

The City of God Augustine

Introduction

309 – “Two loves,” Augustine writes, “have made two cities. Love of self, even to the point of contempt for God, made the earthly city; and love of God, even to the point of contempt for self, made the heavenly city.” For all its vast scale and intricate complexity, then, The City of God is a story of love.

326. Chart the way of virtue.

327. We cannot discern the ways of God (except where they are revealed in Scripture, which rests on God’s authority, not ours), cannot plumb the depths of the human heart, and can find no morally pure community on earth. God alone, then, can see who does and who does not finally belong to each city, and God alone can achieve the separation of the one from the other.

Book 1

331. The immediate occasion for the writing of the The City of God was the sack of the city of Rome by Alaric and his Gothic army in August of 410 AD.

346. The vehicle for the triumph of true religion. In the light of Rome’s fall to the Goths, however, it seemed that Rome had suddenly and disastrously lost its invulnerability and that, against all expectation, Jupiter’s promise had failed. To the empire’s remaining pagan population, especially in the Latin West . . .

349. Accounts of Rome’s founding and its rise to greatness were still strong, the reason for the failure was all too obvious. Rome had abandoned her gods and banished the sacrifices that earned their favor; and, as a consequence, her gods had abandoned her and withdrawn their protection. The city had fallen to the onslaught of the Goths. And in the event, the new Christian God, for whom they had traded their traditional religion, had provided no defense at all.

355. Augustine was already responding to such complaints in 410 AD, in the immediate aftermath of the calamity at Rome. When he began writing The City of God in 412, then, he already had an arsenal of answers to the critics of Christianity on which he could (358) draw: and, in fact, the first book of the work makes many of the same points that he had made in his preaching. He starts by reminding the pagan critics that they would never have survived to

lodge their complaints if it had not been true that the Goths themselves, although Arian heretics, were Christians and, against all the traditional rules and customs of war, had treated Rome's churches as places of sanctuary where all, pagans quite as much as Christians, could gather in safety.

369 – His aim was not to chronicle a competition between gods on the dubious scale of success or failure at the level of historical event. It was rather to confront, and to counter, the entire religious, cultural and political tradition of Rome on an entirely different set of issues, the issues clustering around the question of religion and the ultimate attainment of **human happiness**.

373 – The real issue, he argues, is not a supposed failure of divine protection but rather the enigmatic workings of divine providence.

375 – Divine providence i.e. God, makes use of historical events to shape human character. It sometimes spares the evil as well as the good in order to provide opportunities for repentance; and it sometimes afflicts the good as well as the evil in order either to punish them for their moral failures or to test them in their perseverance in the good.

382. Thus, any Christians who lost their wealth in the pillaging of the city lost what is transient and vulnerable, not what is enduring and invulnerable to loss. Any Christians who loved their riches as if they were of supreme value discovered, through the training of experience, how badly they had misplaced their devotion. Any Christians who were tortured by the enemy to force them to hand over their earthly goods neither could nor did hand over the good by which they themselves were good: and, if they preferred to be tortured rather than to hand over their possessions, they were not actually good and should have learned to love Christ, who offers eternal felicity, rather than gold and silver.

394. Finally, in this catalogue of Christian sufferings in the sack of Rome, Augustine considers the case of Christian women who were raped by the Goths. What is inflicted on the body by someone else, however, does not affect a person's virtue, which is a function of the mind rather than the body.

397. Lucretia, who was raped by the son of the Roman king Tarquin and, overwhelmed by her sense of shame at what had happened to her, committed suicide. Like Regulus, Lucretia was held in high regard by the Romans as an example of moral excellence. But, Augustine argued, if she had truly not consented to the rape, then she had no reason to feel shame and, in committing suicide, she had in effect murdered an innocent person; or, if her shame was

justified, then she must in some way have consented in her mind to the rape, in that case she cannot be considered an paragon of feminine virtue. Here again, then, the Romans face a dilemma: either Lucretia's virtue was not damaged by the rape and she was wrong to put herself to death, or her shame was justified and she should not be honored as an exemplar of virtue. In either case, it is the Roman and not the Christian and not the Christian tradition that has gone astray in its moral reckoning.

412. The story of Rome's decline is, then, a story of the loss of all externally enforced moral restraint.

420 – His intended audience is not merely the pagan critics of Christianity and “these Christian times”; it is also the Christians who have, in one degree or another, turned against their faith.

Rome's Gods and Earthly Happiness (Books 2-5)

441 – The failure of the Roman gods, he insists, is most especially a failure in the moral arena.

446 – Malicious demons bent on bringing humans into submission to themselves by deceiving them into treating the evil as if it were the good.

End of Book Summaries

Book 1

1545. After the Preface, which announces the purpose of The City of God as a whole, Book 1 consists of a reply to the Roman critics of Christianity who blamed the sack of the city of Rome by Alaric and his Goths in 410 AD on Rome's abandonment of its traditional gods and its adoption of Christianity as its dominant and state supported religion. It starts by reminding the Romans that many of them survived precisely because the Goths, contrary to all previous practices of war, respected Christ's churches as places of sanctuary and that Rome's own gods.

1550. Why divine providence extended mercy even to the evil and allowed even the good to suffer, suggesting that some of the evil may repent as a result of their experience and that the temporal sufferings of the good are a form of punishment for their failings but do not affect their true good and serve to test or to train them in the life of faith. Thus none of the various forms of Christian suffering in the sack of Rome, loss of wealth, torture, death, captivity, or rape,

separated Christians from Christ; and not even rape can justify suicide, either to avoid rape or out of shame after rape, because rape cannot defile a person's true moral purity.

1564. Persuade the proud how great the power of humility we reach a height, a height not grasped by human arrogance but granted by divine grace.

1570. The city which, when it seeks dominion, even though whole peoples are its slaves, is itself under the dominion of its very lust for domination.

Barbarian Respect for Christ Churches as Places of Sanctuary

1574. They are so ungrateful for the obvious benefits of its redeemer that they forget that they would not be wagging their tongues against it today if they had not, in fleeing the enemy's sword, found in the refuge of its sacred places the life in which they take such pride. Are not the Romans who assail Christ's name the very ones whom the barbarians spared for Christ's sake?

1577. During the devastation of the city they gave refuge to those who fled to them, both to their own people and to strangers as well. The bloodthirsty enemy raged just this far but no further.

1583. As a result, many escaped who now deride these Christian times and make Christ responsible for the evils that Rome endured. But they do not make Christ responsible for the good that happened to them, the fact that they themselves are still alive due to the honor in which Christ was held.

1586. Divine providence which often uses wars to correct and destroy the corrupt ways of human beings, or, again, uses such afflictions to put the righteous and the praiseworthy to the test and, once they have been proved, either to convey them to a better world or to keep them here on earth for further service.

1592. In order to escape the punishment of eternal fire, seeing that so many of them falsely assumed his name in order to escape the punishment of present destruction. For, among those whom you now see insolently and impudently insulting Christ's servants, there are many who would not have eluded.

1594. That ruin and disaster if they had not pretended to be Christ's servants themselves.

Neither the Greeks nor the Romans Respected the Temples of the Gods as Places of Sanctuary

1640. Troy herself, the mother of the Roman people, was unable to protect her citizens from the fire and steel of the Greeks in the places sacred to her gods, even though the Greeks worshiped those very same gods.

1668. To extend their dominance, the Romans stormed, captured, and overthrew any number of great cities. Let them tell us, then, which temples they used to exclude so that anyone who fled to them would be free.

1683. Any devastating, slaughter, looting, burning, and affliction committed in that most recent calamity at Rome was done, then, according to the customary practice of war. What was quite new, however, and put a whole new face on things, was that barbarian brutality appeared in a guise so gentle that the very largest basilicas were selected and set apart to be filled with people who were spared. Here no one was to be slain; no one was to be dragged out; but many were led in by their merciful enemies to be set free, and none were led away into captivity by cruel foes. Anyone who does not see that this is to be attributed to Christ's name and to these Christian times is blind.

Divine Providence, Human Suffering, and Temporal Goods and Evils

1712. Even when the sufferings are alike, the sufferers remain unlike; and even when virtue and vice undergo the same torment, they are not themselves the same.

1714. By the same token, one and the same force, assailing the good, proves and purifies and cleanses them, but, assailing the evil, condemns and ruins and destroys them. Thus, under the same affliction, the evil detest and blaspheme God, but the good praise and pray to him.

1716 – What is really important, then, is not the character of the suffering but rather the character of the sufferer.

Why the Good also Suffered in the Sack of Rome: Failure to Correct the Evil

1740 – What is blameworthy is that people who live quite differently from the wicked, and abhor their deeds, are nonetheless indulgent towards the sins of others when they ought to teach them otherwise and rebuke them.

1757. It pleases God to punish abandoned morals by inflicting temporal penalties.

1758. They are scourged together not because they both lead an evil life but because they both love this temporal life. They do not love it equally, of course, but they both love it.

1759. In truth, however, the good ought to think nothing of temporal life so that the evil, rebuked and corrected, might attain eternal life.

1762 – They are the ones to whom it is said through the prophet, He will certainly die in his sin, but his blood I will require at the hand of the watchman (Ezk. 3:17)

1764 – Those who are set over the people, were established in the churches is precisely so that they would not be lenient in rebuking sins.

1769. There is another reason why the good are afflicted with temporal evils, as in the case of Job, so that the human spirit may be tested and may learn for itself how strong its devotion really is, how strongly it love God even without reward.

Forms of Christian Suffering: Loss of Riches

1786 – The extent to which they grieved at their loss showed the extent to which they had, in the words of the Apostle cited above, entangled themselves in many pains.

1796. For the only treasure that could perish on earth was treasure that they were not ready to transfer to heaven by giving it away.

Forms of Christian Suffering: Dreadful Types of Death and Death without Burial.

1832. What does it matter what kind of death puts an end to this life, since the one whose life ends is not compelled to die a second time?

1838 – Death should not be thought an evil when a good life precedes it. For nothing makes death an evil except what follows death.

1850. Inconceivable, however, that what the Truth said is false.

Forms of Christian Suffering: Dreadful Types of Death and Death without Burial

1947. Let it be stated and established that virtue, by which we live rightly . . .

1948. Members of the body from its seat in the mind and that the body becomes holy through its use by a holy will; and, so long as the will remains steadfast and unshaken, nothing that anyone else does with the body or to the body, and that cannot be avoided by the person who suffers it without some sin on his own part, brings any blame to the one who undergoes it.

1958. Then anyone who kills himself is certainly a murderer; and the more innocent he is with regard to whatever led him to think he ought to kill himself, the more guilty he is for killing himself.

1964. Why, then, should a person who has done no evil do evil to himself? Why should he, in killing himself, kill an innocent person in order not to suffer the crime of another? Why should he perpetrate on himself a sin of his own to keep another's sin from being perpetrated on him?

1967. Purity is a virtue of the mind.

1969. No one, no matter how noble-minded and pure, has it in his power to determine what happens to his flesh, but only what his mind will accept or reject.

1974. If purity is a good of the mind, however, it is not lost when the body is overpowered.

1981. Thus, so long as the mind stays firm in its resolve, through which the body also deserved to be sanctified, the violence of another's lust does not take away the body's holiness, which is preserved by the mind's own perseverance in continence.

1987 – The body's holiness is lost as soon as the mind's holiness is violated, even if the body itself is still intact.

1988. A woman who has been overpowered by force and violated by another's sin without any consent on her part has nothing which she ought to punish in herself by voluntary death.

Rape and Suicide: The Example of Lucretia

1992. We assert, then, that when the body is overpowered but the resolve to remain chaste stands firm, unaltered by any consent to evil, the crime belongs only to the man who took the woman by force and not at all to the woman who was taken by force, without her consent and against her will.

2032. Similar things and yet are still alive. They did not avenge another's crime on themselves, not wanting to add crimes of their own to the crimes of others.

2035. They have the glory of chastity within them, the witness of conscience. They have this in the eyes of God, and they need nothing more.

2037. In the holy canonical books, no divinely given precept or permission can be found that allows us to put ourselves to death, either to attain immortality or to avert or avoid evil.

2055. When we read you shall not kill, we do not take this commandment to apply to plants, since they have no feeling.

2055. Nor does it apply to the irrational animals which fly, swim, walk, or crawl, since they do not share.

2056. With us any capacity for reason. It was not given to them to have reason in common with us; and consequently, by the most just ordinance of the creator, both their life and their death are subordinate to our needs. What remains, then, is that we understand this commandment, you shall not kill, to apply to human beings, both to others and to oneself, for to kill oneself is nothing else than to kill a human being.

2060. It is against the law to kill a human being.

2063. Those who, by God's authority, have waged wars have in no way acted against the commandment which says, You shall not kill; nor have those who, bearing the public power in their own person, have punished the wicked with death according to his laws, that is, according to the authority of the supremely just reason.

2077. The soul that is rightly to be called great is the soul that can bear a life of hardship without fleeing from it.

Is Suicide Permissible to Avoid Sin?

2167. No one ought to inflict voluntary death on himself on the pretext of escaping temporal troubles.

2173. Either through the lure of pleasure or through the ferocity of pain. If we decide to admit this reason, however, it will carry us along to the point of thinking that people should be urged to kill themselves as soon as they have been washed in the font of holy regeneration and received the forgiveness of all sins.

2193. So not let your lives become a burden to you, even if your enemies have made a plaything of your chastity. You have a great and true consolation if you remain sure in your conscience that you did not consent to the sins of those who were permitted to sin against you.

2222. Perhaps they have now been freed from this error. For when they consider how conscientiously they have served God, and, with unshaken faith, refuse to think that he could ever abandon those who serve and call upon him in this way, and find it impossible to doubt how much chastity pleases him, they see that it follows that he could never have permitted such things to happen to his saints if holiness could perish in this way, the very holiness which he bestowed on them and which he loves in them.

2229. Some jeer at their uprightness and, when they happen to fall into temporal evils, say to them, where is your God? (Ps. 42:3) But let such scoffers say where their own gods are when

such things happen to them. It is, after all, precisely to avoid such evils that they worship their gods, or claim that they ought to be worshiped.

2232. When he afflicts me with adversity, he is either testing my merits or chastising my sins, and he is holding an eternal reward for my faithful endurance of temporal evils.

The Perils of Unfettered Prosperity: Scipio Nasica against Roman Extravagance

2240. When afflicted by adversities, do you complain about these Christians times? Is it not simply because you want to remain secure in your extravagance and to wallow in the most abandoned self-indulgence, exempt from all austerity and hardship? You desire to have peace and all kinds of wealthy in abundance, but not so that you may use them honorably, that is, modestly, soberly, moderately, and with godliness. Rather you want them in order to procure an infinite variety of pleasures for your mad excesses, giving rise, in times of prosperity, to moral evils worse than any raging enemies.

2246. He was afraid that security would be the undoing of frivolous minds, and he saw that terror was needed for the citizens, like a tutor for schoolchildren.

2248. Once Carthage was destroyed, that is, once the great terror of the Roman republic was repulsed and eliminated, all the evils arising from prosperity immediately followed.

The Theaters and the Gods

2269 – He had dared to resist the authority of those he imagined to be gods! He did not understand that these gods are actually pernicious demons; or, if he did, he held that they should be appeased.

2270. These gods are actually pernicious demons.

2291. For he did not consider a republic happy when it's walls were standing but its morals were in ruins.

2293. In your security, you are seeking not a republic at peace but unpunished extravagance; you were depraved by prosperity, but you could not be corrected by adversity.

The Intermingling of the Two Cities in this World

2313. In this world, in fact, these two cities remain intermixed and intermingled with each other until they are finally separated at the last judgment.

Book 2

2544. Book 2 briefly summarizes Book 1 and then turns to its own main argument: that, long before the Christian era, Rome's traditional gods had failed to protect it from disaster and calamity; and since these misfortunes predated Christ's human appearance, they cannot be blamed on Christianity or on the prohibition of sacrifices to the gods.

2548. Demanded the performance of immoral theatrical productions in their honor which appeared to give the stamp of divine authority and approval to depraved behavior, thus showing that they are not gods at all but rather malignant demons.

2551. Moral decline of the Roman republic into social disorder and civil war in order to make it clear both that the gods did nothing to discourage or prevent this decline and that, in fact, lacking justice, the republic was not truly a republic at all since it did not represent a people cohering around a "common sense for what is right and a community of interest."

2560. Disease of foolish minds is all the stronger and more foul. Due to it, people defend their own irrational meanderings as if these were very reason itself and very truth itself, even after the dictates of reason have been as completely set before them as one person owes to another.

2566. Those who either cannot understand what is said or are so hardened by intellectual stubbornness that, even if they did understand they would pay no heed, do answer back; and, as it is written, they speak wickedness (Ps. 94:4) and are indefatigable in their folly.

The Failure of the Gods to Provide Moral Guidance: The Rites of the Mother of the Gods

2615. The true God had reason to neglect those who did not worship him. But why did those gods, from whose worship these ungrateful people complain that they have been prohibited, provide no laws to help their worshipers to live rightly? Surely it would have been fitting that, just as the worshipers took pains over the rites of their gods, the gods would have taken pains over the conduct of their worshipers.

2618. But, goes the reply, it is by his own will that a person is evil. Who denies that? But it was still incumbent on the gods as advisers not to conceal that precepts of a good life from the people who worshiped them but rather to see that these precepts were clearly set forth.

What this shows is that those divinities took no care for the moral life of the cities and peoples who worshiped them. They allowed them to fall into terrible and detestable evils.

The Greeks and the Romans on Poets and Actors

2707. Ciscero in The Republic, where Scipio argues that “the comedies could never have won acceptance for their depravities in the theater, if the customs of daily life had not already paved the way for them.”

Roman Morality, the Constraint of Fear, and the Destruction of Carthage

2930. Rome had sunk into the dregs of the worst immorality well before the coming of our heavenly king. For this all happened not only before Christ, present in the flesh, had begun to teach, but even before he was born of a virgin. The Romans do not dare to blame their gods for all the terrible moral evils of those times, whether the less serious evils of the earlier period or the more serious and horrible evils that followed the destruction of Carthage, even though it was precisely these gods who, with malignant cunning, sowed in human minds the outlook that produced such a wild tangle of vices.

2940. There you have it: before the coming of Christ, after the destruction of Carthage, “the decline of traditional morality no longer took place little by little as before but like a rushing torrent. The young were so corrupted by luxury and greed . . .”

2948. They still do not blame their gods for the luxury and greed and fierce immorality which, well before the coming of Christ, made the republic the worst and most depraved; rather, they berate, they berate the Christian religion for any and every affliction suffered by their pride and self-indulgence in these times.

The Issue of Justice and Scipio’s Definition of a Republic

2984. The Roman republic was “the worst and most depraved.” Perhaps they do not care that it overflows with the shame and infamy of the worst and most depraved immorality, just so long as it continues to exist and endure.

Scipio’s Definition of a Republic

3011. Scipio returns to the interrupted theme and recalls and recommends his own brief definition of a republic which, he had said, is the common good of a people.

3012. He stipulates, however, that people are not just any assembly of a multitude but rather an assembly joined together by a common sense for what is right and a community of interest.

3014. He goes on to conclude from these definitions of his that a republic, that is, the common good of a people, only exists when it is well and justly governed, whether by a single king or by a few of the most prominent men or by the people as a whole.

3016. But when the king is unjust (in this case, following the Greeks, he called the king of tyrant), or the most prominent men are unjust (he termed the consensus of such men a faction), or the people itself is unjust (for this case he found no term in common use, although he might also have called the people itself a tyrant), the republic is not simply flawed, as had been argued the day before. Rather, as logical deduction from his definitions would show, it does not exist at all. For there is no common good of a people when a tyrant or a faction has taken it over, nor is the people itself any longer a people if it is unjust, since it is no longer a multitude joined together by a common sense for what is right and a community of interest, which was the very definition of a people.

3021. Thus, when the Roman republic was in the sorry state Sallust described, it was not simply “the worst and most depraved,” as he claimed. In fact, according to the reasoning set out in this discussion of the republic by its great leaders of the time, it did not exist at all.

Cicero: The Republic Has Perished

3031. but our era received the republic like a magnificent painting that was fading with age, and it not only neglected to renew its original colors but did not even care enough to preserve at least its faint outline and the last remnants of its design.

3032. For what is left of the ancient mores which, as Ennius said, sustained the Roman state? We see them so fallen into oblivion that they are not only not cultivated but are scarcely even known.

3036. We now retain the republic in name only, having long ago lost it in reality.

3039. If anyone had thought or said such things after the Christian religion had spread and was gaining strength, what Roman would not have claimed that the Christians were the ones to blame for this state of affairs? What is it, then, that their own gods took no care to prevent the ruin and loss of the republic, whose loss Cicero so lugubriously laments long before Christ came in the flesh?

Had the God's Withdrawn

3072. They have no reason to complain that the gods deserted them because they took offense at the Christian. For their own ancestors, by their immoral conduct, had already driven that throng of tiny gods away from the city's altars like flies.

3080. At this point, I am dealing rather with the decay of morality which at first faded out little by little and then fell headlong like a torrent until, even though the walls and buildings remained intact, the republic was so ruined that even its preeminent authors do not hesitate to say that it was lost.

3083. But what kind of gods were they, I ask, if they were unwilling to live with a people that worshipped them, a people that lived evilly only because they themselves had done nothing to teach the people to live rightly?

3107. Thus, when the republic was perishing due to its moral failure, their gods did nothing either to direct or to correct its ways so as to keep it from perishing. Instead, they added to its moral perversion and corruption so as to make sure that it would perish.

3109. Let not the gods pretend that they were good on the pretext that they withdrew, as if offended by the citizens' iniquity. They were most certainly present. They are unmasked; they are convicted.

The Example of the Gods: A Supposedly Divine Authority for Human Immorality

3185. The Roman republic had already perished due to its citizens' utter immorality and that it had wholly ceased to exist long before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not blame their own gods for this ruin, but they blame our Christ for those transitory evils by which the good cannot be destroyed, regardless of whether they live or die. And they do this even though our Christ repeatedly delivered precepts supporting the highest morality and opposing moral corruption, while their own gods provided no such precepts or the people that worshiped them in order to keep the republic from perishing. In fact, by corrupting the republic's morality

through the baneful authority of their own example, they worked rather to ensure that it would perish.

Did the Gods Provide a Secret Moral Teaching?

3247. Through Christ's name, humanity is rescued from the hellish yoke and penal society of those unclean powers and is brought over from the dark night of destructive impiety to the bright light of saving piety. The wicked and the ungrateful, held deep and tight in the grasp who flow to church in chaste celebration and with a decent separation of the sexes. There the people hear how they should live rightly here on earth for a time so that, after this life, they may live in blessedness forever. There the Sacred Scriptures and the teaching of righteousness sound out from an elevated place in the sight of all; those who follow the teaching hear it to their gain, and those who do not, hear it to their condemnation.

3254. Where the precepts of the true God are commended or his miracles narrated or his gifts praised or his benefits implored, there is nothing shameful or disgraceful presented for them to watch or to imitate.

An Exhortation to the Romans to Abandon their False Gods

3266. We entreat you to join the number of its citizens whose sanctuary, as it were, is the true remission of sins. Pay no attention to your degenerate offspring who disparage Christ and Christians and who denounce this era as an evil time. What they are looking for is not a time that provides tranquility for life but a time that provides security for wickedness.

3273. Do not pursue false and deceitful gods. Abandon them, rather, and despise them. Break out into true liberty!!

3284. The heavenly city is incomparably brighter. There victory is truth, dignity is holiness, peace is felicity, and life is eternity.

3286. If you desire to attain the blessed city, then, shun the company of demons. God's who are propitiated by the disgrace are not worthy to be worshiped by the honorable. So let these gods be removed from your religion by a Christian cleansing, just as those men were removed from your civic honors by the censor's ban.

BOOK 4

4607. Those sorrows come upon them not from God's severity, punishing them, but rather from God's mercy, admonishing them.

The Greater Gods" Jupiter and the Elements of the Universe

4836. It certainly was appropriate that all this nonsense should be stamped out and abolished by the one who was born of a virgin!

4842. The Phoenicians used to make a gift, in that they prostituted their daughters before marrying them to husbands.

Why Not Worship the One God Alone?

4889. But if all is true, and, for the moment, I do not ask whether it is or not, what would they lose if, more prudently, they took a shorter way and simply worshiped the one god alone?

Victory, Just War, and Foreign Iniquity

4952. the Romans assigned separate gods to every single thing and to almost every single mode of activity.

Virtue and the Virtues: Not Goddesses but Gifts of God

5004. The Romans also made Virtue a goddess, and if she really were a goddess, she certainly ought to have taken precedence over many others. In fact, however, since virtue is not a goddess but rather a gift of God, let it be obtained from the One by whom it can be given. Then, that whole throng of false gods will simply vanish.

Virtue and Felicity

5030. Virtue was itself defined by the ancients as **the art of living rightly and well**. Thus they presumed that the Latins derived the word "art" from the Greek term "arete", which means "virtue."

5032. Refers to Aristotle

5038. Why was it necessary to commend newborn infants to the goddess Ops, wailing infants to the god Vaticanus, infants in their cradles to the goddess Cunina, nursing infants to the goddess Rumina, infants standing up to the god Statilinus, infants walking toward to the goddess

Adeona, and infants walking away to the goddess Abeona? Why was it necessary to commend them to the goddess Mens that they might have good minds.

Rome's Late Recognition of Felicity

5086. How could there be true happiness where there was no true piety? Piety is the true worship of the true God; it is not the worship of as many false gods as there are demons.

5125. But if felicity is not a goddess, because, which is true, it is a gift of God, then let people seek the God who can actually give happiness. Let them abandon the noxious multitude of false gods which the empty-headed multitude of fools chases after. These fools make the gifts of God into gods for themselves and offend God himself, the giver of these gifts, by their proud and obstinate self-will. Thus no one can escape unhappiness who worships happiness as a goddess and forsakes God, the giver of happiness, just as no one can escape hunger who licks at a picture of bread and does not ask for real bread from a person who has it.

The Naming of Gods for their Gifts and the God Who Gives Happiness

5125. But if felicity is not a goddess, because, which is true, it is a gift of God, then let people seek the God who can actually give happiness. Let them abandon the noxious multitude of false gods which the empty-headed multitude of fools chases after. These fools make gifts of God into gods for themselves and offend God himself, the giver of these gifts, by their proud and obstinate self-will. Thus no one can escape unhappiness who worships happiness as a goddess and forsakes God, the giver of happiness, just as no one can escape hunger who licks at a picture of bread and does not ask for real bread from a person who has it.

The Naming of Gods for Their Gifts and the God Who Gives Happiness

5131. But I want to consider what the Romans have to say about this. Are we to believe, they ask, that our ancestors were such fools that they did not know that these things are divine gifts and not gods? They knew that such gifts are only granted by the generosity of one god or another, but when they could not discover the names of some of these gods, they called them by the names of the gifts which they believed they gave.

5140. Now that we have this explanation before us, it will be much easier, perhaps, to make our case to those whose hearts are not already too hardened. Human weakness, then, has already

recognized that happiness cannot be given except by some god; and this was recognized by people who were worshipping a great many gods, including Jupiter himself, their king. But because they did not know the name of the god by whom happiness is given, they chose to call him by the name of the gift they believed was given by him. And this clearly shows that they did not think that happiness could be given by Jupiter himself, whom they already worshiped, but only by the deity whom they thought they should worship under the name of felicity itself. I assert, then, that they themselves believed happiness was given by a god whom they did not know. Let that God be sought, then; let that God be worshiped; and he is enough. Let the din of innumerable demons be renounced.

The Gods and the Theatrical Shows

5171. Can anyone in his right mind fail to see that this is a case in which men in subjection to malignant demons, from whose dominion only the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ sets us free.

Rome's Gods Incapable of Extending or Preserving Rome's Empire

5212. By no means were gods such as these able to enlarge and preserve the Roman empire, gods who are appeased, or rather accused, by having honors of such a sort paid to them that it is a greater crime that they delighted in these false tales than it would be if the tales about them were true.

5219. They could by no means have gained it against the will of the true God. But if they had ignored or scorned all those false gods and had recognized and worshiped the one God with sincere faith and upright lives, they would have had a better kingdom here on earth, no matter what its size; and, whether they had any kingdom here or not, they would have received an eternal kingdom hereafter.

The Omen of Mars, Terminus, and Juventas

5249. The more intelligent and serious-minded Romans saw all this, but they had little power to oppose the customs of a city in bondage to the rites of demons. And they themselves, even though they recognized that there was nothing to such rites, still held that the religious worship owed to God should be offered rather to the order of nature, which in fact is set under the rule

and governance of the one true God. Thus, they were, as Apostle says, serving the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever (Rom. 1:25). What was needed was the help of this true God, by who holy and truly devout men were sent, men who would die for the true religion in order to uproot the false religions from among the living.

Cicero and Varro on Superstition, Images of the Gods, and the Religion of the Populace

5259. Cicero, himself an augur, mocks augury and mocks people who regulate their life-plans by the cries of the raven and the crow. But an Academic philosopher like Cicero, who claims that everything is uncertain, does not deserve to be taken as an authority on such matters. In the second book of his "On the Nature of the Gods", he introduces Quintus Lucilius as a participant in the discussion; and; even though Balbus himself brings in superstitions as if they were grounded in science or philosophy, he is still indignant at the setting up of images and at opinions based on fables. This is what he says: "Do you not see, therefore, that reason is diverted from the good and useful investigation of nature to imaginary and fictitious gods?

5279. Let us Christians, therefore, give thanks to the Lord our God, not to heaven and earth, as Cicero argues, but to the One who made heaven and earth.

5280. For He, through the supreme humility of Christ, through the preaching of the apostles, and through the faith of the martyrs who died for the truth and now live with the truth, has overthrown the superstitions which Balbus, as if stammering, barely begins to denounce. He has overthrown these superstitions by the free service of his people, overthrowing them not only in the hearts of the religious but also in the very temples of the superstitious.

5302. Varro could have been free to withstand the prejudice of custom, he would have acknowledged and argued that one God is to be worshiped, the one God who governs the world by movement and reason. And so the only question remaining at issue with him in this connection would be his claim that God is a soul and not rather the creator of the soul.

The One True God is the God Who Gives Earthly Kingdoms

5343. In the power of the one God himself, and not in the power of the many false gods whom the Romans used to believe they should worship, God multiplied his people in Egypt from a very few and delivered them from Egypt by miraculous signs. Nor did their women invoke Lucina when, in the face of the Egyptian persecutors who had resolved to kill all their infants, God

himself saved their newborn children so that they might be multiplied by these marvelous means and the people be increased beyond belief.

5359. That they are now dispersed through virtually all lands and peoples is due to the providence of the one true God. This is to the end that, wherever the images, alters, sacred groves, and temples of the false gods are overthrown and their sacrifices banned, it may be shown from the Jewish Scriptures how all this was prophesied very long ago. And there will be no reason to suppose, when these prophecies are read in our Scriptures, that we made them up ourselves.

BOOK 8

8322. Augustine now turns to theology understood as the aspect of philosophy which centers on reasoning or speaking about the divine. After defining philosophy as the love of wisdom, which properly means the love of God who is wisdom, and after giving a brief summary of the pre-Platonic and Platonic philosophical tradition, Augustine explains why he has selected the Platonists as his conversation partners in this arena, namely, because the Platonists enjoy a higher reputation than do the other philosophical schools; they are superior to the other philosophers in their views on the first principle of the world, on the criterion of truth, and on the supreme good for human beings (i.e. in the areas of the physics, logic, and ethics); and they stand closer to Christianity than the others.

8327. Since the Platonists affirm one supreme and transcendent God, the issue between them and the Christians can be brought into sharp focus: Is worship to be given only to the one God or to many other gods as well?

8331. Capacity for moral goodness that determines superiority among rational creatures, and that it is absurd to think that the morally evil demons could or should serve as intermediaries between the good gods and human beings, who have a higher capacity for goodness than do the demons themselves.

8335. Using magical arts to induce demons to inhabit statues of the gods, giving the statues the power to respond to human requests.

8339. The claim of Book 8 is that there is no reason to honor or worship the demons as gods and still less to worship them for the sake of eternal life after death; it leaves open, however, the question as to whether there might possibly be good demons as well as evil demons.

8346. Latin, declares their love of wisdom.

8347. And if God, who made all things, is wisdom, as divine authority and truth have shown, then the true philosopher is a lover of God.

8352. Theology (a Greek word which we understand to signify reasoning or speaking about the divine).

Plato's Predecessors

8364. In the literature of the Greeks, whose language is held in higher esteem than that of any other people, two types of philosophy are handed down to us.

8374. Thales, in contrast, stood out because he investigated the nature of things.

8377. But he set no divine intelligence over this work, which seems so marvelous to us when we contemplate the universe.

8386. In contrast, Anaximenes' pupil Anaxagoras held and taught that there is a **divine mind** that produces everything we see from infinite matter, which consists of particles of all things, each similar to the others. Each individual thing is made up of its own specific particles but has the divine mind as its maker.

8389. That air is in fact the material from which all things are made, but he maintained that it partakes of divine reason, without which nothing could be made from it.

8390. Anaxagoras was succeeded by his pupil Archelaus. He too held that each individual thing is composed of particles, each similar to the others; but he also claimed that there is an **indwelling mind** which brings everything to pass.

8393. **Socrates** is reported to have been the student of **Archelaus**, and it is Socrates who was the teacher of **Plato**.

Socrates

8395. **Socrates is remembered, then, as the first to have turned the whole of philosophy to the correction and regulation of morals.**

8397. All his predecessors had devoted their chief efforts to the investigation of the physical, that is, the natural order. In my view, however, it is impossible to reach any clear decision as to whether Socrates did this because he grew weary of obscure and inconclusive matters and so

put his mind to discovering something clear and certain that was essential to the life of happiness, which appears to have been **the one goal of all.**

8399. The tireless and laborious efforts of the philosophers.

8401. He saw that they were inquiring into the causes of things, but he believed that the first and highest causes are only to be found in the will of the one supreme God.

8402. He held that these **can only be understood by a mind that has been purified, and therefore he considered it essential to strive to purify one's life by good morals, so that the mind, once freed from the burden of its down-weighing desires, might raise itself by its natural vigor to eternal things and, in purity of understanding, contemplate the nature of the incorporeal and unchanging light in which the causes of all created natures have their stable dwelling.**

8414. But since **Socrates' own discussion did not make clear what the supreme good is** (for he would entertain, assert, and demolish every proposal), each of his followers took whatever pleased him from those discussions, and each defined the final good however it seemed best to him.

8416. Now the term "final good" means that due to which each person, when he attains it, is happy.

Plato and the Platonic Division of Philosophy

8422. Among the disciples of Socrates, however, it was Plato, and certainly not without reason, who shone with the brightest reputation and completely overshadowed all the rest.

8434. Plato is praised for having brought philosophy to its perfection by joining the two.

8435. He then divided philosophy into three parts, the moral, which has chiefly to do with action; the natural, which is given over to contemplation; and the logical, which distinguishes the true from the false.

The Superiority of the Platonists

8456. Plato has stated that the wise man is one who imitates, knows, and loves this God, and who is blessed by participation in him.

8504. They saw that nothing mutable is the supreme God, and therefore they went beyond every soul and all mutable spirits in their search for the supreme God.

8512. All these can only have existence from him who simply is i.e. God.

8513. It is not one thing to exist and another to live, as if he could exist without being alive; nor is it one thing to live and another to have intelligence, as if he could live without having intelligence; nor is it one thing to have intelligence and another to be happy, as if he could have intelligence; nor is it one thing to have intelligence and another to be happy, as if he could have intelligence without being happy. To him, rather, to exist simply is to live, to have intelligence and to be happy.

8532. Thus God himself showed them what is known of him, when the invisible things of God, as well as his eternal power and divinity, were understood and seen by them through the things that he made, for He is the one by whom all visible and temporal things were made.

8548. The moral part of philosophy, which is called ethics in Greek. Here the object of inquiry is the supreme good which, if we direct all our actions to it, and if we desire it not for the sake of anything else but for its own sake alone, will, when attained, leave us nothing further to seek for our happiness. For this reason it is also called the final good, since we want other things for the sake of it but want it only for its own sake.

8565. Philosophers who asserted that human being are happy not in the enjoyment of the body, nor in the enjoyment of the soul, but in the enjoyment of God, enjoying him not as the soul enjoys the body or as the soul enjoys itself or as a friend enjoys a friend but rather as the eye enjoys the light.

8569. Plato determined that the final good is to live in accord with virtue, that this is possible only for the person who knows and imitates God, and that there is no other cause of happiness.

8571. He does not doubt that what it means to do philosophy is to love God, whose nature is incorporeal.

8572. Philosopher, will be happy when he begins to enjoy God.

8573. Many people are miserable because they love what ought not to be loved, and are still more miserable when they enjoy it.

8573. Many people are miserable because they love what ought not to be loved, and are still miserable when they enjoy it.

8577. Supreme good, Plato says, is God and that is why he wants the philosopher to be a lover of God, so that, since the aim of philosophy is precisely the happy life, the person who loves God may attain happiness in the enjoyment of God.

The Closeness of the Platonists to Christianity

8580. Any philosophers, then, who held these views concerning the supreme and true God, namely, that he is the author of created things, the light by which things are known, and the good for the sake of which things are done; and that it is from him that we receive the principle of nature, the truth of doctrine, and the happiness of life, we rank above the rest, and we acknowledge that they stand closest to us.

8589. It is quite true, that a Christian trained only in the literature of the Church may be unfamiliar with the name "Platonists" and may have no idea whether or not there were two schools of philosophy in the Greek tradition, the Ionian and the Italian. He will not be so far removed from human affairs, however, that he does not know that philosophers profess either the pursuit of wisdom or wisdom itself. Nevertheless, he will be on guard against those who shape their philosophy in accord with the elements of this world and not in accord with God, by whom the world itself was made. For he is put on guard by the Apostle's precept, and he listens faithfully to what the Apostle said: See to it that no one deceives you through the philosophy and empty deceit, according to the elements of the world (Col. 2:8). At the same time, however, he does not conclude that all philosophers are of this sort. For he also listens to what the same Apostle says of some of them: For what is known of God is manifest among them, for God has shown it to them. For, from the creation of the world, the invisible things of God have been understood and seen through the things that are made, as well as his eternal power and divinity. (Rom. 1:19-20) And again, that in him we live and move and have our being, the Apostle adds, as some of your own have also said (Acts 17:28). The Christian knows perfectly well, of course, that he must be on guard against even these philosophers when they go astray. For, in the same passage where the Apostle said that God made His invisible things manifest to them through the things that are made, so that they may be seen by the understanding, he also said that they did not rightly worship God himself, because they paid the divine honors due to God alone to other things to which they should not be given: For, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks to him but became futile in their thinking, and their senseless heart was darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of reptiles. (Rom. 1:21-23)

8611. Even though a Christian who does not know their writings may not use in discussion terms he has never learned, even though he may not use the Latin term “natural” or the Greek term “physical” for the part which asks how the truth can be discerned, or the terms “moral” or “ethical” for the part which had to do with morals and with the final good to be sought and the final evil to be avoided, he still knows that it is from the one true and supreme God that we have the nature by virtue of which **we were created in his image**, the teaching by virtue of which we know both him and ourselves, and the grace by virtue of which we attain happiness by cleaving to him.

8617. Here, then, is the reason why we rank the Platonists ahead of the others: although other philosophers have spent their talents and their energies in investigating the causes of things and the right way to learn and to live, the Platonists, with their knowledge of God, are the ones who have discovered where to locate the cause by which the universe was constituted, the light by which truth is perceived, and the fount at which happiness is imbibed.

8620. Thus the philosophers who hold this view of God, whether these Platonists or any others from any nation, are in agreement with us. But I prefer to deal with the Platonists in particular because their writings are better known.

8654. No matter where Plato learned these things, whether from the books of ancient writers who preceded him or, rather, as the Apostle says, because what is known of God is manifest among them, for God has shown it to them.

8656. For, from the creation of the world, the invisible things of God have been understood and seen through the things that are made, as well as his eternal power and divinity, I think I have made it clear enough that it was not without good reason that all chose the Platonic philosophers as the ones with whom to pursue the issue in natural theology that we are now addressing, that is, whether, for the sake of the happiness which is to come after death, it is right to worship one God or many. I chose them, in particular, because, just as their view of the one God who made heaven and earth is superior to the others', so too they are held in higher esteem and more preeminent regard than the others.

Apuleius's of the Demons

8841. Finally, was it before Christian judges that Apuleius himself was accused of magic arts? Surely, if he had known that the arts charged against him were divine, godly, and in accord with

the workings of divine power, he ought not only to have confessed them but even to have professed them. Surely, he ought to have put the blame squarely on the laws by which these arts were prohibited and held damnable, if, in fact, they should have been considered admirable and worthy of veneration, For, by doing so, either he would have won the judges over to his own view or, if they preferred to follow unjust laws and sentence him to death for advocating and praising these practices, the demons would have rewarded him with gifts worthy of such a noble soul, who was not afraid of losing his human life for the sake of proclaiming their divine works. That, after all, is what our martyrs did. When the Christian religion, which they knew would bring them salvation and eternal glory, was charged against them as a crime, they did not choose to avoid temporal punishment by denying it. Rather, by confessing, professing, and proclaiming it, by enduring everything bravely and faithfully for its sake, and by going to their death with devoted confidence, they put to shame the laws by which Christianity was prohibited and forced the laws to be changed.

BOOK 9

9390. There is no basis for a distinction between good and evil demons and that therefore there can be no good demons.

9396. Themselves in misery, they cannot lead human beings out of misery; and, in their misery, they begrudge humans eternal blessedness, impeding them rather than helping them to attain it.

9397. The mediator whom human beings really need, therefore, is not one who is immortal in body and miserable in soul but rather one who is (temporarily) mortal in body and blessed in soul, that is, the Word of God, God himself, present in human form.

9399. God remains completely uncontaminated by human contact and, on this ground too, is the mediator who truly offers human beings a path to blessedness.

9404. And since the demons also cannot be mediators, it is clear that neither demons nor angels/gods should be worshiped for the sake of happiness in the life to come after death.

Scripture on the Passions

9523. Cicero, and outstanding master of words, did not hesitate to call compassion a virtue, even though the Stoics feel no shame at listing it among the vices.

BOOK 10

10044. Book 10 completes Augustine's consideration of whether the gods, specifically, in this case, the good angels, are to be worshiped for the sake of happiness in the life after death. It begins with a definition of happiness for the rational soul, whether angelic or human:

participation in the one God by clinging to him in love. This definition provides common ground with the Platonists and a basis for setting out the true meaning of worship as devotion of the self to God in love. In this light, the sacrifices commanded in the Old Testament can be seen to have been instituted not from any need on God's part for sacrifice but rather as signs signifying the true sacrifice, which is realized in love for God and for others.

That sacrifice is due to God alone is confirmed by the miracles of the Old Testament, and it is this sacrifice that the angels want not for themselves but only for god, in whom they find their happiness and in whom (10051) in their love for us, they want us to find happiness as well. Over against this form of devotion to God, there is the Platonist Porphyry's discussion of theurgy, a manipulation of the gods which, according to Porphyry, can achieve a limited purification of the soul but cannot provide a way of return of the rational soul to God. Augustine holds, however, that the gods involved are actually demons working against the restoration of the soul to God rather than good gods or angels aiding the soul on the path to ultimate happiness. Genuine purification of the soul takes place rather, through the true mediator, who is the one "principle" that purifies that rational soul and, in fact, the whole person. But Porphyry is offended by the humility of Christ's incarnation and thus, in his pride, is prevented from recognizing the truth of Christianity and its triune God. Porphyry, himself has made several corrections of Plato and has thus brought Platonism closer to the Christian position. Even so Porphyry has not been (10058) able to find the universal way of the soul's liberation in any of his own inquiries and investigations. Nevertheless, he believes that there is such a universal way, and, if he had not been blinded by pride, he would have seen that Christianity provides that universal way, which was realized in the coming of Christ and in the life of the Church, which has vanquished the demons not by manipulating the gods but by the witness of the martyrs. To find and follow this way, then, human beings in their weakness should rely on divine authority and on the aid of the angelic beings who do not want worship for themselves but rather direct our worship to the one

supreme God, who is at once their God and ours and who is the true source of eternal happiness.

10071. We chose the Platonists, who are deservedly the most renowned of all the philosophers, because they were able to see that the human soul, even though it is immortal and rational or intellectual, can only be happy by participation in the light of the God by whom both it and the world were made.

10073. Deny that anyone will attain what all human beings desire, that is, the life of happiness, unless he clings with all the purity of a chaste love to the one supreme good which is the immutable God.

The One Source of Happiness, both Human and Angelic

10139. This great Platonist affirms, then, that the rational soul (or the intellectual soul, as we ought rather to call it), and he includes in this class the souls of the immortal and blessed beings who, he has no doubt, dwell in heavenly habitations, has no nature above it except the nature of God, who fashioned the world and by whom the rational soul itself was made. Nor, he says, are the life of blessedness and the light by which the truth is understood granted to these supernal beings from any other source than the source from which they are also granted to us. Thus, he agrees with the gospel, where we read, there was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, in order to bear witness to the light, so that all might believe (10145) through him. He was not himself the light, but he came to bear witness to the light. This was the true light that enlightens everyone who comes into this world. (Jn 1:6-9) This distinction shows quite clearly that the rational or intellectual soul, such as John had, cannot be its own light but shines rather by participation in another light, the true light. And John himself acknowledges this when, in bearing witness to God, he says, from his fullness we have all received (Jn. 1:16).

10154. It is to this God that we owe the service which is called *latreia* in Greek, whether enacted in certain sacraments or in our very selves. For we are all collectively his temple his temple and individually his temples, since he deigns to dwell both in the concord of all and in each individual. And he is no greater in all than he is in each, for he is neither enlarged by addition nor diminished by division. Our heart, when lifted up to him, is his altar. It is with his only-begotten Son as our priest that we propitiate him. To him we sacrifice bleeding victims

when we fight for his truth to the point of shedding blood. We in him vow and return both His gifts in us and our very selves. To him we dedicate and consecrate the memory of his benefits in solemn feasts and on appointed days, lest ungrateful forgetfulness creep in as time goes by. To him we offer, on the alter of the heart, the sacrifice of humility and praise, kindled by the fire of love. In order (10163) to see him, as he can be seen, and to cling to him we are cleansed of every stain of sin and evil desire and are consecrated in his name. For he is the source of our happiness, and he is the end of all desire. In electing him, or rather in re-electing him, for we had lost him by neglecting him, in re-electing him, then (and the word "religion" is also said to be derived from "re-elect", we set our course toward him in love, so that, when we reach him, we may be at rest, blessed because made perfect by the one who is our ultimate end. For our good, the final good about which there is so much dispute among the philosophers, is nothing other than to cling to him whose incorporeal embrace alone, if one can speak of such a thing, the intellectual soul is filled and made fertile with true virtues.

10169. We are enjoined to love this good with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength. To this good we ought to be led by those who love us, and to it we ought to lead those whom we love. **In this way are fulfilled those two commandments on which all the law (10171) and the prophets hang, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

10172. In order that a person may know what it means to love himself, and end has been appointed for him to which he is to refer everything he does so that he may attain happiness, for he who loves himself wants nothing other than to be happy. And this end is precisely to cling to God. Therefore, when a person who now knows what it means to love himself is commanded to love his neighbor as himself, what else is he commanded to do but, so far as possible, to urge his neighbor to love God? This is the worship of God, this is true religion, this is genuine, this is genuine godliness, this is the service due to God alone.

Porphyry on Theurgy and the Purification of the Soul

10308. These miracles, and many others of the same kind, it would take too long to mention them all, were performed to promote the worship of the one true God and to ban worship of the many false gods. What is more, they were performed through simple faith and pious trust, not by means of incantations and charms composed by the art of baneful curiosity, an art which

they call either magic, or by the more detestable name of witchcraft, or by the more honorable one of theurgy.

10633. It is true that, for limited periods, defined in advance, power was even granted to the demons to stir up the people whom they held in their grip and, through them, to give vent to their hatred for the city of God like tyrants. They were allowed not only to receive and demand sacrifice from those who offered it willingly but also to extort it from the unwilling by violent persecution. Far from being destructive, however, this power actually turned out to be useful to the Church in **fulfilling up the number of the martyrs**, whom the City of God counts as the more glorious and more honored among its citizens precisely because they battle so strongly against the sin of impiety, even to the point of shedding their blood.

The Universal Way of the Soul's Liberation

10986. The Universal Way of the Soul's Liberation. This is the religion that contains the universal way of the soul's liberation, for no one would can be liberated by any other way.

11014 – We should endure all bodily evils for the sake of loyalty to the faith and commending the truth.

11045 – Among a few men who found God's grace, and especially among the Hebrew people, whose very public was in a sense consecrated to serve as a prophecy and a foretelling of the City of God that was to be gathered together **from all peoples**.