

Confessions - Book XI - Chapter Xxii

by St. Augustine

Transcript

28. My soul burns ardently to understand this most intricate enigma. O Lord my God, O good Father, I beseech thee through Christ, do not close off these things, both the familiar and the obscure, from my desire. Do not bar it from entering into them; but let their light dawn by thy enlightening mercy, O Lord. Of whom shall I inquire about these things? And to whom shall I confess my ignorance of them with greater profit than to thee, to whom these studies of mine (ardently longing to understand thy Scriptures) are not a bore? Give me what I love, for I do love it; and this thou hast given me. O Father, who truly knowest how to give good gifts to thy children, give this to me. Grant it, since I have undertaken to understand it, and hard labor is my lot until thou openest it. I beseech thee, through Christ and in his name, the Holy of Holies, let no man interrupt me. "For I have believed, and therefore do I speak." [438] This is my hope; for this I live: that I may contemplate the joys of my Lord. [439] Behold, thou hast made my days grow old, and they pass away--and how I do not know.

We speak of this time and that time, and these times and those times: "How long ago since he said this?" "How long ago since he did this?" "How long ago since I saw that?" "This syllable is twice as long as that single short syllable." These words we say and hear, and we are understood and we understand. They are quite commonplace and ordinary, and still the meaning of these very same things lies deeply hid and its discovery is still to come.

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