

THE CITY OF GOD AGAINST THE PAGANS

By Saint Aurelius Augustine

[Podcast 11 of 50]

BOOK SIXTH. ARGUMENT. HITHERTO THE ARGUMENT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED AGAINST THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THE GODS ARE TO BE WORSHIPPED FOR THE SAKE OF TEMPORAL ADVANTAGES, NOW IT IS DIRECTED AGAINST THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE TO BE WORSHIPPED FOR THE SAKE OF ETERNAL LIFE. AUGUSTINE DEVOTES THE FIVE FOLLOWING BOOKS TO THE CONFUTATION OF THIS LATTER BELIEF, AND FIRST OF ALL SHOWS HOW MEAN AN OPINION OF THE GODS WAS HELD BY VARRO HIMSELF, THE MOST ESTEEMED WRITER ON HEATHEN THEOLOGY. OF THIS THEOLOGY AUGUSTINE ADOPTS VARRO'S DIVISION INTO THREE KINDS, MYTHICAL, NATURAL, AND CIVIL; AND AT ONCE DEMONSTRATES THAT NEITHER THE MYTHICAL NOR THE CIVIL CAN CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

[End of Argument]

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE. In the five former books, I think I have sufficiently disputed against those who believe that the many false gods, which the Christian truth shows to be useless images, or unclean spirits and pernicious demons, or certainly creatures, not the Creator, are to be worshipped for the advantage of this mortal life, and of

terrestrial affairs, with that rite and service which the Greeks call λατρεία, and which is due to the one true God. And who does not know that, in the face of excessive stupidity and obstinacy, neither these five nor any other number of books whatsoever could be enough, when it is esteemed the glory of vanity to yield to no amount of strength on the side of truth,—certainly to his destruction over whom so heinous a vice tyrannizes? For, notwithstanding all the assiduity of the physician who attempts to effect a cure, the disease remains unconquered, not through any fault of his, but because of the incurableness of the sick man. But those who thoroughly weigh the things which they read, having understood and considered them, without any, or with no great and excessive degree of that obstinacy which belongs to a long-cherished error, will more readily judge that, in the five books already finished, we have done more than the necessity of the question demanded, than that we have given it less discussion than it required. And they cannot have doubted but that all the hatred which the ignorant attempt to bring upon the Christian religion on account of the disasters of this life, and the destruction and change which befall terrestrial things, whilst the learned do not merely dissimulate, but encourage that hatred, contrary to their own consciences, being possessed by a mad impiety;—they cannot have doubted, I say, but that this hatred is devoid of right reflection and reason, and full of most light temerity, and most pernicious animosity. 1. Of those who maintain that they worship the gods not for the sake of temporal, but eternal advantages. Now, as, in the next place (as the promised order demands), those are to be refuted and taught who contend that the gods of the nations, which the Christian truth destroys, are to be worshipped not on account of this life, but on account of that which is to be after death, I shall do well to commence my disputation with the truthful oracle of the holy psalm,

“Blessed is the man whose hope is the Lord God, and who respecteth not Vanities and lying follies.” Nevertheless, in all vanities and lying follies the philosophers are to be listened to with far more toleration, who have repudiated those opinions and errors of the people; for the people set up images to the deities, and either feigned concerning those whom they call immortal gods many false and unworthy things, or believed them, already feigned, and, when believed, mixed them up with their worship and sacred rites. With those men who, though not by free avowal of their convictions, do still testify that they disapprove of those things by their muttering disapprobation during disputations on the subject, it may not be very far amiss to discuss the following question: Whether, for the sake of the life which is to be after death, we ought to worship, not the one God, who made all creatures spiritual and corporeal, but those many gods who, as some of these philosophers hold, were made by that one God, and placed by Him in their respective sublime spheres, and are therefore considered more excellent and more noble than all the others? But who will assert that it must be affirmed and contended that those gods, certain of whom I have mentioned in the fourth book, to whom are distributed, each to each, the charges of minute things, do bestow eternal life? But will those most skilled and most acute men, who glory in having written for the great benefit of men, to teach on what account each god is to be worshipped, and what is to be sought from each, lest with most disgraceful absurdity, such as a mimic is wont for the sake of merriment to exhibit, water should be sought from Liber, wine from the Lymphs,—will those men indeed affirm to any man supplicating the immortal gods, that when he shall have asked wine from the Lymphs, and they shall have answered him, “We have water, seek wine from Liber,” he may rightly say, “If ye have not wine, at least give me eternal life?” What more monstrous than

this absurdity? Will not these Lymphs,—for they are wont to be very easily made laugh,—laughing loudly (if they do not attempt to deceive like demons), answer the suppliant, “O man, dost thou think that we have life (vitam) in our power, who thou hearest have not even the vine (vitem)?” It is therefore most impudent folly to seek and hope for eternal life from such gods as are asserted so to preside over the separate minute concerns of this most sorrowful and short life, and whatever is useful for supporting and propping it, as that if anything which is under the care and power of one be sought from another, it is so incongruous and absurd that it appears very like to mimic drollery,—which, when it is done by mimics knowing what they are doing, is deservedly laughed at in the theatre, but when it is done by foolish persons, who do not know better, is more deservedly ridiculed in the world. Wherefore, as concerns those gods which the states have established, it has been cleverly invented and handed down to memory by learned men, what god or goddess is to be supplicated in relation to every particular thing,—what, for instance, is to be sought from Liber, what from the Lymphs, what from Vulcan, and so of all the rest, some of whom I have mentioned in the fourth book, and some I have thought right to omit. Further, if it is an error to seek wine from Ceres, bread from Liber, water from Vulcan, fire from the Lymphs, how much greater absurdity ought it to be thought, if supplication be made to any one of these for eternal life? Wherefore, if, when we were inquiring what gods or goddesses are to be believed to be able to confer earthly kingdoms upon men, all things having been discussed, it was shown to be very far from the truth to think that even terrestrial kingdoms are established by any of those many false deities, is it not most insane impiety to believe that eternal life, which is, without any doubt or comparison, to be preferred to all terrestrial kingdoms, can be given to any one by any of these gods? For the reason

why such gods seemed to us not to be able to give even an earthly kingdom, was not because they are very great and exalted, whilst that is something small and abject, which they, in their so great sublimity, would not condescend to care for, but because, however deservedly any one may, in consideration of human frailty, despise the falling pinnacles of an earthly kingdom, these gods have presented such an appearance as to seem most unworthy to have the granting and preserving of even those entrusted to them; and consequently, if (as we have taught in the two last books of our work, where this matter is treated of) no god out of all that crowd, either belonging to, as it were, the plebeian or to the noble gods, is fit to give mortal kingdoms to mortals, how much less is he able to make immortals of mortals? And more than this, if, according to the opinion of those with whom we are now arguing, the gods are to be worshipped, not on account of the present life, but of that which is to be after death, then, certainly, they are not to be worshipped on account of those particular things which are distributed and portioned out (not by any law of rational truth, but by mere vain conjecture) to the power of such gods, as they believe they ought to be worshipped, who contend that their worship is necessary for all the desirable things of this mortal life, against whom I have disputed sufficiently, as far as I was able, in the five preceding books. These things being so, if the age itself of those who worshipped the goddess Juventas should be characterized by remarkable vigour, whilst her despisers should either die within the years of youth, or should, during that period, grow cold as with the torpor of old age; if bearded Fortuna should cover the cheeks of her worshippers more handsomely and more gracefully than all others, whilst we should see those by whom she was despised either altogether beardless or ill-bearded; even then we should most rightly say, that thus far these several gods had power, limited in some way by their functions,

and that, consequently, neither ought eternal life to be sought from Juventas, who could not give a beard, nor ought any good thing after this life to be expected from Fortuna Barbata, who has no power even in this life to give the age itself at which the beard grows. But now, when their worship is necessary not even on account of those very things which they think are subjected to their power,—for many worshippers of the goddess Juventas have not been at all vigorous at that age, and many who do not worship her rejoice in youthful strength; and also many suppliants of Fortuna Barbata have either not been able to attain to any beard at all, not even an ugly one, although they who adore her in order to obtain a beard are ridiculed by her bearded despisers,—is the human heart really so foolish as to believe that that worship of the gods, which it acknowledges to be vain and ridiculous with respect to those very temporal and swiftly passing gifts, over each of which one of these gods is said to preside, is fruitful in results with respect to eternal life? And that they are able to give eternal life has not been affirmed even by those who, that they might be worshipped by the silly populace, distributed in minute division among them these temporal occupations, that none of them might sit idle; for they had supposed the existence of an exceedingly great number. 2. What we are to believe that Varro thought concerning the gods of the nations, whose various kinds and sacred rites he has shown to be such that he would have acted more reverently towards them had he been altogether silent concerning them. Who has investigated those things more carefully than Marcus Varro? Who has discovered them more learnedly? Who has considered them more attentively? Who has distinguished them more acutely? Who has written about them more diligently and more fully?—who, though he is less pleasing in his eloquence, is nevertheless so full of instruction and wisdom, that in all the erudition which we call secular, but they liberal, he will

teach the student of things as much as Cicero delights the student of words. And even Tully himself renders him such testimony, as to say in his Academic books that he had held that disputation which is there carried on with Marcus Varro, "a man," he adds, "unquestionably the acutest of all men, and, without any doubt, the most learned." He does not say the most eloquent or the most fluent, for in reality he was very deficient in this faculty, but he says, "of all men the most acute." And in those books,—that is, the Academic,—where he contends that all things are to be doubted, he adds of him, "without any doubt the most learned." In truth, he was so certain concerning this thing, that he laid aside that doubt which he is wont to have recourse to in all things, as if, when about to dispute in favour of the doubt of the Academics, he had, with respect to this one thing, forgotten that he was an Academic. But in the first book, when he extols the literary works of the same Varro, he says, "Us straying and wandering in our own city like strangers, thy books, as it were, brought home, that at length we might come to know of who we were and where we were. Thou hast opened up to us the age of the country, the distribution of seasons, the laws of sacred things, and of the priests; thou hast opened up to us domestic and public discipline; thou hast pointed out to us the proper places for religious ceremonies, and hast informed us concerning sacred places. Thou hast shown us the names, kinds, offices, causes of all divine and human things." This man, then, of so distinguished and excellent acquirements, and, as Terentian briefly says of him in a most elegant verse, "Varro, a man universally informed," who read so much that we wonder when he had time to write, wrote so much that we can scarcely believe any one could have read it all,—this man, I say, so great in talent, so great in learning, had he been an opposer and destroyer of the so-called divine things of which he wrote, and had he said that they pertained to superstition rather than to

religion, might perhaps, even in that case, not have written so many things which are ridiculous, contemptible, detestable. But when he so worshipped these same gods, and so vindicated their worship, as to say, in that same literary work of his, that he was afraid lest they should perish, not by an assault by enemies, but by the negligence of the citizens, and that from this ignominy they are being delivered by him, and are being laid up and preserved in the memory of the good by means of such books, with a zeal far more beneficial than that through which Metellus is declared to have rescued the sacred things of Vesta from the flames, and Æneas to have rescued the Penates from the burning of Troy; and when he, nevertheless, gives forth such things to be read by succeeding ages as are deservedly judged by wise and unwise to be unfit to be read, and to be most hostile to the truth of religion; what ought we to think but that a most acute and learned man,—not, however, made free by the Holy Spirit,—was overpowered by the custom and laws of his state, and, not being able to be silent about those things by which he was influenced, spoke of them under pretence of commending religion? 3. Varro's distribution of his book which he composed concerning the antiquities of human and divine things. He wrote forty-one books of antiquities. These he divided into human and divine things. Twenty-five he devoted to human things, sixteen to divine things; following this plan in that division,—namely, to give six books to each of the four divisions of human things. For he directs his attention to these considerations: who perform, where they perform, when they perform, what they perform. Therefore in the first six books he wrote concerning men; in the second six, concerning places; in the third six, concerning times; in the fourth and last six, concerning things. Four times six, however, make only twenty-four. But he placed at the head of them one separate work, which spoke of all these things conjointly. In divine things, the same order he

preserved throughout, as far as concerns those things which are performed to the gods. For sacred things are performed by men in places and times. These four things I have mentioned he embraced in twelve books, allotting three to each. For he wrote the first three concerning men, the following three concerning places, the third three concerning times, and the fourth three concerning sacred rites,—showing who should perform, where they should perform, when they should perform, what they should perform, with most subtle distinction. But because it was necessary to say—and that especially was expected—to whom they should perform sacred rites, he wrote concerning the gods themselves the last three books; and these five times three made fifteen. But they are in all, as we have said, sixteen. For he put also at the beginning of these one distinct book, speaking by way of introduction of all which follows; which being finished, he proceeded to subdivide the first three in that fivefold distribution which pertain to men, making the first concerning high priests, the second concerning augurs, the third concerning the fifteen men presiding over the sacred ceremonies. The second three he made concerning places, speaking in one of them concerning their chapels, in the second concerning their temples, and in the third concerning religious places. The next three which follow these, and pertain to times,—that is, to festival days,—he distributed so as to make one concerning holidays, the other concerning the circus games, and the third concerning scenic plays. Of the fourth three, pertaining to sacred things, he devoted one to consecrations, another to private, the last to public, sacred rites. In the three which remain, the gods themselves follow this pompous train, as it were, for whom all this culture has been expended. In the first book are the certain gods, in the second the uncertain, in the third, and last of all, the chief and select gods. 4. That from the disputation of Varro, it follows that the worshippers of the gods regard

human things as more ancient than divine things. In this whole series of most beautiful and most subtle distributions and distinctions, it will most easily appear evident from the things we have said already, and from what is to be said hereafter, to any man who is not, in the obstinacy of his heart, an enemy to himself, that it is vain to seek and to hope for, and even most impudent to wish for eternal life. For these institutions are either the work of men, or of demons,—not of those whom they call good demons, but, to speak more plainly, of unclean, and, without controversy, malign spirits, who with wonderful slyness and secretness suggest to the thoughts of the impious, and sometimes openly present to their understandings, noxious opinions, by which the human mind grows more and more foolish, and becomes unable to adapt itself to and abide in the immutable and eternal truth, and seek to confirm these opinions by every kind of fallacious attestation in their power. This very same Varro testifies that he wrote first concerning human things, but afterwards concerning divine things, because the states existed first, and afterward these things were instituted by them. But the true religion was not instituted by any earthly state, but plainly it established the celestial city. It, however, is inspired and taught by the true God, the giver of eternal life to His true worshippers. The following is the reason Varro gives when he confesses that he had written first concerning human things, and afterwards of divine things, because these divine things were instituted by men:—“As the painter is before the painted tablet, the mason before the edifice, so states are before those things which are instituted by states.” But he says that he would have written first concerning the gods, afterwards concerning men, if he had been writing concerning the whole nature of the gods,—as if he were really writing concerning some portion of, and not all, the nature of the gods; or as if, indeed, some portion of, though not all, the nature of the gods ought not to be put before

that of men. How, then, comes it that in those three last books, when he is diligently explaining the certain, uncertain, and select gods, he seems to pass over no portion of the nature of the gods? Why, then, does he say, "If we had been writing on the whole nature of the gods, we would first have finished the divine things before we touched the human?" For he either writes concerning the whole nature of the gods, or concerning some portion of it, or concerning no part of it at all. If concerning it all, it is certainly to be put before human things; if concerning some part of it, why should it not, from the very nature of the case, precede human things? Is not even some part of the gods to be preferred to the whole of humanity? But if it is too much to prefer a part of the divine to all human things, that part is certainly worthy to be preferred to the Romans at least. For he writes the books concerning human things, not with reference to the whole world, but only to Rome; which books he says he had properly placed, in the order of writing, before the books on divine things, like a painter before the painted tablet, or a mason before the building, most openly confessing that, as a picture or a structure, even these divine things were instituted by men. There remains only the third supposition, that he is to be understood to have written concerning no divine nature, but that he did not wish to say this openly, but left it to the intelligent to infer; for when one says "not all," usage understands that to mean "some," but it may be understood as meaning none, because that which is none is neither all nor some. In fact, as he himself says, if he had been writing concerning all the nature of the gods, its due place would have been before human things in the order of writing. But, as the truth declares, even though Varro is silent, the divine nature should have taken precedence of Roman things, though it were not all, but only some. But it is properly put after, therefore it is none. His arrangement, therefore, was due, not to a desire to give human things

priority to divine things, but to his unwillingness to prefer false things to true. For in what he wrote on human things, he followed the history of affairs; but in what he wrote concerning those things which they call divine, what else did he follow but mere conjectures about vain things? This, doubtless, is what, in a subtle manner, he wished to signify; not only writing concerning divine things after the human, but even giving a reason why he did so; for if he had suppressed this, some, perchance, would have defended his doing so in one way, and some in another. But in that very reason he has rendered, he has left nothing for men to conjecture at will, and has sufficiently proved that he preferred men to the institutions of men, not the nature of men to the nature of the gods. Thus he confessed that, in writing the books concerning divine things, he did not write concerning the truth which belongs to nature, but the falseness which belongs to error; which he has elsewhere expressed more openly (as I have mentioned in the fourth book), saying that, had he been founding a new city himself, he would have written according to the order of nature; but as he had only found an old one, he could not but follow its custom. 5. Concerning the three kinds of theology according to Varro, namely, one fabulous, the other natural, the third civil. Now what are we to say of this proposition of his, namely, that there are three kinds of theology, that is, of the account which is given of the gods; and of these, the one is called mythical, the other physical, and the third civil? Did the Latin usage permit, we should call the kind which he has placed first in order fabular, but let us call it fabulous, for mythical is derived from the Greek μῦθος, a fable; but that the second should be called natural, the usage of speech now admits; the third he himself has designated in Latin, calling it civil. Then he says, "they call that kind mythical which the poets chiefly use; physical, that which the philosophers use; civil, that which the people use. As to the first I have mentioned,"

says he, "in it are many fictions, which are contrary to the dignity and nature of the immortals. For we find in it that one god has been born from the head, another from the thigh, another from drops of blood; also, in this we find that gods have stolen, committed adultery, served men; in a word, in this all manner of things are attributed to the gods, such as may befall, not merely any man, but even the most contemptible man." He certainly, where he could, where he dared, where he thought he could do it with impunity, has manifested, without any of the haziness of ambiguity, how great injury was done to the nature of the gods by lying fables; for he was speaking, not concerning natural theology, not concerning civil, but concerning fabulous theology, which he thought he could freely find fault with. Let us see, now, what he says concerning the second kind. "The second kind which I have explained," he says, "is that concerning which philosophers have left many books, in which they treat such questions as these: what gods there are, where they are, of what kind and character they are, since what time they have existed, or if they have existed from eternity; whether they are of fire, as Heraclitus believes; or of number, as Pythagoras; or of atoms, as Epicurus says; and other such things, which men's ears can more easily hear inside the walls of a school than outside in the Forum." He finds fault with nothing in this kind of theology which they call physical, and which belongs to philosophers, except that he has related their controversies among themselves, through which there has arisen a multitude of dissentient sects. Nevertheless he has removed this kind from the Forum, that is, from the populace, but he has shut it up in schools. But that first kind, most false and most base, he has not removed from the citizens. Oh, the religious ears of the people, and among them even those of the Romans, that are not able to bear what the philosophers dispute concerning the gods! But when the poets sing and stage-players act such things

as are derogatory to the dignity and the nature of the immortals, such as may befall not a man merely, but the most contemptible man, they not only bear, but willingly listen to. Nor is this all, but they even consider that these things please the gods, and that they are propitiated by them. But some one may say, Let us distinguish these two kinds of theology, the mythical and the physical,—that is, the fabulous and the natural,—from this civil kind about which we are now speaking. Anticipating this, he himself has distinguished them. Let us see now how he explains the civil theology itself. I see, indeed, why it should be distinguished as fabulous, even because it is false, because it is base, because it is unworthy. But to wish to distinguish the natural from the civil, what else is that but to confess that the civil itself is false? For if that be natural, what fault has it that it should be excluded? And if this which is called civil be not natural, what merit has it that it should be admitted? This, in truth, is the cause why he wrote first concerning human things, and afterwards concerning divine things; since in divine things he did not follow nature, but the institution of men. Let us look at this civil theology of his. “The third kind,” says he, “is that which citizens in cities, and especially the priests, ought to know and to administer. From it is to be known what god each one may suitably worship, what sacred rites and sacrifices each one may suitably perform.” Let us still attend to what follows. “The first theology,” he says, “is especially adapted to the theatre, the second to the world, the third to the city.” Who does not see to which he gives the palm? Certainly to the second, which he said above is that of the philosophers. For he testifies that this pertains to the world, than which they think there is nothing better. But those two theologies, the first and the third,—to wit, those of the theatre and of the city,—has he distinguished them or united them? For although we see that the city is in the world, we do not see that it follows that any things

belonging to the city pertain to the world. For it is possible that such things may be worshipped and believed in the city, according to false opinions, as have no existence either in the world or out of it. But where is the theatre but in the city? Who instituted the theatre but the state? For what purpose did it constitute it but for scenic plays? And to what class of things do scenic plays belong but to those divine things concerning which these books of Varro's are written with so much ability? 6. Concerning the mythic, that is, the fabulous, theology, and the civil, against Varro. O Marcus Varro! thou art the most acute, and without doubt the most learned, but still a man, not God,—now lifted up by the Spirit of God to see and to announce divine things, thou seest, indeed, that divine things are to be separated from human trifles and lies, but thou fearest to offend those most corrupt opinions of the populace, and their customs in public superstitions, which thou thyself, when thou considerest them on all sides, perceivest, and all your literature loudly pronounces to be abhorrent from the nature of the gods, even of such gods as the frailty of the human mind supposes to exist in the elements of this world. What can the most excellent human talent do here? What can human learning, though manifold, avail thee in this perplexity? Thou desirest to worship the natural gods; thou art compelled to worship the civil. Thou hast found some of the gods to be fabulous, on whom thou vomitest forth very freely what thou thinkest, and, whether thou willest or not, thou wettest therewith even the civil gods. Thou sayest, forsooth, that the fabulous are adapted to the theatre, the natural to the world, and the civil to the city; though the world is a divine work, but cities and theatres are the works of men, and though the gods who are laughed at in the theatre are not other than those who are adored in the temples; and ye do not exhibit games in honour of other gods than those to whom ye immolate victims. How much more freely and more subtly wouldst thou have decided

these hadst thou said that some gods are natural, others established by men; and concerning those who have been so established, the literature of the poets gives one account, and that of the priests another,—both of which are, nevertheless, so friendly the one to the other, through fellowship in falsehood, that they are both pleasing to the demons, to whom the doctrine of the truth is hostile. That theology, therefore, which they call natural, being put aside for a moment, as it is afterwards to be discussed, we ask if any one is really content to seek a hope for eternal life from poetical, theatrical, scenic gods? Perish the thought! The true God avert so wild and sacrilegious a madness! What, is eternal life to be asked from those gods whom these things pleased, and whom these things propitiate, in which their own crimes are represented? No one, as I think, has arrived at such a pitch of headlong and furious impiety. So then, neither by the fabulous nor by the civil theology does any one obtain eternal life. For the one sows base things concerning the gods by feigning them, the other reaps by cherishing them; the one scatters lies, the other gathers them together; the one pursues divine things with false crimes, the other incorporates among divine things the plays which are made up of these crimes; the one sounds abroad in human songs impious fictions concerning the gods, the other consecrates these for the festivities of the gods themselves; the one sings the misdeeds and crimes of the gods, the other loves them; the one gives forth or feigns, the other either attests the true or delights in the false. Both are base; both are damnable. But the one which is theatrical teaches public abomination, and that one which is of the city adorns itself with that abomination. Shall eternal life be hoped for from these, by which this short and temporal life is polluted? Does the society of wicked men pollute our life if they insinuate themselves into our affections, and win our assent? and does not the society of demons pollute the life, who are worshipped with

their own crimes?—if with true crimes, how wicked the demons! if with false, how wicked the worship! When we say these things, it may perchance seem to some one who is very ignorant of these matters that only those things concerning the gods which are sung in the songs of the poets and acted on the stage are unworthy of the divine majesty, and ridiculous, and too detestable to be celebrated, whilst those sacred things which not stage-players but priests perform are pure and free from all unseemliness. Had this been so, never would any one have thought that these theatrical abominations should be celebrated in their honour, never would the gods themselves have ordered them to be performed to them. But men are in nowise ashamed to perform these things in the theatres, because similar things are carried on in the temples. In short, when the fore-mentioned author attempted to distinguish the civil theology from the fabulous and natural, as a sort of third and distinct kind, he wished it to be understood to be rather tempered by both than separated from either. For he says that those things which the poets write are less than the people ought to follow, whilst what the philosophers say is more than it is expedient for the people to pry into. “Which,” says he, “differ in such a way, that nevertheless not a few things from both of them have been taken to the account of the civil theology; wherefore we will indicate what the civil theology has in common with that of the poet, though it ought to be more closely connected with the theology of philosophers.” Civil theology is therefore not quite disconnected from that of the poets. Nevertheless, in another place, concerning the generations of the gods, he says that the people are more inclined toward the poets than toward the physical theologians. For in this place he said what ought to be done; in that other place, what was really done. He said that the latter had written for the sake of utility, but the poets for the sake of amusement. And

hence the things from the poets' writings, which the people ought not to follow, are the crimes of the gods; which, nevertheless, amuse both the people and the gods. For, for amusement's sake, he says, the poets write, and not for that of utility; nevertheless they write such things as the gods will desire, and the people perform.

