



Confessions of a Sinner (Classic, 60s)

Augustine of Hippo

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Book 1. His infancy and boyhood up to age 14. He speaks of his inability to remember the sins he almost certainly committed during this time. Children serve as insight into what man would be if it weren't for being socialized into waiting one's turn. Book 2. Augustine finds himself amongst bad companions, which leads him to commit theft and succumb to lust. Augustine comes from a good family and has never wanted for food. In this chapter, he explores the question of why he and his friends stole pears when he had many better pears of his own. He explains the feelings he experienced as he ate the pears and threw the rest away to the pigs. Augustine argues that he most likely would not have stolen anything had he not been in the company of others who could share in his sin. Some insight into group mentality is given. Book 3. His studies at Carthage, his conversion to Manichaeism and continued indulgences in lust between 16 and 19. The work outlines Augustine's sinful youth and his conversion to Christianity. It is widely seen as the first Western autobiography and was an influential model for Christian writers throughout the following 1000 years of the Middle Ages. It is not a complete autobiography, nonetheless, provide an unbroken record of his development of thought and is the most complete record of any single person from the 4th and 5th centuries. In the work St. Augustine writes about how much he regrets having led a sinful and immoral life. He discusses his regrets for following the Manichaean religion and believing in astrology. He writes about Nebridius's role in helping to persuade him that astrology was not only incorrect but evil, and St. Ambrose's role in his conversion to Christianity. He shows intense sorrow for his sexual sins, and writes on the importance of sexual morality. The books were written as prayers to God, thus the title, based on the Psalms of David.

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