

Shame, yes, shame, on the defamers of S. Augustin who in the name of that noblest-hearted of men, in the name of that heaven-high and heaven-broad soul—dare to justify the hell-vomited atrocities of the *torture* of heretics; the torturing boot and the thumb-screw, the rack and the wheel, the stake, the hanging and the disembowelling and the drawing and the quartering of the poor deluded victims of misbelief or unbelief.

[380] The killing of heretics in the name of religion is a more odious form of murder than even the killing of the incurables in the name of humanity.

Mahomet's "Believe or die" was not the doctrine, much less the practice, of the saints; they loved "vehemently and vehementer," not only the household of the Faith, but all those outside of it. Nay, their exceeding great kindness went on to the brute creation itself. Listen to S. Chrysostom: "Sunt enim sanctorum animæ vehementer amantes, non solum erga domesticos sed *alienos*, ita ut hanc suam mansuetudinem etiam ad animantia *bruta* extendant. Propterea et sapiens quispiam dixit: Justus miseretur animarum jumentorum multo magis hominum" S. Chrys. in Ep. ad Rom. cap. 1. (sermo 20, circa finem).

Even in dealing with the "ferocious" Donatists, S. Augustin "contended against the penalty of death, *which took away from the condemned the means of repentance*" (Hatchfield: Life, etc., p. 136).

As we have seen already, S. Augustin most heroically notified the civil authorities that—rather than consent to the death of heretics—he himself would gladly accept inevitable death from these, by remaining at their mercy and foregoing the protection of the law.

[381] As regards the prosecution and coercion of heretics otherwise guilty of *no criminal offense*, Augustin remained to the last its most formidable opponent. He writes: "One must *never constrain any one to come back* to the unity of Jesus Christ, and no arms should be employed other than discourses and reasons, for fear of making false Catholics of those whom we know now as declared heretics" (Ep. 93).

"I beg of you all who are in the Church to take care *not to insult* those who are not in it. Rather ask God that they may enter."

He wrote to the Manicheans: "Let those be severe with you who do not know with what labor truth is discovered and how hardly one escapes error ..... Those may treat you with rigor who do not know with what sighs and groans one comes to understand God ever so little" (Contra. ep. Manich.).

"We have in view, and we wish only for what is good, the *gentleness* which makes the word of truth *loved*" (Letter 113).

"Nothing," says S. Justin martyr, "*nothing is more contrary to Religion than coercion*" (1. 3).