

*[Transcription of a lecture on Augustine's City of God given by Gordon H. Clark at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Oct 29, 1974]*

*[recording begins]*... this seminary. And when the opportunity presented I accepted the with alacrity. I have met your president on several occasions, not many. But all very pleasant. On one occasion I was the fraternal delegate to your synod out in Kansas some years ago. And it seems to me the synod was a very active body. The church must be very much alive. And then we have had contacts with the Copeland family. And I wish to extend all of these contacts and meet the students too. I hope to talk to a few of you probably at lunch. It's a pleasure for me. And I hope it won't be too distasteful to you.

The lecture is on the City of God. Now this isn't the most important subject in the world. But it has a place in the history of the church and although some of you and maybe all of you may be somewhat familiar with this perhaps a review of it will not be too distasteful.

This is a review of St. Augustine's City of God. Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics all had extensive and detailed theories on political science. None of them had a philosophy of history. St. Augustine (354-430) had both. The former taking pagan theories into account. The latter derived without pagan influence from the Bible. Standing, as he literally did, among the ruins of Rome, Augustine inaugurated a professedly Christian era in which his sometimes direct sometimes vague but always pervasive influence extended over many centuries. When the barbarians achieved the impossible and sacked Rome in A.D. 410 the pagans immediately attributed the disaster to the spread of Christianity. Had we as a city been loyal to our old gods they complained loyal to the gods who led our legions to worldwide victory this calamity would never have happened.

To vindicate Christianity from this pagan accusation, Augustine set himself the thirteen-year long task (413-426) of writing the city of God. The relation of Christianity to history, the civilization of Rome is the pervading theme and the articulation of his reply to the basic charge gives the outline of the work.

The first five books aim to prove that Rome's earthly prosperity did not depend on the worship of its pagan gods. Books 6-10 show that neither can spiritual prosperity have come from the Roman religion. Books 11-14 explain the origin of the two cities whose development makes world history. This development is traced through books 15-18. and finally their respective ends are described in Books 19-22. Depending on what edition you have its anywhere from 500 pages of double columns to a thousand pages or ordinary print. And you may want to read or you may not. I did read it all, all the way through. It took me almost a complete summer to do it.

This lecture cannot of course reproduce all the wealth of detail. But the main divisions are these three, each one with a double title. The first part: Theology or The Origin of the Two Cities. Second, Politics or the Progress of the Two Cities. And third, Eschatology or Their End.

First on Theology and the Origin of the Two Cities. Augustine's philosophy rose mainly against a background of Neo-platonism. Without stretching the truth too much one may say that the school of Plotinus was the flower and culmination of all Greek philosophy. While the Sceptics and Stoics had to be answered, Augustine recognized that Neo-platonism, although it had freed him from skepticism and had brought him to the threshold of Christianity, was nonetheless Christianity's most profound and most worthy opponent.

Neo-platonism explained the existence of the world as the result of the emanation from an eternal first principle. This first principle was pictured as a source of light without itself changing or diminishing in power it extended its rays in all directions. These rays diminished in intensity as the distance from the source increased. And these levels of diminishment were the various levels of subsidiary beings. Stars, planets, trees, rocks and so on. Until finally the intensity faded into evil, darkness, and nothing. The source is the One. A unity so perfect that not even the duality of subject and predicate occurs in it. Therefore the one cannot be an object of thought. No one can say anything about it. It is beyond knowledge. All knowledge requires a subject and predicate. Judgements and thought can grasp what is below the One, but the One is attainable not by the mind but only by a mystic trance. The first stage of emanation from the One is the mind. Here the duality of subject and predicate appears. This mind or Nous is essentially Plato's world of Ideas. Here are the objects of knowledge. The mind then produces the world's soul in which all human souls are merged. And in accordance with this scheme Plotinus discusses the main themes in philosophy.

Although Neo-platonism reserved the possibility of knowledge against the claims of the Sceptics, and although too it destroyed the materialism of the Stoics, and above all though it brought Augustine to the threshold of Christianity, nevertheless the basic principles of Neo-platonism are in direct conflict with the basic principles of Christianity. In Christianity, God is not an absolute unity incapable of thinking and of being thought. Further, the world is a creation, not an emanation. This act of creation occur once for all. It had never happened before and will never happen again. Therefore, and note the therefore, events in time, particularly the history of the human race obtains a significance impossible in paganism. In Plato, and presumably in Plotinus, and most obviously in Stoicism the history of mankind repeats itself in unending cycles. Friedrich Nietzsche also, in modern times, proposed a theory of eternal recurrence. Aristotle indeed did not have any eternal recurrence but he at least held that human history has neither beginning nor end. This view, not only conflicts with creation in the finite past, it also conflicts with a purposeful providence that directs every event for the foreseen chosen end. And further, as Augustine made so perfectly clear, it disguises a hopeless pessimism in its opposition to optimistic Christianity. For these reasons Christianity faces a philosophic problem that was absent from Greek philosophy. This problem is the philosophy of History. Greek thought aimed to discern the principle of permanence in nature. Christians too need a basis in something permanent. Greek thinkers were very serious in their ethical theories. Christianity is also. Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics were intensely interested in politics. Neither can we ignore

politics. But the Greeks had no philosophy of History. The Old Testament guaranteed that Christianity must have a philosophy of History.

The astronomical universe to which the Greeks paid great attention is barely the stage-setting for the drama of redemption. History is a drama because it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Since Paganism allowed for neither beginning nor end, it could have no middle. And without a middle history could not be a drama of significance for the Greeks to watch.

The Neo-platonic objection to a once-for-all act of creation, an objection you find in Plotinus Ennead number two, tractate nine, and therefore its objection to a philosophy of History is essentially the same objection that is used today, namely, a voluntary once-for-all act of a sovereign will is arbitrary and irrational. The problem as directed to Augustine is the simple question why did God create at one moment rather than sooner or later. To counter the Neo-platonic argument Augustine does several things. On a very profound philosophical level he attempts to work out a theory of time. One of the most widely-known opinions is that space and time are infinite. There are some exceptions. The Stoics and Friedrich Nietzsche held that time was infinite but space is finite. So did Aristotle. Democritus and Plato, however much they contradicted each other in everything else, agreed that space and time are both infinite. This is also the common view of scientists today. But for Augustine, time has no infinite past. Aristotle held time to be infinite because motion can neither begin nor end, and time is a function of motion. But for Augustine time began because it is a function, not of physical bodies to be sure, but of created minds. Hence there was no time before God created. God is eternal, he is not temporal. Therefore, the original question, namely "what was God doing before he did anything" or "why did He not created sooner are inapplicable questions for the simple reason that there is no before or sooner. Augustine also mildly puts the pagans for not asking, "why did God create the here rather than there." One question is as appropriate as the other. And Augustine's answer is the same. There was no here or there before creation. Space, like time, is a function of created being. But while Augustine carefully worked out these philosophic, one might even say scientific, analyses of space and time he puts equals on the moral implications on repeated cycles in infinite time. Let it be well understood that the Greek philosophers were intensely interested in morality. Socrates and Plato were content to die because they believed they would enter a better world, a world without evil, after death.

Plotinus stressed moral purification. The Stoics were renown for their efforts to achieve a life of virtue. But they also held, especially Plato and the Stoics, that the world cycle would repeat itself. We would all be reincarnated and live again on this earth and on a following earth time without end. Now Augustine raises the question: is it possible to achieved blessedness or happiness if the world repeats itself throughout infinite time. The Stoics held that our future lives would repeat our present life in all its details. Plato seems to allow for a limited improvement or even a worsened condition. But in any case the theory of reincarnation or eternal recurrence reduces, asserts Augustine, to incurable pessimism.

The argument is this. If human souls are co-eternal with God, as everything must be on this theory, and if the world's cycles repeat themselves endlessly, then our present state of affairs recurs again and again forever. We enjoy our small pleasures and suffer our tragedies time after time without end. Under these conditions can we be happy even between the world cycles when our souls dwell in the heavenly places? No, not even there. For if we foresee our returning misery the knowledge will destroy our heavenly bliss. And if we do not foresee it, then we are ignorant and deceived, but a person who is ignorant and deceived is surely not living a life incapable of improvement. The solution, Augustine argues, is to admit that something happens once for all. But if the pagans are willing to that happiness can be new and permanent they have no further reason to deny that creation happened just once. Nor can they object to our doctrine that Christ died unto sin once for all and being raised from the dead dieth no more. When the pagans hope for happiness, and strange though it may seem, Plotinus' immediate disciple Porphyry with all his gods and demons expressed the hope of permanent happiness. Strange as it may seem they repudiate their basic objection to the Christian doctrines of creation and redemption.

Now with the doctrine of creation absolved from absurdity, Augustine can continue with the creation of man. Created in the image of God, our first parents were social beings. And since there was only one pair, the human race was formed to be one society. However, sin entered. The spiritual unity of the race was broken and the city of God had a rival and antagonist in the other city. Because sin damaged man's social nature, because antagonism and antisocial behavior emerges, it became necessary to inaugurate civil government. Sin, unless controlled by coercive government would result in such anarchy that it would endanger the very physical existence of the race.

Since Augustine aimed not only to defend Christianity against the accusation that it had destroyed the glory of imperial Rome but also to give a rather complete exposition of the Christian position, it was natural for him to spend a good many pages explaining how sin could enter a world created by a good God. Not only does he discuss this at some length in the City of God he had also discussed it in his book on Free Will, *de libero arbitrio*.

Since this lecture cannot afford a long discussion let it be said with brevity that Augustine posited a sort free will in Adam by which he turned from the greater good to a lesser good. Part of the punishment for this evil choice is the loss of his free will. The popular summary of this situation consists of three phrases, quoted in latin to make the lecture seem more scholarly. Before the fall Adam's position was *posse non peccare*. Since the fall man's position has been *non posse non peccare*. And in heaven our state will be *non posse peccare*. In English, Adam at first was able not to sin. Now, we are not able not to sin. And in heaven we shall be not able to sin. One should be however that the later writings of Augustine such as his *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, concerning the predestination of the saints, and his grace and free will approach more closely to Calvin's position. And in his retractions which is the title of another set of writings, he repudiates several of his early views. His *de libero arbitrio*, on free will, is a very early book. And it should not be regarded as his final position. This warning is necessary

because the Roman Catholic interpreters try to make Augustine support the later Romish views. They minimize his retractions. Thus they attempt to maintain that all the church fathers were in essential harmony. Protestants, while they cannot deny what could be called the semi-pelagian material in his earlier books, see his essential thought more clearly expressed in his later publications.

Now, aside from the more profound theology for which there is no time at present, the immediate result of sin was the destruction of peace and the onslaught of war. With his vivid knowledge of Roman history, Augustine writes, "God was not ignorant that man would sin. And that these immortals would run to such enormities of sin that even the beasts devoid of rational will would live more securely and peaceably with their own kind than man.

Man's problem therefore is to survive war and eventually restore peace with God. God will indeed restore peace through the work of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. But there is a difference. While all of Adam's natural descendants are depraved by sin, not all will be saved. Thus the two cities will not always struggle through history, but each will continue forever on its own way.

As it was necessary to omit a fuller discussion of the fall, so it is necessary to omit Augustine's discussion of the Trinity the work of the second person as mediator in salvation.

The origin of the two cities has been stated. And now the second thing must be taken up, namely, politics or the progress of the cities. Yet the mere fact that there is politics and especially history is so important that although it was previously mentioned something more must be added. It is all the more necessary to add this material because of developments in the past 150 years. About that long ago, Soren Kierkegaard wrote that salvation could not be based on historical information. His reason was that the results of historical investigation are always doubtful and tentative. And that something as important as our eternal salvation cannot be based on what is doubtful and tentative.

About the beginning of this century Martin Koehler tried to preserve a Christian Faith without history. More recently, Bultman declares that we cannot know a single thing Jesus ever said or did. But this ignorance of history does not injury our Faith. Then too, from a very different background, perfectly secular background, C.E. M. Joad, who changed his mind after a while, but anyhow Joad in his book God and Evil ridiculed the notion that all history and all blessedness could swing on a pivot in Palestine. Such a localization of divine activity is inconsistent with the idea of deity. Hence we see that the philosophy of the twentieth century, at least in some cases, repeats the objections of Plotinus. And we should not be astonished if Augustine in A.D. 400 had something worthwhile for us today.

Augustine clearly proclaims that the pivot of human history is found in Palestine in A.D. 30. Christianity, while it indispensably includes profound theological doctrines, and while it indispensably includes certain moral imperatives, pivots on a point in time when Jesus hung

upon a cross and died. This event was the culmination of a plan executed by means of Jewish history. Nor did the plan stop there. The remainder of the plan began there. And by means of human history it will arrive at a final peace.

Those who are familiar with recent theories of history may be attempted to compare Augustine with Spengler or Toynbee. There is indeed a similarity. This similarity begins and ends in the statement that history follows a plan. But between Augustine and the modern positivists there are two enormous all-embracing differences. First, the plans are not the same. Second, the method of discovering the plans are not the same. The plan in Christianity is God's eternal decree and purpose. In positivistic historicism there is neither a sovereign god nor a rational purpose. Positivism claims to establish laws, which, as the laws of physics are supposed to be are merely descriptions of regularly repetitions. There is no final goal or apocalyptic conclusion. Then second, the positivists claim to discover their laws by empirical observation. For example, every past empire has fallen under the opposition of an internal proletariat and an external enemy. Therefore every future empire will follow the same procedure. But instead of depending on empirical observation, Christianity depends on divine revelation. The similarity therefore between Augustine and Spengler is empty, and the differences are all-important.

The process of human history is essentially the struggle and antagonism between the two cities as they are geographically, politically, and socially mingled in all nations. Though there are very many in great nations all over the Earth whose rites, customs, speech, honors and dress are distinguished by marked differences. Yet there are no more than two kinds of societies. The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh the other of those who wish to live after the spirit. We are not to suppose that the city of God is immune to evil and tragedy. Nor that the earthly city always fails to enjoy temporal blessings. They both experience joys and sorrows. In the sack of Rome, Pagans and Christians suffered equally but the origins of the two cities, their loves and their destinies are all opposite.

Augustine recognized that the fall of Rome was the visible symbol of the death of a civilization. To prepare for a new civilization, a civilization that would organize the invading barbarians, one that would insure social stability, it was necessary to supply the new society with a system of ideas. And Augustine willingly accepted the task of providing the new system.

Even in the sack of Rome, Christianity displayed a superiority to the pagan system. All Roman history, and all Greek history too, shows how the victorious armies destroyed and robbed the pagan temples and massacred the people who sought safety in them. But the barbarians did not massacre the people who took refuge in the Christian churches. Christianity is surely not the cause of the fall of Rome. Nor would paganism have saved it. Rome had suffered great tragedies before ever Christianity came on the scene. Far from ensuring peace, Paganism consistently depraved the morals of men thus weakening the nation and making its tragedies worse.

The rites performed in honor of the mother of the gods, are too obscene to be sung in the presence of the mother of the poet who described them. Had the pagans (that's Augustine phraseology, not mine. He's quite an orator, you know). Had the pagans worshipped Plato it would have been an improvement. For although we do not consider Plato a demigod, although we do not in fact put him on the level of any simple Christian, he was at least fairly decent and taught a morality superior to common Paganism.

Popular Pagan opinion considers it the purpose of the state to provide its citizens with the means of indulgence. It should supply free public prostitutes, it should furnish rooms for feasting and vomiting, and ... ah ... welfare. Anyone who does not care for lasciviousness and gladiatorial cruelty (or football maybe, or something) should be branded as a public enemy. Not all Romans held this popular theory. Cato, for instance, attributed Rome's earthly success to private initiative, public justice, and a minimum of crime and lust.

Cicero advanced a fuller philosophy than Cato. Cicero, living in the first century before Christ, was intensely interested in philosophy and particularly in politics. As a Platonist, influenced by Stoicism, he did not possess a rigidly logical mind and in his effort to be comprehensive he fell into a too easy syncretism. Yet this very fault has preserved for us a wealth of information on Roman political theory. Cicero's theory of the state was based on the concept of natural law. In this he agreed with Aristotle. But he disagreed with Aristotle on the next point. Aristotle held that men were not all equal. Some were indeed by nature slaves. But from the Stoics, Cicero adopted a theory of natural equality. Not only are all men equal but they are all brothers. Cicero would have approved of the French motto *Libertie, Egalitie, Fraternatie*. Government therefore is not a necessary evil as Augustine held but a positive good. Nor is the state a social contract as Rousseau and Locke were to say later. But rather the state is founded in nature. And no work of man is more noble. Consistently with this Cicero praises the actual Roman constitution because, instead of being the work of one man, it was a natural growth produced by the labors and wisdom of many generations. This was repeated by an English political scientist many years later.

Augustine, though he reduced the theory of natural law, though he holds that the state is an evil rather than a good, and though he completely repudiates the notion of *Fraternatie*, still holds Cicero in high respect. This is because Cicero insisted upon the necessity of justice.

Not only did ??? complain that Rome was utterly wicked and profligate, but Cicero judge that Rome had become so unjust that it no longer merited the name of a *res publica*, a republic.

Popular opinion held that the Republic cannot, just cannot, be governed without injustice. Cicero disagrees and aims to prove that the State can survive only if it be governed with the most absolute justice. After the manner of Plato's *Minos*, Cicero appeals to a principle which lies behind all the order in the world. This law is not one thing in Rome and another in Athens. It is eternal, universally applicable, and immutable. All civil law is but the expression or application of this eternal law of nature. When a ruler ignores this law and enforces arbitrary decrees on the

people the Republic is not only blemished it is actually destroyed. In fact, as there would no longer be a state, there would no longer be a people. A people is an assemblage of persons unified by a common acknowledgment of law. But when the law is gone the people become only a mob. Such was the case with Rome.

Augustine however points out that on Cicero's theory Rome was not destroyed, Rome never existed. If absolute justice is required then no state has ever existed. Justice is the virtue which gives every man his due. But where is justice when men desert the true God and yield to demons. In fact, true justice has no existence save in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ. This is the city of which the holy Scripture says "glorious thing of ye are spoken, o city of God." There can be no such state among sinful man. The theory is wrong that requires perfect justice in actual governments. Yet there is a difference between a pagan emperor and a Christian emperor. The pagan emperor may have wealth, power, and even freedom from great danger but the happiness of the Christian emperor derives from his justice, though imperfect, greater immunity to flattery, his clemency, his concern for the good of the subjects, and above all the Christian emperors love, fear and worship of God.

Nevertheless, not even a Christian emperor can rule with perfect justice. Let us remember that Augustine was not only a profound philosopher, but he was also a bishop charged with the administration of a large diocese. He was of necessity a practical man and faced the facts of life. Therefore he rejected Cicero's view not merely because he rejected the theory of natural law but also because nothing can be gained by denying that Rome was an actual state. To quote (this is from book 19, chapter 24) "where there is a multitude of men conjoined in a common fruition of what they properly desire there may fitly be said to be a people. By this definition, continues Augustine, Rome had a people and consequently a commonwealth."

This passage has stirred up some disagreement as to its exact significance. J. N. Figgis notes that Augustine wants a definition of the state that would include all historical communities no matter how unjust. A.J. Carlisle adds that Augustine here rejects the views of St. Ambrose and other fathers who make justice an essential polity of the state. But another gentlemen C.H MacIlwaine denies this interpretation on the ground that this would make Augustine a precursor of Machiavelli. Other authors find in Augustine a puzzling mixture of Platonic and Sophistic views. Plato and Aristotle held that the state was natural. The Sophists held that the state was conventional. This latter theory is held today by those who, like Hans Kelsen in our country, find no moral norms superior to the positive enactments of government. Well, at least to the decision as to what they mean by the supreme court. Citations from Augustine can be made to support both points of view. Book 4, chapter 4 is entitled "How Similar to Robber Bands are Kingdoms without Justice." And in the text he says "what are robber bands themselves but little kingdoms."

This confusing mixture of Platonic and Sophistic elements can be traced back to the New Testament itself. For example, the treatment of slavery in Philemon and in 1 Corinthians 7:21 seems Sophistic in that no condemnation is made of a positive enactment that most Americans today would abominate. Even the passage in Acts where Peter confirms the right of private

property can be interpreted to mean merely Ananias was within his legal rights as established by Roman law. Another state could abolish private property and that would make private property theft as the Communists contend it is. Such is the Sophistic element in the New Testament.

The Platonic element is found when the apostle's appeal to the law of God as superior to civil authority. These two types of passages are indeed found in the New Testament and we are all familiar with them. But to see within them a confusion between two opposing philosophies is to suppose that the New Testament is a syncretistic effort of a decadent age. The reason why the New Testament contains these two factors which were indeed contradictory in Greek philosophy. The reason the New Testament approve of a law that seems to be natural and another that seems to be conventional. The reason why the New Testament can seem to be a syncretism of Sophism and Platonism without actually being syncretistic or self-contradictory. The reason why the New Testament is logical is that its political theory depends on two basic presuppositions, neither of which occurs in Sophism or Platonism.

The first of these is the epistemological principle of revelation. The second is the divine right of government. This is not the divine right of kings as the Stewarts maintained. But the divine establishment of the principle of civil government.

As for the first of these principles all that can be said in this lecture, and it will be said without explanation or defense is that apart from revelation no theory of ethics or politics can be validly established. As for the second, the Bible teaches that God has given to the government authority to enact and enforce all laws that do not contravene the ten commandments. Therefore most legislative enactments are conventional positive law. The most obvious examples of this, but something to which Augustine was ignorant, are the traffic laws.

#### *Other side of tape*

...certainly army. It was not because of pacifistic principles. How could it have been in view of God's several Old Testament commands to wage war. But Christian usually refuse to serve in the army because they would have been required to worship the emperor as a god. Though it is not the intention to stray far from Augustine into the twentieth century the civil disobedience of college radicals a few years ago cannot be condoned by Christians. When the students at SIU and Kent State burned down the town shopping centers they were thieves with murder in their hearts. When they attacked and set fire to the ROTC buildings and assaulted the fire men who tried to put out the blaze they were clearly guilty of insurrection against the government. In addition they violated the civil liberties of students who wanted to take ROTC and other courses that the leftists disrupted. The fact that a government is corrupt or cruel does not justify disobedience. Augustine does not defend the political idealism that would define actual states out of existence. If obedience is due only to those governments which are perfectly just the result is anarchy.

In book 5, chapter 21, Augustine says “the true God that gives the heavenly kingdom only to the godly, but the earthly kingdoms to both good and bad men as He likes, let Rome have the sovereign. So did He with Assyria and Persia who worshipped two gods, a good one and a bad one. He that gave Marius rule, gave Caesar rule. He that gave it to Augustus gave it to Nero also. He that gave rule to Vespasian and Titus, his son, both of them sweet-natured men, gave it also to Domitian, that cruel bloodsucker. He that gave it to Constantine the Christian gave it also to Julian the Apostate. All these the true sacred and only God disposed and directed as he pleased and if the reasons be unknown why he did thus or thus, is He therefore unjust?”

One reason however we know, God established civil government to restrain sin. Apart from sin God gave man dominion over the animals. He did not intend that his rational creature which was made in his image should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation. Not man over man. God thus intending to teach us what the relative position of the creature is and what is the desert of sin.

Government therefore is not natural as in Plato and Aristotle, nor is it the result of the good in man. It is the result of the evil in man. Though an evil in itself, because it infringes on the liberty of the individual, government is under the actual circumstances a good. It is a good because it is a necessary evil. It is both a punishment and remedy for sin.

This is why Rome was good. Its conquests over other nations were indeed accomplished by calamitous bloodshed. Nevertheless to be conquered by Rome was to be brought under a better government. The conquered nation gains. If today the peoples of America and Angola love liberty, Augustine replies, as far as this life of mortals is concerned what does it matter under whose government a dying man lives if they who govern do not force him to impiety and iniquity.

In the Middle Ages the works of Augustine were used to develop a theory of the relation of church and state. Such an attempt is dangerous because this is a problem Augustine hardly thought of. The eminent Philip Schaff in the preface to Markus Dodd’s translation of the City of God said that Augustine “confines the kingdom of God to the narrow limits of the Jewish theocracy and the visible Catholic church.” But Augustine clearly states the contrary. He says in 18, 47, “there was no other people properly so-called the people of God. But they the Israelites cannot deny that some particular men lived in this world and other nations who belonged to the heavenly hierarchy. The story of the holy Job convinces them. And there might be others. Thus in one faith unite all the predestined into one city one house one temple of the living God.” Conversely, Augustine also denies, this is in 18, 49, denies that every member of the visible church is a citizen of the holy city. “Many reprobate live among the elect. Both come into the Gospel’s neck.” And he gives Judas as an example.

Now to conclude this lecture with only a few minutes remaining a very brief third division must be rapidly gone through. The first division was the origin of the two cities. The second, both too long and too brief, was the progress of politics of the two intertwined cities and now the third division is their end. It won’t be as long as before.

Although the citizens of the two cities are always intermingled in history at the end they are radically separated. "The one city is predestinated to reign eternally with God and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil." Some people object to the doctrine of eternal punishment on the ground that eternity is too long for a sin committed in a short time. Such a rejection is based on the ridiculous assumption that the duration of a punishment should be proportional to the duration of the crime. Nor is this punishment remedial or reformatory. The sinner has had time to reform in this life. At the end his opportunities for reform are passed. The punishment has as its rationale the vindication of the authority of God. Augustine gives a short description of the pains of hell in 19, 28. I mean book 19, chapter 28. He describes the pleasures of the city of God at a greater length. Naturally he stresses the resurrection as a distinct cleavage from paganism. The pagans at best taught the immortality of the soul, never a resurrection of the body. And even the future life of the soul was a gloomy one. Though Plato's future was supposed to be more cheerful. But though Christianity teaches the resurrection of the body, the joys of heaven are not bodily joys. They consist mainly in the beatific vision. This vision consists in peace with God. Since complete peace with God presupposes the complete absence of sin, even the impossibility of sin, Augustine again raises the question of free will.

Does not non posse peccare abolish free will? Well, of course it does, if the term free will is taken at face value. But Augustine says no, he seems to be enamoured of the term and wants to preserve it even though he admits that the impossibility of sin conflicts with the ordination notion of free will. Obviously in heaven there is no power of contrary choice. Augustine asserts that both our freedom from evil desires is indeclinable (although he wasn't doing Greek grammar, he didn't even know Greek, poor fellow) and that the free will of Adam before the fall, namely the power of contrary choice, is not the same as the free will in heaven. But he retains the term free will as being a description of freedom from sin. Even in his latter tractate on grace and free will he still held on to the term. But its meaning is gone for he says clearly concerning even this present life, "it is certain that it is we who act when we act but it is God who makes us act." This is in paragraph 32 of Grace and Free Will. He also added not only men's good wills, which God converts from bad ones, but also those who follow the world are so entirely at the disposal of God that He turns them whithersoever he wills and whensoever he wills. That's a quotation from the same book, paragraph 41.

Calvin himself could say no more. At any rate, freedom is not man's final end but peace. The meaning and value of peace are discussed in book 19 and very likely book 19 is the most important book in the City of God. In this peace the soul will have an intellectual remembrance of past sins but so far as sensible experience goes they shall be forgotten. The soul will also know the eternal sufferings of the lost because if they did not thus know of misery they would not praise God's mercy. And on this note of eternal peace this lecture can conclude which is perhaps the best known of Augustine's brilliant expressions. It does not however come from the City of God, but its thought is an excellent summary. "Thou hast made us for thyself and our souls are restless until they find their rest in thee."

## *End of Lecture*

### *Questions from Audience*

Host: ...either do you have a question, or a question that might lead to clarification at some point you'd like to pursue. I'll just start with ..... comment on Augustine's views of people and the nature of ..... [background noise]

Clark: Well, you first asked for the nature of evil. That's easier to answer. Augustine holds that everything that God created was good. But that some things are better than others. And pure evil is pure nothing. There isn't anything that is evil. Adam's sin consisted in choosing a lesser good. The fruit of the tree that he ate was good, it wasn't evil, but obedience to God's command was better. And Adam's sin consisted in turning from the greater good to the lesser good. Now as for the origin of sin as opposed to the nature of sin he, I gave some quotations there, in his earlier work on Free Will, he said that the state of Adam's mind before the fall was that he was able not to sin. He had the power of contrary choice and he made his choice. There is no particular discussion of predestination in the early work, *De Libero Arbitrio*. I heard ???? said that in the later works, where he is much stronger on Predestination and indicates that it is God (we do things, but it is God who makes us do them). So, although in this one late treatise he still uses the phrase free will, he no longer means the power of contrary choice because he agrees that in heaven we do not have the choice to do evil. I don't know whether that answers your question. To a certain extent maybe.

Audience member: Can you evaluate his view of the nature of sin?

Clark: Well, I would evaluate it this way, I suppose. I think that in the history of theology as it has continued since his time we are able to make more adequate statements of the truth than he seemed to be able to make. Certainly none of us would say that anything in physical nature is in itself an evil; everything is good. Any in that sense, we can say that sin consists of choosing a lesser good instead of a greater good because everything we choose is good. So sin can only be choosing a lesser good over a greater one. But, Augustine (and here I have to do some guesswork because either I don't know what he says or he didn't say anything on it.) He does not exactly show how we know what good is. What a greater or lesser good is. There are things in there that you can work on if you wish, but I think our Westminster Confession gives it much more clearly and precisely that we determine what is good by what is commanded; what is evil is what is forbidden. It is based on the law of God. I would not (now this is just a personal guess), I would suppose, I would hope, that Augustine, since he said so much that is so very good, would have admitted this if it had ever been mentioned to him. But the notion that sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God seems to have been the phrase that he just didn't think of. This doesn't mean that he would condone disobedience. It's just the situation so far as I can see it that a certain very brilliant man was intent on answering certain problems, and he did so much better than anyone else had ever done before, that here was

something he just didn't work out to the last detail. And that's the way I look at it. That's my evaluation. Mr. Copeland? *[Note: Dr. E. Clark Copeland, Professor of OT at RPTS]*

Audience member: Is there any reason to think that Augustine saw these merely as relative matters? Relatively not good not to the ??? of God and relative to the ??

Clark: Well, you see, when he said all things are good, he meant things rather than actions. An he was talking about the fruit of the tree. Or this, that, or the other thing. But he spoke, I can use a few of his words, he spoke of abusing things, like food. You are not to be a glutton, and you remember he ridiculed the Romans for wanting to eat and vomit. I can't quite figure out that particular sin, but that was a Roman difficulty I guess. You see, he would say "food is good but eating too much isn't good." I don't think he would condone disobedience. I'm quite sure he wouldn't, but he did not ordinarily think in those terms. He thought of the things in the world, some were good and some were better, and some not quite so good.

Audience member: He discusses the kingdom of the world and the world is the city of God not to make these merely relative. [hard to understand]

Clark: Well, that is a hard question to answer because the proper amount of food a man eats or should eat depends on the person himself, it is relative to him. An athlete of great physique can very properly eat much more than a person who has little exercise or is frail and only weighs 125 lbs or something. In that sense it is relative. When you use the word relative you sorta have to specify relative to what. On what conditions and so on. And what is the proper amount of food for one person is not the proper amount for another. But as I say, Augustine, because he was interested in other things, just didn't make as clear a statement about obedience and disobedience as we would like for him to have made. After all, look at his great labors against Pelagius, you see. He did insist on total depravity. He argued very thoroughly against Pelagius. But some of our later developments, advancements never occurred to him.

Audience Member: May I ask you, have you seen, obviously on the City of God there is the origin of the city of the world. In other words, [not clear]

Clark: Oh, let me see. He certainly refers to the rebellion of the angels. But that isn't again something he is particularly interested in the City of God. He is talking about the history of the human race. And the origin of the two cities lies in the fall of Adam. And the Cain on the one hand and Enoch and the others on the other hand. One is the city of God and the other the city of man. But he is speaking specifically of human mystery. And although he mentions angels here and there you can probably look in the back edition and connect where he mentions it. The idea of the two cities is an idea of human mystery.

Audience member: Do you find any significance in his choice of the word ???, rather than the Roman, Latin term that we would associate with the city ????? Does he chose that word to include more than we think of when we say city?

Clark: Well, now that's an interesting question. I do not know Latin translation of the Bible he used. He quotes, you know, "glorious thing of ye are spoken, o city of God." Now, I suppose, and this is just a guess, because I don't know. I suppose that in whatever Latin, he was a contemporary of Jerome wasn't he. I don't know whether he knew Jerome's translation. Maybe he did. They did correspond. Do you happen to know? Whether it was Jerome's work or a previous Latin translation.

Audience member: I assume it was a previous one because they contemporaries. They were working together on a number of problems. I've been curious.

Clark: Whether there is a linguistic reason in addition to the matter of quoting Latin translation.

Audience member: Well I have another reason for raising the question, and that is when modern students read the City of God we simply assume that he is talking about a city in the modern sense as opposed to a rural community, but I think that he's talking more about what he'd call a society. A human society versus a society which is in relation to God and Jesus Christ. Because I was wondering what do you think about that?

Clark: Well, offhand, I would think that *urbs* refers to some sort of locality. Populated locality. Perhaps the city represents a body of people under a government. It rather indicates the organization than simply the locality. All I can draw on of course is that we get the word urban from *urbs*. Well, and that doesn't really prove anything.

Audience member: But in this whole discussion are you bring out the term *peoples*. That is another term ...

Clark: He defines a people as an aggregate of individuals united for certain proper goods. That's essentially, well that is similar to Aristotle's definition. Well, there is some modification because Aristotle makes the state concerned with the supreme good. Whereas Augustine has it for earthly goods.

Audience member: What ... you say. Aristotle .. people is a reaction .. a change probably from ....

Clark: I would suppose that it is more a reaction against Manicheism, than any influence of either Aristotle or even the Neo-Platonists. Augustine was influenced by the Neo-Platonists. He utilized a number of their theses while he discarded quite a number of others. But I think his main thrust here is against his previous experience with the Manicheans. He said you have these two different principles and they often said what was material was evil.

And in reaction to that Augustine says everything that God created was good. I'm just about positive it has nothing to do with Aristotle. How much it has to do with Plotinus I'm not sure. And I do know he had gone through a Manichean stage in life and that rejected it. This is what I suppose he had in mind.

Audience member: This is on civil government. ... in relation to our covenant ... forefathers. Where does he refer ... the government and ....

Clark: Well, I suppose Augustine would be less willing to rebel. And there are some other things. I sorta added a bit of emphasis in one or two places. He believes that it is better for people to be slaves, in certain conditions than to be free. I think he would definitely deplore the independence of the new African nations and I'll give you one example of that. A friend of ours was a missionary in the Congo for some 30 or 35 years. He spent his life there. And when the Belgians withdrew and the Congo got its independence cannibalism began immediately. And this friend of ours said he was walking through some of the jungle one morning and he met, I don't know whether he knew the man or not, he was carrying a human arm home for breakfast. And the withdrawal of the British, er Belgian, government brought cannibalism back. The Belgians had suppressed it. And I'm quite sure Augustine would say they'd be better, much better, for them to be governed by the Belgians than to be governed by savages. He admits that the wars and conquests by Rome were very bloody and much to be deplored. But after they are to be deplored, the people are much better off than they would have been. And he has no doctrine or principle objection to slavery. No there may be disadvantages to slavery too, but if the master is a Christian, the slave will not be brutally treated and he might be better off than he would be otherwise. He does not actually say, as Aristotle did, that some men are born slaves. At least I don't remember any such statement as that. But I quoted the place where he says that if you are living under a different government than your own or if you are a slave, you are better off than you might have been depending on conditions of course. A very brutal government might destroy a better government, but in spite of his clear insight into the evil and wickedness of Roman society. He still thought that the Roman government was a great institution. And it was on the whole very good for the inhabited world. It gives no indication that he would have rebelled against Domitian. He called him a bloodsucker. And of course, Domitian, I guess initiated some of the worst persecutions against the Christians as any. But there is no hint that he would have rebelled. In fact, well I guess that's what you say. That he, you see, he did have any notion that the ruler was under some obligation, had to meet some obligation binding which if he broke for people to rebel. I suppose that in this case he would be much closer to the Lutheran position than ??? position. Are there any other questions?

Audience member: [not clear] king ... being the head of the church.

Clark: Well, that again is something that he seems not to have thought of. He thought of the ruler, I guess, as, well I guess, of course he did think of Constantine as being a Christian ruler. But then he said the apostate is appointed by God too. He did, he did, I don't know *[tape ends]*