



The City Of God

St. Augustin

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From Contents:"BOOK I AUGUSTINE CENSURES THE PAGANS, WHO ATTRIBUTED THE CALAMITIES OF THE WORLD, AND ESPECIALLY THE RECENT SACK OF ROME BY THE GOTH, TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND ITS PROHIBITION OF THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS. HE SPEAKS OF THE BLESSINGS AND ILLS OF LIFE, WHICH THEN, AS ALWAYS, HAPPENED TO GOOD AND BAD MEN ALIKE. FINALLY, HE REBUKES THE SHAMELESSNESS OF THOSE WHO CAST UP TO THE CHRISTIANS THAT THEIR WOMEN HAD BEEN VIOLATED BY THE SOLDIERS. BOOK II IN THIS BOOK AUGUSTINE REVIEWS THOSE CALAMITIES WHICH THE ROMANS SUFFERED BEFORE THE TIME OF CHRIST, AND WHILE THE WORSHIP OF THE FALSE GODS WAS UNIVERSALLY PRACTISED; AND DEMONSTRATES THAT, FAR FROM BEING PRESERVED FROM MISFORTUNE BY THE GODS, THE ROMANS HAVE BEEN BY THEM OVERWHELMED WITH THE ONLY, OR AT LEAST THE GREATEST, OF ALL CALAMITIES -- THE CORRUPTION OF MANNERS, AND THE VICIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL. BOOK III AS IN THE FOREGOING BOOK AUGUSTINE HAS PROVED REGARDING MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CALAMITIES, SO IN THIS BOOK HE PROVES REGARDING EXTERNAL AND BODILY DISASTERS, THAT SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY THE ROMANS HAVE BEEN CONTINUALLY SUBJECT TO THEM; AND THAT EVEN WHEN THE FALSE GODS WERE WORSHIPPED WITHOUT A RIVAL, BEFORE THE ADVENT OF CHRIST, THEY AFFORDED NO RELIEF FROM SUCH CALAMITIES. BOOK IV IN THIS BOOK IT IS PROVED THAT THE EXTENT AND LONG DURATION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IS TO BE ASCRIBED, NOT TO JOVE OR THE GODS OF THE HEATHEN, TO WHOM INDIVIDUALLY SCARCE EVEN SINGLE THINGS AND THE VERY BASEST FUNCTIONS WERE BELIEVED TO BE ENTRUSTED, BUT TO THE ONE TRUE GOD, THE AUTHOR OF FELICITY, BY WHOSE POWER AND JUDGMENT EARTHLY KINGDOMS ARE FOUNDED AND MAINTAINED. BOOK V AUGUSTINE FIRST DISCUSSES THE DOCTRINE OF FATE, FOR THE SAKE OF CONFUTING THOSE WHO ARE DISPOSED TO REFER TO FATE THE POWER AND INCREASE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, WHICH COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO FALSE GODS, AS HAS BEEN SHOWN IN THE PRECEDING BOOK. AFTER THAT, HE PROVES THAT THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN GOD'S PRESCIENCE AND OUR FREE WILL. HE THEN SPEAKS OF THE MANNERS OF THE ANCIENT ROMANS, AND SHOWS IN WHAT SENSE IT WAS DUE TO THE VIRTUE OF THE ROMANS THEMSELVES, AND IN HOW FAR TO THE COUNSEL OF GOD, THAT HE INCREASED THEIR DOMINION, THOUGH THEY DID NOT WORSHIP HIM. FINALLY, HE EXPLAINS WHAT IS TO BE ACCOUNTED THE TRUE HAPPINESS OF THE CHRISTIAN EMPERORS. BOOK VI HITHERTO THE ARGUMENT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED AGAINST THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THE GODS ARE TO BE WORSHIPPED FOR THE SAKE OF TEMPORAL ADVANTAGES, NOW IT IS DIRECTED AGAINST THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE TO BE WORSHIPPED FOR THE SAKE OF ETERNAL LIFE. AUGUSTINE DEVOTES THE FIVE FOLLOWING BOOKS TO THE CONFUTATION OF THIS LATTER BELIEF, AND FIRST OF ALL SHOWS HOW MEAN AN OPINION OF THE GODS WAS HELD BY VARRO HIMSELF, THE MOST ESTEEMED WRITER ON HEATHEN THEOLOGY. OF THIS THEOLOGY AUGUSTINE ADOPTS VARRO'S DIVISION INTO THREE KINDS, MYTHICAL, NATURAL, AND CIVIL; AND AT ONCE DEMONSTRATES THAT NEITHER THE MYTHICAL NOR THE CIVIL CAN CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE FUTURE LIFE. BOOK VII IN THIS BOOK IT IS SHOWN THAT ETERNAL LIFE IS NOT OBTAINED BY THE WORSHIP OF JANUS, JUPITER, SATURN, AND THE OTHER "SELECT GODS" OF THE CIVIL THEOLOGY. BOOK VIII AUGUSTINE COMES NOW

TO THE THIRD KIND OF THEOLOGY, THAT IS, THE NATURAL, AND TAKES UP THE QUESTION, WHETHER THE WORSHIP OF THE GODS OF THE NATURAL THEOLOGY IS OF ANY AVAIL TOWARDS SECURING BLESSEDNESS IN THE LIFE TO COME. THIS QUESTION HE PREFERS TO DISCUSS WITH THE PLATONISTS, BECAUSE THE PLATONIC SYSTEM IS "FACILE PRINCEPS" AMONG PHILOSOPHIES, AND MAKES THE NEAREST APPROXIMATION TO CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

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