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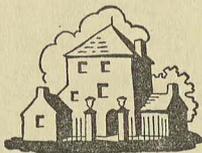
BASIC WRITINGS OF
SAINT
✓
AUGUSTINE

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

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VOLUME ONE



RANDOM HOUSE *Publishers* NEW YORK

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but far otherwise, and seriously, and so as I would desire to be myself commended? For I would not that they should commend and love me as actors are—although I myself did commend and love them—but I would prefer being unknown than so known, and even being hated than so loved. Where now are these influences of such various and divers kinds of loves distributed in one soul? What is it that I am in love with in another, which, if I did not hate, I should not detest and repel from myself, seeing we are equally men? For it does not follow that because a good horse is loved by him who would not, though he might, be that horse, the same should therefore be affirmed by an actor, who partakes of our nature. Do I then love in a man that which I, who am a man, hate to be? Man himself is a great deep, whose very hairs Thou numberest, O Lord, and they fall not to the ground without Thee.³⁶ And yet are the hairs of his head more readily numbered than are his affections and the movements of his heart.

But that orator was of the kind that I so loved as I wished myself to be such a one; and I erred through an inflated pride, and was carried about with every wind,³⁷ but yet was piloted by Thee, though very secretly. And whence know I, and whence confidently confess I unto Thee that I loved him more because of the love of those who praised him, than for the very things for which they praised him? Because had he been upraised, and these self-same men had dispraised him, and with dispraise and scorn told the same things of him, I should never have been so inflamed and provoked to love him. And yet the things had not been different, nor he himself different, but only the affections of the narrators. See where lies the impotent soul that is not yet sustained by the solidity of truth! Just as the blasts of tongues blow from the breasts of conjecturers, so is it tossed this way and that, driven forward and backward, and the light is obscured to it and the truth not perceived. And behold it is before us. And to me it was a great matter that my style and studies should be known to that man; if he approved them, I were the more stimulated, but if he disapproved, this vain heart of mine, void of Thy solidity, had been offended. And yet that “fair and fit,” about which I wrote to him, I reflected on with pleasure, and contemplated it, and admired it, though none joined me in doing so.

CHAPTER XV

WHILE WRITING, BEING BLINDED BY CORPOREAL IMAGES, HE FAILED
TO RECOGNIZE THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF GOD

But not yet did I perceive the hinge on which this impotent matter turned in Thy wisdom, O Thou Omnipotent, who alone does great wonders;³⁸ and my mind ranged through corporeal forms, and I defined and distinguished as “fair,” that which is so in itself, and “fit,” that which is beautiful as it

³⁶ Matt. x. 29, 30

³⁷ Eph. iv. 14

³⁸ Ps. cxxxvi. 4

CHAPTER IX

THAT THE MIND COMMANDS THE MIND, BUT IT WILLS NOT ENTIRELY

Whence is this monstrous thing? And why is it? Let Thy mercy shine on me, that I may inquire, if the hiding-places of man's punishment and the darkest contritions of the sons of Adam may perhaps answer me. Whence is this monstrous thing? and why is it? The mind commands the body, and it obeys forthwith; the mind commands itself, and is resisted. The mind commands the hand to be moved, and such readiness is there that the command is scarce to be distinguished from the obedience. Yet the mind is mind, and the hand is body. The mind commands the mind to will, and yet, though it be itself, it obeys not. Whence this monstrous thing? and why is it? I repeat, it commands itself to will, and would not give the command unless it willed; yet is not that done which it commands. But it wills not entirely; therefore it commands not entirely. For so far forth it commands, as it wills; and so far forth is the thing commanded not done, as it wills not. For the will commands that there be a will—not another, but itself. But it does not command entirely, therefore that is not which it commands. For were it entire, it would not even command it to be, because it would already be. It is, therefore, no monstrous thing partly to will, partly to be unwilling, but an infirmity of the mind, that it does not wholly rise, sustained by truth, pressed down by custom. And so there are two wills, because one of them is not entire; and the one is supplied with what the other needs.

CHAPTER X

HE REFUTES THE OPINION OF THE MANICHAEBANS AS TO TWO KINDS OF MINDS—ONE GOOD AND THE OTHER EVIL

Let them perish from Thy presence,⁵² O God, as vain talkers and deceivers⁵³ of the soul do perish, who, observing that there were two wills in deliberating, affirm that there are two kinds of minds in us—one good, the other evil. They themselves truly are evil when they hold these evil opinions, and they shall become good when they hold the truth, and shall consent unto the truth, that Thy apostle may say unto them, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."⁵⁴ But they, desiring to be light, not in the Lord, but in themselves, conceiving the nature of the soul to be the same as that which God is, are made more gross darkness; since through a shocking arrogance they went farther from Thee, the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.⁵⁵ Take heed what you say, and blush for shame; draw near unto Him and be lightened,

⁵² Ps. lxxviii. 2 ⁵³ Titus i. 10 ⁵⁴ Eph. v. 8 ⁵⁵ John i. 9

and your faces shall not be ashamed.⁵⁶ I, when I was deliberating upon serving the Lord my God now, as I had long purposed—I it was who willed, I who was unwilling.⁵⁷ It was I, even I myself. I neither willed entirely, nor was entirely unwilling. Therefore I was at war with myself, and destroyed by myself. And this destruction overtook me against my will, and yet showed not the presence of another mind, but the punishment of my own. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me⁵⁷—the punishment of a more unconfined sin, in that I was a son of Adam.

For if there be as many contrary natures as there are conflicting wills, there will not now be two natures only, but many. If any one deliberate whether he should go to their conventicle, or to the theatre, those men⁵⁸ at once cry out, "Behold, here are two natures—one good, drawing this way, another bad, drawing back that way; for whence else is this indecision between conflicting wills?" But I reply that both are bad—that which draws to them, and that which draws back to the theatre. But they believe not that will to be other than good which draws to them. Supposing, then, one of us should deliberate, and through the conflict of his two wills should waver whether he should go to the theatre or to our church, would not these also waver what to answer? For either they must confess, which they are not willing to do, that the will which leads to our church is good, as well as that of those who have received and are held by the mysteries of theirs, or they must imagine that there are two evil natures and two evil minds in one man, at war one with the other; and that will not be true which they say, that there is one good and another bad; or they must be converted to the truth, and no longer deny that where any one deliberates, there is one soul fluctuating between conflicting wills.

Let them no more say, then, when they perceive two wills to be antagonistic to each other in the same man, that the contest is between two opposing minds, of two opposing substances, from two opposing principles, the one good and the other bad. For Thou, O true God, dost disprove, check, and convince them; as when both wills are bad, one deliberates whether he should kill a man by poison, or by the sword; whether he should take possession of this or that estate of another's, when he cannot both; whether he should purchase pleasure by prodigality, or retain his money by covetousness; whether he should go to the circus or the theatre, if both are open on the same day; or thirdly, whether he should rob another man's house, if he have the opportunity; or, fourthly, whether he should commit adultery, if at the same time he have the means of doing so—all these things concurring in the same point of time, and all being equally longed for, although impossible to be enacted at one time. For they rend the mind amid four, or even (among the vast variety of things men desire) more antagonistic wills, nor do they yet affirm that there are so many different

⁵⁶ Ps. xxxiv. 5 ⁵⁷ Rom. vii. 17 ⁵⁸ The Manichaeans

substances. Thus also is it in wills which are good. For I ask them, is it a good thing to have delight in reading the apostle, or good to have delight in a sober psalm, or good to discourse on the gospel? To each of these they will answer, "It is good." What, then, if all equally delight us, and all at the same time? Do not different wills distract the mind, when a man is deliberating which he should rather choose? Yet are they all good, and are at variance until one be fixed upon, whither the whole united will may be borne, which before was divided into many. Thus, also, when eternity delights us above, and the pleasure of temporal good holds us down below, it is the same soul which wills not that or this with an entire will, and is therefore torn asunder with grievous perplexities, while out of truth it prefers that, but out of custom does not lay aside this.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHAT MANNER THE SPIRIT STRUGGLED WITH THE FLESH, THAT
IT MIGHT BE FREED FROM THE BONDAGE OF VANITY

Thus was I sick and tormented, accusing myself far more severely than was my wont, tossing and turning me in my chain till that was utterly broken, whereby I now was but slightly, but still was held. And Thou, O Lord, pressedst upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way, and that same slender remaining tie not being broken off, it should recover strength, and enchain me the faster. For I said mentally, "Lo, let it be done now, let it be done now." And as I spoke, I all but came to a resolve. I all but did it, yet I did it not. Yet I fell not back to my old condition, but took up my position hard by, and drew breath. And I tried again, and wanted but very little of reaching it, and somewhat less, and then all but touched and grasped it; and yet came not at it, nor touched, nor grasped it, hesitating to die to death, and to live to life; and the worse, to which I had been habituated, prevailed more with me than the better, which I had not tried. And the very moment in which I was to become another man, the nearer it approached me, the greater horror did it strike into me; but it did not strike me back, nor turn me aside, but kept me in suspense.

The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, "Dost thou part with us? And from that moment shall we no more be with thee for ever? And from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for thee for ever?" And what did they suggest to me in the words "this or that?" What is it that they suggested, O my God? Let Thy mercy avert it from the soul of Thy servant. What impurities did they suggest! What shame! And now I far less than half heard them, not openly showing themselves and contradicting me, but muttering, as it were, behind my back, and furtively plucking me as I was departing, to make me look back upon them.

ing free course to my tears, and the streams of mine eyes gushed out, an acceptable sacrifice unto Thee.⁶⁰ And, not indeed in these words, yet to this effect, spake I much unto Thee—"But Thou, O Lord, how long?"⁶¹ "How long, Lord? Wilt Thou be angry for ever? Oh, remember not against us former iniquities;"⁶² for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries—"How long, how long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?"

I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard the voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighboring house, chanting, and oft repeating, "Take up and read; take up and read." Immediately my countenance was changed, and I began most earnestly to consider whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book, and to read the first chapter I should light upon. For I had heard of Antony, that, accidentally coming in while the gospel was being read, he received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."⁶³ And by such oracle was he forthwith converted unto Thee. So quickly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose thence. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell—"Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."⁶⁴ No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended—by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart—all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

Closing the book, then, and putting either my finger between, or some other mark, I now with a tranquil countenance made it known to Alypius. And he thus disclosed to me what was wrought in him, which I knew not. He asked to look at what I had read. I showed him; and he looked even further than I had read, and I knew not what followed. This it was, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye;"⁶⁵ which he applied to himself, and discovered to me. By this admonition was he strengthened; and by a good resolution and purpose, very much in accord with his character (in which, for the better, he was always far different from me), without any restless delay he joined me. Thence we go in to my mother. We make it known to her—she rejoices. We relate how it came to pass—she leaps for joy, and triumphs, and blesses Thee, who art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think;⁶⁶ for she perceived Thee to have given her more

⁶⁰ 1 Pet. ii. 5 ⁶¹ Ps. vi. 3 ⁶² Ps. lxxix. 5, 8 ⁶³ Matt. xix. 21 ⁶⁴ Rom. xiii. 13, 14 ⁶⁵ Rom. xiv. 1 ⁶⁶ Eph. iii. 20

sides those which I have forgotten. There also do I meet with myself, and recall myself—what, when, or where I did a thing, and how I was affected when I did it. There are all which I remember, either by personal experience or on the faith of others. Out of the same supply do I myself with the past construct now this, now that likeness of things, which either I have experienced, or, from having experienced, have believed; and thence again future actions, events, and hopes, and upon all these again do I meditate as if they were present. "I will do this or that," I say to myself in that vast womb of my mind, filled with the images of things so many and so great, "and this or that shall follow upon it." "Oh that this or that might come to pass!" "God avert this or that!" Thus I speak to myself; and when I speak, the images of all I speak about are present, out of the same treasury of memory; nor could I say anything at all about them were the images absent.

Great is this power of memory, exceeding great, O my God—an inner chamber large and boundless! Who has plumbed its depths? Yet it is a power of mine, and appertains unto my nature; nor do I myself grasp all that I am. Therefore is the mind too narrow to contain itself. And where should that be which it does not contain of itself? Is it outside and not in itself? How is it, then, that it does not grasp itself? A great admiration rises upon me; astonishment seizes me. And men go forth to wonder at the heights of mountains, the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the extent of the ocean, and the courses of the stars, and omit to wonder at themselves; nor do they marvel that when I spoke of all these things, I was not looking on them with my eyes, and yet could not speak of them unless those mountains, and waves, and rivers, and stars which I saw, and that ocean which I believe in, I saw inwardly in my memory, and with the same vast spaces between as when I saw them abroad. But I did not by seeing appropriate them when I looked on them with my eyes; nor are the things themselves with me, but their images. And I knew by what corporeal sense each made impression on me.

CHAPTER IX

NOT ONLY THINGS, BUT ALSO LITERATURE AND IMAGES, ARE TAKEN
FROM THE MEMORY, AND ARE BROUGHT FORTH BY THE ACT OF
REMEMBERING

And yet are not these all that the illimitable capacity of my memory retains. Here also is all that is apprehended of the liberal sciences, and not yet forgotten—removed as it were into an inner place, which is not a place; nor are they the images which are retained, but the things themselves. For what is literature, what skill in disputation, whatsoever I know of all the many kinds of questions there are, is so in my memory, that I have not taken in the image and left the thing without, or that it should have

all time past is forced on by the future, and that all the future follows from the past, and that all, both past and future, is created and issues from that which is always present? Who will hold the heart of man, that it may stand still, and see how the still-standing eternity, itself neither future nor past, utters the times future and past? Can my hand accomplish this, or the hand of my mouth by persuasion bring about a thing so great?

CHAPTER XII

WHAT GOD DID BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Behold, I answer to him who asks, "What was God doing before He made heaven and earth?" I answer not, as a certain person is reported to have done facetiously (avoiding the pressure of the question), "He was preparing hell," said he, "for those who pry into mysteries." It is one thing to perceive, another to laugh—these things I answer not. For more willingly would I have answered, "I know not what I know not," than that I should make him a laughing-stock who asks deep things, and gain praise as one who answers false things. But I say that Thou, our God, art the Creator of every creature; and if by the term "heaven and earth" every creature is understood, I holdly say that before God made heaven and earth, He made not anything. For if He did, what did He make unless the creature? And would that I knew whatever I desire to know to my advantage, as I know that no creature was made before any creature was made.

CHAPTER XIII

BEFORE THE TIMES CREATED BY GOD, TIMES WERE NOT

But if the roving thought of any one should wander through the images of bygone time, and wonder that Thou, the God Almighty, and All-creating, and All-sustaining, the Architect of heaven and earth, didst for innumerable ages refrain from so great a work before Thou wouldst make it, let him awake and consider that he wonders at false things. For whence could innumerable ages pass by which Thou didst not make, since Thou art the Author and Creator of all ages? Or what times should those be which were not made by Thee? Or how should they pass by if they had not been? Since, therefore, Thou art the Creator of all times, if any time was before Thou madest heaven and earth, why is it said that Thou didst refrain from working? For that very time Thou madest, nor could times pass by before Thou madest times. But if before heaven and earth there was no time, why is it asked, What didst Thou then? For there was no "then" when time was not.

Nor dost Thou by time precede time; else wouldest not Thou precede all times. But in the excellency of an ever-present eternity, Thou precedest

Et eternitas = hodie
todayness

hodie = todayness

all times past, and survivest all future times, because they are future, and when they have come they will be past; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end.³⁰ Thy years neither go nor come; but ours both go and come, that all may come. All Thy years stand at once since they do stand; nor were they when departing excluded by coming years, because they pass not away; but all these of ours shall be when all shall cease to be. Thy years are one day, and Thy day is not daily, but to-day; because Thy to-day yields not with to-morrow, for neither doth it follow yesterday. Thy to-day is eternity; therefore didst Thou beget the Co-eternal, to whom Thou saidst, "This day have I begotten Thee."³¹ Thou hast made all time; and before all times Thou art, nor in any time was there not time.

CHAPTER XIV

NEITHER TIME PAST NOR FUTURE, BUT THE PRESENT ONLY, REALLY IS

At no time, therefore, hadst Thou not made anything, because Thou hadst made time itself. And no times are co-eternal with Thee, because Thou remainest for ever; but should these continue, they would not be times. For what is time? Who can easily and briefly explain it? Who even in thought can comprehend it, even to the pronouncing of a word concerning it? But what in speaking do we refer to more familiarly and knowingly than time? And certainly we understand when we speak of it; we understand also when we hear it spoken of by another. (What, then, is time? If no one ask of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not. Yet I say with confidence, that I know that if nothing passed away, there would not be past time; and if nothing were coming, there would not be future time; and if nothing were, there would not be present time.) Those two times, therefore, past and future, how are they, when even the past now is not, and the future is not as yet? But should the present be always present, and should it not pass into time past, truly it could not be time, but eternity. If, then, time present—if it be time—only comes into existence because it passes into time past, how do we say that even this is, whose cause of being is that it shall not be—namely, so that we cannot truly say that time is, unless because it tends not to be?

CHAPTER XV

THERE IS ONLY A MOMENT OF PRESENT TIME

And yet we say that time is long and time is short; nor do we speak of this save of time past and future. A long time past, for example, we call a hundred years ago; in like manner a long time to come, a hundred years

³⁰ Ps. cii. 27 ³¹ Ps. ii. 7, and Heb. v. 5

this, should we not also be speaking in time? Or should there in our words be some syllables long, others short, but because those sounded in a longer time, these in a shorter? God grant to men to see in a small thing ideas common to things great and small. Both the stars and luminaries of heaven are for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.³⁸ No doubt they are; but neither should I say that the circuit of that wooden wheel was a day, nor yet should he say that therefore there was no time.

I desire to know the power and nature of time, by which we measure the motions of bodies, and say (for example) that this motion is twice as long as that. For, I ask, since "day" declares not the stay only of the sun upon the earth, according to which day is one thing, night another, but also its entire circuit from east even to east—according to which we say, "So many days have passed" (the nights being included when we say "so many days," and their spaces not counted apart)—since, then, the day is finished by the motion of the sun, and by his circuit from east to east, I ask, whether the motion itself is the day, or the period in which that motion is completed, or both? For if the first be the day, then would there be a day although the sun should finish that course in so small a space of time as an hour. If the second, then that would not be a day if from one sunrise to another there were but so short a period as an hour, but the sun must go round four-and-twenty times to complete a day. If both, neither could that be called a day if the sun should run his entire round in the space of an hour; nor that, if, while the sun stood still, so much time should pass as the sun is accustomed to accomplish his whole course in from morning to morning. I shall not therefore now ask, what that is which is called day, but what time is, by which we, measuring the circuit of the sun, should say that it was accomplished in half the space of time it was wont, if it had been completed in so small a space as twelve hours; and comparing both times, we should call that single, this double time, although the sun should run his course from east to east sometimes in that single, sometimes in that double time. Let no man then tell me that the motions of the heavenly bodies are times, because, when at the prayer of one the sun stood still in order that he might achieve his victorious battle, the sun stood still, but time went on. For in such space of time as was sufficient was that battle fought and ended.³⁹ I see that time, then, is a certain extension. But do I see it, or do I seem to see it? Thou, O Light and Truth, wilt show me.

CHAPTER XXIV

THAT TIME IS NOT A MOTION OF A BODY WHICH WE MEASURE BY TIME

Dost Thou command that I should assent, if any one should say that time is the motion of a body? Thou dost not command me. For I hear that

³⁸ Gen. i. 14

³⁹ Josh. x. 12-14

no body is moved but in time. This Thou sayest; but that the very motion of a body is time, I hear not; Thou sayest it not. For when a body is moved, I by time measure how long it may be moving from the time in which it began to be moved till it left off. And if I saw not whence it began, and it continued to be moved, so that I see not when it leaves off, I cannot measure unless, perchance, from the time I began until I cease to see. But if I look long, I only proclaim that the time is long, but not how long it may be; because when we say, "How long," we speak by comparison, as, "This is as long as that," or, "This is double as long as that," or any other thing of the kind. But if we were able to note down the distances of places whence and whither comes the body which is moved, or its parts, if it moved as in a wheel, we can say in how much time the motion of the body or its part, from this place to that, was performed. Since, then, the motion of a body is one thing, that by which we measure how long it is another, who cannot see which of these is rather to be called time? For, although a body be sometimes moved, sometimes stand still, we measure not its motion only, but also its standing still, by time; and we say, "It stood still as much as it moved;" or, "It stood still twice or thrice as long as it moved;" and if any other space which our measuring has either determined or imagined, more or less, as we are accustomed to say. Time, therefore, is not the motion of a body.

CHAPTER XXV

HE CALLS ON GOD TO ENLIGHTEN HIS MIND

And I confess unto Thee, O Lord, that I am as yet ignorant as to what time is, and again I confess unto Thee, O Lord, that I know that I speak these things in time, and that I have already long spoken of time, and that very "long" is not long save by the stay of time. How, then, know I this, when I know not what time is? Or is it, perchance, that I know not in what wise I may express what I know? Alas for me, that I do not at least know the extent of my own ignorance! Behold, O my God, before Thee I lie not. As I speak, so is my heart. Thou shalt light my candle; Thou, O Lord my God, wilt enlighten my darkness.⁴⁰

CHAPTER XXVI

WE MEASURE LONGER EVENTS BY SHORTER IN TIME

Doth not my soul pour out unto Thee truly in confession that I do measure times? But do I thus measure, O my God, and know not what I measure? I measure the motion of a body by time; and the time itself do I not measure? But, in truth, could I measure the motion of a body, how

⁴⁰ Ps. xviii. 28

long it is, and how long it is in coming from this place to that, unless I should measure the time in which it is moved? How, therefore, do I measure this very time itself? Or do we by a shorter time measure a longer, as by the space of a cubit the space of a crossbeam? For thus, indeed, we seem by the space of a short syllable to measure the space of a long syllable, and to say that this is double. Thus we measure the spaces of stanzas by the spaces of the verses, and the spaces of the verses by the spaces of the feet, and the spaces of the feet by the spaces of the syllables, and the spaces of long by the spaces of short syllables; not measuring by pages (for in that manner we measure spaces, not times), but when in uttering the words they pass by, and we say, "It is a long stanza because it is made up of so many verses; long verses, because they consist of so many feet; long feet, because they are prolonged by so many syllables; a long syllable, because double a short one." But neither thus is any certain measure of time obtained; since it is possible that a shorter verse, if it be pronounced more fully, may take up more time than a longer one, if pronounced more hurriedly. Thus for a stanza, thus for a foot, thus for a syllable. Whence it appeared to me that time is nothing else than extension; but of what I know not. It is wonderful to me, if it be not of the mind itself. For what do I measure, I beseech Thee, O my God, even when I say either indefinitely, "This time is longer than that;" or even definitely, "This is double that?" That I measure time, I know. But I measure not the future, for it is not yet; nor do I measure the present, because it is extended by no space; nor do I measure the past, because it no longer is. What, therefore, do I measure? Is it times passing, not past? For thus had I said.

CHAPTER XXVII

TIMES ARE MEASURED IN PROPORTION AS THEY PASS BY

Persevere, O my mind, and give earnest heed. God is our helper; He made us, and not we ourselves.⁴¹ Give heed, where truth dawns. Lo, suppose the voice of a body begins to sound, and does sound, and sounds on, and lo! it ceases—it is now silence, and that voice is past and is no longer a voice. It was future before it sounded, and could not be measured, because as yet it was not; and now it cannot, because it no longer is. Then, therefore, while it was sounding, it might, because there was then that which might be measured. But even then it did not stand still, for it was going and passing away. Could it, then, on that account be measured the more? For, while passing, it was being extended into some space of time, in which it might be measured, since the present has no space. If, therefore, then it might be measured, lo! suppose another voice has begun to sound, and still sounds, in a continued tenor without any interruption, we

⁴¹ Ps. c. 3

each individual syllable: this holds in the longer action, of which that psalm is perchance a portion; the same holds in the whole life of man, of which all the actions of man are parts; the same holds in the whole age of the sons of men, of which all the lives of men are parts.

CHAPTER XXIX

THAT HUMAN LIFE IS A DISTRACTION, BUT THAT THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD HE WAS INTENT ON THE PRIZE OF HIS HEAVENLY CALLING

But because Thy loving-kindness is better than life,⁴² behold, my life is but a distraction,⁴³ and Thy right hand upheld me⁴⁴ in my Lord, the Son of man, the Mediator between Thee,⁴⁵ The One, and us the many—in many distractions amid many things—that through Him I may apprehend in whom I have been apprehended, and may be re-collected from my old days, following The One, forgetting the things that are past; and not distracted, but drawn on,⁴⁶ not to those things which shall be and shall pass away, but to those things which are before,⁴⁷ not distractedly, but intently, I follow on for the prize of my heavenly calling,⁴⁸ where I may hear the voice of Thy praise, and contemplate Thy delights,⁴⁹ neither coming nor passing away. But now are my years spent in mourning.⁵⁰ And Thou, O Lord, art my comfort, my Father everlasting. But I have been divided amid times, the order of which I know not; and my thoughts, even the inmost bowels of my soul, are mangled with tumultuous varieties, until I flow together unto Thee, purged and molten in the fire of Thy love.⁵¹

CHAPTER XXX

AGAIN HE REFUTES THE EMPTY QUESTION, "WHAT DID GOD BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD?"

And I will be immovable, and fixed in Thee, in my mould, Thy truth; nor will I endure the questions of men, who by a penal disease thirst for more than they can hold, and say, "What did God make before He made heaven and earth?" Or, "How came it into His mind to make anything when He never before made anything?" Grant to them, O Lord, to think well what they say, and to see that where there is no time, they cannot say "never." What, therefore, He is said "never to have made," what else is it but to say, that in no time was it made? Let them therefore see that there could be no time without a created being, and let them cease to speak that vanity. Let them also be extended unto those things which are

⁴² Ps. lxxiii. 3

⁴³ *Distentio*. It will be observed that there is a play on the word throughout the section. ⁴⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 8 ⁴⁵ 1 Tim. ii. 5 ⁴⁶ *Non distentus sed extensus* ⁴⁷ Phil. iii. 13 ⁴⁸ Phil. iii. 14 ⁴⁹ Ps. xxvi. 7 ⁵⁰ Ps. xxvii. 4 ⁵¹ Ps. xxxi. 10

Distraction
because
there is
distraction

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XX

BOOK TWO

1. *A.* Long enough has our work been intermitted, and impatient is Love, nor have tears a measure, unless to Love is given what is loved: wherefore, let us enter upon the Second Book. *R.* Let us enter upon it. *A.* Let us believe that God will be present. *R.* Let us believe indeed, if even this is in our power. *A.* Our power He Himself is. *R.* Therefore pray most briefly and perfectly, as much as thou canst. *A.* God, always the same, let me know myself, let me know Thee. I have prayed. *R.* Thou who wilt know thyself, knowest thou that thou art? *A.* I know. *R.* Whence knowest thou? *A.* I know not. *R.* Feelest thou thyself to be simple, or manifold? *A.* I know not. *R.* Knowest thou thyself to be moved? *A.* I know not. *R.* Knowest thou thyself to think? *A.* I know. *R.* Therefore it is true that thou thinkest. *A.* True. *R.* Knowest thou thyself to be immortal? *A.* I know not. *R.* Of all these things which thou hast said that thou knowest not, which dost thou most desire to know? *A.* Whether I am immortal. *R.* Therefore thou lovest to live? *A.* I confess it. *R.* How will the matter stand when thou shalt have learned thyself to be immortal? Will it be enough? *A.* That will indeed be a great thing, but that to me will be but slight. *R.* Yet in this which is but slight how much wilt thou rejoice? *A.* Very greatly. *R.* For nothing then wilt thou weep? *A.* For nothing at all. *R.* What if this very life should be found such, that in it it is permitted thee to know nothing more than thou knowest? Wilt thou refrain from tears? *A.* Nay verily, I will weep so much that life should cease to be. *R.* Thou dost not then love to live for the mere sake of living, but for the sake of knowing. *A.* I grant the inference. *R.* What if this very knowledge of things should itself make thee wretched? *A.* I do not believe that that is in any way possible. But if it is so, no one can be blessed; for I am not now wretched from any other source than from ignorance of things. And therefore if the knowledge of things is wretchedness, wretchedness is everlasting. *R.* Now I see all which you desire. For since you believe no one to be wretched by knowledge, from which it is probable that intelligence renders blessed; but no one is blessed unless living, and no one lives who is not; thou wishest to be, to live and to ~~have intelligence~~; but to be that thou mayest live, to live that thou mayest have intelligence. Therefore thou knowest that thou art, thou knowest that thou livest, thou knowest that thou dost exercise intelligence. But whether these things are to be always, or none of these things is to be, or something abides always, and something falls away, or whether these things can be diminished and increased, all things abiding, thou desirest to know. *A.* So it

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TREATISE ON FREE WILL

Book One: "In which, after the question 'Whence evil' is raised, the problem of evil-doing is unfolded. Then it is pointed out that the evil deeds of men arise from the free choice of the will; to be sure, since the mind is compelled by no one to be a slave of that desire which rules in every evil deed."

Chapter 1: After distinguishing between doing and suffering evil, Saint Augustine shows that the evil man is the author of his own evil deeds. Learning is ruled out as a source of evil.

Chapter 2: The problem is restated by asking why, if God, as Creator of all, creates souls which are in turn the sources of evil, He is not ultimately responsible for evil.

Chapter 3: In the light of God's absolute supremacy, the discussion turns to the precise nature of evil-doing. This is discovered to be in desire (*libido*). +

Chapter 4: Desire (*libido*) is established as a desire for things one can lose unwillingly.

Chapter 5: The discussion centers on the limitations of man-made law, which leaves many things unpunished, with which Divine Providence will deal.

Chapter 6: Eternal law is described as that by which "it is just that all things be most perfectly ordered," and all "just" temporal law is derived therefrom.

Chapter 7: Man lives and, by reason, knows he lives. Beasts, whom man controls by virtue of reason or intelligence, lack this power, and in turn the knowledge that they live. By understanding, men lead a more perfect life, through the light of the mind. Knowledge, except when the word is used metaphorically, can only be good.

Chapter 8: Man shares with plants the capacity to grow, and the powers of the senses with animals. He has the power to joke and laugh, the lowest

artisan, and hence are from the source of number. Number is in time and place. As wisdom is the sweetest light of the purified mind, woe to those who abandon her leadership and stray from her paths.

Chapter 17: Everything that is mutable must be capable of being formed. No thing can form itself, since it cannot give itself what it has not. As both body and soul are mutable, they must be formed by a certain immutable and ever enduring form. Thus one can say that all things are governed by Providence whence they derive form. Body and life (by these two terms one can express that which is, lives, and understands) are formable, and hence derive from that form which always exists, *i.e.*, from God.

Chapter 18: That God is, and that all good things come from Him, have been demonstrated. As for the third question, whether the free choice of the will is to be counted as a good, it can also be regarded as solved. Earlier it was urged that, since there can be no right action without the free choice of the will, for this reason God gave it. But this led to the rational proof of the existence of God, during the course of which it became apparent that we must count free will among things good. The nature of the body is on a lower level than the nature of the soul. The soul therefore is a greater good than the body. Among the goods of the body are things which man can misuse. Yet we do not insist that therefore they should not have been given, for we admit that they are good. It is no wonder then that the soul has certain goods which can be misused, but since they are good, they can be given only by the Giver of all goods. Hands, feet, and eyes, which are all goods, can be misused. So in the soul, free will is a good which can be misused. That it is a good cannot be doubted, for without it man is incapable of living rightly.

Chapter 19: The great goods, the virtues of justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance, as well as the least goods, are from God. The virtues are the great goods; bodies, without which one can live rightly, are the least goods, while the powers of the soul, without which one cannot live rightly, are between the two. No one can use virtue wrongly, whereas it is possible to misuse the other two types of goods. As we know reason by the use of reason, so we use free will by the will. So memory not only remembers things, but also through itself remembers itself. When the will, a medium good, cleaves to the immutable good, then is man's life happy. The virtues are in him, which he gets not from the virtues of another man, but from immutable truth which is common to all. The will, a medium good, can by cleaving to the immutable good gain for man the great goods, *i.e.*, the virtues. When the will is not thus oriented, man sins. Neither the goods that are sought by wrong-doers, nor free will itself, are evil in any way. Evil is the turning away from the immutable good, and turning towards mutable

and your unhappiness is just. But if a stronger has you in his power, you cannot think that this is unjust. If this is unjust, you will not be unhappy. If it is just, you will be unhappy, and we should praise Him whose laws have so decreed.

Chapter 7: Since being itself is a great good, it is preferable to be even if you are unhappy. Actually you are unhappy to the extent that you do not come near to God, who in the highest sense *is*. Therefore one must love in oneself the will to be, and the more one does this, the closer he will come to God, the highest Being. All things are to be praised because they *are*. And by the fact of their existence, they are good. The more one yearns to be, the more he will desire eternal life. One should love temporal things, then, in so far as they are, and if he so views things temporal, he will be firm in his love of the eternal. When he starts along the way of being perfectly, then he will not be unhappy.

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Chapter 8: To prefer not to be than to be unhappy is absurd, for *not to be* is *nothing*. There is no choice when one of the things to be chosen does not exist. Furthermore, suicides should not influence our judgment in this question. Even if a suicide insists that he is choosing *nothing*, this very answer shows that we should not be moved. No man really believes that he will not live after death, and therefore really wishes to die. The notion that death involves complete obliteration results from an error of opinion. The desire is to be at rest, which is not non-being, but *being* in a fuller sense.

Chapter 9: Why has God not decreed that no creature should be unhappy? As we cannot say that no creature should be, so we cannot say that a creature should be of such and such a sort. The hierarchic order of things in the perfect universe means that some things are greater and some lesser. Among souls, which are greater than bodies, those which are unhappy are so because they have willed to sin. Sin and unhappiness are not necessary to the perfection of the universe, but souls *qua* souls are, and souls *qua* souls may sin if they so will. Sin and punishment are not natures, but affections of natures. The punishment of sin corrects the disgrace of sin, so that even the sinning soul contributes to the order and perfection of the universe. The first man brought sin, and the adornment of the penalty suited to the sin, and Christ brought the adornment of mercy to grant freedom from sin. The immortality of the saints can be gained, not by the way of the proud, but by the humility revealed by Jesus Christ.

Chapter 10: There are two origins of sins, one from one's own thinking, the second from the persuasion of another, and both are voluntary. It is worse to sin of one's own volition and to persuade another than to yield to the persuasion of another. This latter is as it is with the prince of this

Chapter 16: God does not owe anything to anyone, because He stands above all and does so gratuitously. Nothing is lacking to Him if you will not turn to Him. It is you who lose. All is owing to Him, first of all the very existence of natures in so far as they are natures. Natures with free will owe its proper use. If anyone thinks that he is forced to sin and thus owes this, that he ought to sin, is in error, for his own nature compels no one to sin.

Chapter 17: What is the cause of the will? If you answer this in some way, you will ask for the cause of the cause, and be led into an infinite regression. If you take avarice to be cupidity, then cupidity is wrong will, and wrong will is the cause of all evils. Wrong will is opposed to nature and is destructive of it. Thus it is wrong, and it is fair to say that the root of all evils is not according to nature. The will itself must therefore be the first cause of sin.

Chapter 18: Can compulsion against the will be the first cause? If the will cannot resist, there is no sin in yielding. But if it can, and it does not give in, there is no sin. This shows that the will is the first cause of sin. Man, being what he is, is not good nor does he have it in his power to be good; he sins, and is punished by the omnipotent justice of God. This is a description of fallen man. When we speak of man's free will to act rightly, we are speaking of that will in which man was made.

Chapter 19: Next comes the question why men should suffer for the original sin of Adam and Eve. The answer is the presence of the Lord who teaches the believer, who consoles the hopeful, encourages him who loves, helps him who tries, and hears him who prays.

Chapter 20: After the first sin, God's justice in punishing sin was apparent, and then His mercy as He freed man from sin. After the first sin, it was not right that man should produce a better posterity than himself. But man by right will can overcome the lot of his birth. If one soul is the origin of all souls, if this first soul sins, who can deny sin to the rest? If souls are created one by one for each man, it seems correct that the ill merit of the former should be the nature of the one that follows, and that the good merit of the one that follows should be the nature of the former. The Creator thus reveals the greater value of the soul than the body by making it possible for the soul to rise above the level of its fallen state. Ignorance and difficulty in which souls are born will not be a punishment for sin, but rather an admonition to move forward and a start on the road to perfection. If pre-existing souls are sent to rule men's bodies, then, by ruling well, the corruption of heaven may be reached. If souls enter bodies of their own voli-

tion, then ignorance and difficulty come as a result of this volition, and blame cannot be imputed to the Creator.

Chapter 21: There are four theories concerning the origin of the soul; a) they are propagated by the first soul; b) they are created individually; c) they pre-exist and are sent into human bodies; d) they pre-exist and enter human bodies of their own volition. No one of these should be accepted heedlessly. Either Catholic scholars have not yet elucidated the problem, or else if they have their works are not yet available. In this question we must hold to nothing that is false or untrue concerning the nature of the Creator. Things revealed to us must be held by faith, but many things, however, are beyond human intelligence. Against unbelievers, the weight of authority may be used, but also it must be shown in so far as possible, first how it is not stupid to believe, and next how stupid it is not to believe. We should refute the false by things immutable, and in so far as possible by transparent reasoning. The past should be used for its bearing on the future, and in preparing for the future. Such is the attitude in which the problem concerning the origin of the soul should be studied.

Chapter 22: Whatever may be the solution to the problem, still it is by God's justice that the souls of sinners pay the penalty for their sins. It is all a matter of will, and the soul has the will to move forward, and the soul may ask God's help.

Chapter 23: What of the problem of the death and bodily suffering of little children? The answer is that there is nothing superfluous in God's creation. What good is child baptism? The faith of those who offer them for baptism is an advantage to them. The authority of the Church commends this, for faith begets faith in others. But what of the bodily suffering of children? The elders are tried and made better, or if they do not sustain the trial, they will not have an excuse in the face of the punishment of the future judgment. But who knows what good God may have in store for these children? What of the suffering of animals? Men who are troubled by this do not use right reason concerning the highest good. The pain of animals reveals the presence in them of a marvelous force of soul; it reveals its desire for unity, for pain merely is an evidence of resistance to that which disrupts unity. We would not be aware of this desire for unity in the lower creatures, were it not for the suffering of animals. Thus we would not be so well aware of the fact that all things are constituted by the ineffable unity of the Creator. All things—the beauty of physical creation, the reaction to pleasure and pain, the rational nature's desire for knowledge, its flight from error—point to the unity of the Creator.

Chapter 24: The question as to the nature and character of the first man is more to be investigated than the manner in which his posterity was propagated. If wise, how was he seduced? If stupid, why is God not responsible? Man is rather in a mean state between wisdom and stupidity. Through the will he moves towards stupidity. By reason man is capable of a command, and can obey the command. A rational nature receives a command, and the will is for the purpose of obeying it. A rational nature is deserving to receive a command, but when this command is obeyed, it deserves to receive wisdom. And wisdom comes from him who gives illumination, as the command comes from the commander, not from the one who is commanded. For all this, the Creator of man should be praised.

Chapter 25: Man chooses by his will among things seen, either those from God or from the devil. There are two classes of things seen. One comes from the will of a persuader, *e.g.*, the devil. The other class derives from that which comes to the notice of the mind or the senses of the body. What comes to the attention of the mind first of all is the mind itself. It observes, as it contemplates the highest Wisdom, how it differs from God, yet is something which pleases after God. The mind is better when it is forgetful of itself as compared with the love of God or when it contemns itself wholly in comparison with Him. If it pleases itself wrongly, this is pride, the beginning of all sin. An evil will was added to the pride of the devil, who persuaded man. As the devil submitted himself for the imitation of pride, so our Lord submitted himself for the imitation of humility, through Whom eternal life is promised to us. Let us cleave to our Liberator so that nothing can separate us from Him. One day in the beauty of justice and the joy of eternal light would make us contemn innumerable years of the delights of this life and of temporal goods.