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***Saint Augustine.* Louis Bertrand. Translated by Vincent O'Sullivan. D. Appleton & Co. 1914. Pp. viii, 396. \\$.00.**

George C. Cell

Harvard Theological Review / Volume 8 / Issue 02 / April 1915, pp 278 - 279  
DOI: 10.1017/S0017816000008804, Published online: 03 November 2011

**Link to this article:** [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0017816000008804](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0017816000008804)

**How to cite this article:**

George C. Cell (1915). Harvard Theological Review, 8, pp 278-279  
doi:10.1017/S0017816000008804

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guage and the thought of the Old Roman Symbol, and on the other the speculative conceptions and the philosophical terminology of Nicaea.

In conclusion, we may seriously ask whether our author has not read too largely the philosophical conceptions of a later age into the profoundly religious language of our second-century author.

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SAINT AUGUSTINE. LOUIS BERTRAND. Translated by VINCENT O'SULLIVAN. D. Appleton & Co. 1914. Pp. viii, 396. \$3.00.

This is a remarkably fine portrait of "the great heart and the great intellect" of Augustine. It is brilliant in description, critical as well as appreciative in spirit, rich in fine spiritual observations on the man and his epoch. Where is there a life or an historical setting surpassing the romantic wandering career of Augustine in interest or instructiveness? The metamorphosis of a gay dissolute youth into the "grand old Bishop" with his stalwart faith, the epic of the inner life of a soul, is the high theme. Bertrand's work is not a scholastic review of Augustine's writings, but the "sole aim is to study Augustine's soul." The human interest is put first. The author follows "this peerless man" through the stages of *infantia*, *pueritia*, *adolescencia*, *vir paganus*, *vir christianus*, especially the merging of the Platonist into the Christian monk, and the succeeding work of the Bishop of Hippo. Particularly valuable are the pen pictures of the cities where Augustine lived: Thagasta, Madaura, Carthage, Rome, Milan, and Hippo. These recover for the reader somewhat of Augustine's world, what he must have seen, heard, and felt. The play of environmental influences upon the many-sided personality of the strangely modern Augustine is depicted with insight and critical independence. The style is vivid and fascinating. The book reads very well, and is as instructive as it is readable.

Where the human interest is foremost, we do not look for labored discussions of theological problems. The author has used Augustine's writings only where the "ardent soul pulsates" in them. Still the work is of great value for understanding Augustine's doctrinal position. Much nonsense has been written about the greatest theologian of the Western Church, largely because his writings have been studied in detachment from his biography, from his practical problems, and the impressions upon him of the age. This is the

perennial vice of the dogmatic method. The man and the *Zeitgeist* alone make the doctrines intelligible.

A good illustration is found in the views of Augustine on the State. He has often been berated for his low estimate of the State. "What are your empires but magnificent robberies?" Well, this savage onslaught of his on the State appears, in the light of Bertrand's chapter, "The City of Gold" to be no more than the naked truth about Roman administration of the provinces, at least in the later history of the Empire. They were continuously ransacked and plundered to feed, adorn, and gratify the insatiable hunger, vanity, and lust of Rome. Roman avarice and the mailed fist had made the Mistress of the World a dazzling *aurata Roma*. *Acies stupet igne metalli*, said Claudian. And the provinces paid for it. Small wonder provincials were asking themselves whether this Empire was worth all the blood and money that it cost. Nevertheless, since Augustine knew nothing better to take its place, and also knew that without a minimum of safety all spiritual effort is futile, he strove mightily to strengthen the unity of the Church and to deserve the active support of the government. He believed that Catholic unity, the Roman Empire, and civilization belonged together and were mutually interdependent. The same reasoning applies to his appeal to force in suppressing the lawless and violent Donatists, to his inhuman doctrine of grace and predestination, to his ideas of church authority and other peculiarities of his system. The "time's abuse" accounts in most cases for those features of his theology most offensive to the modern mind. Nowhere else is the brilliant success and incomparable superiority of the historical method over the dogmatic more apparent than in the study and interpretation of this master-mind of the Western Church—so human, so modern, so incomparably great in spiritual effort and achievement.

Bertrand's book supplies a long-felt want. It is not too much to say, "no historical, theological, or biographical collection can be considered complete without it."

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THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF DANTE. Rt. Rev. W. BOYD-CARPENTER.  
Harvard University Press. 1914. Pp. xii, 250. \$1.50.

"The study of Dante is the literary phenomenon of England and America at the present time"; this was the judgment expressed by the Hon. James Bryce in his Lowell Institute lectures some years