I. About the book:
1. Occasion: Fall of Rome to the Goths (Alaric): A.D. 410

2. Double Purpose: - a Christian reply to pagan charges
- a Christian answer to (& dialogue with) the accumulated wisdom of classical antiquity: e.g., free will and God’s foreknowledge; denial of fate, chance and astrology; the origin and nature of evil; the truth in pagan philosophy.

3. Composition and Structure: (A.D. 413-426): 22 books
   a. Books 1-10: the pagan viewpoint; Augustine’s replies to it.
      1-5: the view of those pagans who worshipped the gods for happiness on earth
      6-10: the view of those pagans who worshipped the gods for eternal happiness
   b. Books 11-22: an elaboration of the meaning of history
      11-14: the origin of the two cities
      15-18: their unfolding course in the past
      19-22: their destinies at the end of history

4. Significance:
   a. A reflection of (and on) the transition from the classical world to the Christian monotheistic one:
      “It stands on the borders of two worlds: the classical and the Christian, and it points the way into the Christian.” (Brown)

   b. “a monument to the literary culture of the later Empire” (Brown):
      “I am at a loss as to which to admire the most: the complete religious knowledge of priest; the range of philosophical opinions; the fullness of its historical information; the charm of a grand style.” (from Ep. 154.2- said by Macedonius.)

II. The Theme: Two Cities
1. **Origin:** Will and Love: two loves form two cities
   Political society/city: “an association of rational beings united by unanimous agreement upon things they love.” (XIX, 21)

2. **Nature:** The two cities are mystical entities: they are not fully or totally identifiable (co-extensive) with any actually existing historical reality.

3. **Relation:** Intermixed; co-existent; locked in struggle and constant tension.
III. Philosophy of History

1. Christian philosophy of history: the attempt to interpret the beginning, course, structure and goal of history on the basis and in the light of belief in the one God who is Creator of all, Revealer of Himself in history, Redeemer and Final Judge of the world.

2. Augustine’s interest in the world as history, rather than as nature and cosmos (Greek)
   “Surely most unhappy is the man that knows all these things [knowledge of the world as nature and all that is in it], and is ignorant of thee: but happy is he that knows thee, though ignorant of these. And he that knows both thee and them, is not the happier for them, but for thee only.” (V,4)

3. Comparing and contrasting the Greek and the Augustinian views of history.

Greek/Hellenistic Outlook:
-A theory of society and a political philosophy, but not a theory of history.
-Time as measure of movement; time had to do with change, not with stable reality.
-the eternal is the time-less: the ideal character of the hero; the ideal wisdom of the sage; the ideal order of the good political community.
-history only provides examples of moral virtue or political wisdom or their opposites.
-history has no purpose, no direction (cyclical), no fundamental unity, no universal meaning; it has a large place for chance, necessity and fate. At best, it is political and moral education.

Augustinian/Biblical view:
-no theory of society, but a philosophy of history.
-time is a creature; it is decisive, for it is the arena of God’s real activity (God’s revelation)
-history is purposeful and has direction; it possesses fundamental unity and universal meaning; it is linear
-Augustine opened history to teleology (the study of evidences of purpose in nature).
- the unique, the individual and the new are possible and matter because God is the Creator and Lord of history.
-eternity is fulfillment, not absence, of time.

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