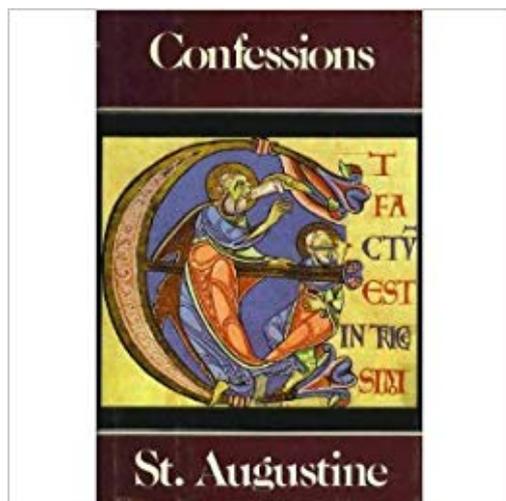


Confessions by Bishop of Hippo Augustine Saint, R. S. Pine-Coffin



ISBN: 0880291036

ISBN13: 978-0880291033

Author: Bishop of Hippo Augustine Saint, R. S. Pine-Coffin

Book title: Confessions

Publisher: Hippocrene Books (March 1, 1987)

Language: English

Category: Leaders & Notable People

Size PDF version: 1756 kb

Size ePUB version: 1207 kb

Size FB2 version: 1952 kb

Other formats: lrf txt lit mbr

“As a youth I had prayed to you for chastity and said “Give me chastity and continence, but not yet”

The son of a pagan father and a Christian mother, Saint Augustine spent his early years torn between conflicting faiths and worldviews. His **Confessions**, written when he was in his forties, recount how, slowly and painfully, he came to turn away from his youthful ideas and licentious lifestyle, to become instead a staunch advocate of Christianity and one of its most influential thinkers. A remarkably honest and revealing spiritual autobiography, the **Confessions** also address fundamental issues of Christian doctrine, and many of the prayers and meditations it includes are still an integral part of the practice of Christianity today.

In his introduction R. S. Pine-Coffin discusses Saint Augustine’s intentions in writing his **Confessions** and issues of translation. This edition also includes a list of dates of events recorded in the **Confessions**.



Reviews of the **Confessions** by Bishop of Hippo Augustine Saint, R. S. Pine-Coffin

Bukelv

It might seem pointless to write a review of one of the cornerstones of Christian literature, yet I purchased this particular edition after struggling with the first chapter of the less expensive Kindle edition of the Pusey translation. I am glad I did. The grammar of Augustine's Latin Silver Age easily handles stylistic complexities that are not natural to modern English, and this translation by Henry Chadwick renders Augustine's prose brilliantly. It reveals not so much a saint with a tortured past as a passionate and thoughtful young man sustained and drawn by a love for truth, beauty, and friends on a journey in search of the source of them, which Augustine finds in the God preached by the Catholic faith. Unlike Newman's "Apologia pro Vita Sua," the "Confessions" are not a defense of a life so much as a hymn of praise of the one who led him and gave it meaning. Augustine realizes that nothing was happenstance, but that God walked with him throughout the journey. One could view this story as a journey from alienation to fulfillment, but abstractions sell it short. In many ways, it is a love story in which the protagonist overcomes difficulties to find his true love. In confessing his journey, Augustine reveals an astonishingly modern self-awareness. He understands himself as a person with a personal history, influenced both by social and cultural conditions and inner drives. Readers in our day may well find in him a mentor in their search for meaning in life. This book became a cornerstone of the Western Christian spiritual tradition and remains fundamental reading. I highly recommend this translation.

Mavegelv

There is no need to discuss the mercy, wisdom and beauty of Augustine's "Confessions", a classic treatise on the human condition, the source of sorrows and joys.

Having read several translations with my favorite being worn out, I replaced it with this translation hoping for the best. The translation exceeded my expectations bringing me new and fresher understanding of Augustine's theological thoughts and my own situation.

I am a simple lay person, not scholarly; I know there is much more to be gleaned from this wonderful translation and will keep at it. What I especially enjoyed are the footnotes that refer the reader to the scriptures that reflect Augustine's words, fleshing out a deeper, more practical meaning to the scriptures contextualized with everyday life. This is the area I want to follow up more thoroughly and diligently.

The book binding is good for me as the inner margin seems slightly bigger than most paperback books easing the usual tendency of having to read on the curve of a book. A silly little thing that makes reflective reading better somehow.

I agree with the translators decisions to keep some of the "Thee's" and "Thou's" to convey Augustine's use of the words when they express his personal intimacy with God as distinguished from generalized concepts of God. They draw me in to greater reverence and understanding.

Sti

In the late seventies as I worked on a master's degree in agricultural economics, my best friend, who had just entered seminary, encouraged me to undertake study of classics in the faith and early on I

read Augustine's (1978) *Confessions*. The *Confessions* proved to be a challenging read both because of my lack of seminary training and because of the old English translation. When I undertook this year to write my own memoir, my friend encouraged me to return to the *Confessions* both because the *Confessions* provided a template for all memoirs to follow and because this time I also had seminary training.

Convinced of the wisdom to return to the *Confessions*, I sought a more modern translation that would be easier to read and, to my delight, found a translation by E.J. Sheed with an introduction by Augustinian biographer, Peter Brown. Brown (2000) is revered as one of the leading Augustinian biographers of our time and I had used his biography during my days in seminary.

I break this review up into four parts. In the first part, I give an overview of the *Confessions* and why we are interested. In the second part, I review the life of Augustine and sin, as he describes it. In the third part, I will focus on Augustine's coming to faith. And, in the fourth part, I will review his theological writings, which focus on the creation accounts in Genesis.

Background on Augustine

For those unfamiliar with church history, Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), which was in modern-day Algeria, lived right after the time of Emperor Constantine the Great (272-337 AD) who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Bishop Ambrose baptized Augustine who had such contemporaries as Jerome, who translated the Bible in Latin. The fourth century posed a heady time for the Christian church and Augustine's theology influenced much of what followed. For example, Martin Luther (1483-1546), a leader in the reformation more than a thousand years later, was an Augustinian monk (Bainton 1995, 25).

Of contemporary significance is the point that Augustine hailed from Africa where some of the best theology and early Bible manuscripts were copied. African scholarship dominated the early church and this dominance continued until the Islamic invasion in the sixth century, following the life and work of Mohammad (570-632 AD). The statement that Christianity is a "white man's religion" (widely touted in developing countries) is not historically accurate and denigrates the significant contribution of African scholarship to the early church.

What Are the *Confessions*?

Augustine came to Christ as an adult. In his introduction, Peter Brown writes:

"On Easter day, April 24th, 387, he [Augustine] had 'put on Christ' by receiving baptism at the hands of Ambrose." (xv)

Shortly before the death of his mother, Monica, who was a devout Catholic, later that year. Augustine supported himself teaching rhetoric, was heavily influenced by the writings of Plato, and wrote the *Confessions* to be read aloud. Each of the thirteen books could be read in about an hour's time (xvi-xviii). Brown writes:

"For, as Catholic bishop, Augustine did not simply know 'about' the Bible, or preach 'on' the Bible. He prayed out of it every day, using especially the book of Psalms, which he believed to be the direct, personal prayers of King David, and so the model of all Christian, as they had been of all Jewish, prayer." (xvii-xviii)

The influence of the Bible on the *Confessions* is obvious to any reader because Augustine frequently

begins a particular section in prayer and cites scripture throughout, allusions to which the editor has conveniently footnoted.

Less obvious to the reader is the definition that Augustine used for confession. As noted by the editor's glossary, for Augustine confession could be:

1. a profession of faith,
2. praise of God, or
3. an act of penance (self-accusation).

Today, we primarily assume the last definition (329).

In his book, *Confessions*, Augustine of Hippo describes his life before and after converting to Christianity as an adult. Augustine shamelessly lays out the sins of his life, saying:

“Let the mind of my brethren love that in me which You teach to be worthy of love, and grieve for that in me which You teach to be worthy of grief.” (191)

I take this statement to mean that Augustine proposes to be frankly forthright in confession so that he can be an example to others. Is it any wonder that people trusted him and followed him into the monastic life? Having read the *Confessions* as a young man, I truly believe that they helped lead me to live ascetic lifestyle, even after it was no longer a financial necessity. I commend the *Confessions* to anyone who wishes to deepen their faith in Jesus Christ.

References

Augustine. 1978. *Confessions* (Orig Pub 397 AD). Translated by R.S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books.

Bainton, Roland H. 1995. *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. New York: Meridan Book.

Brown, Peter. 2000. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Orig pub 1967). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Metzger, Bruce M. and Bart D. Ehrman. 2005. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Related PDF to *Confessions* by Bishop of Hippo Augustine Saint, R. S. Pine-Coffin

[The Confessions of Saint Augustine by Augustine of Hippo](#)

[Confessions, Vol. 2: Commentary on Books 1-7 by Saint Augustine, James J. O'Donnell](#)

[Confidential Confessions \(Confidential Confessions\), Vol. 4 \(Confidential Confessions \(Graphic Novels\)\) by Reiko Momochi](#)

[The Confessions of Saint Augustine by St. Augustine of Hippo](#)

[Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin with a Sketch of His Life and Work: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church Part 1 \(vol.1\) by St Augustine, Augustin St Augustin, Philip Schaff](#)

[Augustine: The Confessions \(Landmarks of World Literature\) by Gillian Clark](#)

[The Seven Deadly Diseases of Ministry Marketing: Confessions of a Christian Fundraiser by Doug](#)

[Brendel](#)

[Confessions of Augustine \(Latin texts and commentaries\) by W. Connor](#)