi*. Anthonie Marten translated the *Loci* to English in 1583 under the title of *The Common Places of the most famous and renowned diuine Doctor Peter Martyr divided into four principal parts: with a large addition of manie theologicall and necessarie discourses, some neuer extant before*. The *Loci* is divided into four parts, and, in addition to these, it also includes writings such as his theological work on the eucharist, along with other philosophical and exegetical works. For a detailed study on how Vermigli's *Loci Communes* came together, see McLelland (2009).

2.The translator of this volume of the *Loci Communes*, Summers (2019:xxvii) established 18 new chapter headings, followed by the original section divisions. This entire volume on concupiscence and original sin belongs to the first chapter in the second part of the *Loci*. In this study, my references follow Summers' chapter and section divisions. I also reference the parts, chapters and sections of the 1583 English translations of the *Loci*.

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matter. My thesis is that Vermigli fundamentally affirms Augustine's understanding of concupiscence by viewing the primal sin that caused concupiscence as implying the loss of original righteousness, which in turn gave rise to inherited guilt. Vermigli, following Augustine, views the condition of concupiscence as a manifestation of original sin, which results in the total depravity of humanity. Yet God's redemptive work does not end with depravity: concupiscence also calls for the justification of believers by the grace of Jesus Christ. To substantiate my claim, I first define Augustine's notion of concupiscence and then unpack each of the theological components associated with it.

Augustine on concupiscence

Augustine views concupiscence as a distorted passion in human nature. Plainly speaking, concupiscence refers to the dark and unruly passion that weakens a person's moral integrity. The notion itself has a Pauline origin (cf. Rm 1:24, 7:7–8, 7:23–25; Gl 5:16–24), expressing the prevailing human condition in light of the loss of God's initial and protective grace over human nature. Besides this broad sense of concupiscence, understood as disordered desire, Augustine at times also views carnal concupiscence in a narrower sense, associating it directly with sexual concupiscence [*concupiscentia sexualis*] and libido. This latter, narrower sense of carnal concupiscence can be seen as the manifestation of the unruly motions that go off the rails of our will and become 'the law of sin' (cf. Rm 7:23–24) that offends God's command (Van Oort 2018:4, 8; *Pecc. mer.* 1.29.57, 2.5.5 in WSA I.23; *Conf.* 10.42.67 in WSA I.1; *C. Iul.* 4.14.66–67 in WSA I.24).³ Vermigli's discussions on carnal concupiscence generally refer to the broad and not the narrow sense of the concept (cf. LC 17.49) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.49).

For Augustine, human beings – and their very nature – are fully dependent on God's grace. This prelapsarian condition (cf. Gn 1–2) precedes the unfortunate post-lapsarian condition of concupiscence (cf. Gn 3), which denotes the absence and incompleteness of God's grace. Contrary to his Pelagian opponents, who affirm a highly optimistic anthropology that overlooks fallen human nature's inability to acquire God's grace, Augustine argues that concupiscence implies sinful human beings' deliberate withdrawal from God's initial and protective grace. Augustine views concupiscence as the direct consequence of the withdrawal of divine grace, even though he also maintains that concupiscence will be abolished at the fullness of grace in the second coming of Jesus Christ (Burnell 1999:224). Put differently, God withdrew his initial and protective grace from human beings not because he was any less gracious towards them, but because the seriousness of concupiscence had affected the very makeup of human beings, rendering them unable to attain grace by their own weakened nature and will.

In light of Augustine's understanding of concupiscence and its relation to the concept of grace, Vermigli (LC 5.10)

³Unless otherwise noted, I referenced all of Augustine's works in *The Works of Saint Augustine* (WSA) series.

(see Vermigli 1583:2.1.10) argues that human nature has been ontologically impacted by the condition of concupiscence ever since the fall of the first Adam, through which a human person's initial God-given grace was removed. On the contrary, Vermigli's theological opponent, Pighius, views concupiscence as a kind of distorted human condition that is *ad extra* to the ontology of human nature (LC 5.11–13; cf. Pighius 1542:fol.iii) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.11–13). The striking differences between the two thinkers on this subject are apparent, as Vermigli emphatically refutes Pighius' understanding of concupiscence: he charges Pighius of distorting Augustine's understanding of concupiscence and sin (LC 3.5–6, 4.7–9, 5.10–13, 6.18, 8.24, 9.25) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.5–13, 2.1.18, 2.1.24–25). For Vermigli, Pighius mislocated concupiscence in the lower part of the soul, involving merely human affection and emotion [*epithymia*] but not the human mind [*logistikon*], which is the controlling faculty of the human soul (LC 4.9, 5.13, 6.19; Donnelly 1976:106; Summers 2019:xviii–xix) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.9, 2.1.13, 2.1.19). In doing so, Pighius undermines the seriousness of sin, as he believes that the human soul remains ontologically undamaged. Despite the fall, Pighius, similar to the Pelagians, affirmed that human nature remains inherently good and uncorrupted.

Primal sin

The differences between Vermigli's and Pighius' positions on concupiscence stem from their divergent evaluations regarding the fall of the first human being, namely Adam (Lane 2002). In this regard, Vermigli (LC 4.9) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.9) follows Augustine's view in suggesting that Adam and Eve's primal sin is the cause of concupiscence. For Augustine, the teaching of primal sin differentiates pre-fall Adam and Eve's liberty from the post-lapsarian human condition centred on the doctrine of original sin. Augustine maintains that primal sin was caused by Adam and Eve's deliberate decision to walk away from God and pursue their own happiness apart from their Creator (Couenhoven 2005:364–367). Hunter (2012) rightly explains:

... by attempting to take their salvation into their own hands [*Adam and Eve*] had rejected the grace of God ... The effect of their disobedience was to lose the grace that God had given to preserve their bodies from death and to live in peace with themselves and all the rest of creation. (p. 358)

To sum up, primal sin, or the first act of disobedience committed by Adam and Eve, is the cause of the condition of concupiscence. In doing so, Adam and Eve rejected God's grace. As a result, primal sin brought not only concupiscence but also death to human life.

The loss of original righteousness

Adam and Eve's primal sin resulted in what Augustine called the loss of original righteousness [*iustitia originalis*]. Couenhoven (2016) observes that Augustine's notion of original righteousness is based on his understanding of the complexity of human psychology. Unlike those Manichaeans

who hold to a low view of human nature (i.e. the belief that human nature has been irredeemably demonised by the force of evil since creation), Augustine inherited from Irenaeus a much more positive view of prelapsarian human nature. Couenhoven (2016:188) notes that, for Augustine, the agency of Adam and Eve before the fall was grounded in a love for the good, bestowed upon them at the moment of their creation. Thus, prelapsarian Adam and Eve were given full volitional liberty to love God, themselves and all of God's creation in a just and ordered manner. As Adam and Eve received original righteousness as a gift of creation from God, they, by default, did not have to struggle with carnal concupiscence and disordered passion. Conversely, they were born with an innate desire to love and obey God.

There are two nuanced ways of viewing the subject matter of Augustine's doctrine of the human being. The first view, proposed by Couenhoven (2005, 2016), emphasises that Augustine's understanding of the human person explicitly incorporates an Irenaean understanding of human nature. Couenhoven (2016:188) argues that, according to Augustine, although Adam and Eve were born right with God and God's creation, their original righteousness was immature. Augustine envisions that between Genesis 1 and 2 and Genesis 3, there was a period during which Adam and Eve lived out their love for God until their eventual disobedience. This is to say that Adam and Eve did not sin right away in their walk with God. Yet, in the process of knowing God, they needed to develop a habit of righteousness by making sound and wise judgements in accordance with God's will.

In a slightly different tenor, the second view, proposed by Wetzel (2010:55–56, 62, 67–69), suggests that although Augustine undoubtedly inherited the earlier Irenaean tradition in which the *imago Dei* in human beings is positively affirmed, he places greater emphasis on the idea that human nature and will, ever since the fall, have fallen from a mature height to somewhere weak. Thus, in such a state of weakness, the distortion of the *imago Dei* in Adam and Eve and all their descendants has been terribly magnified, such that the human intellect has lost control over the soul, mirroring the separation of body–soul that occurs at physical death.

I consider Wetzel's interpretation to be the more reliable guide here, and Vermigli's theological anthropology aligns more closely with Wetzel's dimmer reading of Augustine. Vermigli (LC 5.13) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.13) expounds on his Augustinian understanding of original righteousness by defining it as follows:

... [T]he right constitution of a person, when the body obeys the mind, and the lower parts of the mind obey the higher, with the mind subject to God and his law. (p. 29)

Donnelly (1976:106; cf. LC 10.27) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.27) points out that during the controversy between Vermigli and Pighius, the latter views the lack of original righteousness as a mere privation of God's gift that involves no defect of nature. For Pighius, those born handicapped

neither sinned nor disobeyed God's law. Thus, they cannot have inherited an original sin that would corrupt the very nature of the human being. To do so would imply a God who is unjust. In Pighius' way of thinking, the original righteousness of human beings is never truly lost, and it is blasphemy to assert that God permits sin to be injected into infants (LC 5.10–13; Pighius 1542:fol.iii) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.10–13). In response, Vermigli argues that although human beings are created to be good and blameless, sickness and corruption are all a part of the consequences of the fall of the entire Adamic race. While human beings are initially created in the *imago Dei* with God-given properties that are inherently good, it is the primal sin of the first man, rather than God, that has resulted in the absence of their original righteousness and initial grace (LC 5.13) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.13). This absence of original righteousness has rendered human beings weak and has led to sickness and death in our fractured world.

Inherited guilt

Concupiscence not only implies the loss of original righteousness but also gives birth to the existence of inherited guilt among human beings. In 'Inherited Guilt in St. Augustine and Cyril', McCallum (2020) outlines Augustine's metaphysics of guilt, understood as *culpa*, *reatus* and *reus*. McCallum (2020) notes:

God has made everything from nothing and each created thing is good, including its natural faculties. He owed this to none ... However, all that receive existence owe as a debt to their Creator the proper use of their nature's faculties. (p. 1)

According to Augustine (*Lib. arb.* 1.13.29 in the Father of the Church [FC] 59), every person is called to enjoy a happy life [*vita beata*] but is found guilty for failing to do so; that is, for choosing not to do what is good and just according to God. Thus, Augustine (1968) (*Lib. arb.* 3.16.45 in FC 59; Corpus Christianorum Series Latina [CCSL] 29.302/13; McCallum 2020) views that:

Ex eo igitur quod non accepit, nullus reus est; ex eo uero quod non facit quod debet, iuste resus est. Debet autem si 'accepit uoluntatem liberam et sufficientissimam facultatem. [No one is at fault [*reus*] for what he has not received, but he is justly at fault [*reus*] for not doing as he ought. Now he has an obligation to do so if he has received free will and all the power that is needed.] (p. 207)

The entire human race clearly falls short of God's standard, but how does Augustine account for the phenomenon that the guilt of Adam has spread to the whole of humanity? In *De libero arbitrio* [On Free Will], Augustine's answer essentially breaks down into two plausible positions. The first view, the classical traducianist position, holds that souls (and their inherited guilt) are passed down by generation. The second view, the creationist position, assumes that each soul is newly created by God for every person who is born (*Lib. arb.* 3.21.59 in FC 59). Beatrice (2013:74) notes that the early-to-mid Augustine seems to (reluctantly) settle on the traducianist explanation, which, in relation to the teaching of inherited guilt, implies that if Adam's soul sins, then all souls that

derive from him sin as well. Situated in the cultural milieu of his time and schooled by it, Augustine had a participatory understanding of ensoulment in mind. But when the late Augustine responded to Julian's objection, he denied ever having 'taught traducianism' and did not settle on any particular theory of ensoulment because of each view's explanatory shortcomings (Beatrice 2013:74–75). Nonetheless, although the origin of the soul remained a mystery on which Augustine was unwilling to take a definitive position, he consistently upheld the teaching of inherited guilt and original sin throughout his career. Augustine (1968) (*Lib. arb.* 3.22.64 in FC 59; CCSL 29.313/16; McCallum 2020) notes:

Non enim quod naturaliter nescitet naturaliter non potest, hoc animae deputatur in reatum, sed quod scire non studuit et quod Dignam facilitati comparandae ad recte faciendum operam non dedit. [The soul is charged with guilt [reatum], not because of its natural condition of ignorance and weakness, but because it made no effort to acquire knowledge and did not apply itself sufficiently to obtain the power to do what is right.] (p. 223)

Here, Augustine makes the point that the fact that all souls are guilty of their lack of effort to acquire knowledge, as a means to participate in the truth and goodness of God, proves the metaphysics of inherited guilt (cf. Rm 1:20). Moreover, during his anti-Pelagian period, Augustine further developed a psychological account of inherited guilt, perceptively demonstrating that, because of fleshly concupiscence, post-lapsarian human beings, by default, do not desire a sinless life. Thus, concupiscence attests to the loss of original righteousness that had made human beings guilty before God.

A Pelagian way of refuting Augustine's understanding of inherited guilt is to view the notion of guilt in merely judicial terms, disconnecting it from an ontological understanding of sin (i.e. original sin). Pighius makes use of this strategy by arguing that, although some people are called sinners on account of their guilt (i.e. as a consequence of breaking the judicial law), their act of sinning had long passed (LC 4.8; Pighius 1542:fol.xii) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.8). Therefore, once they have paid a just cost for their wrongdoing, they would be (according to the judicial law) once again guilt-free human beings. Moreover, Pighius compassionately believes that for those people (especially infants) who passed away because of the consequence of Adam's sin but not their own sin and guilt, there is an intermediate state in the afterlife (LC 4.8; Pighius 1542:fol.xii) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.8). Against this view, Vermigli refutes that nowhere in Scripture does it support Pighius' speculative idea of an intermediate state for infants in the afterlife (cf. Mt 25:14–34; Mk 13:13; Jn 5:29). More importantly, Vermigli maintains that infants are guilty before God not necessarily because of their sinful deeds, but because concupiscence, in itself, entails ontological and universal ramifications. Vermigli (LC 4.8) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.8) uses the analogy of a wolf to illustrate the understanding that if an infant wolf is killed, people still would not view it as not a wolf, simply because it has never killed or eaten other animals. Thus, similarly, although an

infant has never committed a sin, he or she has nevertheless inherited a corrupted human nature. Vermigli continues to explain that the central issue of Pighius' position is related to his unorthodox theological anthropology. He shows that Pighius has wrongly viewed Adam to be basically a good person with only a minor irrational flaw (LC 4.8) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.8). On this basis, Vermigli (LC 4.8) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.8) criticises that Pighius' understanding of human nature is better suited for and can only be adequately applied to irrational animals, rather than to any human beings who are created to be God's children. To sum up, for Pighius, guilt is the result of minor post-lapsarian human defects. Yet, for Vermigli, inherited guilt came with the condition of carnal concupiscence, which is embedded in the very nature of the post-lapsarian human being.

The manifestation of original sin

Although I have not explicitly stated it, it should be rather clear that Vermigli affirms Augustine's notion of original sin. The reason for this is that, for Vermigli, concupiscence is intrinsic rather than extrinsic to human nature. This section shall highlight the main features of Augustine's doctrine of original sin in relation to concupiscence and then mainly focus on showing how Vermigli's peculiar understanding of the transmission of original sin varies from Augustine's understanding.

Vermigli (LC 10.27) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.27) agrees with Augustine that original sin, understood as a propensity for sinning, is predicated upon the fall of Adam, through which God removed his initial grace for human beings. According to Vermigli, the withdrawal of God's initial grace towards human beings can be restored by the grace of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, as well as by the sacrament of baptism. Following Augustine's account of other church fathers' consensus (*C. Iul.* 1.5.16–18), Vermigli (LC 7.20–22) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.20–22) also understood original sin as essentially the privation of the good, in contrast to the Manichean view of evil as the privation of substance (i.e. the teaching of evil as a real, substantial entity constantly combating the good). With regard to the ways in which original sin brought about concupiscence, Hunter (2012) rightly points out that for Augustine:

[Original sin] had immediate effects on the body, effects caused by the damage done by the first humans to their own wills. At the moment of their sin, they experienced a disordered ... movement, which [Augustine] calls the concupiscence of the flesh. (p. 358)

In short, Vermigli follows Augustine's understanding in viewing carnal concupiscence as the manifestation of original sin.

Yet, Vermigli diverges from Augustine with regard to the way in which concupiscence is transferred to human progeny. In *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum* [On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism], Augustine interprets Paul's statement in

Romans 5:12 as affirming that the transmission of sin occurs through procreation (*Pecc. mer.* 1.9.9 in WSA I.23; cf. Couenhoven 2005:383–386). In a few other places, such as his meditation on Psalm 50:7, Augustine alludes to the idea that he inherited a primordial propensity for sinning in his mother's womb (*Conf.* 1.7.12 in WSA I.1). His take on the Adam-Christ typology also clearly contrasts the idea that Adam's primal sin affected all generations of his offspring through the conception of the first woman with the idea that Christ's sinlessness was (at least partially) attributed to the conception of a virgin (*C. Iul. imp.* 2.56 in WSA I.25). Augustine maintains that, since souls are propagated along with the body, both are subject to the same guilt and in need of a Saviour and Redeemer (*Pecc. mer.* 2.35.59 in WSA I.23). It is unavoidable that procreation, driven by passionate desire through sex (whether within marriage or not), is the means by which the evil of concupiscence is passed down from one generation to another (*Nupt. et conc.* 1.15.27 in WSA I.24).

This is to say that Vermigli (LC 10.26) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.26) rightly maintains that Augustine basically holds the view that concupiscence is transmitted through procreation. Here, however, Vermigli disagrees with Augustine's position that boils down to the idea that sexual intercourse is the medium through which carnal concupiscence and original sin are transferred.⁴ Yet, similar to Augustine, Vermigli (LC 10.26; cf. Campi 2009:226) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.26) also does not find the theory of traducianism – the hypothesis that infants receive their souls from their parents and that original sin is transmitted along with their souls – to be convincing. For Vermigli (LC 10.26) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.9, 2.1.26), original sin is transmitted to infants regardless of whether parents have lusted, because infants inherit carnal concupiscence and original sin from the first man, not necessarily directly from their parents. This is what philosophers call 'seminal reasons' [*rationes seminales*],⁵ even though Vermigli (LC 4.9, 10.26) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.9; 2.1.26) seemingly does not further elaborate on the mechanism by which original sin is transmitted through them.

To be sure, Vermigli's reference to the idea of seminal reasons is not foreign to Augustine and the Augustinian tradition (which Vermigli was a part of). Broadly speaking, the idea of *rationes seminales* refers to an invisible ability, power or force

4. But this is not to say that Augustine was satisfied with his view. I wonder whether he was willing to endorse his concluding position. Van Oort (2018) and Ullishney (2022) both suggest that although Augustine and the Roman Church maintain that original sin is transmitted through the perpetuation of the family line via sexual intercourse – thereby rejecting the Pelagian view that denies any such transmission – Augustine himself remained uneasy with this biological explanation throughout his later career, as Julian accused him of essentially holding on to a Manichaean anthropology, in which the human body is viewed as inherently evil and depraved. Couenhoven (2005:386) points out that Augustine's reluctance to 'take a stand on' the theory of the soul's origin may explain his ambivalent attitude on the subject. Wetzel (2010:94) maintains that Augustine was not concerned with developing a philosophy to explain the mechanism of the transmission of sin.

5. Vermigli does not mention which philosopher he had in mind by name. According to Gousmett (1988:2–4), the idea of seminal reasons was first introduced by the ancient philosopher Anaxagoras, who replaced the classical element theory (i.e. that all matter is composed of earth, water, air and fire) with the concept that matter and life are activated and sustained through 'an infinite number of inert prime causes, or seeds'. Subsequent philosophers such as Plato and the Stoics also inherited the idea. In the hands of the Greek fathers such as Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, it is the triune God, rather than an abstract cause, who uses *logoi spermatikoi* to bring things into their design and functional forms, an understanding that Augustine would later adopt.

that naturally exists in the visible seeds or elements of things (cf. Brady 1964:156; Gilson 1960:206–209). In *De Genesi ad litteram* [On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis] (5.21.42–5.23.45 in WSA I.13), notably, it utilises the concept to distinguish between God's initial act of creation *ex nihilo* (the Gn 1 narrative) and his ongoing governance and providential care in sustaining creation over time (as shown, according to Augustine's interpretation, in the Gn 2 narrative). Augustine uses the concept of seminal reasons to explain the Genesis 2 phenomenon that, after the first 7 days of creation, living beings are able to grow and mutate naturally according to seminal reasons while still, in another sense, remaining subject to God's providential care.

A key difference between Augustine and Vermigli here is that Augustine never thought to use the concept of seminal reasons to explain the transmission of original sin, while Vermigli does. I take that because Augustine never directly studied Aristotle's philosophy, it is unintelligible for him to attribute the explanation of seminal reasons to the transmission of original sin, as such a move would raise a theodicy problem by directly and uncomfortably associating God and his providential work with the causation of evil. Conversely, for Vermigli, a trained Thomist, this theodicy problem could be circumscribed by utilising the Aristotelian and Thomistic essence-accident distinction to convey the idea that original sin and its transmission are only an 'accident' (i.e., is contingent and not substantial to God's good creation). In other words, the Aristotelian and Thomistic system provides Vermigli with a different framework (interpreted through seminal reasons) to communicate the (still essentially Augustinian) idea that original sin and its transmission do not exist in themselves, but rather as a parasitical phenomenon afflicting Adam's progeny after the fall. In any sense, Vermigli's view on the transmission of concupiscence departs from both the traducian view and Augustine's transmission-through-sexual-intercourse view.

To further unpack Vermigli's Reformed understanding, Campi (2009) suggests that his position on the transmission of original sin aligns with Calvin's. Studies on Calvin's theological anthropology (Battenhouse 1948; Van der Walt 2010) have shown that the influence of Platonism on Calvin's doctrine of the human being should not be underestimated; Calvin has resourced from the perspective of a Platonic participatory metaphysics. Thus, the idea that a single soul (i.e. the soul of the first Adam) can represent and determine the state of other souls (i.e. the entire Adamic race) is not foreign to Calvin. Campi (2009) also notes that Calvin affirms:

... the hypothesis of the direct creation of each soul by God, which teaches that the soul is created sinless but becomes contaminated by original sin as soon as joined to a body which descends from Adam. (p. 226)

In a similar fashion to Calvin, when Vermigli (LC 16.45–46) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.45–46) exegetes the Romans 5 passage, he also considers Adam's human nature to be universal; that

is, each of Adam's offspring is affected by the corruption inherent in universally shared human nature. Thus, although Vermigli has a fundamental affirmation of Augustine's understanding of concupiscence, understood as the manifestation of original sin, he and Calvin both differ from Augustine with regard to how original sin is transmitted to the human race. On this subject, Augustine holds to a very embodied view, while Vermigli's and Calvin's views are (perhaps surprisingly) more participatory than his.

Total depravity

For Vermigli, the concupiscence transmitted to the Adamic race results in what Reformed theology calls the unfortunate condition of total depravity. Broadly speaking, total depravity conveys the idea that, because of the fall and original sin, humanity exists in an irreversible state of enslavement and is incapable of choosing to follow God and attain salvation apart from the grace of the Holy Spirit that regenerates a believer's soul and mind. Vermigli (LC 3.5) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.5) shows that for Pighius:

The only original fault lies with Adam's transgression, and he [Pighius] thinks that we are all born liable for this one transgression, yet not because of some vice, fault, or depravity that we have in ourselves. (p. 12)

Pighius does not hold to a Reformed understanding of total depravity. In fact, Vermigli (LC 3.5) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.5) complained that Pighius does not even consider original sin as a sin. Although the human will is weak and can be affected by sin, Pighius (1542:fol.iv–vii, xv) holds that it nonetheless remains capable of cooperating with God's grace in becoming morally good and attaining salvation. Conversely, Vermigli argued that the notion of total depravity is (in comparison with Pighius' position) much more consistent with Augustine's teaching of original sin.

To be sure, Augustine does not speak of the ramifications of original sin in the Reformed terminology of total depravity. Augustine uses the twofold concept of *massa peccati* [the mass of sin] and *massa damnata* [the condemned mass] to denote the detrimental state of sinful humanity (cf. *Div. qu.* 68.3 in WSA I.12; *Ench.* 8.27 in WSA II.1). The twofold concept arises from the teaching that when Adam first sinned against God and God's divine command (i.e. primal sin), his original righteousness [*iustitia originalis*] was deemed lost and replaced with the condition of inherited guilt. In the state of such guilt, humanity owes God a debt of righteousness, having had none since the fall of Adam. Therefore, the entire human race after Adam became 'the mass of sin' and the 'condemned mass' destined towards damnation apart from God's grace and salvation.

In essence, Vermigli is arguing that the Reformed notion of total depravity does capture what Augustine teaches with regard to concupiscence and original sin. According to Vermigli's rationale, the notion of total depravity can be seen as an equivalent Reformed expression that encompasses Augustine's notions, such as the twofold concept of *massa*

peccati and *massa damnata*, as well as Augustine's strong emphasis on the weakness of the will after the fall (cf. *Conf.* 8.8.20; Saarinen 1994:27).

In Vermigli's view, although total depravity teaches that there is a profound perversion in sinful humanity, it 'does not mean that after the fall man's natural gifts – reason, desire for truth, social instincts – were spoiled, but remained albeit in a debased form' (Campi 2009:226). In short, although total depravity does not mean that all morality is completely stripped from human beings, it does imply that its seriousness lies in the fact that all faculties related to understanding and obeying God have been terribly damaged. Vermigli (LC 4.11) (see Vermigli 1583:2.1.11) observes a significant detrimental effect of concupiscence, which leads to total depravity, namely that the depraved human beings are unaware of the seriousness of concupiscence. In other words, many people have sinned without even knowing that they are terrible sinners. As a result, they have been living in a state of pride, ignorance and self-love. This is why, in his Romans commentary, Vermigli (1568 ch. 7, p. 187), echoing Paul's view, laments that, being unable to freely love God and apart from God's regeneration, human beings 'remain subject to the miseries and troubles of this life'. Donnelly (1976:108) rightly comments that original sin 'has left man more than half dead and gives rise to evil passions which constantly wax stronger'. Similarly, concupiscence is like a 'horse' that 'rears more viciously whenever the rider digs in his spurs to control it' (Donnelly 1976:108). Such an evil passion would only increasingly corrupt human nature and could not be tamed by the lapsed human will. In short, Vermigli's dim view of the post-lapsarian human condition is a central reason why he reacted against Pighius' Pelagian understanding of human nature. Vermigli's Reformed understanding of total depravity is constructed according to Augustine's evaluation of the seriousness of the post-lapsarian human condition.

Justification

Although carnal concupiscence leads to total depravity, it is not the final word in the redemptive narrative. Thus, for Vermigli (2003), concupiscence also calls for the need for justification by the grace of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. We see from Vermigli's commentary on Paul's letter a strong emphasis on understanding the Hebrew term *hitsdiq*, or 'to justify', as a forensic verb (Vermigli 2003:87). According to him, Scripture understands 'flesh' [*sarx*] to refer to the whole human being. Thus, given that fallen human beings live according to the flesh, none of them can be made righteous by their own good deeds (Vermigli 2003:98–99). As I have argued, Vermigli's Reformed formulation of justification is grounded in Augustine's understanding of sin, grace and human nature. Motivated by concern for the serious issue of concupiscence and original sin, Vermigli developed this Reformed understanding of justification. James (2009) summarises that for Reformers, such as Vermigli:

... [T]he imputed righteousness of Christ, technically speaking, does not penetrate and transform the soul of the sinner as is required in the Catholic notion of inherent grace (*gratia inhaerens*), but remains external to the sinner. Justification ... in the forensic sense is not *iustitia in nobis* but *iustitia extra nos*. (p. 311)

Vermigli, similar to other Reformers, views justification first as a forensic concept. However, based on a forensic understanding of imputed righteousness, Vermigli also developed a broader understanding of the righteousness of God. In his commentary on Romans, he expounds that the concept of righteousness entails a threefold meaning: firstly, it is being received into favour through Christ, with believers' sins forgiven and the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; secondly, it implies the transformation and reformation of their mind and thirdly, it grants them a pure heart, enabling them to do good works and live a sincere life (James 2009:312). Thus, in Vermigli's view, there is both a 'narrower' understanding of justification, understood as imputed righteousness, and a 'broader' understanding of righteousness that also takes moral reformation into account (Fesko 2012:200–203; James 2009:314). The reason he accounts for a broader understanding of justification, understood in terms of moral reformation (or sanctification), is both theological and pastoral. James (2009) notes that, for Vermigli:

... [O]ne cannot properly deal with the immense problem of original sin by considering only the legal dimension, but one must also deal with the moral implications. (p. 314)

Moreover, in his biblical expositions of Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus, Vermigli (1994) essentially offers a Christological reading of the Old Testament in which he develops a view of twofold righteousness. His view of twofold righteousness is analogous to Calvin's. For Calvin, believers receive a twofold justification before God: the first is the process by which God brings them into Christ through forensic justification, and the second is through *unio mystica*, through which sanctification is imparted by the Holy Spirit to them (Baschera 2011:52–53; McGrath 2005:224). Similarly, Vermigli's view holds that, firstly, believers attain their righteousness before God through Christ's sacrificial death, which fulfils the just requirements of the Mosaic Law; and secondly, through partaking in and sharing the righteousness of Christ by the remission of sin granted by him (Vermigli 1994:103, 106–107, 131, 144–145, 152–153, 156). Baschera (2011) teases out the implications of Vermigli's view by noting that, for Vermigli, the second function of righteousness:

... [I]nheres in [*believers*] and consists of faith, hope, and love, as well as of all good works, which ... never entail a perfect but only an inchoative obedience to the law. (p. 52)

The way Vermigli worked through both the forensic and moral dimensions of justification, addressing the issue of concupiscence, understood as the manifestation of original sin, makes his view closer to Augustine's than to that of some other Reformers, such as Ulrich Zwingli. The reason for this is that Augustine himself did not make a clear-cut

distinction between the forensic and moral dimensions of redemption. On the one hand, it is anachronistic to conceptually bifurcate Augustine's doctrine of salvation into accounts of 'justification' and 'sanctification'. On the other hand, Augustine has a unifying understanding of how God's redemption works, in which, as Ayres (2012) rightly puts it, according to Augustine:

Christ justifies, sanctifies, teaches, persuades, and reforms humanity by incorporating [*believers*] into himself and into his life, death, and resurrection. (p. 417)

Although Augustine affirms the significance of justification, he does not explicitly understand it as a forensic concept. Rather, Augustine encompasses the entire redemptive significance of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice on the cross in becoming 'sin' (cf. 2 Cor 5:21), so that believers might become righteous by participating in the resurrected life of Christ and by receiving the gift of charity in faith, hope and love through the grace of regeneration (cf. *Ench.* 13.41, 13.50–53, 30.114, 31.117, 31.119–120 in WSA I.8).

In sum, Augustine never developed a distinctive forensic account of justification in the way the Reformers did. Nonetheless, his view on sin and grace still shapes the way Vermigli resolves the issue of concupiscence, the loss of original righteousness and inherited guilt through forensic justification, accompanied by sharing in Christ's resurrected life. Vermigli utilises a twofold understanding of righteousness to address the issue of concupiscence: the forensic dimension declares the sufficiency of Christ's atoning work, while the moral dimension addresses the ongoing partaking of Christ's righteousness through the impartation of the Spirit's work to revive and reform humanity.

Conclusion

This study has shown how Vermigli drew upon Augustine to develop a Reformed understanding of concupiscence while engaging with Pighius' position on the matter. In doing so, Vermigli fundamentally affirms Augustine's understanding of concupiscence, arguing that the primal sin that caused concupiscence (argument I) implies the loss of original righteousness (argument II), which in turn gave rise to inherited guilt (argument III). Both Augustine and Vermigli view the unfortunate condition of concupiscence as a manifestation of original sin (argument IV), which results in the total depravity of humanity (argument V). Yet God's redemptive work does not end with depravity: concupiscence also calls for the need for the justification of believers by the sheer grace of Jesus Christ (argument VI). Despite the gravity of concupiscence and sin, Vermigli follows Augustine's trajectory in affirming that, because of the primacy of God's grace, post-lapsarian humanity can once again be incorporated into the eternal life of the triune God through Christ's twofold righteousness: his justifying work and the sharing of his life through the Spirit, signified (as Augustine has argued) in the sacrament of baptism.

Vermigli does not slavishly follow Augustine in every aspect of the doctrine of original sin. Vermigli's 16th-century understanding of how original sin is transmitted to Adam's descendants, for instance, is, perhaps surprisingly, more metaphysically participatory than Augustine's 5th-century view, which involves the perpetuation of the family line through sexual intercourse. Moreover, although original sin shaped the way Vermigli thought through justification – including his distinctive understanding of justification as consisting of forensic and moral aspects – it is nevertheless clear that his Reformed understanding of justification by faith alone is a later doctrinal development, one that does not appear in Augustine's doctrine of salvation.

This study illustrates how the condition of carnal concupiscence, as a human existential phenomenon, has spurred theological reflections throughout various periods in the history of Christianity. It may be rewarding to follow the trajectory of this essay and examine how Vermigli's and Augustine's understandings of concupiscence and original sin influence their doctrines of predestination and baptism. The former doctrine delves into the eternal decree of the immanent Trinity, while the latter underscores the presence of the economic Trinity in and with the church. In what senses original sin propels Vermigli to formulate a distinct Reformed understanding of double predestination, in contrast to Augustine's so-called 'single predestination' position and how the sacrament of baptism, for both Vermigli and Augustine (cf. *Gen. litt.* 10.14.25), is seen as capable of removing a believer's guilt and helping to offset the effects of original sin passed down through generations. In this sense, perhaps 'sin-talk' is truly a unifying force that, within the domain of *fides quaerens intellectum*, draws all strands of theological discussion together until the day when there will no longer be sin (cf. *Rv* 22:5).

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