

Book XI

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Chapter XIV

15

17. There was no time, therefore, when thou hadst not made anything, because thou hadst made time itself. And there are no times that are coeternal with thee, because thou dost abide forever; but if times should abide, they would not be times.

For what is time? Who can easily and briefly explain it? Who can even comprehend it in thought or put the answer into words? Yet is it not true that in conversation we refer to nothing more familiarly or knowingly than time? And surely we understand it when we speak of it; we understand it also when we hear another speak of it.

What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know. Yet I say with confidence that I know that if nothing passed away, there would be no past time; and if nothing were still coming, there would be no future time; and if there were nothing at all, there would be no present time.

But, then, how is it that there are the two times, past and future, when even the past is now no longer and the future is now not yet? But if the present were always present, and did not pass into past time, it obviously would not be time but eternity. If, then, time present—if it be time—comes into existence only because it passes into time past, how can we say that even this is, since the cause of its being is that it will cease to be? Thus, can we not truly say that time *is* only as it tends toward nonbeing?

Chapter XV

18. And yet we speak of a long time and a short time; but never speak this way except of time past and future. We call a hundred years ago, for example, a long time past. In like manner, we should call a hundred years hence a long time to

come. But we call ten days ago a short time past; and ten days hence a short time to come. But in what sense is something long or short that is nonexistent? For the past is not now, and the future is not yet. Therefore, let us not say, “It *is* long”; instead, let us say of the past, “It *was* long,” and of the future, “It *will be* long.” And yet, O Lord, my Light, shall not thy truth make mockery of man even here? For that long time past: was it long when it was already past, or when it was still present? For it might have been long when there was a period that could be long, but when it was past, it no longer was. In that case, that which was not at all could not be long. Let us not, therefore, say, “Time past was long,” for we shall not discover what it was that was long because, since it is past, it no longer exists. Rather, let us say that “time *present* was long, because when it was present it *was* long.” For then it had not yet passed on so as not to be, and therefore it still was in a state that could be called long. But after it passed, it ceased to be long simply because it ceased to be.

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19. Let us, therefore, O human soul, see whether present time can be long, for it has been given you to feel and measure the periods of time. How, then, will you answer me?

Is a hundred years when present a long time? But, first, see whether a hundred years can be present at once. For if the first year in the century is current, then it is present time, and the other ninety and nine are still future. Therefore, they are not yet. But, then, if the second year is current, one year is already past, the second present, and all the rest are future. And thus, if we fix on any middle year of this century as present, those before it are past, those after it are future. Therefore, a hundred years cannot be present all at once.

Let us see, then, whether the year that is now current can be present. For if its first month is current, then the rest are future; if the second, the first is already past, and the remainder are not yet. Therefore, the current year is not present all at once. And if it is not present as a whole, then the year is not present. For it takes twelve months to make the year, from which each individual month which is current is itself

present one at a time, but the rest are either past or future.

20. Thus it comes out that time present, which we found was the only time that could be called “long,” has been cut down to the space of scarcely a single day. But let us examine even that, for one day is never present as a whole. For it is made up of twenty-four hours, divided between night and day. The first of these hours has the rest of them as future, and the last of them has the rest as past; but any of those between has those that preceded it as past and those that succeed it as future. And that one hour itself passes away in fleeting fractions. The part of it that has fled is past; what remains is still future. If any fraction of time be conceived that cannot now be divided even into the most minute momentary point, this alone is what we may call time present. But this flies so rapidly from future to past that it cannot be extended by any delay. For if it is extended, it is then divided into past and future. But the present has no extension⁴³⁴ whatever.

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Where, therefore, is that time which we may call “long”? Is it future? Actually we do not say of the future, “It is long,” for it has not yet come to be, so as to be long. Instead, we say, “It will be long.” *When* will it be? For since it is future, it will not be long, for what may be long is not yet. It will be long only when it passes from the future which is not as yet, and will have begun to be present, so that there can be something that may be long. But in that case, time present cries aloud, in the words we have already heard, that it cannot be “long.”

Chapter XVI

21. And yet, O Lord, we do perceive intervals of time, and we compare them with each other, and we say that some are longer and others are shorter. We even measure how much longer or shorter this time may be than that time. And we say that this time is twice as long, or three times as long, while this other time is only just as long as that other. But we measure the passage of time when we measure the intervals of perception. But who can measure times past which now are

no longer, or times future which are not yet—unless perhaps someone will dare to say that what does not exist can be measured? Therefore, while time is passing, it can be perceived and measured; but when it is past, it cannot, since it is not.

Chapter XVII

22. I am seeking the truth, O Father; I am not affirming it. O my God, direct and rule me.

Who is there who will tell me that there are not three times—as we learned when boys and as we have also taught boys—time past, time present, and time future? Who can say that there is only time present because the other two do not exist? Or do they also exist; but when, from the future, time becomes present, it proceeds from some secret place; and when, from times present, it becomes past, it recedes into some secret place? For where have those men who have foretold the future seen the things foretold, if then they were not yet existing? For what does not exist cannot be seen. And those who tell of things past could not speak of them as if they were true, if they did not see them in their minds. These things could in no way be discerned if they did not exist. There are therefore times present and times past.

Chapter XVIII

18

23. Give me leave, O Lord, to seek still further. O my Hope, let not my purpose be confounded. For if there are times past and future, I wish to know where they are. But if I have not yet succeeded in this, I still know that wherever they are, they are not there as future or past, but as present. For if they are there as future, they are there as “not yet”; if they are there as past, they are there as “no longer.” Wherever they are and whatever they are they exist therefore only as present. Although we tell of past things as true, they are drawn out of the memory—not the things themselves, which have already passed, but words constructed from the images of the perceptions which were formed in the mind, like footprints in their passage through the senses. My childhood, for

instance, which is no longer, still exists in time past, which does not now exist. But when I call to mind its image and speak of it, I see it in the present because it is still in my memory. Whether there is a similar explanation for the foretelling of future events—that is, of the images of things which are not yet seen as if they were already existing—I confess, O my God, I do not know. But this I certainly do know: that we generally think ahead about our future actions, and this premeditation is in time present; but that the action which we premeditate is not yet, because it is still future. When we shall have started the action and have begun to do what we were premeditating, then that action will be in time present, because then it is no longer in time future.

24. Whatever may be the manner of this secret foreseeing of future things, nothing can be seen except what exists. But what exists now is not future, but present. When, therefore, they say that future events are seen, it is not the events themselves, for they do not exist as yet (that is, they are still in time future), but perhaps, instead, their causes and their signs are seen, which already do exist. Therefore, to those already beholding these causes and signs, they are not future, but present, and from them future things are predicted because they are conceived in the mind. These conceptions, however, exist *now*, and those who predict those things see these conceptions before them in time present.

Let me take an example from the vast multitude and variety of such things. I see the dawn; I predict that the sun is about to rise. What I see is in time present, what I predict is in time future—not that the sun is future, for it already exists; but its rising is future, because it is not yet. Yet I could not predict even its rising, unless I had an image of it in my mind; as, indeed, I do even now as I speak. But that dawn which I see in the sky is not the rising of the sun (though it does precede it), nor is it a conception in my mind. These two⁴³⁵ are seen in time present, in order that the event which is in time future may be predicted.

Future events, therefore, are not yet. And if they are not

yet, they do not exist. And if they do not exist, they cannot be seen at all, but they can be predicted from things present, which now are and are seen.

Chapter XIX

25. Now, therefore, O Ruler of thy creatures, what is the mode by which thou teachest souls those things which are still future? For thou hast taught thy prophets. How dost thou, to whom nothing is future, teach future things—or rather teach things present from the signs of things future? For what does not exist certainly cannot be taught. This way of thine is too far from my sight; it is too great for me, I cannot attain to it.⁴³⁶ But I shall be enabled by thee, when thou wilt grant it, O sweet Light of my secret eyes.

Chapter XX

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’s meaning.

Chapter XXI

27. I have said, then, that we measure periods of time as they pass so that we can say that this time is twice as long as that

one or that this is just as long as that, and so on for the other 20
fractions of time which we can count by measuring.

So, then, as I was saying, we measure periods of time as they pass. And if anyone asks me, “How do you know this?”, I can answer: “I know because we measure. We could not measure things that do not exist, and things past and future do not exist.” But how do we measure present time since it has no extension? It is measured while it passes, but when it has passed it is not measured; for then there is nothing that could be measured. But whence, and how, and whither does it pass while it is being measured? Whence, but from the future? Which way, save through the present? Whither, but into the past? Therefore, from what is not yet, through what has no length, it passes into what is now no longer. But what do we measure, unless it is a time of some length? For we cannot speak of single, and double, and triple, and equal, and all the other ways in which we speak of time, except in terms of the length of the periods of time. But in what “length,” then, do we measure passing time? Is it in the future, from which it passes over? But what does not yet exist cannot be measured. Or, is it in the present, through which it passes? But what has no length we cannot measure. Or is it in the past into which it passes? But what is no longer we cannot measure.

Chapter XXII

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 un-

derstand 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.

Chapter XXIII

29. I once heard a learned man say that the motions of the sun, moon, and stars constituted time; and I did not agree. For why should not the motions of all bodies constitute time? What if the lights of heaven should cease, and a potter’s wheel still turn round: would there be no time by which we might measure those rotations and say either that it turned at equal intervals, or, if it moved now more slowly and now more quickly, that some rotations were longer and others shorter? And while we were saying this, would we not also be speaking in time? Or would there not be in our words some syllables that were long and others short, because the first took a longer time to sound, and the others a shorter time? O God, grant men to see in a small thing the notions that are common⁴⁴⁰ to all things, both great and small. Both the stars and the lights of heaven are “for signs and seasons, and for days and years.”⁴⁴¹ This is doubtless the case, but just as I should not say that the circuit of that wooden wheel was a day, neither would that learned man say that there was, therefore, no time.

30. I thirst to know the power and the nature of time, by

which we measure the motions of bodies, and say, for example, that this motion is twice as long as that. For I ask, since the word “day” refers not only to the length of time that the sun is above the earth (which separates day from night), but also refers to the sun’s entire circuit from east all the way around to east—on account of which we can say, “So many days have passed” (the nights being included when we say, “So many days,” and their lengths not counted separately)—since, then, the day is ended by the motion of the sun and by his passage from east to east, I ask whether the motion itself is the day, or whether the day is the period in which that motion is completed; or both? For if the sun’s passage is the day, then there would be a day even if the sun should finish his course in as short a period as an hour. If the motion itself is the day, then it would not be a day if from one sunrise to another there were a period no longer than an hour. But the sun would have to go round twenty-four times to make just one day. If it is both, then that could not be called a day if the sun ran his entire course in the period of an hour; nor would it be a day if, while the sun stood still, as much time passed as the sun usually covered during his whole course, from morning to morning. I shall, therefore, not ask any more what it is that is called a day, but rather what time is, for it is by time that we measure the circuit of the sun, and would be able to say that it was finished in half the period of time that it customarily takes if it were completed in a period of only twelve hours. If, then, we compare these periods, we could call one of them a single and the other a double period, as if the sun might run his course from east to east sometimes in a single period and sometimes in a double period.

Let no man tell me, therefore, that the motions of the heavenly bodies constitute time. For when the sun stood still at the prayer of a certain man in order that he might gain his victory in battle, the sun stood still but time went on. For in as long a span of time as was sufficient the battle was fought and ended.⁴⁴²

I see, then, that time is a certain kind of extension. But do I

see it, or do I only seem to? Thou, O Light and Truth, wilt show me.

Chapter XXIV

31. Dost thou command that I should agree if anyone says that time is “the motion of a body”? Thou dost not so command. For I hear that no body is moved but in time; this thou tellest me. But that the motion of a body itself is time I do not hear; thou dost not say so. For when a body is moved, I measure by time how long it was moving from the time when it began to be moved until it stopped. And if I did not see when it began to be moved, and if it continued to move so that I could not see when it stopped, I could not measure the movement, except from the time when I began to see it until I stopped. But if I look at it for a long time, I can affirm only that the time is long but not how long it may be. This is because when we say, “How long?”, we are speaking comparatively as: “This is as long as that,” or, “This is twice as long as that”; or other such similar ratios. But if we were able to observe the point in space where and from which the body, which is moved, comes and the point to which it is moved; or if we can observe its parts moving as in a wheel, we can say how long the movement of the body took or the movement of its parts from this place to that. Since, therefore, the motion of a body is one thing, and the norm by which we measure how long it takes is another thing, we cannot see which of these two is to be called time. For, although a body is sometimes moved and sometimes stands still, we measure not only its motion but also its rest as well; and both by time! Thus we say, “It stood still as long as it moved,” or, “It stood still twice or three times as long as it moved”—or any other ratio which our measuring has either determined or imagined, either roughly or precisely, according to our custom. Therefore, time is not the motion of a body.

Chapter XXV

32. And I confess to thee, O Lord, that I am still ignorant as

to what time is. And again I confess to thee, O Lord, that I know that I am speaking all these things in time, and that I have already spoken of time a long time, and that “very long” is not long except when measured by the duration of time. How, then, do I know this, when I do not know what time is? Or, is it possible that I do not know how I can express what I do know? Alas for me! I do not even know the extent of my own ignorance. Behold, O my God, in thy presence I do not lie. As my heart is, so I speak. Thou shalt light my candle; thou, O Lord my God, wilt enlighten my darkness.⁴⁴³

Chapter XXVI

33. Does not my soul most truly confess to thee that I do measure intervals of time? But what is it that I thus measure, O my God, and how is it that I do not know what I measure? I measure the motion of a body by time, but the time itself I do not measure. But, truly, could I measure the motion of a body—how long it takes, how long it is in motion from this place to that—unless I could measure the time in which it is moving?

How, then, do I measure this time itself? Do we measure a longer time by a shorter time, as we measure the length of a crossbeam in terms of cubits?⁴⁴⁴ Thus, we can say that the length of a long syllable is measured by the length of a short syllable and thus say that the long syllable is double. So also we measure the length of poems by the length of the lines, and the length of the line by the length of the feet, and the length of the feet by the length of the syllable, and the length of the long syllables by the length of the short ones. We do not measure by pages—for in that way we would measure space rather than time—but when we speak the words as they pass by we say: “It is a long stanza, because it is made up of so many verses; they are long verses because they consist of so many feet; they are long feet because they extend over so many syllables; this is a long syllable because it is twice the length of a short one.”

But no certain measure of time is obtained this way; since

it is possible that if a shorter verse is pronounced slowly, it may take up more time than a longer one if it is pronounced hurriedly. The same would hold for a stanza, or a foot, or a syllable. From this it appears to me that time is nothing other than extendedness;⁴⁴⁵ but extendedness of what I do not know. This is a marvel to me. The extendedness may be of the mind itself. For what is it I measure, I ask thee, O my God, when I say either, roughly, “This time is longer than that,” or, more precisely, “This is *twice* as long as that.” I know that I am measuring time. But I am not measuring the future, for it is not yet; and I am not measuring the present because it is extended by no length; and I am not measuring the past because it no longer is. What is it, therefore, that I am measuring? Is it time in its passage, but not time past [*praetereuntia tempora, non praeterita*]? This is what I have been saying.

Chapter XXVII

34. Press on, O my mind, and attend with all your power. God is our Helper: “it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves.”⁴⁴⁶ Give heed where the truth begins to dawn.⁴⁴⁷ Suppose now that a bodily voice begins to sound, and continues to sound—on and on—and then ceases. Now there is silence. The voice is past, and there is no longer a sound. It was future before it sounded, and could not be measured because it was not yet; and now it cannot be measured because it is no longer. Therefore, while it was sounding, it might have been measured because then there was something that could be measured. But even then it did not stand still, for it was in motion and was passing away. Could it, on that account, be any more readily measured? For while it was passing away, it was being extended into some interval of time in which it might be measured, since the present has no length. Supposing, though, that it might have been measured—then also suppose that another voice had begun to sound and is still sounding without any interruption to break its continued flow. We can measure it only while it is sounding, for when it

has ceased to sound it will be already past and there will not be anything there that can be measured. Let us measure it exactly; and let us say how much it is. But while it is sounding, it cannot be measured except from the instant when it began to sound, down to the final moment when it left off. For we measure the time interval itself from some beginning point to some end. This is why a voice that has not yet ended cannot be measured, so that one could say how long or how briefly it will continue. Nor can it be said to be equal to another voice or single or double in comparison to it or anything like this. But when it is ended, it is no longer. How, therefore, may it be measured? And yet we measure times; not those which are not yet, nor those which no longer are, nor those which are stretched out by some delay, nor those which have no limit. Therefore, we measure neither times future nor times past, nor times present, nor times passing by; and yet we do measure times.

35. *Deus Creator omnium*⁴⁴⁸: this verse of eight syllables alternates between short and long syllables. The four short ones—that is, the first, third, fifth, and seventh—are single in relation to the four long ones—that is, the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth. Each of the long ones is double the length of each of the short ones. I affirm this and report it, and common sense perceives that this indeed is the case. By common sense, then, I measure a long syllable by a short one, and I find that it is twice as long. But when one sounds after another, if the first be short and the latter long, how can I hold the short one and how can I apply it to the long one as a measure, so that I can discover that the long one is twice as long, when, in fact, the long one does not begin to sound until the short one leaves off sounding? That same long syllable I do not measure as present, since I cannot measure it until it is ended; but its ending is its passing away.

What is it, then, that I can measure? Where is the short syllable by which I measure? Where is the long one that I am measuring? Both have sounded, have flown away, have passed on, and are no longer. And still I measure, and I confi-

dently answer—as far as a trained ear can be trusted—that this syllable is single and that syllable double. And I could not do this unless they both had passed and were ended. Therefore I do not measure them, for they do not exist any more. But I measure something in my memory which remains fixed.

36. It is in you, O mind of mine, that I measure the periods of time. Do not shout me down that it exists [objectively]; do not overwhelm yourself with the turbulent flood of your impressions. In you, as I have said, I measure the periods of time. I measure as time present the impression that things make on you as they pass by and what remains after they have passed by—I do not measure the things themselves which have passed by and left their impression on you. This is what I measure when I measure periods of time. Either, then, these are the periods of time or else I do not measure time at all.

What are we doing when we measure silence, and say that this silence has lasted as long as that voice lasts? Do we not project our thought to the measure of a sound, as if it were then sounding, so that we can say something concerning the intervals of silence in a given span of time? For, even when both the voice and the tongue are still, we review—in thought—poems and verses, and discourse of various kinds or various measures of motions, and we specify their time spans—how long this is in relation to that—just as if we were speaking them aloud. If anyone wishes to utter a prolonged sound, and if, in forethought, he has decided how long it should be, that man has already in silence gone through a span of time, and committed his sound to memory. Thus he begins to speak and his voice sounds until it reaches the predetermined end. It has truly sounded and will go on sounding. But what is already finished has already sounded and what remains will still sound. Thus it passes on, until the present intention carries the future over into the past. The past increases by the diminution of the future until by the consumption of all the future all is past.⁴⁴⁹

Chapter XXVIII

37. But how is the future diminished or consumed when it does not yet exist? Or how does the past, which exists no longer, increase, unless it is that in the mind in which all this happens there are three functions? For the mind expects, it attends, and it remembers; so that what it expects passes into what it remembers by way of what it attends to. Who denies that future things do not exist as yet? But still there is already in the mind the expectation of things still future. And who denies that past things now exist no longer? Still there is in the mind the memory of things past. Who denies that time present has no length, since it passes away in a moment? Yet, our attention has a continuity and it is through this that what is present may proceed to become absent. Therefore, future time, which is nonexistent, is not long; but “a long future” is “a long expectation of the future.” Nor is time past, which is now no longer, long; a “long past” is “a long memory of the past.”

38. I am about to repeat a psalm that I know. Before I begin, my attention encompasses the whole, but once I have begun, as much of it as becomes past while I speak is still stretched out in my memory. The span of my action is divided between my memory, which contains what I have repeated, and my expectation, which contains what I am about to repeat. Yet my attention is continually present with me, and through it what was future is carried over so that it becomes past. The more this is done and repeated, the more the memory is enlarged—and expectation is shortened—until the whole expectation is exhausted. Then the whole action is ended and passed into memory. And what takes place in the entire psalm takes place also in each individual part of it and in each individual syllable. This also holds in the even longer action of which that psalm is only a portion. The same holds in the whole life of man, of which all the actions of men are parts. The same holds in the whole age of the sons of men, of which all the lives of men are parts.

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Chapter XXIX

39. But “since thy loving-kindness is better than life itself,”⁴⁵⁰ observe how my life is but a stretching out, and how thy right hand has upheld me in my Lord, the Son of Man, the Mediator between thee, the One, and us, the many—in so many ways and by so many means. Thus through him I may lay hold upon him in whom I am also laid hold upon; and I may be gathered up from my old way of life to follow that One and to forget that which is behind, no longer stretched out but now pulled together again—stretching forth not to what shall be and shall pass away but to those things that *are* before me. Not distractedly now, but intently, I follow on for the prize of my heavenly calling,⁴⁵¹ where I may hear the sound of thy praise and contemplate thy delights, which neither come to be nor pass away.

But now my years are spent in mourning.⁴⁵² And thou, O Lord, art my comfort, my eternal Father. But I have been torn between the times, the order of which I do not know, and my thoughts, even the inmost and deepest places of my soul, are mangled by various commotions until I shall flow together into thee, purged and molten in the fire of thy love.

Chapter XXX

40. And I will be immovable and fixed in thee, and thy truth will be my mold. And I shall not have to endure the questions of those men who, as if in a morbid disease, thirst for more than they can hold and say, “What did God make before he made heaven and earth?” or, “How did it come into his mind to make something when he had never before made anything?” Grant them, O Lord, to consider well what they are saying; and grant them to see that where there is no time they cannot say “never.” When, therefore, he is said “never to have made” something—what is this but to say that it was made in no time at all? Let them therefore see that there could be no time without a created world, and let them cease to speak vanity of this kind. Let them also be stretched out to those things which are before them, and understand that thou,

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the eternal Creator of all times, art before all times and that no times are coeternal with thee; nor is any creature, even if there is a creature “above time.”

Chapter XXXI

41. O Lord my God, what a chasm there is in thy deep secret! How far short of it have the consequences of my sins cast me? Heal my eyes, that I may enjoy thy light. Surely, if there is a mind that so greatly abounds in knowledge and foreknowledge, to which all things past and future are as well known as one psalm is well known to me, that mind would be an exceeding marvel and altogether astonishing. For whatever is past and whatever is yet to come would be no more concealed from him than the past and future of that psalm were hidden from me when I was chanting it: how much of it had been sung from the beginning and what and how much still remained till the end. But far be it from thee, O Creator of the universe, and Creator of our souls and bodies—far be it from thee that thou shouldst merely know all things past and future. Far, far more wonderfully, and far more mysteriously thou knowest them. For it is not as the feelings of one singing familiar songs, or hearing a familiar song in which, because of his expectation of words still to come and his remembrance of those that are past, his feelings are varied and his senses are divided. This is not the way that anything happens to thee, who art unchangeably eternal, that is, the truly eternal Creator of minds. As in the beginning thou knewest both the heaven and the earth without any change in thy knowledge, so thou didst make heaven and earth in their beginnings without any division in thy action.⁴³³ Let him who understands this confess to thee; and let him who does not understand also confess to thee! Oh, exalted as thou art, still the humble in heart are thy dwelling place! For thou liftest them who are cast down and they fall not for whom thou art the Most High.⁴³⁴

Notes

⁴³⁴ *Spatium*, which means extension either in space or time.

⁴³⁵ The breaking light and the image of the rising sun.

⁴³⁶ Cf. Ps. 139:6.

⁴³⁷ *Memoria*, *contuitus*, and *expectatio*: a pattern that corresponds vaguely to the *movement* of Augustine’s thought in the *Confessions*: from direct experience back to the supporting memories and forward to the outreach of hope and confidence in God’s provident grace.

⁴³⁸ Cf. Ps. 116:10.

⁴³⁹ Cf. Matt. 25:21, 23.

⁴⁴⁰ *Communes notitias*, the universal principles of “common sense.” This idea became a basic category in scholastic epistemology.

⁴⁴¹ Gen. 1:14.

⁴⁴² Cf. Josh. 10:12-14.

⁴⁴³ Cf. Ps. 18:28.

⁴⁴⁴ *Cubitum*, literally the distance between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger; in the imperial system of weights and measures it was 17.5 inches.

⁴⁴⁵ *Distentionem*, “spread-out-ness”; cf. Descartes’ notion of *res extensae* [‘extended things’], and its relation to time.

⁴⁴⁶ Ps. 100:3.

⁴⁴⁷ Here Augustine begins to summarize his own answers to the questions he has raised in his analysis of time.

⁴⁴⁸ The same hymn of Ambrose quoted above, Bk. IX, Ch. XII, 39, and analyzed again in *De musica*, VI, 2:2.

⁴⁴⁹ This theory of time is worth comparing with its most notable restatement in modern poetry, in T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* and especially “Burnt Norton.”

⁴⁵⁰ Ps. 63:3.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. Phil. 3:12-14.

⁴⁵² Cf. Ps. 31:10.

⁴⁵³ Note here the preparation for the transition from this analysis of time in Bk. XI to the exploration of the mystery of creation in Bks. XII and XIII.

⁴⁵⁴ *Celsitudo*, an honorific title, somewhat like “Your Highness.”