

Discerning the Divine Logos: The Case for Secular and Pagan Literature

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This thesis seeks to address the age-old question that church Father Tertullian posed long ago: “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between Heretics and Christians?” Throughout the ages, Christians have had varying answers to the question. Some claim, like Tertullian, that reading pagan and secular literature is not something a Christ seeking person should do. The Talmud, which is authored by the Pharisees, proclaims that the man who teaches his son Greek wisdom shall be cursed alongside the man who raises pigs. Others, like Thomas Aquinas, claim that so long as literature is approached cautiously, the virtues found within it can influence men towards the celestial kingdom. Even today, the question of what is permissible and good for Christians to read remains a divisive topic within the church.

Christians should not condemn secular and pagan literature but, instead, should filter all books through a biblical lens, reading all literature in light of Christ. Reading books in light of biblical knowledge allows the conscientious Christian to greater understand history and culture, be an effective evangelist for God, and learn virtue in the manner of the Christian Humanists.