

TO HIS MOTHER,

THIS TRANSLATION,

CONTAINING THE RECORD OF A MOTHER'S DEVOTION TO HER SON,

IS DEDICATED

BY THE TRANSLATOR

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

"TF St. Augustine," says Nourrisson, "had left nothing L but his Confessions and the City of God, one could readily understand the respectful sympathy that surrounds his memory. How, indeed, could one fail to admire in the City of God the flight of genius, and in the Confessions, what is better still, the effusions of a great soul?" It may be safely predicted, that while the mind of man yearns for knowledge, and his heart seeks rest, the Confessions will retain that foremost place in the world's literature which it has secured by its sublime outpourings of devotion and profound philosophical spirit. There is in the book a wonderful combination of childlike piety and intellectual power. Desjardins' idea, that, while in Augustine's other works we see the philosopher or the controversialist, here we see the man, is only to be accepted as a comparative statement of Augustine's attitude in the Confessions; for philosophy and piety are in many of his reflections as it were molten into one homogeneous whole. In his highest intellectual flights we find the breathings of faith and love, and amid the profoundest expressions of penitential sorrow, gleams of his metaphysical genius appear.

It may, indeed, be from the man's showing himself so little, as distinguished from the philosopher, that some readers are a little disappointed in the book. They have expected to meet with a copiousness of biographic details, and have found, commingled with such as are given, long disquisitions on Manichæanism, Time, Creation, and Memory. To avoid such disappointment we must ascertain the author's design. The book is emphatically not an autobiography. There is in it an outline of the author's life up to his mother's death; but only so much of detail is given as may subserve his main purpose. That purpose is clearly explained in the fourth section of his Tenth Book. It was that the impenitent on reading it might not say, "I cannot," and "sleep in despair," but rather that, looking to that God who had raised the writer from his low estate of pride and sin to be a pillar of the Church, he might take courage, and "awake in the sweetness of His grace, by which he that is weak is made strong;" and that those no longer in sin might rejoice and praise God as they heard of the past lusts of him who was now freed from them. This, his design of encouraging penitence and stimulating praise, is referred to in his Retractations, and in his Letter to Darius.

These two main ideas are embodied in the very meaning of the title of the book, the word *confession* having, as Augustine constantly urges, two meanings. In his exposition of the Psalms we read: "Confession is understood in two senses, of our *sins*, and of God's *praise*. Confession of our sins is well known, so well known to all the people, that whenever they hear the name of confession in the lessons, whether it is said in praise or of sin, they beat their breasts." Again: "Confession of sin all know, but confession of praise few attend to." "The former but showeth the wound to the physician, the latter giveth thanks for health." He would therefore have his hearers make the sacrifice of praise their ideal, since, in the City of God, even in the New Jerusalem, there will be no longer confession of sin,

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but there will be confession of praise. It is not surprising, that with this view of confession he should hinge on the incidents of his life such considerations as tend to elevate the mind and heart of the reader. When, for example, he speaks of his youthful sins, he diverges into a disquisition on the motives to sin; when his friend dies, he moralizes on death; and—to give one example of a reverse process his profound psychological review of memory recalls his former sin (which at times haunts him in his dreams), and leads up to devout reflections on God's power to cleanse from sin. This undertone of penitence and praise which pervades the *Confessions* in all its episodes, like the golden threads which run through the texture of an Eastern garment, presents one of its peculiar charms.

It would not be right to overlook a charge that has been brought against the book by Lord Byron. He says, "Augustine in his fine Confessions makes the reader envy his transgressions." Nothing could be more reckless or further from the truth than this charge. There is here no dwelling on his sin, or painting it so as to satisfy a prurient imagination. As we have already remarked, Augustine's manner is not to go into detail further than to find a position from which to "edify" the reader, and he treats this episode in his life with his characteristic delicacy and reticence. His sin was dead; and he had carried it to its burial with tears of repentance. And when, ten years after his baptism, he sets himself, at the request of some, to a consideration of what he then was at the moment of making his confessions, he refers hardly at all to this sin of his youth; and such allusions as he does make are of the most casual kind. Instead of enlarging upon it, he treats it as past, and only speaks

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of temptation and sin as they are common to all men. Many of the French writers on the Confessions institute a comparison in this matter between the confessions of Augustine and those of Rousseau. Pressensé draws attention to the delicacy and reserve which characterize the one, and the arrogant defiance of God and man manifested in the other. The confessions of the one he speaks of as "un grande acte de repentir et d'amour;" and eloquently says, "In it he seems, like the Magdalen, to have spread his box of perfumes at the foot of the Saviour; from his stricken heart there exhales the incense most agreeable to God-the homage of true penitence." The other he truly describes as uttering "a cry of triumph in the very midst of his sin, and robing his shame in a royal purple." Well may Desjardins express surprise at a book of such foulness coming from a genius so great; and perhaps his solution of the enigma is not far from the truth, when he attributes it to an overweening vanity and egotism.

It is right to point out, in connection with this part of our subject, that in regard to some at least of Augustine's self-accusations, there may be a little of that pious exaggeration of his sinfulness which, as Lord Macaulay points out in his essays on Bunyan, frequently characterizes deep penitence. But however this may be, justice requires us to remember, in considering his transgression, that from his very childhood he had been surrounded by a condition of civilization presenting manifold temptations. Carthage, where he spent a large part of his life, had become, since its restoration and colonization under Augustus Cæsar, an "exceeding great city," in wealth and importance next to Rome. "African Paganism," says Prepsensé, "was half Asiatic; the ancient worship of nature, the adoration of

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Astarte, had full license in the city of Carthage; Dido had become a mythological being, whom this dissolute city had made its protecting divinity, and it is easy to recognize in her the great goddess of Phœnicia under a new name." The luxury of the period is described by Jerome and Tertullian, when they denounce the custom of painting the face and tiring the head, and the prodigality that would give 25,000 golden crowns for a veil, immense revenues for a pair of ear-rings, and the value of a forest or an island for a headdress. And Jerome, in one of his epistles, gives an illustration of the Church's relation to the Pagan world at that time, when he represents an old priest of Jupiter with his grand-daughter, a catechumen, on his knee, who responds to his caresses by singing canticles. It was a time when we can imagine one of Augustine's parents going to the Colosseum, and enjoying the lasciviousness of its displays, and its gladiatorial shows, with their contempt of human life; while the other carefully shunned such scenes, as being under the ban of the teachers of the Church. It was an age in which there was action and reaction between religion and philosophy; but in which the power of Christianity was so great in its influences on Paganism, that some received the Christian Scriptures only to embody in their phraseology the ideas of heathenism. Of this last point Manichæanism presents an illustration. Now all these influences left their mark on Augustine. In his youth he plunged deep into the pleasures of his day; and we know how he endeavoured to find in Manichæanism a solution of those speculations which haunted his subtle and inquiring mind. Augustine at this time, then, is not to be taken as a type of what Christianity produced. He is to a great extent the outgrowth of the Pagan influences of the time. Considerations such as these

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may enable us to judge of his early sin more justly than if we measured it by our own privileges and opportunities.

The style of Augustine is sometimes criticized as not having the refinement of Virgil, Horace, or Cicero. But it should be remembered that he wrote in a time of national decay; and further, as Desjardins has remarked in the introduction to his essay, he had no time "to cut his phrases." From the period of his conversion to that of his death, he was constantly engaged in controversy with this or that heresy; and if he did not write with classical accuracy, he so inspired the language with his genius, and moulded it by his fire, that it appears almost to pulsate with the throbbings of his brain. He seems likewise to have despised mere elegance, for in his Confessions, when speaking of the style of Faustus, he says, "What profit to me was the elegance of my cup-bearer, since he offered me not the more precious draught for which I thirsted?" In this connection the remarks of Collinges are worthy of note. He says, when anticipating objections that might be made to his own style: "It was the last of my study; my opinion always was that what Augustine calls diligens negligentia was the best diligence as to that; while I was yet a very young man I had learned out of him that it was no solecism in a preacher to use ossum for os, for (saith he) an iron key is better than one made of gold if it will better open the door, for that is all the use of the key. I had learned out of Hierom that a gaudry of phrases and words in a pulpit is but signum insipientiæ. The words of a preacher, saith he, ought pungere non palpare, to prick the heart, not to smooth and coax. The work of an orator is too precarious for a minister of the gospel. Gregory observed that our Saviour had not styled us the

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sugar but the salt of the earth, and Augustine observeth, that though Cyprian in one epistle showed much of a florid orator, to show he could do it, yet he never would do so any more, to show he would not."

There are several features in the *Confessions* deserving of remark, as being of special interest to the philosopher, the historian, or the divine.

I. Chiefest amongst these is the intense desire for knowledge and the love of truth which characterized Augustine. This was noticeable before his conversion in his hungering after such knowledge as Manichæanism and the philosophy of the time could afford. It is none the less observable in that better time, when, in his quiet retreat at Cassisiacum, he sought to strengthen the foundations of his faith, and resolved to give himself up to the acquisition of divine knowledge. It was seen, too, in the many conflicts in which he was engaged with Donatists, Manichæans, Arians, and Pelagians, and in his earnest study of the deep things of God. This love of knowledge is perhaps conveyed in the beautiful legend quoted by Nourrisson, of the monk wrapped in spirit, who expressed astonishment at not seeing Augustine among the elect in heaven. "He is higher up," he was answered, "he is standing before the Holy Trinity disputing thereon for all eternity."

While from the time of his conversion we find him holding on to the fundamental doctrines of the faith with the tenacity of one who had experienced the hollowness of the teachings of philosophy, this passion for truth led him to handle most freely subjects of speculation in things nonessential. But whether viewed as a controversialist, a student of Scripture, or a bishop of the Church of God, he ever manifests those qualities of mind and heart that gained for him not only the affection of the Church, but the esteem of his unorthodox opponents. To quote Guizot's discriminating words, there was in him "ce mélange de passion et de douceur, d'autorité et de sympathie, d'étendue d'esprit et de rigueur logique, qui lui donnait un si rare pouvoir."

2. It is to this eager desire for truth in his many-sided mind that we owe those trains of thought that read like forecasts of modern opinion. We have called attention to some such anticipations of modern thought as they recur in the notes throughout the book; but the speculations on Memory, Time, and Creation, which occupy so large a space in Books Ten and Eleven, deserve more particular notice. The French essavists have entered very fully into these questions. M. Saisset, in his admirable introduction to the De Civitate Dei, reviews Augustine's theories as to the mysterious problems connected with the idea of Creation. He says, that in his subtle analysis of Time, and in his attempt at reconciling "the eternity of creative action with the dependence of things created, . . . he has touched with a bold and delicate hand one of the deepest mysteries of the human mind, and that to all his glorious titles he has added another, that of an ingenious psychologist and an eminent metaphysician." Desjardins likewise commends the depths of Augustine's speculations as to Time, and maintains that no one's teaching as to Creation has shown more clearness, boldness, and vigour,-avoiding the perils of dualism on the one hand, and atheism on the other. In his remarks on Augustine's disquisitions on the phenomena of Memory, his praise is of a more qualified character. He compares his theories with those of Malebranche, and, while recognizing the practical and animated character of his descriptions, thinks him

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obscure in his delineation of the *manner in which* absent realities reproduce themselves on the memory.*

We have had occasion in the notes to refer to the Unseen Universe. The authors of this powerful "Apologia" for Christianity propose it chiefly as an antidote to the materialistic disbelief in the immortality of the soul amongst scientific men, which has resulted in this age from the recent advance in physical science; just as in the last century English deism had its rise in a similar influence. It is curious, in connection with this part of our subject, to note that in leading up to the conclusion at which he arrives, M. Saisset quotes a passage from the *City of God*, which contains an adumbration of the theory of the above work in regard to the eternity of the invisible universe. Verily, the saying of the wise man is true: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

3. We have already, in a previous paragraph, briefly adverted to the influence Christianity and Paganism had one on the other. The history of Christianity has been a steady advance on Paganism and Pagan philosophy; but it can hardly be denied that in this advance there has been an absorption—and in some periods in no small degree—of some of their elements. As these matters have been examined in the notes, we need not do more than refer the reader to the Index of Subjects for the evidence to be ob-

* Nourrisson's criticism of Augustine's views on Memory may well be compared with that of Desjardins. He speaks of the powerful originality of Augustine,—who is ingenious as well as new,—and says some of his disquisitions are "the most admirable which have inspired psychological observation." And further, "One does not meet in all the books of St. Augustine any philosophical theories which have greater depth than that on Memory."— *Philosophie*, i. 133. tained in this respect from the *Confessions* on such matters as Baptism, False Miracles, and Prayers for the Dead.

4. There is one feature in the Confessions which we should not like to pass unnoticed. A reference to the Retractations will show that Augustine highly appreciated the spiritual use to which the book might be put in the edification of the brethren. We believe that it will prove most useful in this way; and spiritual benefit will accrue in proportion to the steadiness of its use. We would venture to suggest that Book X., from section 37 to the end, may be profitably used as a manual of self-examination. We have pointed out in a note, that in his comment on the 8th Psalm he makes our Lord's three temptations to be types of all the temptations to which man can be subjected; and makes them correspond in their order, as given by St. Matthew, to "the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life," mentioned by St. John. Under each of these heads we have, in this part of the Confessions, a most severe examination of conscience; and the impression is deepened by his allegorically likening the three divisions of temptation to the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air. We have already remarked, in adverting to allegorical interpretation, that where "the strict use of the history is not disregarded," to use Augustine's expression, allegorizing, by way of spiritual meditation, may be profitable. Those who employ it with this idea will find their interpretations greatly aided, and made more systematic, by realizing Augustine's methods here and in the last two books of the Confessions,-as when he makes the sea to represent the wicked world, and the fruitful earth the Church.

It only remains to call attention to the principles on which

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this translation and its annotations have been made. The text of the Benedictine edition has been followed; but the head-lines of the chapters are taken from the edition of Bruder, as being the more definite and full. After carefully translating the whole of the book, it has been compared, line by line, with the translation of Watts (one of the most nervous translations of the seventeenth century), and that of Dr. Pusey, which is confessedly founded upon that of Watts. Reference has also been made, in the case of obscure passages, to the French translation of Du Bois, and the English translation of the first Ten Books. The references to Scripture are in the words of the Authorized Version wherever the sense will bear it; and whenever noteworthy variations from our version occur, they are indicated by references to the old Italic version, or to the Vulgate.

J. G. P.

ST. MARK'S VICARAGE, WEST HACKNEY
[1876]

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AUGUSTINE, SAINT (354-430), one of the four great Fathers of the Latin Church. Augustinus-the prænomen Aurelius is used indeed by his disciples Orosius and Prosper, and is found in the oldest Augustine Mss., but is not used by himself, nor in the letters addressd to him-was born at Tagaste, a town of Numidia, now Suk Ahras in Constantine, on the 13th of November 354. His father, Patricius, was a burgess of Tagaste and still a pagan at the time of his son's birth. His mother, Monica, was not only a Christian, but a woman of the most tender and devoted piety, whose beautiful faith and enthusiasm and patient prayer for both her husband and son (at length crowned with success in both cases) have made her a type of womanly saintliness for all ages. She early instructed her son in the faith and love of Jesus Christ, and for a time he seems to have been impressed by her teaching. Falling ill, he wished to be baptized; but when the danger was past, the rite was deferred and, in spite of his mother's admonitions and prayers, Augustine grew up without any profession of Christian piety or any devotion to Christian principles.

Inheriting from his father a passionate nature, he formed while still a mere youth an irregular union with a girl, by whom he became the father of a son, whom in a fit of pious emotion he named Adeodatus ("by God given"), and to whom he was passionately attached. In his *Confessions* he afterwards described this period of his life in the blackest colours; for in the light of his conversion he saw behind him

only shadows. Yet, whatever his youthful aberrations, Augustine was from the first an earnest student. His father, noticing his early promise, destined him for the brilliant and lucrative career of a rhetorician, for which he spared no expense in training him. Augustine studied at his native town and afterwards at Madaura and Carthage, especially devoting himself to the works of the Latin poets, many traces of his love for which are to be found in his writings. His acquaintance with Greek literature was much more limited, and, indeed, it has been doubted, though without sufficient reason, whether he could use the Greek scriptures in the original. Cicero's Hortensius, which he read in his nineteenth year, first awakened in his mind the spirit of speculation and the impulse towards the knowledge of the truth. But he passed from one phase of thought to another, unable to find satisfaction in any. Manichæism, that mixed product of Zoroastrian and Christian-gnostic elements, first enthralled him. He became a fervent member of the sect, and was admitted into the class of auditors or "hearers." Manichæism seemed to him to solve the mysteries of the world, and of his own experiences by which he was perplexed. His insatiable imagination drew congenial food from the fanciful religious world of the Manichæans, decked out as this was with the luxuriant wealth of Oriental myth. His strongly developed sense of a need of salvation sought satisfaction in the contest of the two principles of Good and Evil, and found peace, at least for the moment, in the conviction that the portions of light present in him would be freed from the darkness in which they were immersed. The ideal of chastity and self-restraint, which promised a foretaste of union with God, amazed him, bound as he was in the fetters of sensuality and for ever shaking at these fetters. But while

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his moral force was not sufficient for the attainment of this ideal, gradually everything else which Manichæism seemed to offer him dissolved before his criticism. Increasingly occupied with the exact sciences, he learnt the incompatibility of the Manichæan astrology with the facts. More and more absorbed in the problems of psychology, he realized the insufficiency of dualism, which did not solve the ultimate questions but merely set them back. The Manichæan propaganda seemed to him invertebrate and lacking in force, and a discussion which he had with Faustus, a distinguished Manichæan bishop and controversialist, left him greatly disappointed.

Meanwhile nine years had passed. Augustine, after finishing his studies, had returned to Tagaste, where he became a teacher of grammar. He must have been an excellent master, who knew how to influence the whole personality of his pupils. It was then that Alypius, who in the later stages of Augustine's life proved a true friend and companion, attached himself to him. He remained in his native town little more than a year, during which time he lived with his mother, who was comforted by the bishop for the estrangement of her son from the Catholic faith ("a son of so many tears cannot be lost": Confess. III. xii. § 21), comforted also, and above all, by the famous vision, which Augustine thus describes: "She saw herself standing on a certain wooden rule, and a shining youth coming towards her, cheerful and smiling upon her the while she grieved, and was consumed with grief: and when he had inquired of her the causes of her grief and daily tears (for the sake, as is their wont, of teaching, not of learning) and she had made answer that she was bewailing my perdition, he bade her be at ease, and advised her to look and observe, 'That where she

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was, there was I also.' And when she looked there, she saw me standing by her on the same rule" (*Confess.* III. xi.). Augustine now returned for a second time to Carthage, where he devoted himself zealously to work. Thence, probably in the spring of 383, he migrated to Rome. His Manichæan friends urged him to take this step, which was rendered easier by the licentious lives of the students at Carthage. His stay at Rome may have lasted about a year, no agreeable time for Augustine, since his patrons and friends belonged to just those Manichæan circles with which he had in the meantime entirely lost all intellectual touch. He, therefore, accepted an invitation from Milan, where the people were in search of a teacher of rhetoric.

At Milan the conflict within his mind in search of truth still continued. It was now that he separated himself openly from the Manichæan sect. As a thinker he came entirely under the influence of the New Academy; he professed the Sceptic philosophy, without being able to find in it the final conclusion of wisdom. He was, however, not far from the decision. Two things determined his further development. He became acquainted with the Neo-Platonic philosophy; its monism replaced the dualism, its intellectualized world of ideas the materialism of Manichæism. Here he found the admonition to seek for truth outside the material world, and from created things he learnt to recognize the invisible God; he attained the certainty that this God is, and is eternal, always the same, subject to change neither in his parts nor in his motions. And while thus Augustine's metaphysical convictions were being slowly remodelled, he met, in Ambrose, bishop of Milan, a man in whom complete worldly culture and the nobility of a ripe Christian personality were wonderfully united. He heard him preach; but