



“THE CROSS ALONE IS OUR THEOLOGY”

REMEMBERING, CELEBRATING AND APPLYING LUTHER'S
HEIDELBERG DISPUTATION 500 YEARS LATER



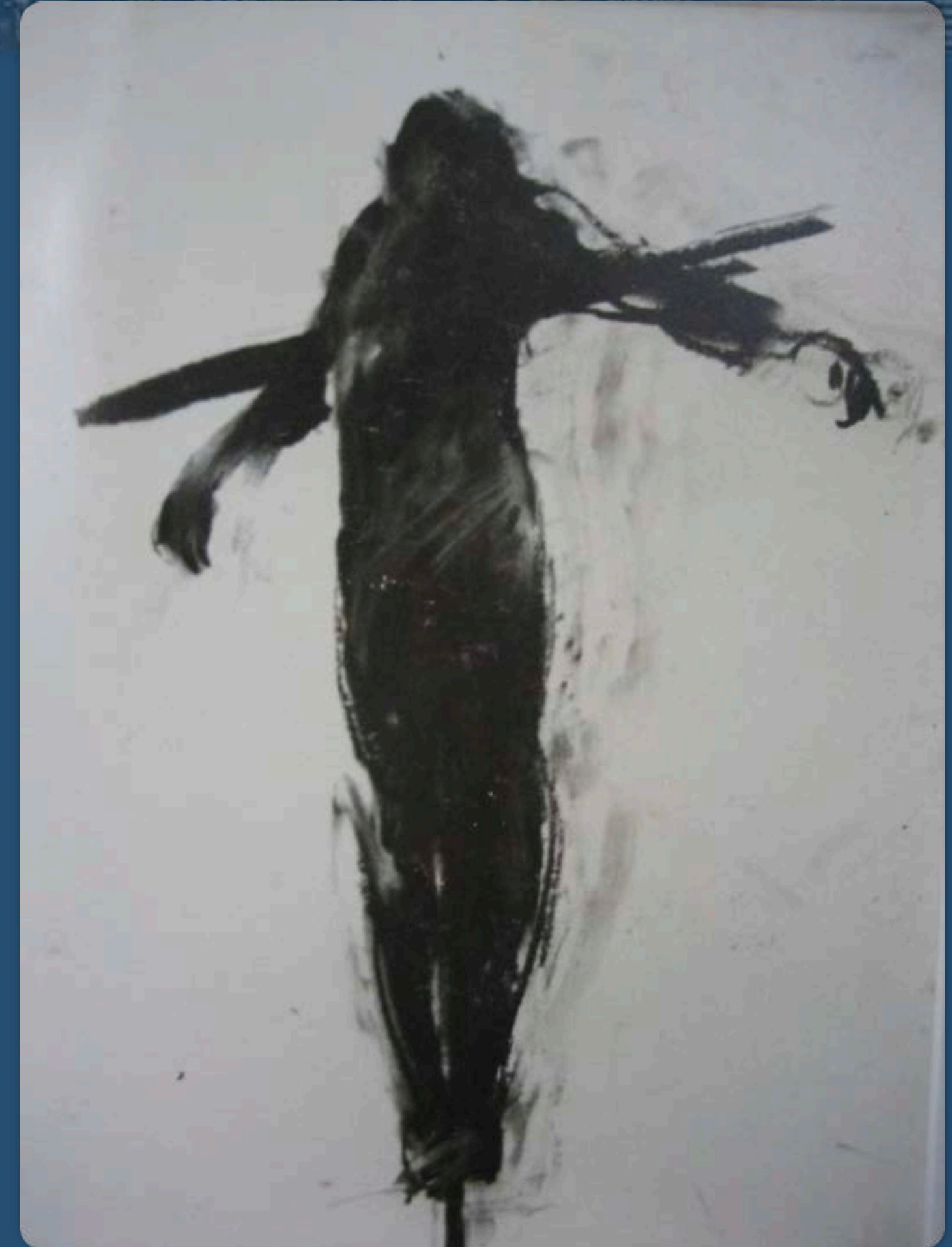
#miLCMSpastors



Michigan District
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

HEIDELBERG DISPUTATION:

- 5 thematic groupings
 - 1-6: the paradox of divine and human works
 - 7-12: “fear of God” in human works
 - 13-18: free will and grace
 - 19-24: the CRUX of the paradox
 - 25-28: the paradox of divine and human works unraveled



WHAT IS THE HEIDELBERG DISPUTATION?

1. It is a new theological method/paradigm that establishes truth through paradox rather than the prevalent syllogism of scholastic dialectic. “Ergo” vs. “Dennoch”
2. It is a new description of sin which focuses on idolatry rather than ethics or immorality. “Uti” vs. “Frui”
3. It is the seedbed for a pastoral theology that gives hope to the suffering. “Vita passiva” vs. “Vita activa/contemplativa”

THEOLOGICAL METHOD: SYLLOGISM VS. PARADOX — ERGO VS. DENNOCH

“Distrusting completely our own wisdom, according to that counsel of the Holy Spirit, “Do not rely on your own insight” (Prov. 3:5), we humbly present to the judgment of all those who wish to be here these **theological paradoxes**, so that it may become clear whether they have been deduced well or poorly from St. Paul, the especially chosen vessel and instrument of Christ, and also from St. Augustine, his most trustworthy interpreter.”

1. The law of God, the most salutary doctrine of life, cannot advance man on his way to righteousness, but rather hinders him. ...
3. Although the works of man always seem attractive and good, they are nevertheless likely to be mortal sins.

PARADOX OF CROSS

19. That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the “invisible” things of God as though they were clearly “perceptible in those things which have been made” (Rom. 1:20).



PARADOX OF CROSS

20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and “backside” of God (*posteriora dei*) [cf. Ex. 33:23] seen through **suffering** and the **cross**.



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UTI — FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

De doctrina christiana:

“There are some things, then, which are to be **enjoyed**, others which are to be **used**, others still which enjoy and use. Those things which are objects of **enjoyment** make us happy. Those things which are objects of **use** assist, and support us in our efforts after happiness, so that we can attain the things that make us happy and rest in them.”

AUGUSTINE

UTI — FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

Suppose, then, we were wanderers in a strange country, and could not live happily away from our fatherland, and that we felt wretched in our wandering, and wishing to put an end to our misery, determined to return home. ...

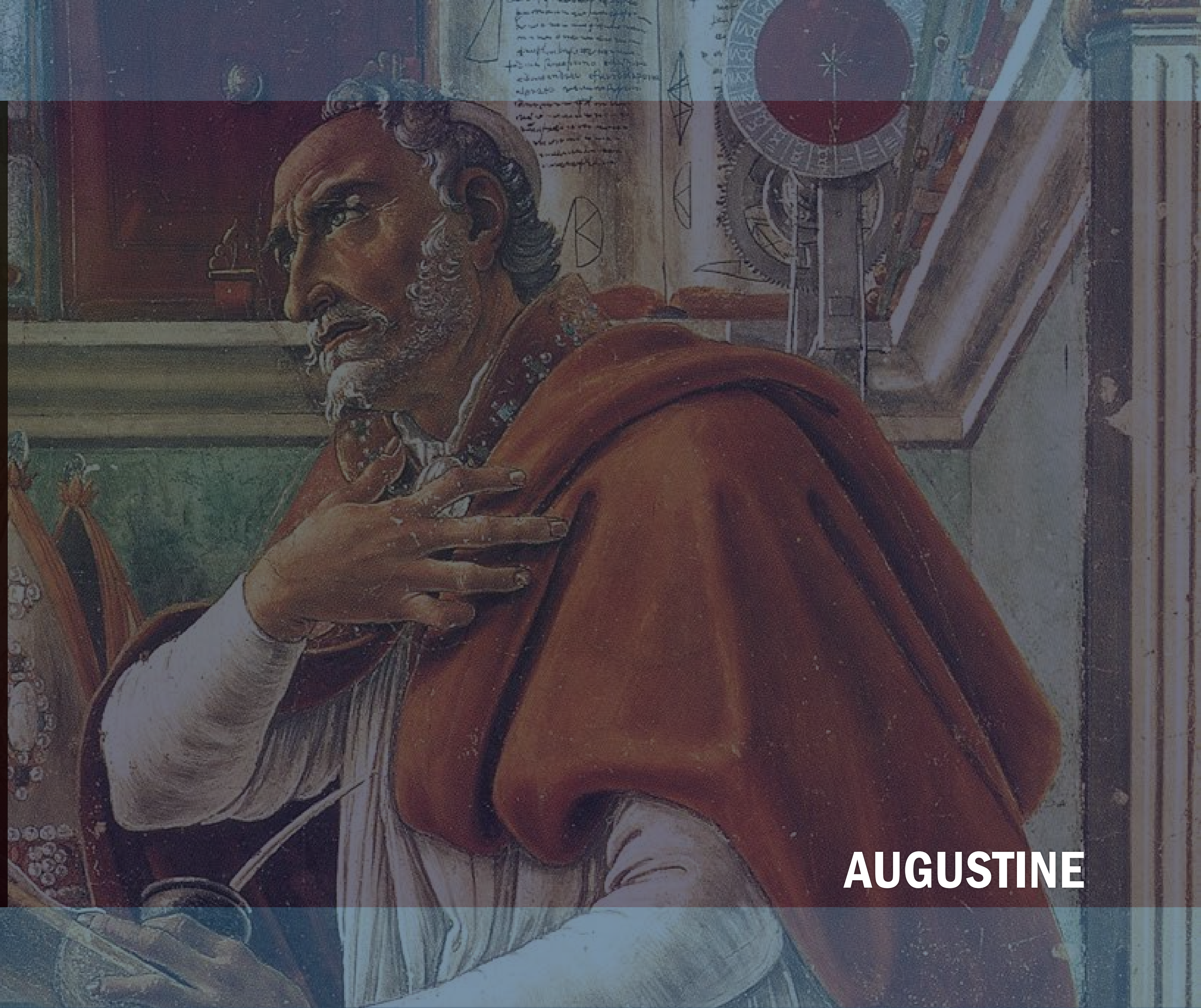


AUGUSTINE

UTI — FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

But the **beauty** of the country through which we pass, and the very **pleasure** of the motion, charm our hearts, and turning these things which we ought to **use** into objects of **enjoyment**, we become unwilling to hasten the end of our journey. Becoming engrossed in a counterfeit delight, our thoughts are diverted from that home whose delights would make us truly happy.

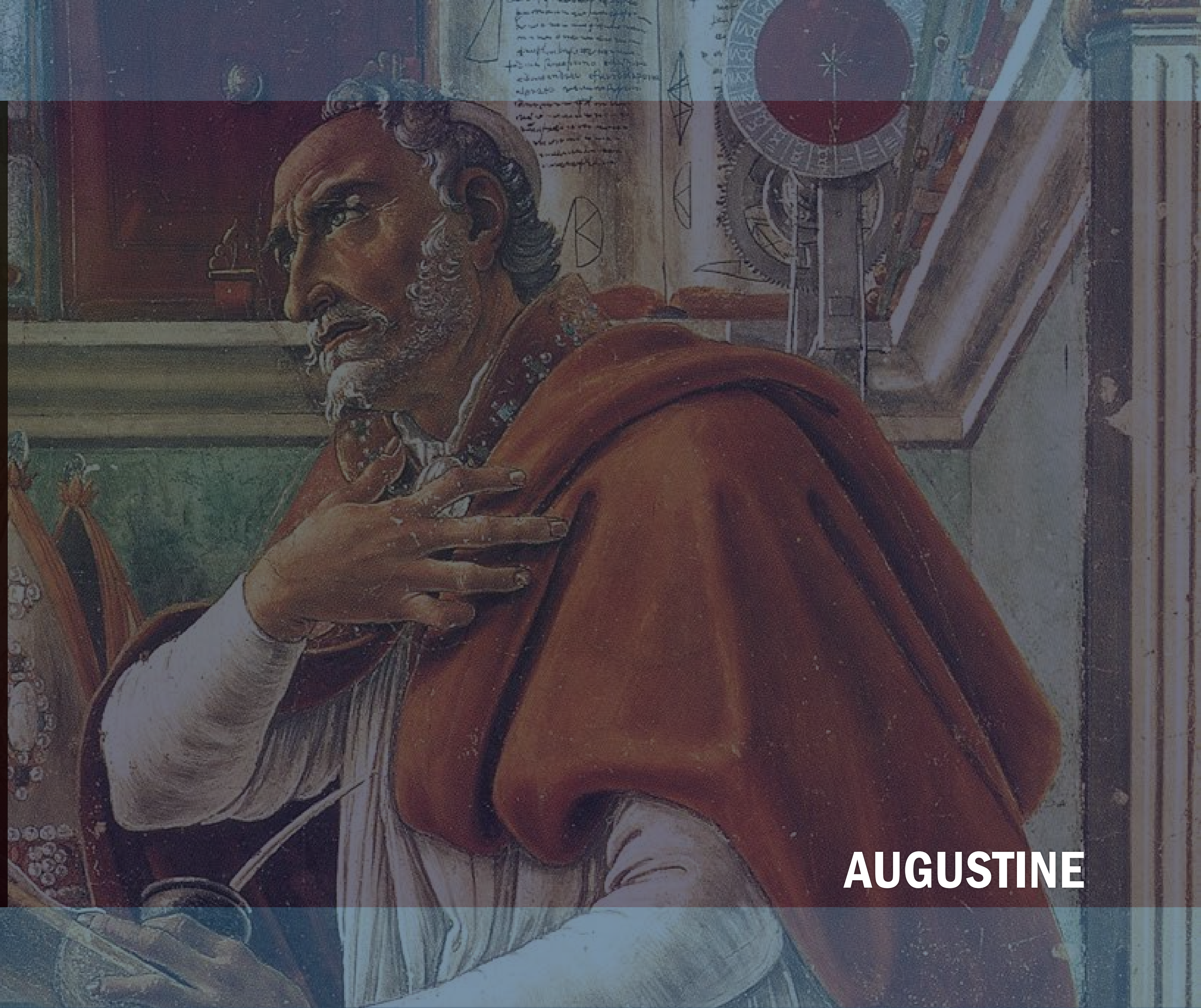
AUGUSTINE



UTI — FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

“Such is a picture of our condition in this life of mortality. We have wandered far from God; and if we wish to return to our Father's home, this world must be **used**, not **enjoyed**, so that the invisible things of God may be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made—that is, that by means of what is material and temporary we may lay hold upon that which is spiritual and eternal.”

AUGUSTINE



UTI — FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

Luther, *Romans Lectures*:

“Our nature, by the corruption of the first sin, is so deeply curved in on itself that it not only bends the best gifts of God towards itself and **enjoys** them, ... but it also fails to realize that it so wickedly, cursedly, and viciously seeks all things, even God, for its own sake” (LW 25, 313)



LUTHER

UTI — FRUI

(USE & ENJOYMENT)

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LUTHER

UTI — FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

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5. The works of men are thus not mortal sins (we speak of works which are apparently good), as though they were crimes.



LUTHER

UTI – FRUI (USE & ENJOYMENT)

7. The works of the righteous would be mortal sins if they would not be feared as mortal sins by the righteous themselves out of pious fear of God.

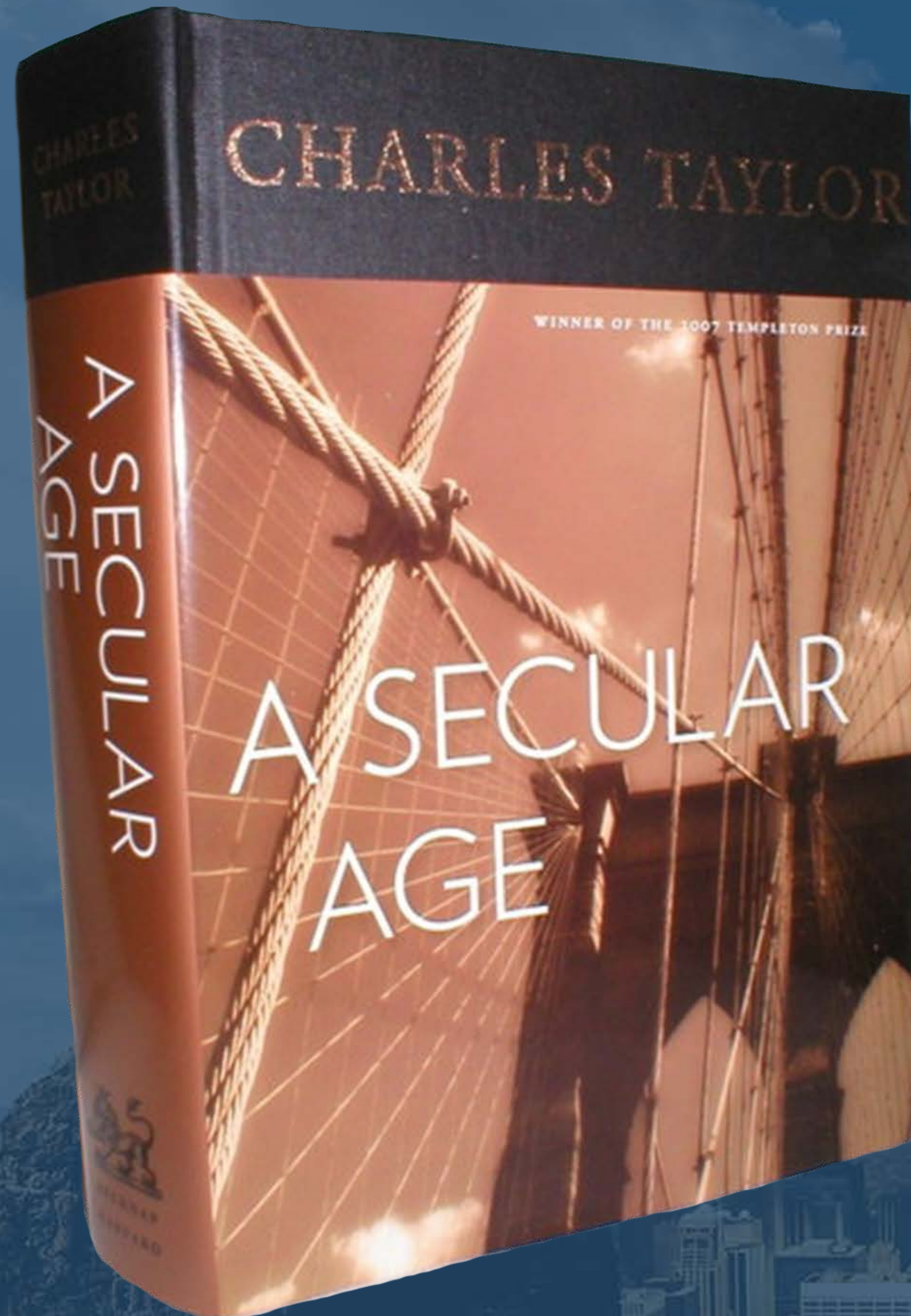
8. By so much more are the works of man mortal sins when they are done without fear and in unadulterated, evil self-security.

11. Arrogance cannot be avoided or true hope be present unless the judgment of condemnation is feared in every work.

22. That wisdom which sees the invisible things of God in works as perceived by man is completely puffed up, blinded, and hardened.

24. Yet that wisdom is not of itself evil, nor is the law to be evaded; but without the theology of the cross man misuses the best in the worst manner.

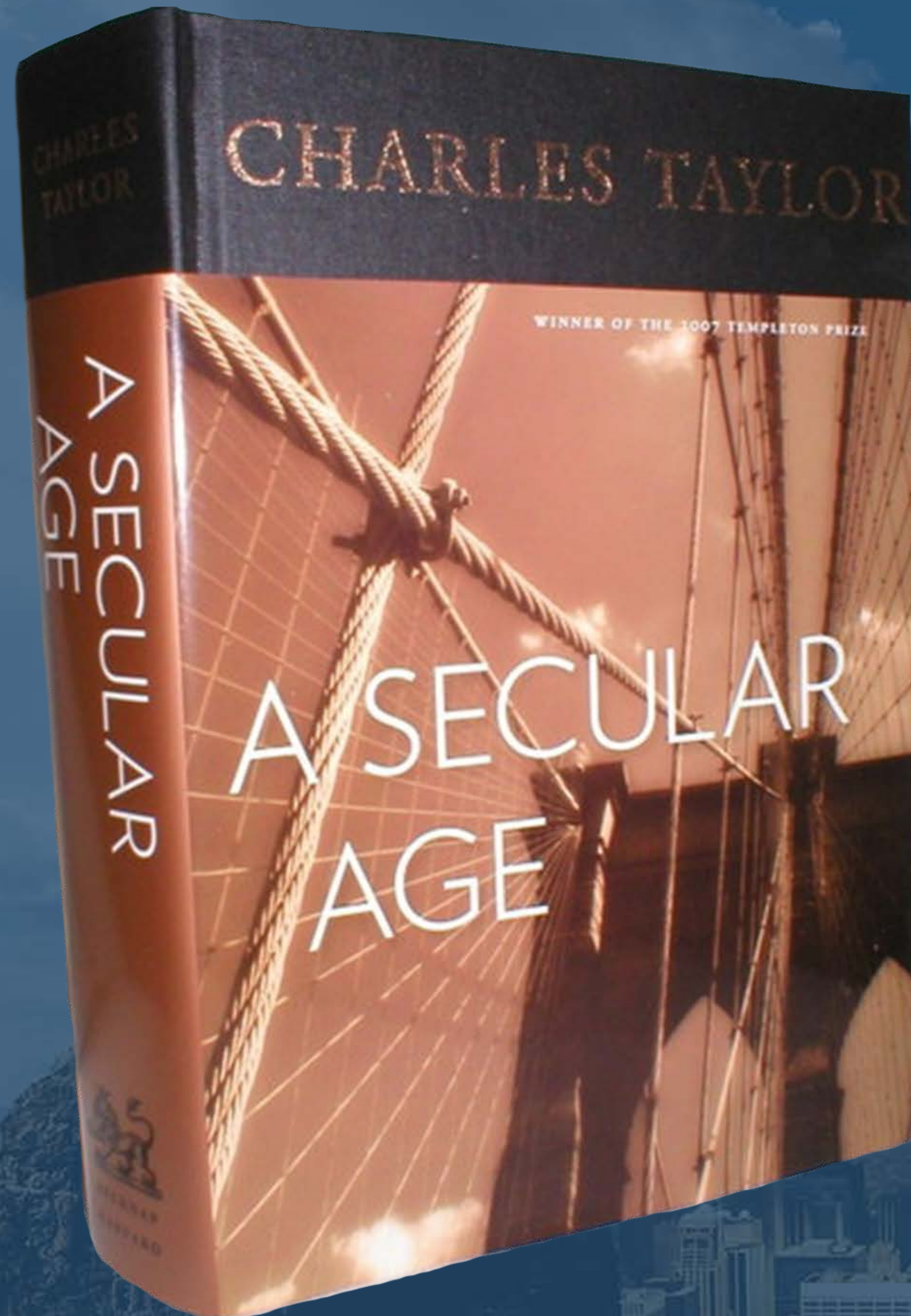
LUTHER



CHARLES TAYLOR

A SECULAR AGE

“One way to put the question that I want to answer here is this: why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?”



CHARLES TAYLOR

A SECULAR AGE

“religion simply becomes unnecessary when technology gets to a certain level: we don’t need God any more, because we know how to get it [anything that we need] ourselves”

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PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN SUFFERING

VITA PASSIVA

21.

A theology of glory calls evil good and good evil.

A theology of the cross calls the thing what it
actually is.

