

INTRODUCTION

Augustine was many things: a philosopher, a theologian, a writer, a bishop, a Church Father. When he is considered primarily as a philosopher, Augustine is often thought of as someone who tried to Christianize classical Greek and Roman thought. John M. Rist, in his recent book *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, develops this conception of him.

Yet Augustine's ideas are not only backward looking; they are also profoundly forward looking. Until the ascendancy of St. Thomas Aquinas at the end of the thirteenth century, Augustine was the most important Christian philosopher. Aquinas, as he himself makes quite clear, was highly indebted to Augustine, as well as to Aristotle. Moreover, the Augustinian tradition continued to flourish even after Aquinas. In the modern period Augustine's influence on Descartes, Leibniz, Rousseau, and Hegel call for special mention. But his influence is much more pervasive than any such list might suggest.

Augustine's thought is also surprisingly contemporary. Many of Augustine's most characteristic preoccupations, whether with introspective self-examination, with human motivation, with skepticism, with the workings of language, or with time and history, are also our preoccupations today.

This collection of articles is evidence of the persisting vitality of Augustine's thought. It is also evidence of a new interest in Augustine, and a new respect for him, among twentieth-century English-speaking philosophers. Remarkably, more serious work on Augustine has been done by such philosophers since the 1970s than their counterparts did in all the earlier decades of this century put together.

The papers collected in the present volume reflect something of the historical reality of the Augustinian tradition. Thus, some pieces here connect Augustine specifically with Anselm, Dante, Descartes, Locke, Jonathan Edwards, Rousseau, Kant, Wittgenstein, and even John Updike! But there is no effort here to represent all the historical strands in the Augustinian tradition. Nor is there any attempt to treat this tradition with historical detachment. To the contrary, Augustine is to be seen in these essays as a thinker who engages our own thinking today, just as he engaged and influenced thinkers all the way from his own time to ours.

This volume begins with Alvin Plantinga's apologia for an "Augustinian Christian Philosophy." As Plantinga makes clear, he does not want to resurrect or merely celebrate a historical artifact; rather, he aims to tell us how we should think about Christian philosophy today. The way of thinking he advocates, as he says, "grows out of Augustinian roots."

No doubt Augustine's most influential single work is his *Confessions*, which is arguably the first significant autobiography in Western literature. Yet despite the classic status this work has enjoyed, almost all readers have thought it poorly composed. It has proved an especially difficult problem for readers to understand how the last four books of the work could be thought to fit together with the first nine, largely autobiographical, books to make a unified whole. With uncommon imagination and insight Frederick Crosson undertakes to solve the problem of the unity of the *Confessions*.

In her paper, "Augustine and the 'Problem' of Time," Genevieve Lloyd turns specifically to book 11 of the *Confessions* and discusses the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic antecedents to the treatment of time to be found there. She then connects Augustine's subjective account of time with the self-consciousness that underlies narration and, more broadly, the literary imagination.

In her essay, "Augustine and Dante on the Ascent of Love," Martha Nussbaum draws on part of her Gifford Lectures to show how Augustine uses Neoplatonic versions of the *Symposium's* "ladder of love" to develop a Christian idea of love's ascent. After a richly detailed survey of this motif in Augustine's vast corpus Nussbaum turns to Dante for illuminating comparisons and contrasts. At the end of her paper she offers her own assessment of the conceptions of love that emerge in Augustine and Dante.

In her "Romancing the Good: God and the Self according to St. Anselm of Canterbury" Marilyn McCord Adams discusses the ways in which St. Anselm takes up from Augustine's *De Trinitate* the Platonic images of God as paradigm, as artist, and as beloved. She goes on to find other images for God and the self in Anselm, mainly biblical ones, but again images that are also prominent in Augustine, and she ends up with an appreciation of Anselm's account of the intellectual love of God.

With Scott MacDonald's paper, "Primal Sins," we move away from Augustine's Platonic and Plotinian heritage into the realm of specifically Christian theology and moral philosophy. As MacDonald says, the idea of Adam and Eve's primal sin is "the cornerstone of Augustine's theodicy." Yet, given the unblemished moral state of Adam and Eve before the fall, how could they make evil choices? MacDonald thinks Augustine offers a plausible resolution to this problem of primal sin. In the course of making his case he discusses an important connection between practical reasoning and moral responsibility.

In his paper, "Inner-Life Ethics," William Mann first tries to give clear shape to Augustine's strongly intentionalist ethics. He then considers how this "inner-life ethics" applies to a variety of cases of lying, a variety of cases of gratuitous theft,

and finally the case of committing adultery in one's dreams. These applications help us both to understand the theory and to assess its plausibility.

Ishtiyaque Haji, in his paper, "On Being Morally Responsible in a Dream," takes up the last case Mann discusses and devotes his entire discussion to it. Haji defends against a number of objections the conclusion Augustine seems to be left with—namely, that we *are* morally responsible for what we do and think in our dreams. Among Haji's conclusions is the suggestion that we need to reconceptualize the epistemic requirements for moral responsibility.

In "Avoiding Sin: Augustine against Consequentialism" Christopher Kirwan discusses Augustine's rejection of the plausible consequentialist idea "that one should aim at the best outcome." He develops Augustine's idea that one will never sin if, in preference to actually doing ill, one merely allows it to be done. He makes the fully developed form of this idea as plausible as he can. But he finds that the resulting method for "deciding what to do" founders over important cases of lying and homicide.

In his essay, "Do We Have a Will? Augustine's Way in to the Will," Simon Harrison focuses on Augustine's claim to know himself to have a will and asks what that knowledge might consist in. One reason his question is interesting and important is that Augustine is sometimes credited with "inventing" or "discovering" the modern concept of will. Through an especially thoughtful reading of an important Augustinian text, Harrison discovers that Augustine's claim to know that he has a will resembles in important respects his "cogito-like" arguments for his claim to know that he exists.

In "The Emergence of the Logic of Will in Medieval Thought" Simo Knuuttila shows how Augustine attempts to systematize his theological anthropology with the help of the notion of the will. He then shows how certain features of Augustine's account of the will influenced early medieval thought and "how this tradition gave rise to what might be called a theory of the logic of will."

In "Augustine and Descartes on Minds and Bodies" Gareth B. Matthews finds Augustine committed to the thesis that the mind of each of us knows what a mind is simply and solely by knowing itself. According to Matthews, this thesis, recently attributed to Descartes and criticized by Wittgenstein, underlies Augustine's use of the argument from analogy for other minds, as well as his argument for mind-body dualism.

In his paper, "Disputing the Augustinian Legacy: John Locke and Jonathan Edwards on Romans 5:12–19," Philip L. Quinn discusses the doctrine of original sin. He begins with an account of this doctrine as Augustine himself formulates it by appeal to chapter 5 of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Noting that John Locke accepts the "Arminian assumption" that no one can be guilty for the sins of another, Quinn then discusses Locke's alternative interpretation of Romans 5. Finally, he brings out how Jonathan Edwards shows that a Lockean-type effort at reconciling the Armenian assumption with Romans 5 fails.

Picking up the theme of original sin, John E. Hare, in his essay, "Augustine, Kant, and the Moral Gap," discusses how it might be thought reasonable for us to be under the demands God makes of us, even though we are unable to meet God's demands without his own assistance. Hare notes that Kant accepted the Stoic maxim that, if we are morally good or evil, we must be responsible for becoming or being so. He then brings out how Kant translated the Christian doctrine of justification into the pure religion of reason. Yet, in the end, Hare argues, the translation project fails, and Kant fails to bridge the moral gap within the limits of reason.

Ann Hartle, in her paper, "Augustine and Rousseau: Narrative and Self-Knowledge in the Two *Confessions*," treats Rousseau's *Confessions* as a response to Augustine's work by the same name. Rousseau claims to see his interior self as God sees him. According to Hartle, it is through his creative imagination that Rousseau thinks he has gained access to his inner self. Thus, Rousseau claims a perspective on his life, she argues, that, for Augustine, is proper to God alone.

In "Wittgenstein and Augustine *De magistro*" M. F. Burnyeat traces out Augustine's reason for supposing that no person teaches another anything and finds it to rest on the Platonic assumption that knowledge requires "first-hand appreciation." He ends with a discussion of the relevance of *De magistro* to a proper understanding of the passage on language-learning from Augustine's *Confessions* with which Wittgenstein begins his *Philosophical Investigations*.

Paul J. Weithman, in his essay, "Toward an Augustinian Liberalism," takes liberalism to defend restrictions on the invocation of moral, philosophical, and religious beliefs to legitimate the exercise of public power. He argues that acts of religiously inspired political advocacy to coerce belief, purify society, or make it more Christian are often acts of pride, such as Augustine found to be rooted in original sin. The Augustinian liberalism he advocates aims at holding such pride in check, even if it cannot foster true humility.

In "St. Augustine and the Just War Theory" Robert L. Holmes explores Augustine's "interiority" in ethics and how it bears on his justification of war. His discussion leads through the elements of Augustine's theory of the just war. He concludes that the problem of war is of the first importance to Augustine's own thought. This is so because Augustine aimed to define the implications of Christianity for life in the earthly city and that definition "turns upon the understanding of war, the social and political forces that bring it into existence, and the divine purposes that allow it to endure."

In "Augustine's Philosophy of History" Rüdiger Bittner presents the Augustinian teacher of Christian doctrine as a narrator of stories rather than a "mere reasoner." Yet the fundamental conception in Augustine's philosophy of history, according to Bittner, is that God is beyond history. "History is owed to what is beyond history." Moreover, the only interesting event in the age of human history is the appearance of "what is beyond history"—namely, the incarnation of God in Christ. Bittner concludes by trying to make clear that it is largely this picture of

history as represented in Augustine that most modern writers on history have been arguing against.

The volume concludes with the essay by Richard Eldridge, "Dramas of Sin and Salvation in Augustine and John Updike." Eldridge notes that Updike is well aware of his affinities with Augustine and their common preoccupations with sex, sin, and salvation. Eldridge offers a detailed and arresting comparison between Augustine, as he presents himself in his *Confessions*, and Harry Angstrom, the hero of Updike's "Rabbit" novels.