

## Augustine, *Confessions*

Based on the E. B. Pusey translation [Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1838]

### BOOK 11: In the beginning, God created (Genesis, 1:1)

#### 11.1.1

Lord, since eternity is yours, are You ignorant of what I say to you? or do you see in time, what passes in time? Why then do I lay in order before you so many relations? Not, of a truth, that You might learn them through me, but to stir up my own and my readers' devotions towards you, that we may all say, Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. I have said already; and again will say, for love of your love do I this. For we pray also, and yet Truth has said, Your Father knows what you have need of, before you ask. It is then our affections which we lay open to you, confessing our own miseries, and your mercies upon us, that You may free us wholly, since you have begun, that we may cease to be wretched in ourselves, and be blessed in you; seeing you has called us to become poor in spirit, and meek, and mourners, and hungering and athirst after righteousness, and merciful, and pure in heart, and peace-makers. See, I have told you many things, as I could and as I would, because You first would that I should confess to you, my Lord God. For You are good, for your mercy endures for ever.

#### 11.2.2

But how shall I suffice with the tongue of my pen to utter all your exhortations, and all your terrors, and comforts, and guidances, whereby You brought me to preach your Word, and dispense your Sacrament to your people? And if I suffice to utter them in order, the drops of time are precious with me; and long have I burned to meditate in your law, and therein to confess to Thee my skill and unskilfulness, the daybreak of your enlightening, and the remnants of my darkness, until infirmity be swallowed up by strength. And I would not have aught besides steal away those hours which I find free from the necessities of refreshing my body and the powers of my mind, and of the service which we owe to men, or which though we owe not, yet we pay.

#### 11.2.3

O Lord my God, listen to my prayer, and let your mercy hearken to my desire: because it is anxious not for myself alone, but would serve brotherly charity; and You see my heart, that so it is. I would sacrifice to you the service of my thought and tongue; do You give me, what I may offer you. For I am poor and needy, You rich to all that call upon you; Who, inaccessible to care, care for us. Circumcise from all rashness and all lying both my inward and outward lips: let your Scriptures be my pure delights: let me not be deceived in them, nor deceive out of them.

Lord, hearken and pity, O Lord my God, Light of the blind, and Strength of the weak; yea also Light of those that see, and Strength of the strong; hearken to my soul, and hear it crying out of the depths. For if Your ears be not with us in the depths also, whither shall we go? whither cry? The day is yours, and the night is yours; at your beck the moments flee by. Grant thereof a space for our meditations in the hidden things of your law, and close it not against us who knock. For not in vain would You have the darksome secrets of so many pages written; nor are those forests without their harts which retire therein and range and walk; feed, lie down, and ruminate. Perfect me, O Lord, and reveal them to me. Behold, your voice is my joy; your voice exceeds the abundance of pleasures. Give what I love: for I do love; and this you have given: forsake not your own gifts, nor despise your green herb that thirst. Let me confess to you whatsoever I shall find in your books, and hear the voice of praise, and drink in you, and meditate on the wonderful things out of your law; even from the beginning, wherein You made the heaven and the earth, to the everlasting reigning of your holy city with you.

#### 11.2.4

Lord, have mercy on me, and hear my desire. For it is not, I deem, of the earth, not of gold and silver, and precious stones, or gorgeous apparel, or honors and offices, or the pleasures of the flesh, or necessaries for the body and for this life of our pilgrimage: all which shall be added to those that seek your kingdom and your righteousness. Behold, O Lord my God, wherein is my desire. The wicked have told me of delights, but not such as your law, O Lord. Behold, wherein is my desire. Behold, Father, behold, and see and approve; and be it pleasing in the sight of your mercy, that I may find grace before you, that the inward parts of your words be opened to me knocking. I beseech by our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, the Man of your right hand, the Son of man, whom you have established for yourself, as your Mediator and ours, through Whom You sought us, not seeking you, but sought us, that we might seek you, — your Word, through Whom You made all things, and among them, me also; — your Only-Begotten, through Whom You called to adoption the believing people, and therein me also; — I beseech you by Him, who sits at your right hand, and interceded with you for us, in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These do I seek in your books. Of Him did Moses write; this says Himself; this says the Truth.

#### 11.3.5

I would hear and understand, how “In the Beginning You made the heaven and earth.” Moses wrote this, wrote and departed, passed hence from you to you; nor is he now before me. For if he were, I would hold him and ask him, and beseech him by you to open these things to me, and would lay the ears of my body to the sounds bursting out of his mouth. And should he speak Hebrew, in vain will it strike on my

senses, nor would aught of it touch my mind; but if Latin, I should know what he said. But whence should I know, whether he spoke truth? Yea, and if I knew this also, should I know it from him? Truly within me, within, in the chamber of my thoughts, Truth, neither Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Latin, nor barbarian, without organs of voice or tongue, or sound of syllables, would say, "It is truth," and I forthwith should say confidently to that man of Yours, "you say truly." Whereas then I cannot enquire of him, you, you I beseech, O Truth, full of Whom he spoke truth, you, my God, I beseech, forgive my sins; and Thou, who gave him your servant to speak these things, give to me also to understand them.

#### 11.4.6

Behold, the heavens and the earth are; they proclaim that they were created; for they change and vary. Whereas whatsoever has not been made, and yet is, has nothing in it, which before it had not; and this it is, to change and vary. They proclaim also, that they made not themselves; "therefore we are, because we have been made; we were not therefore, before we were, so as to make ourselves." Now the evidence of the thing, is the voice of the speakers. You therefore, Lord, made them; who are beautiful, for they are beautiful; who are good, for they are good; who art, for they are; yet are they not beautiful nor good, nor are they, as You their Creator art; compared with Whom, they are neither beautiful, nor good, nor are. This we know, thanks be to you. And our knowledge, compared with your knowledge, is ignorance.

#### 11.5.7

But how did You make the heaven and the earth? and what the engine of your so mighty fabric? For it was not as a human artificer, forming one body from another, according to the discretion of his mind, which can in some way invest with such a form, as it sees in itself by its inward eye. And whence should he be able to do this, unless You had made that mind? and he invests with a form what already exists, and has a being, as clay, or stone, or wood, or gold, or the like. And whence should they be, had not You appointed them? You made the artificer his body, You the mind commanding the limbs, You the matter whereof he makes any thing; You the apprehension whereby to take in his art, and see within what he does without; You the sense of his body, whereby, as by an interpreter, he may from mind to matter, convey that which he does, and report to his mind what is done; that it within may consult the truth, which presides over itself, whether it be well done or no. All these praise you, the Creator of all. But how do You make them? how, O God, did you make heaven and earth? Verily, neither in the heaven, nor in the earth, did You make heaven and earth; nor in the air, or waters, seeing these also belong to the heaven and the earth; nor in the whole world did You make the whole world; because there was no place where to make it, before it was made, that it might be. Nor did You hold any thing in your hand, whereof to make heaven and earth. For whence should You have this, which You had not made, thereof to make any thing? For what is, but

because You art? Therefore You spoke, and they were made, and in your Word You made them.

#### 11.6.8

But how did You speak? In the way that the voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son? For that voice passed by and passed away, began and ended; the syllables sounded and passed away, the second after the first, the third after the second, and so forth in order, until the last after the rest, and silence after the last. Whence it is abundantly clear and plain that the motion of a creature expressed it, itself temporal, serving your eternal will. And these your words, created for a time, the outward ear reported to the intelligent soul, whose inward ear lay listening to your Eternal Word. But she compared these words sounding in time, with that your Eternal Word in silence, and said "It is different, far different. These words are far beneath me, nor are they, because they flee and pass away; but the Word of my Lord abides above me for ever." If then in sounding and passing words You said that heaven and earth should be made, and so made heaven and earth, there was a corporeal creature before heaven and earth, by whose motions in time that voice might take his course in time. But there was nought corporeal before heaven and earth; or if there were, surely you had, without such a passing voice, created that, whereof to make this passing voice, by which to say, Let the heaven and the earth be made. For whatsoever that were, whereof such a voice were made, unless by you it were made, it could not be at all. By what Word then did you speak, that a body might be made, whereby these words again might be made?

#### 11.7.9

You call us then to understand the Word, God, with you God, Which is spoken eternally, and by It are all things spoken eternally. For what was spoken was not spoken successively, one thing concluded that the next might be spoken, but all things together and eternally. Else have we time and change; and not a true eternity nor true immortality. This I know, O my God, and give thanks. I know, I confess to you, O Lord, and with me there knows and blesses you, whoso is not unthankful to assure Truth. We know, Lord, we know; since inasmuch as anything is not which was, and is, which was not, so far forth it dies and arises. Nothing then of your Word does give place or replace, because It is truly immortal and eternal. And therefore to the Word coeternal with you, You do at once and eternally say all that You do say; and whatever You say shall be made is made; nor do You make, otherwise than by saying; and yet are not all things made together, or everlasting, which You make by saying.

#### 11.8.10

Why, I beseech you, O Lord my God? I see it in a way; but how to express it, I know not, unless it be, that whatsoever begins to be, and leaves off to be, begins then, and leaves off then, when in your eternal Reason it is known, that it ought to begin or leave off; in which Reason nothing begins or leaves off. This is your Word, which is also "the Beginning, because also It speaks to us." Thus in the Gospel He speaks through the flesh; and this sounded outwardly in the ears of men; that it might be believed and sought inwardly, and found in the

eternal Verity; where the good and only Master teaches all His disciples. There, Lord, hear I your voice speaking to me; because He speaks us, who teaches us; but He that teaches us not, though He speaks, to us He speaks not. Who now teaches us, but the unchangeable Truth? for even when we are admonished through a changeable creature; we are but led to the unchangeable Truth; where we learn truly, while we stand and hear Him, and rejoice greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice, restoring us to Him, from Whom we are. And therefore the Beginning, because unless It abided, there should not, when we went astray, be whither to return. But when we return from error, it is through knowing; and that we may know, He teaches us, because He is the Beginning, and speaking to us.

### 11.9.11

In this Beginning, O God, hast You made heaven and earth, in your Word, in your Son, in your Power, in your Wisdom, in your Truth; wondrously speaking, and wondrously making. Who shall comprehend? Who declare it? What is that which gleams through me, and strikes my heart without hurting it; and I shudder and kindle? I shudder, inasmuch as I am unlike it; I kindle, inasmuch as I am like it. It is Wisdom, Wisdom's self which gleams through me; severing my cloudiness which yet again mantles over me, fainting from it, through the darkness which for my punishment gathers upon me. For my strength is brought down in need, so that I cannot support my blessings, till Thou, Lord, Who hast been gracious to all my iniquities, shall heal all my infirmities. For You shall also redeem my life from corruption, and crown me with loving kindness and tender mercies, and shall satisfy my desire with good things, because my youth shall be renewed like an eagle's. For in hope we are saved, wherefore we through patience wait for your promises. Let him that is able, hear you inwardly discoursing out of your oracle: I will boldly cry out, How wonderful are your works, O Lord, in Wisdom hast You made them all; and this Wisdom is the Beginning, and in that Beginning did You make heaven and earth.

### 11.10.12

Lo, are they not full of their old leaven, who say to us, "What was God doing before He made heaven and earth? For if (say they) He were unemployed and wrought not, why does He not also henceforth, and for ever, as He did heretofore? For did any new motion arise in God, and a new will to make a creature, which He had never before made, how then would that be a true eternity, where there arises a will, which was not? For the will of God is not a creature, but before the creature; seeing nothing could be created, unless the will of the Creator had preceded. The will of God then belongs to His very Substance. And if aught have arisen in God's Substance, which before was not, that Substance cannot be truly called eternal. But if the will of God has been from eternity that the creature should be, why was not the creature also from eternity?"

### 11.11.13

Who speak thus, do not yet understand you, O Wisdom of God, Light of souls, understand not yet how the things be made, which by you, and in you are made: yet they strive to comprehend things eternal, whilst their heart flutters between the motions of things past and to come, and is still unstable. Who shall hold it, and fix it, that it be settled awhile, and awhile catch the glory of that everfixed Eternity, and compare it with the times which are never fixed, and see that it cannot be compared; and that a long time cannot become long, but out of many motions passing by, which cannot be prolonged altogether; but that in the Eternal nothing passes, but the whole is present; whereas no time is all at once present: and that all time past, is driven on by time to come, and all to come follows upon the past; and all past and to come, is created, and flows out of that which is ever present? Who shall hold the heart of man, that it may stand still, and see how eternity ever still-standing, neither past nor to come, utters the times past and to come? Can my hand do this, or the hand of my mouth by speech bring about a thing so great?

### 11.12.14

See, I answer him that asks, "What did God before He made heaven and earth?" I answer not as one is said to have done merrily (eluding the pressure of the question), "He was preparing hell (saith he) for pryers into mysteries." It is one thing to answer enquiries, another to make sport of enquirers. So I answer not; for rather had I answer, "I know not," what I know not, than so as to raise a laugh at him who asks deep things and gain praise for one who answers false things. But I say that Thou, our God, are the Creator of every creature: and if by the name "heaven and earth," every creature be understood; I boldly say, "that before God made heaven and earth, He did not make any thing." For if He made, what did He make but a creature? And would I knew whatsoever I desire to know to my profit, as I know, that no creature was made, before there was made any creature.

### 11.13.15

But if any excursive brain rove over the images of forepassed times, and wonder that You the God Almighty and All-creating and All-supporting, Maker of heaven and earth, did for innumerable ages forbear from so great a work, before You would make it; let him awake and consider, that he wonders at false conceits. For whence could innumerable ages pass by, which you made not, You the Author and Creator of all ages? or what times should there be, which were not made by you? or how should they pass by, if they never were? Seeing then you are the Creator of all times, if any time was before You made heaven and earth, why say they that you did forego working? For that very time did you make, nor could times pass by, before you made those times. But if before heaven and earth there was no time, why is it demanded, what you then did? For there was no "then," when there was no time.

### 11.13.16

Nor do You by time, precede time: else should You not precede all times. But You precede all things past, by the sublimity of an ever-present eternity; and surpasses all future because

they are future, and when they come, they shall be past; but You are the Same, and your years fail not. Your years neither come nor go; whereas ours both come and go, that they all may come. Your years stand together, because they do stand; nor are departing thrust out by coming years, for they pass not away; but ours shall all be, when they shall no more be. Your years are one day; and your day is not daily, but today, seeing your today gives not place to tomorrow, for neither does it replace yesterday. Your today, is Eternity; therefore did You beget The Co-eternal, to whom You said, This day have I begotten you. You hast made all things; and before all times You art: neither in any time was time not.

### 11.14.17

At no time then had you not made any thing, because time itself You made. And no times are coeternal with you, because You abide; but if they abode, they should not be times. For what is time? Who can readily and briefly explain this? Who can even in thought comprehend it, so as to utter a word about it? But what in discourse do we mention more familiarly and knowingly, than time? And, we understand, when we speak of it; we understand also, when we hear it spoken of by another. What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that ask, I know not: yet I say boldly that I know, that if nothing passed away, time past were not; and if nothing were coming, a time to come were not; and if nothing were, time present were not. Those two times then, past and to come, how are they, seeing the past now is not, and that to come is not yet? But the present, should it always be present, and never pass into time past, verily it should not be time, but eternity. If time present (if it is to be time) only come into existence, because it pass into time past, how can we say that either this is, whose cause of being is, that it shall not be; so, namely, that we cannot truly say that time is, but because it is tending not to be?

### 11.15.18

And yet we say, “a long time” and “a short time”; and yet only of time past or to come. A long time past (for example) we call an hundred years since; and a long time to come, an hundred years hence. But a short time past, we call (suppose) often days since; and a short time to come, often days hence. But in what sense is that long or short, which is not? For the past, is not now; and the future, is not yet. Let us not then say, “it is long”; but of the past, “it has been long”; and of the future, “it will be long.” O my Lord, my Light, shall not here also your Truth mock at man? For that past time which was long, was it long when it was now past, or when it was yet present? For then might it be long, when there was, what could be long; but when past, it was no longer; wherefore neither could that be long, which was not at all. Let us not then say, “time past has been long”: for we shall not find, what has been long, seeing that since it was past, it is no more, but let us say, “that present time was long”; because, when it was present, it was long. For it had not yet passed away, so as not to be; and therefore there was, what could

be long; but after it was past, that ceased also to be long, which ceased to be.

### 11.15.19

Let us see then, you soul of man, whether present time can be long: for to you it is given to feel and to measure length of time. What wilt you answer me? Are an hundred years, when present, a long time? See first, whether an hundred years can be present. For if the first of these years be now current, it is present, but the other ninety and nine are to come, and therefore are not yet, but if the second year be current, one is now past, another present, the rest to come. And so if we assume any middle year of this hundred to be present, all before it, are past; all after it, to come; wherefore an hundred years cannot be present. But see at least whether that one which is now current, itself is present; for if the current month be its first, the rest are to come; if the second, the first is already past, and the rest are not yet. Therefore, neither is the year now current present; and if not present as a whole, then is not the year present. For twelve months are a year; of which whatever by the current month is present; the rest past, or to come. Although neither is that current month present; but one day only; the rest being to come, if it be the first; past, if the last; if any of the middle, then amid past and to come.

### 11.15.20

See how the present time, which alone we found could be called long, is abridged to the length scarce of one day. But let us examine that also; because neither is one day present as a whole. For it is made up of four and twenty hours of night and day: of which, the first has the rest to come; the last has them past; and any of the middle has those before it past, those behind it to come. Yea, that one hour pass away in flying particles. Whatsoever of it has flown away, is past; whatsoever remain, is to come. If an instant of time be conceived, which cannot be divided into the smallest particles of moments, that alone is it, which may be called present. Which yet flies with such speed from future to past, as not to be lengthened out with the least stay. For if it be, it is divided into past and future. The present has no space. Where then is the time, which we may call long? Is it to come? Of it we do not say, “it is long”; because it is not yet, so as to be long; but we say, “it will be long.” When therefore will it be? For if even then, when it is yet to come, it shall not be long (because what can be long, as yet is not), and so it shall then be long, when from future which as yet is not, it shall begin now to be, and have become present, that so there should exist what may be long; then does time present cry out in the words above, that it cannot be long.

### 11.16.21

And yet, Lord, we perceive intervals of times, and compare them, and say, some are shorter, and others longer. We measure also, how much longer or shorter this time is than that; and we answer, “This is double, or treble; and that, but once, or only just so much as that.” But we measure times as they are passing, by perceiving them; but past, which now are not, or the future, which are not yet, who can measure? unless a man shall presume to say, that can be measured, which is not.

When then time is passing, it may be perceived and measured; but when it is past, it cannot, because it is not.

### 11.17.22

I ask, Father, I affirm not: O my God, rule and guide me. “Who will tell me that there are not three times (as we learned when boys, and taught boys), past, present, and future; but present only, because those two are not? Or are they also; and when from future it become present, does it come out of some secret place; and so, when retiring, from present it become past? For where did they, who foretold things to come, see them, if as yet they be not? For that which is not, cannot be seen. And they who relate things past, could not relate them, if in mind they did not discern them, and if they were not, they could no way be discerned. Things then past and to come, are.”

### 11.18.23

Permit me, Lord, to seek further. O my hope, let not my purpose be confounded. For if times past and to come be, I would know where they be. Which yet if I cannot, yet I know, wherever they be, they are not there as future, or past, but present. For if there also they be future, they are not yet there; if there also they be past, they are no longer there. Wheresoever then is whatsoever is, it is only as present. Although when past facts are related, there are drawn out of the memory, not the things themselves which are past, but words which, conceived by the images of the things, they, in passing, have through the senses left as traces in the mind. Thus my childhood, which now is not, is in time past, which now is not: but now when I recall its image, and tell of it, I behold it in the present, because it is still in my memory. Whether there be a like cause of foretelling things to come also; that of things which as yet are not, the images may be perceived before, already existing, I confess, O my God, I know not. This indeed I know, that we generally think before on our future actions, and that that forethinking is present, but the action whereof we forethink is not yet, because it is to come. Which, when we have set upon, and have begun to do what we were forethinking, then shall that action be; because then it is no longer future, but present.

### 11.18.24

Which way soever then this secret foreperceiving of things to come be; that only can be seen, which is. But what now is, is not future, but present. When then things to come are said to be seen, it is not themselves which as yet are not (that is, which are to be), but their causes perchance or signs are seen, which already are. Therefore they are not future but present to those who now see that, from which the future, being foreconceived in the mind, is foretold. Which foreconceptions again now are; and those who foretell those things, do behold the conceptions present before them. Let now the numerous variety of things furnish me some example. I behold the day-break, I foreshow, that the sun, is about to rise. What I behold, is present; what I foresignify, to come; not the sun, which already is; but the sun-rising, which is not yet. And yet did I not in my mind imagine the sun-rising itself (as now

while I speak of it), I could not foretell it. But neither is that day-break which I discern in the sky, the sun-rising, although it goes before it; nor that imagination of my mind; which two are seen now present, that the other which is to be may be foretold. Future things then are not yet: and if they be not yet, they are not: and if they are not, they cannot be seen; yet foretold they may be from things present, which are already, and are seen.

### 11.19.25

You then, Ruler of your creation, by what way do you teach souls things to come? For you did teach your Prophets. By what way do you, to whom nothing is to come, teach things to come; or rather of the future, do teach things present? For, what is not, neither can it be taught. Too far is this way of my ken: it is too mighty for me, I cannot attain to it; but from you I can, when You shall vouchsafe it, O sweet light of my hidden eyes.

### 11.20.26

What now is clear and plain is, that neither things to come nor past are. Nor is it properly said, “there be three times, past, present, and to come”: yet perchance it might be properly said, “there be three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future.” For these three do exist in some sort, in the soul, but elsewhere do I not see them; present of things past, memory; present of things present, sight; present of things future, expectation. If thus we be permitted to speak, I see three times, and I confess there are three. Let it be said too, “there be three times, past, present, and to come”: in our incorrect way. See, I object not, nor gainsay, nor find fault, if what is so said be but understood, that neither what is to be, now is, nor what is past. For but few things are there, which we speak properly, most things improperly; still the things intended are understood.

### 11.21.27

I said then even now, we measure times as they pass, in order to be able to say, this time is twice so much as that one; or, this is just so much as that; and so of any other parts of time, which be measurable. Wherefore, as I said, we measure times as they pass. And if any should ask me, “How know thou?” I might answer, “I know, that we do measure, nor can we measure things that are not; and things past and to come, are not.” But time present how do we measure, seeing it has no space? It is measured while passing, but when it shall have passed, it is not measured; for there will be nothing to be measured. But whence, by what way, and whither passes it while it is a measuring? whence, but from the future? Which way, but through the present? whither, but into the past? From that therefore, which is not yet, through that, which has no space, into that, which now is not. Yet what do we measure, if not time in some space? For we do not say, single, and double, and triple, and equal, or any other like way that we speak of time, except of spaces of times. In what space then do we measure time passing? In the future, whence it pass through? But what is not yet, we measure not. Or in the present, by which it passes? but no space, we do not measure: or in the

past, to which it passes? But neither do we measure that, which now is not.

### 11.22.28

My soul is on fire to know this most intricate enigma. Shut it not up, O Lord my God, good Father; through Christ I beseech you, do not shut up these usual, yet hidden things, from my desire, that it be hindered from piercing into them; but let them dawn through your enlightening mercy, O Lord. Whom shall I enquire of concerning these things? and to whom shall I more fruitfully confess my ignorance, than to you, to Whom these my studies, so vehemently kindled toward your Scriptures, are not troublesome? Give what I love; for I do love, and this has You given me. Give, Father, Who truly know to give good gifts to your children. Give, because I have taken upon me to know, and trouble is before me until You open it. By Christ I beseech you, in His Name, Holy of holies, let no man disturb me. For I believed, and therefore do I speak. This is my hope, for this do I live, that I may contemplate the delights of the Lord. Behold, You have made my days old, and they pass away, and how, I know not. And we talk of one time, and another time, this period of time and that, "How much time is it since he said this"; "how much time since he did this"; and "how much time since I saw that"; and "this syllable has double time to that single short syllable." These words we speak, and these we hear, and are understood, and understand. Most manifest and ordinary they are, and the self-same things again are but too deeply hidden, and the discovery of them were new.

### 11.23.29

I heard once from a learned man, that the motions of the sun, moon, and stars, constituted time, and I assented not. For why should not the motions of all bodies rather be times? Or, if the lights of heaven should cease, and a potter's wheel run round, should there be no time by which we might measure those whirlings, and say, that either it moved with equal pauses, or if it turned sometimes slower, otherwhiles quicker, that some rounds were longer, other shorter? Or, while we were saying this, should we not also be speaking in time? Or, should there in our words be some syllables short, others long, but because those sounded in a shorter time, these in a longer? God, grant to men to see in a small thing notices common to things great and small. The stars and lights of heaven, are also for signs, and for seasons, and for years, and for days; they are; yet neither should I say, that the going round of that wooden wheel was a day, nor yet he, that it was therefore no time.

### 11.23.30

I desire to know the essence and nature of time, by which we measure the motions of bodies, and say (for example) this motion is twice as long as that. For I ask, Seeing "day" denotes not the stay only of the sun upon the earth (according to which day is one thing, night another); but also its whole circuit from east to east again; according to which we say, "there passed so many days," the night

being included when we say, "so many days," and the nights not reckoned apart; — seeing then a day is completed by the motion of the sun and by his circuit from east to east again, I ask, does the motion alone make the day, or the stay in which that motion is completed, or both? For if the first be the day; then should we have a day, although the sun should finish that course in so small a space of time, as one hour comes to. If the second, then should not that make a day, if between one sunrise and another there were but so short a stay, as one hour comes to; but the sun must go four and twenty times about, to complete one day. If both, then neither could that be called a day; if the sun should run his whole round in the space of one hour; nor that, if, while the sun stood still, so much time should overpass, as the sun usually makes his whole course in, from morning to morning. I will not therefore now ask, what that is which is called day; but, what time is, whereby we, measuring the circuit of the sun, should say that it was finished in half the time it was wont, if so be it was finished in so small a space as twelve hours; and comparing both times, should call this a single time, that a double time; even supposing the sun to run his round from east to east, sometimes in that single, sometimes in that double time. Let no man then tell me, that the motions of the heavenly bodies constitute times, because, when at the prayer of one, the sun had stood still, till he could achieve his victorious battle, the sun stood still, but time went on. For in its own allotted space of time was that battle waged and ended. I perceive time then to be a certain extension. But do I perceive it, or seem to perceive it? Thou, Light and Truth, wilt show me.

### 11.24.31

Do you bid me assent, if any define time to be "motion of a body?" You do not bid me. For that no body is moved, but in time, I hear; this you say; but that the motion of a body is time, I hear not; you say it not. For when a body is moved, I by time measure, how long it move, from the time it began to move until it left off? And if I did not see whence it began; and it continue to move so that I see not when it ends, I cannot measure, save perchance from the time I began, until I cease to see. And if I look long, I can only pronounce it to be a long time, but not how long; because when we say "how long," we do it by comparison; as, "this is as long as that," or "twice so long as that," or the like. But when we can mark the distances of the places, whence and whither go the body moved, or his parts, if it moved as in a lathe, then can we say precisely, in how much time the motion of that body or his part, from this place to that, was finished. Seeing therefore the motion of a body is one thing, that by which we measure how long it is, another; who sees not, which of the two is rather to be called time? For and if a body be sometimes moved, sometimes stands still, then we measure, not his motion only, but his standing still too by time; and we say, "it stood still, as much as it moved"; or "it stood still twice or thrice so long as it moved"; or any other space which our measuring has either ascertained, or guessed; more or less, as we use to say. Time then is not the motion of a body.

### 11.25.32

And I confess to you, O Lord, that I yet know not what time is, and again I confess to you, O Lord, that I know that I speak

this in time, and that having long spoken of time, that very “long” is not long, but by the pause of time. How then know I this, seeing I know not what time is? or is it perchance that I know not how to express what I know? Woe is me, that I do not even know, what I know not. Behold, O my God, before you I lie not; but as I speak, so is my heart. You shall light my candle; Thou, O Lord my God, wilt enlighten my darkness.

### 11.26.33

Does not my soul most truly confess to you, that I do measure times? Do I then measure, O my God, and know not what I measure? I measure the motion of a body in time; and the time itself do I not measure? Or could I indeed measure the motion of a body how long it were, and in how long space it could come from this place to that, without measuring the time in which it is moved? This same time then, how do I measure? do we by a shorter time measure a longer, as by the space of a cubit, the space of a rood? for so indeed we seem by the space of a short syllable, to measure the space of a long syllable, and to say that this is double the other. Thus measure we the spaces of stanzas, by the spaces of the verses, and the spaces of the verses, by the spaces of the feet, and the spaces of the feet, by the spaces of the syllables, and the spaces of long, by the space of short syllables; not measuring by pages (for then we measure spaces, not times); but when we utter the words and they pass by, and we say “it is a long stanza, because composed of so many verses; long verses, because consisting of so many feet; long feet, because prolonged by so many syllables; a long syllable because double to a short one. But neither do we this way obtain any certain measure of time; because it may be, that a shorter verse, pronounced more fully, may take up more time than a longer, pronounced hurriedly. And so for a verse, a foot, a syllable. Whence it seemed to me, that time is nothing else than protraction; but of what, I know not; and I marvel, if it be not of the mind itself? For what, I beseech you, O my God, do I measure, when I say, either indefinitely “this is a longer time than that,” or definitely “this is double that”? That I measure time, I know; and yet I measure not time to come, for it is not yet; nor present, because it is not protracted by any space; nor past, because it now is not. What then do I measure? Times passing, not past? for so I said.

### 11.27.34

Courage, my mind, and press on mightily. God is our helper, He made us, and not we ourselves. Press on where truth begins to dawn. Suppose, now, the voice of a body begins to sound, and does sound, and sounds on, and list, it ceases; it is silence now, and that voice is past, and is no more a voice. Before it sounded, it was to come, and could not be measured, because as yet it was not, and now it cannot, because it is no longer. Then therefore while it sounded, it might; because there then was what might be measured. But yet even then it was not at a stay; for it was passing on, and passing away. Could it be measured the rather, for that? For while passing, it was being extended into some space of time, so that it might be measured,

since the present has no space. If therefore then it might, then, to, suppose another voice has begun to sound, and still sound in one continued tenor without any interruption; let us measure it while it sounds; seeing when it has left sounding, it will then be past, and nothing left to be measured; let us measure it verily, and tell how much it is. But it sounds still, nor can it be measured but from the instant it began in, to the end it left in. For the very space between is the thing we measure, namely, from some beginning to some end. Wherefore, a voice that is not yet ended, cannot be measured, so that it may be said how long, or short it is; nor can it be called equal to another, or double to a single, or the like. But when ended, it no longer is. How may it then be measured? And yet we measure times; but yet neither those which are not yet, nor those which no longer are, nor those which are not lengthened out by some pause, nor those which have no bounds. We measure neither times to come, nor past, nor present, nor passing; and yet we do measure times.

### 11.27.35

“*Deus Creator omnium*,” this verse of eight syllables alternates between short and long syllables. The four short then, the first, third, fifth, and seventh, are but single, in respect of the four long, the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth. Every one of these to every one of those, has a double time: I pronounce them, report on them, and find it so, as one’s plain sense perceives. By plain sense then, I measure a long syllable by a short, and I sensibly find it to have twice so much; but when one sounds after the other, if the former be short, the latter long, how shall I detain the short one, and how, measuring, shall I apply it to the long, that I may find this to have twice so much; seeing the long does not begin to sound, unless the short leaves sounding? And that very long one do I measure as present, seeing I measure it not till it be ended? Now his ending is his passing away. What then is it I measure? where is the short syllable by which I measure? where the long which I measure? Both have sounded, have flown, passed away, are no more; and yet I measure, and confidently answer (so far as is presumed on a practised sense) that as to space of time this syllable is but single, that double. And yet I could not do this, unless they were already past and ended. It is not then themselves, which now are not, that I measure, but something in my memory, which there remains fixed.

### 11.27.36

It is in you, my mind, that I measure times. Interrupt me not, that is, interrupt not thyself with the tumults of thy impressions. In you I measure times; the impression, which things as they pass by cause in you, remains even when they are gone; this it is which still present, I measure, not the things which pass by to make this impression. This I measure, when I measure times. Either then this is time, or I do not measure times. What when we measure silence, and say that this silence has held as long time as did that voice? do we not stretch out our thought to the measure of a voice, as if it sounded, that so we may be able to report of the intervals of silence in a given space of time? For though both voice and tongue be still, yet in thought we go over poems, and verses, and any other discourse, or dimensions of motions, and report as to the spaces of times, how much this is in respect of that, no other-

wise than if vocally we did pronounce them. If a man would utter a lengthened sound, and had settled in thought how long it should be, he has in silence already gone through a space of time, and committing it to memory, begins to utter that speech, which sounds on, until it be brought to the end proposed. Yea it has sounded, and will sound; for so much of it as is finished, has sounded already, and the rest will sound. And thus passes it on, until the present intent conveys over the future into the past; the past increasing by the diminution of the future, until by the consumption of the future, all is past.

### 11.28.37

But how is that future diminished or consumed, which as yet is not? or how that past increased, which is now no longer, save that in the mind which enact this, there be three things done? For it expects, it considers, it remembers; that so that which it expect, through that which it consider, pass into that which it remember. Who therefore deny that things to come are not as yet? and yet, there is in the mind an expectation of things to come. And who denies past things to be now no longer? and yet is there still in the mind a memory of things past. And who deny the present time has no space, because it pass away in a moment? and yet our consideration continue, through which that which shall be present proceed to become absent. It is not then future time, that is long, for as yet it is not: but a long future, is “a long expectation of the future,” nor is it time past, which now is not, that is long; but a long past, is “a long memory of the past.”

### 11.28.38

I am about to repeat a Psalm that I know. Before I begin, my expectation is extended over the whole; but when I have begun, how much soever of it I shall separate off into the past, is extended along my memory; thus the life of this action of mine is divided between my memory as to what I have repeated, and expectation as to what I am about to repeat; but “consideration” is present with me, that through it what was future, may be conveyed over, so as to become past. Which the more it is done again and again, so much the more the expectation being shortened, is the memory enlarged: till the whole expectation be at length exhausted, when that whole action being ended, shall have passed into memory. And this which takes place in the whole Psalm, the same takes place in each several portion of it, and each several syllable; the same holds in that longer action, whereof this Psalm may be part; the same holds in the whole life of man, whereof all the actions of man are parts; the same holds through the whole age of the sons of men, whereof all the lives of men are parts.

### 11.29.39

But because your loving-kindness is better than all lives, behold, my life is but a distraction, and your right hand upheld me, in my Lord the Son of man, the Mediator betwixt you, The One, and us many, many also through our manifold distractions amid many things, that by Him I may apprehend in Whom I have been apprehended, and

may be re-collected from my old conversation, to follow The One, forgetting what is behind, and not distended but extended, not to things which shall be and shall pass away, but to those things which are before, not distractedly but intently, I follow on for the prize of my heavenly calling, where I may hear the voice of your praise, and contemplate your delights, neither to come, nor to pass away. But now are my years spent in mourning. And Thou, O Lord, are my comfort, my Father everlasting, but I have been severed amid times, whose order I know not; and my thoughts, even the inmost bowels of my soul, are rent and mangled with tumultuous varieties, until I flow together into you, purified and molten by the fire of your love.

### 11.30.40

And now will I stand, and become firm in you, in my mould, your truth; nor will I endure the questions of men, who by a penal disease thirst for more than they can contain, and say, “what did God before He made heaven and earth?” Or, “How came it into His mind to make any thing, having never before made any thing?” Give them, O Lord, well to bethink themselves what they say, and to find, that “never” cannot be predicated, when “time” is not. This then that He is said “never to have made”; what else is it to say, that “he did not do it at any time.” Let them see therefore, that time cannot be without created being, and cease to speak that vanity. May they also be extended towards those things which are before; and understand you before all times, the eternal Creator of all times, and that no times be coeternal with you, nor any creature, even if there be any creature before all times.

### 11.31.41

O Lord my God, what a depth is that recess of your mysteries, and how far from it have the consequences of my transgressions cast me! Heal my eyes, that I may share the joy of your light. Certainly, if there be mind gifted with such vast knowledge and foreknowledge, as to know all things past and to come, as I know one well-known Psalm, truly that mind is passing wonderful, and fearfully amazing; in that nothing past, nothing to come in after-ages, is any more hidden from him, than when I sung that Psalm, was hidden from me what, and how much of it had passed away from the beginning, what, and how much there remained to the end. But far be it that You the Creator of the Universe, the Creator of souls and bodies, far be it, that You should in such wise know all things past and to come. Far, far more wonderfully, and far more mysteriously, do you know them. For not, as the feelings of one who sing what he know, or hear some well-known song, are through expectation of the words to come, and the remembering of those that are past, varied, and his senses divided, — not so does any thing happen to you, unchangeably eternal, that is, the eternal Creator of minds. Like then as you in the Beginning knew the heaven and the earth, without any variety of your knowledge, so made You in the Beginning heaven and earth, without any distraction of your action. Whoever understands, let him confess to you; whoever does not understand, let him confess to you. Oh how high you are, and yet the humble in heart are your dwelling-place; for you raise up those that are bowed down, and they fall not, whose elevation You are.