

Confessions - Book IV - Chapter II

by St. Augustine

Transcript

2. During those years I taught the art of rhetoric. Conquered by the desire for gain, I offered for sale speaking skills with which to conquer others. And yet, O Lord, thou knowest that I really preferred to have honest scholars (or what were esteemed as such) and, without tricks of speech, I taught these scholars the tricks of speech--not to be used against the life of the innocent, but sometimes to save the life of a guilty man. And thou, O God, didst see me from afar, stumbling on that slippery path and sending out some flashes of fidelity amid much smoke--guiding those who loved vanity and sought after lying,[85] being myself their companion.

In those years I had a mistress, to whom I was not joined in lawful marriage. She was a woman I had discovered in my wayward passion, void as it was of understanding, yet she was the only one; and I remained faithful to her and with her I discovered, by my own experience, what a great difference there is between the restraint of the marriage bond contracted with a view to having children and the compact of a lustful love, where children are born against the parents\\

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