

CHURCH HISTORY



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No. 1

MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY, MARCH, 1934

MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY AND THE COUNCIL,
DECEMBER, 1934

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

Frederick William Loetscher

THE AMERICAN COLONIAL ENVIRONMENT AND
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN COLONIAL AMERICA

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BOOK REVIEWS

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THE TENTH SPRING MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CHURCH HISTORY

March 27, 28, 1934

The American Society of Church History held its Spring Meeting at the Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 27th and 28th, 1934. The first meeting was held at 2:30 p. m. at Shepherd Hall, Theological Quadrangle, Oberlin College, Professor F. W. Buckler presiding.

Letters were received from Dean Frederick D. Kerschner and Professor W. D. Schermerhorn expressing regret for their inability to be present. Telegrams were received from Messrs. Spinka, McNeill, Sweet and Riddle of Chicago, and Messrs. Johnson and Malmberg of Thiel College, Greenville, Pennsylvania, reporting their inability to be present owing to snowdrifts and bad weather.

The following members were present: Messrs. Moehlman, Lotta, Knappen, Leach, Buckler, Mott, McCutchan and Slosser. The following candidates for membership were present: Messrs. Miller, Ferm, Beaver, Ludlow, as well as several visitors.

The first paper read was by Prof. Conrad H. Moehlman of the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, on the subject of *Christianity and the Kingdom of God*. It was followed by the Rev. R. Pierce Beaver of Cincinnati, who read a paper on *Servus servorum Christi*.

At 3:45 the meeting was adjourned for tea after which Prof. M. M. Knappen read his paper on *The Meaning and Origin of Puritanism* which was followed by a general discussion. The meeting adjourned at 5 p. m. to view some exhibits in the library of Oberlin College.

Dinner was held at 6 p. m. in the small dining room of

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CONCEPTION OF THE STATE¹

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER
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In his celebrated lecture on the Confessions of St. Augustine the late Professor Adolf von Harnack declared: "Between St. Paul the Apostle and Luther the Reformer, the Christian Church has possessed no one who could measure himself with Augustine; and in comprehensive influence no other is to be compared with him."² Not only was this North African bishop the chief luminary of Western Christendom in his own generation, but through his writings he fairly dominated the philosophy, the theology, and the ethics of the Middle Ages; he stimulated the medieval mystics, alike those who accepted and many of those who rejected the traditional dogmas; he inspired both the so-called forerunners of the Reformation and the leading humanists of the Renaissance; and in large measure he moulded the evangelical faith and piety of the Lutheran and especially of the Reformed churches from the days of their founders down to our own times. But in no realm of thought or life was his influence more potent or historically more significant than in that characteristic development of the relations of church and state that marked the millennial period beginning, less than half a century after his death, with the fall of the Western Empire in the year 476. He was the weightiest authority to whom emperors and popes could and did appeal for support in their age-long contest for the supreme power: the former to vindicate their independence in secular affairs, and the latter to prove their lordship over all other earthly potentates, whether temporal or spiritual.³

Augustine wrote no treatise dealing specifically with our

1 The presidential address delivered at the meeting of the Society in Washington on December 27, 1934.

2 *Monasticism: Its Ideals and History: and The Confessions of St. Augustine* (Crown Theological Library, xxviii), p. 123.

3 Cf. K. Mirbt, *Die Stellung Augustins in der Publizistik des gregorianischen Kirchenstreits*, Leipzig, 1888. He shows the thoroughly partisan use that both factions made of Augustine's often purely incidental and never fully developed statements.

subject, nor did he ever set forth his views concerning the state in a systematic fashion. These must be gathered from occasional references in his *Letters and Sermons*, from his *Anti-Donatist Writings*,⁴ and above all from his *De Civitate Dei*,⁵ the greatest, and excepting his *Confessions*, the best known and the most read of all his works.

The monumental *City of God*—the author himself calls it a *magnum opus et arduum*—⁶ is unquestionably the ablest refutation of heathenism and defence of Christianity that the ancient church has bequeathed to us. It was occasioned by an event that shook the Graeco-Roman world to its very foundations: in August, 410, the imperial capital—*Roma aeterna, Roma felix, Roma invicta*—fell a prey to Alaric's plundering hordes. Men were filled with amazement and terror; the more so because for generations such a catastrophe had been deemed a sheer impossibility. The pagans promptly charged this calamity, as they had long been wont to do with every sort of public misfortune, to the ever-increasing ascendancy of Christianity over their own time-honored religion. And it was in answer to this accusation that Augustine wrote this immortal work, devoting to the task about fourteen of his ripest and busiest years (412-426).⁷ His apologetic purpose dominated the entire treatise.⁸ Of the twenty-two books, the first five, as he himself declares in his *Retractations*,⁹ "refute those who fancy that the polytheistic worship is necessary in order to secure worldly prosperity," while the next five deal with those who "maintain that the worship of the gods is advantageous for the life to come." The remaining twelve books, though

⁴ These are specially important for his doctrine of the church. Cf. H. Reuter, *Augustinische Studien*, Gotha, 1887, p. 151: "Man kann die Staatslehre Augustin's nur mit äusserster Vorsicht und selbst dann nicht vollständig aus den *lib. de civ.* schöpfen. Sie ist korrekt nur unter Vergleichung anderer Schriften, namentlich der antidonatistischen aufzubauen."

⁵ We use the edition of B. Dombart, Leipzig, (vol. i, 1908; vol. ii, 1918); and the English translation by Marcus Dods in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Buffalo, 1887, Second Series, vol. ii.

⁶ I, Praefatio; xxii, 30 (ii, p. 635, ed. Dombart): "ingentis huius operis"; *Retract.* ii, 69 (i, p. 1): "grande opus."

⁷ The facts in regard to the origin of the work, the dates for the publication of the several parts, the course of the argument as a whole, and such matters, may be found in the introductory chapter of H. Scholz's *Glaube und Unglaube in der Weltgeschichte: Ein Kommentar zu Augustins De Civitate Dei*, Leipzig, 1911. Later writers have called attention to some misconceptions in this "Commentary", but it is on the whole the most useful guide we have for the study of the *City of God*.

⁸ Cf. the ancient title in Dombart, ii, p. 635: "De Civitate Dei contra paganos."

⁹ *Retract.*, ii, 43 (E. T., p. xii); cf. *De Civ. Dei*, x, 32, at the end.

by no means lacking in passages of polemic vigor, give what may be called his positive interpretation of Christianity, conceived as the *civitas Dei* in contrast with the *civitas terrena*, and presented in three groups of four books each, dealing, respectively, with the origin, the progress, and the deserved destinies of the two cities. Thus his original aim, that of showing that it was not the renunciation of the old deities that had ruined Rome, was confirmed by a constructive theory of history that purports to embrace the whole life of the race from the fall of man to the final judgment. No doubt, the plan is more magnificent in its conception than adequate in its execution! Augustine's learning, especially his exegetical and historical scholarship, did not equal his theological genius. We may, indeed, question the propriety of calling the work a philosophy of history in the modern sense; but it was the first worthy attempt in this direction, an achievement that is the more striking in view of the fact that for more than a thousand years nothing better or even comparable was produced on Christian soil, and that the essential features of his solution of the problem have been adopted by many modern writers.¹⁰

We have said that Augustine nowhere gives us a systematic presentation of his views concerning the state; and this, we repeat, is true even of the *City of God*. But it was inevitable that when the pagans took occasion from the fall of Rome to defend their traditional polytheism, he should feel constrained to consider that political event in the light of his own theological principles as a Catholic Christian, and that in so doing he should have to test the two basic historical realities involved in the debate—the church and the state—as to their highest value, their ideal significance, their relation to the spiritual world.¹¹ This is the explanation of that characteristic blending of empiricism and transcendentalism that has given rise to such varied and often contradictory interpretations of this work. On the one hand, his whole discussion is conditioned by concrete facts taken from the realm of ecclesiastical and political history;

10 See Flint, *Philosophy of History in France and French Belgium and Switzerland*, 1894, pp. 152ff.; J. Reinkens, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie des heiligen Augustinus*, 1865; G. J. Seyrich, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie Augustins nach seiner Schrift De civitate Dei*, 1891; J. Biegler, *Die Civitas Dei des heiligen Augustinus*, 1894; A. Niemann, *Augustins Geschichtsphilosophie*, 1895.

11 Karl Holl, "Augustins innere Entwicklung," (in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, Tübingen, iii, 1928) p. 101f.; Hermelink, "Die civitas terrena bei Augustin" (*Festgabe von Fachgenossen und Freunden A. Von Harnack zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht*, Tübingen, 1921), p. 311f.

on the other, his ethical judgments concerning these data are uniformly determined by his habit of viewing the church and the state *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is the clear recognition of this double truth that has convinced most modern interpreters of the *City of God* that the fundamental contrast in this work is not, as most medieval expounders maintained for their partisan purposes, that between the church and the state, but rather that between the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*, those transcendent organisms of which the ecclesiastical and political organizations of this world are but partial and imperfect embodiments. It was thus that Augustine, in the performance of his apologetic task, found it necessary to express himself concerning the state, and in doing so to relate his views to his doctrine of the kingdom of God.

We come, therefore, to the heart of our subject, when we now raise the much controverted question as to the meaning of the term *civitas terrena*, with which Augustine links many of his reflections on the state and on all sorts of problems pertaining to civil government. The name was obviously adopted by him as an antithesis to the familiar *civitas Dei* of the Vulgate. It may be well, therefore, to glance, first of all, at some of the more important traits that mark his use of this latter designation, especially in the work that forms our chief source.

In book xi, chapter 1, which may be regarded as the introduction to the positive and constructive part of the treatise, the author refers to three passages in the Psalter,¹² and then adds: "From these and similar testimonies, all of which it were tedious to cite,¹³ we have learned that there is a city of God."¹⁴ This earthly Jerusalem is later represented as the "prophetic image" of the "supernal city of the saints,"¹⁵ which includes all—both angels¹⁶ and human beings—who live "according to God"¹⁷ or "according to the Spirit."¹⁸ In its widest extent the *civitas Dei* becomes the universal and eternal kingdom of God, embracing both the society of the holy angels

¹² Psalm 87, 3; 48, 2; 46, 4.

¹³ Among these he may have had in mind Heb. 11, 10; 11, 16; 12, 22; 13, 14; and Rev. 3, 12; 21, 2.

¹⁴ Scholz, *op. cit.*, p. 71f., gives an extended account of some striking adumbrations, amounting almost to anticipations, of the Augustinian antithesis between *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena*, in Plato, Plotinus, the Stoics, Philo, Hermas, Origen, Lactantius, Ambrose, and Ticonius.

¹⁵ xv, 1, xv, 2 (ii, p. 59, 60).

¹⁶ xiv, 13 (ii, p. 33).

¹⁷ xv, 1 (ii, p. 58).

¹⁸ xiv, 1 (ii, p. 4).

that antedates human history,¹⁹ and the *communio sanctorum* as the company of the elect.²⁰ In its earthly form the *civitas Dei* begins with Adam,²¹ "not, indeed, evidently, but according to God's foreknowledge."²² From Seth the development extends through the patriarchs and the prophets and, not without large admixtures from the ranks of the ungodly, through the nation of Israel.²³ Of special interest here is the inclusion, within the society of the blessed, of the Erythraean Sibyl,²⁴ "the holy and wonderful Job,"²⁵ and the Queen of the South.²⁶ With the advent of the Saviour the *civitas Dei* enters upon the highest stage of its earthly career, so that the church is now virtually identified with the *regnum Christi*.²⁷ At the second coming of Christ, when the final judgment takes place, the earthly form of the *civitas Dei* is exchanged for the heavenly, with the glorification of the saints and their enjoyment of the beatific vision of God.²⁸

Over against the *civitas Dei* Augustine places the *civitas terrena*. This binomial, it must be confessed, is not easily defined. It is used with various connotations. Reuter²⁹ long ago referred to the unfortunate fact that German writers commonly employed the word "state" to translate *civitas*, and he clearly showed that much of what Augustine says about the *civitas terrena* does not apply at all to the state as such. Mausbach,³⁰ indeed, is quite too optimistic in declaring that this basal error has since been universally admitted. But he and other Catholic writers, notably Seidel and Schilling,³¹ and most recent

19 xi, 28 (i, p. 502).

20 xx, 3 (ii, p. 556f.). How far Augustine's doctrine of predestination undermines the Catholic dogma of the church may be seen in Reuter, *op. cit.*, p. 96f.

21 Not with Seth, as Reuter (p. 132) represents.

22 xii, 28 (i, p. 556).

23 xvii, 15 and 16, and the later chapters dealing with the history of the Jews.

24 xviii, 23 (ii, 285).

25 xviii, 47 (ii, 330).

26 xx, 5 (ii, 411).

27 xx, 9 (ii, p. 429, 431). Augustine gave up his earlier chiliasm and interpreted the millenium as the present reign of Christ and his saints.

28 xxii, 29 and 30.

29 Reuter, *op. cit.*, p. 130: "Die Wahl des Wortes *civitas* ist doch eine verhängnisvolle geworden." Cf. p. 131.

30 *Die Ethik des hl. Augustinus*, i, Freiburg, 1909, p. 332.

31 Bruno Seidel, "Die Lehre des hl. Augustinus vom Staate," in *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen herausg. von Dr. Max Sdralek*, ix, i, Breslau, 1909, pp. 5-14; Otto Schilling, *Die Staats- und Soziallehre des hl. Augustinus*, Freiburg, 1910, particularly pp. 37-44, where he shows that Gierke (*Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*, iii, Berlin, 1897) misinterprets the five passages from *De Civ. Dei* which he cites in support of his view that Augustine denies all justification to the state *per se*.

Protestant authorities³² like Robertson, Scholz, Eckstädt, Troeltsch, Hermelink, and Figgis, may be said to have secured a fairly general recognition of the view that while an empirical state may, according to Augustine, be an embodiment or form of the *civitas terrena*, it is not proper to equate this term with the essential idea of the state.

In trying to get hold of Augustine's conception of the *civitas terrena*, it is natural to consider his use of the noun itself, apart from any modifying adjunct. He defines *civitas* as "nothing else than a multitude of men bound together by some associating tie."³³ Frequently emphasis is laid on certain specific features of the unifying principle; such as "concordia," "than which," he says, "nothing is more useful to the State,"³⁴ and the correlative terms obedience and rule.³⁵ These characterizations are helpful as far as they go, but they are not sufficiently definite to distinguish the *civitas* from allied forms of communal life; nor do they give any indication of the size of the society to which they may be applied. As a matter of fact, the word is frequently employed,³⁶ as by other Latin authors, to denote individual cities, city-states, and states in our modern sense of the term—political bodies embracing relatively large areas under a single governing authority.³⁷ *Civitas* thus becomes a synonym of the various words used in Latin to denote the state as we understand it,—*res publica*, *res populi*, *regnum*, *imperium*.

But it is only when we give due consideration to the religious and moral implications of the adjective "earthly," that the distinctive traits of the *civitas terrena* become plain. It is the special merit of Seidel's dissertation that he has so convincingly proved that throughout the *City of God* the *civitas*

32 Archibald Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, London, 1901, p. 206ff.; Scholz, as cited—though his judgment of Augustine's "state" is not as favorable as the facts warrant; K. Eckstädt, *Augustins Anschauung vom Staat*, Kirchhain, 1912, p. 7; Troeltsch, *Augustin, die christliche Antike und das Mittelalter*, Berlin, 1915, p. 12f.; Hermelink, as cited, p. 302; J. N. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of St. Augustine's 'City of God'*, Lond., 1921, p. 50.

33 xv, 8 (ii, p. 73): "civitas, quae nihil est aliud quam hominum multitudo aliquo societatis vinculo conligata". Cf. *Quaest. ev. ii*, 46 (Migne, P. L. 35, 1360): "rationalium multitudo legis unius societate devincta."

34 *Letter* 138, 11, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, i, p. 484. Cf. *De Civ. D.* xix, 24 (ii, p. 400): "Populus est coetus multitudinis rationalis rerum quas diligit concordii communione sociatus."

35 xix, 16 (ii, p. 384): "ad ordinatam imperandi oboediendique concordiam civium."

36 Eckstädt, p. 14, gives a list of instances.

37 xxii, 6 (ii, 563): "civitates positae sub iure Romano."

terrena is essentially the *societas impiorum*. As in the case of the corresponding *civitas Dei*, the spiritual factor is the really decisive one. Hence fallen angels,³⁸ as well as unregenerate human beings, may belong to this community. It embraces all who out of love of self live in contempt of God,³⁹ all the *superbi*,⁴⁰ all "who in the uncleanness of their hearts mind earthly things."⁴¹ The *civitas terrena*, therefore, is not necessarily an empirical state; it is rather a body of persons, whether angels or men, who center their interest in that which is purely transitory and which, as compared with the substantial and permanent good of the *civitas Dei*, is of far inferior worth, whatever be its value under the conditions of the present temporal order. It is a "citizenry of the earth-born,"⁴² who "rejoice in the earthly felicity of an earthly community,"⁴³ "who prefer their own gods to the Founder of the holy city,"⁴⁴ who "live after the flesh,"⁴⁵ and "run riot in an endless variety of sottish pleasures."⁴⁶ From these and other passages that might be cited it is clear that, contrary to Reuter's contention,⁴⁷ it is not only in the last twelve but also in the first ten books of the *City of God* that *civitas terrena* denotes primarily "the society of the impious."⁴⁸ The basal contrast is never that between the historical church and some empirical state, be this more or less heathenish, nor that between the church and the state as such, but that between the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*, as organic products of two opposite and indeed irreconcilable principles—faith and unbelief.⁴⁹ Conscious of the peculiarity of his nomenclature, Augustine says at the beginning of the twelfth book: "I must,

38 xiv, 13 (ii, p. 33). Cf. xviii, 18 (ii, p. 277): "civitate, quae profecto et angelorum et hominum societas impiorum est"; xii, 1 (i, p. 512): "sed duae potius civitates, hoc est societates, merito esse dicantur, una in bonis, altera in malis non solum angelis, verum etiam hominibus constitutae."

39 xiv, 28 (ii, p. 56): "Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui."

40 i, Praef.

41 viii, 25 (i, p. 363).

42 xvi, 17 (ii, p. 153): "terrigenarum civitas."

43 xv, 15 (ii, p. 88).

44 x, 32 (i, p. 460).

45 xiv, 1 (ii p. 1).

46 i, 30 (i, p. 47).

47 *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

48 There are, indeed, a few cases in which the "terrena" seems to be morally colorless, signifying, simply, "on earth"; see Eckstädt, p. 19f., and Seidel, p. 13.

49 xx, 9 (ii, p. 431): "impia civitas . . . et populus infidelium contrarius populo fidei et civitati Dei".

so far as I can, demonstrate that it is not incongruous and unsuitable to speak of a society composed of angels and men; so that there may properly be said to be, not four (two, namely, of angels and as many of men), but rather two communities, that is societies, one composed of the good, and the other of the wicked, alike angels and men."⁵⁰ Throughout the work this is the governing idea.⁵¹ We shall cite only one more passage: "And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil."⁵² As Hermelink says,⁵³ the word "*mystice*," here as generally in Augustine, refers to the *mysticus sensus* of holy Scripture and denotes a mysterious relationship concealed in the sacred text and not only justifying but demanding an allegorical interpretation. Essentially, therefore, the *civitas terrena* is just as much a metaphysical conception as is the *civitas Dei*. In the last analysis, it is the predestinated, the elect and the reprobate, that are designated by the two communities.⁵⁴

There is, however, another aspect of the matter, and to this we now turn. The *civitas terrena* has always found expression in historic communities here on earth. While, therefore, we may never, on the one hand, fully identify the whole with any of its several parts, the *civitas terrena* with any given political organization, it is true, on the other, that states, whatever be their size, may be forms of the *civitas terrena*. This is expressly said, for instance, of Rome itself,⁵⁵ the state with which his apologetic purpose required him particularly to deal. In the Preface to the entire work, it is obviously the *civitas terrena* that speaks in the famous lines used by Virgil to set forth the proud boast of the heathen Romans, "to show pity to the humbled soul and crush the sons of pride."⁵⁶ We cannot dwell upon the details

50 F. Kolde, *Das Staatswesen des Mittelalters*, Teil I, *Seine Grundlegung durch Augustin*, p. 6, misconstrues this statement, saying, "Dem irdischen Staat gegenüber steht der himmlische, der sich selber weiter in zwei einander entgegengesetzte Teile spaltete, den guten und den bösen." The error is the more remarkable as Reinkens, to whom he refers, gave the correct rendering.

51 Cf. Bliemetzrieder, "Ueber St. Augustin's Schrift, 'De civitate Dei'" in *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Tübingen, 1913, p. 103.

52 xv, 1 (ii, p. 58).

53 *Op. cit.*, p. 309. Seidel, p. 7, refers to the occasional phrase "*secundum scripturas nostras*" (xiv, 1) as an equivalent, but this does not bring out clearly the main idea—that of the more or less hidden figurative meaning.

54 So Troeltsch, p. 11.

55 v, 19 (i, p. 230): "*quandam formam terrenae civitatis*."

56 Cf. Holl, as cited, p. 100.

of Augustine's history of the *civitas terrena*, but must content ourselves with the mention of a few salient facts. Of special interest is the first stage in the organization of this community. The *civitas terrena* enters the mundane realm through Adam, but Cain is the first to give it a social expression. Commenting on Genesis 4:17, "And Cain builded a city," Augustine says: "Thus the founder of the *civitas terrena* was a fratricide."⁵⁷ It is to be observed, indeed, that he does not say that Cain founded "the state," a mistranslation frequently charged against him;⁵⁸ but while the remark contains no disparagement of the state as such, it clearly shows that in his opinion the city founded by Cain was a part of the *civitas terrena*. The terrene community, extending its sway from generation to generation, becomes inextricably mixed with its rival, the *civitas Dei*.⁵⁹ After the flood, which destroyed the wicked, the sons of Noah restore the earthly city.⁶⁰ In Abraham's time, says Augustine, "there were three famous kingdoms of the nations, in which the city of the earth-born . . . chiefly flourished, namely the three kingdoms of Sicyon, Egypt, and Assyria." Of these the last was much the most powerful, with Babylon as its head, the very name signifying the confusion that always results from the unbridled lust of power.⁶¹ When Assyria declined in the East, Rome, like another Babylon, arose in the West.⁶² Augustine is not lacking in appreciation of the old Roman virtues: many of their wars, he admits, were just,⁶³ and the people, if not saintly, were at least less shameful:⁶⁴ but he emphasizes the fact that their city, too, was founded by a fratricide,⁶⁵ and that its whole history was stained with sinful excesses of every sort.⁶⁶ One after another, therefore, the great monarchies of the past are pictured as exhibiting the characteristic God-defying spirit of the *civitas terrena*. The state thus becomes identified, not indeed fully and absolutely but partially and relatively, with the

⁵⁷ xv, 5 (ii, p. 64).

⁵⁸ E. g., Eucken, *Die Lebensanschauungen der grossen Denker*, 1890, p. 282; and Scholz, p. 99.

⁵⁹ i, 35 (i, p. 51). Cf. xv, 22 (ii, p. 106), referring to Genesis 6:2.

⁶⁰ xv, 20 (ii, p. 99).

⁶¹ xvi, 17 (ii, p. 153f.); cf. xvii, 16 (ii, p. 239).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ iv, 15 (i, p. 165).

⁶⁴ v, 13 (i, p. 218).

⁶⁵ xv, 5 (ii, p. 64).

⁶⁶ Books ii-v.

civitas terrena.⁶⁷ From the historical point of view the *civitas terrena* works itself out in political states that embody a life that is contrary to the divine will.⁶⁸ But in spite of this fact, we must, as Schilling reminds us,⁶⁹ always take pains to ascertain whether in a given context Augustine has in mind what we mean by the state as such, or whether—as will commonly be found to be the case—he is speaking of heathenism, or the heathen state, or the *societas improborum*.

Augustine's conception of the nature of the state is more clearly set forth in two passages in which he deals at some length with the definition of a commonwealth given in the name of Scipio by Cicero in his *De Republica*. The first of these discussions is found in the *City of God*, book ii, chapter 21. Augustine here refers to Cicero's statements that *res publica* is *res populi*; that "a people . . . is an assemblage associated by a common acknowledgment of law, and by a community of interests;" and further, that a republic . . . exists only when it is well and justly governed." And then Augustine adds that he intends in its proper place to show that according to this definition "Rome never was a republic, because true justice had never a place in it." For, he continues, "true justice has no existence save in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ." For the fulfillment of his promise we must turn to book xix, chapter 21. Here Augustine, accepting Cicero's own concession that a "republic cannot be administered without justice," concludes: "Consequently, if the republic is the weal of the people, and there is no people if it be not associated by a common acknowledgment of right, and if there is no right where there is no justice, then most certainly it follows that there is no republic where there is no justice." But "justice," he says, "is that virtue which gives every one his due. Where, then, is the justice of man, when he deserts the true God and yields himself to impure demons? Is this to give every one his due?" According to Augustine, then, if supernatural justice, that is justice in the sense thus indicated, were essential to a state, then neither Rome nor any other pagan state ever was a true

67 Mausbach, i, p. 332f., gives three reasons for the fact: 1) political interests and motives, if not restrained, lead to the sinful *cupiditas* and *superbia* of the *civitas terrena*; 2) the ancient world monarchies reflected this tendency in its heathenish character; and 3) the treatise itself was occasioned by the defenders of the heathen Roman state.

68 Hermelink, p. 309.

69 *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

state. Many of his interpreters have, therefore, declared that he virtually deprived the state of all possible justification on ethical grounds.⁷⁰ But Augustine gives the discussion a quite different turn. As Figgis rightly declares: "So far indeed is Augustine from saying that injustice destroys the being of a commonwealth, that he uses the admitted injustice and corruption of Rome in the later days of the Republic as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Scipio's definition."⁷¹

The fact is that our author specifically rejects the idea that *vera iustitia* must be an attribute of the state. He discards Scipio's definition as too narrow to suit the historical facts, and substitutes for it one of his own. It is this: "A people is an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love."⁷² Then he says: "According to this definition of ours, the Roman people is a people and its weal is without doubt a commonwealth or republic." And he adds that the same is true of "the Athenians or any Greek state, of the Egyptians, of the early Assyrian Babylon, and of every other nation, great or small, which had a public government."

What, then, are the characteristic traits of the state according to his own definition of the term?

We need not dwell upon the requirement that citizens must be "reasonable" beings, as distinguished from brutes. But more significant is the matter of "agreement as to the objects of their love;" for, as Augustine says in the immediate context, "in order to discover the character of any people, we have only to observe what they love . . . and it will be a superior people in proportion as it is bound together by higher interests, inferior in proportion as it is bound together by lower." Eckstädt⁷³ has been the first, so far as we have been able to ascertain, to give

⁷⁰ See Seidel, p. 25, for an excellent summary of the various forms of this basal error in the writings of Schmidt, Dorner, Reuter, Gierke, Kolde, Eucken, von Eicken, and Sommerlad; the last-named going the length of saying: "Einzig und allein die irdische staatliche Gesellschaft gewinnt für den grossen Kirchenlehrer Berechtigung, die sich unbedingt und unbeschränkt in den Dienst der Gemeinde Gottes, der Kirche, und ihres Organs, des Klerus, begiebt." (*Die wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit der Kirche in Deutschland*, i, p. 137). We think that Seidel is justified in saying: "Alle diese den wahren Anschauungen Augustins widersprechenden Behauptungen rühren von der verkehrten Auffassung des Begriffs civitas terrena als Wesensbestimmung für 'Staat' oder 'nichtchristlicher Staat' her."

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁷² xix, 24 (ii, p. 400): "Populus est coetus multitudinis rationalis rerum quas diligit concordie communione sociatus."

⁷³ *Op. cit.*, p. 29f.

due emphasis to this feature of Augustine's conception, particularly as it pertains to the underlying *concordia*. We can only allude to a few of the cardinal passages cited by him. "For a community," says Augustine, "is nothing else than a harmonious multitude of human beings."⁷⁴ Quoting Sallust with approval, Augustine declares that the "*maxima concordia*" enjoyed by the Romans between the second and third Punic wars was due to their "most excellent morals" at that time, while the later dissensions sprang from their *discordia*.⁷⁵ With a touch of irony, he says that if the goddess Concordia, to whom the Romans built a temple on the very site of those seditions and massacres, had been present in the city, "she would not have suffered herself to be torn by such dissensions."⁷⁶ As we have already seen, Augustine, in his Letter to Marcellinus, defines the state as a "multitude of men bound together by some bond of concord,"⁷⁷ and adds that if the Romans had imitated the quarrels of their deities, the state would have fallen to pieces.

There can, then, be no doubt, that *concordia*, to the mind of Augustine, is an essential attribute of the state. But a further question emerges here, a question that still divides his interpreters into irreconcilable groups. It is the question of a possible relation between *concordia* and *iustitia*. We have seen that Augustine was quite unwilling to deny statehood to the great monarchies of the past, even though they lacked that true and supernatural righteousness that gives to God, as well as to all other persons, their dues. But can there be a state without any justice whatsoever? Reuter⁷⁸ was the first to insist that Augustine makes a distinction between absolute and relative, or what Reuter calls rational justice, and that Augustine maintains that every state, being in some sense an ethical community, must have at least this rational or natural justice that administers human affairs with some regard to equity. Is not, then, this *concordia* itself based on some sort of *iustitia*? The debate turns chiefly on the interpretation of the celebrated passage in book iv, chapter 4:⁷⁹ "Justice, then, being taken away, what are

⁷⁴ i, 15 (i, p. 27): "cum aliud civitas non sit quam concors hominum multitudo."

⁷⁵ ii, 18 (i, p. 74). Cf. iii, 23 (i, p. 135): "discordiae civiles vel potius inciviles."

⁷⁶ iii, 25 (i, p. 136).

⁷⁷ (See note 33).

⁷⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 137f.

⁷⁹ iv, 4 (i, p. 150): "Remota itaque iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?"

kingdoms but great robberies?" Scholz⁸⁰ says that these words pronounce a veritable sentence of death over the state. He takes the ablative absolute as causative, so that the meaning is: "Inasmuch as justice (as a matter of fact) is lacking, kingdoms are nothing but robberies." But Mausbach,⁸¹ Seidel,⁸² Bliemetzrieder,⁸³ Hermelink,⁸⁴ Schilling,⁸⁵ and Figgis⁸⁶ all take the clause in a merely conditional sense. And unquestionably the context favors this construction. Augustine is not here speaking of that true justice that seeks the glory of God and that only Christian citizens can exemplify, but of that sort of equity or fair dealing which even criminals must practice among themselves; for, as he goes on to say: "what are robberies themselves but little kingdoms? The band itself is made up of men; it is ruled by the authority of a prince, it is knit together by the pact of the confederacy; the booty is divided by the law agreed on." Unless, therefore, there is this sort of natural law, there can be no state at all.⁸⁷ This justice may be rudimentary and feeble—a *vitium* rather than a *virtus*⁸⁸—but without it there could be no enduring society whatever. Justice alone can secure the needed *concordia*. Augustine quotes with approval Scipio's simile: "What musicians call harmony in singing, is concord in matters of state, which is the strictest bond and best security of any republic, and which by no ingenuity can be retained where justice has become extinct."⁸⁹

The state is thus, according to our author, a natural necessity. No doubt, his severe condemnation of the *civitas terrena* involves many a harsh judgment on those states, whether heathen, Jewish, or nominally Christian, that fall utterly short in promoting the common weal even in temporal, to say nothing of spiritual affairs. He is particularly opposed to the tyranny of strong nations over weak neighbors. He allows that to a considerable extent Rome built up her greatness by "honorable

80 *Op. cit.*, p. 102. But on the very next page he admits that Augustine concedes to the "Naturstaat" a certain "iustitia civilis."

81 Vol. i, p. 336f.

82 P. 20f.

83 P. 110f.

84 P. 321. He thinks, however, that the possibility ought to be left open that the clause may be both causal and hypothetical.

85 P. 40.

86 P. 60.

87 Scholz, and especially Troeltsch and Schilling, develop the historic background of Augustine's ideas on the *lex naturae*.

88 Seidel, p. 23.

89 ii, 21 (i, p. 80).

means."⁹⁰ His own ideal, however, is that of groups of small states, "rejoicing in neighborly concord;" and he adds that, if this ideal had been realized, "there would have been very many small kingdoms of nations in the world, as there are very many small houses of citizens in a city."⁹¹

What has just been said suggests a further word in regard to the origin of the state. Here, again, it is of prime importance to distinguish between the underlying principle and its realization in history. The state, according to Augustine, is an organism that evolves naturally out of man's divinely given social nature. The whole race was made to proceed from one man, we are told, in order that God might thereby show how highly He prized "unity in a multitude."⁹² Even more powerfully than other members of the animal kingdom, man is moved by the laws of his nature "to hold fellowship and maintain peace with all men, so far as in him lies."⁹³ Marriage is the seed-bed of the city;⁹⁴ "the house ought to be the beginning or element of the city."⁹⁵ Like Cicero, Augustine makes the family the organic link between the individual and the state.⁹⁶ Specially significant is Augustine's statement concerning "domestic peace": "But in the family of the just man . . . even those who rule serve those whom they seem to command; for they rule, not from a love of power, but from a sense of duty they owe to others—not because they are proud of authority, but because they love mercy."⁹⁷ And this is precisely the well-ordered concord that ought to prevail in the state; for it is, indeed, "prescribed by the order of nature: it is thus that God created man."⁹⁸

But sin has disturbed what would have been the normal relationships alike in the family and in the state. Augustine says: God "did not intend that His rational creature, who was made in His image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation,—not man over man but man over

90 iii, 10 (i, p. 107): "Decenter his artibus Roma crevit."

91 iv, 15 (i, p. 164).

92 xii, 23 (i, p. 550): "in pluribus unitas."

93 xix, 12 (ii, p. 375): "Quanto magis homo fertur quodam modo naturae suae legibus ad ineundam societatem pacemque cum hominibus, quantum in ipso est, omnibus obtinendam."

94 xv, 16 (ii, p. 93): "'quoddam seminarium est civitatis.'"

95 xix, 16 (ii, p. 383): "Quia igitur hominis domus initium sive particula debet esse civitatis."

96 Cf. Schilling, p. 60.

97 xix, 14 (ii, p. 381).

98 xix, 15 (ii, p. 381).

beasts. And hence the righteous men in primitive times were made shepherds of cattle rather than kings of men."⁹⁹ But through sin came slavery as its just desert, together with the lust of power¹⁰⁰ and the manifold evils of the *civitas terrena*. But even so, not everything in a morally imperfect state is essentially bad. Even godless citizens, as will be seen later, may do their part in securing and maintaining peace, which, though it cannot be the highest blessing of a commonwealth, is nevertheless a real and valuable good.¹⁰¹ We may not, therefore, regard the state *per se* as a direct consequence of sin; for even if sin had not disturbed the normal development of society, the organic life of the race would have found expression in communal forms. "For there is nothing," says Augustine, "so social by nature, so prone to discord by corruption, as this (human) race."¹⁰² Occasionally, he speaks of a *pactum societatis*;¹⁰³ but the emphasis lies not on the voluntary character of the action taken, but on the social instincts that determined the choice of ends. This entire natural order is grounded in the will of God, by whose providence all human kingdoms are established.¹⁰⁴

Among the tasks of the state by far the most important is that of securing and maintaining peace. And here, as Scholz reminds us,¹⁰⁵ Augustine is an epoch-making thinker; a truly modern man in his clear grasp of the inestimable cultural value of peace. "For peace," we read, "is so great a good, that even in this earthly and mortal life there is no word we hear with such pleasure, nothing we desire with such zest, or find to be more thoroughly gratifying."¹⁰⁶ Again, "Domestic peace is the well-ordered concord between those of the family who rule and those who obey. Civil peace is a similar concord among the citizens. The peace of the celestial city is the perfectly or-

99 *Ibid.*

100 Augustine, like the earlier Fathers, accepted slavery as a historical fact; but Mausbach, i, p. 327, goes too far in intimating, on the basis of xix, 14 (ii, p. 380), that he regarded slavery as "necessary."

101 Gregorovius, *Rome in the Middle Ages*, 4th ed., E. t., i. p. 169, says: Augustine "considered the Empire of the Romans, with all its imperious majesty, its laws, literature and philosophy, only as the accursed work of devils." But Augustine says, on the contrary, that it was God who gave Rome its ancient glory; v. 15f.

102 xii, 28 (i, p. 555).

103 *Confessiones*, iii, c. 8, 15; cf. *De Civ. D.*, iv, 4.

104 v, 1 (i, p. 190): "Prorsus divina providentia regna constituuntur humana."

105 *Op. cit.*, p. 51. Cf. H. Fuchs, *Augustin und der antike Friedensgedanke*, Berlin, 1926, p. 16f.

106 xix, 11 (ii, p. 372).

dered and harmonious enjoyment of God, and of one another in God."¹⁰⁷ The peace that marks the blessedness of eternal life is the secret of all happiness even in this life.¹⁰⁸ In short, "the whole use of things temporal has a reference to this result of earthly peace in the earthly community, while in the city of God it is connected with eternal peace."¹⁰⁹

Peace in the state means, on the one hand, protection against external foes. Augustine is no pacifist. He admits the frightful evils of war, but at the same time he recognizes that some wars are thoroughly justified. He says: "Now, when victory remains with the party that had the juster cause, who hesitates to congratulate the victor and style it a desirable peace? These things, then, are good things, and without doubt the gifts of God."¹¹⁰ In case of an unwarranted attack from without, it is incumbent on the state, in the very interests of peace, to defend itself.¹¹¹ He praises the old Roman virtues as real excellencies, even though they were not of the highest order of merit, inasmuch as they were due to a love of earthly power and fame.¹¹² Nevertheless, many of their wars were righteous.¹¹³ He duly appreciates the benefits of the universal peace under Augustus.¹¹⁴ Even Christians may with a good conscience serve the state in civil or military life.¹¹⁵ But he warns against the pride of dominion and the passion for self-aggrandizement that have marked the expansion of some states into vast monarchies, especially Assyria and—in its later stages—Rome itself.¹¹⁶

On the other hand, peace in the state means also the proper regulation of internal affairs. The spirit of selfishness that characterizes the members of the *civitas terrena* inevitably leads

¹⁰⁷ xix, 13 (ii, p. 377).

¹⁰⁸ xix, 10 and 11 (ii, p. 370f.).

¹⁰⁹ xix, 14 (ii, p. 379).

¹¹⁰ xv, 4 (ii, p. 63).

¹¹¹ xix, 7 (ii, p. 367).

¹¹² v, 15 (i, p. 220).

¹¹³ iv, 15 (i, p. 164): "Si ergo iusta gerenda bella, non impia, non iniqua, Romani imperium tam magnum acquirere potuerant." Cf. i, 21 (i, p. 35), concerning those who—in the biblical history—"waged war in obedience to the divine command."

¹¹⁴ xviii, 22 (ii, p. 284).

¹¹⁵ Ep. 138 (to Marcellinus), c. 15. Ep. 189 (to Boniface), c. 4: "Do not think that it is impossible for any one to please God while engaged in active military service."

¹¹⁶ iv, 6 (i, p. 153): "Inferre autem bella finitimis et in cetera inde procedere ac populos sibi non molestos sola regni cupiditate conterere et subdere, quid aliud quam grande latrocinium nominandum est?"

to dissension and strife, particularly with reference to the acquisition and use of private property. Augustine makes plain that earthly possessions are not in themselves evil; for they who live by faith understand the art of using aright all things that are necessary for this mortal life.¹¹⁷ They may with propriety even pray for wealth, provided they purpose to employ it, agreeably to the will of God, for the benefit of their fellow-men.¹¹⁸ But possessions involve legal rights, and when these give rise to litigation, only the state can determine the issue¹¹⁹ by securing "the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule" through "the combination of men's wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life."¹²⁰ Reuter,¹²¹ indeed, claims that Augustine had no firm conviction in regard to the ethical value of private possessions. But Seidel¹²² and Kolde¹²³ interpret him more accurately, when they say that while he does not regard the ownership of private property under the ordinary conditions of administration as an ideal system, he both concedes to it a divine origin and justifies it on the basis of human rights. It is not the possession of material good, but the improper use of it, as if it alone were worth while, that brings evil into the world.¹²⁴ In any event, there is no other agency than the state for the protection of civil rights and the enforcement of the mutual obligations of citizens. It is divinely appointed to promote the common welfare by means of its statutes and, when necessary, its judicial processes.¹²⁵

Even, therefore, if the state had no further task than that of defending its inhabitants against attacks from without and of maintaining public order and tranquility within, it would be of inestimable value to human society. Dorner¹²⁶ misinterprets the passage to which he refers in proof of his statement that Augustine condemned as sinful the seeking of earthly felicity

117 xix, 17 (ii, p. 384).

118 Ep. 130 (to Proba), c. xii, section 13.

119 Ep. 93 (to Vincentius), c. 12, sect. 50: "Every earthly possession can be rightly retained only on the ground of divine right, according to which all things belong to the righteous, or of human right, which is the jurisdiction of the kings of the earth." Cf. xix, 17 (ii, p. 384): "legibus terrenae civitatis, quae sustentandae mortali vitae accommodata sunt, obtemperare non dubitat."

120 xix, 17 (ii, p. 384).

121 *Op. cit.*, p. 384.

122 *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

123 *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

124 *Ibid.*

125 xix, 5 and 6 (ii, p. 364f.).

126 *Augustinus*, 1873, p. 298.

for its own sake. For the context shows that the writer is not speaking of the state as such but of the *civitas terrena* that is guilty because of its "neglect of the better things that belong to the *superna civitas*." He says explicitly: "But the things which this city [the *civitas terrena*] desires cannot justly be said to be evil, inasmuch as in its own human sphere it is itself a good of a higher order."¹²⁷

But Augustine does not confine the responsibilities of the state to the sphere of purely secular and temporal interests. According to his favorite analogy, the state is an enlarged family and the magistrate ought to discharge the duty of "a pious father."¹²⁸ The civil power must deal not only with matters pertaining to law and order but also with considerations of *utilitas* and *felicitas*.¹²⁹ But the secret of happiness, we are told, is the same for the state as for the individual,¹³⁰ and as "those who are true fathers of their households desire and endeavor that all the members of their household, equally with their own children, should worship and win God,"¹³¹ so the state must give due attention to the moral and religious welfare of its people. As we have seen, the *civitas terrena* is blameworthy, not because it aims to secure material prosperity, but because it makes this its chief and exclusive concern, and neglects the higher, the ethical and spiritual values of life. Addressing its members, Augustine says: "Depraved by good fortune and not chastened by adversity, what you desire in your security is not the tranquility of the commonwealth, but the impunity of your own vicious luxury."¹³² But in the ideal state the rulers will promote the worship of the true God and exercise authority "not from a love of power but from a sense of duty they owe to others."¹³³ As Christians they will do what in them lies to put an end to idolatry and obtain for their subjects the happiness

127 xv. 4 (ii, p. 63): "Non autem recte dicitur ea bona non esse, quae concupiscit haec civitas, quando est et ipsa in suo genere melior." We follow Hermelink, p. 315, and Mausbach, i, 339, in the interpretation of this difficult and much debated passage. Cf. Scholz, p. 105, and Bliemetzrieder, p. 102.

128 Ep. 133 (to Marcellinus), c. 2 (ed. Goldbacher, iii, p. 82): "Imple, Christiane iudex, pii patris officium."

129 iv, 3 (i, p. 149f.).

130 Ep. 155 (to Marcellinus), c. 7 (ed. Goldbacher, iii, p. 437): "Quoniam vero te rei publicae scimus amatorem, non aliunde esse beatum hominem, aliunde civitatem vide quam sit in illis sacris litteris clarum."

131 xix, 16 (ii, p. 383).

132 i, 33 (i, p. 50).

133 xix, 14 (ii, p. 381).

of that people whose God is the Lord.¹³⁴ According to our author, "there could be nothing more fortunate for human affairs than that, by the mercy of God, they who are endowed with true piety of life, if they have the skill for ruling people, should also have the power;"¹³⁵ and "if the true God is worshipped, and if He is served with genuine rites and true virtue, it is advantageous that good men should long reign both far and wide."¹³⁶ Under these circumstances Augustine would even be willing to abandon his ideal of a family of small states, since then the question of territorial size would be of minor importance.¹³⁷

From what has been said it is obvious that the state, according to Augustine, has important pedagogical and disciplinary functions to perform, and that in the discharge of these duties it is necessarily dependent upon the church as the divinely appointed teacher of pure religion and wholesome morals. We thus come, in the course of our exposition of his views, to the last phase of our subject, the relation of church and state to each other. It is no doubt true, as Reuter reminds us,¹³⁸ that the author of the *City of God* nowhere professes to give us a special treatment of this problem in the sense with which later historic usage has made us familiar. Nevertheless, many statements, incidental though they are to his primary apologetic purpose, and a considerable number of passages in his *Letters* and especially in his anti-Donatist writings, enable us to reproduce his ideas with a fair degree of accuracy and completeness.

It is plain that Augustine writes as a Catholic Christian. He accepts without criticism the authority of the emperor as the head of a state that after centuries of conflict with Christianity had established the orthodox Nicene faith as the official and only permissible religion. The *civitas Dei*, ideally considered, remains limited to the *communio sanctorum* as the company of the elect, but it finds a real though imperfect embodiment in the historic visible church which, so far as it contains true saints, is even now to be identified with the *regnum Dei*. And in like manner, when he deals with the given empirical data, he either directly equates the *civitas terrena* with

134 Ep. 155, c. 2 (Goldbacher iii, p. 349).

135 v. 19 (ii, p. 230).

136 iv, 3 (i, p. 149f.).

137 iv, 28 (i, p. 181): "melius hic regnum haberent, quantumcumque haberent."

138 *L. c.*, p. 151.

the existing empire or at least brings the two into such intimate connection with each other that it becomes impossible for us to separate the idea from its concrete expression.¹³⁹

Broadly speaking, the relation of church and state is determined, according to Augustine, by the principle stated by Jesus in these terms: "Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."¹⁴⁰ But in practice the two spheres of activity and influence cannot be rigidly kept apart, and the Christian will be constrained to vary his attitude to the civil power according to his judgment as to its conformity to his basal religious convictions. Like those of his fellow citizens who may belong to the *societas improborum*, he will yield obedience even to those statutes of the realm that have no higher aim than the attainment and preservation of earthly peace and material prosperity. For he, too, needs these benefits; and indeed he alone knows how to use them to the best advantage as aids to the cultivation of the spiritual life. He will do all he can to help even the non-Christian state to perform its legitimate tasks. But one thing he cannot, because he may not do, and that is to obey any law that conflicts with his obligation to render due worship to God. As Augustine puts the matter: "This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on earth, calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a society of pilgrims of all languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained, but recognizing that, however various these are, they all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace. It therefore is so far from rescinding and abolishing these diversities, that it even preserves and adopts them, so long only as no hindrance to the worship of the one supreme and true God is thus introduced."¹⁴¹ In the case of a Christian state—a state that regulates all public interests, including morals and religion, by the principles of the Gospel—the church naturally has a far more intimate relation to the civil power and exerts a correspondingly greater influence upon it. In such a commonwealth Christians labor the more hopefully for the recognition by all of the need of that *vera iustitia* which, though not essential to the existence of the

¹³⁹ Scholz, p. 110f.; Holl, pp. 101, 115; Robertson, p. 214; and Seidel, p. 44, note 1, as against Reuter's contention that the kingdom of God means only the invisible communion of the saints and not the hierarchically governed church.

¹⁴⁰ Luke 20, 25.

¹⁴¹ xix, 17 (ii, p. 385 f.).

state, conditions its highest welfare by securing the subjection of all its activities to the ideal purposes of the kingdom of God. By precept and example they will show that Christian morality does no harm to civic interests but actually promotes them by forging that bond "of concord, than which nothing is more useful to the state,"¹⁴² so that, as Augustine says: "were our religion listened to as it deserves, it would establish, consecrate, strengthen, and enlarge the commonwealth in a way beyond all that Romulus, Numa, Brutus, and all the other men of renown in Roman history achieved."¹⁴³ Then would Christian rulers be truly happy, "not through ardent desire of empty glory, but through love of eternal felicity, if for their sins they neglect not to offer to the true God, their own God, the sacrifice of humility, contrition, and prayer."¹⁴⁴ They will be mindful, not only in their private lives but also in their official conduct, of the claims of the celestial commonwealth.¹⁴⁵ They will, like their Christian subjects, be actuated, not by selfish motives or considerations of worldly honor or power, but by a due regard for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of those who are under them.¹⁴⁶ And in turn the principles of Christianity will promote loyalty to the state by making its citizens yield ready and joyful obedience to all legislation that does not conflict with the revealed will of God, and by disposing them to bring their households into harmony with the civic order.¹⁴⁷

In general, then, the relation of church and state, as Augustine conceived it, may fairly be described as one of mutual dependence and reciprocal obligations. Each needs the other and is bound to help it in the realization of its divinely appointed mission. But this broad statement falls far short of being an adequate representation of his views. It throws no light on the perplexing but important question that is sure to arise when divergent opinions lead to a conflict of authorities—the question as to which of the two is the superior power. Some Cath-

142 Ep. 138 (to Marcellinus), c. ii, sect. 11 (ed. Goldbacher, iii, p. 136).

143 *Ibid.*, sect. 10 (iii, p. 135).

144 v, 24 (i, p. 237), the justly celebrated "Mirror of the Princes". Cf. v, 26, on the piety of Theodosius.

145 Ep. 155 (to Macedonius), c. 9, sect. 17 (ed. Goldbacher, iii, p. 477): "ut te appareat in terreni iudicis cingulo non parua ex parte caelestem rem publicam cogitare."

146 xix, 19 (ii, p. 388): "In actione vero non amandus est honor in hac vita sive potentia, quoniam omnia vana sub sole, sed opus ipsum, quod per honorem vel potentiam fit, si recte atque utiliter fit, id est, ut valeat ad eam salutem subditorum, quae secundum Deum est."

147 xix, 16 (ii, p. 384).

olic interpreters,¹⁴⁸ indeed, assert that no such clash of interests is possible, or at most concede that it can be due only to some fault on the part of a representative of either side. But the stern facts of history made Augustine himself see that in practice his theoretical separation of the political and ecclesiastical spheres could not be maintained, and brought him to the conclusion that while the state had, to be sure, a limited field of exclusive jurisdiction, there was a much wider realm, embracing both matters of policy and methods of administration, in which the state had to subject itself, for its own good, to the guidance of the church. We can only briefly refer to some of the cardinal points in his treatment of this aspect of the subject.

Writing as a member of that victorious church that had not only destroyed countless idols but also witnessed "the highest dignitary of the noblest empire laying aside his crown and kneeling as a suppliant at the tomb of the fisherman Peter,"¹⁴⁹ Augustine emphasizes the right and the duty of the civil magistrate to promote, by every means at his disposal, the moral and religious welfare of the people.¹⁵⁰ In rather fulsome language he specially commends Theodosius for the help he gave the church in her fight against idolatry and against Arianism.¹⁵¹ It was his settled conviction that Christian emperors should "make their power the handmaid of the majesty of God by using it for the greatest possible extension of his worship."¹⁵² "Accordingly," we are told, "when we take into consideration the social condition of the human race, kings, in the very fact that they are kings, have a service which they can render to the Lord in a manner which is impossible for any who are not kings."¹⁵³

How far Augustine carried the idea that the state should protect and promote the welfare of the church can best be seen in his anti-Donatist writings. These are of prime importance in this connection just because they reflect the development of

148 Seidel, pp. 50, 53; and, less explicitly and confidently, Schilling, p. 144.

149 Ep. 232 (to the brethren of Madaura), c. 3 (ed. Goldbacher, iv, p. 514). Cf. Ep. 35 (to Eusebius), anno 396, c. 3 (Goldbacher, ii, p. 30): "Dominus . . . qui iugo suo in gremio eius toto orbe diffuso omnia terrena regna subiecit."

150 Ep. 185 (to Boniface, "Concerning the Correction of the Donatists"), c. 2, sect. 8 and c. 5, sect. 20 (ed. Goldbacher, iv, p. 7 and p. 18).

151 v. 26 (i, p. 240).

152 v. 24 (i, p. 237).

153 Contra Lit. Petiliani, ii, c. 92, sect. 210 (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, iv, p. 583).

his teaching concerning the Catholic church and her sacraments. As against the Donatists, Augustine holds that this church, with her marks of unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity is infallible, indispensable, and permanent.¹⁵⁴ Therefore all heresies are to be condemned, because they are departures from the authentic faith of this church; and likewise all schisms, because they rupture that bond of love that conditions and expresses the union of her true members with Christ and with one another. How, then, is the church to deal with these foes of hers?

In a tract written about the year 397, shortly after he had become bishop, Augustine, addressing some Manichaeans in his then customary tone of conciliation, says: "It is ours, accordingly, to desire . . . that we might attain our end in your correction, not by contention, and strife, and persecution, but by kindly consolation, by friendly exhortation, by quiet discussion."¹⁵⁵ And writing to Vincentius, a moderate Donatist, he says: "For originally my opinion was, that no one should be coerced into the unity of Christ, that we must act only by words, fight only by arguments, and prevail by force of reason, lest we should have those whom we knew as avowed heretics feigning themselves to be Catholics."¹⁵⁶ With his profoundly spiritual conception of true piety, with his frank recognition of the freedom of the religious personality, and with his vivid recollection of the difficulties he had himself experienced in attaining the truth, he was in those early days content to believe that it was the divine will that "erring men," as he says, "should be amended rather than destroyed."¹⁵⁷ But presently—from about the year 408—having become convinced of the futility of trying to win his adversaries by peaceful methods, he advocated, repeatedly and with increasing vigor and insistence, the coercion of heretics by the civil power. He was, of course, well aware that the Donatists had been the first to appeal for aid to the emperor, that they had often done so, and that it was

154 Harnack, *History of Dogma*, E. t., v. p. 144f.; for the modifications occasioned by Augustine's later emphasis on predestination, see p. 163f.

155 *Contra Ep. Manichaei Quam Vocant Fundamenti*, c. i (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, F. Ser., iv, p. 129).

156 Ep. 93 (anno 408, to Vincentius, one of the small group of Donatists called Rogatists), c. 5, sect. 17 (ed. Goldbacher, ii, p. 461). Cf. Ep. 23 (anno 392, when Augustine was still a presbyter), c. 7 (Goldbacher, i, p. 71): "cessabit a nostris partibus terror temporalium potestatum; cesset etiam a nostris partibus terror congregatorum Circumcellionum: re agamus, ratione agamus, diuinarum scripturarum auctoritatibus agamus."

157 *Contra Ep. Manich.*, as cited, i.

only after such efforts had failed that they insisted that the state should keep its hands off church properties and leave religious bodies unmolested.¹⁵⁸ He was also much influenced by the fact that other bishops, who had begun to rely on force, were actually winning back into the church large numbers of Donatists, many of whom expressed their delight in being thus delivered from the terror of their own fanatical leaders.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the violence of the plundering and murderous Circumcellions gave ample justification for the state to intervene for the restoration of peace and order; though it is worthy of note that even in the case of these atrocious crimes Augustine admonished proconsuls to exercise moderation and under no circumstances to inflict capital punishment.¹⁶⁰ But he went much further. He took Luke 23:14, improperly translated in the Vulgate as "*compelle intrare*," as a sufficient vindication of the use of force, even in purely religious and theological matters, by the civil magistrate under the tutelage of the church;¹⁶¹ and to the same purpose, and with equally sophistical exegesis, he exploited the account of Paul's "violent" conversion¹⁶² and other biblical narratives that seemed to him to prove the beneficial effects of compulsion in the sphere of moral conduct.¹⁶³ It was under these circumstances, and by such questionable methods of argumentation, that he developed his theory, as far-reaching in its historical consequences as it is incompatible with modern ideas of religious toleration, that the state, under the guidance of the church, the divinely appointed teacher of revealed truth, must perform a pedagogical and disciplinary function that involves the use of the civil power for the conversion of heretics and schismatics or for their adequate punishment if they obstinately persist in their errors—a theory that quite justifies Reuter's verdict, "Augustine is the first dogmatist of the Inquisition."¹⁶⁴

Taking Augustine's statements as a whole, we may say that to him church and state are neither mutually exclusive nor necessarily hostile to each other. They both have a divine right

158 Ep. 93, c. iv, sect. 12ff. (Goldbacher, ii, p. 456).

159 *Ibid.*, c. 1f., c. 17ff. Cf. Ep. 185, c. ii, sect. 7 (Goldb., iv, p. 7).

160 Ep. 100 (to Donatus), c. 1 and 2 (Goldb., ii, p. 535); Ep. 133 (to Marcellinus), c. 3 (Goldb., iii, p. 83); Ep. 134 (to Apringius), c. 2 (Goldb., iii, p. 85).

161 Ep. 173 (to Donatus), c. 10 (Goldb., iii, p. 647); Ep. 185 (to Boniface), c. ii, sect. 7 (Goldb., iv, p. 7); Ep. 93, c. v, sect. 18 (Goldb., ii, p. 463).

162 Ep. 173, as cited c. iii (iii, p. 641).

163 Ep. 93, c. ii, sect. 7 (ii, p. 451f.).

164 *Op. cit.*, p. 501, n. 3.

to be, and they ought not only to tolerate but also to cooperate with one another. As regards the state, he certainly takes nothing from it that is essential to its existence or prosperity. Nor does he question either its competence or its complete autonomy in the realm of purely secular affairs. Ideally, as any Christian would agree, its activities are salutary just in the proportion in which they enhance the common, and especially the highest, welfare of its citizens. From this point of view, there can be no doubt as to Augustine's real patriotism or even, in spite of some one-sided emphases on other-worldliness, of his generous recognition of all those cultural values that depend for their realization upon the development and maintenance of that righteousness without which there can be no civic concord and peace.¹⁶⁵ Though Christianity does not belong to the essence of the state, the best commonwealth, Augustine would say, is one that embodies the best principles and the highest ideals. But this does not justify the assertion of Reuter,¹⁶⁶ "For the state is a state only in the measure in which it subordinates itself to Christian norms, the true state the Christian state." The generalization of Eckstädt¹⁶⁷ is much nearer the truth: "According to Augustine's own verdict, the state is the better by as much as the objects of its affection are the better. Thus the Christian state is not the ideal according to its essence, but it is the most valuable according to its content."

On the other hand, no fair reading of the evidence will minimize the importance of the many statements that favor what may be called the clericalist conception of the state. The *City of God* must be supplemented by the anti-Donatist works, the *Letters*, and other minor writings. It may be true, indeed, that in certain respects the church, according to Augustine, is just as much dependent on the state—for example, to take only the cardinal instance, in the preservation of property rights—as is the state upon the church. Nevertheless, even in his own day and in his own official conduct, the event clearly showed that civil magistrates were bound to take not only advice but also commands from bishops; and though ostensibly this subordination might be limited to spiritual affairs only,¹⁶⁸ yet practically this spiritual realm was made to embrace not only religious

165 Cf. Seidel, p. 26; Mausbach, i, p. 350; and Figgis, p. 67.

166 *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

167 *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

168 Seidel, p. 46, n. 3.

and moral issues but also, by the very necessities of the case, all sorts of ecclesiastical, social, cultural, and humanitarian interests. Though Augustine personally was about as little hierarchically minded as any of the early Catholic writers, and though in his latest anti-Pelagian works he developed a doctrine of predestination that really "destroyed the Catholic dogma of the Church,"¹⁶⁹ nevertheless neither he himself nor his spiritual heirs during the next millenium fully realized the logic of his "evangelicalism." It was inevitable under the historic conditions that determined the growth of the papacy, that his Pauline view of saving grace would be transformed into a theory of sacramental grace that would harmonize with the dominant sacerdotalism of the age. Scholz,¹⁷⁰ no doubt, goes too far in declaring that "the whole program of the medieval 'priest-state' is contained in these deductions" from the principles underlying the *City of God*; but he is quite right in adding: "or at least it can be read out of them." For if the state, as Augustine holds, is dependent upon the church for that supernatural *iustitia* by which alone men can fulfill their highest obligations to God; and further, if the empirical church is the kingdom of heaven, the *civitas Dei*, and the only true commonwealth is that in which Christ is the ruler, and in which the civil magistrate must use his influence, personal and official, and all his powers, military resources included, to convert or else to punish all whom the ecclesiastical authorities may determine to be heretics or schismatics, then certainly the theocratic state becomes an inevitable necessity, and its visible head will not stop short of regarding himself as king of kings and lord of lords. We need not deny that Augustine valued the state more highly than did the ancient Christians, and always vindicated for it a considerable sphere of activity in which it had an independent right to be obeyed. But his virtual identification of the communion of saints, the city of God, the kingdom of heaven, the *numerus praedestinatorum*, with the visible, hierarchically governed church, was bound to make the early *ecclesia in imperio* give place to the later *imperium in ecclesia*. And looking beyond the Middle Ages and the Reformation,

169 Reuter, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, v. p. 166: "Thus the thought of predestination shatters every notion of the Church." "Not only does the Medieval Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments go back to Augustine, but so do the spiritualists of the Middle Ages, and, in turn, Luther and Calvin are indebted to him for suggestions" (*ibid.*, p. 162).

170 *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

we may affirm with Robertson:¹⁷¹ In Augustine, "it is hardly too much to say, we have in germ the Counter-Reformation theory of the Church as a *Societas Perfecta*, an institution equipped with all that is necessary to a self-contained body-politic, perfect not indeed in the moral character of its members, but in organization, institutions, and the divine right to everything necessary to the carrying out of its temporal ends."

¹⁷¹ *Regnum Dei*, p. 214