

St. augustine's confessions

Philosophy



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During his time, St. Augustine wrote thirteen autobiographical books entitled "Confessions". The book tells how St. Augustine's life was changed from living a sinful life to his conversion to Christianity. After studying the Confessions by St. Augustine, several parallelisms can be seen between the said autobiography and the Old and New Testament of the Christian Bible. Parallelisms do not appear only within the text but as well as in structure and format. One of the major parallelisms that can be seen between Augustine's Confession and the Bible is the pattern or way of developing each stage or part of each one.

The Bible started by the creation of everything perceivable by the human senses. On the other hand, Augustine's Confession started by telling the story of Augustine's childhood, his birth. Thus, Augustine's birth symbolizes the creation in the first book of the Bible, in the book of Genesis. The development of Augustine's Confessions also followed the same trend as the Bible. The first eight books of the Confessions told the story of Augustine's life from infancy to living in sin and then, finding his way to God.

The story of Augustine's infancy can be related to the story of Adam and Eve in the Old Testament. As an infant, Augustine knows nothing of sin, innocent as Adam and Eve were in the beginning. Then, Augustine was exposed to the world along with its sinful desires that causes Augustine to live a life afar from God, just as Adam and Eve after eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. Augustine continues to live his life following the desires of the flesh until he sees hopelessness without God. This part of Augustine's life somehow reflects the Old Testament.

The Israelites continued to sin causing them to reach the promise land in a lot longer time. The later part of the Confessions can also be linked to the New Testament. Augustine was Christianized that also symbolizes rebirth, rebirth in his attitudes and views of life just as the New Testament signifies the birth of Christ, the one who is to save the people. The dark ages in Augustine's life can be viewed as the Old Testament wherein the people lived in sin. On the other hand, Augustine's conversion can be viewed as the New Testament wherein God provided salvation and a new birth.

Thus, it can be noticed that the transition of events in the two books are also similar to each other: the conversion of Augustine to Christianity and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Consequently, it can be said that the first part of the Confessions, like the Old Testament speaks of past events: the birth and early life of Augustine and the creation in the Old Testament. The last parts of the two books are also connected; they both speak of future events. The last part of Augustine's Confessions stated the eagerness of Augustine to interpret the inner meanings and messages of the Bible.

He ended the Confessions by referring to the Sabbath, the seventh day when God rested. Augustine refers to the Sabbath figuratively that can also be interpreted as the final rest of the soul in the presence of God, the eternal life. In the same way, the Revelation or the last book of the New Testament speaks of things to come in a metaphorical sense. Thus, it can be concluded that both the last part of the two books are to be viewed in a metaphorical way in order to understand its true meaning. The Revelation was full of symbolisms in the same way as the last book of the Confessions.

Both leaves the readers time to reflect and to search for the true meanings and essence of the text in their own way. Both in the Old and New Testament of the Bible, God reveals himself to man through angels, visions and others because of the inability of man to reach Him. In the same way, Augustine sees God through the life of his mother: through her actions and advice. Both show the inability of man to reach to God in their own way and thus, it was God providing man the means of understanding and obeying Him. Another similarity is that the Bible was comprised of different books (67 books in all) that also include several chapters.

In the same way, Augustine wrote several books of which each were named by their order, that is, Book 1 to 13. Each book of The Confessions is also divided in to chapters that are similar to the chapters of the books in the Bible. Thus, it can be said that parallelisms indeed occur between the Holy Bible of Christianity and the Confessions by St. Augustine both within and outside of the text. It can also be said that most Christian literatures of the contemporary time follows the same format as the Confessions in which the original pattern can be rooted to the Bible of Christianity.