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Sixty-Year Old Classic: A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine

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fore, appear that a reconstruction of the Al-Khwarizmi Map based on the *Kitab surat al-ard* would be more satisfactory than one based on the *Rasm*.

Takahashi presents as his reconstruction seven maps corresponding to the following regions: Europe, Anatolia, Arabia and Iran, Scythia, Scythia and Seria, India, and Taprobana, which is the area south of India. The East-West spread of the Al-Khwarizmi Map extends to 180° with the starting line running through the *Insulae Fortunatae*. The Zero Latitude runs through Taprobana south of India. The projection of the Map as reconstructed is cylindrical (5° x 5°), its top being the north and its bottom the south. The numbering of points in the reconstructed map follows that of Hans von Mzik. For instance, Khandju is Number 16 which is the figure assigned by von Mzik. Takahashi notes the heavy influence of Ptolemy on the Al-Khwarizmi Map, although he also points out where Al-Khwarizmi improves upon Ptolemy on the basis of new data. However, not all the deviations from Ptolemy have a factual basis. In spite of these deviations, however, the Al-Khwarizmi Map remains Ptolemaic in design and conception. Muslim map makers in succeeding generations kept the values and features of the Al-Khwarizmi Map rather than those of Ptolemy's. For this reason, Takahashi's reconstruction sheds much stronger light on Arab geography in the centuries noted for the resurgence of Muslim vigor.

A note by Walter Fuchs accompanies the presentation of the Ming world atlas, "Ta Ming Hun-i T'u," which was found at the Peking Palace Museum. The Map is 380 cm. high and 480 cm. wide. The Map itself as well as a detail are reproduced in two plates printed in black and white on glossy paper.

S. V. EPISTOLA

SIXTY-YEAR OLD CLASSIC

A GUIDE TO THE THOUGHT OF ST. AUGUSTINE. By Eugene Portalié, S.J. (transl. by Ralph J. Bastian, S.J.) Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960. xxxvii, 428 p.

Father Portalié's study of St. Augustine first appeared in 1902 as an article in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. After more than a half century, it is still considered one of the standard introductions to a serious study of the thought of St. Augustine. The years have given it a slightly quaint look. In an attempt to remedy this, Vernon J. Bourke has written a meticulously footnoted introduction wherein he surveys the

more outstanding editions of Augustine's works and indicates the main lines along which a certain segment of Augustinian scholarship has developed since Portalie's time. More recent titles have also been inserted—duly asterisked—into Portalie's general bibliography. The value of the work under review, however, does not lie mainly in its extensive coverage of secondary sources, but in its profound grounding in the works of Augustine himself.

Portalie begins with a survey of Augustine's life. This is not merely a matter of human interest but essential, given the intensely personal character of Augustine's thought. There follows a detailed survey of every surviving work of Augustine; the works falsely attributed to him are also thrown in for good measure. But the main core of the book is an exposition of Augustine's teaching.

One who would give a brief account of Augustine's thought is faced with an almost impossible challenge. For Augustine's inmost self was a complex, evolving universe, and it is this self that he communicates in his writings. How can a mere scholar organize an entire universe in evolution?

Here is how Portalie met this problem of method. In his introductory biography of Augustine, he naturally outlined his intellectual development. "Naturally"—because in Augustine thought and life are one. With this outline as background, Portalie finds himself free to treat Augustine's thought in greater detail according to headings like "The Divine Nature," "Creation and Creatures," "Christology," "Grace as Developed by Augustine." But even here Father Portalie never loses his "sense of evolution." Thus he shows that certain "contradictions" in Augustine vanish as soon as one sees them within the context of his developing thought. Another trait of Portalie is his instinctive "sense of the whole." While dealing with one aspect of Augustine's thought, he is careful to point out how other lines of Augustinian thought might modify or introduce nuances into the aspect under consideration.

An example of Portalie's sense of evolution is his treatment of Augustine's thought on the soul. The beginner is often confused when he reads different definitions of the soul, each of them provided with quotation marks and a reference to one of Augustine's works. Portalie disentangles the confusion by simply providing the dates on which the definitions were written. Thus one can follow Augustine's grappling with the problem from the time when he held that man is "a rational soul using a mortal and earthly body" (quoted p. 117) to the period of deeper insight: "Man is, as the ancients said, a rational, mortal animal," (*ibid.*) and "the body therefore subsists through the soul and exists by the very fact that it is animated. . . . The

soul gives form to the body so that the latter is body insofar as it exists" (quoted p. 148).

Another instance of evolution in Augustine is his position on the need of grace for the first positive movement of man towards justification. In the beginning he held that this movement was due exclusively to the free choice of the will. As he continued to study the matter, he began to see that this free choice itself would not be possible without God's grace. As Portalie puts it: "Later he was to say that every good desire was already an act of mercy on the part of God" (pp. 181-182). Augustine himself was aware of this development so that he said to the Semipelagians who were appealing to his earlier writings: "That is true, I have seen the problem better and I have corrected myself. Since you read what I have to say, why do you not advance with me?" (quoted p. 181).

Portalie's solicitude to present Augustine as a living, evolving thinker enables the reader to realize that Augustine was a rare tension of humbleness and courage: no question was too profound for his restless, brooding curiosity; at the same time, his very advance into insight made him more aware of his ignorance. His writings abound in expressions like this: "I choose to confess my cautious ignorance rather than profess a false knowledge" (quoted p. 299).

Portalie's sense of the whole is seen in his treatment of Augustine's position concerning reason and faith. A rather popular notion is that, according to Augustine, man cannot begin to reason unless he already has faith: thinking is a function of belief. Portalie points out that expressions such as "We believe that we may know; we do not know that we may believe" (quoted p. 116) occur only when Augustine is discussing the inner understanding of revealed truths. Obviously, man cannot begin to understand what God has revealed unless he already believes in God. On the other hand, Augustine is just as explicit in stressing that man cannot begin to believe unless he has first reasoned. For man cannot accept the authority of another, even if that other be God, unless man has first reasoned concerning the trustworthiness of that authority. "If therefore it is reasonable that faith precede reason for the deeper truths which cannot be grasped, certainly whatever reason there was which led to this conclusion should itself precede faith" (quoted p. 116). In Augustine, reason and authority, philosophy and faith interpenetrate without neutralizing each other. Augustine's theory of the divine illumination of the intellect is often discussed apart from all context. Portalie, with his sense of the whole, views the theory within the context of Augustine's teaching on man's dependence on God. Just as the human will needs grace to attain the supreme good, so too the human intellect needs the divine illumination to grasp truth. There is no question here of re-

vealed truth but of such basic truths as: If I am deceived, I exist. Note how, in this matter, faith and philosophy work together without interfering with each other. Augustine evolves a purely philosophical theory of knowledge. What has been revealed concerning grace does not enter into the substance of the theory but provides—from the outside, as it were—a hint on how to approach the problem.

In matters of terminology, emphasis, and organization Portalie's study shows signs of aging. He uses the term "soul of the church" to indicate those members of Christ who are in grace. Today that term is reserved for the Holy Spirit, the principle of divine life in the Mystical Body. In his treatment of the theory of the priesthood, Portalie stresses Augustine's teaching on "the insurmountable barrier which separates the priest from the laity" (p. 236). He mentions only in passing that Augustine "probably" recognized a general priesthood in all the faithful. Today the "insurmountable barrier" which ordination places between priest and people is still stressed; however, equal stress is brought to bear on the lesser but nonetheless real priesthood of all who have been sealed with Christ in baptism and confirmation. The scholar who would write a survey of Augustine's thought today would certainly spend more time exploring what, if any, was Augustine's doctrine on the priesthood of the faithful. Portalie's treatment of Augustine's doctrine on the Eucharist is largely a polemic against those who deny that Augustine taught the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Today it would be more apropos to abbreviate the polemic and treat more at length Augustine's profound teaching on the role of the Eucharist within the Mystical Body as the sacrament of life and community. Portalie's designation of Augustine as doctor of charity in the field of moral theology has a curiously contemporary sound.

Concerning Portalie's position on the philosophies that influenced Augustine: further research has confirmed his contention that, though Augustine read very little of Plato directly and drew most of his Platonism from Plotinus, still he is more Platonic than Plotinian. However, his claim that Augustine was not influenced by the stoics will find few supporters today. It is true that in combating Pelagius Augustine was combating the stoic doctrine of man's total self-sufficiency; yet, Augustine's theory of the city of God is deeply, if perhaps unconsciously indebted to the stoic conception of the universe as "the sweet city of Zeus."

Then there is the matter of philosophic idiom. Augustine belongs to the tradition of Christian thinkers who use philosophy as a channel toward deeper insights into the truths of faith and again as a tool to express their insights into the faith. But, as Gilson points out, philosophy, taken precisely as philosophy, never becomes a constitutive

element of their faith, much less a substitute for faith. Yet it cannot be denied that the depth and vitality of their lives as believers sprang to an appreciable extent from their philosophizing in the faith. One who would give an account of a thinker of this tradition is faced with the problem of giving accurate expression to his philosophical notions. The problem is rendered more difficult if the thinker in question lived fifteen centuries ago. Portalie is aware of this when he speaks of the need "to penetrate deeper into the mind of the great doctor and to recast our concepts of these matters in the mold of the thought of Augustine's time" (p. 254). For this is one of the oddities of a philosopher: he can gain insight into the unconditioned, the unlimited, the eternal; but the channels through which he has access to insight and the techniques he employs in the attempt to express insight are limited and conditioned by the cast of mind and the climate of thought of his own time. So, the modern scholar who would write about Augustine is faced with the task of translation, not from one language to another, but from one climate of thought to another.

Portalie's philosophic idiom is basically Aristotelian; its tendency is to reduce thought to the universal and the abstract. Augustine's philosophic idiom is more versatile. He does use universal abstractions, but in a distinctively concrete manner. He also uses metaphor and image, not as ornaments, but as metaphysical tools. Now we can hear the first stirrings of an attempt to revive the use of metaphor and image in philosophy. If this attempt succeeds, it will open a new dimension in Augustinian scholarship. Finally, Augustine revels in long philosophical analyses of his consciousness. These analyses can be best described by the modern term "phenomenological." The phenomenological category of the "dialogue" is invaluable for one who would sound the meanings of Augustine's tortured strivings to understand "God and myself." (It might be remarked in passing that when Augustine discovers himself in God and God in himself, he also discovers mankind and the universe in God and in himself. His is no self-stultifying introspection.) A contemporary account of Augustine would not be complete if the phenomenological approach is ignored.

Portalie justly remarks that St. Thomas with his calm and severe method prepared "the dictionary thanks to which the African doctor can be read without danger" (p. 312). It may also be said that St. Augustine prepared the corrective to St. Thomas. One of the basic insights of Thomism is that in man the soul is the substantial form of the body. Man is not soul alone nor body alone, but soul-and-body. A legitimate corollary would be that man is not thought alone nor passion alone, but thought-and-passion. What St. Thomas analyzed and proved in his philosophy, St. Augustine also practiced in his. A dash of Augustine's attitude of passionate commitment in the face of

reality would do good to any self-styled Thomist who might consider aloofness the fifth cardinal virtue.

In the book, the chapter written with the most penetration is the one entitled "The Characteristic Genius of St. Augustine." The description contained in the following quotation from it is exact.

Augustine's genius is the marvelous gift of being able to embrace truth with every fiber of his soul—not with the heart alone, for the heart does not think; nor with the mind alone, for the mind grasps only truth which is abstract and already half dead. Augustine seeks the living truth. (p. 306)

The living truth which he is looking for is the living God. And having found God, Augustine has to speak of him to every creature. "Communicative tenderness" is Portalie's precise term. This chapter is hard to equal and it would be worthwhile to read the whole book just to be able to read this chapter in context.

ROQUE FERRIOLS

NO SYNTHESIS EMERGES

PROBLEMS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS. A symposium. Baltimore, Md.: Helicon Press, 1961. ix, 219 p.

According to the preface, this collection of articles is intended "to throw a little light on some of the psychoanalytic problems which surround the approaches to a field which is complicated, ambiguous and difficult, where the best and the worst are often inextricably mixed" (p. vii). The book does give some light to the competent reader; yet the problems remain as complicated, ambiguous, and difficult as the very complex field it tackles.

The thirteen authors of the book are persons devoted to psychoanalysis and competent in the field. Yet in many of their opinions they are markedly divergent. Each of them seems happy to have the opportunity to say emphatically what he wants to say. The result is a variety of views which leaves the symposium interesting but certainly far from homogeneous in thought and opinion.

The articles are divided into three groups. The first part, "Men and Techniques", is informative on the psychoanalytic process and its basic techniques. The second part, "Freud and the Analytic Schools", presents some highlights on the trends in psychoanalysis which have gained a reputation in Europe. In the last part, "Beyond Psychoanalysis", there are attempts at evaluating certain involvements that have been specially controversial.