

# Confessions - Book Xiii - Chapter II

by St. Augustine

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## Transcript

2. Indeed, it is from the fullness of thy goodness that thy creation exists at all: to the end that the created good might not fail to be, even though it can profit thee nothing, and is nothing of thee nor equal to thee--since its created existence comes from thee.

For what did the heaven and earth, which thou didst make in the beginning, ever deserve from thee? Let them declare--these spiritual and corporeal entities, which thou madest in thy wisdom--let them declare what they merited at thy hands, so that the inchoate and the formless, whether spiritual or corporeal, would deserve to be held in being in spite of the fact that they tend toward disorder and extreme unlikeness to thee? An unformed spiritual entity is more excellent than a formed corporeal entity; and the corporeal, even when unformed, is more excellent than if it were simply nothing at all. Still, these formless entities are held in their state of being by thee, until they are recalled to thy unity and receive form and being from thee, the one sovereign Good. What have they deserved of thee, since they would not even be unformed entities except from thee?

3. What has corporeal matter deserved of thee--even in its invisible and unformed state--since it would not exist even in this state if thou hadst not made it? And, if it did not exist, it could not merit its existence from thee.

Or, what has that formless spiritual creation deserved of thee--that it should flow lightly like the abyss--since it is so unlike thee and would not exist at all if it had not been turned by the Word which made it that same Word, and, illumined by that Word, had been "made light"[507] although not as thy equal but only as an image of that Form [of Light] which is equal to thee? For, in the case of a body, its being is not the same thing as its being beautiful; else it could not then be a deformed body. Likewise, in the case of a created spirit, living is not the same state as living wisely; else it could then be immutably wise. But the true good of every created thing is always to cleave fast to thee, lest, in turning away from thee, it lose the light it had received in being turned by thee, and so relapse into a life like that of the dark abyss.

As for ourselves, who are a spiritual creation by virtue of our souls, when we turned away from thee, O Light, we were in that former life of darkness; and we toil amid the shadows of our darkness until--through thy only Son--we become thy righteousness,[508] like the mountains of God. For we, like the great abyss,[509] have been the objects of thy judgments.

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