

# Augustine's Interpretation of the Bible about Church and State



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## I. Introduction

In this article we will examine Augustine's teachings about Church and State from his Bible interpretations. First, we will select necessary Bible texts which clearly show how Augustine thought about Church-State relationships.<sup>1)</sup> Secondly, a systematic approach will be used to understand and survey Augustine's ideas on Church and State. The development of Augustine's thoughts on Church and State will be examined,

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1) In this article, direct quotations from Augustine's works are drawn from the following Latin editions: (1) *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, Vienna: Academia Litterarum Caesarae Vindobonensis, 1866 ff. 이하 CSEL로 약함. (2) *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, Turnholti, Typographi Brepols, 1953 ff. 이하 CCL로 약함. (3) *Patrologia Latina Cursus Completus*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols, Paris: Vives, 1844-55, 이하 PL로 약함. (4) Dolbeau F, ed, *Augustin D'Hippone: Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'afrique* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1996). In addition, I have consulted the following English translations: (1) *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, First Series, vol 1-8, New York: Christian Literature Co., 1886-1900, Reprinted, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, (2) *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, New York: New City Press, 1990 ff. (3) *The Fathers of the Church*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1947 ff.

by dating the writings used.<sup>2)</sup> In this way, in each phase of his life, the development of Augustine's interpretation of the Bible texts will be clearly delineated. An investigation into Augustine's thoughts on Church and State using these exegetic and thematic approaches will bring out the traits of Augustine's thinking about Church and State more clearly.

## II. Augustine's Interpretation of the Bible on Church and State

### 1. PSALM 2

To understand Augustine's thoughts on Church and State, we need to focus attention on his interpretation of Psalm 2, for this psalm, in the Christian tradition, elucidates the relations between Christ and the Church and the kings and rulers of the earth. God promises that the nations will be the inheritance for the son of the Lord, and the end of the earth His possession.

In Augustine's writings, this Psalm was cited in sixty-six places. Of them, thirty-eight can be regarded as used in the context of relations between Church and State. The other twenty-eight quotations seem to have no relation to Augustine's teaching on Church and State.

In this article we will examine the development of Augustine's teachings on Church and State in the three stages<sup>3)</sup> : before

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2) For the dates of the writings of Augustine, see P.R.L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2000) and A.D. Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

395, when he became a bishop of the Catholic Church; between 396 and 405, in which period the edict against the Donatists was issued; and after 406 when the invasion of the Vandals in Gaul took place.

First, we have his own extant commentary on Psalm 2 which was written in 392.<sup>4)</sup>

Secondly, in his writings before 395, we have six quotations from Psalms 2. They all appear to refer to Church-State relationships.

- 1) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 5,1. (Ps 2:8)<sup>5)</sup> – written in 392.
- 2) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 7,6. (Ps 2:1; 8)<sup>6)</sup> – written in 392.
- 3) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 9, 9. (Ps 2:1; 2)<sup>7)</sup> – written in 392.
- 4) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 28, 9. (Ps 2:8; 9)<sup>8)</sup> – written in 392.

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3) After his examination, F.E. Cranz concluded that Augustine's political thoughts were fully developed between 386 and 400. Partly accepting his argument, it is in the details and from a historical perspective that I suggest these three stages concerning the development of Augustine's political thoughts. Cf. F.E. Cranz, "The Development of Augustine's Ideas on Society Before the Donatist Controversy," *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 47 (1954), 255–316.

4) *CCL* 38, 3–7.

5) *CCL* 38, 19.

6) *CCL* 38, 39–40.

7) *CCL* 38, 63.

8) *CCL* 38, 168–169.

9) *CCL* 38, 169–171.

- 5) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 29, 6. (Ps 2:1–2)<sup>9)</sup> – written in 392.
- 6) Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, 1, 21, 71. (Ps 2:1)<sup>10)</sup> – written in 394.

Thirdly, between 396 and 405, he used Psalm 2 twenty times. Among them, fourteen citations seem to be concerned with Church and State.

- 1) Letters 43, 9, 25. (Ps 2:7; 8)<sup>11)</sup> – Written in 396/early 397.
- 2) Concerning Faith of Things not seen, 7. (Ps 2:7; 8)<sup>12)</sup> – written around 399.
- 3) Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, 12, 43. (Ps 2:8; 9)<sup>13)</sup> – written in 400.
- 4) Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, 13, 7. (Ps 2:7; 8)<sup>14)</sup> – written in 400.
- 5) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 1, 13, 14. (Ps 2:8)<sup>15)</sup> – written in 400.
- 6) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 2, 8, 20. (Ps 2:8)<sup>16)</sup> – written in 400.
- 7) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 2, 39, 94. (Ps 2:8)<sup>17)</sup> – written in 400.

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10) *CCL* 35. 79–80.

11) *CCL* 34. II, 107.

12) *CCL* 46. 17–18.

13) *CCL* 25. 370–371.

14) *CCL* 25. 384–386.

15) *CCL* 52. 12–13.

16) *CCL* 52. 31–33.

17) *CCL* 52. 76–78.

18) *CCL* 52. 123–126.

- 8) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 2, 92, 202. (Ps 2)<sup>18)</sup>  
– written in 400.
- 9) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 2, 92, 210. (Ps 2:7;  
8)<sup>19)</sup> – written in 400.
- 10) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 3, 50, 62. (Ps  
2:8)<sup>20)</sup> – written in 400.
- 11) On Baptism, Against the Donatists, 4, 12, 18. (Ps 2:9)<sup>21)</sup>  
– written in 400.
- 12) The Harmony of the Gospel, 2, 4, 8. (Ps 2:6; 9)<sup>22)</sup> –  
written in 400.
- 13) Letter 76, 1. (Ps 2:7; 8)<sup>23)</sup> – written in 404.
- 14) Letter 87, 6. (Ps 2:8)<sup>24)</sup> – written in 405/ 411.

Fourthly, we find eleven quotations among a further twenty-three sources on the topic of Church and State,

- 1) Expositions on the Book of Psalm, 119, 171. (Ps 2:1; 2)<sup>25)</sup>  
– written between 406–414.
- 2) Expositions on the Book of Psalm, 127, 6. (Ps 2:8)<sup>26)</sup> –  
written between 406–414
- 3) Letter 93, 3, 9. (Ps 2:10, 11, 1, 2)<sup>27)</sup> – written in 407/408.
- 4) On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate 2, 1, 6–14,

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19) *CCL* 52, 135–136.

20) *CCL* 52, 214–215.

21) *CCL* 51, 242–248.

22) *CCL* 43, 88–89.

23) *CCL* 34, 324–326.

24) *CCL* 34, 402.

25) *CCL* 40, 1775.

26) *CCL* 40, 1863–1864.

27) *CCL* 34, 453–454.

13. (Ps 2:7; 8)<sup>28)</sup> – written in 407–8, 414, 16/17.
- 5) On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate 6. 32–33.
9. (Ps 2:8)<sup>29)</sup> – written in 407–8, 414, 16/17.
- 6) On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate 115. 18, 33–40, 2. (Ps 2:6)<sup>30)</sup> – written in 407–8. 414, 16/17.
- 7) On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate 117. 19, 17–22, 5. (Ps 2:6–8)<sup>31)</sup> – written in 407–8, 414, 16–17.
- 8) Ten Homilies on the Epistle of John to the Parthians, Homily 3. The Epistle of John, 1 John 18–27, 7. (Ps 2:8)<sup>32)</sup> – written 407–408, 415/16.
- 9) Sermons on selected lessons of the Gospel, 96, 2. (Ps 2:8)<sup>33)</sup> – written in 405–11.
- 10) The Correction of the Donatists, 1, 3. (Ps 2:7; 8)<sup>34)</sup> – written in 417.
- 11) The Correction of the Donatists, 5, 19. (Ps 2:1; 2; 10; 11)<sup>35)</sup> – written in 417.

Lastly, when we examine Augustine's use of the Psalms, whose dates are not known exactly, we find a further seven quotations on the relation of Church and State – in all seventeen quotations.

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28) *CCL* 36. 17–18.

29) *CCL* 36. 57–58.

30) *CCL* 36. 644–645.

31) *CCL* 36. 653–654.

32) *PL* 35. 2000–2001.

33) *PL* 38. 796–797. (= *Sermon* 146)

34) *CSEL* 57. 2–3. (= *Letter* 185)

35) *CSEL* 57. 17–18. (= *Letter* 185)

- 1) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 45, 16. (Ps 2:9)<sup>36)</sup>
- 2) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 48, 5. (Ps 2:6)<sup>37)</sup>
- 3) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 48, 7. (Ps 2:8)<sup>38)</sup>
- 4) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 48, 14. (Ps 2:9)<sup>39)</sup>
- 5) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 61, 2. (Ps 2:8)<sup>40)</sup>
- 6) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 66, 4. (Ps 2:10; 11)<sup>41)</sup>
- 7) Expositions on the Book of Psalms, 76, 13. (Ps 2:10; 11)<sup>42)</sup>

Augustine's quotations from Psalm 2 shows that after 395, as a bishop of the Church, his thoughts were influenced by the Bible texts themselves.

### 1.1. Before 395

Augustine wrote his Expositions on the Book of Psalms in 392. According to Augustine, the counsel of the kings of the earth and the rulers could not succeed, because it was aimed at Christ's destruction.<sup>43)</sup> For Augustine, the "King upon Sion" in Psalm 2:6 means the Lord Jesus Christ. Further, Sion

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36) CCL 38, 493-517.

37) CCL 38, 538-550.

38) CCL 38, 538-550.

39) CCL 38, 538-550.

40) CCL 39, 765-772.

41) CCL 39, 838-856.

42) CCL 39, 1035-1052.

43) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 2, "It is said, 'why?' as if it were said, in vain, For what they wished, namely, Christ's destruction, they accomplished not."

signifies the Church.<sup>44)</sup> Thus, Augustine explained that Christ has been installed as King over His Church.<sup>45)</sup>

It is to Christ that the nations are given as an inheritance. Therefore, Augustine elucidated that “the nations should be joined to the Name of Christ.” “The nations ought to be possessed by Christ for their salvation.”<sup>46)</sup> The possession of Christ, for Augustine, signifies the inheritance of the Lord, namely the nations.

As we have considered above, Augustine related the King of Mount Sion to Christ, the Lord. This King is set over His Church. However, Augustine did not make any direct connection between the Church and the nations. The nations are the possession of Christ, but not that of the Church for Augustine in this period. Therefore, we can conclude that, in 392, Augustine did not fully understand the relation of the Church to the nations of the world, even though he had already thought of Christ as the King of the Church. From these quotations it appeared that his thoughts about Church and State in 392 did not seem to be fully developed, as we shall see them later.

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44) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 2. “‘Yet am I set by Him as King upon Sion, His holy hill, preaching His decree’ (ver. 6). This is clearly spoken in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if Sion signify, as some interpret, beholding, we must not understand it of anything rather than of the Church ….”

45) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 2. “Therefore the meaning of this is, Yet I am set by Him as King over His holy Church; which for its eminence and stability He calleth a mountain.”

46) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 2. “... namely, that the ‘nations’ should be joined to the Name of Christ, and so be redeemed from death, and possessed by God. ‘I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance,’ which so possess them for their salvation, and to bear unto Thee spiritual fruit.”



In Augustine's *De Sermone Domini in Monte secundum Mattaeum*, which was written in 394, he interpreted Psalm 2:1, as a prophetic text of the Bible.<sup>47)</sup> He just mentioned the two groups of people who surrounded and persecuted the Lord, and who believed in Him, and in doing so, he used Psalm 2.<sup>48)</sup> He believed that the Believers will gain the inheritance of the Lord. He also explained the judgment of the Lord at the end of the world, by using Psalm 2:12, without any further description.<sup>49)</sup> Augustine explained the heathen as the inheritance to be ruled in this temporal life.<sup>50)</sup>

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47) Augustine, *Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount*, 1, 21, 71. "But these difficulties are easily solved, for the prophet predicted by means of imprecation what was about to happen, not as praying for what he wished, but in the spirit of one who saw it beforehand. So also the Lord, so also the apostle; although even in the words of these we do not find what they have wished, but what they have foretold."

48) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 7, 6. "'And the congregation of the people shall surround Thee.' This may be understood in two ways. For the 'congregation of the people' can be taken, either of them that believe, or of them that persecute, both of which took place in the same humiliation of our Lord: in contempt of which the multitude of them that persecute surrounded Him; concerning which it is said, 'Why have the heathen raged, and the people meditated vain things?'" See further, "But of them that believe through His humiliation the multitude so surrounded Him, that it could be said with the greatest truth, 'blindness in part is happened unto Israel, that the fullness of the Gentiles might come in:' and again, 'Ask of me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thine inheritance, and the boundaries of the earth for Thy possession.'"

49) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 9,9. "'And the Lord abideth for ever' (ver. 7). 'Wherefore' then 'have the heathen raged, and the people imagined vain things against the Lord, and against His anointed:' for 'the Lord abideth for ever. He hath prepared His seat in judgment, and He shall judge the world in equity.'"

50) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 28, 9. "Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance (ver. 9). I intercede therefore, after My Flesh hath flourished again, because Thou hast said, 'Desire of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance;' 'Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance:' for 'all Mine are Thine.' 'And rule them, and set them up ever and ever' And rule them in this temporal life, and raise them from hence into life eternal...."

In his writings before 395, however, he already connected these verses of Psalm 2 to the Church. But here the connection did not seem to be improved in comparison with his later ideas. God is our inheritance, because He feeds us. At the same time the Church is His inheritance, because He rules the Church.<sup>51)</sup> Because the kings of the earth stood up against the Lord and His Christ, they will be humiliated.<sup>52)</sup>

As we have seen above, Augustine did not appear to show the strong emphasis on Christ and the Church in comparison with his next periods, when he reinterpreted the texts of Psalm 2, even though he already gave some indication of the way he was heading. Thus, Augustine did not seem to expand his thoughts on the Church yet, before he was ordained as a bishop.

## 1.2. During 396–405

In 395 Augustine was consecrated as bishop of the Roman Catholic Church of Hippo, following Valerius. As a bishop of

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51) Augustine, *Expositions of the Book of Psalm*, 5, 1. “And conversely the word Church is said to be God’s inheritance according to that, ‘Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.’ Therefore is God said to be our inheritance, because He feedeth and sustaineth us: and we are said to be God’s inheritance, because He ordereth and ruleth us. Wherefore it is the voice of the Church in this Psalm called to her inheritance, that she too may herself become the inheritance of the Lord...”

52) Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 29, 6. “‘And shall bruise them as the calf of Libanus’ (ver. 6). And when their proud exaltation hath been cut off, He will lay them low after the imitation of His Own humility, who like a calf was led to slaughter by the nobility of this world. ‘For the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers agreed together against the Lord, and against His Christ.’”

the North African Church of the Late Rome period, he had to preach in his church every Sunday,<sup>53)</sup> and so he devoted himself to biblical study much more than before. His new office is the reason for his increasing quotations from the Bible in his writings. Until the edict of unity against the Donatists in 405, Augustine seemed to rely on the State, so that he may have wanted the Roman Catholic Church to be supported by the State against the Donatists. In this expectation, his hermeneutics also seems to have developed in the case of Psalm 2.

He wrote in Letter 43, which was written in 396 or early 397:

By all means let us give up arguing from ancient manuscripts, public archives, or the acts of courts, civil or ecclesiastical. We have a greater book — the world itself. In it I read the accomplishment of that of which I read the promise in the Book of God: “The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee: ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” He that

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53) Augustine preached already as a priest, because Valerius urged that he should preach. See P.R.L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2000), 132–133.

54) Augustine, *Ep.* 43.9.25, *CSEL* 34.2. 107. “certe non chartis ueteribus, non archiuis publicis, non gestis forensibus aut ecclesiasticis agamus, Maior liber noster orbis terrarum est; in eo lego completum, quod in libro dei ego promissum: Dominus, inquit, dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te; postula a me et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminos terrae, huic hereditati qui non communicat, quoslibet libros teneat, exhereditatum se esse cognoscat: hanc hereditatem quisquis expugnat, alienum se esse a familia dei satis indicat.”

has not communion with this inheritance may know himself to be disinherited, whatever books he may plead to the contrary. He that assails this inheritance is plainly enough declared to be an outcast from the family of God.<sup>54)</sup>

In this passage, he tried to interact with the Bible in his explanation of Psalm 2:7 and 8. The promise in the Bible will be accomplished. The inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth will be given.

His writings, especially, in these periods, showed a number of applications of Psalm 2 to the work of Christ. When the writer of Psalm 2 described the inheritance of the nations and the possession, for Augustine, these verses were accomplished in Christ's works.<sup>55)</sup> He emphasized this by using Psalm 2:8, 9:

But they could not prevent His resurrection, or His ascension above the heavens, or His filling the earth with the glory of His name; for the Psalm says: "Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let Thy glory be above all the earth." Every one must apply these words to Christ: "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I will give Thee

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55) Augustine, *Concerning Faith of Things Not Seen*, 7. This was written around 399. "Ye saw not what was foretold concerning the wonderful works of Christ, 'Come ye, and see the works of the Lord, what wonders He hath set upon the earth:' but ye see that which was foretold, 'The Lord said unto Me, My Son art Thou, I have this day begotten Thee; demand of Me and I will give Thee nations as Thy inheritance, and as Thy possession the bounds of the earth.'"

56) Augustine, *c. Faust.* (=Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon) 12.43. *CSEL* 25. 371. "quid autem fecerunt, quid nocuerunt resurrecturo et super caelos ascensuro et totum orbem terrarum gloria sui nominis possessuro? uide, utrum hoc psalmus ante tacuerit; sequitur enim: exaltare super caelos, deus, et super omnem terram gloria tua, quis umquam de Christo dictum dubitauit: dominus dixit ad me, filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te; postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminos terrae?" And also see *Letter* 76, which was written in 404.

the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.<sup>56)</sup>

Augustine highlighted the subjection of all nations to the name of Christ. The kings of the earth will happily be subdued by Christ, and all nations will serve Him.<sup>57)</sup> It is, especially, notable that he wrote that it is “fulfilled in the present state of the world.” By this expression, he seemed to be optimistic in the periods between 395 and 405.

In addition to this Christocentric interpretation of Psalm 2, Augustine also emphasized the method of its fulfilment in the world. How will the prophecy of Psalm 2 be accomplished?

In attempting to answer this question, he seemed to develop a theology of the Catholic Church. According to Augustine, the promised blessings will be given by the expansion of the Catholic Church.<sup>58)</sup> His idea concerning this matter seemed to be formed and strengthened in the course of the controversy

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57) Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean*, 13, 7. “He would see these very kings of the earth now happily subdued by Christ, and all nations serving Him; and he would hear the words of the Psalm in which this was so long before predicted: ‘All the kings of the earth shall bow down to Him; all nations shall serve Him.’”

58) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian*, The Donatist, 3, 50, 62. “I urged that the following passages were prophesied of Christ: that ... ‘I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession;’ and that the covenant of God made with Abraham may be quoted in behalf of our, that is, of the Catholic communion, in which it is written, ‘In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed;’ which seed the apostle interprets, saying, ‘And to thy seed, which is Christ.’ Whence it is evident that in Christ not only Africans or Africa, but all the nations through which the Catholic Church is spread abroad, should receive the blessing which was promised so long before.”

against the Donatists.

According to Augustine, the Donatists did not understand the mercy of God, because they charged this against the Catholic Church.<sup>59)</sup> Thus, he asked them to take a part in this inheritance.<sup>60)</sup> The inheritance of Christ will increase, while the impious will perish from off the earth.<sup>61)</sup> Augustine argued that the kings of the earth have a special task to serve the Lord, which may be impossible for the common people.<sup>62)</sup> Therefore, he could use Psalm 2:6, 9, in order to describe

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59) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian*, the Donatist, 1, 13, 14. "I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.' In behalf of the unity of Donatus, they are not compelled to call together again what they have scattered abroad, but are warned to hear the cry of the Scriptures: why will they not understand that they meet with such treatment through the mercy of God, that since they brought false charges against the Catholic Church, ..."

60) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian*, The Donatist, 2, 8, 20. "Is it not written in that testament, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession'? Take part in this inheritance, and you may bring what charges you will against me about the testament."

61) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian*, The Donatist, 2, 39, 94.

62) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian*, The Donatist, 2, 92, 210. "Accordingly, when we take into consideration the social condition of the human race, we find that kings, in the very fact that they are kings, have a service which they can render to the Lord in a manner which is impossible for any who have not the power of kings."

63) Augustine, *The Harmony of the Gospel*, 2, 4, 8. "This discipline is also signified by that rod of iron, concerning which we read this statement in a Psalm: 'Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron:' which words occur after the saying, 'Yet I am set king by Him upon His holy hill of Zion!' For the good, too, are ruled with a rod of iron, as it is said of them: 'The time is come that judgment should begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be to them that obey not the gospel of God? and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' To the same persons the sentence that follows also applies: 'Thou shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' For the good, indeed, are ruled by this discipline, while the wicked are crushed by it. And these two different classes of persons are mentioned here as if they were the same, on account of the identity of the signs employed in reference to the wicked in common with the good."

the discipline of the rod of iron. This rod of iron, will rule the good, while it will crush the wicked.<sup>63)</sup> For the present, the good and the wicked will live together in this world, as there are the vessels of gold, of silver, of wood and of pottery in a great house. However, in the day of the Lord, He will break the earthen vessels with the “rod of iron.” Augustine interpreted these verses as pointing to the Church, in which the good and the wicked are mixed until the end of time.<sup>64)</sup>

### 1.3. After 406

Just after the edict of unity against the Donatists, Augustine argued that the Christian king may make the wicked suffer.<sup>65)</sup> According to Augustine, a king serves the Lord by enforcing with suitable rigour such laws as ordain what is righteous, and punish what is the reverse. In this way the king serves

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64) Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, 4, 12, 18, “And whereas the apostle says, ‘But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth,’ that he should seem to choose those of gold and of silver, and despise and cast away and condemn those of wood and of earth, when really the vessels of wood are only to be burned in the day of the Lord by the burning of the divine conflagration, and those of earth are to be broken by Him to whom the ‘rod of iron has been given.’ .... By this argument, therefore, against those who, under the pretext of avoiding the society of wicked men, had severed themselves from the unity of the Church, Cyprian shows that by the great house of which the apostle spoke, in which there were not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, he understood nothing else but the Church, in which there should be good and bad, till at the last day it should be cleansed as a threshing-floor by the winnowing-fan.”

65) Augustine, *Letter* 93, 3, 9. This letter was written around 407/8. “The earlier time of that king represented the former age of emperors who did not believe in Christ, at whose hands the Christians suffered because of the wicked; but the later time of that king represented the age of the successors to the imperial throne, now believing in Christ, at whose hands the wicked suffer because of the Christians.”

God with trembling.

He justified it thus:

In that he is man, he serves Him by living faithfully; but in that he is also king, he serves Him by enforcing with suitable rigour such laws as ordain what is righteous, and punish what is the reverse.<sup>66)</sup>

However, 406 witnessed the invasion of the Vandals in Gaul. It was regarded as the cause of the collapse of the Holy Christian Empire. Augustine's reliance on the State as the supporter of the Church was shaken with the fall of the Empire.

At this time, Augustine showed an ambivalent attitude towards the state. The Kingdom of God is not of the world. However, this Kingdom will continue till the harvest of the world by the Lord.<sup>67)</sup> It is intermingled with wheat and the tares.

Moreover, Augustine explained the manner by which the people become His inheritance. By giving the power to the

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66) Augustine, *Ep.* 185 (= *The Correction of the Donatists*) 5, 19. *CSEL* 57, 17. "aliter enim servit, quia homo est, aliter, quia etiam rex est; quia homo est enim, servit vivendo fideliter, quia vero etiam rex est, servit leges iusta praecipientes et contraria prohibentes convenienti vigore sanciendo ..."

67) Augustine, *On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate* 115, 18, 33-40, 2. "And when He proved this by saying, 'If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews,' He saith not, 'But now is my kingdom not' here, but, 'is not from hence.' For His kingdom is here until the end of the world, having tares intermingled therewith until the harvest; for the harvest is the end of the world, when the reapers, that is to say, the angels, shall come and gather out of His kingdom everything that offendeth; which certainly would not be done, were it not that His kingdom is here."



people of God, the promise will be accomplished.<sup>68)</sup>

He continued:

You have heard, brethren, how that inheritance comes, "Ask of me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the utmost bounds of the earth for Thy possessions." You have heard how that "from Sion went forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." For it was there the disciples were told, "Go, baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."<sup>69)</sup>

As he stated, the inheritance comes through the baptizing of the nations. The Gentiles will be given as the inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.<sup>70)</sup>

Augustine, as a bishop fortified ecclesiology through the historical circumstances of the demise of the Roman Empire. He suggested that the Church would fly like an arrow, and thus will continue unto the end of the world.

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68) Augustine, *On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate 2*, 1, 6-14, 13. "Those very persons, He being possessor, become His inheritance, and He in turn becomes their inheritance, Hear in what manner they become His inheritance: "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance,"

69) Augustine, *Jo. ev. tra.* (= *On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate*) 6, 32-33, 9. *CCL* 36, 57-58. "Audistis, fratres, quomodo venit illa hereditas: Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam, et possessionem tuam terminos terrae. Audistis quomodo a Sion prodiit lex, et verbum Domini ab Ierusalem: ibi enim audierunt discipuli: Ite, baptizate gentes in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti."

70) Augustine, *On the Gospel according to St. John, Tractate* 117, 19, 17-22, 5.

He stated:

For this is the heritage whereof it is said, "Desire of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And how doth this possession extend and increase unto the world's uttermost parts? Because, "like as the arrows in the hand of the mighty one," etc. Arrows are shot forth from the bow, and the stronger the arm which hath sent it forth, the farther flieth the arrow.<sup>71)</sup>

As the flying arrow, the Church will strongly and quickly expand in this earth, according to Augustine. Thus the Catholic Church will gain the nations and the earth as inheritances

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71) Augustine, *Expositions of the Book of Psalms* 127, 6. CCL 40, p. 1863–64. "Nam ipsa est hereditas de qua dicitur: Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam, et possessionem tuam terminos terrae. Et quomodo ista possessio pertenditur et crescit usque ad fines terae? Quia sicut sagittae in manu potentis, sic filii excussorum. De arcu excutiuntur sagittae, et quanto fortior excusserit, tanto longius uadit sagitta." It was written around 406 and 414.

72) Augustine, *Sermons on selected lessons of the Gospels*, 96, 2. It can be dated 416–17.

73) Augustine, *Ten Homilies on the Epistle of John to the Parthians*, Homily 3, The Epistle of St. John 1, John 18–27, 7. "For we have the testament of the Lord's inheritance, we recite it, and there we find, 'I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and for Thy possessions the ends of the earth.' We hold fast Christ's inheritance; they hold it not, for they do not communicate with the whole earth, ..."

74) Augustine, *A Treatise concerning the Correction of the Donatists*, 1, 3. "They recognize Christ together with us in that which is written, 'They pierced my hands and my feet. They can tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;' and yet they refuse to recognize the Church in that which follows shortly after: 'All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and He is the Governor among the nations.' They recognize Christ together with us in that which is written, 'The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee;' and they will not recognize the Church in that which follows: 'Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.'" It was written in 417.

and possession.<sup>72)</sup> It is here that the Catholic Church is increasingly emphasized. This Church, which receives the promised inheritance, will form the universal body redeemed by the blood of the Lord.<sup>73)</sup> Augustine recognises, however, that the Donatist Church refuses to recognize this Church, but the Lord is the Governor among the nations.<sup>74)</sup>

The preceding considerations might suggest that Augustine developed the subject of Church and State, depending on the circumstances where he lived and worked as a bishop of the Roman Church. From this brief survey we can conclude with some points.

At first, before 395, i.e., before he was consecrated bishop, Augustine did not seem to hold his later interpretation of Psalm 2 concerning Church and State. However, after his exegetical work as a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, Augustine made progress in his thoughts using the Bible. His hermeneutics deepened concerning Church and State, especially his ecclesiology as this became focused in relation to his Christology.

Later on, his thoughts on Church and State, through his understanding of Psalm 2, grew in the circumstances of the North Africa of the late Rome period. Between 395 and 405, he seemed to believe that the inheritance of promise in Psalm 2 could be fulfilled in the expansion of the Catholic Church.

His attitude to the state in these periods might be regarded as positive, because he showed an expectation that the king should serve God.

Finally, just after the Edict of unity against the Donatists, which was issued in 405, he argued that the king should serve the Church by punishing the Donatists, in the light of his interpretation of Psalm 2. However, experiencing the invasion of the Vandals in 406 and the weakness of the Roman Empire, this only strengthened his theory about the position of the Roman Church. He, especially, emphasized the manner of the accomplishment of Psalm 2 by the Church. It was by the work of the Catholic Church that the kings of the earth will be given as an inheritance and a possession up to the end of the world.

## 2. JEREMIAH 29:1-14

The second text from the Bible we will investigate is Jeremiah 29 – the prophet's letter to the exiles in Babylon. The Jewish people encountered problems in their identity as Israel when they were in Babylon as exiles. The prophet Jeremiah wrote to them to build houses and live in them and plant gardens and eat their produces. Further he encouraged the exiles to pray for the welfare of that city.

Despite living in Babylon Israel was not of Babylon. In the same way, Christians live in the world, but do not belong

to this world. This text explains the identity of Christians in the state and the relationship between the Church and Society. Thus, through the interpretation of these verses, we can understand better Augustine's idea on Church and State.

We find five quotations of Jeremiah 29. in Augustine's works.

\* Before 406

1. Jer. 29:7. Sermons on New Testament Lessons 1. 14.<sup>75)</sup>  
(written in 400)

\* After 406

2. Jer. 29:4-7. On the Catechising of the Uninstructed, 21.  
37.<sup>76)</sup>(written in 406)
3. Jer. 29:10. Explanations of the Psalms, 126. 2.<sup>77)</sup>(written  
in 406-414)
4. Jer. 29:7. The City of God, 19. 26.<sup>78)</sup>(written in 425-27)

\* It is not clear when it was written.

- Jer. 29:10. Explanations of the Psalms, 65. 1.<sup>79)</sup>

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75) *PL* 38, 340-341, (= *Sermon* 51 )

76) *CCL* 46, 161-162.

77) *CCL* 40, 1844-1856.

78) *CCL* 48, 696-697.

79) *CCL* 39, 822-837.

## 2.1. Before 406

In chronological order, if we examine the use made by Augustine of Jeremiah 29, it seems to be clear that it helped to develop his thinking. First, Augustine's use of Jeremiah 29 before 406 will be investigated here. When Augustine used chapter 29 of Jeremiah, he emphasized the peace in Babylon. The Israelites in Babylon were urged to cultivate their vines, plant their gardens and enjoy the abundance of their fruits.

Let those who read the Scriptures, remember this as we do; and let those who do not, give us credit. Jeremiah then on the part of God threatened those who would not go into Babylon, whereas to them who should go he promised rest there, and a sort of happiness in the cultivation of their vines, and planting of their gardens, and the abundance of their fruits. How then do the people of Israel, not now in figure but in verity, pass over unto Babylon? Whence came the Apostles? Were they not of the nation of the Jews?<sup>80)</sup>

Before 406, what Augustine cited from Jeremiah 29 was the commandment to pray for the peace of Babylon and for the non-Christian kings, for the purpose of establishing a peaceful life for Israel in Babylon.

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80) Augustine, *Sermons on New Testament Lessons*, 1,14, PL 38, 340–341. “Qui Scripturas legunt, recordentur nobiscum qui non legunt, credant nobis, Minabatur ergo Jeremias ex persona Domini eis qui nolebant ire in Babyloniam: eis autem qui irent, promittebat ibi quietem, et quamdam felicitatem in novellandis vineis et plantandis hortis et ubertate fructuum (Jerem. XXVII). Quomodo ergo iam non in figura, sed in veritate populus Israel transit in Babyloniam? Unde erant Apostoli? Nonne de gente Judaeorum?” It was written in 394–395.

“For in their peace shall be your peace.” When Israel then passed over also into Babylon by Christ and the Apostles, that is, when the Gospel came unto the Gentiles, what saith the Apostle, as though by the mouth of Jeremiah of old? “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” For they were not yet Christian kings, yet he prayed for them. Israel then praying in Babylon hath been heard; the prayers of the Church have been heard, and the kings have become Christian, and you see now fulfilled what was then spoken in figure; “In their peace shall be your peace,” for they have received the peace of Christ, and have left off to persecute Christians, that now in the secure quiet of peace, the Churches might be built up, and peoples planted in the garden of God, and that all nations might bring forth fruit in faith, and hope, and love, which is in Christ.<sup>81)</sup>

According to his argument, for building up the Church in Babylon, a quiet life for the Jewish people was necessary. Thus, Augustine's emphasis was on the peaceful life of the earthly city. As far as we read his description, at least

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81) Augustine, *Sermons on New Testament Lessons*, 1, 14, PL 38, 341, “Quia in pace ipsorum erit, inquit, pax vestra (Jerem. XXIX, 7). Cum ergo transmigraret etiam per Christum et Apostolos Israel in Babyloniam, hoc est Evangelium veniret ad Gentes, quid dicit Apostolus quasi ex voce tunc Jeremiae? Obscuro ergo primum omnium fieri deprecationes, orationes, interpellationes, gratiarum actiones pro omnibus hominibus, pro regibus et his qui in sublimitate sunt constituti; ut quietam et tranquillam vitam agamus, cum omni pietate et castitate (1 Tim. II, 1 et 2). Nondum erant reges christiani, et orabat pro eis. Orans ergo Israel in Babylonia, exauditus est. Exauditae sunt voces Ecclesiae, facti sunt christiani: et videtis impleri quod figuraliter dictum est, In eorum pace, erit pax vestra. Acceperunt enim pacem Christi, et destiterunt persequi Christianos; ut jam in securitate pacis aedificarentur ecclesiae, et plantarentur populi in agricultura Dei, et fructificarent omnes gentes fide, spe et charitate quae est in Christo.”

up to 406, he did not display a negative tone against life in Babylon. We may, therefore, assume that until 406 the eschatological perspective in his interpretation of Jeremiah 29 was not fully developed yet. His attitude to the State can be regarded as positive and he seemed to be still optimistic about Rome. Further, we may have to keep in mind that there is a difference between the Church and Israel. Augustine does respect this difference.

## 2.2. After 406

According to Augustine, as the prophet ordered, the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem ought to beget children and build houses, and plant gardens and vineyards. By using Jeremiah 29, Augustine wrote that the heavenly people sojourn in this earth, just as the exiles were in captivity.<sup>82)</sup> However, it was after 406 that a change in his eschatology appeared in his writings: But at the end of seventy years, release from their captivity was promised to them.<sup>83)</sup>

He started to underline the fact that the people of Israel under the Babylonian captivity would be released at the end

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82) Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, 21, 37, "Moreover the people were ordered both to pray for those by whom they were detained in captivity, and in their peace to hope for peace, to the effect that they should beget children, and build houses, and plant gardens and vineyards,"

83) Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed* 21.37, CCL 46, 161, "Post septuaginta autem annos promittitur eis ab illa captivitate liberatio." This was written in 406. See also *On the Psalms*, 65, 1.



of seventy years.

In his explanation of Psalm 126, which was written about 404–414, the same idea is expressed. In Augustine's thoughts, Jerusalem was Zion. Babylon is this world. According to Augustine, man was a citizen of Jerusalem, but being sold under sin he became a pilgrim in Babylon. The identity of the citizen of Jerusalem in Babylon is of a pilgrim. The captivity in Babylon will be freed after seventy years. After seventy years they turned back to their own place.<sup>84)</sup>

In chapter 19 of Augustine's *The City of God*,<sup>85)</sup> he explained the idea of the two cities. According to Augustine, we Christians have to pray for the peace of Babylon, because we also profit by that peace. However, this peace is just temporal not eternal.<sup>86)</sup> Augustine related the peace of Babylon to his teaching of the two cities. Both the good and the bad in this world enjoy the temporal peace. It is because the two cities

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84) Augustine, *Psalms 126*, 2, "When? 'When the Lord turned back the captivity of Sion.' What is Sion? Jerusalem, the same is also the eternal Sion, How is Sion eternal, how is Sion captive? In angels eternal, in men captive. For not all the citizens of that city are captives, but those who are away from thence, they are captives, Man was a citizen of Jerusalem, but sold under sin he became a pilgrim, Of his progeny was born the human race, and the captivity of Sion filled all lands. And how is this captivity of Sion a shadow of that Jerusalem? The shadow of that Sion, which was granted to the Jews, in an image, in a figure, was in captivity in Babylonia, and after seventy years that people turned back to its own city ... But when all time is past, then we return to our country, as after seventy years that people returned from the Babylonish captivity, for Babylon is this world; since Babylon is interpreted "confusion,"... So then this whole life of human affairs is confusion, which belongeth not unto God, In this confusion, in this Babylonish land, Sion is held captive. But 'the Lord hath turned back the captivity of Sion.' 'And we became,' he saith, 'as those that are comforted.' That is, we rejoiced as receiving consolation."

85) This chapter was written in 425–27.

are mixed in this world. Therefore, what Augustine tried to underscore here appears to be his deepened eschatological aspect concerning his teaching of the two cities.

As a whole, when Augustine interpreted Jeremiah 29:1–14, he described the identity of the Christian in this world. As Israel was enslaved in Babylon, so the citizens of heavenly Jerusalem sojourn in this world. However, the exiles should serve the kings of that land, because by the peace of that land, the Church can be built up throughout the world. The Jewish people in Babylon were encouraged to live and enjoy their life even in Babylon. However, they should always remember that they are not of Babylon but of Jerusalem.

From this we can conclude that it was after 406 that Augustine developed his eschatological aspects through his use of Jeremiah 29.

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86) Augustine, *City of God*, 19, 26. “But it is our interest that it enjoy this peace meanwhile in this life; for as long as the two cities are commingled, we also enjoy the peace of Babylon. For from Babylon the people of God is so freed that it meanwhile sojourns in its company. And therefore the apostle also admonished the Church to pray for kings and those in authority, assigning as the reason, ‘that we may live a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and love.’ And the prophet Jeremiah, when predicting the captivity that was to befall the ancient people of God, and giving them the divine command to go obediently to Babylonia, and thus serve their God, counselled them also to pray for Babylonia, saying, ‘In the peace thereof shall ye have peace’ — the temporal peace which the good and the wicked together enjoy.”

### 3. ROMANS 13:1-7

On the relation between Church and State, Romans 13:1-7, is regarded as one of the most important statements about Church-State relationships and will be treated as the last biblical text in this section. We will examine Augustine's interpretation of these verses here.

The following sources have been used:

\* Before 395

1) Sermons on New Testament Lessons. 12.13.<sup>87)</sup>(written in 394-95)

\* During 396-405

2) On Contenance, 11.<sup>88)</sup>(written in 395-96 or in 418-20)

3) On Christian Doctrine, 4.20.40.<sup>89)</sup>(396 - 426)

4) Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, 22.75.<sup>90)</sup>(397/98)

5) Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans, 32.<sup>91)</sup>(399)<sup>92)</sup>

6) The Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, 2.20.45.<sup>93)</sup>(401/05)

7) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 2.31.70.<sup>94)</sup>(401/05)

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87) *PL* 38, 420-421, (=Sermon 62).

88) *CSEL* 41, 152-154.

89) *CCL* 32, 146-147.

90) *CSEL* 25.1, 673-674.

91) *CSEL* 25.2, 870-871.

92) Cf. S. Doepp and W. Geerlings (eds.) *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 68.

93) *CSEL* 52, 45-46.

94) *CSEL* 52, 60.

- 8) The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist, 2.83.184.<sup>95)</sup>(401/05)  
 9) Letter 87.7.7.<sup>96)</sup>(405)  
 10) On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed, 21.37.<sup>97)</sup>(406)

\* After 406

- 11) Letter 93.6.20.<sup>98)</sup>(written in 407/408)  
 12) Letter 100.1.1.<sup>99)</sup>(408/409)  
 13) On the Gospel of St. John, 5.12.<sup>100)</sup>(begun in 407-408/  
 16-17)  
 14) On the Gospel of St. John, 105.2.<sup>101)</sup>(begun in 407-408.  
 414/ 16-17)  
 15) On the Gospel of St. John, 116.5.<sup>102)</sup>(begun in 407-408.  
 414/16-17)  
 16) On the Spirit and the Letter, 54.<sup>103)</sup>(412)  
 17) The Retractations, 1.12.8.<sup>104)</sup>(426/27)  
 18) Letter 220.4.<sup>105)</sup>(428)

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95) *CSEL* 52, 112-115.  
 96) *CSEL* 34.2, 402-403.  
 97) *CCL* 46, 161-162.  
 98) *CSEL* 34.2, 464-467.  
 99) *CSEL* 34.2, 535-537.  
 100) *CCL* 36, 176-177.  
 101) *CCL* 36, 604.  
 102) *CCL* 36, 648-649.  
 103) *CSEL* 60, 210-212.  
 104) *CSEL* 36, 63.  
 105) *CSEL* 57, 433-434.

\* It is not clear when these were written,

19) On the Psalms, 104,37.<sup>106)</sup>

20) On the Psalms, 119,159.<sup>107)</sup>

### 3.1. No power but God

When Augustine elucidated Romans 13:1-7, he first emphasized that there is no power but of God.<sup>108)</sup> This is the basic idea from which he drew the idea about obedience to the ruler of the State.

Because there is no power but what comes from God, whosoever resisted the power, resisted the ordinance of God, according to Augustine. Rulers are not a terror to good men, but to the evil.<sup>109)</sup> Augustine even argued that when the African Church was helped by the earthly power, it was from God, who made heaven and earth.<sup>110)</sup> Because all ruling power comes from God, Christians have to obey the earthly authority.<sup>111)</sup> In this context, even the hurtful power also came from God in Augustine's view.<sup>112)</sup> Because there is no power but of God, Augustine did not fear the State.<sup>113)</sup>

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106) *PL* 37, 1335-1390.

107) *PL* 37, 1501-1596.

108) Augustine, *Ep.* 93, 6, 20; *Ep.* 100, 1,1; *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon*, 22, 75; *Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans*, 32; *The Letters of Petilian, The Donatist*, 2, 31, 70, *On the Gospel of St. John*, 104, 37.

109) Augustine, *Ep.* 93, 6, 20.

110) Augustine, *Ep.* 100, 1,1.

111) Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon*, 22, 75

112) Augustine, *Nature of Good, Against the Manichaeans*, 32.

113) Augustine, *On the Psalms*, 104, 37.

### 3.2. Obedience to the ruler

According to Augustine's argument, we have to "render to all the dues – tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."<sup>114)</sup> The citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem should serve the kings of this world.<sup>115)</sup>

However, he went further when he approved the persecution by the State. When the civil powers defend their deed by persecuting the schismatics, Augustine supported it using Romans 13. For him, to resist the power meant to do so against the ordinance of God. Because the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil, they are the ministers of God in Augustine's thinking. If we do evil, we have to be afraid, for he may execute wrath upon him that did evil. Therefore, he argued:

... the whole question therefore is, whether schism be not an evil work, or whether you have not caused schism, so that your resistance of the powers that be is in a good cause and not in an evil work, whereby you would bring judgment on yourselves.<sup>116)</sup>

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114) Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 4, 20, 40.

115) Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, 21, 37.

116) Augustine, *Ep. 87.7.7*. CSEL 34.2, 403. "tota igitur quaestio est, utrum nihil mali sit schisma aut utrum schisma non feceritis, ut pro bono opere potestatibus resistatis, non pro malo, unde uobis adquiratis iudicium."

Because the ruler is the minister of God, Augustine taught that he did not bear the sword in vain. A public trial may administer any punishment on the schismatics.<sup>117)</sup> Thus, Augustine even argued that “The whole question therefore is, whether you are not doing ill, who are charged by the whole world with the sacrilege of so great a schism.”<sup>118)</sup>

However, Augustine did not maintain that we have to obey the ruler whether he is right or not. Augustine asked, “what if it enjoin what thou oughtest not to do?” He answered clearly:

But what if it enjoin what thou oughtest not to do? by all means disregard the power through fear of Power. Consider these several grades of human powers. If the magistrate enjoin anything, must it not be done?<sup>119)</sup>

By using the concept of grades of powers, he maintained that we should first obey God's word.

Lastly, it is necessary for us to consider Augustine's use of Romans 13:1–7 chronologically. It is notable that when he quoted these verses of Paul's letter to the Romans after 406, it can generally be seen that he emphasized the unique power of God, thus he showed less regard for obedience to the State.<sup>120)</sup> From this brief observation, we may argue that

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117) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian, the Donatist*, 2, 20, 45.

118) Augustine, *The Letters of Petilian, the Donatist*, 2, 84, 184.

119) Augustine, *Sermons on New-Testament Lessons*, 12, 13, *PL* 38, 420–421. “Sed quid, si illud jubeat, quod non debes facere? Hic sane contemne potestatem, timendo potestatem. Ipsos humanarum rerum gradus advertite, Si aliquid jusserit curator, nonne faciendum est?”

120) Augustine, *Ep.* 93, 6, 20; *Ep.* 100, 1, 1; *On the Gospel of St John* 116, 5; *On the Spirit and the Letter*, 220, 4; *The Retractions* 1, 12, 8, etc.

the situation of the declining Roman Empire (through the invasion of the Vandals) inspired Augustine to review the relations of the Church and the State.

### III. Conclusion: A North African bishop in the late Roman world

Augustine was a man of his own age, even though he was an outstanding thinker in those days. The fact that he was a Catholic bishop from North Africa in the late Roman period explains much of the background of his thought-world.

In the fourth century the Christian Church expanded throughout the Roman world. The situation was changed from a persecuted church to that of the official religion of the Empire. It is understandable that the Constantinian and Theodosian periods seemed to be for Augustine a time of prophetic fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. However, the influence of his own North African tradition was so deep that he could see further by means of his eschatology. Augustine's hermeneutic developed. Later on, his pastoral work as bishop helped him to develop his thoughts.

On the other hand, his concept of a universal Roman Church opened up the possibility of using coercion toward paganism and sects. Augustine even argued that the State had to support Christian orthodoxy. However, it seems that Augustine believed that such coercion was not a purely political act, but



a pastoral necessity. With this understanding, his enthusiasm for the Orthodox position, which sometimes seemed less tolerant toward other Christian groups and pagans, can be explained. (\*)