

THE CITY OF GOD AGAINST THE PAGANS

By Saint Aurelius Augustine

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BOOK FIFTH.

[continues]

14. Concerning the eradication of the love of human praise, because all the glory of the righteous is in God. It is, therefore, doubtless far better to resist this desire than to yield to it, for the purer one is from this defilement, the liker is he to God; and, though this vice be not thoroughly eradicated from his heart,—for it does not cease to tempt even the minds of those who are making good progress in virtue,—at any rate, let the desire of glory be surpassed by the love of righteousness, so that, if there be seen anywhere “lying neglected things which are generally discredited,” if they are good, if they are right, even the love of human praise may blush and yield to the love of truth. For so hostile is this vice to pious faith, if the love of glory be greater in the heart than the fear or love of God, that the Lord said, “How can ye believe, who look for glory from one another, and do not seek the glory which is from God alone?” Also, concerning some who had believed on Him, but were afraid to confess Him openly, the evangelist says, “They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;” which did not the holy apostles, who, when they

proclaimed the name of Christ in those places where it was not only discredited, and therefore neglected,—according as Cicero says, “Those things are always neglected which are generally discredited,”—but was even held in the utmost detestation, holding to what they had heard from the Good Master, who was also the physician of minds, “If any one shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven, and before the angels of God,” amidst maledictions and reproaches, and most grievous persecutions and cruel punishments, were not deterred from the preaching of human salvation by the noise of human indignation. And when, as they did and spake divine things, and lived divine lives, conquering, as it were, hard hearts, and introducing into them the peace of righteousness, great glory followed them in the church of Christ, they did not rest in that as in the end of their virtue, but, referring that glory itself to the glory of God, by whose grace they were what they were, they sought to kindle, also by that same flame, the minds of those for whose good they consulted, to the love of Him, by whom they could be made to be what they themselves were. For their Master had taught them not to seek to be good for the sake of human glory, saying, “Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them, or otherwise ye shall not have a reward from your Father who is in heaven.” But again, lest, understanding this wrongly, they should, through fear of pleasing men, be less useful through concealing their goodness, showing for what end they ought to make it known, He says, “Let your works shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Not, observe, “that ye may be seen by them, that is, in order that their eyes may be directed upon you,”—for of yourselves ye are nothing,—but “that they

may glorify your Father who is in heaven," by fixing their regards on whom they may become such as ye are. These the martyrs followed, who surpassed the Scævolas, and the Curtiuses, and the Deciuses, both in true virtue, because in true piety, and also in the greatness of their number. But since those Romans were in an earthly city, and had before them, as the end of all the offices undertaken in its behalf, its safety, and a kingdom, not in heaven, but in earth,—not in the sphere of eternal life, but in the sphere of demise and succession, where the dead are succeeded by the dying,—what else but glory should they love, by which they wished even after death to live in the mouths of their admirers?

15. Concerning the temporal reward which God granted to the virtues of the Romans. Now, therefore, with regard to those to whom God did not purpose to give eternal life with His holy angels in His own celestial city, to the society of which that true piety which does not render the service of religion, which the Greeks call λατρεία, to any save the true God conducts, if He had also withheld from them the terrestrial glory of that most excellent empire, a reward would not have been rendered to their good arts,—that is, their virtues,—by which they sought to attain so great glory. For as to those who seem to do some good that they may receive glory from men, the Lord also says, "Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward." So also these despised their own private affairs for the sake of the republic, and for its treasury resisted avarice, consulted for the good of their country with a spirit of freedom, addicted neither to what their laws pronounced to be crime nor to lust. By all these acts, as by the true way, they pressed forward to honours, power, and glory; they were honoured among almost all

nations; they imposed the laws of their empire upon many nations; and at this day, both in literature and history, they are glorious among almost all nations. There is no reason why they should complain against the justice of the supreme and true God,—“they have received their reward.”

16. Concerning the reward of the holy citizens of the celestial city, to whom the example of the virtues of the Roman are useful. But the reward of the saints is far different, who even here endured reproaches for that city of God which is hateful to the lovers of this world. That city is eternal. There none are born, for none die. There is true and full felicity,—not a goddess, but a gift of God. Thence we receive the pledge of faith, whilst on our pilgrimage we sigh for its beauty. There rises not the sun on the good and the evil, but the Sun of Righteousness protects the good alone. There no great industry shall be expended to enrich the public treasury by suffering privations at home, for there is the common treasury of truth. And, therefore, it was not only for the sake of recompensing the citizens of Rome that her empire and glory had been so signally extended, but also that the citizens of that eternal city, during their pilgrimage here, might diligently and soberly contemplate these examples, and see what a love they owe to the supernal country on account of life eternal, if the terrestrial country was so much beloved by its citizens on account of human glory.
17. To what profit the Romans carried on wars, and how much they contributed to the well-being of those whom they conquered. For, as far as this life of mortals is concerned, which is spent and ended in a few days, what does it matter under whose government a dying man lives, if they who govern do not force him to

impiety and iniquity? Did the Romans at all harm those nations, on whom, when subjugated, they imposed their laws, except in as far as that was accomplished with great slaughter in war? Now, had it been done with consent of the nations, it would have been done with greater success, but there would have been no glory of conquest, for neither did the Romans themselves live exempt from those laws which they imposed on others. Had this been done without Mars and Bellona, so that there should have been no place for victory, no one conquering where no one had fought, would not the condition of the Romans and of the other nations have been one and the same, especially if that had been done at once which afterwards was done most humanely and most acceptably, namely, the admission of all to the rights of Roman citizens who belonged to the Roman empire, and if that had been made the privilege of all which was formerly the privilege of a few, with this one condition, that the humbler class who had no lands of their own should live at the public expense—an alimentary impost, which would have been paid with a much better grace by them into the hands of good administrators of the republic, of which they were members, by their own hearty consent, than it would have been paid with had it to be extorted from them as conquered men? For I do not see what it makes for the safety, good morals, and certainly not for the dignity, of men, that some have conquered and others have been conquered, except that it yields them that most insane pomp of human glory, in which “they have received their reward,” who burned with excessive desire of it, and carried on most eager wars. For do not their lands pay tribute? Have they any privilege of learning what the others are not privileged to learn? Are there not many senators in the other countries who do not even know Rome by sight? Take away outward show, and

what are all men after all but men? But even though the perversity of the age should permit that all the better men should be more highly honoured than others, neither thus should human honour be held at a great price, for it is smoke which has no weight. But let us avail ourselves even in these things of the kindness of God. Let us consider how great things they despised, how great things they endured, what lusts they subdued for the sake of human glory, who merited that glory, as it were, in reward for such virtues; and let this be useful to us even in suppressing pride, so that, as that city in which it has been promised us to reign as far surpasses this one as heaven is distant from the earth, as eternal life surpasses temporal joy, solid glory empty praise, or the society of angels the society of mortals, or the glory of Him who made the sun and moon the light of the sun and moon, the citizens of so great a country may not seem to themselves to have done anything very great, if, in order to obtain it, they have done some good works or endured some evils, when those men for this terrestrial country already obtained, did such great things, suffered such great things. And especially are all these things to be considered, because the remission of sins which collects citizens to the celestial country has something in it to which a shadowy resemblance is found in that asylum of Romulus, whither escape from the punishment of all manner of crimes congregated that multitude with which the state was to be founded.

18. How far Christians ought to be from boasting, if they have done anything for the love of the eternal country, when the Romans did such great things for human glory and a terrestrial city. What great thing, therefore, is it for that eternal and celestial city to despise all the charms of this world, however pleasant, if for the sake

of this terrestrial city Brutus could even put to death his son,—a sacrifice which the heavenly city compels no one to make? But certainly it is more difficult to put to death one's sons, than to do what is required to be done for the heavenly country, even to distribute to the poor those things which were looked upon as things to be amassed and laid up for one's children, or to let them go, if there arise any temptation which compels us to do so, for the sake of faith and righteousness. For it is not earthly riches which make us or our sons happy; for they must either be lost by us in our lifetime, or be possessed when we are dead, by whom we know not, or perhaps by whom we would not. But it is God who makes us happy, who is the true riches of minds. But of Brutus, even the poet who celebrates his praises testifies that it was the occasion of unhappiness to him that he slew his son, for he says, "And call his own rebellious seed For menaced liberty to bleed. Unhappy father! howsoe'er The deed be judged by after days." But in the following verse he consoles him in his unhappiness, saying, "His country's love shall all o'erbear." There are those two things, namely, liberty and the desire of human praise, which compelled the Romans to admirable deeds. If, therefore, for the liberty of dying men, and for the desire of human praise which is sought after by mortals, sons could be put to death by a father, what great thing is it, if, for the true liberty which has made us free from the dominion of sin, and death, and the devil,—not through the desire of human praise, but through the earnest desire of freeing men, not from King Tarquin, but from demons and the prince of the demons,—we should, I do not say put to death our sons, but reckon among our sons Christ's poor ones? If, also, another Roman chief, surnamed Torquatus, slew his son, not because he fought against his country, but because, being challenged by an

enemy, he through youthful impetuosity fought, though for his country, yet contrary to orders which he his father had given as general; and this he did, notwithstanding that his son was victorious, lest there should be more evil in the example of authority despised, than good in the glory of slaying an enemy;—if, I say, Torquatus acted thus, wherefore should they boast themselves, who, for the laws of a celestial country, despise all earthly good things, which are loved far less than sons? If Furius Camillus, who was condemned by those who envied him, notwithstanding that he had thrown off from the necks of his countrymen the yoke of their most bitter enemies, the Veientes, again delivered his ungrateful country from the Gauls, because he had no other in which he could have better opportunities for living a life of glory;—if Camillus did thus, why should he be extolled as having done some great thing, who, having, it may be, suffered in the church at the hands of carnal enemies most grievous and dishonouring injury, has not betaken himself to heretical enemies, or himself raised some heresy against her, but has rather defended her, as far as he was able, from the most pernicious perversity of heretics, since there is not another church, I say not in which one can live a life of glory, but in which eternal life can be obtained? If Mucius, in order that peace might be made with King Porsenna, who was pressing the Romans with a most grievous war, when he did not succeed in slaying Porsenna, but slew another by mistake for him, reached forth his right hand and laid it on a red-hot altar, saying that many such as he saw him to be had conspired for his destruction, so that Porsenna, terrified at his daring, and at the thought of a conspiracy of such as he, without any delay recalled all his warlike purposes, and made peace;—if, I say, Mucius did this, who shall speak of his meritorious

claims to the kingdom of heaven, if for it he may have given to the flames not one hand, but even his whole body, and that not by his own spontaneous act, but because he was persecuted by another? If Curtius, spurring on his steed, threw himself all armed into a precipitous gulf, obeying the oracles of their gods, which had commanded that the Romans should throw into that gulf the best thing which they possessed, and they could only understand thereby that, since they excelled in men and arms, the gods had commanded that an armed man should be cast headlong into that destruction;—if he did this, shall we say that that man has done a great thing for the eternal city who may have died by a like death, not, however, precipitating himself spontaneously into a gulf, but having suffered this death at the hands of some enemy of his faith, more especially when he has received from his Lord, who is also King of his country, a more certain oracle, “Fear not them who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul?” If the Decii dedicated themselves to death, consecrating themselves in a form of words, as it were, that falling, and pacifying by their blood the wrath of the gods, they might be the means of delivering the Roman army;—if they did this, let not the holy martyrs carry themselves proudly, as though they had done some meritorious thing for a share in that country where are eternal life and felicity, if even to the shedding of their blood, loving not only the brethren for whom it was shed, but, according as had been commanded them, even their enemies by whom it was being shed, they have vied with one another in faith of love and love of faith. If Marcus Pulvillus, when engaged in dedicating a temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, received with such indifference the false intelligence which was brought to him of the death of his son, with the intention of so agitating him that he

should go away, and thus the glory of dedicating the temple should fall to his colleague;—if he received that intelligence with such indifference that he even ordered that his son should be cast out unburied, the love of glory having overcome in his heart the grief of bereavement, how shall any one affirm that he has done a great thing for the preaching of the gospel, by which the citizens of the heavenly city are delivered from divers errors, and gathered together from divers wanderings, to whom his Lord has said, when anxious about the burial of his father, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead?” Regulus, in order not to break his oath, even with his most cruel enemies, returned to them from Rome itself, because (as he is said to have replied to the Romans when they wished to retain him) he could not have the dignity of an honourable citizen at Rome after having been a slave to the Africans, and the Carthaginians put him to death with the utmost tortures, because he had spoken against them in the senate. If Regulus acted thus, what tortures are not to be despised for the sake of good faith toward that country to whose beatitude faith itself leads? Or what will a man have rendered to the Lord for all He has bestowed upon him, if, for the faithfulness he owes to Him, he shall have suffered such things as Regulus suffered at the hands of his most ruthless enemies for the good faith which he owed to them? And how shall a Christian dare vaunt himself of his voluntary poverty, which he has chosen in order that during the pilgrimage of this life he may walk the more disencumbered on the way which leads to the country where the true riches are, even God Himself;—how, I say, shall he vaunt himself for this, when he hears or reads that Lucius Valerius, who died when he was holding the office of consul, was so poor that his funeral expenses were paid with money collected by the

people?—or when he hears that Quintius Cincinnatus, who, possessing only four acres of land, and cultivating them with his own hands, was taken from the plough to be made dictator,—an office more honourable even than that of consul,—and that, after having won great glory by conquering the enemy, he preferred notwithstanding to continue in his poverty? Or how shall he boast of having done a great thing, who has not been prevailed upon by the offer of any reward of this world to renounce his connection with that heavenly and eternal country, when he hears that Fabricius could not be prevailed on to forsake the Roman city by the great gifts offered to him by Pyrrhus king of the Epirots, who promised him the fourth part of his kingdom, but preferred to abide there in his poverty as a private individual? For if, when their republic,—that is, the interest of the people, the interest of the country, the common interest,—was most prosperous and wealthy, they themselves were so poor in their own houses, that one of them, who had already been twice a consul, was expelled from that senate of poor men by the censor, because he was discovered to possess ten pounds weight of silver-plate,—since, I say, those very men by whose triumphs the public treasury was enriched were so poor, ought not all Christians, who make common property of their riches with a far nobler purpose, even that (according to what is written in the Acts of the Apostles) they may distribute to each one according to his need, and that no one may say that anything is his own, but that all things may be their common possession,—ought they not to understand that they should not vaunt themselves, because they do that to obtain the society of angels, when those men did well-nigh the same thing to preserve the glory of the Romans? How could these, and whatever like things are found in the Roman history, have become so widely

known, and have been proclaimed by so great a fame, had not the Roman empire, extending far and wide, been raised to its greatness by magnificent successes? Wherefore, through that empire, so extensive and of so long continuance, so illustrious and glorious also through the virtues of such great men, the reward which they sought was rendered to their earnest aspirations, and also examples are set before us, containing necessary admonition, in order that we may be stung with shame if we shall see that we have not held fast those virtues for the sake of the most glorious city of God, which are, in whatever way, resembled by those virtues which they held fast for the sake of the glory of a terrestrial city, and that, too, if we shall feel conscious that we have held them fast, we may not be lifted up with pride, because, as the apostle says, "The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." But so far as regards human and temporal glory, the lives of these ancient Romans were reckoned sufficiently worthy. Therefore, also, we see, in the light of that truth which, veiled in the Old Testament, is revealed in the New, namely, that it is not in view of terrestrial and temporal benefits, which divine providence grants promiscuously to good and evil, that God is to be worshipped, but in view of eternal life, everlasting gifts, and of the society of the heavenly city itself;—in the light of this truth we see that the Jews were most righteously given as a trophy to the glory of the Romans; for we see that these Romans, who rested on earthly glory, and sought to obtain it by virtues, such as they were, conquered those who, in their great depravity, slew and rejected the giver of true glory, and of the eternal city.

19. Concerning the difference between true glory and the desire of domination. There is assuredly a difference between the desire of human glory and the desire of domination; for, though he who has an overweening delight in human glory will be also very prone to aspire earnestly after domination, nevertheless they who desire the true glory even of human praise strive not to displease those who judge well of them. For there are many good moral qualities, of which many are competent judges, although they are not possessed by many; and by those good moral qualities those men press on to glory, honour, and domination, of whom Sallust says, "But they press on by the true way." But whosoever, without possessing that desire of glory which makes one fear to displease those who judge his conduct, desires domination and power, very often seeks to obtain what he loves by most open crimes. Therefore he who desires glory presses on to obtain it either by the true way, or certainly by deceit and artifice, wishing to appear good when he is not. Therefore to him who possesses virtues it is a great virtue to despise glory; for contempt of it is seen by God, but is not manifest to human judgment. For whatever any one does before the eyes of men in order to show himself to be a despiser of glory, if they suspect that he is doing it in order to get greater praise,—that is, greater glory,—he has no means of demonstrating to the perceptions of those who suspect him that the case is really otherwise than they suspect it to be. But he who despises the judgment of praisers, despises also the rashness of suspects. Their salvation, indeed, he does not despise, if he is truly good; for so great is the righteousness of that man who receives his virtues from the Spirit of God, that he loves his very enemies, and so loves them that he desires that his haters and detractors may be turned to

righteousness, and become his associates, and that not in an earthly but in a heavenly country. But with respect to his praisers, though he sets little value on their praise, he does not set little value on their love; neither does he elude their praise, lest he should forfeit their love. And, therefore, he strives earnestly to have their praises directed to Him from whom every one receives whatever in him is truly praiseworthy. But he who is a despiser of glory, but is greedy of domination, exceeds the beasts in the vices of cruelty and luxuriousness. Such, indeed, were certain of the Romans, who, wanting the love of esteem, wanted not the thirst for domination; and that there were many such, history testifies. But it was Nero Cæsar who was the first to reach the summit, and, as it were, the citadel, of this vice; for so great was his luxuriousness, that one would have thought there was nothing manly to be dreaded in him, and such his cruelty, that, had not the contrary been known, no one would have thought there was anything effeminate in his character. Nevertheless power and domination are not given even to such men save by the providence of the most high God, when He judges that the state of human affairs is worthy of such lords. The divine utterance is clear on this matter; for the Wisdom of God thus speaks: "By me kings reign, and tyrants possess the land." But, that it may not be thought that by "tyrants" is meant, not wicked and impious kings, but brave men, in accordance with the ancient use of the word, as when Virgil says, "For know that treaty may not stand Where king greets king and joins not hand," in another place it is most unambiguously said of God, that He "maketh the man who is an hypocrite to reign on account of the perversity of the people." Wherefore, though I have, according to my ability, shown for what reason God, who alone is true and just, helped forward the Romans,

who were good according to a certain standard of an earthly state, to the acquirement of the glory of so great an empire, there may be, nevertheless, a more hidden cause, known better to God than to us, depending on the diversity of the merits of the human race. Among all who are truly pious, it is at all events agreed that no one without true piety—that is, true worship of the true God—can have true virtue; and that it is not true virtue which is the slave of human praise. Though, nevertheless, they who are not citizens of the eternal city, which is called the city of God in the sacred Scriptures, are more useful to the earthly city when they possess even that virtue than if they had not even that. But there could be nothing more fortunate for human affairs than that, by the mercy of God, they who are endowed with true piety of life, if they have the skill for ruling people, should also have the power. But such men, however great virtues they may possess in this life, attribute it solely to the grace of God that He has bestowed it on them—willing, believing, seeking. And, at the same time, they understand how far they are short of that perfection of righteousness which exists in the society of those holy angels for which they are striving to fit themselves. But however much that virtue may be praised and cried up, which without true piety is the slave of human glory, it is not at all to be compared even to the feeble beginnings of the virtue of the saints, whose hope is placed in the grace and mercy of the true God.

20. That it is as shameful for the virtues to serve human glory as bodily pleasure. Philosophers,—who place the end of human good in virtue itself, in order to put to shame certain other philosophers, who indeed approve of the virtues, but measure them all with reference to the end of bodily pleasure, and think that this pleasure

is to be sought for its own sake, but the virtues on account of pleasure,—are wont to paint a kind of word-picture, in which Pleasure sits like a luxurious queen on a royal seat, and all the virtues are subjected to her as slaves, watching her nod, that they may do whatever she shall command. She commands Prudence to be ever on the watch to discover how Pleasure may rule, and be safe. Justice she orders to grant what benefits she can, in order to secure those friendships which are necessary for bodily pleasure; to do wrong to no one, lest, on account of the breaking of the laws, Pleasure be not able to live in security. Fortitude she orders to keep her mistress, that is, Pleasure, bravely in her mind, if any affliction befall her body which does not occasion death, in order that by remembrance of former delights she may mitigate the poignancy of present pain. Temperance she commands to take only a certain quantity even of the most favourite food, lest, through immoderate use, anything prove hurtful by disturbing the health of the body, and thus Pleasure, which the Epicureans make to consist chiefly in the health of the body, be grievously offended. Thus the virtues, with the whole dignity of their glory, will be the slaves of Pleasure, as of some imperious and disreputable woman. There is nothing, say our philosophers, more disgraceful and monstrous than this picture, and which the eyes of good men can less endure. And they say the truth. But I do not think that the picture would be sufficiently becoming, even if it were made so that the virtues should be represented as the slaves of human glory; for, though that glory be not a luxurious woman, it is nevertheless puffed up, and has much vanity in it. Wherefore it is unworthy of the solidity and firmness of the virtues to represent them as serving this glory, so that Prudence shall provide nothing, Justice distribute nothing, Temperance moderate nothing, except to the

end that men may be pleased and vainglory served. Nor will they be able to defend themselves from the charge of such baseness, whilst they, by way of being despisers of glory, disregard the judgment of other men, seem to themselves wise, and please themselves. For their virtue,—if, indeed, it is virtue at all,—is only in another way subjected to human praise; for he who seeks to please himself seeks still to please man. But he who, with true piety towards God, whom he loves, believes, and hopes in, fixes his attention more on those things in which he displeases himself, than on those things, if there are any such, which please himself, or rather, not himself, but the truth, does not attribute that by which he can now please the truth to anything but to the mercy of Him whom he has feared to displease, giving thanks for what in him is healed, and pouring out prayers for the healing of that which is yet unhealed.

21. That the Roman dominion was granted by Him from whom is all power, and by whose providence all things are ruled. These things being so, we do not attribute the power of giving kingdoms and empires to any save to the true God, who gives happiness in the kingdom of heaven to the pious alone, but gives kingly power on earth both to the pious and the impious, as it may please Him, whose good pleasure is always just. For though we have said something about the principles which guide His administration, in so far as it has seemed good to Him to explain it, nevertheless it is too much for us, and far surpasses our strength, to discuss the hidden things of men's hearts, and by a clear examination to determine the merits of various kingdoms. He, therefore, who is the one true God, who never leaves the human race without just judgment and help, gave a kingdom to the Romans when He would, and as great as He would, as He did also to the

Assyrians, and even the Persians, by whom, as their own books testify, only two gods are worshipped, the one good and the other evil,—to say nothing concerning the Hebrew people, of whom I have already spoken as much as seemed necessary, who, as long as they were a kingdom, worshipped none save the true God. The same, therefore, who gave to the Persians harvests, though they did not worship the goddess Segetia, who gave the other blessings of the earth, though they did not worship the many gods which the Romans supposed to preside, each one over some particular thing, or even many of them over each several thing,—He, I say, gave the Persians dominion, though they worshipped none of those gods to whom the Romans believed themselves indebted for the empire. And the same is true in respect of men as well as nations. He who gave power to Marius gave it also to Caius Cæsar; He who gave it to Augustus gave it also to Nero; He also who gave it to the most benignant emperors, the Vespasians, father and son, gave it also to the cruel Domitian; and, finally, to avoid the necessity of going over them all, He who gave it to the Christian Constantine gave it also to the apostate Julian, whose gifted mind was deceived by a sacrilegious and detestable curiosity, stimulated by the love of power. And it was because he was addicted through curiosity to vain oracles, that, confident of victory, he burned the ships which were laden with the provisions necessary for his army, and therefore, engaging with hot zeal in rashly audacious enterprises, he was soon slain, as the just consequence of his recklessness, and left his army unprovisioned in an enemy's country, and in such a predicament that it never could have escaped, save by altering the boundaries of the Roman empire, in violation of that omen of the god Terminus of which I spoke in the preceding book; for the god Terminus yielded to

necessity, though he had not yielded to Jupiter. Manifestly these things are ruled and governed by the one God according as He pleases; and if His motives are hid, are they therefore unjust?

22. The durations and issues of war depend on the will of God. Thus also the durations of wars are determined by Him as He may see meet, according to His righteous will, and pleasure, and mercy, to afflict or to console the human race, so that they are sometimes of longer, sometimes of shorter duration. The war of the Pirates and the third Punic war were terminated with incredible celerity. Also the war of the fugitive gladiators, though in it many Roman generals and the consuls were defeated, and Italy was terribly wasted and ravaged, was nevertheless ended in the third year, having itself been, during its continuance, the end of much. The Picentes, the Marsi, and the Peligni, not distant but Italian nations, after a long and most loyal servitude under the Roman yoke, attempted to raise their heads into liberty, though many nations had now been subjected to the Roman power, and Carthage had been overthrown. In this Italian war the Romans were very often defeated, and two consuls perished, besides other noble senators; nevertheless this calamity was not protracted over a long space of time, for the fifth year put an end to it. But the second Punic war, lasting for the space of eighteen years, and occasioning the greatest disasters and calamities to the republic, wore out and well-nigh consumed the strength of the Romans; for in two battles about seventy thousand Romans fell. The first Punic war was terminated after having been waged for three-and-twenty years. The Mithridatic war was waged for forty years. And that no one may think that in the early and much belauded times of the Romans they were far braver and more

able to bring wars to a speedy termination, the Samnite war was protracted for nearly fifty years; and in this war the Romans were so beaten that they were even put under the yoke. But because they did not love glory for the sake of justice, but seemed rather to have loved justice for the sake of glory, they broke the peace and the treaty which had been concluded. These things I mention, because many, ignorant of past things, and some also dissimulating what they know, if in Christian times they see any war protracted a little longer than they expected, straightway make a fierce and insolent attack on our religion, exclaiming that, but for it, the deities would have been supplicated still, according to ancient rites; and then, by that bravery of the Romans, which, with the help of Mars and Bellona, speedily brought to an end such great wars, this war also would be speedily terminated. Let them, therefore, who have read history recollect what long-continued wars, having various issues and entailing woful slaughter, were waged by the ancient Romans, in accordance with the general truth that the earth, like the tempestuous deep, is subject to agitations from tempests—tempests of such evils, in various degrees,—and let them sometimes confess what they do not like to own, and not, by madly speaking against God, destroy themselves and deceive the ignorant.

23. Concerning the war in which Radagaisus, king of the Goths, a worshipper of demons, was conquered in one day, with all his mighty forces. Nevertheless they do not mention with thanksgiving what God has very recently, and within our own memory, wonderfully and mercifully done, but as far as in them lies they attempt, if possible, to bury it in universal oblivion. But should we be silent about these things, we should be in like manner ungrateful. When Radagaisus, king of the

Goths, having taken up his position very near to the city, with a vast and savage army, was already close upon the Romans, he was in one day so speedily and so thoroughly beaten, that, whilst not even one Roman was wounded, much less slain, far more than a hundred thousand of his army were prostrated, and he himself and his sons, having been captured, were forthwith put to death, suffering the punishment they deserved. For had so impious a man, with so great and so impious a host, entered the city, whom would he have spared? what tombs of the martyrs would he have respected? in his treatment of what person would he have manifested the fear of God? whose blood would he have refrained from shedding? whose chastity would he have wished to preserve inviolate? But how loud would they not have been in the praises of their gods! How insultingly they would have boasted, saying that Radagaisus had conquered, that he had been able to achieve such great things, because he propitiated and won over the gods by daily sacrifices,—a thing which the Christian religion did not allow the Romans to do! For when he was approaching to those places where he was overwhelmed at the nod of the Supreme Majesty, as his fame was everywhere increasing, it was being told us at Carthage that the pagans were believing, publishing, and boasting, that he, on account of the help and protection of the gods friendly to him, because of the sacrifices which he was said to be daily offering to them, would certainly not be conquered by those who were not performing such sacrifices to the Roman gods, and did not even permit that they should be offered by any one. And now these wretched men do not give thanks to God for His great mercy, who, having determined to chastise the corruption of men, which was worthy of far heavier chastisement than the corruption of the barbarians, tempered His indignation

with such mildness as, in the first instance, to cause that the king of the Goths should be conquered in a wonderful manner, lest glory should accrue to demons, whom he was known to be supplicating, and thus the minds of the weak should be overthrown; and then, afterwards, to cause that, when Rome was to be taken, it should be taken by those barbarians who, contrary to any custom of all former wars, protected, through reverence for the Christian religion, those who fled for refuge to the sacred places, and who so opposed the demons themselves, and the rites of impious sacrifices, that they seemed to be carrying on a far more terrible war with them than with men. Thus did the true Lord and Governor of things both scourge the Romans mercifully, and, by the marvellous defeat of the worshippers of demons, show that those sacrifices were not necessary even for the safety of present things; so that, by those who do not obstinately hold out, but prudently consider the matter, true religion may not be deserted on account of the urgencies of the present time, but may be more clung to in most confident expectation of eternal life.

24. What was the happiness of the Christian emperors, and how far it was true happiness. For neither do we say that certain Christian emperors were therefore happy because they ruled a long time, or, dying a peaceful death, left their sons to succeed them in the empire, or subdued the enemies of the republic, or were able both to guard against and to suppress the attempt of hostile citizens rising against them. These and other gifts or comforts of this sorrowful life even certain worshippers of demons have merited to receive, who do not belong to the kingdom of God to which these belong; and this is to be traced to the mercy of God, who would not have those who believe in Him desire such things as the

highest good. But we say that they are happy if they rule justly; if they are not lifted up amid the praises of those who pay them sublime honours, and the obsequiousness of those who salute them with an excessive humility, but remember that they are men; if they make their power the handmaid of His majesty by using it for the greatest possible extension of His worship; if they fear, love, worship God; if more than their own they love that kingdom in which they are not afraid to have partners; if they are slow to punish, ready to pardon; if they apply that punishment as necessary to government and defence of the republic, and not in order to gratify their own enmity; if they grant pardon, not that iniquity may go unpunished, but with the hope that the transgressor may amend his ways; if they compensate with the lenity of mercy and the liberality of benevolence for whatever severity they may be compelled to decree; if their luxury is as much restrained as it might have been unrestrained; if they prefer to govern depraved desires rather than any nation whatever; and if they do all these things, not through ardent desire of empty glory, but through love of eternal felicity, not neglecting to offer to the true God, who is their God, for their sins, the sacrifices of humility, contrition, and prayer. Such Christian emperors, we say, are happy in the present time by hope, and are destined to be so in the enjoyment of the reality itself, when that which we wait for shall have arrived.

25. Concerning the prosperity which God granted to the Christian emperor Constantine. For the good God, lest men, who believe that He is to be worshipped with a view to eternal life, should think that no one could attain to all this high estate, and to this terrestrial dominion, unless he should be a worshipper of the

demons,—supposing that these spirits have great power with respect to such things,—for this reason He gave to the Emperor Constantine, who was not a worshipper of demons, but of the true God Himself, such fulness of earthly gifts as no one would even dare wish for. To him also He granted the honour of founding a city, a companion to the Roman empire, the daughter, as it were, of Rome itself, but without any temple or image of the demons. He reigned for a long period as sole emperor, and unaided held and defended the whole Roman world. In conducting and carrying on wars he was most victorious; in overthrowing tyrants he was most successful. He died at a great age, of sickness and old age, and left his sons to succeed him in the empire. But again, lest any emperor should become a Christian in order to merit the happiness of Constantine, when every one should be a Christian for the sake of eternal life, God took away Jovian far sooner than Julian, and permitted that Gratian should be slain by the sword of a tyrant. But in his case there was far more mitigation of the calamity than in the case of the great Pompey, for he could not be avenged by Cato, whom he had left, as it were, heir to the civil war. But Gratian, though pious minds require not such consolations, was avenged by Theodosius, whom he had associated with himself in the empire, though he had a little brother of his own, being more desirous of a faithful alliance than of extensive power.

26. On the faith and piety of Theodosius Augustus. And on this account, Theodosius not only preserved during the lifetime of Gratian that fidelity which was due to him, but also, after his death, he, like a true Christian, took his little brother Valentinian under his protection, as joint emperor, after he had been expelled by Maximus, the murderer of his father. He guarded him with

paternal affection, though he might without any difficulty have got rid of him, being entirely destitute of all resources, had he been animated with the desire of extensive empire, and not with the ambition of being a benefactor. It was therefore a far greater pleasure to him, when he had adopted the boy, and preserved to him his imperial dignity, to console him by his very humanity and kindness. Afterwards, when that success was rendering Maximus terrible, Theodosius, in the midst of his perplexing anxieties, was not drawn away to follow the suggestions of a sacrilegious and unlawful curiosity, but sent to John, whose abode was in the desert of Egypt,—for he had learned that this servant of God (whose fame was spreading abroad) was endowed with the gift of prophecy,—and from him he received assurance of victory. Immediately the slayer of the tyrant Maximus, with the deepest feelings of compassion and respect, restored the boy Valentinianus to his share in the empire from which he had been driven. Valentinianus being soon after slain by secret assassination, or by some other plot or accident, Theodosius, having again received a response from the prophet, and placing entire confidence in it, marched against the tyrant Eugenius, who had been unlawfully elected to succeed that emperor, and defeated his very powerful army, more by prayer than by the sword. Some soldiers who were at the battle reported to me that all the missiles they were throwing were snatched from their hands by a vehement wind, which blew from the direction of Theodosius' army upon the enemy; nor did it only drive with greater velocity the darts which were hurled against them, but also turned back upon their own bodies the darts which they themselves were throwing. And therefore the poet Claudian, although an alien from the name of Christ, nevertheless says in his praises of him, "O prince, too much beloved by God, for

thee Æolus pours armed tempests from their caves; for thee the air fights, and the winds with one accord obey thy bugles." But the victor, as he had believed and predicted, overthrew the statues of Jupiter, which had been, as it were, consecrated by I know not what kind of rites against him, and set up in the Alps. And the thunderbolts of these statues, which were made of gold, he mirthfully and graciously presented to his couriers, who (as the joy of the occasion permitted) were jocularly saying that they would be most happy to be struck by such thunderbolts. The sons of his own enemies, whose fathers had been slain not so much by his orders as by the vehemence of war, having fled for refuge to a church, though they were not yet Christians, he was anxious, taking advantage of the occasion, to bring over to Christianity, and treated them with Christian love. Nor did he deprive them of their property, but, besides allowing them to retain it, bestowed on them additional honours. He did not permit private animosities to affect the treatment of any man after the war. He was not like Cinna, and Marius, and Sylla, and other such men, who wished not to finish civil wars even when they were finished, but rather grieved that they had arisen at all, than wished that when they were finished they should harm any one. Amid all these events, from the very commencement of his reign, he did not cease to help the troubled church against the impious by most just and merciful laws, which the heretical Valens, favouring the Arians, had vehemently afflicted. Indeed, he rejoiced more to be a member of this church than he did to be a king upon the earth. The idols of the Gentiles he everywhere ordered to be overthrown, understanding well that not even terrestrial gifts are placed in the power of demons, but in that of the true God. And what could be more admirable than his

religious humility, when, compelled by the urgency of certain of his intimates, he avenged the grievous crime of the Thessalonians, which at the prayer of the bishops he had promised to pardon, and, being laid hold of by the discipline of the church, did penance in such a way that the sight of his imperial loftiness prostrated made the people who were interceding for him weep more than the consciousness of offence had made them fear it when enraged? These and other similar good works, which it would be long to tell, he carried with him from this world of time, where the greatest human nobility and loftiness are but vapour. Of these works the reward is eternal happiness, of which God is the giver, though only to those who are sincerely pious. But all other blessings and privileges of this life, as the world itself, light, air, earth, water, fruits, and the soul of man himself, his body, senses, mind, life, He lavishes on good and bad alike. And among these blessings is also to be reckoned the possession of an empire, whose extent He regulates according to the requirements of His providential government at various times. Whence, I see, we must now answer those who, being confuted and convicted by the most manifest proofs, by which it is shown that for obtaining these terrestrial things, which are all the foolish desire to have, that multitude of false gods is of no use, attempt to assert that the gods are to be worshipped with a view to the interest, not of the present life, but of that which is to come after death. For as to those who, for the sake of the friendship of this world, are willing to worship vanities, and do not grieve that they are left to their puerile understandings, I think they have been sufficiently answered in these five books; of which books, when I had published the first three, and they had begun to come into the hands of many, I heard that certain persons were preparing against them an answer of

some kind or other in writing. Then it was told me that they had already written their answer, but were waiting a time when they could publish it without danger. Such persons I would advise not to desire what cannot be of any advantage to them; for it is very easy for a man to seem to himself to have answered arguments, when he has only been unwilling to be silent. For what is more loquacious than vanity? And though it be able, if it like, to shout more loudly than the truth, it is not, for all that, more powerful than the truth. But let men consider diligently all the things that we have said, and if, perchance, judging without party spirit, they shall clearly perceive that they are such things as may rather be shaken than torn up by their most impudent garrulity, and, as it were, satirical and mimic levity, let them restrain their absurdities, and let them choose rather to be corrected by the wise than to be lauded by the foolish. For if they are waiting an opportunity, not for liberty to speak the truth, but for licence to revile, may not that befall them which Tully says concerning some one, "Oh, wretched man! who was at liberty to sin?" Wherefore, whoever he be who deems himself happy because of licence to revile, he would be far happier if that were not allowed him at all; for he might all the while, laying aside empty boast, be contradicting those to whose views he is opposed by way of free consultation with them, and be listening, as it becomes him, honourably, gravely, candidly, to all that can be adduced by those whom he consults by friendly disputation.

