

Confessions - Book XI - Chapter XX

by St. Augustine

Transcript

26. But even now it is manifest and clear that there are neither times future nor times past. Thus it is not properly said that there are three times, past, present, and future. Perhaps it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future. For these three do coexist somehow in the soul, for otherwise I could not see them. The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation.[437] If we are allowed to speak of these things so, I see three times, and I grant that there are three. Let it still be said, then, as our misapplied custom has it: "There are three times, past, present, and future." I shall not be troubled by it, nor argue, nor object--always provided that what is said is understood, so that neither the future nor the past is said to exist now. There are but few things about which we speak properly--and many more about which we speak improperly--though we understand one another\

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