



The Conversion and Therapy of Desire: Augustine's Theology of Desire in the Cassiciacum Dialogues

Mark J. Boone

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The first fruits of the literary career of St. Augustine, the great theologian and Christian philosopher par excellence, are the dialogues he wrote at Cassiciacum in Italy following his famous conversion in Milan in 386 AD. These four little books, largely neglected by scholars, investigate knowledge, ethics, metaphysics, the problem of evil, and the intriguing relationship of God and the soul. They also take up the ancient philosophical project of identifying the principles and practices that heal human desires in order to attain happiness, renewing this philosophical endeavor with insights from Christian theology. Augustine's later books, such as the Confessions, would continue this project of healing desire, as would the writings of others including Boethius, Anselm, and Aquinas. Mark Boone's *The Conversion and Therapy of Desire* investigates the roots of this project at Cassiciacum, where Augustine is developing a Christian theology of desire, informed by Neoplatonism but transformed by Christian teaching and practices.

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