

**ST. AUGUSTINE**

**ST.  
AUGUSTINE**

**HIS AGE,  
LIFE, AND  
THOUGHT**

ESSAYS BY  
M. C. D'ARCY  
MAURICE BLONDEL  
CHRISTOPHER DAWSON  
ETIENNE GILSON  
JACQUES MARITAIN  
C. C. MARTINDALE  
ERICH PRZYWARA  
JOHN-BAPTIST REEVES  
B. ROLAND GOSSELIN  
E. I. WATKIN

**MERIDIAN BOOKS M 51**

**\$1.35 Canada \$1.45**

SAINT AUGUSTINE

*Saint Augustine*

BY H. C. DARCY, S. J.

JACQUES BLONDEL

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

STIENNE GILSON

JACQUES MARTYAN

E. C. MARTINDALE, S. J.

ERICH PRZYWARA, S. J.

JOHN BAPTIST REEVES, O. P.

B. ROLAND-GOSSELIN

E. J. WATKIN

TRANSLATIONS BY NEW YORK 1917

A

# SAINT AUGUSTINE

by M. C. D'ARCY, S.J.

MAURICE BLONDEL

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

ETIENNE GILSON

JACQUES MARITAIN

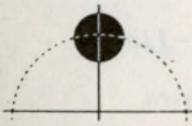
C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

ERICH PRZYWARA, S.J.

JOHN-BAPTIST REEVES, O.P.

B. ROLAND-GOSSELIN

E. I. WATKIN



MERIDIAN BOOKS *New York 1957*

Fr. M. C. D'ARCY, S.J. is the author of *The Mind and Heart of Love* (Meridian Books, M26), *St. Thomas Aquinas*, and many other works. MAURICE BLONDEL is best known as the author of *L'Action* and was, until his death, one of the most distinguished contemporary European Catholic thinkers. CHRISTOPHER DAWSON is the author of *The Making of Europe* (Meridian Books, M35), *Religion and Culture* (shortly to be published by Meridian Books), and many other works on history and culture (all of which are published by Sheed and Ward). ETIENNE GILSON is the author of *La Philosophie du Moyen Age, God and Philosophy, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, and numerous other works in French and English on St. Thomas, St. Augustine, St. Bonaventura, and other aspects of medieval philosophy. JACQUES MARITAIN is already represented in Meridian books by his *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (M8) and *St. Thomas Aquinas* shortly to be published in a revised and newly translated version. Fr. C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J. is the author of books too numerous to mention. ERICH PRZYWARA, S.J. is well known in Germany for his works on modern philosophy: he is the editor of *Stimmen der Zeit*. JOHN-BAPTIST REEVES, O.P., has written *The Middle Ages at School*. B. ROLAND-GOSSELIN is the author of *La Morale de S. Augustin*, etc., and is professor at the Institut Catholique in Paris. E. I. WATKIN is the author of *The Philosophy of Mysticism* and many other works on logic and philosophy.

*Meridian Books Edition first published September 1957*  
*First printing August 1957*

*Reprinted by arrangement with Sheed and Ward, Inc.*  
*who first published the work in 1930 and reissued it in 1945*  
*under the title A Monument to Saint Augustine*

*Library of Congress catalog card number: 57-11671*

*Manufactured in The United States of America*

STEVENS ON LIBRARY BARD COLLEGE  
 Annandale-on-Hudson N.Y. 12504

## CONTENTS

	page
COMPILER'S NOTE	7
<i>Epinicium Augustini</i>	9
I. ST. AUGUSTINE AND HIS AGE	11
(i) THE DYING WORLD	15
(ii) THE CITY OF GOD	43
<i>By Christopher Dawson</i>	
II. A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ST AUGUSTINE	79
<i>By C. C. Martindale, S.J.</i>	
III. THE MYSTICISM OF ST. AUGUSTINE	103
<i>By E. I. Watkin</i>	
IV. ST. AUGUSTINE AND HUMANISM	121
<i>By John-Baptist Reeves, O.P.</i>	
V. THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. AUGUSTINE	153
<i>By M. C. D'Arcy, S.J.</i>	
VI. ST. AUGUSTINE AND ST. THOMAS AQUINAS	197
<i>By Jacques Maritain</i>	
VII. ST. AUGUSTINE'S SYSTEM OF MORALS	225
<i>By Bernard Roland-Gosselin</i>	
VIII. ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE MODERN WORLD	249
<i>By Erich Przywara, S.J.</i>	
IX. THE FUTURE OF AUGUSTINIAN METAPHYSICS	287
<i>By Etienne Gilson</i>	
X. THE LATENT RESOURCES IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S THOUGHT	317
<i>By Maurice Blondel</i>	
INDEX	355

knowledge. He is here thinking of truths which the pupil learns, and he is arguing that such truths come to light within us; they are not merely the private singular views of a professor. Is he then committed to some form of innate ideas or Platonic reminiscence or to Ontologism? In his first years as a Platonist he was in all probability affected by the doctrine of reminiscence, but its influence declined as he pursued his meditations. As for innate ideas, the truth seems to be that St. Augustine steers a middle course between them and a direct vision of God. The nearest approach to them is found in passages devoted to memory. This word has a suggestion of the Platonic *reminiscence*, but in St. Augustine it covers a multitude of meanings. It refers to the present as much as to the past; it emphasizes his belief that within the soul resided knowledge and truth, and I think it served a useful purpose as suggesting that that truth was derivative, whether from past experience or from God. "The memory, then, is as it were the belly of the mind," or in other phrases a place "of spacious chambers furnished with innumerable stores." Now, in listening to the words of others, it was not the words nor the private opinions to which he assented, but something common to all minds, something universal, something within, which goes by the name of truth. Whosoever can perceive this universal "is within, the disciple of truth; and without, the judge of him who speaks, or rather of the discourse itself."<sup>1</sup> "Truth is near to all, is eternal for all; it prompts from without, it teaches from within."<sup>2</sup>

To the soul itself then we must turn. But memory here reveals to us that it cannot be the human soul which begets truth. The soul must listen and be taught. As God is the Author of our existence, so must He be the Doctor. The soul, which changes, cannot have produced the unchanging. "And I entered into the very seat of my mind (which it hath in my memory, inasmuch as the mind remembers itself also),

<sup>1</sup> *De Magistro*, XIII, xli.

<sup>2</sup> *De Libero Arbitrio*, II, xiv.

to attributing to thought whatever is contained in his clear and distinct idea, and, correlatively, to attribute to it only what is thus contained in it. In this sense, the *cogito* is as rich in exclusions as in affirmations; it is but the first of that series of conceptual snippets which substitutes progressively a mosaic of abstractions for the continuity of reality, digs impassable trenches between the aspects of the concrete, and requires the invention of illusory bridges for the attempt to cross them again. This is not the place to set out the numberless difficulties in which the *cogito* entangles metaphysics; what matters is to observe that the very *cogito* of Descartes, that is, the one of all Descartes's steps which we would most certainly expect to furnish a concrete reality in all its proper substantiality, furnishes actually only that part of the reality which can be retained in idea, for whatever part of the *ego* the idea does not contain it denies: *a non nosse ad non esse valet consequentia*.

When, on the contrary, we consider the attitude of St. Augustine, it appears as very different from that of Descartes, and each of his theses displays a fruitfulness which Cartesianism destroyed by its very rigidity. To begin with, instead of being a method practised upon ideas, Augustinianism is an enquiry concerning the concrete content of thought. It is true that, for St. Augustine as much as for Descartes, man apprehends himself only through his ideas, but St. Augustine does not hold in anticipation that his inner experience will divide itself into a certain number of simple natures and defined essences; taking man altogether, he observes him, and while he formulates him in ideas, he models his ideas on the empirical content that he has observed. Hence the fundamental character of his work, which, it must be said, Cartesianism has not only not safeguarded, but systematically destroyed. In proportion as the teaching of St. Augustine aimed at being a metaphysic, it is a metaphysic based upon a psychological empiricism, or, if preferred, a metaphysic

of inner experience. Hence its extreme suppleness, its power of rebirth, and the very incompleteness which left a permanent possibility of progress open before it.

This essential characteristic is displayed in the thought of St. Augustine from its very beginnings. It too opens with doubt; but this doubt is not methodical or intentional, still less a pretence, like that of Descartes; St. Augustine is the prey of doubt, uncertain and almost despairing of finding truth. What is, for the French philosopher, but the initial step in a regulated order of thoughts is for St. Augustine a concrete and painful experience, an illness from which he has suffered and of which he has cured himself. Hence the remedy he has discovered and now offers us is no more necessary than the illness itself: his *si fallor sum* appears in its place whenever sceptical uncertainty threatens him as a possible danger, but its place is not at the beginning of a general exposition of his teaching, because the radical preventive of doubt is much less the *cogito* than the act of faith. Whoever believes in God and His word holds a truth infinitely richer and more fruitful than the *cogito*: "I believe, therefore I know" is better as a first principle than "I think, therefore I am."

For the same reason, the Augustinian empiricism discovers in the *cogito* something very different from what the mathematical method of Descartes discovers in it, for Descartes is committed once and for all to find in it nothing immediately but the essence of thought to be defined, whereas St. Augustine finds in it the whole of man to explore: man, that is, the body, the soul, and grace. The point is of such importance as to warrant special emphasis.

Three centuries of idealism have produced in us so intimate an adaptation to the Cartesian method that, wherever we observe its absence, we seem to observe an empty gap. Here, however, we encounter a solid. What St. Augustine discovers is, in the first place, his thought; but instead of

doubt is that every substitution of abstract concepts for reality, and of a geometrical analysis for the investigation of concrete experience, is repugnant to the very essence of authentic Augustinianism. Another method may be preferred, but in that case we ought to realize that we are no longer Augustinians.

If this matter had been fully appreciated, the illusion of an ontological St. Augustine, or a St. Augustine tending to ontologism without fully committing himself to it, would never have arisen. Malebranche (whom we do not, by the way, consider as an ontologist), Gerdil, Gioberti, and many others, believe they can justify their point of view by a skilful exegesis of Augustinian texts on divine illumination. The Thomistic interpreters, like the eminent Zigliara, attempt the opposite operation by the same method. This method may have to have its day, but in the last resort it is worth only as much as the whole ideology on which it rests. All that such analyses establish is that at times the letter of St. Augustine invites ontologism and at others rejects it. But what is the significance of the letter? To discover it, we have to deal with his ideas. And here again it seems to us that every ontologism presupposes an idealist interpretation of Augustinianism and falls to the ground together with that interpretation.

Assuming it be admitted that St. Augustine's method is as we have described it, what do we find as the necessary starting-point of our search? Facts, and nothing but facts. These facts may be, and often are, facts of inner experience, they may be ideas – but ideas taken not as principles of deduction, but as the basis of induction. The problem of the existence of God enjoys no privileged position in his teaching. It is, indeed, a unique case in respect of the reality at stake and consequently also in respect of the nature of the datum which allows us to attain to it, but this datum differs from other data only in content, not in nature. Like being, like life, like

sensation, like thought, truth is a fact ; like other facts, it is presented to our empirical observation ; like other empirical observations, it demands of metaphysics the discovery of its sufficient reason ; and if God alone can furnish its sufficient reason, we shall have proved the existence of God. Nothing here ever leaves the strictly philosophical order to pass over into mystical intuition and to substitute it for philosophical thought. The mystical order is certainly anticipated, hoped for, prepared for, but we have not got there yet ; we are even still so far from it that it is never by pure philosophy that we can reach it : the order of knowledge has first to be superseded by the order of charity.

Every ontological interpretation of St. Augustine presupposes, then, a more or less complete misunderstanding of his radical empiricism. This explains also why such an interpretation believes itself able to introduce idealism into it. The *primum cognitum* of St. Augustine is not God ; it is man within the universe, and, within this universe and this man, the experience of a true judgement. But it must be added that this *primum cognitum* is not even the *primum reale* ; on the contrary, it becomes intelligible only on condition of finding its sufficient reason in a transcendent fact which provides its explanation. It is of the very essence of Augustinianism to affirm that this transcendent fact has left on man its mark and impress, that this impress is decisively legible for us only in true thought ; but an impress is not the seal, and to forget that is the sure way of destroying Augustinianism. Far from taking his starting-point, like Gioberti, from a *primum cognitum*, which is, *pro tanto*, the First Being, St. Augustine starts from a complex *cognitum*, in which he distinguishes by analysis an order of reality which postulates in its turn that of the First Being. Once this Being is apprehended and posited, it becomes possible to set off into an order which is not that of deduction, but rather of production ; and even then it must be remembered that the start is taken not from

303  
179

Arendt BR1720.A9 M55 1957  
Saint Augustine