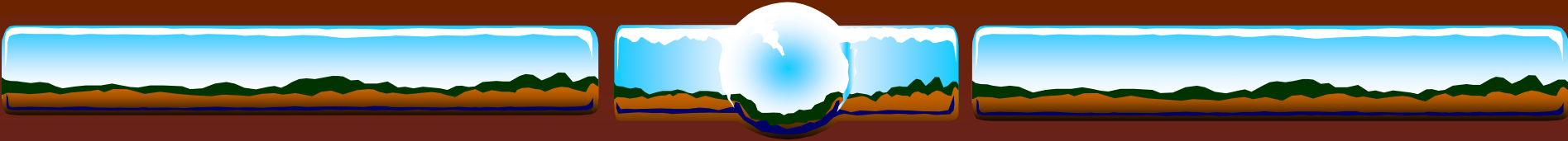


*Life's Ultimate Questions*  
“Augustine”

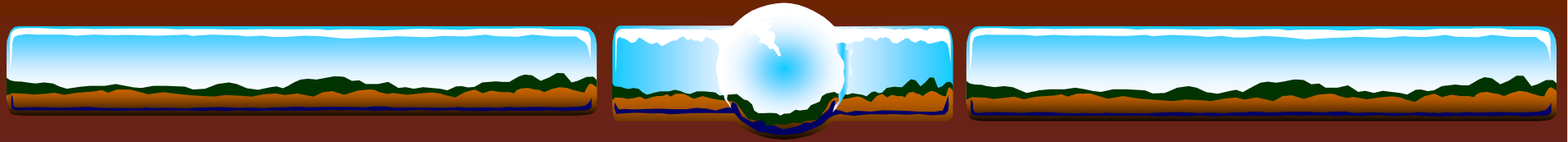
Christopher Ullman, Instructor  
Christian Life College



# Augustine (354 – 430)

- Born in what is now Algeria, North Africa
- Christian mother Monica had a strong influence
- Was sexually promiscuous
  - Has mistress from age 17-29
  - Fathers an illegitimate son at age 19
- Follower of Manicheanism from age 19
  - Dualism provided an answer to the problem of evil
    - God wasn't all good, and
    - Therefore evil's existence had a rational cause
  - Was able to keep on partying





# Augustine's Path to Christianity

- Found his talents as an orator and as a teacher could make a good life for himself
- Ambrose planted seeds of faith by removing reasons for doubt
- Platonic philosophy also removed reasons for doubt
- Life of sin held him in bondage
- Converted to Christianity at age 32
  - “Take up and read” – Romans 13:13-14
  - Hearing from God delivered him from his sin and convinced him to surrender to Jesus

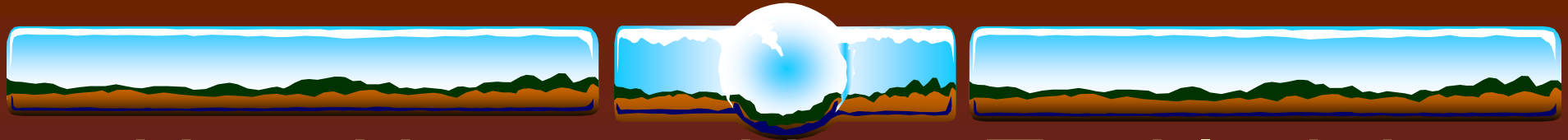
# The Problem of Evil, or Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

**The Problem: How can these three statements all be true?**

1. God is all good
2. God is all powerful
3. Evil exists, but why?
  - Either God isn't all good, or
  - God isn't all powerful



**Why should I believe in a being who either isn't strong enough or good enough to put an end to evil?**

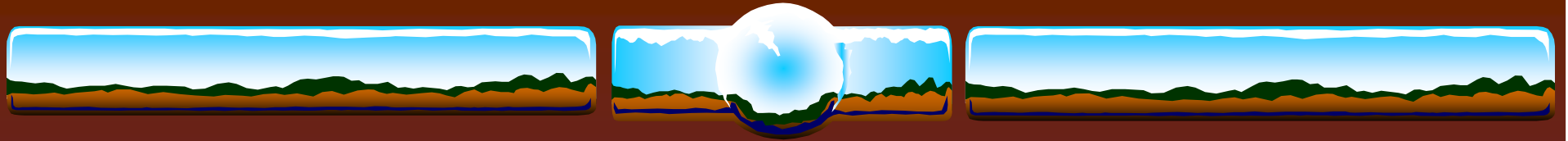


# How Humans Have Tackled the Problem of Evil

**Atheism** (there is no such being as God):

**Agnosticism** (if there is a God, he can't be known, and is irrelevant):

- Evil undeniably exists
- Humans must find answers to reduce the effects of bad moral choices
  - Quit blaming a devil
  - Quit waiting for help from a non-existent (or nonchalant) god
- Ultimately, either “Life’s a b\_ \_ \_ \_ , and then you die,” or “Life is what you make of it”



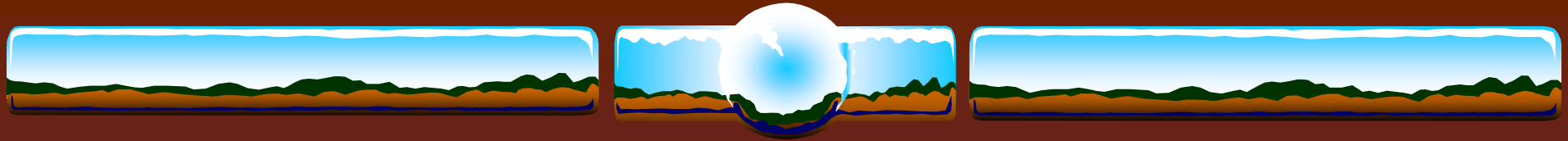
# How Humans Have Tackled the Problem of Evil

**Manicheanism (and Zoroastrianism, Greek paganism, and Eastern paganism):**

- Deity isn't all good
  - multiplicity of gods, or dual nature within one god
  - constant struggle between good and evil

**Process Theology (influences present in Social Gospel Movement, Liberation Theology, Amillennialism):**

- God isn't all powerful
  - Believers pool their moral resources with God's finite goodness
  - Together, evil eventually is defeated

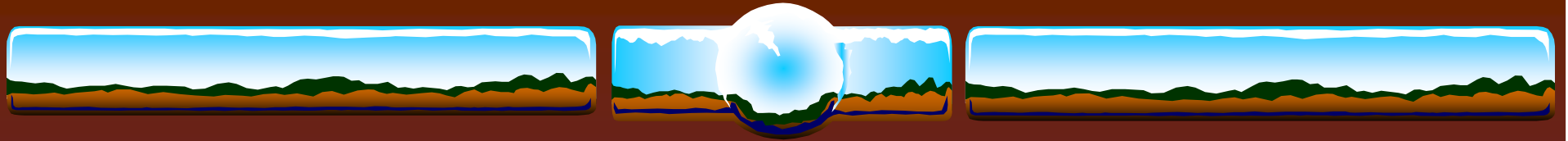


# How Humans Have Tackled the Problem of Evil

## Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, New Age:

- Evil doesn't exist
  - Moral dualism is an illusion
  - Merge with the One, or
  - "Awake" in Nirvana, or
  - Find peace in the Yin and the Yang
  - All will be well when you
    - Cease to believe in "good vs. evil" and
    - Find the god within

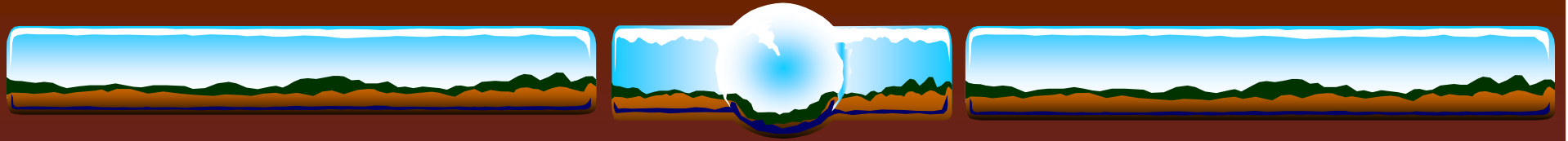




# How Humans Have Solved the Problem of Evil

Christianity, Judaism, Islam:

- God is all good and all powerful, and evil does exist
  - Moral evil (sin and its direct consequences) is a necessary condition of humans having free will (“the free-will defense”)
  - Non-moral evil (natural disasters, etc.) exists to perfect us (“the vale of soul-making defense”)



# A Closer Look at Evil

Augustine let the problem of evil keep him from God, so after his conversion he studies the undeniable reality called evil (*Confessions* includes some of humanity's deepest thoughts on the subject)

- All God's creations were good
  - Some goods were higher than other goods
- Angels and humans have the ability to choose
  - This ability was corrupted when they chose lower goods instead of higher goods

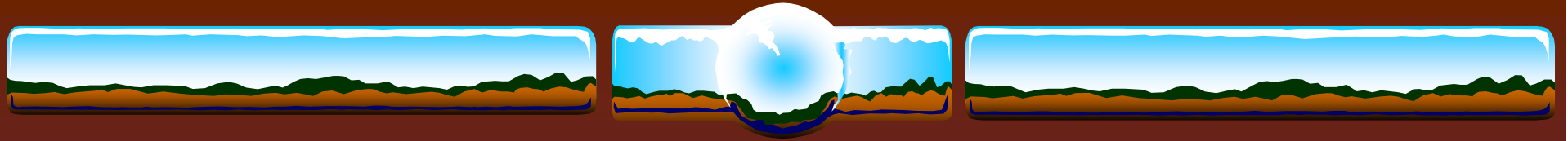


# More about Evil

Augustine taught that evil's "existence" is not independent

- Evil is the privation of Good
  - Evil/Good = Darkness/Light
  - Evil/Good = Death/Life
- Evil parasitizes the Good
  - The parasite's existence is never of a higher order than its host's existence

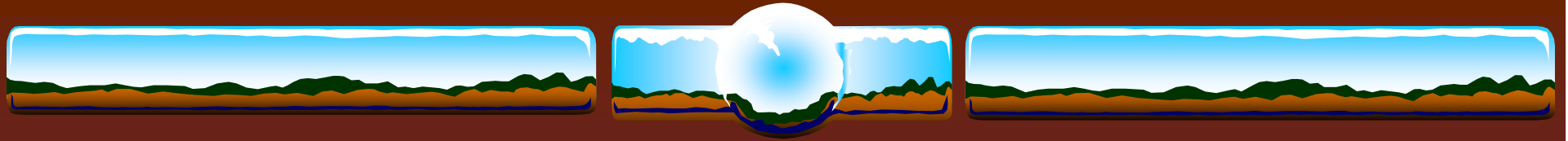




# Still More about Evil

Augustine taught that evil's "existence" is not necessary

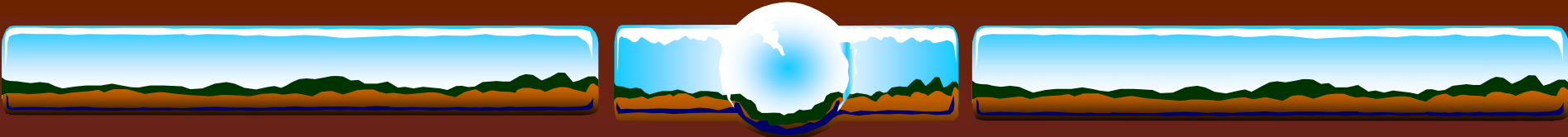
- God existed first, and God is good
- Evil entered creation when will (a good faculty) was misused
  - Humanity's main problem is the perverted will
- Good can be appreciated without there being evil
- **The City of God** is inhabited by humans with converted wills
  - It will never go away, even though Rome goes away (this is why Augustine wrote *The City of God*)<sub>11</sub>



# What We Know from the Beginning

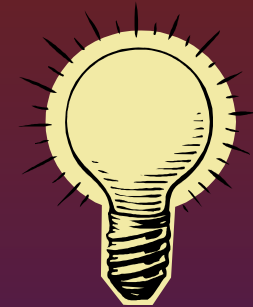
- The notion of unity
  - This is one dog
  - This is not merely an accumulation of many dog parts
  - It isn't your senses that led you to know that this is one dog
  - How then do you know it is one dog?





# What We Know from the Beginning (continued)

- The Forms
  - Remember Plato and his concept that ideas are eternal?
    - The idea of “one” is one of those eternal ideas
  - Eternal ideas are the foundation stones of all human knowledge
  - You don’t recall the Forms from a past life
    - God implants these concepts in you from birth, since you are created in His image





# How We Know Eternal Truths (Universals)

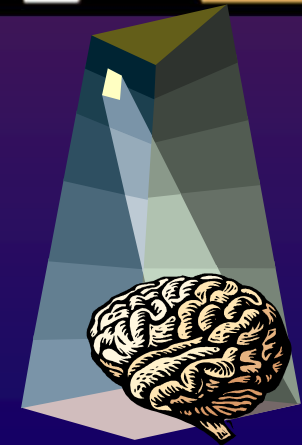
- Not by human teaching alone
- Christ teaches us
  - Christ's presence in us illuminates our minds
  - This isn't a once-for-all event, but a continual process
- Your unaided human mind is necessary but not sufficient for the task of knowing

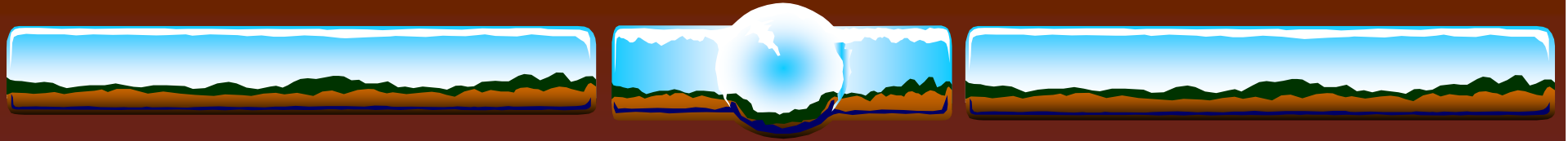




# How God Makes Knowledge Possible

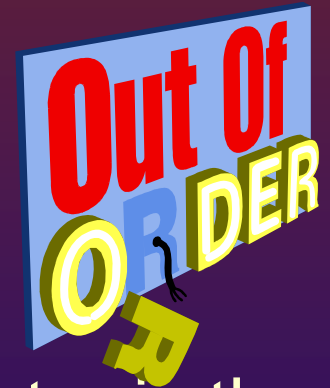
- He creates each human as a rational being
- He equips the mind with predispositions to think in certain ways (the internal light)
- He continually illuminates our minds to be able to know (the external light)
- Psalm 36:9 “. . . In your light, we see light.”





# Why We Can Be Good

- Imago Dei (Genesis 1:26-27 & 9:6, Psalm 8:5-8)
- Original Sin has distorted this image. It makes all humans
  - Morally flawed (Romans 5:12)
  - Bent toward evil (Romans 3:9-18), and
  - Needy (Romans 5:6-8)
- God's perfect, unchanging moral character is the ground of all hope for goodness
- God transforms the broken will of humans, and joyful obedience can be realized (Romans 8:1-4)





# What is History?

- Rome was sacked in 410, and pagans thought Christianity was to blame
  - Augustine sought to encourage the frightened Romans, and to refute the pagan accusation
  - He introduces the “Two Cities” concept
    - The City of Man
    - The City of God
- History is a linear record of these two cities, not a cyclical pattern of eternal repetition
  - Only one life, t’will soon be past,  
Only what’s done for Christ will last

