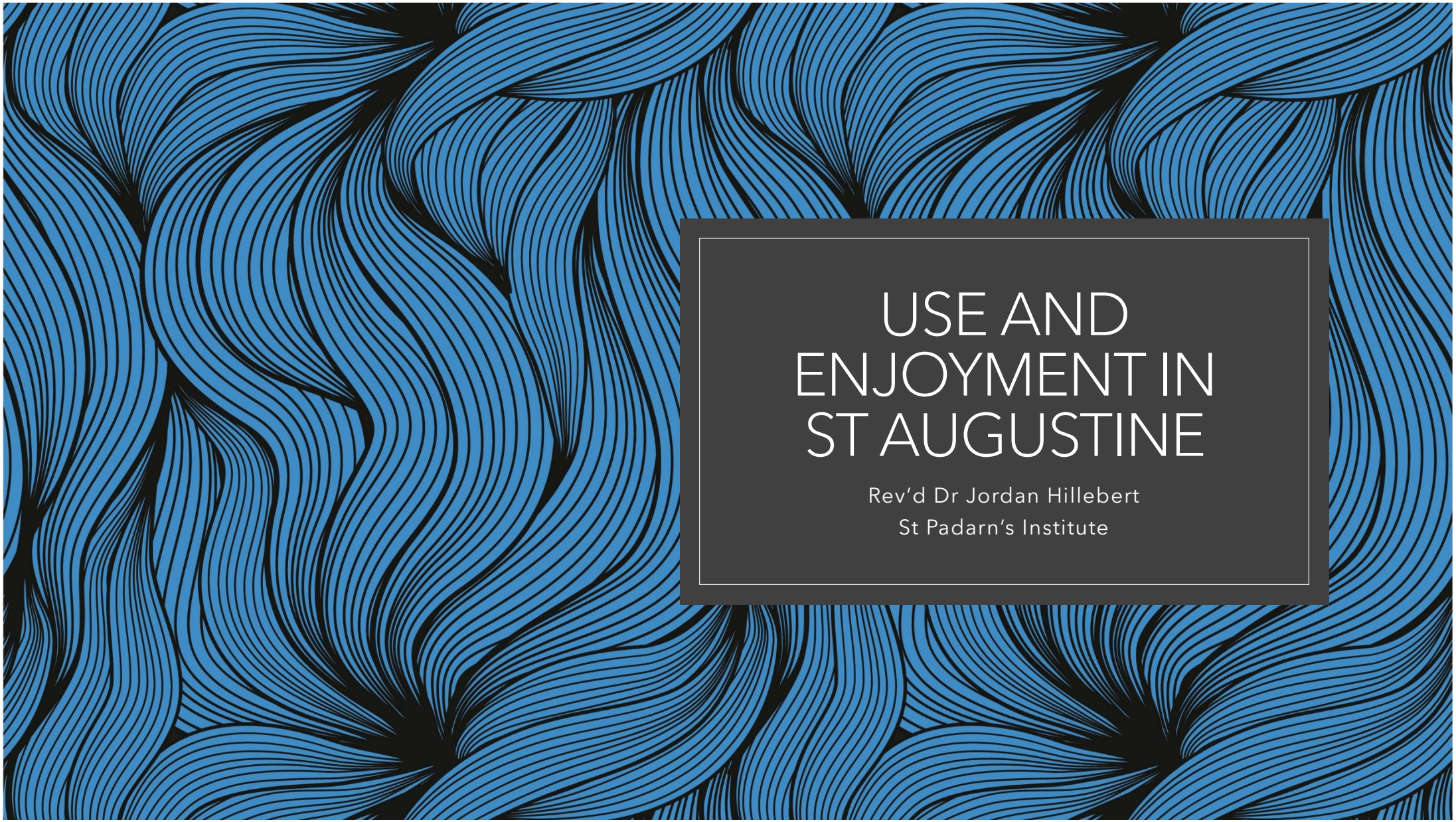


USE AND ENJOYMENT IN ST AUGUSTINE

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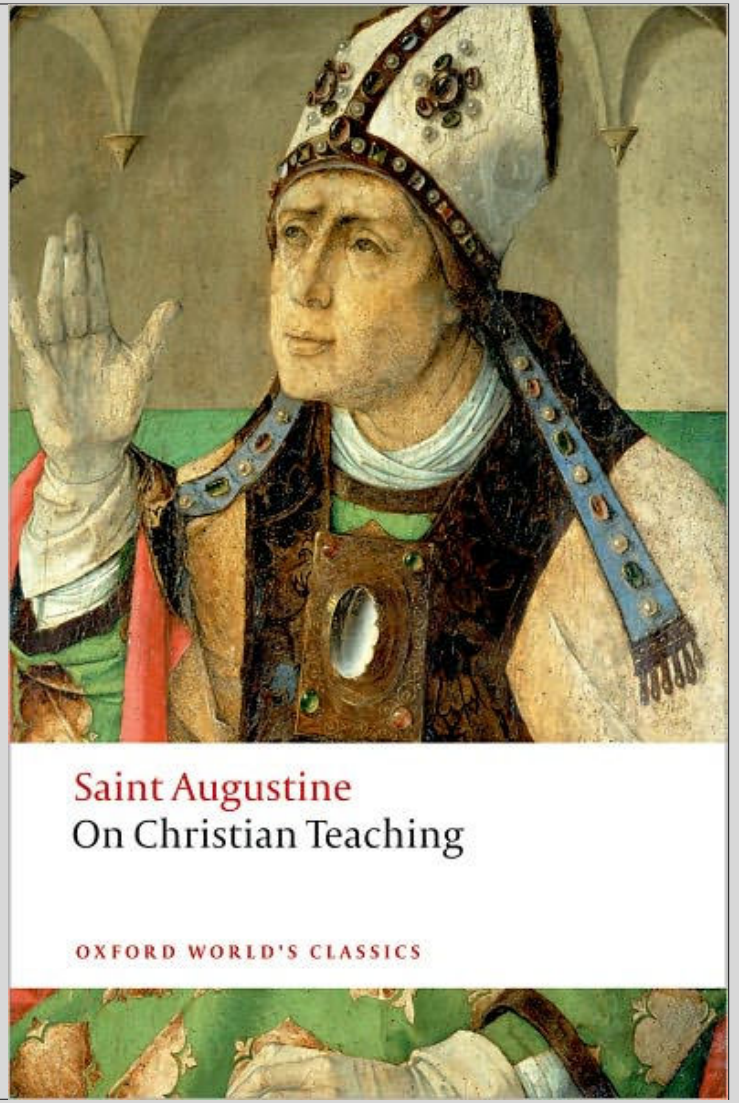


‘It is my duty… to investigate all the [spiritual] remedies to be found in Holy Scripture and to see that prayer and study procure for my soul adequate strength for such dangerous tasks. I had no time before [my ordination]…

If experience has taught me what is necessary for own who dispenses God’s word and sacrament to the people, only now to be prevented from acquiring what I know I do not possess, are you, Fr Valerius, simply decreeing my ruin? Where is your affection for me? Do you really love me? Do you really love the Church which you want me to serve with this poor equipment?’ (Ep. XXI)

De Doctrina Christiana

- Rules for illumination: intended for all (educated) Christians
- A manual for preachers/bishops: hermeneutics *and* homiletics (to teach, delight, and move)
- The purpose of scripture: ‘anyone who thinks that he [sic] has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this double love of God and neighbour, has not yet succeeded in understanding them’ (I.xxxvi, p. 27).



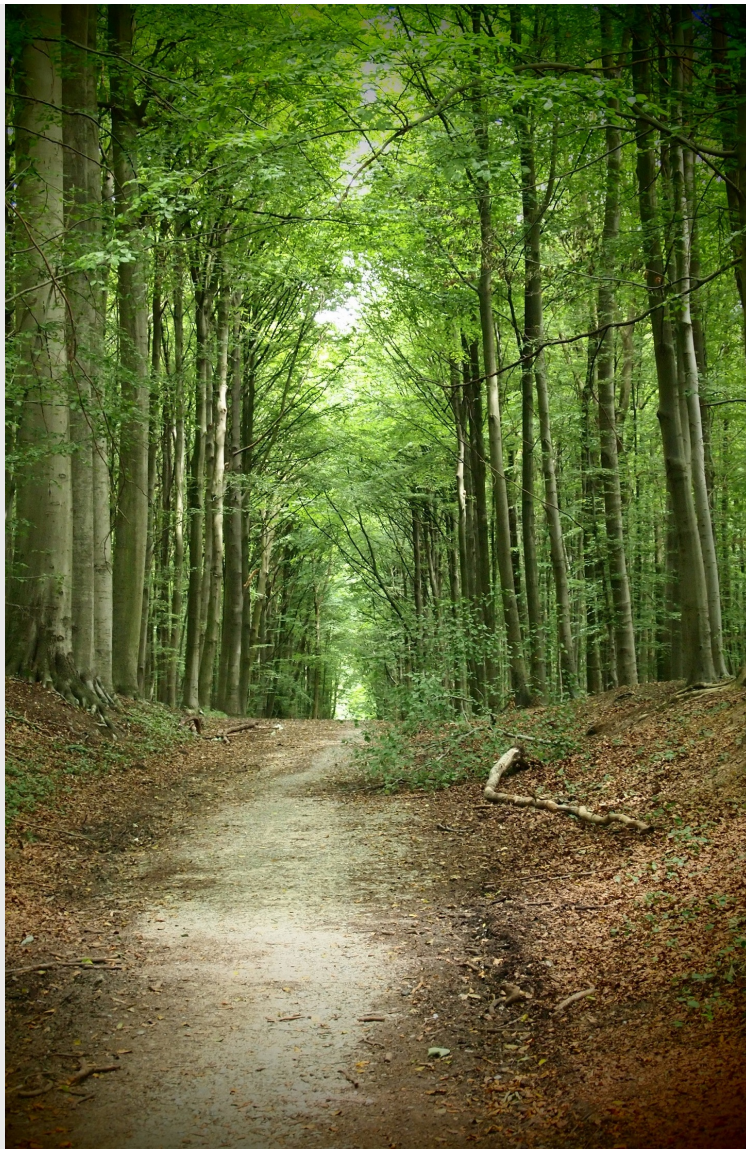


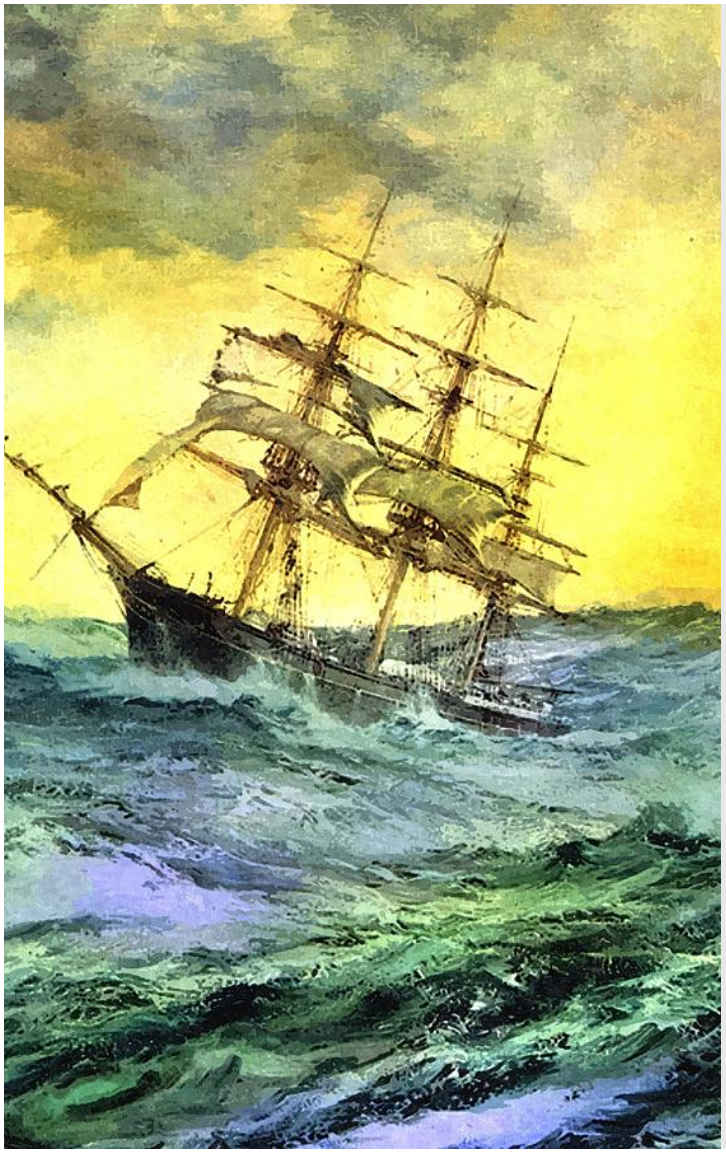
Things and Signs

- 'All teaching is teaching of either things or signs, but things are learnt through signs' (I.4)
- **Things** (*res*): stuff that we encounter in the world around us (logs, sheep, rocks, etc.)
- **Signs** *(signum):* Those things which are employed to signify something
  - Natural signs and given signs
  - Signs are also things… and *most* things are also signs

Use and Enjoyment

- ‘There are some things which are to be enjoyed, some which are to be used, and some whose function is both to enjoy and use’ (I.7)
- **Enjoyment:** ‘To enjoy something is to hold fast to it in love for its own sake’ (I.8)
- **Use:** ‘To use something is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love’ (I.8)
- **Abuse:** the improper use of something (I.8)





The Way to Enjoyment

- '[If] we choose to enjoy things that are to be used, our advance [towards happiness] is impeded and sometimes even diverted, and we are held back, or even put off, from attaining things which are to be enjoyed, because we are hamstrung by our love of lower things' (7)
- 'Suppose we were travellers who could live happily only in our homeland…' (I.8)

God Alone is to be Enjoyed

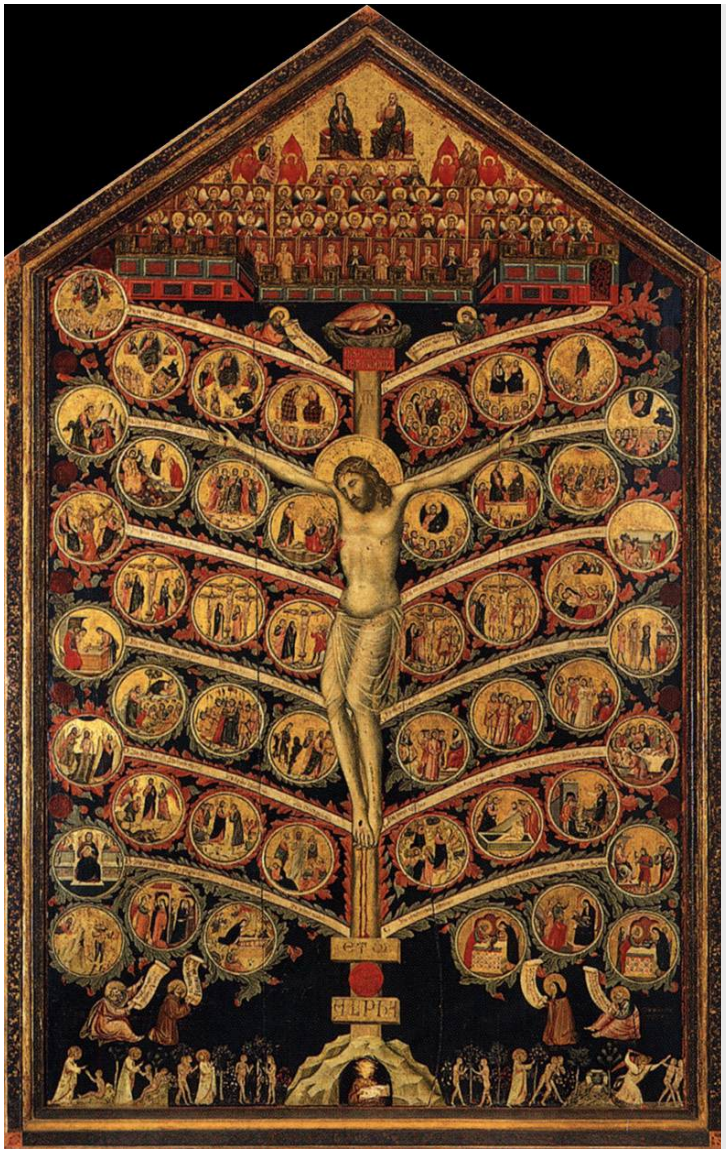
‘So in this mortal life we are like travellers away from our Lord [2 Cor. 5:6]: if we wish to return to the homeland where we can be happy we must use this world [cf. 1 Cor. 7:31], not enjoy it, in order to discern “the invisible attributes of God, which are understood through what has been made” [Rom. 1:20] or, in other words, to derive eternal and spiritual value from corporeal and temporal things’ (I.9)



The Problems with Enjoying Creatures

- Creatures cannot satisfy (God alone is 'supreme and unchangeable good' I.80)
- Creatures can distract us from our goal (the analogy of the voyage)
- The enjoyment of corruptible things corrupts (idolatry as self-destruction)





How do we Enjoy God?

- Making use of creation ‘in order to discern the invisible attributes of God’ (I.9)
- Making use of Christ: ‘So although it [divine Wisdom] is actually our homeland, it has also made itself the road to our homeland’ (I.23)
- Making use of the Church: Christ ‘ties together his own body… in a bond of unity and love like a healing bandage’ (I.33)



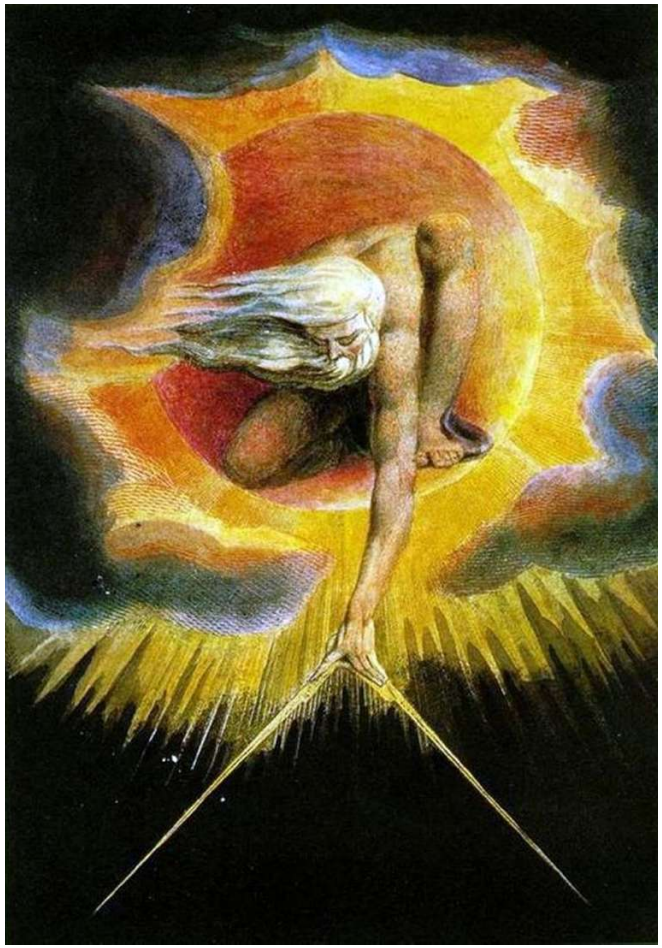
What about other people?

- If God alone is to be enjoyed… do we *use* other people?
- In one sense, yes: 'For if something is to be loved on its own account, it is made to constitute the happy life… But "cursed is he who puts his hope in man" (Jer. 17:5)' (I.40)
- *And yet*… "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' (Lk 10:27)

Loving Use

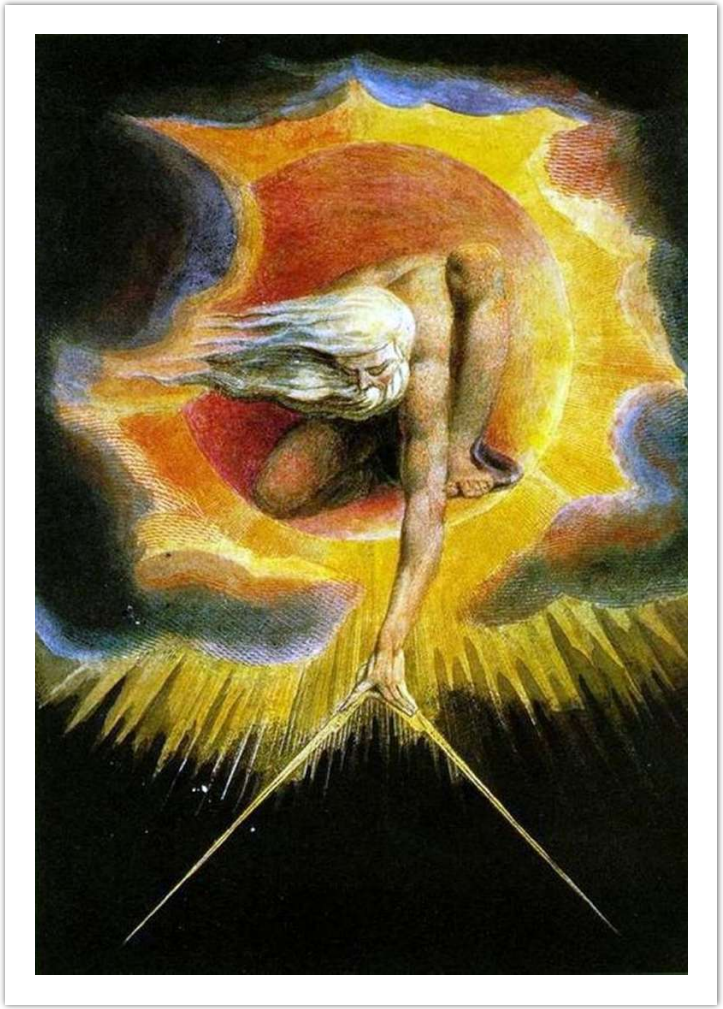
- Augustine initially treats love and enjoyment as synonymous (I.8)
- Eventually distinguishes between two kinds of love (I.40):
  - Love for something 'on its own account' (*diligere propter se*) – **loving enjoyment**
  - Love for something 'for the sake of something else' (*diligere propter aliud)* – **loving use**
- Enjoying others 'in God' (I.76)





Does God Use Us or Enjoy Us?

‘God loves us… but in what way does he love us – so as to use us or to enjoy us? If he enjoys us, he stands in need of our goodness, which only a madman could assert; for all our goodness either comes from him or actually consists of him… So God does not enjoy us, but uses us’ (I.73-74)



Love without Need

God wants us to love him, ‘not in order to gain any reward for himself but to give to those who love him an eternal reward – namely himself, the object of their love’ (I.64)



The Fulfilment of Scripture

‘The chief purpose of all that we have been saying in our discussion of things is to make it understood that the fulfilment and end of the law and all the divine scriptures is to love the thing which must be enjoyed [God] and the thing which together with us can enjoy that thing [neighbor]’ (I.84)

Further Reading

- Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Book One.
- Carol Harrison, 'Taking creation for the creator: use and enjoyment in Augustine's theological aesthetics,' S. Barton, ed., *Idolatry : false worship in the Bible, early Judaism, and Christianity* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 179-97.
- Oliver O'Donovan, '*Usus* and *Fruitio* in Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana I*,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 33.2 (October 1982): 361-97.
- Rowan Williams, 'Language, Reality and Desire: The Nature of Christian Formation,' *On Augustine* (London: T&T Clark, 2016), 41-58.