

Saint Augustine of Hippo

354 - 430

PARADISE

Saint Augustine in the renowned work *The City of God*, deals with the sublime spiritual vision of God that the souls in Paradise enjoy: “Therefore it may very well be and it is perfectly credible that in eternity we shall see the material forms of the world of new heavens and of new earth in such a way that we will see God with luminous clarity, wherever we turn our eyes, through the body that we will have and through the bodies that we will observe. God is present everywhere and directs to their end all things including the material ones. And this will not occur as in our time, when the invisible perfections of God, regarding the works accomplished by Him, are contemplated with the intellect as in a mirror, in an obscure manner and only in part, because here the faith by which we believe can be more useful than the representation of the objects of the physical world that we express by means of the eyes of our body. When we see the people living around us, who are exercising vital functions, it is not by faith that we understand that they are alive, but by seeing them, because we cannot observe their life without their bodies, but we see it beyond any uncertainty by means of their bodies. In the same way, in eternity wherever we will direct the spiritual luminosity of our bodies, also with our bodies we shall contemplate God, Who is

incorporeal and directs everything to its own end. Therefore either God will be seen through the eyes in the sense that they would have in a such high sublimity a function similar to that of the mind and by which they may be able to discern also the spiritual nature, and it is difficult, or rather impossible to clarify such a supposition with examples or with texts of the Sacred Scripture. Alternatively, and this is an idea easier to comprehend, God will be so known by us with such a clarity that we shall see Him by the spirit in ourselves, in one another, in Himself, in the new heavens and in the new earth and in every creature that will exist in eternity, and also by the means of the body we shall see God in every body, in every direction where the sharp vision of the spiritual body shall reach. Also thoughts will be revealed from one another. Then, shall be fulfilled the words of the Apostle, who after having said: Judge nothing before time, adds: Until the Lord comes and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will manifest the intentions of the heart; then shall everyone have praise of God.”

Saint Augustine was born in Africa in Thagaste, Numidia – now Souk Ahras in Algeria – on November 13, 354 from a family of small landowners. He received a Christian education from his mother,



but after having read the work *Hortensius* by Cicero he embraced philosophy, adhering to Manichaeism. In 387 on a trip to Milan he met Saint Ambrose. The encounter revealed itself important to the faith journey of Augustine: it is from him that he received Baptism. Subsequently he returned to Africa with the desire to create a community of monks. After the death of his mother he moved to Hippo, where he was ordained priest and Bishop. He died on August 28, 430.

