

necessary to understand and come to terms with the ongoing social effects of the division of labour. It has been three decades since the ‘end of history’ and the declaration of ‘no alternatives’ to capitalism. Determining just what triumphed, and sifting what is truly without alternative from what is merely provisional and contingent requires more focused attention on the heart of the problem. A revival of the term ‘commercial society’ and a return to the problem of the division of labour is a step in the right direction. Political theorists, social scientists, and anyone interested in understanding the commercial society in which we live will benefit from this book.

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*A Commonwealth of Hope:  
Augustine’s Political Thought*  
Michael Lamb  
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Michael Lamb wants to overturn a consensus on Augustine’s political thought three-quarters of a century old. Since the dawn of the postwar era, he argues, commentators both sympathetic and hostile have consistently interpreted Augustine’s attitude toward secular affairs in general and politics in particular as deeply pessimistic, otherworldly, and antipolitical. Thinkers as diverse as Reinhold Niebuhr and Herbert Deane, John Rawls and Martha Nussbaum, Hannah Arendt and Judith Shklar, John Milbank and Stanley Hauerwas, he contends, inadvertently collaborated in painting a picture of Augustine as ‘an otherworldly, sin-obsessed pessimist who encourages us to renounce the world and seek the City of God’ (xi). Under their influence, ‘Augustinianism’ has acquired a set of fixed connotations in contemporary political theory: ‘The world is a vale of tears, and government is nothing but a remedy for sin. Politics remains tragic, limited, and hostage to necessity. Citizens must do the “lesser evil” so that good may come or retreat from politics altogether, finding refuge in an otherworldly vision of heaven or the purity of the institutional church’ (xi).

Lamb believes that contemporary interpreters suffer from ‘selective vision’ (1). They are too beholden to postwar despair of political possibilities (4-5); too narrow in their reading, which rarely ventures beyond Book 19 of the *City of God* (5-6); too sequestered within political theory to see how Augustine’s theology and rhetoric interact with his politics (6-7); too ‘Lutheran’ in their assumptions about Augustine’s attitudes toward human nature, the effects of sin, and worldly virtue (7-10). Each of these factors has reinforced the widespread ‘assumption that, for Augustine, earthly goods, and hence political goods, have little or no value’ (3). But it is this assumption that Lamb sets out to ‘unsettle’ by ‘recover[ing] Augustine’s conception of hope as a virtue’ (10). His aim is to demonstrate that ‘Augustine allows a robust hope for temporal goods as long as it is rightly ordered’ (13), and from this worldly virtue to ‘adduc[e] distinctively Augustinian reasons for citizens to engage in public life and seek common objects of hope with diverse citizens’ (11).

Lamb’s argument turns on a single claim with implications that extend from the ethical to the political. He impugns contemporary interpreters for reading Augustine’s famous distinctions between temporal and eternal, use and enjoyment, *amor sui* and *amor Dei*, Earthly City and City of God, as ‘either-or’ dichotomies (37-38, 49, 104, 194-195). On this view, Lamb explains, worldly attachments and affections can become virtuous ‘only if [one] calls on the assistance of an otherworldly God who intervenes mysteriously in human affairs’ (104). Commentators may differ as to whether and how this procedure of renouncing the world and getting it back again actually works, but they tend to agree that Augustine follows it. Yet Lamb points out that Augustine is not necessarily devaluing or denying the goodness of this-worldly things, nor is he steering Christians away from virtuous pursuit of them, by ‘referring’ or ‘relating’ (*refero*) them to transcendent finalities. ‘Temporal goods partake in God’s goodness’, he writes. ‘Temporal goods are still *goods*’ (38). Lamb is hardly the first to insist on this anti-Manichaean point: anyone who has read Augustine in consonance with the natural law tradition, from Thomas Aquinas to his twentieth-century heirs, must affirm it in principle.<sup>5</sup> But Lamb is surely correct that too many of today’s

<sup>5</sup> See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 96., a. 4; Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, trans. L. Lynch (New York: Vintage, 1960 [1929]), 130-131; Jacques Maritain, ‘St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas’ in M. D’Arcy et al.,

leading interpreters find in Augustine a world-weary dualism that is plainly incompatible with his authentic views when assessed from an adequately comprehensive vantagepoint. This insight sets the agenda for *A Commonwealth of Hope*, which progressively widens in scope to elaborate its consequences for moral, social, and political life.

Drawing chiefly on the *Enchiridion*, Lamb defines Augustinian hope as an ‘orientation of the will toward objects that are good, future, possible, yet not fully possessed’ (31, cf. 47). By situating hope in relation to love (chs. 2-3) and faith (chs. 4-5), he shows that hope combines cognitive apprehension of its object as possible with affective movement toward the object as good. Hope adds something to both belief and desire by sustaining active pursuit of the good amidst the uncertainty and difficulty of being on the way in the temporal not-yet (22-31). Virtuous hope occupies a middle ground between the deficiency of despair, which forecloses possibility prematurely, and the excess of presumption, which takes possession of the good for granted (47-63). Christians are instructed to place their hope in God, but does Augustine believe one can also hope virtuously for earthly goods that are finite, contingent, and insecure? While acknowledging that his interpretation involves ‘making explicit what Augustine only leaves implicit’ (20), Lamb contends that he does.

Substantiating this claim sends him back to a *locus classicus* of Augustine’s moral theology, the distinction between *uti* (use) and *frui* (enjoyment) and ensuing account of the *ordo amoris* (order of love) in his early work *On Christian Doctrine*. Influential interpreters following in Arendt’s tracks have accused Augustine of deserting the world and instrumentalizing the human neighbour on the basis of this argument,<sup>6</sup> but Lamb faults them for assuming that ‘love of eternal and temporal goods is mutually exclusive or competitive’ and equating the objects of use and enjoyment with Kantian means and ends (36-37). They fail to understand what Lamb calls Augustine’s ‘participationist ontology’, in which all things that exist receive their being from God, who is Being *simpliciter*. In this metaphysical framework,

*A Monument to St. Augustine* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930), 197-224; Ernst Fortin, ‘Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and the Problem of Natural Law’ in J. Benestad, ed., *Classical Christianity and the Political Order* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 199-222.

<sup>6</sup> Arendt, *Love and St. Augustine*, ed. J. V. Scott & J. C. Stark (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 19, 94-97.

'loving God does not necessarily crowd out, or compete with, love of neighbor or the world', as long as one's loves are properly ordered (37-38). Moreover, the objects of use and enjoyment should not be understood as instrumental means and otherworldly ends, but rather as 'proximate' and 'ultimate' goods that relate to one another as parts to a larger whole. This means that 'loving the neighbor and temporal goods in an ordinate way can be partly *constitutive* of loving God' (42-44). And since hope 'is a kind of love', Lamb reasons, what is true for the order of love should be true for the 'order of hope' as well, even though Augustine 'never develops' the idea 'in such explicit terms' (46-47).

Lamb then underscores this argument by drawing attention to passages where Augustine explicates godly love and faith by comparing them to this-worldly affection and mutual trust between human neighbours. This suggests that the graced virtues of faith and charity are not opposed to but rather complement their natural analogues (96-98). Once again, Augustine is not as 'explicit' about the analogical relation between natural and supernatural hope as he is about the other theological virtues. But Lamb does not consider this especially significant. Since Augustinian hope combines the cognitive and affective elements of faith and charity, he feels safe drawing the inference that it follows the same pattern: spiritual hope is neither exclusive nor instrumentalizing of temporal hope. 'Hoping in other human beings can also be a way to hope in God, as long as that hope is properly ordered' (104).

Lamb's treatment of Augustine's more directly political writings is prefaced by a lengthy prolegomenon on rhetorical technique (chs. 6-7) that tries to further dissolve some of the apparent dualisms in his thought by repurposing them (118). If such oppositions are not really 'zero-sum' (131), as contemporary interpreters have assumed, what good do they serve? With a nod to Pierre Hadot's ever-influential *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (119-120) and the Stoic practice of *exhortatio* (121-123), Lamb argues that Augustine's notorious 'antitheses' are chiefly persuasive, not propositional. They are not 'precise formulations or literal valuations of the world' but rather 'rhetorical devices' that serve the 'pedagogical functions' of 'chang[ing] audiences' attitudes' and encouraging them in virtue (131, 146-147). Augustine's harrowing descriptions of worldly suffering and sorrow, often presented 'side by side' with equally vivid images of other-

worldly glory, should not be read as ‘expression[s] of skepticism’ or indications that ‘earthly goods have no value’, but rather as exhortative pastoral responses to the psychological fact that ‘human beings are tempted to give earthly goods too much value or love them in the wrong ways’ (159, 164).

Augustine distinguishes the two cities not only by their loves but also by their hopes.<sup>7</sup> So how does Lamb’s revisionist account of Augustinian hope alter the political picture? He begins by levelling three anti-dualist challenges to the contemporary consensus (ch. 8). First, against ‘democratic critics’ of Augustine like Arendt and Nussbaum as well as ‘Augustinian realists’ like Niebuhr and Deane, both of whom agree that Augustine’s infinite deferral of the eschaton radically narrows political possibility and undercuts political hope, Lamb argues that Augustine’s eschatology is ‘inaugurated or partially realized’ in a way that ‘enables participation in the heavenly city here and now’ (168). While Augustine undoubtedly rejects millenarianism as a species of ‘presumption’, he does not go to the ‘opposite extreme’ of a ‘completely *futurist eschatology* that holds the Kingdom of God will appear only at the end of time’ (170). Rather, Lamb argues, Augustine affirms that ‘human beings can participate *proleptically*, if only partially, in that kingdom here and now’ (171). Second, against ‘Augustinian communitarians’ like Milbank and Hauerwas, who equate active citizenship in the *civitas Dei* with the construction of an ecclesial counter-community over and against the political realm, Lamb claims that Augustine ‘does not confine’ immanent participation in God’s kingdom to the ‘institutional church’ (168). Rather, Augustine’s distinction between ‘institutional church’ and ‘true church’ implies that membership in the eschatological community is open and professed Christians have no monopoly on virtue (174-175). This claim is reinforced by Lamb’s third contention, that contemporary accounts of Augustine’s *saeculum* have overemphasized the importance of legal and political institutions in providing a basis for mutual cooperation between the two cities. Lamb downplays statist factors in favour of a more ‘expansive’ and ‘relational’ conception of Augustinian politics that refuses to ‘tie virtue too closely to any particular institution’ (176-177).

<sup>7</sup> *cin. Dei* 14.28, 15.21.

With the remainder of the book, Lamb sets out to concretize these theoretical claims through an interpretation of *City of God* 19.24 (in which Augustine offers his famous corrective to Cicero's definition of a *res publica*) and a re-evaluation of Augustine's sprawling critique of pagan virtue. The success of these arguments depends on Lamb's transposition of his anti-dualist thesis—that Augustine's distinction between temporal and eternal is non-exclusive and non-instrumentalizing—into the political realm. 'For Augustine, the supreme good is not temporal peace but eternal peace ... [Yet] temporal peace remains a genuine good' (181). The affirmation of this principle licenses Lamb to make a number of further claims on behalf of Augustinian politics. First, while Augustine's 'common objects of love' have often invited a 'contractualist' reading, Lamb resists any proto-liberal interpretation that would construe temporal peace in strictly negative terms, as 'the mere absence of violence or harm' brought about by legal restraint under a coercive state and justified by consensus on the lowest common denominator of shared 'interests' (179-182). On the contrary, Lamb argues, political order is a positive good for Augustine, and if the ordinate love of proximate goods (including political goods) is partially constitutive of love for ultimate goods, it follows that the pursuit of temporal peace is 'a kind of *participation* in the peace of the Heavenly City' (182-183). Lamb carries this immanentizing logic as far as it will go, declaring that 'acts of public service and sacrifice can be a way to worship God' and 'can even constitute a kind of "liturgy"' (223-224). But he is usually careful to qualify his formulations ('*can* be', '*a kind of*') just enough to avoid raising difficult questions about nature and grace while limiting himself to the less controversial claim that political engagement is a valid form of moral and spiritual practice for Christians (see Jer. 29:7 and Lamb's discussion at 226-227).

Second, Lamb tries to show how politics conducted in an Augustinian mode, oriented toward common objects of love, is capable of fostering mutual cooperation and civil concord in a pluralistic context without the aid of liberal proceduralism. This leads him to recast in a positive and pragmatic light the negative and juridical liberal principles of neutrality and toleration. Because Augustinian politics is chiefly concerned with proximate goods rather than ultimate ones (181), it need not insist on unanimity about 'ultimate objects of love' in order to achieve its ends—only that citizens' love for

the 'proximate goods of civic peace' is properly ordered (184-185). Augustine, on Lamb's account, is therefore neither a theocrat nor a proponent of strict procedural neutrality, but a practical irenist who 'welcomes plurality' and disagreement while 'encourag[ing] a robust form of concord and convergence of diverse citizens around common goods' (185-186, 206-207). Such an Augustinian politics can be more inclusive of religious viewpoints than Rawlsian public reason, since it imposes no 'freestanding' criterion, while remaining consensus-driven. Lamb summons Cass Sunstein's notion of 'incompletely theorized agreement' and Jeffrey Stout's anti-foundationalist model of civil discourse to illustrate how democratic deliberation in an Augustinian mode may be 'more agonistic' as well as 'more localized, provisional, and fluid' than Rawls permits without failing to foster the virtues of 'humility' and 'openness' necessary to establish 'tense consensus' among pluralistic political subjects (186-189, 256). Likewise, Lamb envisions an Augustinian practice of 'toleration' that ceases to be the liberal virtue of 'self-control and self-restraint' and becomes a positive duty to 'patiently endure difference ... for the sake of the commonwealth' as a non-instrumental community (238-239). The message here is that Augustinians can lay claim to all the goods of civil concord over which liberals assert a monopoly, without the constraints of liberal individualism and legalism. While some liberals may question the viability of Lamb's third way, others will wonder whether his conception of liberalism (which he repeatedly equates with Rawls's political liberalism) is too narrow, and if so, whether his account of Augustinian civic democracy is best understood as striking a particular pragmatist note *within* the wider liberal tradition rather than leaving it behind.

Finally, Lamb's argument culminates in an apologia for the validity and semi-autonomy of worldly or 'pagan' virtue, particularly the virtue of political hope. Having established that 'all citizens can order their hopes to the proximate goods of civic peace' even if their 'ultimate objects' differ (198), Lamb now asks whether the virtue of those whose proximate hopes are properly ordered but do not ultimately 'refer' to God can be considered true or genuine (229). This is the classical problem of the 'unity of the virtues' or the 'splendid vices', and Lamb attempts to dissolve it by giving an 'inclusive' account of virtue that situates it on a 'continuum' rather than a binary (197). In part this position follows from Lamb's basic anti-dualist



commitment to the real goodness of worldly goods (however proximate and partial) as well as their corresponding virtues, whether or not they share in grace's superabundant perfections. 'True but imperfect virtues are ordered to genuine goods, even if their possessors do not consciously order those goods to God' (242). But there is also a practical question here. How can natural virtue first achieve the proper ordering of its loves—and how can it stay within the bounds of the *ordo amoris* over time—without constant and direct subordination to God? Readers of the first ten books of the *City of God* could be forgiven for thinking that Augustine considers such an achievement precarious, if not impossible, under fallen conditions in the absence of extraordinary grace. But Lamb is more hopeful on this point, to the extent that some will consider him unduly optimistic. The mechanism he identifies is one of 'implicit reference' (245). As long as worldly virtue is 'ordered toward a proximate good that is compatible with the ultimate end', he argues, 'then it assumes a morally correct, if incomplete conception of the ultimate end and can be counted as a genuine, if incomplete, virtue' (241). Such compatibility need not be 'explicit' or established through 'subjectively conscious referral' of temporal to eternal—an agent need not have God 'subjectively "in mind"'—and is hence partially autonomous from Christian belief (244). What counts for Lamb is the moral act itself and whether the temporal goods it seeks are 'genuine goods' in the sense that they 'enable participation in the goodness of God' and thus *could* be referred to the ultimate end even if they happen not to be. They must be 'referable' even if they are not consciously 'referred' (245).

Yet Lamb concedes that implicit reference alone is insufficient, since Augustine considers even supernatural virtue to be corruptible by pride, *amor sui*, and *libido dominandi* (246). In order for 'genuine but incomplete' this-worldly virtues to be considered valid, they must additionally possess an intrinsic resistance to these vices *without* direct reliance on otherworldly intervention. This requirement somewhat narrows the range of virtues that can both be recognized as such by Christians and affirmed as secular (248-249). Lamb concludes by offering examples of just three. Piety and humility, he argues, mitigate against tendencies to domination and exploitation by highlighting human beings' inherent limitations and dependence on others (249-259). These are not 'perfect or complete virtues' in their worldly



forms, ‘but they can restrain the worst vices’ (259). They also help buttress a third this-worldly virtue—hope for commonwealth—by ‘chasten[ing] utopian presumptions’ and ‘prevent[ing] citizens from seeing the realities of evil as reasons to despair’ (260). All three virtues are in principle open and accessible to non-Christians, and all three reinforce a commitment to pursuing ‘unity in plurality’ with fellow citizens in the *saeculum* (261-262).

The intent of Lamb’s sprawling conclusion, which discusses everything from democratic party politics and interreligious dialogue to climate change and responsible social critique in contemporary liberal democracies (266-274), is to suggest that the Augustinian virtue of hope can be an invaluable resource for politics today. But Lamb’s casual movement across boundaries of normative and historical political theory, as well as reconstructive and contextual interpretation, raises questions about his methods, which are difficult to assess from the beginning. He states near the outset that his ‘primary aim’ is to provide a ‘more contextualized interpretation of Augustine’s thought on its own terms’ (15). But ‘context’ here almost always equates to the textual background of Augustine’s own vast corpus, beginning with the works and passages usually neglected by political theorists. It does not typically signify (aside from a few discussions of Cicero and some broad claims about the general character of ancient philosophy and rhetoric, or Christian homiletics) the distinct discursive setting and intellectual situation of Augustine’s lifetime, nor does it stand for the dominant material, social, and political forces at work in his world. There is not necessarily anything wrong with a ‘unitarian’ approach that takes the harmonization of concepts and arguments across an author’s oeuvre as its primary condition of interpretive validity; but to call it ‘contextual’, when the contexts are almost always texts and the texts are almost always the subject’s own, is bound to produce confusion.

Such doubts are only exacerbated by Lamb’s reliance on terminology derived from contemporary moral and political theory in his elucidation of Augustinian concepts, a strategy only passingly justified in a way that inadvertently denigrates the intelligence of ‘contemporary audiences’ (15). To name just one instance in addition to those already mentioned, Lamb describes Augustine’s *ordo amoris* as a ‘regulative ideal’ (41, 63, 159), an idea he has borrowed from Kant via Jennifer Herdt (303 n. 86). The risk of anachronism

here could be laid aside if Lamb were content to present his interpretation as an appropriation, akin to Arendtian pearl-diving.<sup>8</sup> But he repeatedly insists that his account is both ‘more contextualized’ than existing alternatives and, for that very reason, ‘more, not less, relevant’ (15, 265). Yet the fact that Lamb finds it necessary to import contemporary theory in the first place suggests that he cannot have it both ways, and reluctance to acknowledge this leads him into occasional inconsistencies. It cannot be true, for instance, *both* that ‘Augustine does not measure love by the metaphysical status of its objects’ (46), that the *ordo amoris* is more a psychological ‘way of discernment’ than a metaphysical hierarchy (57), or that Augustine rejects ‘foundationalist metaphysics’ (157), *and* that the temporal/eternal distinction is non-exclusive precisely because it is grounded in Augustine’s ‘participationist ontology’ (37-38, 42-43). Lamb qualifies this argument in a footnote (303 n. 83), but it remains unclear whether his modern distinction between ‘moral psychology’ and ontological order, much less the postmodern antipathy to metaphysics that leads him to frame the argument like this in the first place, can be reconciled with Augustine’s own metaphysical realism. An irony that goes overlooked here is that if the *ordo amoris* is indeed grounded in fundamental ontology, as Lamb asserts, then it cannot be a ‘regulative ideal’ at all but is clearly constitutive and cosmological.<sup>9</sup> The fact that, after Kant, such notions have gone out of fashion, should be considered irrelevant to a study of Augustine.

Contextualization is not Lamb’s only procedure in this study, but his other principal method—‘interdisciplinary integration’ (10)—raises problems of its own. Lamb’s closing arguments on behalf of inclusivism and implicit reference bear an unmistakable resemblance to the theory of ‘anonymous Christianity’ developed by Karl Rahner, and anticipated by Jacques Maritain, more than half a century ago.<sup>10</sup> The fact that Lamb does not mention Rahner, and alludes to Maritain only once at second-hand, is suggestive of one reason why *A Commonwealth of Hope* is stronger on the attack than in its pos-

<sup>8</sup> See Arendt, Introduction to Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1968), at 38-51; *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin, 1961), 4-6, 17-40; *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1963), 280-281.

<sup>9</sup> See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A644/B672.

<sup>10</sup> Rahner, ‘Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions’ in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 5 (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1966), 115-134; Maritain, *Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a New Christendom*, trans. J. Evans (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973 [1936]), 64, 169.

itive prescriptions. It is difficult to accept that Lamb has delivered on his promise of a ‘more faithful and holistic’ interpretation that ventures into theological literature where political theorists have feared to tread (6-7, 10), or to believe his claim that ‘Augustine’s complex views on the relations between grace and nature, divine agency and human agency ... are beyond the scope of this inquiry’ (110), when he does not attend to serious theological problems raised by his inclusivism that Augustine himself anticipated.

The words ‘Israel’ and ‘Israelite’ appear outside quotations only three times in *A Commonwealth of Hope* (226-227), and Lamb assigns them no particular significance. There are certain theological spectres that will always haunt inclusivist attempts to sanctify the natural virtues, and Marcionism is one of them. The conviction that virtuous hope—worldly or otherworldly—must conform in spirit and object with the biblical narrative of salvation history, which has as its protagonist the People of God, is wholly absent from *A Commonwealth of Hope*, but it suffuses Augustine’s thought. This is true not least of Books 15-18 of the *City of God*, which recapitulate that history, and particularly 15.21, where Augustine distinguishes the two cities by their hopes only on the basis of an interpolation in the biblical recitation of the posterity of Cain and Seth (Genesis 4-5). Here Lamb cannot avoid his own charge of ‘decontextualization’. But elsewhere Augustine draws an even clearer connection between hope and Israel. In his controversy with Faustus the Manichean, a man who preached the New Testament while rejecting the Old, Augustine deploys Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians: ‘Remember that you were at one time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ... you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone’ (Eph. 2:12-13, 19). Of a man like Faustus who believes, not unlike one of Lamb’s implicit Christians, that he can reap the rewards of God’s providence without joining himself to the salvific community of Israel, Augustine asks, ‘Where should I put away your kind but in that cursed

middle place [*illa maledicta medietate*] where Christ is not the cornerstone?<sup>11</sup>

Pelagianism is another common complaint against inclusivist theories and Lamb is more careful with this objection, fending off otherworldly readings of nature and grace as more Lutheran than Augustinian (7, 9) and suggesting that ‘it is the presumption of self-sufficiency’ more than worldliness per se ‘that made both paganism and Pelagianism so dangerous’ for Augustine (106). Lamb is probably correct about that, narrowly speaking, but his confidence that he has put the issue to rest leads him to overlook a feature of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian position that is compatible neither with the exclusivist otherworldliness he is criticizing nor his own inclusive account. Augustine may not see spiritual hope in the eschaton as *exclusive* of hope for the things of this world, but he does see the latter as *hierarchically dependent* on the former in a way that is best expressed conditionally: if there were no promise of Christ’s triumph, then there would be no hope, whether for this world or the next.

This emerges most clearly in the course of a remarkable exchange between Augustine and Julian of Eclanum over interpretation of 1 Cor. 15:12-14: ‘Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.’ The dispute is dense, but ultimately it turns on a minor point of logic. Julian argues that Paul’s original statement ( $P_0$ , ‘if there is *no* resurrection of the dead, then Christ has *not* been raised’) is derived by contraposition from a prior conditional,  $P_1$ : ‘if Christ *has* been raised, then there *is* resurrection of the dead’. This sounds perfectly orthodox but, crucially for Julian, by negation of the antecedent  $P_1$  equally implies  $P_2$ : ‘but Christ has *not* been raised, therefore there *is* resurrection of the dead’. Julian thus makes room for some means other than the grace of Christ, such as human beings’ intrinsic natural capacity for goodness, to bring about their redemption. Augustine, by contrast, insists on interpreting Paul’s statement as the expression of a *biconditional* ( $P_3$ , ‘there is resurrection of the dead *if and only if* Christ has been raised’) in which both antecedent and consequent have been falsified: ‘but if there

<sup>11</sup> *c. Faust.* 12.24.

is *no* resurrection of the dead, then Christ *also* has *not* been raised'. Augustine's point is that there is no other route than through Christ to the total fulfilment that human beings seek. Our hope for deliverance from sin is hierarchically dependent on our hope in Christ, so that if the latter is false so too is the former. As Augustine explains, Julian's error (and Lamb's) is to 'deny those great differences of Christ from the rest of us so that we can persuade [non-Christians] of the resurrection ... on the basis of Christ's equality [*aequalitate*] with them'—an equality that is imaged in the Pelagian picture of human freedom.<sup>12</sup>

This turns out to be relevant to one of the final arguments Lamb makes in *A Commonwealth of Hope*, when he responds to the objection that 'without hope for eternal life ... there would be no way to resist despair'. Lamb draws attention to *City of God* 21.15, in which Augustine writes that 'even if ... there were no hope' of 'eternal peace' in Christ, 'we ought nonetheless to prefer to endure the distress of this conflict [with vice], rather than permitting our vices to have dominion over us'. Lamb draws the conclusion that 'Augustine acknowledges the functional value of a virtue that lacks any completion in the heavenly city or any hope of its ultimate realization', namely, the virtue of this-worldly hope (261). But Augustine does not exactly say that temporal *hope* should persist in the absence of eternal hope; what he says is that we should continue in our worldly struggle against vice, and this means above all obeying the Law and commandments. Indeed, such a view is hardly unexpected coming from Augustine, and perfectly consonant with his conception of salvation history. Since Christians' hope of eternal peace comes through Christ, the counterfactual state in which that hope is null would be one in which the old covenant with Israel was unabrogated. But Lamb is not much interested in the Law—nor in the other ordinary modes of Christian worldliness, ecclesiological and sacramental—and the consequences are evident in the difficulty he has setting clear parameters on worldly hope, a shortcoming only partially resolved by recourse to 'psychological' criteria.

This last argument is emblematic of *A Commonwealth of Hope*. Lamb is undoubtedly correct that twentieth century political theory reduced Augustinianism to a caricature of pure negativity and oth-

<sup>12</sup> c. *Inl. imp.* 6.31-34.

erworldly alienation, and of this tendency Lamb has written the authoritative refutation that should be consulted for years to come. But the positive reconstruction of Augustine's thought that Lamb offers instead sometimes devolves into an immanentism that Augustine was prepared to rebut. And this is not only a theological criticism, but a political criticism as well. For the way Lamb conjoins hope on the one hand with worldliness and plurality on the other sometimes makes him sound like the very liberals he is eager to abjure. In *The Law of Peoples* (1999), John Rawls wrote repeatedly of "our hope for the future."<sup>13</sup> But liberal hope, as Rawls explains elsewhere, is not so much an expectation of complete fulfilment as a kind of confidence that liberalism's 'method of avoidance', by which it 'bypass[es]' controversies over the transcendent truth, can be projected into the future, and the 'day of reckoning' indefinitely deferred.<sup>14</sup> There is a difference between hope that transcendence will *enter* the world and hope that transcendence can be rendered *unnecessary* for the world. But it is difficult to tell on which side Lamb—or the implicit Christians he hypothesizes—ultimately falls.

There is one minor issue with the Latin that merits correction in subsequent editions. On p. 227, Lamb writes that 'Augustine has glossed "welfare" as "peace"' in his discussion of Jer. 29:7 at *City of God* 19.26. But the word in the Vulgate is *pax*, as it is in extant patristic references to the *Vetus Latina*. Augustine is not glossing, he is quoting.

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*The Currency of Politics: The Political Theory of Money  
from Aristotle to Keynes*  
Stefan Eich  
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Stefan Eich traces the history of political thought on money, asking why money is so little treated as a topic of political thought on its

<sup>13</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1999), 6, 11, 22-23, 29-30, 124.

<sup>14</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 303; *Collected Papers*, ed. S. Freeman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 395, 404n., 434.