

# Confessions - Book Xiii - Chapter Xxv

by St. Augustine

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## Transcript

38. I also desire to say, O my Lord God, what the following Scripture suggests to me. Indeed, I will speak without fear, for I will speak the truth, as thou inspirest me to know what thou dost will that I should say concerning these words. For I do not believe I can speak the truth by any other inspiration than thine, since thou art the Truth, and every man a liar.[634] Hence, he that speaks a lie, speaks out of himself. Therefore, if I am to speak the truth, I must speak of thy truth.

Behold, thou hast given us for our food every seed-bearing herb on the face of the earth, and all trees that bear in themselves seed of their own kind; and not to us only, but to all the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field and all creeping things.[635] Still, thou hast not given these things to the fishes and great whales. We have said that by these fruits of the earth the works of mercy were signified and figured forth in an allegory: thus, from the fruitful earth, things are provided for the necessities of life. Such an "earth" was the godly Onesiphorus, to whose house thou gavest mercy because he often refreshed Paul and was not ashamed of his bonds.[636] This was also the way of the brethren from Macedonia, who bore such fruit and supplied to him what he lacked. But notice how he grieves for certain "trees," which did not give him the fruit that was due, when he said, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God, that it be not laid up to their charge."[637] For we owe "fruits" to those who minister spiritual doctrine to us through their understanding of the divine mysteries. We owe these to them as men. We owe these fruits, also, to "the living souls" since they offer themselves as examples for us in their own continence. And, finally, we owe them likewise to "the flying creatures" because of their blessings which are multiplied on the earth, for "their sound has gone forth into all the earth."[638]

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