

AUGUSTINE

On the Trinity
Books 8–15

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 **CAMBRIDGE**
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207 Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2002

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Ehrhardt 11/13 pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 79231 2 hardback
ISBN 0 521 79665 2 paperback

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Book 8

Outline

1. In the Divine Trinity, paradoxically, three persons are not greater than one. (1.1)
 2. All bodily analogies to the relationships among the persons of the Trinity mislead. (2.3)
 3. There would be no changeable goods, unless there were an unchangeable good. (3.4–5)
 4. To think of a bodily thing our mind must represent to itself something with bodily features. (4.6–7)
 5. We can represent the Virgin Mary and the Apostle Paul to our mind through a bodily image. (5.7–8)
 6. We know what a mind is because we have one. (6.9)
 7. We know there are other minds by analogical reasoning. (6.9)
 8. We can know what a *just* mind or soul is through knowledge of the form of justice. (6.9)
 9. We love God and our neighbors from the same love. (7.10–10.14)
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Preface

In this Trinity, as we have said elsewhere, those names, which are predicated relatively, the one of the other, are properly spoken of¹ as belonging to each person in particular, as Father and Son, and the Gift of both, the Holy Spirit; for the Father is not the Trinity, nor the Son the Trinity, nor

¹ Augustine here draws on his distinction between substantial predication and relative predication, which is introduced in Book 5 and discussed briefly in the Introduction above.

the Gift the Trinity. But when they are spoken of singly with respect to themselves, then they are not spoken of as three in the plural number but as one, the Trinity itself. Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; the Father is good, the Son is good, the Holy Spirit is good; and the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent; but yet there are not three gods, nor three goods, nor three omnipotents, but one God, one good, and one omnipotent, the Trinity itself. And the same applies to everything else that may be said of them, not in relation of one to the other, but individually in respect to themselves.

These things are said essentially,² for in them to be is the same as to be great, to be good, to be wise, and whatever else is predicated of each person therein with respect to themselves or of the Trinity itself.³ And, therefore, they are called three persons or three substances, not that any diversity of essence is to be understood, but so that we may be able to answer by some one word when anyone asks three what or what three things. So great is the equality in this Trinity, that not only is the Father not greater than the Son in that which pertains to the divinity, but neither are the Father and the Son anything greater than the Holy Spirit, nor is each person singly, whichever of the three it may be, anything less than the Trinity itself.

These are the things that we have affirmed; and the more often we repeat and discuss them, then, of course, the more familiar the knowledge of them will become to us; but at the same time we also have to set some limit to our treatise. And we must supplicate God with the most devout piety, that He may open our understanding and take away the spirit of contention, in order that our mind may gaze upon the essence of the truth that is without any bulk and without any mutability. Therefore, insofar as the Creator Himself in His marvelous mercy comes to our help, let us turn our attention to these subjects, which we shall analyze in a more inward way⁴ than the preceding things, although they are the very same things. Meanwhile let us hold fast to this rule, that what has not yet become clear to our intellect may still be preserved by the firmness of our faith.⁵

² *secundum essentiam*. Given Augustine's distinction between two kinds of "proper" or non-accidental predication, namely, substantial and relative predication, what is said *secundum essentiam* is predicated substantially, rather than relationally.

³ The idea expressed here is called "the doctrine of divine simplicity." (See the Introduction under "Divine simplicity.")

⁴ *modo interiore*.

⁵ Augustine here suggests the guiding principle of his philosophical theology, *fides quaerens intellectum* ("faith in search of understanding"). Seven centuries later St. Anselm used this phrase

Chapter 1

(2) For we say that in this Trinity two or three persons are not greater than one alone. Our carnal perception cannot grasp this, because it only perceives, as it can, the true [or: real]⁶ things that are created, but is unable to discern the truth itself by which they have been created. If it could do so, then that very corporeal light itself would be in no way more clear than this that we have just said. For, in relation to the substance of truth, since truth alone truly is, nothing is greater unless it is more true [or: more real]. But with regard to whatever is intelligible and unchangeable, no one thing is more true than another, because all are equally and unchangeably eternal. What is called great, is great from no other source than from that by which it truly is.

Where, then, greatness itself is truth, whatever has more of greatness must necessarily have more of the truth. Therefore, whatever does not have more of the truth does not also have more of greatness. Again whatever has more of the truth is certainly more true [or: real], just as that which is greater has more of greatness; therefore, in regard to the substance of truth, that which is more true [or: real] is greater. But the Father and the Son together are not more true [or: real] than the Father singly or the Son singly. Therefore, both together are not something greater than each one by Himself alone. And because the Holy Spirit also truly is, so the Father and the Son together are not something greater than He, because they are not more true [or: more real] than He. The Father also and the Holy Spirit together do not surpass the Son in greatness, because they do not surpass Him in truth; they are not more true [or: more real]. And similarly the Son and the Holy Spirit together are something just as great as the Father alone, because they are just as truly as He is. Similarly, the Trinity itself is just as great as each one of the persons therein. For there, that is not greater which is not more true, where truth itself is greatness. Because in the essence of the truth, to be true is one and the same as to be, and to be is one and the same as to be great; therefore, to be great is one and the same as to be true. Consequently, what is there equally true, must there be also equally great.

as the subtitle for his famous *Proslogion*, in which he presents what has come to be called “the ontological argument.”

⁶ In this section Augustine’s word for “true” also means “real.”

Chapter 2

(3) In material things this and that gold can be equally true [or: real], and yet one can be greater than the other, because here greatness is not the same as truth, and because it is one thing for it to be gold and another thing for it to be great. The same is also true with regard to the nature of the soul, for it is not called a true soul in the same respect in which it is called a great soul. For he also has a true soul who has not a great soul, since the essence of the body and the soul is not the essence of the truth itself, as the Trinity is the one, the only, the great, the true, the truthful God, Truth itself.

And if we try to think of the Trinity, insofar as He allows and grants, let no one think of any kind of contact or embrace in space or in place, as though there were three bodies, nor of any knitting together of a joint, as the fables relate of the three-bodied Geryon, but let us reject whatsoever may occur to the mind that is of such a sort as to be greater in three than in each one singly, and less in one than in two, for in this way everything corporeal is rejected. But even in spiritual things let nothing changeable that may have occurred to the mind be thought of God. For when we aspire to that height from this depth, it is a step toward no small bit of knowledge if, before we can know what God is, we can already know what He is not.⁷ For assuredly He is neither earth nor heaven, nor like earth and heaven, nor any such thing as we see in the heaven, nor any such thing as we do not see, and is perhaps in the heaven. Even if by the power of your imagination you magnify the light of the sun in your mind as much as you are able, either that it may be greater or that it may be brighter, a thousand times as much or innumerable times, yet even this is not God. Neither as the pure angels are thought of as animating heavenly bodies, changing and making use of them in accordance with the will by which they serve God, neither if all were brought together and became one – and there are thousands of thousands of them [*Daniel* 7:10; *Revelation* 5:11] – is any such thing God. Nor would it be so, even if you were to think of these same spirits without bodies, which is indeed extremely difficult for our carnal thought.

Behold and see if you can, O soul bowed down by the corruptible body [*Wisdom* 9:15] and laden by many and various kinds of earthly thoughts,

⁷ The attempt to describe God by saying what God is *not* is called in later medieval philosophy “the negative way” (*via negativa*). Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) says that even claims about God made in the affirmative mode should be understood as implicit denials. See his *Guide for the Perplexed* 1.58.

behold, and see if you can that God is Truth. For it is written that “God is light” [*1 John* 1:5] not as these eyes see it, but as the heart sees it when it hears: “He is Truth” [*John* 14:6]. Do not ask: “What is Truth?” [*John* 18:38]. For at once the mists of bodily images and the clouds of phantasms will obstruct your view, and obscure the brightness which shone upon you at the first flash when I said “Truth.” See, remain in that first flash in which you were dazzled as it were by its brightness, when it was said to you “Truth.” Remain in it, if you can, but if you cannot, you will fall back into those wonted earthly thoughts. And what weight, pray, will finally cause you to fall back, if not the tenacity of the sinful desires that you have contracted and the errors of your earthly pilgrimage?

Chapter 3

(4) Behold, and again see if you can. Certainly you love only the good, because the earth is good by the height of its mountains, the moderate elevation of its hills, and the evenness of its fields; and good is the farm that is pleasant and fertile; and good is the house that is arranged throughout in symmetrical proportions and is spacious and bright; and good are the animals, animate bodies; and good is the mild and salubrious air; and good is the food that is pleasant and conducive to health; and good is health without pains and weariness; and good is the countenance of man with regular features, a cheerful expression, and a glowing color; and good is the soul⁸ of a friend with the sweetness of concord and the fidelity of love; and good is the just man; and good are riches because they readily assist us; and good is the heaven with its own sun, moon, and stars; and good are the angels by their holy obedience; and good is the lecture that graciously instructs and suitably admonishes the listener; and good is the poem with its measured rhythm and the seriousness of its thoughts.

Why should I add still more? This good and that good; take away this and that, and see good itself if you can; so you will see God who is good not by another good, but is the good of every good. For in all these good

⁸ Augustine’s word here is *animus*, not *anima*. Quite consistently in this work Augustine uses *anima* for the principle of life to be found in all living beings, including human beings. He uses *animus* for the rational soul, which is to be found in human beings but, Augustine thinks, not in other animals. Later on, especially in Book 10, he focuses on *mens*, the conscious human self. McKenna has chosen to translate *animus* as “soul” here in Book 8, but the reader should be aware that, as we approach Augustine’s discussion of the Problem of Other Minds in DT 8.6.9, it will become increasingly clear that it is the rational soul, or mind, that Augustine is especially interested in.

things, either those which I have enumerated, or any others which are seen or thought, we would be unable to call one better than the other, if we judge in accordance with the truth, if the idea of good itself had not been impressed upon us, according to which we approve of something as good, and also prefer one good to another. Thus God is to be loved, not as this or that good, but as good itself. For the good of the soul that is to be sought is not that over which one flies by judging, but that to which one adheres by loving, and what is this but God?⁹ Not the good soul, nor the good angel, nor the good heaven, but the good. But perhaps what I wish to say may be grasped more readily in this manner. For example, when I hear that a soul is called good, as there are two words [i.e., “good” and “soul”], so from these words I understand two things: one by which it is a soul, the other by which it is good. And certainly the soul itself had nothing to do with making itself a soul, for at that time it was not, so that it could not bring about its own being. But I realize that an act of the will is necessary in order that it may be a good soul, not as though the soul itself were not something good by the very fact that it is a soul, for how then could it be called, and most truly called, better than the body? But it is not yet called a good soul for this reason, because an act of the will still remains to be made, by which it may become more excellent; should it neglect this, then it is justly blamed, and it is rightly said not to be a good soul.

Such a soul is different from one that has made itself good; and if the latter is deserving of praise, then the former is naturally deserving of blame for not having done so. But when it acts with this end in view and becomes a good soul, it can only reach this goal by turning towards something which itself is not. But to what else can it turn in order to become a good soul, than to the good which it loves, desires, and obtains? And if it should again turn away from it, and by the very fact of its turning away from the good does not become good, then unless that good remain in it from which it has turned away, there would be nothing to which it could again turn if it should wish to amend.

(5) There would, therefore, be no changeable goods, unless there were an unchangeable good. When you hear then of this good and that good which may not even be good in other respects, if it were possible to put aside those goods which are good by a participation in the good and see the good itself of which they are good by participation – for when you

⁹ Augustine’s reasoning here is very close to the reasoning St. Thomas uses in his “Fourth Way” to prove the existence of God (*Summa Theologiae* 1a, q2, a3).

hear of this or that good, you also understand the good itself at the same time – if, therefore, I repeat, you could put these goods aside and perceive the good in itself, you would see God. And if you cling to Him by love, you will be at once blest. But since other things are not loved unless because they are good, let him be ashamed who is attached to them and does not love the good itself by which they are good. But if that which is also a soul, insofar as it is only a soul – insofar, therefore, as it is not yet good by its turning to the unchangeable good, but as I said, is only a soul – when the soul so pleases us that we also prefer it, when we rightly understand, to every corporeal light, it does not please us in itself, but in that art with which it was made. For there it is approved when already made, where it is seen to have been [in God’s eternal plan], when it was still to be made. This is the truth and the simple good, for it is nothing else than good itself, and on this account also the supreme good. For a good cannot be lessened or increased, unless it is a good which is good from another good.

In order to be good, therefore, the soul turns to this good to which it is also indebted for being a soul. Hence, the will then works in harmony with nature when, in order that the soul may be perfected in good, that good is loved by the will turning to it, from which that other good also comes that is not lost even by the turning away of the will. For by turning away from the supreme good, the soul ceases to be a good soul, but it does not cease to be a soul, and even as such it is already a better good than the body. The will, therefore, loses that which the will acquires. For there already was a soul that could wish to be turned to that from which it was, but there wasn’t yet a soul that could wish to be before it was. And this is our good, wherein we see whether the thing ought to have been or ought to be, insofar as we comprehend whatever ought to have been or ought to be; and wherein we see that the thing could not have been, unless it ought to have been, although at the same time we do not even comprehend in what manner it ought to have been. This good is not far from any one of us, for “In him we live and move and have our being” [*Acts 17:27*].

Chapter 4

(6) We must remain in this [good] and cling to it by love, that we may enjoy the presence of that from which we are, in the absence of which we would not be at all. For, since “we walk by faith, not by sight” [*2 Corinthians 5:7*], we certainly do not yet see God, as the same one has said, “face to face”

[*1 Corinthians* 13:12]. Unless we love Him now, we shall never see Him. But who loves that which he does not know? For something can be known and not loved; but what I am asking is whether something can be loved that is not known? If that is impossible, then no one loves God before he knows Him. And what does it mean to love God, except to see Him and to perceive Him steadfastly with our mind? For He is not a body to be sought for with bodily eyes.

But even before we are capable of seeing and perceiving God, as He can be perceived, which is granted to the clean of heart, for “blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God” [*Matthew* 5:8], He must be loved by faith; otherwise, the heart cannot be cleansed so as to be fit and ready to see Him. For where are those three, faith, hope, and charity [*1 Corinthians* 13:13], for the building up of which in the soul all the divine books have been composed and work together, except in the soul that believes what it does not yet see, and hopes for and loves what it believes? Therefore, even He who is not known, but in whom one believes, is already loved. Care must, of course, be taken lest the mind, in believing what it does not see, picture it to itself as something which it is not, and so hope for and love that which is false. For if this is done, it will no longer be charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned which, as the same Apostle says, is the end of the commandment [*1 Timothy* 1:5].

(7) When we believe in any corporeal things, of which we have heard or read but have not seen, our mind must represent them to itself as something with bodily features and forms, just as it occurs to our thoughts; now this image is either false or true; even if it is true, and this can happen very rarely, still we derive no profit from clinging to it by faith, but it is useful for some other purpose which is intimated by means of it. For who, upon reading or listening to the writings of Paul the Apostle, or of those which have been written about him, does not draw a picture in his mind of the countenance of the Apostle himself, and of all those whose names are there mentioned? And since in the large number of people to whom those writings are known, one represents the features and figures of those bodies in one way, and another in a different way, it is assuredly uncertain whose thoughts are closer to and more like the reality. But our faith is not busied there with the bodily countenance of those men, but only with the life that they led through the grace of God, and with the deeds to which that Scripture bears witness; this it is which is useful to believe, which must not be despaired of, and which must be sought.

Even the countenance of the Lord Himself in the flesh is represented differently by reason of the diversity of innumerable thoughts, even though it was only one, whichever it was. But in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not the image which the mind forms for itself and which may perhaps be far different from what it actually was that leads to salvation, but what we think of the man according to his kind. For an idea has been impressed upon human nature as if it were a law, according to which, when we see any such thing, we at once recognize it as a man or as the form of a man.

Chapter 5

Our thought is formed in accordance with this idea when we believe that God was made man for us, as an example of humility and to manifest God's love for us. For it profits us to believe, and to keep firmly and unshakenly in our heart, that the humility, whereby God was born of a woman and was led through such great insults to His death by mortal men, is the most excellent medicine by which the swelling of our pride may be cured, and the exalted mystery by which the chain of sin may be broken.

Thus it is with regard to the omnipotent God: since we know what omnipotence is, we also believe in the power of His miracles and of His Resurrection, and we form concepts about events of this kind in accordance with the species and genera of things, which are either ingrafted in our nature or are acquired by experience, so that our faith may not be feigned.

Neither do we know the outward appearance of the Virgin Mary, of whom without contact with man or without detriment in the birth itself He was born in a wondrous manner. Nor have we seen what were the characteristic features of the body of Lazarus, nor Bethany, nor the sepulchre, nor the stone which He ordered to be removed when He raised him from the dead, nor the new tomb hewn out of the rock from which He Himself rose, nor Mount Olivet whence He ascended to heaven; and those of us who have never seen these things do not even know whether they were as we imagine them to be; in fact we regard it as more probable that they were not so.

If the look of some place, or of a man, or of any body whatsoever shall appear the same to our eyes as it appeared to our mind when we were thinking

about it before we had seen it, we are moved with no little amazement, for such a thing rarely or hardly ever occurs; and yet we believe those things most firmly, because we reason about them in accordance with the special or general knowledge of which we are certain. For we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin called “Mary.” But we do not believe, we simply know, what a virgin is, what it is to be born, and what a proper name is. However, whether that was the outward appearance of Mary that came to our mind when we said or recalled these things, we do not at all know, nor do we believe it so. Here, then, it is permissible to say without violating the faith that perhaps she had such an appearance and perhaps she did not have such an appearance; no one, however, without violating the Christian faith could say concerning whether Christ was born of a Virgin, “Perhaps.”

(8) Wherefore, we desire to understand the eternity, the equality, and the unity of the Trinity, insofar as it is granted to us; but we must believe before we understand,¹⁰ and be on our guard that our faith may not be feigned, for we must find our enjoyment in this same Trinity in order to live blessedly. But should we believe anything false concerning it, our hope will be vain and our love will not be pure; how, then, by believing can we love that Trinity which we do not know? Will it be according to some special or general knowledge, such as that whereby we love the Apostle Paul? Even if he did not have the outward appearance which comes before us when we think of him, and we are wholly in the dark about this matter, yet we do know what a man is. But we do not even need to go so far, for we ourselves are men. It is evident that he was also a man, that his soul was united with his body, and that he led a mortal life. We believe of him, therefore, what we find in ourselves, along with the species and genus of which every human nature is likewise comprised.

What then? Do we either have a special or a general knowledge of that exalted Trinity, as if there were many such trinities, some of which we have come to know from experience, so that from the law of similarity impressed upon us, either as a special or as a general knowledge, we may also believe that Trinity to be such, and so may love the thing which we believe and yet do not know, from its similarity with the thing which we do know? Such is certainly not the case. Or is it possible for us to believe in and to love the Trinity, which we do not see and the like of which we

¹⁰ Again, faith is in search of understanding.

have never seen, in the same way as we love in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He rose from the dead, although we have never seen anyone rise from the dead? But we certainly know what it is to die, and what it is to live, because we both live and at times have seen and learned from experience about the dead and the dying. But to rise again, what else is it, if not to live again, that is, to return from death to life?

When we, therefore, speak of and believe in the Trinity, we know what a trinity is, because we know what three are. But this is not what we love. For we can easily have it whenever we wish – to pass over other things – by simply raising three fingers. Or is it that we do not love every trinity, but only that which is God the Trinity? What we love in the Trinity, therefore, is that it is God; but we have not seen, nor do we know of any other God, since there is only one God, that one whom we have not seen and whom we love by believing. But the question here is, by what likeness or comparison with known things can we believe, so that we may also love the God who is not yet known?

Chapter 6

(9) Return, therefore, with me, and let us consider why we love the Apostle. Is it on account of his human form which is most familiar to us, because we believe him to have been a man? Certainly not; otherwise, we would have no reason for loving him now, since he is no longer that man, for his soul has been separated from his body. But we believe that what we love in him lives even now, for we love his just soul [or mind, *animus*¹¹]. And by reason of what general or special law then except this, that we know what a soul [*animus*] is and what a just man is. And as regards the soul [*animus*], we not unfittingly say that we, therefore, know what a soul [*animus*] is because we also have a soul [*animus*]. We have never seen it with our eyes, nor formed a general or special idea of it from any similarity with other souls that we have seen, but rather, as I said, because we, too, have a soul

¹¹ In view of the argumentation coming up, it is especially important to keep in mind that Augustine has two words for “soul,” the feminine word, *anima*, and the masculine word, *animus*. As mentioned in note 8, Augustine uses *anima* for the rational principle of all living things, including human beings. But the *anima* that human beings have, in his view, is a rational *anima*, that is, an *animus*, or mind. In the Argument from Analogy for Other Minds that Augustine is about to present, he supposes we use reason to justify our belief that there is an *animus*, a mind, in another human being. But he supposes that some beasts, with only an *anima*, instinctually do something that is somehow functionally equivalent to reasoning analogically to the supposition that there are other minds, or souls.

[*animus*]. For what is so intimately known, and what knows itself to be itself, than that through which all other things are likewise known, that is, the soul [*animus*]¹² itself?

For we also recognize, from a likeness to us, the movements of bodies by which we perceive that others besides us live. Just as we move our body in living, so, we notice, those bodies are moved. For when a living body is moved, there is no way opened to our eyes to see the soul [*animus*], a thing which cannot be seen with the eyes. But we perceive something present in that bulk, such as is present in us to move our bulk in a similar way; it is life and the soul [*anima*]. Nor is such perception something peculiar to, as it were, human prudence and reason. For indeed beasts perceive as living, not only themselves, but also each other and one another, and us as well. Nor do they see our souls [*animas*]¹³ except through the movements of our bodies, and that at once and very easily by a sort of natural agreement.¹⁴ Therefore, we know the mind [*animus*] of anyone at all from our own, and from our own case we believe in that which we do not know. For not only do we perceive a mind [*animus*], but we even know what one is, by considering our own; for we, too, have a mind [*animus*].

But from what do we know what the just person is? For we have said that we love the Apostle for no other reason than that he is a just soul [*animus*]. So then we know what a just person is, as we also know what a soul [*animus*] is. But we know what a soul [*animus*] is, as has been said, from ourselves, for there is a soul [*animus*] within us. But from what do we know what the just person is if we are not just? For if no one knows what the just person is except one who is himself just, then no one loves the just person except a just person. For no one can love one whom he believes to be just, merely for this reason that he believes him to be just, if he does not know what it is to be just. This follows from what we have shown above, namely, that no one loves what he believes and does not see, except by virtue of some law based on general or special knowledge. And, consequently, if no one loves the just person except a just person, how can anyone who is not yet just will to become just? For no one wills to be that which he does not love. But in order that one who is not yet just may

¹² Augustine makes the same claim about *mens*, mind, throughout Book 10. It is clear that each occurrence of *animus* here in this chapter, and perhaps throughout Book 8, could as well be translated “mind.”

¹³ That is, the accusative plural of *anima*.

¹⁴ *quadam conspiratione naturale*. Augustine’s idea seems to be that beasts do instinctively, without reasoning, something human beings do through analogical reasoning.

become so, let him by all means will to be just; but in order that he may have such a will, he must love the just person. Therefore, even he who is not yet just loves the just person. But one who does not know what a just person is cannot love the just person. Consequently, even he who is not yet just knows what the just person is.

From what does he know this? Does he see it with his eyes? Is there a just body, as there is a white, black, square, or round body? Who has ever said such a thing? One sees nothing with the eyes except bodies. But there is nothing just in a man except the soul, and when one is called just, he is so called by reason of his soul, not his body. For justice is a certain beauty of the soul through which men are beautiful, even though the body of very many is misshapen and deformed. But even as the soul is not seen by the eyes, so neither is its beauty. From what then does one who is not yet just know what the just person is, and love the just person in order to become just himself? Are certain signs flashed through the movement of the body by which this or that person appears to be just? But whence does he know that these are the signs of a just soul if he has no idea at all of what the just soul is? Therefore, he does know.

But from what do we know what the just person is, even when we are not yet just? If we know it from outside ourselves, we know it in some body. But this is not a thing of the body. Therefore, we know what the just person is from within ourselves. For I do not find it anywhere else when I seek to utter it, except within myself; and if I ask another what the just person is, he seeks for what he should answer within himself, and, therefore, whoever could answer truly has found what to answer within himself.

In fact when I wish to speak of Carthage, I seek for what to say within myself, and find an image of Carthage within myself; but I received this through the body, that is, through the sense of the body, since I was present there in the body, and have seen and perceived it with my senses, and have retained it in my memory, that I might find the word about it within myself whenever I might wish to utter it. For its image [*phantasia*] in my mind is its word, not that sound of three syllables ["Car-tha-go"] when Carthage is named, or even when that name itself is silently thought of during some period of time, but the word that I see in my mind when I utter this word of three syllables with my voice, or even before I utter it.

So too, when I wish to speak of Alexandria, which I have never seen, an image [*imago*] of it is also present within me. For I had heard from

many people and believed that it is a great city; so in accordance with the description that could be given me, I formed an image of it in my mind as I was able; and this is its word within me, when I wish to express it, before my voice utters the five syllables that make the name almost everyone knows. And if I could bring this image from my mind before the eyes of the people who are familiar with Alexandria, all would doubtless say either, "That is not it," or if they were to say, "That is it," I would be much surprised; and while I gazed upon it in my mind, that is, upon the image as if it were a picture of it, yet I should not know if it were so, but I would believe those who had seen it and retained the image of what they had seen.

But I do not seek in that way for what the just person is, nor do I so find it, nor so gaze upon it when I utter it, nor am I so approved when I am heard, nor do I so approve when I hear, as if I had seen such a thing with my eyes, or had learned of it from any sense of my body, or had heard it from those who had so learned it. For when I say, and say as one who knows, "A soul is just which with knowledge and deliberation both in life and conduct assigns to everyone his due," I do not think of something absent as Carthage, or imagine it as I can as Alexandria, whether it be so or not; but I see something present and see it within me, even though I myself am not that which I see, and many will agree with me if they hear what I see. And whoever hears me and gives his approval as one who knows, he himself also sees this same thing in himself, even though he himself is also not that which he sees. But when the just person says this, then he sees and says what he himself is. And where does he himself also see it except within himself? But this is not wonderful. For where then should he see himself, if not within himself? The marvel is that the soul should see within itself what it has not seen anywhere else, and should see truly, and should see the truly just soul itself, and that itself is indeed a soul, and yet not the just soul that it sees within itself.

Is there perhaps another just soul in the soul that is not yet just? Or if there is not, what does it see there when it sees and says what a just soul is, nor see anywhere else than in itself, even though it itself is not a just soul? Is that which it sees an inner truth which is present to the soul that is capable of seeing it? Not all are capable of doing so, and not all who are capable of seeing it are also that which they behold, that is, they themselves are not also just souls; but they can see and say what a just soul is. And in what other way will they be able to be so, save by clinging

to that same form itself which they behold, in order that they may be formed by it and be good souls? Then they will not only see and say what a just soul is, namely, one that with knowledge and deliberation both in life and conduct assigns to everyone his due, but they themselves will also live justly and be rooted in justice by assigning to everyone his due, so that they may owe no man anything except to love one another.

And how does one cling to that form save by loving it? Why, then, do we love another whom we believe to be just, and not love that form itself in which we see what a just soul is, so that we too may be able to be just? Or should we not rather say that unless we also loved that form, we should not love him at all whom we love through it, but while we are not just, we love it too little and so are unable to become just? The man, therefore, who is believed to be just, is loved through that form and truth which he who loves, sees, and understands within himself. But this form and truth cannot be loved from anywhere else. For we find nothing similar to it outside of itself, so that by believing we might love it when it is unknown, by reason of something similar that we already know. For whatever thing of this kind one may have seen is itself, and there is nothing else of the kind, since itself alone is such as itself is.

He, therefore, who loves men ought to love them, either because they are just or that they may be just. So ought he to love himself also, either because he is just or that he may be just, for in this way he loves his neighbor as himself without any danger. For he who loves himself otherwise, loves himself unjustly, since he loves himself for this purpose that he may be unjust; he loves himself, therefore, that he may be wicked, and consequently he no longer loves himself, since "he who loves iniquity hates his own soul" [*Psalm* 10:6].

Chapter 7

(10) Therefore, in this question concerning the Trinity and the knowledge of God, nothing else is to be particularly considered, except what true love is, or rather, what love is. For only true love may be called love, otherwise it is desire. Therefore, it is a misuse of terms to say of those who desire that they love, just as it is a misuse of terms to say of those who love that they desire. But this is true love, that while holding fast to the truth, we may live justly, and, therefore, may despise everything mortal for the sake of the love of men, whereby we wish them to live justly.

For in this way we can be prepared even to die with profit for our brethren, which the Lord Jesus Christ has taught us by His example. For since the whole Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments, love of God and love of neighbor [*Matthew* 22:37–40], it is not without reason that Scripture generally places one for both. At times it mentions only the love of God, as in this passage: “We know that for those who love God all things work together unto good” [*Romans* 8:28], and again: “But whoever loves God, he is known by him” [*I Corinthians* 8:3], and again: “Because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” [*Romans* 5:5] and so on in many other texts. For he who loves God must logically do what God has commanded, and loves Him just as much as he does so; therefore, he must also love his neighbor since God has commanded this.

At other times Scripture mentions only the love of our neighbor, as in that text: “Bear one another’s burden, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ” [*Galatians* 6:2] and again: “For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in that which is written, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’” [*Galatians* 5:14], and in the Gospel: “All that you wish men to do to you, even so do you also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” [*Matthew* 7:12]. And we find many other passages in the Sacred Scriptures where love of our neighbor alone seems to be commanded for perfection, and the love of God is passed over in silence, although the Law and the Prophets depend on both commandments. But this also follows logically, for he who loves his neighbor must also love love itself above everything else. But “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God” [*John* 4:16]. Therefore, he must needs love God above everything else.

(11) Consequently, those who seek God by those powers that rule the world, or parts of the world, are taken away and cast far from Him, not by intervals of space but by diversity of affections, for they seek to walk by outward paths, and abandon their own interior things, interior to which is God. Therefore, even though they may have heard or thought in one way or another of some holy, heavenly power, they are more desirous of its deeds at which human weakness marvels, but do not imitate the piety by which rest in God is secured. For they prefer in their pride to be able to do what an angel can, rather than to be by their piety what an angel is. For no holy person rejoices in his own power, but in the power of Him from whom he has whatever power he can suitably have. He knows that it is a proof of greater power to be united with the omnipotent One by a

pious will, rather than to be able to do things by his own power and will, at which those tremble who cannot do such things.

Therefore, while doing such things the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in order to teach greater things to the astonished spectators, and to turn those who were eager for and dependent upon these unusual things to eternal and interior things, said: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" [*Matthew* 11:28]. And He did not say: "Learn from me, because I raise up those who are dead for four days," but "Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart" [*Matthew* 11:29]. For humility that is solidly established is more powerful and safer than the most inflated conceit. And, therefore, He proceeds to say: "You will find rest for your souls" [*Matthew* 11:29]. For "Charity is not puffed up" [*1 Corinthians* 13:4], and "God is love" [*1 John* 4:8], and "The faithful in love shall rest in him" [*Wisdom* 3:9], called back from the clamor that is without to silent joys. Behold, "God is love." Why then do we set out for and run to the heights of the heavens and to the depths of the earth in search of Him who is within us, if we wish to be with Him?

Chapter 8

(12) Let no one say: "I do not know what I should love." Let him love his brother and he will love the same love. For he knows the love by which he loves more than the brother whom he loves. And so, God can now become more known to him than his brother, actually more known because more present, more known because more within him, more known because more certain. Embrace love, God, and embrace God by love. It is love itself which unites all the good angels and all the servants of God by the bond of holiness, and unites us and them mutually with ourselves and makes us subject to Himself. Therefore, the more we are cured of the swelling of pride, the more we are full of love, and of what, if not of God, is he full who is full of love?

One may object: "I see love and I conceive it in my mind as best I can, and I believe the Scripture when it says: 'God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God,' but when I see it I do not see the Trinity in it." But as a matter of fact you do see the Trinity if you see love. But I will give you a proof, if I can, so that you may see that you do see the Trinity; only let love itself be present that we may be moved by it to something good. For when we love love, then we love that which loves something,

precisely because it loves something. What, therefore, does love love, that love itself may also be loved? For that which loves nothing is not love. But if it loves itself, it must love something in order that it may love itself as love. For, just as a word both indicates something and also indicates itself, but it does not indicate itself as a word, unless it indicates that it is indicating something, so, too, does love indeed love itself; but unless it loves itself as loving something, then it does not love itself as love. What, therefore, does love love, except that which we love with love?

But this, to begin with what is nearest to us, is our brother. Let us take note of how highly the Apostle John commends brotherly love: “He who loves his brother,” he says, “abides in the light, and there is no scandal in him” [*1 John* 2:12]. It is evident that he has put the perfection of justice in brotherly love, for he in whom there is no scandal is surely perfect, and yet it seems that he has kept silent about the love of God. He would never have done so if he did not intend that God should be understood in brotherly love itself. For a little later on in the same Epistle he expresses this most plainly in the following words: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love, does not know God, for God is love” [*1 John* 1:5]. The context shows sufficiently and clearly that brotherly love itself (for brotherly love is that whereby we love one another) is taught by so eminent an authority, not only to be from God, but also to be God.

Therefore, when we love our brother from love, we love our brother from God; nor can it happen that we do not love above all else that same love by which we love our brother. From this we conclude that these two commandments cannot be without one another. For since “God is love,” he who loves love, surely loves God; but he must needs love love who loves his brother. And, therefore, he says a little later: “He cannot love God whom he does not see, who does not love his brother whom he sees” [*1 John* 4:7–8, 20]. That he does not love his brother is indeed the reason why he does not see God. For he who does not love his brother is not in love; and he who is not in love is not in God, because God is love.

Furthermore, he who is not in God is not in the light, because “God is light and in him is no darkness” [*1 John* 1:5]. If anyone, therefore, is not in the light, what wonder is it if he does not see the light, that is, if he does not see God, because he is in darkness? But he sees his brother with the human sight by which God cannot be seen. If, however, he loved him whom he sees by human sight with a spiritual love, he would see God,

who is love itself, with that inner sight by which He can be seen. How then can he, who does not love his brother whom he sees, love God whom he, therefore, does not see, since God is love, and this is wanting to him who does not love his brother? Neither should we let this other question disturb us, how much love we ought to spend upon our brother, how much upon God – incomparably more upon God than upon ourselves, but as much upon our brother as upon ourselves – and we love ourselves so much the more, the more we love God. We, therefore, love God and our neighbor from one and the same love, but we love God on account of God, but ourselves and our neighbor on account of God.

Chapter 9

(13) What is the reason, pray, why we are inflamed when we read and hear: “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Giving no offense to anyone, that our ministry may not be blamed; but in everything commending ourselves as God’s ministers, in much patience; in tribulations, in hardships, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleepless nights, in fastings; in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering; in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; with the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left; in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet truthful; as unknown and yet known; as dying and behold we live; as chastised and not killed; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing yet possessing all things”? [*2 Corinthians* 6:2–10]

Why is it that we are enkindled with love for the Apostle Paul when we read these words, unless we believe that he so lived? Yet we believe that the ministers of God should so live, not because we hear it from some others, but because we see it within ourselves, or rather above ourselves in the truth itself. Therefore, it is from this which we see that we love him whom we believe to have lived in the same way. And unless we loved this form above all else, which we perceived to be always immovable and unchangeable, we should not, therefore, love him, because we retain in our faith that his life, while he lived on earth, harmonized with, and corresponded to, this form.

I know not how, but we are inspired the more to the love of this form through the faith by which we believe someone to have so lived, and to

the hope whereby we do not at all despair that we can so live – we who are men, from the fact that some men have so lived – so that we desire it more ardently and pray for it more fervently. Thus the love for this form, according to which they are believed to have lived, causes us to love the life of these men; and their life thus believed arouses a more fervent love for this same form. Therefore, the more ardently we love God, so much the more certainly and calmly do we see Him, because we see the unchangeable form of justice in God, and we judge that men ought to live in conformity with it. Faith is, therefore, a powerful help to the knowledge and the love of God, not as though He were wholly unknown or wholly unloved, but that He may be known more clearly, and that He may be loved more fervently.

Chapter 10

(14) But what is love or charity, which the Divine Scripture praises and proclaims so highly, if not the love of the good? Now love is of someone who loves, and something is loved with love. So then there are three: the lover, the beloved, and the love.¹⁵ What else is love, therefore, except a kind of life which binds or seeks to bind some two together, namely, the lover and the beloved? And this is so even in external and carnal love. But that we may draw from a purer and clearer source, let us tread the flesh under foot and mount up to the soul. What does the soul love in a friend except the soul? And, therefore, even here there are three: the lover, the beloved, and the love.

It remains to ascend even from here and to seek for those higher things, insofar as it is granted to man. But let our purpose rest here a while, not that it may think to have already found that which it is seeking, but as a place is usually found where something is to be sought; what is sought has not yet been found, but the place has now been found where it is to be sought. So it will have sufficed to have said this, so that from it, as if from a small portion of some beginning, we may weave the rest of our discourse.

¹⁵ This trinity of love, lover, and beloved, is the first of a series of “psychological” trinities Augustine uses to illuminate the Divine Trinity. Thus, as Augustine writes in the next paragraph, “what is sought has not yet been found, but the place has now been found where it is to be sought.”