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St. Augustine’s Conception of *verbum mentis* in *De Trinitate*: A Reconsideration

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HANDOUT

1. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De Trinitate*, XV, 10, 19-20, ed. J.-P. Migne, 1841-1865, vol. 42 (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia*, in *Patrologia Latina*); trans. E. Hill, ed. J. E. Rotelle, Brooklyn, New York, 1991 (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century).

XV.10.19 Quisquis igitur potest intellegere verbum, non solum antequam sonet, verum etiam antequam sonorum eius imagines cogitatione volvantur: hoc enim est quod ad nullam pertinet linguam, earum scilicet quae linguae appellantur gentium, quarum nostra latina est: quisquis, inquam, hoc intellegere potest, iam potest videre per hoc speculum atque in hoc aenigmate aliquam Verbi illius similitudinem, de quo dictum est: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Necesse est enim cum verum loquimur, id est, quod scimus loquimur, ex ipsa scientia quam memoria tenemus, nascatur verbum quod eiusmodi sit omnino, cuiusmodi est illa scientia de qua nascitur. Formata quippe cogitatio ab ea re quam scimus, verbum est quod in corde dicimus: quod nec graecum est, nec latinum, nec linguae alicuius alterius; sed cum id opus est in eorum quibus loquimur perferre notitiam, aliquod signum quo significetur assumitur. Et plerumque sonus, aliquando etiam nutus, ille auribus, ille oculis exhibetur, ut per signa corporalia etiam corporis sensibus verbum quod mente gerimus innotescat.

...

10.20 Proinde verbum quod foris sonat, signum est verbi quod intus lucet, cui magis verbi competit nomen. Nam illud quod profertur carnis ore, vox verbi est: verbumque et ipsum dicitur, propter illud a quo ut foris appareret assumptum est. Ita enim verbum nostrum vox quodam modo corporis fit, assumendo eam in qua manifestetur sensibus hominum; sicut Verbum Dei caro factum est, assumendo eam in qua et ipsum manifestaretur sensibus hominum. Et sicut verbum nostrum fit vox, nec mutatur in vocem; ita Verbum Dei caro quidem factum est, sed absit ut mutaretur in carnem. Assumendo

XV.10.19 If anyone then can understand how a word can be, not only before it is spoken aloud but even before the images of its sounds are turned over in thought—this is the word that belongs to no language, that is to none of what are called the languages of the nations, of which ours is Latin; if anyone, I say, can understand this, he can already see through this mirror and in this enigma some likeness of that Word of which it is said, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (Jn 1:1). For when we utter something true, that is when we utter what we know, a word is necessarily born from the knowledge which we hold in the memory, a word which is absolutely the same kind of thing as the knowledge it is born from. It is the thought formed from the thing we know that is the word which we utter in the heart, a word that is neither Greek nor Latin nor any other language; but when it is necessary to convey the knowledge in the language of those we are speaking to, some sign is adopted to signify this word. And usually a sound, sometimes also a gesture is presented, the one to their ears the other to their eyes, in order that bodily signs may make the word we carry in our minds known to their bodily senses.

...

10.20 Thus the word which makes a sound outside is the sign of the word which lights up inside, and it is this latter that primarily deserves the name of “word.” For the one that is uttered by the mouth of flesh is really the sound of a “word,” and it is called “word” too because of the one which assumes it in order to be manifested outwardly. Thus in a certain fashion our word becomes a bodily sound by assuming that in which it is manifested to the senses of men, just as the Word of God became flesh by assuming that in which it too could be manifested to the senses of men. And just as our word becomes sound without being changed into sound, so the Word of

quippe illam, non in eam se consumendo, et hoc nostrum vox fit, et illud caro factum est. Quapropter qui cupit ad qualemcumque similitudinem Verbi Dei, quamvis per multa dissimilem, pervenire, non intueatur verbum nostrum quod sonat in auribus, nec quando voce profertur, nec quando silentio cogitatur. Omnium namque sonantium verba linguarum etiam in silentio cogitantur, et carmina percurreuntur animo, tacente ore corporis: nec solum numeri syllabarum, verum etiam modi cantilenarum, cum sint corporales, et ad eum, qui vocatur auditus, sensum corporis pertinentes, per incorporeas quasdam imagines suas praesto sunt cogitantibus, et tacite cuncta ista volventibus. Sed transeunda sunt haec, ut ad illud perveniatur hominis verbum, per cuius qualemcumque similitudinem sicut in aenigmate videatur utcumque Dei Verbum.

...

Pervenendum est ergo ad illud verbum hominis, ad verbum rationalis animantis, ad verbum non de Deo natae, sed a Deo factae imaginis Dei, quod neque prolativum est in sono, neque cogitativum in similitudine soni, quod alicuius linguae esse necesse sit, sed quod omnia quibus significatur signa praecedit, et gignitur de scientia quae manet in animo, quando eadem scientia intus dicitur, sicuti est. Simillima est enim visio cogitationis, visioni scientiae. Nam quando per sonum dicitur, vel per aliquod corporale signum, non dicitur sicuti est, sed sicut potest videri audirive per corpus. Quando ergo quod in notitia est, hoc est in verbo, tunc est verum verbum, et veritas, qualis exspectatur ab homine, ut quod est in ista, hoc sit et in illo; quod non est in ista, non sit et in illo; hic agnoscitur: Est, est; Non, non. Sic accedit, quantum potest, ista similitudo imaginis factae ad illam similitudinem imaginis natae, qua Deus Filius Patri per omnia substantialiter similis praedicatur.

God became flesh, but it is unthinkable that it should have been changed into flesh. It is by assuming it, not by being consumed into it, that both our word becomes sound and that Word became flesh. Therefore if you wish to arrive at some kind of likeness of the Word of God, however unlike it may be in many ways, do not look at that word of ours which sounds in the ears, neither when it is uttered vocally nor when it is thought of silently. The words of all spoken languages are thought of silently, and people run over songs in their minds while their mouths remain silent; and it is not only the number of syllables either, but the notes of the melodies as well, all of them bodily realities pertaining to the bodily sense called hearing, that the thoughts of those who are thinking them over, and silently pondering them all, find ready to hand in their own kind of non-bodily images. But we must go beyond all these and come to that word of man through whose likeness of a sort the Word of God may somehow or other be seen in an enigma.

...

And so we must come to that word of man, the word of a rational animal, the word of the image of God which is not born of God but made by God, the word which is neither uttered in sound nor thought of in the likeness of sound which necessarily belongs to some language, but which precedes all the signs that signify it and is begotten of the knowledge abiding in the consciousness, when this knowledge is uttered inwardly just exactly as it is. When it is uttered vocally or by some bodily sign, it is not uttered just exactly as it is, but as it can be seen or heard through the body. So when that which is in the awareness is also in a word, then is it a true word, and truth such as a man looks for so that what is in awareness should also be in word and what is not in awareness should not either be in word. It is here that one acknowledges the *Yes, yes; no, no* (Mt 5:37; 2 Cor 1:17; Jas 5:12). In this way this likeness of the made image approaches as far as it can to the likeness of the born image, in which God the Son is declared to be substantially like the Father in all respects.

2. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De dialectica*, V, ed. J.-P. Migne, 1841-1865, vol. 32 (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia*, in *Patrologia Latina*); trans. B. D. Jackson (from the text newly ed. by J. Pinborg), Dordrecht, Boston, 1975.

V. Verbum est uniuscuiusque rei signum, quod ab audiente possit intellegi, a loquente prolatum. Res est quidquid vel sentitur vel intellegitur vel latet. Signum est quod et se ipsum sensui et praeter se aliquid animo ostendit. Loqui est articulata voce signum dare. Articulatam autem dico quae comprehendi litteris potest.

...

Omne verbum sonat. Cum enim est in scripto, non verbum sed verbi signum est; quippe inspectis a legente litteris occurrit animo, quid voce prorumpat. Quid enim aliud litterae scriptae quam se ipsas oculis, praeter se voces animo ostendunt.

...

Cum ergo verbum ore procedit, si propter se procedit id est ut de ipso verbo aliquid quaeratur aut disputetur, res est utique disputationi quaestionique subiecta, sed ipsa res verbum vocatur. Quidquid autem ex verbo non aures sed animus sentit et ipso animo tenetur inclusum, dicibile vocatur. Cum vero verbum procedit non propter se sed propter aliud aliquid significandum, dictio vocatur. Res autem ipsa, quae iam verbum non est neque verbi in mente conceptio, sive habeat verbum quo significari possit, sive non habeat, nihil aliud quam res vocatur proprio iam nomine. Haec ergo quattuor distincta teneantur; verbum, dicibile, dictio, res. Quod dixi verbum, et verbum est et verbum significat. Quod dixi dicibile, verbum est, nec tamen verbum, sed quod in verbo intellegitur et animo continetur, significat. Quod dixi dictionem, verbum est, sed quod iam illa duo simul id est et ipsum verbum et quod fit in animo per verbum significat. Quod dixi rem, verbum est, quod praeter illa tria quae dicta sunt quidquid restat significat.

V. A word is a sign of any sort of thing. It is spoken by a speaker and can be understood by a hearer. A thing is whatever is sensed or is understood or is hidden. A sign is something which is itself sensed and which indicates to the mind something beyond the sign itself. To speak is to give a sign by means of an articulate utterance. By an articulate utterance I mean one which can be expressed in letters.

...

Every word is a sound, for when it is written it is not a word but the sign of a word. When we read, the letters we see suggest to the mind the sounds of the utterance. For written letters indicate to the eyes something other than themselves and indicate to the mind utterances beyond themselves.

...

When, therefore, a word is uttered for its own sake, that is, so that something is being asked or argued about the word itself, clearly it is the thing which is the subject of disputation and inquiry; but the thing in this case is called a *verbum*. Now that which the mind not the ears perceives from the word and which is held within the mind itself is called a *dicibile*. When a word is spoken not for its own sake but for the sake of signifying something else, it is called a *dictio*. The thing itself which is neither a word nor the conception of a word in the mind, whether or not it has a word by which it can be signified, is called nothing but a *res* in the proper sense of the name. Therefore, these four are to be kept distinct: the *verbum*, the *dicibile*, the *dictio*, and the *res*. *Verbum* both is a word and signifies a word. *Dicibile* is a word; however, it does not signify a word but what is understood in the word and contained in the mind. *Dictio* is also a word, but it signifies both the first two, that is, the word itself and what is brought about in the mind by means of the word. *Res* is a word which signifies whatever remains beyond the three that have been mentioned.

3. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De magistro*, 2.3, 4.8, 10.34, 11.36, ed. J.-P. Migne, 1841-1865, vol. 32 (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia*, in *Patrologia Latina*); trans. R. P. Russell, Washington (DC), 1968 (The Fathers of the Church, vol. 59: The Teacher; The Free Choice of the Will; Grace and Free Will).

2.3 Aug. - *Constat ergo inter nos verba signa esse.*

Ad. - Constat.

Aug. - Quid? signum, nisi aliquid significet, potest esse signum?

Ad. - Non potest.

...

2.3 Aug. Do we agree then that words are signs?

Ad. We do.

Aug. Well, can there be a sign unless it signifies something?

Ad. No.

...

4.8 Aug. - *Quid, cum verba scripta invenimus? num verba non sunt, an signa verborum verius intelleguntur? ut verbum sit quod cum aliquo significato articulata voce profertur; vox autem nullo alio sensu quam auditu percipi potest: ita fit ut cum scribitur verbum, signum fiat oculis, quo illud quod ad aures pertinet, veniat in mentem.*

...

10.34 *Quod ut apertius intellegas, finge nos primum nunc audire quod dicitur: "caput"; et nescientes utrum vox ista sit tantummodo sonans, an aliquid etiam significans, quaerere quid sit caput (memento nos non rei quae significatur, sed ipsius signi velle habere notitiam, qua caremus profecto, quamdiu cuius signum est ignoramus): si ergo ita quaerentibus res ipsa digito demonstratur, hac conspecta discimus signum quod audieramus tantum, nondum noveramus. In quo tamen signo cum duo sint, sonus et significatio, sonum certe non per signum percipimus, sed eo ipso aure pulsata; significationem autem re, quae significatur, aspecta... Et id maxime tibi nitor persuadere, si potero, per ea signa quae verba appellantur, nos nihil discere; potius enim, ut dixi, vim verbi, id est significationem quae latet in sono, re ipsa quae significatur cognita, discimus, quam illam tali significatione percipimus.*

...

11.36 *Hactenus verba valuerunt, quibus ut plurimum tribuam, admonent tantum ut quaeramus res, non exhibent ut noverimus. Is me autem aliquid docet, qui vel oculis, vel ulli corporis sensui, vel ipsi etiam menti praebet ea quae cognoscere volo. Verbis igitur nisi verba non discimus, imo sonitum strepitumque verborum: nam si ea quae signa non sunt, verba esse non possunt, quamvis iam auditum verbum, nescio tamen verbum esse, donec quid significet sciam. Rebus ergo cognitis, verborum quoque cognitio perficitur; verbis vero auditis, nec verba discuntur. Non enim ea verba quae novimus, discimus; aut quae non novimus, didicisse nos possumus confiteri, nisi eorum significatione percepta, quae non auditione vocum emissarum, sed rerum significatarum cognitione contingit. Verissima quippe ratio est, et verissime dicitur, cum verba proferuntur, aut scire nos quid significant, aut nescire: si scimus, commemorari potius quam discere; si autem nescimus, ne commemorari quidem, sed fortasse ad quaerendum admoneri.*

4.8 Aug. What about words we find written? Are they words, or are they more properly thought of as signs of words? To be a word, something must be uttered with articulated sound and have some meaning, and sound can be perceived by no other sense than hearing. Consequently, when a word is written, the eyes are given a sign by which something pertaining to hearing is brought to mind.

...

10.34 Aug. To grasp this point more clearly, let us pretend that we now hear the word "head" for the first time, and, not knowing whether it is merely a vocal sound or whether it also signifies something, we inquire what "head" is. Remember now, we want to become acquainted, not with the thing signified, but with the sign itself, which we actually do not know as long as we do not know the thing it signifies. But if the reality is pointed out to us while we are inquiring about it, it is by seeing this reality that we learn its sign, which we had heard before but had not understood. But since there are two things about this sign, namely, the sound and its meaning, we certainly do not perceive the sound because it is a sign, but, by the very fact that it strikes the ear, whereas its meaning is perceived by looking at the reality it signifies... The point I am trying most of all to make you see, if I can, is this, that we learn nothing from signs which we call words. For, as I have pointed out, it is rather a question of learning the sense of the word, that is, the meaning hidden in the sound, from a previous knowledge of the reality signified than it is of perceiving that reality from a sign of this kind.

...

11.36 Aug. So far, the most I can say for words is that they merely intimate that we should look for realities; they do not present them to us for our knowledge. But the man who teaches me is one who presents to my eyes or to any bodily sense, or even to the mind itself, something that I wish to know. So by means of words we learn only words, or better, the sound and noise of words. For if something cannot be a word unless it is a sign, I still cannot recognize it as a word until I know what it signifies, even though I have heard the word. Accordingly, it is by knowing the realities that we also come to a knowledge of their words, whereas, by the sound of words, we do not even learn the words. For we cannot learn words we already know, and, as for those which we do not know, we cannot profess to have learned them until we have seen their meaning. And this comes about, not by hearing the sounds they make, but from a knowledge of the realities they signify. It is perfectly logical and true to conclude that whenever words are spoken, we either know what they mean or we do not. If we know, they recall rather than teach something to us; if we do not know, they cannot even recall something, though they may lead us to inquire.

4. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De Trinitate*, IX, 7.12, 10.15, 11.16, ed. J.-P. Migne, 1841-1865, vol. 42 (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia*, in *Patrologia Latina*); trans. E. Hill, ed. J. E. Rotelle, Brooklyn, New York, 1991 (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century).

IX.7.12 In illa igitur aeterna veritate, ex qua temporalia facta sunt omnia, formam secundum quam sumus, et secundum quam vel in nobis vel in corporibus vera et recta ratione aliquid operamur, visu mentis aspicimus; atque inde conceptam rerum veracem notitiam, tamquam verbum apud nos habemus, et dicendo intus gignimus; nec a nobis nascendo discedit. Cum autem ad alios loquimur, verbo intus manenti ministerium vocis adhibemus, aut alicuius signi corporalis, ut per quandam commemorationem sensibilem tale aliquid fiat etiam in animo audientis, quale de loquentis animo non recedit. Nihil itaque agimus per membra corporis in factis dictisque nostris, quibus vel approbantur vel improbantur mores hominum, quod non verbo apud nos intus edito praevenimus. Nemo enim aliquid volens facit, quod non in corde suo prius dixerit.

...

10.15 Recte ergo quaeritur, utrum omnis notitia verbum, an tantum amata notitia. Novimus enim et ea quae odimus; sed nec concepta, nec parta dicenda sunt animo, quae nobis displicent. Non enim omnia quae quoquo modo tangunt, concipiuntur, ut tantum nota sint, non tamen verba dicantur; ista de quibus nunc agimus. Aliter enim dicuntur verba quae spatia temporum syllabis tenent, sive pronuntientur, sive cogitentur; aliter omne quod notum est, verbum dicitur animo impressum, quamdiu de memoria proferri et definiri potest, quamvis res ipsa displiceat; aliter cum placet quod mente concipitur... Verbum est igitur, quod nunc discernere et insinuare volumus, cum amore notitia. Cum itaque se mens novit et amat, iungitur ei amore verbum eius. Et quoniam amat notitiam et novit amorem, et verbum in amore est et amor in verbo, et utrumque in amante atque dicente.

...

11.16 Ex quo colligitur, quia cum se mens ipsa novit atque approbat, sic est eadem notitia verbum eius, ut ei sit par omnino et aequale, atque identidem; quia neque inferioris essentiae notitia est, sicut corporis; neque superioris, sicut Dei. Et cum habeat notitia similitudinem ad eam rem quam novit, hoc est, cuius notitia est; haec habet perfectam et aequalem, qua mens ipsa, quae novit, est nota. Ideoque et imago et verbum est, quia de illa exprimitur cum cognoscendo eidem coaequatur, et est gignentem aequale quod genitum est.

IX.7.12 Thus it is that in that eternal truth according to which all temporal things were made we observe with the eye of the mind the form according to which we are and according to which we do anything with true and right reason, either in ourselves or in bodies. And by this form we conceive true knowledge of things, which we have with us as a kind of word that we beget by uttering inwardly, and that does not depart from us when it is born. When we speak to others we put our voice or some bodily gesture at the disposal of the word that abides within, in order that by a kind of perceptible reminder the same sort of thing might happen in the mind of the listener as exists in and does not depart from the mind of the speaker. And so there is nothing that we do with our bodies in deeds or words to express approval or disapproval of the behavior of men, which we have not anticipated with a word uttered inside ourselves. Nobody voluntarily does anything that he has not previously uttered as a word in his heart.

...

10.15 It is right then to ask whether all knowledge is a word, or only loved knowledge. We also know what we hate, but we can scarcely talk of things we dislike being either conceived or brought forth by the consciousness. Not everything that touches our mind in any way is conceived, so it may only be known without being called the kind of word we are now talking about. In one sense we give the name of word to whatever occupies a space of time with its syllables, whether it is spoken aloud or merely thought; in another, everything that is known is called a word impressed on the consciousness, as long as it can be produced from the memory and described, even when we dislike it; but in the sense we are now using, that is called a word which we like when it is conceived by the mind... The kind of word then that we are now wishing to distinguish and propose is "knowledge with love." So when the mind knows and loves itself, its word is joined to it with love. And since it loves knowledge and knows love, the word is in the love and the love in the word and both in the lover and the utterer.

...

11.16 From this we can gather that when the mind knows and approves itself, this knowledge is its word in such a way that it matches it exactly and is equal to it and identical, since it is neither knowledge of an inferior thing like body nor of a superior one like God. And while any knowledge has a likeness to the thing it knows, that is to the thing it is the knowledge of, this knowledge by which the knowing mind is known has a perfect and equal likeness. And the reason it is both image and word, is that it is expressed from the mind when it is made equal to it by knowing it; and what is begotten is equal to the begetter.

5. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De Trinitate*, XV, 15, 25, ed. J.-P. Migne, 1841-1865, vol. 42 (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia*, in *Patrologia Latina*); trans. E. Hill, ed. J. E. Rotelle, Brooklyn, New York, 1991 (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century).

XV.15.25 *Illa etiam quae ita sciuntur, ut numquam excidere possint, quoniam praesentia sunt, et ad ipsius animi naturam pertinent, ut est illud quod nos vivere scimus (manet enim hoc quamdiu animus manet, et quia semper manet animus, et hoc semper manet): id ergo et si qua reperiuntur similia, in quibus imago Dei potius intuenda est, etiamsi semper sciuntur, tamen quia non semper etiam cogitantur, quomodo de his dicatur verbum sempiternum, cum verbum nostrum nostra cogitatione dicatur, invenire difficile est. Sempiternum est enim animo vivere, sempiternum est scire quod vivit: nec tamen sempiternum est cogitare vitam suam, vel cogitare scientiam vitae suae; quoniam cum aliud atque aliud coeperit, hoc desinet cogitare, quamvis non desinat scire. Ex quo fit, ut si potest esse in animo aliqua scientia sempiterna, et sempiterna esse non potest eiusdem scientiae cogitatio, et verbum verum nostrum intimum nisi nostra cogitatione non dicitur, solus Deus intellegatur habere Verbum sempiternum sibi que coaeternum. Nisi forte dicendum est, ipsam possibilitatem cogitationis, quoniam id quod scitur, etiam quando non cogitatur, potest tamen veraciter cogitari, verbum esse tam perpetuum, quam scientia ipsa perpetua est. Sed quomodo est verbum, quod nondum in cogitationis visione formatum est? Quomodo erit simile scientiae de qua nascitur, si eius non habet formam, et ideo iam vocatur verbum quia potest habere? Tale est enim ac si dicatur, ideo iam vocandum esse verbum quia potest esse verbum. Sed quid est quod potest esse verbum, et ideo iam dignum est verbi nomine? Quid est, inquam, hoc formabile nondumque formatum, nisi quiddam mentis nostrae, quod hac atque hac volubili quadam motione iactamus, cum a nobis nunc hoc, nunc illud, sicut inventum fuerit vel occurrerit, cogitatur? Et tunc fit verum verbum, quando illud quod nos dixi volubili motione iactare, ad id quod scimus pervenit, atque inde formatur, eius omnimodam similitudinem capiens; ut quomodo res quaeque scitur, sic etiam cogitetur, id est, sine voce, sine vocis cogitatione, quae profecto alicuius linguae est, sic in corde dicatur. Ac per hoc etiam si concedamus, ne de controversia vocabuli laborare videamur, iam vocandum esse verbum quiddam illud mentis nostrae quod de nostra scientia formari potest, etiam priusquam formatum sit, quia iam, ut ita dicam, formabile est; quis non videat, quanta hic sit dissimilitudo ab illo Dei Verbo, quod in forma Dei sic est 161, ut non antea fuerit formabile postque formatum, nec aliquando esse possit informe, sed sit forma simplex et simpliciter aequalis ei de quo est, et cui mirabiliter coaeterna est.*

XV.15.25 There are, certainly, things which are so known that they can never escape us, because they are present and belong to the very nature of the consciousness, like our knowing that we are still alive. This remains as long as the consciousness or mind remains, and as the mind always remains, so does this always remain. This and similar cases that could be found, in which the image of God is for preference to be observed, may indeed always be known, but they are not always being thought about, and so it is difficult to see how one can talk of an everlasting word about these things, since our word is only uttered by our thought. To be alive is everlasting for the mind and to know that it is alive is everlasting. But to think about its life or about its knowledge of its life is not everlasting, since when it begins to think about something else it stops thinking about this, although it does not stop knowing it. It follows then that if there can be some everlasting knowledge in the mind, while there cannot be everlasting thought about this knowledge, and if our true and innermost word is only uttered by our thinking, only God can be understood to have an everlasting Word co-eternal with himself. Unless perhaps you could say that the very possibility of thought, given that what is known can be truly thought about even when it is not being thought about, is a word as continuous as the knowledge itself is continuous. But how can that be a word which has not yet been formed in the sight which is actual thought? How will it be like the knowledge it is born from if it does not have its form? Is it already to be called a word because it can have this form? That amounts to saying that it should already be called a word because it can be a word. But in that case, what is it that can be a word and therefore already deserves the name of word? What, I ask, is this formable not-yet-formed thing, but something of our mind which we cast about hither and thither with a kind of chopping and changing motion as we think about now this and now that just as it occurs to us or comes our way? And the time you get a true word is when this thing that I have said we cast around with a chopping and changing motion falls onto something we know and is formed from it and takes on its exact likeness, so that the thing is thought about exactly as it is known, that is to say is uttered in the heart without either voice or thought of voice which would ipso facto belong to some language. And thus even if we concede, to avoid thrashing around in an argument about words, that something of our mind which can be formed from our knowledge should already be called a word even before it has been formed, because it is already, so to say, formable; still, who could fail to see what a vast dissimilarity there is here to that Word of God which is in the form of God without first being formable and afterward formed, and which could never ever be formless, but is simple form and simply equal to him from whom it is and with whom it is wonderfully co-eternal?