

# On Human Propitiation of the Divine

By Sallust

If anyone thinks, in accordance with reason and truth, that the gods are not subject to change, and then wonders how they rejoice in the good and reject the bad, how they are angry with sinners and become propitiated when appeased, the answer is that the divine neither rejoices (for that which rejoices also feels sorrow), nor is angry (for anger is passion), nor is appeased by gifts (for it would be affected by pleasure).

It is not right to think that deity should be moved to good or to bad by human affairs. The gods are always good and always give aid and never harm, being ever in the same changeless state.

We, when we are good, are united to the gods through our likeness to them; but if we are bad, we are separated from them because we are unlike them. And when we live according to virtue, we are close to the gods; but if we are bad, we cause them to become our enemies—not because they are angry, but because guilt prevents us from receiving the illuminations of the gods...

If by prayers and sacrifice we obtain release from our guilt, we do not appease or change the gods, but by what we do and by turning toward the divine we heal our own badness and so again enjoy the goodness of the gods.

To say that deity turns away from sinners is like saying that the sun hides itself from the blind.