

# Confessions - Book Xii - Chapter XV

by St. Augustine

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## Transcript

18. "Will you say that these things are false which Truth tells me, with a loud voice in my inner ear, about the very eternity of the Creator: that his essence is changed in no respect by time and that his will is not distinct from his essence? Thus, he doth not will one thing now and another thing later, but he willeth once and for all everything that he willeth--not again and again; and not now this and now that. Nor does he will afterward what he did not will before, nor does he cease to will what he had willed before. Such a will would be mutable and no mutable thing is eternal. But our God is eternal.

"Again, he tells me in my inner ear that the expectation of future things is turned to sight when they have come to pass. And this same sight is turned into memory when they have passed. Moreover, all thought that varies thus is mutable, and nothing mutable is eternal. But our God is eternal." These things I sum up and put together, and I conclude that my God, the eternal God, hath not made any creature by any new will, and his knowledge does not admit anything transitory.

19. "What, then, will you say to this, you objectors? Are these things false?" "No," they say. "What then? Is it false that every entity already formed and all matter capable of receiving form is from him alone who is supremely good, because he is supreme?" "We do not deny this, either," they say. "What then? Do you deny this: that there is a certain sublime created order which cleaves with such a chaste love to the true and truly eternal God that, although it is not coeternal with him, yet it does not separate itself from him, and does not flow away into any mutation of change or process but abides in true contemplation of him alone?" If thou, O God, dost show thyself to him who loves thee as thou hast commanded--and art sufficient for him--then, such a one will neither turn himself away from thee nor turn away toward himself. This is "the house of God." It is not an earthly house and it is not made from any celestial matter; but it is a spiritual house, and it partakes in thy eternity because it is without blemish forever. For thou hast made it steadfast forever and ever; thou hast given it a law which will not be removed. Still, it is not coeternal with thee, O God, since it is not without beginning--it was created.

20. For, although we can find no time before it (for wisdom was created before all things),<sup>[473]</sup> this is certainly not that Wisdom which is absolutely coeternal and equal with thee, our God, its Father, the Wisdom through whom all things were created and in whom, in the beginning, thou didst create the heaven and earth. This is truly the created Wisdom, namely, the intelligible nature which, in its contemplation of light, is light. For this is also called wisdom, even if it is a created wisdom. But the difference between the Light that lightens and that which is enlightened is as great as is the difference between the Wisdom that creates and that which is created. So also is the difference between the

Righteousness that justifies and the righteousness that is made by justification. For we also are called thy righteousness, for a certain servant of thine says, \"That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.\"[474] Therefore, there is a certain created wisdom that was created before all things: the rational and intelligible mind of that chaste city of thine. It is our mother which is above and is free[475] and \"eternal in the heavens\"[476]--but in what heavens except those which praise thee, the \"heaven of heavens\"? This also is the \"heaven of heavens\" which is the Lord\\

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