

Notes – Early Medieval Ages 5

Notes 5

Why study the Confessions?

Christianity had a great impact on Roman Empire late fourth and fifth century

3 problems

1. Problem of evil

2. Relation between body and soul

3. Understanding of sin and redemption

All of these are dealt with thoroughly in Augustine's work
More thorough than any other

Ancient thinker

Philosophical and Psychological investigation

Men go out and gaze at astonishment at high mountains... But they pay no attention to themselves

An examination of the author's heart – intellectual and emotional

Reads dialogue by Cicero hortensius

Convinces him life of mind most important

About a search for truth

That takes a lot of wrong turns

A confession of sin

About spiritual yearning

An intellectual and a passionate person

Not apposed to desire

Love is a psychological need

I was in love with the idea of love

Both sexual and spiritual

Also a believer in friendship

He is ambitious

Ability to write

Read

Argue

At that time the course of success

Was government service

Rhetoric and law

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion

Writing well and elegantly

Highly valued in Roman Empire

Mother is extremely pious

Augustine's mother is a saint now

Wants him to be a success which means delaying baptism

Involvement in government service

Which involves dealing with sin,

Wrangling, parties, honours,

Sexual conquests

Gives it up when converts

What bothers Augustine?

Problem of evil

Why does a good God allow bad things to happen

Compared to the works of the Greek writers and philosophers

the Bible seems awfully crude

Rhetorically in terms of style

And conceptually in terms of ideas
The Old Testament God seems temperamental
The flood

Kills man touches the ark
Anthropomorphism

Walking in garden

Talks to people
Likes Manichaeism

Two gods one bad
Christian belief

There will be bodies as well as spirit in resurrection
Platonism

Evil is the absence of something Good

It is the absence of being and meaning

Turning away from the good is the human problem
People of cave

Chained looking at back of cave

Seeing images of what is outside

Forget chained

Think this is the real thing

If you tried to liberate them

Persecute you, don't want to change
Key differences

Platonism assigns evil to ignorance

Christianity to sin
Why steal pears?

Bored

Not hungry, not desire

It's gratuitous – not from need

Platonists don't have a good idea of why this happens as not to do with ignorance.

If human beings are sinful and education not going to help,

What will?

The nature of sin is the pears

The way out of it is the conversion

At least in part

After his conversion Augustine's plan was to lead a life of contemplation with his friends

Leisure with dignity

He did not follow through with it

Went back to North Africa

Became bishop

Defended doctrine against heretics

Died defending his city of

Hippo from the Vandals

Writes City of God when Rome falls in 410 to Vandals

You cannot live a life of perfection

Becomes more and more against doctrine of perfectionism

Cannot in any way earn salvation

Some saved by grace

Visible elect – know who's going to heaven

Small community seeking salvation

Everyone outside doomed

Invisible – then everybody ought to be in the church

Ought to be roping in every one you can

Augustine believes in forced conversion

With baptism

Doesn't mean perfection

Means entering the process

Key points

Opposition to perfectionism

Exaltation of grace

Sin as indelible