

## **Augustine of Hippo: Christianity at the Crossroads**

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##### Lecture 1

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##### Lecture 2

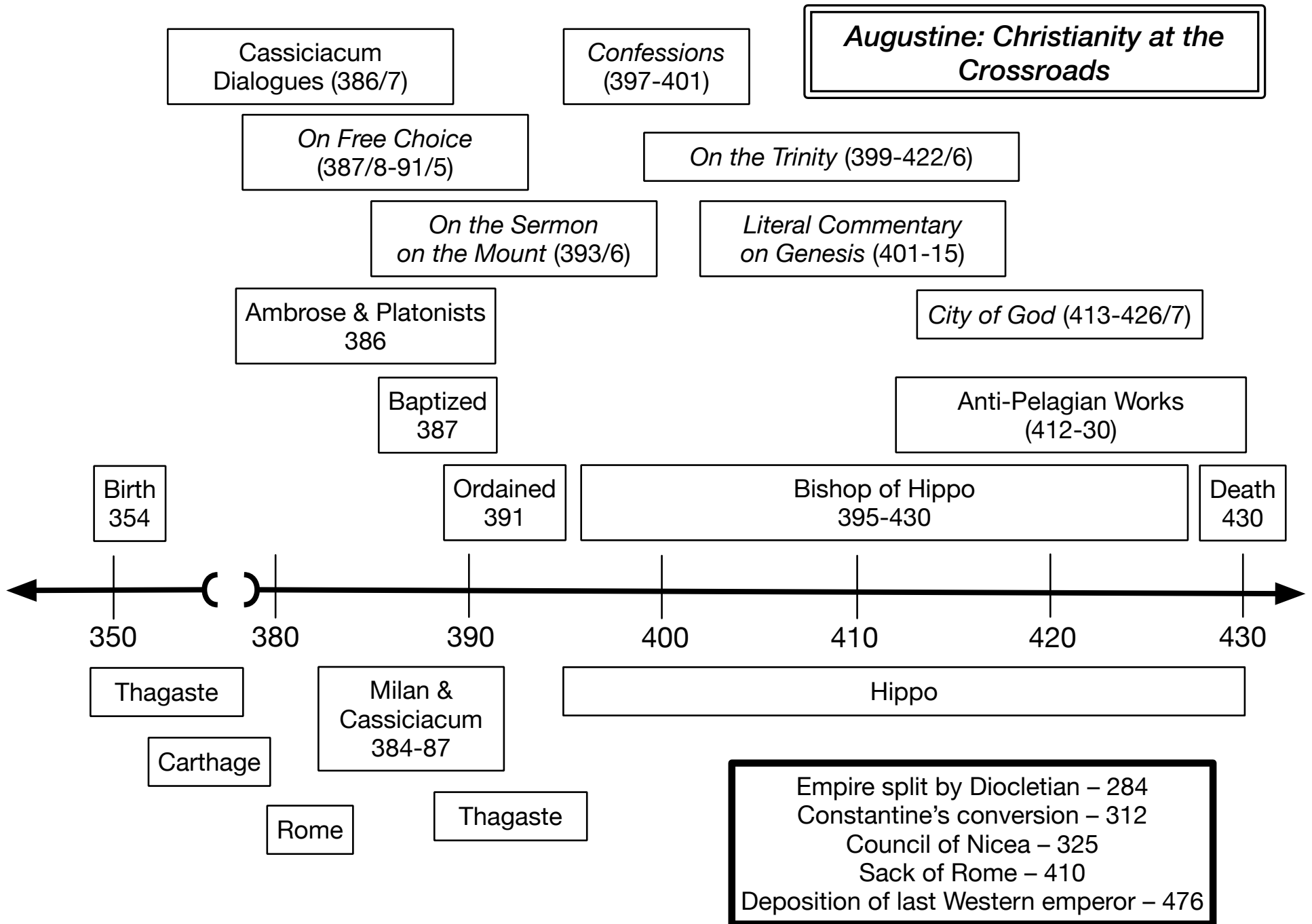
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- "Augustine on God's Presence in Creation," chapter 6 in the *Oxford Handbook of Omnipresence*, ed. A. Marmodoro and D. Migliorini. Oxford University Press, 2025.

##### Lecture 3

- "Primal Sin," in *The Augustinian Tradition*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews. University of California Press, 1998. Pp. 110-39.
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##### Lecture 4

- "Augustine and the Life of the Mind," a chapter in *The Life of the Mind in the History of Philosophy*, ed. K. Kraus and S. Ogden. Springer Publishing, forthcoming.



## Lecture 1: Faith Seeking Understanding

### **Confessions** (3.8) [tr. T. Williams]

[3.8] With what passion, my God, with what great passion I longed to fly away from earthly things to you, and I did not know what you would make of me. **[a]** For “with you is wisdom” (Job 12:13, 16). **[b]** Now the love of wisdom has in Greek the name “philosophy,” and it was this love that those writings set aflame in me. **[c]** There are those who lead others astray through philosophy, using that great and alluring and honorable name to whitewash their errors and wrap them in a false beauty; and nearly all such people, both in those days and earlier, are identified and exposed in that book. **[d]** The healthful admonition of your Spirit through your good and dutiful servant is also made manifest there [in Cicero’s book]: “See to it that no one deceive you through philosophy and empty seduction, according to human tradition, according to the elements of this world, and not according to Christ. **[e]** For in Christ dwells all the fullness of Godhead bodily.” (Col. 2:8-9). **[f]** In those days, as you know, O Light of my heart, these words of the Apostle were unknown to me. No, what delighted me in that exhortation was just this: it encouraged me not to follow this or that sect but instead to love wisdom itself, whatever it should turn out to be, and to love it and seek after it and pursue it and hold on to it and embrace it with all my strength. And the book stirred me and set me aflame, and I was filled with passionate longing. But in my great ardor there was just one thing that held me back: the name of Christ was not there. . . .

### **On Free Choice 1.4** [tr. S. MacDonald]

25 God will be with us and will help us understand what we have believed. For we can be assured that the prophet’s precept applies to us: “Unless you have believed, you will not understand” (Isaiah 7:9). Now, we believe that everything that exists is from the one God, but that God is nevertheless not the author of sins.

### 30 **Letter 120** [tr. R. Teske, New City Press (2003)]

One who now understands by true reason what he before only believed should certainly be preferred to one who still desires to understand what he believes. But if he does not even desire to understand and thinks that those things which should be understood ought only to be believed, he does not know the benefit faith brings. (ii.8)

35 Heaven forbid, after all, that God should hate in us that by which he made us more excellent than the other animals [namely, our reason]. Heaven forbid, I say, that we should believe in such a way that we do not accept or seek a rational account, since we could not even believe if we did not have rational souls. (i.3)

### **On Free Choice 2.6** [tr. S. MacDonald]

For unless it is one thing to believe and another to understand, and unless we ought first to believe the great and divine matter that we desire to understand, there would have been no point in the prophet’s saying, 45 “Unless you have believed, you will not understand” (Isaiah 7:9). Moreover, our Lord himself, by both word and deed, exhorted those whom he called to salvation to believe first. Later, when he was speaking about the gift that was to be given to those who believe, he did not say, “This is eternal life, that they may believe,” but rather, “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the true God, and the one whom you have sent, Jesus Christ” [John 17:3]. Moreover, to those who already believe he says, “Seek and you will find” [Matthew 7:7]. For something that is unknown and [merely] believed cannot be said to have been found, nor can anyone be prepared for finding God unless he has first believed what is later to be known.

### 55 **The Trinity 9.1** [tr. McKenna/Mathews]

Let us not doubt faithlessly the things to be believed, and let us affirm without rashness the things to be understood; in the former case, authority is to be upheld; in the latter, the truth is to be sought. With regard to the question at hand, therefore, let us believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, the Creator, and the ruler of all creation; that the Father is not the Son, nor is the Holy Spirit the Father or the Son, but that there is a trinity of inter-related persons, and the unity of an equal substance. But let us seek to understand this, imploring the help of Him whom we wish to understand. . . .

65 **Lecture 2: Searching for God (and Other Things)**

**Confessions** [tr. T. Williams, except where otherwise noted]

**Book I** [tr. S. MacDonald]

1. Great are you, O Lord, and greatly to be praised. Great is your power,  
and there is no measure of your wisdom. A human being, a small part of  
70 your creation, wants to praise you—a human being who carries around his  
own mortality, who carries around the testimony of his sin and the testimony  
that you oppose the proud. Nevertheless a human being, a small part of  
your creation, wants to praise you. You stir him up so that he takes delight in  
praising you because you have made us for yourself and our heart is  
75 restless until it rests in you.

Grant me, O Lord, to know, that is, to understand: does invoking you  
come first or praising you? And does knowing you come first or invoking  
you? But who invokes you without knowing you—for someone who does not  
know might well invoke something else altogether? Or is it rather that you  
80 are to be invoked in order that you might be known? But how will they  
invoke someone in whom they have not believed? And how will they  
believe unless by someone who preaches? Those who pine for the Lord will  
praise him, for those who seek find him, and those who find will praise him.

Let me seek you, Lord, as one who invokes you. And let me invoke you  
85 as one who believes in you. For you have been preached to us. My faith  
invokes you, Lord, the faith you have given me, the faith you breathed into  
me through your son’s humanity through the ministry of your preacher.

**Book 10** [tr. T. Williams]

8-9. What do I love when I love you? . . . I asked the earth, and it said, “It is  
90 not I.” And everything that is in the earth made the same confession.

11. What, then, do I love when I love my God? Who is this God who is  
above the pinnacle of my soul? Through my soul itself I will ascend to him.

12. So I will pass through even this nature of mine, climbing step by step to  
the one who made me; and I come into the open fields and spacious  
95 mansions of memory.

26. What, then, shall I do, my God? I will pass beyond even this power of  
mine that is called memory; I will pass beyond it so that I can progress  
toward you, O sweet Light. . . . See, I am making my ascent through my soul  
to you, who abide above me; I will pass beyond even this power of mind

100 that is called memory, eager to touch you in whatever way you can be  
touched, to embrace you in whatever way you can be embraced. . . . I will  
pass beyond even memory so that I might find you—where? Where will I find  
you, my true good, my sure sweetness? If I find you outside my memory  
(*praeter memoriam meam*), I have no memory of you (*immemor tui sum*).  
105 And how will I find you if I have no memory of you (*memor non sum tui*)?

29. How, then, do I seek you, Lord? For when I seek you, my God, I seek the  
happy life. I will seek you so that my soul may live. My body lives by my soul,  
and my soul lives by you. How, then, do I seek the happy life? . . . Do I seek it  
by way of remembrance, as though I have forgotten it but still remember  
110 that I have forgotten it? Or do I seek it by way of a desire to learn something  
unknown, either something I have never known or something I have so  
thoroughly forgotten that I do not even remember that I have forgotten it? Is  
not this the happy life that all people want, that absolutely no one fails to  
want? Where did they come to know it, so that they could want it? Where  
115 did they see it, so that they could love it? Surely we have this happy life—but  
in what way we have it, I do not know. . . .

I am struggling to determine whether this knowledge is in their  
memory. If it is there, we were happy at some time: whether each of us  
individually, or in the human being who first sinned, in whom we all died  
120 and from whom we are all born into unhappiness, I am not now asking. But I  
am asking whether the happy life is in memory. After all, we would not love  
it if we did not know it.

30. Is it retained in the same way that someone who has seen Carthage  
remembers Carthage? No. The happy life is not seen with the eyes, since it is  
125 not a body. Is it retained in the same way that we remember numbers? No.  
Someone who knows numbers does not still seek to attain them, whereas  
we know the happy life and for that very reason love it and still seek to attain  
it, so that we might be happy. Is it retained in the way that we remember  
eloquence? No. Granted, the cases are similar in certain respects: when  
130 people hear the word “eloquence” they remember the thing itself, even if  
they are not yet eloquent themselves; and many people do long to be  
eloquent (and from that fact it is evident that they know eloquence). But  
through the bodily senses they have observed other people who are  
eloquent, and they took pleasure in this and want to be eloquent  
135 themselves—though their pleasure in eloquence depends on some inward  
knowledge, and apart from that pleasure they would not want to be  
eloquent—whereas we do not experience the happy life in others through  
any bodily sense. Is it retained in the same way that we remember joy?

Perhaps so. For though I am unhappy I remember the happy life, in the  
 140 same way that I remember my own joy even when I am sad, and I never saw  
 or heard or smelled or tasted or touched my joy by any bodily sense; rather,  
 I experienced it in my mind when I was joyful, and the knowledge of that joy  
 stuck to my memory so that I would be able to recall it, sometimes with  
 contempt, sometimes with longing, in keeping with the variety of things I  
 145 remember enjoying. . . .

**31.** So where and when did I experience this happy life of mine, so that I  
 remember and love and desire it? And it is not just I, or I and a few others:  
 truly, we all want to be happy. Now if we did not have some reliable  
 knowledge of the happy life, we would not will it so reliably. But how can  
 150 that be? . . . Could it perhaps be the case that one person finds joy in one  
 thing and another person in something else? In that way all people agree  
 that they want to be happy, since they would all agree, if asked, that they  
 want joy, and that very joy is what they call a happy life. So even if different  
 people attain such joy from different things, there is still just one thing—joy—  
 155 that everyone is seeking to acquire. And no one can claim never to have  
 experienced joy, so when we hear the words “happy life,” we find joy in our  
 memory and recognize it.

**32.** Far be it, Lord, far be it from the heart of your servant who is making his  
 confession to you, far be it that I should think I am happy for experiencing  
 160 just any joy. For there is a joy that is not granted to the unrighteous, but only  
 to those who worship you without looking for any reward, because you are  
 yourself their joy. To rejoice for you, in you, about you: this is itself the happy  
 life, this alone, and no other. Those who think there is some other happy life  
 are pursuing a joy that is no true joy, though their wills have not turned away  
 165 altogether from some shadowy image of joy.

**33.** Therefore it is not certain that everyone wants to be happy, since not  
 everyone wants to rejoice in you, which is the only happy life. So indeed not  
 everyone wants the happy life. . . . I would ask them all, “Would you rather  
 rejoice in truth than in falsehood?” And as unhesitatingly as they had  
 170 answered that they want to be happy, they would now answer that they  
 would rather rejoice in truth. The happy life, in fact, is joy in truth: and that  
 means joy in you, who are Truth, O God my light, the health of my  
 countenance, my God. . . . All want this happy life; all want this life, which  
 alone is happy; all want joy in truth.

**34.** . . . So [the human mind] will be happy if it rejoices without hindrance  
 and without interruption in the one and only Truth by which all true things  
 are true.

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#### **Book 7.16** [tr. S. MacDonald]

180 Having been admonished by the Platonists’ books to return into myself, I  
 entered into my innermost self, with you [God] as my guide. And I was able  
 to do it because you had become my helper. I entered and with whatever  
 sort of eye it is that my soul possesses, I saw above that same eye of my soul  
 an immutable light higher than my mind. . . It transcended my mind, not in  
 185 the way that oil floats on water, nor in the way heaven is above the earth. It  
 was higher than me because it made me, and I was lower than it because I  
 was made by it. The person who knows truth knows it, and one who knows it  
 knows eternity. Love knows it. Eternal truth, true love, beloved eternity: you  
 are my God. To you I sigh day and night. When I first came to know you, you  
 190 raised me up so that I might see that what I was seeing is Being, and that I  
 who was seeing it am not yet Being. And shining intensely on me you  
 shocked the weakness of my sight, and I trembled with love and awe. . . I  
 said: “Is truth nothing just because it is not diffused through space, either  
 finite or infinite?” And you cried from far away: “No, indeed, for I am who  
 195 am” (Exodus 3:14). I heard in the way one hears in the heart, and there was  
 absolutely no room left for doubt.

#### **The Trinity 8.4-5** [tr. S. McKenna, ed. G. Matthews]

Behold, and again see if you can. Certainly you love only the good, because  
 the earth is good by the height of its mountains, the moderate elevation of  
 200 its hills, and the evenness of its fields; and good is the farm that is pleasant  
 and fertile; and good is . . . Why should I add still more? This good and that  
 good; take away this and that, and see good itself if you can; so you will see  
 God who is good not by another good, but is the good of every good. For  
 in all these good things, either those which I have enumerated, or any  
 205 others which are seen or thought, we would be unable to call one better  
 than the other, if we judge in accordance with the truth, if the idea of good  
 itself had not been impressed upon us, according to which we approve of  
 something as good, and also prefer one good to another. Thus God is to be  
 loved, not as this or that good, but as good itself. . . . When you hear then of  
 210 this good and that good which may not even be good in other respects, if it  
 were possible to put aside those goods which are good by a participation in  
 the good and see the good itself of which they are good by participation –  
 for when you hear of this or that good, you also understand the good itself  
 at the same time . . . – you would see God. And if you cling to Him by love,  
 215 you will be at once blest.

### Lecture 3: Good, Evil, and Free Will

#### *On Free Choice* [tr. S. MacDonald]

**OFC 1.1. Evodius:** Tell me, if you will, is it true that God is not the author of evil?

220 **Augustine:** I will tell you if you will make clear what sort of evil you are asking about. For we commonly use the term ‘evil’ in two ways: in one way when we talk about someone’s having acted in an evil way; in another when we talk about someone’s having suffered some evil.

**E:** I want to know about both sorts.

225 **A:** Well, if you know – or believe – that God is good (and of course it is shameful to think otherwise), then God does not act in an evil way. Moreover, if we confess that God is just (to deny that, too, would be a sacrilege), then he assigns punishments for evils just as he assigns rewards for goods. And of course punishments are evils to those who suffer them.

230 Will it not be the case, then, that if no one suffers punishment unjustly (which we must believe, since we believe that the universe is governed by divine providence), then God is in no way the author of the first sort of evil but is the author of the second sort?

**OFC 1.4-6. E:** Tell me how we come to act in an evil way.

235 **A:** You are pressing the question that tormented me for years when I was young and drove me to heretics and cast me down, exhausted, in their midst. I was so crippled by that fall and weighed down by such an enormous mass of empty fables that, had my love of finding what is true not secured divine help, I would not have been able to escape from under it and take in my first breaths in the freedom which that sort of inquiry offers. Now, because in my case such extraordinary effort was made to free me from this question, I will lead you by the route I followed in my escape. God will be with us and will help us understand what we have believed. For we can be assured that the prophet’s precept applies to us: “Unless you have  
240 believed, you will not understand” (Isaiah 7:9).

Now, we believe that everything that exists is from the one God, but that God is nevertheless not the author of sins. Of course what troubles the mind is this: if sins are from souls which God created, and those souls are from God, then is it not just a small step to trace those sins back to God?

250 **E:** That is it! You have now clearly expressed what is troubling me. That is what has driven me to ask these questions.

**A:** Take courage and hold on to what you believe. . . . What you want to

know is how we come to act in an evil way. But the first thing we need to discuss is what it is to act in an evil way.

255 **OFC 1.34.** So we have now begun to see, I gather, what authority eternal law has, and we have discovered how far temporal law is able to go in its punishments. Moreover, we have distinguished clearly enough two kinds of things – eternal and temporal – and two kinds of people corresponding to them – those who pursue and love eternal things and others who pursue  
260 and love temporal things. Moreover, we have established that what – or who – chooses what is to be pursued and embraced is located in the will, and that nothing other than the will can depose the mind from the citadel from which it rules and from its right order. It is clear, too, that when someone uses something in an evil way, it is not the thing that is to be accused but  
265 rather the person who uses it in an evil way.

Having accomplished all these things, let us return, if it is alright with you, to the question proposed at the beginning of our discussion, and let us see whether it has been answered. We set ourselves the question “What is it to act in an evil way?”, and everything we have talked about was raised with  
270 this end in view. Therefore please focus your attention now and consider whether acting in an evil way is anything other than this: having neglected eternal things – things which the mind enjoys just by virtue of itself, perceives just by virtue of itself, and which it cannot lose just so long as it loves them – and pursuing, as if they were important and wonderful,  
275 temporal things, that is, anything that is perceived through the body (the least valuable part of a human being) and can never be certain. For all evil deeds, that is, sins, seem to me to be included in this one genus.

**OFC 2.53.** Thus it happens that neither the goods that are sought after by sinners nor the free will itself . . . are in any way evil. What is evil is its turning  
280 away from the unchangeable good and its turning toward changeable goods.

**OFC 2.54.** But perhaps you will ask: Since the will is moved when it turns itself away from the unchangeable good toward a changeable good, where does that movement, which is clearly evil even though the free will must be  
285 counted as a good . . . come from?

**OFC 3.47.** I still want to know, if possible, why the [good angels] did not sin, and why [the evil angels] did sin. . . . If there were no cause, there would not be this distinction among rational creatures. . . . What cause distinguishes them? . . . Don’t give me the answer: An act of will (*voluntas*),  
290 for I’m looking for the cause of the act of will itself.

**OFC 3.48.** Since an act of will is the cause of sin, and you're looking for the cause of the act of will itself, if I were to find this cause for you, wouldn't you then ask for the cause of the cause I found for you? What limit is there to the inquiry; what could bring an end to our examination and discussion?  
 295 You must not look for anything beyond the root. Don't think that anything could be said more truly than that avarice – i. e., wanting more than is enough – is the root of all evils (I Timothy 6:10). . . . Now, avarice of this sort is cupidity, and cupidity is a wicked act of will (*improba voluntas*). Therefore a wicked act of will is the cause of all evils. . . . But if you demand a cause of  
 300 this root, how will it be the root of all evils?

**OFC 3.50.** Whatever is the cause of an act of will, if it cannot be resisted, one yields to it without sin; but if it can be resisted, then if one does not yield to it, one will not sin. Or perhaps one falls out of carelessness (*incautum*)? Then one should take care that one does not fall. Is the  
 305 deception so great that it is altogether impossible for one to guard against it? In that case there are no sins, for who sins in connection with something that cannot be guarded against in any way? If one sins, then it can be guarded against.

**OFC 3.74.** Nothing draws the will into action (*ad faciendum*) except some  
 310 object that has been perceived. What one accepts or rejects is in one's power, but one has no power over what perceived objects one is touched by; therefore it must be acknowledged that the mind is touched by both superior and inferior things in such a way that a rational substance accepts what it wills from each.

**OFC 3.76.** In the contemplation of the highest wisdom (which of course the mind is not, since the highest wisdom is unchangeable), the mind (which is changeable) also observes itself and, in a certain way, comes before its own mind. This would not happen unless there were a difference by which it is not what God is and nevertheless is something that can be  
 320 pleasing next to God. Now, it is better when it forgets itself in the presence of the love of the immutable God or considers itself of little value in comparison with it. But if, insofar as it encounters itself, it pleases itself to the point of perversely imitating God so that it wishes to enjoy its own power, then to the extent to which it desires to be greater, to that extent it  
 325 becomes less. This is "pride, the beginning of all sin."

**The Lord's Sermon on the Mount I.12.34** [tr. S. MacDonald]

There are three steps by which sin is brought to completion: suggestion, delight, and consent. A suggestion comes about through memory or a

bodily sense (when we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch something). If the  
 330 enjoyment of this thing delights, then if the delight is illicit, one ought to refrain from it. For example, when we are fasting and an appetite for something to eat arises in us at the sight of food, this occurs only by virtue of delight. Nevertheless we do not consent to it, and we restrain it by a command of reason which has control. But if consent had been given, the  
 335 sin would be complete.

## Lecture 4: The Human Mind (and Divine Trinity)

**Confessions** [tr. T. Williams],

**The Trinity** [tr. S. McKenna, ed. G. Matthews, except where otherwise noted]

340 **Soliloquies 1.12** [tr. Watson, modified]

For reason . . . promises that she will display God as clearly to your mind as the sun appears to the eyes. For minds are, as it were, souls' senses. The most certain truths arrived at by the sciences are like the objects which are illuminated by the sun – such as the earth and all the things on the earth –  
345 so that they can be seen. Now it is God Himself who illuminates, and reason [is] to minds what the power to see is to eyes. Now to have eyes is not the same thing as to have the power to see, and to have the power to see is not the same thing as to see.

**De immortalitate animae 10** (tr. S. MacDonald)

350 Reason is either (A) the mind's gaze (*aspectus animi*), by which [the mind] observes something true (*verum*) through itself and not through the body, or (B) the contemplation of something true, not through the body, or (C) something true itself which the mind contemplates.

**De quantitate animae 53** (tr. Colleran, modified)

355 Reason is a kind of sight, whereas reasoning is reason's search, that is, the moving of that sight over the things that are to be seen. Hence, the function of the latter is to search, that of the former, to see. And so, when that sight of the mind (which we are calling reason), is directed at some thing and sees it, that is called knowledge.

360 **Conf. 10.26** – The power of memory is great indeed, something terrifying, my God, a deep and boundless multiplicity. And this is the mind; it is I myself. What am I, then, my God? What nature am I? A various, manifold, and powerfully vast life. Behold the countless fields and caves and chasms of my memory, uncountably full of countless kinds of things: whether by  
365 means of images, as with all bodies, or through the presence of the things themselves, as with the liberal arts, or through some sort of notions or notings, as with the affections of the mind (for the memory retains these even when the mind is not experiencing them, and whatever is in memory is in the mind). I hasten through all these things, I fly here and there; I make  
370 what progress I can, but I never come to the end of it. So great is the power of memory, so great is the power of life in human beings who live only to

die. . . .

See, I am making my ascent through my soul to you, who abide above me; I will pass beyond even this power of mind that is called memory, eager to  
375 touch you in whatever way you can be touched, to embrace you in whatever way you can be embraced. . . . I will pass beyond even memory so that I might find you—where? Where will I find you, my true good, my sure sweetness? If I find you outside my memory (*praeter memoriam meam*), I have no memory of you (*immemor tui sum*). And how will I find you if I have  
380 no memory of you (*memor non sum tui*)?

**Trin. 10.7** – Why, then, was [the mind] commanded to know itself? I believe it was so commanded that it might *think of* itself and live according to its nature. . . . [I]t is one thing not to know oneself, and another thing not to think of oneself – for we do not say that a person, skilled in many branches  
385 of knowledge, is ignorant of grammar when he is not thinking of it, because he is then thinking of the art of medicine. . . .

**Trin. 11.6** – [E]ven when the form of the body that was perceived corporeally has been taken away, yet a likeness of it remains in the memory, to which the will may again turn its gaze in order to be formed by it from  
390 within, as the sense was formed by the sensible body that was presented to it from without. And so that trinity arises from memory, inner vision, and the will, which unites both. . . . But the place of that bodily form, which was perceived from without, is taken by the memory, retaining the form which  
395 the soul absorbs into itself through the bodily sense; and the vision that was without, when the sense was formed by a sensible body, is succeeded by a similar vision within, when the eye of the mind is formed from that which the memory retains, and absent bodies are conceived . . . .

**Trin. 11.7** – Therefore, what a body in a particular place is to the sense of the body, that the likeness of the body in the memory is to the eye of the  
400 mind; and what the vision of one seeing is to that form of the body from which the sense is informed, that the vision of one thinking is to the image of the body that is fixed in the memory, from which the eye of the mind is informed.

**Trin. 11.14** – For it is impossible for anyone to think of a color or of a bodily  
405 figure that one has never seen, or of a sound that one has never heard, or of a flavor that one has never tasted, or of an odor that one has never smelled, or of any touch of a corporeal object that one has never felt. If no one, accordingly, thinks of anything corporeal unless he has perceived it, because no one remembers anything corporeal unless he has perceived it,



410 then as the limit of perceiving is in bodies, so the limit of thinking is in the memory. For the sense receives the form from that body which we perceive, the memory receives it from the sense, but the gaze of thought receives it from the memory.

**Trin. 12.23-24** [tr. S. MacDonald]

415 [23] [Intelligibles] . . . abide, however, not as though they were fixed in spatial locations, in the way bodies abide but, [fixed] in incorporeal nature, they are present (praesto sunt) to the mind's gaze (mentis aspectibus) in just the way things that are visible or tangible are [present] to the bodily senses in their places.

420 . . . Few are able to attain to these things by their mind's gaze (mentis acie), and when one does attain to them as far as that is possible, one does not remain among them but it is as if the mind's gaze is shocked and rebuffed and is left with a transitory thought (cogitatio) of something that is not transitory.

425 This transient thought, however, is committed to memory by the sorts of training by which the mind is trained. As a result, there is something to which [the thought] that is forced back can return. But if thought does not return to memory and find there what it had committed to memory (as happens with the untrained), it can be led to it just as it was led before and  
430 find it where it first found it, in the incorporeal truth where once again a sort of impression can be recorded in memory (quasi descriptum in memoria figeretur). . . .

[24] Thus, the noble philosopher Plato tried to persuade us that the souls of human beings had lived here before they took on these bodies and  
435 therefore that things which are learned are things previously cognized being remembered rather than things being newly cognized. He tells about a certain boy who when asked all sorts of questions about geometry responded as if he were well trained in the discipline. As he was questioned gradually and strategically, he saw what was to be seen and he reported  
440 what he saw. But if this recollection were of things he had cognized before, then not everyone or hardly anyone could do this when questioned in that way, for it is not the case that everyone was a geometer in a prior life (for geometers are so rare among human kind that one can scarcely find a single one).

445 Instead, one should believe that the nature of the intellectual mind was created in such a way that it is in contact (subiuncta) with intelligible things by virtue of the natural arrangement the creator instituted. As a result, it

sees these things in a certain incorporeal light of its own kind, in the sort of way the eye of the flesh sees things in its vicinity in this corporeal light, a  
450 light the eye was created with a capacity and suitability for.

**Trin. 14.8** – [S]o great is the power of thought that not even the mind itself may place itself, so to speak, in its own sight, except when it thinks of itself. And consequently nothing is so in the sight of the mind, except when one thinks of it, that not even the mind itself, by which is thought whatever is  
455 thought, can be in its own sight in any other way than by thinking of itself. . . . It remains, therefore, that its sight is something belonging to its nature, and the mind is recalled to it when it thinks of itself, not as it were by a movement in space, but by an incorporeal conversion; on the other hand, when it does not think of itself, it is indeed not in its own sight, nor is its gaze  
460 formed from it; but yet it knows itself, as if it were a remembrance of itself to itself. It is like a man versed in many sciences: what he knows is contained in his memory, nor is anything from there present in the sight of his mind, except when he thinks of it. But all the rest is hidden in a kind of secret knowledge which is called memory.

465 **Trin. 14.9** – We learn from this that in the hidden recesses of the mind there is a certain knowledge of certain things, and that when we think of them, they then proceed, as it were, to the center and are placed, so to speak, more clearly in the sight of the mind, for then the mind itself discovers that it remembers, understands, and loves those things of which it was not even  
470 thinking when it was thinking of something else.

**Trin. 14.10** – [B]ecause the word cannot be there without the thought . . . this [trinitarian] image is rather to be recognized in these three things, namely, memory, understanding, and will. But I am now referring to understanding as that whereby we understand when actually thinking, that  
475 is, when our thought is formed after the finding of those things which had been present in our memory, but of which we were not thinking, and I am referring to will, love, or dilection as that which unites this child with its parent, and is in some way common to both.

**Trin. 14.13** – [F]rom the moment that [the mind] began to be, it has  
480 certainly never ceased to remember itself, never ceased to understand itself, and never ceased to love itself, as we have already shown. And, therefore, when it is turned to itself by thought, then arises a trinity, in which a word, too, can at last be identified, for it is formed from thought itself, and the will which unites both. Here, then, we may recognize more clearly than before  
485 the [trinitarian] image which we are seeking.

**Trin. 15.25** – What is that which can be a word, and, therefore, is already worthy of the name of a word? What, I say, is this word, formable and not yet formed, except something of our own mind which we cast this way and that by a kind of revolving motion, according as we think now of this and now of that thing, just as they are found, or as they occur to our mind? And it then  
490 becomes a true word when that which we cast, as I have said, by a revolving motion, arrives at that which we know, and is formed by it by taking its perfect likeness, so that as any thing is known, so it is also thought, so it is spoken in the heart, that is, without sound, without the thought of sound,  
495 such as certainly belongs to some language.