

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE JUDGEMENT, MILLENNIUM AND BEYOND

#### 4.0 Introduction

The majority of ante-Nicene Patristic writers believed that after Christ returned at the end of the age to destroy the enemies of God, he would establish his kingdom on earth for a thousand years (the millennium). At the beginning of this period the dead saints would be resurrected in glory, and the living saints transformed, so they may participate in the millennial kingdom [the “first resurrection” of *Revelation* 20:4]. At the end of the millennium, the rest of the dead would be raised and judged, and then punished for their misdeeds [*Revelation* 20:11-15]. The earth would then be renewed and the saints would enter their eternal life on that new earth.<sup>1</sup> The hope of a bodily resurrection is central to this conception. The significance of millennialism for this study is found in the fact that those who expected to be raised to participate in the thousand year reign thus postponed the fulfillment of their eschatological hopes to the return of Christ, while those who rejected the millennium (See Chapter 7) could conceive of eschatological life commencing immediately after death.

While most of these writers anticipated eternal life on the renewed earth to follow the millennium, some came to hold that the millennium was only an interim state, to be followed by eternity in heaven after a second transformation of the body.

It was held that it was just of God to judge, indeed it was necessary for there to be a judgement because God is just. Correlated with this was the rejection of “fate” as this undermined individual responsibility, and was based on a pagan idea of inevitability.

#### 4.1 The resurrection for judgement

A Patristic commonplace is that since we sin in the body, we must also be judged in the body. It is quite clear that for Justin Martyr there is no judgement for the soul independent of the body, and no reward for the soul separately from the body. The whole person is judged and the whole person either enjoys reward or suffers punishment. Justin stresses that while this idea may seem to be similar to the ideas of the pagan writers, he implies that it is in fact rather different in its force. It is apparent from the rest of his thought that the punishment or reward is not received directly after death, but only after the resurrection and the judgement which follows. In this latter point the pagan writers were in error.<sup>2</sup> We see then very early in the Patristic period that the idea of an immediate judgement after death is associated by Christians with pagan views concerning the immortality of the soul and the rejection of the resurrection. Justin Martyr decisively rejected this approach.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the outline given by Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.35.1. ANF 1, p. 565. Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 25. ANF 3, p. 563.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr. *First Apology* 20. ANF 1, p. 170. Hippolytus. *Against Plato, on the cause of the universe* 2. ANF 5, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Justin Martyr. *Fragments of the lost work of Justin on the Resurrection*, 2. ANF 1, pp. 294-295.

Tatian's view of the resurrection is that the whole person, body and soul, will be raised from the dead to face the judgement. "When our age has been brought to an end, the resurrection will take place once and for all, in reference to men alone, for their judgement."<sup>4</sup> Only through the resurrection are human beings able to face the judgement: after death they do not exist, because the soul dies with the body; so they must be raised to life again to receive their reward, when the righteous will be allotted immortality and the wicked punishment.

Irenaeus indicates that one of the main purposes of the resurrection is to bring people to judgement. He says that if there is to be a resurrection, then there will surely be a judgement, and therefore, since he has proved the resurrection to his satisfaction, he assumes acceptance of the fact that there will be a judgement will follow. "If the corpse of Elisha raised a dead man, how much more shall God, when he has quickened men's dead bodies, bring them up for judgement?"<sup>5</sup> He stresses that all who love God shall be raised first, then the rest of the dead, who shall be judged.

For it was not merely for those who believed on Him in the time of Tiberius Caesar that Christ came, nor did the Father exercise His providence for the men only who are now alive, but for all men together, who from the beginning, according to their capacity, in their generation have both feared and loved God, and practised justice and piety towards their neighbours, and have earnestly desired to see Christ, and to hear His voice. Wherefore He shall, at His second coming, first rouse from their sleep all persons of this description, and shall raise them up, as well as the rest who shall be judged, and give them a place in His kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

The doctrine of the resurrection is demanded by the judgement, as the body is the agent of the person's actions. Immortality is conferred on the righteous at the resurrection, it is not something which is possessed by the person by nature. Irenaeus thus stresses an eschatological judgement, not an immediate judgement after death.

[Christ will return from heaven] to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race...that He should execute just judgement towards all; that He may send "spiritual wickednesses," and the angels who transgressed, and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept his commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 6.1. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Irenaeus. *Fragments of Lost Writings* 35. ANF 1, p. 574.

<sup>6</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 4.22.2. ANF 1, p. 494.

<sup>7</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 1.10.1. ANF 1, p. 330-331. Cf. *Against Heresies* 5.27.2. "And to as many as continue in their love towards God, does He grant communion with Him. But

Irenaeus sees the doctrine of the resurrection for judgement as a criticism of the gnostic view, since it affirms the goodness of the creation and of this bodily life, a view rejected by the gnostics he contends against. However much they may reject the idea of a resurrection and a judgement to follow, still they shall be raised and judged in the flesh.

Moreover, they despise the workmanship of God, speaking against their own salvation, becoming their own bitterest accusers, and being false witnesses [against themselves]. Yet, reluctant as they may be, these men shall one day rise again in the flesh, to confess the power of Him who raises them from the dead; but they shall not be numbered among the righteous on account of their unbelief.<sup>8</sup>

According to Tertullian, the resurrection is necessary prior to the judgement, for two reasons: the soul being incorporeal is incapable of experiencing suffering apart from the flesh,<sup>9</sup> and it would be unjust to punish one without the other as both were involved in sin. There is also the need to stress the identity of the body buried and the body raised, so that judgement is carried out on the responsible party.

Is it for you to distinguish the acts of the flesh and the spirit, whose communion and conjunction in life, in death, and in resurrection, are so intimate, that, “at that time,” they are equally raised up either for life or else for judgement; because, to wit, they have equally either sinned or lived innocently?<sup>10</sup>

Justice demands that as both body and soul acted together, both must be rewarded or punished, as to judge only one of them was unjust. This theme is frequently cited in Patristic discussions of the judgement, and often in connection with 2 Corinthians 5:10. Tertullian infers from this passage that the whole person will be judged, body as well as soul, and the body as well as the soul will be either rewarded or punished. This then implies the resurrection of the body.<sup>11</sup> Because human beings are composed

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communion with God is life and light, and the enjoyment of all the benefits which He has in store. But on as many as, according to their choice, depart from God, He inflicts that separation from Himself which they have chosen of their own accord. But separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store.” ANF 1, p. 556.

<sup>8</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 1.22.1. ANF 1, p. 347.

<sup>9</sup> Evans comments that Tertullian was still of this opinion when he wrote *The testimony of the soul* 4, but when he wrote *On the resurrection of the flesh* 17 he is seen to have changed his mind. E Evans. **Tertullian's treatise on the resurrection**, p. xii, n. 1. Tertullian there advances the view that the soul has its own kind of corporeality which enables it to perceive and suffer, as is proved, he says, by the case of Lazarus. The soul still needs the flesh, not because it cannot suffer without it, but because it should not suffer without it, as both were responsible for the actions of the person. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 17. ANF 3, pp. 556-557.

<sup>10</sup> Tertullian. *On repentance* 3. ANF 3, pp. 658-659. Cf. also *Apology* 48. ANF 3, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 43. ANF 3, p. 577. Cf. Basil of Caesarea. “These bones, which shared in the conflict with the blessed soul, are known to the Lord. These bones He will crown, together with that soul, in the righteous day of His requital, as it is written, *we*

of two natures, soul and flesh, it is necessary for both to be present for the judgement. That which is to be judged is also that which is to be raised; and since both will be judged, the flesh must be raised so the person can appear with both, since his life is spent in both. He must be judged in the condition in which he lived.<sup>12</sup> Correlated with his belief in the resurrection of all the dead, Tertullian clearly expects that the judgement of God is to embrace everyone: nobody will be exempted from it.<sup>13</sup> Tertullian asserts that since Christ is to pass sentence on both good and bad, all will be raised, as it would be unjust if sentence were pronounced on those not present. And they must be in the condition in which they had carried out the deeds on which sentence is passed: hence they must be raised to be present with both body and soul.<sup>14</sup> Tertullian argues that if the flesh has been used solely as an instrument by the soul, and that it is the soul which will face the judgement, then, he argues, the flesh is innocent and should be raised: it should be saved because of its innocence, its fate should be independent of the fate of the soul.<sup>15</sup> But because he sees both acting together, Tertullian insists that the body must be raised to be rejoined with the soul in order for them to face the judgement together.<sup>16</sup>

A similar interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:10 is found in the works of John Chrysostom. Through asserting that all shall be judged, he maintains that by this means the apostle Paul

...both revives those who have done virtuously and are persecuted with those hopes, and makes those who have fallen back more earnest by that fear. And he thus confirmed his words touching the resurrection of the body. "For surely," says he, "that which has ministered to the one and to the other shall not stand excluded from the recompenses: but along with the soul shall in the one case be punished, in the other crowned." But some of the heretics say, that it is another body that is raised. How so? tell me. Did one sin, and is another punished? Did one do virtuously, and is another crowned?<sup>17</sup>

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*must stand before the judgement seat of Christ, that each may give account of what he has done in the body."* Letter 197, to Ambrose. NPNF 2/8, p. 235.

<sup>12</sup> Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 14. ANF 3, pp. 554-555.

<sup>13</sup> Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 59. ANF 3, p. 591. Cf. *Apology* 18. ANF 3, p. 32. *Ad nationes* 1.7. ANF 3, p. 116.

<sup>14</sup> Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 5.12. ANF 3, p. 456.

<sup>15</sup> Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 16. ANF 3, p. 556.

<sup>16</sup> Tertullian. *The soul's testimony* 4. ANF 3, p. 177. Cf. Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 1. ANF 3, p. 545.

<sup>17</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 10.5. NPNF 1/12, p. 329. Cf. also *Homilies on St. John* 34.3. NPNF 1/14, pp. 120-121. A similar view appears in Ambrose. "For since the whole course of our life consists in the union of body and soul, and the resurrection brings with it either the reward of good works, or the punishment of wicked ones, it is necessary that the body, whose actions are weighed, rise again. For how shall the soul be summoned to judgement without the body, when account has to be rendered of the companionship of itself and the body?" *On belief in the resurrection* 2.52. NPNF 2/10, pp. 181-182.

Since all will be raised, because Christ was raised, we will all therefore be judged, since the judgement inexorably follows the resurrection. Chrysostom thus argues for the necessity of the judgement from the logic of the necessity of the resurrection, and since Christ was raised there will necessarily be a judgement.

Let us repent then: for we must assuredly be judged. If Christ rose not, we shall not be judged: but if he rose, we shall without doubt be judged. *For to this end, it is said, did he also die, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living [Romans 14:9]. For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that he has done [Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10].* Do not imagine that these are but words. Lo! he introduced also the subject of the resurrection of all men; for in no other way can the world be judged. And that, *In that he has raised him from the dead [Acts 17:31]*, relates to the body, for that was dead, that had fallen.<sup>18</sup>

Chrysostom stresses that the resurrection is of the body, not the soul, since it is a resurrection to incorruption, and the soul is not corrupted. Also that the resurrection is of that which fell, that is, the body.<sup>19</sup> It is only through the resurrection that justice can be done.

But many sinners have had their departure without punishment, many righteous men have had their departure after suffering ten thousand grievous things. If then God be just, where will he reward their good to the one, and their punishment to the other, if there be no hell, if there be no resurrection?<sup>20</sup>

Augustine interpreted 2 Corinthians 5:10 in a rather different way. He queries why we are to be judged according to the things which we have done “by means of the body” when there are also “many things are done by the mind alone, and not by the body,” such as thoughts of the kind mentioned in Psalm 14:1. *The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.* Augustine decides that it must mean that to be judged according to the things done by means of the body mean things done “during that time in which he was in the body,” that is, during bodily life. We will therefore be judged in the body solely for the sake of receiving rewards and punishments, but in the intermediate state between death and resurrection, “souls are either tormented or they are in repose, according to those things which they have done during the period of the bodily life.”<sup>21</sup> This interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:10, based on an anthropological dichotomy, separates the deeds of the mind from those of the body. While Augustine’s interpretation in some respects is correct, in that it refers to deeds done “while in the body,” that is, in this life, he forces the distinction of body and soul into this text to

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<sup>18</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homily on The Acts of the Apostles* 38. NPNF 1/11, p. 237.

<sup>19</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on John* 66.3. NPNF 1/14, p. 246. Cf. the study of this theme: A H C van Eijk. “Only that can rise which has previously fallen. The history of a formula.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971) 517-529.

<sup>20</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Philippians* 6. NPNF 1/13, p. 212. Cf. also *Homilies on St. John* 66.3. NPNF 1/14, pp. 246-247.

<sup>21</sup> Augustine. *On the predestination of the saints* 24. NPNF 1/5, p. 509.

explain why we are judged apart from the body for deeds apparently, according to this text, done in the body. In the time between death and the resurrection, the soul suffers punishment or reward for deeds done in the soul,<sup>22</sup> while the punishment and reward of the soul together with the body follows later at the resurrection. The view of Augustine thus continues some of the earlier themes of Patristic theology, but is unable to escape from the consequences of an instrumentalist anthropology.

Cyril of Jerusalem asks his hearers to reverence the body in which they will be raised and judged: “Be tender, I beseech you, of this body, and understand that you will be raised from the dead, to be judged with this body.”<sup>23</sup> He stressed that the believers would have to give account to the Lord of what they have done with the body.<sup>24</sup> He argues that God has power over both bodies and souls, and he will therefore subject both to punishment.<sup>25</sup>

Gregory of Nyssa insists that since in both virtuous deeds and in vice, body and soul act together, there is no basis for judging the soul alone, a view he says is neither just nor reasonable. “If alone and naked the soul sinned, punish it alone, too; but if it has a manifest accomplice, the judge being just will not acquit the accomplice.”<sup>26</sup> In burglary, adultery or murder, the soul cannot act without the body, nor can this be the case likewise in acts of virtue, and so both must be judged together.<sup>27</sup> Gregory refers to human nature in the resurrection as “a composite being as before consisting of both body and soul,” which will be led to judgement after the resurrection. The soul and body form a partnership which must be judged as a whole.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Augustine. “During the time, moreover, which intervenes between a man's death and the final resurrection, the soul dwells in a hidden retreat, where it enjoys rest or suffers affliction just in proportion to the merit it has earned by the life which it led on earth.” *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love* 109. NPNF 1/3, p. 272.

<sup>23</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 4.30. NPNF 2/7, p. 26. Concern for the body is also expressed by Prudentius. “Receive now, earth, this our brother into thy care, take him into thy gentle bosom. It is a man's body I leave in thy keeping; nobly born the remains that I commit to thy trust. This was once the home of a soul created from its Maker's mouth; in these remains dwelt glowing Wisdom, whose head is Christ. Do thou cover the body entrusted to thee; He who is its maker and author will not forget it, and will seek again that which He gave, the image of His own countenance.” *Cathemerinon* 10.124-135. Loeb, I, p. 93. Similarly Augustine says that care ought to be shown to the bodies of the deceased saints, since they have been “used by the Holy Spirit as his organs and instruments for all good works.” He says “the body is not an extraneous ornament or aid, but a part of man's very nature.” *The City of God* 1.13. NPNF 1/2, p. 10. See also *On care to be had for the dead* 5. NPNF 1/3, p. 541.

<sup>24</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 18.20. NPNF 2/7, pp. 139. Here Cyril accuses the heretics of despising the body as a garment that is not an intrinsic part of human nature, and exhorts his hearers to treat it with respect, since they will give an account to the Lord for everything they have done through the body.

<sup>25</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 8.3. NPNF 2/7, p. 48.

<sup>26</sup> Gregory of Nyssa. *Discourse on the holy Pascha*. In: **The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa**, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory of Nyssa. *Discourse on the holy Pascha*. In: **The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa**, p. 21.

<sup>28</sup> Gregory of Nyssa. *Discourse on the holy Pascha*. In: **The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa**, p. 20.

In his commentary on Psalm 1 Origen mentions the common Patristic approach to anthropology, that both body and soul will suffer together for the deeds they have done, saying that Matthew 10:28 [*Fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell*] possibly means that the soul will not receive punishment apart from the body. However he sees the text in terms of the Greek doctrine of form and substance, and cannot thereby but distort the meaning by introducing into the text alien dualistic conceptions.<sup>29</sup>

Gregory the Great uses the traditional anthropological viewpoint when he comes to discuss the significance and nature of the resurrection. He states that it is fitting that both the body and soul together should share the rewards and punishments earned together in life. Gregory held that the wicked will be raised in the same flesh in which they now live, so that the flesh which was the instrument of sin should share in the punishment for that sin.

Which people, though here they quit their dead flesh, yet that same in the resurrection they receive again, that together with that flesh they may burn, in which flesh they did their sin. For as their sin was in mind and body, so the punishment shall be in spirit and flesh alike.<sup>30</sup>

Since the union of body and soul is the natural state for humankind, it is only natural that the restoration of that union should occur at the resurrection, so that the soul and body can share together in the punishments and rewards the person has deserved.<sup>31</sup> The body which sinned, or did virtue, will be the body which is punished or rewarded, and this therefore demands a resurrection. This will not take place without the soul, since both body and soul were involved in every deed. This idea is found in many Patristic writers.<sup>32</sup>

The concept of both body and soul deserving rewards and punishments together is continued in Patristic thought, although it is divorced from the foundation on which it was established: the unity of body and soul which formed the person.

## 4.2 The justice of God and the judgement

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<sup>29</sup> Origen. *Selections in Psalms. Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory the Great. *Morals in Job* 16.14.19. LF 21, p. 236.

<sup>31</sup> J P McClain. **The doctrine of heaven in the writings of Saint Gregory the Great**, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Chrysologus. *Sermon* 83. FC 17, pp. 136-137. Basil of Caesarea. "The body is not divided, part being delivered to chastisement, and part let off; for when a whole has sinned it were like the old fables, and unworthy of a righteous judge, for only the half to suffer chastisement. Nor is the soul cut in two, that soul the whole of which possesses the sinful affection throughout, and works the wickedness in co-operation with the body." *On the Spirit* 16.40. NPNF 2/8, p. 25. Peter of Alexandria. "...at the resurrection our mortal bodies put on immortality in order that the body united with the soul might receive the reward which it deserves." Peter of Alexandria. *On the resurrection* [Fragment IV.1]. In: T Vivian. **St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr**, p. 133.

The necessity for the resurrection was frequently argued on the basis of justice. Because the Patristic authors recognised that people often do not receive their just deserts in this life, they held that a judgement after death was essential, in order to punish the wicked and reward the righteous. Without a judgement there would be no setting to rights of the things that are wrong, nor an incentive to right living for those able to escape punishment in this life.<sup>33</sup> Only by such a judgement after death could justice be done. This view is found in John Chrysostom, who says that "...if he were to chasten all the evil men here, and were to honour all the good men, a day of judgement were superfluous."<sup>34</sup>

Irenaeus and many other Patristic writers asserted that those who sinned did so deliberately, and cannot escape their punishment by claiming that God is not just.

Just as it is with those who break the laws, when punishment overtakes them: they throw the blame upon those who frame the laws, but not upon themselves. In like manner do those men, filled with a satanic spirit, bring innumerable accusations against our Creator, who has both given to us the spirit of life, and established a law adapted for all; and they will not admit that the judgement of God is just. Wherefore also they set about imagining some other Father who neither cares about nor exercises a providence over our affairs, nay, one who even approves of all sins.<sup>35</sup>

Irenaeus insists then that it is essential that God judges all humankind, otherwise it would demonstrate that he is either not just, or else does not care about human deeds. Because Irenaeus believes that God is both just and the Creator of all, then to deny he judges is to deny he is the Creator.<sup>36</sup> And if human deeds are of no concern to God, then the incarnation and redemptive work of Christ has no object. The true God is not like the God of the Gnostics, who has no interest in us and is indifferent to human virtue and indulgent of human vice. The Son has come, however, for the ruin of obdurate sinners and the salvation of those who believe. All will then be judged according to their deeds, and accordingly punished or rewarded.<sup>37</sup>

Many Patristic writers argue that denial of the resurrection is motivated by rejection of the idea of the judgement to follow. Thus John Chrysostom states:

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<sup>33</sup> Hippolytus states that Epicurus denies the possibility of judgement after death because the soul is then dissolved, so if we can evade punishment in this life we have escaped it altogether. *Refutation of all Heresies* 1.19. ANF 5, p. 21. Epicurus was frequently assailed by the Patristic writers for this view. Cf. Arnobius. *The case against the pagans* 2.30. ANF 7, p. 144. Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 3.17. ANF 7, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup> John Chrysostom. *That demons do not govern the world* 1.7. NPNF 1/9, p. 184.

<sup>35</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.27.1. ANF 1, pp. 555-556.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Theophilus of Antioch. "For he who gave the mouth for speech and formed the ear for hearing and made eyes for vision, will examine everything and will judge justly, rewarding each one in accordance with what he deserves." *To Autolycus* 1.14. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 19, 21.

<sup>37</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.27.1-2. ANF 1, p. 556.



Be not therefore deceived by the heretics, beloved: for there is a Resurrection and there is a Judgement, but they deny these things, who would desire not to give account of their actions.<sup>38</sup>

Elsewhere he says that “death will be the beginning of punishment for persons who believe not that there is a Judgement.”<sup>39</sup> The Epistles of Polycarp stress that a denial of the resurrection and the judgement is a heresy: “...whosoever... does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is antichrist; ...and anyone who says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgement, he is the firstborn of Satan.”<sup>40</sup> While not explicitly stated, this is perhaps implying that denying the judgement results in immoral behaviour, and such a person would merit the description of “the firstborn of Satan.” The judgement to come is thus both an incentive to live an ethical life here and now, and also an encouragement to those suffering injustice, since it holds the promise that the wrongs in the world will be put to right.<sup>41</sup>

Minucius Felix asserts that the wicked wish to think that death is the end of all and that there is therefore no resurrection for judgement, because they are aware that they will have to give an account of their evil lives at the judgement. Minucius says that they can assert this error simply because God delays his judgement in patience, and is therefore even more just.<sup>42</sup> Minucius argues that this doctrine of the punishment of the wicked after death is well attested in the pagan writers, as well as in Christian doctrine.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Arnobius claims that the Greek poets and philosophers understood something of the truth when they spoke of punishments after death, but they did not understand that the resurrection needed to occur first.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on John* 66.3. NPNF 1/14, pp. 246-247.

<sup>39</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Colossians* 2. NPNF 1/13, p. 268.

<sup>40</sup> Polycarp. *Letter to the Philippians* 7. ANF 1, p. 34. Cf. the comments of John Chrysostom, who says that those who do not believe in the judgement after death have no right to call themselves Christians. *Homilies on Colossians* 2. NPNF 1/13, p. 268.

<sup>41</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homily in Matthew* 13.9. NPNF 1/10, p. 86.

<sup>42</sup> Minucius Felix. *Octavius* 34. ANF 4, p. 194. G Quispel points out the parallel between this idea and a passage in the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 5.28 [ANF 8, p. 150], where the desire of the wicked that death is the end also occurs. Quispel suggests that both could be using a common source. “A Jewish source of Minucius Felix.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 3 (1949) 119. Commodian suggested that it was ungrateful for the wicked rich to suggest that there will be no life after death, since they thereby despise God who gave them life and all their many possessions. They are merely hoping to avoid any punishment. *Instructions* 29. ANF 4, p. 208. Cf. also *Instructions* 26-27. ANF 4, pp. 207-208. Eusebius. *On the Theophania* 3.61. Samuel Lee, pp. 196-200. *Oration in praise of the Emperor Constantine* 13.13. NPNF 2/1, p. 602.

<sup>43</sup> Minucius Felix. *Octavius* 35. ANF 4, p. 195. Cf. also John Chrysostom, who says that the Greeks have no right to disbelieve in the judgement, since so many of their poets and philosophers have spoken of it, even though, he stresses, they erred in understanding it to be a judgement of the soul alone and not of the soul together with the body. *Homilies on Colossians* 2. NPNF 1/13, p. 269. Cf. Hippolytus, who points to Plato's doctrine of judgement after death to show that the justice of God is not evaded by the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. *Refutation of all Heresies* 1.16. ANF 5, pp. 18-19.

<sup>44</sup> Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 2.13. ACW 7, p. 127.

Cyril of Jerusalem stresses the importance of belief in the resurrection, since then the Lord will reward us for our labours, as any king would do for his subjects.<sup>45</sup> Cyril says that the Greeks reject the resurrection, the Samaritans do not believe it,<sup>46</sup> but heretics on the other hand mutilate it, that is, they affirm the life of the soul but reject the resurrection of the body,<sup>47</sup> since according to Cyril the heretics consider the body as a garment to be discarded.<sup>48</sup> This emphasis on the resurrection is essential for Cyril's theology, both to maintain the integrity of the Biblical eschatology, as he needs to show that God is able to execute justice on both body and soul, and also to thereby refute the heretics who deny the unity of human nature as the creation of God.

But they [the heretics] who say that one God is Lord of the soul, and some other of the body, make neither of them perfect, because either is wanting to the other. For how is he almighty, who has power over the soul, but not over the body? And how is he almighty who has dominion over bodies, but no power over spirits? But these men the Lord confutes, saying on the contrary, *Rather fear ye Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell*. For unless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has the power over both, how does He subject both to punishment?<sup>49</sup>

The need for justice and belief in a resurrection were thus seen as reinforcing each other: both were necessary, and each implied the other. The judgement was demanded because God was just and would reward those who do good and punish those who do evil, even if this did not occur in this life. This idea is expressed succinctly by John Chrysostom.

If there is a God, as indeed there is, it follows that he is just, for if he is not just neither is he God, and if he is just he recompenses to each according to their desert. But we do not see all here receiving according to their desert. Therefore it is necessary to hope for some other requital awaiting us, in order that by each one receiving according to his desert, the justice of God may be made manifest. For this consideration does

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<sup>45</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 18.1. NPNF 2/7, p. 134.

<sup>46</sup> The Samaritans accept only the Pentateuch, like the Sadducees, and thus claim that because there is no direct teaching of the resurrection and future judgement there, it is not essential for the faith. Nor do they believe in the immortality of the soul, expecting a 'resurrection' only through having offspring. Cf. Philastrius. *De haeresibus* 7. PL 12, 1120-1121.

<sup>47</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 18.1. NPNF 2/7, p. 134. Ambrose complains that the philosophers allow only a "partial redemption" through rejecting the resurrection, even if they do accept the immortality of the soul. *On belief in the resurrection* 2.126. NPNF 2/10, p. 195.

<sup>48</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 18.20. NPNF 2/7, p. 139. The heretical groups that do not believe in the resurrection and future judgement include the 'Proclianitae,' the Floriani or Carpocratians, the Manichaeans, and the Symmachians. Philastrius. *De haeresibus* 56-63. PL 12, 1170-1177.

<sup>49</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 8.3. NPNF 2/7, p. 48.

not only contribute to our wisdom about providence alone, but about the Resurrection...<sup>50</sup>

Chrysostom expands on this idea elsewhere, and demonstrates how the judgement is essential if justice is to be maintained. He bases this on the perception that the order in creation demonstrates the existence of God. He then maintains that God must be just, rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked, since even human beings feel this way. Thus since justice is not done in this life, it can only happen in the next life, that is, after we are raised from the dead.<sup>51</sup> Thus the justice of God is correlated with his providence; for unless God is concerned about what occurs in this life and cares for this creation, what basis is there for him to judge us for our deeds?

So frequently was the resurrection “proven” on the grounds of justice that Athenagoras expressed regret that this argument had been used, as it obscured what was for him the more important basis of resurrection: the fulfillment of the intention of God for humanity.<sup>52</sup> Even though he used the same argument, Athenagoras wished it to be subordinate to this teleological concern. However, he also argues from “secondary arguments,” namely that the reward or punishment due to each requires the resurrection.<sup>53</sup> Athenagoras argues that since humans are rational, they require justice.<sup>54</sup> This is in contrast to the irrational animals, since they neither know about nor demand justice.<sup>55</sup> This justice applies to the whole person, the *compositum* of body and soul, therefore

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<sup>50</sup> John Chrysostom. *That demons do not govern the world* 1.8. NPNF 1/9, p. 186. Cf. *Homilies on Colossians* 2. NPNF 1/13, p. 268. “If there is no Judgement, God is not just: if God is not just, then there is no God at all: if there is no God, all things go on at haphazard, virtue is nothing, vice nothing.” This idea was found also in Clement of Alexandria, who says that God cannot be good without being just. *The Instructor* 1.9. ANF 2, pp. 228-232. Justin Martyr argues that God's nature implies a final judgement. *First Apology* 28. ANF 1, p. 172. This approach to the just nature of God is considered by Pannenberg to be rooted in a philosophical conception of God in which “The biblical connection between the righteousness of God and his faithfulness to his promises and his covenant receded from sight.” He says this “gives the concept of righteousness an ultimately cosmological instead of redemptive-historical background.” Wolfhart Pannenberg. **Basic Questions in Theology**. Vol. 2, pp. 174-175, and n. 197.

<sup>51</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 9.3. NPNF 1/12, p. 323. Cf. his further comment in this section: “Open the doors of your conscience, and behold the judge that sits in your heart. Now if you condemn yourself, although a lover of yourself, and cannot refrain from passing a righteous verdict, will not God much rather make great provision for that which is just, and pass that impartial judgement upon all; or will he permit everything to go on loosely and at random?” NPNF 1/12, p. 324.

<sup>52</sup> Even after the time of Athenagoras, that idea continued. As his writings were relatively unknown, his criticisms appear to have had little effect on subsequent writers such as Tertullian, who said: “The entire cause, then, or rather necessity of the resurrection, will be this, namely, that arrangement of the final judgement which shall be most suitable to God.” *On the resurrection of the flesh* 14. ANF 3, p. 554.

<sup>53</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 18.2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 131.

<sup>54</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 18.4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 133.

<sup>55</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 10.2-4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 111.

...it is necessary that such a man should be held accountable for all his deeds and receive reward and punishment because of them. Just judgement requites the composite creature for his deeds. The soul alone should not receive the wages for deeds done in conjunction with the body (for the soul as soul is free from passions and untouched by the faults which arise in connection with bodily pleasures or with food and nurture), nor should the body alone be requited (for the body as body cannot make assessment of law and justice); it is man, the combination of both, who receives judgement for each of his deeds.<sup>56</sup>

Athenagoras is convinced that true justice is not meted out during our lifetimes, as many wicked people escape punishment, while many righteous people are not rewarded but frequently suffer distress. Neither can such justice be given after death, since the composite creature no longer exists as long as the soul is separated from the body which decomposes and is dispersed.<sup>57</sup> The conclusion which must follow from this logic is obvious, according to Athenagoras.

What follows is clear to everyone: that this corruptible and dispersible body must, according to the apostle, put on incorruptibility, so that, when the dead are revived through the resurrection and what has been separated or entirely dissolved is reunited, each may receive his just recompense for what he did in the body, whether good or evil.<sup>58</sup>

Athenagoras argues that if there is no judgement then we are no better than animals and moral living is not only not necessary, it is a disadvantage to us, since we cannot thereby fulfill what would be perfectly natural desires without inhibition. The fitting conclusion of that view is the motto, *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*, that is, we are annihilated in death.<sup>59</sup>

Athenagoras insists that God will visit his justice on us, and because of his anthropological views, the body and soul must both be present, since justice demands that the subject of the punishment be present.

If the body decays and each part which undergoes dissolution returns to its appropriate element, whereas the soul as such remains incorruptible, not even then will a judgement upon the soul take place, since justice would be absent; for it is not right to assume that any judgement will be

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<sup>56</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 18.4-5. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 133.

<sup>57</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 18.5. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 133.

<sup>58</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 18.5. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 135.

<sup>59</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 19.3. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 135. The same idea is found in other Patristic writers, for example, Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 2.29. ACW 7, p. 142. John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Colossians* 2. NPNF 1/13, p. 269. Gregory of Nyssa. *Discourse on the Holy Pascha*. In: **The Easter Sermons of Gregory of Nyssa**, pp. 9, 19.

exercised by God or issue from God if justice is absent; and justice is absent if the doer of righteousness or unrighteousness does not perdure; and the one who in his lifetime did each of the deeds that are judged was man - not soul as such. In short, this doctrine is worth nothing for the maintenance of justice.<sup>60</sup>

Athenagoras thus shows that on his grounds, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul alone without the resurrection of the body cannot guarantee the justice of God in exercising judgement on humankind, since human persons are to be judged, not the souls alone. Thus the body must be raised to participate in the rewards and punishments due to it together with the soul, if true justice is to be done and to be seen to be done.

In the rewarding of virtuous acts the body will clearly be wronged if it participates with the soul in the labours of its earnest striving but does not participate in the reward for such acts; it will be wronged if the soul has frequently gained forgiveness for some of its misdeeds in consideration of the body's need and want, but the body itself is deprived of participation in the reward for virtuous acts for the sake of which it endured the labours of this life. Moreover, when misdeeds are judged, justice is not upheld in the case of the soul if it alone pays the penalty for the misdeeds it committed when the body afflicted it and drew it into the orbit of its own desires and impulses, sometimes carrying it off by force, and at other times finding it a compliant attendant, indulging and pampering the body's frame.<sup>61</sup>

The belief that God created humankind in the beginning is used as an argument for believing God will also judge them. God is **able** to judge, because he is able to raise them from the dead to exercise his judgement. It is just of God to judge them, because it is God who originally created them. Thus we must be raised bodily, and it is our bodily existence that will be judged after we have been raised.<sup>62</sup>

Those Patristic writers who held that there would be only one judgement on the Last Day saw this as inconsistent with an immediate individualistic judgement after death. Cyril of Jerusalem draws on Matthew 25:32, the separation of the sheep from the goats, as evidence that all will be judged, including the believers. He refers to the good works commanded by Christ [Matthew 25:35] and says "These things if you do, you shall reign together with Him; but if you do not do them, you shall be condemned."<sup>63</sup>

The distinction between the righteous and the wicked was made very early, with such texts as Matthew 25, concerning the separation of the sheep and the goats, playing a

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<sup>60</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 20.3. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 137, 139.

<sup>61</sup> Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 21.1-2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 139.

<sup>62</sup> *Second Letter of Clement* 14. ANF 10, pp. 254-255.

<sup>63</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 15.25-26. NPNF 2/7, p. 112.

prominent role.<sup>64</sup> An instance is the *Teaching of Addaeus the Apostle*, who speaks of a separation “between the sheep and the goats, and between the faithful and those who believe not.”<sup>65</sup>

Tertullian insisted that the separation made by God between the wicked and the righteous would take place only at the judgement and not before. Until then, all human beings are treated alike. This is a salutary reminder to any who would attempt to usurp the prerogative of God and decide here and now who is righteous and who is not.

For He who once for all appointed an eternal judgement at the world's close, does not precipitate the separation, which is essential to judgement, before the end. Meanwhile He deals with all sorts of men alike, so that all together share His favours and reproofs.<sup>66</sup>

Those who do seek to separate out in this life the “wicked” from the “righteous” are thus implicitly denying the resurrection of the wicked to face judgement, since they seem to think there is no other opportunity to punish the wicked than in this life.<sup>67</sup> This postponement of the separation on the part of God to the end of the age can be understood in terms of “common grace,” that favour which God shows towards all his creatures, regardless of their response to his appeal of love to them.<sup>68</sup> Tertullian returns to this theme in his *Epistle to Scapula*.

Accordingly the true God bestows His blessings alike on wicked men and on His own elect; upon which account He has appointed an eternal judgement, when both thankful and unthankful will have to stand before His bar.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Caesarius of Arles emphasised charity to others, so as to appear before the Judge with a clear conscience. This is demonstrated “by the frequency of his references to the Judgement scene in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel, with its dramatic insistence on helping the unfortunate as the test for salvation... Sermons on, and references within other sermons to, Matthew 25.31-46 outnumber those relating to any other text.” W M Daley. “Caesarius of Arles, a precursor of Mediaeval Christendom.” *Traditio* 26 (1970) 22 and note 53.

<sup>65</sup> *The Teaching of Addaeus the Apostle*. ANF 8, p. 658. Further on the author speaks of “the separation which is to be made between the faithful and the unbelieving” at the resurrection. *The Teaching of Addaeus the Apostle*. ANF 8, p. 660.

<sup>66</sup> Tertullian. *Apology* 41. ANF 3, p. 48.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. the comments of John Cassian. “This question [why the righteous are killed] often exercises the minds of those who have not much faith or knowledge, and imagine that the prizes and rewards of the saints (which are not given in this world, but laid up for the future), are bestowed in the short space of this mortal life. But we whose hope in Christ is not only in this life, for fear lest, as the Apostle says, we should be *of all men most miserable* (because as we receive none of the promises in this world we should for our unbelief lose them also in that to come) ought not wrongly to follow their ideas...” *Conferences* 6.2. NPNF 2/11, p. 352.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Herman Bavinck. “Calvin and Common Grace.” In: **Calvin and the Reformation**, pp. 99-130. R C van Leeuwen. “Herman Bavinck's ‘Common Grace.’ A translation and introduction.” *Calvin Theological Journal* 24 (1989) 35-65.

<sup>69</sup> Tertullian. *To Scapula* 2. ANF 3, p. 105.

The “common grace” of God thus provides a further argument for the judgement of all following the resurrection, since we will all have to give an account of our response to God's continued graciousness to us in spite of our continued rebelliousness. A similar idea shaped Augustine's doctrine of the “two cities,” which Augustine says are commingled while in the world, so that the godly and the ungodly live together. Some of the ungodly wish to identify with the church, thus exemplifying the commingling. But those who live lives of ungodliness “shall not eternally dwell in the lot of the saints” since the two cities, entangled now, will be separated at the last judgement.<sup>70</sup> “For some most flagrant and wicked desires are allowed free play at present by the secret judgement of God, and are reserved to the public and final judgement.”<sup>71</sup> Augustine stresses that all shall rise for the judgement; those who have done evil will be raised and judged and sent into punishment, so that at that time there will be a separation between the good and the wicked. The distinction is not made in the resurrection, but only after the dead have risen, when they are sent to separate destinations: *They that have done good into the resurrection of life; they that have done evil into the resurrection of judgement.* Here, Augustine says, judgement means punishment, when we are separated. At the present time there is no separation, as “we all live together with the unjust, though the life of all is not the same: in secret we are distinguished, in secret we are separated.” At the judgement this secret separation will be made public, when that which is hidden will be revealed.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4.2.1 The judgement of the living and the dead

The Apostle's Creed, echoing Biblical terminology,<sup>73</sup> says that Christ will come to judge “the living and the dead,” a phrase used without further explanation by a number of early Patristic writers.<sup>74</sup> The idea that Christ will judge both “the living and the dead” implies a general judgement of all at his return, since the individualistic view of an immediate judgement after death separates the “living,” who are not judged, from the “dead,” who are.

There was considerable discussion later in the Patristic period as to what this phrase meant. There were three views expressed: that “the living and the dead” are those who are still alive at the *parousia*, and those who have died; that “the living” are the immortal souls, while “the dead” are their bodies; or that “the living” are the saints and “the dead” are the wicked who have no true life in them.

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<sup>70</sup> Augustine. *The City of God* 1.35. NPNF 1/2, p. 21. Cf. Gregory the Great. “For since this life is passed in common by the good and the evil, the Church is now visibly made up of a number of each of those. But it is distinguished in God's invisible judgement, and, at its end, is separated from the society of the wicked.” *Morals on Job* 31.15.28. LF 31, p. 447.

<sup>71</sup> Augustine. *The City of God* 1.28. NPNF 1/2, p. 19.

<sup>72</sup> Augustine. *On the Gospel of John* 19.17-18. NPNF 1/7, p. 130.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Romans 14:9, 2 Timothy 4:1, 1 Peter 4:5.

<sup>74</sup> For example, Polycarp. *Letter to the Philippians* 2. ANF 1, p. 33. *The Epistle of Barnabas* 7. ANF 1, p. 141. *Second Letter of Clement* 1. ANF 10, p. 251.

The first view is found in Theodore of Mopsuestia, who insists that the phrase refers simply to the two groups, those who have died, and those who are still alive, at the time of the return of Christ.

They added after His coming the sentence: *To judge the dead and the living*, so that with the mention of the good things done to us they should also implant fear into us and make us ready for the gift of the glory of all this Economy. They said, “of the dead and of the living,” not that the dead shall be judged - what kind of judgement can there be to the dead who do not feel? - but that at the time of His coming He will raise all of us born of Adam, that is all the children of men who had died, and will transform them into an immortal nature. Those men who will be overtaken by the general resurrection while still alive He will only transform, and from being mortal He will make immortal. This is the reason why they said, “the living and the dead.” Those who will be alive at that time they called “the living,” and those who had already died and passed away they called “the dead,” in order to show us that all the children of men shall be judged and none shall escape scrutiny, and that when they have been judged they shall receive a judgement commensurate with the nature of their actions in a way that some of them will be rewarded and others punished.<sup>75</sup>

Theodore thus stresses that the judgement will not take place after death, since the dead cannot be punished with justice, as they are unable to feel their punishment. Rather, everyone will be raised from the dead in order to face the judgement: nobody is exempt, and nobody escapes.

The second view is found in Methodius, who expresses the opinion that it refers to “souls and bodies; the souls being the *living*, as being immortal, and the bodies being *dead*.”<sup>76</sup> This same idea is found in Rufinus, who emphasises the significance of the eschatological judgement when all will receive the rewards due to them for their deeds in the body.<sup>77</sup> He says:

But the statement that He will judge living and dead does not imply that some will come to the judgement alive and others dead. Rather it means that He will judge men's souls and bodies simultaneously, their souls being described as living and their bodies as dead.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 7. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 78-79. Note the comment that the dead cannot feel (See Chapter 2.4.1).

<sup>76</sup> From an account of Methodius' *Discourse On the Resurrection* as reported by Photius. ANF 6, p. 377. Cf. also *The Symposium* 6.4. ACW 27, p. 95. Origen suggests that the statement that *God is not the God of the dead but of the living* [Mark 12:27] means that “He is not the God of sinners but of saints... If, then, He is the God of the saints, and is said to be the God of the living, then the saints are the living and the living are saints...” *Commentary on John* 2.11. ANF 10, p. 333.

<sup>77</sup> Rufinus. *Apology to Anastasius* 4-5. NPNF 2/3, p. 431. Cf. also *Apology* 1.4-9. NPNF 2/3, pp. 437-439.

<sup>78</sup> Rufinus. *Commentary on the Apostle's Creed* 33. ACW 20, p. 67. Peter Chrysologus says that the reference to the judgement of both the dead and the living means those who have died are



The third view is found in Augustine's discussion of this article of the Apostle's Creed, where he says that this phrase refers to the just (the "living") and the wicked (the "dead"). He also mentions the first interpretation discussed above as an alternative, but stresses that Christ judges both groups, however they are understood.<sup>79</sup>

#### 4.2.2 The rejection of Fate

The Patristic writers rejected the idea that human actions are governed by "fate," which determined our futures not according to justice but according to an arbitrary decree.<sup>80</sup> In opposition to this idea, they posited the providence of God, who cares for his creation, and will judge all humankind justly, rewarding the just and punishing the wicked. The Patristic writers also insisted on the freedom of human beings and their responsibility for their actions.<sup>81</sup> For instance, Eusebius attacks Apollonius for his views of the Fates which prescribe for every man his character and actions, which he

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still living in the eyes of God, even if we think of them as dead. The dead will certainly be raised for the judgement, they have not perished. "*Whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.* Let it be so with regard to the living. But how will He be able to judge the dead? Why, those whom we regard as dead are living. Therefore, admit that those whom the pagan world thinks have perished will rise again to be judged; that those who have died and will be found to be living may give an account both of their deeds and their life." *Sermon 57. On the Apostles' Creed.* FC 17, p. 109. Cf. also *Sermon 61. On the Apostles' Creed.* FC 17, p. 114. Caesarius says that the dead are "those who are proven to have died in their sins" while the living are "those who persevered in the good works of their lives." Thus, those who are cast into hell are the dead, and those received into the kingdom are the living. *Sermon 110.3.* FC 47, pp. 146-147. Isidore of Pelusium says: "By the judgement of living and dead is meant that both soul and body come to judgement together, and not separately. Just as they formed a unity here, so they will undergo judgement in unison there." *Letter 1.222.* PG 78, 321. Cited in: J N D Kelly. **Rufinus. Commentary on the Apostles' Creed.** ACW 20, p. 132, n. 200.

<sup>79</sup> Augustine. *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love* 55. NPNF 1/3, p. 255. *On Faith and the Creed* 8.15. NPNF 1/3, p. 327. *On the Creed* 12. NPNF 1/3, pp. 373-374. Cf. *The City of God* 20.24. NPNF 1/2, p. 445, where Augustine says that Christ will come from heaven to judge the living and the dead, namely, "the just and the unjust." This interpretation may be derived from Ambrose, who holds that the "living" and the "dead" are the just and the wicked, the first enjoying eternal life in the bosom of Abraham, and the other in the tombs of the dead. *The prayer of Job and David* 5.19. FC 65, p. 365.

<sup>80</sup> See for instance Augustine's attack on the idea of fate, and its corollary, astrology, in *The City of God* 5.1-10. NPNF 1/2, pp. 84-93. Also Justin Martyr. *First Apology* 43. ANF 1, p. 177. *Second Apology* 7. ANF 1, p. 190. Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 7-8. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 13, 15. Minucius Felix. *Octavius* 11. ANF 4, p. 179. *Octavius* 36. ANF 4, p. 195. Ambrosiaster. *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* 115. PL 35, 2347-2359.

<sup>81</sup> The idea of "free will" was articulated perhaps most strongly in this context, although it is in conflict with a Scriptural anthropology. Although it allowed the Patristic writers to maintain human responsibility, it was to generate various pseudo-problems in the paradox of free will and determinism, which are still debated today. These problems can be seen in Augustine's attempt to maintain the foreknowledge of God of all human actions in conjunction with human free will, while also insisting that the predetermining of our actions by fate destroys free will. *The City of God* 5.9. NPNF 1/2, pp. 90-91. Cf. Origen. *De Principiis* 3.1.1. ANF 4, p. 302.

cannot avoid. Eusebius defends the doctrine of free will in an effort to preserve personal responsibility for evil and good.<sup>82</sup>

John Chrysostom recognised that the idea of fate was in conflict with the resurrection and subsequent judgement, and he asserts that to believe the latter is to refute the former. If God is just, then the accident of birth cannot be unjust. It is God and not Fate or the powers of astrology that “holds all things together.” Belief in God banishes the idea of necessity and defends free agency, and thus also human responsibility.<sup>83</sup>

Because Chrysostom believes there is a judgement to follow the resurrection, the seeming injustices of this life do not disturb him. It does not indicate that we are subject to the powers of fate which do not operate according to justice, but that we are awaiting a day of judgement when all things are put to rights. Chrysostom insists that the true rewards and punishments come after the resurrection. If we see what appears to be injustice here, as when the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer, then this is not what they deserve, but a foretaste of the judgement to bring them to repentance.<sup>84</sup> He appears to imply that this will bring a sense of the grace of God and appropriate response.

Let us not then be troubled, let no man be troubled, when he sees the wicked prospering. The recompense is not here, either of wickedness or, of virtue; and if in any instance there be either of wickedness or of virtue, yet it is not according to desert, but merely as it were a taste of the judgement, that they who believe not the resurrection may yet even by things that happen here be brought to their senses. When then we see a wicked man rich, let us not be cast down; when we see a good man suffering, let us not be troubled. For yonder are the crowns, yonder the punishments.<sup>85</sup>

Even if the inequities of life are not resolved in this life, we need not despair since they will be corrected at the judgement. He also suggests that the wicked receive good things here, since they are not wholly bad, but after the resurrection they will receive only punishments, having already had what rewards they deserve. The righteous are not perfect either, and so they can receive recompense for their sins through punishment here, that later they should receive only rewards.<sup>86</sup> Chrysostom insists that since God is just, therefore he will not allow injustice to stand uncorrected. Since God does not correct it in this life, then there must be a judgement when it will be corrected.

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<sup>82</sup> Eusebius. *The Treatise of Eusebius against the life of Apollonius of Tyana* 41. Loeb, Vol 2, pp. 593-601. See G F Chesnut. “Fate, fortune, free will and nature in Eusebius of Caesarea.” *Church History* 42 (1973) 165-182.

<sup>83</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on 1 Timothy* 1. NPNF 1/13, p. 411.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. the views of Cyprian. “[The apostle Paul] says that God's judgement is just, because it is tardy, because it is long and greatly deferred, so that by the long patience of God man may be benefited for life eternal.” *On the advantage of patience* 4. ANF 5, p. 485.

<sup>85</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Hebrews* 5.6. NPNF 1/14, p. 391.

<sup>86</sup> John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Hebrews* 5.6. NPNF 1/14, p. 391.

So that when you see a just man straitened and afflicted; and in sickness, and in poverty, as well as innumerable other woes, till he ends this present life; say to yourself, that if there were no resurrection and judgement, God would not have permitted one, who enjoyed such great evils for his sake, to depart hence without enjoying any good thing; from when it is evident, that for such he has prepared another life, and one which is sweeter and much more enduring. For if it were not so, then he would not suffer many of the wicked to luxuriate through the present life; and many of the just to remain in ten thousand ills; but since there is provided another life, in which he is about to recompense every man according to his deserts; one for his wickedness, another for his virtue; on that account he forbears, while he sees the former enduring evil, and the latter living in luxury.<sup>87</sup>

Nemesius attacks the idea that fate (and astrology) governs human affairs.<sup>88</sup> He argues that God's providence will ensure that justice is done with respect to those who escape punishment for crimes in this life. He bases this on the immortality of the soul, as criminals cannot escape punishment through death, but instead will face judgement after death. Those who argue that there is no justice for those who escape punishment in this life restrict justice to this life only on the basis that the soul is mortal. As a result they “grossly exaggerate the importance of bodily and external well-being” and ignore virtue.<sup>89</sup>

The judgement to come thus stands in contrast to the doctrine of fate, which does not accept that the injustices of this life will remain unaltered. Therefore, there is a judgement after the resurrection, since God is just, and it is only in that way that he can exercise his justice and be seen to be just.

### 4.3 The millennium

The doctrine of the millennium can be found in the earliest Patristic writers, as for instance in the reports of Eusebius concerning the views of Papias, who held that “there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth.”<sup>90</sup> This correlation of the millennium with resurrection of the dead is typical, as Davies comments:

A survey of the relevant passages indicates that wherever there is a belief in a millennium, this is wedded to belief in the resurrection of the flesh. This combination would appear to be logically necessary because the millennium is a period of messianic sovereignty *on earth*; for the righteous dead to participate in this, they must live again *on earth*, i.e. the resurrection must be one that involves the restoration of

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<sup>87</sup> John Chrysostom. *Concerning the statues* 20. NPNF 1/9, pp. 339-340.

<sup>88</sup> Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 35.51. LCC 4, p.p. 397-398.

<sup>89</sup> Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 44.66. LCC 4, p. 439.

<sup>90</sup> Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39. NPNF 2/1, p. 172.

their physical particles - the millennium therefore requires the resurrection of the flesh.<sup>91</sup>

Dewart also points out this necessary correlation: “Justin believed in a resurrection of the *flesh* as a corollary of millenarianism, which necessarily involves a resurrection.”<sup>92</sup> While Justin's *Apology* does not mention the millennium, for perfectly valid reasons,<sup>93</sup> it is found in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Thus the eschatology of the *Apology* has been described as “spiritual” over against the implied “materialism” of the *Dialogue*.<sup>94</sup> Barnard points out (drawing on the views of C D F Moule)<sup>95</sup> that the different eschatological emphases in Justin's writings, such as we see in the *Dialogue with Trypho* and the *Apology*, are the result of different circumstances which therefore require different treatment **and terminology**.<sup>96</sup>

In Justin's eyes, those who reject Christ's millennial reign on earth and the restoration of Jerusalem, and believe that their souls will be taken to heaven when they die, are not orthodox Christians.

...I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> J G Davies. “Factors leading to the emergence of belief in the resurrection of the flesh.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1972) 450.

<sup>92</sup> J E McWilliam Dewart. **Death and Resurrection**, p. 64. Cf. L W Barnard. “Justin Martyr's eschatology.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 19 (1965) 95.

<sup>93</sup> J E McWilliam Dewart. “While the *Dialogue* stresses the millennium (addressed to Jewish ears) the *Apology* (addressed to the Emperor) avoids discussing the kingdom of God and speaks of `eternal and good life.” **Death and Resurrection**, p. 65. A defence of Christianity intended for the Emperor would naturally avoid any expressions which might imply a political threat to the State. For instance, Eusebius reports that the relatives of the Lord were brought to Domitian for questioning about their political aspirations. On being asked about the nature of the kingdom of Christ, they replied “that it was not a temporal or an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and give unto every one according to his works. Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass judgement against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church.” *Ecclesiastical History* 3.20. NPNF 2/1, p. 149. Cf. Irenaeus, who does not give the kingdom this “spiritual” interpretation, but certainly stresses its peaceful character. “The Lord's advent as a man was pointed out, that it should be subsequent to that law which was given by Moses, mild and tranquil, in which He would neither break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. The mild and peaceful repose of His Kingdom was indicated likewise. For, after the wind which rends the mountains, and after the earthquake, and after the fire, come the tranquil and peaceful times of His kingdom, in which the Spirit of God does, in the most gentle manner, vivify and increase mankind.” *Against Heresies* 4.20.10. ANF 1, p. 490.

<sup>94</sup> G T Purves. **The Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity**, pp. 121-122.

<sup>95</sup> L W Barnard. **Justin Martyr, His Life and Thought**, p. 157, referring to: C F D Moule. “The influence of circumstances on eschatological terminology.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 15 (1964) 1-15.

<sup>96</sup> L W Barnard. **Justin Martyr, His Life and Thought**, p. 158.

<sup>97</sup> Justin Martyr. *Dialogue with Trypho* 80. ANF 1, p. 239. Lactantius also speaks of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 72. ANF 7, p. 254.

Irenaeus also makes a very obscure reference to the opinions of otherwise orthodox believers whose eschatological views are suspect.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature...<sup>98</sup>

It is frustrating that Irenaeus does not name these heretical discourses, or to whom he refers. But it would appear that he means Gnostic documents, which have influenced orthodox Christians, since Irenaeus identifies denial of the resurrection and the millennial reign with heresy, and in the context of his writings, heresy principally means Gnosticism.

Irenaeus interprets the prophecy of *Daniel* 2:44-45 concerning the coming of the Messiah as a reference to the second coming and the resurrection, when temporal kingdoms shall be brought to an end, and an eternal kingdom established. "Christ is the stone which is cut out without hands, who shall destroy temporal kingdoms, and introduce an eternal one, which is the resurrection of the just..."<sup>99</sup> The millennial kingdom for Irenaeus is characterised by a return to the peaceful coexistence of the animals typical of the garden of Eden, as prophesied in *Isaiah* 11:1-10. This Irenaeus sees as both a "parable" of the present peaceful community of the church which includes those of different nations, and a prophecy which will receive a literal fulfillment in the eschaton. His description of the foretaste of the millennial peace which presently exists in the church, according to Irenaeus, indicates something of what he anticipates in the fulfillment. Justice is accomplished and character changed to holiness, and there is no lack in what the Lord supplies.<sup>100</sup>

Irenaeus considered the eschaton as the completion and consummation of what was intended at the beginning, renewing the creation and dispelling the effects of the fall, while incorporating the development that has meanwhile taken place. The work of redemption not only makes this consummation possible, it actualises it. The restoration of creation is not simply a reprinted original, it is matured and enhanced, brought to what it was intended to become, not simply to what it had once been. Thus his conception leads from the garden of Eden to the millennial city, the new Jerusalem. He interprets the process of redemption as movement from immaturity to maturity.

#### **4.3.1 The vindication of the saints**

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<sup>98</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.32.1. ANF 1, p. 561.

<sup>99</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.26.2. ANF 1, p. 555.

<sup>100</sup> Irenaeus. *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 61. ACW 16, p. 88.

A theme first expressed most explicitly and most forcefully by Irenaeus was that since the saints had suffered bodily in this world, it was only just that they be raised bodily and given rewards in the same world in which they had suffered.

...it behoves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgement should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, they should reign. For God is rich in all things, and all things are His. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous...<sup>101</sup>

This idea was repeated by many other Patristic writers,<sup>102</sup> for example, Tertullian.

We say that this city has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with the abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which in the world we have either despised or lost; since it is both just and Godworthy that his servants should have their joy in the place where they also suffered affliction for His name's sake.<sup>103</sup>

We find this theme of the vindication of the saints repeated in other Patristic writers, although not necessarily connected with expectation of a millennium. It is found in Hippolytus,<sup>104</sup> Prudentius,<sup>105</sup> Gregory the Illuminator,<sup>106</sup> and Augustine, who says that

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<sup>101</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.32.1. ANF 1, p. 561. Justin Martyr had early commented that “[Christ] has promised, as has already been proved, that there shall be a future possession for all the saints in this same land. And hence all men everywhere, whether bond or free, who believe in Christ, and recognise the truth in His own words and those of His prophets, know that they shall be with Him in that land, and inherit everlasting and incorruptible good.” *Dialogue with Trypho* 139. ANF 1, p. 269.

<sup>102</sup> G W E Nickelsburg suggests that the resurrection in Daniel 12:2 is a vindication of the righteous whose lives were wrongly taken. **Resurrection, immortality and eternal life in inter-testamental Judaism**, p. 18. The idea of a vindication on earth may be derived from Matthew 5:5, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*. Cf. Irenaeus. “Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in his; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*.” *Against Heresies* 5.32.2. ANF 1, pp. 561-562. Cf. *Against Heresies* 5.9.4. ANF 1, p. 535. Origen, as can be expected, interprets Matthew 5:5 in a spiritualising sense. *De principiis* 2.4.7. ANF 4, p. 275.

<sup>103</sup> Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 3.25. ANF 3, p. 343.

<sup>104</sup> Hippolytus. *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe*, 2. ANF 5, p. 222.

<sup>105</sup> Prudentius. *Crowns of Martyrdom* 5.569-576. Loeb II, p. 203.

<sup>106</sup> Gregory the Illuminator. *The Teaching of Saint Gregory* 529. R W Thomson, p. 124.

“the saints will, in the resurrection, inhabit those very bodies in which they toiled,” but without any of the troubles the flesh had earlier experienced.<sup>107</sup> Later on Augustine says that it is most suitable that the saints rejoice in the same body in which they had earlier groaned.<sup>108</sup> The idea appears again in Gregory the Great.

The just will see an increase in their reward on the day of judgement, inasmuch as up till then they enjoyed only the bliss of the soul. After the judgement, however, they will also enjoy bodily bliss, for the body in which they suffered griefs and torments will also share in their happiness.<sup>109</sup>

In his treatise *On the Resurrection* Origen argues that it would be unjust for God to give a reward to the soul when the body has also suffered and struggled for the sake of the gospel, and thus is an appeal to God's justice as a guarantee of the resurrection of the body.<sup>110</sup> Origen wrote:

Would it be anything but absurd for this body which bore scars on Christ's behalf, and endured the cruel pains of persecution equally with the soul; which suffered the torture of imprisonment, bondage, and beatings as well as the torture of fire; which was cut by the sword, has suffered the bloodthirsty attacks of beasts, crucifixion, and all sorts of punishments... would it not be unreasonable if the body should be deprived of the reward of such struggles?<sup>111</sup>

Even in the works of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, which are perhaps best described as neo-Platonic re-interpretations of Christian doctrine,<sup>112</sup> we find the idea that the body must be given its appropriate rewards and punishments, this in spite of the fact that the resurrection is almost totally obscured in his works by the speculative doctrine of *theosis*.<sup>113</sup> He objects to those who say that souls enter other bodies (through metempsychosis) since through this they hold “an unfair view of the bodies which have shared in the struggles of divine souls,” and thereby “wrongly deny them

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<sup>107</sup> Augustine. *The City of God* 13.19. NPNF 1/2, p. 255.

<sup>108</sup> Augustine. *The City of God* 22.26. NPNF 1/2, p. 506.

<sup>109</sup> Gregory the Great. *Dialogues* 4.26. FC 39, p. 218.

<sup>110</sup> L Boliek. **The resurrection of the flesh**, p. 42.

<sup>111</sup> Origen. Fragment, *On the Resurrection*. Excerpt in the *Apology of Pamphilius on behalf of Origen*. Translation cited from: L Boliek. **The resurrection of the flesh**, p. 41.

<sup>112</sup> I P Sheldon-Williams. “From a philosophical point of view the four treatises written by the pseudonymous Dionysius the Areopagite are of interest for two reasons: together they compose the most systematic exposition of fifth century Neoplatonism that we possess; and the exposition is a Christian one.” “The ecclesiastical hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius, Part I.” *Downside Review* 82 (1964) 293. Pseudo-Dionysius influenced many later Patristic writers such as Maximus the Confessor, whose works are also Neo-Platonic in flavour. Cf. the views of J Pelikan, who said that Maximus achieved “the restoration of the balance between Neo-Platonism and Christian orthodoxy...” Introduction. **Maximus Confessor. Selected Writings**. Classics of Western Spirituality, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> For a discussion of *theosis* see the Appendix.

the sacred rewards which they have earned at the end of the divine race.”<sup>114</sup> This theme is significantly transformed by Pseudo-Dionysius in the context of a *theosis* doctrine and a neo-Platonic philosophy, so that resurrection did not mean principally bodily renewal and transformation, but participation of both body and soul in the contemplation of God.<sup>115</sup> However, even though it is reinterpreted here in the light of the doctrine of *theosis*, it can be seen that this Patristic commonplace had an enduring influence on eschatological thought, and did much to sustain the idea that God's justice requires the resurrection of the body. However it was significantly altered when it was divorced from its roots in millennialism, as can be seen from the way it was interpreted by Pseudo-Dionysius, and was to collapse under the increasing influence of mystical asceticism, which did not ascribe any importance at all to this world, but sought rather to escape from it. This significant insight of Irenaeus' seems to have disappeared from contemporary eschatology, much to its detriment.<sup>116</sup> McDannell and Lang describe both the significance and demise of this insight very well.

The will to survive in a hostile civilization despite persecution and martyrdom led to an understanding of heaven as the compensation for lost earthly privileges. One Christian writer, Irenaeus of Lyons, looked to the next world for compensation for the loss of productive life on earth. The church of the martyrs, which Irenaeus represented, did not reject the world. It resented the fact that Roman persecution had made it impossible for Christians to enjoy God's good gift to humanity fully. As a glorified material world, Irenaeus' heaven would offset earthly limitations. Other early Christians perceived the situation quite differently. Inspired partly by fashionable Greek world-renouncing philosophies, ascetic Christians despised pagan life and wanted to withdraw from it. The young Augustine not only looked upon Roman society with suspicion; he extended this attitude to the entire material universe. Alienated from everything pertaining to “this world,” ascetic Christians such as Augustine espoused the dualistic philosophies of Gnosticism or Neoplatonism. They rejected the compensational heaven of Irenaeus and predicted that life after death would entail the continuation of their ascetic, spiritual lifestyle. As spirit was superior to matter on earth, so it would be in heaven.<sup>117</sup>

This latter approach can be seen in the thought of Athanasius, who said: “And though we fought on earth, we shall not receive our inheritance on earth, but we have the promises in heaven...”<sup>118</sup>

The idea that those who have suffered in the world would reign in glory in that same world in vindication, is perhaps reflected in Cyprian's view, in form if not in spirit,

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<sup>114</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius. *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7.1.2. Classics of Western Spirituality, p. 250.

<sup>115</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius. *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7.3.9. Classics of Western Spirituality, p. 257.

<sup>116</sup> In his recent book, J Webb Mealy interprets the millennium as a time of vindication for the martyrs and other saints, and see this theme as central to the purpose of the millennium. **After the thousand years**, p. 244. See also Herman Bavinck. **Our Reasonable Faith**, p. 567.

<sup>117</sup> C McDannell & B Lang. **Heaven: A History**, p. 47.

<sup>118</sup> Athanasius. *The Life of Anthony* 16. NPNF 2/4, p. 200.



that those who have been tormented by the wicked in this world will in turn watch their persecutors being tormented in hell, when the limited torment which others can inflict on us now will be replaced by an eternal torment inflicted on them, not just on souls but on “souls with their bodies.”<sup>119</sup> This is an indication that for Cyprian the punishment of the wicked takes place after the resurrection and the judgement. The idea that the saints will rejoice at the spectacle of the wicked being punished has some scriptural warrant in Isaiah 66:22-24, Luke 16 (since the rich man can see Lazarus, it appears likely that Lazarus could see the rich man in torment) and Revelation 14:9-11.<sup>120</sup> Elsewhere Cyprian expresses the idea of the vindication of the saints in terms more consistent with earlier views. He says that at the judgement God will “examine and weigh the deserts of each of us in His holy assessment” and then “render the reward due for our faith and dedication.”<sup>121</sup>

### 4.3.2 The marriage supper of the Lamb

A number of millennialist writers spoke of a feast in the new earth when the saints shall rejoice with their Saviour.<sup>122</sup> Irenaeus spoke of it in this way:

He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. For the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup. And He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with His [disciples] above in a super-celestial place; nor, again, are they who drink of it devoid of flesh, for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit.<sup>123</sup>

This idea was based on the Biblical theme of the marriage supper of the Lamb [*Revelation* 19:9], and passages such as *Matthew* 26:29, *I tell you, I will not drink of*

<sup>119</sup> Cyprian. *An address to Demetrianus* 24. ANF 5, p. 464. The theme of the saints watching the torments of the wicked also appears in Tertullian. *The shows* 30. ANF 3, p. 91. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 31. ANF 3, p. 567. Augustine. *The City of God* 20:21-22. NPNF 1/2, pp. 440-443. Also, the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* 17 records that the martyrs exhorted the pagans to remember their faces, since they will see them again when the situation is reversed at the judgement. G W H Lampe. “Early Patristic Eschatology.” In: **Eschatology**. *Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers* 2 (1953) 27. Jerome suggests that the ascetics will look down from heaven on those in hell who had fallen away from the ascetic life, as well as those who had tried to hinder the resolution of the ascetics. Elizabeth A Clark. “The place of Jerome's Commentary on Ephesians in the Origenist controversy: the apokatastasis and ascetic ideals.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987) 164.

<sup>120</sup> D P Walker suggests that while this idea was still current in the 16th century, it was almost obsolete by the late 17th century. **The decline of Hell**, pp. 29-30.

<sup>121</sup> Cyprian. *Letter* 58.10. *To the people of Thibarisis*. ACW 46, p. 67.

<sup>122</sup> H Bietenhard cites the Christian additions to the *Testament of Isaac* [8.11, 8.19f, 10.11f] as sources for the idea of a millennial banquet. “The millennial hope of the early church.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953) 14. O Skarsaune suggests that it is a literal application of *Isaiah* 65:20-23. **The proof from prophecy**, p. 404.

<sup>123</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.33.1. ANF 1, p. 562.

*this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.*<sup>124</sup> Also, *Matthew 8:11* says that *many will come from the east and the west, and take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*<sup>125</sup> Justin Martyr cites this text but only in demonstrating that those who believe in Christ will supplant the Jews at the feast. He does not discuss the feast as such.<sup>126</sup>

This idea is no doubt behind criticisms by Patristic writers who rejected the millennium because of the feasting which they saw associated with it.<sup>127</sup> But this marriage supper was not the orgy of drinking and eating some suspected to be implicit in the idea.<sup>128</sup> The Biblical texts cited above seem to lie behind the views of Irenaeus, who held that after receiving the glorification of the resurrection body, we would partake of a feast in the millennium, sharing with the Lord at his table. Irenaeus said that “They who believe in Him shall be incorruptible and not subject to suffering, and shall receive the kingdom of heaven,”<sup>129</sup> and “in which kingdom, the man who shall have persevered in serving God shall, in a state of rest, partake of God's table.”<sup>130</sup>

Daniélou suggests that Papias' opinion that the pleasures of food would be enjoyed at the time of the resurrection indicates that there is “a first resurrection in which the just will have a transfigured body, but it will still be earthly and will be followed by a second more complete transformation.”<sup>131</sup> This interpretation of Papias overlooks the

<sup>124</sup> Cf. the views of Eusebius, who held that we do not fast at Easter because then “the Bridegroom is with us” [*De solemnitate paschali* 5. PG 24, 700C], an apparent reference to *Matthew 9:15*, which is understood in terms of Eusebius' “realised” eschatology, and he later asserts that fasting originated with the Apostles “when the Lord was taken away from them” [*De solemnitate paschali* 10. PG 24, 705C]. Cited in: H Musurillo. “The problem of ascetical fasting in the Greek Patristic writers.” *Traditio* 12 (1956) 24.

<sup>125</sup> Other more indirect references could include *Matthew 22:1-13*, *Matthew 25:1-13*, *Luke 12:37*, *Luke 14:15-24*, *Revelation 3:20*. Louis A Vos. **The synoptic traditions in the Apocalypse**, pp. 97, 166-172. See also *Exodus 24:11*. Modern commentaries have little to say about the feast (as distinct from the marriage). An exception is Herman Hoeksema. **Behold he cometh. An exposition of the book of Revelation**, pp. 620-621. Klaas Schilder has the most extensive discussion, devoting an entire chapter to the feast. **Heaven: What is it?** pp. 73-99.

<sup>126</sup> Justin Martyr. *Dialogue with Trypho* 76, 120, 140. ANF 1, pp. 236, 259, 269. Similarly Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 4.8.1. ANF 1, p. 470. Cyprian. *On the Lord's Prayer* 13. ANF 5, p. 451. With reference to this text the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* stresses the “many” that shall come to participate, and not the exclusion of the Jews. The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 4.4. ANF 8, p. 135. In another place Irenaeus draws attention to the banquet but does not elaborate on it. *Against Heresies* 4.36.8. ANF 1, p. 518.

<sup>127</sup> See below, Chapter 7.1 **The rejection of millennialism.**

<sup>128</sup> Cf. the views of Hippolytus. “And Hippolytus does not himself hesitate to speak of the righteous as 'eating and drinking' in that day with the Lord in His glory, without giving any hint that the promise of a grosser 'eating and drinking' had been attributed by Caius to the Apocalypticist.” J Gwynn. “Hippolytus and his 'Heads against Gaius.’” *Hermathena* 6 (1888) 406.

<sup>129</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 4.24.2. ANF 1, p. 495.

<sup>130</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 4.16.1. ANF 1, p. 481.

<sup>131</sup> J Daniélou. **A History of Early Christian Doctrine**. Vol. 1, p. 382. He comments further: “As for the belief in material nourishment during the millennium, since the intermediate state was one of a risen, but not transfigured body, this question was bound to arise.” *Ibid.*, p. 384.

more likely possibility: that he held that the resurrection body of the believer was a transformed and immortal but still physical body, and able to partake of food (and presumably enjoy doing so), just as Christ ate with his disciples after his resurrection.<sup>132</sup> The resurrected Christ had a physical body that could be handled, and at times appeared no different to that of other human beings, even though it had been transformed into a glorious resurrection body. The typical characterisation of such views of the resurrection as “materialistic” obscures the belief of the Apostolic Fathers that the resurrection was of this present body, which they affirmed in opposition to those who thought that the body of Christ only appeared to be human (the Docetists) and thereby undermined the reality of Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection. This then meant that the possibility of the redemption of the human person, an irrefragible unity of body and soul, was destroyed. The authentic doctrine of the millennial feast can be seen in writers such as Aphrahat, who said: “Whosoever is expectant of the marriage-feast of the Bridegroom, let him not love the feast of this present time.”<sup>133</sup> Further on he states:

The marriage cry is at hand. The tombs will be opened and the treasures laid bare. The dead shall rise and the living shall fly to meet the king. The banquet is laid, and the cornet shall encourage and the trumpets shall hasten (them).<sup>134</sup>

This then is one element of the millennialist vision, which draws on explicit Biblical witness, and is consistent with their view of the resurrection body as an earthly, physical body, though glorified and rendered immortal.

#### **4.4 The new heavens and earth: Cosmic redemption**

The correlation of creation and redemption led the Patristic writers to speak of the renewal of the entire created order, and not just of human beings. The idea that the body would partake of redemption because it was saved by the same God that created it also provided a basis for the idea of cosmic redemption: the belief that the whole world would be renewed in the eschaton by the Creator. This is of course an impossible concept for Gnostic thought, and similarly, it was an absurdity for those Patristic writers who saw salvation as escape from this earthly body into an ethereal realm, with a correspondingly ethereal resurrection body. But the renewal of the cosmos, resulting in the new heavens and new earth of Isaiah 65 and *Revelation* 21 was correlated for many Patristic writers with the reality of the physical resurrection body. Thus the resurrection life would be lived on the renewed earth, when God redeems all that he has created.

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Perhaps Daniélou had in mind the view found in Tertullian [see below, section 4.3] that the resurrected saints would undergo a further change at the end of the millennium, “into the substance of angels.” *Against Marcion* 3.25. ANF 3, p. 343. This idea does not appear in Papias.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Augustine. *The City of God* 13.22. NPNF 1/2, pp. 256-257. *Letter* 102.6. NPNF 1/1, p. 415.

<sup>133</sup> Aphrahat. *Demonstrations* 6.1. NPNF 2/13, p. 364.

<sup>134</sup> Aphrahat. *Demonstrations* 6.6. NPNF 2/13, p. 367.

Irenaeus held that the creation will be “resurrected” so to speak, and that the righteous will rise to reign with Christ in the same creation in which they were persecuted. Since God created all things, it is appropriate that all things are renewed by Christ in the eschaton.<sup>135</sup> For Irenaeus, the resurrection is the prelude to the glorification of the entire created order.<sup>136</sup> The creation will also be liberated from bondage to evil, and in its purified state is a suitable reward in itself. Since the creation has suffered from the effects of human sin, it is only just that it should receive liberation along with those who have been redeemed from sin and made righteous. The redemption of the whole creation is at stake in the denial of the resurrection and the millennial kingdom in creation-negating eschatologies, which see redemption not as the restoration of human bodily life in the renewed earth, but as a non-bodily life in heaven.

Cyril of Jerusalem says that “...this world will accomplish its course, and the world that once came into being is hereafter to be renewed... This world passes away that the fairer world may be revealed...”<sup>137</sup> Cyril refutes those who cite Job 7:9-10 to prove that there is no resurrection by demonstrating that while the dead shall not return to their former homes, that is because the earth will be renewed and their former homes will be no more. There will instead be a **new** earth onto which they will be raised.

And respecting that passage, *If a man go down to the grave, he shall come up no more*, observe what follows, for it is written, *He shall come up no more, neither shall he return to his own house* [Job 7:9-10]. For since the whole world shall pass away, and every house be destroyed, how shall he return to his own house, there being henceforth a new and different earth?<sup>138</sup>

Cyril says that the statement that the earth and the heavens shall perish [Psalm 102:25-26] should be interpreted in the light of Isaiah 57:1, which reads *The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart*. That is, even though he perishes, he will still rise again. “And in like manner we look for a sort of resurrection of the heavens also.”<sup>139</sup>

Methodius argued that since it was God who made the world, it is destined for a better fate than destruction. If it was better for the world not to exist than to exist, why

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<sup>135</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.32.1. ANF 1, p. 561. Cf. *Against Heresies* 5.36.3. ANF 1, p. 567.

<sup>136</sup> Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.35.1. ANF 1, p. 565.

<sup>137</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 15.3. NPNF 2/7, p. 105. This view of Cyril's was directed to former Manicheans in his congregation: “Here let converts from the Manichees gain instruction.”

<sup>138</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 18.15. NPNF 2/7, p. 137.

<sup>139</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 15.3. NPNF 2/7, p. 105. There is a strong correlation between the resurrection of the fleshly body and the renewal of the earth, with the same outlook on continuity or discontinuity found in both concepts, so that the transformation of the present body in glory is correlated with the cleansing and renewal of this present earth, and the view that the resurrection body is “spiritual” and unlike the present body is correlated with a destruction and recreation of the earth. See further Peter Steen. “The problem of time and eternity in its relation to the nature-grace ground motive.” In: **Hearing and doing**, pp. 138-139.

would God have created it in the first place?<sup>140</sup> Methodius cites the book of Wisdom and Romans 8:19-21, as well as passages from Isaiah, to demonstrate that the world will not be destroyed but redeemed. Then the redeemed creation shall rejoice over the redemption of human beings when they are raised from the dead, and the redeemed creation is where the resurrected saints shall live.<sup>141</sup> Methodius argued against those who held that the earth would be destroyed.

But if our opponents say, How is it then, if the universe be not destroyed, that the Lord says that “heaven and earth shall pass away,” and the prophet, that “the heaven shall perish as smoke, and the earth shall grow old as a garment;” we answer, because it is usual for the Scriptures to call the change (*metabole*) of the world from its present condition to a better and more glorious one, destruction (*apoleia*); as its earlier form is lost in the change of all things to a state of greater splendour; for there is no contradiction nor absurdity in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>142</sup>

Methodius rejected the Origenist tradition of the *apokatastasis*,<sup>143</sup> which he saw as a distortion of the scriptural hope of cosmic renewal.

Methodius... shared Origen's resistance to the idea of the destruction of the material universe, but for a different reason. Whereas Origen had looked for a change of its quality and outward form, Methodius' hope was for its renewal and perfection.<sup>144</sup>

Methodius saw the renewal of heaven and earth as the purification of what already exists, so that just as through the death of humankind sin will be destroyed, so the earth will have its contamination removed.<sup>145</sup> Methodius also saw the earth as created

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. however the argument of Tertullian, that the destruction of the world, when it returns to nothing, proves that it was originally created from nothing. Tertullian is seeking to refute the eternity of matter. *Against Hermogenes* 34. ANF 3, pp. 496-497.

<sup>141</sup> Methodius. *The Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.8. ANF 1, pp. 365-366. The same idea is found in John Chrysostom, who believes the whole material world will be transformed along with us since it was made for human beings. *Homily on Romans* 14.5. NPNF 1/11, pp. 444-445. F X Murphy. “Conflagration: the eschatological perspective from Origen to John Chrysostom.” *Studia Patristica* 18 (1985) 184.

<sup>142</sup> Methodius. *The Discourse on the resurrection* 1.9. ANF 6, p. 366.

<sup>143</sup> An instance of this view is the concept of Macarius Magnes that it is the “logos” of the earth which continues into the new creation. *Apocriticus* 4.16. Translations of Christian Literature, p. 132.

<sup>144</sup> J E McWilliam Dewart. **Death and Resurrection**, p. 138. While Irenaeus looks for the redemption and glorification of this present world, Origen seeks its transformation into something totally unlike what presently exists. Macarius Magnes suggests that since heaven and earth were created for the sake of humankind, when humankind is changed, the heaven and earth must also be changed to be able to continue to be of use. *Apocriticus* 4.30. Translations of Christian Literature, p. 157. In another place Macarius suggests that “heaven and earth” should be understood allegorically, since it means “man in his twofold nature,” body and soul, which are redeemed by Christ. *Apocriticus* 4.16. Translations of Christian Literature, p. 133.

<sup>145</sup> J E McWilliam Dewart. **Death and Resurrection**, p. 138.

for the sake of humankind, and since the earth will be renewed, there must therefore be inhabitants for it. This he sees as a reason to reject the Origenist view of an ethereal existence somewhere other than on the new earth.<sup>146</sup> Ambrose argued from similar premises to the same conclusion: “If the earth and heaven are renewed, why should we doubt that man, on account of whom heaven and earth were made, can be renewed?”<sup>147</sup>

Rufinus wrote that Christ would not only release human beings from sin, but would also release the earth from the curse which had come upon it because of human sin. The thorns of the curse of Genesis 3 are used to crown the saviour who shall release the earth from the curse.<sup>148</sup> Peter Chrysologus also argued that the renewal of the earth was its release from sin, and its end brings renewal, not destruction.<sup>149</sup> He says elsewhere that the world will be renewed, our body changed, and the reign of sin destroyed.<sup>150</sup> Niceta of Remesiana similarly says that following the return of Christ, the world will be renewed, after which will be “the eternal kingdom of the just in the glory of the Lord and the everlasting punishment of the wicked.”<sup>151</sup> Gregory the Illuminator speaks of “the renewal of the universe” at the time of the resurrection.<sup>152</sup>

In his record of the constitutions of the Council of Nicea,<sup>153</sup> Gelasius of Cyzicus cites a viewpoint which while not overtly millennialist, is quite compatible with that approach.

**Concerning the Providence of God and Concerning the World:** The lesser world was made through providence: for God foresaw that man would sin. For this reason we hope for new heavens and a new earth according to the sacred Scriptures, when the Appearing and Kingdom of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ shall have shone forth. *And then, as Daniel says, the saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom.* And the earth shall be pure, a holy land of the living, and not of the dead; which David, foreseeing with eyes of faith, exclaimed: *I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, the land of the meek and humble. For, Blessed, it says, are the meek, for*

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<sup>146</sup> Methodius. *The Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.9. ANF 6, p. 366.

<sup>147</sup> Ambrose. *On the belief in the resurrection* 2.87. NPNF 2/10, p. 188. Further on Ambrose says concerning the resurrection of Christ: “The universe rose again in Him, the heaven rose again in Him, the earth rose again in Him, for there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.” *On the belief in the resurrection* 2.102. NPNF 2/10, p. 191.

<sup>148</sup> Rufinus. *Commentary on the Creed* 22. ACW 20, p. 57.

<sup>149</sup> Peter Chrysologus. “A creature is renewed by its end, not destroyed. It withdraws itself not from its Creator, but from sin.” *Sermon 47. On Matthew 13:45-50*. FC 17, p. 102.

<sup>150</sup> Peter Chrysologus. *Sermon 70. On the Lord's Prayer*. FC 17, p. 121.

<sup>151</sup> Niceta of Remesiana. *Liturgical Singing* 6. FC 7, p. 70.

<sup>152</sup> Agathangelos. *History of the Armenians* 92. R W Thomson, p. 103.

<sup>153</sup> Altaner notes that this *Book of the Acts of the Council of Nicaea* is of doubtful authenticity. **Patrology**, p. 284. Whether or not this is correct, it still indicates the persistence of millennialist ideas as late as 475 AD and thus is a relevant witness. Gelazius also includes a section on the resurrection of the dead. *Commentarius Actorum Concilii Nicaeni* 2.30.7. PG 85, 1317-1320.

*they shall occupy the earth.* And the prophet says: *The feet of the meek and humble shall tread it.* These things from the ecclesiastical constitutions worked out by our holy fathers, a few from many, we have described in this commentary.<sup>154</sup>

It is only in the Patristic eschatology that preserves the true significance of the bodily resurrection which also retains the concept of cosmic redemption.<sup>155</sup> The eschatological renewal of the cosmos is thus an important theme in Patristic thought. It is only the truly creation-affirming view that can sustain the doctrine of the resurrection and the eschatological life, through maintaining the redemption of the entire created order, and seeing it as a unity from the hand of the one Creator God.

#### 4.5 The millennium on earth and eternity in heaven

Tertullian said that the restoration of Judaea spoken of by the prophetic writings is to be understood in terms of a “figurative interpretation... spiritually applicable to Christ and His church, and to the character and fruits thereof...” This he says “relates to what is promised in heaven, not on earth.” He does say, however, that there is a literal interpretation of those passages:

But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem...<sup>156</sup>

Tertullian expresses the unusual idea (found in no other Patristic writer as far as I am aware) that the saints will be raised progressively throughout the millennium according to their merits. Then comes the destruction of the world, at which time the saints receive another transformation and enter heaven.

After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgement: we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom in heaven of which we have now been treating...<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Gelasius of Cyzicus. *Commentarius Actorum Concilii Nicaeni* 2.30.9. PG 85, 1320. Translation cited in: L E Froom. **The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers**. Vol. 1, pp. 369, 372.

<sup>155</sup> See the instructive discussion of cosmic redemption in Augustine by Thomas E Clarke. “St. Augustine and Cosmic Redemption.” *Theological Studies* 19 (1958) 133-164. Clarke demonstrates that Augustine was unable to accept the idea of the redemption of the cosmos because of the similarity this held for him with Manicheism, which saw the cosmos as trapping sparks of the divine which need to be liberated. However, he did see a place for cosmic redemption in terms of the “new heavens and new earth” which have their counterpart in human resurrection.

<sup>156</sup> Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 3.25. ANF 3, p. 342.

<sup>157</sup> Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 3.25. ANF 3, p. 343. It may be this idea which reappears in somewhat different form in the thought of Ambrose, who said concerning Valentinian (died

It is possible that Tertullian includes this idea of a further transformation to bring some kind of consistency into his eschatology. He is thereby able to say that there is both the resurrection of the saints through the millennium, and a general resurrection of all the dead, including these same saints, at the end of the millennium, when they are further transformed while the wicked are raised for the first time. This also resolves his difficulty with the continuing purpose of the bodily organs in the resurrection body, but at the expense of its identity with the present body. While he appears to retain the significance and necessity of the resurrection (in order for both body and soul, which had been involved in the deeds of this life, to come to the judgement),<sup>158</sup> the idea that the body is of use only in this life, and will be raised solely for the purposes of judgement, that of the wicked to be punished, and that of the saints to be rewarded, is actually an anti-bodily sentiment. Tertullian is unable to escape from the inconsistency inherent in maintaining the resurrection as the restoration of the whole person, while believing in the separate life of the soul.<sup>159</sup> Thus at the end of the millennium,

...then the whole human race shall be raised again, to have its dues meted out according as it has merited in the period of good or evil, and thereafter to have these paid out through the immeasurable ages of eternity. Therefore after this there is neither death nor repeated resurrections, but we shall be the same that we are now, and still unchanged - the servants of God, ever with God, clothed upon with the proper substance of eternity; but the profane, and all who are not true worshippers of God, in like manner shall be consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire - that fire which, from its very nature indeed, directly ministers to their incorruptibility.<sup>160</sup>

Tertullian says that in the transformation of the resurrection, the flesh will “assume the condition of angels,” that is, it will attain immortality through being raised from the dead.<sup>161</sup> Methodius held that the millennium corresponds to the feast of tabernacles celebrated by the Israelites before they entered the promised land. After this, at the end of the millennium, the saints will undergo another change, to be like the angels: “...my body not remaining as it was before, but, after the space of a thousand years, changed from a human and corruptible form into angelic size and beauty...” after

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aged 20) and Gratian (died aged 24) “I beseech Thee, O highest God, that Thou mayest raise and revive these dearest youths by an early resurrection, that Thou mayest compensate for their unduly short span of life in this world by an early restoration.” *On the death of Valentinian* 81. FC 22, p. 299. Here he alludes to the theme of the “vindication of the saints” in his own way.

<sup>158</sup> Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 60. ANF 3, p. 592. Cf. also Justin Martyr. *Fragments of the lost work on the resurrection* 3. ANF 1, p. 295. Augustine. *On faith and the creed* 10.23-24. NPNF 1/3, pp. 331-333. *Enchiridion* 89. NPNF 1/3, pp. 265-266. Jerome. *To Pammachius against John of Jerusalem*. NPNF 2/6, pp. 425-447.

<sup>159</sup> C Tresmontant. **La métaphysique de christianisme et la naissance de la philosophie chrétienne**. Paris, 1961, p. 626. Cited in: G L Bray. **Holiness and the will of God**, pp. 36-37.

<sup>160</sup> Tertullian. *Apology* 48. ANF 3, p. 54.

<sup>161</sup> Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 42. ANF 3, pp. 575-576. Cf. also *Against Marcion* 5.10. ANF 3, pp. 451-452. Methodius. *The Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.9. ANF 6, p. 366.



which we shall “pass from the wondrous place of the Tabernacle to the larger and better one, going up to the very *house of God* above the heavens...”<sup>162</sup> Bietenhard comments that this view occupies the “middle ground between a Biblical realism and Platonic spiritualising.”<sup>163</sup>

Commodian also implies that following the resurrection the saints will spend eternity in heaven. He addresses the saints as “You who are to be inhabitants of the heavens with God-Christ,” and then goes on to spell out his vision of the millennial kingdom.<sup>164</sup>

Lactantius seems to hold that the earth will ultimately be destroyed and the future life lived in heaven.

...we worship Him for this end, that we may receive immortality as the reward for our labours; for this end we are rewarded with immortality, that being made like to the angels, we may serve the Supreme Father and Lord for ever, and may be to all eternity a kingdom to God.<sup>165</sup>

The millennialist approach taken by Lactantius is complicated and rather confusing, if not confused. The scenario is as follows: After the return of Christ and the defeat of the Antichrist and his followers, the living and the dead will be judged on the earth. The righteous who are still alive will be given power over the nations of the earth, and the righteous dead will be raised to share that power with them. The wicked are not raised at this time, but are kept for the imposition of the punishment due them at a later date.<sup>166</sup> Christ will reign with the saints on the earth, in the “kingdom of the righteous,” for a thousand years.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Methodius. *The Symposium* 9.5. ACW 27, p. 140.

<sup>163</sup> H Bietenhard. “The millennial hope of the early church.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953) 21.

<sup>164</sup> Commodian. *Instructions* 80. ANF 4, p. 218. Daniélou sees millennialism as a primitive doctrine, and therefore dates Commodian to the 2nd-3rd centuries. **A History of Early Christian Doctrine**. Vol. 3, p. 100. However, Brisson held that Commodian was a Donatist from the 5th century, based on the view that Donatists were in a situation of poverty and persecution, the kind of context which fosters millennialism. [J-P Brisson, **Autonomisme et Christianisme dans l'Afrique romaine**. Paris, 1958, p. 379 ff. Cited by: E A Isichei. **Political thinking and social experience**, p. 24.] Daley suggests that the theories of Martin, Thraede, and Gag e [J Martin. “Commodianus.” *Traditio* 13 (1957) 1-71. K Thraede. “Beitr ge zur Datierung Commodians.” *Jahrbuch f r Antike und Christentum* 2 (1959) 90-114. J Gag e. “Commodien et la crise mill nariste du IIIe si cle.” *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse* 41 (1961) 355-378.] all make questionable assumptions about the third century, and none take into sufficient account the resemblances between Commodian's eschatology and that of other fifth-century Patristic writers. Brian E Daley. **The hope of the early Church**, pp. 253-254, n. 58. Daley notes that Gennadius includes Commodian among fifth-century writers. *De viris illustribus* 15. Ibid., p. 254, n. 59. Daley also cites Brisson in this regard. **The hope of the early Church**, p. 162.

<sup>165</sup> Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 7.6. ANF 7, p. 203.

<sup>166</sup> Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 7.21. ANF 7, p. 217.

<sup>167</sup> Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 4.12. ANF 7, p. 111. *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 72. ANF 7, p. 254.

Thus the views of Tertullian, Methodius and Lactantius form a transition point between the full millennial resurrection eschatology and the spiritualised anti-millennial eschatology which does away with the reality of the resurrection body.

#### 4.6 Eternity in heaven following the resurrection

A number of patristic writers who held to unitary anthropologies did not hold to millennialist views, locating the eternal life following the resurrection in heaven. Novatian is one early writer who does not clearly state anywhere his views on the nature of the eternal life, but does appear to lean away from millennialism. He states in connection with the fate of the righteous and the wicked that God “has prepared heaven, but He has also prepared hell.”<sup>168</sup>

Ephrem of Syria also held that following the resurrection, the righteous would enter Paradise, which for him is identical with heaven.

...this is why Ephraem assumes that the soul of the good thief of Luke 23:43, whose body (as that of all other men) will not rise until the end of times, cannot truly be in Paradise, but only in a pre-Paradise.<sup>169</sup>

Ladner states that “Ephraem... transferred the characteristics of the millennium (extraordinary fertility, etc.) to his description of a 'pre-Paradise'.”<sup>170</sup>

Since primordial Paradise belongs outside time and space it also serves as the eschatological Paradise, the home of the righteous and glorious after the final Resurrection... Nevertheless, St. Ephrem is emphatic that this eschatological Paradise can only be entered in the resurrected state of the body... Nor can the soul alone enter Paradise; it must be accompanied by the resurrected body (VIII.9). This explains why, in his vision of Paradise, Ephrem expects the Garden to be empty (V.II), seeing that the final Resurrection has not yet taken place.<sup>171</sup>

Theodore of Mopsuestia interprets 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to mean a transfer to heaven, since it refers to those “who expect to dwell in heaven with Christ. Thus in this life we should “strive as much as possible to imitate the life we shall live in heaven,” which is Theodore's interpretation of “Thy will be done as in heaven so in earth.”<sup>172</sup> Then we will “not cultivate a ground that will bring forth thorns and thistles” but “will dwell in a heaven which is remote and immune from all sorrow and sighing.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Novatian. *Letter of the Roman Clergy to Cyprian* 7. ANF 5, p. 311.

<sup>169</sup> G B Ladner. **The Idea of Reform**, p. 65, n. 6.

<sup>170</sup> G B Ladner. **The Idea of Reform**, p. 66, n. 15.

<sup>171</sup> S P Brock. Introduction. **St. Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise**, pp. 55-56.

<sup>172</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 1. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 8-9. Theodore refers to 1 Thessalonians 4:17 frequently to demonstrate that after the resurrection we are transferred to heaven. Cf. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) pp. 77, 79; *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) pp. 24, 25, 101.

<sup>173</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 1. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 20.

Those who believe in Christ “are in expectation of making their abode in heaven after the resurrection from the dead.”<sup>174</sup> To demonstrate that after the resurrection we shall be transferred to heaven he also refers to Philippians 3:21,<sup>175</sup> as well as 2 Corinthians 5:1.<sup>176</sup> He says further “When all earthly things have ceased to exist, we shall rise from the dead and dwell in heaven in an immortal and immutable nature.”<sup>177</sup>

While Theodore says that the new Jerusalem is “full of an innumerable company of angels and men who are all immortal and immutable,” this is not a present reality but the description of its future state, since they are “worthy of the adoption of sons” and are “children of God because they are the children of the resurrection [Luke 20:36]” and are enrolled in heaven as its inhabitants. “These things will be seen so in reality in the world to come, when, according to the words of the Apostle, ‘we are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, so that we may be ever with Him [1 Thessalonians 4:17].’” At that point we will ascend into heaven.<sup>178</sup> This is possible for us since Christ arose and ascended into heaven, “in order to raise us all up and cause us to ascend into heaven.”<sup>179</sup>

We will have no need of food after the resurrection, when we have become immortal and entered the heavenly abode, since the immortality given by the power of the Holy Spirit will maintain us in existence by grace.<sup>180</sup> In this life the sacrament of the Eucharist is a symbol, using earthly food, of the immortal life which will sustain us in the resurrection.<sup>181</sup> Theodore argues that after his resurrection Christ had no need of food and drink since he had an immortal nature, but did “violence to the natural laws” in order to prove the resurrection of the body.<sup>182</sup> The logic of this is obscure. Surely it would be through **not** eating and drinking that Christ would prove that he had an immortal nature through resurrection, as doing so could imply that his bodily nature

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<sup>174</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 1. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 21.

<sup>175</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 7. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 77, 78, 103, 113. Cf. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 25, 30, 65, 98.

<sup>176</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 1. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 20, 77. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 72.

<sup>177</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 1. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 9. See also *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* 2. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 30. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 82.

<sup>178</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 2. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 23-24.

<sup>179</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 80.

<sup>180</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 72.

<sup>181</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 74-75.

<sup>182</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 78.

had not been made immortal but had been merely resuscitated. However, Theodore adopts some of the anti-millennial views when he says that the Jews had only a “base conception” of the resurrection.<sup>183</sup> “They did not think, as we do, that we shall be changed into an immortal life, but they thought of it as a place in which we shall continue to eat, drink and marry.” Theodore disproves this from Matthew 22:29-30 and Luke 20:36.<sup>184</sup>

#### 4.7 Conclusion

The Patristic writers who held to a unitary anthropology appreciated the significance of the resurrection. For them, the person could not be said to have been saved without the bodily resurrection. It was in such a fleshly body that the saints would participate in the millennium. This was often correlated with the renewal of the entire cosmic order. They understood the resurrection to be of a real, physical body, able to eat and drink and so enjoy a banquet with Christ during his reign on earth. They did not see the need to spiritualise or allegorise this idea, rather they rejected all such approaches, but accepted it as an expression of the goodness of God's creation and the bodily life we have been given, as well as the continuity of God's purposes for the creation.

Following the millennium and resurrection and the judgement of the rest of the dead, they expected to enjoy life for eternity on the new earth. Some, however, thought that following the millennium the saints would be further transformed in order to be able to enjoy eternity in heaven. Others, more distant from the early period when millennialism was widely accepted, held simply that following the resurrection the saints would enter heaven immediately.

The whole thrust of the unitary anthropology is in marked contrast to that of the writers who held an instrumentalist model, and it is to this approach that we now turn.

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<sup>183</sup> See further Chapter 7.1.2. **The rejection of millennialism as Jewish.**

<sup>184</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist 2*. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 19.