CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Confessions

Augustine of Hippo · *c. 397–400* · *E. B. Pusey, 1838*

Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom infinite. Augustine's Confessions, in Pusey's English, is a prayer and a life in thirteen books: a restless youth, a conversion, and a last turning of memory toward God as Creator.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What does it mean to confess a life before God, and can a restless heart tell the truth about its thefts, its loves, and its late turning?

"Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised;"

Book I, the opening

The translation is E. B. Pusey (1838), PG #3296, The Confessions of Saint Augustine, complete in thirteen books. The opening is exact, including "art Thou" and "Thy." This is Augustine's Confessions, not Rousseau's (a different work on the site). A Christian prayer-memoir, for older students, of sin, a mother's tears, a garden turning, and a close in praise of the Creator. Teach the thefts and the loves with gravity, not as gossip; quote Pusey, not another English Augustine.

KEY CHARACTERS

Augustine
The speaker, who confesses a life and praises God from the first line.

Monica
The mother whose tears and counsel belong to the early books.

Ambrose, and the friends at Milan
The teacher and the circle of the turning.

the Lord who is praised
The addressee of the whole work, not a decoration of it.

GREATLY TO BE PRAISED

> *"Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised;"*
> Book I, the opening

Grades 10–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
Great Art Thou
BOOK I, THE OPENING

The book opens as praise, not as a résumé. Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; man would praise, though he is but a particle of that creation.

- The first clause is exact in both witnesses.
- The Confessions is a prayer from the first line.
- This is Pusey's English, 1838.

> *"Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised;"*
> Book I

02
A Restless Youth
THE EARLY BOOKS

Childhood, school, Carthage, and the famous thefts and loves. The memory is already a confession, not a boast.

- Teach the pear-theft and the loves with gravity, for older students; do not sensationalize them.
- Monica's tears and counsel belong to the early books.
- Cite this typography: art Thou, Thy.

03
Ambition, and a New Circle
THE MIDDLE BOOKS

Rome, Milan, rhetoric, and the friends and books that prepare a change. The will is not yet whole.

- Ambrose and the new teaching are a hinge, not a sudden trick.
- The restlessness is intellectual and moral at once.
- Keep Augustine's own account; do not tidy it.

04
A Garden, and a Turning
THE CONVERSION

The crisis in the garden, a child's voice, and a will that is finally turned. The baptism follows in its time.

- The turning is the moral center of the life-books.
- Teach it as Augustine confesses it, not as a later slogan only.
- For older students.

05
Memory, and the Creator
THE LATER BOOKS, THROUGH XIII

After the life comes a long looking at memory, time, and Genesis. The hosted text is complete in thirteen books. This is not Rousseau's Confessions.

- Do not stop at the baptism if Books X–XIII continue.
- Pusey 1838, PG #3296, thirteen books complete.
- A Christian prayer-memoir, for older students; not the later French Confessions on this site.

A Confession | A Restless Heart | A Mother's Tears | A Turning | Memory and Creation

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. The translation is E. B. Pusey (1838), Project Gutenberg #3296, complete in thirteen books. The opening is exact: "Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised;" Typography includes art Thou and Thy. This is Augustine's Confessions, not Rousseau's Confessions (a different work on the site).
2. A Christian prayer-memoir, for older students. Teach the thefts, the loves, and the garden turning with gravity, not as gossip. Quote Pusey, not another English Augustine.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB. Do not stop at the baptism if Books X–XIII continue.

Quotations are verbatim from the E. B. Pusey, 1838, Project Gutenberg #3296, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/confessions/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.