

CONFESSIONS - BOOK I - CHAPTER XII

~Other Speakers A-F: St. Augustine:

19. But in this time of childhood--which was far less dreaded for me than my adolescence--I had no love of learning, and hated to be driven to it. Yet I was driven to it just the same, and good was done for me, even though I did not do it well, for I would not have learned if I had not been forced to it. For no man does well against his will, even if what he does is a good thing. Neither did they who forced me do well, but the good that was done me came from thee, my God. For they did not care about the way in which I would use what they forced me to learn, and took it for granted that it was to satisfy the inordinate desires of a rich beggary and a shameful glory. But thou, Lord, by whom the hairs of our head are numbered, didst use for my good the error of all who pushed me on to study: but my error in not being willing to learn thou didst use for my punishment. And I--though so small a boy yet so great a sinner--was not punished without warrant. Thus by the instrumentality of those who did not do well, thou didst well for me; and by my own sin thou didst justly punish me. For it is even as thou hast ordained: that every inordinate affection brings on its own punishment.