

Confessions - Book I - Chapter Xix

by St. Augustine

Transcript

31. However, O Lord, to thee most excellent and most good, thou Architect and Governor of the universe, thanks would be due thee, O our God, even if thou hadst not willed that I should survive my boyhood. For I existed even then; I lived and felt and was solicitous about my own well-being--a trace of that most mysterious unity from whence I had my being. [39] I kept watch, by my inner sense, over the integrity of my outer senses, and even in these trifles and also in my thoughts about trifles, I learned to take pleasure in truth. I was averse to being deceived; I had a vigorous memory; I was gifted with the power of speech, was softened by friendship, shunned sorrow, meanness, ignorance. Is not such an animated creature as this wonderful and praiseworthy? But all these are gifts of my God; I did not give them to myself. Moreover, they are good, and they all together constitute myself. Good, then, is he that made me, and he is my God; and before him will I rejoice exceedingly for every good gift which, even as a boy, I had. But herein lay my sin, that it was not in him, but in his creatures--myself and the rest--that I sought for pleasures, honors, and truths. And I fell thereby into sorrows, troubles, and errors. Thanks be to thee, my joy, my pride, my confidence, my God--thanks be to thee for thy gifts; but do thou preserve them in me. For thus wilt thou preserve me; and those things which thou hast given me shall be developed and perfected, and I myself shall be with thee, for from thee is my being.

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