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The Meaning of Augustinte's "De Civitate Dei" for Our Day

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there will be a welcome for Christian emissaries when they come to heathen people or not, the work of evangelization will have to go forward at an accelerated pace. In the past we have been remiss. "The time is short."

Let us think for one minute of what a difference it would make if throughout the world, instead of the thunder of guns and the declarations of hatred and hostility, there would be heard the grand tidings that Jesus, the promised Christ, has paid for the sins of mankind and that all things must work together for good to them that love God, the God who reconciled the world to Himself through the death of His Son. Good news in the darkness, indeed! Not a promise of wealth, to be sure, of earthly power, greatness, and glory, but of inward peace and happiness, manifesting itself in radiant service to one's fellow men! Spreading this news, we shall be laying foundations of peace, better than any others that can be devised in this sinful world, because in this way there will be brought about that change of heart which is required if the lust for power is to give way to feelings of friendship and good will. That is the grandest contribution imaginable to the solution of postwar problems. Christians, ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world!

May 1944 see the end of the dread conflict, so that with vigor Zion may be built and its walls extended! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. 15:58. W. ARNDT



**The Meaning of Augustine's "De Civitate Dei"
for Our Day**

(A paper read before the South-Central Pastoral Conference
of the Minnesota District on May 4, 1943)

In the presidential address which he prepared for the meeting of the American Historical Association in 1941, but which he could not deliver because of his death, James Westfall Thompson said:

Historic unity, the unity of history proper, is to be sought only in the history of universals, that is, in ideas. History is not a compilation of facts. The purpose of the serious historian is to trace the advancement of knowledge; not of all knowledge, but so much of it as is causative of human conduct. For the totality of man's conduct is ultimately determined by the totality of man's knowledge, and the prime movers of human affairs, I think it may be said, are Law and Government, Religion, Literature, and Art. The degree of culture of any country, of any epoch or period, is con-

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ditioned by the amount, the direction, and the diffusion of these elements.¹⁾

If we are not prepared to agree with this entire statement, it is tenable at least that "ideas are the criteria of history."²⁾

An examination of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and its meaning for our day, therefore, needs no apology. During the Middle Ages, indeed, the treatise by St. Augustine had far greater meaning than it has now, for the world of today has been secularized by forces which the fourth and fifth as well as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did not know. But even for us many of the principles supported by Augustine must enter into our *Weltanschauung* if we are to appraise the forces and movements around us aright. The twentieth century cannot shrug its shoulders and say, "Why be concerned with a Bishop of Hippo who lived fifteen hundred years ago?" His ideas have lived in history and have made history. His book is one of the major events in history. John Neville Figgis says:

Literally immeasurable has been the influence of St. Augustine in molding the mind of Western Europe. So deeply has it entered into our life that it is not possible to say where his influence begins and where it ends. For the medieval world he summed up so much of their heritage from the ancient world—he was so large a conduit pipe—that it is hard to say where the stream did not penetrate.³⁾

Although the modern mind may define ideas advanced before the year 1914 as antiquarian, the modern educated mind will know that the stream of history has been fed by many rivers and rivulets down through the ages—our heritage, to which Augustine did not contribute the most insignificant part.

He was the greatest of the Latin Fathers, the man with whom, more than any other, every serious thinker for over a thousand

1) James Westfall Thompson, "The Age of Mabillon and Montfaucon," *American Historical Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 (January, 1942), page 225.

2) *Loc. cit.*

3) John N. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's "City of God"* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1921), p. 82.

Adolf Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte, fuenfte verbesserte Auflage* (Tuebingen, 1914), p. 290: "Er ist der Vater der roemischen Kirche und der Reformation, der Biblizisten und der Mystiker, ja selbst die Renaissance und die moderne empirische Philosophie (Psychologie) sind ihm verpflichtet."

George C. Sellery and A. C. Krey, *Medieval Foundations of Western Civilization* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1929), p. 25, say of the *City of God* that "it has exerted a powerful influence upon the thoughts of men down to our own day."

A delightful appraisal of Augustine is given by E. K. Rand in his lecture, "St. Augustine and Dante," chap. VIII of *Founders of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, Second Edition, 1941), p. 251.

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years, and every theologian down to our own time, has had to come to terms.⁴⁾

We cannot now tell the story of his life, of his father, Patricius, and his mother, Monica; of his education in Tagaste, Carthage, Rome, and Milan; of his wanderings through the mazes of Manichaeism and Neo-Platonism; of his conversion and baptism by St. Ambrose of Milan; and of his career as bishop. Let him who will read the story in the matchless *Confessions*, Augustine's autobiography. We could easily lose ourselves in the man and not arrive at his ideas. Nor can we outline his doctrinal position. That, too, he has done for us—in his *De Doctrina Christiana, libri quatuor*. Luther studied that work assiduously, but, then, Luther lived four hundred years ago. Today we can concern ourselves only with Augustine's *City of God*, after taking a brief glance at his times.

I. The Occasion for the Writing of the "De Civitate Dei"

As Augustine lay a dying in the city of Hippo in 430 A. D., this city (now known as Bone) was being besieged by the Vandals. He was the last bishop of Hippo. The infiltration of the Germanic peoples into the Roman Empire had become the *Voelkerwanderung*, the barbarian invasions. Rome was declining, and soon it would "fall," if indeed the year 476 really marks the "fall of Rome." The Roman Empire had deteriorated. Theodosius had divided it into the eastern and the western part to provide for the succession of his two sons, Honorius and Arcadius, in 395. This same Theodosius had made Christianity the only legal religion of the Empire, and Christianity was now rapidly penetrating even the remote country districts, where dwelt the last pagans. Ever since the days of Constantine (313) the Church had been in favor with the government (excepting during the reign of Julian) and had grown in numbers, influence, and wealth. The Church became corrupt; many bishops were more concerned with the acquisition of riches than with the welfare of souls; the paganization of the primitive Church was going on apace. Meanwhile fundamental questions of the Christian religion were in dispute. The Arian, the Nestorian, the Pelagian, and the Donatist controversies occupied the minds of some of the greatest thinkers of the fourth and early fifth centuries.

4) James Westfall Thompson and Edgar N. Johnson, *An Introduction to Medieval Europe, 300—1500* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1937), p. 61.

Philip Schaff, in the "Editor's Preface" to Marcus Dods' translation, says: "The *City of God* is the masterpiece of the greatest genius among the Latin Fathers." *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by Philip Schaff. First Series, Vol. II: *St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. v.

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Amid these unsettled times in Church and society, monasticism appealed to many, to a Jerome and to an Augustine, providing an avenue of escape to those unable to face the pressure of an age of transition.⁵⁾

Augustine did not withdraw from the world. He faced it, ready "to demonstrate to the world the abiding worth of the Church to humanity"⁶⁾ in his *De Civitate Dei*. He would write an epic in prose "to justify the ways of God to men," comparable alone to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

The occasion which brought on the work was the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in the year 410 A. D. First driven to ask for protection within the limits of the Roman Empire by the pressure of the Huns, a race which Jordanes describes as "fiercer than ferocity itself,"⁷⁾ the Visigoths, had crossed the Danube in the year 376. Two years later, made desperate by the perfidy of the Romans, the Visigoths defeated the forces of the Emperor Valens in a "grievous battle," Adrianople (378).⁸⁾ Again they were settled down. Again — this time after thirteen years — they were on the march. Under their king, Alaric, they exacted tribute from Athens, sacked Corinth, depredated Laconia. Northward they turned to make a temporary halt in Epirus, their king now the *magister militum* in Illyricum. The first decade of the fifth century found other Germanic nations in a turmoil, anxiously pressing into the Roman Empire. "The whole German world had bulged beyond the confines of the Rhine and Danube in an expansion of permanent and fundamental importance to all subsequent European history."⁹⁾ Stilicho, the one man who might have stopped Alaric, was slain at the behest of the cowardly Emperor Honorius. All roads lead to Rome, and thither the Visigoths turned. Diplomatic sparring with the inefficient emperor only served to infuriate Alaric. Three times he attacked Rome. Scornfully dismissing the bogey of superior Roman numbers with the remark "The thicker the hay, the easier it is to be mowed," Alaric had shown little concern for the proud mistress of the Tiber. His people were permitted to sack

5) Cf. particularly J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1889), Vol. I, passim; J. W. Thompson, *An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (300—1300)* (New York: Century, 1928), chap. II and III. Thompson and Johnson, *op. cit.*; Sellery and Krey, *op. cit.*; Edward Gibbon.

Thompson in his *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*, p. 73, says: "It may be doubted if Christianity ever sank so low as in the centuries between 300 and 800."

6) *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

7) Scott, Hyma, Noyes, *Readings in Medieval History* (New York: Crofts & Co., 1933), p. 30.

8) *Op. cit.*, p. 35. Jordanes' phrase.

9) Thompson and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

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Rome — "the city which had rifled the world." For the first time since Hannibal the Great had threatened the City, Rome had been in danger. For the first time since the Gauls had sacked her, eight hundred years before, in the year 390 B. C., Rome had been forced to admit a hostile, victorious army inside her gates.

Is it any wonder that this event should have moved the contemporary world deeply? If I read the feelings of the time correctly, there was a temporary shock, then a deep, vague, undefined, pressing dismay which settled down upon the Western world, like the sorrow of one who has been apprised of the moral turpitude of a dear friend. Suppose that Britain had fallen as a result of the German blitz and the streets of London had echoed the tread of the conqueror's feet, that the English island bastion had been successfully invaded for the first time in almost nine hundred years, and you can imagine how the people of Augustine's day reacted to the Visigothic looting of Rome, though no radios blared forth the news to a shivering world and no telegraphic communiques frayed their nerves. Shocked by the first vague rumors that reached them, numbed by the confirmation of these reports, they must have thought it impossible,¹⁰ and then tried to rationalize it. They reached out for reasons to explain this untoward event or tried to dismiss it with the thought that Rome had suffered setbacks before. But why had Rome fallen? Why had she suffered this blow to her prestige?

The pagans immediately answered that Rome had forsaken her ancient gods, who now avenged themselves with the sword of Alaric. Rome had adopted a new god and a strange religion; Jupiter and Mars and the hosts of other gods who had protected glorious, eternal Rome had withdrawn their presence. Nemesis was inevitable. The Christ, for whose sake the ancient sacrifices were abolished, was not the Savior, but the destroyer of Rome.

Augustine, as a good and faithful shepherd of his flock in Hippo, took cognizance of these charges. In one of his sermons, to cite an example, after quoting Jupiter's promise in Vergil's *Aeneid* that the Roman state would know no boundaries or temporal termination, he says:

An end there will be to all earthly kingdoms. If that end be now, God knoweth. For peradventure it is not yet, and we, through some infirmity, or mercifulness, or misery, are wishing that it may not be yet; nevertheless will it not therefore some day be? . . .

10) Jerome, hearing the news of the disaster in far-off Palestine, asked: "Who could believe that Rome, built upon the conquest of the whole world, would fall to the ground? That the mother herself would become the tomb of the people?" Quoted *op. cit.*, p. 93. For a longer quotation from Jerome on his reaction to the barbarian invasions and the sack of Rome cf. James Harvey Robinson's *Readings in European History* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1904), Vol. I, p. 44 f.

Be it far from me to insult it [Rome]. . . . What can I say, then, when I speak of Rome, but that that is false which they say of our Christ, that He is Rome's destroyer, and that the gods of wood and stone were her defenders? . . . And that which they say is not true, that immediately on losing her gods Rome has been taken and ruined. It is not true at all; their images were overthrown before; and even so were the Goths with Rhadagaisus conquered.¹¹⁾

He treats these at some length and points his hearers to the eternal Jerusalem.

But the grand defense against such charges was reserved for the greatest of all apologetic books of the early Church, the *De Civitate Dei*. In his *Retractions* Augustine tells us:

Rome having been stormed and sacked by the Goths under Alaric, their king, the worshipers of false gods, or pagans, as we commonly call them, made an attempt to attribute this calamity to the Christian religion and began to blaspheme the true God with even more than their wonted bitterness and acerbity. It was this which kindled my zeal for the house of God and prompted me to undertake the defense of the city of God against the charges and misrepresentations of its assailants.¹²⁾

There may have been minor considerations which led Augustine to compose this work, but here we have the main reason. The background of this work, however, cannot be complete in any sense without at least a passing reference to the Donatists. A re-reading of the *City of God* inclines me to believe that the undertone of the book was pitched for the ears of these heretics. It is true that the book was written after (from 413 to 426) the *Collatio cum Donatistis* at Carthage in 411. But in treating of the two cities Augustine could not, to my mind, forget that the Donatists taught that there was nothing in common between the Church and the State or the community. For our purposes, however, we need not concern ourselves too much with the Donatists in this essay. Let us rather turn to the work itself.

II. A Resume of the "De Civitate Dei"

The author himself gives us a summary of the book.

Of these [twenty-two books], the first five refute those who fancy that polytheistic worship is necessary in order to secure worldly prosperity and that all these overwhelming calamities have befallen us in consequence of its prohibition. In the following five books I address myself to those who admit that such calamities have at all times attended, and will at all times attend, the

11) Sermon LV in Vol. VI (First Series) of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (ed. by Philip Schaff, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), pp. 433-435. This volume contains a collection of Augustine's sermons, homilies, and harmony of the Gospels.

12) *Retractions*, II, 43, cited by Marcus Dods in his preface to the translation of *The City of God*; cf. Schaff, *op. cit.*, II, p. XII.

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human race and that they constantly recur in forms more or less disastrous, varying only in the scenes, occasions, and persons on whom they light, but, while admitting this, maintain the worship of the gods is advantageous for the life to come. In these ten books, then, I refute these two opinions, which are as groundless as they are antagonistic to the Christian religion.

But that no one might have occasion to say that, though I refuted the tenets of other men, I had omitted to establish my own, I devote to this object the second part of this work, which comprises twelve books. The first four contain an account of the origin of these two cities—the city of God and the city of the world. The second four treat of their history or progress; the third and last four, of their deserved destinies. And so, though all these twenty-two books refer to both cities, yet I have named them after the better city, and called them the City of God.¹³⁾

Books I—V of the *City of God* examine in detail the claims of those who say that a worship of the gods—whom Augustine calls “useless images, or unclean spirits and pernicious demons, or certainly creatures, not the Creator”¹⁴⁾—does insure temporal blessings. Many were spared, Augustine says, in the sack of Rome because they took refuge in Christian sanctuaries—the Goths were Arian Christians—a thing unknown to pagan victors. The Romans, trusting in gods conquered already at Troy, ought to have known that the asylum of Juno had availed the Trojans nothing. Even they, according to the testimony of Julius Caesar and their own history, spared not the temples. Though some Christians were violated in the sack of Rome, though some met death and their bodies remained unburied, it must be remembered that the hardships and calamities of war are inflicted on the ungodly as well as on the godly. Rome's calamity was due to her own vices, the lusts of rule, avarice, immoralities fostered by luxurious license, scenic games, and exhibitions of shameless folly, vices which have not been corrected by the overthrow of Rome.¹⁵⁾

History teaches that Rome suffered calamities even before the incarnation of Christ. The false gods did not improve the morals of their votaries, least of all Cybele, “the mother of the gods.” The plays and festivals for the gods show their lack of morality; the Romans did not even claim to have received their laws from these gods. The rape of the Sabines, the testimony of Sallust and Cicero, the deeds of Sulla, the most obscene of all, the mysteries of Coelestis, are given as specific examples of immorality; the vices of Rome aggravated the ruin of Rome.¹⁶⁾

13) *Loc. cit.*, note 12.

14) *De Civitate Dei*, V, preface (p. 108). All references to the *De Civitate Dei* are to Dods' translation, *op. cit.* The page reference always refers to the second volume of the collection edited by Schaff. The propriety of using a translation may be questioned. I offer no defense, save that Dods' translation is better than any of mine might have been.

15) *Op. cit.*, I. 16) *Op. cit.*, II.

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The gods did not even protect Rome from external, temporal disasters. The period of the monarchy, the Punic Wars, the time of the Gracchi, the civil wars between Marius and Sulla, are among the examples adduced.¹⁷⁾

What good things Rome has enjoyed cannot be ascribed to any one god, since not even a virtue such as happiness, for example, was ascribed to one god, but alone to the true God, who gives earthly kingdoms to the good and the bad.¹⁸⁾

Neither fate nor the position of the stars made the Roman Empire great, but the laws of God's providence. God grants temporal rewards to those who have some measure of civic virtue; He granted the Romans their empire.¹⁹⁾

Having thus shown in the first five books of his work that the false gods are not to be worshiped as if they gave material advantages, Augustine turns to refute those who believe that the gods are to be worshiped on account of the life after death. He examines the writings of Marcus Terentius Varro (116—27 B. C.), the forty-one books of antiquities of things human and divine. Varro had divided his theology into three categories: mythical, physical, and civil, or (according to Augustine) fabulous, natural, and civic. The mythical, or fabulous, theology Varro himself shows will not give a blessed hereafter.²⁰⁾

The select gods, like Janus, Jupiter, Mercury, and Mars, Apollo and Diana, Saturn, Ceres, Liber, the Magna Mater, the Earth, and others, the gods worshiped in civil theology, cannot give blessedness in eternity.²¹⁾

What about natural theology? Can it lead to heaven? This question is to be discussed with the philosophers. The Italic and Ionic schools of philosophy produced many illustrious men, among them Plato, the disciple of Socrates, "the one who shone with a glory which far excelled that of the others and who not unjustly eclipsed them all."²²⁾ Plato divided philosophy into natural, rational, and moral philosophy. The Platonic philosophers, Augustine believes, "have recognized the true God as the author of all things, the source of the light of truth, and the bountiful bestower of all blessedness."²³⁾ He would dispute with them alone. Their rational philosophy is above that of the Stoics and Epicureans. In their natural philosophy they have learned to know God in accordance with Rom. 1:19, 20. In moral philosophy the Platonists hold the first rank. Plato found the *summum bonum* in the knowledge and

17) *Op. cit.*, III.18) *Op. cit.*, IV.19) *Op. cit.*, V.20) *Op. cit.*, VI.21) *Op. cit.*, VII.22) *Op. cit.*, VIII, 4 (p. 146).23) *Op. cit.*, VIII, 5 (p. 148).

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imitation of God.²⁴⁾ Yet the Christian religion is superior to Platonic philosophy, for the Platonist held that sacred rites ought to be performed in honor of many gods, since all the gods are good and honorable, and friendly to the virtues of the wise. According to these same Platonists there are celestial gods, aerial demons, and terrestrial men; the demons mediate between the gods and men. All the religions of the pagans, however, worship dead men.²⁵⁾

Some say that there are differences between the demons—there are good and bad demons. How can the demons mediate between the gods and men when they have nothing in common with either? Christ Jesus, the true Mediator, is both God and Man.²⁶⁾

All men desire to be happy. The angels are happy, having their source of happiness in God. These angels are not to receive divine honors and sacrifice, which belong alone to the true God. "A true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship and which has a reference to the supreme good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed."²⁷⁾ God, in His providence, grants eternal and temporal good, and all saints both of the Old and the New Testament are justified by faith in the mystery of Christ's incarnation. Porphyry and other Platonists cannot find this way to God.²⁸⁾

Now Augustine goes over to the second part of his work. The first part was largely negative; the second part is positive.

"There is a city of God, and its Founder has inspired us with a love which makes us covet its citizenship."²⁹⁾ To know God, the mind of man must be purified, impregnated with faith. "And that in this faith it might advance the more confidently towards the truth, the truth itself, God, God's Son, assuming humanity without destroying His divinity (*homine assumpto, non Deo consumpto*), established and founded this faith, that there might be a way for man to man's God through a God-man."³⁰⁾ The canonical Scripture has paramount authority in teaching us of God. It tells us that God created the world, to which the world itself testifies. "For, though the voices of the Prophets were silent, the world itself, by its well-ordered changes and movements, and by the fair appearance of all visible things, bears a testimony of its own, both that it was created, and also that it could not have been created

24) "But the true and highest good, according to Plato, is God, and therefore he would call him a philosopher who loves God; for philosophy is directed to the obtaining of the blessed life, and he who loves God is blessed in the enjoyment of God." *Op. cit.*, VIII, 9 (p. 150).

25) *Op. cit.*, VIII.

26) *Op. cit.*, IX

27) *Op. cit.*, X, p (p. 183).

28) *Op. cit.*, X.

29) *Op. cit.*, XI, 1 (p. 205).

30) *Op. cit.*, XI, 2 (p. 206).

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save by God, whose greatness and beauty are unutterable and invisible."³¹⁾ This creation took place according to God's eternal design. We cannot conceive the infinite times nor the infinite spaces before the creation, since there is no time before the beginning. In eternity there is no change, hence no time, and the world was made not in time but simultaneously with time. The angels were created on the first day, on which God created the light; the evil angels did not from the beginning participate in a true certainty [?] of eternal felicity, else they would not have fallen. The devil is wicked; he sinned by his own will. When God saw that that which He had made was good, and said so, He is teaching us that it was good. But what about evil? Augustine refutes some of the ideas of the Manichaeans and of Origen before going on to discuss the nature of the Trinity, which is revealed to us in the creation. We recognize in ourselves the image of God, "for we both are, and know that we are, and delight in our being, and our knowledge of it."³²⁾ Being assured that I am and that I know that I am, I love both existence and the knowledge of existence, and I am assured that I love them. Augustine is highly philosophical here, yet more concerned with this "love" than with the other thoughts; for from the assurance of this love he would infer that we must return to God, our Maker, to know Him, even as the holy angels know God by the presence to their souls of the only-begotten Word of God, immutable truth. Once more Augustine returns to a discussion of the creation of the angels, because in the two communities of angels he finds the origin of the human communities.³³⁾

Originally both the good and the evil angels were created good. "The true cause of the blessedness of the good angels is found to be this, that they cleave to Him who supremely is. And if we ask the cause of the misery of the bad, it occurs to us, and not unreasonably, that they are miserable because they have forsaken Him who supremely is and have turned to themselves, who have no such essence. . . . 'Pride is the beginning of sin.'"³⁴⁾ But what was the cause of their evil will? Let no one look for an efficient cause of the evil will, which is made evil by deflection from God. The holy angels have always had a good will, the love of God. "Not only of men, but primarily and principally of angels, it is true, as it is written (Ps. 73:28): 'It is good to draw near to God.' And those who have this good in common, have both with Him to whom they draw near, and with one another, a holy fellowship, and form one city of God—His living sacrifice, and His living

31) *Op. cit.*, XI, 4 (p. 207).32) *Op. cit.*, XI, 26 (p. 220).33) *Op. cit.*, XI.34) *Op. cit.*, XII, 6 (p. 229).

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temple."³⁵) Having spoken of the rise of the city of God among the good angels, Augustine then proceeds to discuss its origin among men. This brings him to a treatment of the creation of man, a refutation of the hypothesis that man as a race is immortal, existing in the past for many thousands of years, a rebuttal of the theory that there are revolving cycles of existence, and a negation of the Platonist view that the angels created man.³⁶)

God made men, "that if they discharged the obligations of obedience, an angelic immortality and blessed eternity might ensue, without the intervention of death; but if they disobeyed, death should be visited on them with just sentence."³⁷) There is a death when the soul is forsaken of God and a death when the soul forsakes the body. To the good this bodily death is good; to the evil it is evil. Even the regenerate must suffer bodily death. "No sooner do we begin to live in this dying body than we begin to move ceaselessly towards death."³⁸) Adam in his sin forsook God; this falling away from God was the first death of the soul. This requires a survey of some of the speculations of the philosophers concerning death, the nature of the human body, particularly after the resurrection, and kindred questions.³⁹)

One of these questions deals with the nature of the emotions. In Paradise our first parents had no fear or grief. "Their love to God was unclouded, and their mutual affection was that of faithful and sincere marriage; and from this love flowed a wonderful delight, because they always enjoyed what was loved. Their avoidance of sin was tranquil; and so long as it was maintained, no other ill at all could invade them and bring sorrow."⁴⁰) Man sinned; the transgression being preceded by an evil will, "by aspiring to be self-sufficing, he fell away from Him who truly suffices him."⁴¹) By his sin, man's emotions became corrupt, particularly lust, which is accompanied with shame. "The sins of men and angels do nothing to impede the 'great works of the Lord which accomplish His will' (Ps. 111:2)."⁴²) He shows what good can be accomplished by His grace.⁴³)

Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, "Thou art my Glory, and

35) *Op. cit.*, XII, 9 (p. 232).36) *Op. cit.*, XII.37) *Op. cit.*, XIII, 1 (p. 245).38) *Op. cit.*, XIII, 10 (p. 249).39) *Op. cit.*, XIII.40) *Op. cit.*, XIV, 10 (p. 271).41) *Op. cit.*, XIV, 13 (p. 274).42) *Op. cit.*, XIV, 27 (p. 282).43) *Op. cit.*, XIV.

the Lifter-up of mine head" (Ps. 3:3). In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought of all. The one delights in its own strength, represented in the persons of its rulers; the other says to its God, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength" (Ps. 18:1). And therefore the wise men of the one city, living according to man, have sought profit to their own bodies or souls, or both, and those who have known God "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise"—that is, glorifying in their own wisdom and being possessed by pride—"they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." For they were either leaders or followers of the people in adoring images, "and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Rom. 1:21-25). But in the other city there is no human wisdom but only godliness, which offers due worship to the true God and looks for its reward in the society of the saints, of holy angels as well as holy men, "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).⁴⁴⁾

With this, Augustine concludes the first section of the second part of his work, on the origins of the two cities. In the following four books he traces the progress of the two cities.

He goes into the history of Cain and Abel, the long life and large stature of the antediluvians, and the Flood.⁴⁵⁾

In parallel fashion he follows through the terrestrial and celestial cities from Noah to Abraham and then proceeds to examine the history of the descendants of Abraham.⁴⁶⁾

The prophetic age is next studied. The prophecies of Hannah and David, the 89th Psalm, the 45th, the 110th, the 22d, the 3d, the 41st, the 15th, and 68th Psalms, are among the passages treated.⁴⁷⁾

Augustine then turns to secular history, the history of the Assyrians, Sicyon, Argos, Rome. He touches on the so-called prophecies of the Sibyls. He then goes on to the times of Hosea, Amos, Micah, Isaiah, etc. In an apologetic vein he writes about the canonicity of the Scriptures, the value of the Septuagint, the presence of heretics in the Church, and the contention that Christianity would not last more than three hundred sixty-five years.⁴⁸⁾

In the four final books of the *City of God* Augustine turns to the question of the ultimate destinies of the two cities.

The philosophers have reasoned almost without end regarding the chief good, Varro finding no less than two hundred eighty-eight

44) *Op. cit.*, XIV, 28 (pp. 282—283).

45) *Op. cit.*, XV.

46) *Op. cit.*, XVI.

47) *Op. cit.*, XVII.

48) *Op. cit.*, XVIII.

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different opinions, of which, by removing secondary differences, there are three which ought to be investigated, upon which it will be found that virtue is the highest good. The philosophers try to find the supreme good in themselves. But in this mortal state human society abounds in miseries, whether mankind be united in smaller or larger groups. Even friendships have their bitter-nesses. The supreme good or end of the city of God is either peace in eternal life, or eternal life in peace. "For peace is a good so great, that even in this earthly or mortal life there is no word we hear with such pleasure, nothing we desire with such zest, or find to be more thoroughly gratifying."⁴⁹⁾ There is a tranquillity of order in nature. The peace of this world is enjoyed by the children of God, who will attain to full peace in eternity.⁵⁰⁾

A day of judgment is coming; even now in the mingled web of human affairs God's judgment is present, though it cannot always be readily discerned. This compels Augustine to examine various Scripture passages dealing with eschatology, e. g., Rev. 20; 2 Peter 3; 2 Thess. 2:1-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-16; Is. 26:19; Dan. 7:15-28; and other passages.⁵¹⁾

He speaks of the punishment of the wicked. Unbelief brings various arguments against it. It argues that bodies cannot last forever in burning fires, but pain does not necessarily mean destruction through death. Examples are adduced from nature, such as the diamond, proving that bodies may remain unconsumed in fire. Besides that, there are many things which reason cannot explain and yet are true. Ultimately, of course, we believe in miracles because of the omnipotence of God. Some argue that it is unjust that the punishment lasts longer than the sin itself lasted. Cicero shows that there are eight kinds of penalties, and legal justice does not allow this argument.

But eternal punishment seems hard and unjust to human perceptions, because in the weakness of our mortal condition there is wanting that highest and purest wisdom by which it can be perceived how great a wickedness was committed in that first transgression. The more enjoyment man found in God, the greater was his wickedness in abandoning Him; and he who destroyed in himself a good which might have been eternal became worthy of eternal evil. Hence the whole mass of the human race is condemned; for he who first gave entrance to sin has been punished with all his posterity who were in him as a root, so that no one is exempt from this just and due punishment, unless delivered by mercy and undeserved grace.⁵²⁾

Those who fancy that no men shall be punished eternally, like Origen, who believed that even the devil would be delivered from

49) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 11 (p. 407).50) *Op. cit.*, XIX.51) *Op. cit.*, XX.52) *Op. cit.*, XXI, 12 (p. 463).

hell, Augustine calls "tenderhearted Christians." Some believe that no one shall be damned because of the intercession of the saints in the Last Judgment; others, that all those who have been baptized, no matter into what impiety or heresy they may have fallen, will be saved; still others, that only those who are Catholics, however badly they have lived, will receive the promise; some believe that sins accompanied with almsgiving will do them no harm. Against all these divergent views Augustine replies.⁵³⁾

In the last book Augustine discusses the eternal blessedness of the city of God. Some refuse to believe in the resurrection of Christ, fully attested. He is true God; Rome loved its founder Romulus and therefore believed him to be a god; the Christians believe Christ to be God and therefore love Him. How is it that Christ is everywhere believed as the resurrected and ascended Lord? Augustine cites various miracles of his own day, which, he says, witness to the Resurrection and Ascension, done by the martyrs in testimony of that faith they had in Christ. Against the Platonist argument on "scientific grounds" (that a body of earth cannot live in heaven because of its weight) he brings scientific counterarguments. Against the calumnies of the unbelievers who ridicule the doctrine of the resurrection he replies in detail. He speaks of the new spiritual bodies of the believers. Then, after discussing the ills and the blessings of temporal life, he ends his work with a peroration on the eternal felicity of the city of God and the eternal Sabbath.⁵⁴⁾

This in brief review is the substance of *De Civitate Dei*. The work is prolix, repetitious; in it there are many digressions. Yet the architectural scheme of the whole has been carried out by the hand of a master artist, faithful to his blueprints, but ready to embellish without marring the beauty of the whole.

The book has its faults; but it effectually introduces us to the most influential of theologians and the greatest popular teacher; to a genius that cannot nod for many lines together; to a reasoner whose dialectic is more formidable, more keen and sifting, than that of Socrates or Aquinas; to a saint whose ardent and genuine devotional feeling bursts up through the severest argumentation; to a man whose kindness and wit, universal sympathies and breath of intelligence, lend piquancy and vitality to the most abstract dissertation.⁵⁵⁾

The work is first of all an apology, a defense of Christianity. We must examine it further as to its apologetic character. It is a theological treatise, though not complete, in which some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion are discussed in

53) *Op. cit.*, XXI.54) *Op. cit.*, XXII.55) Marcus Dods, "Translator's Preface," in Schaff, *op. cit.*, II, p. xiv.

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detail. It presents viewpoints of history, of political science, society, and especially of the Church, which cannot be overlooked. No *résumé* can give an adequate idea of the wealth of thoughts expressed by Augustine.

III. The Value of the "De Civitate Dei" as an Apology

Among the apologetes of the ancient Church we must reckon Augustine the greatest. Greater than Tertullian, Cyprian, Minucius Felix, or Lactantius, Augustine has given us a work which may well be read by Lutheran pastors to fortify themselves with arguments against the ignorant or the would-be wise.

One of the requisites of a bishop, an overseer, a pastor, is that "he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). He must warn against those who come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). As a watchman standing guard on the walls of Zion, he must sound the alarm against the approaching enemy; as a faithful shepherd, he must warn his flock against the dangers of wolves and bears. He must not say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). The builders of the city of God must, like those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, build while armed. *Lehren* and *wehren* belong together. The refutation of error, even from a strictly pedagogical point of view, is a necessary part of the inculcation of sound truth. And while it is true that the *usus elencticus* need not be employed in every sermon and that the preacher "should not assume a habitual gladiatorial attitude in the pulpit" (to use Dean Fritz's phrase),⁵⁶ it is nevertheless true that that preacher who avoids the use of polemics is not doing his full duty.

In our own day the need for apologetics and polemics from the pulpit has not been lessened. We may argue that after a century of sound teaching the Missouri Synod is as a whole so well grounded in sound doctrine and so well guarded against error that it is not necessary to be polemical in our preaching. We may argue that our congregations are so filled with the truths of the Bible, by virtue of our Christian day schools and the thorough indoctrination they have received, that it is not wholesome to mention the false notions current in our day. Such arguments are based on the fallacy that our congregations are isolated in-groups which have little or no contact with the thought of the day. However, the radio, for instance, brings views of divergent hues to our people; sometimes they can winnow the good from the bad; sometimes, not. Newspapers and popular magazines present ideas

56) J. H. C. Fritz, *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), p. 75. Dr. Fritz, of course, does not disparage the value of polemics.

and concepts which in many instances are not in the form of sound words. The current trend towards a greater religiosity, which has been labeled a "return to religion," and which can be seen from the popularity of religious books,⁵⁷⁾ will, I believe, affect also our people. They stand, owing to modern means of communication, no longer in far-off corners unaffected by the crosscurrents of the day, but at the very crossroads of events or in close proximity to these crossroads. The fact that the educational level has risen and that many of them are now high school graduates means that they have come in contact with the thinking of our generation, often in schools which glorify the emancipation of the mind from the shackles of a dead theology (as they teach). We cannot ignore these trends and must be ready, therefore, to counteract them.

The utilitarian and materialistic philosophy of our day, evolutionism, communism, we know as some of the evils. We are acquainted with the shibboleth of the modern mind, "the brotherhood of man." We are more or less aware of the unionistic teachings about us. The essential errors of natural man concerning his inherent goodness, or at least the lack of depravity, and his confidence in his own work-righteousness we cannot miss. But what about the theological by-products (if we may use this phrase) of that catalysis, the war? What about this so-called "tolerance"? this new paganism? this glorification of the state? this emphasis on the "social teachings of religion"? "the twilight of Christianity"? or "the church in disrepute"?

I am mentioning some of these trends because it seems to me that the very occasion which gave rise to Augustine's *City of God*, a political event which was reflected in adverse criticisms of Christianity, teaches us that any apologetics or polemics must be *zeit-gemaess*. There is nothing gained by refuting the ideas of the Manichaeans or the Neo-Platonists except in so far as these ideas may be current today. We need not exhume the bones of dead heretics merely to scorch them again with the fire of our eloquence.

This does not mean that Augustine's apologetics cannot be of value to us. We have learned one thing already, that our apolo-

57) George N. Shuster, "Religious Books in Wartime," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol. XXVI, No. 14 (April 3, 1943), pp. 22-24, lists twenty-six books of a religious nature in observance of religious book week. The very next review in this periodical, by Gladys Graham, of Curtis's *Story of Bible People*, is headed "History's Biggest Best-Seller." The subtitle of Shuster's article says, "Reading Today Reflects the Pre-occupations of People." He concludes his article, p. 24: "There is abroad in the land what men term a 'revival of religion.' We do well to remember, as we speak those words, that religion is something for which the best of our contemporaries, in many dark lands, have stood and died, thus helping to earn for mankind the right to freedom." Just what is religion?

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getics should be geared to our times. We can see that, too, from his constant reference to those writers who were most highly regarded. He quotes Vergil, both pro and con. He goes to Cicero and even to Plato. Varro, whose books contained the most systematic exposition of paganism, is laid under heavy toll. Porphyry is refuted repeatedly.

By reason of his training in the schools of rhetoric in Carthage and Rome, Augustine was thoroughly at home in the writings of the pagans. He had lived in Milan, the second city of Italy. Very probably one of the best educated men of his day, he was in a position to appraise the thinking of the fourth and early fifth centuries better than almost any one else. But he goes to the sources of this thinking. Is it amiss to remark that that preacher who would refute evolutionism should be acquainted with Darwin's *Origin of Species*, or to refute communism, he should have read Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*? This in spite of the fact that the views of both Darwin and Marx have been modified and the apologete must needs know the works of later writers.

Augustine's thoroughness can be seen from a more detailed analysis of book X, the closing book of the first part of his work. He has been discussing the proposition that the false gods ought to be worshiped because they alone provide blessedness in the hereafter. "It is the decided opinion of all who use their brains," he says, "that all men desire to be happy."⁵⁸ The Platonists, "justly esteemed the noblest of the philosophers, because they had the wit to perceive that the human soul, immortal and rational, or intellectual, as it is, cannot be happy except by partaking of the light of that God by whom itself and the world were made; and also that the happy life which all men desire cannot be reached by anyone who does not cleave with pure and holy love to that one supreme good, the unchangeable God,"⁵⁹ suppose that many gods should be worshiped. What is worship? *λατρεία*? *cultus*? *religio*? *εὐσέβεια*? *θεοσέβεια*? This worship belongs to God only; therefore the angels cannot desire our worship. Their happiness is from God; therefore they cannot wish our happiness to flow from another source.⁶⁰ Plotinus, a Greek philosopher of the third century, one of the greatest philosophers of the Neo-Platonic school, is cited in support of the contention that the angels receive their light from God.⁶⁰ And so the Platonists must acknowledge that neither the angels nor we can obtain a happy condition without worshipping "the one God of gods."

To Him we owe the service which is called in Greek *λατρεία*, whether we render it outwardly or inwardly; for we are all His temple, each of us severally and all of us together, because He

58) *Civ. Dei*, X, 1 (p.180).

60) *Op. cit.*, X, 3 (p.182).

59) *Op. cit.*, X, 2.

condescends to inhabit each individually and the whole harmonious body, being no greater in all than in each, since He is neither expanded nor divided. Our heart, when it rises to Him, is His altar; the priest who intercedes for us is His Only-begotten; we sacrifice to Him bleeding victims when we contend for His truth even unto blood; to Him we offer the sweetest incense when we come before Him burning with holy and pious love; to Him we devote and surrender ourselves and His gifts in us; to Him, by solemn feasts and on appointed days, we consecrate the memory of His benefits lest through the lapse of time ungrateful oblivion should steal upon us; to Him we offer on the altar of our heart the sacrifice of humility and praise, kindled by the fire of burning love. It is that we may see Him, so far as He can be seen; it is that we may cleave to Him, that we are cleansed from all stain of sin and evil passions, and are consecrated to His name. For He is the fountain of our happiness, He the end of all our desires. Being attached to Him, or rather let me say, re-attached — for we had detached ourselves and lost hold of Him — being, I say, re-attached to Him, we tend towards Him by love that we may rest in Him and find our blessedness by attaining that end. For our good, about which philosophers have so keenly contended, is nothing else than to be united to God. It is, if I may say so, by spiritually embracing Him that the intellectual soul is filled and impregnated with true virtues.⁶⁰⁾

And as worship, so sacrifice is due alone to the true God.⁶¹⁾ God does not need our sacrifices, but He requires them, particularly mercy.⁶²⁾ But even mercy, if it is not shown for God's sake, is not a sacrifice. After quoting Romans 12:1, in which St. Paul beseeches us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, Augustine says:

If, then, the body, which, being inferior, the soul uses as a servant or instrument, is a sacrifice when it is used rightly and with reference to God, how much more does the soul itself become a sacrifice when it offers itself to God, in order that, being inflamed with the fire of His love, it may receive of His beauty and become pleasing to Him, losing the shape of earthly desires, and being remolded in the image of permanent loveliness! . . . The whole redeemed city, that is to say, the congregation, or community, of the saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great High Priest, who offered Himself to God in His Passion for us that we might be members of this glorious head, according to the form of a servant. . . . This is the sacrifice of Christians; we, being many, are one body in Christ.⁶³⁾

The angels, who together with us form the one city of God, do not desire our sacrifices, Augustine asserts.⁶⁴⁾ God performed miracles through the angels.⁶⁵⁾ Illicit arts, necromancy, theurgy, are practiced through demons, but even Porphyry denies that

61) *Op. cit.*, X, 4.64) *Op. cit.*, X, 762) *Op. cit.*, X, 5.65) *Op. cit.*, X, 8.63) *Op. cit.*, X, 6 (p. 184).

theurgy can secure to any one a return to God.⁶⁶⁾ He examines theurgy⁶⁷⁾ and goes into a detailed discussion of Porphyry's letter to Anebo, the Egyptian.⁶⁸⁾ Then he returns to a discussion of the miracles of the true God, performed through angels.⁶⁹⁾ The invisible God has often made Himself visible⁷⁰⁾ and gives temporal and eternal blessings.

For he who denies that all things which either angels or men can give us are in the hand of the one Almighty is a madman. The Platonist Plotinus discourses concerning providence, and from the beauty of the flowers and foliage proves that from the supreme God, whose beauty is unseen and ineffable, providence reaches down even to these earthly things here below; and he argues that all these frail and perishing things could not have so exquisite and elaborate a beauty were they not fashioned by Him whose unseen and unchangeable beauty continually pervades all things.⁷¹⁾

The Law, enjoining the worship of the true God, was given by the ministry of angels.⁷²⁾ Those angels, not the wicked demons, are to be trusted about the way to life eternal.⁷³⁾ Augustine must speak also of the signs and wonders which accompanied the Ark of the Covenant.⁷⁴⁾ He refutes those who reject the miracles of the Bible.⁷⁵⁾ He does all this in order to show that the true God only is to receive sacrifices.⁷⁶⁾ The supreme sacrifice was offered by Him who was both victim and priest.⁷⁷⁾ The power that the demons have has been delegated to them for the trial and glorification of the saints.⁷⁸⁾ By the grace of God the saints have power against the demons and true purification of the heart.⁷⁹⁾ The Neo-Platonists speak of various principles which regulate the purification of the soul,⁸⁰⁾ but there is only one true principle which purifies and renews human nature, the Principle which assumed human flesh.⁸¹⁾ In Him all the saints, both of the Old and the New Testament, are purified.⁸²⁾ Porphyry is to be censured for rejecting the true God,⁸³⁾ more so than Apuleius,⁸⁴⁾ for Porphyry in his human wisdom did not recognize the true Wisdom, Christ.⁸⁵⁾ Augustine must therefore speak at greater length of the Incarnation,⁸⁶⁾ and then he considers Porphyry's emendations and modifications of Platonism,⁸⁷⁾ answering more arguments of the

66) *Op. cit.*, X, 9.67) *Op. cit.*, X, 10.68) *Op. cit.*, X, 11.69) *Op. cit.*, X, 12.70) *Op. cit.*, X, 13.71) *Op. cit.*, X, 14 (p. 189).72) *Op. cit.*, X, 15.73) *Op. cit.*, X, 16.74) *Op. cit.*, X, 17.75) *Op. cit.*, X, 18.76) *Op. cit.*, X, 19.77) *Op. cit.*, X, 20.78) *Op. cit.*, X, 21.79) *Op. cit.*, X, 22.80) *Op. cit.*, X, 23.81) *Op. cit.*, X, 24.82) *Op. cit.*, X, 25.83) *Op. cit.*, X, 26.84) *Op. cit.*, X, 27.85) *Op. cit.*, X, 28.86) *Op. cit.*, X, 29.87) *Op. cit.*, X, 30.

Platonists⁸⁸⁾ before he finally closes the book with an exposition of the true way to salvation through the grace of Christ.⁸⁹⁾

You see how meticulous Augustine is in answering every objection that might be raised against the worship of the true God. Neither good angels nor wicked demons — and in this class Augustine places the false gods of the pagans — are to be worshiped. He examines closely the arguments of the Neo-Platonists. It would seem to us that there is little more to be said on the subject.

Augustine is also fair in his polemics; by this I mean that he does not twist his opponents' arguments. At times he might ridicule them, but usually he gives them a sober and respectful hearing. He takes great pains to show the different "principles" which the Neo-Platonists believe in, even discussing the differences between Porphyry and Plotinus.⁹⁰⁾

An apologete gains comparatively little who in a bigoted fashion perverts the opinions of his adversaries. These adversaries are honest and sincere in their beliefs, though neither their honesty nor their sincerity has been a safeguard against error. We may think of the "Jehovah's Witnesses" in our day, who by their zeal mislead many. To meet them with ridicule or, worse yet, with incomplete, hazy, perverted statements of their position will not convince them nor those in danger of being drawn to them. To argue against the evolutionists, or even to warn against evolution without an understanding of some of the alleged proofs of the theories propounded and a fair statement of these proofs, can only weaken the polemics.

It is in the arena of "science" that much polemics must be carried on today, as it was in the arena of "philosophy" that Augustine waged his battles against the unbelievers. Augustine cannot help us to combat the modern theories of evolution on scientific grounds, though he does refute those who do not believe in creation on philosophic grounds. Philosophy and philosophic arguments are not dead today, and we find those who are opposed to "scientists" who repudiate the validity of insights other than their own.⁹¹⁾ The modern theologian is expected to be a philosopher rather than a scientist, a humanist rather than a laboratory expert.⁹²⁾

88) *Op. cit.*, X, 31.

89) *Op. cit.*, X, 32.

90) *Op. cit.*, X, 23; cf. X, 28.

91) Theodore Meyer Greene in the "Introduction" to *The Meaning of the Humanities*, by Perry, Krey, Panofsky, Calhoun, and Chinard (Princeton University Press: 1938), p. xxxi.

92) Robert Lowry Calhoun's essay "Theology and the Humanities," *op. cit.*, pp. 119—150, is one, I fear, that should be better known. It will repay careful reading. Cf. also Martin S. Sommer, "The Pastor and Secular Literature," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, Vol. VII, No. 9 (September, 1936), pp. 677—684.

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As a humanist, Augustine must be given a high rank. In him was the poet—even sections of his prose have a poetic beauty—and the musician—he wrote a treatise on music—and the philosopher and the historian and the theologian.⁹³ What more would you ask to have one qualify as a humanist? He can quote Vergil with all the love and reverence of a native Roman and Cicero's influence on him is almost that of a beloved master on a budding scholar.⁹⁴

I will not labor the point or make many-pointed applications. Let me merely remark that in my opinion the theologian who neglects the humanities, not merely literature but also philosophy and history, is for that reason a poorer theologian and a poorer apologete. The *De Civitate Dei* is at once literature, philosophy, history, and theology.

Has it any practical value, you will ask?

Augustine's work is not merely an armchair apology which is out of touch with the thinking of the "little man." He knows and refutes the doubts of the "street-corner philosopher" as well as those of the academicians. And it is surprising how "modern" some of these criticisms are. Let me illustrate.

In his discussion of creation Augustine cites Genesis 1:1. He then takes up the question, posed by the Epicureans, "Why did God create the world just at that particular time?" They wanted to argue that, after all, the world had existed for a much longer time. Augustine answers:

Though the voices of the Prophets were silent, the world itself, by its well-ordered changes and movements and by the fair appearance of all visible things, bears a testimony of its own, both that it has been created, and also that it could not have been created save by God, whose greatness and beauty are unutterable and invisible.⁹⁵

The world was created according to the eternal design of God.

Or the arguments which Augustine meets in the last book. Not everyone believes in the resurrection of the flesh. Even today many find it hard to believe in it. They will ask, Will God restore the bodies that have been eaten by sharks? What about those who are blown to bits by bombs? Will abortions have a part in the resurrection? Augustine is inclined to believe that they will.⁹⁶

93) Gerald G. Walsh, *Medieval Humanism* (New York: Macmillan, 1942), p. 20, summarizes Augustine's *De Musica*, "which," he says, "might be called a very key to humanistic happiness," as follows: "In poetry, he [Augustine] says (and it is easy to apply the words to life), there should be music to satisfy the senses, passion to appeal to the emotions, meaning to feed the mind; and all should be lifted to the level of prayer."

94) E. K. Rand, "St. Augustine and Dante," in his *Founders of the Middle Ages*, p. 255 ff., shows the humanistic bent of Augustine's mind.

95) *Civ. Dei*, XI, 4 (p. 207).

96) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 13.

Will infants have that body which they would have had had they grown up? Augustine answers, "Not a hair of your head shall perish."⁹⁷ Will the bodies of the saints be all of the same size as the body of our Lord? Augustine says, No. "Every man shall receive his own size which he had in youth, though he died an old man, or which he would have had, supposing he died before his prime."⁹⁸ Will women retain their own sex in the resurrection? Augustine's answer is, Yes, but there will be no marriages.⁹⁹ What about bodily blemishes? That which mars human beauty will not be in heaven, he says.¹⁰⁰

Now, we may not agree with all of Augustine's answers. Some of them may seem to us almost as childish as the arguments which they are to meet. I dare say, however, that many of these childish queries are just those that trouble some of our Christians. I recall an old mother, a faithful Lutheran throughout her life, who but a few weeks before her death was troubled with the question, "Wie konnte Salomo so viele Weiber liebhaben?" I recall, too, an M. D., not of our faith, who, though seriously ill in the hospital, posed various questions about the resurrection.

It would seem, then, that even from a practical point of view there are some things — if you will permit an understatement — in the *De Civitate Dei* that will be helpful.

There are two more points which I would like to make about the value of the *City of God* as an apology. One is: it is specific. Augustine does not fire a salvo merely in the general direction of the enemy, nor does he drop his bombs indiscriminately. With the precision of a trained bombardier using the hairline accurateness of the Norden bombsight, he drops his bombs on well-chosen objectives. Augustine does not hesitate to mention names in refuting his opponents. We have learned *Nominalenchnus* already from Scripture, but let us be reminded of that from the *De Civitate Dei*. The charge may be leveled against us that we be "name-callers" and "rabble-rousers." What of it?

The second point is regarding the procedure Augustine follows. Augustine meets his opponents on a common ground and then turns to Scripture. He reasons with them, and then he swings over to divine revelation. Consider his sustained argumentation in Books VIII and IX on natural theology and the worship of demons. Very carefully he examines the philosophy of Plato. He does not hesitate to say, however:

For although a Christian man instructed only in ecclesiastical literature may perhaps be ignorant of the very name of Platonists, and may not even know that there have existed two schools of philosophers speaking the Greek tongue, to wit, the Ionic and the

97) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 14.99) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 17.98) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 15.100) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 19.

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Italic, he is nevertheless not so deaf with respect to human affairs as not to know that philosophers profess the study, and even the possession, of wisdom. He is on his guard, however, with respect to those who philosophize according to the elements of this world, not according to God, by whom the world itself was made; for he is warned by the precept of the Apostle, and faithfully hears what has been said, "Beware that no one deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the elements of the world" (Col. 2:8).¹⁰¹⁾

St. Paul, he says, made use of philosophy in showing the natural knowledge of God and in his address on Mars' Hill. With that warning he goes on, refuting the Platonists step by step, showing a thorough acquaintance with the writings of Apuleius, and arrives at the point where he is ready to speak of the God-man and the differences between the demons and the angels.

The apologete, of course, cannot rest his case on reason, for the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." He must meet his opponent on a plane which he will accept. Ultimate truth, of course, came only through revelation, and the apologete must turn to the Bible for the climax of his argumentation. Much harm can be done, however, by not following Augustine's steps. After all, was it not this method which Paul used? In the Agora at Athens he was speaking as a philosopher to philosophers, he who was "all things to all men." Did not Christ meet the woman of Sychar on a common ground when speaking to her about the worship of the true God? The final proof, after a predisposition to accept this proof has been gained, must come from the Scriptures.

Much, then, can be gained from the study of the *City of God* as an apology. His method, the characteristics of his apology, are valuable today.

IV. The Philosophy of History in the "De Civitate Dei"

The *De Civitate Dei* is an apology. Ernst Troeltsch says:

Es ist voellig aus der Zeit fuer die Zeit geschrieben. Es nimmt nicht bloss "apologetische Fragen gegenueber der heidnisch-patriotischen Anklagen zum Ausgangspunkte," sondern ist von der ersten bis zur letzten Zeile das Buch des Seelsorgers, Homileten, Praktikers und Apologeten, der die Christen staerken will und daher seine ungeheure und bunte Gelehrsamkeit in den Dienst der Widerlegung aller denkbaren Vorwuerfe stellt. Es ist die letzte grosse Leistung der apologetischen Literatur, ueberall mit der praktischen Absicht, den alten Vorwurf einer Aufloesung der roemischen Gesellschaft durch die christliche Kirche zu widerlegen.¹⁰²⁾

101) *Op. cit.*, VIII, 10 (p.150).

102) Ernst Troeltsch, *Augustin, die christliche Antike und das Mittelalter, im Anschluss an die Schrift "De Civitate Dei"* (Historische Bibliothek, 36. Band, Muenchen und Berlin, Oldenburg, 1915), p. 8.

Troeltsch also points out that few have read the work in its entirety, else it would not be taken for a Christian philosophy of history or for a Christian viewpoint of society.¹⁰³⁾ But he will admit that "das bunte und endlose Material solcher Polemik und Apologetik ist nun aber unter einen einfachen Gesichtspunkt gebracht."¹⁰⁴⁾ Augustine's viewpoint is a historical one. Although the work was not written as a philosophy of history or as a treatise in political science, it does offer the materials for both, in my opinion, and as such can be and is of value and meaning today. For that reason I propose to treat both in some detail. It should be understood, however, that Augustine does not set forth a systematic, analytic treatment of either. An attempt to reconstruct such a philosophy of history or theory of the state must be regarded as an interpretation of Augustine's views.¹⁰⁵⁾

I shall not go into the question: What is History?¹⁰⁶⁾ However, I would like to say a few words about the value of history for the theologian before going over to a discussion of Augustine's philosophy of history. It is evident that Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* is steeped in history.

Sacred history as recorded in the inspired books of the Bible is often used. There is no need to give specific instances. In the field of ecclesiastical history he makes reference to the so-called "ten persecutions,"¹⁰⁷⁾ martyrology, and current saints' legends,¹⁰⁸⁾ and the misfortunes of some Christians in the sack of Rome.¹⁰⁹⁾ ("Misfortune" is a mild word; he speaks of the rape of Christian women during the sack).¹¹⁰⁾

The secular historian whom Augustine quotes most frequently is Sallust.¹¹¹⁾ He makes one reference to Livy.¹¹²⁾ Polybius is

103) *Op. cit.*, p. 7 f.

104) *Op. cit.*, p. 10. Heinrich Scholz, *Glaube und Unglaube in der Weltgeschichte*, 1911, is cited in support of the view that Augustine has no philosophy of history.

105) Reinken, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie des heiligen Augustinus*, Schaffhausen, 1866, was not available to me.

Figgis, *op. cit.*, devotes an entire lecture to this subject.

106) Henry Johnson's discussion in the first chapter of his *Teaching of History* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1940), pp. 1—24, is perhaps as good a discussion of this question as can be found. I know of none better. *A History of Historical Writing*, by James Westfall Thompson with the collaboration of Bernard J. Holm (New York: Macmillan Co., 1943), two volumes, contains various definitions of history and concepts of historical writings. This work is useful in spite of its shortcomings.

107) *Op. cit.*, XVIII, 52. 108) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 8—10.

109) *Op. cit.*, I, 27—30.

110) Gibbon, *op. cit.*, makes fun of this "question of casuistry" (*Mod. Libr. ed.*, I. P. 1119).

111) *Civ. Dei*, I, 5; II, 17; II, 18; III, 3; III, 10; III, 14; III, 17; V, 12; VII, 4; XVIII, 2.

112) *Op. cit.*, IV, 26.

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not quoted; neither is Josephus. Plutarch is used several times.¹¹³⁾ He quotes from Justinus.¹¹⁴⁾ Although there are few direct references to historians, there are many references to historical events. — It would be an interesting study to determine the sources which Augustine might have used for these facts. — He makes brief references to the Assyrians,¹¹⁵⁾ the Babylonians,¹¹⁶⁾ the Trojan Wars,¹¹⁷⁾ the Athenians,¹¹⁸⁾ Alexander the Great,¹¹⁹⁾ Ptolemy and Antiochus of Syria,¹²⁰⁾ and others. Naturally he refers most frequently to happenings in the history of Rome, both legendary and genuine. He speaks of Romulus,¹²¹⁾ the rape of the Sabine women,¹²²⁾ the war against the Albans,¹²³⁾ and Servius Tullius.¹²⁴⁾ He knows about the wars against Pyrrhus,¹²⁵⁾ the Punic Wars,¹²⁶⁾ Scipio and Hannibal,¹²⁷⁾ the Gracchi,¹²⁸⁾ Marius and Sulla,¹²⁹⁾ Julius and Augustus Caesar,¹³⁰⁾ Nero,¹³¹⁾ Constantine,¹³²⁾ Valens,¹³³⁾ Theodosius,¹³⁴⁾ and Radagaisus the Goth.¹³⁵⁾ This does not exhaust the number of his allusions to historical personages or events. Enough have been cited to show how saturated with history the *De Civitate Dei* is.

Objections will be raised that comparatively few men have time for the study of history. What little time there is — let's label this as a "rationalization" in the psychological sense of the word — should be devoted to a study of church history, if to history at all. All of us will admit that there may be some value in the study of church history.¹³⁶⁾ What about secular history, in which Augustine was so thoroughly at home?

The objectives for the teaching and learning of history have

113) *Op. cit.*, I, 23; IV, 31. 114) *Op. cit.*, IV, 6.

115) *Op. cit.*, XVIII, 3; XVIII, 22.

116) *Op. cit.*, XVI, 4 (which he identifies with Babel).

117) *Op. cit.*, K, 4: III, 3. 118) *Op. cit.*, X, 9.

119) *Op. cit.*, IV, 4; V, 5; VIII, 27; XVIII, 45.

120) *Op. cit.*, XVIII, 45.

121) *Op. cit.*, III, 5—6; XVIII, 22.

122) *Op. cit.*, II, 17; III, 13. 123) *Op. cit.*, III, 14.

124) *Op. cit.*, III, 15. Others of the Roman kings are also mentioned.

125) *Op. cit.*, III, 17. 131) *Op. cit.*, V, 19; XX, 19.

126) *Op. cit.*, III, 18. 132) *Op. cit.*, V, 21; V, 25.

127) *Op. cit.*, III, 21. 133) *Op. cit.*, XVIII, 52.

128) *Op. cit.*, III, 24. 134) *Op. cit.*, V, 26.

129) *Op. cit.*, III, 27—28. 135) *Op. cit.*, V, 24.

130) *Op. cit.*, III, 30.

136) W. G. Polack, "Why Should a Pastor Continue to Study Church History?" *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, Vol. IX, No. 8 (August, 1938), pp. 590—594, has stated the arguments for the study of church history, viz., to know the past, the Reformation, the Papacy, the Church in relation to the State, for illustrative material, and because there is a need for specialists in church history.

been catalogued and classified in various ways.¹³⁷⁾ The preacher may want to be able to fortify his arguments with a "History teaches," etc. And undoubtedly Clio can teach much to him who would study her lessons. For the theologian I would like to suggest that the study of "secular history" is important so that he may understand the present by a knowledge of the changes which have come about in the past—as Henry Johnson once said, "Change is the soul of history." We cannot escape history. He who wants to know what is the meaning of today's events must know the meaning of yesterday's events. "The roots of the present lie deep in the past," to quote one of James Westfall Thompson's favorite remarks. The modern psychologist has recognized the value of the genetic approach; the social worker has adopted the case-history method. To understand a problem in pastoral care, you want to know the background of the case, in other words, you want to know its history. To understand the world, the nation, the state, the community, the congregation, in which you are, you want to know its history. A knowledge of secular history will also give you a better understanding of church history. To me it seems that there has been too sharp a separation between ecclesiastical and secular history. This has been due to the fact, partly, that church history was conceived too narrowly as *Dogmengeschichte*, the history of dogma, and, partly, that secular history was conceived too narrowly as political and military history. The changed viewpoint of the "new history" has emphasized that history is concerned not merely with the names of kings and of battles, but also with the economic struggles of the serf and the factory hand, with the society of the upper ten and the lower ninety per cent of the population, with literature and thought as well as with actions, with religion and magic, with music and art. To me, and you will agree, it is impossible to understand the Middle Ages without a knowledge of the Catholic Church. Has it occurred to you that it is impossible to understand the Catholic Church without a knowledge of the Middle Ages? The history of the Reformation is not bound up in the biography of Dr. Martin Luther. Without an understanding of the Renaissance, the commercial revolution, the economic and social conditions of the early sixteenth century, the history of the Reformation is perceived in a myopic fashion. The age of Rationalism, the growth of Pietism, the Deistic movement, the secularism of the twentieth century, what are they but products

137) Cf. especially Henry Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 105—129, and the bibliography cited by him. The work of the Commission on Social Studies, headed by A. C. Krey, of the American Historical Association, in 16 volumes, particularly the *Conclusions and Recommendations*, is valuable.

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of the social, economic, cultural climates of their day? I doubt that the history of the Missouri Synod can be written without a thorough knowledge of the frontier movement in American history and the effects of the World War, nor can it be understood without a knowledge of both. That history can be used effectively for apologetic purposes should need no elaboration for any one who has the barest acquaintance with the *De Civitate Dei*. Allowing, then, your plea that you are interested only in church history, let me emend that plea with another, that you do not conceive church history too minutely, but study it in the framework of secular history — if indeed this distinction can be made.

I do not know if Augustine thought of history in a narrow way; judging from his *De Civitate Dei* I would say that he did not. At any rate, I believe that his *De Civitate Dei* can be of value to us in essaying the worth of history.

However, you cannot approach history without some sort of a philosophy of history. It is in Augustine's philosophy of history that I would find much that has meaning for today.

Augustine's *Civitas Dei* undertook to expound the polity of Him who made the world and man. Under His providence waxed the empire of the earth, the *civitas terrena*, with its own aims leading away from God. Within the guidance of His love, endured and grew the other city, the heavenly, the *civitas Dei*. Two opposite desires — *amores* — made these two commonwealths and carry them along divergent paths to different ends, the one toward the false good of this life, the other toward the true good of life eternal: *Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duo; terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, coelestam vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui*. The fortunes of the earthly commonwealth appear through the history of states, until finally all elements of earthly greatness converge in the imperial destiny of Rome. The course of the other commonwealth is traced through the Old Testament, which is shown to be in harmony with what its events prefigure and prophesy, Christ and the universal Church.¹³⁸⁾

To Augustine, God is the Maker of history. Or as Thompson says of the *City of God*: "It declared that God ruled human affairs. It put God in history."¹³⁹⁾ Radagaisus, the haughty Goth, was "overwhelmed at the nod of the Supreme Majesty."¹⁴⁰⁾ The times of all kings and kingdoms are ordained by the judgment and power

138) Henry Osborn Taylor, *The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages* (Third Edition, New York: Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 217—218 with reference to *Civ. Dei*, XIV, 28: Two cities have been made by two loves; the earthly, it is evident, by love of self even to the contempt of God; the heavenly, in truth, by the love of God, even to the contempt of self.

139) James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, I, p. 137.

140) *Civ. Dei*, V, 23 (p. 104).

of the true God. Earthly kingdoms are given both to the good and the bad.

Therefore that God, the Author and Giver of felicity, because He alone is the true God, Himself gives earthly kingdoms both to good and bad. Neither does He do this rashly and, as it were, fortuitously—because He is God, not fortune—but according to the order of things and times which is hidden from us, but thoroughly known to Himself; which same order of times, however, He does not serve as subject to it, but Himself rules as Lord and appoints as Governor.¹⁴¹⁾

He determines the time and the seasons for historical events according to the laws of His providence.

Therefore God supreme and true, with His Word and Holy Spirit (which three are one), one God omnipotent, Creator and Maker of every soul and body; by whose gift all are happy who are happy through verity and not through vanity; who made man a rational animal consisting of soul and body; who, when he sinned, neither permitted him to go unpunished nor left him without mercy; who has given to the good and to the evil: being in common with stones, vegetable life in common with trees, sensuous life in common with brutes, intellectual life in common with angels alone; from whom is every mode, every species, every order; from whom are measure, number, weight; from whom is everything which has existence in nature, of whatever kind it be and of whatever value; from whom are the seeds of forms and the forms of seeds, and the motion of seeds and of forms; who gave also to flesh its origin, beauty, health, reproductive fecundity, disposition of members, and the salutary concord of its parts; who also to the irrational soul has given memory, sense, appetite, but to the rational soul in addition to these has given intelligence and will; who has not left, not to speak of heaven and earth, angels and men, but not even of the entrails of the smallest and most contemptible animal, or the feather of a bird, or the little flower of a plant, or the leaf of a tree, without an harmony and, as it were, a mutual peace among all its parts;—that God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence.¹⁴²⁾

In a word, human kingdoms are established by divine providence. And if anyone attributes their existence to fate, because he calls the will or the power of God itself by the name of fate, let him keep his opinion, but correct his language.¹⁴³⁾

Thus it is neither blind fate nor the blind gods of the pagans that controls the pattern of history but

that God who has appointed to the natures created by Him both the beginnings and the end of their existing and moving; who holds, knows, and disposes the causes of things; who has created the virtues of seeds; who hath given to what creatures He would a rational soul, which is called mind; who hath bestowed the faculty and use of speech; who hath imparted the gift of foretelling the future things to whatever spirits it seemed to Him

141) *Op. cit.*, IV, 33 (p. 82).

143) *Op. cit.*, V, 1 (p. 84).

142) *Op. cit.*, V, 11 (p. 93).

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good; who also Himself predicts future things, through whom He pleases, and through whom He will remove diseases; who, when the human race is to be corrected and chastised by wars, regulates also the beginnings, progress, and ends of these wars; who has created and governs the most vehement and violent fire of this world, in due relation and proportion to the other elements of immense nature; who is the Governor of all the waters; who hath made the sun brightest of all material lights and hath given him suitable power and motion; who hath not withdrawn, even from the inhabitants of the nether world, His dominion and power; who hath appointed to mortal natures their suitable seed and nourishment, dry or liquid; who establishes and makes fruitful the earth; who bountifully bestows its fruits on animals and on men; who knows and ordains not only principal causes but also subsequent causes; who hath determined for the moon her motion; who affords ways in heaven and on earth for passage from one place to another; who hath granted also to human minds, which He hath created, the knowledge of the various arts for the help of life and nature; who hath appointed the union of male and female for the propagation of offspring; who hath favored the societies of men with the gift of terrestrial fire for the simplest and most familiar purposes, to burn on the hearth and to give light. . . . These things the one true God makes and does, but as *the same* God, that is, as He who is wholly everywhere, included in no space, bound by no chains, mutable in no part of His being, filling heaven and earth with omnipresent power, not with a needy nature. Therefore He governs all things in such a manner as to allow them to perform and exercise their own proper movements.¹⁴⁴⁾

As God controls the events, He controls also the cause of these events. He "knows and ordains not only principal causes but also subsequent causes."¹⁴⁵⁾ "There is for God a certain order of all causes; . . . our wills themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to God . . .; and He who foreknew all the causes of things would certainly among the causes not have been ignorant of our wills."¹⁴⁶⁾

The ultimate cause is the will of God, even though it may seem that what is done is contrary to His purpose and in opposition to His will.

So great is His wisdom and power that all things which seem adverse to His purpose do still tend towards those just and good ends and issues which He Himself has foreknown. . . . According to this will, then, by which we say that God wills what He causes to be willed by others, from whom the future is hidden, He wills many things which He does not perform.¹⁴⁷⁾

In other words, although Augustine does not express it this way, God works mediately, through means (the will of men), as

144) *Op. cit.*, VII, 30 (p.140). Cf. V, 8 for a further refutation of the idea of "fate."

145) *Op. cit.*, VII, 30 (p.140). 146) *Op. cit.*, V, IX (p.91).

147) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 2 (p.480); cf. XIV, 27.

well as immediately, directly (through miracles). God uses men and angels and demons to carry out His will. He may do all this within the framework of natural events, and there are definite causes which may be assigned for these events. Behind all events is the hand of God, God's providence. Let this be emphasized, too, as is evident from the preceding quotations, that this Providence is for Augustine always the true God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit.

Augustine is, of course, merely stating a Scripture doctrine, or a principle in a Biblical philosophy of history. He is restating what St. Paul said on Mars' Hill:

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.¹⁴⁸⁾

In finding various causes, principal causes and subsequent causes, Augustine recognizes the law of interdependence and the plurality of causes.¹⁴⁹⁾ This, I believe, we must acknowledge as quite well established, that God, as a general rule, operates through several causes, not merely through one cause. The great forces and movements of history, the trends in the affairs of men and nations, are caused not by single, isolated causes, but complexities of causes.

This does not mean that God is not to be found in history. It may mean that His will, the purposes which He wants to accomplish, are not always evident to us. It does mean that we must say with St. Paul:

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever! Amen.¹⁵⁰⁾

In a letter to Marcellinus, Augustine shows that he understood the music of the heavenly song which is history.

God is the unchangeable Governor as He is the unchangeable Creator of mutable things, ordering all events in His providence until the beauty of the completed course of time, the component parts of which are the dispensations adapted to each successive

148) Acts 17:24-26 (A. V.).

149) Edward P. Cheney, *Law in History and Other Essays* (New York: 1927), has formulated six "laws" of history, of which the law of interdependence is one.

150) Romans 11:33-36 (A. V.).

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age, shall be finished, like the grand melody of some ineffably rare master of song.¹⁵¹⁾

At least one recent writer, unwilling, it seems, to allow the hand of Providence in history, yet dissatisfied with current schools of interpretation, contends that we must allow for the "factor of accident in history." "By accident," he says "we mean any unforeseen occurrence which may arise quite capriciously to alter the course of causation and meaningfulness attached to any series of events." As an example he cites the destruction of the Spanish Armada (1588) by the wind and the storm which decided this historic naval engagement. "Accident—pure freakish, capricious, unpredictable accident."¹⁵²⁾ Perhaps the foxholes of Bataan, the drifting rubber rafts on the wide expanse of the Pacific, the jungles of Guadalcanal, or the Tunisian hills and plains, which our Numidian saint knew, will enforce the lesson that Augustine wanted to teach his war-torn generation. There are no accidents in history. God reigns over the destinies of the nations, as He rules in the lives of men.

I believe that this lesson is sorely needed. I need not elaborate. The prevailing philosophies of life glorify man and the state or society. They hold that man can solve his own problems and that he has no need of God.¹⁵³⁾ The pagans of Augustine's day believed that a return to the old gods was necessary, but the pagans today would usurp the place of God.

Our day must learn that the restless soul can find rest only in God. Man wants to be happy and guides his actions towards that goal. That goal Augustine finds in the words of the Psalmist (73:28), "to draw near to God."¹⁵⁴⁾ Augustine is not refuting those "who either deny that there is any divine power or contend that it does not interfere with human affairs." To convince those who believe in the gods, he shows, "It is good for me to be united to God." He points out:

Among the philosophers it is the question, what is the end and good to the attainment of which all our duties are to have a relation? The Psalmist did not say, It is good for me to have great wealth or to wear imperial insignia, purple, scepter, and diadem; or, as some even of the philosophers have not blushed to say, It is

151) Epist. 138, quoted by Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

152) Abraham Margolies, "Accident in History," *Social Education*, Vol. V, No. 1 (January, 1941), pp. 37—40. The quotations are from p. 39.

153) Harry Elmer Barnes and Oreen M. Ruedi, *The American Way of Life* (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1942), p. 514, say of education, e. g.: "We do not need religious subjects so much as a well-directed social intelligence in solving our perplexing problems. We are living in the midst of the greatest social crisis in history, and one so complicated that we need, as never before, the counsel and direction of organized intelligence."

154) *Civ. Dei*, X, 3, et *passim*.

good for me to enjoy sensual pleasure; or, as the better men among them seemed to say, My good is my spiritual strength; but "It is good for me to be united to God."¹⁵⁵⁾

Man was separated from God by sin. When man abandons God, he sins.¹⁵⁶⁾ Sin brought on the origin of the second city.¹⁵⁷⁾ The fact of sin, the existence of the earthly city, then, must be basic in understanding the course of history. Augustine's entire work is predicated on this fact. It belongs, I believe, to what we may well call his "philosophy of history." It explains the actions of men as individuals or as groups.

That the whole human race has been condemned in its first origin, this life itself, if life it is to be called, bears witness by the cruel ills with which it is filled. Is not this proved by the profound and dreadful ignorance which produces all the errors that enfold the children of Adam, and from which no man can be delivered without toil, pain, and fear? Is it not proved by his love of so many vain and hurtful things, which produces gnawing cares, disquiet, griefs, fears, wild joys, quarrels, lawsuits, wars, treasons, angers, hatreds, deceit, flattery, fraud, theft, robbery, perfidy, pride, ambition, envy, murders, parricides, cruelty, ferocity, wickedness, luxury, insolence, impudence, shamelessness, fornications, adulteries, incests, and the numberless uncleannesses and unnatural acts of both sexes, which it is shameful so much as to mention; sacrileges, heresies, blasphemies, perjuries, oppression of the innocent, calumnies, plots, falsehoods, false witnessings, unrighteous judgments, violent deeds, plundering, and whatever similar wickedness has found its way into the lives of men, . . . ?¹⁵⁸⁾

What causes tyranny, oppression of one nation by another, imperialism, wars? Although Augustine in his first four books of the *De Civitate Dei* cites examples after examples of calamities that came to Rome before the introduction of Christianity to show the futility of the worship of the false gods, it is evident that the roots of these evils are to be found in the sinfulness of the human race. Consider Augustine's comparison between kingdoms without justice and robberies:

Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies? For what are robberies themselves but little kingdoms? The band itself is made up of men; it is ruled by the authority of a prince, it is knit together by the pact of confederacy; the booty is divided by the law agreed on. If, by the admittance of abandoned men, this evil increases to such a degree that it holds places, fixes abodes, takes possession of cities, and subdues peoples, it assumes the more plainly the name of a kingdom, because the reality is now manifestly conferred on it, not by the removal of covetousness, but by the addition of impunity.¹⁵⁹⁾

155) *Op. cit.*, X, 18 (p. 192).

156) *Op. cit.*, XIV, 4.

157) *Op. cit.*, XI—XV, *passim*.

158) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 22 (p. 499 f.).

159) *Op. cit.*, IV, 4 (p. 66).

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Again:

But to make war on your neighbors and thence to proceed to others and through more lust of dominion to crush and subdue people who do you no harm, what else is this to be called than great robbery?¹⁶⁰⁾

Imperialism is a cause of war, as can be seen from Roman imperialism: "how many great wars, how much slaughter and bloodshed, have provided this unity!"¹⁶¹⁾

That there are necessary just wars Augustine admits.¹⁶²⁾ They fight wars to end all wars, to beget a just and lasting peace.

Whoever gives but moderate attention to human affairs and to our common nature, will recognize that there is no man who does not wish to be joyful, neither is there any one who does not wish to have peace. For even they who make war desire nothing but victory — desire, that is to say, to attain to peace with glory. For what else is victory but the conquest of those who resist us? And when this is done, there is peace. It is therefore with the desire for peace that wars are waged, even by those who take pleasure in exercising their warlike nature in command and battle. And hence it is obvious that peace is the end sought by war. For every man seeks peace by waging war, but no man seeks war by making peace.¹⁶³⁾

True peace comes only to the inhabitant of the heavenly city. They desire earthly peace.¹⁶⁴⁾ Despite the desire for peace, in a just war the adversaries must be sinning. And as war may result in slavery, "the prime cause, then, of slavery is sin, which brings man under the dominion of his fellow."¹⁶⁵⁾

We who have seen two wars of unprecedented dimensions, who have found the causes of these wars in economic imperialism, rampant nationalism, the desire for revenge, the lust of domination, greed and selfishness, admit that the existence of sin must be acknowledged for the correct understanding of history and must therefore enter into our philosophy of history.

The question arises — and it is faced by St. Augustine — how God can accomplish good through evil. God uses evil to accomplish His purposes and ends.

The durations of wars are determined by Him as He may see meet, according to His righteous will and pleasure and mercy, to afflict or to console the human race, so that they may be sometimes of longer, sometimes of shorter duration.¹⁶⁶⁾

But better yet, God in His grace has sent His Son to become incarnate in order that man may be at peace with Him. God's grace becomes a factor in history and the Incarnation becomes the most single important event in history. Figgis has said:

160) *Op. cit.*, IV, 6 (p. 67).

161) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 7 (p. 405).

162) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 6; cf. XIX, 7.

163) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 11 (p. 407).

164) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 17.

165) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 15 (p. 141).

166) *Op. cit.*, V, 22 (p. 103).

No one who takes the Incarnation seriously can avoid some kind of philosophy of history. That event—if a fact—testifies at once to the importance of human life on earth and shows its center. . . . Take a definite historical fact as your center, take an actual visible society as the special sphere of God's operation, a society which has a past and must have a future on earth; and then you are compelled to some philosophy of history.¹⁶⁷⁾

God's grace in Christ Jesus, says Augustine, has made us the sons of God. Through this grace we are at peace with God.¹⁶⁸⁾ In that grace we have blessedness, we are citizens of the heavenly city, the City of God. Augustine devotes the final four books of his work to expand this theme. Through the grace of our Savior alone is there escape from "this hell upon earth."¹⁶⁹⁾

It has been suggested that the "revival of religion" in our day includes a return to this Biblical doctrine. George Shuster, writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, after reviewing a number of religious books published recently, has said:

In all these books—and indeed in the better theological writing of every mold—one seems to notice a refreshing dearth of self-righteousness. It appears to be understood by all of us that, whether we be Lutherans or not, we have manifestly lived according to the *pecca fortiter* maxim and must take the consequences. Hitler is not merely Satan rising like a star. He is the materialization of our own errors and shortcomings. He could not have made the headsman's ax the grim symbolic device of our time had he not left humanity stripped of other symbols in which there was glory and radiance. Obviously, though the heart of man has not been at rest, religion must be taught else than soporific. It remains, therefore, to sense anew the truth enshrined in Augustine's *City of God*, that happiness springs from discipline of the mind and the mood under God. This, it seems, is the dominant religious outlook today.¹⁷⁰⁾

But whatever the dominant religious outlook today may be, we are convinced that only in the grace of God can man find happiness.

There may be those who will contend that the fact of God's providence, sin and grace, belong to theology proper, not to any philosophy of history. They do belong to theology. They belong also to the domains of the philosophy of history which Augustine postulated. If we adopt a historical approach and ask according to what principles we shall judge the happenings on earth, we must include the facts of providence, of sin, and of grace. That, then, is our philosophy of history. Let's not divorce our theology from an application to world events. Let's not hesitate to look at

167) Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

168) *Civ. Dei*, XXI, 15.

169) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 22 (p. 501).

170) George Schuster, "Religious Books in Wartime," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol. XXVI, No. 14 (April 3, 1943), p. 23 f.

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world events in the light of our theology and interpret them according to our theology. But when we do that, we have a philosophy of history. That is what Augustine did. That is why the *De Civitate Dei* has had such a large significance in the history of thought; that is why, I believe, the *De Civitate Dei* has so much that is meaningful for us today.

Augustine's philosophy of history contains a concept of society that should have meaning in our day, which stresses the superiority of certain races. Whether it be the Nordic myth, the belief in the "white man's burden," the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon race, or the fallacy of descent from the gods, whether it be Nietzsche's *Uebermensch* or Anti-Semitism, all these points of view could well be corrected from Augustine's *City of God*. Augustine presupposes the unity of the human race and the essential sociability of man.¹⁷¹⁾ H. Scholz, a German scholar, has written:

Wenn es richtig ist, dass Geschichtsphilosophie und Soziologie zusammengehören, so ist Augustin der erste gewesen, der diesen Zusammenhang innerlich erfasst und wirksam ausgesprochen hat. Zwar hat schon Aristoteles den Menschen als ζῷον πολιτικόν gewürdigt, aber nur um den Staat daraus abzuleiten. . . . Augustin hat den Fortschritt zur Geschichte gemacht und die Möglichkeit des geschichtlichen Lebens auf den geselligen Zusammenschluss der Individuen gegründet. Er hat erkannt, dass es Geschichte nur da gibt und dass Geschichte erst da beginnt, wo Menschen sind, die sich zu geordnetem Mit- und Aufeinanderwirken verbinden. Er hat diesen Zusammenhang nicht nur geahnt, sondern deutlich ausgesprochen: *Unde Dei civitas . . . vel inchoaretur exortu vel progrediretur excursu vel apprehenderet debitos fines, si non esset socialis vita sanctorum?* (xix, 5.) Es ist nicht zuviel, wenn man behauptet, dass Augustin sich durch diesen einen Satz ein bleibendes Verdienst um die Philosophie der Geschichte erworben hat; denn solange es eine Philosophie der Geschichte gibt, wird sie mit diesem Satz beginnen und insofern immer auf Augustin als ihren geistlichen Vater zurueckblicken dürfen.¹⁷²⁾

"How could the city of God . . . either take a beginning or be developed, or attain its proper destiny, if the life of the saints were not a social life?" In this heavenly city there are citizens of all nations, drawn from those who have diverse manners and laws and languages, but they form one city, one community.¹⁷³⁾

171) Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 38. It may be interesting to note that Alvin Johnson recently stated that he believed that we are now in "the final throes of a civilization developed along racial lines" and that the "future world civilization" will result "from the breakdown of the psychological barriers between nation and nation, race and race." Alvin Johnson, "A Time for World Civilization," *The Yale Review*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2 (Winter, 1943—published in December, 1942), pp. 209—216.

172) *Op. cit.*, p. 126, n. 3, quoted from H. Scholz, *Glaube und Unglaube in der Weltgeschichte*, p. 47.

173) *Civ. Dei*, XIX, 17.

God created only one single man, not certainly, that he might be a solitary, bereft of all society, but that by this means the unity of society and the bond of concord might be more effectually commended to him, men being bound together not only by similarity of nature, but by family affection.¹⁷⁴⁾ . . . And human nature has nothing more appropriate, either for the prevention of discord or for the healing of it, where it exists, than the remembrance of that first parent of us all, whom God was pleased to create alone that all men might be derived from one and that they might be admonished to preserve unity among their whole multitude. . . . In this first man, who was created in the beginning, there was laid the foundation, not indeed evidently, but in God's foreknowledge, of these two cities or societies, so far as regards the human race. For from that man all men were to be derived—some of them to be associated with the good angels in their reward, others with the wicked in punishment; all being ordered by the secret yet just judgment of God. For since it is written, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth" (Ps. 25:10), neither can His grace be unjust nor His justice cruel.¹⁷⁵⁾

The unity of the human race was destroyed by the fall of man. There are now two societies, but divergencies of race, tongues, customs, dress, arms, etc., do not make these two societies, but their relationship to God.¹⁷⁶⁾

Augustine seems to treat history as "the education of the human race."¹⁷⁷⁾ He draws on the analogy of the individual and holds that through the ages and epochs God has educated the race, "represented by the people of God," so that it might rise to heavenly, spiritual things. Whether we should find in this the germs of the theory of progress, another of the laws of history, may be doubted.¹⁷⁸⁾ That he believes in some development, that he believes in change is evident.¹⁷⁹⁾ These thoughts, too, might be included in a thorough discussion of Augustine's philosophy of history.

Whatever happens, according to Augustine, happens, we might say, against the background of eternity. In time only there is change, motion, development.

For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity there is no change, who does not see that there could

174) *Op. cit.*, XII, 21 (p.241).

175) *Op. cit.*, XII, 27 (pp.243—244).

176) *Op. cit.*, XIV, 1; XV, 1; *et al. passim*. Cf. Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, pp.143—149.

177) *Op. cit.*, X, 14.

178) Cheyney, *op. cit.* The idea of progress is one that demands wider treatment than here given. The bibliography that might be cited is voluminous.

179) Cf. the previous quotations given from *Civ. Dei*. VII, 30. Cf. X, 14. Towards the close of the first book, I, 35 (p.21) Augustine says: "I now proceed to speak . . . of the rise, progress, and end of these two cities. . . ."

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have been no time had not some creature been made, which by some motion could give birth to change—the various parts of which motion and change, as they cannot be simultaneous, succeed one another—and thus, in these shorter or longer intervals of duration, time would begin?¹⁸⁰⁾

Perhaps it is true that with that view of the time process as a whole, to use a phrase from Figgis,¹⁸¹⁾ world history becomes an episode.¹⁸²⁾ Nevertheless that view belongs to a philosophy of history, at least Augustine's philosophy of history.

If it is true that we, as children of our age, are too much occupied with the present, too contemporary, like Jonah's gourd of a day and for a day, if the poet's complaint that "the world is too much with us" is justified, then this point of view needs a re-emphasis today. Then the rise and fall of civilizations, changing economic and social phenomena or institutions, the ebb and flow of epochs, the flotsam and the jetsam of fame and fortunes on the waves of time, will be seen in their relation to a timeless Deity and a state when nothing was or shall be.

V. The Political Science of the "De Civitate Dei"

The *De Civitate Dei* is, we must repeat, not a treatise in political science nor a philosophy of history, but an apology; but, as Augustine presents various aspects of his philosophy of history in that work, so he shows us various aspects of his political science. This, too, is not detailed in a systematic, analytical fashion. We must reconstruct. Such a reconstruction must again be an interpretation.

To Augustine the family is the ideal group, or society. He uses the terms "family of God" and "family of Christ" as synonyms for "city of God."¹⁸³⁾ Although God laid a curse on man for his sin, He gave him the blessings of propagation and conformity as proof of His goodness. The fecundity originally bestowed upon man remained as a blessing; though death came upon all men, mankind's congenital capacity to propagate their kind was not

180) *Op. cit.*, XI, 6.

181) Figgis, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

182) Quoted *loc. cit.* from Scholz, *op. cit.*, p. 138. Augustine says, *Civ. Dei*, I, 29 (p. 19): "The whole family of God, most high and most true, has therefore a consolation of its own—a consolation which cannot deceive, and which has in it a surer hope than the tottering and falling affairs of earth can afford. They will not refuse the discipline of this temporal life, in which they are schooled for life eternal; nor will they lament their experience of it, for the good things of earth they use as pilgrims who are not detained by them, and its ills either prove or improve them. . . . When He [God] exposes us to adversities, it is either to prove our perfections or correct our imperfections; and in return for our patient endurance of the sufferings of time, He reserves for us an everlasting reward."

183) *Civ. Dei*, I, 29.

taken away. This river or torrent of the human race has been reproduced because conformity has been added to propagation.¹⁸⁴⁾

The family also serves as a school for obedience.¹⁸⁵⁾ Here law and order, justice and equity, tranquillity and peace, are found.¹⁸⁶⁾ In all these respects the family is the pattern for the city or state. Whatever other functions the family may have, the procreative function is, from a political point of view, the most important. "The sexual intercourse of man and woman, then, is in the case of mortals a kind of seedbed of the city," says Augustine.¹⁸⁷⁾ So has the Lord ordained.

For the earthly city and community of men who live after the flesh will never fail until the end of this world, of which our Lord says, "The children of this world generate, and are generated" (Luke 20:34).¹⁸⁸⁾

When Cain founded the first city and named it after his son Enoch, this was, of course, the establishing of a city with a family as the basis, a family which, Augustine believes, continued to rule in that city, which "may have had a widely extended dominion and many kings, not reigning simultaneously, but successively, the reigning king begetting his successor," the names of the members of this dynasty being recorded for us in Genesis.¹⁸⁹⁾ "The house ought to be the beginning or the element of the city."¹⁹⁰⁾ The first circle is the house; the second circle is the city; "after the state or city comes the world, the third circle of human society."¹⁹¹⁾

Perhaps all this will seem commonplace to you. Naturally, you will say, the family must remain basic to every form of societal organization. Naturally? Hitler does not seem to think so, if we are to believe Ziemer's *Education for Death*. The Communists do not seem to think so. Sociologists recognize that the family is a primary group in America, but they speak of the "weakening family ties," point to the increasing prevalence of divorce, and the crucial transformations in family functions. They tell us, "The problem is . . . the stability of family relationships." They do not fear that the family will disappear, but under the stress of war anything might happen. They say: "We cannot predict with any certainty the future of family life. War always has a disintegrat-

184) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 24. Legitimate sexual intercourse, "by nature fitting and decent," is, says Augustine, accompanied "with a shame-begetting penalty of sin." XIV, 18. Cf. XIV, 16—18. 20. 22. 26; XV, 16.

185) *Op. cit.*, XXII, 22; XIX, 14. 16.

186) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 13—16.

187) *Op. cit.*, XV, 16 (p. 298). Cf. Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 127—130 and the note on p. 130 ff. for a discussion of Augustine's family and sex ethics.

188) *Civ. Dei*, XV, 20 (p. 300).

190) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 16 (p. 412).

189) *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* (p. 301).

191) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 7 (p. 403).

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ing effect on family life."¹⁹²) In the armistice between the two world wars we as a people have been hacking away at the roots of civilization, of which the family is one of the most vital. We cannot disguise the fact that one of the chief tasks of our generation is the rehabilitation of the family. While it is true that within the circles of our Church this evil of our times has not made devastating inroads as yet, it is equally true that we must be on the alert against this evil. We are not advocating a "social gospel." The Church, however, should not be slow in upholding the sanctity and the stability of family relationships. This, too, belongs to the "all things" whatsoever Christ has commanded us. Our duty as citizens—if we are to agree with Augustine that the family is the element of the state—would make it imperative for us to uphold the first circle, the family.

It is a bit difficult to say that this is one of the prominent lessons of the *De Civitate Dei*. Augustine has there treated the subject almost incidentally. In one chapter, e. g., he speaks of the marriage of blood relationships in the earliest days of the race. He points out that Adam was both father and father-in-law to some of his children; Eve, both mother and mother-in-law; one, both wife and sister; another perhaps father, father-in-law, and uncle to his own children. These relationships, he says, were then spread, so that more people were united together within the bonds of the family; "thus the social bond (was) . . . loosened to embrace a larger number of relations."¹⁹³) He approves the prohibition of the marriage of cousins, "on account of the reason we have been urging," he says, "the multiplying of relationships, so that one person might not absorb two, which might be distributed to two persons, and so increase the number of people bound together as a family."¹⁹⁴) So the lesson is there.

From the family arises the state, a people. What is a people? One definition, which Augustine rejects, would be that it is "an assemblage associated by a common acknowledgment of right and by a community of interests." Such would be the ideal state, "the community and people of the just," living by faith in love, "that love whereby man loves God as He ought to be loved, and his neighbor as himself."¹⁹⁵)

But if we discard this definition of a people and, assuming another, say that a people is an assemblage of reasonable beings

192) Barnes and Ruedi, *op. cit.*, p. 466. Cf. the whole chapter, pp. 450—472. One could quote from a host of writings in a similar vein. Burgess has an interesting article in the November, 1943, issue of the *Journal of Sociology* on the effects of the war on family life. He believes that the family will be transformed into the "companionship type," but that it will not disappear.

193) *Civ. Dei*, XV, 16 (p. 297).

194) *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* (p. 298).

195) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 23 (p. 418).

bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love, then, in order to discover the character of any people, we have only to observe what they love. Yet whatever it loves, if only it is an assemblage of reasonable beings and not of beasts, and is bound together by an agreement as to the objects of love, it is reasonably called a people; and it will be a superior people in proportion as it is bound together by lower.¹⁹⁶⁾

Before going on, I should like to stop just a minute with that phrase "bound together by a common agreement," which Augustine has used. Is he there pronouncing one of the "self-evident truths" of the *Declaration of Independence*, "that, to secure these rights" (of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) "governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed"? Has he anticipated Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* by thirteen hundred years? We cannot say that he has. He never, to my knowledge, developed that idea. The germ of the idea, however, is there.

Augustine was more imbued with other ideas. To him peace, harmony, unity, concord, was the important thing in society. I have already quoted for you his opinion that the object even of wars is peace.¹⁹⁷⁾ In connection with that passage he says: "Even what is perverted must of necessity be in harmony with, and in dependence on, and in some part of, the order of things, for otherwise it would have no existence at all."¹⁹⁸⁾

The peace of the body consists in the duly proportioned arrangement of its parts. The peace of the irrational soul is the harmonious repose of the appetites, and that of the rational soul the harmony of knowledge and action. The peace of body and soul is the well-ordered and harmonious life and health of the living creature. Peace between man and God is the well-ordered obedience of faith to eternal law. Peace between man and man is well-ordered concord. Domestic peace is the well-ordered concord between those of the family who rule and those who obey. Civil peace is a similar concord among the citizens. The peace of all things is the tranquillity of order. Order is the distribution which allots things equal and unequal each to its own place.¹⁹⁹⁾

God, then, the most wise Creator and most just Ordainer of all natures, who placed the human race upon earth as its greatest ornament, imparted to men some good things adapted to this life, to wit, temporal peace, such as we can enjoy in this life from health and safety and human fellowship, and all things needful for the preservation and recovery of this peace. . . .²⁰⁰⁾

But as this divine Master inculcates two precepts—the love of God and the love of our neighbor—and as in these precepts a man finds three things he has to love: God, himself, and his neighbor, and that he who loves God loves himself thereby, it

196) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 24 (p. 418).

197) *Vide supra*, text after footnote 162.

198) *Civ. Dei*, XIX, 12 (p. 408).

199) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 13 (p. 409).

200) *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, (p. 410).

follows that he must endeavor to get his neighbor to love God, since he is ordered to love his neighbor as himself. He ought to make this endeavor in behalf of his wife, his children, his household, all within his reach, even as he would wish his neighbor to do the same for him if he needed it; and consequently he will be at peace, or in well-ordered concord, with all men, as far as in him lies. And this is the order of this concord, that a man, in the first place, injure no one and, in the second, do good to every one he can reach. Primarily, therefore, his own household are his care, for the law of nature and of society gives him readier access to them and greater opportunity of serving them. And hence the Apostle says, "Now, if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. 5:8. This is the origin of domestic peace.²⁰¹⁾ . . . And if any member of the family interrupts the domestic peace by disobedience, he is corrected either by word or blow or some kind of just and legitimate punishment, such as society permits, that he may himself be the better for it and be readjusted to the family harmony from which he had dislocated himself. . . . Since, then, the house ought to be the beginning, or element, of the city, and every beginning bears reference to some end of its own kind, and every element to the integrity of the whole of which it is an element, it follows plainly enough that domestic peace has a relation to civic peace—in other words, that the well-ordered concord of domestic rule has a relation to the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and civic rule. And therefore it follows, further, that the father of the family ought to frame his domestic rule in accordance with the law of the city, so that the household may be in harmony with the civic order. . . .²⁰²⁾

Even the heavenly city, therefore, while in its state of pilgrimage, avails itself of the peace of earth and, so far as it can without injuring faith and godliness, desires and maintains a common agreement among men regarding the acquisition of the necessities of life, and makes this earthly peace bear upon the peace of heaven; for this alone can be truly called and esteemed the peace of the reasonable creatures, consisting, as it does, in the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God and of one another in God. . . . In its pilgrim state the heavenly city possesses this peace by faith; and by this faith it lives righteously when it refers to the attainment of that peace every good action towards God and man; for the life of the city is a social life.²⁰³⁾

Thus Augustine, in the course of his discussion, makes it plain, in my opinion, that the peace of the city consists in the protection of the citizens by the government and the attainment of the common welfare by a harmonious co-operation of these citizens.²⁰⁴⁾

201) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 14 (p. 410).

202) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 16 (p. 412).

203) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 17 (p. 413).

204) I was not able to obtain Harold Fuchs, *Augustin und der antike Friedensgedanke*. Figgis, *op. cit.*, devotes one lecture, pp. 51—67, to Augustine's concept of the state. He does not, to my mind, make enough of Augustine's concept of peace. Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, is valuable particularly for bringing out that Augustine's concept did not mean medieval imperialism, cf. pp. 35—41 and 130—137.

In that one word *peace* Augustine seems to sum up justice and liberty, protection and order, the safeguarding of the rights of the minority, and the proper carrying out of the wishes of the majority, the desirable attitude of the citizen in obeying the laws of the state and the desirable attitude of the ruler or rulers in making the laws of the state, the common good or the general welfare.

There are those who would make the execution of justice the supreme purpose of the state. If that is true, says Augustine—and he cites Cicero as one who held that opinion—“Rome never was a republic, because true justice had never a place in it. . . . True justice has no existence save in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ.”²⁰⁵⁾ His argument is a closely knit one:

Thus, where there is no justice, there can be no assemblage of men associated by a common acknowledgment of right, and therefore there can be no people, as defined by Scipio or Cicero; and if no people, then no weal of the people, but only of some promiscuous multitude unworthy of the name of people. Consequently, if the republic is the weal of the people, and there is no people if it be not associated by a common acknowledgment of right, and if there is no right where there is no justice, then most certainly it follows that there is no republic where there is no justice.²⁰⁶⁾

Excluding justice, his definition is: *Populus est coetus multitudinis, rationalis, quae diligit concordiam communitatis sociatus.*²⁰⁷⁾

Augustine does not deny that a government ought to be just. That justice he finds in a higher concept, peace (*concordia*). I think in the same way he would regard the cry for liberty or the emphasis on the right of man. He would say that where men live in agreement, harmoniously, these privileges and rights will be respected. What Augustine would say about insurrections, particularly against tyranny, is not evident.

With the existence of a state for the express purpose of providing peace, or concord, there will be a minimum of conflict between classes, let us say, between capital and labor—although Augustine was not concerned especially with this. He does say, regarding slavery: “Masters ought to feel their position of authority a greater burden than servants their service.”²⁰⁸⁾ Class conflicts are the result of sin. The lust of ruling does harm to man.²⁰⁹⁾ Augustine is not such a dreamer that he believes that such conflicts can be eliminated. He does believe, however, unless I mistake him, that the goal of harmony in society will minimize such conflicts. Augustine approaches this problem from the ethical point of view.²¹⁰⁾

205) *Civ. Dei*, II, 21 (p. 36).

207) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 24.

206) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 21 (p. 414).

208) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 16 (p. 412).

209) *Op. cit.*, XIX, 15 (p. 411). “The condition of slavery is the result of sin.”

210) *Vide Troeltsch, op. cit.*, pp. 143—154.

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There, I believe, we have an important signpost for our day. In politics it has been the concern to gain power, not so much for the reason that opportunity is given for service, but from the lust of power. The political machines have been controlled by magnates and tycoons for their own gains, without concern for the welfare of the body politic of which they are members. Rights and privileges have been emphasized; duties and responsibilities have been forgotten. If we consider Augustine's view, we must say that everyone has his peculiar privileges, yes, but also his corresponding duties, working together as the members of the human body work together, to maintain the concord, or peace, of the state.²¹¹⁾

Then, too, there will be little need to be concerned about the rights of the States and power of the Federal Government. There will be harmony, peace, between the federated states and the federal state.

This will answer, too, I believe, the question so often raised about the relationship between the Church and the State.²¹²⁾ The charge is made that Augustine is the father of medieval clericalism. I cannot persuade myself that this is true. It is true, Popes built their claims on the stones they quarried from the *De Civitate Dei*, but they did not understand Augustine. Augustine states that the Church and the State are mingled, but the citizens of the city of God are to seek the peace of the Babylon in which they live.²¹³⁾ The whole book points out that there are two cities, two communities; ideally, of course, there should be only one city, the city of God. In the world of sin, however, there are these two. But nowhere do I find a statement that the Church is to rule over the State.²¹⁴⁾ Generally when Augustine speaks of the "city of God," he has in mind the invisible Church, which will become the Church Triumphant. It seems, therefore, that he cannot be thinking of the rule of the Church over the State. But this question must really be treated from other writings of Augustine, notably his writings against the Donatists.

211) *Civ. Dei*, XIX, 13.

212) "The greatest of the Popes, Gregory VII, Alexander III, Innocent III, based their claim of supremacy of Papacy over Empire, of Church over State, on Augustine's reasoning." James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, Vol. I, p. 137.

213) *Civ. Dei*, XIX, 26. This, I believe, is the important passage bearing on the question of the relationship between the Church and the State.

214) Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 42—47 and note, p. 47 f. Figgis, *op. cit.*, pp. 68—80, is in substantial agreement with this view. Harnack, *op. cit.*, pp. 298—304, summarizes Augustine's views on the doctrine of the Church.

If my interpretation of the viewpoint of Augustine is correct—and I have based it on what I believe to be the pertinent passage from his book—then we may apply it to our times by saying that the Church is to work in her sphere and the State in its sphere, commingled in respect to the persons who make up each community, but differing in functions. There will be no dominance of the one over the other. There will be peace.

The state, then, has, as Augustine puts it, "its good in this world." True, there will be distresses and conflicts, litigations, quarrels, and wars. "But the things which this city desires cannot justly be said to be evil, for it is itself, in its own kind, better than all human good." Its aim is to obtain peace. "These things, then, are good things and, without doubt, the gifts of God."²¹⁵

In this total scheme of things the state will safeguard the rights of the individual. It is not a contradiction when he calls the family the element of the state²¹⁶) and calls the individual "the element of a city or kingdom."²¹⁷) Individuals, even vile individuals, live together in the fellowship of the city, "so that henceforth they might be made more peaceable members of society."²¹⁸) God created man from one pair. He knew that man would sin, and yet He has propagated the human race from one individual "for the very purpose of commending concord." The very doctrine of election, Augustine says, shows that God "prizes unity in a multitude."²¹⁹) The "peace of the city" cannot mean, therefore, that the individual's well-being will be sacrificed.

There remains yet a consideration of Augustine's views on the structure of the state. Augustine's ideal is the small state. He is not in favor of large empires. Large empires are built by war. He points to the Roman Empire, when, according to Vergil:

At length stole on a baser age
And war's indomitable rage,
And greedy lust of gain.²²⁰)

215) *Civ. Dei*, XV, 4 (p. 286).

216) *Vide supra*.

217) *Civ. Dei*, IV, 3: "Let us not come to naught by being carried away with empty boasting, or blunt the edge of our attention by loud-sounding names of things, when we hear of peoples, kingdoms, provinces. But let us suppose the case of two men; for each individual man, like one letter in a language, is as it were the element of a city or kingdom, however far-spreading in its occupation of the earth" (p. 65).

218) *Op. cit.*, IV, 5 (p. 66).

219) *Op. cit.*, XII, 22 (p. 241): "But God foresaw also that by His grace a people would be called to admonition, and that they, being justified by the remission of their sins, would be united by the Holy Ghost to the holy angels in eternal peace, the last enemy, death, being destroyed; and He knew that this people would derive profit from the consideration that God had caused all men to be derived from one, for the sake of showing how highly He prizes unity in a multitude."

220) Quoted from the *Aeneid*, VII, 326—7 in *op. cit.*, III, 10 (p. 47).

52 The Meaning of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* for Our Day

Augustine asks, and the question is one that we might pose to those struggling to maintain empires or to gain them in the present conflict:

Why must a kingdom be distracted in order to be great? In this little world of man's body, is it not better to have a moderate stature, and health with it, than to attain to huge dimensions of a giant by unnatural torments and, when you attain it, to find no rest, but to be pained the more in proportion to the size of your members? . . .²²¹⁾ I should like first to inquire for a little what reason, what prudence, there is in wishing to glory in the greatness and extent of the empire, when you cannot point out the happiness of men who are always rolling with dark fear and cruel lust, in warlike slaughters and in blood, which, whether shed in civil or foreign war, is still human blood; so that their joy may be compared to glass in its fragile splendor, of which one is horribly afraid lest it should be suddenly broken in pieces. . . .²²²⁾ For the iniquity of those with whom just wars are carried on favors the growth of a kingdom, which would certainly have been small if peace and justice of neighbors had not by any wrong provoked the carrying on of war against them; and human affairs being thus more happy, all kingdoms would have been small, rejoicing in neighborly concord; and thus there would have been very many kingdoms of nations in the world, as there are very many houses of citizens in a city.²²³⁾

From this it might be concluded that Augustine would have endorsed the "good neighbor policy," particularly if the United States of America were smaller. I believe that he would endorse the structure of government of the United States of America—forty-eight small states living together in concord.

The possession of goodness is by no means diminished by being shared with a partner either permanent or temporarily assumed; on the contrary, the possession of goodness is increased in proportion to the concord and charity of each of those who share it. In short, he who is unwilling to share his possession cannot have it; and he who is most willing to admit others to a share of it will have the greatest abundance to himself.²²⁴⁾

I am not prepared to say that Augustine would advocate "Union Now," but perhaps the League of Nations would have won his approval. Small kingdoms, living together in concord, sharing each others' possessions, recognizing their interdependence, these would provide the greatest felicity.²²⁵⁾

Now, when Augustine uses the term "kingdom" it does not mean that he is necessarily committed to monarchy as a form of

221) *Loc. cit.*223) *Op. cit.*, IV, 15 (p. 72).222) *Op. cit.*, IV, 3 (p. 65).224) *Op. cit.*, XV, 5 (p. 287).225) "The disease of colossality," with quotations from Pitirin A. Sorokin's *Crisis of Our Age*, is discussed in "The Astrolabe," by Ad. Haentzschel and Theo. Graebner, *The Cresset*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (April, 1943), pp. 23—26.

government. There are passages which seem to indicate that he favored the republican form of government. They are not definite. To Augustine the structure was of little importance as long as the state maintained peace, concord, within and without.

Conclusion

We have considered various phases of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*. The treatment has not been exhaustive. Augustine's genius is too manysided to permit a comprehensive appraisal in a relatively short space; his book is concerned with too many topics to apply all of them to our times. As James Westfall Thompson has said of it, it "represents Augustine's mature thought. Although it was hammered out on the anvil of his brain, the *City of God* was no sudden brilliant spark, but was wrought and rewrought until it was fashioned into one of the greatest books in the world."²²⁶ Or as one of Augustine's biographers tells us:

This densely crowded work contains an apologetics, a theology, a philosophy of history, and a moral code; it starts with the sacking of a city and ends with the resurrection of the bodies of the victims beneath the new heavens; it treats of the time when earth was not yet and ends when earth no longer is; it is the history of a war and teaches peace; it deals with human events, and God is the chief actor. It is at once an epic and a drama; the struggle is not between the hero and fate as in Greek tragedy, but between man and Satan, between man and God. It is a drama and an encyclopedia; it contains all the knowledge of antiquity, the customs of barbarians and the systems of the philosophers; the darkest superstitions and the wars of empire; the hierarchy of the angels and anecdotes of the time. It is an encyclopedia and at the same time a mighty theological treatise; all the dogmas of Christianity from original sin to the resurrection of the body are defined and demonstrated in it.²²⁷

I can do no better than to close with the words with which Augustine himself closed the chapters of his historic book: "Let those who think I have said too little or those who think I have said too much forgive me; and let those who think I have said just enough join me in giving thanks to God."²²⁸

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²²⁶ James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, Vol. I, p. 136 f.

²²⁷ Giovanni Papini, *Saint Augustine*, translated by Mary Prichard Agnetti (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., First Edition, 1930), p. 270 f. ²²⁸ *Civ. Dei*, XXII, 30 (p. 511).