

ABSTRACT

Reclaiming Happiness of the City and the Soul:
Augustine's Engagement with Cicero and Porphyry in the *City of God*

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The present dissertation argues that Augustine's *City of God* demonstrates the superiority of the Christian faith to pagan philosophy in the attainment of happiness and, ultimately, seeks to turn the Roman intellectuals to the Christian faith. The study investigates Augustine's correspondence with educated Romans and shows that the target audience of the *City of God* is *primarily* those who are interested in the Christian faith, yet under the sway of pagan philosophies and their criticisms of the Christian teachings. Since Cicero and Porphyry were the major philosophers who taught a way to happiness on socio-political and contemplative levels respectively, Augustine presents the Christian faith as the single way to the true commonwealth and the beatific vision which these two philosophers desired to achieve. In other words, he presents the Christian faith as completing the goal of pagan philosophy, especially the goal of Plato's philosophy: happiness on both the political and contemplative dimensions. The dissertation concludes that Augustine integrates these two main eudaemonistic components in Platonism through the *City of God*. The dissertation also claims that Augustine identifies Rome with

Nineveh in the Book of Jonah, and that such re-conceptualization reflects the evangelistic attitude toward his contemporary intellectuals.

Reclaiming Happiness of the City and the Soul:
Augustine's Engagement with Cicero and Porphyry in the *City of God*

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ABBREVIATIONS

General Abbreviations

<i>Aug. Lex.</i>	Augustinus-Lexikon. Basel, 1986-
BA	Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Paris, 1949-
CCL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina. Turnhout, 1959-
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna, 1866-
LCL	Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA, 1912-
PL	Patrologia Latina, Paris, 1844-64.
WSA	The Works of Saint Augustine. New York, 1990-

Works by Augustine

<i>b. vita.</i>	<i>De beata vita</i>
<i>bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo contra donatistas</i>
<i>c. Faust.</i>	<i>Contra Faustum</i>
<i>cat. rud.</i>	<i>De catechizandis rudibus</i>
<i>civ. Dei.</i>	<i>De civitate Dei</i>
<i>conf.</i>	<i>Confessiones</i>
<i>cons. Ev.</i>	<i>De consensu evangelistarum</i>
<i>div. qu.</i>	<i>De diversis quaestionibus</i>
<i>doc. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana</i>
<i>Dulc. qu.</i>	<i>De octo Dulcitii quaestionibus</i>
<i>en. Ps.</i>	<i>Enarratio in psalmos</i>
<i>ench.</i>	<i>Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide spe et caritate</i>
<i>ep. (epp.)</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>ex. prop. Rm.</i>	<i>Expositio quarundam propositionum ex apostoli ad romanos</i>
<i>exc. urb.</i>	<i>De excidio urbis romae</i>
<i>Gn. litt.</i>	<i>De genesi ad litteram</i>
<i>gr. et pecc. or.</i>	<i>De gratia Christi et de peccato originali</i>
<i>lib. arb.</i>	<i>De libero arbitrio</i>
<i>mor.</i>	<i>De moribus ecclesiae</i>
<i>nat. et gr.</i>	<i>De natura et gratia</i>
<i>perf. just.</i>	<i>De perfectione iustitiae hominis</i>
<i>persev.</i>	<i>De dono perseverantiae</i>
<i>praed. sanct.</i>	<i>De praedestinatione sanctorum</i>
<i>retr.</i>	<i>Retractationes</i>
<i>s. Dom. mon.</i>	<i>De Sermone Domini in monte</i>

<i>Simpl.</i>	<i>Ad Simplicianum</i>
<i>vera rel.</i>	<i>De vera religione</i>
<i>Trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>

Works by Other Ancient Authors

Ambrose	<i>off.</i>	<i>De officiis ministorum</i>
Arnobius	<i>adv. nat.</i>	<i>Adversus nationes</i>
Cicero	<i>acad.</i>	<i>Academicae quaestiones</i>
	<i>nat. d.</i>	<i>De natura deorum</i>
	<i>off.</i>	<i>De officiis</i>
	<i>rep.</i>	<i>De reipublica</i>
Eusebius	<i>v. Const.</i>	<i>Vita Constantini</i>
	<i>laus. Const.</i>	<i>Oratio de laudibus Constantini</i>
Irenaeus	<i>adv. haer.</i>	<i>Adversus haereses</i>
Lactantius	<i>div. inst.</i>	<i>Divinae Institutiones</i>
Macrobius	<i>somn.</i>	<i>Commentarius ex Cicerone in somnium Scipionis</i>
	<i>sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia</i>
Orosius	<i>hist.</i>	<i>Historiarum adversum paganos</i>
Plato	<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
	<i>rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
	<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
	<i>Symp.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
	<i>Theaet.</i>	<i>Theaetetus</i>
Plotinus	<i>enn.</i>	<i>Enneads</i>
Prudentius	<i>c. Symm</i>	<i>Contra Symmachum</i>
Possidius	<i>v. Aug.</i>	<i>Vita sancti Augustini</i>
Porphyrus	<i>abst.</i>	<i>De abstinentia ab esu animalium</i>
	<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Marcellam</i>
	<i>phil. orac.</i>	<i>Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda</i>
	<i>regr. anim.</i>	<i>De regress animae</i>
	<i>sent.</i>	<i>Sententiae</i>
	<i>v. Plot.</i>	<i>Vita Plotini</i>
	<i>v. Pyth.</i>	<i>De vita Pythagorae</i>
Quintilian	<i>inst.</i>	<i>Institutio oratoria</i>
Symmachus	<i>rel.</i>	<i>Relatio</i>
Tertullian	<i>or.</i>	<i>De oratione</i>
	<i>res.</i>	<i>De resurrectione carnis</i>
Tyconius	<i>lib. reg.</i>	<i>Liber regularum</i>
Vergil	<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
Victorinus of Pettau	<i>in Apoc.</i>	<i>In Apocalypsim Johannis</i>

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CHAPTER ONE

Centrality of Happiness in the *City of God*

Happiness was at the center of Augustine's life and thought, as Etienne Gilson has already noticed.¹ Augustine believed that the attainment of happiness was the most fundamental desire of human beings: "By sinning we lost both piety and happiness; and yet with the loss of happiness we did not lose the very will to happiness."² Since it was impossible to find true happiness on earth, as he confesses in the first page of the *Confessions*, human beings were restless.³ For a long time the young Augustine wandered

¹ Gilson's famous work on Augustine's philosophy begins with a chapter concerning happiness in Augustine's works. Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (New York: Random House, 1960), 3–24. On Augustine's view of happiness, see Ragnar Holte, *Béatitude et Sagesse: Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1962); R. J. O'Connell, "The 'Enneads' and St. Augustine's Image of Happiness," *Vigiliae Christianae* 17 (1963): 129–64; Robert J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 203–27; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 61–72; Werner Beierwaltes, "*Regio Beatitudinis*": *Augustine's Concept of Happiness* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1981); Jean Doignon, "Beata Uita," ed. Cornelius Petrus Mayer and Erich Feldmann, *Augustinus-Lexikon* (Basel: Schwabe, 1986); Ronald J. Teske, "St. Augustine and the Vision of God," in *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren, Joseph C. Schnaubelt, and Joseph Reino (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 287–308; John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 48–53, 203–55; Henry Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 32–5.

² *civ. dei.* 22.30 (CCL 48.864): *Nam utique peccando nec pietatem nec felicitatem tenuimus, voluntatem vero felicitatis nec perdita felicitate perdidimus.*

³ Augustine states that all our (universal) longing for happiness would find rest in God alone (*ep.* 118.17; *conf.* 1.1.1). To modern readers, the word happiness refers to materialistic and this-worldly pleasure and satisfaction whereas beatitude means spiritual or eternal bliss. There are two Latin words for happiness: *felicitas* and *beatitudo*. Augustine does not seem to hesitate to use generic term *felicitas* for true eternal happiness (it should be noted that Felicitas was the name of Roman deity Felicitas. *civ. dei.* 4.14-23). He never distinguishes worldly happiness from spiritual happiness by using different terminologies. Rather, by using most common term for happiness, Augustine seeks to begin with universal desire. Then, he ultimately proves that the happiness the Christian faith promises is the true one. In other word, Augustine's use of generic term happiness is part of his strategy. In line with Augustine's strategy, therefore, the current dissertation uses the term "happiness" for both false and true happiness.

for happiness without knowing what he was seeking. Thus, one commentator rightly observes: “The characteristically Augustinian argument [of happiness] is practically the leitmotif of the *Confessions*.... Even the most satisfying forms of happiness...fail to sate us fully ...so that man’s quest never ends and every apparent end merely compels him further.”⁴ This unsatisfied desire for happiness drove every aspect of his life.

While reared by a Christian mother, Augustine says in his *Confessions* that he came to God from the Pagans.⁵ After a decisive encounter with *Hortensius*, his mind and heart was occupied with desire for happiness (*felicitas*, *beatitudo*). The early writings of Augustine reflect such an inclination. For example, the Cassiciacum dialogues concern the pursuit of true happiness. In *De beata vita* (*On the Happy Life*, 386), the young Augustine grapples with a pivotal philosophical question: what is a happy life and how can it be attained? He concludes that it can be found only in the Christian faith.⁶ His serious quest for happiness continued after he returned to North Africa and built an ascetic community in Thagaste. Around 387,⁷ he wrote his friend Nebridius, who was a

Also, we need to remember that as Augustine argues in *De magistro* (11.36-12.40), we come to know realities outside us only through inner illumination. Although we know the reality through word, word is not equated with reality itself. Words are signs for realities that they point to. Therefore, there should be illumination which enables us to see the reality behind a word, and the illumination is given by the Inner Teacher who is the Lord of the Word. Therefore, what matters is not the distinction of the word such as *beatitudo* and *felicitas* but the inner illumination of Christ that makes us see the different realities between earthly and heavenly happiness.

⁴ Louis Bouyer, *The Invisible Father: Approaches to the Mystery of the Divinity* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 1999), 66.

⁵ *conf.* 7.9.15 (CCL 27.103): *uocasti gentes in hereditatem tuam et ego ad te ueneram ex gentibus*.

⁶ *b. vita*; *ord.* 1.9.27. Concerning Augustine’s early eudaemonistic argument, See Michael P. Foley, “The Other Happy Life: The Political Dimensions to St. Augustine’s Cassiciacum Dialogues,” *Review of Politics* 65 (2003): 165–83.

⁷ The date of *ep.* 3 is around 386/7. Divjak estimates that it was written around 386, right after *Soliloquy* was written. Johannes Divjak, “Epistulae” in *Aug. Lex.* 924. Teske says that it was in early 387. WSA II/1.19

rich Carthaginian: “but, where is this happy life? Where? Where in the world? ... certainly the sensible world is said to be the image of a certain intelligible one ... Happy life is not in the enjoyment of the sensible.”⁸ After Augustine was made bishop, he taught that the purpose of becoming a Christian is the attainment of true felicity.⁹ His last major work *De civitate Dei* employs happiness language or concepts (*felicitas*, *infelicitas*, *beatitudo*, *miseria*) over 350 times. Such a strong semantic emphasis is in keeping with Augustine’s life-long concern with happiness. Due to Augustine’s emphasis on happiness in Christian faith, some have regarded him as eudaemonistic.¹⁰ As Robert O’Connell rightly puts it, “if there is one constant running through all of Augustine’s thinking, not only in this early period but throughout his career, it is his preoccupation with the question of happiness. From *On the Happy Life* to the *City of God*, this is always the focal question.”¹¹

While *Confessions* narrates Augustine’s personal meandering in quest of the discovery of happiness, the *City of God* deals with the same subject in much broader

⁸ ep. 3.2-4 (CSEL 34/1.6-8): *Sed ubi est ista beata uita? ubi? ubinam?... certe sensibilis mundus nescio cuius intellegibilis imago esse dicitur... non esse tamen beatam uitam in laetitia sensibilium.*

⁹ *cat. rud.* 24.

¹⁰ Rist, *Augustine*, 49; Mary T. Clark, *Augustine of Hippo* (London; New York: Continuum, 2005), 30; Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 25–62.

¹¹ O’Connell, *St. Augustine’s Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, 205. Following his precursors such as Lactantius and Ambrose, Augustine presents Christianity as a way to true happiness. See Ivor J. Davidson, “The ‘Vita Beata’: Ambrose, ‘De Officiis’ 2.1-21 and the Synthesis of Classical and Christian Thought in the Late Fourth Century,” *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 63 (1997): 297–301; Peter Garnsey, “Lactantius and Augustine,” in *Representations of Empire: Rome and the Mediterranean World*, ed. Alan K. Bowman and Fergus Millar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 153–79. Also see Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Winrich Löhr, “Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (2010): 168–70; Frederick van Fleteren, “Augustine and Philosophy: *Intellectus Fidei*,” in *Augustine and Philosophy*, ed. Phillip Cary, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 23–40. Augustine regards the possession of God as true happiness: *lib. arb.* 2.13.35; *doc. chr.* 1.8; *civ. dei.* 8.8.

dimensions. The two Cities of the text represent two ways of pursuing happiness: one for self-love and the other for the love of God. In this sense, the *City of God* shares Augustine's profound insight into human existence that was also expressed through his own life story in the *Confessions*. The first ten books of the work shows that worshipping pagan gods does not further earthly felicity (books 1-5) or felicity after death (books 6-10). And Augustine's primary emphasis on happiness continues in the second part (books 11-22); while speaking of the two Cities, he compares their origin, development, and final destiny in terms of attaining happiness. It is, therefore, not surprising that the work ends with a beatific vision, the supreme happiness in the Christian faith.

Despite this emphasis on happiness on both terminological and structural levels, the concept has never been fully examined with respect to its function as an overarching framework for the *City of God*. The considerable breadth and depth of the *magnum opus et arduum* has prevented its students from finding a vantage point from which various topics and issues can be seen as serving one consistent cause and purpose. In other words, as Robert Dodaro rightly observes, studies of *City of God* have been often done without seeing the forest.¹² For its various subjects and discussions to be viewed as a coherent whole, the overarching purpose of the work must be found.

The thesis of the present dissertation is that the *City of God* is, in fact, a grand eudaemonistic argument against the philosophical pursuit of happiness, in order to persuade the Roman intellectuals to espouse the Christian faith. Since pagan philosophy created criticisms of and challenges to the Christian faith, there were many Roman

¹² Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

intellectuals who wavered between pagan philosophy and Christianity. In response, Augustine discussed which one of the two ways led to true happiness. His argument culminates in his conversation with two prominent philosophers, Cicero and Porphyry. These two philosophers represent socio-political and spiritual-contemplative pursuit of happiness.

The bishop proves the superiority of the Christian faith to pagan philosophy in the attainment of happiness. Yet, he does this within a philosophical framework. By so doing, on the one hand, he reveals the flaws and weaknesses of pagan philosophy regarding how to achieve happiness. On the other hand, however, he shows that the Christian way alone completes the ideal and goal of pagan philosophy. In other words, the Christian faith will lead to the perfect Heavenly Commonwealth which Cicero seeks to achieve and to the beatific vision which is the ultimate goal of the Porphyrian philosophy. This investigation of Augustine's eudaemonistic argument will show that the *City of God* is a project to evangelize¹³ the Roman intellectuals by liberating them from the illusory promise of

¹³ William Harmless defines the term *evangelize* (and its noun form *evangelization*) according to *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 1998) which was promulgated by the Vatican: "This first period, evangelization, is to be a time for hearing the Gospel of 'the living God' and 'Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all.' During it, the inquirer should taste some initial conversion. This conversion should be powerful enough to 'cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love.'" William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 3. Harmless presents evangelization as an initial stage of being Christian followed by catechumenate, enlightenment, and mystagogy. Following Harmless, the present dissertation uses the term evangelize (evangelistic, evangelism) with two emphases: (1) an evangelizing act seeks to produce faith in Christ (i.e. conversion) in the person who is evangelized, and (2) such initial movement of the soul is aided and caused by external means such as preaching, personal conversation, and reading. The term evangelize is distinguished from "Christianize." While the latter stresses on social and cultural aspect, the former highlights personal and existential encounter with the salvation revealed in Christ and His Word preached and written.

The evangelistic effort and resultant conversion in the Early Church is found throughout patristic period: Justin, *dial.* 1-8; Tatian, *or.* 29; Theophilus of Antioch, *ad Autol.* 1.14; Clement of Alexandria, *strom.* 1.1; Origen, *c. Cels.* 3.9; Cyprian *ep.* 19. For secondary literature concerning evangelism in the Early Church, see Adolf von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. James Moffatt, 2 vols. (London; New York: Williams and Norgate, 1908); W. H. C. Frend,

happiness by philosophers. This particular reading of the *City of God* will provide us with a focal point toward which, I argue, the complex discussions and various topics within the work are directed.

Doubting Intellectuals and Their Prophets

When it comes to Augustine's motivation for writing the *City of God*, we need to consider two closely related causes. As stated in *Retractationes*, the immediate cause is the pagan accusations and criticisms after the sack of Rome in 410. The sack had moved many refugees to Hippo. As the bishop of the city Augustine had to face actual questions and doubts among them and produced the *City of God* to answer those questions and to

"The Missions of the Early Church 180–700 A.D.," in *Miscellanea Historiae Ecclesiasticae III Coologique de Cambridge 24-28 Septembre 1968*, ed. Dreke Baker (Louvain: Universitaires de Louvain, 1970), 3–23; Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970); E. Glenn Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Empire: Identity and Adaptability* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1981); Reidar Hvalvik, "In Word and Deed: The Expansion of the Church in the Pre-Constantinian Era," in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles*, ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 127 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 265–89; Alan Kreider, "'They Alone Know the Right Way to Live': The Early Church and Evangelism," in *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future*, ed. Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 169–86; Anders Runesson, "Was There a Christian Mission Before the Fourth Century? Problematizing Common Ideas about Early Christianity and the Origins of Modern Mission," in *The Making of Christianity: Conflicts, Contacts, and Constructions, Essays in Honor of Bengt Holmberg*, ed. Magnus Zetterholm and Samuel Byrskog (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 205–47.

Augustine's use of *evangelizare* is well captured in *c. Faust.* 32.10. The bishop speaks of one who refuses to take the ministry of preaching the Gospel (*ministerium evangelizandi*) which the church charged on him. This man is criticized for shirking "concern for gaining others" (*curam vero lucratorum aliorum*). Quoting Gal 1:9, Augustine also accuses Faustus for preaching (*evangelizare*) the false Gospel (*c. Faust.* 13.18; 15.3). It seems that by *evangelizare* Augustine refers to the preaching office of the church which intends for producing faith in Christ. Interestingly, in the context of personal evangelism to non-believer, Augustine uses *catechizare*: *Atque ut exemplo fiat id quod dicimus apertius, ponamus aliquem nunc a nobis catechizari Gentilem, cui assidentes dicamus: Crede Christo, quia Deus est. Ille uero: Unde hoc mihi probatis, dicat? Et nos respondentes dicamus: Ex prophetis* (*c. Faust.* 13.1). Harmless, rightly argues that Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus* is a brief presentation of the Gospel for evangelistic purpose. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 107–54. While Augustine uses *evangelizare* only twice in the *City of God* (*civ. dei.* 18.31, 52), his purpose for the conversion of pagan minds will be clear as argued in this dissertation.

defend the Christian faith.¹⁴ At the same time, however, we need to look at this work within a broader context.¹⁵ Even prior to the sack, the bishop had been dealing with similar pagan criticisms. While the sack provided a momentum to create this work, the *City of God* should be viewed as a product of Augustine's long engagement with pagan criticisms and thought.

From this perspective, the content of Augustine's letters offers a clue regarding the challenges and tasks that Augustine undertakes in the *City of God*. Encountering intellectuals who vacillated between the Christian faith and philosophical ideas, the bishop seeks to prove the superiority of Christian faith by philosophy's own standard, the attainment of happiness. The *City of God* shows that the bishop broadens and sophisticates his strategy for responding to pagan criticisms which he developed through his engagement with Roman intellectuals. Augustine's correspondence has previously been used merely to understand the "background" of the *City of God*. It seems that modern commentators on the *City of God* have not noticed that it is in this correspondence that Augustine initially developed his approach to pagan criticisms and doubts concerning the Christian faith. Thus, on the basis of re-examining the correspondence between the bishop and pagan recipients, chapter two of this dissertation

¹⁴ *retr.* 2.43.

¹⁵ This means that the *City of God* does not react primarily to the event in 410. After Goths' crossing of the Danube in 376, the Roman Empire realized that there needed the political realignments. In this respect, Theodosius' treaty with the Goths in 382 "marked the beginning of a new phase in the relationship between Goths and empire." Michael Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars: From the Third Century to Alaric* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 156. Until 410, the Empire was under constant revolts and attacks. The sack in 410 was in fact the third siege of Alaric. The first siege occurred during the winter of 408/409. On the account of Gothic threat to the Empire between 376 and 410, see *Ibid.*, 154–77. Also, see Gerard J. P. O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God": A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27–32. Although the sack of Rome is one event among series of attacks, it became deeply symbolic and became a marker before and after the tragedy. Due to this symbolic significance, the present dissertation focuses on the sack.

will argue that Augustine made consistent evangelistic efforts through eudaemonistic argument, and that the *City of God* employs the same strategy for the same purpose. The chapter will discuss how the bishop consistently reframes engagement with the educated Romans in terms of the attainment of happiness.

While he deals with doubt and suspicion among the intellectuals, Augustine finds two disciples of Plato exercising profound influence on pagan minds. On a socio-political level, many Roman intellectuals subscribed to Ciceronian political ideology, which critically inherits that of Plato,¹⁶ believing that the state deserves the highest degree of loyalty. Based upon these Ciceronian ideas, critics of the church asserted that Christian doctrine was incompatible with the welfare of the commonwealth. Augustine labels this assertion a “most determined opposition.”¹⁷ On a spiritual-contemplative level, it was Neoplatonism that fascinated their minds, with its spiritual program for the ascent of the soul to the One. Thus, Porphyry was the other persistent basis for criticism of Christian doctrine, especially on the resurrection of the body and the nature of the beatific vision.¹⁸ As Porphyry’s notorious attacks on the Scripture still exerted considerable influence, Augustine found himself compelled to respond to these attacks exegetically.¹⁹

¹⁶ According to Fortin, Augustine knew the spirit and content of Plato’s political thought “through Plato’s Roman disciples, Varro and especially Cicero.” Ernest Fortin, “Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine,” in *Classical Christianity and the Political Order: Reflections on the Theologico-Political Problem*, ed. J. Brian Benestad (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 33. According to Fortin, Augustine ultimately engages with Plato through his disciples, Cicero and Porphyry. We will discuss this issue in chapters 4, 5, and especially 7.

¹⁷ *ep.* 137.20 (CSEL 44.124): *obstinatissimas contradictiones*. On “un-Roman” nature of Christianity, see *epp.* 136.2-3; 138.9.

¹⁸ For the main issues in Augustine’s engagement with Porphyry, see Eugene TeSelle, “Porphyry and Augustine,” *Augustinian Studies* 5 (1974): 113–47.

¹⁹ For example, in his letter to Deogratias, Augustine shows he knows that the objector draws on Porphyry. *ep.* 102.28. Cf. Timothy D. Barnes, “Porphyry ‘Against the Christians’: Date and the Attribution

The *City of God* was produced within this context; the bishop was facing various doubts about the Christian teachings among his contemporary intellectuals. The bodily resurrection did not make sense to them, and they doubted that Christ's command to love one's enemy could be compatible with the safety of the Empire.²⁰ And the doubts were not just from outside. Even within the church there were questions and suspicions. The correspondence between Augustine and educated Romans reveals philosophical problems that hindered their full adoption of Christian teachings. The letters also reveal Augustine's evangelistic passion for those doubting intellectuals. In letters after 400, the bishop seems to sense the destructive influence of pagan philosophy on the educated. There were many intellectuals who hesitated to be baptized due to "doubt" (*dubium* or *ambiguum*) about Christian doctrine.²¹ Augustine identifies Cicero and Porphyry as main sources of such doubts and suspicions.

The significance of Cicero and Porphyry in the *City of God* is obvious. The author most frequently quoted in the work, apart from Varro, is Cicero,²² and his political work

of Fragments," *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1973): 430n9. Referring to Chadwick, Barnes claims that Porphyry's treatment of the Gospels can be deduced from Augustine's *De consensus evangelistarum*. Regarding Porphyry's criticism of the Scriptures and Augustine's response, see John G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 150–247; Isabelle Bochet, "The Role of Scripture in Augustine's Controversy with Porphyry," *Augustinian Studies* 41 (2010): 7–52; Brian Dunkle, "Humility, Prophecy, and Augustine's Harmony of the Gospels," *Augustinian Studies* 44 (2013): 207–25.

²⁰ In *De octo Dulitii quaestionibus* (CCL 44A. 253–97), Augustine answers six questions for a certain pagan. Also, see Augustine's correspondences with Deogratias (*ep.* 102 = *Quaestiones expositae contra paganos*), Nebridius (*epp.* 5, 6, 8, 9), Maximus of Madaura (*epp.* 16, 17), Paulinus of Nola (*ep.* 31), Nectarius (*epp.* 90, 91, 103, 104), Dioscorus (*epp.* 117, 118), Flavius Marcellinus (*epp.* 136, 138), Rufius Antonius Agrypinus Volusianus (*epp.* 132, 135, 137), Macedonius (*ep.* 153), Longinianus (*epp.* 233–235), and Firmus (*epp.* 1A*, 2*).

²¹ For example, Volusianus. *epp.* 135.2; 136.1.

²² Although Varro is the most frequently quoted author in the *City of God*, he is not a main interlocutor of Augustine; rather, the bishop uses Varro's antiquarian encyclopedic presentation of the Roman society.

De republica (On the Commonwealth) is at the center of Augustine's engagement with him. This comes after a long silence, since Augustine's active engagement with Cicero in the Cassiciacum dialogues.²³ It seems that the bishop became aware of the threat of Ciceronian ideology to Christian faith in his later life. Regarding Porphyry, Augustine frequently shows genuine respect to him above other Platonists; the position of Porphyry is regarded as closer to Christian faith than that of any other philosopher.²⁴ Despite Porphyry's hostility to Christianity, Augustine even says that Porphyry would have become a Christian (22.27).²⁵

The importance of the two philosophers is demonstrated by the location of their appearances within the *City of God* as well. In the first five books, the bishop discusses the relationship between material happiness and worshipping gods. The bishop investigates this matter through the history of Rome and its commonwealth. In particular, Cicero's political ideology in *On the Commonwealth* is examined. Then, the next five books of the *City of God* are devoted to discussing the relationship between eternal happiness and worshipping gods. The discussion reaches its climax in a debate with Porphyry. Especially, the bishop investigates Porphyry's *De regressu animae (On the Return of the Soul)* in which Porphyry developed the spiritual teachings of Plato. In the first ten books of the *City of God*, Augustine's two targets are Cicero and Porphyry. Augustine's engagement with them is not limited to these passages, however. He resumes

²³ On Augustine's reluctance to talk of the Ciceronian philosophy even after 400, see his letter to Dioscorus. *ep.* 118.1.

²⁴ Augustine deplores Porphyry's rejection of the Incarnation of Christ (*civ. dei.* 10.29). He states that he did not find the Incarnate Christ in *libri platonici. conf.* 7.21.27.

²⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all references which appear without title in the text are to the *City of God*.

debate with Cicero in book 19. Porphyry is also brought back into the discussion in book 19. Even in the last chapters of the work, Cicero and Porphyry remain major interlocutors.²⁶ In the *City of God* there are no other philosophers to whom the bishop pays such serious attention. These philosophers are treated as the foremost architects of the illusion of philosophical happiness at the political and the contemplative levels.²⁷ Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that among all other philosophers, these two heirs of Plato are the real targets of the eudaemonistic argument of the bishop.²⁸

Augustine's choice of the two interlocutors is interesting one because they inherited respectively political and contemplative eudaemonistic ideals of Plato. Concerning the origin of these two distinct views about happiness in Plato's philosophy, Dominic J. O'Meara states:

Plato seems at first glance to have diverging conceptions of happiness. On the one hand he follows Socrates in thinking of it as realized in social and political life ... On the other hand he sometimes suggests, particularly in the *Phaedo*, that happiness lies in escape from the body and blissful vision of the Forms in a higher existence.²⁹

This observation further reveals the significance of Augustine's treatment of Cicero and Porphyry.³⁰ Beyond mere refutation of the two philosophers' errors, the bishop shows

²⁶ *civ. dei.* 22.25-30.

²⁷ Augustine states that in the *City of God* he engages with most excellent philosophers. *civ. dei.* 1.36.

²⁸ Thelma B. Degraff, "Plato in Cicero," *Classical Philology* 35 (1940): 143-53; A. A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 285-306 ("Cicero's Plato and Aristotle").

²⁹ Dominic J. O'Meara, *Plotinus: An Introduction to the "Enneads"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 101.

³⁰ One may say that Varro is one of Augustine's central interlocutors in the *City of God*; his presence in the work and the bishop's dependence on Varro's knowledge of Roman religion and Greek history is considerable. Especially, Augustine engages with Varro concerning the Roman religion and

that it is through the Christian faith that these two aspects of the Platonic happiness can be integrated. The Ciceronian political ideology and the Neoplatonic program for the ascent of the soul in the *City of God* have long been studied separately. There has not been sufficient effort to harmonize them within the rubric of the work.³¹

Thus, chapter two of this dissertation seeks to find an overarching Augustinian strategy governing his engagement with pagan philosophy, especially with Cicero and Porphyry, and especially on political and contemplative levels. Christianity and pagan philosophy are compared on the basis of the universal desire for happiness; everyone, whether pagan or Christian, has innate desire for happiness. Since this fundamental

traditional gods in books 4, 6, 7. Nevertheless, Varro is not a major interlocutor because his presentation of Roman gods is out of date in Augustine's time. As Hagendahl points out, Augustine's outdated criticism of Varro contains an "air of unreality." Harald Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Göteborg: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1967), II: 608. Mary Madden also observes: "the references in the *City of God* to contemporary pagan worship ... are relatively few." Mary D. Madden, *The Pagan Divinities and Their Worship as Depicted in the Works of Saint Augustine Exclusive of the "City of God"* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1930), 6. When it comes to Augustine's evangelistic purpose of the work, Augustine's criticism of Varro seems less relevant to his contemporaries. In contrast, Cicero and Porphyry were still exerting their influences on the Roman intellectuals. Concerning Varro, see Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, II: 589–630; Matthew Fox, *Roman Historical Myths: The Regal Period in Augustan Literature* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), 236–56; O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 236–8.

³¹ While Neoplatonism has mostly been considered non-political, scholarly interest in the political aspect of Neoplatonism has recently emerged. See Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003). Also, see Jeremy M. Schott, "Founding Platonopolis: The Platonic Politeia in Eusebius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (2003): 501–31. Nevertheless, evidence of political thought in Neoplatonism is meager, and there is no Neoplatonic work which can be called "political" by comparison to Aristotle and Plato.

Hadot rightly argues concerning the disappearance of political concerns in Neoplatonism: "At the same time, the viewpoint of philosophers' political action, which had existed in the Academy as well as in primitive Pythagoreanism, disappears, or at least fades into the background." Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 158. Regarding philosophical schools in the Imperial Period, see *Ibid.*, 146–71. In the same vein, Johnson argues for Porphyry's indifference to the political. Aaron P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limit of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 293.

concern is shared among philosophers, there is an anthropological common ground between Christianity and philosophy.³²

For the comparison, as the chapter will demonstrate, Augustine employs a twofold eudaemonistic strategy. On the one hand, he debunks the false happiness the pagan philosophers promised. On the other hand, he demonstrates within a philosophical framework how Christianity can bring true happiness. The eudaemonistic strategy represents the Christian faith as the true way to happiness on both political and spiritual levels, and the goal of this line of eudaemonistic argument is to turn the Romans to Christ.

If these intellectual engagements amount to a seminal thought at the heart of the *City of God*, there emerges a new possibility, to see the work according to Augustine's eudaemonistic argument. Based on the discussion of Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy chapters two and three will provide a eudaemonistic reading of the *City of God*. It will analyze the way Augustine structures the *City of God* according to his eudaemonistic argument. The chapter will argue that the bishop established a eudaemonistic standard by which each philosophical or theological position is assessed. As a result of this investigation, many seemingly unrelated parts of the *City of God* will be read as cohesive within a grand eudaemonistic argument for evangelism.

³² Augustine states that happiness is the ultimate goal of man; all philosophies are various presentations of a particular way of pursuing happiness: "...we said that people have placed the happy life in whatever pleased them most as pleasure pleased Epicurus and virtue delighted Zeno; something else [pleased] someone else; so perhaps we can say that happy life is nothing but living according to one's own enjoyment." *trin.*13.8 (CCL 51A:391): *diximus ibi quosque posuisse beatam uitam quod eos maxime delectavit, ut uoluptas Epicurum, uirtus Zenonem; sic alium aliquid aliud, nihil dicamus esse beate uiuere, nisi uiuere secundum delectationem suam.*

Deconstructing the Pagan Promise of Happiness

How then, does Augustine disprove the pagan philosophical path to happiness?

The dissertation focuses on Augustine's ultimate refutation of two Platonic ways to happiness. Chapter 4 deals with Cicero and his happiness of the commonwealth, and chapter five discusses the Porphyrian (or Neoplatonic) way to attain beatific vision. On each dimension of happiness, Augustine seeks to overthrow the false dreams of happiness Cicero and Porphyry created in the minds of Romans.

On a political level, the bishop examines the Ciceronian political ideology that makes patriotic intellectuals reluctant to embrace the Christian way of life.³³ According to *On the Commonwealth*, piety (*pietas*) and justice (*iustitia*) are the two foundations of the Roman commonwealth.³⁴ Cicero argues that, as the history of Rome demonstrates, the founding fathers of the Roman commonwealth were just and pious, and, therefore, the Roman commonwealth is the best context for the happiness of its people. The Ciceronian idea of politically-attained happiness even includes a quasi-eschatological vision. According to Cicero's account, Romulus reached the divine realm by his own strength and became a paragon of eternal happiness.³⁵ For Augustine and his fellow Christians, the last book of *De republica*, which was circulated with the independent title, *Somnium*

³³ For example, conflict between teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and the Roman commonwealth. *ep.* 138.9.

³⁴ Charles N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 193ff. The importance of *pietas* and *iustitia* is also testified in Symmachus' defense of *institute maiorum*, specifically religious institutions (Symmachus, *rel.* 3). It should be noted that Lactantius sought to re-define these two concepts in his *Divinae institutiones* books 5-6. Augustine's view on justice and piety is also found in his letter to Marcellinus (*ep.* 138.14).

³⁵ Cicero, *rep.* 2.4. Cf. *civ. dei.* 22.6.

Scipionis,³⁶ may have appeared to compete with the Christian eschatological vision when it depicts eschatological reward for those who are loyal to the Roman commonwealth.³⁷

Augustine discerns the challenge of the Ciceronian eschatological aspect, and his counterargument is constructed on two tightly interconnected objectives: refuting the deification of Romulus and refuting the meta-narrative of the eternal city. The bishop contends that Ciceronian political thought cannot bring true happiness. His refutation is twofold: (1) Rome does not worship the true God but demons. Therefore, its commonwealth is not just, because it does not pay due worship and reverence to God. (2) The founders of Rome were neither just nor pious, and the history of Rome has been fraught with injustice. Thus, Cicero's claim that Rome was a perfect real commonwealth is not the case. Augustine even argues that according to Cicero's own definition, there has been no commonwealth in the Roman history. This implies that the Roman commonwealth cannot bring happiness to its people.

Augustine debates Porphyry on a variety of issues, such as the universal way of salvation, mediation between God and men, the resurrection of the body, and intellectual vision. These debates all center on the attainment of happiness. It seems that there were at least three ways to happiness for those who followed Porphyry's teachings: through virtue, theurgy, and contemplation. Porphyry, according to Augustine, was not certain of

³⁶ For example, fifth-century North African philosopher Macrobius wrote *A Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (*Commentarius ex Cicerone in somnium Scipionis*). On the confluence of Neoplatonism and Ciceronian political idealology in Macrobius, see, Robert Dodaro, "Augustine on the Statesman and the Two Cities," in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 395–6.

³⁷ Cicero thinks that the city of Rome is not perishable (Cicero, *rep.* 3.23, 41).

where to find the universal way, although he did not reject its existence.³⁸ This kind of pluralistic understanding of salvation conflicts with the singleness of Christ as mediator. Augustine accuses Porphyry of the inconsistency of worshipping many daemons (10.26). Then, he presents Christianity as the universal way to happiness in which Christ is the sole mediator (10.32).

Later in the *City of God*, Augustine deeply engages with an even more influential Platonic idea: the flight from the body in order to reach union with the One (*omne corpus fugiendum*). Because of Platonist contempt of the body, it was very hard for the followers of Porphyry to understand the Christian belief of bodily resurrection. Augustine debates the resurrection with Porphyry in order to persuade Porphyry's followers to subscribe to the Christian belief of the resurrection of the body. The bishop seeks remove the intellectual obstacles they find on their way to Christianity.

Moreover, the Porphyrian intellectual vision draws is achieved through the principles fundamentally different from that of Christian beatitude. Augustine utilizes the Neoplatonic frame of intellectual vision, due to the dearth of biblical descriptions of the beatific vision and his own lack of experience with it, as he himself admits (22.29). However, Augustine corrects Porphyry's principles according to the Christian doctrines, depending especially on the Pauline anthropology that he learned from his study of Paul's

³⁸ There are debates on the nature of the universal way in Porphyry's thought. Simmons argues that Porphyry constructed "tripartite universal soteriology which included the masses, novice philosophers, and mature Neoplatonists in a hierarchical system, because he was evidently concerned about Christian claims that Christ offered the one *via salutis* for all humanity." Michael B. Simmons, "Porphyrian Universalism: A Tripartite Soteriology and Eusebius's Response," *Harvard Theological Review* 102 (2009): 190. In contrast, Gillian Clark and Aaron Johnson argue that Porphyry's soteriology excluded the masses, which is fundamentally elitist position. Gillian Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," in *Studies on Porphyry*, ed. George E. Karamanolis and Anne D. R. Sheppard (London: University of London, 2007), 127–40. For further discussion, see chap. 5.

letters in the 390s.³⁹ Augustine's argument against Porphyry seeks to give a correct account of the nature of the beatific vision that has been confused with Porphyrian intellectual vision.

While refuting these difficult challenges from major philosophers, nevertheless, Augustine does not simply want victory over pagan thought; rather, what he truly seeks is to win the minds of Roman intellectuals. In a sense, he utilizes the pagan philosophical frameworks to present the beauty and perfection of the Christian faith in the attainment of happiness in order to help his audience understand the message of the gospel and accept the Christian faith over pagan philosophy.⁴⁰ Therefore, the *City of God* is not a mere defensive "apologetic" work even the first ten books. It deeply concerns the salvation of the fellow Romans, and that leads us to the next chapter on Augustine's reconceptualization of Rome.

Re-interpreting the Sack of Rome

All the arguments of this dissertation lead to Augustine's prime intention in writing the *City of God*. The bishop's evangelistic purpose is most clearly expressed in his exegesis of the book of Jonah. Chapter 6 examines the bishop's re-interpretation of the sack through the lens of this little book in the Old Testament. Answering the criticism that Jonah's prophecy did not come true,⁴¹ the bishop states that Nineveh did fall in a

³⁹ Rist, *Augustine*, 204.

⁴⁰ In this respect, Augustine's "apology" was not primarily for pagan critics, but for doubting educated Christians or "inquirers." Ernest Fortin, "St. Augustine," in *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 154.

⁴¹ God's lie (*mendacem*) to Nineveh. *civ. dei.* 21.18 (CCL 48.784): *Factum est ergo quod praedixit Deus.*

spiritual sense: the spiritual Nineveh fell so that the physical Nineveh could be saved.⁴² This argument reveals Augustine's attitude toward Rome. Augustine thinks that the biblical history in the Scriptures follows a certain spiritual pattern which can be applied to the present. Rome, he thinks, is an "*altera Babylon*" whose capital was Nineveh (18.2).⁴³ Therefore, if Rome is a spiritual heir of Nineveh, then its destiny also would follow a similar pattern. This whole process of exegesis indicates that what Augustine really wants to achieve in the *City of God* is what Jonah did for Nineveh—that is, to overthrow a "spiritual" Rome so that people of the Roman Empire, especially the educated, could turn to Christ (18.44).⁴⁴ What Augustine intends to do in the *City of God*, therefore, is to persuade his contemporaries to embrace the Christian faith as the true way to happiness by disenchanting the "false happiness"⁴⁵ of the philosophers.⁴⁶

In connection with his evangelistic passion and production of the *City of God*, there was an event which left deep wounds and scars on the bishop. His friend Marcellinus, who was an imperial commissioner, was falsely accused for treason and

⁴² *civ. dei.* 21.24 (CCL 48.792): *eversa est Nineue quae mala erat, et bona aedificata est quae non erat.*

⁴³ For Augustine, Assyria and Babylon were identical. For detail, see chap. 6.

⁴⁴ Augustine states that the salvation in the church of the Gentiles is allegorically represented in Nineveh. Cf. *ep.* 102.35.

⁴⁵ *falsa felicitas. ep.* 2*.10 (CSEL 88.18).

⁴⁶ This passion for evangelism is deeply connected to Augustine's concept of two Cities; on earth, according to Augustine, there is still a possibility to move from the Earthly City to the Heavenly City; future citizens of the Heavenly City are hidden among the very enemies of the Heavenly city on earth (*civ. dei.* 1.35). Augustine states that the intended fruit of the *City of God* is (1) the conviction of the Heavenly City and (2) the determination to stay in it (*ep.* 2*.3).

shortly executed in 413 in spite of Augustine's desperate political effort to save his life.⁴⁷ In the same year the bishop began writing of the *City of God*. Marcellinus' contribution to this work is important. He was a keen mind who had helped the bishop to see a real problem among the Roman intellectuals; they could not follow Christ because they found a conflict between the Christian faith and what they believed to be a way to happiness in the political and personal sphere. Volusianus, who was a mutual friend of Marcellinus and Augustine, was one example of those who hesitated to be a Christian due to the doubts about the Christian teachings. As we will see in the next chapter, their evangelistic efforts for Volusianus express seminal thoughts which were fully developed in the *City of God*.⁴⁸ The reason that the first three books of the *City of God* were dedicated to Marcellinus is probably because the *City of God* is created out of their the evangelistic efforts and endeavors to resolve doubts and suspicion among Roman intellectuals like Volusianus.⁴⁹

His tragic loss of Marcellinus and the sack of Rome were not unrelated for Augustine. They must have opened his eyes to an emerging need to answer the questions from the intellectual Romans, or from the *saeculum* to use Robert Markus' term.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ The date is Sep. 13 in 413. For a helpful account of Marcellinus and Augustine, see Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo*, 113–5. Gustave Bardy dates the completion of the first three books to between late 413 and early 414. BA 33, 26. R. W. Dyson thinks that Marcellinus' death really turned Augustine's mind to produce comprehensive work against pagan culture in general. Robert W. Dyson, trans., *The City of God against the Pagans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xii–xiii.

⁴⁸ *epp.* 132, 135–138. Marcellinus appreciates Augustine's evangelistic effort for Volusianus. *ep.* 136.1.

⁴⁹ *civ. dei.* 1.pref. On the occasion of the publication of the *City of God*, see O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 34–6.

⁵⁰ Robert A. Markus, *"Saeculum": History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

Augustine's renewed interest in Cicero's philosophy, which breaks over ten years' silence on the subject, and his continual re-assessment of Platonism, indicate that Augustine's last and probably the most important contribution to Western Christianity is radical transformation and completion of the classical, especially Platonic, ideals of a perfect commonwealth and the vision of the One. The bishop had already engaged with various debates within the church, yet this grand project enabled him to expand his theological horizon to the extent that Christians creatively reclaim the ancient pagan culture and thought, once avoided to keep "purity" of Christian faith, in order to fulfill the ultimate universal desire for truth, beauty, and happiness. What the bishop seeks to achieve through the *City of God* should be construed in this light.

CHAPTER TWO

Doubting Intellectuals and Persuading Bishop

Even at the end of his life near 430, Augustine vividly remembered that facing the criticisms after the sack of Rome in 410, he burned with ‘zeal for the house of the Lord’ and began to write his *magnum opus et arduum*.¹ The pagan challenge to the Christian faith reached its climax in years following;² fundamental doubt about the Christian God was raised, and the church had to face a surge of pagan accusations regarding the tragedy. For the pagans the tragedy happened because the Empire had chosen the Christian God and abandoned its traditional gods. As Augustine himself states, the sack of Rome became a significant motive in writing the *City of God* as a response to pagan criticisms.³

Nevertheless, we need to carefully estimate the significance of the sack in making the *City of God*. It did not take long for the traumatic memory of 410 to fade among the Romans, as Augustine’s pupil Orosius lamented:

Although this deed [the sack of Rome] is of recent memory, if anyone were to see the great numbers of Rome’s population and listen to them, he would think, as they themselves say, that ‘nothing had happened’, unless he were to learn of it by chance from the few ruins which still remain from the fire.⁴

¹ *retr.* 2.43.1.

² Augustine mentions the tragic event on several occasions. *retr.* 2.43; *epp.* 99, 111, 122, 155; *ss.* 25, 81, 105, 296, 397.

³ *civ. dei.* 1.1. *retr.* 2.43.1.

⁴ Orosius, *his.* 7.40.1 (PL 31.1165): *cujus rei quamvis recens memoria sit, tum si quis ipsius populi Romani et multitudinem videat, et vocem audiat, nihil factum, sicut etiam ipsi fatentur, arbitrabitur, nisi aliquantis adhuc exsistentibus ex incendio ruinis forte doceatur.* trans. A. T. Fear. According to Frend, “After 417...it was becoming clear that the revival of paganism would not last long. Even memories of

Augustine began to write the *City of God* in 413 and completed it in 426.⁵ Furthermore, the pagan criticisms were not new; the bishop had been dealing with similar criticisms and suspicions throughout his episcopacy. Therefore, the work cannot be considered merely a response to the sack and its subsequent accusations. The sustaining reason for this work's production is found on a deeper and more substantial level.

For Augustine the sack was not just a political tragedy or physical damage. The meaning of the sack lay on a deeper level. Augustine sensed a prophetic message of God from the sack; God demanded the repentance of Rome. The sack was not merely a political catastrophe; rather, it was a spiritual sign from God calling for repentance.⁶ Thus, the fall of Rome caused the bishop to see the urgent need to preach to the pagan world more vividly. His sermon *De excidio urbis romae* (*On the Fall of the City of Rome*) shows that Augustine, in addition to giving a reason for Rome's fall, urged the Romans to repent and turn to Christ.⁷ Augustine found wavering intellectuals who were struggling with rational problems they found in the Christian Scriptures and teachings.⁸ As we will see below, the influence of hostile critics of the church kept Roman intellectuals from

Alaric's capture of Rome were fading." William H. C. Frend, "Augustine and Orosius: On the End of the Ancient World," *Augustinian Studies* 20 (1989): 20.

⁵ Augustine began to write the *City of God* in 413 and finished in 426/7. Goulven Madec, *Introduction aux "Revisions" et à la lecture des Œuvres de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996), 163–4. Pierre-Marie Hombert dates the completion of the last book to 425–426. Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2000), 222, 263. Augustine may have revised it after the completion. O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 38.

⁶ For further discussion, see chap. 6.

⁷ *exc. urb.* 8. Also, see a similar evangelistic exhortation: "Now, choose what you follow ... Awake, the day has come ... We invite you to this country and exhort you to add [yourself] to the number of [its] citizens" *civ. dei.* 2.29 (CCL 47.64): *Nunc iam elige quid sequaris...Expergiscere, dies est...Ad quam patriam te inuitamus et exhortamur, ut eius adiciaris numero ciuium.*

⁸ *ep.* 102.38.

fully embracing the Christian faith.⁹ Augustine viewed it as his task to resolve these doubts and difficulties by providing “rational” explanations. Out of this context and his own interpretation of the tragedy, the *City of God* appears to be more than an “apology.”¹⁰

The main questions this chapter poses are two-fold: First, who is Augustine’s target audience in the *City of God*, and what are the sources of the obstacles to block them to come to Christ? Second, how does Augustine remove those obstacles in order to lead his audience to the Christian faith? To answer these questions, the best resource outside the *City of God* is Augustine’s correspondence with Roman intellectuals. Some of the letters mention the *City of God*,¹¹ and, therefore, give us an important clue to understand the context of the work.¹² Some of the recipients were even given a copy of it, whether partial or complete.¹³ Furthermore, there are other letters to pagan intellectuals.

⁹ The episode of Victorinus in the *Confessions* vividly demonstrates the reluctance among the intellectuals to join the church in 380s. Claiming to Simplicianus bishop of Milan that he is already a Christian, Victorinus asks: “Do walls make Christians?” *conf.* 8.2.4 (CCL 27.115): *Ergo parietes faciunt Christianos?* Simplicianus’ answer to this question is affirmative.

¹⁰ For the recent discussion of the term apology, see Anders-Christian Jacobsen, “Apologetics and Apologies - Some Definitions,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, ed. Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Maijastina Kahlos (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009), 5–21.

¹¹ *epp.* 151, 152, 153, 169, 184A, 23A*, 1A*, 2*.

¹² E. M. Atkins and Robert Dodaro, “Introduction” to *Augustine: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xi–xii. Both scholars rightly justify the use of Augustine’s letters to understand the *City of God*. “The exigencies of daily life raised large political questions ... Augustine wrote about such matters, but not in the *City of God*. To discover the everyday political thinking that constituted both the background to and the outworking of the large-scale ideas of his magnum opus, we need to turn to the occasional writings of the busy bishop.” Also, “Augustine’s full range of ideas and theological insights is best gleaned from his occasional works as a priest and bishop with pressing pastoral responsibilities, namely his letters and sermons.” Boniface Ramsey, “Foreword,” in *Essential Sermons* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007), 7.

¹³ Macedonius (*epp.* 152, 153), Evodius (*ep.* 169), Abraham and Peter (*ep.* 184A), Firmus (*epp.* 1A*, 2*) were given a copy of the *City of God*. Firmus is the only person who received a copy of the complete 22 books of the work.

Although they were written before the bishop began to write the *City of God*, they reveal how Augustine developed the strategy for dealing with pagan doubts and suspicions about the Christian faith, a strategy eventually used in the *City of God*.

On the basis of the examination of the letter, this chapter argues that Augustine's target audience is the Roman intellectuals who waver between pagan philosophy and the Christian faith due to their doubt and suspicion of the Christian teachings. Augustine's letters to the Roman intellectuals demonstrates that his target audience cannot be simply labeled as "pagans." The chapter also argues that Cicero and Porphyry were the main sources of the suspicions and doubts among these intellectuals; both philosophers were the chief architect of political and contemplative happiness, and their teachings concerning happiness were in conflict with the Christian way to happiness. Therefore, in order to remove pagan criticisms and doubts and turn his audience to Christ, the chapter claims, Augustine demonstrates that pagan philosophy is incapable of achieving happiness and the Christian faith is the sole way to happiness; this reasoning of Augustine is what this dissertation calls "eudaemonistic strategy for evangelism." The investigation of Augustine's correspondence with Roman intellectuals will also cast some light on the structure and purpose of the *City of God*, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Persuasion for Evangelism

Due to the highly sophisticated nature of the *City of God*, scholarly discussions often focus on a philosophical aspect of the work. As a result, Augustine the pastor is often outshone by Augustine the great thinker or philosopher. Augustine's primary concern as a servant of God, however, was preaching the word of God in order to nurture

the faith of his flock, and he took this responsibility with utmost seriousness from the beginning of his career as a servant of God. A few years after his ordination as a priest in 391, the young Augustine asks Valerius, the current bishop of Hippo, to grant him a retreat for the study of the Scriptures. Augustine says: “I should study carefully all the remedies of the Scriptures, and spend time for prayer and reading in order that the vigor and health would be granted to my soul even in a dangerous business.”¹⁴ Just as his Master is the Healer, so Augustine considered his vocation to be that of a doctor of the soul who finds remedies in the Scriptures.¹⁵

In fact, Augustine’s responsibility as a preacher was daunting. Although it is difficult to make accurate estimates, the bishop seems to have produced over 4000 sermons. At present, the extant sermons of the bishop total roughly 396 which may represent 7-14 percent of his entire corpus.¹⁶ The bishop did not intend to produce sermonic short treatises in his preaching; rather, he preached in order to cure disease: to correct errors, and convert and edify the flock of Christ. In his handbook for Christian teachers (or preachers) the bishop says: “I still do not think that I achieved anything, when I hear them applauding, but when I see them weeping.”¹⁷ Such pastoral and evangelistic concern permeates all the works of the bishop.

¹⁴ *ep. 21.3 (CSEL 34/1.51): debeo Scripturarum eius medicamenta omnia perscrutari et orando ac legendo agere, ut idonea ualeatudo animae meae, ad tam periculosa negotia tribuatur.*

¹⁵ Concerning Christ the Healer, see Rudolph Arbesmann, “The Concept of ‘Christus Medicus’ in St. Augustine,” *Traditio* 10 (1954): 1–28.

¹⁶ Daniel E. Doyle, “Introduction” to *Essential Sermons* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2007), 13.

¹⁷ *doc. chr. 4.53 (CCL 32.159): non tamen egisse aliquid me putavi, cum eos audirem acclamantes, sed cum flentes uiderem.*

Augustine's evangelistic passion was not limited within the church. Often, his letters to the pagan intellectuals vividly reveal the same passion. His position as a bishop and fame as a rhetorician led him to engage with varied issues both in and outside the church. Dealing with educated people, he had sympathy for them, for he had wandered around in search of truth for a long time as they did. In the eyes of the educated there were many rational problems within the Christian teachings. Like the Latin Fathers before him,¹⁸ Augustine was confronting doubts and questions about the Christian faith, and to give 'rational explanations' to those questions was part of the burden he had to take on his shoulders.¹⁹ Who, then, were these intellectual Romans Augustine engaged with?

Gray Area between Paganism and Christianity

Although Christianity became the emperor's religion, the Christianization of the Roman Empire was a long-term process throughout the empire and its social strata, which advanced by confronting (or compromising with) paganism. Even after the "Christianization" of the Empire, the Roman world never fully entered into a Christian age (*aetas Christiana*). Greco-Roman pagan culture remained strong; traditional education in the liberal arts was considered the best way to nurture the younger

¹⁸ On the apologetic tradition before Augustine, see Pierre Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: From Arnobius to St. Ambrose," in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century: Essays*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 151–92; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine's Strategy as an Apologist* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1974); O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 39–52; Nicholas L. Thomas, *Defending Christ: The Latin Apologists Before Augustine* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Maijastina Kahlos, eds., *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009).

¹⁹ For example, *civ. dei.* 21.2; 5, 7.

generation. Unlike what is generally depicted in the popular concept of the “Christian Roman Empire,” the fourth and fifth centuries witnessed many high profile pagan senators and Roman officials determinedly adhering to their pagan religious and cultural traditions. For example, in 384 Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, who was proconsul of Africa, made a petition for the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the Senate house.²⁰ The actual number of Christians in the Empire, according to Rodney Stark’s estimation, was less than twenty percent of the entire population.²¹

The situation of North Africa in the fifth century was not very different.²² Already, within the *City of God*, we find indication of a potent pagan culture; Augustine mentions

²⁰ Symmachus, *rel.* 3; Ambrose, *epp.* 17-18. Jones describes this event as “paganism’s appeal to the cultivated classes.” A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey*, vol. 2 (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 940. The actual conflict between Symmachus and Ambrose the bishop of Milan, however, has been challenged: see Timothy D. Barnes, “Augustine, Symmachus, and Ambrose,” in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne McWilliam (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), 7–13; John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). For Augustine’s connection with Symmachus, see *conf.* 5.13.23.

According to scholars, there was another resurgence of paganism in 390s. Under Aborgaste, Eugenius was declared the Western Emperor. With Flavianus, Eugenius lauched imperial support for pagan religion. For example, the usurpers restored financial support for the pagan ceremonies, although not formally. Also, Eugenius rebuilt a temple of Hercules in the “hopes of usurpers to associate the ‘pagan’ with the ‘senatorial’ cause.” Ibid., 241. For the scholarly narrative of this pagan revival in 392-294, see Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire: AD 284-430* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 74–9; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425*, 238–52. See also the collection of related sources and comments: Brian Croke and Jill Harries, eds., *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome: A Documentary Study* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1982), 52–72. Recently, however, Alan Cameron challenged previous scholarly view of this “pagan revival” in 392-394. Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33–92.

²¹ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 13.

²² Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 2:940. “Peasants in all ages have been intensively conservative, and Christianity from its earliest days had been a predominantly urban religion, whose missionaries travelled from town to town, neglecting the intervening countryside. It is not therefore surprising that in most parts of the empire the rural population remained pagan long after the towns were mostly Christian.”

popular superstition and the prevalent practice of worshipping pagan gods.²³ The bishop had to fight some aspects of pagan culture because, as A. H. M. Jones states, “in Africa Christianity was widely diffused over the countryside as early as the third century, but Calama, Madaura and Sufes were apparently still predominantly pagan cities in the early fifth.”²⁴

It has long been assumed among scholars that the Roman world in Late Antiquity could be divided into pagans and Christians. Recent scholarship, however, has found that to be an oversimplification. We need to remember that there was a gray area between the church and hostile paganism.²⁵ For example, Gerald Bonner argues that there were four religious categories among the Roman people: pagans, semi-Christians, paganized Christians, and Christians.²⁶ Though the boundaries among the groups are not clear,

²³ On pagan worship of gods in Augustine’s time, see Madden, *The Pagan Divinities and Their Worship as Depicted in the Works of Saint Augustine Exclusive of the “City of God”*; Frederik van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: Religion and Society at the Dawn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 29–75; Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 107–23.

²⁴ Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 2:942–3. On the pagan violence against Christian in Calama, Madaura and Sufes, see *epp.* 50, 91, 232. For the early conversion of rural Africa, see William H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 87–93. Also, on Augustine’s response to this violence, see Frend, “Augustine and Orosius,” 17.

²⁵ Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 33; Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c.360-430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 26–8. Jaclyn Maxwell rightly observes: “The gray area is often missing from studies of religion in Late Antiquity: most people were neither strict Christians nor devoted pagans...Most people, it seems, would have tended toward different practices or religious affiliations, moving one way or another depending on the situation, the time of year, or the particular occasion.” Jaclyn Maxwell, “Paganism and Christianization,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 866–7. Also see 864–5 concerning “fluid religious identity.”

²⁶ Gerald Bonner, “The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984): 348–57. Bonner’s category is also supported by Chadwick: “One catholic bishop in Numidia found his people bringing their children to baptism, but also arranging for pagan sacrifice to be offered for their health and happiness. Thoughtful pagans who did not wish to be Christians tended to adopt one of two positions, sometimes both.” Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo*, 124–5. On a more recent discussion, see Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 176–7.

Bonner rightly observes that there was a large group of people who did not easily fall into either paganism or Christianity.²⁷ If Bonner's first group "pagans" were antagonistic to Christian faith, the people between the first and the last categories can probably be depicted as wandering between paganism and Christianity.

It is such wavering Romans whom Augustine was deeply concerned with. These people were nurtured by traditional pagan education, yet had become interested in the Christian religion. While attracted, they found rational difficulties and suspicions in the Christian teachings. For example, in 409 Carthaginian deacon Deogratias asked the bishop to answer the six questions raised by his pagan friend. The questions concern (1) the final resurrection, (2) novelty of the Christian religion, (3) Christian rejection of Jewish sacrifices, (4) fairness of the divine judgment, (5) whether God has a son, (6) credibility of Jonah.

Where did these criticisms come from? The bishops noticed that at least three of them were from Porphyry.²⁸ He wrote back to Deogratias with rational explanations to the questions. That pagan friend does not appear to be antagonistic to the Christian faith. Augustine, however, sighs over his delayed conversion: "How much pain it is to me that he is not yet a Christian."²⁹ His grief suggests that the pagan friend was interested in Christianity, and that Augustine and Deogratias had been laboring to convert him by

²⁷ O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 36.

²⁸ That is the second, fifth, and sixth questions. *ep.* 102.8, 28, 30.

²⁹ *ep.* 102.1 (CSEL 34/2.544): *quantoque mihi dolori sit, quod nondum christianus est.*

resolving his questions. After answering all the questions, Augustine urges: “Let him now become a Christian at once!”³⁰

The difficulties and doubts in such wavering hearts often made them delay their baptism. Although it was not unusual in the fourth century to put off baptism until the end of life, Augustine found many cultivated Romans hesitating to be baptized.³¹ It was not so much because of the fear of future sin as because of difficulties they faced in the Christian teachings.³²

After the sack of Rome, many refugees came to Hippo as well as Carthage, and there was definitely a social gathering in Carthage.³³ It would not be unreasonable to think that this kind of gathering and conversation among the intellectual Romans also may have been happening in other places. In this social gathering of educated Romans, which O’Donnell calls a “salon in Carthage,” various issues and questions were discussed including ones concerning the Christian faith.³⁴ For instance, Christ’s Incarnation did not make sense to them. How can God assume the infirmity of human beings? Furthermore,

³⁰ *ep.* 102.38 (CSEL 34/2.577): *sed ille qui proposuit, iam sit christianus.*

³¹ Augustine gave accounts of his interaction with several educated Romans who belonged to this group: Volusianus (*epp.* 132, 135-138), Caecilianus (*ep.* 151), Macedonius (*epp.* 152-155) and Firmus (*epp.* 1A*, 2*).

³² Eric Rebillard argues that the idea that postponing baptism was a wide spread practice is misleading because Augustine’s calls for baptism were preached at the approach of Lent. Eric Rebillard, “Religious Sociology: Being Christian in the Time of Augustine,” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 42. Unfortunately, he does not take into account Augustine’s letters to the educated Romans who were delaying their baptism.

³³ *ep.* 135.1-2.

³⁴ O’Donnell calls this meeting the “salon in Carthage.” James J. O’Donnell, *Augustine* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 44.

Jesus' command to love one's enemy seemed inimical to the Empire.³⁵ The same kinds of difficulties troubled Volusianus and his friend as those that had troubled Deogratias' pagan friend. These intellectuals in the gray area needed rational explanations for the difficulties and doubts concerning the Christian faith. According to Volusianus' own account, a certain man cried in the Carthaginian social gathering: "Who...could explain the doubt that I am tangled with and strengthen my own hesitating assent either by truth or probability?"³⁶

As he came across this cry in Volusianus' letter, Augustine's heart must have been greatly stirred. The conversion of the pagan was one of the most important concerns for the bishop not just because it is what Christ had commanded the church; rather, the bishop clearly saw the prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles being fulfilled throughout history.³⁷ Therefore, it would serve as a proof of the truthfulness of the Christian faith. As we see in his autobiographical narrative, Augustine himself was entangled by such rational problems before he came to the Christian faith.³⁸ It is not a coincidence that he wrote *Contra Academicos* (*Against the Skeptics*) soon after his conversion.³⁹ From his own experience Augustine was fully aware of what kind of

³⁵ *epp.* 135, 136.

³⁶ *ep.* 135.2 (CSEL 44.91): *Et quis ... est sapientia ad perfectum Christianitatis inbutus, qui ambigua, in quibus haereo, possit aperire dubiosque adsensus meos uera uel uerisimili credulitate firmare?*

³⁷ See Augustine's extended exegesis of biblical prophecy on the return of the Gentile in *civ. dei.* 18. We will discuss it later.

³⁸ *conf.* 5.3.6; 6.3.4; 7.3.4.

³⁹ *ep.* 1A*.3. The way Augustine reflects on his conversion experience and contrasts it with previous skepticism is significant: "At once, with the last words of this sentence [Rom 13:13-14], it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. *All the shadows of doubt were dispelled.*" *Statim quippe cum fine huiusce sententiae quasi luce securitatis infusa cordi meo omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt.* *conf.* 8.12.29 (CCL 27.131). italics added (trans. Henry Chadwick)

difficulties and questions blocked educated people from accepting Christianity. Thus, it is not surprising that from the outset of his ecclesiastical vocation the bishop actively engaged with these issues in order to reach out to educated people. Nevertheless, the bishop knew that it would be impossible to turn them to Christ without disproving what they learned from their philosophers.

At the beginning of the *City of God*, the bishop clearly states that he is engaging with the most distinguished philosophers.⁴⁰ Though the bishop refutes many anti-Christian slanders in the work, at the same time his strategy is not mere defense of the Christian faith. His active engagement with philosophers is aimed at reaching those who subscribed to teachings of such philosophers and thereby became skeptical of Christianity. At the end of his imaginary conversation with Porphyry, who had died a hundred years earlier, Augustine betrays his target audience:

But, there are many people who hold you [Porphyry] in high regard. There also many people who respect them who highly esteem you and love you due to whatever kind of a love of wisdom, or curiosity about the magic art which you should never have studied. They are those whom I am really addressing in your name; it may be that for them it is not in vain.⁴¹

Since Augustine engages with philosophers in the *City of God*, his correspondence with Longinianus and Dioscorus, written before he began the *City of God*, deserve our attention due to their intense philosophical engagements.⁴² Longinianus was a highly

⁴⁰ *civ. dei.* 1.36 (CCL 47.34): *et contra philosophos in ea disseratur, non quoslibet, sed qui apud illos excellentissima gloria clari sunt et nobiscum multa sentiunt.*

⁴¹ *civ. dei.* 10.29 (CCL 47.304-5): *sed quantum ad te adinet; quantum autem ad eos, qui te magnipendunt et te uel qualicumque amore sapientiae uel curiositate artium, quas non debuisti discere, diligunt, quos potius in tua compellatione alloquor, fortasse non frustra.*

⁴² Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, 81–2. Recent readings of the *City of God* often reflect the political interests of its readers. For instance, Robert Markus approaches the *City of God* through the bishop's correspondence with two prominent Roman intellectuals: Marcellinus and Volusianus. Markus' political interpretation of book 19 is supported by Augustine's correspondence with them. Markus,

philosophical (probably Neoplatonic) mind who held priesthoods, and Dioscorus was a young admirer of Cicero who was leaving for Greece to study philosophy.

Engagement with Neoplatonist Longinianus

The conversations between Longinianus and Augustine (*epp.* 233-5)⁴³ are devoted to both philosophical and religious issues: how to be good and how to worship God for that purpose.⁴⁴ Augustine sums up their discussions as concerning the origin of goodness and happiness.⁴⁵ While Longinianus is interested in and not refusing the Christian way of life, he is not quite ready to take that route.⁴⁶ Although he politely refuses to make any comment on it due to his ignorance, at least his caricature of the doctrine concerning “bodily Christ and spirit God” (*Christo... carnali et spiritu Deo*) reveals the reason for his reluctance to accept Christ as the way to God.⁴⁷ In the first letter to Longinianus,

Saeculum, xi–xii. However, Markus does not consider other non-political dialogues between the bishop and educated Romans. See Ferdinand Cranz’ comment: “We may often try to reduce Augustine to the level of our own questions and problems.” Ferdinand Edward Cranz, “Review: St. Augustine’s the *City of God* in English Translation and Commentary,” *Speculum* 27 (1952): 202.

⁴³ It is hard to determine their date; the only thing certain is that the discussions took place after Augustine was made bishop in 395. If this Longinianus is identified with prefect Fl. Macrobius Longinianus, as Martindale suggests, the correspondence took place no later than 408 the death of Longinianus. See John R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire II: A.D. 395-527* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 687; Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, 81–2; Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 189–90. Longinianus identifies himself as an outsider, not initiated (*non insinuato extrinsecus*: *ep.* 234.2). Also see the first modern biography of Augustine, Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, *The Life of Augustine: Childhood to Episcopal Consecration (354-396): Memoire Ecclesiastique*, trans. Frederick van Fleteren, *Collectanea Augustiniana* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 297–9.

⁴⁴ *epp.* 233; 234.2.

⁴⁵ *ep.* 233.

⁴⁶ *ep.* 233 (CSEL 57.518): *utrum ea et sola uia, quae ab illo demonstrata est, ad uitam beatam perueniri posse existimes, et aliqua ex causa non eam neglegas ire, sed differas.*

⁴⁷ *ep.* 234.3.

Augustine begins with the goal of the ancient philosophers: how one can become good?⁴⁸ Beginning with this common philosophical ground, Augustine proceeds to the necessity to worship God because “there is nothing better than God, and from him the human soul draws [its power] to be good.”⁴⁹ Then, the bishop presents Christ as the single way to happiness.⁵⁰ Longinianus is not sure of the uniqueness of Christ in pursuit of happiness. On the basis of “sacred ancient tradition,” he admits that there might be a better way to God than the pagan way, though he is reluctant to speak of Christ who is worshipped as God.

Longinianus seems to be influenced by Neoplatonism in his pursuit of happiness. For him the ideal way to God is through purification of the soul and the body. In his reply, it becomes clear to the bishop that Longinianus has a great respect for Christ, yet believes in the Neoplatonist way of salvation, doubting that Christ is the only way. Longinianus’ reply betrays his admiration of the bishop. Even from Longinianus’ Neoplatonist perspective, Augustine appeared to have overcome the weight of the body and purified his mind.⁵¹ However, the Incarnation of Christ diametrically conflict with his Neoplatonic view of salvation.

Facing such initial difficulty, Augustine begins with the question how to obtain happiness, which in turn entails a second and crucial question, as to whether there is a

⁴⁸ *ep. 233 (CSEL 57.517): unde fiat bonus.*

⁴⁹ *ep. 233 (CSEL 57.518): Deum, quo nihil est melius et unde humanus animus haurit, ut bonus sit.*

⁵⁰ *ep. 233 (CSEL 57.518): Quaero etiam ...utrum ea sola uia, quae ab illo demonstrata est, ad uitam beatam perueniri posse existimes.* “I would like to ask whether you think happy life can be obtained by the sole way which was demonstrated by Him [Christ].”

⁵¹ *ep. 234.1.*

single way or many.⁵² Longinianus' acknowledgement that there is a better way to God (*via est in Deum melior*) pleases Augustine. In the pluralistic Greco-Roman world it was necessary above all to prove that there is only one way to true happiness.⁵³ Only then, there comes an opening to present Christ as the only way.⁵⁴ Augustine says that he understands the *temperamentum* of the pagan mind which make Longinianus reluctance to accept or refuse Christ rashly.⁵⁵ However, he seeks to keep Longinianus away from the pluralistic idea of the pursuit of happiness; this semi-monolithic understanding of the way to happiness is what Augustine refers to when he is pleased to see his letter bearing fruit.⁵⁶

In Longinianus' reply Augustine senses subtle indication of dissatisfaction with the ancient way of purification. When Longinianus signals that he agrees about a single (or at least a better) way, Augustine pushes Longinianus further by casting a doubt on a philosophical idea of purification:

If a man still ought to be purified by sacrifices, certainly he is not pure, and if he is not pure he has not lived a pious, just, pure, chaste life. But, if he has so lived, now he is pure. Again, for one who is already pure and clean, what should be expiated by sacrifices to be purified?⁵⁷

⁵² *ep.* 233.

⁵³ Robert L. Wilken, "Religious Pluralism and Early Christian Theology," *Interpretation* 40 (1986): 379–91.

⁵⁴ *ep.* 235.1.

⁵⁵ *ep.* 235.1 (CSEL 57.521): *Proinde, quod de Christo nihil temere tibi uel negandum uel affirmandum putasti, hoc in pagani animo temperamentum non inuitus acceperim.*

⁵⁶ *ep.* 235.1

⁵⁷ *ep.* 235.2 (CSEL 57.522–3): *Si enim adhuc sacris purgandus est, utique mundus non est et, si mundus non est, pie, iuste, pure casteque non uiuit. Si autem iam ita uiuit, iam mundus est. porro iam mundum atque purum, quid opus est sacris expiando purgari?*

It seems that Augustine thought that this is the point where the ancient philosophical way to happiness—especially that of Neoplatonism—fails. “Once this is untangled,” he continues, “we shall see what follows.” To settle this problem, he presents four possibilities and asks Longinianus to pick one. He makes one of them a stepping stone to the Christian way of salvation: “No matter how good a life he leads, he is not yet suited for the happy life given from God without the help of these sacrifices.”⁵⁸ This idea that we need divine help to be good and happy is also found in the *City of God*.⁵⁹ Since men are caught up with unavoidable human misery and injustice, external divine assistance is necessary for the happiness of men.⁶⁰

The exchange of thoughts ends here, but it is not difficult to conjecture the next step to which Augustine will take Longinianus. The bishop will examine each of the options, and then prove that the Christian option is the most reasonable choice.⁶¹ The conclusion that Augustine hopes to reach is the presentation of Christ as the one perfect

⁵⁸ *ep. 235.2* (CSEL 57.523): *ipse quantuscumque bene uiuendi in homine modus nondum sit idoneus ad beatam uitam, quae ex deo capitur, nisi accedant adiumenta sacrorum*. The other three are: (1) A man lives well that he may be purified by sacrifices; (2) He is purified by sacrifices that he may live well; (3) It is a part of right living to partake of these sacrifices, so that there is no difference between the good life and the consecrated life and the good life is enclosed within the boundaries of the consecrated life. Surely, if Longinianus had chosen one of these three, Augustine would have refuted that as well.

⁵⁹ *civ. dei. 19.4*. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 131nn58–9. Cf. *Trin.* 4.10.13; 4.12.15.

⁶⁰ For example, *civ. dei.* 14.27; 19.4. TeSelle, “Porphyry and Augustine,” 131.n.58–9. Cf. *Trin.* 4.10.13; 4.12.15. In contrast, Plotinus and Porphyry had no doubt about human ability to attain the vision of the One. Andrew Smith, *Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2004), 67. Both of them experienced highly mystical experiences as Plato narrates in his Symposium 210-1. Porphyry, v. *Plot.* 23.

⁶¹ As I mentioned above, Augustine turns pagan criticisms of irrationality in Christianity back to them. “I make no difficulty about attributing to the natural disposition of a pagan mind your thought that you should not pronounce for or against Christ without reasonable ground.” *ep. 235.1* (CSEL 57.521). Cf. on Plato’s rationalism and its transformation for the stability of society, see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 207–35.

sacrifice to cleanse the impurity of human beings, thus demonstrating that true happiness can be obtained only by the way Christ taught, and that there is no other way.⁶²

Here Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy is employed to bear evangelistic fruit. The bishop skillfully weaves together crucial topics such as purification, worship of God, goodness/happiness, and human capacity according to his evangelistic strategy for philosophical minds. Augustine disproves the teachings of philosophers for attaining happiness within a philosophical framework so that Longinianus could understand what the bishop presents about his faith; it must have been a very effective and reasonable argument for Longinianus. Conversion is what Augustine hoped to achieve in his correspondent: "From there what I want, if God helps, is this: it [their conversation] may be concluded by an appropriate and profitable end."⁶³ If John R. Martindale's identification is not mistaken, Longinianus became a Christian, whether at this time or later.⁶⁴ The dialogue must have had an impact on this follower of Neoplatonism.

The example of Longinianus conforms to Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy that I have argued for. The correspondence between the two intellectuals gives rise to several important steps. First, Longinianus' philosophical education set up a common ground for conversing with the Christian bishop; the pursuit of happiness and becoming a good person are universal goals of human beings. Second, however, Longinianus' philosophical training casts doubts on Christian teachings. Longinianus' Neoplatonic mindset raises several perplexing questions. Third, Augustine, as he always does, points

⁶² *ep.* 233.

⁶³ *ep.* 235.1 (CSEL 57.521): *deinde quod adhuc uolo, Deus adiuvabit. Id autem est, ut hoc coeptum debito ac salubri fine claudatur.*

⁶⁴ Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire II: A.D. 395-527*, 687.

out the errors and limits within pagan philosophy by using philosophy's own standard. Fourth, after the refutation of philosophy, Christ is presented as the single way to what philosophy seeks to achieve.

This eudaemonistic approach for evangelism is not for all pagans. In 418 Augustine writes two monks Abraham and Peter that there are two kinds of pagans: those who believe in superstitions and those who have no religion at all. Augustine states that the first ten books of the *City of God* were written for the first group. Unfortunately, the bishop admits that it is very difficult to deal with the second group.⁶⁵ This shows that Augustine's target audience is a specific kind of people for whom Augustine's strategy works better. According to Robert Markus, there was "a wide no-man's-land" where paganism and Christian faith co-existed with doubts and admiration at the same time.⁶⁶ Longinianus was an example from that land. Years later Augustine takes basically the same approach, which he used for Longinianus, to his audience in the *City of God*.

Engagement with Dioscorus

The other example of Augustine's philosophical engagement before the *City of God* is with a certain Dioscorus.⁶⁷ This young man, leaving for Greece, pressed the bishop to reply to his questions on Ciceronian philosophy; he did not want to look ignorant to the Greeks. In contrast with Longinianus' sincere pursuit of truth, what Augustine discovered in Dioscorus is vanity —a worldly ambition to exceed in

⁶⁵ *ep.* 184A.5-6.

⁶⁶ Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 33.

⁶⁷ *epp.* 117 (from Dioscorus), 118 (Augustine's reply). The letters are dated to 410. Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne*, 271.

philosophical knowledge. Annoyed by Dioscorus' vain and deceitful desire, Augustine began his reply with chastisement; yet his reply turned out to be quite prolonged, not because of the difficulty of the questions Dioscorus raised, but due to Augustine's pastoral concern to correct the errors in minds and hearts. Augustine saw a young man who, though his mind was obsessed with superficial knowledge of philosophical arguments, did not even recognize that philosophy was about attaining true happiness. Here we encounter his eudaemonistic approach once more:

With this feebleness of your soul, you have penetrated my heart, and broke into my concerns, so that I could not ignore to cure you ... not by making clear and explaining your questions, but I would break off your wavering happiness dependent on human speeches from so unhappy a hawser.⁶⁸

Augustine's annoyance and rebuke is not directed at philosophy *per se*, but at Dioscorus' abuse of philosophy and his misguided pursuit of worldly fame and human applause, which is, in Augustine's expression, false happiness. Dioscorus does not even concern himself with the origin of good and happiness; rather, philosophy is a means to fulfill his worldly desires. As Augustine recognizes Dioscorus' hidden motivation, he burns with the desire to reply. By correcting the 'malady' in Dioscorus' mind, the bishop seeks to break previous ties to pagan philosophy and bind Dioscorus' happiness to what is utterly unshakable and stable.⁶⁹ As in the case of Longinianus, Augustine deploys his eudaemonistic strategy against philosophy, for philosophy provides a false way to

⁶⁸ *ep.* 118.3 (CSEL 34/2.667): *hoc enim languore animi tui penetrasti mihi pectus, et inrupisti in curas meas, ut dissimulare non possem... mederi tibi, non ut de tuis quaestionibus enodandis explicandisque cogitarem, sed ut felicitatem tuam pendentem ex linguis hominum atque nutantem a tam infelici retinaculo abrumperem.*

⁶⁹ *ep.* 118.3.

happiness. Thus, the refutation of the false way should precede the presentation of the true way, which is basically the same order as found in the *City of God*.⁷⁰

While Augustine's tone is far different from that in his conversation with Longinianus, interestingly, the central issue in his conversation with Dioscorus is the same. Augustine re-orientes the young man's mind to the end of philosophy: seeking the ultimate good. Following the ancients, Augustine states that when one finds the good, he becomes happy.⁷¹ While explaining how to lead a happy life, Augustine lays out his eudaemonistic framework. The starting point is the fundamental human desire to be happy, which can be met only by enjoyment of the ultimate good. Thus, until finding it, the soul cannot avoid being restless. Augustine exhorts Dioscorus to 'cling to God' (*inhaerere Deo*). Since God is the single source of happiness, one must cling to God in order to be happy.⁷² It is in God alone that "all our longing for happiness would find rest."⁷³ For Augustine, human restlessness reflects a status of being in search of true happiness, i.e., lacking true happiness.

Although Dioscorus asks of the Ciceronian philosophy, Augustine turns Dioscorus' attention to the Greek philosophy, especially Platonism.⁷⁴ According to the

⁷⁰ O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 48. "The purpose of the first ten books of the *City of God* was demolition, not construction."

⁷¹ "For one, who asks where he could reach happy life, certainly nothing else he would ask but where the ultimate good is, that is, where the highest good is, that is, where the ultimate good of human being is located, not according to a wrong or reckless opinion but according to certain and unshakable truth." *ep.* 118.13 (CSEL 34/2.677-8): *qui enim quaerit, qua ad beatam uitam perueniat, nihil aliud profecto quaerit, nisi ubi sit finis boni, hoc est ubi constitutum sit, non praua opinione atque temeraria sed certa atque inconcussa ueritate summum hominis bonum.*

⁷² *ep.* 118.15.

⁷³ *ep.* 118.17. Cf. *conf.* 1.1.1.

⁷⁴ *ep.* 118.10.

bishop, the Platonist is superior to the Stoics who find the true happiness in the soul and to the Epicureans who believe that the highest good is found in bodily pleasure.⁷⁵ While Platonism betrays the falsity of the Stoics and the Epicureans, the Platonists also fell into error because they failed to accept Christ and emulate His humility. Given the failure of the best philosophy of all, Augustine is concerned that philosophical teachings misguide Roman intellectuals into seeking their happiness outside God. This causes two problems: first, they pursue happiness with their own strength. Only philosophical minds can achieve happiness. This elitist view excludes common people from attaining the truth and true happiness.⁷⁶ The philosophers' way leads to pride, while the Christian way to happiness requires humility.⁷⁷ Second, the philosophical pursuit of happiness does not lead to the true God. For the bishop, true philosophy is supposed to guide its follower to the place of worshipping the true God.

His concern for young men is also found in the conversation with Firmus, a Carthaginian Roman to whom Augustine sent a copy of the *City of God* for his conversion. While laboring to turn his mind to Christ, Augustine is interested in Firmus' son as well, who was versed in Greek philosophy.⁷⁸ The bishop, however, is concerned

⁷⁵ *ep.* 118.16.

⁷⁶ *ep.* 118.20. For Augustine, this sort of elitism is a major problem of philosophers. See *civ. dei.* 18.41 (CCL 48.636) *Unde non immerito, cum illa scriberent, eis Deum vel per eos locutum, non pauci in scholis atque gymnasiis litigiosis disputationibus garruli, sed in agris atque urbibus cum doctis atque indoctis tot tantique populi crediderunt. Ipsi sane pauci esse debuerunt, ne multitudine vilesceret, quod religione carum esse oporteret; nec tamen ita pauci, ut eorum non sit miranda consensus.* Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 45–62. On Porphyry's elitism, see Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," 127–40; Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 139–45.

⁷⁷ Augustine advises Dioscorus to have humility in order to obtain truth; the first way to truth is humility, second humility, and third also humility (*ep.* 118.22). Cf. *ep.* 118.32.

⁷⁸ *ep.* 2*.12.

about how this young man uses his talents: whether he makes good or bad use of them.⁷⁹

Firmus probably asked Augustine to judge the rhetorical skill of his son, for Augustine himself was a very talented public speaker. Though the bishop's tone is very gentle, the warning is the same one he gives to Dioscorus. And what is the good use of philosophy and liberal arts? According to his *De doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Teaching*), it is for the pursuit of true happiness and the worship of the true God.⁸⁰

What Augustine observes in Dioscorus and in Firmus' son is their worldly desire to attain fame and applause. Furthermore, their philosophical training might be misused so that it becomes an obstacle to Christian faith. Insofar as the teachings of philosophers are a 'false way of happiness,' they do great harm to lovers of wisdom; instead of helping its lovers avoid misery of the world,⁸¹ they lead them to heap sin upon sin. In the face of misery of the world due to its sin, Augustine advises Firmus that rebirth is the only way which will lead to Christ.⁸² The bishop does the exact same thing to Dioscorus as well as to Longinianus: "To him [Christ], my Dioscorus, I desire you to submit yourself with all [your] piety."⁸³

It should be noted that the philosophers Augustine refutes in his correspondence with Dioscorus include past Platonists as well as Cicero.⁸⁴ These philosophers are those

⁷⁹ This echoes Augustine's *uti* and *frui* in *doc. chr.* 1.3-4.

⁸⁰ *doc. chr.* 2.40.60-1.

⁸¹ *ep.* 2*.12.

⁸² *ep.* 2*.13.

⁸³ *ep.* 118.22 (CSEL 34/2.685): *Huic te, mi Dioscore, ut tota pietate subdas uelim.*

⁸⁴ It may not be a coincidence that Cicero's *Hortensius* and Platonist books play important roles in the *Confessions*.

on whom Dioscorus depends concerning his pursuit of happiness. For Augustine, Platonists and Cicero were the most potent opponents of the Christian way of life. He sees the doubts and suspicions about Christianity that their philosophical teachings planted in the minds of Romans. Augustine appears to be especially concerned about the young people. He does not want them to undergo or use philosophical training for the sake of their worldly desires. For Augustine, when correctly used, philosophy can serve as a preparation for the gospel: *praeparatio evangelica*. Augustine's correspondence with these educated Romans shows that the bishop sought to put their philosophical training to its best use by leading them to Christ with a eudaemonistic argument. As we will see below, the bishop took the same approach both when he wrote to recipients of copies of the *City of God* and when he was writing the *City of God* itself.

Eudaemonistic Strategy for Conversion

Answering various questions from both within and outside the church and dealing with the philosophical thinking of Roman intellectuals, Augustine felt a need to respond to paganism on a more fundamental level. In 411, a couple of years after answering the six questions from Deogratias, he wrote to Marcellinus, who had enthusiastically helped his effort to convert Volusianus (Marcellinus' friend and then-proconsul of Africa). In his letter, Augustine asked Marcellinus to collect pagan criticisms:⁸⁵

⁸⁵ It seems that collecting pagan criticisms and making brief booklet-type response was not unusual in the early church. O'Daly states: "One cannot exclude the possibility of an available apologetic handbook or compendium, along the line of known scriptural anthologies, such as Cyprian's *Ad Quirinum*." O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God"*, 41. Augustine, however, brought that kind of practice to a different level. *Divine Institutes*' Lactantius should be considered the first to see a need for a comprehensive philosophical engagement with paganism in terms of happiness. Ibid., 50: "Lactantius' aim is not merely to attack false religion and wisdom, but also to write a Christian protreptic." On the relation between Lactantius and Augustine, see Garnsey, "Lactantius and Augustine."

I see that I have written a very long letter and have still not said about Christ everything that could suffice ... for those who, though acutely stirred, are nonetheless prevented from understanding by their obstinate mind and by the preoccupation of long-lasting error. Even so, find out what moves them in the opposite direction, and write back to me so that we may take care to reply to all their objections, if God grants his help, either in letters or in books.⁸⁶

While he responded topic by topic in a letter to Deogratias (*ep.* 102), he found that there were persisting criticisms which troubled many people and could not be easily rebutted. Of the criticisms and rational difficulties among the educated Romans that he gathered, there were two especially persistent sources of pagan criticisms: (1) Christian doctrine is incompatible with the welfare of the Roman commonwealth; (2) Platonic thought cannot be reconciled with the Christian view of the body found in the doctrine of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ.⁸⁷ These criticisms came from two major philosophical sources: the teachings of Cicero⁸⁸ and those of the Platonists, especially Porphyry. Augustine called the criticism from the Ciceronian political ideology ‘most determined opposition.’⁸⁹ And he sensed that Porphyry constituted a source of doubts and suspicions concerning Christian teachings: Porphyry was the ‘most bitter enemy of

⁸⁶ *ep.* 138.20 (CSEL 44.148): *Video me fecisse prolixissimam epistulam, nec tamen de Christo dixisse omnia quae ... eis, quos, licet acute moueantur, contentiosum tamen studium et praeoccupatio diuturni erroris ab intellegendo impedit, possint utcumque sufficere. Verumtamen cognosce quid eos contra moueat, atque rescribe, ut uel epistolis uel libris, si adiuerit Deus, ad omnia respondere curemus.*

⁸⁷ *epp.* 102.2-7; 135.1; 136.2.

⁸⁸ It appears that Augustine thought that the foundation of such criticisms was laid in the Ciceronian political idea which was crystallized in his *De republica*. Cochrane observes that “[n]o author has been more widely known or more intensively studied [than Cicero], and the range of his influence is indicated not merely by this fact but the direct testimony of enthusiastic admirers. The preeminence of Cicero both as thinker and writer was no less secure in the fourth and fifth centuries than it had been in the first.” Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 38. For example, Symmachus was called a “keeper *aedituus* of Cicero’s shrine.” Macrobius, *sat.* 2.3.1.

⁸⁹ *ep.* 137.20 (CSEL 44.124): *obstinatissimas contradictiones.*

Christians.⁹⁰ John O'Meara even argues that the *City of God* reaches its climax in the form of a refutation of Porphyry's *Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda* (*Philosophy from Oracles*).⁹¹

Augustine saw these philosophers defying the Christian faith that would turn people to true happiness in the resurrected body; their philosophy was competing for converts with the Christian faith.⁹²

Evidently, scholars and philosophers stand against the might of this great authority which has converted all kinds of men, as predicted so long ago, to believe and hope for it; it appears to themselves that they acutely argue against the resurrection of the body and quote from the third book of Cicero's *On the Commonwealth*.⁹³

⁹⁰ *Christianorum acerrimus inimicus* (civ. dei. 19.22). In his letter to Deogratias Augustine attributes pagan criticisms to Porphyry. *ep.* 102.8, 28, 30. Interestingly, however, Augustine corrects himself, denying that the criticisms originate from Porphyry. *retr.* 2.31.58. This may reflect the advancement of Augustine's reading and understanding of Porphyry in his later life. Courcelle argues that between 390 and 400 Augustine can "just barely read Greek and a few elementary expressions" but shows his great progress in the language in the second half of 410s: his publications in that period such as *Enarraiones in Psalmos* and *Tractatus in Ioannem* and *Locutiones in Heptateuchum*, show "his recourse to Greek is either frequent or customary." And even he can "explain and correct a mistake of the translators through textual criticism of the Greek manuscripts." Pierre P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 150–60. Barnes also argues that Augustine became acquainted with Porphyry's writings as he learned to read Greek with some fluency. Timothy D. Barnes, "Aspects of the Background of the 'City of God,'" *University of Ottawa Quarterly* 52 (1982): 77.

⁹¹ John J. O'Meara, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1959):2. In his other work, O'Meara asserts that the *City of God* refutes both Roman and Greek culture and presents the Bible as the supreme authority. John J. O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom: The Significance of the "City of God"* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 31–4.

⁹² Stanley Stowers argues: "Both Christians and pagans also wrote longer protreptic letters that ...introduce them to their teachings and beliefs in a more comprehensive way." Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1986), 91–4, 112–3. Concerning the Christian use of philosophical tradition of protreptic, see also Anthony J. Guerra, *Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre, and Audience of Paul's Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–22. On protreptic in philosophical literature, see S. R. Slings, "Protreptic in Ancient Theories of Philosophical Literature," in *Greek Literary Theory After Aristotle: A Collection of Papers in Honour of D.M. Schenkeveld*, ed. J. G. J. Abbenes, S. R. Slings, and I. Sluiter (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995), 173–92.

⁹³ civ. dei. 22.4 (CCL 48.809): *sed uidelicet homines docti atque sapientes contra uim tantae auctoritatis, quae omnia genera hominum, sicut tanto ante praedixit, in hoc credendum sperandumque conuertit, acute sibi argumentari uidentur aduersus corporum resurrectionem et dicere quod in tertio De re*

Augustine's contemporary pagan philosophy is represented by Cicero and Porphyry. Cicero's writing and thought were important parts of Latin education, and as James O'Donnell and Henry Chadwick observe, Neoplatonism was the only "living power" in Augustine's time.⁹⁴ In Augustine's assessment, their thoughts were not just casting doubts and suspicions on the teaching of the church, but also deceiving people by their philosophical (or political) teaching on happiness. Given this intellectual context Augustine chose to present Christianity within a philosophical framework. Therefore, it is not surprising to see in the *City of God* Augustine deploys the same eudaemonistic strategy used in his letters to the educated Romans.

There were several people who received a copy of the *City of God*, whether partial or complete. These recipients had a range of positions on the Christian faith: bishop Evodius (*ep.* 169), monks Peter and Abraham (*ep.* 184A), catechumen Firmus (*epp.* 1A* and 2*),⁹⁵ and pagan Macedonius (*ep.* 152-5). While Augustine does not provide details about the work in his letters to devoted Christians (Evodius and the two monks), for unbaptized Christians or pagans such as Firmus and Macedonius Augustine makes

publica libro a Cicerone commemoratum est. It is also interesting that the anti-resurrection argument of Augustine's opponents is based on Cicero's *De republica*. This indicates that the actual influence of Cicero and Porphyry on Roman minds cannot be clearly separated. We need to remember that Cicero was a transmitter of Plato's thought to the Latin West.

⁹⁴ Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo*, 132; O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 44.

⁹⁵ On letters to Firmus, see Johannes Divjak, "Augustins erster Brief an Firmus und die revidierte Ausgabe der *Civitas Dei*," in *Latinität Und Alte Kirche: Festschrift F. Rudolf Hanslik Zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Herbert Bannert and Johannes Divjak (Wien: Böhlau, 1977), 56-70; Herbert Frohnhofen, "Anmerkungen zum Brief 2* des Heiligen Augustinus," *Vigiliae Christianae* 38, no. 4 (1984): 385-392. Also see the commentaries on *ep.* 1A* by Goulven Madec and on *ep.* 2* by René Braun in *Lettres 1*-29**, Bibliothèque Augustinienne 46B (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1987), 424-29.

great efforts to persuade them to Christ.⁹⁶ His philosophical argument turns out to be very acute, and his heart is burning with evangelistic fervor.

As we have seen in the letters to Longinianus and Dioscorus, the bishop's eudaemonistic strategy for evangelism consists of three stages. (1) Augustine presents the Christian way of life within a philosophical framework in which its goal is redefined as avoidance of misery and attainment of happiness. (2) The bishop refutes the philosophical way of life because of its inconsistency and incapacity to achieve happiness. (3) He presents Christ as the single way to happiness. In correspondence to these stages, the following three sections will elaborate Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy by analyzing his letters to Macedonius and Firmus, two recipients of copies of the *City of God*. This discussion will help us to understand how Augustine constructs the work in order to reach pagan readers.

The Christian Way of Happiness in Philosophical Terms

Since his early fascination with Cicero's *Hortensius*, Augustine pursued happiness through philosophy. As his Cassiciacum dialogues show, despite the basic Christian orientation in his early pursuit of happiness, Augustine did not realize a sharp tension between philosophical and Christian ways to happiness.⁹⁷ Moreover, he was

⁹⁶ This does not mean that Augustine's eudaemonistic approach is only for pagans. Augustine advises Deogratias, who asked about how to lead catechism, first to investigate the candidate's reason to be a Christian. The expected reason is to obtain eternal felicity. *cat. rud.* 16.25-17.26. He even says: "He who desires to be a Christian for the sake of eternal blessedness and perpetual rest ... that person is truly a Christian" *Qui autem propter beatitudinem sempiternam et perpetuam requiem ... vere ipse christianus est. cat.rud.*17.27 (CCL 46.152).

⁹⁷ Concerning the radical shift in Augustine's thought around 390s, See this excellent analysis: Ferdinand E. Cranz, "The Development of Augustine's Ideas on Society before the Donatist Controversy," *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954): 255-316.

deeply influenced by Neoplatonism through the Platonist Christians in Milan and his reading of *libri platonicii*.⁹⁸ A radical break with the philosophy, however, came from his intense study and ‘rediscovery’ of the Pauline doctrine of grace in the mid-390s.⁹⁹ After this, his theological thought was profoundly reoriented. It enabled him to see the limitation of human freedom and stress the absoluteness of divine grace. Consequently, this shift turned Augustine to a radical dependence on divine power in the attainment of happiness, i.e., eternal life.

For the bishop, the philosophical quest for happiness, despite its fundamental limits, reflects a universal desire for the good life, and, therefore, Christianity and philosophy share the common goal: the attainment of happiness. Nevertheless, the problem is that the goal of philosophy can be reached only through Christ. For Augustine, in contrast to the philosophers’ beliefs, it is a false conviction that one could achieve true happiness by one’s own capacity on earth without external divine assistance.

⁹⁸ TeSelle argues that Augustine’s apologetic strategy shifted in the course of time. According to him, there are three periods: namely, hortatory, controversial, and lastly defensive (or apologetic). TeSelle, *Augustine’s Strategy as an Apologist*, 3–4. As Barnes argues, however, the *City of God* “is less a defense of Christianity against pagans than a protreptic addressed to them. Augustine constantly asserts that the best philosophers accept the central propositions of Christian theology. Both Plato and Porphyry are partly right.” Barnes, “Aspects of the Background of the ‘City of God,’” 80. Also, despite Augustine’s shift of approach, happiness remains a central theme in his apologetics.

⁹⁹ The occasion of this study was Augustine’s request to the current bishop Valerius for leave (*ep.* 21). Several commentaries on Pauline letters were produced during this period; Augustine likely focused on the Pauline corpus. When he wrote two commentaries on Romans (*exp. prop. Rom.* and *Rom. inch. exp.*), he did not fully understand the nature of election by grace in Rom 9. A radical turn to divine grace, however, occurred in 396 when he was grappling with the question Simplicianus raised. Augustine appears not to have seen this point because of his latent resistance to Manichean fatalism; against Manichean interpretations of Paul’s letters he had been looking to ground the freedom of will. According to his own account, Augustine solved the problem through a revelatory breakthrough: he worked for the free choice of human will, but the grace of God won out (*praed. sanct.* 3.7. Cf. *retr.* 2.1). Brown states that the change in Augustine’s view of Paul is “memorialized in the *Ad Simplicianum*.” Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 15. Also see, William S. Babcock, “Augustine’s Interpretation of Romans (A.D. 394-396),” *Augustinian Studies* 10 (1979): 55–74; Paula Fredriksen, “Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy: Augustine on Paul against the Manichees and the Pelagians,” *Recherches Augustiniennes* 23 (1988): 87–114.

Since both are ways of pursuing the same goal, it is not surprising to see the bishop presenting eternal life of the Christian faith as the supreme good even in his sermons: “From this we understand why we are Christians. it is not because of what is temporal and passing, whether good or bad, but in order to avoid evils that will not pass away, and to gain goods that will never come to an end.”¹⁰⁰ In this line of thought, Christianity is the true way to achieve happiness: “I have always advised you of this, brothers! I have never stopped and been silent: We must love eternal life. We must despise the present life. We must live well, and we must hope for what is good.”¹⁰¹ Here the eternal life of Christianity is viewed as the completion of the pagan’s pursuit of happiness.

When it comes to educated Romans who stand in the above-mentioned gray area, Christian ideas are intentionally represented in philosophical terms. In his letter to Roman commissioner Macedonius in 414, Augustine recasts the Kingdom of God as the Heavenly Commonwealth (*coelestis res publica*): “I recognize that your mind is possessed of God’s heavenly commonwealth with a love of eternity and of truth and of love itself; Christ is the ruler there.”¹⁰² In the pagan philosophical/political framework, the Roman commonwealth was the most important concern. Macedonius was deeply influenced by the Ciceronian political ideology. To present the Christian faith within such

¹⁰⁰ s. 302.2-3 (PL 38.1387): *hinc intelligitur quare sumus Christiani, quia non propter temporalia et transeuntia, uel bona, uel mala, sed propter uitanda mala quae non transibunt, et propter adipiscenda bona quae terminum non habebunt.*

¹⁰¹ s. 302.9 (PL 38.1389): *Semper haec admonuimus, fratres, nunquam cessauimus, nunquam tacuimus. Uita aeterna diligenda est, praesens contemnenda est, bene uiuendum est, bonum sperandum est.*

¹⁰² ep. 155.1 (CSEL 44.430): *quod animum tuum caritate aeternitatis et ueritatis, atque ipsius caritatis affectum diuinae illi coelestique rei publicae, cuius regnator est Christus...agnosco inhiantem.*

a pagan framework, the bishop intentionally employs the expression ‘heavenly commonwealth’ to refer to the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of God is the true *res publica*. By accommodating this deeply held pagan value, Augustine invites Macedonius to view the Christian faith fulfilling what the Ciceronian ideology promises.

The other example is piety (*pietas*). In his letters to pagan intellectuals, faith (*fides*) is often presented alongside the concept of piety, which was a foundational virtue in the Roman society. This choice also reflects Augustine’s apologetic-evangelistic approach. For comparison, Augustine finds a pagan concept that corresponds to a Christian virtue. In this case, (Christian) faith is framed by a pagan virtue of piety; yet, for Augustine, true piety is in the Christian faith because it refers to the “truthful worship of the true God.”¹⁰³

In Late Antiquity the meaning of *pietas* had more than a religious dimension; it covered a far broader range of social relationships. In its civic aspect, piety often meant “the loyal fulfillment of responsibilities towards the fatherland.”¹⁰⁴ In the Roman political ideology, the goal of piety was to promote patriotic love for the Empire. Augustine noticed this strong patriotic sentiment among Roman intellectuals. For instance, when the pagan Nectarius¹⁰⁵ quoted Cicero, Augustine was keenly aware of the influence of Ciceronian political ideology: “I, not bewildered, rather praise that you not only remember accurately, but also demonstrate by your life and your behavior that a good

¹⁰³ *ep.* 155.2.

¹⁰⁴ Carlos F. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 73. Cochrane argues that Julius Caesar modified the conventional cardinal virtues for a political purpose; the substitution of *pietas* for *prudentia* is to highlight the fact that he was the embodiment of the Latin political virtues. This modification shows “Augustan political wisdom.” Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 109–10.

¹⁰⁵ The occasion of this correspondence was a pagan riot against the church in Calama in 408. Nectarius asked Augustine to intervene for the sake of the pagans who were accused of illegally stoning the church and killing a minister.

man's service for his country has no limit or end.”¹⁰⁶ In response to pagan criticism, the bishop argues that the Christian piety is beneficial to the Roman commonwealth. The Christian piety alone acknowledges the true God as the source of all virtues. Therefore, Augustine advises Macedonius to lead his people to worship the true God in order to benefit the Roman commonwealth.¹⁰⁷

The common issue in these conversations with pagan intellectuals is how to live well or how to lead a blessed/happy life. The goal of Augustine's argument in his letter to Macedonius is ultimately to prove that the Christian faith is the only way to true happiness and blessed life. For that purpose, Augustine chose to set his argument for the Christian faith in a philosophical framework. Now, let us look at how he refutes the philosophical way of happiness.

Debunking False Happiness

The real danger of pagan philosophy for the bishop was that it poisoned Roman minds with the illusory promise of attaining false happiness.¹⁰⁸ As we have seen in Dioscorus, pagan philosophy, especially the Ciceronian and Porphyrian philosophies turned out to be a potent alternative to Christian faith. Averil Cameron rightly observes, “the main intellectual alternative to Christianity was Neoplatonism.”¹⁰⁹ For example, a

¹⁰⁶ *ep.* 91.1 (CSEL 34/2.427): *nec miror, et laudo; teque non tantum tenere memoriter, uerum etiam uita ac moribus demonstrare quod nullus sit patriae consulendi modus aut finis bonis*. Nectarius' quote is from Cicero, *rep.* 6.16.

¹⁰⁷ *ep.* 155.12 (CSEL 44.441-2).

¹⁰⁸ “They promise to the human soul either the alteration of genuine unhappiness and false felicity, as Plato, or the assurance of an eventual end to misery as Porphyry.” *civ. dei.* 22.12 (CCL 48.833): *sic animae humanae aut alternantes, sicut Plato, ueras infelicitates falsasque promittant beatitudines aut post multas itidem per diuersa corpora reuolutiones aliquando tamen eam, sicut Porphyrius, finire miserias*.

¹⁰⁹ Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire*, 164–5.

certain Roman senator Rogatianus was “converted” to the Plotinian philosophy.¹¹⁰ At the same time, however, the Ciceronian political ideology also fascinated the minds of Roman intellectuals with its dream of the perfect commonwealth. Therefore, it was clear to the bishop that without disproving these delusions of philosophical happiness, it would be impossible to turn Roman intellectuals to the Christian faith.¹¹¹ The best way for Augustine was to show the inevitable misery of the world and the incapacity of philosophy to bring happiness.

After Macedonius finished the first three books of the *City of God*, Augustine boldly expressed harsh criticism against ‘lying philosophers’ and their ‘deception.’¹¹² The target in this letter was Cicero. The bishop demonstrates that Ciceronian happiness is not consistent. According to *Tusculan Disputations* book 5, a wise man can be blessed despite a physical disability such as deafness or blindness. However, if one is in extreme torment, Cicero argues, one is to kill oneself. Augustine asks why the wise man does not remain in torment and enjoy it if the life of happiness can exist in the midst of physical torment.¹¹³

The bishop points out by quoting Cicero that Tully even admits that this present life is not blessed: “This life is really death.”¹¹⁴ Augustine’s view of the present life is

¹¹⁰ Porphyry, v. *Plot.* 7. On ideal life in philosophical tradition in Antiquity, see Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, trans. Richard Robinson, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 426–61.

¹¹¹ “The approach that writers took to their protreptic tasks varied ... One approach is to refute objections against the particular kind of philosophy or Christianity in question and to argue for its advantages or superiority.” Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 113.

¹¹² *ep.* 155.6. (CSEL 44.436-7): *falsos philosophos; mendacium*.

¹¹³ *ep.* 155.3.

¹¹⁴ *ep.* 155.4 (CSEL 44.435): *haec uita quidem mors est*

stark as well. Life is either genuine unhappiness, or deceptive happiness.¹¹⁵ *Miseria hominis* is counted as inevitable. This recognition of the misery of the present life is of fundamental significance for Augustine, because that is the starting point for moving forward to the gospel. The bishop demonstrates that man cannot make himself happy; only the maker of man can do so.¹¹⁶ Therefore, Augustine advises Macedonius to pray to God, who is just and merciful and has the power over this life.¹¹⁷ Here *pietas* as exemplified by Aeneas¹¹⁸ is corrected in two ways. (1) True *pietas* is “the truthful worship of the true God” of Christians; (2) its reward is supreme good and everlasting felicity instead of earthly happiness.¹¹⁹ Augustine summarizes the connection between present and eternal realities: “Here it is unchanging piety, there eternal felicity.”¹²⁰ Thus, piety is what we should have on earth in order to attain true happiness in heaven.

Augustine’s persuasion of Macedonius then proceeds to a socio-political level. If God is the source of human happiness, that should also hold true in the sphere of the commonwealth: “We know that truly you are a lover of commonwealth; See how clear it is in those sacred writings that a man as well as a city becomes happy from nothing else.”¹²¹ In fact, in Augustine’s mind there is no fundamental discrepancy between

¹¹⁵ s. 302.2 (PL 38.1386): *uera infelicitas, mendosa felicitas*.

¹¹⁶ *ep.* 155.2.

¹¹⁷ *ep.* 155.3. Cf. In such unavoidable necessity, one would cry: “Save me from my necessity!” *civ. dei.* 19.6. (CCL 48.671): *De necessitatibus meis erue me!*

¹¹⁸ Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West*, 72.

¹¹⁹ *ep.* 155.2.

¹²⁰ *ep.* 155.5 (CSEL 44.435): *Hic constantissima pietas, ibi sempiterna felicitas*.

¹²¹ *ep.* 155.7 (CSEL 44.437): *Quoniam uero te rei publicae scimus amatorem, non aliunde esse beatum hominem, aliunde ciuitatem uide quam sit in illis sacris litteris clarum*.

personal and social happiness. The source of blessedness is not one thing for a human being and something else for another. In ancient tradition, these two dimensions—personal (or spiritual) and socio-political—were closely interwoven,¹²² for a city is a like-minded mass of people.¹²³

On a political level virtues had been considered a means to foster the well-being of the Empire. However, Augustine challenges such an understanding: if all the virtues Macedonius is trying to achieve are simply for the physical security on earth, such endeavor will bring neither virtues nor happiness.¹²⁴ Even in the political sphere, virtues are not for the sake of happiness in this present life. Augustine leads the pagan Macedonius to see what true commonwealth would be, and shows that Ciceronian political ideology blinds people to this real blessedness. Augustine writes his friend and faithful Christian Roman official Marcellinus that Christianity would establish, consecrate, strengthen and increase the commonwealth much better than Romulus, Numa, Brutus and the other illustrious men of the Roman state.¹²⁵ Thus, Augustine contrasts Christian teachings with Roman heroes and Cicero's use of them to establish a political

¹²² *civ. dei.* 4.3; Plato, *rep.* 368d. On the ancient concept of the relation between macro-micro levels, see M. R. Wright, *Cosmology in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1995), 70–4. Scholars have noticed such an interconnection between the two levels in Augustine's *Confessions* and the *City of God*. Concerning the logical and structural similarity between *Confessions* and the *City of God*, see Barnes, "Aspects of the Background of the 'City of God,'" 80; Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 204–206.

¹²³ *ep.* 155.9. Cf. *s.* 81.9. "What is Rome if not the Romans who live there?" Also, "Plato seems at first glance to have diverging conceptions of happiness. On the one hand he follows Socrates in thinking of it as realized in social and political life. . . . On the other hand he sometimes suggests, particularly in the *Phaedo*, that happiness lies in escape from the body and blissful vision of the Forms in a higher existence." O'Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*, 101.

¹²⁴ *ep.* 155.10.

¹²⁵ *ep.* 138.10.

ideology.¹²⁶ In terms of real happiness of the nation, Augustine thinks, Roman political and mythological ideology misguides people to pursue material prosperity.

Augustine's counter argument against philosophers continued until he completed the *City of God*. Sending a copy of the 22 books to Firmus, he asks him to make it available to his pagan friends as well as Christians so that they could be freed from superstition.¹²⁷ In the first ten books Augustine deals with two ways of pursuing happiness: through crude material pursuit (books 1-5) and through a highly philosophical pursuit (books 6-10). There is a gradation among pagan pursuits of happiness, yet Augustine ultimately lumps them all together under the label of superstition, because all offer false happiness through worshipping false gods who cannot be a true source of happiness. Augustine warns Firmus of the harm of false happiness:

Hence, as we see, there are those errors and affliction of the mortal with which this human life is filled. There, false happiness does greater harm its own lover; those who desire to enjoy it pile up sins over sins when everyone wants to bring to an end hard and severe misery, but not all know [how to].¹²⁸

False happiness, Augustine thinks, makes its pursuers commit idolatry. Also, philosophy produces pride in one's capacity to cure the problem without external assistance. Apart from the Christian faith, however, every path will lead to more serious misery caused by the pursuit of that which is other than God. Thus, false happiness subjects its seeker to the

¹²⁶ A similar contrast between Christian martyrs and Greco-Roman heroes is found in *s.* 335C.1.

¹²⁷ *ep.* 1A*.2. This is an interesting inversion of the concept of *superstitio*; in Roman traditional thought, *superstitio* was distinguished from *religio* (or *pietas*). See, Cicero, *nat. d.* 2.28.71-72; *civ. dei.* 4.30. Augustine uses Varro's distinction; superstition makes people fear the gods as enemies, but religious people love them as parents (*civ. dei.* 6.9). Also see, O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 106.

¹²⁸ *ep.* 2*.10 (CSEL 88.18): *Hinc sunt isti quos uidemus errores aerumnaeque mortalium quibus haec uita humana completa est, ubi amatoribus suis peius nocet falsa felicitas, qua perfrui cupientes aggerant peccata peccatis, quam dura et aspera miseria quam ferre omnes uolunt nec omnes sciunt.*

wrath and judgment of God. From this misery and delusion, Augustine moves to the true way to happiness.

Christ the Sole Way

Up to this stage of his eudaemonistic argument against philosophers, Augustine proves that life is genuine unhappiness, and that philosophers' teaching cannot lead us to true happiness for two reasons. First, humans cannot make themselves happy. Only the maker of humans can do so. Second, true happiness is not found on earth. Though we may participate in a partial happiness, complete happiness is attained in eternity. In his argument, the traditional concept of happiness, cherished by philosophical minds, undergoes a radical transformation. Unlike pagan philosophers, Augustine teaches that virtues are given by God through the "grace of mediator Christ," and that divine endowment and assistance help us lead a good life here, and that we will be rewarded by a blessed life in eternity.¹²⁹

As these points are argued in a reasonable way, and the deception of philosophical teaching on happiness is refuted, Augustine no doubt exhorts his correspondents to repentance and rebirth. Since the source of true happiness is God, true happiness is in the enjoyment of God.¹³⁰ Thus, present reality without such hope is utter misery.¹³¹ In the last step of his persuasion, Augustine exhorts Macedonius to cling to God, quoting a Psalm:

¹²⁹ *ep.* 155.16.

¹³⁰ *ep.* 118.16. Cf. *civ. dei.* 8.8; 11.12. Here the seat of the supreme good is the issue. While Epicureans and Stoics thought that it was in our body, for Platonists it was in the mind. Augustine thinks that the supreme good is not even in the mind, but in God. Cf. *ep.* 118.16-17.

¹³¹ *civ. dei.* 19.20

“for me it is good to cling to God.”¹³² This full and everlasting wisdom as well as a life now truly blessed will be obtained by clinging to God.¹³³

Augustine is even ready to speak the truth at the cost of modesty and friendship with Macedonius.¹³⁴ Here we find bishop Augustine’s evangelistic passion for the intellectual Romans. His eudaemonistic argument is not just for a debate or defense; rather, it purports to persuade intelligentsia to turn to Christ by resolving the difficulties and doubts they find in the Christian teachings. Augustine sent the copy of the first three books of the *City of God*, which has been recently finished, to Macedonius with the same purpose. The bishop exhorts educated Romans to cling to God for the sake of their happiness as he points out the failure of pagan philosophers and their gods fail to bring true felicity. Augustine’s eudaemonistic argument is designed for evangelism.

Future Citizens of Heavenly City

As both philosophy and Christianity pursue the attainment of happiness, the bishop sought to prove the superiority of the Christian faith over two dominant philosophies with regard to attaining happiness. This eudaemonistic strategy, however, was not devised to fight philosophers; rather, Augustine’s purpose was persuasion and conversion of educated Romans who were vacillating between Christianity and paganism.

¹³² *ep.* 155.12 (CSEL 44.442) *Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est* (Ps 73:29). ‘Cling to God’ is an Augustinian expression of faith. See *ep.* 118.15, 22, 24. This expression also appears in the *City of God*: to cling to ‘eternal truth’ (*civ. dei.* 6.4), ‘God’ (10.5, 12), ‘the Mediator’ (18.18).

¹³³ *ep.* 155.12 (CSEL 44.442) *Haec ibi erit plena et sempiterna sapientia, eademque ueraciter uita iam beata.*

¹³⁴ *ep.* 155.10-11. Also, Augustine seeks to reach Firmus’ soul anxiously even to the point of making demands. “I, who produced the most plentiful planting, do not wish to look like an annoying exactor of fruits.” *ep.* 2*.3 (CSEL 88:10): *non sim, quaeso, molestus frugis exactor qui sementem copiosissimam feci.*

From Augustine's statement we reaffirm that the *City of God* is not so much to fight as to win over even the enemy of the church:

Certainly she [the church] has to remember that among these very enemies are hidden future fellow citizens; she should not consider it fruitless even in the presence of them to bear their bitter hostility until she finds them confessing [the faith] ... As you see, those two Cities are interwoven and mingled together in this world.¹³⁵

Augustine and his contemporaries were surrounded by pagan literature. As he mentions in the *City of God*, pagan books exerted considerable influence on Roman intellectuals. Thus, in order to refute paganism the bishop had to produce literary work that would be read and considered by pagan minds. As Harry Gamble rightly points out, "Christian writings were virtually always published privately, through intramural Christian channels, and circulated thereafter by private copying."¹³⁶ This kind of private circulation should not be mistaken as a form of publication. Rather, the circulation of Christian books, especially among the pagans, had evangelism as its purpose. Augustine's odd restriction on copying makes sense when seen from his evangelistic purpose. Sending out a copy of the *City of God* in 427, the bishop told Firmus to allow a few friends around him to copy the work. The purpose of the circulation is clearly spoken: "You will see what to do with your friends whether they desire to be instructed among Christians or they are held by some superstition, whence they will seem to be able to be

¹³⁵ *civ. dei.* 1.35 (CCL 47.33-4): *meminerit sane in ipsis inimicis latere ciues futuros, ne infructuosum uel apud ipsos putet, quod, donec perueniat ad confessos, portat infensos... Perplexae quippe sunt istae duae ciuitates in hoc saeculo inuicemque permixtae.*

¹³⁶ Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 140. Concerning book production in antiquity, see also H. L. M. van der Valk, "On the Edition of Books in Antiquity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 11 (1957): 1-10.

freed by the grace of God through this effort of us.”¹³⁷ Such a pastoral concern must have been on the bishop’s mind when he sent a copy of the first three books of the *City of God* to Macedonius.¹³⁸

In this literary and intellectual milieu, Augustine actively engaged with pagan philosophy with his literary and philosophical talents. Our investigation reveals that Augustine’s eudaemonistic strategy has been developed through his engagement with pagan intellectuals the engagement, and that the goal of such an approach was to the evangelism of wavering Roman intellectuals.¹³⁹ Now Let us see how the bishop utilizes this strategy in the *City of God*.

¹³⁷ *ep.* 1A*.2 (CSEL 88.8): *amicis uero tuis, siue in populo Christiano se desiderent instrui, siue qualibet superstitione teneantur, unde uidebuntur posse per hunc laborem nostrum Dei gratia liberari, quomodo impertias ipse uideris.* On other occasions of the circulation of Augustine’s works, see *ep.* 102.1.

¹³⁸ Given Augustine’s evangelistic approach to Macedonius, it is hard to agree with McLynn’s explanation that Augustine’s intention to contact Macedonius was to get a “distributor” of his works among high class Romans in Rome. Neil B. McLynn, “Augustine’s Roman Empire,” *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 29–44.

¹³⁹ In his new chapter “New Directions” added to the second edition of the masterful biography of Augustine, Peter Brown states, on the basis of the discovery of the new letters: “The newly discovered Divjak letter to Firmus of Carthage makes plain that the *City of God* was written for waverers, and not only to denounce hardened pagans or to reassure Christians disillusioned by the barbarian invasions ... The *City of God* was written partly to clear away the obstacles that littered the extensive common ground between educated pagans and their Christian peers, so that the pagans should cross over, as they surely would, to join the Church.” Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 511. Barnes also shows a similar view: Barnes, “Aspects of the Background of the ‘City of God.’”

CHAPTER THREE

The Purpose and Structure of the *City of God*

Bishop Augustine structures the *City of God* with a very clear outline. Fortunately, within the *City of God* there are several places in which our bishop himself indicates how he structured the work.¹ Also, we have two external sources concerning the structure: his letter to Firmus (*ep.* 1*) and *Reconsiderations* 2.43. According to these sources, the first ten books refuted two pagan pursuits of happiness: happiness on earth (books 1-5) and eternal happiness of the life after death (books 6-10). Then, the following twelve books describe three major movements of the two Cities: the origin (books 11-13), the development (books 14-17), and the end (books 18-22) of the Earthly and the Heavenly Cities. To use Augustine's own words, the first ten books are "refutation" of pagan thoughts, and the following twelve books are "demonstration" of the Christian faith.

Most of the scholarly proposals concerning the structure of the *City of God* have been based on Augustine's own explanation of the structure as mentioned above.²

¹ *ep.* 1A*; *retr.* 2.69. O'Meara collected Augustine's mentions of the structure within the *City of God*: O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom*, 20–8. Also see Augustine's mention of the *City of God* in other works: *epp.* 151-3, 169, 184A, 23*.

² The discovery of the so-called Divjak letters in the 1970s, especially Augustine's correspondence to Firmus (*epp.* 1A*, 2*), shed light on our inquiry into the *City of God*'s structure and purpose. On scholarly discussions on the structure of the *City of God*: Roy J. Deferrari and M. Jerome Keeler, "St. Augustine's 'City of God': Its Plan and Development," *American Journal of Philology* 50 (1929): 109–37; Henri I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1938); Henri I. Marrou, "La division en chapitres des livres de 'La Cité de Dieu,'" in *Mélanges Joseph De Ghellinck, S.J.* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1951), 235–49; Jean-Claude Guy, *Unité et structure logique de la "Cité de Dieu" de saint Augustin* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1961); Gustave Bardy, *La Cité de Dieu: Œuvres de saint Augustin*, Bibliothèque augustiniennne 33 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959); O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom*; Klaus Thraede, "Das antike Rom in Augustins 'De civitate Dei': Recht und Grenzen eines verjährten Themas," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977): 90–145; O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 39–

Nevertheless, beyond Augustine's twofold (books 1-10, 11-22) or fivefold structure (books 1-5, 6-10, 11-14, 15-18, 19-22), it is hard to find scholarly consensus about either the structure or the purpose of the work; for our purposes, it would be sufficient to look at differences among proposals that major Augustinian scholars make. For example, in his *Charter of Christendom: The Significance of the City of God* (1961), John O'Meara points out three topoi in the *City of God*: Rome, Greece, and the Scriptures. According to him, Augustine argues against the Roman (books 1-5) and Greek (books 6-10) cultures, and, then, presents the scriptural teachings of Christianity (books 11-22). O'Meara points out two representatives of the first two cultures: Varro and Platonists.³ In contrast to O'Meara's highlight of Varro's role in the first five books, most of students of the *City of God* agree that Augustine's real interlocutor is Cicero rather than Varro.⁴

James O'Donnell's analysis is more theological. According to him, the "polemical structure" of the first ten books is to show the "ruling power of God" (books 1-5) and the "redeeming power of Christ" (books 6-10) while it destroys a "false interpretation of reality" in pagan philosophy.⁵ O'Donnell also claims that the last dozen books are "to explain the fall of man and its implications; then to prescribe the Christian remedy for the ills of the present; and finally to explain the Christian hope for the world to come."⁶ He

60; Johannes Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's "City of God" and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 1991); Johannes Van Oort, "Augustine's Letters to Firmus (1A* and 2*) and the Purpose of 'De Civitate Dei,'" in *Studia Patristica*, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, vol. 27 (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 417–23.

³ O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom*, 31–34.

⁴ For example, Fortin, "St. Augustine." For further discussions, see chap. 4.

⁵ O'Donnell closely follows J. -C. Guy's presentation of the structure of the *City of God*: Guy, *Unité et structure logique de la "Cité de Dieu" de saint Augustin*.

⁶ O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 48–50.

thinks that Augustine's tripartite presentation of the history of the two Cities corresponds to love, faith, and hope. Despite some good insights, his analysis of the structure is subjective rather than being firmly based on textual evidence.

While O'Meara and O'Donnell accept apologetic purpose of the *City of God*, J. van Oort argues in his 1991 work that in structure and content the *City of God* is both an apologetic and *catechetical* work.⁷ The ground of his claim for catechetical purpose is twofold: First, there is a structural similarity between *De catechizandis rudibus* (*On the Instruction of Beginners*) and the *City of God*. The former has been considered "catechetical" work, although it is subject to investigation. Thus, given the structural parallel, van Oort asserts that the *City of God* should be viewed as an extended version of catechesis. Second, soon after the completion of the *City of God*, Augustine sent a copy of the work to a certain "catechumen" Firmus. Augustine wished that the recipient could "enter the city of God" by reading it.⁸ However, there are many discussions and issues which cannot be identified as catechetical. For example, Augustine's detailed discussions of Roman religion and Platonism in the first ten books do not match the nature of catechesis.

The *City of God* is often read as a "political" work. Especially among recent political theologians, Augustine has been viewed as a "godfather of Christian political theology."⁹ This perception has some validity because medieval political thought is

⁷ Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 196–7.

⁸ *ep.* 2*.3.

⁹ Michael Kirwan, *Political Theology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009), 68.

deeply rooted in Augustine's *City of God*.¹⁰ Modern political theologians find the bishop most political in book 19, and as a result, this book has been highlighted more than any other books in the *City of God*. For example, Oliver O'Donovan, a well-known political theologian, argued that book 19 of the *City of God* "is correctly read as an essay in social or political philosophy."¹¹ Although he did not extend this claim to the point that the *City of God* as a whole is legitimately read as political, it is implied in his presentation of Augustine's strategy of deconstruction of Roman political order throughout the *City of God*.

After Robert Markus' ground breaking work *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (1970),¹² political reading of Augustine came to have a substantial support from patristic scholarship. It is not surprising to hear Markus' discovery of the political nature of narrating history in John Milbank's 1987 article: "A genuine soteriology must be an ecclesiology and ... a genuine ecclesiology must be a 'philosophy of history'"¹³ or in another place he says: "the central thrust of the *Civitas Dei* ... is an unremittingly subversive analysis of the Roman political order"¹⁴ based upon the mystification of Roman history.¹⁵ Although political reading of the *City of God* has

¹⁰ Beryl Smalley, ed., *Trends in Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965).

¹¹ Oliver O'Donovan, "Augustine's 'City of God' XIX and Western Political Thought," *Dionysius* 11 (1987): 90. O'Donovan argues against Barrow's caution. See Reginald H. Barrow, *Introduction to St. Augustine: The "City of God"* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), 249, 253. "He is concerned with historical criticism, and not with developing a theory of the state"

¹² Markus, *Saeculum*, xxi.

¹³ John Milbank, "An Essay against Secular Order," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 15 (1987): 207.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

cast significant light on Augustine's tension with state ideology of the Roman Empire, it cannot explain the other major discussion with Neoplatonism which is almost indifferent to the political.

As our brief survey of scholarly discussions indicates, the *City of God* has been read as an apologetic, catechetical, or political work. These different readings and consequent characterization of the *City of God* postulate different purposes of the work. In sum, concerning the purpose and structure of the *City of God* there is no scholarly consensus. Moreover, regarding its structure, the *City of God* has been said to have too many subjects and discussions to contain any penetrating argument. Scholars often complain that the *City of God* has too many "digressions,"¹⁶ and even that its structure is "poorly thought out."¹⁷ Even the basic relationship between the first and the second half of the work is unclear. For example, H. I. Marrou and G. Bardy think that part one (books 1-10) is a huge "excursus" to the main discussion of the tripartite history of the two Cities (books 11-22).¹⁸ Although their ideas have been corrected by other scholars, the relation between part one and two is still to be examined.¹⁹ Despite Augustine's clear fivefold structure, an overarching argument, which connects each part of the *City of God* as a

¹⁶ Deferrari and Keeler, "Plan and Development."

¹⁷ Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 74, 74n314.

¹⁸ Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, 67. Also see Bardy, BA 33, 43-4. A similar idea is found in Gilson who repeats Deferrari and Keeler's classical judgment that the work has many digressions which are not necessary to its main tripartite structure. Deferrari and Keeler, "Plan and Development"; Etienne Gilson, "Introduction," in *City of God, Books I-VII*, trans. Demetrius B. Zema and Gerald G. Walsh, vol. 8, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1950), i-xcviii.

¹⁹ O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 135.

whole, has not been seriously asked.²⁰ Therefore, in order to avoid misunderstandings or eisegesis, the *City of God* should be read with a clear understanding of the purpose and structure of the work. And that is the task of this chapter.

This chapter argues that the *City of God* is best understood as a eudaemonistic work with evangelistic purpose. As the previous chapter has shown, Augustine employed a eudaemonistic strategy to lead Roman intellectuals to Christ. The present chapter will revisit Augustine's own statements concerning the structure of the *City of God*. Textual analysis of those passages will reveal evangelistic purpose of the work. Then, the chapter will examine the way the bishop sets up his work as a debate with pagan philosophers concerning the attainment of happiness. Cicero and Porphyry, the most potent interlocutors, are considered representatives of pagan pursuits of socio-political and contemplative happiness.²¹ The chapter will argue that the work is best read as a grand, coherent eudaemonistic argument that the Christian faith is the sole way to happiness both on the socio-political and spiritual-contemplative levels.²² The last section of the chapter will provide a eudaemonistic reading of the *City of God*. This will enable us to view seeming "digressions" as serving Augustine's eudaemonistic argument.

²⁰ Cf. Augustine was very scrupulous in editing his works. For example, he stopped writing *The Trinity* (*De trinitate*) for ten years due to a pirated publication of his manuscript before satisfactory revision (*ep.* 174; *retr.* 2.15). His letter to Marcellinus (*ep.* 143) shows that Augustine was grappling with revisioning of the first three books of the *City of God*. Given his frequent reminders of the structure within the work, and the record of his careful revision make it hard to accept the idea that the bishop crafted his texts without an overarching argument or penetrating theme.

²¹ Both of these pagan philosophers inherited Plato's thought in different ways. Cicero reinterpreted the Platonic political thought in his Roman context while Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Porphyry developed the contemplative philosophy of Plato. Augustine responds to these two interpretations of Plato.

²² In fact, van Oort rightly observed that the *City of God* "can be regarded as a comprehensive exposition on true happiness and true blessedness." Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 195. Nevertheless, he does not elaborate this idea.

Eudaemonistic Structure for Evangelistic Purpose

Augustine consistently followed a clear eudaemonistic structure in the *City of God*: at the end or beginning of each of the five major sections (books 1-5, 6-10, 11-13, 14-17, 18-22), he summarized his argument or previewed what he was going to do in the next section.²³ While he is criticized for excessive digressions, he never lost a sense of direction. It seems that for the bishop the fivefold structure of the *City of God* served well the purpose of the work. This suggests that if we understand the purpose of the work correctly, then we would be able to find an overarching argument which governs the five sections as a coherent whole. The best place to find the purpose of the *City of God* is Augustine's own statements concerning the work. In this respect, Augustine's letter to Firmus stands out among the internal and external evidences concerning the structure of the work.

Soon after the completion of the *City of God* in 426, the bishop sent a copy of entire work to Firmus in Carthage. Since no one in Carthage had yet seen the complete work, Firmus was going to be the first Carthaginian reader of the complete *City of God*.²⁴ The bishop was well aware that his voluminous work would be daunting for any reader. For the sake of the very first reader, the bishop took great care of writing a letter as an introduction to the work in order to show Firmus how to read the *City of God*. The bishop summarized five sections with brief explanation. But, at the same time, Augustine must

²³ *civ. dei.* 1.36; 2.2; 3.1; 4.1-2; 6.praef-1; 7.praef.; 10.32; 11.1; 12.1; 14.1; 18.1; 19.1; 20.30; 22.1.

²⁴ *ep.* 1*A.2.

have taken future readers into his consideration as well; according to the letter, he knew that there were people around Firmus who were interested in the *City of God*.²⁵

On a practical level the fivefold division of the work can be seen as an advice for book binding; in Augustine's time it was technically impossible to make the entire 22 book in one single volume. Nevertheless, it seems that what Augustine truly wanted was that Firmus would understand the main argument of the work. What he presents concerning the division of the work in the letter is in fact not so much a summary of the structure as a summary of main arguments of the *City of God*. The first two sections are to refute two pagan pursuits of earthly and eternal happiness through worshipping gods, and the other three sections are to defend the Christian religion by showing origin, development, and end of the city of God.²⁶

At the same time, Augustine reveals his hope to see Firmus "bear fruits" through reading the work. But, what kind of fruits did the bishop want to see? In his second letter, Augustine rebukes Firmus for remaining a catechumen while delaying baptism. What he hoped for in the first letter was that Firmus would choose baptism as he read the *City of God*. He makes very clear of the intended fruits of his work:

For in excusing yourself in your second letter from receiving the sacrament of rebirth, you are rejecting the whole fruit of so many books that you love. For their fruits does not consist in delighting the reader or in making someone know many facts that he does not know but in persuading a person either to enter the city of God without hesitation or to remain there with perseverance. The first of these is

²⁵ As he intended, the letter to Firmus (*ep. 1A**) often served as an introduction to the *City of God* in medieval times. Both manuscripts of Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève of Paris and the Bibliothèque Municipale of Reims put the letter as a prologue to the *City of God*. The transcriber or editor of those manuscripts must have considered the letter a reading guide to the work.

²⁶ *ep. 1*A.1*. In this letter Augustine describes the last twelve books as history of the City of God, not of the two Cities. Probably to show clear contrast between refutation and defense.

obtained by rebirth, the second by a love for righteousness. If these books do not produce this in those who read and praise them, what do they accomplish?²⁷

As found in this statement, the bishop knew that there were those who read the work with different purposes, and that is the reason why Augustine told Firmus not to distribute the work to many but only to a few to whom the purpose of the *City of God* could be fulfilled.²⁸ Augustine's purpose of writing those 22 books is twofold: (1) for Christians, it is to nurture their love for the justice of God; (2) for non-Christians, it is to lead them to regeneration.²⁹

As we have discussed the previous chapter, Firmus inhabited a “gray area” wavering between hostile pagans and devout Christians. He was in the church, yet could not be considered to be enjoying full citizenship of the city of God. Augustine's purpose of the *City of God* is to enable Firmus to enter this Heavenly City. But, how? The bishop stated in his first letter:

Do not give them [the 22 books of the *City of God*] to many, but to just one or two persons, and they will give [them] to others. Certainly you should see how you give [them] to your friends whether they, who are Christians, want to be

²⁷ *ep. 2*.3* (CSEL 88.10-11): *Nam quod in alia tua epistola te ab accipiendo sacramento regenerationis excusas, totum tot librorum quos amas fructum recusas; neque enim ille fructus est eorum, quod delectant legentem, nec ille, quod multa faciunt scire nescientem, sed ille, quod ciuitatem dei persuadent uel incunctanter intrandam uel perseueranter habitandam; quorum duorum primum regeneratione, secundum iustitiae dilectione confertur. Haec in eis a quibus leguntur atque laudantur si non agunt, quid agunt? Horum igitur quantum ad te ipsum attinet, quando nec illud quod prius est in te agere potuerunt, quantumlibet eos praedices, nihil adhuc egerunt.*

²⁸ On the publication and circulation of the Christian writings in the fourth and fifth centuries, see Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 132–43; van der Valk, “On the Edition of Books in Antiquity.” Cf. Frederic G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951).

²⁹ *ep. 2*.3*. Van Oort, “Augustine's Letters to Firmus and the Purpose of the De Civitate Dei.”

instructed or they are caught in some superstition from which they could be set free by the grace of God through our effort.³⁰

In other words, what Augustine intended was to be liberated from *superstition* by being instructed and persuaded by the *City of God*. Firmus was, therefore, a first target audience of the work, who needed to be freed from superstition because he did not fully subscribe to the Christian teachings and hesitated to be baptized.

How did Augustine seek to liberate this Roman intellectual from superstition and persuade him to become a full member of the city of God? What was his strategy? To answer this question, we need to revisit Augustine's explanations about the structure of the *City of God*. As we discussed, there are several internal and external sources concerning the structure. Although the fivefold structure is fairly straightforward and clear, a careful examination of these sources reveals that the attainment of happiness is an overarching theme which holds together the five sections of the *City of God* as a whole.

In the letter to Firmus (*ep.* 1A*), as we also find in his *Retractationes* (*Reconsiderations*),³¹ Augustine says that first ten books are a refutation of the pagan vanities, and part two is a presentation of and defense for the Christian faith.³² However, such characterization of the two parts is for convenience; the bishop continues to say that

³⁰ *ep.* 1A*.2 (CSEL 88.8): *Non enim multis dabis, sed uix uni uel duobus et ipsi iam ceteris dabunt; amicis uero tuis, siue in populo Christiano se desiderent instrui, siue qualibet superstitione teneantur, unde uidebuntur posse per hunc laborem nostrum dei gratia liberari, quomodo impertias ipse uideris.*

³¹ *retr.* 2.69.1-2 (CSEL 36.182): *his ergo decem libris duae istae vanae opiniones christianae religioni adversariae refelluntur. Sed ne quisquam nos aliena tantum redarguisse, non autem nostra asseruisse reprehenderet, id agit pars altera operis huius, quae libris duodecim continetur, quamquam.* All the sources show basically the same contents on its structure: the first part is divided into two sections of pagan pursuit of material and eternal happiness through worshipping gods (books 1-5 and 6-10), and the second part into three (books 11-14, 15-18, 19-22). In part two the bishop lays out three stages of the two Cities: their origins, development, and destined ends.

³² *ep.* 1A* (CSEL 88.7): *decem quippe illis uanitates refutatae sunt impiorum, reliquis autem demonstrata atque defensa est nostra religio.*

depending on the context he defended Christianity in the first ten books, and refuted pagan vanities in the remaining twelve books. In other words, *both* parts deal with the defense of the Christian religion and refutation of pagan pursuit of happiness. In fact, even though the last twelve books are called tripartite history of the two Cities, they are not simply a historical presentation of the two Cities. Rather, what the bishop actually does is to persuade his readers to accept the Christian faith and leave their previous superstition through historical argument which is highly theological as well.

Then, on what ground does Augustine defend the one and refute the other? If his purpose is to persuade wavering Roman intellectuals such as Firmus, he cannot simply preach the gospel; rather, he needs to persuade them by comparing Christianity and pagan philosophy/religion according to the same criteria. The bishop does *not* denounce pagan philosophy and religion simply because they are wrong. The reason for refutation is because they cannot bring true happiness. The way of refutation is to show that the worship of pagan gods produces happiness neither in earthly life nor in the life after death. Therefore, at the conclusion of the first ten books of the *City of God*, Augustine states:

The first five of the ten books are written against those who think that the gods are to be worshipped for the sake of the good of this life, whereas the latter five against those who consider that the cult of the gods should be kept up for the sake of the life after death.³³

In many places throughout the *City of God*, the bishop locates sign posts which give a brief summary of previous argument or of the argument he will make. No doubt, this is to give his readers a sense of direction. But, if Augustine's purpose is to persuade

³³ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.314): *Quorum decem librorum quinque superiores aduersus eos conscripti sunt, qui propter bona uitae huius deos colendos putant; quinque autem posteriores aduersus eos, qui cultum deorum propter uitam, quae post mortem futura est, seruandum existimant.*

and evangelize, the iteration of such statements is not simply to help the readers to understand the structure; rather, it is because that is the central argument by which the bishop seeks to free his readers from superstition. Superstition in this respect refers not so much to pagan gods themselves as to pagan idea that the worship of gods enhances happiness of their worshippers. By disproving this notion, Augustine seeks to free Roman intellectuals from the grip of pagan gods and lead them to the true God.

Augustine defends the Christian religion on the same ground. In *Reconsiderations*, Augustine refers to two pagan opinions about happiness as inimical to the Christian faith: “with these ten books, therefore, the two vain opinions against the Christian faith are refuted.”³⁴ Then, he says, part two is a presentation of “our own” (*nostra*) opinions about happiness.³⁵ This statement implies that the second part of the text is a logical extension of his eudaemonistic criticism of pagan pursuit of happiness in the first ten books; while the first ten books refute pagan claims that one should worship gods for the sake of earthly or eternal happiness, the second half of the work argues that one should worship the Christian God in order to attain true happiness. Therefore, both parts in fact serve the same eudaemonistic argument. Augustine makes this eudaemonistic argument very clear from the beginning of the *City of God*:

As we refuted the contrary ideas of the impious ... we may proclaim the City of God, and true piety and the true worship of God in which alone the genuine eternal bliss is promised.³⁶

³⁴ *retr.* 2.69.1 (CSEL 36.182): *his ergo decem libris duae istae vanae opinioniones christianae religioni adversariae refelluntur.*

³⁵ *retr.* 2.69.2 (CSEL 36.182): *Sed ne quisquam nos aliena tantum redarguisse, non autem nostra asseruisse reprehenderet, id agit pars altera operis huius, quae libris duodecim continetur, quamquam.*

³⁶ *civ. dei.* 1.36 (CCL 47.34): *refutatis impiis contradictionibus pro uiribus... asseramus civitatem Dei ueramque pietatem et Dei cultum, in quo uno ueraciter sempiterna beatitudo promittitur.*

Augustine characterized the first ten books as refutation and the last twelve books as defense. If a eudaemonistic argument continues to govern the last twelve books, then, the tripartite historical presentation of the two Cities should be seen as demonstration that the Christian faith is the true way to happiness. In fact, the last two books are concluded with the eternal damnation (=misery) of the Earthly City and the eternal happiness of the Heavenly City. As we discussed above, even in the second half of the work, the bishop had to refute pagan positions and their criticisms of the Christian faith. Then, why did Augustine choose such threefold presentation, origin-development-end, to prove that the worship of the Christian God brings the genuine happiness to His worshippers?

Augustine's choice can be explained within his close engagement with Cicero and Porphyry as we will discuss below. These two pagan philosophers are the main architects of socio-political and contemplative happiness in the minds of Roman intellectuals. To destroy such "false" happiness, the bishop needed to respond to their criticisms and demonstrate that the Christian way is superior to theirs even in their philosophical framework. For example, at the end of the book 10, the bishop deals with Porphyrian criticism that Christianity cannot be a true way to happiness because it appeared late in human history—antiquity being an important quality for religious authority. Augustine had to demonstrate that the Christian way has been revealed throughout history by narrating the origin, progress, and end of the Christian way.

At the same time, he must have had Cicero's historical argument for Roman commonwealth. In book 2 of his *On the Commonwealth*, Cicero proves the perfection of Roman commonwealth by presenting "historical" record of the founders of Rome. To put it very briefly, Roman commonwealth can bring happiness because it is founded by just

and pious founders and has been developed and examined throughout history. In order to refute such political claim based on historical argument, the bishop also needed to show the justice and piety of the Heavenly commonwealth throughout history while debunking pagan superstition by historical argument.

In sum, Augustine's choice of the tripartite presentation of the two Cities originates from the need to refute pagan criticisms and positions as well as to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian way to pagan ways. While we will see further investigation in the following two chapters on Augustine's engagement with Cicero and Porphyry, let us turn to these architects of pagan pursuit of happiness.

Leaders of the Earthly City

Among apologists prior to Augustine it had not been unusual to present Christianity as one among these philosophies. The Christian faith had been compared with philosophy in pagan terms. From the outset of the work, Augustine squarely states that his intention is to debate with the most eminent philosophers (1.36). As he contrasts the two Cities, the bishop focuses on the leaders of the two Cities, philosophers of the Earthly City and prophets of the Heavenly City. He identifies philosophers as the Earthly City's "powerful" (*potentes*)³⁷ "leaders" (*principes*),³⁸ and, therefore, as the opponents to prophets in the Scripture (18.28ff). Augustine even presents the biblical prophets as the "philosophers" of the Heavenly Commonwealth.³⁹ In these comparisons, the Christian

³⁷ *civ. dei.* 14.28.

³⁸ *civ. dei.* 17.20.

³⁹ *civ. dei.* 18.41 (CCL 48.637): *Ipsi eis erant philosophi, hoc est amatores sapientiae, ipsi sapientes, ipsi theologi, ipsi prophetae, ipsi doctores probitatis atque pietatis.*

faith was presented as the true philosophy. To understand the contrast Augustine wished to make between philosophy and faith, we need to examine the office of biblical prophets, as opposed to philosophers, in Augustine's mind.

First of all, Augustine views the prophets as mouthpieces of God.⁴⁰ They are the messengers who deliver God's word. Their messages all come from the same truth, and there is no disharmony or conflict among them. Second, the biblical prophets are called to preach the universal way of salvation to all nations and to all people. Augustine states that prophets taught the universal way of salvation which philosophers have failed to find (10.32). In Augustine's exegesis, the message of the biblical prophets is not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles in its spiritual sense.⁴¹ Third, their messages are not just words, but have been fulfilled in history through divine power (9.4; 20.30; 22.5).

In the *City of God*, Augustine presents pagan philosophers as the counterparts of the biblical prophets.⁴² Philosophers are the representatives and messengers of the Earthly City.⁴³ Compared to the biblical prophets, the teachings of pagan philosophers lack harmony. According to Varro, there are 288 different philosophical schools competing with one another (19.2). This disharmony indicates that philosophers' teachings are not

⁴⁰ *en. Ps.* 66.13.

⁴¹ The most illuminating example is Jonah. Augustine points out that Jonah's disobedience prefigured that of carnal Israelites who would also refuse to preach to the Gentiles. *ep.* 102.35.

⁴² As discussed in chap. 2 this competition was also instantiated in Augustine's real life as bishop. Augustine often had to respond various doubts and criticisms about Christianity, and often these criticisms were found to be anchored in philosophical teachings.

⁴³ This remains true, even when pagan prophecies are taken into account. Henry Chadwick, "Oracles of the End in the Conflict of Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century," in *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière: Antiquité Païenne et Chrétienne*, ed. Enzo Lucchesi and H. D. Saffrey (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1984), 125–29. Porphyry was also deeply interested in the integration between philosophy and prophecy. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 102–45. Augustine also uses pagan prophecies such as Vergil's Eclogue (*civ. dei.* 18.19) and the Sibylline oracle (18.23) in order to prove the divine providence for Christ's Incarnation and salvation. See also 18.46.

the universal way for all. Most philosophies, furthermore, are for intellectuals and the educated. Above all, the teachings of philosophy have no real power; they are mere human arguments (20.30) without miracles (18.45; 22.5).⁴⁴

By contrasting the leaders of the two Cities, pagan philosophers and biblical prophets, Augustine in fact compares two ways of happiness.⁴⁵ Concerning the attainment of happiness, pagan philosophical teachings exerted considerable influence on Augustine's contemporaries. For instance, as he launches into his actual engagement with the Platonists in the *City of God*, he elucidates the following goal:

Most earnestly I am laboring to root out and extirpate the perverted and long-lasting opinions, which are hostile to the truth of the pious; the opinions which a deep and tenaciously long-held error of mankind have implanted in the darkened minds.⁴⁶

Augustine refers to these long-lasting "errors" in pagan philosophical teachings concerning the attainment of happiness. Pagan opinions about happiness are deeply rooted in the Platonic philosophy.

As we discussed in chapter one, the idea of happiness in Plato's philosophy was divided according to their socio-political and spiritual-contemplative emphases; two aspects are represented by the philosophies of Cicero and Porphyry.⁴⁷ Their teachings defined what happiness is and how it can be achieved. In Cicero and Porphyry, Augustine

⁴⁴ Augustine states that the divine power speaks by actions as well as by words. *ep.* 102.33.

⁴⁵ See van Oort's discussion of the idea of two ways in the early Christianity and the influence on Augustine, especially in a catechetical context. Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 327–34.

⁴⁶ *civ. dei.* 7. pref (CCL 47.184): *Diligentius me prauas et ueteres opiniones ueritati pietatis inimicas, quas tenebrosis animis altius et tenacius diuturnus humani generis error infixit, euellere atque extirpare conantem.*

⁴⁷ For more on specific scholarly discussions of Augustine's engagement with these philosophers, see the next two chapters.

sees the two different aspects of pagan philosophy's pursuit of happiness: socio-political and spiritual-contemplative emphasis, respectively. Thus, he engages with these two messengers of the Earthly City at two different levels. However, Augustine also integrates the two dimensions within his eudaemonistic argument, because he recognizes that social and spiritual happiness are one, found only in Christ.⁴⁸ Philosophers attempt to create happiness in the middle of misery of the world (19.1). According to Augustine, it is primarily a personal quest, but at the same time they claim that happy life is social (19.3).⁴⁹

Thus, although, Cicero, Porphyry and Christianity each approach happiness differently, the overarching argument of the *City of God* is a contest between just two conflicting ways to happiness: that of Christianity and the shared way of all pagan philosophy. This contest culminates at Augustine's engagement with Cicero and Porphyry. The purpose of Augustine's argument is to disprove the teachings of the "prophets" of the Earthly City and to offer the truth of the prophets as an alternative.

The effectiveness of his philosophical engagement, however, is not limited to a refutation of the philosophical way and proof of the truthfulness of the Christian faith; rather, it is designed to persuade educated Romans to listen to the teachings of the

⁴⁸ On such integration, see an excellent essay by Rowan Williams, "Politics and the Soul: Reading the 'City of God,'" *Milltown Studies* 19/20 (1987): 55–72. Both Cicero and Augustine think that "there is interaction, and mutual interdependence, between social traditions and good citizens" because "individuals are the product of, and conserve, institutions." O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 89n26.

⁴⁹ Although Augustine uses the concept *polis/civitas*, he does not refer to the "political" in the usual technical sense. Rather, it is figurative reference to the two groups of people who are separated according to their worship and love of God (*civ. dei.* 15.1). Augustine points out that while Cain founded a city, Abel instead remained a pilgrim. Likewise, In contrast to the Earthly City, the Heavenly City, i.e., the citizens of the Heaven, is on pilgrimage in this world (15.2). Cf. Concerning Augustine's political project and subversion of classical politics, see Williams, "Politics and the Soul: Reading the 'City of God'"; Fortin, "Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine."

prophets of the Heavenly City so that they can actually find the true way to happiness on both the political and spiritual levels. Thus, the goal of his eudaemonistic argument is the conversion of the “hidden citizens of God among the enemies” (1.36).⁵⁰ The bishop exhorts: “To this country we invite you [people of Rome] and exhort to add yourself to the number of its citizens.”⁵¹

In our analysis of the eudaemonistic structure of the *City of God* below, we will stick to the formal structure that Augustine lays out. Our goal, however, is to demonstrate that all the apparent divisions seen in the *City of God* are coherent when they are seen as a eudaemonistic argument made against the prophets of the Earthly City at both the political and contemplative levels.⁵²

Part One: Refuting the Pagan Pursuit of Happiness

The purpose of this structural analysis is to unveil the happiness argument which penetrates the *City of God*. The analysis will show that apparent “digressions” within the work are not departures from the topic of eudaemonism, which Augustine himself promised the text is designed to explore, and that concern for happiness holds many topics and issues together so that the work as a whole exhibits a high level of consistency

⁵⁰ Also, the *City of God* intends to nurture the love of justice (*ep.* 2*.3). On scholarly discussions of the protreptic nature of the *City of God*, see Barnes, “Aspects of the Background of the ‘City of God,’” 80; O’Donnell, *Augustine*, 59–60; Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Allan Fitzgerald, eds., *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine’s “City of God”* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University, 1999), 19n42. Also see, Dodaro, “Ciuitas dei (De-).” *Aug. Lex.* 977ff.

⁵¹ *civ. dei.* 2.29 (CCL 47.64): *Ad quam patriam te inuitamus et exhortamur, ut eius adiciaris numero ciuium.*

⁵² On Augustine’s inheritance of Western apologetic tradition, see Courcelle, “Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: From Arnobius to St. Ambrose”; Thomas, *Defending Christ*.

and coherence.⁵³ It will also suggest that the *City of God* is structured to show that the Christian faith is the sole true way to happiness, while the philosophical way is a false alternative. In other words, it is a colossal eudaemonistic argument in defense for and promotion of the Christian faith against pagan philosophy. This structural analysis will follow Augustine's own division, yet demonstrate how each division ultimately serves the evangelistic purpose of the *City of God*.

Books 1-5: Pursuit of Material Happiness

Augustine structured the first ten books of the *City of God* in order to refute two kinds of pagan pursuits of happiness: material and eternal happiness.⁵⁴ The main argument in the first five books is to disprove Roman belief that the worship of the gods will bring material happiness. Augustine chooses the Ciceronian political thought as a main target of his refutation because he considers Cicero's political philosophy the most sophisticated form of the pursuit of material happiness.⁵⁵ According to Cicero, the Roman commonwealth is the best form of state and, therefore, brings happiness to its people more than any other forms of commonwealth.⁵⁶ Justice and piety are the very foundations

⁵³ Cf. H. Marrou confessed that it is extremely difficult to summarize *the City of God*. Marrou, "La division en chapitres des livres de 'La Cité de Dieu,'" 264.

⁵⁴ *ep. 1A*.1. civ. dei. 10.32.*

⁵⁵ O'Meara sees Varro as Augustine's main interlocutor in books 1-5. O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom*, 31-4. Augustine uses Varro's encyclopedic knowledge and categories, and Varro serves as a common authority on which Augustine and his pagan opponents rely. Augustine's real target in books 1-5, however, is Cicero whose thought establishes a foundation for the threat and challenges to the Christian faith as we have discussed in chap. two.

⁵⁶ The first book of *De republica* claims that on a theoretical level that the Roman mixed constitution is the best form (*rep. 1.33*), then book 2 argues that it is the best actual form because it existed in history. James E. G. Zetzel, *De Re Publica: Selections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 13-29.

of the Roman commonwealth, and, therefore, the happiness of the Roman people is rooted in these two virtues.⁵⁷

Cicero's thought was deeply ingrained in Roman intellectual minds. For example, when the controversy over the Altar of Victory broke out,⁵⁸ Symmachus, who was called the "keeper of Cicero's shrine,"⁵⁹ argued in favor of worshipping traditional Roman gods because the prosperity of the commonwealth, as he learned from Cicero, was dependent on *pietas* towards the traditional Roman gods.⁶⁰ Given this intellectual milieu, it is not surprising that Augustine embarks on a serious philosophical engagement with Cicero. From book 2 the bishop criticizes the very foundations of Ciceronian commonwealth: piety and justice. Do pagan philosophers teach "ways of piety and justice" in a true sense? (2.7).

⁵⁷ Cicero, *nat. d.* 1.2.3-4. See also Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 41. "He [Cicero] was convinced that sentiment like loyalty and justice (*pietas et iustitia*), upon which the life of organized society depends, had their ultimate basis in religion and that they could survive only if this fact were recognized."

⁵⁸ The Altar of Victory was a major political symbol for Rome's success and power. It had been set up in the senate house in 29 B.C. by Augustus. The Altar was a place on which "oaths, including the customary oath of loyalty to an emperor on his accession, were taken." Croke and Harries, *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome*, 28-30. In 382, however, it, the altar not the statue, was removed by the order of the emperor Gratian. This invited the controversy led by Symmachus. Ambrose, who had influenced Gratian, opposed to Symmachus' petition for the restoration of the altar and wrote letter to Valentinian II (*ep.* 17-18). For the documents of this controversy, see *Ibid.*, 30-51.

⁵⁹ Macrobius, *sat.* 2.3.1. See Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 272.

⁶⁰ Symmachus, *rel.* 3.15: "Let no one imagine I am pleading the cause only of religion; it is from acts of the kind I have described that all the disasters to the Roman race have arisen. The law of our fathers had honored the Vestal Virgins and the servants of the gods by granting them means for a moderate livelihood and reasonable privileges." Reginald H. Barrow, trans., *Prefect and Emperor: The Relations of Symmachus, A.D. 384* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 43-5. Symmachus' plea expresses the linkage between the traditional religion and pride in the glorious history of Rome. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 2:940.

The bishop uses the Ciceronian definition of justice to demonstrate that the Roman commonwealth is neither just nor pious. According to Cicero's definition,⁶¹ justice is to give each his due. The Roman Empire does not pay due piety to the true God; rather, their gods are demons who promote corruption instead of virtues (2.16).⁶² Contrary to Cicero's own assessment, therefore, the Roman commonwealth was an unjust regime from the outset. Given lack of justice and piety in the Roman commonwealth, Augustine argues that there has never, in fact, been a true commonwealth in Roman history (2.21). The Ciceronian way to political happiness is disproved.

To strengthen his claim, the bishop looks at Roman history. To contrast Cicero's pride in the Roman commonwealth, Augustine points out, the Republic was fraught with immorality and unhappiness, not to mention disasters, under her gods. As Sallust witnesses, even before Christ Rome suffered from moral degradation and injustice, which resulted from her "ambition for victory" (*amore uincendi*).⁶³ The entirety of book 3 is devoted to sketching the misery of the Republic: wars, civil strife, disasters (3.23).⁶⁴ As Sallust narrates, the origin and the prosperity of the Republic were marred by impiety and injustice, and Rome had to suffer consequent misery throughout its long history (3.17).⁶⁵

⁶¹ Cicero's definition of justice is drawn from that of Aristotle.

⁶² Ernest Fortin, "Augustine and Roman Civil Religion: Some Critical Reflections," *Études Augustiniennes* 26 (1980): 238–56.

⁶³ *civ. dei.* 2.17.

⁶⁴ Augustine characterizes this period as "grandeur of the empire and its unhappy life." *civ. dei.* 4.3. For Augustine's summary of books 2 and 3, see *civ. dei.* 4.2.

⁶⁵ Cf. Ernest Fortin, "Justice as the Foundation of the Political Community: Augustine and his Pagan Models," in *Augustinus: De civitate dei*, ed. Christoph Horn (Berlin: Der Akademie Verlag, 1997), 41–62.

What, then, about the growth of the Roman Empire? Is that not a sign of happiness? Augustine claims that this growth only seems to make people happy (5.praef.). It is not reasonable, Augustine argues, to boast of the achievement of the Empire when the people passed their lives amid the horror of wars (4.3). His point is twofold: First, the victory and prosperity the Republic had achieved did not bring happiness to its people (4.3), nor was it obtained through justice (4.15); a kingdom without justice is like a band of gangsters (4.3). Second, earthly blessings are gifts of God; they cannot come from Roman gods who are proved to be unclean spirits (4.34). After making these two points, the bishop urges his readers to turn to God, the true giver of happiness (4.25); a “better dominion” is to be found not by violence, but by worshipping the one true God (4.28).

In book 5, his case against the Ciceronian political pursuit of happiness becomes stronger. The problem of the Roman pursuit of happiness is that glory precedes virtue, especially justice (5.22). Although Cicero knew the evil nature of greed, he used greed for glory for the sake of commonwealth (5.13). Rome’s greed for glory, the bishop argues, should be overcome by the love of justice (5.14)! Augustine’s point becomes clear when he contrasts Roman heroes and Christian martyrs; both of them show loyalty to their own countries, i.e., Rome and the Kingdom of God, and represent the happiness and reward of each.

Augustine concludes the first five books that that worship of false gods is of no help to attaining temporal happiness because of the absence of justice and piety it implies (5.20). In contrast with Roman heroic kings such as Romulus, who was considered a “just” king, and Numa, who established Roman way of piety, the bishop presents two Christian emperors – Constantine and Theodosius – who established their regime on a right basis;

they worshipped the true God with the desire for eternal blessedness, offered humility, compassion and prayer as sacrifice for their sins, and consequently were justified by Christ (5.24).⁶⁶ Emperors who seek the justice of God are happy because they are just (5.24-26). Ironically, it is within this Christian alternative where the Ciceronian goal of founding a happy commonwealth through its just and pious ruler(s) is achieved, if in an imperfect, earthly way. The illusion of the Ciceronian political ideology among the educated Roman is thus refuted in Augustine's eudaemonistic argument.

Books 6-10: Pursuit of Eternal Happiness

Books 6-10 argue that happiness in the life after death cannot be achieved by worshipping false gods. In book 6, the bishop lays out the division of theology according to Varro's opinion (6.5): Mythical (for the theater), Civic (for the city), and Natural (for the world). While Augustine does not discuss mythical theology much in books 6-10, perhaps because the first five books already discuss it, civic and natural theologies receive serious attention and criticism from the bishop.⁶⁷ The bishop argues that none of the three theologies and their gods can give eternal felicity, and that the Christian God is the true source of happiness (7 praef.).

Most of book 7 is devoted to an assault on the gods of civil theology (7.4-28). The bishop establishes true piety due to the true God (7.29-33). Then, by using pagan authorities, he proves that the book of King Numa Pompilius the founder of Roman rites

⁶⁶ For detailed discussions on this subject, see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 191, 192n47. Augustine presents two Christian emperors as penitent, just, and therefore happy (*civ. dei.* 5.24, 26). Cf. Plato, *rep.* 583a; 427e.

⁶⁷ Part one can be said to be structured according to the Varronian division in order to produce a comprehensive refutation against Roman theology as a whole.

is demonic and dangerous; it was strictly banned and burnt because of its contents (7.34-5). For Augustine, this implies that the Roman gods are demons and unclean spirits and they cannot bring material or spiritual happiness (or salvation) to their worshippers (7.27). Therefore, the true God alone can bring happiness to the soul who worships Him.

In books 8-10 Augustine engages with the natural theology of the Platonists concerning the “question about the life of happiness” (10.1). There seem to be two reasons for Augustine to choose to engage with Platonism. First, for Augustine, Platonism was superior to any other philosophies in the pursuit of happiness and the nearest one to the Christian faith (8.5-12).⁶⁸ Its goal was happiness (8.3), and it taught that the true happiness was the participation in and enjoyment of God (8.5). Second, Platonism exerted considerable influence on the educated Romans, with the works of the Platonists widely known and read at the time (8.10). Precisely because of its similarity to Christianity, Platonism was one of the most challenging opponents to the church.

The bishop strategically fights Platonism within its own eudaemonistic framework. According to Plato, “the wise man is an imitator, knower, and lover of this God; he is happy by participation in this God.”⁶⁹ The common standard is: which one between Christianity or and Platonism can provide purification and a mediator in order to participate in God, whereby to reach supreme happiness.

In Platonism, one needs to be *purified* from the filth of the body in order to participate in the divine and achieve eternal happiness. Michael B. Simmons argues that

⁶⁸ In fact,, the bishop finds similarities between his religion and Platonism; the Platonists agree that there is one supreme God who created the whole world (*civ. dei.* 8.10). Also, they have arrived at two fundamental concepts of God: immutability and simplicity (8.6).

⁶⁹ *civ. dei.* 8.5 (CCL 47.221): *Plato Dei huius imitatore cognitorem amatorem dixit esse sapientem, cuius participatione sit beatus.*

in Porphyrian soteriology there are three routes for purifying the soul depending on the participant's philosophical training, though they are not considered equal:⁷⁰ (1) For the uneducated, by performing theurgy and traditional polytheistic worship.⁷¹ (2) For novice philosophers, by achieving "purificatory virtues."⁷² (3) For Neoplatonic philosophers, by living the intellectual life.

Augustine argues that the Platonic way of happiness cannot make one happy. He begins by dealing with the worship of demons and practice of theurgy. (The other two methods are discussed in books 19-22). Augustine first refutes the Platonic idea of demons as mediators (8.13-24). Then, in book 9, he engages in a comprehensive attack on Platonist demonology. Demons cannot be mediators because they are in fact in misery due to their own malice (9.23). Instead, Jesus Christ is the only true mediator (9.23), and it is in him alone that we can participate in and attain eternal felicity (9.15).⁷³

Theurgy is also subject to the bishop's criticism; it is an imposture of malignant spirits (10.10). According to Porphyry's letter to the Egyptian priest Anebo, Augustine claims, even Porphyry admitted the incapacity of theurgy to purify the soul (10.11). He

⁷⁰ Simmons finds the Porphyrian tripartite way within Augustine's criticism of the philosopher. Simmons, "Porphyrian Universalism," 171-6, especially 185. To the contrary, Gillian Clark argues that Porphyry's teaching was for the elites, not for all: Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation." While Simmons trusts Augustine's presentation of Porphyry's philosophy, Clark argues that the bishop manipulates Porphyry's thought for his own polemical purpose.

⁷¹ On the Neoplatonic theurgy which is a magical techniques to contact the divine, see E. R. Dodds, "Theurgy and Its Relationship to Neoplatonism," *Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947): 55-69; Andrew Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition: A Study in Post-Plotinian Neoplatonism* (Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1974), 122-44; Gregory Shaw, "Theurgy: Rituals of Unification in the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus," *Traditio* 41 (1985): 1-28; Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 124-6.

⁷² Simmons, "Porphyrian Universalism," 176-7.

⁷³ On Christ as mediator, Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 94-104.

solemnly rebukes Porphyry: “you sent men on the most certainly erroneous path.”⁷⁴

Augustine’s conclusion is clear: All seemingly good principles in Porphyry’s thought lead to delusive happiness or genuine misery (10.28).⁷⁵ Also, Augustine points out that Platonic teachings have logical defects to foil the attainment of happiness. For instance, the Platonic doctrine of transmigration of the soul and the view of eternal alternation of history perpetuate the misery and cannot guarantee secure happiness (10.30).

The target audience of the bishop is those who subscribe to the Porphyrian philosophy as he reveals (10.29). Along with his criticisms of Porphyry and Platonists, the bishop shows that Christianity will bring what Porphyry himself desires to attain. Christian miracles bear witness to the true God (10.16). Christ is the one true principle which purifies the soul, as in Porphyry’s teaching (10.23-24), as well as the true sacrifice and the mediator between men and the One (10.20). At the same time, the bishop removes rational objections to the Christian doctrines of incarnation and resurrection.

The whole discussion of happiness in books 6-10 is consummated at Augustine’s debate with Porphyry concerning the universal way for liberation of the soul. While Porphyry painfully admits that he could not find the way in his own study of history, the bishop proclaims that Christ is the universal way:

Hence, long afterward as he took the flesh from the seed of Abraham, the very Savior said of himself: *I am the way, the truth, and the life*. This is the universal way of which it had been prophesied so long before.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *civ. dei.* 10.28(CCL 47.303): *Mittis ergo homines in errorem certissimum.*

⁷⁵ On Augustine’s engagement with Porphyry in book 10, see John J. O’Meara, *Porphyry’s “Philosophy from Oracles” in Augustine* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1959), 97–148.

⁷⁶ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.311): *Vnde tanto post ex Abrahae semine carne suscepta de se ipso ait ipse Salvator: Ego sum uia, ueritas et uita. Haec est uniuersalis uia, de qua tanto ante prophetatum est.*

Through Christ, all elements of the human being may be purified, including the body, and those who are purified will see God. The Neoplatonic goal of seeing the One is thus achieved only through Christ.⁷⁷ The beatitude Porphyry desired yet did not know what exactly was is reached and perfected by clinging to Christ the Son of God (10.3).⁷⁸

Augustine proclaimed in the first book: “in this [the City of God] alone the genuine everlasting beatitude is promised” (1.36).⁷⁹ The conclusion of the first ten books corresponds to that proclamation: All men desire happiness (10.1), and Christ is the way to the true happiness: “this is the right way which leads to vision of God” (10.32).⁸⁰

Part Two: Christ the Universal Way to Happiness

At the end of the first ten books, Augustine claimed that Christ is the universal way which Porphyry has failed to find. If the Christian faith were the universal way, the Platonists were known to ask: Why did it appear in the world so late?⁸¹ It should have been known from ancient times. The Christian faith had often been criticized for its

⁷⁷ Augustine also views the vision of God as the ultimate goal of the Christian faith. In his exegesis of Jacob’s wrestling with God (Gen 32), he presents the vision of God as the apex of Christian beatitude (*civ. dei.* 16.39). Concerning the vision of God in Augustine’s thought, see chap. 5.

⁷⁸ In Neoplatonism, virtue is a means to purify the body and the soul, and human capacity for purification and vision of the One is not doubted. Plotinus is “very positive about our capacity to rise to the level of Intellect by our own efforts and without the sort of divine help...” This view was shared by Porphyry and Theodorus of Asine, but vigorously rejected by Iamblichus and Proclus.” Smith, *Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, 67. On the Neoplatonic purification, see *Ibid.*, chp 5. Within the self there must be the principle and cause and god of Intellect. Plotinus, *enn.* 5.1.11.7-15. Plotinus considered virtue a means for the ascent of the mind to the One. *Ibid.*, *enn.* 1.6.7.1-6. Cf. Plato, *Phaed.* 69b-c.

⁷⁹ *civ. dei.* 1.36 (CCL 47.34): *in quo uno ueraciter sempiterna beatitudo promittitur.*

⁸⁰ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.313): *Huius uiae rectitudinem usque ad Deum uidendum.* Also, see a similar exhortation in 2.29. concerning the bishop’s view of Christ as the Way, see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 72n1.

⁸¹ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.311): *Quare modo? et: Quare sero?* The same question is found in *ep.* 102.8-15 (in 409); *praed. sanct.* 9.17-18 (in 428).

novelty. Following a traditional apologetic strategy, Augustine points out the lineage of Christianity within Judaism. For even pagans, who were hostile to Judaism, admitted the antiquity of Jewish religion and tradition. Porphyry himself had an especially great respect for the history of Judaism.⁸² In this respect, part two (books 11-22) may be seen as Augustine's further extrapolation of what he had already answered at the end of part one. He argued for the Christianity as the universal way by proving its antiquity: the origin, the development, and the end of the Heavenly City which the angels and prophets in the Old Testament preached to be the way of happiness to the Hebrew people.⁸³

The goal of the threefold structure of the last twelve books is to show that this universal way of the Christian faith has been revealed throughout history (from the origin of each city to the end of both), and that it will lead us to the true happiness.⁸⁴ At the same time, if this way is the truly universal way, it should be proven not just for a certain nation or ethnic group but for all nations, including the Gentiles (10.32). In this light, part two is supposed to show that the Christian faith has been calling the Gentiles and has spread out among them throughout history.

Augustine defines his task for the rest of the *City of God* as discussion of the origin, development, and destiny of the Earthly and the Heavenly Cities (11.1). While the

⁸² Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 273–82.

⁸³ *civ. dei*. 10.32 (CCL 47.312): *Haec est igitur universalis animae liberandae uia, quam sancti angeli sanctique prophetae prius in paucis hominibus ubi potuerunt dei gratiam reperientibus et maxime in Hebraea gente.*

⁸⁴ Concerning the tripartite structure of part two, scholars often rely on knowledge of ancient rhetorical devices without considering its connection with part one. For example, see Basil Studer, "Zm Aufbau von Augustins 'De Civitate dei,'" *Augustiniana* 41 (1991): 947. Although Augustine divided the work into refutation (books 1-10) and demonstration (books 11-22), as Augustine himself states, refutation and demonstration overlap each other (*retr.* 2.69). In fact, from Augustine's eudaemonistic perspective, part two continues and completes what part one argues. "Beneath the structural edifice, more subtle connections [between part one and two] are discernible." O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 135.

two Cities refer to two groups of people, they also signify two contrasting ways of life: one leads to the true happiness, the other to genuine misery and unhappiness.⁸⁵

Books 11-14: the Origin

Under the title “the origin of the two Cities” Augustine sharply contrasts the Christian and Platonic views concerning the origin of the world because the philosophical pursuit of happiness is revealed to be grounded in a given metaphysics. At the beginning of book 11, the bishop engages with a series of metaphysical issues such as the goodness of creation, the eternity of the universe (11.5-8), angels and devils, and beauty and evil in the world. Van Oort reads these topics as “extensive excursus.”⁸⁶ However, we need to remember that Augustine criticizes Plato for writing to be read rather than to persuade.⁸⁷ Augustine’s purpose of bringing up metaphysical issues is not for mere intellectual discussion but for persuasion and conversion. For such purpose, he invalidates the metaphysical foundation of the Platonic way of happiness. Each issue is examined in terms of happiness, and Augustine shows that the prophets (i.e., pagan philosophers) of the Earthly City lead its citizens to misery and unhappiness by their teachings.

As an alternative and true view of reality, the bishop highlights the idea of God’s good creation. Augustine claims that if we carefully consider the goodness of creation, which is from the goodness of God, the questions about the origin of the world will be

⁸⁵ Concerning “way” in Augustine’s thought: Michael Cameron, “Christological Substructure of Augustine’s Figurative Exegesis,” in *Augustine and the Bible*, ed. Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 93, 102n38. See also *conf.* 7.18.24: Augustine claims that one should embrace Christ as Mediator in order to enjoy God.

⁸⁶ Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 67.

⁸⁷ *ver. rel.* 2.2.

brought to an end (11.22).⁸⁸ Since God is good, the world as His good creation holds beauty and goodness which rely on the Creator. The dependent status of creatures is shown by the example of the angels; even angels in the Heavenly City attain perfect felicity only within the Trinity (11.29). They receive justice (righteousness) from God by their will, which is reverently subjected to Him (11.13). Their happiness, like ours, is from God alone (11.24):

To a rational or intellectual creature there is no good by which it would be happy except God. And so ...those [creatures] which are capable of it [felicity] can do it not by themselves, being created out of nothing, but by him who created them. In attaining this [good] they are happy; in losing it they are miserable.⁸⁹

The ethical conclusion of our status as creatures is that we should cling to God in order to attain happiness (12.9).⁹⁰

The tripartite divisions of philosophy in Platonic tradition— physics, logic, ethics (or, being, enlightenment, and joy) – are all devoted to happiness in life (11.25). Yet, perfect achievement of each element is not located within the self as suggested in Plotinus’ motto, Return to the Self. Instead, “for our happiness we must have Him [God]

⁸⁸ *civ. dei.* 11.22 (CCL 48.340): *Hanc tamen causam, id est ad bona creanda bonitatem Dei, hanc, inquam, causam tam iustam atque idoneam, quae diligenter considerata et pie cogitata omnes controuersias quaerentium mundi originem terminat.*

⁸⁹ *civ. dei.* 12.1 (CCL 48.355) : *non est creaturae rationalis uel intellectualis bonum, quo beata sit, nisi Deus. Ita ... ea tamen, quae potest, non ex se ipsa potest, quia ex nihilo creata est, sed ex illo, a quo creata est. Hoc enim adepto beata, quo amisso misera est.* Evil is, thus, falling away from God. The bishop appears to grapple with a conundrum that a Platonic monolithic view of the reality causes: If everything is from the One, then, did evil also come from it? If God is the creator of the world, did he create evil? For the bishop, evil is from the perversion of will, not from nature because Nature was created good. On the problem of evil in Plotinus and the Platonic tradition, see O’Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*, 79–87.

⁹⁰ Augustine argues that the happiness of all angels also consists in clinging to God; their unhappiness results from not clinging to God (*civ. dei.* 12.1).

as the giver of the inmost delight.”⁹¹ The bishop employs the motto in order to re-introduce the Christian way as true means to complete the Plotinian ideal.

Contemplating His image in ourselves, therefore, let us “returning to ourselves”... rise up and go back to him from whom we have withdrawn by our sin. There our existence will have no death, there our knowledge no error, there our life no obstacle.⁹²

If we consider Augustine’s discussion of createdness in terms of happiness, it makes much better sense why Augustine needs to criticize the Platonic idea of cyclical history as endangering happiness (12.10-21). According to Augustine’s criticism, within the Platonic worldview misery never has an end, but is only interrupted by intervals of false happiness (12.21). The eternal security of happiness, the bishop claims, is achieved through Christ’s death once for all and through his eternal victory over death (12.14).⁹³

Although the bishop follows the order of the narrative in Genesis 1-3, Augustine’s discussion of death in book 13 also should be seen within a broader eudaemonistic argument; death is the opposite of happiness. It is a punishment of sin, the “supreme misery of life,” and a grim human condition from which no one can escape (13.1). Everyone is in death from the moment that they begin their bodily existence (13.10).⁹⁴ Worst of all, however, is the second death in which the soul is eternally tormented with the body without receiving life from God (13.12). Then, how can one avoid this worst

⁹¹ *civ. dei.* 11.25 (CCL 48.345): *debemus habere ... ipsum etiam ut beati simus suavitatis intimae largitorem.*

⁹² *civ. dei.* 11.28 (CCL48. 348): *in nobis autem ipsis eius imaginem contuentes ... ad nosmetipsos reuersi surgamus et ad illum redeamus, a quo peccando recesseramus. Ibi esse nostrum non habebit mortem, ibi nosse nostrum non habebit errorem, ibi amare nostrum non habebit offensionem.*

⁹³ In other words, he secures this eternal bliss within God’s unchanging promise of eternal life and happiness rather than alternating between happiness and misery (*civ. dei.* 12.17).

⁹⁴ This is Augustine’s exegesis of Gen 2:17 which reads: “You will surely die.”

misery and secure eternal felicity? The only way, Augustine points out, is regeneration: “yet if it [death] is paid for through piety and justice, it becomes the glory of those who are reborn; although death is recompense of sin, it sometimes ensures that nothing [needs to] be recompensed for sin.”⁹⁵ Augustine claims that with the grace of Christ we may be enabled to avoid the second death (13.11).

At the same time, Augustine corrects the Platonic view that the separation of the body and the soul, which will happen eventually in death, is a condition of perfect bliss (13.16). According to the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the body, the body is where felicity of the soul is located (13.16).⁹⁶ The spiritual and immortal body will be given so that we may enjoy eternal bliss with spiritual bodies, without sin or death, just as angels do (13.24).

After spending three books arguing against the Platonic world view, the bishop finally speaks of the “two Cities” in book 14. As O’Daly observes, the bishop reintroduces a political dimension, breaking a long silence on the subject.⁹⁷ There is one City of men who choose to live “according to the flesh,” another of those who choose to live “according to the Spirit.”⁹⁸ Augustine finds the beginning of each City within an act

⁹⁵ *civ. dei.* 13.6 (CCL 48.389): *tamen si pro pietate iustitia que pendatur, fit gloria renascentis; et cum sit mors peccati retributio, aliquando impetrat, ut nihil retribuat peccato.* Emphasis added.

⁹⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that the bishop deals with this topic at the end of the work (*civ. dei.* 22.25-29).

⁹⁷ O’Daly, *Augustine’s “City of God,”* 154.

⁹⁸ *secundum carnem; secundum spiritum. civ. dei.* 14.1.

of will.⁹⁹ In other words, the most decisive factor that differentiates the two Cities is the orientation of their love (that is, what they will).

Two kinds of love, therefore, have created the two Cities: self-love of course [established] the earthly [city] up to the point of contempt of God, whereas the love of God [established] the Heavenly City all the way to contempt of self.¹⁰⁰

While refuting the Platonist accusation that the body is the source of human misery and disturbance, Augustine argues that the source of evil and misery is, in fact, the corruption of the will, and that due to original sin (14.15-20) men have no power to lead a just (or righteous) life by which to reach the goal of happiness. Rather, we only have sufficient power to live an evil life (14.27); we sin for the sake of our well-being, but it turns out to be our misfortune. “Thus,” Augustine asks, “what is the reason for this, except that man’s well-being can only come from God, whom he forsakes by sinning, not from himself?”¹⁰¹ Then, the only way to be happy is the liberation of the will from faults and sins, and only the Son of God can restore the will because he is our savior and liberator (14.11). In this respect, Augustine contrasts the two Cities: “the one [City] loves its own strength [shown] in its powerful [men]; the other [City] says to its God, *I will love you, my Lord, my strength.*”¹⁰²

In sum, books 11-14 deal with the root causes of two different ways of life. We are all created by God, and our happiness is only from God. Thus, we need to cling to

⁹⁹ Concerning such individualistic reductionism, see Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 137–59.

¹⁰⁰ *civ. dei.* 14.28 (CCL 48.451): *Fecerunt itaque ciuitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem uero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui.*

¹⁰¹ *civ. dei.* 14.4 (CCL 48.418): *Vnde hoc, nisi quia de Deo potest bene esse homini, quem delinquendo deserit, non de se ipso?*

¹⁰² *civ. dei.* 14.28 (CCL 48.451): *Illa in suis potentibus diligit uirtutem suam; haec dicit Deo suo: Diligam te, Domine, uirtus mea.* Ps 18:1.

God. This is the place the two Cities part from each other. As the bishop criticizes, the Earthly City chooses the way *according to the flesh*, which leads to perpetual misery, and the Heavenly City the way *according to the Spirit*, the way to eternal happiness.

Books 15-18: The Development

In these books concerning “the progress of the two Cities,” Augustine makes a full-scale historical presentation of these two entities, although the narration mainly sticks to the history of the Heavenly City until book 18.¹⁰³ The question to ask is: What role do these paralleled histories play in his eudaemonistic argument? To answer this question, we need to understand that Augustine’s reading and presentation of biblical history is deeply theological.¹⁰⁴ For example, Sarah’s barrenness is taken to signify that human nature, perverted by sin and rightly condemned, does not deserve any true happiness (15.3).

Augustine’s theological reading of biblical history as shown in books 15-18 demonstrates these biblical truths regarding happiness: (1) Human nature is corrupted by sin, and human beings have no power to purify themselves. (2) As a result, all human beings became a “lump of condemnation” and deserve punishment and consequent misery. (3) Therefore, they cannot attain true happiness except through worship of the

¹⁰³ Augustine divides world history into six stages. (1) Cain and Abel to Noah, (2) Noah to Abraham, (3) Abraham to David, (4) David to the exile to Babylon, (5) the exile to Christ, (6) Christ to the end of the world. Concerning the division of history in six ages, see also *Gn. adv. Man.* 1.23.35-1.24.41.

¹⁰⁴ Although dealing with history, Augustine distances himself from being a mere reporter of past calamities (*scriptor historiae. civ. dei.* 3.18). Rather, his purpose of dealing with history in the *City of God* is to show the way of salvation which has revealed through history. See Gerard J. P. O’Daly, “Thinking through History: Augustine’s Method in the ‘City of God’ and Its Ciceronian Dimension,” *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 45–57.

true God and faith in the true mediator Jesus Christ. In short, the Christian faith is the universal way of happiness.

Contrary to Porphyry's research and frustration, the bishop shows that this universal way has been revealed throughout history. Yet, it is discerned only through prophetic reading of the Old Testament which he has learned from Tyconius the Donatist. The bishop summarizes his approach to the biblical history: "these historical events and the written records [are] not without some prefiguration of things to come, and reference to Christ and his church, which is the City of God."¹⁰⁵ Christ and the His body, therefore, have been prophesied to be the universal way to eternal happiness, which was lost after Adam's fall.

In order to prove the universality of the Christian way to happiness, Augustine brings his reader's attention to the divine calling of the nations to Christ; in a long section on Abraham (16.12-34), it becomes clear that this universal way has been revealed even from the time of Abraham, not merely as late as that of Jesus. Also, the way has been open not just to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. As the name "Abraham" implies, he became a father of all nations (16.28). The promise to Abraham is that his descendants will be exalted in heavenly felicity, and their rewards will be "seeing God" which was believed to be the meaning of the name "Israel" (16.39. Cf. 17.13).¹⁰⁶ The bishop argues that Abraham's descendants are not just biological ones but also all nations throughout

¹⁰⁵ *civ. dei.* 16.2 (CCL 48.500): *non ea sine aliqua praefiguratione futurorum gesta atque conscripta neque nisi ad Christum et eius Ecclesiam, quae civitas Dei est, esse referenda.* Also see Tyconius, *lib. reg.* 1. For a further discussion of Augustine's allegorical reading, see chap. 6.

¹⁰⁶ Augustine probably uses popular etymology. Henry S. Bettenson, trans., *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), 704n178. For a detailed explanation, see Bardsy, BA 36, 729.

the whole world. (16.21), as explained when God's promised Isaac to Abraham in Gen 17.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, there are more explicit promises about the calling of the Gentiles. Since Abraham and his barren wife have no capacity to bear a child, God's promise to them is fulfilled not by way of generation but by way of regeneration (16.26). Even circumcision signifies the universal way: God orders its accomplishment not just to all sons of Abraham but even to the house-born and purchased slaves. Grace is for all humanity (16.26). Abraham's sacrifice at Mt. Moriah refers to Christ's sacrifice for the "whole world" (16.32). The sacrifice is followed by the promise of God that all the nations of the earth will be blessed in Abraham's descendants. Augustine comments, "In this way concerning the calling of the nations in Abraham's offspring, after the burnt-offering, by which Christ is symbolized, the promise was confirmed also by an oath of God."¹⁰⁸ In this figurative reading, therefore, Christ is proven to be the universal way to eternal happiness for all nations and people.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Augustine seems to employ the term "oracle *oraculum*" instead of "prophecy" in consideration of pagan audience who have great respect for ancient oracles (16.16, 18, 21, 36, 38; 17.3, 18). It may, however, reflect his latent criticism of Porphyry's soteriology presented in *Philosophy from the Oracles*. Furthermore, the bishop pays attention to Chaldean origin of Abraham; Porphyry's oracles originate from the same region. See Chadwick, "Oracles of the End in the Conflict of Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century." Also for general discussion of ancient phenomena of prophecy, see David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983).

¹⁰⁸ *civ. dei.* 16.32 (CCL 48.537): *Hoc modo est illa de uocatione gentium in semine Abrahae post holocaustum, quo significatus est Christus, etiam iuratione Dei firmata promissio.*

¹⁰⁹ On Augustine's Christocentric reading of the Old Testament, see Cameron, "Christological Substructure of Augustine's Figurative Exegesis." On his exegesis in general, see Frederick van Fleteren, "Principles of Augustine's Hermeneutic: An Overview," in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Frederick van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 1–32; Thomas Williams, "Biblical Interpretation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 59–70; William S. Babcock, "Augustine and Tyconius: A Study in the Latin Appropriation of Paul," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 17 (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 1209–20; Henry Chadwick, "Tyconius and Augustine," in *A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa*:

Augustine's defense for the Christian faith as the universal way reaches its climax in his reading of the Old Testament prophets. Carefully selected passages refer to Christ and his church. As the bishop examines the life of David and (17.8-13) his psalms (17.14-19),¹¹⁰ Christ is interpreted as true priest between God and humans (17.5), and true king (17.16). The church prefigured in the Old Testament is not limited to those who belong to the church at present. There are many who will join her in the future. This biblical prophecy has been proven throughout history. After the resurrection of Jesus, the Gentiles believed in him when he was announced to them (17.16). The universal way, Christ and His church, has been proclaimed already in the Old Testament by the prophets' hope for true felicity in the age to come (17.20). Therefore, the prophets guide the Gentiles, who read their prophecies, to Christ and his church so that these citizens of the other city may find the true mediator and King Jesus Christ and attain eternal felicity. Augustine exclaims: "Now we see this prophecy fulfilled!"¹¹¹

By contrast, there was no happiness in the lives of leading figures of the Earthly City – Cain, Ninus, and Romulus. Cain founded the Earthly city, and likewise Romulus established the second Babylon. Their perverted desire for dominion led them to the same tragedy of fratricide (15.5). Ninus, who was contemporary to Abraham, established the Assyrian Empire. Although he pursued predominance over the other nations, his kingdom was characterized as confusion (16.17), as the meaning of the name of its capital city

Tyconius and Augustine, ed. Charles Kannengiesser, Pamela Bright, and Wilhelm H. Wuellner (Berkeley, CA: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1989), 49–55.

¹¹⁰ In line with early Christian exegesis, for Augustine, even non-prophetic passages can be read as having prophetic meaning. For example, Zion is a prefiguration of the church including the (future) Gentile Christians.

¹¹¹ *civ. dei.* 17.5 (CCL 48.563): *quod iam videmus impletum*. Cf. "written evidence." *civ. dei.* 21.8.

Babylon indicates. According to Augustine's interpretation, that kingdom was succeeded by a second Babylon, Rome, which has been suffering the misery and degeneration of morality that he demonstrated in the first five books.

History shows that while the Heavenly City has been worshipping the true God alone, the Earthly City created many gods to worship. The former makes use of this world in order to enjoy God, the latter makes use of God in order to enjoy the world (15.7).

One of them [the two Cities], the earthly, has created for herself false gods as she wanted, from anything, even out of men, in order to worship them by sacrifice; the other [city], the heavenly on pilgrimage in this world, does not make false gods, but is created by the true God, and she herself is his true sacrifice.¹¹²

A stark contrast between the two Cities is made by showing the pagan history of deifying ancient heroes and kings (18.2-26), especially during the reign of the first and the second Babylons (Assyria and Rome). Then, the truthfulness of the prophecies of God is defended by historical records (18.27-36). In this chronological comparison with pagan polytheism, the monotheistic faith of Christianity is proved to be a superior way to happiness. The bishop refutes the books of philosophers (18.37-54) for they are the architects of deification and "false prophets" who lead people to misery and unhappiness. Among their teachings concerning misery and happiness of our lives there is considerable confusion, as is seen in the meaning of the name of their city Babylon (18.41).

¹¹² *civ. dei.* 18.54 (CCL 48.656): *quarum illa, quae terrena est, fecit sibi quos uoluit uel undecumque uel etiam ex hominibus falsos deos, quibus sacrificando seruiret; illa autem, quae caelestis peregrinatur in terra, falsos deos non facit, sed a uero Deo ipsa fit, cuius uerum sacrificium ipsa sit.*

The discussion of the “progress of the two Cities” concludes that pagan gods are in fact deified humans or demons,¹¹³ and, therefore, a “demon-worshipping city” (*daemonicola civitate*) cannot produce true happiness. In contrast, the bishop argues, God has been revealing the universal way to happiness throughout history. Especially, he argues that repentance is to be preached among all nations in harmony with a prophecy of Isaiah: “Out of Zion the Law will issue, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.”¹¹⁴ Through clinging to Christ, thus, one becomes a citizen of the Heavenly Commonwealth and participates in eternal happiness.

As we have analyzed, books 15-18 are not so much a narration of history as an historical argument to convince pagans of the antiquity and authority of the universal way presented in the Christian faith.¹¹⁵

Books 19-22: The Destined End

Augustine’s eudaemonistic argument finally comes to an end in these four books. Two contrasting ends – eternal happiness and punishment – prove the falsity of the philosophers and the truthfulness of the biblical prophets. Determined to debate with top-rated philosophers (1.36), the bishop brings Cicero and Porphyry back at this crucial

¹¹³ *civ. dei.* 18.24. Augustine argues that the pagan practice of deification was simply a matter of flattery, not of a mistaken belief, and that it is the activity of demons at work in their hearts.

¹¹⁴ Isa 2:3; *civ. dei.* 18.54. Book 18 has been depreciated among scholars. James O’Donnell, for example, comments on the book: “The principles on which Augustine worked are subject to criticism, and he did not always implement them with the greatest success; he could juxtapose the serenity and lucidity of book 19 to the *seemingly endless expanse of loosely connected discussions of book 18.*” James O’Donnell’s unpublished 1983 article in his website: http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/civ.html#* accessed in 2014.4.14. Italics added. In contrast to such a low view, I argue that book 18 is one of the key places where Augustine’s battle with philosophers reaches climax and his purpose of the entire project is revealed. Jangho Jo, “Augustine’s Three-Day Lecture in Carthage,” in *Studia Patristica LXX*, ed. Markus Vinzent, vol. 18 (Leuven; Paris; Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013), 331–37.

¹¹⁵ Concerning the calling of the Gentiles in book 18, see chap. 6.

point. The conflict with philosophers concerning happiness is put at the forefront at the beginning of book 19: “Hence above all, I have to explain, as much as the plan of this work allows, the arguments of mortals [philosophers] that endeavor to produce happiness for themselves in the midst of the unhappiness of this life.”¹¹⁶ Augustine seeks to finish his project with a definite conclusion that the Christian faith is superior to the ways both of his vanguard philosophers taught concerning happiness, and that the worship of God through Christ alone can bring perfect and eternal peace on spiritual and social levels.¹¹⁷ The reason is twofold: First, There is no universal way to happiness among philosophical teachings; 288 sects, according to Varro, compete with one another (19.2). Second, philosophy has no power to achieve happiness when it comes to the stark reality of evil and consequent misery in human life (19.5-9). These criticisms anticipate his verdict to philosophy at the end of the work.

Augustine closely engages with two foundational texts: Cicero’s *On the Commonwealth* and Porphyry’s *Philosophy from Oracles* (19.21-26). Augustine resumes the discussion with Cicero concerning justice as a foundation of the commonwealth as he promised in book 2. At the same time, he discusses the Porphyrian way of salvation.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ *civ. dei.* 19.1 (CCL 48.657): *prius exponenda sunt, quantum operis huius terminandi ratio patitur, argumenta mortalium, quibus sibi ipsi beatitudinem facere in huius uitae infelicitate moliti sunt*

¹¹⁷ O’Meara also reaches the same conclusion: “It is hardly necessary to add that ...Augustine found the scriptural account of God and of how we should live in His sight both more clear and, in his opinion, superior in every way.” O’Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles*, 60. Unfortunately, O’Daly’s explanation of the purpose of book 19 is misleading as well: “It is not a discussion of the relations between church and state: rather, it gives an account of how Christians may, and why they must, be good citizens of the empire.” O’Daly, *Augustine’s “City of God,”* 209.

¹¹⁸ O’Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles*, 49–61. Here we find the second and third ways of the Porphyrian purification, as Michael Simmons argues. Simmons, “Porphyrian Universalism.” Augustine’s eudaemonistic argument enables us to harmonize his debates with two radically different philosophers under the quest for happiness.

Porphry states, according to Augustine, “it is good for us when we adore Him [God] by justice, chastity, and other virtues... For seeking [God] purifies [us], and imitation [of God] deifies us by devoting our disposition to His.”¹¹⁹ For both Cicero and Porphyry, justice is the highest means to attain the blessed life, either on the individual or social dimensions. Happiness, however, can be attained neither through the Ciceronian and nor through the Porphyrian ways because it is found where the one supreme God rules and is worshipped alone (19.23). In this respect, the superiority of Christian justice and peace is demonstrated.

Book 20 deals with the last judgment. In contrast to the teachings of philosophers, it is the divine judgment, not our own endeavor, that determines eternal happiness or perpetual misery of human beings. To convince his doubting readers of the reality of the final judgment,¹²⁰ the bishop first proves the veracity of the last judgment; as the biblical prophecies are already vindicated by their fulfillment in history (20.5-29); the last judgment will be made as Christ comes to judge the world (20.30). Augustine also defends the justice of Christ’s judgment; since all men are a lump of sin (*massa peccati*), the last judgment of Christ is just whether one’s destiny ends in eternal happiness or torment. Nevertheless, Augustine leaves his audience not in the dread of the last judgment but in the hope of Christ: “We now see fulfilled the last words of the prophecy about him: *In his name the nations will put their hope*. By this [fulfillment] which

¹¹⁹ *civ. dei.* 19.23 (CCL 48.693): *sed nobis est bene, cum eum per iustitiam et castitatem aliasque virtutes adoramus ... Inquisitio enim purgat, inquit, imitatio deificat affectionem ad ipsum operando.* Emphasis is mine. It is probably a direct quotation from Porphyry. On Augustine’s debate with Porphyry in book 19, see O’Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles*, 49–61.

¹²⁰ His argument addresses especially to the “impious and the unbelieving *aduersus impios et incredulos*” who deny or doubt the last judgment of Christ (*civ. dei.* 20.1).

certainly cannot be denied, now that which has been impudently denied should be believed.”¹²¹

In the last two books, the bishop discusses the punishment of the wicked (book 21), and the eternal felicity of the righteous (book 22). His persuasion for the unbelieving audience is continued.¹²² In order to convert them, he provides a “rational proof” with those who do not believe the reality of eternal bodily torment (21.2).¹²³ This bodily immortality of the saints and the impious, as he admits, has been a major stumbling block for unbelievers, especially for those who subscribe to Platonism (21.1). The Christian faith, however, teaches that both eternal bliss and torment will be experienced with the body. Augustine disproves varied false opinions which deny eternal punishment within the body¹²⁴ and argues for the justice of divine judgment (21.11-15). The body-soul connection will last forever, and we will participate in our eternal human destiny with a different kind of body (21.3).¹²⁵

¹²¹ *civ. dei.* 20.30 (CCL 48.757): *iam uidemus impletum, quod hic ultimum positum est: Et in nomine eius gentes sperabunt. Per hoc certe quod negari non potest etiam illud credatur quod impudenter negatur.*

¹²² *civ. dei.* 21.2 (CCL 48.759): *Quid igitur ostendam, unde conuincantur increduli, posse humana corpora animata atque uiuentia non solum numquam morte dissolui, sed in aeternorum quoque ignium durare tormentis? Nolunt enim hoc ad Omnipotentis nos referre potentiam, sed aliquo exemplo persuaderi sibi flagitant.*

¹²³ Regarding Christian miracles, the skeptics would ask for a rational explanation in each case. Augustine answers that God does not act irrationally even when the human mind cannot find a rational explanation (*civ. dei.* 21.5).

¹²⁴ For example, there is an idea that the body after death feels no pain in the fire. *civ. dei.* 21.9. Cf. *civ. dei.* 10.29; 12.27; 22.12; 22.26-28.

¹²⁵ The relationship between the body and the soul was a classical problem in Neoplatonism. See O’Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*, 12–22. Also, see Fredriksen, “Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy”; Margaret Miles, *Augustine on the Body* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

After the rational explanations, Augustine proceeds to an exhortation to repentance and conversion: “Anyone, therefore, who desires to avoid eternal punishment should not only be baptized but truly also be justified in Christ and in such a way pass from the devil to Christ.”¹²⁶ Repentance is presented as the way to liberation from eternal torment. For this, the Ninevites are presented as a model to emulate; they repented and were saved from the wrath of God (21.24).¹²⁷ The church should pray for her enemies so that there may be a time for fruitful penitence (21.24). Beyond a mere refutation of false ideas concerning the eternal punishment, the whole philosophical engagement in this book is directed to persuasion and conversion. Just as we saw in Augustine’s correspondence, this evangelistic cause is carried out through eudaemonistic arguments. The grand finale of the *City of God* clearly shows his eudaemonistic strategy for evangelism.

While book 21 leads its readers to Christ by showing the reality of the eternal punishment meted out on the Earthly City, the last book achieves the same goal by presenting Christian beatitude as a completion of the philosophical pursuit of happiness at the socio-political and contemplative levels. It is in the deification of Romulus that Augustine finds the embodiment of the pagan pursuit of happiness, on both the spiritual

¹²⁶ *civ. dei.* 21.16 (CCL 48.782-3): *Quisquis igitur cupit poenas euadere sempiternas, non solum baptizetur, uerum etiam iustificetur in Christo, ac sic uere transeat a diabolo ad Christum.* The bishop utilizes a universal desire to avoid eternal torment (or to attain happiness) as momentum which leads to conversion. Augustine’s correction of a false Christian idea (21.17-27) that even devils will be saved and there will be no eternal torment, should be read as part of Augustine’s evangelistic strategy. If such an idea is true, there would be no motivation for repentance on earth. The bishop warns those Christians not to hope what they want, but what the Scriptures say (21.27).

¹²⁷ For detailed discussion on Augustine’s exegesis of Jonah, and especially of Nineveh, see chap. 6.

and political levels.¹²⁸ In Cicero's *On the Commonwealth*, Romulus is described as a paragon of eternal bliss; he was a very just king¹²⁹ and lifted up in heaven and enjoys eternal happiness without his body.¹³⁰ Based on this description, Augustine's contemporary Platonists claim that an earthly body cannot exist in heaven (22.11). At the same time, Romulus's deification secures the eternity of the Roman commonwealth. If its founder becomes god, his commonwealth can be said to be divinely instituted. Thus, if a city is destroyed, it would be equivalent to the destruction of the whole world (22.6).¹³¹ While Cicero's account of deification corresponds to the basic Platonic abhorrence of the body, deification also enforces the idea of an eternal city and leads to the worship of a falsely deified Romulus.¹³²

In response to the Ciceronian socio-political pursuit of happiness, Augustine argues that the true safety of the commonwealth is achieved by faith in Christ alone (22.6). He disproves Cicero's idea that the safety of the city is obtained through (mutual

¹²⁸ On the social effect of Romulus, see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 204–5; Philippe Bruggisser, “City of the Outcast and City of the Elect: The Romulean Asylum in Augustine's ‘City of God’ and Servius's Commentaries on Virgil,” *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 75–104.

¹²⁹ Cicero, *rep.* 1.58.

¹³⁰ *civ. dei.* 22.4 ; Cicero, *rep.* 3.40b. In Augustine's time, Cicero's statements in *De republica* seem to have been utilized to support Platonic metaphysical ideas; the Roman intellectuals defended their Platonic world view by reference to Ciceronian claims such as the non-bodily status of eternal felicity. Porphyry viewed the divinity of Christ in a Platonic light; Christ's soul is immortal, yet His body cannot participate in eternal happiness (*civ. dei.* 22.25). See also Augustine's discussion of the resurrection of the body with the followers of Porphyry: O'Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles*, 72–83.

¹³¹ *civ. dei.* 22.6; Cicero, *rep.* 3.23. This idea seems to have been deeply influential on Roman intellectuals. See Augustine's correspondence to Nectarius (*epp.* 90, 91, 103, 104). See also chap. 2.

¹³² Concerning the personification of Rome, see Michael Roberts, “Rome Personified, Rome Epitomized: Representations of Rome in the Poetry of the Early Fifth Century,” *American Journal of Philology* 122 (2001): 533–65; Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought: From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth*, trans. S. O'Donnell (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1970).

faithfulness (*fides*). Ironically, the Saguntines lost safety (*salus*) because of their faithfulness to Rome (22.6). Therefore, Augustine argues that the Ciceronian idea of commonwealth cannot bring happiness and safety to Rome and her allies.

On the contemplative level, the Platonic/Plotinian way of happiness also fails to achieve happiness. In the Platonic tradition, in order to reach the vision of the One, one achieves virtue by fighting the body which weighs down the soul. For Augustine, however, virtue cannot be attained through human endeavor and discipline; life is a continual temptation (22.21) and full of unhappiness and misery. For this reason, the Platonic (and Ciceronian, as well) virtue ethics does not produce happiness. Human life is under condemnation, and there is no true happiness and salvation except through the grace of Christ. The capacity for eternal felicity, therefore, is a gift and blessing out of the goodness of God (22.22-24).

While debunking the illusion that pagan philosophers and authorities had found a way to happiness, the bishop admits that pagan thoughts hold truth in a partial way.¹³³ Augustine lists highly esteemed pagan authorities: Cicero, Labeo, Varro, Plato, and Porphyry (22.28).¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the philosophers only knew where to go, not how to get there.¹³⁵ Augustine pronounces: “what they [philosophers] promise to the human soul

¹³³ For instance, *ep.* 118; *civ. dei.* 8.11.

¹³⁴ O’Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles*, 72–83.

¹³⁵ *conf.* 7.20.26. Augustine says that by reading scripture, he learned how to discern between philosophers who see the goal but do not know how to get there, and those (probably the apostles and prophets) who know the way to eternal bliss.

is an alternation of genuine unhappiness and false felicity.”¹³⁶ Christ alone is the true way which can bring the happiness pagan philosophers themselves sought.

In the very last chapter, Augustine envisions Christian beatitude; what philosophers have long searched for will be attained within the Heavenly City of God. There, we will enjoy the ultimate felicity of seeing God; there, we will become perfectly happy in both the socio-political and contemplative dimensions. In other words, the Christian faith will bring a complete realization of pagan ideals for happiness.¹³⁷ The bishop sees the completion of the Platonic beatitude in the Apostle Paul’s vision: “But we, gazing at the glory of the Lord with face unveiled, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18).¹³⁸

Beyond individual contemplation, the bishop extends such beatitude to the socio-political sphere. It will be radically different from the Plotinian/ Porphyrian way: Ascent of the alone to the Alone.¹³⁹ We will see the beauty of other saints and the renewed world, and there will no envy or disharmony due to inferiority; rather we will be in perfect

¹³⁶ *civ. dei.* 22.12 (CCL 48.833): *sic animae humanae aut alternantes... ueras infelicitates falsasque promittant beatitudines.*

¹³⁷ Concerning the goal of Neoplatonism and Augustine’s *visio dei*, see O’Connell, *St. Augustine’s Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, 203–26; O’Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*; Teske, “St. Augustine and the Vision of God”; Kari Kloos, *Christ, Creation, and the Vision of God: Augustine’s Transformation of Early Christian Theophany Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 165–91.

¹³⁸ *civ. dei.* 22.29 (CCL 48.860): *Nos autem reuelata facie gloriam Domini speculantes in eadem imaginem transformamur, de gloria in gloriam, tamquam a Domini Spiritu.*

¹³⁹ Plotinus, *enn.* 9.11; Porphyry, *v. Plot.* 23; *abst.* 2.49.1, 3. Also, see John M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 265n11. Cf. “Many theologians of the fourth century found that the subject which gripped them with deep religious and intellectual excitement was no longer the way in which human beings might climb up to God... It was the manner in which God, in Christ, had bent to the very bottom of the *mundus*, to raise up a fallen human race.” Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 506.

harmony and peace in that City of God. On the eighth day, there will be the eternal rest in both our spirit and the body:

There we shall be at rest and see; we shall see and love; we shall love and praise. Behold what will be in the end without end! For what is our end but to reach the kingdom of which there is no end?¹⁴⁰

All these discussions and arguments demonstrate that the Christian faith is the only way to that true happiness which both Cicero and Porphyry have failed to bring. Our bishop's confidence concerning the superiority of the Christian faith to pagan philosophy is based on the fact that the authority of the Scriptures has converted all kinds of people to believe in the Christian promise of bliss and to hope for it (22.4). Moreover, unlike philosophers' opinions, numerous records of continuing miracles among the Christians assure the truthfulness of its promise (22.8). Augustine's eudaemonistic argument is supported by those historical records and rational proofs. Based on such persuasion, Augustine ultimately leads his audience to Christ, the true way to supreme happiness.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the *City of God*, including its passages often read as digressions, is structured by Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy. On the one hand, the bishop proves the falsity of pagan philosophical approaches to happiness on the socio-political and contemplative levels. He debunks the teachings of false happiness, especially those of Cicero and Porphyry, which keep people from faith in Christ and from hope for His kingdom. On the other hand, within the pagan philosophical framework, the

¹⁴⁰ *civ. dei.* 22.30 (CCL 48.866): *Ibi uacabimus et uidebimus, uidebimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus. Ecce quod erit in fine sine fine. Nam quis alius noster est finis nisi peruenire ad regnum, cuius nullus est finis?*

bishop proves that the Christian faith is the universal way to true happiness. The purpose of his eudaemonistic argument is to win over the souls of the Romans by philosophical persuasion. The *City of God*, therefore, is best understood in light of Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy for the conversion of educated Romans. The next two chapters will more closely investigate how he deals with key philosophers Cicero and Porphyry, and how he proves the superiority of Christianity over their philosophical pursuit of happiness.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Way to the Heavenly Commonwealth

Cicero in the City of God

The presence of Cicero in the *City of God* has drawn the attention of many scholars.¹ Augustine began to actively discuss the Roman political ideology around 410 three years before he began to compose the *City of God*. Challenges to Christianity from the political sphere confounded many intellectuals within the church, and these challenges stemmed from the Ciceronian political ideology. Facing these intellectual challenges, as Hagendahl has shown, Augustine, breaking his long silence on Cicero, re-read Cicero's *On the Commonwealth* with seriousness while composing the *City of God*.² This little Ciceronian political work posed a significant counterpoint to what the Christian faith teaches. Concerning this conflict, for example, Ernest Fortin states:

Like Plato's *Republic* and Cicero's *De republica*, Augustine's *City of God* is in the main a book about justice...The purpose of the book may be said to be

¹ On Augustine and Cicero, see Maurice Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron: Cicéron dans la formation et dans l'œuvre de saint Augustin*, vol. 1 (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1958); Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 479–588; Fortin, “Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine”; Ernest Fortin, *Classical Christianity and the Political Order: Reflections on the Theologico-Political Problem*, ed. J. Brian Benestad (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); Fortin, “Justice as the Foundation of the Political Community”; O’Daly, “Thinking through History”; Margaret Atkins, “Old Philosophy and New Power: Cicero in Fifth Century North Africa,” in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin*, ed. Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 251–71; Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*; Brian Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue* (London: Continuum, 2008); Charles Brittain, “Augustine as a Reader of Cicero,” in *“Tolle Lege”: Essays on Augustine and on Medieval Philosophy in Honor of Roland J. Teske, SJ*, ed. Richard C. Taylor, David Twetten, and Michael J. Wreen (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2011), 81–114.

² It is likely that Augustine had the actual text in his hand. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 542–3. O’Donnell mostly follows Hagendahl’s analysis: James J. O’Donnell, “Augustine’s Classical Readings,” *Recherches Augustiniennes* 15 (1980): 144–75.

twofold: to encourage the practice of justice among human beings, and, by stressing the limitations of human justice, to caution against excessive zeal in its pursuit.³

As Fortin rightly observes that justice is one of the major concerns in the *City of God*. His characterization of the *City of God*, however, is not entirely accurate. Political reading of the *City of God* in recent scholarship tends to overly concern political nature of the work. While justice and peace are two central subjects, among others, they serve a higher purpose in service of human happiness as this dissertation has argued. Also, such political concern is only half of the story; political readings of the *City of God* often ignore Augustine's engagement with another major interlocutor: Porphyry and the Neoplatonists.⁴ In fact, both the *City of God* and *On the Commonwealth* itself address more than what we typically call "political."⁵

The previous chapter shows that Augustine's engagement with Cicero purports to liberate the intellectual Romans from the Ciceronian vision of the socio-political happiness so that the Christian social vision can be presented as the true alternative.⁶ This chapter will examine the way in which Cicero's *On the Commonwealth* creates a

³ Fortin, "Justice as the Foundation of the Political Community," 41. Fortin also thinks that *City of God* is a counterargument against Plato, whom Augustine probably never read. Fortin, "St. Augustine."

⁴ Recent scholarship has discovered parallels in the functions of political virtue between Cicero and Neoplatonism. Dodaro, "Augustine on the Statesman and the Two Cities," 393–6. Nevertheless, political concern is not apparent in Neoplatonism. We will discuss Augustine's engagement with Porphyry and the Neoplatonists in the next chapter.

⁵ In this respect, Brian Harding's recent work makes a crucial contribution to our understanding of Augustinian engagement with Roman culture and philosophy. Harding argues that Augustine's intention is to show that Christianity can fulfill what philosophy dreams of. See Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*.

⁶ Harding's thesis is similar to what this chapter argues. While he sees the *City of God* mainly as Augustine's engagement with specifically Roman virtue and philosophy, however, the present dissertation argues that the bishop's project ultimately integrates political and contemplative pursuits of happiness in Plato.

particular vision for socio-political happiness and justifies such vision by using history. The chapter argues that Augustine recycles Cicero's historical argument to disprove the Ciceronian political vision and present the Christian social vision based on true justice and true piety. For this argument, first, we will examine the influence and reception of the Ciceronian idea of commonwealth among Augustine's contemporaries. Second, we will examine Cicero's strategy to present Rome as the perfect commonwealth based on justice and piety of her founders. In particular, we will focus on Cicero's use of history for this political vision. Then, third, we will look at Augustine's strategy to criticize Cicero's project of socio-political happiness through the Roman commonwealth. Finally, the chapter will examine Augustine's alternative Christian social vision for the city. In other words, we will see how the bishop presents the Christian social vision as the way to a true commonwealth.

This investigation will bring us to see that Augustine's political argument is part of a larger project that intends to lead Roman intellectuals to the Christian faith. As mentioned above, recent political reading of the *City of God* has failed to integrate Augustine's political discussion with non-political contents. By locating Augustine's engagement with Cicero within his eudaemonistic strategy for evangelism, the chapter will enable us to see his political discussion serving a overarching argument of the *City of God*, which has not been given deserved scholarly attention.

De republica among Augustine's Contemporaries

In Augustine's time, there was a tendency to glamorize the earlier history of Rome with a "burning nostalgia" for the glory of the Republic.⁷ For instance, according to A. N. Sherwin-White, Augustine's contemporary court poet, Claudian, "like[d] to dwell on the splendors of the imperial period ... but the Republican period ha[d] an attraction for him that is not hard to explain ... This interest in the earlier history of Rome, so neglected by the writers of the prosperity of the Empire, is perhaps a general tendency among literary men of the period."⁸ In line with such literary glorification, Rome was often personified and considered eternal, as well.⁹

Such idealization of the city was more than a reflection of the Romans' sense of loss after the Sack; it entailed political and ideological implications. The idealization of Rome and its history also evoked a strong sense of patriotism as expressed by Augustine's contemporary Rutilius, another Roman imperial poet:

[O]ur common losses call for each man's loyalty. Our presence and our tears are what we owe to the ancestral home: service which grief has prompted ofttimes helps... Listen, O fairest queen of thy world, Rome... thee do we chant, and shall, while destiny allows, forever chant. None can be safe if forgetful of thee. Sooner shall guilty oblivion whelm the sun than the honor due to thee quit my heart.¹⁰

⁷ Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought*, 15.

⁸ A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 466.

⁹ Regarding the development of the conception of Rome, see Donald R. Dudley, ed., "*Urbs Roma*": *A Source Book of Classical Texts on the City and Its Monuments* (London: Phaidon Press, 1967); David Thompson, ed., *The Idea of Rome: From Antiquity to the Renaissance*. (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1971); Roberts, "Representations of Rome."

¹⁰ From Rutilius' *De reditu suo*. Re-cited in Thompson, *The Idea of Rome*, 126–7. Rowan Greer claims that Rutilius was probably not a Christian, yet there were many Christians who shared his patriotic sentiment. Rowan Greer, "Alien Citizens: A Marvelous Paradox," in *Civitas: Religious Interpretations of the City*, ed. Peter S. Hawkins (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 55.

The pagan ideology conveyed with such literary power demanded that Romans give the Empire the utmost priority and show ultimate loyalty to it.¹¹ It also resulted in the pagan attempt to recover the traditional Roman spirit *romanitas* including religious rituals and traditional values.

No doubt, the ideology of eternal Rome was most strengthened by Virgil who created a mythical foundation for political ideology.¹² Yet, it was Cicero who architected this socio-political ideology on the philosophical and political levels.¹³ His *On the Commonwealth* appealed to Augustine's contemporaries with a political ideal of the commonwealth and made them consider the construction of "public life" their most important and honorable task.¹⁴ As a result a strong patriotic sentiment was evoked among Romans. The bishop's pagan opponents as well as some of his audience subscribed to the Ciceronian ideal of Roman commonwealth. Augustine saw the Ciceronian ideal setting fire to the hearts of local Roman officials such as Nectarius.¹⁵ In

¹¹ Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 461–8.

¹² Brenda D. Schildgen, *Divine Providence: A History* (London; New York: Continuum, 2012), 31–43. Around 410, Augustine criticizes Virgil for making "false promises" of eternal Empire to the Romans (s. 105.7). See also Danuta Shanzer, "Augustine and the Latin Classics," in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 164–5.

¹³ On the making of political ideology in Virgil and Cicero, see Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 59–73.

¹⁴ Cicero, *rep.* 1.1. See, James E. Holton, "Marcus Tullius Cicero," in *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 158–9. The political situations of both Cicero and Augustine were similar: as Augustine saw the Empire sinking, Cicero also lived at the end of the long-lasting Republic. As a strong supporter of aristocracy and as a philosopher, Cicero presented his political thought in the *De republica*. Scipio, the main character, who lived in the early Republic, is described as a redeemer of the declining Republic, but he dies soon after the dialogues in *De republica*. Thus, even for Cicero, his ideal of commonwealth remains an ideal. Cicero was the Latin authority on political ideas for both Christians and pagans, though there was the considerable influence of Plato and Aristotle on him.

¹⁵ On Nectarius, Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 6–7, 196–200.

his letter to Nectarius (408/9), Augustine had to express a reservation about Nectarius' unlimited loyalty to the empire which thrived "with weapons of war."¹⁶

Consider those little books, *De republica*, from which you have imbibed the affection of the most loyal citizen, that concerning the fatherland, no measure or good limit is to be asked. Consider, I ask you, and discern how much praise there would be bestowed on frugality, abstinence, conjugal faithfulness, and the manners of chaste, upright, and honest people; when the city excels concerning these [virtues], it is truly told to be flourishing.¹⁷

One problem for Augustine was that Cicero's idealized commonwealth kept people from turning their eyes to the true Heavenly commonwealth (*caelesti re publica*).¹⁸ Yet, it seems that the threat had been barely noticed among other clerics of Augustine's time; rather, for many Christians the Roman Empire was identified with a realized Kingdom of God through the course of the Christianization of the Empire, especially through the Eusebian theology.¹⁹ Augustine could see the danger of this political identification and pronounced his determination to debunk the Ciceronian social vision: "I shall demonstrate that according to Cicero's own definitions, commonwealth never existed, because there never was true justice in it."²⁰ This refutation is a

¹⁶ *ep.* 91.2.

¹⁷ *ep.* 91.3 (CSEL 34/2.428-9): *Intuere paululum ipsos de re publica libros, unde illum affectum amantissimi cuius ebibisti, quod nullus sit patriae consulendi modus, aut finis bonis. intuere, obsecro te, et cerne, quantis ibi laudibus frugalitas et continentia praedicetur, et erga coniugale uinculum fides castique honesti ac probi mores, quibus cum praepollet ciuitas, uere florere dicenda est.*

¹⁸ Ray C. Petry, *Christian Eschatology and Social Thought: A Historical Essay on the Social Implications of Some Selected Aspects in Christian Eschatology to A. D. 1500* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 153–72; Greer, "Alien Citizens: A Marvelous Paradox."

¹⁹ See classical work for this issue: Markus, *Saeculum*. Also, Fortin, "Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine."

²⁰ *civ. dei.* 2.21 (CCL 47.55): *ostendam secundum definitiones ipsius Ciceronis [...] numquam illam fuisse rem publicam, quia numquam in ea fuerit vera iustitia*. Shanzer argues: "[for Augustine] it was crucial for understanding the intellectual underpinnings of the Roman state." Shanzer, "Augustine and the Latin Classics," 167.

preliminary step to prove that the heavenly commonwealth is the true one. Let us turn to the social vision Cicero draws.

Ciceronian Social Vision: Justice, Piety, and History

The Ciceronian social vision is best expressed in his *On the Commonwealth*. While this work is left to us in a fragmentary form²¹ and it is impossible to reconstruct the original, still, we have enough information to understand Cicero's social vision from the surviving portion of the work, as well as the aid of other textual evidences and quotations. Cicero wrote this work as a sort of imitation of Plato's dialogue on the same topic.²² But the narrator in Cicero's work is not a philosopher but a Roman statesman, Scipio Aemilianus, the adopted son of Scipio Africanus who destroyed Carthage in the second Punic war. Scipio and his companions discuss how to protect and increase the Roman commonwealth.

Cicero defines that commonwealth (*res publica*) is "the concern of a people, but a people is not any group of men assembled in any way, but an assemblage of some size associated with one another through agreement on law and community of interest."²³

²¹ Ironically, *De republica*. was discovered in 1820 written on the manuscript of Augustine's commentary on Psalms (Vaticanus Latinus 5757). Many of the fragments are preserved in the *City of God*. See The critical edition of *De re publica*: Konrat Ziegler, ed., *De Re Publica Librorum Sex Quae Manserunt* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1929); J. G. F. Powell, ed., *De Re Publica*, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). The present dissertation uses James Zetzel's translation and compilation of the fragments. Zetzel's presentation and numbering of the fragments is different from that of Ziegler: James E. G. Zetzel, ed., *On the Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²² Cicero has been often called a "Roman Plato" since many of his works, political ones in particular, correspond with Plato's. On Cicero's mirroring of Plato, see Zetzel, *On the Commonwealth*, x–xiv. For the setting of the dialogues, see Zetzel, *De Re Publica*, 12–3.

²³ *civ. dei*. 2.21; Cicero, *rep.* 1.39a. On Cicero's concept of commonwealth, see Malcolm Schofield, "Cicero's Definition of 'Res Publica,'" in *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 63–83.

Based on this definition, Cicero highlights the purpose of commonwealth.

Commonwealth is meant to secure the happy life of the people.

Consider furthermore how wisely all the rest has been foreseen in order to promote the citizens' shared association in a *happy and honorable way of life*. That is, indeed, the first cause of the creation of society, and it ought to be accomplished on the authority of the commonwealth in part through institutions and in part through laws.²⁴

In his letter to Atticus, Cicero also claims that the purpose of commonwealth is the increase of the happiness of the people: "As a helmsman aims at a good voyage, a doctor at saving his patient, a general at victory, so this guide of the commonwealth aims at the *blessedness of the life of his citizens*."²⁵

Then, how can one increase commonwealth or make the people happy? Cicero shrewdly provides his answer in the *Dream of Scipio* the last book of *On the Commonwealth*. The two pillars of Roman commonwealth are justice and piety, and by promoting both virtues, commonwealth makes progress. In his dream Scipio is addressed by his dead grandfather (by adoption) Publius Cornelius Scipio (the elder Africanus):

You must not seem to run away from the human duty assigned by the god. But, Scipio, you should be like your grandfather here and like me your father in cultivating *justice and piety*; it is important in relation to your parents and family, but most important in relation to your fatherland. That way of life is the way to the heavens and to this gathering of those who have ceased to live and after having been released from the body now inhabit the place you see.²⁶

²⁴ Cicero, *rep.* 4.3a. Emphasis is mine.

²⁵ Cicero, *rep.* 5.8a. Emphasis is mine. This fragment is from Cicero's letter to Atticus 8.11.1. Zetzel rightly points out such Aristotelian modification of the previous definition of commonwealth. Zetzel, *On the Commonwealth*, 80n5.

²⁶ Cicero, *rep.* 6.15-16. Emphasis is mine.

The dream arouses a strong patriotism with quasi-eschatological hope.²⁷ This Roman hero of the second Punic war advised his son to cultivate justice and piety for their fatherland. In such a dramatic way, this dream made the Roman intellectuals believe that justice and piety are the foundations to the eternal happiness of the state.²⁸ Furthermore, the dream of Scipio stirs Romans to pursue justice and piety for the sake of their commonwealth.

Cicero describes an ideal city as a “well-ordered state” in which the natural order is both given and performed.²⁹ As the soul takes control of the body, so reason should rule over vices. The microcosm of the person corresponds to the macrocosm of the political life as well. In his dream, Scipio hears a sound of harmony resulting from the

²⁷ This strong patriotic sentiment entailed the eternity of Rome. According to Mazzolani, this kind of conceptualization was developed especially during the reign of Julius Caesar (and Augustus). Along with Caesar’s territorial expansion, the concept of *orbis terrarum* began to be circulated as equivalent with *orbis Romanus*. Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought*, 119. Naturally, *aeternitas* became the common term for the duration of the empire.

²⁸ In line with ancient philosophical tradition, Cicero considered virtue a way to a happy and honorable life: “if the state had not had such morals, then the men would not have existed...It is because of our own vices, not because of some bad luck, that we preserve the commonwealth in name alone but have long ago lost its substance” (Cicero, *rep.* 5.1. Cf. Augustine’s summary of the beginning of book 5: *civ. dei.* 2.21). Augustine discusses the relationship between virtue and happiness by quoting Cicero’s *De republica*: “when a city excels in virtue, it is to be said to flourish” (*ep.* 91.3). On virtue and commonwealth, see *ep.* 155 and Dodaro’s discussion: Robert Dodaro, “Political and Theological Virtues in Augustine, Letter 155 to Macedonius,” *Augustiniana* 54 (2004): 431–74. Cicero presents the means to promote virtues in three ways: by imitating great men of virtue (*civ. dei.* 2.21; Cicero, *rep.* 2.69a), by institutions and laws (4.3a), and by education (3.7). In Cicero’s political philosophy, these civic virtues are summarized in justice. At the same time, Cicero argues that without piety, justice would not be possible (Cicero, *nat. d.* 1.4). As Cochrane rightly observes, therefore, justice and piety are foundational elements in Roman commonwealth for Cicero. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 41, 193. It should not be considered a coincidence that in his *Divine Institutes*, Lactantius, who is often called “the Christian Cicero,” devotes books 5 and 6 to pursuing true justice and true piety.

²⁹ Cicero, *rep.* 5.7. Here we see that Stoic ideas of natural order play a role in Cicero’s thought. Concerning Stoicism in Cicero, see Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 61–158. It should be noted that the historical background of Scipio’s dream is the political “disorder” caused by Gracchus; Scipio was called to make such chaos right (Cicero, *rep.* 6.11–12)

motions of the spheres, and based on reason.³⁰ Such cosmic order is also embodied in the political sphere: “So too the state, through the reasoned balance of the highest and the lowest and the intervening orders, is harmonious in the concord of very different people.”³¹ It is justice that brings harmony and concern among the people. Without justice, there never exists harmony, which is the highest value for the safety of the state. Therefore, justice is the hinge around which the fate of commonwealth swings; it turns out to be the most important qualification of both ruler and commonwealth. In order to make people happy, the ruler must be just.³²

The supremacy of justice in the commonwealth had been a shared idea among the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Cicero, however, differentiates his own view from theirs. Greeks, he argues, pursue an ideal in theory which has never existed, whereas the Romans have already established the perfect commonwealth in the time of Romulus.³³ Thus, the Roman republic is the best form of commonwealth and the most perfect state;³⁴ its people would lead a happy life. To prove this claim, Cicero devotes the entire second book to narrate his version of history of ancient Rome, which Greek

³⁰ Cicero, *rep.* 6.18.

³¹ *civ. dei.* 2.21; Cicero, *rep.* 2.69a.

³² Cicero, *rep.* 1.64.

³³ Cicero, *rep.* 2.21. Fortin notices Cicero’s realism. Fortin, “Justice as the Foundation of the Political Community,” 44. On the possibility of Plato’s ideal state, Julia Annas states: “Plato seems on the whole reconciled to leaving the just state as an ideal, whereas he wants individuals actually to improve by reading the *Republic* and using it as an ideal to which to conform themselves.” Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s “Republic”* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1981), 187.

³⁴ Cicero, *rep.* 1.70; 2.39, 66.

philosophers had never done in their political works.³⁵ Unlike Greek philosophers' theories, Cicero argues, the Roman commonwealth was devised (1) by many people (2) throughout Roman history.³⁶ In comparison with Greek idealism, therefore, the Roman commonwealth is much more practical and, therefore, superior. History plays a central role in justifying his political ideology.

In his narrative, Cicero depicts the founding fathers of Rome as just and pious rulers; Romulus was a "very just" (*iustissimus*) king,³⁷ and Numa, who invented religion to soften the character of the Romans, was a pious king.³⁸ The deification of Romulus strengthens Cicero's social vision even more by providing his political idea with a divine nature. Cicero tries to historicize the deification of Romulus. He claims that already in the time of Romulus people were enlightened so that they would not simply have believed any myth as true.

Thus one can see that Homer lived a great many years before Romulus, so that – since men and even the times themselves were educated – there would be little room for making anything up. Ancient times accepted stories that were often crude inventions, but this cultivated age generally ridicules and rejects everything that is impossible.³⁹

The deification of Rome's founder, historically "proved" by Cicero, implies that Rome was established by god, that its constitutions were divinely instituted, and that the gods of

³⁵ On this innovation of Cicero, see Zetzel, *De Re Publica*, 22–25; Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 149ff. Concerning Cicero's originality in comparison with Plato, see Zetzel, *De Re Publica*, 13–17. Regarding Cicero's historical account in *De republica*, see Holton, "Marcus Tullius Cicero," 166–7; O'Daly, "Thinking through History."

³⁶ Cicero, *rep.* 2.2.

³⁷ Cicero, *rep.* 1.58; 3.47.

³⁸ Cicero, *rep.* 2.26. On *pietas*, see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 196–212.

³⁹ Cicero, *rep.* 2.19.

Rome guard it.⁴⁰ Since Roman history is not myth but fact, therefore, the Roman commonwealth is eternal. The eternity of the Roman commonwealth is also confirmed by the eschatological reward of glory in Scipio's dream. Scipio is called god as well.⁴¹

All of these arguments of Cicero are meant to demonstrate that the Roman commonwealth is the best form of civic society to make the people happy; they justify limitless loyalty to the fatherland and function as a social bond to hold Romans together with a shared vision of *Roma eterna*. That is the reason why Cicero highly praises public life and considers it more important than the contemplative life. The service of the commonwealth is the best vocation; there should be no limit of loyalty to the fatherland.⁴²

In sum, the Ciceronian ideology is buttressed by a Ciceronian historical argument. On a micro level, Cicero "proves" that the founders of the Roman commonwealth were men of justice and piety and became gods. Thus, the Roman commonwealth itself is divinely constituted and, accordingly, eternal. On a macro level, Cicero demonstrates, the Roman commonwealth has developed this ideology and reached its maturity in actual history. For Cicero, the Roman commonwealth, in contrast to Greek idealism, is the one historically proven and justified. These two arguments on macro and micro levels are seamlessly integrated and create a peculiar political ideology that justifies the Roman commonwealth and promises peace and happiness within it. The Ciceronian vision nurtured a sense of pride and superiority in Augustine's Roman contemporaries. This

⁴⁰ Cicero, *rep.* 1.64.

⁴¹ Cicero, *rep.* 6.26.

⁴² For example, Cato, who is considered a model for civic virtue, "chose to be tossed" by public life (Cicero, *rep.* 1.1). Cato also can be seen as an approximate example of a Platonic philosopher-king who comes back to the cave to enlighten his people after he has found the true light. Plato, *rep.* 473c-e.

history – remembered, taught, and imitated – created a collective memory for the Romans.⁴³ In this respect, a Ciceronian historical narrative plays an important part in accounting for the national identity of its people.⁴⁴ History and its hidden political ideology form the value and ideals of people who cherish it.⁴⁵

*Augustine the Remembrancer*⁴⁶

The bishop discerned the danger of writing a history, or more correctly, of inventing a political ideology supported by a particular historical narrative.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Augustine did not entirely reject the Ciceronian ideology; rather, he utilized Cicero's framework as a stepping stone to ask what commonwealth really is and

⁴³ On the theory of collective memory, Karl-J. Hölkeskamp, "History and Collective Memory in the Middle Republic," in *A Companion to the Roman republic*, ed. Nathan Stewart Rosenstein and Robert Morstein-Marx (Malden: Blackwell, 2006). See also, Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Memory: History, Culture, and the Mind*, ed. Thomas Butler (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 97–113.

⁴⁴ Hölkeskamp argues: "This special historiography *alla Romana* thus served to strengthen the collective identity and legitimacy of a ruling class or meritocracy, based on an ideology of permanent, unflinching, and unerring service to the *populus Romanus* and the greatness of their Empire." Hölkeskamp, "History and Collective Memory," 479.

⁴⁵ In Augustine's time there was a *literary* conflict between the Christians and the pagans: "Our adversaries object to our giving preference over Cato to the holy Job or to other saints recorded in our literature" (*civ. dei.* 1.24). More often than not, pagan hostility to the Christian faith was expressed through the paragons in their history such as Cato and Regulus. While these pagan heroes were used for anti-Christian polemic, Augustine did not downplay the virtues of pagan heroes. Rather, for him both Christian and pagan literature deal with a certain way of life cherished by each party. In this regard, Job and Cato are considered embodiments of social value for each group, and therefore their stories must have been taught as a model to be imitated.

⁴⁶ This term is borrowed from Peter Burke. He says that one of the important roles of historians is that of a "remembrancer" who "reminds people of what they would have liked to forget." Burke, "History as Social Memory," 110.

⁴⁷ Here we find a striking parallel between Augustine and Peter Burke. Commenting on political use of history, Burke says: "we need of course to remind ourselves ... that these records are not innocent acts of memory, but rather attempts to persuade, to shape the memory of others." *Ibid.*, 101.

where the true commonwealth is to be found.⁴⁸ What he tried to drive out of the minds of the Romans was the delusion of the Ciceronian social vision rather than the idea that commonwealth had eudaemonistic value. It was apparent to the bishop that *On the Commonwealth* played a central role in providing a theoretical and historical basis for the political ideology among his contemporaries.⁴⁹ As we discussed in chapter two, the correspondences between Augustine and local Roman officials from 408 onward convinced the bishop of the danger of the Roman ideology.

Our focus in this section lies on the function of the second book of *On the Commonwealth*. In this book, Cicero provides a brief account of earlier Roman history from Romulus to the Decemvirate. This highly idealized version of the history of ancient Rome is carefully planned. In the next book, Cicero discusses justice and commonwealth in a theoretical dimension. In other words, Cicero historically demonstrates in book 2 that the Roman commonwealth is founded on justice and piety of its founders. Then, his theoretical proof follows. Book 2 gives reliability to Cicero's political program because history demonstrates that the Roman commonwealth is not in theory but has existed in history. The quasi-eschatological vision in book 6 is also based on the historicity of the perfect commonwealth in Roman history. Consequently, through the historical argument in book 2, *On the Commonwealth* exerts considerable political power and appeals to the

⁴⁸ In *De republica* Scipio says that virtues of the early Romans and their political functions were almost forgotten and even unknown to his [and Cicero's] own time (*civ. dei.* 2.21; Cicero, *rep.* 5.2a). Augustine's task in this respect can be said to be a recovery of that early Roman tradition of virtue politics. In this sense, Augustine can be considered both a thoughtful and accurate reader of Cicero and a critic of the philosopher. See Atkins, "Old Philosophy and New Power"; Brittain, "Augustine as a Reader of Cicero." Nevertheless, the bishop transforms the core virtue of the Ciceronian political ideology from theological perspective.

⁴⁹ O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 45–57; Vessey, Pollmann, and Fitzgerald, *New Essays on Augustine's "City of God,"*; Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine,* 6–10. Dodaro's focus is more on civic virtue while mine is on political ideology of Rome.

heart of Roman patriots. “High degree of loyalty,” as Sherwin-White observes, permeates a “considerable percentage of the provincial population.”⁵⁰

For Augustine, however, Romulus was not a god, nor was Rome a perfect commonwealth. The Ciceronian political program sharply conflicted with the Christian eschatological social vision. This problem led the bishop to a close engagement with Cicero’s presentation of Roman history in the first five books of the *City of God*.⁵¹ Augustine undermines the historical basis of the Ciceronian ideology by showing that the Ciceronian narrative was a product of political need and not what had really happened.⁵² Ironically, as O’Daly observes, Augustine shatters this social delusion by recycling Cicero’s own historical strategy. Augustine’s main argument against Ciceronian history concerns the injustice and impiety of Rome, on both micro and macro levels. Examining the micro level, we will focus on Augustine’s investigation of the first two founders of Rome –Romulus and Numa. On the macro level, we will look at how the bishop demonstrates that Rome has been fraught with injustice and impiety. These arguments serve the primary goal of the bishop. If there was neither justice nor piety, on either the micro or macro levels in Roman history, then the Roman commonwealth did not secure

⁵⁰ Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 468.

⁵¹ Despite his imitation of Plato’s *Republic*, Cicero’s use of history in *De republica* is distinctive. Admittedly, for Plato history was not considered a subject for education. History is also absent in Aristotle’s *Republic*. According to O’Daly, “Cicero’s use of Roman history in his dialogue influences Augustine’s understanding of history in general, and ...Augustine’s use of history as an element in his argument in the *City of God* both develops and reacts against Cicero’s method.” O’Daly, “Thinking through History,” 49.

⁵² In a personal dimension, for example, there seems to have been competition concerning the model for life. Augustine states that the adversaries of the church criticize Christians for giving preference over Cato to Job or to other saints in the Scriptures (*civ. dei.* 1.24). O’Daly rightly says that Augustine deals with history by attacking the Roman gods. O’Daly, *Augustine’s “City of God,”* 52.

the happiness of the people as Cicero had claimed it did. The following sections will discuss Augustine's refutation of the Ciceronian historical argument.

Re-historicizing the Deification of Unjust Romulus

It is undeniable that Romulus as the founder and the first king of Rome holds a central position in Cicero's historical narrative. Cicero presents Romulus as the embodiment of the perfect commonwealth. According to Cicero, Romulus is the creator of a new people.⁵³ Also, Romulus' deification is described as a divine confirmation that the Roman commonwealth is endowed with eternity and happiness.⁵⁴ In Cicero's portrayal, Romulus is an example of a just and wise king. The political implication of such portrayal is that since he was a virtuous ruler, he and his commonwealth enjoy eternal felicity.⁵⁵ He should be considered to fit the qualifications of a Platonic philosopher-king and is worthy to be emulated.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cicero, *rep.* 2.21. "Do you see that the judgment of one man not only created a new people but brought it to full growth, almost to maturity, not leaving it like some infant bawling in a cradle?" Cf. *civ. dei.* 2.21.

⁵⁴ In this respect, what matters is not to create a just society as in Greek idealism but to restore what their forefathers have already achieved. Cicero, *rep.* 6.12: "you [Scipio] will have to restore the commonwealth as dictator- if you escape the impious hands of those close to you."

⁵⁵ Zetzel, *De Re Publica*, 29. "Cicero believed that there is a direct relationship between the virtuous conduct of citizens and the successful governance of states." Concerning modification of cardinal virtues according to emperors' character, see Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 109. Romulus' deification without the body was used even for defending the Platonic ideal of non-bodily happiness (*civ. dei.* 22.4).

⁵⁶ *civ. dei.* 2.21; Cicero, *rep.* 2. 69a. "[t]here is really only one [responsibility of statesman], because practically all the rest are contained in this one alone: that he never cease educating and observing himself that he summon others to imitate him, that through the brilliance of his mind and life he offer himself as a mirror to his fellow citizens." Cf. Burke argues: "these mechanisms assist the assimilation of the life of the particular individual to a particular stereotype from the repertoire of stereotypes present in the social memory in a given culture." Burke, "History as Social Memory," 104.

The Ciceronian narrative of Romulus and other founding fathers of Rome is the most fundamental basis of Cicero's political ideology; Cicero describes them as an embodiment of Roman commonwealth. The Ciceronian account of Romulus and other founding fathers is neatly arranged; every event and figure perfectly endorses what Cicero says of the Roman commonwealth.⁵⁷ When comparing Cicero's own history with the histories of other pagan authors, it is clear that Cicero's omissions are intentional; whatever may not fit Cicero's purpose – to show the originality, divinity, and justice of the Roman commonwealth – is ignored, especially concerning the first two kings, Romulus and Numa. Cicero's omissions represent, therefore, an intended amnesia about whatever may cause any trouble to his political ideology.⁵⁸ Through the selection of certain events in history, Cicero made a "consistent" narrative for his political ideology.

The bishop sees such pseudo-history about Romulus still exercising great influence on his contemporary intellectuals. The Ciceronian account of Romulus and Ancient Rome became predominant "social memory" among the Roman patriotic intellectuals.⁵⁹ This communal memory of the past, as Peter Burke accurately points out, shaped the national identity of the Romans. Without overthrowing this notion in their minds, it would be impossible for Augustine to reorient his congregation's and the Romans' minds to Jesus Christ the true founder of the Heavenly Commonwealth.

⁵⁷ On the manipulation of history for political agenda, especially concerning the cases of Numa and Romulus, see Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 104–6.

⁵⁸ For example, Cicero's description of the geographical benefits of Rome keeps silence about its disadvantages. It was not an unusual description of the site of Rome. Donald Reynolds Dudley, ed., *Urbs Roma: A Source book of Classical Texts on the City and Its Monuments* (London: Phaidon Press, 1967), 5.

⁵⁹ The Romulean asylum is an example. Concerning this idea among pagans in the fourth century and Augustine's response, see Bruggisser, "City of the Outcast and City of the Elect." Hawkins also recognizes Augustine's use of the Romulean asylum to present the Heavenly City. Peter S. Hawkins, "Polemical Counterpoint in 'De Civitate Dei,'" *Augustinian Studies* 6 (1975): 100–1.

For this reason, Augustine criticizes the historicity of Romulus' deification and re-historicizes it.⁶⁰ It is not a fact but a belief, or more correctly, a political propaganda that forces the people Rome conquered to accept. Augustine reminds his readers what the Ciceronian account elides, for the sake of protecting the supposed divine identity of Rome's founder. The birth of the ruler was not divine or supernatural but rather dishonorable. According to Cicero, Romulus' mother was a "woodland beast."⁶¹ The bishop corrects the meaning of the expression; "she-wolf" refers to a harlot (18.21; 22.6).⁶² Also, Romulus died a human death (3.15). While Cicero regards a sudden darkening of the sun as a sign of the deification of Romulus,⁶³ Augustine responds that it is to be considered either "violence of the storm" or "sudden murder" (3.15).⁶⁴ Furthermore, Augustine points out that Cicero himself speaks of Romulus' human death in *Hortensius* (3.15). Ultimately, Romulus's death is compared with that of Christ, who was killed by the "impious brutality of the Jews" (3.15). While the former died as an unjust ruler, the latter died in order for the justification of His people.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Concerning Augustine's treatment with early Rome, see Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 74–83.

⁶¹ Cicero, *rep.* 2.4.

⁶² Cf. Cicero, *rep.* 2.4.

⁶³ Cicero, *rep.* 2.17.

⁶⁴ Sallust is the key authority for Augustine's counterargument. See, Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 631–49; O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 240–6; Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 47–52, 71–3.

⁶⁵ This is an interesting point for Augustine to make. In the Suetonian biographical tradition, as often in Latin literature, death was seen as the moment of truth; one reveals who one is at the moment of death. Catharine Edwards, "Introduction," in *Lives of the Caesars* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), xvii–xviii. Concerning Augustine's critic of euhemerism, especially that of Romulus, see *civ. dei.* 2.5, 15, 18; 3.4, 15; 8.18; 22.6, 10.

Beyond re-historicizing Romulus, the bishop exposes the injustice of Romulus. While Cicero presents the rape of the Sabine girls as a politically wise plan for the future,⁶⁶ the bishop judges that it cannot be out of “justice and morality” (2.17. Cf. 3.13).⁶⁷ Romulus’ murder of his twin brother is revisited as well (15.5). If Cicero’s logic is applied, Remus as a co-founder of Rome should have been deified like Romulus. However, Romulus killed his brother out of ambition and jealousy. This fratricide cannot be an act of justice.⁶⁸ Therefore, Augustine argues that the prosperity of Roman society was not because of justice but because of its injustice (4.15).⁶⁹

In book 18, Augustine makes a strong critique of the whole process of tradition-making. He reveals the “necessity” of inventing tradition for the national identity. Moreover, the Roman Empire enforced the various conquered nations and peoples to receive her own history as theirs; history was one of the ways to unify them under one Empire:⁷⁰

From then, it was necessary for posterity to preserve what they had received from their ancestors. Having imbibed such superstition in certain way through her mother’s milk, the city has grown so much to become an empire; from her summit, just as from a certain lofty place, she poured her own belief over the

⁶⁶ Cicero, *rep.* 2.12-13.

⁶⁷ Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 35–70.

⁶⁸ Augustine also deals with the injustice and the bloodshed of “pious Aeneas” who is the founder of the city of Rome (*civ. dei.* 3.14). Harding argues that Aeneas should be considered both priest and hero. *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁹ Paul Weithman, “Augustine’s Political Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 242.

⁷⁰ Burke, “History as Social Memory.” 106.

other people whom she has conquered. Certainly they did not believe [that], yet profess Romulus to be a god.⁷¹

Augustine knew that Ciceronian ideology is built on “historicity” of just and pious founders. By re-historicizing Cicero’s Romulus, the bishop undermines the Roman political ideal and its ethical appeal to Roman intellectuals.

We have been discussing Augustine’s critique of justice of the founders of Rome. the bishop effectively disproved one of the two foundations of the Roman commonwealth. Let us look at his critique of the other foundation: the piety of Rome.

Impiety of Roman Religious Leaders

The gods of Romans, Augustine argues, cannot bring happiness because they are not concerned with the right living of their worshippers; rather, their gods teach vices (2.18) and encourage people to imitate their perverted way of life (2.16).⁷² Augustine says theatrical performances re-presenting the myths and legends of the gods invite moral degradation among the people who watch and enjoy them (2.4-14). Moreover, the Roman gods have not punished acts of immorality in Rome’s history; Romulus’ murder of his brother was never condemned by the gods, though even Cicero considers the fratricide an unjustified and dishonorable crime.⁷³ Based on his judgment of the immorality of Rome’s gods, Augustine claims that the gods are in fact demons and unclean spirits.

⁷¹ *civ. dei.* 22.6 (CCL 48.821): *Tum deinde posteris seruire fuerat necesse quod acceperant a maioribus, ut cum ista superstitione in lacte quodam modo matris ebibita cresceret ciuitas atque ad tam magnum perueniret imperium, ut ex eius fastigio, uelut ex altiore quodam loco, alias quoque gentes, quibus dominaretur, hac sua opinione perfunderet, ut non quidem crederent, sed tamen dicerent deum Romulum.* Italics added.

⁷² Concerning Augustine’s critique of the gods of Romans, see Fortin, “Augustine and Roman Civil Religion.”

⁷³ Cicero, *off.* 3.10.41.

Then, the bishop investigates important figures in the Roman religious history: Numa, Scaevola, and Varro. First, he tackles the father of Roman religious rites. In Cicero's description, Numa Pamphilus is a "pious king" who introduced the Roman gods; he invented the Roman religious rites (3.9-12), which, according to Cicero, made the character of Romans softer.⁷⁴ By quoting pagan historians, however, Augustine uncovers what Numa's gods really were. The king was driven by perverse curiosity and recorded what he discovered about the secrets of demons. Since the senate of the time found the books of Numa extremely dangerous, it banned and finally burnt them (7.34-35). These facts indicate that Numa's gods were far from being true gods. In other words, from the beginning of Roman history, Rome worshipped demons, and her piety was nothing but superstition.

Next, Augustine debunks the deceit and manipulation behind the practice of Roman religion. Scaevola, the most learned pontiff, had already assessed that gods of Rome gave no benefit to the commonwealth; rather they brought moral degradation which was harmful to the Republic (3.9-12).⁷⁵ Scaevola also knew, Augustine argues, that gods were human beings and that they died as ordinary humans (4.27). Nevertheless, he did not want people to know the truth and hid it. The bishop asks: "what [has happened] finally to the life of the city under so many protector gods?"⁷⁶ While the Romans thought they would attain happiness and security through worshipping those

⁷⁴ Cicero, *rep.* 2.26-30. Under Numa's reign Rome is believed to have enjoyed peace for a long time. Augustine, however, claims that Numa's peace was not because the gods wished, but because neighboring peoples wished (*civ. dei.* 3.10-11).

⁷⁵ Concerning Scaevola, see O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 92.

⁷⁶ *civ. dei.* 3.13 (CCL 47.75): *quae postremo sub tot diis tutoribus uita ciuitatis?*

gods, what they really had was the “insignificant and deceptive happiness of this world.”⁷⁷

Finally, the bishop criticizes Varro’s dishonest position concerning religion. As the “most learned scholar,” Varro knew the falsity of the myths and legends of gods. He, however, kept silence on it. For him, myths and legends were often used for a certain political purpose. Therefore, from Varro’s perspective, it is beneficial to the community that brave men should believe themselves to be sons of gods, although it’s not true (3.4); myths and legends make people braver in their enterprise and actions. Augustine accuses Varro of abusing religion for socio-political benefit despite his doubt and unbelief. As we have already seen, such political propaganda is widely used to promote loyalty to the empire (22.6).

In the bishop’s historical research, all of these leading figures in Roman religious history knew that their gods were demons and that worshipping them was superstition. Therefore, Augustine’s point is that there has never been true piety in Roman history, nor do these demons have power to make people happy.

Misery of the Republic

While debunking the founders’ injustice and impiety on a micro level, on a macro level Augustine shows that the history of the Roman Republic had been fraught with many calamities and tragedies even before the birth of Christ. No doubt, this historical research is to remove the charge against Christians that the sack of Rome should be attributed to the Christian faith. Beyond offering a defense for the church, however,

⁷⁷ *civ. dei.* 3.17 (CCL 47.83): *fallacemque mundi huius felicitatem.*

Augustine's historical argument enables his readers to recognize the illusive happiness that the Ciceronian social vision promises. Augustine raises an incisive question:

Is it reasonable ... to want to boast of the greatness of the Empire when you cannot show the happiness of the people [who were] always in the middle of calamity of wars and in the blood of their fellow citizens or enemies?⁷⁸

The criterion to assess a commonwealth is not the promise of happiness but the actuality of happiness of the people.

There are, as Augustine admits, many illiterates who blame Christians for the sack due to their ignorance of the fact that Rome has been suffering various catastrophes and calamities all along. Yet some, while they know that this whole idea is delusion, conceal their knowledge and even support the idea (4.1). Augustine's historical argument uncovers what even pagan author knows, namely the unhappiness of Roman antiquity (3.17).⁷⁹ Augustine shrewdly brings the people's attention to pagan authors' accounts of the tragedies and miseries during the Golden era of the Roman Republic. Imitating Romulus, the kings of Rome were stained by the murder of their family members. That was, Augustine states, the life of the Romans under the kings in the "praiseworthy period" of the commonwealth, right down to the expulsion of the kings (3.15).

This is a completely different presentation of the Roman history from that of Cicero. The Roman republic was fraught with misery far from enjoying a glorious era.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *civ. dei.* 4.3 (CCL 47.100): *quae sit ratio ... cum hominum felicitatem non possis ostendere, semper in bellicis cladibus et in sanguine ciuili uel hostili, ... de imperii latitudine ac magnitudine uelle gloriari.*

⁷⁹ On Augustine's "forensic commentary", see Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," 134.

⁸⁰ *civ. dei.* 3.17. Cf. book 18: "misery of life." For Augustine, the Roman Republic is an example of the misery of the Earthly City.

Cicero's historical argument for the happiness of the people in the Roman commonwealth is to be refused. Although the bishop admits the limited good the state can bring, he flatly rejects the Ciceronian propaganda that Rome is a just, pious, and, therefore, happy commonwealth.

Commonwealth Unfaithful and Insecure

Piety and justice are two pillars of the Ciceronian promise that commonwealth brings civic happiness. Critique of Roman justice and piety through historical demonstration reveals the falsity of the Ciceronian social vision. Augustine's counterargument is consummated with the disillusionment of "eternally safe Rome" and refutation of "faith" in Rome.⁸¹ The ultimate challenge Augustine raises is this: Can we trust that the Roman commonwealth brings peace and happiness?

This question was often answered by pointing to the expansion of the Empire. If the gods are harmful as the bishop argues, how was it possible for Rome to exist and even become an empire? The bishop argues that the victory and expansion of territory of the empire was achieved through lust for glory,⁸² not through justice (5.12). It is a devastating claim that the Roman commonwealth is not based on justice but on lust for dominion.⁸³ If the Empire is run by lust, not by virtue, then the Ciceronian social vision loses the philosophical (and ethical) ground on which it is meant to stand, because there

⁸¹ Fortin, "Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine"; Fortin, "Justice as the Foundation of the Political Community."

⁸² Or through the fear of destruction (*civ. dei.* 1.30-31). Weithman, "Augustine's Political Philosophy," 243n58.

⁸³ Augustine borrows this analysis from Sallust. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 643-4; Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 61-83.

is no essential difference between the Empire and a band of pirates, as the head of pirate said before Alexander the Great (4.4).

Augustine observes that for Romans the pursuit of glory is the real motivation to seek virtue. Cicero himself admits this and even asserts to educate their leaders on glory.⁸⁴ Concerning the education of the first citizen of the state, Cicero argues that he should be nourished on glory, as many forefathers did great deeds “out of desire for glory.”⁸⁵ The pursuit of glory continues in the last book of *On the Commonwealth*. The elder Africanus instructs Scipio to pursue the eternal glory rather than the glory on earth because the earthly glory does not last long. The path to the eternal glory and honor is to “use your soul in the best activities,” and the “the best concerns are those that involve the safety of the fatherland; the soul which is aroused and exercised by them will fly more swiftly to this, its dwelling and home.”⁸⁶ While Romans achieved a certain degree of virtue, the ultimate goal of their moral pursuit was in fact to satisfy their desire for domination.

Augustine points out, however, that no virtue motivated by human glory can be true virtue.⁸⁷ The expansion of the Empire was aided by the wickedness (4.15), and virtues became a means to meet their pervert desire. Unlike in Cicero’s depiction of just

⁸⁴ *civ. dei.* 5.13; Cicero, *rep.* 5.9a.

⁸⁵ *cupiditate gloriae. civ. dei.* 5.13; Cicero, *rep.* 5.9a. Augustine acutely points out dynamics in which the pursuit of glory promotes virtues to a certain degree. The bishop acknowledges the usefulness of the pursuit of glory. *civ. dei.* 5.12-14.

⁸⁶ Cicero, *rep.* 6.29.

⁸⁷ *civ. dei.* 5.19; 19.25.

commonwealth and just war in Rome,⁸⁸ Rome has waged wars neither for safety nor for faith. Rather, she went to war to rule over other nations. In most of the cases, the cause of wars was not just (22.6).⁸⁹ Despite Cicero's defense for the justice of the Roman commonwealth, Rome has been driven by injustice and lust for dominion.

Ultimately, Augustine criticizes the promise of safety and eternity of the Roman commonwealth in the Ciceronian political thought. For Cicero, the commonwealth does not have death; it is immortal.⁹⁰

He [Cicero] held that the world was imperishable. It is certain, therefore, that he wished a city to take up arms in defense of that safety [*salus*] which ensures its continuance as a city in this world, as he says, for eternity.⁹¹

Cicero believes that faith (*fides*) is an essential condition for justice and piety because justice cannot exist without faith. He argues in his *De officiis* (*On Duties*) that "the foundation of justice is faith, and that is consistency and truthfulness of what is said and agreed."⁹² Faith was applied not just to domestic politics. When it comes to the Roman relationship with foreign allies, under the condition of faithfulness to the contract with

⁸⁸ "No war is waged by the best state except for faith or for safety." This fragment is found only in *civ. dei.* 22.6 (CCL 48.814): *nullum bellum suscipi a ciuitate optima, nisi aut pro fide aut pro salute.*

⁸⁹ Augustine is, Weithman claims, "exposing the operation of misdirected loves and showing how frequently they masquerade as nobler motives with the connivance of self-deception and ideology." Weithman, "Augustine's Political Philosophy," 249.

⁹⁰ Cicero, *rep.* 3.41.

⁹¹ *civ. dei.* 22.6; Cicero, *rep.* 3.24a.

⁹² Cicero, *off.* 1.8.23 (LCL 24): *fundamentum autem est iustitiae fides, id est dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas.* For the meaning and function of *fides* in Roman moral and political thoughts, Eleanor M. Atkins, "'Domina et Regina Virtutum': Justice and Societas in 'De Officiis,'" *Phronesis* 35 (1990): 258–89. Schofield, "Cicero's Definition of Res Publica," 77–81. Zetzel argues that unlike that of Plato, Cicero's justice is based on "external relationships of individuals or nations" as found in the case of Saguntines. Zetzel, *De Re Publica*, 14.

Rome, the allies could be a part of the Roman commonwealth, and their safety (or salvation: *salus*) was protected by Rome.

Augustine, however, disproves the promise of safety based on faith with the tragic fall of Saguntum in 218 B.C. that instigated the second Punic war. As an ally of Rome Saguntum enjoyed *fides* with Rome. Under Hannibal's attack, however, Saguntines could not pick up arms due to their "friendship" with Rome. Despite their desperation, they decided to keep their faith to Rome. Unfortunately, their decision brought them to complete destruction. The bishop calls Cicero to account:

Hence, it is right to ask whether the Saguntines behaved rightly when they preferred the devastation of whole of their own city to break the faith which they hold with the Roman commonwealth; for this reason, they are praised by every citizen of the earthly commonwealth. Yet, I do not see how they could subject themselves to this argument in which he [Cicero] says that no war is to be waged except for the sake of either faith or safety; he does not say what would be better to choose if both [faith and safety] are in the same danger that it is not possible to keep one without losing the other.⁹³

The case of Saguntum demonstrates that the Roman commonwealth cannot guarantee the safety of the one who is faithful to Rome. The Ciceronian ideal of the Roman polity, therefore, can bring neither safety nor happiness. The bishop uses this example twice in the *City of God* where he sharply challenges the Ciceronian ideology (3.20; 22.6).⁹⁴

⁹³ *civ. dei.* 22.6 (CCL 48.814): *Unde merito quaeritur, utrum recte fecerint Saguntini, quando uniuersam ciuitatem suam interire maluerunt quam fidem frangere, qua cum ipsa Romana re publica tenebantur; in quo suo facto laudantur ab omnibus terrenae rei publicae ciuibus. Sed quomodo huic disputationi possent oboedire, non uideo, ubi dicitur nullum suscipiendum esse bellum nisi aut pro fide aut pro salute, nec dicitur, si in unum simul periculum ita duo ista concurrerint, ut teneri alterum sine alterius amissione non possit, quid sit potius eligendum.*

⁹⁴ It should be noticed that for Augustine the demise of Saguntum is a key example that shows the impossibility of the Ciceronian ideology. Augustine considers it "very relevant to my argument" (*civ. dei.* 3.20), and revisits it in the last book (22.6). Also, the bishop seems to make a subtle distinction between Rome as a nation and a Rome as ideology; his project is to renew the former through destroying the latter.

The example of Saguntum indirectly answers Volusianus' question: Can the Christian faith bring safety and happiness to the commonwealth?⁹⁵ Augustine turns the table and reminds his suspicious reader of the fact that they cannot rely on the Empire to ensure their safety and happiness. This response anticipates the conclusion that faith should not be put in Rome but in Christ and his Heavenly Commonwealth; Rome could not be compatible with the Heavenly Commonwealth.

In the last book, Augustine concludes the *City of God* with the introduction to the true Heavenly Commonwealth which does not fail those who have faith: "But the safety of the City of God is such that it can be held, or rather acquired with faith and through faith."⁹⁶ Let us turn to Augustine's vision of the blessed Heavenly Commonwealth.

Augustinian Social Vision of Happiness

To summarize Augustine's historical argument, Augustine made two main points concerning the Roman commonwealth: (1) in terms of piety, the Romans worship demons and unclean spirits. (2) Instead of justice, there has been considerable injustice and vices in the Roman commonwealth and in its founding fathers. Both of the points lead to an anti-eudaemonistic conclusion: there has never been a commonwealth in Roman history by the Ciceronian definition, and therefore, the Roman state does not bring safety and happiness to its people.

In contrast to Cicero's political endeavor for the earthly commonwealth, the bishop's prime concern does not lie with an earthly kingdom. The Augustinian social

⁹⁵ *ep.*137.20. See also Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 471–2.

⁹⁶ *civ. dei.* 22.6 (CCL 48.814): *Salus autem ciuitatis Dei talis est, ut cum fide ac per fidem teneri uel potius adquiri possit.*

vision is deeply eschatological. The true happiness of the city will be given within the Heavenly Commonwealth, i.e. the Kingdom of God. The life on earth is, therefore, lived in the hope for such eschatological bliss: “the present reality without that hope is a false happiness and a great misery.”⁹⁷ Within this eschatological hope, the Earthly City and the state are relativized. They should not be mistaken as the ultimate goal although they maintain peace and justice to a limited extent (19.26).

Augustine’s eschatological social vision affects the political thought and practice of his contemporaries in two ways. First, it redefines justice and piety for the earthly political life in an eschatological perspective.⁹⁸ Second, it calls for a “hope” for the Heavenly Commonwealth rather than seeking perfect happiness in any earthly state. That is the ultimate purpose of Augustine’s intellectual engagement with Cicero. In short, Augustine’s eschatological social vision reorients our political life on earth within the ultimate hope for the completion of the Heavenly Commonwealth. In Augustine’s thought, the gospel and the Christian faith promise a genuine happiness of human society represented by *civitas*.⁹⁹

Piety, Justice, and Peace

⁹⁷ *civ. dei.* 19.20 (CCL 48. 687): *Res ista uero sine spe illa beatitudo falsa et magna miseria est.* Augustine writes Macedonius that the life of eternal blessedness is the reward of the pious, and that with the hope of gaining it, we lead this earthly life with endurance rather than with delight (*ep.* 155.4).

⁹⁸ Penelope Johnson argues that Augustine transformed pagan conception of virtue in three ways: intention (not action), motivation (not for glory, but for the love of God), and with regard to the goal (not earthly but eschatological *beatitudo*). Penelope D. Johnson, “‘Virtus’: Transition from Classical Latin to the ‘De Civitate Dei,’” *Augustinian Studies* 6 (1975): 121–2.

⁹⁹ Aristotle and most of the classical philosophers think that man’s happiness cannot be separated from the city. Augustine shares the same idea, and that is a reason why he has to start within a philosophical frame work. Concerning the classical ideal of commonwealth see, Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 74–82.

Beyond offering a defense for the Christian faith against pagan accusation, Augustine re-interprets the sack of Rome as an opportunity to seek true religion and the true commonwealth that will bring eternal happiness:

Therefore, the true Lord and Governor of all things chastised the Romans as well with mercy and showed to the worshippers, who are incredibly defeated, that those sacrifices [to the demons] are not necessary for the safety of the present world. Thus, those, who prudently listen rather than contending stubbornly, will not abandon the true religion because of the present necessity. And they will hold it with the most faithful expectation of great eternal life.¹⁰⁰

As we have discussed in previous chapters, the bishop argues that human beings have no capacity to produce happiness for two reasons: (1) human beings depend on God in attaining virtue. (2) human temporality cannot offer eternal happiness. If these points are the case, the Ciceronian vision, which is founded on the prime virtue of justice, cannot stand. Against the background of these limitations, the bishop shows the need of the gospel for the true happy commonwealth.

First, according to Augustine, virtues and consequent happiness can be achieved only through worshipping the true God. For the bishop, virtues are still an important medium to bring happiness, but, he argues, even virtues become vices unless they are based on the worship of the true God (19.25). In this respect, Augustine refuses the classical idea of a happy life through self-mastery that was also expected to produce happiness of the city.¹⁰¹ Rather, Augustine's argument is based on the Pauline

¹⁰⁰ *civ. dei.* 5.23 (CCL 47.160): *ita uerus dominus gubernatorque rerum et Romanos cum misericordia flagellauit, et tam incredibiliter uictis supplicatoribus daemonum nec saluti rerum praesentium necessaria esse sacrificia illa monstrauit, ut ab his qui non peruicaciter contendunt, sed prudenter attendunt, nec propter praesentes necessitates uera religio deseratur, et magis aeternae uitae fidelissima exspectatione teneatur.*

¹⁰¹ Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 380–98, 441–55. While Wetzel appreciates Cochrane's keen observation of Augustine's attitude toward philosophy, he criticizes Cochrane's "sweeping" thesis. Wetzel argues that Augustine's real target is the Stoics and their concept of

anthropology that human beings need an external aid to be happy (19.4).¹⁰² Virtues are given through the grace of God who is the source of all virtues. The only way to lead a virtuous happy life, therefore, is to cling to God:

For our good, on which philosophers greatly debate, is nothing but to stick to him, by whose incorporeal embrace alone, if it can be said so, intellectual soul is filled and fertile with true virtues.¹⁰³

This idea of human dependence diametrically opposes the pride and self-mastery in the classical ideal of virtuous life, but at the same time it gives an alternative hope.

According to the Augustinian understanding, happiness relies on God's grace, not on human endeavor. The bishop transforms ancient classical and philosophical virtue ethics aimed at happiness by redefining it from the Christian perspective.¹⁰⁴

invulnerability in ethics. James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 112–26. Harding's reading weights Augustine's engagement with Cicero so much that he nearly ignores another important dialogue with Porphyry and the Platonists. He mentions Neoplatonism in Augustine very briefly: Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 143–8. Dodaro also stresses Augustine's debate with Cicero, but his reading does not exclude the significance of Porphyrian influence in understanding the *City of God*. Dodaro, "Augustine on the Statesman and the Two Cities," 393–6.

¹⁰² TeSelle, *Augustine's Strategy as an Apologist*, 131nn58–9. Cf. *trin.* 4.10.13; 4.12.15. Concerning Pauline anthropology in Augustine's mind, see TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 247–8. Jerome would call Augustine "Second Paul." William H. C. Frend, "Review," *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991): 299.

¹⁰³ *civ. dei.* 10.3 (CCL 47.275): *Bonum enim nostrum, de cuius fine inter philosophos magna contentio est, nullum est aliud quam illi cohaerere, cuius unius anima intellectualis incorporeo, si dici potest, amplexu ueris impletur fecundaturque uirtutibus.* Also Cf. "we run to the Lord, we desire to be ruled by Him, suspend our own will on His, and by constantly clinging to Him we become one spirit with Him." *gr. et pecc. or.* 23.24 (CSEL 42.144): *ad Dominum currimus, ab eo nos regi cupimus, uoluntatem nostram ex eius uoluntate suspendimus, eique adhaerendo iugiter, unus cum illo efficimur spiritus.* This is a very important connection between Augustine's study of Paul (or Pelagian controversy) and his transformation (or evangelism) of the ancient culture.

¹⁰⁴ J. T. Muckle, "The 'De Officiis Ministrorum' of Saint Ambrose: An Example of the Process of the Christianization of the Latin Language," *Mediaeval Studies* 1 (1939): 63–80; Johnson, "Virtus": Transition from Classical Latin to the 'De Civitate Dei'; John Langan, "Augustine on the Unity and the Interconnection of the Virtues," *Harvard Theological Review* 72 (1979): 81–95; Rollen E. Houser, *The Cardinal Virtues: Aquinas, Albert and Philip the Chancellor* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004); Ernest Fortin, "The Political Thought of St. Augustine," in *Classical Christianity and the Political Order: Reflections on the Theologico-Political Problem*, ed. J. Brian Benestad (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 1–29.

In this respect, piety and faith become the foundation of all virtues (19.25). While criticizing the Empire for putting glory over justice, Augustine introduces biblical concept of justice as a true foundation for socio-political happiness. Using Cicero's idea that justice is to give everyone his due,¹⁰⁵ the bishop argues that the most important justice has not been done to God because the Empire does not worship Him, and worship is due to the true God (19.21). Therefore, the first step to attain justice is to worship the true God, and God will give His worshipper justice (or righteousness) through forgiving our sin.¹⁰⁶ Even after obtaining justice, however, one should remain dependent on the grace of God in order to maintain justice. Therefore, a just man is one who clings to God by prayer and, at the same time, follows God's command to love (19.27). Justice comes from piety to the true God.

Furthermore, this justice leads one to love his own enemies: "But the man who despises the judgment of those who praise him, despises their rash suspicion. But, if he is truly good, he does not despise [their] salvation because so great is the righteousness of one who has his virtue from the Spirit of God, that he loves even his own enemies!"¹⁰⁷ In other words, truly virtuous person, who worships the true God, comes to make peace with his enemies by loving them. The bishop continues: "and he loves [his enemies] so that he wants those who hate and disparage him to be reformed, so as to have them as sharers not

¹⁰⁵ Cicero follows Aristotle's definition. *eth. Nic.* 5.5.2.

¹⁰⁶ For the bishop, virtue "is the ordering of love." *civ. dei.* 15.22 (CCL 48.488): *definitio brevis et uera uirtutis ordo est amoris.*

¹⁰⁷ *civ. dei.* 5.19 (CCL 47.155): *Sed qui contemnit iudicia laudantium, contemnit etiam suspicantium temeritatem, quorum tamen, si uere bonus est, non contemnit salutem, quoniam tantae iustitiae est qui de spiritu Dei uirtutes habet, ut etiam ipsos diligat inimicos.*

in the earthly fatherland but in the heavenly fatherland.”¹⁰⁸ While the Roman commonwealth produces a fake peace, the Christian faith guarantees perfect peace not by destroying enemies but by loving and evangelizing them; such peace is founded on peace with God (19.27).

Second, to show the need for the gospel, the bishop also shows the limit and temporality of the peace to be found in the earthly commonwealth. Within the political dimension, peace is necessary for happiness; the happiness of society is founded on harmony among the people. In dealing with the destined ends of the two Cities (books 19-22) the bishop presents peace as an important goal of human life as well as of commonwealth (19.11-13). The bishop criticizes the Roman ideology of *pax Romana*.¹⁰⁹ True peace cannot be obtained on earth; it will be granted in the time of resurrection (19.27). It seems that Augustine views this Roman ideology of peace within the Pauline fourfold stage of salvation: *ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia, in pace*.¹¹⁰ The completion of the salvation is marked by the eternal peace, yet it will not be fulfilled within an earthly commonwealth.

Then, what would be the function of the earthly state? It should, Augustine thinks, imitate and reflect the justice and piety of the Heavenly Kingdom.¹¹¹ The earthly state

¹⁰⁸ *civ. dei.* 5.19 (CCL 47.155): *et ita diligat, ut suos osiores uel detractores uelit correctos habere consortes non in terrena patria, sed superna.*

¹⁰⁹ Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 141.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Sin will have no dominion over you. For you are not under the law but under grace* (Rom 6:14). Concerning the four stages, see *de. div. quaest* 66.3-7; *prop. ad. rom* 13-18; *ad. Simp.* 1. *enchi.* 31.118. Also, see Dodaro, “Iustitia” in *AugLex*. 872-3. On Augustine’s theological anthropology in the Latin Christian tradition, see J. Patout Burns, ed., *Theological Anthropology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1981), 11–9.

¹¹¹ Augustine warns Macedonius against the practice of virtue (merely) for the present life (*ep.* 155.10). Dodaro rightly observes: “In Augustine’s view, without the transformation of the political virtues

embodies the virtues and principles of the heavenly commonwealth. For instance, the bishop advises Macedonius that he should fix his mind on the heavenly commonwealth as he wears the belt of an earthly judge.¹¹² Nevertheless, Augustine makes sure to teach that this can be done only in a partial and imperfect way. Therefore, on one hand, the earthly state should not supersede the heavenly commonwealth, but on the other hand it reflects the splendor and glory of the heavenly state, depending on its faithfulness to the true commonwealth.

In line with Cicero, the bishop considers that keeping to the natural order established by God is a condition of peace; the peace between God and men comes from men's acceptance of the dominion and authority of God. Likewise, in order to keep peace, the soul should rule over the body, reason over vices (19.13-14, 25, 27).¹¹³ Therefore, the restoration of just order and its dominion at both micro and macro levels is required to maintain peace. Obstacles to this endeavor are pride and the pursuit of worldly glory because pride seeks to dominate in the place of God (19.12). Thus, pride breaks a just order between God and men and resists God's reign (19.23-24). On a political level, therefore, a city which does not worship the true God cannot be a just society, since God

through faith, hope, and especially love, the statesman would pursue a form of peace and prosperity devoid of the love of God as the supreme good." Dodaro, "Political and Theological Virtues in Augustine, Letter 155 to Macedonius," 440.

¹¹² *ep.* 155.17.

¹¹³ Not just Cicero, but also the classical idea of natural endowment of justice Cf. Cicero, *rep.* 3.36.

does not rule over it (19.24). In that city, even what looks virtuous turns out to be a vice! (19.25).¹¹⁴

By contrast, Christian emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius are happy princes because they believed in God, and God *justified* them through their faith (5.24). Augustine's example of these Christian emperors is often misunderstood as an endorsement of Christendom. As I suggested, however, the bishop regards Christian rulers and their states only from the eschatological perspective of *in pace*. From such a perspective, a Christian empire functions as a sign for the Heavenly Commonwealth,¹¹⁵ but is to be viewed as an imperfect reflection of it.¹¹⁶ The true Heavenly Commonwealth is yet to come. Until the fulfillment of the perfect peace in the City of God, we cannot find the perfect peace and happiness on earth.

Nevertheless, this does not lead to despair but faith and hope. In his letter to Macedonius, Augustine beautifully captured the essence of the earthly existence in eschatological hope of happiness: "Here steadfast piety, there everlasting happiness."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Cf. James Wetzel, "Splendid Vices and Secular Virtues: Variations on Milbank's Augustine," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32 (2004): 271–300. Some call Augustine's position "moral exclusivism" which means there are no virtues without worshipping God.

¹¹⁵ Augustine even says that the reason for the expansion of the Empire is to show that the citizen of the Heavenly City will be rewarded for his loyalty (5.16). In Augustine's view, even the pagan earthly state becomes a sign to the heavenly commonwealth

¹¹⁶ Fortin rightly states: "Because of the intractability of certain human situations, these principles must be diluted in order to become operative. What we end up with in such cases is a kind of lesser justice, better suited to the conditions of this life: *justitia minor huic vitae competens*." Ernest L. Fortin, "The 'City of God,'" in *Ever Ancient, Ever New: Ruminations on the City, the Soul, and the Church*, ed. Michael P. Foley, vol. 4, Ernest L. Fortin: Collected Essays (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 78. Concerning the relationship between the earthly City of God and the state, Peter Hawkins states: "the earthly City of God is leaven to the imperial lump, transforming the shadowy vestiges of truth within the fallen community into the redeemed image of life together." Hawkins, "Polemical Counterpoint," 106.

¹¹⁷ *ep.* 155.5 (CSEL 44.435): *Hic constantissima pietas, ibi sempiterna felicitas*. Also, Augustine writes that what we seek on earth has been promised only in heaven (*en. Ps.* 48.6).

Let us turn to the eschatological vision of the city that the bishop powerfully presents at the end of the work.

Power and Splendor of the Heavenly Commonwealth

Cicero's Roman ideology in *On the Commonwealth* is consummated with *Scipio's Dream*, which corresponds to the "Myth of Er" in Plato's *Republic*.¹¹⁸ This dream maximizes Cicero's appeal to Roman patriotism and results in a strong this-worldly orientation. The core of the dream is heavenly reward; if one takes on a noble vocation of public life for the sake of commonwealth, it will lead the one to the heavenly community filled with eternal bliss. In this heavenly realm all the heroes and leaders such as Romulus and Numa are found as gods.

Considering Romulus' socio-political role in the Roman society, it is not surprising that Augustine continues to compare the founders of each commonwealth: Romulus and Christ. For the Romans, allegiance to Romulus and the Roman commonwealth cannot be divided, and that was one of the major obstacles for them to embrace the Christian faith. Christianity was alleged to conflict with the happiness and safety of their state, and that was the question of Volusianus as we have seen in chapter two.¹¹⁹ In response to such a question, Augustine answers that if the Empire accepts and

¹¹⁸ Macrobius, *somn* 1.1.8-2.5. Dodaro, "Augustine on the Statesman and the Two Cities," 393–6. Concerning Augustine's engagement with the *Dream of Scipio*, see Harding, *Augustine and Roman Virtue*, 172n54. Harding takes a negative position concerning Augustine's direct challenge to Plato's Myth of Er. See Jean Doignon, "Le Libellé du jugement de Cicéron sur le mythe d'Er selon le témoignage d'Augustin," *Rivista di filologia* 121 (1993): 419–26. Barnes suggests investigating Macrobius' pagan interpretation of Cicero's *De republica* as a background of the *City of God*. Barnes, "Aspects of the Background of the 'City of God,'" 78–80. Concerning Macrobius' commentary on the Dream of Scipio, see Alan Cameron, "The Date and Identity of Macrobius," *Journal of Roman Studies* 56 (1966): 25–38; William H. Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

¹¹⁹ *epp.* 136.2; 138.9; 137.20.

learns Christian justice and virtues, it will now enrich this present world with its own happiness and ultimately ascend to the heights of eternal life to reign in felicity. The bishop, at the same time, does not lose sight of the reality of the Empire: Christ's servants should expect to endure the wickedness of an utterly corrupt state; by their endurance they will secure their place in the Heavenly Commonwealth (2.19).

Both of the Heavenly and the Roman commonwealths claim that they enjoy perfect and eternal happiness. Yet in the last book, the bishop describes the glory and happiness of the Heavenly Commonwealth in eschatological hope. Those who were familiar with Cicero's work would have not missed that Augustine's vision of the Heavenly City in the last book is indeed an alternative to that of Cicero.¹²⁰

As Cicero did for the ideology of the earthly commonwealth, the bishop desires that the happiness and peace (or safety) of the heavenly commonwealth fascinate the minds of Roman intellectuals. At the same time, Augustine's subtle distinction between the Christian empire and the Kingdom of God liberates certain Christians from the illusion of the Eusebian identification of the Empire with the Kingdom of God, which has been already crumbled by the sack of Rome.¹²¹ His ultimate purpose is to reorient the minds of the Romans to the faith of the heavenly commonwealth of God. For this purpose, Augustine makes exhortation soon after the sack of Rome:

Choose now which one you will follow so that you may be praised not in yourself but in the true God who has no error. For at that time the glory of the people was present to you, but with hidden judgment of divine providence the true religion was absent for you to choose. Awake, it is day! ... To this country we are inviting

¹²⁰ Dodaro, therefore, argues: "what is at stake for Augustine's conception of civic virtue is nothing less than a reformation of the Roman heroic ideal away from the illusions of moral victory and self-possession which it promotes." Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 247.

¹²¹ On this issue, see chap. 6.

you; and we exhort you to add yourself to the number of the citizens of the country whose asylum¹²² is the true remission of sins.¹²³

The end of the *City of God* describes the perfect peace and reward that we will receive in the Heavenly Commonwealth, but Augustine begins the last book with the comparison between Romulus and Christ. Romulus' commonwealth could not protect the Sanguntines while they kept the faith of Rome (22.6). This tragic failure of the Roman commonwealth challenges the reliability of Rome. In contrast, Augustine purposefully imitates Ciceronian historical argument in order to show that the Heavenly Commonwealth holds true power to keep its promise.

There are two evidences for that: First, all the biblical prophecies have been fulfilled in history (22.7). Second, numberless miracles among Christians vindicate the truthfulness of their faith. The bishop reports a long account of miracles (22.8). While this miracle account is often considered a digression, indeed it demonstrates the power and actuality of the Christian faith to bring eternal happiness. Augustine does not lose the chance to criticize Cicero's claim for the deification of Romulus. The promise of safety and peace in the Roman commonwealth is deception. Augustine encourages his audience to have faith in Christ for "miracles attest but the faith" (20.9).

¹²² Philippe Bruggisser argues: "For the bishop of Hippo, the asylum of Romulus is only a preliminary phase in the emergence of the Heavenly City, the shadow of an institution that will attain its perfection in the city of the elect." Bruggisser, "City of the Outcast and City of the Elect," 101.

¹²³ *civ. dei.* 2.29 (CCL 47.64): *Nunc iam elige quid sequare, ut non in te, sed in Deo uero sine ullo errore lauderis. Tunc enim tibi gloria popularis adfuit, sed occulto iudicio diuinae prouidentiae uera religio quam eligeres defuit. Expergiscere, dies est ... Ad quam patriam te inuitamus et exhortamur, ut eius adiciaris numero ciuium, cuius quodam modo asylum est uera remissio peccatorum.*

Augustine writes to Marcedonius after the latter has read the first three books of the *City of God*. He describes Marcedonius as "panting for God's Heavenly Commonwealth" (*ep.* 155.1). For Augustine this heavenly state is filled with eternal joy and perfect blessedness, and such felicity is awarded those who led a pious life on earth. In this letter, Augustine criticizes philosophers, especially Cicero, regarding a way to attain beatitude.

And there will be a reward, as Cicero describes in *Scipio's Dream*. In that City, Augustine presents, there will be the true glory, true honor, and the true peace, which Rome could not provide for her people and allies. But the ultimate happiness will be rewarded to the people of God, and that will be God Himself! (22.30). He will be the complete satisfaction to every honorable desire and longing. No doubt the true peace, which the Roman commonwealth has failed to bring, will be given to this Heavenly City. Peace will permeate every aspect of human life: peace in ourselves, peace among ourselves, and peace with God (22.29).

Only in this Heavenly Commonwealth will piety and justice be perfectly recovered, and our desire for eternal happiness will only be satisfied within the Kingdom of God which is founded on true justice and true piety. Therefore, in the Heavenly Commonwealth there will not be a tragedy like the case of Saguntum; safety and faith perfectly work together, and “true justice does not exist except in that commonwealth whose founder and ruler is Christ.”¹²⁴

Conclusion

Due to his intense engagement with the Ciceronian political vision, the bishop is often regarded as a political philosopher. It should be noted, however, that the reason for this engagement was not because his old fascination with Cicero had been renewed; rather it was because he recognized the stronghold taking captive of the mind of Romans with the idea of the eternal Roman commonwealth. As with the Roman intellectuals who delayed baptism, many Roman intellectuals who subscribed to the Ciceronian political

¹²⁴ *civ. dei.* 2.21 (CCL 47.55): *uera autem iustitia non est nisi in ea re publica, cuius conditor rectorque Christus est.*

ideology, put absolute value on the Roman commonwealth. For them, there could be no social happiness without the commonwealth. The enchantment with this social happiness had to be broken so that Roman intellectuals might be led to the true Heavenly Commonwealth and its happiness and peace. Within this philosophical and political milieu, the bishop investigates the very foundation of the Ciceronian social vision and disproves it from within. But at the same time, Augustine seeks to make his audience move from this disillusionment ultimately to the hope and promise of the Heavenly Commonwealth where true justice and true piety can be found.¹²⁵

For this evangelistic purpose, Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy proves to be effective.¹²⁶ Augustine was wise enough to make use of the Ciceronian vision so that he could show that it will be completed through the Christian faith. Cicero's political thought is not rejected merely as a false vision; it paves a way for its subscribers to understand the biblical social vision in their own terms. The goal, method, and foundations of Cicero's idea of commonwealth become stepping stones to highlight beauty and truthfulness of the Christian social vision.¹²⁷ Within Augustine's engagement with Cicero, the socio-political dimension of the gospel emerges; the Christian truth encompasses every aspect of human life from spiritual to socio-political matters. At the

¹²⁵ On Augustine's protreptic intention in book five, see John von Heyking, *Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 157–8.

¹²⁶ While Cicero is different from Plato in his political program, he inherited the basic eudaemonistic orientation of Plato's *Republic*. The purpose of governing the city is to promote the happiness of the people. On Plato's political intention, see Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 58–60.

¹²⁷ In this regard, we need to be careful about accepting Hagendahl's conclusion: "Augustine, almost without exception, is opposed to the views expressed in *De re publica*." Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 2: 553. Eleanor Atkins counts Augustine as more Ciceronian than his pagan contemporaries. She argues that Augustine's contemporaries read Cicero superficially and that the "antiquarian learning of the pagan aristocrats of Rome in the late fourth century has been overrated." Atkins, "Old Philosophy and New Power," 266.

same time, the engagement reveals the limitation and failure of the Ciceronian vision and gives an ultimate solution to that problem. In short, Augustine's strategy intends to overcome the Ciceronian philosophy from within and complete it with divine revelation and power. This radical transformation of the social vision is succinctly expressed: "The Heavenly City is fairer beyond comparison [than Rome]." ¹²⁸

Finally, Augustine should be considered a faithful reader of ancient philosophy. His eudaemonistic project is indeed a restoration of the original goal of ancient political philosophy: happiness for the city and its people. Cicero, though a brilliant guide of the state, did not succeed in giving a right answer to the question of political philosophy. It is the Christian faith alone that can meet the city's longing for happiness. *Scipio's Dream* is replaced by a renewed social vision that is vividly promoted in the last of book of the *City of God*. Augustine's eschatological social vision encourages his contemporaries to pursue the justice of God and enter His heavenly commonwealth. ¹²⁹ Although he does not present a political theory as some might expect, the bishop in fact provides one of the most powerful social visions through the Ciceronian political ideology, ¹³⁰ so that those

¹²⁸ *civ. dei.* 2.29 (CCL 47.65). *Incomparabiliter suprema est ciuitas clarior*. Augustine also states that the glory of the City of God shall shine forth all the more brightly when compared with the other city (1.35).

¹²⁹ *ep.* 2*.3.

¹³⁰ However, there comes a crucial question: "Why city rather than kingdom?" See Eugene TeSelle, "The Civic Vision in Augustine's 'City of God,'" *Thought* 62 (1987): 268. Fortin rightly observes: "The *City of God* depicts the happiest condition of humankind as one in which small cities and kingdoms exist side by side in neighborly concord." Fortin, "Justice as the Foundation of the Political Community," 43. It is probably because of Augustine's own witness to the violence and injustice of the Roman Empire (*civ. dei.* 19.5). He seems to think that on earth, it is better to have small kingdoms competing with one another than one dominating empire.

who were persuaded by this vision, would turn to the True King Jesus and begins to live as the citizens of the Heavenly Commonwealth on earth.¹³¹

¹³¹ Hawkins succinctly expresses the essence of Augustinian political vision in close connection with his evangelistic orientation: "Therefore the earthly City of God is leaven to the imperial lump, transforming the shadowy vestiges of truth within the fallen community into the redeemed image of life together." Hawkins, "Polemical Counterpoint," 106.

CHAPTER FIVE

Beatific Vision in the Resurrected Body

Neoplatonism greatly influenced Augustine after his encounter with the “Platonist books” (*libri platoniorum*) in Milan.¹ It is very hard to understand his thought without Neoplatonism. Henry Chadwick argues:

Although the *Retractationes* show Augustine looking back with embarrassment and regret on some of the Platonisms he admitted to his early writings, the truth is that a large part of the philosophical side of his mind cannot break free from the Platonic tradition. It is the air he and all his educated contemporaries breathe.²

¹ Both Plotinus and Porphyry claimed to be disciples of Plato, and Augustine did not distinguish Neoplatonism from Platonism as we do; he considered Plotinus and Porphyry simply “Platonists.” The actual contents of any Platonist books Augustine read cannot be certain. However, it seems that the young Augustine read Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Porphyry. On this issue, see Pier Franco Beatrice, “‘Quosdam Platoniorum Libros’: The Platonic Readings of Augustine in Milan,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 43 (1989): 248–81; James J. O’Donnell, *Confessions: Commentary on Books 1-7*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 413–26.

² Henry Chadwick, “Christian Platonism in Origen and in Augustine,” in *Origeniana Tertia*, ed. Richard P. C. Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Roma: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1985), 218. It has long been debated whether and how much Augustine’s Platonism is from Plotinus (Paul Henry, Robert J. O’Connell), or from Porphyry (Willy Theiler), or from both. However, the results are not satisfactory mainly due to the complicated nature of the sources. Most of current scholars agree on Porphyry’s significance in Augustine’s thought. A detailed discussion concerning the source of Augustine’s Platonism is beyond the scope of this chapter. Regarding this issue, see brief overviews of the scholarly discussions, Frederick van Fleteren, “Porphyry,” *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 661–3; Robert Crouse, “‘Paucis Mutatis Verbis’: St. Augustine’s Platonism,” in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2000), 37–50.

For a couple of reasons, the current chapter focuses on Augustine’s engagement with Porphyry rather than that with Plotinus: (1) Augustine does not engage with Plotinus in the *City of God* as much as with Porphyry. The *Enneads* is never mentioned by its title although Augustine must cite Plotinus’ *On the Beautiful* (*civ. dei.* 10.16; *enn.* 1.6.7.32-34). O’Daly argues: “Despite these allusions to, and echoes of, Plotinus, Augustine never engages with the broader issues of Plotinus’ philosophy.” Also, it is doubtful that Augustine read Plotinus extensively. O’Daly, *Augustine’s “City of God,”* 258. In contrast, Augustine intensely engages with two of Porphyry’s texts: *On the Return of the Soul* and *Philosophy from Oracles*. (2) Porphyry was a major critic of the Christian faith, and thus, his thought was more relevant to Augustine’s audience and to his evangelistic purpose of the *City of God*. As we will see, Augustine mentions the followers of Porphyry in work and seeks to persuade to turn to Christ (*civ. dei.* 10.29). (3) It seems that Augustine genuinely views Porphyry as a seeker of truth and happiness. In comparison with Plotinus,

Even in his last major work the *City of God*, the Neoplatonist Porphyry remains as a major interlocutor of the aged bishop.³

Neoplatonism had once provided the young Augustine with a conceptual springboard to escape Manicheanism. Augustine even confesses that God brought those books to him.⁴ He finds parallels between Platonist books and the Bible and sees some of the Christian truth within the Platonic philosophical framework. Nevertheless, he sees the limitation of Neoplatonism; the Platonists' books do not contain the Incarnation of Christ.⁵ Despite the contribution of these books to his own spiritual progress, the bishop knew that Platonism should be distinguished from the true way to salvation; the two ways should not be confused. Moreover, as we have seen in previous chapters, the bishop gradually recognized that Platonism caused serious philosophical problems to his contemporaries that hindered their conversion to the Christian faith. Through his own intellectual and spiritual odyssey, Augustine was sympathetic to those who grappled with rational problems that kept them from coming to faith in Christ.

Porphyry fit to the evangelistic purpose of the bishop far better. For Augustine's readers, it would be easier to identify themselves with Porphyry the seeker of happiness rather than with Plotinus who was portrayed by Porphyry as almost a superhuman or sage. For example, Porphyry reported the oracle of Apollo at the death of Plotinus: "Daemon, once a man, but now attaining the more divine lot of daemons, since you have loosed the bond of human necessity... But now that you have put off the tabernacle and have left the tomb of your daemonic soul, you have already entered the daemonic band that exhales winds of delight." v. *Plot.* 22 (trans. Mark J. Edwards).

³ It has been believed that the bishop, waiting for return to his fatherland, meditated, allegedly, on Plotinus' *Enneads* along with penitential psalms (Possidius, v. *Aug.* 28, 31). However, Augustine's meditation on Neoplatonic books at his deathbed has been successfully challenged by James J. O'Donnell, "The Next Life of Augustine," in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 218–23.

⁴ *conf.* 7.9.13.

⁵ *conf.* 7.9.14.

In the *City of God*, the bishop engages with the followers of Platonism concerning happiness on a contemplative level. As we have discussed, we cannot simply say that the *City of God* is merely intended to respond to pagan criticism of the church. It is deeply concerned with winning over the minds of Roman intellectuals. Such an evangelistic concern, however, has not drawn sufficient scholarly attention.

Over several decades, scholars have been discussing whether Augustine is a Platonist or a Christian, or how much he is of either. While these are important questions to ask, the bishop's relationship with Neoplatonism has been often discussed in terms of "apology" in a narrow sense, or on a highly philosophical level.⁶ The evangelistic purpose of his engagement with this pagan philosophy has been left as a lacuna. The *City of God*, however, launches full-scale engagement with Platonism for such a purpose. Augustine mentions that there were a number of "our people," supposedly Christians, who had considerable affection for Plato (22.28). Under the influence of Platonism, they were grappling with serious rational problems in the Christian beliefs such as the bodily resurrection and the miracles in the Bible.

Augustine's strategy for these intellectuals is characterized by three key words: rational, eudaemonistic, and evangelistic. He answers doubts and suspicions regarding the Christian faith with rational arguments, especially by using Neoplatonic ideas and

⁶ Willy Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin* (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1933); Paul Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident* (Louvain: Bureaux, 1934); Mary P. Garvey, *Saint Augustine: Christian or Neo-Platonist?* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1939); Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1968). Probably one of the best explanations of Porphyry in Augustine's thought is TeSelle, "Porphyry and Augustine." Also see recent scholarly interest in Porphyry George E. Karamanolis and Anne D. R. Sheppard, eds., *Studies on Porphyry* (London: University of London, 2007); Bochet, "The Role of Scripture"; Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 150–247.

framework.⁷ Beyond giving a passive defense, however, the bishop proves the Christian faith to be the single way to happiness in order to lead his audience to the faith. For the sake of their conversion, the real issue at stake for the bishop was how to resolve these rational problems and prove Christianity to be the sole way to the true happiness that Platonism cannot guarantee.

The present chapter argues that the ultimate goal of Augustine's engagement with Porphyry is not so much refutation as evangelism for his contemporary intellectuals.⁸ For this purpose, Augustine frames both Christianity and Platonic/Porphyrian philosophy within the common pursuit of happiness, and shows how the Christian faith completes the philosophical quest for happiness, i.e. the vision of the One.⁹ The chapter will investigate Augustine's way of portraying Porphyry as a seeker of happiness rather than an enemy of the Church. This unusually favorable portrait will reveal Augustine's eudaemonistic approach to setting up his discussion with the philosopher and his followers. Given the eudaemonistic framework, we will examine how Augustine persuades his intellectual audience to accept the Christian way to happiness through two major discussions with

⁷ For example, as Simmons rightly observes: "Porphyry argued that Christians were unable by clear demonstration to provide evidence of the truth of the things promised in their faith. In *cons. evan.* 1.30.46, Augustine uses Psalm 19:6 to prove that the things promised therein about the name of Christ spreading to all nations are now set forth as accomplished facts in the clearest light." Michael B. Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 274–8, esp. 276. See also Augustine's alternate attempt to persuade Platonists with rational argument: *ver. rel.* 3.3–4.7.

⁸ As James O'Donnell mentions, study of the relationship between Augustine and Porphyry is one of lacunae in recent Augustinian scholarship after Pierre Courcelle, Robert O'Connell, and Goulven Madec. James J. O'Donnell, "Envoi: After Augustine?," in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 509–10.

⁹ Both Chadwick and Louth argue that Augustine, by comparison with the Greek Christian authors, integrated Neoplatonism with Christian thought far more. Chadwick, "Christian Platonism in Origen and in Augustine"; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

Porphyry concerning the universal way of salvation and the vision of God. The chapter will reveal the complexity of Augustine's engagement with Porphyry. On the one hand, the bishop points out faults in the Porphyrian teachings and corrects them. On the other hand, however, by putting the Christian faith within the Porphyrian framework, he proves the Christian faith to be the universal way to the vision of God so that his audience would be persuaded to turn to Christ.

Porphyry Seeker of Happiness

Porphyry (232-305), an esteemed student of Plotinus and a brilliant philosopher on his own, was one of the greatest critics of the church, and the Christian emperors often ordered the destruction of Porphyry's writings.¹⁰ As Robert M. Berchman describes, however, "the figure of Porphyry cast such a chill shadow that for seven centuries Christian bishops and emperors did not let Porphyry out of their sight for a moment."¹¹ Indeed, Porphyry has been depicted as the fiercest and the most formidable enemy of the Christian faith. Even after his death it was never an easy task for Christian apologists to cast out the specter of Porphyry. Porphyry's attack on Christianity covered a broad range of subjects and topics.¹² Compared with other accusers of the church he was considerably

¹⁰ Constantine ordered Arius' writings to be burned as well as Porphyry's, and Theodosius II and Valentinian III also issued an edict to burn Porphyry's books: Socrates, *HE* 1.9.30; *cod. Theod.* XVI 5, 66; *Edictum Theodosii et Valentiniani* (Collect. Vatic.138) (17 Feb. 448). For the collection of the edicts and decrees against Porphyry, Andrew Smith, ed., *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta* (Stuttgartiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1993), 30–3. Cf. María Victoria Escribano Paño, "Heretical Texts and Maleficium in the Codex Theodosianus (CTh. 16.5.34)," in *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005*, ed. Richard L. Gordon and Francisco Marco Simón, vol. 168, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 105–40.

¹¹ Robert M. Berchman, ed., *Porphyry "Against the Christians"* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 114.

¹² Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 126–63. See recent studies concerning Porphyry's *Against Christians*: Cook, *The*

versed in the Scriptures; he could point out a number of passages that appeared irrational and inconsistent to a rational mind. Even in the fourth and fifth centuries Christians still had to deal with questions and mockeries based on Porphyry's criticisms. Jerome wrote a commentary on Daniel around 407 in order to refute Porphyry's criticisms.¹³ The purpose of Augustine's *De consensu evangelistarum* (*On Agreement among the Evangelists*) was to defend the biblical authority against Porphyry's potentially devastating critiques.¹⁴ It was inevitable, therefore, for him to make a response, when Porphyry's attacks on Christianity were employed to support pluralistic Roman piety and his philosophy attracted many Roman intellectuals.¹⁵

Many Christian authors directed tirades at Porphyry. Jerome, for example, called him "a scoundrel, an impudent fellow, a vilifier, a sycophant, a lunatic and a mad dog."¹⁶ Given the harsh and hostile attitude among the church fathers toward the philosopher, Augustine's dealing with Porphyry is unique. In contrast to the Christian authors in the previous generations, the bishop treated him with considerable respect. He was even

Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism, 159–247; Berchman, *Porphyry "Against the Christians,"* 123–225; Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 47–9.

¹³ J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 298. Jerome hardly gives verbal quotation of Porphyry and heavily depends on his predecessors, which indicates that his knowledge of Porphyry is secondhand. See Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 196–7.

¹⁴ Berchman, *Porphyry "Against the Christians,"* 155–90.

¹⁵ Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 306.

¹⁶ Recited from Ibid. Concerning the Christian portrayal of Porphyry, see Markus Mertaniemi, "'Acerrimus Inimicus': Porphyry in Christian Apologetics," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, ed. Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Maijastina Kahlos (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009), 100–7. Unfortunately, Mertaniemi fails to notice that Augustine sees Porphyry in a highly positive light for his evangelistic purpose.

favorable to the philosopher.¹⁷ He openly utilized the thoughts of this chief enemy of Christians.¹⁸ In Augustine's survey of various philosophical positions in books 8-10 of the *City of God*, the bishop proves that the Platonism of Plotinus and Porphyry is the most advanced philosophy, in terms of the attainment of happiness (8.12). And this is the reason that Augustine chose Porphyry as his interlocutor:

And this is what the Platonists, the distinguished and the most prominent among philosophers, think; and [they are those] with whom we decided, due to their excellence, to investigate the very question of whether worship of many gods would be useful to attain the blessed life after death.¹⁹

Interestingly, the bishop portrays Porphyry as a genuine seeker of true happiness. Porphyry himself states in his *De abstinencia ab esu animalium* (*On Abstinence from Killing Animals*) that the goal of his philosophy is the attainment of happiness, i.e. contemplation:

The contemplation is happiness for us ... our end is to achieve the contemplation of that which really is, and this achievement brings about, so far as our capacity allows, the joining of contemplator and contemplated. For the return is to one's real self, nothing else; and the joining is with one's real self, nothing else. And one's real self is the intellect, so the end is to live in accordance with the intellect.²⁰

¹⁷ Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 301.

¹⁸ Contrary to Eusebius, who opposed Porphyry while also being influenced by him. Concerning Eusebius' hidden use of Porphyry, see Mark Smith, "A Hidden Use of Porphyry's History of Philosophy in Eusebius' 'Praeparatio Evangelica,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 494–504.

¹⁹ *civ. dei.* 9.1 (CCL 47.249-50) *atque hoc Platonici, praecipui philosophorum ac nobilissimi, sentiunt, cum quibus uelut cum excellentioribus placuit istam examinare quaestionem, utrum cultus plurimorum deorum prosit ad consequendam uitam beatam quae post mortem futura est.* Augustine also states that he is dealing with those who prefer their gods to the God of Christians. *civ. dei.* 10.18.

²⁰ Porphyry, *abs.* 1.29 (trans. Gilian Clark). On Augustine's assessment of Porphyry, see Andrew Smith, "Porphyrian Studies Since 1913," in *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt: Geschichte Und Kultur Roms Im Spiegel Der Neueren Forschung*, ed. W. Haase, Joseph Vogt, and Hildegard Temporini, vol. 36.2, Pt.2 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1972), 769n325; Gillian Clark, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 5n19. While Simmons receives Augustine's presentation of Porphyry as authentic and accurate, Clark and Johnson think that Augustine manipulates

In his quest for happiness, however, Porphyry did not blindly follow his masters. For example, he refused to accept the authority of Plato as well as that of his own master Plotinus concerning their view of the soul's transmigration (10.30). He explored beyond the boundary of the Platonic tradition. The philosopher took a journey to the Chaldean region in order to obtain their wisdom and consult their oracles (10.27).²¹ Also, in his letter to the Egyptian priest Anebo, Porphyry asks of the "way to happiness according to Egyptian wisdom."²²

Such unceasing search for happiness, according to Augustine's assessment, draws Porphyry closer to the true way to happiness, i.e. Christianity, than any philosopher. From the outset of the *City of God*, Augustine highlights the similarities between the Christian teachings and those of Porphyry. For example, for Porphyry, God is the creator of the universe and governs the whole creation according to his providence (1.36). In *Philosophy from Oracles* (*Philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*) Porphyry proclaims God the Father (10.23). He even shows a great respect for Christ: "the gods have pronounced

Porphyry's thought to serve his purpose in the *City of God*. Simmons, "Porphyrian Universalism," 171; Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," 133.

Interestingly, Augustine's portrayal of Porphyry as a seeker of happiness is very similar to Johnson's portrayal of Porphyry as particularly concerned with salvation by comparison with his contemporary philosophers. Johnson claims: "The search for salvation appears as a rather emphatic concern in Porphyry's corpus." Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 102.

²¹ Porphyry's respect and quest for the Chaldean wisdom is well known. See John J. O'Meara, "Indian Wisdom and Porphyry's Search for a Universal Way," in *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought*, ed. R. Baine Harris (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982), 5–25. Regarding the importance of prophecy in the Late Antiquity, see Chadwick, "Oracles of the End in the Conflict of Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century."

²² *civ. dei.* 10.11 (CCL 47.286): *quae sit ad beatitudinem uia ex Aegyptia sapientia.*

that Christ has been extremely devout and has become immortal.”²³ In this respect the bishop conjectures that Porphyry may have been influenced by the Christian faith.²⁴ Porphyry, according to Augustine, is embarrassed about the Platonist doctrine of transmigration; in order to avoid appearing to be inferior to Christ’s promise of eternal life, argues Augustine, Porphyry establishes purification of the soul in eternal felicity without returning to its prior miseries (13.19).

To Jerome’s surprise, the bishop even deplores Porphyry’s refusal of Christ, lamenting: “If only you had recognized God’s grace through Jesus Christ our Lord and his incarnation in which he took a human soul and body.”²⁵ For Augustine, Porphyry came nearer to Christ than anyone, yet did not recognize him as the universal way of happiness that he was looking for. In a prolonged imaginary address to (or eulogy for) Porphyry (10.26-29), Augustine expressed his respect, sympathy, and grief for Porphyry’s unbelief.²⁶

After the imaginary address, the bishop states that he is speaking not so much to dead Porphyry as to the followers of the philosopher:

But, what am I doing? I know that it is of no use to speak to a dead man [Porphyry], but, that applies only to you; perhaps not in vain to those who greatly esteem you and love you, either with whatever love for wisdom or curiosity about

²³ *civ. dei.* 19.23 (CCL 48.691): *Christum enim dii piissimum pronuntiaverunt et immortalem factum.* Cf. 10.27.

²⁴ See Chadwick’s rebuttal, Chadwick, “Christian Platonism in Origen and in Augustine,” 227.

²⁵ *civ. dei.* 10.29 (CCL 47.304): *O si cognouisses Dei gratiam per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum ipsamque eius incarnationem, qua hominis animam corpusque suscepit.*

²⁶ For an account of Augustine’s paradoxical sympathy with Porphyry, see Beatrice, “The Platonic Readings of Augustine,” 261–4.

those arts [theurgy], which you should never have studied. They are whom I rather like to speak to in your name.²⁷

The actual target, at which Augustine aims, is those who pursued the Porphyrian way of happiness.²⁸ The bishop's respect and lament for Porphyry function as a rhetorical device to appeal to the followers of Porphyry.²⁹ By showing affirmation of and, to some extent, sympathy for their master, the bishop seeks to persuade and win over these intellectual Romans to Christianity.³⁰ He makes a subtle exhortation that although their master has failed, they should not.

As Cicero was a guide for the Roman intellectuals to socio-political happiness, Porphyry was a highly esteemed philosopher who taught the way to happiness on a contemplative level. The goal of Porphyry's philosophy is to be united with the One, which is the first and fundamental principle of the world.³¹ Since everything has emanated from it, salvation and eternal bliss are to be attained through the reversal of emanation: the return of the soul to the One.³² There are two fundamental conditions for

²⁷ *civ. dei.* 10.29 (CCL 47.304-5): *Sed quid faciam? Scio me frustra loqui mortuo, sed quantum ad te attinet; quantum autem ad eos, qui te magnipendunt et te vel qualicumque amore sapientiae vel curiositate artium, quas non debuisti discere, diligunt, quos potius in tua compellatione alloquor, fortasse non frustra.* See also, Smith, "Porphyrian Studies Since 1913," 769, 765n299.

²⁸ In his Easter sermons, the bishop frequently mentions pagan ridicules of the bodily resurrection (*ss.* 240, 241, 242, 242A, 368). The most potent attack is based on Porphyry's criticism.

²⁹ P. Courcelle also rightly claims: "His supreme apologetic effort in the *De civitate Dei* consisted, unless I am mistaken, in contemplating the sequence of his own conversion in order to lead Porphyry's disciples to Christianity." Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 181.

³⁰ Augustine also admits that a number of "our people" (supposedly Christians) have a great affection toward Plato because of his charming style and insights: *Nonnulli nostri propter quoddam praeclarissimum loquendi genus et propter nonnulla, quae ueraciter sensit, amantes Platonem dicunt eum aliquid simile nobis etiam de mortuorum resurrectione sensisse.* *civ. dei.* 22.28 (CCL 48.855).

³¹ "Participation in the light: *participato lumine illius Dei*" (*civ. dei.* 10.1).

³² Plotinus, *enn.* 1.6.8. For summary of the Neoplatonic ascent, see Frederick van Fleteren, "The Ascent of the Soul in the Augustinian Tradition," in *Paradigms in Medieval Thought Applications in*

the Neoplatonic return: (1) the purification of the soul and (2) the soul's ascent to God. "Ascent" is a figurative concept that refers to the soul's assimilation to and participation in the divine. For ascent of the soul, the body should be shunned, and the spiritual soul, in contrast with the intellectual part of the soul, should be purged. The purpose of purification is to remove any bodily element foreign to the soul, and this is achieved through the liberal arts and virtues.³³ For the assimilation to the divine, there is no place for matter including human body. Such despise of matter is reflected in using the phrase "flight from the body" for the ascent. The goal of contemplation is to "live in accordance with the spirit or Intellect,"³⁴ and that is what assimilation to God means in Neoplatonism.³⁵ Within Neoplatonism the ultimate state of this union was often figuratively expressed with the phrase "seeing the One."³⁶

Because of their attraction to this contemplative and spiritual teaching for happiness and its cultural influence, Augustine's contemporary intellectuals accepted Porphyry's lead and sought for this noble union with the ultimate reality.³⁷ While the

Medieval Disciplines: A Symposium, ed. Nancy van Deusen and Alvin E. Ford, vol. 3 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990).

³³ Plotinus, *enn.* 1.2. "On Virtues"; Porphyry, *sent.* 32.

³⁴ Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 160.

³⁵ On the experiences of union with the One in Plotinus and Porphyry, see v. *Plot.* 23.

³⁶ Plotinus, *enn.* 1.6.8: "No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like, nor can a soul see beauty without becoming beautiful. You must become first all godlike and all beautiful if you intend to see God and beauty. First the soul will come in its ascent to intellect and there will know the Forms, all beautiful, and will affirm that these, the Ideas, are beauty; for all things are beautiful by these, by the products of intellect and essence" (trans. A. H. Armstrong). For the summary of the Neoplatonic ascent, see van Fleteren, "The Ascent of the Soul in the Augustinian Tradition." Especially, on Porphyry's view of ascent in his *Return of the Soul*, see Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 139–44.

³⁷ For example, the so-called Milanese circle of Platonist Christians. Concerning Augustine's early contact with the Porphyrian philosophy and Platonists in Milan, see O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early*

bishop sympathized with them,³⁸ he was fully aware of the serious problems in the Porphyrian pursuit of happiness; its major doctrines diametrically conflicted with one of the most fundamental teachings of the Christian faith, namely, the resurrection of the body. With this intellectual landscape as background, the bishop introduces Christianity as an alternative, yet ultimately, the single route to true happiness. As we will see below, at both ends of parts one (book 10) and two (book 22) Augustine advances his most crucial arguments to present Christianity as a completion of the Neoplatonic philosophy.

In Augustine's portrayal of Porphyry as a seeker of happiness, the Porphyrian philosophy is ultimately concerned with two issues: (1) the universal way of happiness.³⁹ (2) the vision of the One. Therefore, the bishop deals with the goal of Porphyry's philosophy and the way to achieve his goal. Interestingly, Augustine argues for Christianity as the universal way of salvation at the end of part one while proving that the worship of Roman gods does not help attaining eternal happiness. At the end of part two he presents the Christian beatific vision as the supreme happiness.⁴⁰ The issue at stake is seeing God, but the problem is the relationship between the corporeal body and eternal

Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391; James J. O'Donnell, *Confessions: Introduction and Text*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 416–8.

³⁸ In relation to Augustine's friendly attitude to Porphyry, it is to be remembered as we have seen above that certain Neoplatonist books were immensely influential to Augustine's escape from Manicheanism and his conversion to the Christian faith. *conf. 7.9.13. procurasti mihi ... quosdam Platoniorum libros ex graeca lingua in latinam versos*. See Beatrice, "The Platonic Readings of Augustine." Based on his own past experience, Augustine thinks that Neoplatonism was not what Christians should avoid. Brown rightly states: "Augustine's treatment of the Platonists throughout the *City of God*, shows the extent to which a part of the pagan past was still alive in Augustine, stimulating his finest thought, and challenging him to a continuous inner dialogue that would last up to his death." Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 306.

³⁹ O'Connell argues that Porphyry's search for *via universalis* influenced Augustine. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, 24–5.

⁴⁰ That is the reason that O'Meara in his 1959 work argued that the *City of God* "reaches its climax in refutation of the *Philosophy from Oracles*." O'Meara, *Philosophy from Oracles*, 2.

happiness. After all, Augustine concludes the *City of God* with the most powerful presentation of the Christian vision of God within the body. In this presentation, the Porphyrian way to happiness is radically corrected and the Christian faith is offered as its genuine completion.

As we briefly mentioned, while the bishop deals with Porphyry, his engagement with the philosopher is, in reality, directed toward the followers of Neoplatonism.⁴¹ The obstacles which kept Porphyry and his students from accepting the Christian faith and truth were Christ's bodily incarnation and resurrection: "he [Porphyry] opposed Christ by denying the resurrection of imperishable bodies."⁴² Augustine sought to resolve these problems within Porphyry's philosophical framework so that his followers might be able to correct their view and take the Christian way to happiness. The bishop's conviction was that the Christian way could make sense to philosophical minds through rational arguments and persuasion, unless those minds were hopelessly caught up with pride.⁴³ From this perspective, Christianity is considered a philosophy. Let us look at how Augustine corrects the two major teachings of Porphyry and explains "irrational" doctrines of Christianity so that the Christian truth may be presented as the universal way that ultimately leads to the vision of God.

⁴¹ Concerning the scope of Augustine's discussion with Porphyry, O'Daly states: "Augustine engages with Porphyry's views on metaphysical principles, theurgy, purification and salvation (especially the notion of a 'universal way' of liberation), mediation, demonology, reincarnation, and body-soul relation." O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 258–9.

⁴² *civ. dei.* 13.19 (CCL 48.402): *Christo aduersaretur, resurrectionem incorruptibilium corporum negans.* Also see O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom*, 79.

⁴³ Augustine says that "with a few changes here and there in their words and assertions," Platonists would have become Christian, and that there are some Platonists who turned to Christ by being corrected in their thought. *ver. rel.* 4.7 (CCL 32.192): *paucis mutatis verbis atque sententis.* At the same time, he mentions that

The Universal Way to Happiness

According to Augustine, Porphyry firmly believed that divine providence could not leave mankind without a universal way for the liberation of the soul (10.32). If so, that would be contrary to goodness of God because God is concerned with our happiness while demons deceive us into worshipping them (10.11). Porphyry, however, could not find the way. Citing Porphyry's *De regressu animae* (*On the Return of the Soul*), Augustine states:

Porphyry says...this [universal] way had never been brought to his notice in his historical investigation. He confessed that without doubt such a way exists, but it had never come to his notice.⁴⁴

Augustine quotes this statement of Porphyry three times in book 10 with slight differences.⁴⁵ There are three components shared in these quotations: (1) Porphyry's firm belief in the existence of a universal way.⁴⁶ (2) His extensive historical research to find the way, which ranged from philosophy, ethics, Indian ascetic practice, to the Chaldean oracles and theurgical practices. (3) His failure to discover the universal way.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.309-10): *Dicit Porphyrius ... nondumque in suam notitiam eandem viam historiali cognitione perlatam. Pprocul dubio confitetur esse aliquam, sed nondum in suam venisse notitiam.*

⁴⁵ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.312-3): *Quod autem Porphyrius uniuersalem uiam animae liberandae nondum in suam notitiam historiali cognitione dicit esse perlatam.* Also, see Smith, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, frs. 302, 302b. Smith's edition does not include Augustine's last mention of Porphyry's historical research.

⁴⁶ O'Connell views Augustine's statement that Porphyry sought for a universal way as "very shaky". He argues that Augustine read into Porphyry for the sake of his own polemic. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, 24. However, O'Connell's concept of universal way is as Augustine defined the phrase, i.e., the way for everyone. Porphyry may have considered a very limited way to happiness for a few people. Concerning the universal way in Augustine's thought, see John J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind up to His Conversion* (London; New York; Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1954), 131-72; O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, 20-28.

⁴⁷ Gillian Clark and Aaron Johnson argue that Augustine's quotations are misleading because they are taken without their contexts. To use Johnson's expression, the quotations are "Augustine's masterful

With this failure, to Augustine's eye, Porphyry has reached a dead end. All philosophies are supposed to present a universal way to happiness. But, Porphyry could not find one. This is Porphyry's, and therefore his followers', philosophical plight. Augustine desires to rescue those who are in this philosophical pit of misery. What, then, would be a breakthrough for the Porphyrian plight? Augustine's answer is simple and straightforward: the humility of men and the grace of God. The humility comes in the form of a "humble admission of genuine misery" regarding their own condition, without boasting of their "delusive happiness" (10.28). Divine grace will heal the weakness of the humble.⁴⁸ The bishop reminds his Porphyrian audience of their master's acknowledgement of the necessity of divine grace (10.29).⁴⁹

manipulation." Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 141. His assessment of Augustine's reading of Porphyry relies on Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation." Nevertheless, there is no evidence either to support or to allay their suspicion; studying Porphyry's work through Augustine's quotations has an innate difficulty. Ibid., 127–40; Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 106. At least, both of the scholars do not deny the Porphyrian origin of the actual statements.

Considering Augustine's tendency in his quotation, especially when he engages with important texts such as Cicero's *De republica* and Porphyry's *De regressu animae*, it is hard to reject the veracity of at least the above-mentioned three basic elements in the Porphyrian statements. The bishop does not seem to paraphrase what he has read; rather, he is ready to discuss the actual texts with his opponents, especially when he gives a reference of what he quotes: "at the end of the first book of *de regressu*." *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL: 47.309): *in primo iuxta finem de regressu*.

⁴⁸ In relation to the concept of grace and the human reception of it, Ps 73(72):28 plays a crucial role in Augustine's thought; happiness is to cling to God who is the source of our good (*civ. dei.* 10.3, 6, 10, 18, 25, 32, 44; 12. 9, 58). Interestingly, a similar idea of clinging to God is also found in Porphyry's thought: "there is no other way to achieve our end than by being riveted to the god and unfastening the rivet of the body" *abs.*1.57 (trans. Gilian Clark).

⁴⁹ Clark argues that Augustine manipulates Porphyry's view regarding two crucial issues: the universal way and the concept of grace. She criticizes Augustine for mistaking simple passive expressions (no active role on the divine side) by Porphyry for evidences of his acknowledgement of a need for divine grace. Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," 135. Augustine, however, defines grace as the work of divine love that is given to one and draws the one to God (*civ. dei.* 10.29). In fact, Plotinus also explains grace in the same way by using the word love: "It [the soul] is as if it was in the presence of a face which is certainly beautiful, but cannot catch the eye because it has no grace [*charis*] playing upon its beauty" (Plotinus, *enn.* 6.7.22. trans. A .H. Armstrong). Also, see Porphyry's fairly personal reference to God and his love: "we must pray that we may attain after our labors those things that are preceded by toil and virtue" (*Marc.*12. Also, see *Marc.* 14, 16, 24).

The Christian Way in Porphyrian Terms

For this rescue, the bishop demonstrates that the Christian faith is the universal way of liberation of the soul that Porphyry desired to find. Augustine frames his argument for the Christian faith within the Porphyrian way to the vision of the One.⁵⁰ Augustine begins with a eudaemonistic basis common to both Christianity and philosophy that all human beings seek happiness (10.1). The desire for happiness remains while happiness itself has been lost as a result of our sin.⁵¹ This universal longing for happiness amounts to an anthropological common ground between Christianity and philosophy. On that basis, Augustine defined happiness with the Neoplatonic idea of the participation in the divine light at the beginning of book 10:

Now we selected the Platonists, deservedly the most well-known among all philosophers, because they have been able to understand the fact that the human soul, though immortal and rational, cannot be happy without participation in the light of God who created the soul and the world.⁵²

On grace in philosophical tradition, see A. H. Armstrong, "Tradition, Reason, and Experience in the Thought of Plotinus," in *Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente (Roma, 5-9 ottobre 1970)* (Roma: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1974), 171–94; Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus, or the Simplicity of Vision*, trans. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 49–51, 59–60; John M. Dillon, "'A Kind of Warmth': Some Reflections on the Concept of 'Grace' in the Neoplatonic Tradition," in *The Passionate Intellect: Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions: Presented to Professor I. G. Kidd*, ed. Lewis Ayres (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 323–32.

⁵⁰ Augustine's theory of happiness, according to Bussanich, satisfies the criteria of Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism; but the content and the means of obtaining it are determined by Christian faith. John Bussanich, "Happiness, Eudaimonism," *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁵¹ *civ. dei.* 22.30 (CCL 48.864): *Sic enim erit inamissibilis uoluntas pietatis et aequitatis, quomodo est felicitatis. Nam utique peccando nec pietatem nec felicitatem tenuimus, voluntatem vero felicitatis nec perditam felicitate perdidimus.*

⁵² *civ. dei.* 10.1 (CCL 47.271): *Elegimus enim Platonicos omnium philosophorum merito nobilissimos, propterea quia sapere potuerunt licet immortalem ac rationalem uel intellectualem hominis animam nisi participato lumine illius Dei, a quo et ipsa et mundus factus est, beatam esse non posse.*

The source of happiness is the intelligible light, and happiness is to see the light or God (10.2).⁵³ Among Christians as well, happiness is attained by the contemplation of God or His beauty.

Porphyry, as we discussed, never had a doubt about the existence of the universal way, because it is unthinkable that God leaves human beings without a way to happiness (10.32). If there is a universal desire to be happy and the existence of the way to salvation is certain, a genuine philosophy should offer that way (10.32).

The questions, then, are “who is happy?” and “how is happiness gained?” (10.1). These questions are directed to the Porphyrian teaching regarding the attainment of happiness. The bishop carefully analyzes Porphyry’s endorsement of theurgy and reveals the inconsistency of this teaching. Theurgy is a magical practice intended to invoke gods, as a means of purification.⁵⁴ Porphyry admits only partial purification of the spiritual soul; the intellectual soul needs no purification because of its already divine status (10.9).⁵⁵ Therefore, theurgy is of no use for intellectual people who can purify their soul through

⁵³ Cf. Plotinus, *enn.* 6.7.36: “One ... is carried out of it by the surge of the wave of Intellect itself and lifted on high...not seeing how, but the vision fills his eyes with light and does not make him see something else by it, but the light itself is what he sees” (trans. A. H. Armstrong).

⁵⁴ To Augustine’s eye, the philosopher wavers between his philosophical standpoint and superstition (*civ. dei.* 10.9); Porphyry was ashamed of his reluctant subjection to superstition (10.24). Smith attributes Porphyry’s “inconsistency” to his melancholic personality and his life-long pursuit of truth, which is contrasting in many ways to Plotinus. Smith, *Porphyry’s Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition*, 150. Recently, however, Johnson provides a fresh interpretation of this seeming inconsistency. He presents a coherent account for Porphyry’s diverse concerns about ethnic religions and cults, including oracles. In contrast Augustine’s “Christian Porphyry” (to use Johnson’s expression) who wavers between philosophy and theurgy, Johnson’s Porphyry seeks to integrate Greek philosophy and ethnic religious traditions. See Johnson’s chapter titled “Knowledge and nations: Porphyry’s ethnic argumentation” Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 189–221.

⁵⁵ O’Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*, 100–3. Contrary to Plato, Plotinus thought that the part of the soul is “there.”

philosophy. Even for those who do not lead a contemplative life, this magical practice makes merely a partial effect to the lower part of the soul.

Moreover, in his *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* Porphyry does not support animal sacrifice to gods. Nevertheless, he does not actively oppose it either.⁵⁶ If the divine beings take honor and sacrifice from men for the sake of their own happiness, then they must be demons, because angels' happiness is dependent only on God, and they do not need sacrifice for their own happiness. If the gods are truly good divine beings, they must want us to participate in happiness from God, whom they enjoy, without regard to receiving animal sacrifices.⁵⁷ According to the bishop, however, Porphyry knew that theurgy was a dangerous art.⁵⁸ He learned theurgy from the Chaldeans (10.28). In his letter to Anebo the Egyptian priest, Porphyry implies by way of asking questions that theurgical practice cannot bring happiness to its practitioners.⁵⁹ Therefore, Augustine concludes, theurgy cannot make one "return to God" which is the goal of the Porphyrian philosophy.

⁵⁶ Porphyry, *abs.* 1.1-3. Also, see Clark's comments: Clark, *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*, 1-4. Augustine seems to explain these seemingly contradicting positions of Porphyry (*civ. dei.* 10.21).

⁵⁷ In fact, Porphyry also taught that good demons never harm, and bad ones never benefit (Porphyry, *abs.* 2.41). Augustine claims that in contrast with theurgy, Christian miracles are not for taking honor and worship from God to angels. The purpose of angels is rather to lead one to worship one True God (*civ. dei.* 10.9, 12, 16).

⁵⁸ Augustine is right in his assessment of Porphyry's own position. He does not miss Porphyry's concealed caution and indirect criticisms of Anebo's teachings. Concerning Porphyry's attitude toward theurgy, see Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition*, 122-44. On the defense of theurgy in Neoplatonists, see Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*. Also, Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), xxvi-xxxvii; Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 81-7.

⁵⁹ On this letter, see Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 118-9.

Augustine's criticism of theurgy is ultimately directed to the religious pluralism in Porphyry's thought.⁶⁰ Even in Porphyry's thought there is only one true God; other beings are dependent on Him, whether angels or demons. Therefore, worship should be directed to this God alone. If, then, demons are evil spirits who cannot make their worshippers purified, there should be another mediator for purification and the vision of the One for the world is given the way of salvation as Porphyry believed. This need for the true mediator becomes an important door to the discussion of the universal way.

After his criticism of Porphyry's pluralism, the bishop presents Christ as the true mediator within the Neoplatonic framework.⁶¹ At this step, the bishop criticizes Porphyry's concept of mediation and his support of theurgy as a means of mediation by using Porphyry's master Plotinus' authority. Plotinus claims that true purification is through the principle, not principles (10.24),⁶² and, therefore, if Plotinus is correct, neither demons nor good angels can be mediators. At this critical point, the bishop introduces Christ as true mediator for purification. The evidence comes from the Bible;

⁶⁰ Cf. Symmachus argues: "We gaze at the same stars, the sky belongs to all, the same universe surrounds us. What difference does it make by whose wisdom someone seeks the truth? We cannot attain so great a mystery by one way." Recited from Robert L. Wilken, *Remembering the Christian Past* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 27. On the challenge of pagan religious pluralism which early Christian authors had to face, see Wilken, "Religious Pluralism." Wilken's view of Porphyrian toleration of pluralism is in line with Augustine's description of the philosopher. Wilken argues that after the "failure" to find a universal way, Porphyry turned to defend "the traditional ways of the various nations and to identify genuine religion, piety, with the tradition of one's ancestors." Ibid., 386. Clark, however, is suspicious of Augustine's use of Porphyry's works. She claims: "It is much more likely that Porphyry denied any claim that there is a single way of liberating the soul." Clark, "Augustine's Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation," 136. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Augustine manipulates such an important and fundamental statement when he engages with followers of Porphyry.

⁶¹ Concerning mediation in Platonism and Christianity, see TeSelle, "Porphyry and Augustine," 123–33. According to TeSelle, Porphyry's difficulty is that "he can offer no way of mediation that joins man directly with God; his mediation is hierarchical, proceeding step by step, and the demands of the last step – the union of the intellect with God – are incompatible with the first and the second stage." Ibid., 133.

⁶² While Augustine considers Porphyry the most brilliant philosopher, from time to time he uses the authority of Plotinus as Porphyry's master for his own argument.

the apostle John proclaims Jesus as the principle: “therefore, the Principle, having assumed the soul and the body, purified the souls and the body of believers” (John 8:25).⁶³ Supposedly, Porphyry also agrees with the Principle’s purification of the soul; he argues in his *Return of the Soul* that purification is only made through the *patrikos nous* (10.28).⁶⁴ This sole mediator is, Augustine argues, the single way to happiness.

Beginning with the universal desire to be happy, Augustine pointed out the errors and inconsistency in the Porphyrian purification and mediation. By these criticisms, he set a foundation to present Christ as the universal way within the philosophical framework of Porphyry and his followers.

Removing Obstacles

Nevertheless, Augustine knew that there were major obstacles for followers of Porphyry to believe in Christ as the universal way to happiness: (1) doctrinal difficulty concerning Christ’s bodily Incarnation and resurrection; (2) reluctance to challenge Plato’s authority; (3) Suspicion concerning the late appearance of the Christian religion. The rest of book 10 consists of the bishop’s evangelistic effort to remove those rational problems and win over the souls of these Roman intellectuals.

⁶³ *civ. dei.* 10.24 (CCL 47.298): *Principium ergo suscepta anima et carne et animam credentium mundat et carnem.* Augustine identifies *principium* in John’s Gospel with the Plotinian principle. On the Old Latin versions of the Bible Augustine used, H. A. G. Houghton, *Augustine’s Text of John: Patristic Citations and Latin Gospel Manuscripts* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5–21, 78–99.

⁶⁴ This is one of the rare quotations by Augustine from the Greek philosophical texts. On the Neoplatonic triad, One-Intellect-Soul, and Augustine’s treatment of it, see Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 66–7. Courcelle argues that after long discipline, Augustine may have been competent with the Greek in his later life. On this, see Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 157–65.

First, the incarnation and the resurrection of Christ are deeply problematic to the followers of Porphyry (10.29).⁶⁵ Platonism in general despises material reality. This fundamental tenet is intensified in Neoplatonism. For example, Porphyry's biography of Plotinus begins with the statement that his master was ashamed of being in the body.⁶⁶ In Neoplatonism, the material cannot participate in the divine realm. The way of salvation is often summarized by Porphyry as the "flight from the body" (*omne corpus fugiendum*). Thus, because of Christ's Incarnation and bodily resurrection, it was impossible for Porphyry and his students to accept Christianity as a way to happiness.⁶⁷

Augustine is well aware that the union between the incorporeal and corporeal would be unthinkable for them.⁶⁸ The bishop, however, makes it comprehensible to them by using their own Platonic idea that the earth, sun, stars are gigantic heavenly "bodies" which are living beings of perfect blessedness.⁶⁹ From the Platonic idea of incorporeal body, Augustine leads his audience (the Platonists) in two directions: (1) Porphyry's dictum, the "flight from the body," should be corrected. (2) The incarnation of Christ should be reconsidered and, desirably, accepted. Furthermore, to persuade them effectively, the bishop explains that the resurrected body does not hinder contemplation

⁶⁵ See excellent overviews and analyses concerning the development of Augustine's view on resurrection: Frederick van Fleteren, "Augustine and the Resurrection," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 12 (1978): 9–15; Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 99–125.

⁶⁶ Porphyry, v. *Plot.* 1.

⁶⁷ While Porphyry had high respect for Christ as holy and immortal (*civ. dei.* 10.27), his criticisms were directed to the Disciples of Christ and the biblical authors. Concerning Porphyry's nuanced criticisms against Christianity by praising Christ yet limiting him within the category of hero, see Jeffrey W. Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemic* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 63–90.

⁶⁸ *civ. dei.* 10.29 (CCL 47.305): *quae ceruici uestrae difficillime persuaderi potest.*

⁶⁹ On the Neoplatonic doctrine of heavenly bodies, especially sun, see Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, 223–8.

since it is no more mortal but incorruptible (10.29). Now, the problem is humility, to subject oneself to divine authority, which leads to the next challenge.

The second obstacle is the absoluteness of Plato's authority among Platonists. Plato was a highly respected authority among Augustine's contemporaries. Despite their radical departure from some aspects of Plato's teachings, both Plotinus and Porphyry considered themselves faithful students of Plato. It was considered "improper" (*indignum*) to correct Plato on any subject (10.30). To believe in Christ meant to turn away from Plato's authority.

In this historical context, Plato's authority needed to be challenged in order to persuade the intellectual Romans. Augustine, however, was well aware that the students of Plato would feel ashamed of being corrected.⁷⁰ Instead of fighting Plato head to head by himself, the wise bishop takes Porphyry as an example: Porphyry made significant "corrections" to Plato's doctrines of the migration of the soul: according to Plato, the souls after death return to the earth and even enter into the bodies of beasts (10.30). Porphyry criticizes that the soul would never obtain eternal felicity if it kept turning back to the mortal body. In Porphyry we find an example of a Platonist departing from Plato for the better. Porphyry sees what his master did not.⁷¹ He is not afraid of having an opinion different from that of Plato. Augustine's point is, therefore, that Porphyry's followers and his audience may take a different position from Plato's in their quest for happiness. The bishop warns his audience of their blind trust in Plato's authority. They

⁷⁰ *civ. dei.* 10.29 (CCL 47.306): *An forte corrigi pudet?*

⁷¹ *civ. dei.* 10.30 (CCL 47.308): *ecce Platonicus in melius a Platone dissentit; ecce uidit, quod ille non uidit.*

need to judge the Platonic teachings by a eudaemonistic standard. If the teachings contain what prevents true happiness, they must be corrected. Platonists need not be ashamed to correct their own beliefs by listening to the Christian authority.

The third obstacle concerns the novelty of the Christian faith. Since Christianity appeared fairly late in human history, it is difficult for the intellectuals to accept this nascent religion as the universal way. In Porphyry's estimate, Judaism, along with a few others, is one of the true religions that contain the way to salvation.⁷² Christianity, however, is not regarded as compatible with those ancient religions. It was often thought to be a distortion of Judaism. But, above all, it came too late to be an authoritative religion. This critique of novelty is not new; decades before, the bishop had to respond to the same challenge from a friend of Carthaginian deacon Deogratias.⁷³ Even toward the end of his life the bishop still faced the same question from his congregation.⁷⁴

Augustine's response in book 10 is made through a historical demonstration. Porphyry did extensive historical research to find out the universal way, but failed to recognize Christianity as that way. Augustine quite favorably conjectures an excuse for Porphyry's disbelief on the behalf of his opponent; Porphyry thought that the Christian religion would disappear soon due to the persecution in his time, but ironically, that persecution strengthened the church (10.32). Furthermore, the historical evidence shows

⁷² It should be noted that Porphyry's view of the way in various ethnic groups and religions is found in the oracle of Apollo: "The road that leads to heaven is steep and rough/ Entered initially though doors bound with brass/ Within are found innumerable paths, / Which for the endless good of all the human race/ They first revealed who Nile's sweet water's drink/ From them the heavenward paths Phoenicia learned,/ Assyria, Lydia, and the Hebrew race... The discovery [of the road to gods] by the god to Egyptians, Phoenicians, Chaldeans (for these are the Assyrians), Lydians, and Hebrew." Eusebius, *PE* 9.10.1-5. (trans. Berchman, *Porphyry "Against the Christians,"* 124).

⁷³ *ep.* 102.14-15.

⁷⁴ *praed. sanct.* 9.17-18.

that Christianity is *not* a newly born religion, but its way has been prophesied throughout the ages. It is striking that Augustine narrates Abraham's background; he was born a Chaldean, but set free from the "Chaldean superstitions" and worshipped the one true God with complete trust (10.32). This seemingly simple exegesis of Abraham's story in Genesis in fact poses a stark contrast to Porphyry's respect for Chaldean teachers and oracles. While Porphyry criticized Christianity itself as superstitious, Augustine aligns Porphyry's Chaldean oracles and practice (theurgy) with superstition. The goal of this brief characterization is obvious. This faith of Christ has been revealed throughout history, and thus the Christian way to happiness is very reliable. Augustine exhorts his audience to worship one true Christian God as Abraham did; the worship of this God will bring them happiness as it did to Abraham.

This is the Way!

In contrast to Porphyry's failure in finding the universal way, Augustine shows that the Christian faith has been revealed as the universal way for all nations. The bishop's rather brief presentation ends with a pointed conclusion:⁷⁵

This way has never been away from mankind; sometime it was foretold that they [the biblical prophecies] will come true in the future, or in another time it was announced that it has been fulfilled. Except this way, no one has been liberated, no one is liberated, and no one will be liberated.⁷⁶

The first part of the *City of God* (books 1-10) ends with such a victorious proclamation and, yet, exhorts the audience to take the way of the Christian faith in order to reach the

⁷⁵ The full version of his historical demonstration comprises two third of the second part of the work.

⁷⁶ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.312): *Praeter hanc uiam, quae, partim cum haec futura praenuntiantur, partim cum facta nuntiantur, numquam generi humano defuit, nemo liberatus est, nemo liberatur, nemo liberabitur.*

vision of God and obtain the eternal happiness that Porphyry pursued: “This is the right road to which leads to vision of God and eternal union with Him.”⁷⁷

Compared with Porphyry’s idea of universal way, Augustine presents the Christian way as the single universal way for a couple of reasons: (1) The Christian universal way is not only for purification of the intellectual soul but purifies whole person including the spiritual soul and the body.⁷⁸ (2) It is not limited to a few intellectual elites as we see in Porphyry’s works *De abstinence* and *Epistula ad Marcellam* (*Letter to Marcella*),⁷⁹ but for all people; various social groups entered the church to be the same body of Christ.⁸⁰ (3) Although it started with the one race, Jewish people, it invites all nations.⁸¹ In Augustine’s historical narrative of the two Cities in books 15-18, the bishop stresses the expansion of the Christian faith over cultural boundaries and ethnic

⁷⁷ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.313): *Huius viae rectitudinem usque ad Deum uidendum eique in aeternum cohaerendum.*

⁷⁸ Clark, “Augustine’s Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation,” 137; Smith, *Porphyry’s Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition*, 136–9.

⁷⁹ There are debates on the nature of the universal way in Porphyry. Simmons argues that Porphyry constructed “tripartite universal soteriology which included the masses, novice philosophers, and mature Neoplatonists in a hierarchical system, because he was evidently concerned about Christian claims that Christ offered the one *via salutis* for all humanity.” Simmons, “Porphyrian Universalism,” 190. But, Gillian Clark and Johnson argue that Porphyry’s soteriology excluded the masses, which is a fundamentally elitist position. Clark, “Augustine’s Porphyry and the Universal Way of Salvation,” 127–40; Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 292–6.

⁸⁰ On this subject, see Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, chap. 4: “Augustine: A Defense of Christian Mediocrity.” Also on the communal nature of the Augustinian way in contrast with the Porphyrian, see John C. Cavadini, “Ideology and Solidarity in Augustine’s ‘City of God,’” in *Augustine’s ‘City of God’: A Critical Guide*, ed. James Wetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 101–10. Regarding elitism in antiquity, see O’Donnell, *Augustine*, 46. On Augustine’s vision of the salvation of Gentiles and barbarians, see Augustine’s letter to Hesychius the bishop of Salona. Augustine wrote that countless barbarian nations in North Africa have not heard the gospel, and some of them believed after surrendering to the Empire. He argues that the gospel is still to be preached, and, then, the end time should come (*ep.* 199.46).

⁸¹ If Johnson’s new portrait of Porphyry is correct, it is intriguing that both the philosopher and the bishop present their own ethnic and universal vision for all nations. See the chapter “Ethnic particularism and the limits of Hellenism”, Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*, 222–57.

diversities; through the Jewish prophets, God has been calling the Gentiles to the faith in Christ. This is the reason why prophecy-fulfillment plays a significant role in proving Christianity as the universal way. Augustine reminds his audience of Porphyry's failure to find the universal way and, then asks:

What can be found even more distinguished than this history which has prevailed over the whole world by such a high authority, or [what can be] more trustable in that the past is accounted so that even the future could be foretold, because we are seeing many things fulfilled, thus without doubt we expect what remains to be fulfilled?⁸²

The bishop answers Porphyry's frustration in his historical research with biblical history. Where philosophy fails, the Christian faith prevails. In fact, this statement becomes a transition to the grand historical narrative of the two Cities (books 11-18) to show how the Christian way has been revealed and proved itself to be the universal way throughout history, as we discussed in chapter three.

By correcting the thought of Platonists and Porphyry, Augustine presents Christianity as the universal way to eternal felicity that Porphyry failed to find. Eternal happiness, therefore, cannot be obtained through the worship of a plurality of gods; it is only possible through the worship of one true God who manifested himself in Christ. The conclusion of the first ten books of the *City of God* already anticipates the discussion of the beatific vision in the last pages of the work. But, for now, concluding the first part of the work, the bishop is ready to proclaim that the Christian way is the right road which leads to what Porphyry strived for: the vision of God and eternal union with Him.⁸³

⁸² *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.313): *quid hac historia uel illustrius inueniri potest, quae uniuersum orbem tanto apice auctoritatis obtinuit, uel fidelius, in qua ita narrantur praeterita, ut futura etiam praedicantur, quorum multa uidemus impleta, ex quibus ea quae restant sine dubio speremus implenda?*

⁸³ *civ. dei.* 10.32. It echoes his exhortation in book 2. "Now, choose which [way] to follow!" *Nunc iam elige quid sequaris. civ. dei.* 2.29 (CCL 47.64).

Beatific Vision

We have discussed how the *City of God* seeks to turn its readers to Christ by eudaemonistic arguments. Augustine, better than anyone else, knew that arguments and refutations are not the best way to move doubting minds; rational arguments are only for removing difficulties and obstacles. The human mind is driven by what it desires, i.e. happiness. This is the reason why Augustine deals with both material and philosophical happiness throughout the work. In the last pages of the work, the bishop provides his audience with a glimpse of the Christian beatific vision, so that the lofty and glorious life of happiness would fascinate their hearts and make them desire it.⁸⁴

One crucial difficulty in discussing the beatific vision is that Augustine lacked personal experience and there are barely sufficient biblical resources to describe it from his own knowledge.⁸⁵ Thus, the bishop utilizes the Porphyrian idea of intellectual vision; for him, Porphyry's thought contained a particle of the truth, though imperfect and incomplete.⁸⁶ At the same time, however, the bishop corrects it according to the scriptural

⁸⁴ For Augustine's beatific vision, see O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man, A.D. 386-391*, 203–26; Margaret Miles, "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's 'De Trinitate' and 'Confessions,'" *Journal of Religion* 63 (1983): 125–42; Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol. 1 (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 228–62, esp. 232–43; Teske, "St. Augustine and the Vision of God"; Kloos, *Christ, Creation, and the Vision of God*.

⁸⁵ See Augustine's expressions: "I do not know what will be the nature of that activity [intellectual vision]"; "we do not know what new qualities the spiritual body will have for we are speaking of something beyond our experience"; "it is indeed most probable..." (*civ. dei.* 22.29). Regarding Augustine's mystical experience, Paul Henry argues that the bishop bases the final vision in the *City of God* on his own vision in Milan and Ostia (*conf.* 7.17.23; 9.10.23-26): Paul Henry, *The Path to Transcendence: From Philosophy to Mysticism in Saint Augustine*, trans. Francis F. Burch (Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick Press, 1981), 45–6. Louth also argues that Augustine considers his ecstasy a "foretaste of the joys of heaven." Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 137.

⁸⁶ For example, Augustine argues, the combination of the philosophies of Plato and Porphyry will agree on the Christian teaching of resurrection of the body: the soul will return to the body as Plato asserts, yet never return to any evils, as Porphyry teaches. In other words, if pagan philosophies were properly corrected, the whole difficulty about the resurrection of the body would be solved (*civ. dei.* 22.28).

teachings. For example, according to Porphyry's teaching, there should be purification of the soul from the carnal desire of the body in order to attain happiness, which Augustine also admits. Nevertheless, the Porphyrian way of purification is radically revised. One can be purified only through Christ's forgiveness of sins, neither by theurgy nor by intellectual ascent.

The Platonic description of the soul's liberation and the way to the vision of the One are considered the Egyptian gold⁸⁷ from which to construct the biblical vision of God. In such Christian appropriation, the Porphyrian vision is employed to explain the complete and perfect vision of God which is the ultimate goal of the Christian faith. In the course of Augustine's appropriation of the Porphyrian philosophy to present the Christian vision of God, the Christian way to happiness is demonstrated to be superior to the Porphyrian way.⁸⁸

Correction for Appropriation

As discussed above, Augustine's correction is not so much for refutation as for re-appropriation. Within the Neoplatonic framework, the bishop carefully explores the way to express the beatific vision that will take place in the eschaton. While the biblical teachings are the primary guide,⁸⁹ the vision is still explained with the Neoplatonic terms and ideas. Within the Porphyrian vision of the One, however, there are two main errors

⁸⁷ *doc. chr.* 2.40.60; *en. Ps.* 46.6; *bapt.* 4.5-6. This idea is originally from Origen's letter to Gregory who is traditionally identified as Gregory Thaumaturgus.

⁸⁸ Concerning the *visio dei* tradition in Early Christianity, see Kloos, *Christ, Creation, and the Vision of God*, 45–71. See also Louth's explanation of Augustine's critiques of the Porphyrian vision, Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 132–58.

⁸⁹ The idea of seeing God has many biblical references. For example, Ps 116:10; Matt 5:8, 18:10; 1Cor 13:12; 1John 3:2.

the bishop corrects. They are concerning the bodily participation in the beatific vision and the time at which the vision is fully attained.

First, the bishop confirms the bodily nature of the beatific vision. For those who subscribe to Porphyry's beatific vision, the doctrine of the bodily resurrection is the most challenging one among other teachings of Christianity.⁹⁰ Porphyry teaches that in order to attain the vision, the soul must be free from all contact with the body because the body interrupts the soul's ascent to God.⁹¹ According to Pierre Hadot, as with most of the ancient philosophical traditions, Neoplatonism also viewed philosophy as a preparation for death; salvation was fulfilled through the complete escape from the body and the sensible world. Such abhorrence of the body and flesh, which turned out to be a strong ascetic drive, would lead them even to abstain from the meat at all. The salvation lay in returning to the "real self," and, thus, the intellect is to be away from the material world.⁹²

For the bishop, however, neither Plato's eternal migration of the soul to different bodies nor Porphyry's complete abandonment of the body can bring the ultimate happiness:

In the same way, they [Platonists] promise as Plato that the human soul would alternate between genuine unhappiness and false felicity; or they confess as Porphyry that after many changes through different bodies, the soul would give end to misery and never come back to it.⁹³

⁹⁰ Concerning pagan questions about the resurrected body and Augustine's answers see ss.240-242. These sermons were preached during the Easter season.

⁹¹ *civ. dei.* 22.26. See also Porphyry, *Marc.* 32-33; *abs.* 2.49, 4.20.

⁹² Pierre Hadot, "Plotinus and Porphyry," in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 230-49.

⁹³ *civ. dei.* 22.12 (CCL 48.833): *ac sic animae humanae aut alternantes, sicut plato, ueras infelicitates falsasque promittant beatitudines aut post multas itidem per diuersa corpora reuolutiones aliquando tamen eam, sicut porphyrius, finire miserias et ad eas numquam redire fateantur; non tamen corpus habendo inmortale, sed corpus omne fugiendo.*

Nevertheless, for Augustine's mind, Porphyry might have become a Christian because his thought was very close to the Christian teaching of the resurrected body. He believed that "the human souls would return not to the bodies which they have left but to other new bodies."⁹⁴ Though it remained obscure what Porphyry meant by "new bodies," at least it is clear that the real problem does not lie with the body itself, but with the carnal desire of the body that keeps the soul from reaching the eternal bliss.⁹⁵ Also, as Augustine has pointed out, Plato's thought contained an idea of the celestial body; the sun and stars are living beings of eternal happiness in corporeal forms (10.29). Thus, the Christian teaching of the resurrected body, Augustine argues, is not completely foreign to the Platonic tradition. By defining the "spiritual" body within his eschatological horizon, however, Augustine corrects and completes Porphyry's idea of the new body;⁹⁶ it will be perfectly purified from carnal desire, yet a corporeal one. Therefore, we will have the vision of God with the resurrected, thus perfectly purified, body.

⁹⁴ *civ. dei.* 10.30 (CCL 47.307): *In hominum sane non sua quae dimiserant, sed alia noua corpora redire humanas animas arbitratus est.* Scholars noticed that it is hard to tell whether this belief comes from Porphyry himself. According to Smith: "whether he [Porphyry] considered a form of bodily salvation is difficult to say, but it would not be an impossibility, though highly unlikely." Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition*, 136.

⁹⁵ In this matter, Smith argues that Porphyry rejected a purely literal interpretation of Platonic reincarnation into animals and "proposed both a metaphorical and a qualified literal interpretation." Andrew Smith, "Did Porphyry Reject the Transmigration of Human Souls into Animals?," in *Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus: Philosophy and Religion in Neoplatonism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), 276–84, esp. 278. This essay is originally published in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 127 (1984).

⁹⁶ The term "spiritual" here takes a different meaning from that in Porphyry's thought. For Porphyry, the spiritual soul refers to the lower part of the soul whereas the intellectual soul to the divine part of the soul. Augustine, however, redefines this term according to the Pauline distinction between carnal and spiritual. The body is carefully distinguished from its sinful desire according to Augustine's belief in the goodness of creation. In contrast with Platonism as expressed by Virgil (*Aen.* 14.3-9; 9.4-5), for the bishop, sin is not from the body. For Augustine's concern regarding the four kinds of passion, see Harald Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers* (Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1958), 341ff.

While Porphyry excludes a bodily participation in the beatific vision, the Christian vision is holistic; it excludes neither the body nor the spiritual part of the soul from the beatific vision. The bishop states:

This way [Christianity] purifies the whole man and prepares for immortality his mortal being according to each corresponding part. For we do not need to seek one purgation for the part which Porphyry calls intellectual, another for the part which is called spiritual, and another for the body itself.⁹⁷

The spiritual body, which will have been completely purified from bodily passion, will not weigh down the soul in its contemplation of God.⁹⁸ If this is the case, there is no obstacle to the body's participation in the beatific vision.

The second correction of the Porphyrian vision of God is concerning the time of its fulfillment. This creates a subtle, yet foundational difference between Porphyry and Augustine. In the Plotinian thought "there" often refers to the intelligible realm, and "here" the sensible reality. Porphyry also uses here-there contrast based on Plato's *Theaetetus*.⁹⁹ Both realities exist simultaneously. The intellectual part of the soul, however, is already "there" because from the beginning it belongs to the intelligible

⁹⁷ *civ. dei.* 10.32 (CCL 47.312): *Haec uia totum hominem mundat et immortalitati mortalem ex omnibus quibus constat partibus praeparat. Vt enim non alia purgatio ei parti quaereretur, quam uocat intellectualem Porphyrius, alia ei, quam uocat spiritalem, aliaque ipsi corpori.*

⁹⁸ "Weigh down" is a typical expression that Augustine borrows from Wis 9:15. Concerning his use of the phrase, see Frederick van Fleteren, "Augustine's Exegesis of Wisdom 9.15," in *Studia Patristica*, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, vol. 27 (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 409–16.

⁹⁹ Porphyry, *abs.* 1.36: "we must try to escape here to there [i.e. to the gods] as quickly as possible" (trans. Gilian Clark). Cf. Plato, *Theaet.* 176a-b: "Therefore we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can; and to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become righteous and holy and wise" (trans. Harold N. Fowler). Augustine also use a similar contrast; he preaches that here we know God by faith, yet there by seeing Him (*ep. Io. tr.* 4.8). The same idea is expressed by the contrast between *dilectio* and *contemplatio* (*Gn. litt.* 12.26.54).

reality.¹⁰⁰ Thus, in the first place, both of the realities are not separated by a historical dispensation or time. Therefore, for Plotinus and Porphyry, it is possible to cross over to the intelligible reality within a lifetime because the intellectual soul is already there; the distance between intelligible and sensible realities can be decreased by philosophical training.

Although Augustine uses the Neoplatonic here-there contrast,¹⁰¹ he radically revises it on the eschatological horizon.¹⁰² For the bishop, “there” refers to the eschatological reality in which God brings the ultimate completion and restoration, and “here” refers to the present reality in which we are waiting for the vision of God. In other words, it is “there” that the vision of God will be given to the saints as a reward (22.29),¹⁰³ but “here” on earth we are not able to participate in the beatific vision.¹⁰⁴

The implication of this correction is of considerable significance. First, one cannot cross over to “there” because no one can completely purify himself until the “spiritual body” is given in the eschaton. The full participation in the beatitude is delayed until God brings history to its end. At the same time, by locating the beatific vision in the

¹⁰⁰ According to Robert O’Connell, Augustine “did in fact toy with ideas he later rejected: that our souls might indeed be in some genuine sense of the term *divine*.” Robert J. O’Connell, *Saint Augustine’s Platonism* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1984), 3.

¹⁰¹ *civ. dei*. 19.27; 20.29.

¹⁰² Maria Gatti argues that one of common polarities of Platonism is “the association of ethics with eschatology in a religious vision of the world.” Maria L. Gatti, “Plotinus: The Platonic Tradition and the Foundation of Neoplatonism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 14.

¹⁰³ Concerning *visio dei* as a reward, see *vid. deo* 22 (= *ep.* 147.22) where Augustine depends on Ambrose, *Expositio super Lucam*.

¹⁰⁴ Augustine preached to his flock that our task on earth is to restore the eye of the heart with which God may be seen (*s.* 88.5).

eschaton, Augustine's beatific vision overcomes the transitory nature of the Plotinian / Porphyrian mystical experience.¹⁰⁵ Both of the philosophers suffered the same problem that their visions did not last long, and that is also what Augustine describes regarding two of his mystical experiences in the *Confessions*.¹⁰⁶ Given such limitations, Augustine's presentation of the vision of God in the *City of God*, as Margaret Miles claims, overcomes this problem of the transitory nature of the Neoplatonist "glance"; the saints will enjoy the eternal bliss through the "timeless luxury of gaze" at God.¹⁰⁷ Within an eschatological perspective, Porphyry's transitory vision is replaced with a perpetual vision of God. Since our body will have been completely purified and we will enjoy the eternal life, there will be no "weighing down" from the body. Rather, the vision of God will continue without being interrupted.

Thus, Augustine's insistence on bodily existence in the beatific vision is a response to the Neoplatonic program, "the flight from the body." This eternal vision of God in the resurrected body is what Augustine presents as a completion of Porphyrian vision. At the same time, however, it should be noted as well that beyond a mere defense

¹⁰⁵ Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, 224; O'Donnell, "The Next Life of Augustine," 224. It should be noted that Augustine's understanding of the resurrection has become mature in his later life. Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, 108, 111. Also, see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, chap. 15 "Lost Future." According to Pierre Hadot, the Neoplatonic experience of the union with the divine Intellect is a transient one: "It is compared with drunkenness produced by nectar; it is unusual; it appears suddenly and does not last ... it consists of a vision without discursivity of any kind, the vision of an internal light." Hadot, "Classical Mediterranean Spirituality," 241.

¹⁰⁶ *conf.* 7.17.23 (CCL 27.107): *sed aciem figere non eualui*. Also, 9.10.24 (CCL 27.147-8) *et suspirauimus et reliquimus ibi religatas primitias spiritus et remeauimus ad strepitum oris nostri, ubi uerbum et incipitur et finitur*.

¹⁰⁷ Margaret Miles rightly points out: "Moreover, Augustine's analysis of the vision into the brief moments of glance and the timeless luxury of gaze allows him to correct the Neoplatonist formulation without rejecting what has been to him both intellectually attractive and experientially powerful." Miles, "The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind," 136.

for the goodness of creation, the engagement with Porphyrian thought leads the bishop to a profound insight of the meaning of the bodily existence.

Beauty of the Wounds

At the end of his long argument for the bodily resurrection in book 22, Augustine reflects on the beauty of the body in the *eschaton*.¹⁰⁸ After the earthly utility of the body passes, the dignity and beauty of the body will shine out (22.24). But, what dignity and what beauty? The proportion and harmony of each part of the body constitutes its beauty, yet the real beauty does not come from the body itself. The beauty that we will see in the *eschaton* is not *of* the body but *in* the body (22.19).

Given the Porphyrian abhorrence of the body, it is intriguing that the bishop discusses seeing other people's bodies in the beatific vision: "Necessity [of the body] will naturally pass away, and there will be a time when we would mutually enjoy the beauty itself without any lust."¹⁰⁹ Also, this vision of others' bodies conflicts with the solitary nature of the Neoplatonic vision. Augustine's portrayal of the Christian beatitude reflects its firm communal nature. Already, in the *Confessions*, we see young Augustine making a radical deviation from what he learned about the intellectual ascent from the Platonist books. He experiences two separate occasions of vision.¹¹⁰ While the two spiritual experiences in Milan and Ostia look similar, there is a fundamental difference. In contrast to the vision in Milan, the vision in Ostia was a shared experience with his mother

¹⁰⁸ Concerning the Plotinian concept of beauty, see Rist, *Plotinus*, 53–65; O'Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*, 88–99.

¹⁰⁹ *civ. dei*. 22.24 (CCL 48.851): *Transitura est quippe necessitas tempusque uenturum, quando sola inuicem pulchritudine sine ulla libidine perfruamur.*

¹¹⁰ *conf.* 7.17.23; 9.10.23–26.

Monica. This communal vision is unprecedented within the Platonic tradition.¹¹¹

Moreover, the uneducated woman Monica was able to participate in the vision, which is open to philosophers alone in the Platonic tradition.¹¹² Augustine's communal mystical experience provides a basis for the Christian alternative to the solitary vision of Plotinus and Porphyry.

More strikingly, Augustine claims, the saints will see the beauty of the wounds of the bodies of Christ and the martyrs (22.19)! In Platonic thought, the body cannot hold beauty and should be shunned in order to participate in the beatific vision. If that is the case, however, how much more it should be true when it comes to wounds of the body! In the Christian hope, however, "the proof of glorious wounds" will remain in the resurrected bodies.¹¹³ Although in themselves the wounds and scars are defects and ugly marks, they will eternally remain on the body because they are the signs that show the love of the saints and their sacrifices to the death for that love. Perfect beauty shines through the work of love, and by seeing those wounds, we will perceive the beauty of their lives filled with the divine love. Therefore, the body, far from weighing down our souls, leads us to see the genuine beauty of love. That is why Christ still had a scar and wounds in his resurrected body, perfectly renewed by the power of God (22.19).¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, 222–6; McGinn, *The Presence of God*, 1:234–5; James J. O'Donnell, *Confessions: Commentary on Books 8–13*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 128, 133.

¹¹² This is more obvious when Monica is compared with Porphyry's wife Marcella who led a philosophical (contemplative) life.

¹¹³ *civ. dei*. 22.19 (CCL 48.839): *indicia gloriosorum uulnerum*.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *ep.* 102.2–7. Augustine wrote a long letter responding to the inquiries of a friend who was troubled by such questions. Similar issues lie behind the later books of the *City of God*, where Augustine discusses the resurrection of the dead and the life to come. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 161.

Augustine argues that we will see the life of others through seeing their bodies: “Without the bodies, we do not see the lives with bodily eyes.”¹¹⁵ Without the body there is no way to see one’s life. As the wounds of Christ and martyrs signify, our body will reflect the life that we lived out. “Life” in Augustine’s thought is ultimately love. For his mind, deeply saturated by the First Epistle of John, love was always manifested by the works of love.¹¹⁶ Therefore, the resurrected body will be the embodiment of the love we lived with our body. It is through the body that our love will become manifest. Since love is from God, by seeing others’ bodies, which embodies their love, we will reach God who is love itself.¹¹⁷ That is the reason why Augustine focuses on seeing other’s body without lust in the beatific vision. Seeing God is seeing His love.

Then, what will be the ultimate object of the beatific vision? How can we see God who has no body? Is it possible to see God? In fact, these are the questions a certain lady Pauline asked to the bishop.¹¹⁸ In Neoplatonism, the intelligible reality is not seen by physical eyes but by the intellect; seeing means understanding. The underlying principle of this intellectual vision is: Like is known to like. Thus, the Neoplatonic participation in the divine is made possible through assimilation to the Intellect. When Augustine’s

¹¹⁵ *civ. dei.* 22.29 (CCL 48.861): *Vitas autem sine corporibus corporeis oculis non uidemus.*

¹¹⁶ *ep. Io. tr.* 9.10.

¹¹⁷ In his series of sermons during Octave, Augustine exhorts brothers and sisters to love; if we love our brothers, we will see God because God dwells in love (*ep. Io. tr.* 5.7; 7.10). On this subject, see Lewis Ayres, “Augustine, Christology and God as Love: An Introduction to the ‘Homilies on 1 John,’” in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 89–93. For Augustine’s Homilies on 1 John, see Matthew Levering, *The Theology of Augustine: An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 49–70.

¹¹⁸ *vid. deo* (= *ep.* 147). The estimated date of this correspondence is around 413.

answer echoes Porphyry's, assimilation to God and purification of our soul are greatly emphasized.¹¹⁹

Yet, there are critical differences in Augustine's answer. First, while it is not impossible to see God, He can be seen "invisibly" to clean hearts.¹²⁰ Such vision depends not on our ability but on God's will for self-manifestation.¹²¹ Second, the purified body and the renewed world reflect and shine the divine beauty and glory. God's glory and beauty will manifest through his (material or visible) world (22.24), and He will be perceived in everything. As we will see the beauty in the bodies of others in the eschaton, the restored material world will mirror the divine glory and beauty without distortion.

Augustine answers to Pauline:

For that reason, it is possible and highly probable that we shall see then the physical bodies of the new heaven and the new earth in such a way that through the bodies that we shall assume and the bodies that we shall look at wherever we turn our eyes, we will see with utmost clarity God present everywhere and governing everything, even the corporeal.¹²²

At the same time, as we will see someone's life through seeing the body, God will be seen through his works in the new heaven and new earth because his works are from his

¹¹⁹ *vid. deo* 22, 37, 42. See the biblical basis for this: 1John 3:2 "we will become as He is"; Matt 4:8 "pure heart will see God." As apostle Paul said, inward man is renewed day by day. Thus, the bishop says that we should strive for it with pious love by washing our hearts (*vid. deo* 51). Also, see *ep. tr. Io.* 9.10. *purgatur ille oculus magis magisque dilectione ut uideat illam incommutabilem substantiam.*

¹²⁰ *vid. deo* 37.

¹²¹ *vid. deo* 20. Or by being snatched by God as in Paul's experience of the Third Heaven. 2 Cor 12:2; *Gn. litt.* 12.11.24; 26.53; 31.59.

¹²² *civ. dei.* 22.29 (CCL 48.861): *Quam ob rem fieri potest ualdeque credibile est sic nos uisuros mundana tunc corpora caeli noui et terrae nouae, ut Deum ubique praesentem et uniuersa etiam corporalia gubernantem per corpora quae gestabimus et quae conspiciemus, quaquam uersum oculos duxerimus, clarissima perspicuitate uideamus.*

love, and he dwells in love.¹²³ Love is acted out through the body so that we can “see” it. Likewise, God reveals himself in his creation and history through this works of love.

Augustine’s picture of the beatific vision outshines the solitary and non-bodily ascent of Porphyry. What the bishop seeks through this presentation of the Christian beatific vision, is that the Roman intellectuals be fascinated by it and finally find in this vision the completion of what pagan philosophers hope, and that they would come to the faith in Christ the true mediator and the true manifestation of the beauty of God.

Conclusion

Porphyry was a life-long interlocutor for Augustine. Ongoing internal dialogue with the philosopher indeed helped the bishop understand the gospel and Christian truth much more clearly and from a different, even fresh, angle.¹²⁴ While Augustine’s criticism of Porphyry is highlighted among scholars, Porphyry’s constructive role in Augustine’s presentation of the gospel should be recognized. Although his thought is corrected by Augustine, Porphyry’s philosophy established a good launching pad for Augustine’s presentation of the Gospel, and within such philosophical framework, the bishop is able to uncover the multi-layered Christian truth by comparing it with pagan philosophies: purification, sacrifice, mediation, and the universal way. In this respect, Augustine’s world is not in opposition; both the Christian religion and pagan philosophy pursue

¹²³ Cf. *ep. tr. Io.* 5.7; 7.10.

¹²⁴ Berchman also argues for Porphyry’s influence on and contribution to Augustinian exegesis. Berchman, *Porphyry “Against the Christians,”* 222–5. Also, Andrew Louth argues that while Greek fathers utilized Platonism for their theological purpose, Augustine breathes in Neoplatonism to the point of its being incorporated with his own theological thought. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, 132–3.

happiness. Although pagan philosophers do not know how to get there, they see, at least vaguely, the same destination.

At the same time, however, Augustine saw the limit of pagan philosophy and its inability to bring true happiness. Thus, the bishop seeks to lead his contemporary intellectuals to Christ by showing how Christ has completed what Porphyry taught for the attainment of happiness.¹²⁵ In such a radical eudaemonistic integration, the Christian God becomes the destination of all genuine happiness seekers, whether Christian or pagan.

Augustine boldly claims:

He is the God from whom Abraham received the answer ...at last, he is the God whom Porphyry, the most learned among philosophers, although he was the fiercest enemy of Christians, confesses to be a great god even through oracles of those whom he thinks to be gods.¹²⁶

This God has shown the way to happiness. While pagan philosophy has failed to achieve happiness due to human weakness and wretchedness, Christ came to this world and saved us from the misery of the world. This is the true way to happiness as Christ himself said (John 14:6). At the resurrection, the saints will see and love God within the bodies renewed from weakness and sinful desire. That will be the perfect eternal happiness for them:

There we shall rest and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise.
Behold, what will be in the end has no end.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ According to O'Meara, Augustine's treatment of Neoplatonists leads us to believe "that he saw in Christianity the fulfillment of Platonism, but not that platonic doctrine entered into the positive teaching of the *City of God* in any remarkable way." O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom*, 87.

¹²⁶ *civ. dei.* 19.22 (CCL 48.689-90): *Ipse est Deus, a quo responsum accepit Abraham...Postremo ipse est Deus, quem doctissimus philosophorum, quamvis Christianorum acerrimus inimicus, etiam per eorum oracula, quos deos putat, deum magnum Porphyrius confitetur.*

¹²⁷ *civ. dei.* 22.30 (CCL 48.866): *Ibi uocabimus et uidebimus, uidebimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus. Ecce quod erit in fine sine fine. Nam quis alius noster est finis nisi peruenire ad regnum, cuius nullus est finis?*

CHAPTER SIX

Prophet for the Second Nineveh

We have been discussing Augustine's eudaemonistic arguments on socio-political and contemplative levels to convert wavering Roman intellectuals to the Christian faith. For the bishop, the conversion of these intellectuals seemed to signify the conversion of Rome. The bishop saw the Empire through his engagement with Roman intellectuals, and Rome as an abstract idea was, in turn, manifested in his very concrete reality. In Augustine's dealing with Rome the illusion of Rome as an eternal city was refuted. At the same time, Augustine viewed Rome as it really exists as something that can be changed. An extension of our discussion of Augustine's eudaemonistic strategy for evangelism, this chapter explores how the bishop re-conceptualizes Rome as he reads the signs of his time.

Rome and Babylon

While early Christian writers often exhorted their fellow Christians to pray for the Empire with respect,¹ until the third century the dominant image of Rome in the church was mostly shaped by the biblical, eschatological image of Babylon, as in Revelation.²

¹ Rom 13:1; 1Pet 2:13-14; Irenaeus, *adv. haer.* 4.30.3; Tertullian, *apol.* 32.1, 34.2. Regarding the symbolic use of Babylon in the early church and early Judaism, see Duane Watson, "Babylon," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 566.

² The source of the image: 1Pet 5:13; Rev. 14:8, 16:19, 17:5, 18:2; Irenaeus, *adv. haer.* 5.26.1; Hippolytus, *On Antichrist* 36; Tertullian, *res. carn.* 24-25; Victorinus of Pettau, *Apoc.* 8.2, 9.4. On the early Christian concept of Rome as Babylon, see O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 53-6. On the image of Rome in Augustine's thought, see Emilien Lamirande, "Babylon(ia)," in *Aug. Lex.* 566-9. The

This conception of Rome relates closely to the eschatology of the early Christian church under persecution.³ After the ascension of Constantine, the church enjoyed the imperial support, and it became hard to maintain the previous identification of Rome with the condemned city of Babylon. As Paula Fredriksen states: “As a result of his victory, prompted by a vision, Constantine became the imperial patron of Christianity. From the perspective of John of Patmos, the Beast [Rome] had entered the church.”⁴

Within the shifting political context after Constantine, there were, as Robert Markus keenly observes,⁵ roughly two contrasting views of Rome among Christians, although the two views were not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260-340) viewed the Empire as an instrument of divine providence. He thought that the Roman Empire was destined to advance Christianization and ultimately the Kingdom of God on earth. In his panegyric to the emperor Constantine, for instance, Eusebius claims that Constantine fulfilled Isaiah’s messianic prophecy.⁶ The Roman

destruction of Rome was counted as a sign of the final stage of the world. For example, Tertullian locates Rome within an eschatological timetable (*or.* 5.1-4; *apol.* 32.1).

³ On the eschatology of the early church, see Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Gregory C. Jenks, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991); Charles E. Hill, *“Regnum Caelorum”: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001). Correcting the previous view on millennialism, Hill argues that there was also a non-chiliastic tradition before Augustine: “It is now plain that this [non-chiliastic tradition] cannot be seen as an innovation on Augustine’s part; it had had by now a long tradition.” *Ibid.*, 267. Also, see A. J. Visser, “A Bird’s-Eye View of Ancient Christian Eschatology,” *Numen* 14 (1967): 15. “Quite different was the development in the West; chiliasm, though not accepted by all, remained a very strong power there up to St. Augustine and later.”

⁴ Paula Fredriksen, “Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity: From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991): 155.

⁵ Markus, *Saeculum*, 166–7.

⁶ Eusebius, *laus. Const.* 16.7. Isa 2:4 “He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

emperors after 313 were mostly Christians, and the Empire gradually grew supportive of the church especially through new legislation.⁷ Thus, although the traditional imagery of Babylon was still in circulation, the Empire's association with eschatological Babylon became less frequent.

The second view of Rome was held by those who subscribed to eschatological pessimism. According to this idea, they identified Rome with the doomed city of Babylon.⁸ Arnobius of Sicca (d. ca. 330) warned that the Empire would "be scourged by great flood and fire,"⁹ and his pupil Lactantius in the fourth century was also pessimistic about the destiny of Rome: quoting the Sibylline oracles, he proclaimed that Rome would suffer such a disaster from heaven.¹⁰ The most lasting group harboring this view is the Donatists, for they were under the persecutions of the Empire.¹¹

While a new relationship between the Empire and the church demanded an alternative image of Rome, especially in Western Christianity, the earlier identification of Rome with Babylon faded out after Constantine. An alternative biblical image of Rome

⁷ Regarding Constantine's legislation for the church, see Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 190–232.

⁸ On Gregory C. Jenks' account, there was a discernible negative attitude toward Rome in the church until the third century. Jenks, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth*, 112; Markus, *Saeculum*, 72.

⁹ Arnobius, *adv. nat.* 1.3-10.

¹⁰ Lactantius, *div. inst.* 7.15-16.

¹¹ "Beneath the purple and scarlet robes of the apocalyptic whore they could still recognize Rome ... in Africa, above all, Donatist theologians kept the [apocalyptic] tradition alive throughout the fourth century and later." Markus, *Saeculum*, 55.

did not appear until Augustine.¹² It may at first seem that Augustine inherits the earlier conception of Rome as Babylon, since in the *City of God* his choice of imagery for the Earthly City indicates that he received Babylon-imagery for Rome both from the Scriptures and from his Latin predecessors. In contrast with the views of the Latin church fathers, however, Augustine's image of Rome is much more complex.¹³ The bishop did not describe Rome within a millennial framework.¹⁴ He identifies Rome neither with Babylon in Revelation nor with the Kingdom of God, as Eusebius had suggested.¹⁵ In Augustine's mind the Empire preserves a certain level of peace and safety according to God's providence, but at the same time it is still an embodiment of the Earthly City in a spiritual sense.¹⁶

¹² On the view of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries, see Robert A. Markus, "The Roman Empire in Early Christian Historiography," *Downside Review* 81 (1963): 340–54. Jerome shows a mixed view of Rome composed of both historical and eschatological images: "But I will now address myself to you, great Rome, who with the confession of Christ have blotted out the blasphemy written on your forehead.... By repentance, as the history of Nineveh proves, you may escape the curse wherewith the Savior threatened you in the Apocalypse. Beware of the name of Jovinianus." *Against Jovinianus* 2.38 (NPNF II. vol.6, 415–16). Cf. Peter Oakes, ed., *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).

¹³ Regarding Augustine's attitude to Rome, see Thraede's summary of scholarly discussions. Thraede, "Das antike Rom in Augustins 'De civitate Dei,'" 100–2. While F. G. Maier and W. Kamlah argue for Augustine's typical North African anti-Rome sentiment, especially to "eternal Rome", J. Strauß asserts that the bishop's attitude toward Rome was much more moderate and positive. Hagendahl argues: "Augustine takes up a fundamentally hostile attitude toward Rome." Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 718–9. Also, "Augustine's pretended patriotism," *Ibid.*, 719n1.

¹⁴ It may reflect his abandonment of chiliasm in the 390s. Brian Daley summarizes Augustine's departure from millennialism: "In thus translating the millenarian vision of *Apoc.* 20 into ecclesiological terms, Augustine undoubtedly laid the foundation for the widespread tendency of later Latin theology to identify the Kingdom of God, at least in its first stage of existence, with the institutional Catholic Church. In the context of the *City of God* 20, however, his purpose is more to clarify his theology of Christian hope than to reinforce a vision of the Church." Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 134.

¹⁵ Theodor E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of the 'City of God,'" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12 (1951): 346–74.

¹⁶ e.g. *civ. dei.* 18.2.

In his work *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, Markus recognized the shift to a new view of Rome in Augustine's theological development. He argues that Augustine, abandoning his previous affirmation of the Eusebian conceptualization of Rome, "secularized" time, state, and church according, in Markus' term, to 'the theology of *saeculum*.'¹⁷ According to this understanding, there is no distinction between "sacred" and "secular" on earth; everything is mixed in the present age.¹⁸ Even the church, the body of Christ, is a mixture of saints and the ungodly. The logical extension of this idea of mixed body is, Markus argues, that Rome is in a "neutral" position that is open to both Earthly and Heavenly Cities.¹⁹ In Augustine's thought, Rome was neither an embodiment of the Kingdom of God as expressed in the "Theodosian settlement" in the fourth century,²⁰ nor the Beast of the Revelation. Markus' *Saeculum* has exerted considerable influence on the study of Augustine and its modern, especially political, implications.²¹ Also, it is *Saeculum* that gave a political reading of the *City of God* support from patristic scholarship.

¹⁷ Especially, concerning Markus' analysis of Augustine's view of Rome, Markus, *Saeculum*, 45–71. Frend does not agree with Markus's idea that Augustine has Eusebius' "Roman ideology" in his mind in writing the *City of God*. Frend, "Augustine and Orosius," 17, 33n105, 35n128. On further disagreement between Frend and Markus, *ibid.*, 35n128. Also, on scholarly discussion of Markus' claim, Robert A. Markus, *Christianity and the Secular* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 33n4.

¹⁸ Markus, *Saeculum*, 122.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 119, 150, 173, 178.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22–44.

²¹ There is a useful collection of essays on Augustine's political thought: Dorothy F. Donnelly, ed., *"City of God": A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 15–168. See also John Milbank, "An Essay against Secular Order," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 15 (1987): 199–224; James Wetzel, "Splendid Vices and Secular Virtues: Variations on Milbank's Augustine," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 2 (2004): 271–300. Milbank criticizes that Markus ignores "Augustine's explicit identification" of the visible church with the city of God: John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 402–3. For the comparison of Markus and Milbank in Michael J. Hollerich, "John Milbank, Augustine, and the 'Secular,'" *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 311–26. A recent

While Markus rightly pointed out the change in Augustine's view of Rome within complex historical and theological background, he did not find an alternative biblical image for Rome in Augustine's theology. If Augustine's precursors relied on the use of a strong biblical imagery, what biblical image could capture the complex and transitional status of Rome in the mind of our bishop? This chapter will argue that Augustine developed an alternative image of Rome through his exegesis of the Book of Jonah; the bishop reconceptualized Rome within the image of historical Nineveh the capital city of Babylon rather than the image of eschatological Babylon.²² For this purpose, the chapter will investigate the bishop's exegesis and theological use of Jonah in a chronological order to see how Augustine's view of Rome had been formed and changed.²³ In light of this examination, the chapter will reconsider Markus' theory of Augustinian *saeculum* and a consequent political reading of the *City of God*.

critic of Markus' reading of the *City of God*: Gregory W. Lee, "Republics and Their Loves: Rereading 'City of God' 19," *Modern Theology* 27 (2011): 553–81.

²² This is also a partial response to Dodaro's keen observation that there has been a disconnection between political thought and exegesis in Augustinian scholarship. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 1.

²³ On Augustine's reference to Jonah, see, A. -M. la Bonnardière, "Les douze petits prophètes dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin," *Revue des études augustinienne et patristiques* 3 (1957): 341–74. On the use of Jonah in early Christian writers, see Yves-Marie Duval, *Le livre de Jonas dans la littérature Chrétienne Grecque et Latine: Sources et influence du commentaire sur Jonas de saint Jérôme* (Paris: Études augustinienne, 1973); Yves-Marie Duval, "Saint Augustin et le commentaire sur Jonas de saint Jérôme," *Revue des études augustinienne et patristiques* 66 (1966): 9–40.

*Reading of Jonah prior to De civitate Dei*²⁴

De catechizandis rudibus (ca.400)

Augustine does not show a keen interest in the book of Jonah before 400 except in his response to Jerome's new Latin translation of the scriptures.²⁵ Even though Augustine used the story of Nineveh several times as an example of repentance and God's unfailing mercy in that response,²⁶ it seems that Augustine began to assign a more significant role to Nineveh from *De catechizandis rudibus* (*On the Instruction of Beginners*) around 400.²⁷ The work is Augustine's reply to a Carthaginian deacon, Deogratias, who asked how to approach those (*rudes*) who are interested in becoming Christian. The bishop provides two examples; one for those who have no Christian background (*cat. rud.* 16.24-25.49), the other for those who are already familiar with the Biblical history and teachings (*cat. rud.* 26.51-27.55). As the bishop speaks of the story of Nineveh in this instruction, his exegetical point is not far different from the ones before 400: the conversion of the Ninevites demonstrates God's grace has been granted even to the most ungodly.²⁸ Two things, however, are to be noted.

²⁴ In Augustine's writings, Nineveh is often mentioned to illustrate repentance and mercy of God. *civ. dei.* 18.44, 20.5, 21.18, 24; *ep* 166; *cat. rud.* 19.32; *ss.* 72A.2, 361.20, 346A.3, 351.12; *en. Ps.* 65.6-7, 50.11, 49.28, 129.1.

²⁵ *epp.* 71, 75, 82. On the unfriendly reception of Jerome's Latin translation of Jonah in local North African churches, see van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 341-2.

²⁶ For instance, *ss.* 346A (in 399); 351.12 (in 391). la Bonnardière leaves the date of *s.* 351 unknown. I follow the estimation of José Anoz, "Cronología de la producción agustiniana," *Augustinus* 47 (2002): 229-322. Cf. Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne*.

²⁷ On recent scholarly opinions on the date, see Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne*, 41-4; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechuminate*, 107n1; Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 177n112.

²⁸ *cat. rud.* 32.

First, Nineveh is used as a supplement to Noah's ark in Genesis 6.²⁹ It shows Augustine's usual exegetical practice when he deals with the topic of repentance. The story of Nineveh was often coupled with other biblical references in order to strengthen his call for repentance. Here, the story of Nineveh demonstrates God's mercy and tolerance. The wrath of God was preached for a hundred years while Noah was building the ark. If people had turned to God, God would have saved them as he did for Nineveh.³⁰ The lesson is that God grants an opportunity for repentance even to the persistently wicked. In this respect, Nineveh is employed as a model for those who are interested in the Christian faith.³¹

Second, despite its supplementary status, the story of Nineveh is located at an important place in which the bishop compares two Cities and their final destiny.³² The use of the story of Nineveh, though following Augustine's usual practice, is employed for an evangelistic purpose. While this instruction has been conventionally categorized as a "catechetical work," it aims not at catechumens but at "inquirers" who should be distinguished from a formal group of catechumens.³³ A careful reading leads one to

²⁹ None of Augustine's extant sermons was preached with Jonah as a central text. Duval, *Le livre de Jonas*, 521.

³⁰ *cat. rud.* 32.

³¹ *cat. rud.* 32.

³² *cat. rud.* 31.

³³ Van Oort and most scholars identify *cat. rud.* as a catechetical work: Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 175–98. Van Oort, "Augustine's Letters to Firmus and the Purpose of the *De Civitate Dei*," 421n32. A careful distinction, however, is to be made. The Latin word *rudes* does *not* refer to catechumens in a strict sense. What Augustine presents is not a catechesis for *catechumeni* who were under a long period of catechetical education, or for *compententes* who submitted their names as candidates for baptism. *Rudes* were those who were interested in the Christian faith but did not have faith yet. On the ancient practice of baptism, see Lawrence D. Folkemer, "A Study of the Catechumenate," *Church History* 15 (1946): 286–307. On Augustine's catechetical practice, see van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 453–67; Harmless,

regard this work as advice about how to help inquirers embrace the Christian faith rather than how to perform catechism.³⁴ In this sense, as William Harmless rightly characterizes it, the work presents Augustine's "first systematic proclamation of the good news of Christ."³⁵ The climax of Augustine's presentation of the gospel is naturally reached at the exhortation for repentance, which is the door to the eternal life. The story of Nineveh perfectly fits this evangelistic purpose. With mercy and tolerance, God is calling the Gentiles to turn to Him in Augustine's presentation; Ninevites become a model for the inquirers to emulate.

If *On the Instruction* is a blueprint for the *City of God* as Johannes van Oort claims, the appearance of penitent Ninevites in both texts would not be a coincidence.³⁶ Although the appearance of Nineveh in the instruction, compared with previous usage, adds nothing new in terms of exegetical focus on repentance and divine grace, Nineveh begins to play a more important role in Augustine's dealing with his pagan contemporaries and their conversion to Christianity.³⁷

Augustine and the Catechumenate, 107–55; Everett Ferguson, "Catechesis and Initiation," in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, ed. Alan Kreider (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 229–68; Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 776–94.

³⁴ *cat. rud.* 1.

³⁵ Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 109.

³⁶ On the structural similarity between *cat. rud.* and *civ. dei.*, see Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 175–98.

³⁷ Augustine was influenced by Donatist Tyconius' exegetical rules, *Liber regularum*. Tyconius reads Nineveh as a figure of the bipartite church, which is composed of good and bad. As Nineveh was delivered at the preaching of Jonah, the bad part of the church may be saved by Christ. Tyconius, *Liber regularum*. trans. William S. Babcock, ed., *Tyconius: The Book of Rules* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 71. On Tyconius' hermeneutical principle, see Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purpose and Inner Logic*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009); David C. Robinson, "The Mystic Rules of Scripture: Tyconius of Carthage's Keys and Windows to the Apocalypse" (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael's College, 2010). As for Tyconius' influence on Augustine, see

Epistola 102 (409)

In the late 400s Augustine's understanding and use of the story of Nineveh reaches a different level. Beyond using Nineveh as an example, the bishop begins to see the repentance of Nineveh in a prophetic light. In his exegesis, Nineveh prefigures the conversion of the Gentiles. His letter to Deogratias in 409³⁸ deals with six criticisms raised by Deogratias' pagan friend.³⁹ Of those six questions, the last one is concerning the Book of Jonah.⁴⁰ Is it possible to believe that Jonah was really in the belly of the whale for three days?⁴¹ What is the meaning of the gourd plant at the end of the book?⁴²

At the beginning, Augustine argues for the credibility of miracles in the Bible in comparison with pagan myths.⁴³ Then, he turns to the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament. Augustine's exegetical principle is twofold: (1) the Old Testament prefigures Christ and/ or the church. In this light, the three days in the belly of the whale signify Christ's three-day stay in the tomb. (2) the salvation of the Ninevites holds a prophetic

Charles Kannengiesser, Pamela Bright, and Wilhelm H. Wuellner, eds., *A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa: Tyconius and Augustine* (Berkeley, CA: Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, 1989). See especially Henry Chadwick's essay in this collection: "Tyconius and Augustine," 49-55.

³⁸ It is not certain that Deogratias in *ep.* 102 is the recipient of *cat. rud.*

³⁹ At the end of his life Augustine corrects his view in *ep.* 102 that some of the questions were originally from Porphyry (*retr.* 2.31). Bochet, however, convincingly argues that all of the questions can be attributed to Porphyry. Bochet, "The Role of Scripture."

⁴⁰ *ep.* 102.30-37.

⁴¹ Jonah in the belly of a big fish is one of the most common criticisms of the Bible. Concerning Augustine's counterargument, see *civ. dei.* 1.14. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 186.

⁴² *ep.* 102.30.

⁴³ *ep.* 102.32.

message about the redemption of the Gentiles.⁴⁴ Just as Jonah began to preach after he was spat out by the whale, the gospel was preached after the resurrection of Christ.⁴⁵ In Augustine's reading, the gourd refers to the Gentiles and the worm becomes Christ; the Gentiles are eaten day by day under the tooth of the gospel!⁴⁶ The bishop validates his spiritual interpretation by citing the prophecy concerning the coming of the nations to the Lord as in Psalm 22: "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord."⁴⁷

The redemption of the nations was already planned out, and had been proclaimed through the repentance of Nineveh. Now the bishop guides those who criticize the Scriptures to a "prophetic meaning"⁴⁸ of the biblical history. By reading the story of Nineveh in this light, the bishop is able to deliver a prophetic message for Gentiles such as Deogratias' friend. In this regard, Augustine gives his prophetic reading not just for proper understanding of the text. He also challenges pagan minds to accept the story of Jonah and Nineveh as God's redemptive action for their sake. Augustine's evangelistic passion for the non-believers continues as in *De catechizandis rudibus*. It is not surprising to see the bishop's exhortation for conversion at the end of the letter:

We have explained what was proposed as much as we could. In fact, let him who proposed [the questions] become a Christian lest by chance while hoping to end

⁴⁴ *ep.* 102.35-38.

⁴⁵ *ep.* 102.34.

⁴⁶ *ep.* 102.36.

⁴⁷ *ep.* 102.37.

⁴⁸ *aliquam significationem* (*ep.* 102.33).

his questions on the Scriptures, he should end this life before he moves from death to life.⁴⁹

De excidio urbis Romae (410/411)

Despite his reading of the repentance of Ninevites in relation with the Gentiles, Augustine does not seem to have made a definite connection between Rome and Nineveh until the sack of Rome in 410. This event brought enormous terror and shock both to pagans and Christians.⁵⁰ To those who believed that the city was eternal and divine the event was taken as the fall of the whole cosmos.⁵¹ The sack brought a surge of pagan accusation against the Christians,⁵² and the church was facing difficult questions from both outside and inside: Why did God allow such a tragedy to the Empire under a Christian emperor and Christian worship? No doubt, Augustine faced these challenges. It was a time when a prophetic message would be more readily heard in the middle of confusion and crisis. Ironically, the catastrophe and subsequent pagan criticisms brought the bishop to see a spiritual pattern reiterated in redemptive history.⁵³ In this context, the story of Nineveh becomes a central biblical text to discern the will of God for Rome.

The sermon *De excidio urbis romae (On the Sack of the City of Rome)* was delivered soon after the sack. In this sermon the bishop interprets the tragedy in a

⁴⁹ *ep.* 102.38 (CSEL 34/2.577): *Proposita exposuimus ut potuimus: sed ille qui proposuit, iam sit christianus, ne forte cum exspectat ante Librorum sanctorum finire quaestiones, prius finiat vitam istam, quam transeat a morte ad vitam.*

⁵⁰ On Augustine's mention of the sack, see *ss.* 25, 81, 105, 296; *epp.* 99, 111, 122.

⁵¹ O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 28.

⁵² For instance, *civ. dei.* 1.1; *retr.* 2.43.1.

⁵³ O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 124. "For Augustine, all human life is preface to a future the human imagination can scarcely grasp; so at every point, the whole past becomes preface anew and the future, whole and entire, remains."

different light from most of his contemporaries. The sack is not a collapse of the whole world, as Jerome sighed,⁵⁴ nor is it divine punishment. God indeed has spared the city; despite damages and the deaths of people, the city was not completely destroyed.⁵⁵ It cannot be compared to Sodom, overthrown by the wrath of God.⁵⁶ Instead, Augustine considers Rome in light of what happened in Constantinople and Nineveh. As a consequence of the recent earthquake around 400, the people of Constantinople mourned and repented, as happened in the city of Nineveh.⁵⁷ Within the picture of overlapping disasters in the three cities, the story of Nineveh plays a central role for discerning God's will. If God gave a warning yet spared Rome, Augustine asserts, it demonstrates God's mercy toward the people of Rome.⁵⁸ Rome is identified with Nineveh and expected to repent and offer a plea for mercy as the Ninevites did.

Interestingly, although the sermon is about repentance, Noah's ark is not mentioned as in *On the Instructions*. Augustine must have preferred Nineveh to Noah's ark in this case because of the parallel histories of the three cities. Also, the story of Nineveh offers a hope of salvation much broader than the story of Noah, in which only eight people survived. Beyond the similarities at surface, however, there is a spiritual pattern of God's working in all the three events: the fall of Nineveh, the earthquake in Constantinople, and the sack of Rome. God shows his mercy to them in order to turn

⁵⁴ Jerome, *epp.* 123, 127, 128.

⁵⁵ *exc. urb.* 6.

⁵⁶ *exc. urb.* 2.

⁵⁷ *exc. urb.* 7. On the earthquake in Constantinople, see Alan Cameron, "Earthquake 400," *Chiron* 17 (1987): 332–50.

⁵⁸ *exc. urb.* 8.

them to Christ. Augustine's identification of Rome with Nineveh provides a hermeneutical frame by which to read a current history and discern the divine message from the sack. In the bishop's mind, God's dealing with the Ninevites is applied to Constantinople and Rome as well. In this reading, the sack is not considered a punishment, but a call for repentance. The earthquake in Constantinople serves as a historical example of faithful response to the divine call.

The importance of Augustine's treatment of Jonah in our inquiry is that he begins to use a different biblical image to identify Rome, other than eschatological Babylon. In his spiritual reading,⁵⁹ Rome is put before the same divine calling as penitent Nineveh, not as the doomed city of Babylon. Also, the relocation of the sack of Rome within the biblical narrative, i.e. the conversion of Nineveh, results in liberating the Romans from the myth of the eternal city. This shift of views ties in closely with Markus' thesis that a new idea of *saeculum* was formed in the bishop's mind around 410. Instead of demonizing Rome, the bishop leads his audience to see Rome through the historical account of Nineveh so that they could find the hope for God's mercy within the prophetic message to Nineveh. In his reading of Jonah, biblical history turns out to be a prophecy for the present. Unlike the quasi-fatalism in the popular millennial framework of his times, in such a historico-prophetic framework Rome turns out to be open to the possibility of conversion. Augustine's voice is inspired by the prophetic message resulting from the identification of Rome with historical Nineveh. The purpose of his

⁵⁹ O'Daly refers to this reading as a "typological reading of history." O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 81. On Augustine's figurative interpretation and exegetical principles, see Cameron, "Christological Substructure of Augustine's Figurative Exegesis"; van Fleteren, "Principles of Augustine's Hermeneutic"; Williams, "Biblical Interpretation."

prophetic exegesis is clear: the people of Rome should repent and turn to God who has shown mercy toward her.

Rome as a Second Nineveh: De civitate Dei

In the 420s the bishop develops the connection between Nineveh and Rome within a much broader historical narrative, and it is reflected in book 18 of the *City of God*. Admittedly, Augustine labels Rome the “second Babylon” and a “daughter of Babylon.”⁶⁰ However, it should be noted that when he refers to Rome this way, “Babylon” is used not so much in an eschatological dimension as in a historical one, as we have examined.⁶¹ In book 18 the histories of the earthly and heavenly cities are chronologically paralleled with the aid of Varro’s *De gente populi Romani* (*On the Race of the Roman People*) and Eusebius-Jerome’s *Chronicle*.⁶² Since Rome was established right after the fall of Babylonia, Augustine refers to Rome as the “second Babylon” and the “Babylon in the west.”⁶³ For him, this chronological succession is not by coincidence but by God’s

⁶⁰ *civ. dei*. 18.22.

⁶¹ Lamirande rightly warns that Rome cannot be completely identified with Babylon as in Rev 17-18. “Babylon(ia),” in *Aug. Lex.* 567.

⁶² On Augustine’s use of Varro, see Markus, *Saeculum*, 236–56; Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 265–315, 589–630; Fox, *Roman Historical Myths*, 236–56. A critical edition of Jerome’s chronicles: Rudolf Helm, ed., *Die Chronik Des Hieronymus = Hieronymi Chronicon*, 3rd ed., *Eusebius Werke* 7 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984). Bickerman states: “Jerome’s compilation became the standard of chronological knowledge in the West.” E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 86. On Eusebius’s historiography, see William Adler, “Early Christian Historians and Historiography,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. Susan A. Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 584–602.

⁶³ *civ. dei*. 18.2, 22, 27.

design.⁶⁴ Augustine reads these two Babylons as representing the Gentiles; all other kingdoms are appendages of them.⁶⁵

In Augustine's historical survey in the *City of God*, Nineveh holds an important position. Book 16 contains a genealogy of Nineveh that sets a background for the comparison of the two Cities in book 18. Augustine quotes Genesis 10 concerning Asshur, who left Shinar (Babylon), built Nineveh and became a father of Assyrians.⁶⁶ Later, the Assyrian king Ninus, a contemporary of Abraham, also founded Nineveh after his name. Interestingly, Augustine says that Ninus reigned in *Babylon*, the capital city of Assyria.⁶⁷ This reflects Augustine's confusion about the ancient history of Eastern empires. Babylon, despite its significance in ancient Mesopotamia, had never been the capital of the Assyrian Empire.⁶⁸ However, it shows that at least conceptually, Nineveh and Babylon refer to the same city in Augustine's mind as Assyria and Babylon were often conflated in antiquity.⁶⁹ The bishop treats the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires as if they were a single empire. Unlike in his usual practice, Augustine compares Assyria (rather than

⁶⁴ *civ. dei.* 18.27.

⁶⁵ *civ. dei.* 18.2.

⁶⁶ *civ. dei.* 16.3. Cf. Gen 10:11-12; 1 Chr 1:17.

⁶⁷ *civ. dei.* 16.17.

⁶⁸ The original capital of the Assyrian Empire was Asshur in the 14th century. Under the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.) the capital moved to Calah, then Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) moved the capital to Nineveh. In the last few decades of the Empire, Nineveh was the capital until the fall of Assyria in 612 B.C. On these important ancient Mesopotamian cities and on ancient Mesopotamian history, see "Asshur"; "Babylon"; "Nineveh"; "Mesopotamia, History of" in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

⁶⁹ Augustine uses Babylon and Assyria interchangeably due to the vagueness of antiquity about the great Empires of the East; Assyria and Babylon are generally - understandably - confused. Therefore, for Augustine, Nineveh is often presented as a city of Babylon. Bettenson, *City of God*, 762n2. Also, see, O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 184.

Babylonia, although they are interchangeable for him!) and Rome.⁷⁰ The Assyrian King Ninus is introduced as the first emperor who demonstrated his ambition for the empire. In this regard, Augustine even labels Assyria as the “first Rome.”⁷¹ With the name Babylon, the bishop, in fact, thinks of Assyria and the king Ninus who craved Empire as the Roman Empire also did.

In Augustine’s spiritual exegesis, Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria/Babylon, like their forefather Nimrod, the “gigantic hunter *against* the Lord” in Genesis 10,⁷² signifies the most wretched sinners before God. Within Augustine’s historico-prophetic interpretation, Rome inherited the nature of Nineveh since Rome, like her predecessor, is characterized as “most wretched of mankind.”⁷³

In book 18 Augustine compares the history of the two Cities with Assyria and Rome as two representatives.⁷⁴ It seems that his intention in this historical comparison is, as Hagendahl states, to show that pagan kings and heroes have been deified and worshipped as god while the citizens of the Heavenly city have been faithful to one true God.⁷⁵ By this synchronization Augustine shows the Christian God as the true one and,

⁷⁰ *civ. dei.* 18.2; 4.6.

⁷¹ *civ. dei.* 18.2.

⁷² *civ. dei.* 16.3 (CCL 48.501): *Hic erat gigans uenator contra Dominum Deum*. “Contra” is probably a mistranslation of Gen 10:9 by the Old Latin version.

⁷³ *civ. dei.* 1.33.

⁷⁴ Cf. *civ. dei.* 15.1. Although the formal purpose of books 15-18 is to narrate the progress of the two Cities, a full-scale comparison does not appear until book 18.

⁷⁵ Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 597. Also, Augustine himself summarizes the argument of book 18 as description of moral condition of the two Cities; the Earthly city created gods to worship for herself while the Heavenly city is rather a creation of God and true sacrifice to God (*civ. dei.* 18.54). Augustine employs Euhemerius’ theory that the gods were deified men (Euhemerism) in order to

on this basis, exhorts his audience to turn to Him. After comparing the histories of the two Cities, he turns to Old Testament prophecies. As we have mentioned above, Augustine interprets them as messages for the Gentiles, or more specifically for the (future) “church of the Gentiles.”⁷⁶ A series of prophecies in the Minor Prophets and extra-canonical writings are interpreted as the calling of the Gentiles and the prefiguration of their future conversion,⁷⁷ and this makes up one of the major parts of book 18 (18.27-36). When it comes to the bishop’s evangelistic orientation in book 18, the appearance of Nineveh is not without significance. Nineveh in Augustine’s exegesis should be read with the historical and spiritual significance we discussed.

The way the bishop deals with the discrepancy between the Hebrew Bible and Septuagint shows the historical and spiritual significance of Nineveh. In the Septuagint, Jonah proclaims that Nineveh will be overthrown in three days, whereas it is in forty days in the Hebrew Bible. Which one is correct? Augustine responds to this question through his historico-prophetic exegesis; Nineveh, beyond its original historical context, prefigures the Gentiles who will come to the church with faith in Christ,⁷⁸ and there is no conflict between two Bibles in a spiritual realm, since both refer to the same reality; the number 40 refers to Christ’s post-resurrection period while the number three means the

demonstrate the falsity of pagan gods. *civ. dei.* 4.27; 6.7; 7.18, 27; 18.8. Concerning this theory, see O’Daly, *Augustine’s “City of God,”* 43–4, 105–6.

⁷⁶ *civ. dei.* 18.27, 31, 44. Augustine may have learned this from Tyconius; Tyconius shows that some Old Testament prophecies refer to the coming of the gentiles to Christ (Tyconius, *lib. reg.* especially see his fourth rule). Also see, Duval, *Le livre de Jonas*, 516n149.

⁷⁷ The conversion of the Gentiles recurs several times in book 18. *civ. dei.* 18.27; 18.33 “the calling of the Gentiles”; 18.42 “the Gentiles who were destined to believe in Christ.” Augustine states that the gospel is also to be preached to countless barbarian nations until the end of the world (*ep.* 199.46).

⁷⁸ *civ. dei.* 18.44.

third day of Christ's resurrection. Augustine thinks that the Septuagint exercises, in O'Daly's expression, "prophetic creativity" which reveals the profound spiritual reality of the redemption of Christ.⁷⁹

Regardless of the discrepancy between the Hebrew Scripture and Vulgate, the fact that Nineveh repented and was converted to God holds a prophetic message for the second Babylon (or second Nineveh). Within such an intimate historical connection, Augustine led his contemporaries to take the message of the Christian Scriptures to the Empire and Rome. In this light, when the Empire was sinking and heavenly authority should come to its rescue,⁸⁰ Augustine's spiritual and prophetic reading of Jonah gave fellow Romans the same calling that Nineveh had received through the prophet Jonah.⁸¹

In book 21 of the *City of God*, Augustine still uses Nineveh as a vantage point for this exhortation. Before elaborating on eternal bliss in the last book, the bishop decides to deal with the eternal punishment destined for the Earthly City.⁸² The task Augustine

⁷⁹ O'Daly, *Augustine's "City of God,"* 166. For another discussion of the authority of the Septuagint, see *civ. dei.* 15.13-14. Augustine may have implicitly responded to Porphyry's criticism of the Septuagint on which the Christian teaching is based. Cook argues: "One of his [Porphyry's] primary reasons for attacking LXX texts was his awareness that Christians used them to persuade their hearers." Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 159. On Porphyry's criticism of Jonah, 185-6.

⁸⁰ *ep.* 138.17

⁸¹ In fact, what the bishop said in book 18 was lectured in Carthage for three days (*ep.* 2*.3). Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 471. We do not know what the nature of this lecture was, but from the letter to Firmus, who listened to the lecture, it is apparent that the lecture appealed to Roman intellectual minds and interested them in the Christian faith. After the lecture, Firmus asked the bishop for a copy of the entire books of the *City of God*. Firmus' passionate response shows that Augustine's presentation of the two Cities in book 18 was not intended for a mere chronological narration but for an exhortation to the pagan intellectuals to turn to the Christian faith. The dramatic conversion of Nineveh and the bishop's interpretation must have touched the heart of the audience: if the ancient pagan city Nineveh repented, the same thing could (and should!) happen to Rome. Concerning the date of the lecture, Brown thinks that it was given while the bishop was working on book 18. I do not agree with Brown; the lecture was probably given after the completion of the *City of God*. See Jo, "Augustine's Three-Day Lecture in Carthage," 331-7.

⁸² *civ. dei.* 21.1.

imposes on himself is to demonstrate the reality of the eternal torment. Here he engages with rationalists who do not believe in the existence of hell and eternal punishment. The topic is of significance for the entire project of the *City of God*. What leads people to God, who is the source of happiness, is twofold: everyone wants to avoid misery and unhappiness, as well as to achieve goodness and felicity. Therefore, Augustine's evangelistic purpose will be benefitted by demonstrating the truthfulness of eternal punishment and torment according to the Scriptures.

In this present life, Augustine thinks, one still has an opportunity to make a difference regarding one's final destiny. After this life, however, there is no hope for salvation. Eternal punishment, therefore, sets a deadline for repentance. For this reason, Augustine also responds to various false teachings among Christians, which water down the seriousness and reality of eternal punishment (21.17-27). The threat of such ideas is that they turn people away from sincere repentance while leading them to depend on other means of salvation such as intercession of saints, participation in sacraments, or merely naïve beliefs in divine mercy, etc.

Contrary to those ideas, Augustine proclaims that repentance is the sole way to avoid eternal punishment and attain eternal bliss: "Those who make themselves members of a prostitute, however, are not members of Christ unless they cease to commit such evil through repentance, and return to this good by renewal."⁸³ Augustine paid the most attention to the idea that the intercession of the saints spares the guilty, (21.24). The challenge is that some Christians base their idea on their own interpretation of Jonah.

⁸³ *civ. dei.* 21.25 (CCL 48.796): *Non sunt autem membra Christi, qui se faciunt membra meretricis, nisi malum illud paenitendo esse destiterint et ad hoc bonum reconciliatione redierint.*

They argue that since Jonah's prediction did not come true, it was a "lying threat" which will punish no one.⁸⁴ If God spared Nineveh due to the supplication of the penitent, he cannot help saving the guilty when the saints intercede for them. The crux of this conundrum lies on the conflict between mercy and truth in God.

Did God fail to fulfill the prophecy? Was it really a lying threat? Augustine's answer is paradoxical:

Therefore, what God predicted came true; Nineveh which was evil was overthrown, and a good [Nineveh] which did not exist was built ... because he who foretold it knew how it was to be fulfilled so that a better thing came to be.⁸⁵

While visible Nineveh remained, an intact, invisible, spiritual Nineveh, which was filled with immorality and corruption, was thrown down so that new Nineveh could be raised. In Augustine's exegesis, the prophecy was fulfilled on a deeper level of reality, and such fulfillment was not just an act of wrath, but also of mercy because its fulfillment was for the sake of Ninevites. The fundamental faith of the bishop is that divine prophecy never fails. For Augustine true reality is always perceived by faith, not by the eyes. Therefore, divine prophecy always aims at and works in a spiritual dimension. And that is the reason that the prophecy of the Scriptures is still being fulfilled in Augustine's contemporaries. The historical contexts of Nineveh and Rome are different, but the spiritual reality they face is the same.

⁸⁴ *civ. dei.* 21.18.

⁸⁵ *civ. dei.* 21.24 (CCL 48.792): *factum est ergo quod praedixit deus; eversa est nineue quae mala erat, et bona aedificata est quae non erat... quoniam nouerat qui praedixit, quomodo in melius esset implendum.* Augustine already reached this spiritual insight (*en. Ps.* 50.11). The translator of WSA considers it delivered in summer 411 (WSA III. 16. 410). Anoz dates this exposition to 413: Anoz, "Cronología de la producción agustiniana," 257n337. Already at the outset of the *City of God*, we find this remarkable insight. The bishop states that as a result of immorality and injustice, the Roman commonwealth has come to ruin even though buildings and walls stood unharmed during the sack in 410 (2.22).

Although Augustine brought up Jonah in order to refute a denial of the eternal punishment (21.24), taking the example of the penitent Nineveh, he instructs his audience what to do with the truth of eternal judgment: when facing divine judgment and consequent eternal punishment, one should repent and turn to God in imitation of the Ninevites whose sins were destroyed by their repentance.⁸⁶ As we have seen, Nineveh in Augustine's mind was more than a city; it was capital city of Assyria, which was also referred to as the first Babylon. As he often points out, the problem of intellectuals in the Empire was their pride. For them, now it is the time to be humble and repent.

The bishop further addresses exegetical issues concerning this false idea about divine punishment.⁸⁷ First of all, the function of intercession is not a substitute for repentance; rather the saints' supplication is that there would be a time for repentance of sinners. Secondly, therefore, intercession is only for the present life. No intercession is permitted after death. Lastly, since the church does not know which people are predestined to be saved, she should intercede for everyone, even for the most wretched enemies of hers. Beyond exhortation for repentance, Augustine's exegesis has been deepened as he grappled with varied challenges centering on the interpretation of Jonah. In his mature exegesis, the story of Nineveh does not just exhort people to repent. It also leads Christians to pray for their enemies, some of whom will turn to God in the future.

⁸⁶ *civ. dei.* 21.24. Book 21 of the *City of God* responds to two kinds of audience and their misunderstanding of the eternal punishment. The first half of the book is for the opponents of the church, and the second half is for the Christians who subscribe to false teachings.

⁸⁷ *civ. dei.* 21.24.

Augustine's exegesis of Jonah, therefore, calls for repentance to the Gentile and instructs Christians to pray for the repentance of pagan opponents.⁸⁸

In sum, Augustine seems to sense the prophetic calling for Rome as he identifies Rome with historical Nineveh instead of eschatological Babylon. Such concrete relocation (or demythologization) of Rome within the biblical history denies the myth of eternal Rome and produces a prophetic message for Rome. The bishop called for the repentance of Rome just as prophet Jonah did to Nineveh. The identification of Rome with Nineveh reflects strong evangelistic passion in the bishop's heart. At the same time, such re-conceptualization of Rome rescues Christian historiography both from blind endorsement of the Empire as an instrument of God and from an excessively pessimistic and fatalistic view of Rome; Rome is given an opportunity to escape the bondage of the Earthly City and be renewed by emulating the first Rome, Nineveh.

Re-considering Rome in Saeculum

Augustine's re-conceptualization of Rome leads us to reconsider the neutral nature of Markus' concept of *saeculum*. Markus argues that *saeculum* in Augustine's thought is a "neutral" state which may turn out to belong to either of the two Cities.⁸⁹ He concludes his well-known book as follows:

In the *saeculum* we must be content with the provisional, the ultimately ambiguous, the 'secular'; for the ultimates are here inextricably intertwined, and

⁸⁸ This message out of his exegesis substantially corresponds to his warning that the church ought not to forget that there are future citizens of the Kingdom of God who are hidden among the citizens of the Earthly City (*civ. dei*. 1.35).

⁸⁹ Markus argues: "A state simply as such, without some disfiguring idolatry, for example, being written into its constitution is neutrally 'open' to both cities. In its essence as a form of politically organized society of men, a state can be assimilated to one or other city only in virtue of its citizens' allegiances." Markus, *Saeculum*, 119.

must not be prematurely unraveled... Augustinian theology should at least undermine Christian opposition to an open, pluralistic, secular society.⁹⁰

As an extension of this concept of *saeculum* Markus even argues that “for Augustine the *ecclesia* [church] must always be ‘secular’ in the sense that it is ... part of the *saeculum*.”⁹¹ To do justice to Markus, these statements should be read in the context of his criticism of the Eusebian sacralization and the Donatist demonization of the state. Markus has made a considerable contribution in that he rightly identified Augustine’s nuanced view that temporal reality is provisional. The concept *saeculum* is his effort to re-locate the state (or the world in general) within a proper place.⁹²

Nevertheless, his frequent characterization of *saeculum* as a neutral sphere is misleading and does not faithfully present Augustine’s ultimate concern. Markus’ neutrality is to protect *saeculum* from both sacralization and demonization. However, he seems to have created, at least without intention, a third state, or granted *saeculum* a choice to pick between the two Cities. For Augustine, there is no neutral state; everyone belongs to either city without the human ability to cross over to the other side. In the 390s the bishop took a radical turn to the absoluteness of divine grace, and this resulted in a peculiar view that all human beings are a lump of sin (*massa peccati*);⁹³ there is no

⁹⁰ Ibid., 173. Markus seems to have modified his previous view (see the last footnote above): “When we ask whether there is a ‘neutral public sphere in which people can act politically without reference to ultimate ends?’ the answer ... must be no, because people cannot act intentionally in any sphere without reference to ultimate ends. But it is important to note that the implication of this is not that there is no ‘neutral public sphere’ but that there is no morally indifferent action within it.” Markus, *Christianity and the Secular*, 44.

⁹¹ Markus, *Saeculum*, 179.

⁹² On his own explanation of *saeculum*, see Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 1–18.

⁹³ *div. qu.* 68.3; *Simpl.* 1.2.16, 19.20. *massa damnata* in *civ. dei.* 15.2, 21.12. Augustine says that everyone is from a condemned stock but belong to the Heavenly City by rebirth in Christ (*civ. dei.* 15.1). Fredriksen, “Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy.”

neutral sphere, and the original status of the human being is under condemnation.⁹⁴

Before grace is given, we belong to the Earthly City, not by our choice but by necessity.

Furthermore, the neutrality of *saeculum* cannot be an endorsement of status quo as “secular.” As Markus’ observes, Augustine is well aware that the present reality before the eschaton is provisional. However, this cannot be an implicit endorsement of belonging to the Earthly City nor openness to a pluralistic society. It should be stressed that the bishop seeks to disprove religious pluralism in first ten books of the *City of God*. As shown in the conversation with Longinianus, monotheism was the first step to presenting the Christian faith.⁹⁵ The bishop knew that as long as one remained in religious pluralism, it would be hard to accept one true Christian God; for the bishop’s evangelistic strategy, pluralism was a major obstacle to the Christian faith.⁹⁶ As Markus himself painfully admits, he finds that neutral *saeculum* in Augustine’s thought cannot be reconciled with Augustine’s support of governmental coercion for promoting the Christian faith.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ For Milbank’s criticism and Markus’s response concerning whether there is a neutral sphere, see Hollerich, “John Milbank, Augustine, and the ‘Secular,’” 315; Markus, *Christianity and the Secular*, 44–5; Lee, “Republics and Their Loves,” 574.

⁹⁵ See the section on Longinianus in chap. 2.

⁹⁶ O’Meara, *Charter of Christendom*, 104, 112; TeSelle, *Augustine’s Strategy as an Apologist*, 12–8; Wilken, “Religious Pluralism,” 379–91.

⁹⁷ “But although the chief theoretical foundation of religious coercion built into his theology had thus disappeared, Augustine never repudiated the politics which had been based on it. This is the central paradox of Augustine’s attitude to religious coercion when placed in relation to his fundamental theological development.” Markus, *Saeculum*, 139. Despite his effort to reconcile these two mutually exclusive positions, the problem does not seem to be settled. See also, Oliver O’Donovan and Joan L. O’Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought, 100-1625* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 105.

As our investigation in this chapter shows, in Augustine's mind there is no neutral place between the two Cities; Rome belongs to the Earthly City. Although her destiny is not fixed, one cannot consider her status neutral. There is, however, a hope for her to join the Heavenly City, as Augustine reads the status of Rome within penitent Nineveh.⁹⁸ The breakthrough comes from repentance and a turn to the true God. Augustine's concept of *saeculum*, therefore, is not simply to protect *saeculum* from both the Eusebian and the Donatist views; what the idea truly signifies is that since *saeculum* is provisional, as Markus points out, it should belong to Christ. In other words, the purpose of the concept of the two Cities and the mixed body is not for a "description" of the provisional nature of the present state. Rather, Augustine's emphasis lies on the opportunity that is given only in the present time. It seems, however, that Markus' book stopped at the protection of *saeculum* from demythologization and secularization without asking the ultimate purpose of Augustine's idea of *saeculum*.⁹⁹ The point our aged bishop makes through his historico-prophetic exegesis of Nineveh is that God gives Rome an opportunity to repent before the last judgment. Therefore, the purpose of narrating two Cities in the *City of God* is not for describing two kinds of genealogies, but for exhorting people of the Empire to turn to God from worshipping their false gods.

Markus's work has contributed significantly to our understanding the complexity of the Augustinian view of the temporal/eternal and the sacred/secular, a view that has been often misunderstood and consequently misused for ecclesiastical and political

⁹⁸ Dodaro reaches a similar interpretation and conclusion: for Augustine a penitent city is a just city. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 153–8.

⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Markus lightly mentions this subject at the end. Markus, *Saeculum*, 180, 185.

ideology. As a result, his work provided substantial support for a political reading of the *City of God* and a powerful framework for discussions in political theology.¹⁰⁰ Despite its contributions and benefits, however, this political reading has often misguided readers. What Augustine ultimately wanted to achieve was not to correct Eusebian political theology or the Theodosian settlement. His battle was not an “in-house fight” with other Christians. The primary purpose of the *City of God* was to turn his contemporaries to Christ and lead them to the Kingdom of God. Augustine writes that “the church is the world – the world redeemed and reconciled.”¹⁰¹ Markus summarized the dual status of the church: “As *res* the Church is lost in the ‘world’; as *signum* it has distinct being as the world’s pointer to the Kingdom.” But, what is the marker of being redeemed and reconciled? What makes the church redeemed and reconciled? What is the sign of the church as a pointer? For Augustine, it is repentance: “The Ninevites, to be sure, repented in this life, and their repentance was fruitful” which means, according to the context of the quotation, rescue from the eternal fire.¹⁰²

The conceptual distinction between the two Cities on an earthly level is not the separation of Christians from the pagans. Including Augustine himself, every Christian once belonged to the city of Babylon, and, more importantly, there are hidden future Christians “among the very enemies.”¹⁰³ On earth, Augustine could not make a clear line between the two Cities because there was always the possibility of conversion in either

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Fortin, “St. Augustine.”

¹⁰¹ Cited from Markus, *Saeculum*, 181.

¹⁰² *civ. dei.* 21.24.

¹⁰³ *civ. dei.* 1.35. Augustine sees God’s vision that Babylon gradually turns into Jerusalem. *en. Ps.* 86.6. Also see Lee’s keen observation on this subject, Lee, “Republics and Their Loves,” 579n75.

direction. As he presented two dramatically different courses, however, our bishop sought to disenchant pagans of the illusion of false happiness that the Earthly City promised, and cause them to desire the Heavenly City instead. Such an evangelistic outlook discerned God's will in his reading of Jonah.

In the sack of Rome, the bishop saw the redemptive work of God that would make people "cross-over" from the Earthly City to the Heavenly City. When the sack of Rome terrified everyone and caused many upper-class citizens to flee to North Africa, Augustine could read the signs of the times (Matt 16:3),¹⁰⁴ and Jonah cast fresh light for the bishop. Augustine finds the message of God toward Rome while reading about the destiny of Nineveh. If Rome is a second Babylon, then, its destiny should be the same with the first, though not in a fatalistic way. In this course of thought, Augustine finally reads the current catastrophe of Rome in light of God's prophetic message toward Nineveh. At this point, the bishop's reading begins to exert prophetic insight and power.¹⁰⁵ Just like the first Babylon repented and turned to God, the second Babylon faces the same demand for repentance. Therefore, Augustine's re-conceptualization of Rome is a message of hope for those who took the sack of Rome as the end of the world.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, the Roman Empire was afflicted rather than changed, as had happened to it in other times before the name of Christ, and after that affliction

¹⁰⁴ Markus, *Saeculum*, 159.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 12–15, 187–96; Karla Pollmann, "Moulding the Present: Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics in 'City of God' 21–22," in *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine's "City of God,"* ed. Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Allan Fitzgerald (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University, 1999), 165–81. Also see, Vessey's introduction to this collection, 24.

¹⁰⁶ "Augustine himself in the *City of God* adopts the role of prophet": Schildgen, *Divine Providence*, 93.

the Empire has been restored, which is not to be despaired of even in these times. Who knows God's will about this matter?¹⁰⁷

The sack is not a judgment, but a calling from God to repent and believe in Christ.

The Christian interpretation of the current events in the Empire is firmly based upon Augustine's reading of Jonah. Beyond that, however, Jonah becomes a central text which enables the bishop to see Rome in a fresh exegetical light. Now, the city of Rome, previously considered as a condemned Babylon, is seen within the frame of repentant Nineveh.¹⁰⁸

Our inquiry into Augustine's reading of Jonah and its prophetic message reflects what he wanted to achieve through the *City of God*.¹⁰⁹ Regrettably, the bishop died seeing the Vandals invading Hippo, and the Empire fell without the anticipated repentance.¹¹⁰ However, his prayer, with the church, for her enemies, which follows that of the Apostle, still resonates with readers of the *City of God*:

Certainly what else would she [the church] pray for them [the enemies of the church] except that God may grant them repentance so that they may come to

¹⁰⁷ *civ. dei.* 4.7 (CCL 47.104): *quamquam romanum imperium adflictum est potius quam mutatum, quod et aliis ante christi nomen temporibus ei contigit et ab illa est adflictione recreatum, quod nec istis temporibus desperandum est. quis enim de hac re nouit uoluntatem dei?* The question "Who knows God's will about this matter?" echoes the King of Nineveh (Jon 3:9).

¹⁰⁸ In his expositions on Psalms, Babylon is usually viewed from an eschatological perspective; it is under condemnation (*en. Ps.* 61.6, 8; 64.3; 92.5)

¹⁰⁹ In book 5 Augustine takes Emperor Theodosius as an example of a penitent and humble leader of a state (*civ. dei.* 5.26). Also see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, 192–3. Unfortunately, Augustine's re-conceptualization of Rome and his evangelistic fervor has not been fully appreciated in Augustinian scholarship.

¹¹⁰ Barrow, *Introduction to St. Augustine*, 20. "It was during this invasion that St. Augustine died, with the Vandals round the walls of Hippo." The sack of Rome gave Patrick of Ireland a sense of urgency so that he sought to evangelize "the last race upon earth." R. P. C. Hanson, "The Reaction of the Church to the Collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the Fifth Century," *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972): 274.

their senses and escape from the snare of the Devil, by whom they have been captured to follow his will?¹¹¹

¹¹¹ *civ. dei.* 21.24 (CCL 48.789). 2 Tim 2:25-26. Nam quid maxime pro eis orat, nisi *ut det illis Deus... paenitentiam et resipiscant de diaboli laqueis, a quo captiui tenentur secundum ipsius uoluntatem?*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Reclaiming Happiness

The present dissertation has demonstrated that the *City of God* engages with the pagan pursuit of happiness to turn wavering Roman intellectuals to the Christian faith. In Augustine's last colossal project, the illusive happiness pagan philosophy promises is disproved, and the Christian faith is presented as the true way to happiness, thus completing the philosophical pursuit of happiness as philosophy itself could not. The universal longings for happiness, which are elaborated in the Neoplatonic ascent to God and the Ciceronian commonwealth, will be truly satisfied within the *City of God* in the eschaton.

Augustine's eudaemonistic approach, however, is no mere strategy for evangelism. The bishop always yearned for happiness from the time of his memorable encounter with Cicero's *Hortensius*.¹ After being made a bishop, he still taught that happiness is the goal of both Christianity and philosophy, and that the very reason to be a Christian is for the sake of the blessed life.² Nevertheless, until he came to the faith in Christ, Augustine had been seeking happiness, yet had to wander because he did not

¹ *conf.* 3.4.7. This lost work of Cicero is considered one of the most famous examples of protreptic works along with Aristotle's *Protrepticus*. Cicero's approach must have been eudaemonistic, from Augustine's inspiration. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 112–3. Also see, van Fleteren, "Augustine and Philosophy: *Intellectus Fidei*," 25.

² *s.* 150.4; *cat. rud.* 24–26. Cf. *mor. cat. ecc.* 1.11.18. Augustine wrote this work before taking an episcopate office as a response to Manichaeism.

know what it is and where he could find it. In other words, he had a desire for happiness without right knowledge of it.

In the *City of God*, the aged bishop clearly sees that a false idea of happiness leads one ultimately to unhappiness and makes one's life perverse; he is determined to prove that pagan gods greatly injured their worshippers "by deceit and fraud."³ If one has a materialistic idea of happiness, then he'll pursue worldly fame, wealth, and pleasure. The first five books of the *City of God*, for example, show how the desire for dominion and glory has defiled the life of the Romans and their society. The following five books also demonstrate that if one subscribes to a philosophical teaching of happiness, he will worship demons and fall into misery without finding true happiness. The point that the bishop makes is that the misunderstanding of happiness leads to bad practices in life and to resultant unhappiness. Therefore, the right teaching of happiness should be taught, and then the right practice, i.e. the good life, will follow.

Augustine corrects false teachings of philosophy on happiness and gives the right teaching within pagan philosophy's⁴ own eudaemonistic framework so that his audience can see the superiority of the Christian way to happiness and, then begin a happy life within Christ. We have been discussing Augustine's engagement with philosophers in the political and the contemplative dimensions. As a conclusion, the present chapter will briefly show how Augustine integrates both the political and mystical dimensions of happiness in the Christian eschatological horizon. Then, we will explore the implications

³ *civ. dei.* 1.36. *decipiendo et fallendo.*

⁴ See Augustine's own experience that he was persuaded by Ambrose's allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament and his protection of the Scriptures from hostile critics (*conf.* 5.14.24).

of Augustine's alternative happiness in both dimensions. This will show that the *City of God* indeed reclaims the true happiness of the city and the soul that had been lost with the demise of the Empire in the eyes of Romans, and, moreover, the happiness that Plato taught.

Integrating Political and Contemplative Happiness

Nicholas Wolterstorff claims that in contrast with the ancient philosophical tradition Augustine proposes a profoundly different version of happiness.⁵ For example, Augustine rejects the Stoic ideal of detachment from emotion and the possibility of becoming a sage. The bishop, according to Wolterstorff, undermines the basis of the eudaemonism that is found in ancient philosophy and argues that pagan philosophy is incapable of achieving happiness because "it is the power of sin within that is the problem, and only God can deliver us from that."⁶ The bishop, however, does not throw away philosophy's two dimensional pursuit of happiness, especially not that found within Plato's philosophy. Instead, he seeks to re-integrate contemplative and political happiness within Christian eschatological hope.

As Dominic J. O'Meara rightly observes, there are two distinct concepts of happiness in Platonism. On the one hand, happiness is attained when one escapes the

⁵ Nicolas Wolterstorff, "Augustine's Rejection of Eudaimonism," in *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide*, ed. James Wetzel (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 149–66. While Wolterstorff discusses Augustine's refutation of the Stoic position, the bishop often lumps together various positions under the name of philosophy. This is understandable; even Cicero mixes different philosophical positions: Platonism, Stoicism, etc. Vernon Bourke also observes that the bishop points to the limit of the cardinal virtues as means to be happy; this implies that ancient pursuit of happiness through virtue is subject to failure. Vernon J. Bourke, *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom: Life and Philosophy of the Bishop of Hippo* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1945), 273.

⁶ Wolterstorff, "Augustine's Rejection of Eudaimonism," 166.

body and sees the Forms. This is the goal of the contemplative life of a philosopher. On the other hand, in a social-political dimension, happiness is realized when “all action [in the city] is based on real knowledge of ethical principles.”⁷ In Plato both dimensions are integrated and happiness is achieved under the reign of an ideal philosopher-king.⁸ According to Plato’s parable,⁹ the philosophic soul escapes an underground cave dwelling (= the body) and attain the knowledge of the Forms.¹⁰ While Plato is not optimistic about whether people would follow his lead,¹¹ his ideal city Callipolis is ruled according to the knowledge and reason as in this philosopher-king. The ultimate unity of these political and contemplative levels is rooted in Plato’s belief that the soul and the city share the same principles in order to be happy, and the (happy, or virtuous) city shapes its citizen with virtues.¹²

It is hard to explain the reason for the division between political and contemplative pursuits of happiness that will follow historically within the Platonic

⁷ O’Meara, *An Introduction to the Enneads*, 101.

⁸ Concerning the possibility of this ideal, see Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s “Republic,”* 185–7.

⁹ Plato, *rep.* 514a-518b. The purpose of this parable is to show the effect of education.

¹⁰ Plato explains this journey to the upper world from the cave as the “ascent of the soul to the realm of understanding.” Plato, *rep.* 517b.

¹¹ Plato, *rep.* 517a. According to Plato, there is a danger that people would even kill the philosopher who returns to the cave to liberate them.

¹² Such fundamental belief is shattered in the course of the rise of the modern nation-state. Machiavelli radically redefines virtue in terms of politics and the traditional unity between personal and political happiness and virtue is breached. C. C. Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010), 95–105. Pecknold depends on Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, Expanded (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

tradition.¹³ Nevertheless, after the third century the separation between the political and contemplative aspects of Platonism cannot be ignored. Plato's mystical ascent of the soul to true reality was further developed by Plotinus and his pupils, yet these Neoplatonists dropped the political vision of Plato almost entirely.¹⁴ Although Porphyry considered civic virtues preliminary to the ascent, they never became a central concern. His attitude toward them was rather nearer to indifference. On the other hand, Plato's political vision is inherited by Cicero in the Latin West. While considered a philosopher, Cicero was in the first place a statesman, and his works do not examine a contemplative element, to say nothing of the ascent of the soul, as those of Plato did. In contrast to Porphyry, Cicero encouraged the cultivation of virtues mainly for civic and political purposes, which reflect Ciceronian realism.¹⁵ Therefore, while the Platonic ideal never came to be realized, as Cicero points out, the Platonic integration of political and contemplative happiness under the philosopher-king fell apart, and in the Latin West each side was separately developed through Cicero and the Neoplatonists.

In the *City of God*, Augustine has accomplished a great re-integration of these two Platonic pursuits of happiness, which his major interlocutors – Cicero and Porphyry – represent. We have been discussing the bishop's engagement with both of the great minds and depiction of the Christian faith as the completion of their ideals. Yet, Augustine's

¹³ The classical answer has attributed the divide to a so-called "third century crisis" and consequent ignorance of the political in philosophical schools.

¹⁴ "[T]he viewpoint of philosophers' political action, which had existed in the Academy ... disappears, or at least fades into the background." Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 158.

¹⁵ Admittedly, the last book of Cicero's *On the Commonwealth* contains the vision of an "eschatological" realm into which servants of the republic will enter. However, Cicero's main point is that by establishing justice and political government, we can achieve the eternal city here on earth

picture of such completion is not two separate visions; rather, it is the re-integration of both the contemplative and political visions within his Christian hope. The locus of beatitude is the Heavenly City of Jerusalem. As the resurrected body is not a replacement for the one we are originally given but the complete transformation of it, this Heavenly City is neither a utopian city of the sort found in Plato's *Republic* nor the Rome that Cicero presented as commonwealth perfectly established on earth.¹⁶ It consists of the saints who are going through an earthly pilgrimage in faithfulness to and love for their Lord. Therefore, Augustine's whole project maintains certain continuity with Platonic eudaemonism. Nevertheless, his re-integration radically changes two fundamental components of Platonism and philosophy in general so that his audience could learn right teaching concerning happiness.

First, Augustine replaces the earthly achievement of happiness with the eschatological hope of the beatific vision; true happiness cannot be achieved on earth. By this radically eschatological reformulation of pursuit of happiness, the actual attainment of happiness put off until God renews the whole world. According to Augustine's eschatology, the beatific vision is preserved as a reward for the faithful until the eschaton. This eschatological reframing of the pagan pursuit of happiness is also applied to a political dimension as well. Rome, the eternal city, has been sacked, and as the bishop demonstrated with the aid of pagan critics, the Roman commonwealth has not been established on justice, which is necessarily the very foundation of true commonwealth.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ernest Fortin rightly claims that Augustine ultimately engages with Plato through his debate with Cicero. Fortin, "The Political Thought of St. Augustine," 1–29.

¹⁷ TeSelle, "The Civic Vision in Augustine's 'City of God'"; Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics*, 1.

Even Christian emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius, though they reflect what will come with Christ in the future, are not perfect models (5.24-26). Genuine happiness for the city will be given in the New Jerusalem, i.e. the City of God, which will come down from Heaven.

Second, true happiness depends on divine grace, instead of human ability. According to philosophical eudaemonism, virtues bring about a good life; the crux of obtaining happiness consists in self-mastery. Thus, happiness is dependent on our will to cherish and nurture virtues. Augustine's theological anthropology radically reorients this philosophical idea. The happiness we desire to achieve is considered a gift of God through His abounding grace in Christ. It is not earned nor achieved; it is given gratuitously. In this fundamental reorientation, so-called cardinal virtues, which have been regarded as the major conveyers of happiness, become secondary to theological virtues. The former are the product of the latter. Faith, hope, and love are not what we can achieve by human discipline and mastery. They flow from salvation and the grace of Christ.¹⁸ Everything is given through grace. Therefore, the source of happiness is God, and to be happy, the bishop teaches, we should rely on Him. All the philosophical endeavors for happiness both at the political and contemplative levels are destined to fail, and thus Augustine profoundly revises the whole classical ideal of virtue and attainment of happiness.¹⁹

¹⁸ Since his radical reorientation toward grace in the 390s Augustine thinks that there is nothing in us that we are not given.

¹⁹ As in Pecknold's observation, for Augustine the Roman Empire is destined to decline because its virtues are corrupt at the core, and such corruption resulted from corruption of their theology, i.e., worshipping false gods. Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics*, 14.

It is in Christ that the above-mentioned, divided Platonic vision of happiness is re-integrated. Since Christ has come down to us from Heaven, he is the perfect mediator to help the ascent to God. He is the single “philosopher” who can reach beatitude without aid. At the same time, he is the just king who will establish his kingdom on perfect justice. Both visions, contemplative and political, are fulfilled within the Heavenly City of God, where Christ reigns as true king. This city is the true commonwealth, and its people will enjoy perfect justice, since they worship the true God. Also, in that city, people will no longer fall short of the glory of God. Their resurrected bodies will not weigh them down. So, they will see God within their bodies. However, as we have discussed, it will not be a solitary mystical *visio dei* as in Neoplatonism. Rather, it will occur *within* the city and will be communal participation. Therefore, Porphyrian mysticism and Ciceronian political theory converge at Augustine’s eschatological hope of the Heavenly City of God. In this city, we finally discover the true integration of contemplative and political happiness that was sought in Platonism, not just in theory but also in eschatological reality.²⁰

Faith and Love in Eschatological Hope

What does Augustine intend to do with this seemingly unrealistic eschatological vision? Augustine has been more often than not accused of his strong inclination toward eschatology. Does the eschatological hope in the concluding books of the *City of God*

²⁰ Nevertheless, it should be noted that Augustine hardly read Plato in original language. Most of his knowledge of Plato is through secondary literatures and translations. P. Courcelle argues that Augustine knows some of ideas of Plato in his *Republic* only from Cicero’s *De republica*. At the same time, however, he claims that the bishop is “abundantly informed on Plato’s philosophy, partly through the Romans – Cicero, Varro, Apuleius, Cyprian, Ambrose – and partly through the Greek Neoplatonists.” Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 171. On Augustine’s progress of Greek competency, Courcelle argues that in his later life Augustine was able to read Greek philosophical works in their original language. see *Ibid.*, 157–165.

render ethical effort on earth less important? Again, we need to go back to the Christian dictum: right doctrine bears right practice. The pursuit of happiness is contingent on the hope to be happy.²¹ However, if we have a false idea of happiness, then we will not attain true happiness. That is the reason that Augustine describes Christian eschatological hope at the end of the work. Even soon after his baptism, Augustine recognized the difference between the Christian and the Porphyrian pursuits of happiness. Since the Neoplatonists tried to obtain happiness through assimilation to the One, in practice they sought to avoid the material as much as they could. In contrast, the young Augustine knew that in order to be happy they should cling to God by faith and approach to him by love. In 388 he writes: “pursuing God, therefore, is desiring happiness, but possessing [God] is happiness itself. And we seek him by loving; truly we obtain Him not when we become entirely what He is, but when we are coming close to Him.”²² The right teaching of hope leads to right practice of faith and love. Augustine’s stress on eschatological vision is not meant to downplay ethical efforts in the present life; rather, it is meant to orient our earthly life toward the participation in the beatitude. The beatific vision in the *City of God*, therefore, encourages his audience to take the path of the Christian faith and love on earth. In this regard, the hope for the beatific vision reshapes the life on earth, which Karla Pollmann rightly labels as “everyday-apocalypse.”²³

²¹ Bourke, *Augustine’s Quest of Wisdom: Life and Philosophy of the Bishop of Hippo*, 276–7.

²² *mor. cat. ecc.* 1.11.18 (PL 32.4319): *Secutio igitur Dei, beatitatis appetitus est, consecutio autem ipsa beatitas. At eum sequimur diligendo, consequimur uero, non cum hoc omnino efficimur quod est ipse, sed ei proximi.*

²³ Pollmann, “Moulding the Present: Apocalyptic as Hermeneutics in ‘City of God’ 21–22,” 178.

In an earlier part of this dissertation, we discussed Augustine's correspondence to those who delayed their baptism. Throughout the *City of God*, the bishop sought to show the illusion of the two philosophical ways of happiness. In line with the refutation of pagan happiness, Augustine encourages his audience to pursue an alternative happiness in Christ; his eudaemonistic argument is profoundly evangelistic for the doubting and wavering intellectuals. If they follow the bishop's argument in the *City of God*, what would be the next place to which the bishop would lead them?

Around 420 Augustine writes *Enchiridion ad laurentium de fide spe et caritate* (*A Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Love*) at the request of a certain Roman intellectual Laurence who is a brother of imperial official Dulcitius. What he produced is a compendium of the Christian faith. According to Augustine's own words, this handbook basically explains the Apostle's Creed and Lord's Prayer in order to teach (1) how God should be worshipped and (2) what the true wisdom is.²⁴ It seems that for the sake of this educated Roman the bishop intentionally deals with two main concerns of religion and of philosophy: piety and wisdom. The bishop integrates piety and wisdom within a biblical passage. According to the Book of Job, states the bishop, wisdom is the same as piety for it is achieved by worshipping the true God: "Behold, piety is wisdom."²⁵ The bishop teaches that God should be worshipped through faith, hope, and love. He succinctly depicts the Christian way to happiness:

Although the mind is imbued with the beginning of faith, which works through love, it continues to come by a good life even to the vision in which the holy and

²⁴ *retr.* 2.63.

²⁵ *ench.* 1.2. *Ecce pietas est sapientia* (Job 28:28).

perfect heart would know the ineffable beauty, the full vision of which is the highest felicity.²⁶

This beatific vision is our ultimate hope, the beginning of the way to that vision is faith, and the external sign and fruit of faith is love. Therefore, in this summary of the way to true felicity, the Christian faith and love are carried out within the hope to see God who is the supreme beauty and happiness.

For the bishop, hope is not wishful thinking; rather, it is expressed through sincere prayer to God. The saints pray, and their prayer brings, by the work of grace, any good deeds that they hope to do and any reward that they hope to receive for their good deeds.²⁷ In other words, everything, whether faith or love, comes from God through the petitions that Christ teaches through the Lord's Prayer. This explains how the Augustinian hope of the vision of God is related to our daily life on earth. Those who have the Christian hope to see God will pray so that they may live a life filled with faith and love.²⁸ In return, God answers the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer *here* on earth, and the fulfillment will be completed in heaven forever.²⁹ Thus, Augustine's Christian happiness, which is alternative to philosophical happiness, reshapes our hope,

²⁶ *ench.* 1.5 (CCL 46.50): *Cum autem initio fidei quae per dilectionem operatur imbuta mens fuerit, tendit bene uiuendo etiam ad speciem peruenire, ubi est sanctis et perfectis cordibus nota et ineffabilis pulchritudo cuius plena uisio est summa felicitas.*

²⁷ *ench.* 30.114.

²⁸ *ench.* 30.117. See Dodaro's excellent analysis: "Hope, for Augustine, therefore redirects the political virtues away from an exclusive concern with assuring temporal benefits for the Earthly City and toward the pursuit of the happiness that belongs to the Heavenly City. In this way, hope alters the statesman's conception of political virtues." Dodaro, "Augustine on the Statesman and the Two Cities," 390.

²⁹ *ench.* 30.115.

and our earthly life with faith and love, in *saeculum*, is radically reoriented according to that hope of contemplative and political happiness as presented in the *City of God*.³⁰

Furthermore, in line with the Apostle Paul, Augustine places love higher than faith and hope (1Cor 13:13). Although good life begins with faith and hope, it consists in and is perfected in love. At the time of the resurrection, we will see God face to face instead of seeing Him by faith, as on earth, and the hope we have here will be fulfilled. Love alone, however, will continue beyond this world. It is hidden for us in this world even if other people are doing things out of love, but in the world to come we will praise and love in our neighbors what God has illuminated to us.³¹

Augustine's eschatological hope at the end of the *City of God* leads his audience to the Christian faith so that they may live out their faith by bearing the fruit of charity on earth.³² That is the character of the people of the Heavenly City; it will be formed in their pilgrimage on earth until they see God.³³ The whole point of presenting the beatific

³⁰ It is somewhat similar approach to Charles T. Mathewes, *The Republic of Grace: Augustinian Thoughts for Dark Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010). Mathewes' Augustinian politics is translated into three theological virtues in political realm, and three chapters are devoted to explain it: Love and Political Responsibility (chap. 5); Faith and Political Commitment (chap. 6); Hope and Political Engagement (chap. 7). However, Mathewes' proposal switched the traditional order of these theological virtues by putting hope at the end. He seems to regard the Augustinian eschatology as more radically transforming the political life of Christians.

One thing we need to note is that Augustine in this work never employs the term virtue to refer to any of the theological "virtues." Although I use that term, I do not think that Augustine would call theological virtues "virtues," beyond convenience to address them all together.

³¹ *ench.* 32.121.

³² Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 134.

³³ Concerning recent scholarly discussions on the Augustinian politics of love, see O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*; Oliver O'Donovan, *Bonds of Imperfection: Christian Politics, Past and Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Mathewes, *The Republic of Grace*.

vision in eschatological hope is for the life of faith and love in our pilgrimage on earth. In this respect, Augustine's eschatological vision has a profound ethical orientation. The people of God worship God and lead a pious life here. Then, God will reward them with the beatific vision.

For Romans, the sack of Rome gave a sign of the impending collapse of the Empire. Along with this downfall, the hope of happiness through the Roman commonwealth gradually faded. For the aged bishop, the sack also signified the decline of the ancient world and its happiness. The longing for happiness in pagan philosophy would be satisfied within that city. However, the bishop saw beyond current visible reality and turned the eyes of his contemporaries to the invisible yet eternal Heavenly Commonwealth and its happiness. This explains why Augustine makes such a strong evangelistic exhortation to the wavering Roman intellectuals at the outset of the *City of God*:

We invite you to this country and exhort you to be citizens of the Heavenly City.³⁴

³⁴ *civ. dei.* 2.29 (CCL 47.64): *Ad quam patriam te inuitamus et exhortamur, ut eius adiciaris numero ciuium.* It should not be considered a coincidence that Augustine expresses the same hope that Nectarius, who was a pagan intellectual, would become a citizen of the heavenly *patria* (*ep.*104.10).

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