

Augustine on the City of God and the City of the World: A Preliminary Study of Augustine's Political Philosophy

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Abstract: Augustine's philosophy can be understood in two ways, namely love and justice. Love occupies a very important place in Augustine's thought. Love will determine what kind of city people are in, and love is more important than justice, so love and justice build two cities. The city of God composed of love and justice and the city of the world composed of love and injustice. The City of God represents an ideal society of high faith, spirituality and morality. The people of this city strive for the best, are guided by God's law, and their actions are guided by moral values. In the City of God, individual desires are constrained by virtue and devotion, and people pursue the happiness and harmony of the whole at the expense of individual interests. By contrast, secular cities represent secular interests, desires, and utilitarian societies. The residents in this city are more in pursuit of individual desire satisfaction and material benefits. They are driven by secular values and practical factors, and often ignore moral and ethical considerations in the pursuit of personal gain.

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1. Order of love

1.1. Origin of Evil: Abuse of free will

Augustine once thought deeply about the origin of evil, according to Augustine's thought, the origin of evil can be analyzed from three dimensions: evil is the absence of good, evil is the abuse of free will, free will and God's relationship.

First, evil is the absence of good. Augustine believed that the nature of God's creation was good, and that evil was not created by God. "If one know or believe that God is good - and it would be wrong to believe otherwise - then He does not do evil. On the other hand, if Augustine admit that God is just - and to deny this is blasphemy - then He rewards good and punishes evil." [1] Evil is not an entity that exists in opposition to God, but a defect of the good that God created. The root of evil comes from the partial or total absence of good, which causes the nature of things to become imperfect and confused.

Secondly, evil is the abuse of free will. Augustine emphasized that human free will is a precious ability given by God, and viewed in this way, human free will is inherently good, but it is easy to abuse this free will when humans are tempted to make wrong decisions. Free will has no moral property; it can do both good and evil. "[1] This evil cannot happen without a cause. But if one ask

what the cause is, it is impossible to answer, for there is more than one cause of evil; rather, if anyone does evil, it is the cause of his own evil. One of the reasons is that when people chase the wrong values, it leads to evil, which is one of the sources of evil.

Finally, the relationship between free will and God. Augustine believes that God is the source of good: "God is all-powerful and immutable in the smallest respects; He is the creator of all good things, but he himself is more perfect than all these things; He is the supreme and righteous ruler of all that He has created; He creates not by means of any being (as if he himself had not sufficient power), but from nothing he creates everything." [1] It gives human beings free will, because people with free will be much more noble than people without free will like empty shells and walking dead, God has no right to make the will and choice for people, if God is in control, people cannot be called free. This means that God gives human beings the right and freedom to choose between good and evil, and this arrangement demonstrates God's love and his justice in punishing evil.

1.2. Order of love

Augustine believed that in order to maintain the order of legitimate love, Augustine must direct his love in the right direction. He distinguishes between two basic types of human love: covetousness and benevolence. These two kinds of love play an important role in human life, affecting our relationship with others, the world, and God. Charity is called universal love, and covetousness is called the love of being human.

First of all, fraternity, which comes from God, is a divine, pure love without selfish desires and desires. God's love is the most perfect, highest love. It is God's grace, it is an unappreciated and unexpected gift. God's love is the basis for people in society to love each other. Grace helps us to realize that we are not isolated individuals, but live in a community of interdependence and mutual support. Therefore, benevolence has become the foundation for people to love each other in a society, which is essential for building a harmonious and prosperous society. Augustine believed that in order to achieve the order of love, people need to turn to the pursuit of benevolence, which helps us establish the right system of values in our lives. "What is true love; Actually, it's just what love is. Only true love deserves to be called love; otherwise it is lust; So greedy people are improperly described as loving, and loving people are improperly described as covetous. True love means that Augustine should live righteously by truth, and to love people and want them to live righteously, Augustine should despise all earthly things. In this way, Augustine is even ready to die for the good of our brothers, as the Lord Jesus Christ taught us by example." [2]

Next to love, love is a strong love for worldly goodness and limited beings. This love is usually driven by selfish desires and threatened with death. Covetousness makes people focus on material wealth and power and leads people to do whatever they can to satisfy their desires. Under the influence of greed, social order is often broken, and human morality and values are eroded.

Augustine's exploration of the order of love has profound wisdom. He emphasized the priority of benevolence in order to maintain order and stability on a moral level. His ideas help people establish the right value system, achieve spiritual growth, and find the right path for their lives and relationships with each other.

2. City of God and City of the world

2.1. Secular life and spiritual life

In Section 2.1 of this article, Augustine will explore secular and spiritual life and the relationship between them. Augustine will take Augustine's City of God as the basic framework for discussion.

First, Christian theology holds that all things were created by God. Augustine said, "Of all that is seen, the world is the greatest; Of all the unseen, God is the greatest. Augustine see the world as it is before our eyes and believe that God exists. God created the world, and there is no one we can trust more than God himself." [3] According to Augustine, God is a triune being, one being, three persons. Augustine's theory of God is the trinity of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three persons are all Almighty God, but they cannot be considered three Gods. The origin of human beings can be traced back to Adam and Eve, who were the first of God's creation. However, Adam and Eve were tempted to commit original sin, resulting in human suffering the punishment of sin and death. In addition to physical death, humans face a second death and the final judgment of God.

On this basis, Augustine can analyze two different ways of human life: the secular life and the spiritual life. Secular life refers to the life led by people who pursue worldly achievements such as material well-being, status, fame, etc., often neglecting their soul and relationship with God. In contrast, spiritual life refers to the life of those who pursue faith in God, return to truth, and focus on personal practice and relationships with others. People who live according to spirituality can achieve happiness that is closer to God's happiness than to mere human emotion. Human emotions are more out of their own will, through the realization of their own desires to be satisfied, although this can get a momentary experience of happiness, but this can never be compared with God's happiness. When people make choices out of their own will, they are actually giving up the will of God. This behavior is living a self-deceiving lie, violating God's truth and betraying God, not obeying. Boersma argues that: "For Augustine, human justice is not independently intelligible; it must always 'refer' beyond itself. Human justice is the finite participation in the 'overflow' of the font of eternal justice." [4]

There is a clear distinction between the secular life and the spiritual life. Secular life often makes people fall into the situation of material desire and moral degradation, and it is easy to neglect the reflection and inquiry on the meaning and mission of life. In contrast, the spiritual life offers people a return to an honest, simple view of life, enabling them to connect with God through faith and practice, and to achieve inner peace and wisdom.

From the perspective of City of God, closeness to God and the noble mission of life are essential. After the SINS of the first human beings, Augustine cannot rely on ourselves to achieve salvation, but must trust in God's grace and divine salvation. It is therefore important to achieve closeness to God in order to pursue a spiritual life. It also reminds us that in real life, we should seek sincere communication with God and prevent ourselves from being tempted by the prosperity of worldly life. In conclusion, by analyzing the secular life and the spiritual life, Augustine understand the difference and importance between the two. Augustine should practice his spiritual life in real life and strive to achieve a close connection with God in order to seek deep truth and inner peace. At the same time, Augustine need to constantly reflect on his own way of life, guide ourselves to the noble spiritual world, and finally realize the mission and value of life.

2.2. City of God and City of the world

In *The City of God*, Augustine explores the community and individuality of human nature and the concept of the city of God and the city of the world. Gerald P. Boersma argues that: "Augustine would suggest that attention to the participatory nature of justice (both individual and collective) for which Augustine argues throughout the *City of God* invites a way beyond the impasse. In this intensely debated question, one might distinguish (in an admittedly overly general manner) two broad and opposing schools of thought." [4]

First, he mentions the community and individuality of people. Augustine pointed out that the fact that God created only one man does not mean that he can live alone and does not need a community. Human society grew out of a man, showing the social nature of man.

Second, Augustine discusses the city of God and the city of the world. Although there are many different countries and cultures in the world, there are really only two social orders, which are called two cities. The earthly city is made up of people who live according to the flesh, while the city of God is made up of people who live according to the spirit. Each city seeks its own peace. Life in the secular city does not refer only to material life, but to a life in which man's desires enslave the spirit away from God. Life in the city of God, on the other hand, is a life in which the spirit submits to God and is able to dominate man's desires. "Living according to the flesh" must be understood as a fault arising not only from the flesh, but also from the mind. The flesh is seen here as an evil, even though it is not evil by nature. Justice concerns the deepest nature of the way of life, and in fact justice and true religion are always inseparable, humbly submitting to God and enjoying Him as the best good, the result of which is that the soul rules the body and reason rules in a just way and directs the animal's desires. After the transformation of desire into reason, justice ceases to be a need, but becomes an essential need for a proper relationship between true religion and God. If the Creator is not the ruler of the soul of the rational being, there is no real justice, no real justice is possible for people in the "city on earth," and people cannot get rid of the disorder of the soul in their own lives. In this state, human nature begins to fall into a series of declines, and human existence tends to nothingness, thus giving rise to all kinds of dark desires of human beings. Furthermore, as a result of losing the power to control these desires, dark desires such as the desire for power arise. Since this is the corruption of nature, man's salvation must depend on grace and gain the perception of God.

Augustine also mentioned two ways of love: self-love and love of God. Two cities are created by two kinds of love: one is a territorial love that extends from self-love to contempt for God; The other is heavenly love, which extends from loving God to despising self.

In *The City of God*, Augustine explores the community and individuality of man, the opposition between the City of God and the city of the world, and the distinction between the physical life and the spiritual life, while pointing out two ways of love. These views illustrate St. Augustine's thinking about human nature and social order. In the development process from early Christian thought to contemporary social values, religions (including Christianity) have established a unified and consistent view of truth in order to persuade and regulate human behavior. When any culture is a holistic object of study, it needs to set up internal thinking between religious belief and social achievement - the connection between all the values of the real human society and the other world will have a stimulating effect on social culture. It is a secular duty, as well as a religious duty, for man to be conscious of and actively pursue a rational, natural life. Gerald P. Boersma argues that: "Finally, I propose that Augustine's participatory account of justice has implications for a vexed twentieth-century debate about the City of God, namely the question of what allegiance, responsibilities and loves citizens of the heavenly city ought to have towards the earthly city in which they live as pilgrims." [4]

3. Conclusion

Augustine believed that love is one of the most basic human drives and needs. "In the context of Christian theology, Augustine it reinterprets political philosophy from the two dimensions of love and justice respectively." [5] The problem is that it is composed of different kinds of love and justice. He divided love into two types: the love of self-centered desire and the love of other-centered virtue. The love of self-centered desire seeks individual self-interest and satisfaction, while the love of other-centered virtue seeks the common good and harmony. Augustine believed that the root of human happiness lies in the connection with God and the pursuit of truth, which is achieved through the love and worship of God. He argued that only by pursuing God's will and acting in a chaste and godly way can people find true happiness and harmony. In the book, Augustine also explores the

existence of evil and the effect of original sin on the order of human love. He believed that original sin sullies human nature, making people more likely to be driven by the love of self-centered desire and away from the love of virtue centered on others. Through his thoughts on love and happiness, Augustine sought to inspire people to transcend individual interests and pursue higher love and moral behavior. He emphasized the close connection between morality and God's love, and advocated that people draw wisdom and truth from love in order to achieve ultimate happiness. Aquinas proposes that these two cities do not exist in isolation in human society, but exist within each individual. Every individual needs to make a choice between these two cities, and the difference in people's choice determines their behavior and position in society. Through this contrast, Aquinas aims to inspire people to uphold morality and faith in their daily lives, making individual actions more meaningful and valuable. Only on the path of pursuing truth, goodness and beauty can human society achieve harmony and development.

References

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