

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS GREGORIANA  
Facultas Theologiae  
INSTITUTUM SPIRITUALITATIS

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ESCHATOLOGY AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN  
ST. AUGUSTINE'S *CITY OF GOD*

**JUDE MULENGA CHISANGA**

*Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum  
in Facultate Theologiae  
Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana*

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*Romae, ex Pontificia Universitate Gregoriana  
Die 21-09-06*

## **DEDICATION**

*In memory of my mother Godfrida Chileshe Nkokomo Chisanga,  
With gratitude and affection*

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The theme for this thesis is *Eschatology and the Spiritual Life in Augustine's City of God*. But here, we should ask the question: what is eschatology? We can define eschatology as a religious language of hope for the fulfillment of the divine promises entailing an interpretation of history<sup>1</sup> as well as the satisfying of the nature of man. People are never completely happy when they are still living here on earth, and so they go on longing for joy and peace, wishing that one day in the future they would attain the so much needed solace of body, mind and heart. True harmony in body, spirit and heart will only be achieved at the end of man's life on this earth; when we return to God who created us in His own image and likeness, and this is the subject of the eschatology. Consequently, the interpretation of the term 'eschatology,' also calls for the understanding of the meaning of the 'spiritual life' so that we can know how to nourish it while we are still in this world; what instrument to use in order for it to mature; we need prayer and spiritual direction that help us to sift through our lives. In spiritual direction and prayer:

We receive help to confront ourselves and thereby to discover our authentic voice. That voice alone will lead us to intimacy with God. We must be patient, however, and ever so silent. We must listen to our heart and not be afraid to hear what it has to say. When we speak from the heart, we soon discover the gentle voice of the Spirit yearning within us. To pray in truth is to pray in the Spirit, the re-creative

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Scanlon, "Eschatology," *Augustine through the Ages, An Encyclopedia*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 1999, 316.

presence of God that hovers over and revives the primal forces within us.<sup>2</sup>

We may define the *Spiritual Life* as man or woman under the action of the ever-coming God actively allowing God to free him or her from all that obstructs the ever-invading love and power of God in order to be more available for God.

We are always restless in this life because our present life is temporal; our present state is not what we are meant to be finally when we come face to face with God. It is for this reason that St. Augustine says that we shall only be fulfilled at the end of time when we shall rest in God.<sup>3</sup> And so briefly, in the modern theological language, we can also define eschatology as the doctrine of the end of the world and history of mankind; the study of the last things, *ta eschata*.<sup>4</sup>

## A. The aim of the Thesis

The aim of this paper is to show that there is a relationship between eschatology and spiritual life in the *De Civitate Dei* of Augustine. The eschatological feeling in the spiritual lives of the Roman North African Christians was fostered by the many conflicts that they encountered in the Roman Empire. There is no doubt that persecutions and other hardships helped to instill a feeling that the Roman North Africans were mere pilgrims on this earth, and so they looked forward to the day when God would bring the present order to an end and establish peace forever. This study also aims at uncovering the fact that the instrument that sustains us in the present life is hope through

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<sup>2</sup> D.J. Billy, "Faith Seeking Understanding: Spiritual Direction's Sapiential Function," in *Review for religious*, Quarterly 63.2, (2004), 136.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 10, 15, *The Works of Saint Augustine, III, Part 1-Books*, vol. 1, New City Press, Hyde Park, New York 1997, 101-102.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. Filoramo, "Escatologia," *DPAC*, vol. 1, AF, Marietti, Casale Monferrato 1983, 1204; J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1963, 360.

the Church. The Church serves as the means for receiving grace, consolation and food for the journey since we believe that no man is an island and that God Himself is a communion of love.

## **B. Justification of the topic**

The reason I chose this topic is because I have always been fascinated by the writings of Augustine, especially the *City of God* and so I thought I must treat it for my thesis. The other reason is that concerning this topic, there is still a lot to treat and reflect about. The *City of God* is an example of how Augustine knows how to adapt the biblical eschatological feeling to the historical situation of the world. The less privileged circumstances in which we live make us turn easily to religious hope, future hope, that one day things will be better. Therefore, I want to show that there is a relationship between eschatology and spiritual life. It is living a spirituality of the eschatological life that I have proposed and developed.

## **C. Originality of the Thesis**

The originality of this thesis lies in combining Augustine's distinctive understanding of the Christian religious hope and its influence on the spiritual life of the Christians of his time with its implications for the contemporary Christian spiritual life.<sup>5</sup> This research retrieves some of the best insights of Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* concerning Christian hope, reflecting on them, synthesizing them and appropriating them for our Christian spiritual lives.

## **D. Methodology**

This piece of work describes Augustine's life-long commitment to Christian hope and his spiritual experience as it comes out from the

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge 1991, 131-150. Here, we must observe that this research is not only a systematic presentation of Augustine's eschatological doctrine, but it is also a synthetic narrative of this very doctrine.

Christian experience of his own people in North Africa. In dealing with this topic, a comparative and contextualizing method has been used in order to show that the *De Civitate Dei* was written in a particular historical moment. This dissertation has treated the themes of eschatology and spiritual life in the *De Civitate Dei* in comparison with other historical situations like the *Eschatology and Spiritual Life in the Jewish world* and *New Testament*. But especially, we have treated our theme in relationship with *The Book of Rules* of Tyconius. We have also taken into consideration other works of St. Augustine thereby allowing the exact understanding of the idea of the *Eschatology and Spiritual Life in the De Civitate Dei* to come out.

### **E. Limits of the Research**

The main document for this dissertation is St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, but it has also taken into consideration the history behind it. Obviously, Augustine used many sources in the writing of the *De Civitate Dei*, but most of them are either lost entirely or only survive in fragments. This research is not only confined to the practical implications of the Christians at the time of Augustine, but it is also an adaptation to the contemporary Christian spiritual life.

### **F. Division of the work**

Our work is divided and treated in six chapters. In chapter one, we have taken into consideration the different elements that come together to make-up the feeling and *attitude* of eschatology. In chapter two, this study proceeds to treat the *social, economic* and *religious situation* among the Roman North African Christians. In chapter three, we tackle the way Augustine dealt with the problem of the eschatology and spiritual life in his ecclesiology. Chapter four is the *Contextualization of the De Civitate Dei*. Chapter five deals with the relationship between the Eschatology and Spiritual Life in the *De Civitate Dei* and the spiritual experience of the people in North Africa

at the time of Augustine. The thesis ends with chapter six which discusses the concept of the Christian Hope in the *De Civitate Dei*. It is my hope that this brief summary of the contents of the whole thesis has helped to give the reader a clear picture of how our theme has developed.

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE PLACE OF CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE *DE CIVITATE DEI*

### INTRODUCTION

Talking about *Christian Hope*, the term *eschatology* that deals with the end of the world, is neither found in Augustine nor in any other Church Fathers although some related views are dealt with by Augustine.<sup>6</sup> Creation and time will come to an end and humanity will experience a physical death thereby ushering in Christ's second coming. There will be the resurrection and judgement of both the living and the dead. The good souls will go to heaven while the evil ones will go to eternal damnation. The idea of the Christian eschatological hope is the *face-to-face vision* of God. Shedding some light on Augustine's thought on eschatological themes, G. Filoramo says: "Common to these different treatments is the fundamental aspiration to the blessed life promised to the Christian, a life in which the redeemed will finally be able to contemplate God directly."<sup>7</sup> And

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. Filoramo, "Eschatology," in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, vol. 1, edited by A. Di Berardino, translated from Italian by A. Walford, James Clarke and Co., Cambridge 1992, 284-286.. For a treatment of Augustine's eschatological ideas, see B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge 1991, 131-150.

<sup>7</sup> G. Filoramo, "Eschatology," in the *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, vol. 1, 284.

in the *De Trinitate*, Augustine argues that total and everlasting happiness in the next life is promised to the one who is faithful and good in this unhappy life.<sup>8</sup>

The soul's conversion with its reformation and renewal is an ongoing process throughout this life until the renewed image is separated from its body by death and, then, reunited with it at the resurrection in order to face the last judgement and the beatific vision. Therefore, in talking about Augustine's concept of Christian hope, we shall consider some fundamental issues of Christian eschatology namely death, resurrection, judgement and eternal happiness or unhappiness.

### A. *MUNDUS TRANSIT*

Augustine holds that this present world will be transformed so that a place worthy of living in can be provided for the spiritual person.<sup>9</sup> Indeed in the future, the material world will change. Augustine sees the future change of the material world as a transformation and not as a destruction.<sup>10</sup> The reason for the partial destruction of the universe will be in order to purify it. Just like our bodies turn from *corpus animale* to *corpus spiritale*, so also the material world will change from old to new.<sup>11</sup> Augustine defends this position later against Porphyry's denial.<sup>12</sup> I personally support Augustine's view; this is what I believe in, and I think that many other Christians hold in high

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Trinitate* 13, 10, vol. IV, a cura di G. Beschin, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1973, 528.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 16, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1991, 144, 146; *Haggai* 2, 7-10: "The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts"

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 17, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 146, 148.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. T. E. Clarke, "St. Augustine and Cosmic Redemption," in *Theological Studies* 19 (1958) 133-164.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 176, 178.

esteem this notion. But Porphyry and his followers deny the future destruction of the world saying neither water nor flame can ever wipe out the whole of human race. The opinion of Augustine, and indeed my own view is that if Porphyry and his followers had humbly referred to the way Peter understood matters, they would have been bound to admit at least a partial destruction of the material world even if they still denied its total destruction:

Moreover, St. Peter, in one of his Epistles, makes it clear that it is not the whole universe but merely the earth that is to 'perish,' and that even this part of the universe is not really to 'perish,' in the full sense of the word. His words are: 'the world that then was, deluged with water, perished. But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by that same world have been stored up, being reserved for fire against the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men.'<sup>13</sup>

Augustine accuses the *Neo-Platonic Philosophers* using two statements from the *letter of Peter*:

They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men (*2 Peter 3, 5-7*).

The other passage that Augustine appeals to is the following:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved

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<sup>13</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24. 1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XLX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 178: "In epistula quoque apostoli Petri, ubi aqua inundatus qui tunc erat perisse dictus est mundus, satis clarum est, et quae pars mundi a toto significata, et quatenus perisse sit dicta, et qui caeli repositi igni reservandi in diem iudicii et perditionis hominum impiorum." Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, CUA Press, Washington D. C. 1964, 318.

with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! (2 Peter 3, 10-11).

Augustine argues that the letter of Peter gives witness to at least the partial destruction of the world.<sup>14</sup>

However, for Augustine, it is the form of this world that will pass away, and not its nature. As St. Paul writes:

I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away (1 Corinthians 7, 29-31).<sup>15</sup>

Other bible passages about the transformation of the world must be viewed in the perspective of the above quoted Pauline text, for example: “And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever” (1 John 2, 17). Consequently, such texts point to the context of the partial transformation of the world.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 180.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 178. Here a comparison with the partial destruction of the material world by flood is made.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 178.

## 1. New Heaven and New Earth

Our hope for good moral living as Christians lies in the belief that there will be a new heaven and a new earth as we read from the book of the *Revelation*:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (*Revelation 21, 1-4*).

We must remain steadfastly agnostic about the time of the world's end, and skeptical about even the most respectable Christian attempts to calculate it from scripture and contemporary events:

It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to earth's remotest end (*Acts 1: 7-8*).

I strongly feel that it is not God's will that people should ever know when the end is going to come. In this case, it is enough for us as Christians to be watchful, and live lives that are worthy of the Kingdom of God:

The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him." Then all those wedding attendants woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when

the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other attendants arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "In truth I tell you, I do not know you." So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour (*Matthew 25: 5-13*).

The coming of the new earth and heaven will allow those who now follow Christ in faith to see his glory directly and will fill the Church with glory; in my own view, this event should not be confused with the millennium which according to Augustine will be part of history.

When we talk about the new earth, and heaven, we are referring to the period outside the normal human time, and so it is eternity that we are taking into consideration. My conviction is that it is one thing to rest in the Lord within this present time, and another thing to pass beyond all time and be united with God; the maker of time without end. There will rather be a 'Spiritual Sabbath' at the end of history whose purpose will be to direct the gaze of the faithful beyond this world to the incorruption and immortality of the eternal new earth, and heaven. Therefore, our hope in the return of Jesus Christ and in the resurrection that is to follow, should be in fact, the main legitimate source of consolation for all the Christians who rightly mourn the death of their loved ones.

But before the new earth, and heaven come on the scene, the last judgement will take place. This will be the purifying process of the final revelation that will cleanse the Church and its members of the remains of sin:

But each person's handiwork will be shown for what it is. The day which dawns in fire will make it clear and the fire itself will test the quality of each person's work. The one whose work stands up to it will be given his wages; the one whose work is burnt down will suffer the loss of it, though he himself will be saved; he will be saved as someone might expect to be saved from a fire (*1 Corinthians 3: 13-15*).

According to Augustine, when the new earth and heaven appear, this present world will be made clean and the just people will be accorded their rightful place as we can note from this quotation:

Having concluded his prophecy of the judgement awaiting bad men, St. John has to speak of what is to befall the good. For, once he has elaborated upon our Lord's brief words, 'And these will go into everlasting punishment, he goes on to develop the implications of our Lord's conclusion, 'but the just into everlasting life.'<sup>17</sup>

I think that Augustine's purpose here is much more to clarify his theology of Christian hope than to reinforce a vision of the Church; he aims at sharpening the distinction between the temporal working of God's saving grace in any age of human history, and its *eschatological fullness* in the rest that is utterly beyond time, and the world as we know them.

In a way, *eschatology* has been realized in Jesus Christ even though it also points to the future. Just before Jesus Christ appeared on the scene, there came John the baptist to prepare the way for Him. John preached repentance in order for the people to enter a renewed covenant community. He proclaimed an impending judgement and called on people to forsake their sins before it should come. He baptized those who repented.<sup>18</sup> Now, Jesus Christ, demands that we clarify certain essential aspects of our lives. His central message like that of the preaching of the primitive Church is based on *eschatology*.<sup>19</sup> It is based on the Kingdom of God<sup>20</sup> that has arrived

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<sup>17</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 16, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 144: "Finito autem iudicio, quo praenuntiavit iudicandos malos, restat ut etiam de bonis dicat. Iam enim explicavit quod breviter a Domino dictum est: Sic ibunt isti in supplicium aeternum; sequitur ut explicet, quod etiam ibi connectitur: Iusti autem in vitam aeternam." Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, CUA Press, Washington D. C. 1964, 291.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. K. S. Latourette, *A History of the expansion of Christianity, The first five centuries*, vol. I., Harper and Row, New York 1970, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P. Ricoeur, *Il conflitto delle interpretazioni*, traduzione dal francese, Jaca Book, Milano 1977, 417.

<sup>20</sup> After being baptised by John the baptist, Jesus began His ministry with divine authority. Right away, He proclaimed to Israel the nearness of the Kingdom of God (*Mark* 1,

through Him and yet that is still to come in the future (realized and future eschatology combined). The members of the Kingdom of God are those people who put themselves under the reign of God as the prayer of Our Father shows: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (*Matthew 6, 10*). Consequently, the Kingdom of God consists in the people who do the will of God, like in Jesus Christ who is totally dedicated to the will of God and to the preaching of the reign of God and instructs His disciples about the Kingdom of God (*Cf. Acts of the Apostles 1, 3*).

Two aspects of the *eschatology* are presented in the Synoptic Gospels: its reality and its degree of nearness.<sup>21</sup> In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus preaches in some striking words at the beginning of His public ministry: “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel” (*Mark 1, 15*). He emphasizes the importance of the present moment: “He also said to the multitudes,

When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘a shower is coming;’ and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘there will be scourging heat;’ and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? (*Luke 12, 54-56*).

The real ground of moral obligation is the perceptible saving action of God in Jesus Christ’s coming and activity, his revelation of redemption, which is both historical and eschatological, and which guarantees the accomplishment which is still to come.<sup>22</sup> So Jesus Christ is not only the *Messiah* who has already come, but also the ultimate *Saviour* and *Judge*, whose coming is still awaited.

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14-15). He called His first disciples (*Cf. Mark 1, 16-20*), taught not like the Scribes (*Cf. Mark 1, 22*), healed the sick, exorcised demons and over-powered Satan (*Cf. Mark 1, 32-34; 3, 22-27*).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. H. J. Cadbury, “Acts and Eschatology,” *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, edited by W. D. Davies and D. Danube in honour of C. H. Dodd, The University Press, Cambridge 1956, 316.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. R. Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (orig. ted.), Herder and Herder, New York 1965, 25.

But what sort of things do we really expect to happen before the new earth, and heaven are ushered in? There is a twofold emphasis in the Christian doctrine of the last things, apart from stressing the reality and completeness of the present salvation, it points believers to certain great *eschatological events* located in the future.<sup>23</sup> Afterwards, the assurance of living in the Messianic age and enjoying the first fruits of the Spirit gives birth to the idea of God's Kingdom as a region or state, situated exclusively in the future, which is reserved as a prize for those who struggle in this life. *Clement of Rome*, for example, spoke of St. Peter and St. Paul, and other nameless Christians as having been granted a place in heaven as a reward for the trials they endured on earth:

But, to drop the examples furnished by antiquity. Let us come to the athletes nearest to us in time. Let us take the noble examples of our own generation. It was due to jealousy and envy that the greatest and most holy pillars were persecuted and fought to the death. Let us pass in review the good Apostles: Peter, who through unmerited jealousy underwent not one or two, but many hardships and, after thus giving testimony, departed for the place of glory that was his due. Through jealousy and strife Paul demonstrated how to win the prize of patient endurance: seven times he was imprisoned; he was forced to leave and stoned; he preached in the East and the West; and, finally, he won the splendid renown which his faith had earned.<sup>24</sup>

*Justine* too, regards the Kingdom of heaven as a prize for virtuous conduct to be obtained after death.<sup>25</sup> This means that our confident and joyous assurance that the age to come has already broken into the present age fades into the background.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 459.

<sup>24</sup> Clément of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 5ff., *The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch*, Ancient Christian Writers, No. 1, editors: J. Quasten and J. C. Plumpe, translated by J. A. Kleist, The Newman Press, London 1961, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Justin, *Dialogue avec Tryphon.*, 117, 3, Tome II, Librairie Alphonse Picard et Fils, Paris 1909, 201, 203.

However, the Church, the Bible and the apostolic tradition, regarding salvation still teach that God has intervened once and for all in human history. That in baptism, we receive the guarantee of the promised inheritance; we are marked for the final redemption of the soul and body at the *eschatology*.<sup>26</sup> Through baptism, we participate in the resurrection; we die and rise again with Jesus Christ, and live the life of the Spirit.<sup>27</sup> From another angle, through our reception of the Holy Eucharist, the eschatological bread of heaven is made available within the present order.<sup>28</sup> This means that as the new people of God we are already feasting in the Eucharist on the *eschatological banquet* prophesied by Isaiah (*Cf. Isaiah. 25, 61*). All the same Augustine tells us that the future is the Christian's favourite tense because it is only in the future that we shall become the Sabbath day.<sup>29</sup> Our pilgrimage will end into a happy life, *beata vita*, which is eternal life.

## 2. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF HUMAN BEINGS

As we well know, like any other mortal thing, human beings die. Augustine notes that just as the soul dies when God leaves it (when a person turns against God), so does the body when the soul leaves it. The body becomes lifeless in this process, as the soul becomes wisdomless.<sup>30</sup> This means that there are two types of deaths. The soul dies when God leaves it; in this case, death implies that the soul no longer has wisdom.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the body dies when the soul

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, "Early Patristic Eschatology," essay in *Scottish journal of Theology occasional papers*, No. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. S. Cirillo di Gerusalemme, *Le Catechesi* 20, 5, a cura di E. Barbisan, Trento 1966, 411-412.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 461.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei*, 22, 30. 1, *De Civitate Dei*, III (Libri XIX-XXII), vol. V/3, a cura di Domenico Gentili, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1991, 414.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Trinitate* 4, 5, vol. IV, a cura di G. Beschin, 572, 574.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 13, 2-2, *De Civitate Dei*, II (Libri XI-XVIII), vol. V/2, a cura di D. Gentili, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1988, 222, 224. This is the irrevocable damnation of a soul, its total abandonment by God. See also G. O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: A*

departs from it; at this moment the body has no life. In the dying of the body, death separates the invisible soul from the visible body; it is a blessing for good people and a curse for bad ones. And indeed, death is a neutral thing, which in itself is neither good nor bad, and when the last day of this life comes, it separates two things that had been joined together, the invisible soul from the visible flesh, the sentient soul from the flesh in which the soul operates because without the soul the flesh senses nothing.<sup>32</sup>

However, for us Christians, physical death should not be seen as the end of life, but as a necessary passage from mortality and corruptibility to the state of incorruptibility and immortality.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, we should always live with the reality in mind that this present life will one day come to an end and so feel the urge to always fix our eyes on the future eschatological life. This realisation will help us to have a true experience of God in the different circumstances of our lives; in our poverty, grief, and other life's frustrations. In whatever we do and say, we should have in view the eschatological eternal life so that we can already now begin to live happily and hopefully. Therefore, the invitation coming our way is for us to avoid remaining closed only in ourselves and our plans; clinging to our reputation and glory; living in this present world as though it is eternal, or as if everything depends on us.

We should know that the whole of our human life is a journey leading us home; a way towards becoming what we really are, thus

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*Reader's Guide*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1999, 150: Death is a consequence of Adam's sin. But Augustine introduces the notion of a second kind of death based on references to 'the second death' in Revelation 2: 11, 20,6 etc., that of the soul.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Sermo* 335K, 1, *Sermones, V (273-340/A)*, vol. XXXIII, a cura di M. Recchia, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1986, 932; C. Lambot, "Sermons inédits de S. Augustin pour des fêtes des saints," in *Revue bénédictine* 59 (1949) 69.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Trinitate* IV, 24, vol. IV, a cura di G. Beschin, 214; S. Kowalczyk, "La mort dans la doctrine de saint Augustin," in *Estudio Augustiniano* 10 (1975) 357-372; R. Teske, "Immortality," in *Modern Schoolman* 63 (1986) 233-249.

discovering our deepest identity and gradually opening ourselves to God and other people. I am aware that things like grief, and other hardships in life bring us some negative feelings and depression, and so they are painful. But this should not make us retreat into ourselves; rather through grief, hardships, and emptiness we should access the renewal that comes about with our opening up to communion with the universe, with others and God. Basically, the good and bad times of life should prepare us for death. This eschatological message is an encouragement to us in times when our strength diminishes, health declines, memory weakens and when as old people, we feel less able to face conflict and lose our friends.

Old age and life towards the end of this physical life can be compared with the moment when we are just born and life is full of hope, for example both when we are old and when we are babies we need to be fed, washed and dressed, and we do not communicate so much through words as through the eyes, touch and smiles; we basically depend on other people's assistance. This basically shows that we are conceived and born for communion with other people and God. Consequently, when we look forward to the eschatological eternal life, we rediscover the gift of communion. So just as this physical life can be beautiful so too can death; it is the way that every person is called towards the attainment of eternal life. However, this is not to say that some deaths are not cruel; there are sudden deaths that leave a terrible vacuum, but the sadness of this is above all for those who stay behind and wait for their turn; the one who dies even suddenly, if he is a believer, attains eternal life.

In the case of the resurrection of the dead, it was affirmed in the faith of early Christianity and was incorporated into the Creed of the early Church.<sup>34</sup> In line with this, Augustine upheld the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh as a central teaching of Christianity so much that he even used it to oppose some pagan philosophical ideas against the resurrection of the body and giving it a prominent position in his

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. G. Pelland, "Dans l'attente de la resurrection: un theme central de l'evangelisation dans l'Eglise Ancienne," in *Sciences et Esprit* 28 (1976) 125-146.

teaching on Christian hope.<sup>35</sup> Arguing against the epicurean moral principle of *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die* (Cf. *1 Corinthians 15, 32*), Augustine notes that the proposition is wrong and instead asserts that the resurrection of the dead forms the basis of our Christian hope and faith.<sup>36</sup>

In the resurrection, the old animal body will be changed into a new and spiritual body that will be clothed in incorruptibility and immortality.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, we can well notice that Augustine's doctrine of the resurrection stresses the restoration of the unity of the body and soul.<sup>38</sup> Augustine holds that the soul's resurrection is its coming alive in faith<sup>39</sup> and attributes the effectivity of this resurrection to the Father through the Son's divinity, and that of the body, he appropriates it to the Father through the Son's humanity.<sup>40</sup>

For Augustine, both sexes will resurrect, and so the female sex will not be expected to become male as it is natural and not a defect. In the resurrection, the female sex will be free of the necessity of intercourse and childbirth. The female organs will be part of a new beauty that

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. H. J.I. Marrou, *The Resurrection and St. Augustine's Theology of Human Values*, translated by M. Consolata, Villanova Press, Villanova, Pennsylvania, 1966, 1-51; A. Trapè, "Escatologia e antiplatonismo di sant'Agostino," in *Augustinianum* 18 (1978) 237-244.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Sermo* 361, 2, *Sermones, VI (341-400)*, vol. XXXIV, a cura di V. Paronetto, A. M. Quattiroli, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1989, 346.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 22, 21, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di Domenico Gentili, 376; P. Fredriksen, "Vile Bodies: Paul and Augustine on the Resurrection of the Flesh," in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective*, edited by M. S. Burrows and P. Rorem, W. M. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1991, 84-87.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. K. E., Børresen, "Augustine, interprete du dogme de la resurrection quelques aspects de son anthropologie dualiste," in *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969) 141-155.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Sermo* 127, 7, *Sermones, III/1 (117-150)*, vol. XXXI/1, a cura di M. Recchia, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1990, 142, 144.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Tractatus* 23, 15, *In Io. Evang. Tractatus, I (1-50)*, vol. XXIV/1, a cura di V. Tarulli, Città Nuova, Roma 1968, 556.

will not excite the lust of the beholder. There will not be lust in the resurrection, but only praises of God for His wisdom and compassion for freeing men and women from corruption.<sup>41</sup>

The passion, death and resurrection of Jesus have a symbolic meaning of being the model of our own sufferings, death and resurrection, and they should be an encouragement to us all. In fact according to Augustine, the resurrection of Jesus is a sacrament (*sacramentum*) and model (*exemplum*) of our own resurrection.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, the Christian apologetics hold the resurrection of Christ as the answer to all objections against and oppositions to the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body and soul.<sup>43</sup>

The fruits of our own resurrection can already be seen in the way we display our lives here on earth as believers. In a way, the eschatological event has already begun with the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ; God has proclaimed His power over death, and, as a pledge of what is to come, He has sent us His Spirit so that we may right now be sure of participating in the eventual coming of His kingdom. In this case, our preaching of the Good News is conveying the joy of listening, of observing the word of God, doing God's will and obtaining God's salvation.<sup>44</sup> There is no doubt therefore, that our essential task whilst in this world is to prepare and supply a pure leaven for eternal life.<sup>45</sup> However, in our preaching of the Word of God, we should move from merely stressing the theme of the Kingdom to announcing the Lordship of Jesus Christ.<sup>46</sup> The reason

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 22, 17, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 366.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Trinitate* 4, 6, vol. IV, a cura di G. Beschin, 184; B. Studer, "Sacramentum et exemplum chez Augustin," in *Recherches augustinienes* 10 (1975) 87-141; R. Dodaro, *Language and Justice: Political Anthropology in Augustine's De Civitate Dei (Doctoral dissertation)*, University of Oxford, Oxford 1992, 118-140.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Sermo* 361, 8, *Sermones, VI (341-400)*, a cura di V. Paronetto, 354.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. E. R. Martinez, *Luca-Atti, un viaggio spirituale*, seconda edizione, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma 1999, 71.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. J. Maritain, *The living thoughts of Saint Paul*, Cassell and Company, Ltd., London 1948, 108.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. L. Padovese, *Introduzione alla Teologia Patristica*, 95.

for this is because of the fact that Jesus Christ proclaimed the Kingdom, and in turn, we as the Christian community should announce Him and His resurrection as the first born of that Kingdom.<sup>47</sup>

Consequently, it is the love for the Lord and spiritual union with Him in the present that feed us with the hope of sharing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ of which St. Paul speaks about saying: “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (*Romans 6, 5*). We can therefore, safely conclude that we in a way, live in the climate of realized *eschatology* through the salvation brought about by Jesus Christ, we have resurrected with Him and we are buried with Him in baptism in which we are also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead (*Cf. Colossians, 2, 12-13*). In any case, the Lordship of God still remains to be accomplished in the future although it is present in the resurrected Jesus Christ as well.<sup>48</sup>

We should really believe in the future reign of God. It is like at the moment we see God dimly in a mirror, but later we shall see Him face to face. Now we only know Him in part, however, in future we shall understand Him fully, even as we have been fully understood (*Cf. 1 Corinthians 13, 12*). It is for this reason that Christians need to couple their expectations for the Kingdom’s coming and Jesus’ *Parousia* with some fervent missionary activities.<sup>49</sup> Needless to say that we have to be separated from real mysticism because of the fact that a state of complete blessedness only seems to be possible in the future, when

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. L. Padovese, *Introduzione alla Teologia Patristica*, 95.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. L. Padovese, *Introduzione alla Teologia Patristica*, 95.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. J. E. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine*, 4.

Christ will reveal himself at the appointed time, to take possession of His kingdom.<sup>50</sup>

In conclusion, we may wish to note that the Father through the Son will raise-up souls in order for them to enjoy divine substance.<sup>51</sup> And the soul's enjoyment of the divine substance will come only after the judgement that will follow the resurrection to immortality.

## B. THE LAST JUDGEMENT

Many people wonder why the final judgement is called the last judgement. The reason is in order to differentiate it from the judgement God makes in the present time and those made in the past. In the past, God's judgement resulted in the punishment of the first persons to be created when they were disobedient in the garden of Eden (Cf. *Genesis* 3, 8ff) and the condemnation of bad angels (Cf. *2 Peter* 2, 4).<sup>52</sup>

The reason Augustine gives for calling the last judgement, judgement in the strict sense, is that there will be no chance for dispute against the ruling:

This will be a day of judgement in the precise sense that there will be no place for any uncomprehending complaint that this sinner has been blessed or that that good man has been punished. On that day, we shall see plainly the true fullness of felicity of all the saints and only of the saints, as we shall see the supreme and deserved misery of the wicked and of the wicked alone.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. M. Dibelius, *Paul*, edited and completed by WernerGeorg Kümel, longmans, London 1964, 109.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Tractatus* 23, 12, In *Io. Evang. Tractatus*, I (1-50), vol. XXIV/1, a cura di V. Tarulli, Città Nuova, Róma 1968, 552.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 1, *De Civitate Dei*, III (Libri XIX-XXII), vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 96.

<sup>53</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 1, *De Civitate Dei*, III (Libri XIX-XXII), vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 98: "Iste quippe dies iudicii proprie iam vocatur, eo quod nullus ibi erit imperitae querellae locus, cur iniustus ille sit felix et cur ille iustus infelix. Omnium namque tunc nonnisi bonorum vera et plena felicitas et omnium nonnisi malorum digna et summa

In the last judgement, one thing will be clear namely that true and complete happiness belongs to all the good people, and complete unhappiness to all the wicked.

Augustine tackled the question of the last judgement in order to argue with *Hesychius* who was the bishop of *Salonita* on the question of the time of the coming of the last judgement.<sup>54</sup> By dealing with the idea of the last judgement, Augustine also wanted to expose the Christian belief in the last judgement against the ungodly and unbelieving.<sup>55</sup>

## 1. The arrival of the Last Judgement

The life of faith is a life in, with, and for Christ, a sharing in and imitation of His death and resurrection.<sup>56</sup> We should believe in our *eschatological victory*. We are invited to see the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as imminent although we do not know exactly when that will occur. St. Paul shares the general ignorance on the time when the actual end will come when he writes to say:

But as to the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people say, ‘there is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape (*1 Thessalonians 5, 1-3*).

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infelicitas apparebit.” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 251.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Epistolae* 199, *Epistolae III (185-270)*, vol. XXIII, a cura di L. Carrozzi Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1974, 348-406.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 1.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 96.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. A. Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism, Christ in the Mystical Teaching of Paul*, Herder and Herder, New York 1960, 146-62.

St. Paul thought that time was running out for marriage (*Cf. 1 Corinthians 7, 29, 31*). He praised the community at Corinth for its expectation of the Lord's coming and gave thanks to God for their spiritual gifts saying: "so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1 Corinthians 1, 7-8*).

The belief in the early coming of the *eschatology* means that the whole of our lives have to be looked at from the point of view of the end of the world as we know it today. The present life is only an intermediate state, and what is to be done in the Church, mission, family, politics, and business, is to be done "until Jesus Christ comes" (*Cf. 1 Corinthians 11, 26*). We have to live in this world as citizens of the new world still to come in the future.

In the meantime, Jesus Christ demands that we set ourselves free from our human inclinations in order for us to announce well the imminent Kingdom of God,<sup>57</sup> and so there is no need of wasting time: "Another of the disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.'" (*Matthew 8, 21-22*). The very person of Jesus signifies the demand for decision, in so far as His cry, as God's last word before the end, calls people to decision.<sup>58</sup>

The *Parousia of the Lord* and the idea of the Lord's coming should be constituent parts of our thinking as Christians because of our faith in the resurrection and Lordship of Jesus Christ. Indeed, we have been crucified with Christ; we no longer live for ourselves, but Jesus Christ lives in us; and the life we now live in the flesh, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loves us and gave himself for us (*Cf. Galatians 2, 20*). St. Paul thought that he would live to see the Lord's coming:

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. D. Goergen, "Christ," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1993, 159: Jesus' healings and exorcisms were God's love in action.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, SCM Press, London 1965, 9.

For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep...then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord (*1 Thessalonians 4, 15, 17*).

But it was only at first that Paul hoped to live long enough to see Christ's return. However, when he realized that death was not far away, his hope seemed to have been frustrated, and he lamented (*Cf. 2 Corinthians 5, 2; 4*) that he may not put on the heavenly garment as soon as death came, but must expect to be freed from his earthly clothing, and to remain for some time, "naked", in the grave. All the same elsewhere he indicated that even in this case he hoped "to depart, and (then) be (at once) with Christ" (*Cf. Philippians 1, 23*); and it did not seem as if this idea came to him only at the end of his life.

Now, how does Augustine describe the eventual coming of the last judgement? We well know that according to Augustine, and just like for all of us believers, the last judgement will inevitably come; our claims are entirely scriptural prophecies.

However, Augustine is firm on the fact that the exact time of the last judgement is not known. He takes seriously, and literally the details predicted in Scripture for the end of the world. He insists on the literal fulfillment of this passage from the gospel of Matthew:

This good news of the Kingdom will be proclaimed to the whole world as evidence to the nations. And then the end will come (*Matthew 24:14*).

Augustine uses some Scriptural passages where Jesus Himself was a witness to the issue of the last judgement in order to prove his points right as follows: "He said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority" (*Acts of the Apostles 1, 7*). Consequently, it was Christ's wish that the apostles

should not give witness to the end of the world history but to His name and resurrection. This means that the exact time of the last judgement is only known to the one who has fixed it and this is no other than God himself. It is important to note that the end of the world is very much connected with the last judgement, and so the last judgement will take place right after the end of this world.<sup>59</sup>

The other proving words on the uncertainty of the arrival of the last judgement are from the Gospel of Matthew as follows: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only” (*Matthew 24, 36*). However, the right time of the last judgement will come after the Gospel has been preached throughout the world: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come” (*Matthew 24, 14*). When the Gospel will be preached to the whole world however, is not known by anybody. Augustine refers to *Jerome’s* information found in *Commentaria in Daniele* 3, 9.24 in his efforts to compute the precise day of the coming of the last judgement.<sup>60</sup> Jerome pointed out to say that *Eusebius* came to an inconclusive result while *Hippolytus* thought that the day would fall in the ‘seventieth week,’ that is ‘in the year 6,000.’ Some people held these arguments as a basis for predicting the arrival of the last judgement, but Augustine ruled them out to have been mere opinions.<sup>61</sup> I remember, in the past years, well before 1974, in my country Zambia, the members of the ‘Jehovas Witnesses’ sect popularly known as ‘Watch Towers’ were up in arms proclaiming that the last judgement and the end of the world would finally occur in 1975. Needless to say, this was only a mis-understanding, and mis-

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 16, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 146.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 23.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 172.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Epistola* 197, 5, *Epistolae III (185-270)*, vol. XXIII, a cura di L. Carrozzi, 336.

interpretation of the whole Gospel truth because really only God knows when the end of time and the last judgement will over take us.

## 2. The coming of the Antichrist

According to St. Paul, the day of judgement is *the Day of the Lord* (Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2, 2).<sup>62</sup> However, before this *day of the Lord* arrives, the *Antichrist* will appear:

There can be no doubt that what is here said refers to Antichrist and the day of judgement (or, as St. Paul calls it, the day of the Lord) which is not to come unless the 'apostate' (as Antichrist is here called) comes first. And, of course, this word, apostate, or rebel against the Lord God, which applies to all who are wicked, is especially applicable to Antichrist.<sup>63</sup>

The *Antichrist* is an *apostate* from God.<sup>64</sup> Augustine is surprised at the opinion of some people that Paul identified the Antichrist with *Nero*, but did not just speak openly about him for fear of being accused of slander in wishing ill to the Roman Empire.<sup>65</sup> The concept of the *Antichrist* implies that there will be a *Total Antichrist*.

Augustine refers a lot to some Old Testament prophecies that say that there will be the reign of the Antichrist soon before the coming of

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 19, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 152.

<sup>63</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 19.2, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 152: "Nulli dubium est eum de Antichristo ista dixisse, diemque iudicii (hunc enim appellat diem Domini) non esse venturum, nisi ille prior venerit, quem refugam vocat, utique a Domino Deo. Quod si de omnibus impiis merito dici potest, quanto magis de isto!" Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 297-298.

<sup>64</sup> 'Apostate' applies to all the wicked and much more to their prince, the devil. These form a sort of unity like that of the Total Christ, Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Genesi ad Litteram* 11, 22, vol. IX/2, a cura di L. Carrozzi, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1989, 584, 586.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 19.3. *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 154.

the Son of God in His glory (*Cf. Daniel 7, 23-28*). Daniel too in his prophecy of the last judgement says that the Day of the Lord will be preceded by the coming of the Antichrist. He also ends his prophecy with an account of the eternal reign of the saints.”<sup>66</sup> But what else do we learn from some Old Testament Prophecies? We also learn that everybody will rise, some to eternal life while others to shame and eternal condemnation (*Cf. Daniel 12, 1-3*):

This passage is surprisingly like one in the Gospel, as far, at least, as concerns the resurrection of the body: ‘All who are in the tombs shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they who have done good shall come forth unto resurrection of life; but they who have done evil unto resurrection of judgement.’<sup>67</sup>

Augustine goes on to quote the prophet *Isaiah* who tells us too that some people will rise to perfect health: “Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust awake and sing for joy! For thy dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall” (*Isaiah 26, 19*).<sup>68</sup>

There are also prophecies that Jesus Christ will come to manifest His presence and execute judgement both on the just and unjust (*Cf.*

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<sup>66</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 23.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 172: “Daniel de hoc ultimo iudicio sic prophetat, ut Antichristum quoque prius venturum esse praenuntiet atque ad aeternum regnum sanctorum perducatur narrationem suam. Cum enim visione prophetica quattuor bestias significantes quattuor regna vidisset.” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 313.

<sup>67</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 23.2, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 176: “Sententiae illi evangelicae est locus iste simillimus de resurrectione dumtaxat corporum mortuorum. Nam qui illic dicti sunt esse *in monumentis*, ipsi hic *dormientes* in terrae aggere, vel, sicut alii interpretati sunt, *in terrae pulvere*; et sicut ibi: *procedent* dictum est, ita hic: *exurgent*; sicut ibi: *Qui bona fecerunt, in resurrectionem vitae; qui autem mala egerunt, in resurrectionem iudicii*; ita et isto loco: *Hi in vitam aeternam, et hi in opprobrium et in confusionem aeternam*.” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 315-316.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 21.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 162.

*Psalm 49, 3-5*).<sup>69</sup> While Jesus, in the past remained silent when subjected to the imperial judges (*Cf. Isaiah 53, 7*), in the future he will make His presence known by the voice of His judgement (*Cf. Psalm 49, 3-5*).<sup>70</sup>

Augustine uses the prophecy of *Malachi* (*Cf. Malachi 3, 1-6*) in order to show that the punishment of some people will be purificatory:

The words in the opening part of this prophecy, ‘like refining fire... refining and cleansing... purify the sons of Levi... refine them as gold,’ seem to make it clear that in the last judgement there are to be purgatorial pains meted out to some of the faithful.<sup>71</sup>

The kind of punishment being talked about here is like the one also described in *Isaiah*: “When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgement and by a spirit of burning” (*Isaiah 4, 4*).<sup>72</sup> According to Augustine, the Church gathered not only from the Hebrews, but from all other nations, will be purified by the last judgement like the floor is made clean by the winnowing wind such that there will be no one to still offer sacrifice for his sins.<sup>73</sup> And after the judgement has taken place, it will be clearly known that there is a wide gulf separating the good and the wicked. This gulf exists

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24.2, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 180.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 24.2, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 180.

<sup>71</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 25, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 184: “Ex his quae dicta sunt videtur/evidentius apparere in illo iudicio quasdam quorundam purgatorias poenas futuras.” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 319.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 25, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 184.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 25, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 184.

even now, only that we are not able to discern it (*Cf. Malachi 3, 17-4, 3*).<sup>74</sup> For this reason, there was a good reason to believe that *Elijah* would come before the judgement-seat so that he could explain the law to the Jews in order to make them believe in Christ and to love Him (*Cf. Malachi 4, 5ff*). There was a belief that Elijah still lived as it was taught to say he was taken-up from the world of men in a fiery chariot (*Cf. 2 Kings 2, 11*).<sup>75</sup>

Prophecies of judgement in the Old Testament do not point to Jesus Christ as the judge, however, there are some passages showing that where God speaks, He is identified with Christ.<sup>76</sup> Here we can give the example of *Isaiah 53, 7*: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” It is within the power of God to remove all hostile nations from the new city of Jerusalem,<sup>77</sup> but it is Christ who will sort out this task as is evident from the prophet *Zechariah*:

And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a first-born (*Zechariah 12, 9-10*).

And so Augustine is committed to teaching that even though the prophetic books say that it is God who will come at the last

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 27, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 190.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 29, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 192, 194.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 30.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 194.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 30.2, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 196.

judgement, He has given all judgement to the Son<sup>78</sup> especially because of the following words from the Gospel of John: “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son” (*John 5, 22*).

### 3. The destiny of the wicked

In the final drama, many events will take place some of which are the return of Elijah, the conversion of the Jewish people to faith in Jesus, the persecution of the Anti-Christ, the coming of Christ as judge, the resurrection of the dead, the separation of the good from the wicked, and the burning and renewal of the material world only then the final judgement will take place. Augustine teaches that it was Jesus Christ Himself who predicted the coming of the final judgement (*Cf. Matthew 11, 22, 24; John 5, 22-24*):

Now, then, to the matter in hand. When our Saviour was rebuking the cities in which He had performed great miracles without their believing in Him, and was putting foreign cities ahead of them, He said: ‘But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgement than for you; and a little further on, addressing another city, He said: ‘But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgement than for thee. In this text He makes it perfectly clear that the judgement day is to come.<sup>79</sup>

Judgement will take place at the rising of the dead (*Cf. Matthew 12, 41, 42; Revelation 20, 11ff*):

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 30.4, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XLX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 200.

<sup>79</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 5.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XLX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 104: “Ergo ipse Salvator cum obiurgaret civitates, in quibus virtutes magnas fecerat neque crediderant, et eis alienigenas anteponeret: *Verumtamen, inquit, dico vobis, Tyro et Sidoni remissius erit in die iudicii quam vobis; et paulo post alteri civitati: Amen, inquit, dico vobis, quia terrae Sodomorum remissius erit in die iudicii quam tibi (hic evidentissime praedicat diem iudicii esse venturum).*” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 256.

For, at the time Christ spoke these words concerning the men of Nineve and the queen of the south He was speaking, of course, about people who had died. And He foretold that these very people would rise again on judgement day.<sup>80</sup>

Jesus Himself will be the judge and everybody will be subject to it. All the disciples of Jesus will join Him coming from all over the world thereby presenting the idea of the universal reign of Christ. This is symbolised by the *twelve thrones* and the *twelve tribes* of Israel (Cf. *Matthew 19, 28*).<sup>81</sup> The agreed number of those who will be judges alongside Jesus is twelve because the numbers three and four are parts of seven and seven is a common symbol of universality:

This number twelve simply stands for some integral fullness of judges, made up as it is of two constituents of seven—a number which generally stands for wholeness. Take these constituents, namely three and four. One multiplied by the other gives us twelve, for four times three and three times four equal twelve. And there may be still other relevant meanings in this number twelve.<sup>82</sup>

At the time of the judgement, the wicked and the good presently mixed like wheat with tares will be separated:

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<sup>80</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 5 and 14, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 104: “De Ninevitis enim et regina Austri quando ista dicebat, de mortuis sine dubio loquebatur, quos tamen in die iudicii surrecturos esse praedixit.” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 257.

<sup>81</sup> “Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (*Matthew 19, 28*). This verse revealing those who will judge with Jesus Christ is found in some works of Augustine: Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Epistola 157, 37, Epistolae II (124-184/A)*, vol. XXII, a cura di L. Carozzi, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1971, 630; the pauperes Christ; *De Genesi ad Litteram* 11, 22, vol. IX/2, a cura di L. Carozzi, 584; 586.

<sup>82</sup> Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 5.3, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 106: “Duodenario quippe numero universa quaedam significata est iudicantium multitudo propter duas partes numeri septenarii, quo significatur plerumque universitas; quae duae partes, id est, tria et quattuor, altera per alteram multiplicatae duodecim faciunt; nam et quattuor ter et tria quarter duodecim sunt, et si qua alia huius duodenarii numeri, quae ad hoc valeat, ratio reperitur.” Translation: *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24, editor: R. J. Deferrari, translated by G. G. Walsh, 258.

He answered, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom; the weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear (*Matthew 13, 37-43*).

When the separation is made, it is believed that many people will be condemned for having failed to extend a hand to the poor (*Cf. Matthew 25, 34-35*).<sup>83</sup>

Augustine recalls the idea of the glorification of the body of Jesus and the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. He says Jesus will come to judge in the body in which He was judged (*Cf. John 5, 27-29*).<sup>84</sup> And expressing the seriousness of the punishment that will be given to the devil and all the wicked,<sup>85</sup> Augustine refers to the passage in *Revelation 10, 10-14*, namely that these two will be flung into *the lake of fire and sulphur*.

The question now is on what sort of people will judgement be passed, on the dead or the living? We may wish to know that judgement will be passed both on the living and the dead. This means that judgement will be passed on those people who will be found alive by Christ and also on those who would have died but risen (*Cf.*

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. R. Canning, *The Unity of Love for God and Neighbour in Saint Augustine*, Augustinian Historical Institute, Leuven 1993, 331-420.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 6.2, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 112.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 8.1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 121.

*Revelation 20, 13 and 14*).<sup>86</sup> This age (*hoc saeculum*) will present those alive in the condition in which they will be found.<sup>87</sup> Death and Hades will recall to life those who may have died (*Cf. Revelation 20, 13*).<sup>88</sup>

#### 4. Eternal happiness for the just

As Christians, we journey on in life without renouncing our citizenship in the temporal society to which we belong. However, we shall not enter heaven if we lose our faith on the way. Only faith makes us see life correctly during the time we are on our spiritual way to achieving communion with God.<sup>89</sup> It is also true to say that anybody who is wholly dedicated to the pursuit of truth and moral virtue is implicitly a citizen of heaven, and whoever abandons virtue for vice is excluded from it. In this world we can enjoy true peace and justice only through faith and hope, and the only true society is the City of God in the heavens.

Augustine refers to the Church as the City of God in a very general way. He speaks of the *City of God as God's Church* while from time to time equates the City of God with the Church. The Heavenly Jerusalem is in most cases taken for granted by Augustine.<sup>90</sup> Heaven is mainly theological because it deals with our salvation and happiness as related to the worship of the one true God. The theological content

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 15, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 142.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 15, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 144.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 15, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 144.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Agostino, *Esposizioni sui Salmi*, 118, a cura di T. Mariucci e V. Tarulli, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1976, 1181-1182; *Sermo.*, 18, 3, *The Works of Saint Augustine, Sermons I (1-19), Part III-Sermons*, vol. I, editor: J. E. Rotelle, translated by E. Hill, New City Press, Brooklyn, New York 1990, 374-375.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine*, The University press, Cambridge 1970, 117-118.

of heaven is found in Augustine's handling of Scripture. Throughout his life, Augustine sees Sacred Scripture as the new light from God that restores, heals, and brightens the inner eye of the human mind in the present life.<sup>91</sup> He shows how the Old Testament, which he follows in the main, in the Septuagint version, is one long prophecy and symbolization of Jesus Christ's coming.

Heaven is about the attainment of eternal joy; true happiness is possible in this world only through future hope rather than the present reality. In the meantime, we ought to share in the earthly peace and contribute to it. We need to make use of the earthly peace, defend and seek the compromise between human wills in respect to the provisions relevant to our mortal nature. We are invited to share in the earthly peace in order to eventually bring about eternal harmony. As aspirants of heaven, we should be concerned with knowing and loving God and bringing other people to doing the same.

Human beings are a *corpus permixtum*, where the good and bad people live side by side, to be separated only on the day of judgement. As Christians, we are called to be the "leaven to the imperial lump, transforming the shadowy vestiges of truth within the fallen community into the redeemed image of life together."<sup>92</sup> The key to the tension lies in the concept of realized eschatology.<sup>93</sup> It is because of Augustine's awareness of this tension that makes his view fruitful. He states that our meditation in this present life should be in the praise of God; for the eternal exultation of our life hereafter will be the praise

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Augustine, *Sermo*, 49, 3, *The Works of Saint Augustine, Part III-Sermons 20-50*, vol. II, editor: J. E. Rotelle, translated by E. Hill, New City Press, Brooklyn, New York 1990, 334-335.

<sup>92</sup> S. H. Peter, "Polemical Counterpoint in *De civitate Dei*" in *Augustinian studies* 6 (1975/6) 105.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. C. Dawson, 'St. Augustine and his Age,' *A Monument to St Augustine*, Sheed and Ward, London 1930, 72, 75.

of God; and none of us can become fit for the future life, who has not prepared himself for it in the present life.<sup>94</sup>

Meanwhile, the future is present in the Christian body, although it has not yet arrived. This is especially to be noticed when we gather around the table of the Eucharist with Christ as our head. Therefore, heaven is also among us. It follows that the whole congregation is offered as a universal sacrifice to God by the Jesus Christ who also offers Himself in suffering for us in the likeness of a slave, in order that we might become the body of which He is so great a head.

God created the world out of His infinite love and it is always tending back to Him. As human beings, we are also part of the life of this God-made world. Unfortunately, man sinned and so lost out from the glory of God through Adam and Eve. However, although man fell short of the glory of God at one point in history, God the Father chose to send His only Son Jesus Christ to come and save us, and so through Him, we have been redeemed. This means that the image of God in us is enlivened and re-activated more and more as we approach the moment of truth; the time of our death when we look forward to the experience of the beatific vision of the almighty God. After our physical death, we shall cross over to a peaceful destiny and achieve complete happiness; and our hearts will finally come to rest:

According to some African beliefs and cultures, as soon as a person dies, he becomes a living-dead so life is actually not ended with physical death, but is transformed which fact should give all of us a lot of hope for looking forward to some sort of life after death. We feel that this is in line with our Christian belief since even in Christianity we believe that soon after our physical existence, life is not destroyed, but only changed. Consequently, to a person of faith, it is a gain to experience some physical death whilst it is only a loss for a non-believer. However, it is also correct to say that Christian teaching about the human person stresses the uniqueness of our individual personalities and dualistic way of thinking about ourselves, namely

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. Agostino, *Esposizioni sui Salmi*, 148, 1, a cura di V. Tarulli, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1977, 865, 867.



that we are beings consisting of soul and body, and that the soul part of a humanbeing does in a way survive after death without a body until the Last Day.<sup>95</sup>

When we attain the fullness of the beatific vision, we shall at that instance see God as He really is. John helps us to know this truth when he writes these words: “Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure (*1 John 3, 2-3*).” It is from this that Augustine deduces the concept that the image of God will achieve its full likeness when it reaches His complete vision.<sup>96</sup> In any case, Jesus Christ will judge the good and the wicked at the end of time just before the experience of the *face-to-face vision* of God is attained. And the judgement will take place in accordance with the will and command of the Father.<sup>97</sup>

Reflecting then about the life of Jesus Christ, I should hasten to say that His life did not end with His passion and death on the cross. He was raised up in the resurrection on the third day, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father and will come again in glory to judge everybody, the living and the dead. Jesus Christ will actually come down from heaven in glory on the last day to judge the living and the dead, however, we all do not know how long this judgement will last.<sup>98</sup>

We are told that on the day of judgement, the good souls who kept their faith in the Lord will be separated from the evil ones and each of these groups will receive its eternal reward. It will then be clear that

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<sup>95</sup> J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Heinemann, London, 1985, 162.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Trinitate* 14, 24, vol. IV, a cura di G. Beschin, 608.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Sermo* 127, 10, *Sermones, III/1 (117-150)*, vol. XXX1/1, a cura di M. Recchia, 146.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XLX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 96.

true and complete happiness belongs to the good people while unhappiness belongs to the wicked.<sup>99</sup>

The eternal unhappiness that the wicked souls will experience is a sort of a *second death*. This sort of *second death* is a state of total separation from the life of God. It is a situation of complete and eternal exclusion from the *City of God* and an experience of the soul's eternal wretchedness. Therefore, Christians should fight hard to run away from this type of life. However, the souls of the good people will attain the Lord's Sabbath; the seventh day.<sup>100</sup> This Lord's seventh day is the *Lord's day*, the end without end (*fine sine fine*), the *City of God* where we shall be still, see, love and praise because we would have reached the kingdom with no end.<sup>101</sup>

As such, the end of a Christian will be a life of delight and contentment in and by God. Equality with the angels will result and God shall be the whole delight and satisfaction of the Holy City living in Him.<sup>102</sup> The destiny of the just is clear, namely that they will go to eternal life (*Cf. Matthew 25, 46*).<sup>103</sup> They will dwell in *the new heaven and the new earth* (*Cf. Revelation 21, 1*). There will be a common enjoyment of the full presence of God by every one of the just people. In the same way, they will enjoy the full freedom of suffering (*Cf. Revelation 21, 2-5*).<sup>104</sup> The transformation of the present world will

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 1, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 96.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 22, 30, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 414.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 22, 30, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 414.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *De Catechizandis rudibus* 47, CCSL XLVI, 170.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 16, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 144.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 16, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XIX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 146.

bring the just people liberation from the presence of the wicked (*Cf. 2 Peter 3, 3-13*).<sup>105</sup>

Approaching the end of his life, Augustine portrays an image of how our life will be when we attain the fullness of perfection in God. The elements that will characterize this time are perfection, peace, goodness, absence of toil, possession of knowledge, wisdom of God and inheritance of a spiritual body that transcends all kinds of carnal corruption.<sup>106</sup> In this case, we can safely say that the climax of Augustine's proposal of the aspiration of complete spiritual maturity is for our *corpus animale* to completely be transformed into a *corpus spirituale*.<sup>107</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In chapter six we have reflected about the Christian eschatological hope in relationship with the eschatology and spiritual life in the *De Civitate Dei; the City of God of Augustine*. Our main aim was to examine closely some traits of the eschatology in the *De Civitate Dei* and generally stress the fact that there is a better life after this earthly one thus the need for believers to continue living a good moral life whilst here on earth in order for them not to miss out of the future glory that awaits good people.

In studying Christian eschatological hope, and to help us drive our point home, we embarked on the examination of the themes pertaining

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 20, 18, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XLX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 150.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Avgvstinvs, *Civ. Dei* 22, 24.4, *De Civitate Dei, III (Libri XLX-XXII)*, vol. V/3, a cura di D. Gentili, 392.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Alfeche, "The Transformation from Corpus Animale to Corpus Spirituale according to Augustine," in *Augustiniana* 42 (1992) 239-310.

to the category of the *Last Things namely*: death, resurrection, judgement, eternal unhappiness and happiness. We proceeded to bring out the lesson that although we Christians shall die, we are invited to believe; trust and have hope in the resurrection of the body and soul. Our earthly lives will be transformed so much that the judgement of the last day will put us in front of God, and the truth about us will be brought to light and then there will come the reward of eternal happiness or the punishment of eternal unhappiness.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

As we come to the end of this thesis, “Eschatology and Spiritual Life,” we have no doubt that in one way or another, this research has made an important contribution in our attempt to finding the relationship between *Eschatology and Spiritual Life in the De Civitate Dei*. By relating Augustine’s understanding of *eschatology* with our Christian spiritual existence, this research has shown how eschatology and spirituality are closely connected. For this reason, our work has put together eschatology and spirituality. In a way, we have undoubtedly proposed that eschatology is the source of our religious hope and the final end of all things. It makes us trust in the fact that our restless hearts will eventually be brought to their tranquility in God at the end of our time here on earth.

What we have actually done is to make an interpretation of Augustine’s eschatology in the *De Civitate Dei* in the light of the Christian spiritual experience, namely, that we came from God and we shall go back to Him. And for Augustine, the dividing line between temporal and eternal existence is total transformation; the transformation of our material reality, and that of our world, which God will workout at the moment of our resurrection. According to Augustine, God will not destroy our human identity at the resurrection; it will rather remain as flesh and spirit. And so the world will not be annihilated.

The orientation and tendency of our lives is that we always long for happiness, and the reality of things is that we cannot achieve complete joy if we do not get it from God Himself in the *eschaton*. Consequently, the resurrection, in Augustine’s view, will mean the end of our existence in time as changeable, restless ‘fallen souls,’ and

the confirmation of the present, historically conditioned order of loves in the changelessness of eternal beatitude, or eternal self-destruction. For Augustine, the *eschaton* is not simply the end of this present age and the beginning of a new one, but the end of history itself and the beginning of the 'Eternal Sabbath,' when God who is beyond all time and all temporal succession, will 'rest in us.' God is going to reward all those people who during their lives in this world obey and follow His commandments out of love, and not out of duty. St. Augustine asserts that the goal for which all things have been made is nothing other than God Himself; this is evident in his whole work of the *De Civitate Dei*. This means that we are basically indebted to God, and so we need to pay back God's faithful Love for us with our faithful obedience. Consequently, and according to this work, the ideals of the Christian Life are shaped by eschatology, and eschatology and spiritual life are elements supportive of each other.

Following this trend of thought, we can safely conclude that the feeling for eschatology by and large, influenced the general spirituality of the people in North Africa at the time of Augustine which is also relevant to our spiritual life as Christians today, especially those of us who come from Africa, and live there. Mostly, Augustine's eschatological doctrine was based on the practices and the cherished hopes of some African Christians in his own day. He drew a distinction between time and eternity-between human existence now in history, with all the ambiguity of value and relationship that come from our life as changeable spirits embodied in a finite, material universe, and the final existence we long for; union with God. What Augustine taught was eschatological hope as total freedom from duration, extension and the utterly simple, and unchanging presence of God's being. However, we should mention here that actually, for most people, and according to the way they live here on earth, life means everything whilst heaven, and the eschatology mean little, or nothing at all. Consequently, these people might be inclined to think that once they are gone; after their physical death, that is the end of all forms of life. But in our case, as Christians, we should know that there is another and a more meaningful life after

this physical one, and so heaven, and the eschatology are important for us. In fact, heaven should already be seen to be present here on earth by Christians through the practice of the love of Jesus Christ among all peoples; Jesus Christ invited us to have some love for one another. We should be careful so that we do not lose sight of a better future life. We may use the advances of science, and technology to improve our lives as Christians in this world, but we should know that there is something greater still to come at the *eschaton*. Something beyond our human strength should lead us, and lift our humanity to heights beyond this world. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we see the great reality of God as a loving Father who keeps waiting for us; and so where Jesus Christ has gone, we as parts of His Body should hope to follow in the near future.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Aug	Augustinianum
AugStud	Augustinian Studies
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CC	Corpus Christianorum
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CUA	Catholic University of America
DPAC	Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane
ETHL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis
EvQ	Evangelical Quarterly
GCS	Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Jahrhunderten
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LS	Louvain Studies
PL	Patrologia Latina
RAC	Reallexikon Für Antike und Christentum
RechAug	Recherches Augustiniennes
RetAug	Revue du études augustiniennes
RSLR	Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SuP	Studia Patristica
SP	Sussidi Patristici
TS	Theological Studies
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
VChr	Vigiliae Christianae

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