

But more profoundly, Augustine *never* claims he believed his five major doctrines prior to 412 CE. He truthfully limits himself to grace without merit. This is precisely what he did learn in 394–396 CE by reading works from Hilary of Poitiers, Tichonius, Victorinus, and Jerome on Romans and Galatians. All of these authors taught unmerited grace without works.<sup>5</sup> His carefully crafted phrase in *Praed.7* suggests a late revision to *Simpl.2*, as "I began (*coepi*)" to understand the beginning of faith as God's gift.<sup>6</sup>

By assuming *Simpl.2* was written in 396 CE, scholars miss Augustine's transition in 395/6 CE from election based upon hidden meritorious deeds to election by unmerited grace (already championed by Victorinus and Tichonius). They assume Augustine's reading of Romans and Galatians evoked his later novel theology.<sup>7</sup> Despite her usual superb insights, Professor Hammond Bammel concluded Rufinus' *Liber de fide* (Book of Faith) was a reaction to Augustine's *Ad Simplicianum* because she assumed *Simpl.2* dated to 396/7 CE.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, she missed the connection between Augustine's Stoic Providence, damnable *reatus* of original sin, and his deterministic revisionist theology in 412 CE. Rufinus was writing against Manichaeans, not Augustine. The similarity in teachings made it difficult for her and others to distinguish.

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Williams, "Justification by Faith: a Patristic Doctrine," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 57 (2006): 649–667.

<sup>6</sup> For a more complete explanation see Wilson, *Augustine's Conversion*, 204–210.

<sup>7</sup> William Babcock, "Augustine and Tyconius: A Study in the Latin Appropriation of Paul," *St.Patr.* 17.3 (1982): 1209–1215.

<sup>8</sup> Caroline Hammond Bammel, „Rufinus' Translation of Origen's Commentary on Romans and the Pelagian Controversy,“ in *Storia ed egesi in Rufino di Concordia*, Altoadriatiche XXXIX (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1992), 132–133.