

The Seduction Toward Corrupting Power

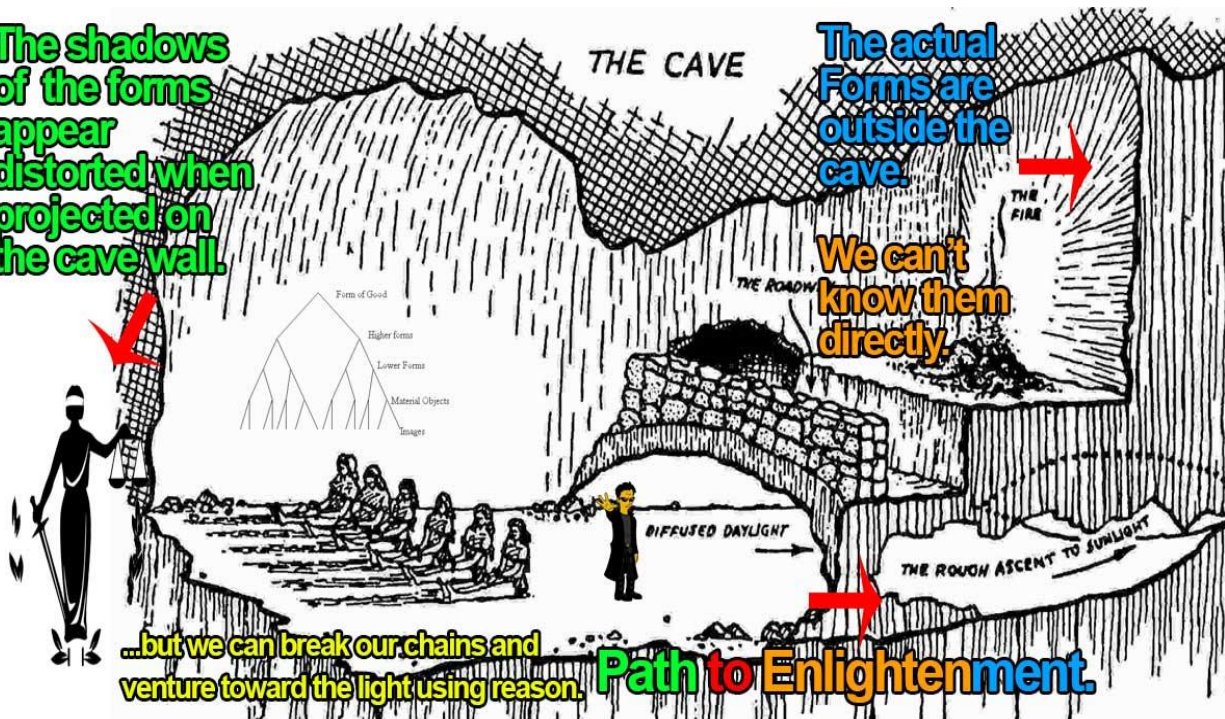
by David Lee Burris

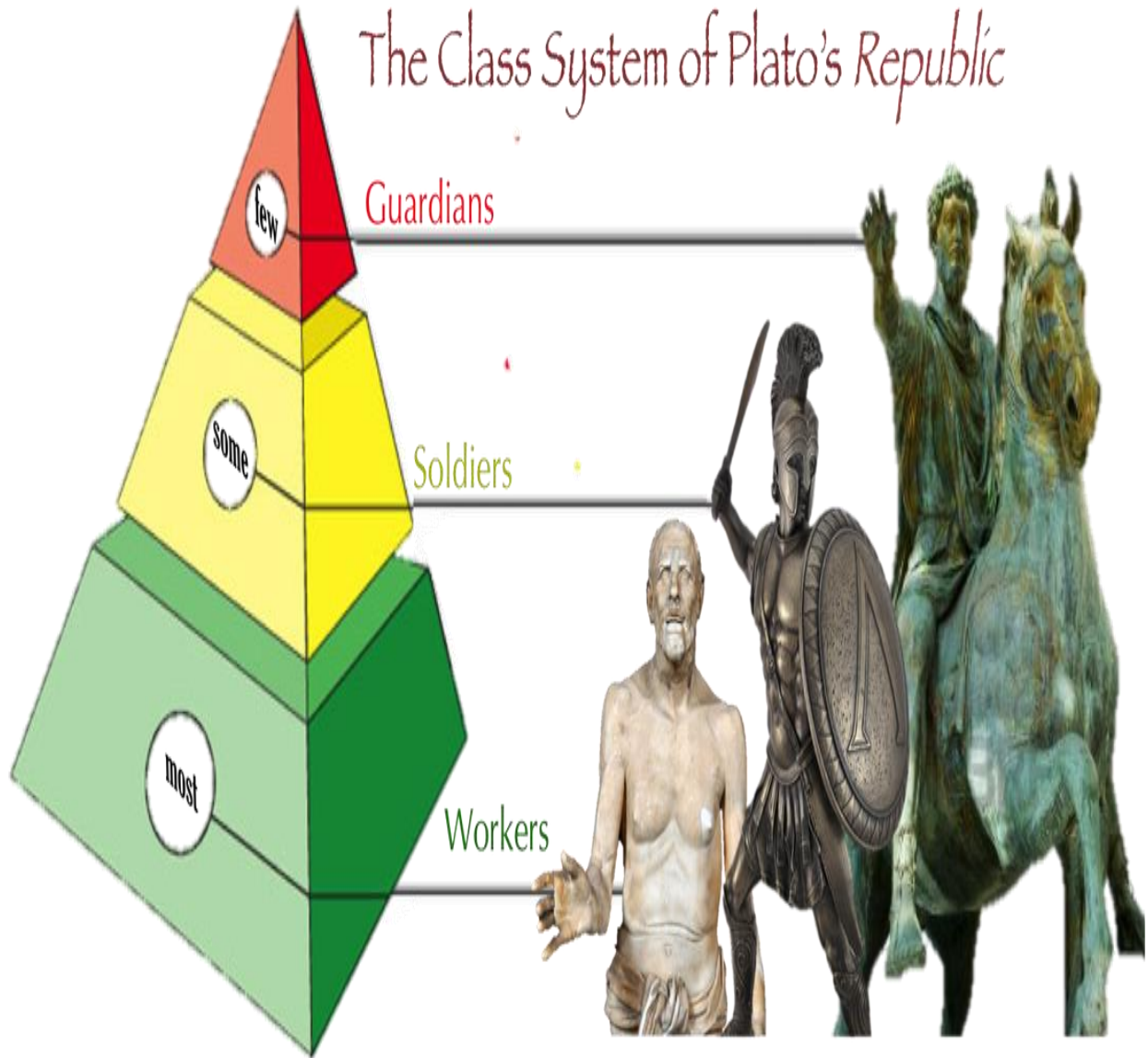
IF ONLY – THE RULE OF THE WISE!

The shadows of the forms appear distorted when projected on the cave wall.

The actual Forms are outside the cave.

We can't know them directly.





“The result, then, is that more plentiful and better-quality goods are more easily produced if each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited, does it at the right time, and is released from having to do any of the others.”

Who should rule?

- Philosopher-King
 - Has a grasp of the true and enduring
 - Would not fear death, would be fair-minded, gentle and sociable
 - Would necessarily be brave, temperate and thereby just
 - Would work to preserve the *status quo*

Even More Analysis

- In Plato's view, the basis of political rule is knowledge
 - In this regard, the "best" should rule
- He also points out that for rulers to be effective, they must put the public interest before private concerns

And this is the reason, my dear Thrasymachus, why, as I was just now saying, no one is willing to govern; because no one likes to take in hand the reformation of evils which are not his concern without remuneration. For, in the execution of his work, and in giving his orders to another, the true artist does not regard his own interest, but always that of his subjects; and therefore in order that rulers may be willing to rule, they must be paid in one of three modes of payment: money, or honour, or a penalty for refusing.


SOCRATES - GLAUCON

What do you mean, Socrates? said Glaucon. The first two modes of payment are intelligible enough, but what the penalty is I do not understand, or how a penalty can be a payment.

You mean that you do not understand the nature of this payment which to the best men is the great inducement to rule? Of course you know that ambition and avarice are held to be, as indeed they are, a disgrace?

Very true.

And for this reason, I said, money and honour have no attraction for them; good men do not wish to be openly demanding payment for governing and so to get the name of hirelings, nor by secretly helping themselves out of the public revenues to get the name of thieves. And not being ambitious they do not care about honour. Wherefore necessity must be laid upon them, and they must be induced to serve from the fear of punishment. And this, as I imagine, is the reason why the forwardness to take office, instead of waiting to be compelled, has been deemed dishonourable. Now the worst part of the punishment is that he who refuses to rule is liable to be ruled by one who is worse than himself. And the fear of this, as I conceive, induces the good to take office, not because they would, but because they cannot help—not under the idea that they are going to have any benefit or enjoyment themselves, but as a necessity, and because they are not able to commit the task of ruling to any one who is better than themselves, or indeed as good. For there is reason to think that if a city were composed entirely of good men, then to avoid office would be as much an object of contention as to obtain office is at present; then we should have plain proof that the true ruler is not meant by nature to regard his own interest, but that of his subjects; and every one who knew this would choose rather to receive a benefit from another than to have the trouble of conferring one. So far am I from agreeing with Thrasymachus that justice is the interest of the stronger. This latter question need not be further

A blue decorative graphic consisting of overlapping, semi-transparent rectangular shapes that create a layered, geometric effect. It is positioned at the top left of the page, partially overlapping the text area.

"On his view, actions are good because of their relation to good agents, and agents are good because of their relation to goodness itself. But goodness itself, the Good, transcends the natural world; it's a supernatural property. This commits Plato to a non-naturalist version of ethical realism."

Plato's View on the Soul

Plato – A Dualist View

- **Dualism** – Plato was a dualist, meaning he believed in two separate entities when it came to body & soul
- Plato suggested that the soul is immortal while the body is mortal, at the end of life the soul is set free from the body
- The soul's destination is the **World of the Forms**, which for Plato is only accessible indirectly in this world for those capable of higher thinking (philosophers)
- Plato argues that real knowledge of the forms in the world of the forms comes from our soul, and therefore is evidence of the existence both of an immortal soul & of an afterlife (this is explained in his evidence for the soul)
- Plato has quite a negative view of the body, arguing that it distracts the soul from reaching the world of the forms; *“the body is the source of endless trouble to us”*
- **He suggests that it is only philosophers who can obtain knowledge from the world of the forms as it is only them who can ignore the distractions of the body**
- The **analogy of the charioteer explains this**;
 - Plato compares the soul to a chariot driver trying to direct the two horses of the chariot, one horse is the mind & the other is the body. The soul attempts to govern both of these


Plato's Description of the Soul

- In the Republic Plato describes the soul as being **“simple”** & **“without parts”**
- This means that the soul is indivisible
- However, it is simultaneously **complex**
- A way of thinking of this is by comparing the soul to a **diamond**; a diamond is a simple & extremely hard rock which cannot be broken – however it is also extremely complex with many different sides & aspects

- Plato also identified three different aspects of the soul;
 - **Reason** – searches for truth & rules the soul
 - **Spirit** – includes aspects which can be trained & controlled such as emotion, aggression
 - **Desire** – linked to the idea of seeking pleasure for oneself, including desire for what is necessary (food) & what isn't (luxury)
- Plato argues that **harmony in the soul is a virtue** – that being harmony amongst all of its aspects
- This enables the soul to work more effectively, eg. reason can govern desire & spirit and the soul can obtain knowledge from the world of the forms
- **Injustice comes from disharmony in the soul** – many crimes are committed due to desire overcoming reason for example
- This means that Plato argued for doing good things & having a harmonious soul as it allowed one to reach the world of the forms – not for material gain such as for money or gratitude

Evidence for the Soul

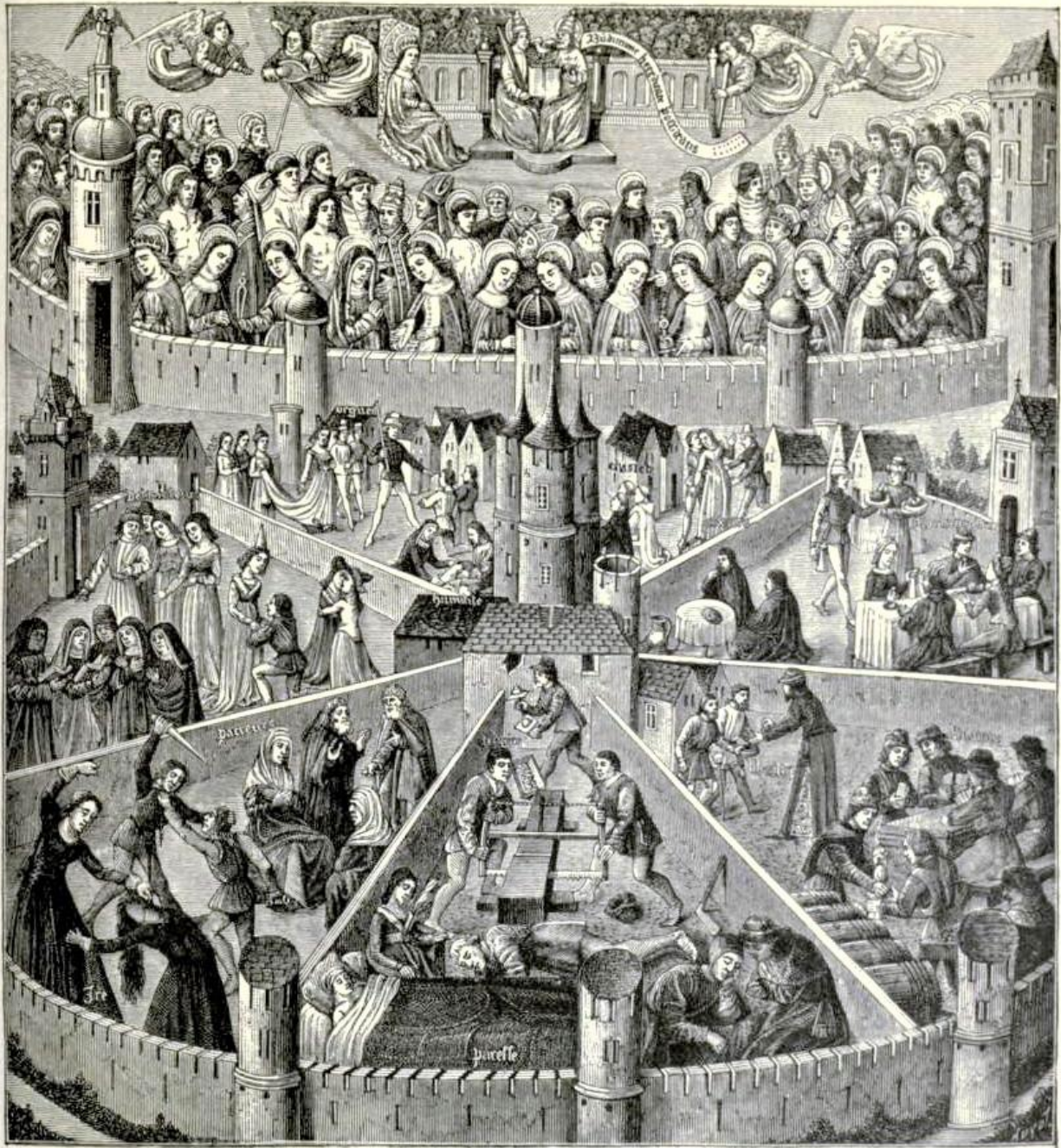
1. **The Argument from Recollection**
 - Plato argued that learning is actually a matter of recalling what our souls perceived in the world of the forms
 - He argues that the reason we can recognise, for example, a dog as a dog is because it participates in the form of the dog in the world of the forms
 - **The particular participates in the ideal**
 - He used this to argue that our ability to recall the ideals shows that we have memories of the world of the forms
 - This therefore points to the existence of an immortal soul which travels to & from the world of the forms
2. **The Argument from Opposites**
 - Plato argued that the physical world consists of opposites such as big & small, light & dark, sleeping & waking
 - He suggested that the opposite of living is death
 - For death to be “something” rather than “nothing” the soul must exist
 - This advocates not only for the soul but for some kind of reincarnation, which Plato suggested in Phaedo

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"Then God, if he be good, isn't the author of all things, as the many assert, but he is the cause of a few things only, and not of most things that occur to men. For few are the goods of human life, and many are the evils, and the good is to be attributed to God alone; of the evils the causes are to be sought elsewhere and not in him."

PLATO'S REPUBLIC

IF ONLY - THE RULE OF THE GOOD!



JUST A TASTE OF 🍷 ST. AUGUSTINE II. TWO CITIES—ONE OF MAN, ONE OF GOD



But it suited the purpose of God, by whose inspiration these histories were composed, to arrange and distinguish from the first these two societies in their several generations — that on the one side the generations of men, that is to say, of those who live according to man, and on the other side the generations of the sons of God, that is to say, of men living according to God, might be traced down together and yet apart from one another as far as the deluge, at which point their dissociation and association are exhibited: their dissociation, inasmuch as the generations of both lines are recorded in separate tables, the one line descending from the fratricide Cain, the other from Seth, who had been born to Adam instead of him whom his brother slew; their association, inasmuch as the good so deteriorated that the whole race became of such a character that it was swept away by the deluge, with the exception of one just man, whose name was Noah, and his wife and three sons and three daughters-in-law, which eight persons were alone deemed worthy to escape from that desolating visitation which destroyed all men.

City of God Bk 15, Ch 8, 410-425 AD

Small Bible by
the Church
Faint

THE CITY OF GODS

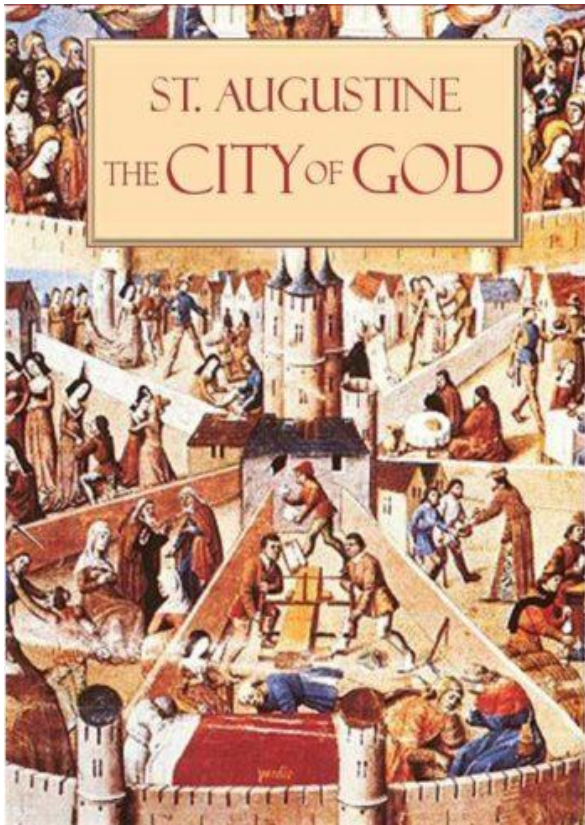
- Plato and Aristotle:
 - The best rulers and the best form of government
- St. Augustine:
 - The love of God, righteousness, justice, faith and salvation

TWO CITIES

- Human society can be divided into two cities depending on how men choose to live.
 - City of Man: Living according to self.
 - City of God: Living according to God's design/laws.

TWO CITIES

CITY OF GOD	CITY OF MAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on love of God, even to the contempt of self.• The greatest glory is found in and with God.• God is the source of its strength.• Consists of those who live according to God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on love of self even to the contempt of God.• Seeks glory from men.• Delights in its own strength as represented in the person of its rulers.• Consists of those who live according to man.



THE 2 CITIES

HUMAN SOCIETY CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO CITIES DEPENDING ON HOW MAN LIVES

CITY OF MAN: MEN LIVE ACCORDING TO THEMSELVES

CITY OF GOD: MEN LIVE ACCORDING TO GODS LAWS AND DESIGN

“The City of God”



- After the fall of Rome in 410 AD, many people blamed Christianity for the demise of Rome and the eventual fall of the Empire – “How could God allow this to happen? The old Roman gods had protected the city! Where is the Christian God in all of this?!”
- In response, Augustine wrote his most important book, “The City of God.”
- According to St. Augustine, the study of history could be understood as a battle between two sides: “the city of God” and “the city of Man”.
- Essentially, it is a battle between the material world and the spiritual world; between those who pursue only self interests and those who place their faith in God and live in service and love.

ST AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO: AN OUTLINE OF HIS POLITICAL THOUGHT

Nicholas Townsend, Sarum College

Primary text: Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX, esp. chs 5-17, 21-22, 24-27
(Penguin Classics, 1974 or CUP 1998)

A. INTRODUCTION

City of God (*CG*) is a defence of the Christian faith against various charges, political and philosophical, and especially against the pagan charge, following 410, that Rome had fallen to the Goths because it had abandoned its traditional gods and turned to Christianity.

City of God is without doubt one of the greatest pieces of Christian writing about human history and society, and probably the single most influential such work.

To make that defence, Augustine explores a theme of deep interest to him: the relation within history of human piety and impiety, of the just and the unjust, of those who 'love God to contempt of self' and those who 'love self to contempt of God' - of the 'city of God' and the 'earthly city'.¹

That Augustine made central the metaphor *civitas Dei* was itself a move of immense rhetorical force. Against the weight of the main intellectual tradition of Rome, the republicanism which looked back, by now romantically, to an ideal *civitas*, Augustine argued for the city under the authority of Christ.

The 'city of God' Although Christ is its "founder and king" (XV.8), it is not just of the Christian era. Its existence could be traced from the beginning of human history, and it will not exist in perfection until the end of history.

Its members are all whose wills are oriented towards God and away from self, a membership known only to God and not the same as any visible society. The city of God is the people of God of which Jewish and Christian scriptures speak conceived in its entirety, the now invisible church in this term's widest sense: of all times and places and beyond time and space. The city of God is a reality to be made known only eschatologically. Those of its members alive on earth in the present are "that part of it which is on pilgrimage in this condition of mortality" (XIX.17).

The visible church confesses the authority of the Lord of the city of God and professes to seek to live as this city in pilgrimage on earth. But the visible church is always mixed, a human society, as all are, including members of both cities "**inextricably interwoven and mingled with each other, until they shall be separated at the last judgment**" (I.35).

¹ The first half of the work comprises rebuttal initially of *political* objections to Christianity, Books I-V, and then of *philosophical* and *religious* objections, Bks VI-X.

The second half comprises description, continuingly apologetically driven, of the *origins, histories* and *ends* of the two cities, on each of these in four Books through to XXII.

For a sense of the structure of the whole of *CG*, see O'Meara's introduction to the Penguin ed. pp. xix-xxi and the table on xxxvii. Passages in the rest of the work which help to show the place of Book XIX within the whole include: Bk II.20-21, Bk IV.3-7, Bk V.24-26, Bk XIV.28, Bk XV.1-5.

On The Two Cities ...

- ✦ Both cities overlap
- ✦ Both desire peace
 - ◆ The City of Man desires peace to enjoy earthly goods
 - ◆ The aim of the City of God is to achieve eternal peace (eternal life in peace)

The Gelasian doctrine

- ✦ Also known as the doctrine of the two swords
- ✦ The doctrine submits that there are two swords of power:
 - ◆ Sacred → sovereign in spiritual matters
 - ◆ Royal → sovereign in temporal affairs

History, Providence, and Progress in Saint Augustine's City of God

Great Books Guy Great Books Project

In light of a new theology based on revealed religion and its encounter with philosophy there was need to address nascent problems within political philosophy and civil society. As a Roman, Saint Augustine inherited the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and as a *Christian* he modified that philosophy to suit the requirements of the faith. He represents a unique moment in Western thought. He is seeking to harmonize and reconcile two disparate and independent sources: the Bible and classical philosophy. In rejecting Manichaean dualism, Augustine replaces it with a another dualism between the “Heavenly City” and the “Earthly City.” This new dualism is most apparent in his seminal work, *De civitate Dei contra paganos* (“On the city of God against the pagans” or simply *The City of God*).

While the *City of God* expounds upon history, politics, and natural philosophy, St. Augustine is first and foremost a theologian. He draws his first principles not from reason but from sacred scripture. However, Augustine is also the founder of a new theology seeking to incorporate ancient philosophy within the new universalist horizon of Christianity. Augustine's works are written for the benefit of both Christians who seek to gain a more-deep understanding of the divine, as well as Pagans who might consider incentives for converting to the faith. Despite Augustine's lambasting of Rome, the bureaucracy of Rome has allowed for Christianity to spread under the empire. Augustine's argument against Rome is that the seeds of the empire's decay and destruction have long predated the arrival of Christianity, and that Christianity is actually allows for the flourishing of civic virtue. Augustine's intent which is outlined in Book I is *magnum opus et arduum* ('long and arduous'). The text is to be a “defense” against the “enemies” of Christianity. The *City of God* is an explicitly polemical work.

Augustine begins by acknowledging the destruction of Rome as another example of human strife and conflict, and that history moves according to divine will “...*God’s Providence uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind*” (Book I, chapter i). Conflict and war come to light as powerful and terrifying teachers according to Augustine.

However, the greatest conflict exists between the City of God and the City of Man, and this conflict drives the movement of history.

The rise of cities and empires is not due to “chance” (an event that occurs without a cause, or at least no intelligible or rational cause) nor “destiny.” History unfolds according to Divine Providence. Human beings have free will to act within the predetermined causes which is foreknowledge only known by God (Book V, chapter ix). Humans are unique in that they participate in the biological world of reproduction (birth, growth, and death) but also humans possess intellect which is only shared with the “angels.” In other words, humans are part bestial and part angelic. Their actions are foreknown only by God and the same can be said of cities, empires, and wars. God’s knowledge exists in an absolute present, he does not see things the way we do in past, present, and future. **History, according to Augustine, is moving toward a divinely revealed end which God has always known and offers glimpses to humans through signs and prophecies in the scriptures.**

It is an eschatological view of history that occurs on a timeline (Augustine firmly argues that the history of humanity can be no more than 6,000 years old).

The crux of *The City of God* begins in the second half of the text starting in Book XI. Augustine says, “*My task is to discuss, to the best of my power, the rise, the development and the destined ends of the two cities, the earthly and the heavenly, the cities which we find, as I have said, interwoven, as it were, in this present transitory world, and mingled with one another*” (Book XI, chapter i). The two cities are connected via a mediator: Jesus Christ. **Christians straddle the two worlds as pilgrims or sojourners in the Earthly City, obeying the laws of men, while awaiting the divine bliss of the Heavenly City (Kingdom of Heaven).**

For Augustine, time begins at the beginning of the world from the moment of God's creation. He echoes his time theory in the *Confessions*, which is that time is a parallel human measurement of God's rhythm in the world. History unfolds as a timeline with unique and particular moments offered by God as a teaching about things to come. History is also moving in a particular direction; it is both eschatological and progressive as well as dialectical. The dialectal tension between the City of God and the City of Man yields beautiful works out of each other's antithesis (Book XI, chapter xvii). In this way Augustine acknowledges that the heretics actually serve to strengthen the "universal" or Catholic Church. At the end of history God promises "eternal rest" from this strife (Book XI, chapter ix). However, since the dialectic allows for beauty would it not follow that the City of God lacks beauty? The citizens of the City of God pursue "peace" and "rest" in the longing for the future of perfect "tranquility" and "health" in this life while "they sigh for their Heavenly Country" (Book XV, chapter vii).


The Earthly City is compared to Rome and Rome's sinfulness (which has apparently only increased after the political rise of Christianity). Despite there being a distinction between the two cities, the Earthly City is not evil - Augustine denies the existence of evil per se. There is only the Good (which is closer to God) and the deprivation of the Good. The Earthly City is the product of the machinations of Cain and Romulus. However, it is also characterized by resentment and fratricide (i.e. Cain slaughters Abel out of envy, Romulus slays Remus to found Rome). The Earthly City is always at risk of dominion and enslavement.

On the other hand, The City of God is universalist and it is characterized by peace and equality. How do we know about this Heavenly City? It is revealed through sacred scripture per the guiding Providence of God. Both cities possess "love" (Book XIV, chapter xxviii): the Earthly City has self-love and seeks its own glory (as well as the "lust for power"), while the City of God possesses a love of God and seeks divine glory. The City of Man is concerned with the self-love of the "flesh" and self-sufficiency, whereas the City of God is abstract, eternal & ecclesiastical.

It also appears that the City of God is infinitely separate from time and space like God according to Augustine.

Per Augustine, progress only comes through God's divine Providence. The focus for Augustine is on the Heavenly City. The Earthly City is to be merely tolerated as it rises and falls. The Earthly City is taught to be an instrument of God as a remedy for evil and to issue divine mercy until the joys after death are attained. Thus, Augustine's theology remains trans-political while attempting to preserve some aspects of classical political philosophy. The quest for the best regime, as pursued by Plato and Aristotle, is subordinated to the spiritual pursuit in Saint Augustine.

This reading used Saint Augustine's *City of God* translated by Henry Bettenson, an Oxford classical scholar; and Ernest Fortin's essay "St. Augustine," in the *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey



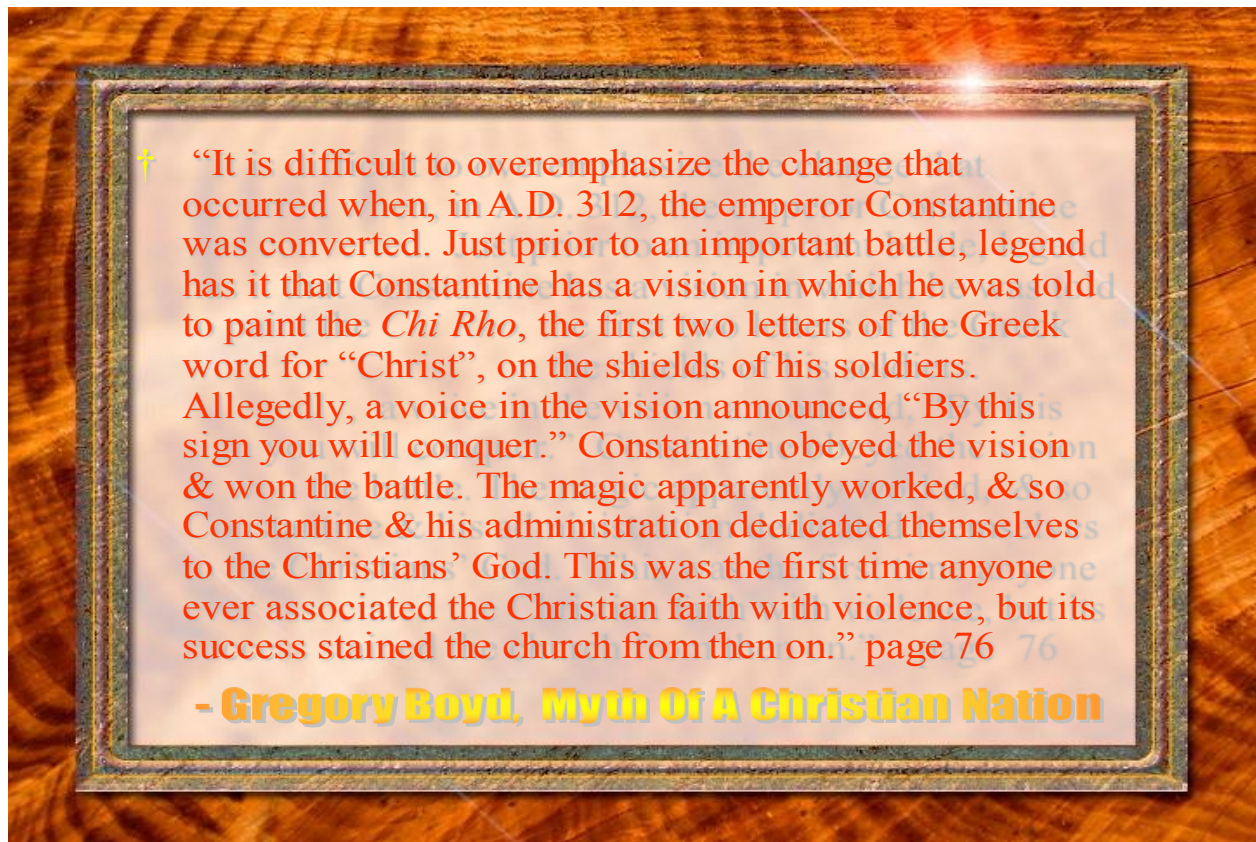
***"Is it reasonable and wise to glory in the extent and greatness of the Empire when you can in no way prove that there is any real happiness in people perpetually living among horrors of war, perpetually wading in blood?"
(City of God 4:3)***

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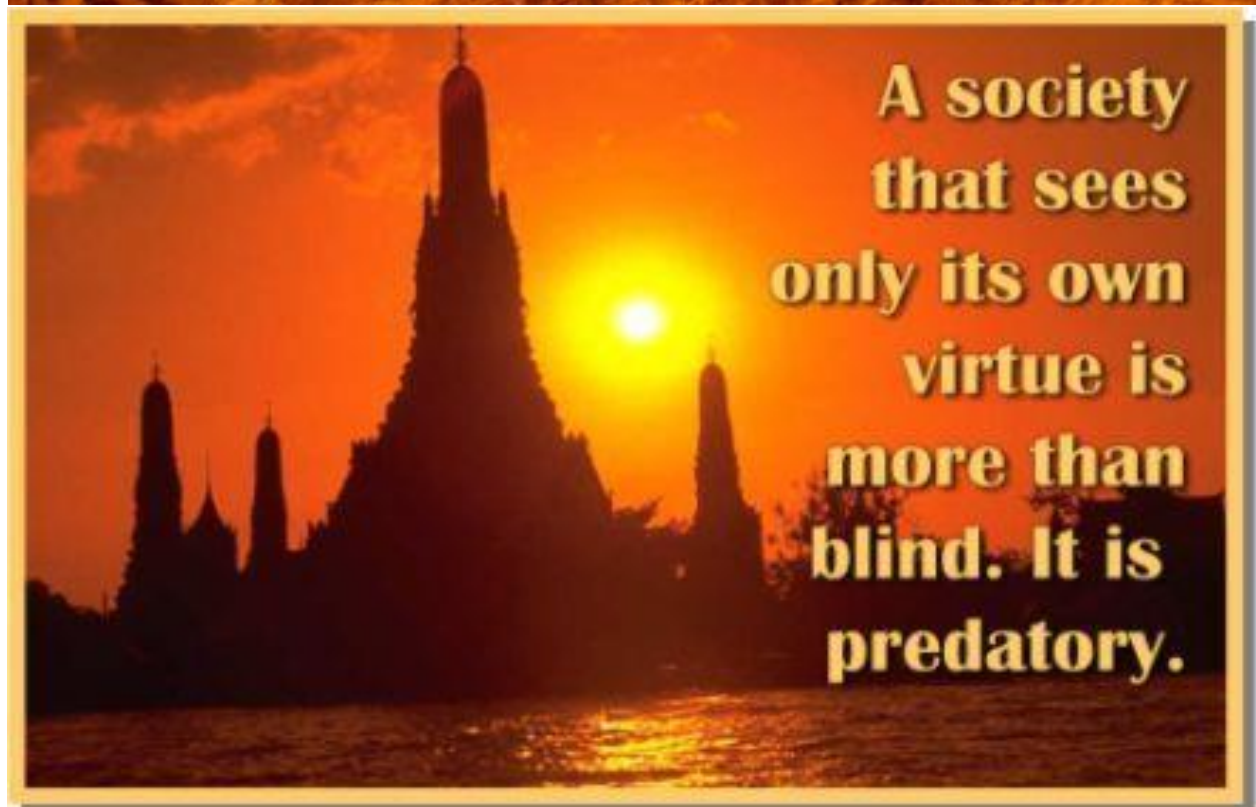
The Gelasian doctrine

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† “It is difficult to overemphasize the change that occurred when, in A.D. 312, the emperor Constantine was converted. Just prior to an important battle, legend has it that Constantine has a vision in which he was told to paint the *Chi Rho*, the first two letters of the Greek word for “Christ”, on the shields of his soldiers. Allegedly, a voice in the vision announced, “By this sign you will conquer.” Constantine obeyed the vision & won the battle. The magic apparently worked, & so Constantine & his administration dedicated themselves to the Christians’ God. This was the first time anyone ever associated the Christian faith with violence, but its success stained the church from then on.” page 76 76

- Gregory Boyd, Myth Of A Christian Nation



**A society
that sees
only its own
virtue is
more than
blind. It is
predatory.**

† “The first recorded instance of Christians killing Pagans occurred shortly after {status change year 313}. In short order, the militant church extended its power by conquering lands & peoples throughout Europe, compelling them to become baptized Christians or die...
As Charlemagne instructed his Christian troops in their conquest of the Saxons:
‘If there is anyone of the Saxon people lurking among them unbaptized, and if he scorns to come to baptism & stay a pagan - let him die’”.

- Gregory Boyd, Myth Of A Christian Nation



Giving In To The Temptation Of Power

- **“You all know what the third temptation of Jesus was. It was the temptation of power. One of the greatest ironies of the history of Christianity is that its leaders constantly gave in to the temptation of power – political power, military power, economic power, or moral and spiritual power even though they continued to speak in the name of Jesus, who did not cling to divine power but emptied self & and became as we are.”**

Giving In To The Temptation Of Power

- **“The temptation to consider power an apt instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel is the greatest of all. We keep hearing from others, as well as saying to ourselves, that having power – provided that it is used in the service of God and your fellow human beings – is a good thing. With this rationalization, crusades took place; inquisitions organized; Indians were enslaved; positions of great influence were desired; episcopal palaces, splendid cathedrals, and opulent seminaries were built; and much moral manipulation of conscience was engaged in.” - In The Name Of Jesus**

Giving In To The Temptation Of Power

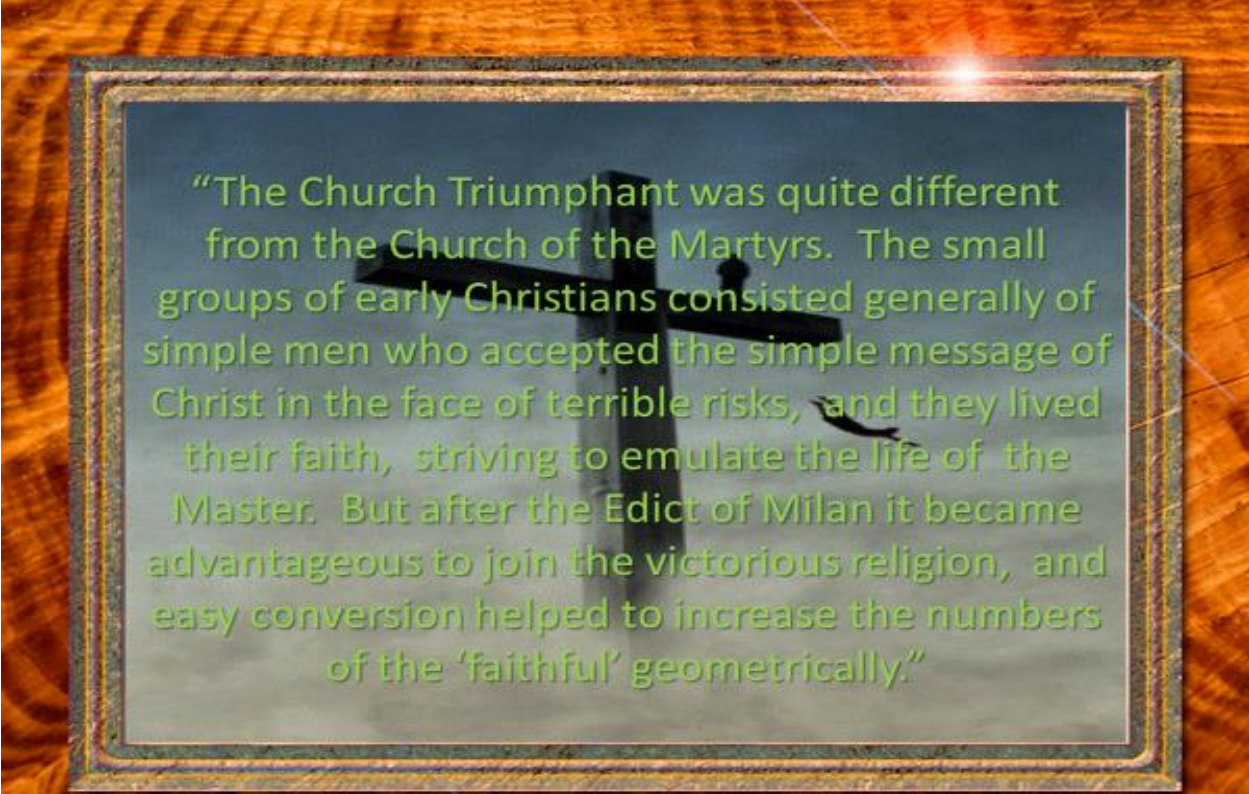
- **“Every time we see a major crisis in the history of the church, such as the Great Schism of the eleventh century, the Reformation of the sixteenth century, or the immense secularization of the 20th Century, we always see a major cause of rupture is the power exercised by those who claim to be followers of the poor & powerless Jesus!” – By Henri Nouwen**

Giving In To The Temptation Of Power

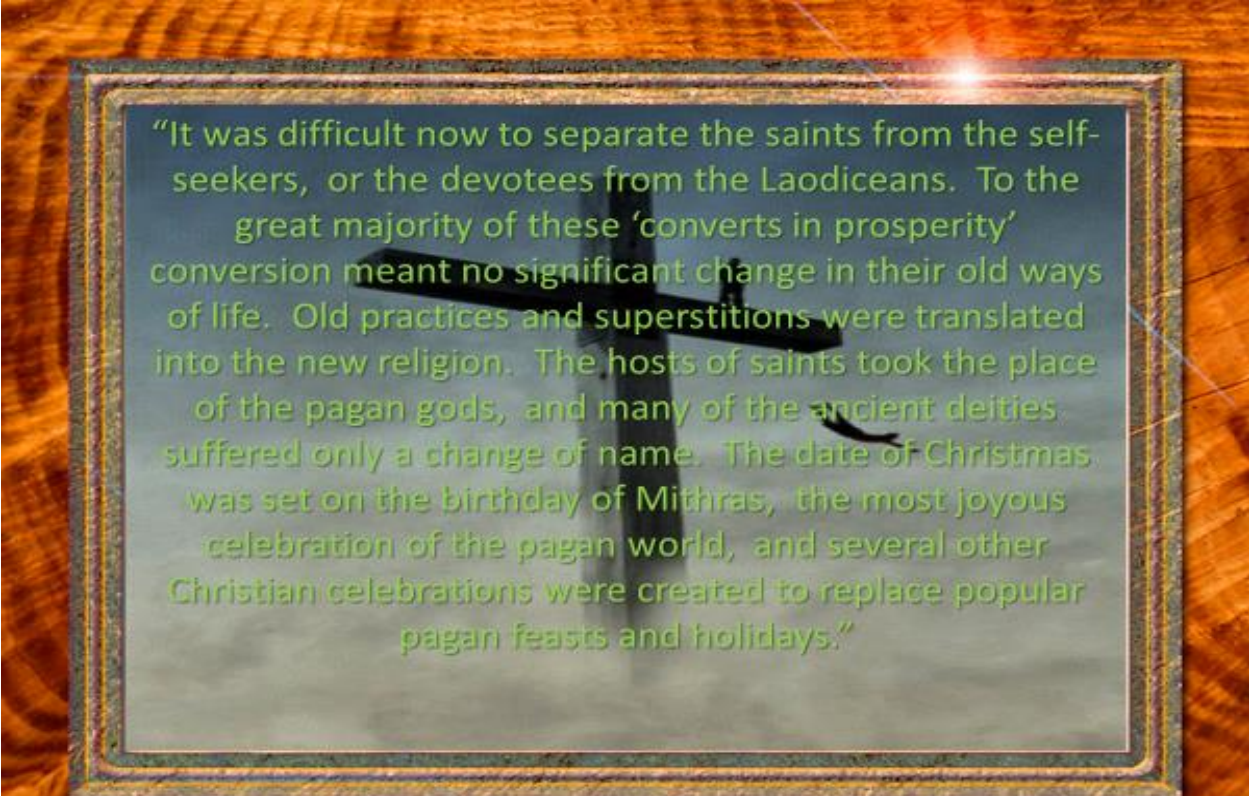
- **“Happiness does not consist in ruling over one’s neighbors or in longing to have more than one’s weaker fellowman. Nor does it consist in being rich and in oppressing those lowlier than oneself. No one can imitate God by doing such things. They are alien to His sublimity. On the contrary, anyone who takes his neighbor’s burdens upon himself, who tries to help the weaker one in points where he has an advantage, who gives what he has received from God to those who need it, takes God’s place, as it were, in the eyes of those who receive. He is the imitator of God. In this way, though living on earth, you will know the awe that there is a God who reigns in Heaven and you will begin to proclaim the mysteries of God. Then you will learn to love and admire those who are punished by death because they refuse to deny God. In this way you will despise the deception and error of the world!”**

Letter to Diognetus

Letter to Diognetus



“The Church Triumphant was quite different from the Church of the Martyrs. The small groups of early Christians consisted generally of simple men who accepted the simple message of Christ in the face of terrible risks, and they lived their faith, striving to emulate the life of the Master. But after the Edict of Milan it became advantageous to join the victorious religion, and easy conversion helped to increase the numbers of the ‘faithful’ geometrically.”



“It was difficult now to separate the saints from the self-seekers, or the devotees from the Laodiceans. To the great majority of these ‘converts in prosperity’ conversion meant no significant change in their old ways of life. Old practices and superstitions were translated into the new religion. The hosts of saints took the place of the pagan gods, and many of the ancient deities suffered only a change of name. The date of Christmas was set on the birthday of Mithras, the most joyous celebration of the pagan world, and several other Christian celebrations were created to replace popular pagan feasts and holidays.”



**The bull “Unam Sanctam”
declared that:**

**There are two swords (forms of power),
spiritual & the temporal (earthly or civic).**

Spiritual power is borne by the Church.

**Temporal power is borne for the Church
under the direction of the clergy.**

Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals Established:



Genesis 1: 16 – Church Of Light Direct



Genesis 1: 16 – State Of Reflected Light

784.

Pope Celestine 4. crowning the Emperour Henricus 6. with his feete.



Augustine and 'The City of God'

AUTHOR [Charmley, Gervase N.](#)

As a Christian, not a pagan, Augustine saw that history isn't a random process, nor is it controlled by blind, uncaring fate. While the pagan gods and goddesses were a part of history, ruled by fate just as mortals were, the Bible reveals a God who is the almighty ruler of history. 'If the beginning of history is seen to be the Creative Act of God, and in its end the completion of man's redemption, history becomes real, earnest and meaningful. Christianity redeemed human history & made it meaningful, for it was in history God had worked out the redemption of his people. **While pagan philosophers posited an eternal universe in which history was a never-ending cycle – all had happened before and would happen again – Augustine found in the Bible that history is a line, from God & to God, in which two strands would round and reach other from a definite beginning to an equally definite end in which they would finally be separated.**

History was, Augustine explained, 'a tale of two cities', the City of God and the Earthly City, which these 'Two states are intimately connected and promiscuously blended with one another in this life until separated by the final judgement.'⁹ Cain and Abel were the archetypes of the two cities, Cain the founder of the earthly city, Abel a citizen of the Eternal.

'These two states have been created by two sets of different affections, the earthly by the love of self to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God to the contempt of self. That one glories in self; this one in God.'¹⁰ The City of God's a stranger in the world & it is to be identified with no human city, state or system; its founder is God himself.

Though he formulated this philosophy of history, Augustine did not attempt to write a 'universal history'; the historical books of *The City of God* are incomplete, fragmentary suggestions rather than finished pieces, and made up mostly of accounts of biblical history rather than interpretations of history outside of Scripture. So, Augustine left the Church with 'His conception of the world's history as a scene of divine permission and purpose.'¹¹

In the Middle Ages *The City of God* became a part of the basis for the medieval doctrine of the papacy. After all, had not Saint Augustine identified the Church with the Kingdom of God, and should not that Kingdom be over the kingdoms of the world? Whilst it is true that Augustine did not in *The City of God* observe the distinction between the Church as an organisation and the Church as the elect people of God, there are many indications in the book that Augustine did not regard the Church in terms of an organised hierarchical body. He writes, for example, of ‘The Church predestined and elected before the foundation of the world, the Church of which it said, “The Lord knoweth them that are His.”’¹² There’s no clear distinction made in Augustine between the visible and the invisible Church, as in later Reformed writers, but the germ of the idea is there, waiting to be developed.

At the Reformation Protestants discarded this illegitimate usage of Augustine’s philosophy of history & recovered the vision of the City of God as a pilgrim city in a strange land; yet old habits do die hard and the two cities have often been confused by those who believed in a state Church.

Not only must the Church realise that she is a band of pilgrims in the midst of a hostile world, but we must also realise more fully than we have the great fact that history is meaningful. **History is a God-directed process, no matter what secularism, atheism, and postmodernism may say as they attempt once more to make the world view history as pointless and ultimately irrelevant.**

The Church must reclaim history, and that means that we must know it, own it, and celebrate it. When far too many congregations sing nothing that was not written within the last forty years, we have a Church that has followed the world in the side-lining of history, and that is a tragedy. The Church must rather reclaim history.

On Earth as It Is in Heaven

What is the role of the government? Can we build a Christian society in this world? Protestant Reformers Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer, and John Calvin all grappled with those questions—and came up with different answers.

In August 2001, Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore erected a 2.5-ton granite monument of the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the state Supreme Court building—raising a storm of legal controversy that ended in the forced removal of the monument and the removal of Moore from office. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, Moore insisted, “The acknowledgment of God is basic to our society, to our law, and to our morality.” But for others, the mixing of religion and public justice went too far.

The questions raised by this controversy—very familiar ones for Americans grappling with the separation of church and state—are some of the same questions that have faced Christians in many different historical situations. What is the proper role of the government in relation to the church? Should Christians be trying to bring about a “Christian society”? To what extent can we place our hope in politicians and political processes to accomplish this?

God has established two kinds of government among men ...

These questions came to the forefront in the 16th century when Europe was caught in a struggle between the Roman Catholic Church and the emerging Protestants. We tend to think of the Protestant reformers as primarily interested in theological issues: justification by faith, the supreme authority of Scripture, and the priesthood of all believers. But in a culture where religious life and civic life were so closely linked—

where the pope fought battles and secular rulers appointed clergy, and where the ordinary lives of citizens were built around the beliefs and rituals of the church—it was impossible to escape the political ramifications of breaking ties with the Catholic mainstream.

The reformers developed their views within a political framework that was very different from ours, but the principles they set forth continue to influence Christian political involvement today.

Church and state

In 1517, Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation with his *95 Theses* arguing against the sale of indulgences, which the church granted to reduce a Christian's punishment in purgatory. Meanwhile, Ulrich Zwingli was working for reform in Zurich, Switzerland. Significant differences between these two reformers ended up dividing Protestantism into two branches, Lutheran and Reformed. Martin Bucer began as a Lutheran, moved to the Reformed camp, and then spent his life trying to bring the two sides together. Bucer significantly influenced John Calvin, who spent most of his ministry in Geneva (now in Switzerland) and became the greatest of the Reformed theologians. These four mainstream reformers are often called the "magisterial reformers" because they believed in cooperating with the magistrates (rulers) to bring about reformation.

In the 16th century, church and state were inextricably intertwined, much as the different departments of state are in a modern government. The magisterial reformers did not question this; they believed that it was proper for the government to support true religion and to suppress error. Christianity was not just a private matter but also a public matter. If the Reformation was to succeed, it would have to reform the entire fabric of society, not just the beliefs of individual Christians. In order to stand up to the highest authorities of the Roman church and bring about widespread change, the reformers needed the support of secular rulers.

Some other reformers were revolutionaries who believed that the final struggle described in the book of Revelation was about to take place and that the godly should establish the kingdom of God by force. At the opposite extreme, the Anabaptists (who rejected infant baptism) believed that Christians should not be involved in the secular government at all, because the use of the sword to maintain order and administer punishment was contrary to the example set by Christ. The true church always stood in conflict with the world.

The magisterial reformers rejected both of these extremes. But they did not always agree about how to use politics to accomplish their spiritual goals.

Luther: Two kingdoms

Luther taught that there are two “kingdoms” or “realms.” The spiritual realm involves issues of eternal life and salvation, which are the concerns of the church. The temporal realm involves issues of this world, such as politics and economics, which are the concerns of government. The spiritual realm is based on Christian revelation, the temporal realm on natural law. “God has established two kinds of government among men,” Luther wrote, “the one is spiritual, it has no sword but it has the Word by which men ... may attain everlasting life. The other is worldly government through the sword which aims to keep peace among men, and this he rewards with temporal blessing.” As long as sin exists, both gospel and government are necessary.

For Luther, it is appropriate for Christians to hold public offices: “Should you see that there is a lack of hangmen, police, judges, lords or princes and find that you are qualified, you should offer your services and seek the job.” But the state has a strictly limited role to play—restraining sin (Rom. 13:4) and keeping anarchy at bay by preserving law and order (1 Tim. 2:1–2).

Christians should be loyal citizens, but they should not fall into the trap of imagining that the state can be truly Christian in this fallen world.

Luther saw the state as secular—not in the sense that it is religiously neutral, nor in the sense that it should not punish those who undermine true religion, but in the sense that we should not look to it to bring about the kingdom of God.

Zwingli: The Bible and the sword

Luther was against the use of military force to defend, let alone spread, the Reformation. On a 1510 trip to Rome, he had been scandalized to see Pope Julius II in armor leading his troops to war. This was not what he expected from a Christian minister. Then he saw his fellow reformer Ulrich Zwingli doing the same thing.

By 1525, Zwingli's reformation of the Church in Zurich was largely complete. The Catholic mass was abolished and replaced by a simple Communion service. His goal of a united evangelical Switzerland seemed within reach. But when he formed an alliance of Protestant cantons (Swiss states), the Roman Catholic cantons felt threatened and formed a rival alliance. The result was war in 1529. After a lull, fighting broke out again in 1531, and Zwingli was killed on the battlefield.

Luther interpreted Zwingli's death as the judgment of God. The image of Zwingli with a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other (as his statue portrays him today in Zurich) was for Luther a contradiction in terms. Lutherans in general were more subservient to the state. When rulers made demands that were against their conscience (such as imposing Roman Catholicism), they believed in **passive disobedience**, not rebellion. They were not pacifists—they believed in the state's right to punish heretics—but they respected the established authorities as given by God. Many in the Reformed tradition, on the other hand, accepted the legitimacy of armed rebellion against tyrannical regimes. In the Netherlands, they fought to expel the Spanish; in Scotland, they fought to protect the Reformation; in England, they fought against a king and eventually executed him; and in the American colonies, where the (Reformed) Puritan influence was strong, they rebelled against England.

Bucer: Blueprint for a Christian society

Zwingli, Bucer, and Calvin viewed the role of the state more positively than Luther. They believed that government's responsibility goes beyond merely preserving law and order; it also has the responsibility to bring about God's rule. Christians are called to make the gospel visible in all areas of society—whether politics, economics, the arts, or the media.

Bucer spent most of his career leading the Reformation in Strasbourg, but towards the end of his life he became a professor at the university of Cambridge. His book *The Kingdom of Christ*, written in 1550 (a year before he died) and addressed to King Edward VI, set forth a blueprint for a Christian England. Bucer's proposals encompassed not just church life but politics and economics. He argued that the laws of the land should be based on Christian principles—namely the two great commandments to love God and one's neighbor.

For example, Bucer proposed that begging should be outlawed so that the deacons of the church could administer effective relief, meeting the needs of those who were genuinely in need—not those who were simply too lazy to work. His vision of a comprehensive safety net for the poor, including steps to restore full employment and the goal of universal education, sounds amazingly modern. At the same time, he avoided one of the pitfalls of modern welfare states by taking care not to reward irresponsible behavior.

Unfortunately, Edward VI died in 1553 and with him any chance of implementing Bucer's blueprint.

Calvin: A model city

Unlike Bucer, John Calvin did live to see his vision of a Christian society take shape, at least in part, in the city of Geneva. Forced to flee France because of his Protestant beliefs, Calvin responded to a call to reform the church in Geneva. In the process, he transformed the city.

Calvin's goal went beyond the modest Lutheran aim of maintaining law and order; he wanted to build a godly society through the combined efforts of the ministers and the magistrates. In addition to preaching and administering the sacraments, the ministers kept a close watch over the spiritual health of the people, setting regulations on dress, dancing, Sunday behavior, etc. The government, for its part, maintained good schools, enforced godly laws, and punished wrongdoers. "These two things are widely different," Calvin argued, "because neither does the Church assume anything which is proper to the magistrate, nor is the magistrate competent to do what is done by the Church." Both, however had the same ultimate purpose: to restrain sin, encourage goodness, and build God's kingdom.

Calvin struggled not to impose a theocracy but to free the church from control by the civil magistrates so it could exercise its ministry to the full. This was not always easy, and he was forced to compromise again and again with stubborn magistrates. Moreover, many native Genevans found Calvin's rigorous discipline insufferable; these people, Calvin suggested, "should build a city where they can live as they want, since they don't want to live here under the yoke of Christ."

But the city also attracted many people, including refugees fleeing religious persecution, ministerial students, and others drawn by their admiration of Calvin. The Scots Reformer John Knox declared Geneva to be "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles."

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¹ Lane, T. (2007). [On Earth as It Is in Heaven](#). *Christian History Magazine-Issue 94: Building the City of God in a Crumbling World*.


Dominionism is the theocratic idea that regardless of theological camp, means, or timetable, God has called conservative Christians to exercise dominion over society by taking control of political and cultural institutions. The term describes a broad tendency across a wide swath of American Christianity. People who embrace this idea are referred to as dominionists. Although Chip Berlet, then of Political Research Associates defined and popularized the term for many in the 1990s, in fact it had (along with the term dominion theology) been in use by both evangelical proponents and critics for many years.

DOMINIONISM DEFINED

Dominionism is the theocratic idea that regardless of theological view, means, or timetable, Christians are called by God to exercise dominion over every aspect of society by taking control of political and cultural institutions.

Analyst Chip Berlet has suggested that there is a dominionist spectrum running from soft to hard as a way of making some broad distinctions among dominionists without getting mired in theological minutiae. But the researchers agree that:

1. **Dominionists celebrate Christian nationalism**, in that they believe that the United States once was, and should once again be, a Christian nation. In this way, they deny the Enlightenment roots of American democracy.
2. **Dominionists promote religious supremacy**, insofar as they generally do not respect the equality of other religions, or even other versions of Christianity.
3. **Dominionists endorse theocratic visions**, insofar as they believe that the Ten Commandments, or “biblical law,” should be the foundation of American law, and that the U.S. Constitution should be seen as a vehicle for implementing biblical principles.



"We can never retreat into our sanctuaries and neglect our civic responsibility to help set the moral tone of our culture. Leaving your neighbor in ignorance of his folly is inconsistent with the command to love him, and so political and cultural engagement are required for faithful believers. We are, I like to put it, to bring the influence of the City of God into the City of Man, working for justice and righteousness.

At the same time, if we controlled every legislative, executive, and judiciary branch, we still could not transform the City of Man into the City of God. That's why talk about making this a "Christian nation" is wrong-headed and needlessly scares our neighbors."

Charles Colson

1st Century Christians Changed The World By Raising The Bar

Bruce W. Winter's first book in the Cambridge Book Series of First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World was **Seek the Welfare of the City: *Christians as Benefactors and Citizens.***

In this book Bruce Winter presents a detailed expository of –

Chapter One @1st Peter 1 – 2:11ff, Chapter Two @Romans 13: 3-4 & 1st Peter 2:14-15, Chapter Three @1st Thessalonians 4: 11-12 & 2nd Thessalonians 3:6-13, Chapter Four @1st Timothy 5:3-16, Chapter Five @Philippians 1:27 – 2:18, Chapter Six @1st Corinthians 6:1-11, Chapter Seven @Galatians 6:11-18, Chapter Eight @1st Corinthians 7:17-24, Chapter Nine @1st Corinthians 8 – 11:1, and Chapter Ten @Romans 16:23.

The title of Winter's book is directly linked to Jeremiah 29:4-7 –

(4) Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: (5) Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. (6) Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters – that you may be increased there, and not diminished. **(7)** *And seek the peace [welfare] of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.*

Benefaction & Citizenship Topics Subjected to Author Analysis –

Eschatology, Benevolent Mission, Public Arena, Patron/Client Relationship, Political Quietism, Financial Independence, Civil Litigation, Personal Enmity, Unrighteous Magistrates, Civic Obligations, Caesar Cultism, Civic Feasts, Social Status, Social Mobility, Christian Calling, and the Aedileship Oath of Office. The last chapter is of exclusive focus on the Corinth City Treasurer Erastus mentioned Acts 19:22 & Romans 16:23.

1994 Winter Book Excerpt, pg. 37

The use of singular 'you' in Romans 13:4 shows that it is addressed to the individual rather than the whole church. The cost of a benefaction was very considerable and beyond the ability of some, if not most, members of the church. Benefactions included supplying grain in times of necessity by diverting the grain-carrying ships to the city, forcing down the price by selling it in the market below the asking rate, erecting public buildings or adorning the old buildings with marble revetments such as in Corinth, refurbishing the theatre, widening roads, helping in the construction of public utilities, going on embassies to gain privileges for the city, and helping the city in times of civil upheaval. There must have been Christians of very considerable means to warrant Paul's injunction in verse 3 and that of 1st Peter 2:15. This further evidence supports the view that there were members of significant social status and wealth in a number of congregations in the early church.

1994 Winter Book Excerpt, pg. 42

Paul wouldn't endorse a Christian continuing as the recipient of private benefactions by way of the parasitic client relationship with a patron even though it was widely accepted in the secular world as an important element in the social fabric of public life. This relationship would have been the one reason why some citizens apart from the rich in the city of Thessalonica, or in any other city in the empire, did not have to work... [Paul] was initiating in Gentile regions a radical social ethic which he regarded as binding on Christians. The secular client must now become a private Christian benefactor.

1994 Winter Book Excerpt, pgs. 201 - 204

The welfare of the city was seen to be two-fold. It was 'physical' and 'spiritual', and in the former case it was revolutionary in certain respects. It linked wealthy Christian members of the city into the civic benefaction convention. At the same time it expanded the definition of 'benefactor' to encompass all those in the Christian community who had the capacity to meet the needs of others from self-generated resources. It required all to be doers of good. This involved the renunciation of the client's full-time role in politeia forcing Christians to withdraw from unproductive existence where they were part of the paid retinue of a patron.

Unlike the secular trends of the first century with the development of a welfare syndrome favoring those with status and/or wealth, the Christian community was to be discriminating in the distribution of 'benefactions' to its members, 'honoring' only those who were genuinely needy – the godly Christian widows without relatives.

Paul was concerned as an 'association' they lived in a way that was worthy of the gospel. This involved securing concord in their midst to be a gospel witness in politeia where discord could be the rule rather than the exception. To live in a manner worthy of the gospel proscribed its members struggling for 'primacy' in their Christian community (Phil. 1:27ff). It also required them to abandon the use of vexatious litigation in civil actions which was one of the secular means of securing power in any group (1st Cor. 6:1-8) ...

By ancient standards, the 'nature of the politeia' for Christians was commended as something unique. It was not that they were postulating heaven as a 'republic'. Rather, Christian conduct in the politeia of their present cities was seen as a 'selling point' for the Christian message in the apologia to Dioqnetus. It was sufficiently different from that of others to draw attention to its distinguishing and startling characteristics.

Voting with a Christian Conscience

We should never give the impression that one party or another is the “Christian party.” We must be able to say to Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—and everyone in between—that unless you believe in Jesus, you will be eternally separated from God.

I agree with Lyndon Johnson who said in his inaugural address, “Under this covenant of justice we have become a nation—prosperous, great, and mighty. And we have kept our freedom. But we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. We have been allowed by Him to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit...If we fail now, we shall have forgotten in abundance what we learned in hardship: that democracy rests on faith, that freedom asks more than it gives, and that the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored.”

We must pray not only that our candidates believe in God, but that their belief means something to them and their policies. At a minimum, they ought to be convinced our laws are to be derived from God, both through the writings of Scripture and natural law.

Whether our preferred candidate wins or loses, we have a God-given responsibility to pray for our leaders and support them in whatever way we can. Paul, addressing the Romans when Nero was on the throne, wrote, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Romans 13:1).

– ERWIN LUTZER