

**THE PROBLEM OF EVIL: A  
CRITICISM  
OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
POINT OF VIEW**

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The problem of evil: a criticism of the Augustinian point of view by Marion Le Roy Burton

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# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

A CRITICISM OF THE AUGUSTINIAN  
POINT OF VIEW

BY

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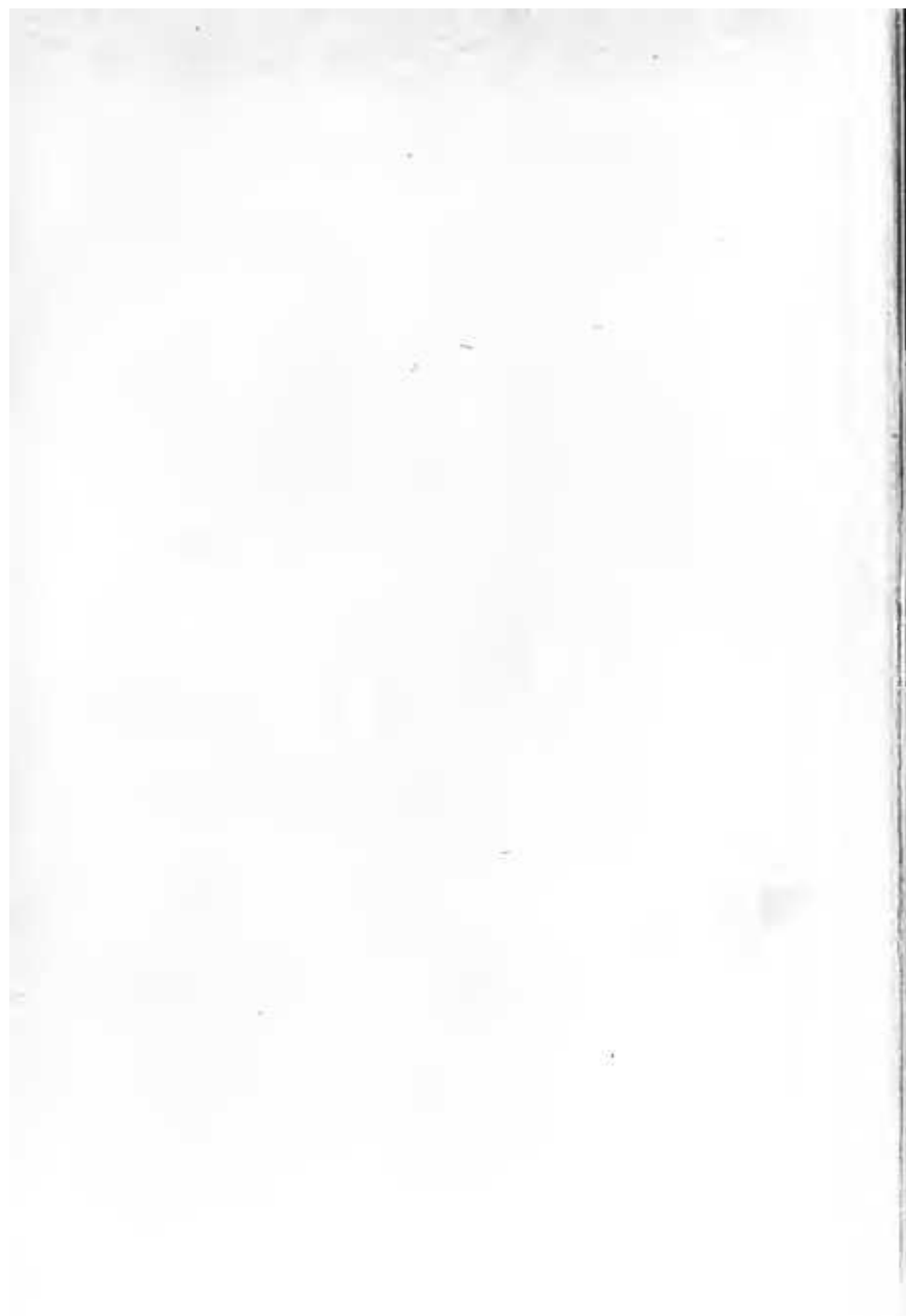
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TO MY WIFE  
I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE  
THIS VOLUME





## PREFACE

This book is not intended for the popular reader. It is a rather detailed and technical criticism of the philosophical basis of the Augustinian treatment of the problem of evil. The author does not presume to have fathomed this eternal mystery nor to have reformulated the doctrine of sin. If, however, he has set forth in a true light the historic theory which for centuries has dominated Christian thought, and has shown the absolute necessity of a reconstruction of the doctrine of sin, then in a measure he has realized his purpose. Anyone who may pick up this work, anticipating something more entertaining than a philosophical or theological discussion, would be wise to lay it down at once. If any reader does not care for the detailed arguments by which the author has arrived at his position, it is suggested that the last chapter, which summarizes his conclusions, be read first.

The present volume was written, as it now stands, while the author was still a graduate student in the department of philosophy at Yale University. Parts of it have been delivered before the George Barker Stevens Theological Club of Yale and the Manhattan Congregational Ministers' Association of New York City. While the author occupied the chair of Systematic Theology in Yale Divinity School much of the material here presented was incorporated in lectures before the students of that institution.

The present work grew out of a suggestion made to

## PREFACE

the writer by the late Professor George B. Stevens. The suggestion was that there existed a distinct need for a complete and impartial statement and criticism of the speculative basis upon which the Augustinian doctrine of sin rests. Consequently it has been the definite aim of the writer to formulate such a statement, endeavoring to make it at once historical, critical and constructive. Augustine was a man of keen spiritual insight; he was also a profound philosopher. He affirmed that his mind preferred nothing to the discovery of truth. It is in keeping, therefore, with the Augustinian spirit and mode of procedure to approach our task from the purely intellectual standpoint.

The writer has sought to deal with the problem from a philosophical rather than from a religious point of view. That the problem of evil lends itself to both forms of treatment is apparent, but the task here undertaken concerns itself primarily with the rational grounds of our author's position. It is for this reason that the biblical material pertaining to the origin and nature of sin has not been given fuller consideration. The writer has not felt called upon to enter into a discussion of the questions that might be raised in regard to biblical sources. Those inquiries lie outside the scope of the present work.

The writer wishes to express his indebtedness to Professor George H. Palmer of Harvard University for valuable suggestions relating especially to the conception of evil and the problem of freedom. To Professor Charles M. Bakewell, of Yale University, the author takes this occasion to record his deep gratitude for many suggestions and criticisms which have been invaluable.

*PREFACE*

The end sought in compiling the bibliography has not been to offer a complete list of works bearing upon every phase of Augustine's thought, but rather to indicate those which have actually been used and have proven especially helpful in dealing with the particular aspect of the system here under examination. We include in the bibliography only a partial list of Augustine's own works, selecting such as bear directly upon the problem of evil.

MARION LEROY BURTON.

May 5, 1909.

Brooklyn — New York City.