

# Augustine of Hippo, The City of God, XI.5; & Theophilus of Antioch, To Autolycus, III.6

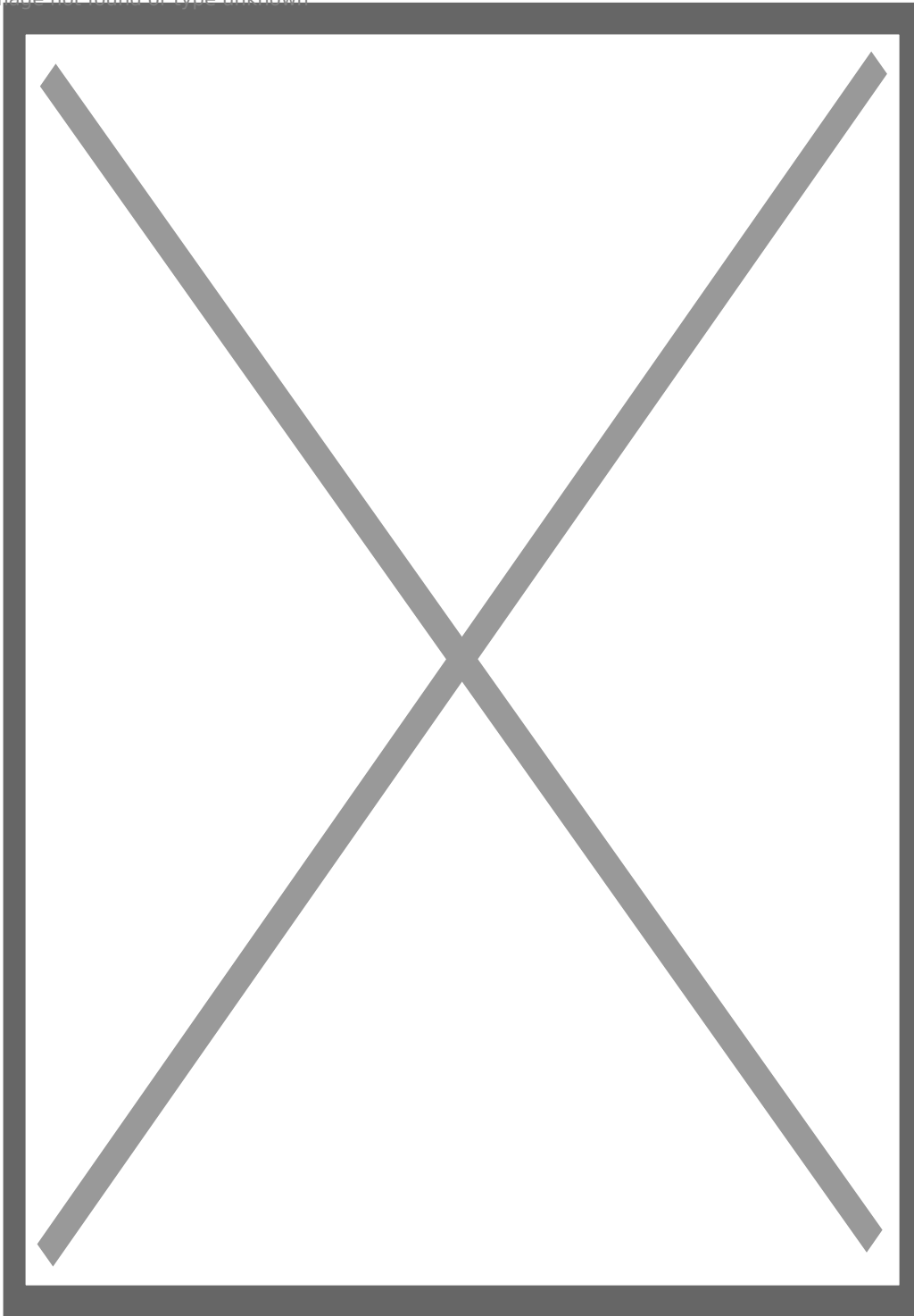
Post by “Don” of November 10, 2023 at 7:47 AM

[Philip Schaff: NPNF1-02. St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine - Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#)

Quote

Next, we must see what reply can be made to those who agree that God is the Creator of the world, but have difficulties about the time of its creation, and what reply, also, they can make to difficulties we might raise about the place of its creation. For, as they demand why the world was created then and no sooner, we may ask why it was created just here where it is, and not elsewhere. For if they imagine infinite spaces of time before the world, during which God could not have been idle, in like manner they may conceive outside the world infinite realms of space, in which, if any one says that the Omnipotent cannot hold His hand from working, will it not follow that they must adopt Epicurus' dream of innumerable worlds? with this difference only, that he asserts that they are formed and destroyed by the fortuitous movements of atoms, while they will hold that they are made by God's hand, if they maintain that, throughout the boundless immensity of space, stretching interminably in every direction round the world, God cannot rest, and that the worlds which they suppose Him to make cannot be destroyed...

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### [The City of God - Wikipedia](#)

[en.wikipedia.org](#)

It still surprises me that we can talk about (and scholars talk about, and the ancients talk about) the demise of the Epicurean school... and yet [Augustine of Hippo](#) (354-430 CE), writing in the 400s CE, can \*still\* be railing against Epicurus and his philosophy. As [Joshua](#) has pointed out,

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3485-augustine-of-hippo-the-city-of-god-xi-5-theophilus-of-antioch-to-autolytus-iii-6/?postID=27200#post27200>

Augustine wrote that the ashes of Stoicism and Epicureanism are so cold that not a single spark can be struck from them against Christianity (Ep. 118.12). And yet, he feels compelled to include a dig against them in his *City of God*. Was he trying to convince others or himself that the Epicurean "ashes" were so cold?

Earlier, [Theophilus of Antioch](#) (115~183/5 CE) includes slanders against both the Stoics and Epicureans in [his letter To Autolytus \(Ad Autolytum 3.6\)](#):

#### Quote

And Epicurus himself, too, as well as teaching atheism, teaches along with it incest with mothers and sisters, and this in transgression of the laws which forbid it; for Solon distinctly legislated regarding this, in order that from a married parent children might lawfully spring, that they might not be born of adultery, so that no one should honour as his father him who was not his father, or dishonour him who was really his father, through ignorance that he was so. And these things the other laws of the Romans and Greeks also prohibit. Why, then, do Epicurus and the Stoics teach incest and sodomy, with which doctrines they have filled libraries, so that from boyhood this lawless intercourse is learned? And why should I further spend time on them, since even of those they call gods they relate similar things?

It seems the early Christians were SO threatened by the Epicureans (and Stoics) that they just railed and railed against them endlessly. From that alone, it appears that Epicurus's school continued to have great significance and impact well into the "Christian" era.