

tions encompasses ethics and political theory: the two cities, *caritas* and *cupiditas*, enjoyment and use, voluntarism, culture and education, political pessimism, justice, the state as penal order. The impression that this little book leaves is very ambiguous. It contains interesting remarks, as far as it shows the highlights of Augustine's contribution to Western thought: the ontological argument, the *cogito*, the theories of time, language and knowledge, the existence of the subconscious, and, most importantly, the notion of will. However, its brevity has also serious disadvantages. The danger is that the reader is not sufficiently put in contact with Augustine's texts, but much more with the opinion of his interpreters. The authors blame Augustine not only for leaving his work inconclusive and rambling, but also for not regarding philosophy as the queen of the sciences. I would like more room for the student to form his or her own opinion.

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John D. CAPUTO, *On Religion. (Thinking in Action)*. London-New York, Routledge, 2001. VIII-147. Hbk 30 \$. ISBN 415-23332-X.

Religion is love of God, who is a reality beyond the real. How is religion still a source of inspiration, even after the death of God? Caputo's intention is to explain and to show the truth of the statement of J. Derrida "religion without religion". In my own words: the first "religion" is a deed, the second time it is a structure. Caputo writes: God is a deed, not a thought; God is a question, not an answer. There is a deeply religious element within us all, with or without religion. In his discussion references are made to many modern philosophers: Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Heidegger, Descartes, Wittgenstein. Even two films, *Star Wars* of George Lucas and *The Apostle* of R. Duvall, are analyzed.

More important for the readers of this review is that this little, well-written book is strongly based on some ideas of Augustine, such as the question "What do I love, when I love my God?"; The only measure of love, is love without measure; Our hearts are restless; We do not know who we are; I have become a question to myself; There is a learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*); Love drives our search to know (*fides quaerens intellectum*); Doing the truth (*facere veritatem*); In the Kingdom of God, the insiders are out, while the outsiders are in. Therefore, the author calls his book a post-modern repetition of Augustine. Caputo considers the impossible as the stuff of which religion



is made, so that to believe what seems unbelievable is really faith, hope against hope is really hope, loving in an impossible situation is really love. The impossible is God's element, because the impossible disturbs the modern idea of what is possible. Faith cannot be reduced to the churches or to organized faiths; nevertheless, the author does not deny that they have a role to play, for a religion without the body of a community and its traditions is a bloodless abstraction.

The secularization has had serious consequences: the old Augustinian idea of the "self", this sinful, self-questioning, passionate, prayerful, weepy being of divided will has been displaced by a sovereign, self-possessed, dispassionate "thinking thing". The moderns created sharp lines between subject and object, consciousness and the external world, science and religion, faith and reason, public and private, rational and irrational, empirical and a priori, cognitive and non-cognitive, fact and value, is and ought, descriptive and normative, sacred and profane, religious and secular. This has led to an exaggerated stress on subjectivity and relativism. More and more religion became lodged in subjectivity. Relativism manifested itself as "nothing is true, one belief is as good as another" or as perpetual (and complacent) agnosticism. Augustine, on the contrary, held that, if we want to find God, who is the most transcendent reality, we have not to go outside, but to go in (*intra me, supra me*).

Although many thoughts in this book deserve serious consideration and approval, sometimes I ask myself if the author is not underestimating the role of reason and knowledge. Is there "a truth without knowledge" (expression used by Caputo)? Is the God of the Bible not more a personal God than "the Force" in which some moderns believe? Is it Augustine's conviction that when we love anything, it is really God whom we love, however obscurely? Would Augustine allow us to say: "The name of God is the name of what we love and desire"? Must we not nuance the statement "In his *Confessions* Augustine said that the Scriptures may have many meanings, so long as all of them are true"?

We cannot deny that truth plays for Augustine an important role. Instead of asserting "Augustine belonged to the phenomenon of Christian Neoplatonism" I would prefer: Augustine was a Christian making use of the neoplatonic philosophy.

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