



The City of God, Books XVII-XXII (Fathers of the Church Patristic Series)

Augustine

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This volume contains the translation of the six concluding books of The City of God. Book 17 briefly reviews significant events in the history of the chosen people down to the birth of Christ and calls attention to the prophecies that are fulfilled in Christ. In summarizing the contents of the first 17 books Augustine shows in book 18 that there is a unifying theme running through the voluminous work: a comparison in the origin, development and progress of the earthly city and the city of God. A synchronizing of events in Jewish history with those in secular history brings this book to a close. Book 19 begins with a discussion of philosophical questions, e.g., the definition of the supreme good and the conditions for a just war, and concludes with an explanation of the differences between the earthly city and God's city and refutation of Porphyry's attacks on Christianity. Augustine himself says that he plans to discuss in book 20 the day of final judgment and to defend its reality against those who deliberately disbelieve in it. This purpose involves a consideration of Antichrist, the coming of Elias before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the millennium mentioned in the book of Revelations, the new heaven and the new earth. The second last book discusses in some detail the kind of punishment that the Devil and those belonging to the earthly city are to endure. Reflections on hell, the nature of eternal torments and the unquenchable fire where the worm does not die bring this book to a close. The last book, book 22, treats the eternal blessedness of the city of God.

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