

A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE RELATIONSHIP OF JUSTICE AND LOVE TO CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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Abstract

Nigeria, like many underdeveloped countries of Africa, is undergoing many social and political problems such as corruption, insurgency, terrorism, armed banditry, electoral frauds, examination malpractices, sexual abuses, etc. These problems are largely rooted in ethical behaviors of citizens in civil society. This paper critically interrogated the unethical foundations of the society based on Saint Augustine's treatise on justice and love and their relationship to civil society. Augustine rejected Cicero's idea of "highest justice" (*summa justitia*) and rather thinks that a "true justice" (*vera justitia*) in relationship to government is what "a people" (a republic) must recognize in order to be well governed. Later, he redefined "a people" in terms of being bound together by "the objects of their love," not by true justice. The question before us in this paper is whether Augustine meant to undermine justice? Or, did he really separate justice from love? With analytical method, we found that Augustine, led by philosophy (reason) illuminated by faith, made the point that we fully understand civil society only when we understand its loves and hates. These give a better clue to its character than its constitution or systems of justice or formal declarations. Our conclusion is that, following Augustine, human realities are seen in a new light in civil society in terms of love, because God is love. Applied to humans, his insight shows that citizens in civil society are what they love.

Key words: Relationship, justice, love, true justice, a people, a republic, civil society

Introduction

Augustine certainly would not have thought of himself as a political or social philosopher as such, but the record of his thoughts on such themes as the

nature of human society, justice, love, the nature and role of the state, the relationship between church and state, just and unjust war, and peace all have played their part in the shaping of Western civilization. The classical philosophers of Greece and Rome acknowledged the importance of justice in the *polis*, but they also acknowledge the shortcomings of the actuality of justice therein. Augustine's assessment of justice in the city of man (civil society) includes an agreement with the classical philosophers concerning the importance of justice. However, since justice is an integral cornerstone of any society, he is more interested in also exploring why justice fails in the civil society. Justice is an integral theme in Augustine's political theology, and justice is directly correlated and contingent upon his theology of love. Since a republic, or any political order, exists in some manner to dispense justice (however imperfect), an understanding of the role of justice in the political thought of Augustine rests upon the role of love in dispensing justice. That is to say, what people love affects how justice is dispensed in civil society since the dispensing of justice will correlate with love of self or love of others. To that end, it is necessary to do an exposition of Augustine's theology of love and his understanding of political justice. In trying to inquire into Augustine's political thought, we shall try as much as possible to concentrate on those elements in it which are of philosophical interest and importance. But then, it will become clear sooner that it is really impossible to separate Augustinian philosophy from Augustinian theology. In this paper, we shall first try to understand the meaning of the terms justice, love, and civil society. This will be followed by inquiring into Augustine's treatise on justice –his rejection of the definition of "a people" (a Republic), and his conception of true justice. We shall also look at Augustine's treatise on love – whereby he redefined a republic in relation to the "objects of their love." This will be followed by examining his notion of evil and disordered love. Next, we shall look at what Augustine sees as the political and psychological consequences of disordered love in a civil society.

Clarification of Terms

(a) Justice

Ordinarily, justice is called an objective and social virtue, because it has to do with perfecting one's actions as they affect or relate to the good of the other person. This is unlike the virtues of prudence, temperance and fortitude, which are called subjective virtues, because they are primarily concerned with ordering our individual or private actions. Following Aristotle, many authors usually define the virtue of justice simply as "the disposition to give everyone his due." That is, it is the constant will or disposition to give each person what he/she rightly deserves or merits. It is based on this common understanding that William A. Wallace defines justices as "the strong and firm will to give each his due. So understood, it is a habitual disposition whose *subject* is the will; in a broader context, the notion also includes the objective

right that is owed to each person and community, on the basis of either natural law or legislation of the state, and, sometimes, the laws or statutes in which consequent obligations are expressed” (172-173). Augustine believes that justice is something deeply personal but with social implications since humans are not atomized animals but essentially social. For him, the function of justice is “to assign to each his due.” But Augustine’s definition does not stop there. Justice is also something interior to the order of humans (here he follows Plato). Hence, there is established in man himself a certain “just order of nature,” by which the soul is subordinated to God, and the body to the soul, and thus both body and soul are subordinate to God. Thus, for Augustine, the love of God is the fountain from which justice flows; for it is only in the love of God, manifested in the love of others, from which justice can “assign to each his due.” As we shall see later, Augustine will go further to make a distinction between justice and true justice, arguing that though the function of justice is important, the action of dispensing justice is more important.

(b) Love

Biblical theology, based on Christian Scriptures, defines love in terms of genuine and wholehearted service to God and one’s neighbor: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind ... *You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mt. 22:37-39). The Scripture also defines love in terms of the golden rule: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk. 6: 31; Mt. 7:12). The golden rule is probably the most well known thing that Jesus ever said. It is the summit of ethics, of behavior, of righteousness (justice), and of godliness. In Augustine’s political theology, justice is directly correlated and contingent upon his theology of love. True justice, for Augustine, begins with the love of God and thereby extending to love of others since the love of others is the ultimate expression of love of God. Hannah Arendt affirms that “Augustine’s perception and every remark about love refer at least to this love of neighbor” (3). Elsewhere, Arendt also observes that in a different context, Augustine developed this notion of love “as the specifically Christian and particularly explicit version of the natural, prereligious, and secular law [golden rule] of not doing to others what we would not have them do to us (*quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*)” (39). Justice, to be effective, requires the right degree of loving other humans. Without the right degree of loving others, the possibility of justice becomes null and void as it sinks back into becoming purely retributive – that is, self-centered. As Mattox observes, “Augustine is at pains to reiterate that love is incomplete without justice, and justice is incomplete without love, and no city can endure – let alone be called a republic – without the twin marriage of love and justice” (Mattox, “Augustine”). And to the question, who is my neighbor? Augustine always replies in his *Soliloquies*, “Every man” (I, 7). Thus, following, Augustine, we understand love here in the Christian context of “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” which, observes Arendt, “is understood in

its literal sense by Augustine, ‘Love of one’s neighbor recognizes as its limitation the love of one’s self’” (18).

(c) Civil Society

There are many rival conceptions of society that have been advanced in social and political philosophy. Of the many conceptions, two are especially important, namely society conceived as an association of individuals (Individualism) and society conceived as a community (Communitarianism). These two conceptions of society are best thought of as clusters of ideas, rather than precisely formulated theories. Following Graham, “at the heart of individualism is the view that in social philosophy, political theory and practice, in moral thought and action, it is individual human beings who must, in some sense, be regarded as prior to society” (8). In what sense precisely the individual must be thought primary is a topic that is outside the limit of this paper. It suffices here to note that we take the best version of this claim to carry with it an implied view of society, namely that society is a sort of association. By way of contrast, Communitarianism regards society as a community, and this, as the very word implies, means that society is in some way a unity, a single thing in which individual members are bound together. Whereas Individualism is associated chiefly with political liberalism of various kinds, Communitarianism is to be found underlying political ideologies of left and right. Whatever the differences between political philosophies of left and right, there is at least this much agreement between them –that society is a community and not merely an association of distinct individuals –and it is one which explains partly their combined opposition to liberal individualism. In this paper, we shall understand society as a community (Communitarianism). Accordingly, the state is simply thought of as the custodian of the interests of the community and not just the protector of the interests of individuals within it. We use here the adjective “civil” to qualify society in a specific sense of “pertaining to ordinary life, not military.” Civil society here also suggests lay, secular, temporal society, not ecclesiastical society.

Augustine’s Treatise On Justice

Augustine’s treatise on justice are glaring in his rejection of definition of “a people” (a Republic), and his conception of “true justice.”

(a) Definition of “a people” (a Republic) Rejected

As Anthony J. Parel rightly observes, the nature of relationship of justice and love to civil society has always been a subject discussed by political philosophers. The discussion is well known in Plato’s Republic. Aristotle, on his part, asserts that friendship is the perfection of justice, and justice implies all other moral virtues (*Nicomachean Ethics*, V. 1). Whereas both Plato and Aristotle see the basic harmony of love and justice in civil society, Augustine sees them differently in exclusive terms. Hence, Parel affirms this of

Augustine: “His attitude on this issue was such he was obliged to redefine civil society as that which was held together not so much by justice as by love” (71). Now, to the question why Augustine rejects justice as the foundation of civil society, Parel thinks that the short answer would be that the justice of the city is deficient and ineffective: “It does not, and cannot, achieve what it sets out to achieve, without violating the principle of justice which is that one should give each one his or her due” (72). In his critique of justice, Augustine first rejects Cicero’s famous definition of a republic as “a thing of the people.” And, for Augustine, “a people” is a multitude gathered together by “consensus juris” and “utilitatis communion”: a consensus, a common sentiment or interest as to what constitutes right, the just; and by a sharing, a communion, in the materially useful things (*De Civitate Dei* II. 21; XIX. 21 & 24.) In analyzing this definition, Augustine focuses his attention on the meaning of “jus”. He is interested in the moral and theological implications of “jus” (- not its juridical meaning). This is because, he observes that Cicero himself elsewhere (*The Republic*) had interpreted “jus” in a moral sense, with reference to “summa justitia.” According to Cicero, “a republic” could not be well governed without the recognition of the relationship of government to *summa justitia* (highest justice). But then, Augustine substitutes Cicero’s *summa justitia* with his own “vera justitia” (true justice), and the rest of his arguments in *De Civitate Dei* (DCD) proceeded along this line of thought.

(b) His Conception of “True Justice” (*Vera Justitia*)

Yes, instead of Cicero’s “highest justice” (*summa justitia*), Augustine thinks that a “true justice” (*vera justitia*) in relationship to government is what a people (a republic) must recognize in order to be well governed. What does he mean by “true justice” (*vera iustitia*)? According to him, “true justice” implies more than a just relation between men. It rather presents a broader picture, an “ordo”: an order that establishes the proper relationship of various forces within man, between men, and between men and God; an order that reflects, in the final analysis, Divine Wisdom. Accordingly then, Augustine argues that a true justice can affect human affairs in the society only when the will is illumined by the Divine Light. It is only with such illumination can virtues become efficacious, and without it virtues remain only quasi virtues. One becomes just by making one’s souls conform to the immutable rules and lights of virtues dwelling eternally with the Truth and Wisdom common to all. Thanks to this divine illumination, the will becomes disposed to seek to live lightly and honourably, and to acquire what Augustine calls “good will.” And whoever possesses good will is incapable of wishing evil for anyone. So it will follow that “he does not harm anyone, and this can be the case only if he gives to each man his due” (Gilson 131). Thus, Augustine rejected as false the view that there can be genuine virtues without reference to divine illumination. In his own words:

For although some suppose that virtue which have reference only to themselves, and are desired only on their own account, are yet true and genuine virtues, the fact is that even then they are inflicted with pride, and are therefore to be reckoned vices rather than virtues. (*DCD XIX. 25*)

Thus, only that virtue which is illuminated by divine light can establish proper order within each individual “so that the soul is subject to God, the body to the soul, and consequently both soul and body to God” (*DCD XIX.4*). In his conclusion, Augustine affirms that a man who does not serve God cannot be just, and that there cannot be justice in a community composed of such individuals. In his own words:

Hence, when a man does not serve God, what justice can we ascribe to him, since in this case his soul cannot exercise a just control over the body, nor his reason over the vices? And if there is no justice in such an individual, certainly there can be none in a community composed of such individuals. (*DCD XIX. 21*)

Of course, we know from experience that human beings, based on their fallen nature, are not likely to possess complete good will in spite of their pursuit of divine illumination. However, given his notion of “true justice”, and given the condition for its effective realization, namely, divine illumination, it is not surprising that Augustine should find the republic of (pagan) Rome wanting in justice. Thus, said Augustine, “Rome never was a republic, because true justice had never a place in it” (*DCD II.21*). What was true of Rome was true of civil society as such, whether the civil society in question was Christian or non-Christian. According to this criterion of “true justice,” there could only be one true just society, and that it is none other than the City of God. As Augustine put it differently: “But the fact is, true justice has no existence save in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ” (*DCD II.21*). Any wonder then that a considerable part of the *City of God* (its first ten books) is devoted to a critique of pagan religion –its mythologies, its addiction to astrology, divination, and its civil theology. But in Augustine’s own judgment, the worst aspect of polytheism is not its mythical fraudulent character, but its injustice towards the true God. For, polytheism gives to false gods that reverence and worship which belong only to the true God. Parel observes that this has an implication:

By implication, every civil society has the tendency to practice injustice of this sort, in so far as it attempts to develop a civil theology and to see religion as a secular phenomenon, and an *instrumentum regni*, a means of temporal felicity. (74)

The case of Roman imperialism fared no better. Augustine endorsed Cicero’s view that it was ‘unjust for some men to rule and some to serve’; yet the

imperial city to which the republic belonged could not rule her provinces without having recourse to this injustice of keeping people in servitude. The empire was an undeniable sign that Rome was not built on *consensus juris*. Had “true justice” been the basis of civil society, asserts Augustine, “all kingdoms would have been small, rejoicing in neighbourly concord; and thus there would have been many kingdoms of nations in the world, as there are very many houses of citizens in a city. Therefore, to carry on war and extend a kingdom over wholly subdued nations seems to bad men to be felicity, to good men necessity” (*DCD IV.15*). Generalizing on this theme, Augustine moved on to wonder whether there was any real moral difference between civil society and organized brigandage. In a much quoted passage, he asks: “Justice being taken away, then what are kingdoms but great robbers? For what are robbers themselves but little kingdoms” (*DCD IV.4*). It seems that the difference between the justice of civil society and that of a band of robbers is not one of substance but of scale. The band of robbers is made up of men; it is ruled by the authority of the leaders; it is held together by the compact of confederacy; and the booty is divided according to the rules agreed upon. If the band becomes large and establishes itself on a broad territory, “it assumes more plainly the name of a kingdom, because the reality now manifestly conferred on it, not by removal of covetousness, but by the addition of impunity” (*DCD IV.4*). Augustine used with relish the alleged reply of a pirate to Alexander the Great. When the great emperor asked the pirate what he meant by keeping the hostile possession of a certain harbor, he answered with bold pride: “What thou meanest by sizing the whole earth; but because I do it with a petty ship, I am called a robber, whilst thou who dost it with a great fleet art styled emperor” (*DCD IV.4*). We can then see why civil society, Christian or non-Christian, is not founded on true justice. For, a civil society cannot render to God or to fellow human beings, or to other civil societies what is their respective due. On the contrary, it conceals this very injustice under the cloak of what it calls civil justice and religion which in today’s democratic parlance may be taken to mean political ideology.

Augustine’s Treatise on Love

Augustine’s treatise on love is visible from the point of view of his redefinition of “a republic” (a people) in relation to the “objects of their love.” It is quite absurd to suggest that there was no Roman State simply because it did not meet Augustine’s definition of “true justice.” It is necessary then to search for a new definition of a republic. Based on this necessity, Augustine writes:

But if we discard this definition of a people, and assuming another, say that a people is an assemblage of reasonable beings bound together by common agreement as to **the objects of their love**, then, in order to discover the character of any

people, we have only to observe **what they love**. (1950 XIX.24)

Yet, says Augustine, whatever it loves, it is reasonably called “a people” 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. According to this definition of ours, says Augustine, the Roman people are a people, and its wealth is without doubt a commonwealth or republic. Of course, these assertions have generated debates and questions. For examples, did Augustine mean to undermine justice? Did he really separate justice from love? Or is he saying that if justice is separated from “true justice,” if will is separated from the unchanging good, every assertion of will becomes tainted? It suffices here to observe that Augustine did not proffer the new definition (of a people) in a fit of enthusiasm. He had slept over the problem for a very long time. Following Parel, Augustine makes the point that we fully understand civil society only when we understand its loves and hates. These give a better clue to its character than its constitution or systems of justice or formal declarations. There is no doubt that he was led to this insight by philosophy illuminated by faith. Thus, human realities are seen in new light, in terms of love, because God is love. Applied to humans, this insight shows that people are what they love. Hence, says Augustine: “My love is my weight; I am carried by it wherever I am carried” (Confessions, XIII.9). Love moves the will, and so the whole man as its weight irresistibly carries a body to its natural position. Thus, Augustine says that when the self moves towards what it loves, there is desire (*cupiditas*); when it delights in what it loves, there is joy (*laetitia*); when it flees from its love, there is fear (*metus*); and when it actually loses its love, there is grief (*tristitia*). These four modes of love – desire, joy, fear, and grief, alone or in combination – constitutes the web of human existence (1950 XIV.7).

Man inevitably loves. To love is to go beyond oneself and fasten one’s affection upon an object of love. What makes it inevitable that man will love, says Augustine, is his incompleteness. As for the object of love, there is a wide range of objects that man can choose to love, reflecting the variety of ways in which man is incomplete. Augustine says that a person can love God, physical objects, other persons, or even himself. From these objects of his love, a person can derive satisfaction for some of his/her desires and passions. In what order must one place these four objects (God, things, persons, self) remains a decisive issue in every human life.

Augustine fully recognized the fact that our love for ourselves is constitutive of us. But he recognized that as creatures, this constitutive love, by itself, would not be enough: a more basic love than that would be needed, for that is the lot of all finite rational creatures. And that love is none other than the love of God, the immutable love in the possession of which all fear of losing it

ceases, so that there is no grief, and the joy of possession is indestructible. But a rational creature is also free; it is free to choose aversion or conversion: aversion from God or conversion to Him. Augustine takes the fundamental position that we cannot love ourselves properly unless we are converted towards God. The same applies to our love for things. Everyone expects to achieve happiness and fulfillment from love, yet men are miserable, unhappy, and restless. Why? Augustine lays the blame upon man's "disordered love."

Disordered Love and Its Consequences

Augustine's notion of "disordered love" could be seen from two perspectives: Evil and disordered love, and political and psychological consequences of disordered love.

(a) Evil and Disordered Love

In the scheme of things, original sin introduces the basic disorder in love. Augustine interpreted original sin as the outcome of pride, that is, aversion from God and conversion to ourselves. According to him: "The soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and becomes a kind of end to itself" (1950 XIV.13). Augustine understands aversion from God as the implication of turning towards nothingness, towards nihilism: ". . . to exist in himself, that is, to be his own satisfaction after abandoning God, is not quite to become a nonentity, but to approximate to it" (XIV.13). For, once you are, you cannot will yourself out of existence. The nihilist must be fooling himself or herself if he or she thinks that turning away from God is the same as murdering God. Thus, says Augustine, the idea of the death of God, as propounded by Fredrick Nietzsche, must appear as a pseudo idea, characterized more by self-delusion than by incoherence. For a God-avorter cannot help being aware of what it is that he is averting.

(b) Political and Psychological Consequences of Disordered Love

Disordered love necessarily seeks to master others. It incessantly compels us to seek to do better than others, and to extract praise from them. It is driven by the love to possess and consume things, not for the sake of life but for the sake of exclusive delight. The most serious of these implications concerns domination. The disordered love, as it were, transforms man's natural sociability into the will to dominate. It rebels against man's natural equality. Augustine says that the fallen man "endeavours to dominate those who are naturally his peers." Disordered love, he says, "abhors equality with other men under him; but instead of his rule, it seeks to impose a rule of its own upon equals. It abhors, that is to say, the just peace of God and loves its own peace" (1950 XIX.12). Thus, civil society understood as an arena of domination and for domination, is not natural to man, but it is his actual lot. This is, however, not God's making; it is man's own making. However, the deepest effect of disordered love is the discontent within the self.

Paradoxically, pride is paralleled by weakness of will to control itself. Augustine asks in a memorable passage, what else is misery “but his own disobedience to himself, so that in consequence of his not being willing to do what he could, he now wills to do what he cannot” (1950 XIV.15). If the fall has introduced disorder in love, our nature, says Augustine, in so far as it is created, is good and remains good. It is our will and our loves that have been impaired (ibid.). Thus, even after the fall, observes Herbert Dean, “vestiges” or “shadows” of true justice in here in the soul, thanks to which the fallen man is able to establish some kind of civil order (97-99). However, these vestigial traces of justice are at the mercy of disordered love to such an extent that whatever civil society achieves, it achieves only if one presupposes coercion. Coercion is, as it were, the price which one has to pay for self-love. As a certain author remarks, fallen men had come to need restraint. Even man’s greatest achievements had been made possible only by an unremitting harshness. In civil society then, the pressure from self-love is manifested in the struggle for domination, for consumption, for recognition. These are the objects of love of civil society, and that is why *consensus juris* cannot be its true basis. On the contrary, civil society manipulates the vestiges justice and corrupts them. The justice of the city, accordingly, reflects the collective self-interest of those who constitute the city. Whatever it embodies, justice is not one of them. Instead of *jus* determining national interest, national interest determines *jus*. However, Augustine recognizes that there can be better states and worse states, depending on what they love. Thus, there is a real difference between tyranny and constitutionalism; but these differences ought not to hide the common denominator of all states, Christian or pagan, Marxist or liberal, namely, the collective love of those who compose them.

Evaluation

Critics have noticed a certain ambiguity in Augustine’s attitude towards civil society. On the one hand, it is an organized system of self-assertion, yet on the other, it does contribute something positive without which man, in the present conditions, cannot manage his affairs. His attitude towards Rome illustrates this ambivalence. Augustine suggested that, at its best, Rome was moved by the love of praise; at its worst, it was moved by domination and the passion for consumption. He said that there is surely the difference between the desire for human glory and desire for domination. However, he insists that “it is not true virtue which is slave to human praise.” That is, the noblest of Romans were defective in that they did what was honourable only because they wanted others to praise them for it. Such virtues, the civic virtues, fall short of being true virtue. Nevertheless, Augustine believed that his new definition of a republic/a people took better account of the empirical reality of political life than did the definition (of Cicero) he rejected. Even the best state, at bottom, exists to serve the competing loves of their citizens. Civic justice and positive law, when isolated from true justice (–illumined by God), are

merely human invention that tend to reconcile, rationalize, coordinate these loves. Civic justice is not a function to be despised, even by Augustine's standard, but neither must we think that it will lead us to beatific vision.

Nothing brings out Augustine's awareness of the deficiency of human justice, and his anguish over it, better than his celebrated analysis of the "wise judge" who had to sanction torture (1950 XIX.6). The context of his analysis is the judicial system prevailing in the 4th century in his society. But the issues raised have a wide significance. They underline the imperfect character of human justice always and everywhere, the necessity under which it operates, and our necessity under dependence on such an imperfect instrument as positive justice. The root cause of the imperfection is the difficulty men have judging the guilt or innocence of fellow human beings. In analyzing the melancholy and lamentable aspects of human judgment (which often results in torture or detention in remand houses before the accused is proved to be guilty), Augustine's point is not to endorse any moral evil. Rather, it is to argue that "judges are men who cannot discern the conscience of those at the bar." Truth is hidden from them. Thus, the judge necessarily operates under an epistemological handicap. Despite this, he has no alternative but to render a judgment. Such "ignorance" of the judge often proves a calamity for the innocent. Again, in spite of such condition of ignorance and darkness that shrouds social life, the judge is morally obliged to act, because not to act would be a greater calamity. It would amount to dissolution of society into anarchy. Society then would be in a worse condition without such judges than it would be with them.

One underlines here that an understanding of Augustine's theory of predestination, side by side with the notion of two cities, is crucial to understanding his notion of "true justice." For want of space, suffice it here to point out that even though those elected for salvation and those elected for damnation live side by side in society, the distinction arising from their *respective destinies* gives rise to *two classes of persons* to whom Augustine refers collectively and allegorically as "cities" –the City of God and the earthly city. Citizens of the earthly city are the unregenerate progeny of Adam and Eve, who are justifiably damned because of Adam's Fall. These persons, according to Augustine, are aliens to God's love (because they refuse to love God as evidenced by their rebellious disposition inherited from the Fall). For Augustine, *the object of their love* –whatever it may be –is something other than God. In particular, citizens of the "earthly city" are distinguished by their lust for material goods and for domination over others. On the other hand, citizens of the City of God are "pilgrims and foreigners" who (because God, *the object of their love*, is not immediately available for their present enjoyment) are very much out of place in a world without an earthly institution sufficiently similar to the City of God. Following

Augustine, one underlines that no political state, nor even the institutional Church, can be equated with the City of God. Moreover, there is no such thing as “dual citizenship” in the two cities. Every member of the human family belongs to one –and only one.

Now, there is no doubt that Augustine had arrived at his conclusions about human justice because of faith illuminated by reason. Seen from this perspective, Augustine’s critique is a theological critique of justice. That is to say, it is not a full blown political philosophy, but a reflection on the limits of politics. Thus, while justice has both external and interior elements, it is equally important that for the external dispensation of justice to occur that humans have their interior order properly subordinated. This is why true justice belongs to God. It belongs to the order of truth and not the false pretensions of fallen humans. But this is not to say that there is no justice in the city of man, or that there are no signs of justice in the city of man. It is to say rather that “the justice dispensed in the city of man is deeply flawed – often failing to dispense justice according to the dues that each person deserves. Since social justice is the realization of the common good, founded on love of God extending to love of others, then justice is necessarily dispensed in accordance with the oriented love which defines the political” (Mattox, “Augustine”). In this way the justice of the city of man, which is oriented to solely the self, is flawed but retains seeds of the truths about the nature of justice defined by Augustine as both incorporating interior and exterior elements. As Mattox further observes, “this is crucial in understanding Augustine’s view of justice – it is not that there is ‘no justice’ in the city of man. It is that the justice dispensed in the city of man is incomparable to the ‘true justice’ found in love of God which has relational and social ramifications for loving other creatures of God and coming to know the proper ordering and degree of loves given to each person” (ibid.) Thus, following Augustine’s theory of predestination and the notion of two cities, “true justice” is unattainable in civil society. For, Augustine’s insights tell us that, though nature is not altogether corrupted, it nevertheless remains prey to self-love. That is, we cannot expect much from the justice of this world. Furthermore, his insights invite us to take critical look at our loves in society.

However, the implications of Augustine’s doctrine of nature and grace for civil society are not without their difficulties. His deep insight into the condition of fallen man could have led to his emphasis on the role of grace in the sphere of nature. In his *The Confessions*, Augustine writes:

I behold other things below you and I see they are not altogether existent nor altogether non-existent; they are because they are from you; they are not, because they are not what you are. For that truly exists, which endures unchangeably . . . (thus) if I do not abide in Him, neither will I be able to abide in myself. (VII.11)

This altered vision of reality is surely one of the consequences of his conversion from Manichaeism to Christianity. He recognizes the fact that one cannot be oneself unless one knows oneself as related to God. In *The Confessions*, he writes again: “Oh God thou haste created us for thyself so that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” In a more philosophical language, he makes the same point by saying that human nature is so made that “it cannot itself be the good by which it is made happy.” That man can find happiness only in God is thus no accident, since he was made by God to find happiness only in God. This aspect of man’s nature is what Augustine elaborates through his doctrine of love. This is Christian self-knowledge, one would say; and this cannot be revealed except by illumination by grace. Granted this, one wonders whether it follows that to live the life of nature in the civil sphere, anything more than natural reason and natural justice would be required. That is, it is true that conversion to God which is man’s ultimate concern, is impossible without grace. But then, if the city is not man’s ultimate concern; and if that is granted, would grace be necessary for politics? Thomas Aquinas does not seem to agree with Augustine under these circumstances. For, as Etienne Gilson observes, Aquinas’ position is that even in fallen condition, the causality of the second created cause, that is, the natural causality of human nature, is not impaired. One does not intend here to stand in judgment between Augustine and Aquinas as to who is right on this matter. Suffice it here to observe that Augustine’s position on nature invites cautious treatment and criticism, as such criticism has relevance to the relationship of love and justice to civil society. More importantly, we do not presume to have answers to all possible questions that might arise from our inquiry into the relationship of justice and love in civil society based on Augustine’s political theology. This is because one finds now and then curious contradiction to his original statements concerning love, justice, the notion of “two cities,” which makes his writings rather complex to understand precisely.

Conclusion

We saw that, in his discussion on justice and love and their relationship to civil society, Augustine rejects Cicero’s idea of highest justice (*summa justitia*), and rather thinks that a true justice (*vera justitia*) in relationship to society is what a people (a republic) must recognize in order to be well governed. A true justice, which implies more than a just relation between men, is an order (“ordo”) that establishes the proper relationship of various forces within man, between men, and between men and God; and which, in the final analysis, reflects Divine Wisdom. Why? A true justice can affect human affairs in the society only when the will is illumined by the Divine Light. Augustine affirms that a man who does not serve God cannot be just, and that there cannot be justice in a community composed of such individuals. According to this criterion of true justice, there could only be one true just

society, and that it is none other than the City of God. However, as earlier mentioned, it is not to say that humans are incapable of attaining justice in the city of man, or that there are no signs of justice in the society. Augustine only suggests that the justice dispensed in the civil society is deeply tainted. In other words, fallen men often fail to dispense justice according to the dues that each person deserves. So a civil society, Christian or non-Christian, is not founded on true justice. Augustine's dim assessment of the state, which is responsible for organizing the society, is not that he opposes political structure and order. It is that he is skeptical of the possibility of the state/government in providing the highest life possible for the human being in society. The state, in other words, cannot socially put order among humans towards their teleological end which, for Augustine, is the ultimate happiness. For, ultimate happiness is to be found in the interior self coming to know God. To this end, Augustine's critique of the justice in the city of man is that it is devoid of true justice because it is self-oriented rather than relational and restorative. We saw also that in redefining "a people" in terms of being bound together by "the objects of their love," not by true justice, Augustine says that whatever a republic loves, it is reasonably called a people. Nevertheless, he does not mean to undermine justice. He did not really separate justice from love. Rather, led by philosophy illuminated by faith, Augustine makes the point that we fully understand civil society only when we understand its loves and hates. These give a better clue to its character than its constitution or systems of justice or formal declarations. For, the justice of the city accordingly reflects the collective self-interest/love of those who constitute the city. For Augustine, nature needs grace to act efficaciously even in the civil sphere after the fall of man. Thus, following him, human realities are seen in a new light in the civil society in terms of love, because God is love. If we apply this to humans, his insight shows that people are what they love in the civil society. Consequently, religion or the worship of God, understood and practiced correctly, adds values to politics, –which values ensure justice, love, peace and harmony in civil society.

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