

AUGUSTINE'S DISCUSSIONS WITH PHILOSOPHERS ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

INTRODUCTION

In this article we attempt to show how Augustine reconciles the teaching of the philosophers, eclectically put together, on the resurrection of the body with that of the Christians.

J. O'Meara has published two excellent works which are pertinent to the theme of our investigation. In *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* he attempts to identify Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* and his *De regressu animae*, which work(s), whether taken as one or separately, Augustine assesses in encounter with the Platonists of his time with respect to the question of the resurrection of the body. In "Augustine and Neo-Platonism" O'Meara gives us in a scheme a list of the points of contact between Augustine and Porphyry.

We limit our field of investigation to the following works of Augustine: *Sermones* 240-242 and *De Civitate Dei* 10,24,30,31,32; 12,27; 13,16,17,18,19,20; and 22,25-28. We consider only these works to be relevant to our purpose.

I. DISCUSSION WITH PHILOSOPHERS IN *SERMONES* 240-242

In this section we attempt: (i) to identify the philosopher opponents of the resurrection of the body in *Sermones* 240-242; (ii) to show the similarity and the continuity of the discussions in the three *Sermones*; and (iii) to show the points of conflict and of reconciliation between Augustine and the philosophers.

A. Sermo 240, 4 and 5: The argument from the incarnation of Christ, by which He became the Mediator between God and men, bolsters the argument for the resurrection and the transformation of the body

In *Sermo* 240,4 and 5, written between 405 and 410, Augustine gives us clear indications that the philosophers with whom he differs on

the question of resurrection and transformation of the body are followers both of Plato and Porphyry, although these names are not mentioned. In *Sermo* 240,4 he describes them as holding the following views¹: (i) there is a sort of afterlife; this is proved by the immortality of the soul; (ii) the souls are in bodies as in prisons, as a consequence of sinning in the previous life; (iii) the souls of the unjust, when they leave the body, immediately return to other bodies, and suffer by bearing these bodies; (iv) the souls of the just, when they leave the body, return to their respective stars and stay there for a long time; however, after having forgotten the miseries of the past life, they delight in reassuming bodies and again undergo sufferings. These doctrines are clearly what Plato teaches both in *Timaeus* and in *Phaedrus*. Plato ascribes the immortality of the soul to a combined work by God and the deities². The soul is sown by God as a seed; and God hands it to the deities for them to weave it with a mortal body. Thus, the immortal element of creatures comes from God, whereas the mortal element and the work of weaving both the immortal and mortal constituents come from and is done by the deities³. Plato also teaches that souls are imprisoned in bodies as a consequence of some mishap; because of this they sink beneath the burden of their forgetfulness and wrongdoing; and thus they lose their wings and fall to earth⁴. In the first fall they do not assume bodies of beasts; they enter, however, into bodies of infants with different categories of potentialities⁵. These differences depend on their degree of vision of reality in their previous journey to a region above the

¹ "Philosophi saeculi huius, qui magni fuerunt et docti, et caeteris meliores, animam humanam immortalem esse senserunt: nec solum senserunt, sed quantis potuerunt argumentationibus defenderunt, et ipsas defensiones suas conscriptas posteris reliquerunt ... Hi ergo qui senserunt atque dixerunt animas humanas immortales, de malis hominum, de aerumnis erroribusque mortalium quaesierunt causas, quantum homines potuerunt; et dixerunt, sicut potuerunt, praecessisse nescio quae in alia vita peccata, quorum peccatorum merito ista corpora velut carcerem animae mererentur ... Et hic contriverunt ingenia sua; et laboraverunt, quantum potuerunt, reddere hominibus rationem, vel sibi, vel aliis: et dixerunt, animas hominum male viventium immundas pessimis moribus, cum exierint de corporibus, rursus continuo revolvi ad alia corpora, et poenas hic luere quas videmus; eas vero animas quae bene vixerunt, cum exierint de corporibus, ire ad suprema coelorum, requiescere ibi in stellis et luminibus istis conspicuis, vel quibuscumque coelestibus abditisque secretis, oblivisci omnium praeteritorum malorum, et rursus delectari redire ad corpora, et venire iterum ad ista patienda". *Sermo* 240,4, PL 38,1132.

² See PLATO, *Timaeus* 41b, *Platon, Oeuvres complètes*, (A. RIVAUD, ed.), Paris, 1956, p.156.

³ PLATO, *Timaeus* 41c-d, p. 157.

⁴ See PLATO, *Phaedrus* 248a-b, *Platon, Oeuvres complètes*, (L. ROBIN, ed.), Paris, 1954, p. 39-40.

⁵ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 248a-b, p. 39-40.

skies which is the abode of reality. Only true knowledge is concerned with this reality and only the intellect, which is the pilot of the soul, can apprehend it⁶. The first group, namely, those who were most perceptive of that reality in the first journey, are destined to become seekers of wisdom, followers of Muses and lovers; the second most perceptive are to become law-abiding monarchs, or warriors or commanders; the third are to become men of affairs, managers of households, or financiers; the fourth, to be lovers of physical activities, or trainers, or physicians; the fifth, to be soothsayers or officials of mysteries; the sixth, to become poets, or practitioners of some other imitative art; the seventh are destined to be artisans or farmers; the eighth are to be popular teachers or demagogues; and the ninth are to become tyrants. In the second incarnation, however, the physical form that souls assume depends on the goodness and the badness of their previous life⁷. At this time human souls may enter into bodies of beasts; and souls which originally were human may change from beasts back into men⁸. Plato teaches that the return into bodies is a punishment⁹. For the philosophers it involves undergoing a slow and painful process of growing wings¹⁰ in order to reach once more the height of wisdom¹¹. For those who assume bodies of beasts it would mean being deprived of seeing truth again¹².

Porphyry follows several of Plato's doctrines. He rejected, however, Plato's teaching of the return to bodies of beasts, and taught the return to other new human bodies instead¹³.

In *Sermo* 240,5 Augustine gives us more information about the position of these philosophers. They deny Christ to be the mediator between God and men. Augustine reacts to this denial. He calls them "fool" while acknowledging them to be wise at the same time. Accordingly he considers it proper to apply to them the words of the apostle in *1 Cor.* 1,20: "God has made foolish the wisdom of this world". He does this in order to put them in contrast to Christ who is truly the wisdom of God. In doing this and by further referring to the following verses, namely 21-

⁶ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 247c, p. 38.

⁷ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 248e, p. 41.

⁸ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 249b, p. 41.

⁹ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 250c, p. 44: PLATO teaches that the return to the body is a deprivation of the pure light enjoyed at the beatific vision in the first journey by following Zeus. The body is a walking sepulchre to which we are bound like an oyster to its shell.

¹⁰ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 248e-249a, p. 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² PLATO, *Timaeus* 42c, p. 158.

¹³ See *De Civitate Dei* 13,19, CSEL 40/1, 642.

24, he reenacts not only the conflict between Paul and the Jews and the Gentiles, but also introduces a revolutionary Cristian teaching that would bring those philosophers to acknowledge that the incarnate Christ is equal to the Father with respect to divine nature, that Christ in His crucifixion showed Himself to be the power and the wisdom of God.

"The great philosophers said much about this. The philosophers of this world, of whom our Scripture says: 'God has made foolish the wisdom of this world' (1 Cor. 1,20) could not discover something more than this. If God has made foolish the wisdom of this world, how much more has he made foolish foolishness? If wisdom of the world, is foolishness in God's eyes, how far from God is the real foolishness of this world? There is, however, a certain foolishness of this world which reaches God, of which the Apostle says: 'Since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preached to save those who believe'. And he adds: 'Since the Jews ask for signs, the Greeks seek wisdom; we, however, preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to the Jews, a foolishness to the Gentiles; but to those who are called, Jews and Greek themselves, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1,21-24)"¹⁴.

The statement "There is, however, a certain foolishness of this world which reaches God"¹⁵, which clearly refers to Christ, is made in opposition to the denial of Christ as the Mediator by the philosophers. It is an assertion of a belief.

Although in this paragraph Augustine does not specify further whom the philosophers were following, it is clear enough that he is referring to them as followers of Porphyry. J. O'Meara would agree with this. In his work, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine*, he points out that Porphyry's main attacks against Christianity are on the following points¹⁶: (i) the equality of Christ with the Father; (ii) the resurrection of Christ's body; (iii) Christ's truthfulness in prophesying the belief of men in Him and the resurrection of the body; and (iv) the resurrection of all

¹⁴ "Hoc dixerunt valde magni philosophi. Isto plus invenire nihil potuerunt philosophi mundi hujus, de quibus dicit Scriptura nostra: *Stultam fecit Deus sapientiam hujus mundi*. Si sapientiam, quanto magis stultiam? Si sapientia mundi stultitia est apud Deum, vera stultitia mundi quam longe est a Deo? Est tamen quaedam stultitia mundi hujus, quae pervenit ad Deum, de qua dicit Apostolus: *Quoniam in sapientia Dei non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes*. Et dicit: 'Quoniam Judaei signa petunt, et Graeci sapientiam quaerunt: nos praedicamus Christum crucifixum; Judaeis quidem scandalum, Gentibus stultitiam; ipsis autem vocatis Judaeis et Graecis Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam' (1 Cor. 1,20-24). *Sermo* 240,5, PL 38,1132-1133.

¹⁵ "Est tamen quaedam stultitia mundi hujus, quae pervenit ad Deum". *Sermo* 240,5, PL 38,1132.

¹⁶ J.O'MEARA, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine*, Paris, 1959, p. 72-83.

bodies. These four points are not distinctly put in *Sermo* 240. However, they are put clearly in *De Civitate Dei* 22,25-28; and there it is expressly said that they are held by followers of Porphyry. Thus, in the light of *De Civitate Dei* 22,25-28 We may say that in *Sermo* 240, 4 and 5 those philosophers who reject the teaching that Christ is the Mediator between God and men are followers of Porphyry.

By asserting that Christ is the Mediator between God and men, Augustine also asserts the equality of Christ with the Father. And on account of this he also asserts the truthfulness of what Christ declares¹⁷. Therefore, what Christ declares with respect to belief in Him and to ordering of life according to this belief, and finally what he declares with respect to the resurrection of the body of the believers and their transformation to a better state should consequently be true.

"The Lord Christ, who is the wisdom of God, came. Heaven sounds; let the frogs keep silent! What the truth says is true. What He said, that is, that the human race is in the condition of sin, is clear. But he who has believed in the Mediator, who is the intercessor between God and men (between the righteous God and the sinful men, an intercessory holy man, assuming humanity from below and holiness from above, and therefore he is the Mediator; from above He is united with the Father, from below He is united with us, since if He were wholly from there, He would be completely only there; and if He were wholly from here, He would be completely here lying down [= miserably] living with us, and therefore could not be a Mediator); he, therefore, who has believed in the Mediator, and has lived faithfully and righteously, he will surely leave behind his body and will attain rest. However, later he will receive his body, not in order that it will be for him a source of suffering, but a source of beauty, and he will live with God forever"¹⁸.

B. Sermo 241,4: Plato maintains that it is because of memory that the souls take delight in going back to the bodies in order to suffer

In *Sermo* 241,4 Augustine contends that instead of making forgetfulness the cause for the souls' return to the bodies, Plato in fact makes memory the cause. Plato's followers, in Augustine's explanation, describe

¹⁷ "Quod dixit veritas, hoc est verum". *Sermo* 240,5, PL 38,1133.

¹⁸ "Venit Dominus Christus, sapientia Dei: coelum tonat; ranae taceant. Quod dixit veritas, hoc est verum. Quod dixit, in mala quidem esse genus humanum causa peccati, manifestum est. Sed qui crediderit in Mediatorem, qui constitutus est medius inter Deum et homines (inter Deum justum et homines injustos, medius homo justus, humanitatem habens de imo, justitiam de summo; et ideo medius: hinc unum, et inde unum; quia si utrumque inde, ibi esset; si utrumque hinc, nobiscum jaceret, et medius non esset): qui ergo crediderit in Mediatorem, et fideliter ac bene vixerit, exiet quidem de corpore, et erit in requie; vivet cum Deo in aeternum". *Sermo* 240,5, PL 38,1133.

their position in the following manner: the souls, after a long rest, forget past miseries; as a result they again begin to long to be united with bodies.

"But they say that after a long period of time, and once they have forgotten the miseries of the previous life, the souls begin to long to return to bodies"¹⁹.

In Augustine's interpretation this Platonic teaching would mean that the souls come back precisely to suffer again in the bodies, to forget God, to blaspheme against him and to struggle against lust. Plato would attribute the return of this desire, according to Augustine, to the souls' forgetfulness. Augustine, however, rejects this explanation on the grounds that if the souls forget past miseries, they will surely forget the desire of the flesh²⁰. However, it is well known that Augustine considers the desires of the flesh to be evil. Plato maintains the same²¹. Thus, if Plato condemns the desires of the flesh as well, he would surely have condemned the idea that it is the memory of the desires of the flesh which induces the souls to come back to the bodies. But in fact he does not, by saying that the souls take delight in coming back to bodies.

"And it will delight the souls to come back, and again they will come back to bear the bodies, to suffer miseries, to forget God, and to blaspheme against God, to follow the desires of the body, and to struggle against lust. From where and for what reason do they come back to those miseries? Tell me why. It is because they forget. If they forget all evils, let them also forget the desire of the flesh. They remember only this evil, by which they have fallen"²².

In the statement "They remember only this evil, by which they have fallen"²³ Augustine clearly expresses his interpretation that for Plato and his followers it is none other than memory of delights that causes the souls to delight in coming back to bodies.

¹⁹ "Sed, inquiunt, post longa tempora, facta penitus oblivione veterum miseriarum, incipiunt velle reverti in corpora". *Sermo* 241,4, PL 38, 1135.

²⁰ "Si omnia mala obliviscuntur, obliviscantur et delectationem carnis". *Sermo* 241,4, PL 38,1135.

²¹ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 42b, p. 158: mastery of desires would lead to good life; subjection to them would lead to wicked life.

²² "Et delectabit eas venire, et rursus veniunt ad ista patienda, ad ista toleranda, ad obliviscendum Deum, ad blasphemandum Deum, ad sequendas corporis voluptates, ad pugnas contra libidines. veniunt ad istas miserias, unde, et quo? Dic mihi, quare? Quia obliviscuntur. Si omnia mala obliviscuntur, obliviscantur et delectationem carnis. Hoc solum malo suo meminerunt, unde ruerunt". *Sermo* 241,4, PL 38,1135.

²³ "Hoc solum malo suo meminerunt, unde ruerunt". *Sermo* 241,4, PL 38,1135.

"They come back. Why? It is because it is a delight to dwell in the bodies. Where does that delight come from, except from memory, because they formerly lived there in the bodies?"²⁴.

C. Sermo 241,5: The souls of the just in heaven cannot be truly happy if the teaching of the followers of Plato is to be accepted

Augustine argues that even the souls of the just cannot be truly happy after life if the philosophers' teaching is to be accepted. He shows this, first by appealing to the statement of Virgil on Plato's teaching on the return of the soul. In the judgement of Virgil the Platonists' teaching would mean that the souls desire what is miserable: "tam dira cupido"²⁵. Second, he shows that, if one has to analyze the philosophers' teaching, it would be impossible to maintain that the souls of the just can really be happy. Why? No matter whether the souls remember or do not remember their past miseries either because of memory or of forgetfulness, they will surely suffer once they come back to assume bodies. In either way they cannot be happy. For if they know, how could they be free from worries when they think of their future miseries? Worries reflect insecurity²⁶. Or, if they do not know, how can they be really happy, since they are deceived, for in fact they will again suffer misery²⁷. To have enjoyment through a mistake, according to Augustine, is not to be really happy²⁸.

"Then, I ask you, do these souls in heaven know or not that they will again suffer the miseries of this life? choose what you would ... If they know that they will suffer such great misery, how are they happy worrying about their future misery? How are they happy there where they are without security? If they do not know, and therefore do not think that they will suffer, then they are happy by mistake, for they shall suffer, although they think that they shall

²⁴ "Veniunt: quare? Quia delectat, nisi per memoriam, quia ibi aliquando habitaverunt?". *Sermo* 241,4, PL 38,1135.

²⁵ "O pater, anne aliquas ad caelum hinc ire putandum est sublimes animas iterumque ad tarda reverti corpora? quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?". VIRGIL, *Aeneid* 6,719-721, (H.Goelzer, ed. & A.Bellesort, transl.), Tome I, Paris, 1970, p. 190-191. Quoted by AUGUSTINE in *Sermo* 240,5, PL 38,1136.

²⁶ "Si sciunt se passuras esse tantas misérias, quomodo sunt beatae, misérias suas futuras cogitantes? quomodo sunt beatae, ubi sunt sine securitate?". *Sermo* 241,5, PL 38,1136.

²⁷ "Si nesciunt, et non se putant esse passuras, errando sunt beatae". *Sermo* 241,5, PL 38,1136.

²⁸ "Erunt ergo errore felices; erunt beatae; non aeternitate, sed falsitate". *Sermo* 241,5, PL 38,1136.

not suffer. What is to think wrongly but to err? They will, therefore, be happy through error; they will be happy, not eternally but falsely"²⁹.

In opposition to the philosopher's concept of happiness, which in his analysis is not really happiness, Augustine posits true happiness in being liberated from falsehood and in possessing the truth. This is achieved through Christ's work of redemption.

"May the truth liberate us in order that we can truly be happy because the words of our Redeemer are not ineffective: 'if the Son would set you free, then you will be truly happy'. For He Himself has said: 'If you remain in my words, you will truly be my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'" (*Jo.* 8,36, 31, 32)³⁰.

This reference to Christ as the Redeemer and as the Truth, is of paramount importance to Augustine's point. It asserts his belief in Christ as equal with the Father, and in the truthfulness of His statements against the denials of Porphyry. Accordingly, the philosophers whom Augustine is confronting are also followers of Porphyry. Thus, while in paragraph four Augustine's description of the beliefs of these philosophers demonstrates that they are followers of Plato, although Plato's name is not expressly mentioned, in paragraph five his description of the same philosophers' other belief shows that they are likewise followers of Porphyry, although the name of Porphyry is not mentioned. This shows that *Sermo* 241,4 and 5 is a doublet of *Sermo* 240,4 and 5.

That these philosophers are indeed followers of Plato and at the same time of Porphyry is expressly indicated in paragraph 6. Here Pythagoras' name is included. This inclusion gives evidence of the influence of Pythagoras on the later philosophers. It is to be noted that Plato was much influenced by the Pythagoreans and by the Orphics, especially with respect to the fall of the souls and their reincarnation³¹.

²⁹ "Deinde, rogo te, sciunt se istae animae in coelo, passuras esse rursus hujus vitae miserias, an nesciunt? Elige quod volueris. Si sciunt se passuras esse tantas miserias, quomodo sunt beatae, miserias suas futuras cogitantes? quomodo sunt beatae, ubi sunt sine securitate? ... Si nesciunt, et non se putant esse passuras, errando sunt beatae. Quod enim passurae sunt, putant se non passuras: quod falsum putare, quid est aliud quam errare? Erunt ergo errore felices; erunt beatae; non aeternitate, sed falsitate". *Sermo* 241,5, PL 38, 1136.

³⁰ "Liberet nos veritas, ut vere beati esse possimus: quoniam non vacat sermo Redemptoris nostri, Si vos Filius liberaverit, tunc vere liberi eritis. Ipse enim dixit: Si manseritis in verbo meo, vere discipuli mei eritis; et cognoscetis veritatem, et veritas liberabit vos". *Sermo* 241,5, PL 38,1136.

³¹ See note 1 in D. LEE, (ed.), *Plato, Phaedrus & Letters VII & VIII*, Harmondsworth, 1981, p. 54.

D. Sermo 241,6: The teaching of the philosophers on hope for a happy life involves a contradiction

In paragraph 6 Augustine becomes even more aggressive and sharp against the philosophers. He invites his listeners to share the same attitude with him towards them: "Then, listen to another point which is worse, another point to be sorry about, or, rather to be ridiculed"³².

Why does Augustine say this? He explains that for these philosophers, for example, Pythagoras, Plato, Porphyry, and anybody else of their kind, to seek wisdom is to seek happy life³³. In my judgement this points to a certain measure of gnosticism among these philosophers. A happy life, however, can be more fully attained when a just soul leaves behind its body on earth. Why? Because on earth while we bear bodies we bear miseries. Yet, as they say, here on earth there is hope for a happy life: a happiness in heaven, which is reached after the soul leaves behind the body it had assumed. It is on this point that Augustine reacts. For as he already pointed out in paragraph 5, in an analysis of the teachings of the philosophers, even the souls of the just which have departed from the bodies can not truly be happy. Whether they know it or not, these souls will surely either worry about their future misery or else when they are in heaven, and can be presumed to be happy, but are, in fact, unhappy, since they are 'happy' there by mistake (*errando*), these souls will eventually come back to assume bodies and live in misery. This would mean that the just souls here on earth hope for a life happier than the life itself hoped for by the same souls already in heaven.

"You who are wise here, you who are a philosopher here, that is to say, on earth (for example Pythagoras, Plato, Porphyry, and anybody else of their kind), why do you philosophize? He says, in order to obtain a happy life. When will you have this happy life? When I leave this body behind on earth, he answers. Now, we, indeed, lead a miserable life; but there is hope for a happy life. There (in the heavens) we enjoy a happy life; but there is hope for a miserable life. Thus, the hope in our unhappy condition is to be happy; and the hope in our happy state is to be unhappy"³⁴.

³² "Deinde audite aliud pejus, aliud dolendum vel potius irridendum". *Sermo* 241,6, PL 38,1136.

³³ "... quare philosopharis? Propter vitam, inquit, beatam". *Sermo* 241,6, PL 38,1136.

³⁴ "Hic sapiens, hic philosophe, hoc est, in terra (verbi gratia, Pythagoras, Plato, Porphyrius, et nescio quis alius ipsorum), quare philosopharis? Propter vitam, inquit, beatam. Quando habebis istam vitam beatam? Cum hoc corpus, inquit, reliquero in terra. Modo ergo misera vita geritur, sed spes est beatæ vitæ: ibi beata vita geritur, sed spes est miseræ vitæ. Ergo spes nostræ infelicitatis est felix, et felicitatis infelix". *Sermo* 241,6, PL 38,1137.

At the end of paragraph 6 Augustine reexpresses both his ridicule and sorrow for the position of the philosophers; ridicule, because it is incorrect³⁵; sorrow, because their teachings are esteemed by many and mislead them³⁶. He shows concern for other's welfare. Yet he pinpoints their absurdities, and persuades his listeners to reject the position of the philosophers outright. In Augustine's interpretation the hope of the just souls, according to the teaching of the philosophers, is in the last analysis nourished by a love for baseness.

"Let us reject these; and either let us scoff at it because they are incorrect; or, let us be sorry for them, since they are esteemed great. Sisters and brothers, these are remarkable absurdities of great and learned people. How much better do we regard the great mysteries of the great saints? They say that the purified souls, cleansed, and wise, out of love for the bodies, will return to assume them; they say that the purified souls, out of love for bodies, will return to assume bodies. Does a purified soul, therefore, love in this manner? Is this love not a great baseness?"³⁷

E. Sermo 241,7: Not all sorts of bodies are shunned

Augustine's discussion in paragraph 7 is limited to the statement: "Corpus est omne fugiendum". This statement is attributed to Porphyry and appears here six times. Augustine considers Porphyry as the bitterest enemy of the Christian faith ("fidei christianae acerrimus inimicus"). Yet, he tempers this portrayal by saying that Porphyry, besides having been embarrassed by the absurdities of his predecessors, was to a certain extent corrected by some Christian teachings: "Porphyrius, fidei christianae acerrimus inimicus, qui iam christianis temporibus fuit; sed tamen ab ipsis deliramentis erubescendo, a Christianis ex aliqua parte correptus". The word *correptus* here suggests more the idea of "being caught" in a discussion and consequently "corrected" than simply "being caught". This is borne out by Porphyry's partial denial of Plato's harsh concept of reincarnation, a denial which partially favors Christian teaching.

³⁵ "... vel rideamus quia falsa sunt, vel doleamus quia magna existimantur". *Sermo* 241,6, PL 38,1137.

³⁶ "... doleamus quia magna existimantur". *Sermo* 241,6, PL 38,1137.

³⁷ "Abjiciamus haec, et vel rideamus quia falsa sunt, vel doleamus quia magna existimantur. Sunt enim ista, fratres mei, magna magnorum deliramenta doctorum. Quanto melius tenemus magna magnorum sacramenta sanctorum? Amore corporum dicunt redire animus purgatas, mundatas, sapientes, purgatas animas amore corporum redire ad corpora. Ergo anima purgata sic amat? Nonne amor iste magnae sunt sordes?". *Sermo* 241,6, PL 38,1137.

Porphyry reacts against Plato by postulating the statement: "Any kind of body should be fled from, for a soul to be happy". But Augustine reacts against this statement and engages in discussions Porphyry himself and the philosophers who follow Porphyry. We shall present their discussions in a scheme:

PORPHYRY

Discussion I:

All bodies should be shunned.

Reason:

All bodies are like a chain for souls.

Discussion II:

There is no reason to praise bodies⁴⁰.

Reason:

Bodies are a source of misery⁴¹.

AUGUSTINE

Discussion I:

Not all kind of bodies are to be shunned.

Reason:

Christian faith and God Himself praise bodies³⁹.

Discussion II:

There are reasons to praise bodies.

Reasons:

1. Human bodies, even in physical stature, have a dignity, although we bear its weakness as a consequence of sin such that it weighs upon the soul (*Wis.* 9,15)⁴².

2. Human bodies will be transformed at the resurrection into immortal, incorruptible, agile, bodies, and they will have facility in movement⁴³.

³⁸ "Omne dixit, quasi omne corpus vinculum aerumnosum sit animae" *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1137.

³⁹ "Deo docente fides nostra laudat corpus"; *ibid.*

⁴⁰ "Sine causa mihi laudas corpus"; *ibid.*

⁴¹ "Quaecumque sit corpus, si vult esse beata anima, corpus est omne fugiendum"; *ibid.*

⁴² "Quia et corpus quod habemus, quamvis habeamus hinc poenam de peccato, et corpus quod corrumpitur, aggravet animam (*Sap.* 9,15); tamen habet corpus istud speciem suam, dispositionem membrorum, distinctionem sensuum, erectam staturam, et caetera quae bene considerantes stupent"; *ibid.*

⁴³ "Verumtamen illud omnino incorruptibile, omnino immortale, omnino ad movendum agile et facile erit"; *ibid.*

Discussion III:

For a soul to be happy, it should leave any kind of body.

[N.B. Here Porphyry is represented by the philosophers⁴⁴].

Reason:

Augustine does not specify the reason given by the philosophers; it seems that he implies the reason given previously in paragraph 6: with the body we bear the misery of life here on earth

Discussion III:

A soul of a just man will be happier after it has been united with his body⁴⁵.

Reasons:

1. As it is the nature of the soul to be the prior element (*praedicatum*) in man, it always seeks for something (*subditum*) subject to it, and this is the body⁴⁶.

2. You, philosophers, teach that the world is an animal. Its soul is Jupiter or Hecates. This soul is always and will always be united with the world; thus the world will have no end. Since this is your belief, then not all bodies are or should be fled from. Otherwise, let Jupiter abandon the world⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ "Sed ait Porphyrius: Sine causa mihi laudas corpus; quaecumque sit corpus, si vult esse beata anima, corpus est omne fugiendum. Hoc dicunt philosophi: sed errant, sed delirant"; *ibid.* A. TRAPÈ, *Escatologia e antiplatonismo di sant' Agostino*, in: *Augustinianum* 18 (1978) 237-244, p. 239-240, underlines the conflicting concept of Porphyry and his followers and Augustine on death and resurrection. For Porphyry and his followers death which is the separation of the soul from the body is good. Resurrection which will result to the union of the soul with the body is evil. For Augustine death came as a punishment for sin. Resurrection is good; it is the last victory over evil.

⁴⁵ "Ego dico beatas animas incorruptibilia corpora semper habituras". *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1137-1138.

⁴⁶ "Duo enim sunt invicem sibi connexa, praedicata et subdita. Superat omnia Deus: huic cuncta sunt subdita. Et anima si habet aliquem honorem apud Deum, debet habere aliquid subditum": *ibid.*, PL 38,1137.

⁴⁷ "Totum hoc, universumque corpus, quod ex his elementis omnibus constat, dicitis esse animal magnum, id est, habere animam suam, sed sensus corporis non habere; quia extrinsecus nihil est quod sentiri possit: habere tamen intellectum, haerere Deo: et ipsam animam mundi vocari Jovem, vel vocari Hecatem, id est, quasi animam universalem mundum regentem, et unum quoddam animal facientem. Eundemque mundum aeternum esse dicitis, semper futurum, finem non habiturum. Si ergo aeternus est mundus, et sine fine manet mundus, et animal est mundus; anima ista semper tenetur in mundo: certe corpus est omne fugiendum? Quid est quod dicebas, Corpus est omne fugiendum? Ego dico beatas animas incorruptibilia corpora semper habituras. Tu qui dicis, Corpus est omne fugiendum, occide mundum. Tu dicis ut fugiam de carne mea: fugiat Jupiter tuus de caelo et terra". *ibid.*, PL 38,1137-1138.

F. Sermo 241,8: Porphyry's statement is refuted by Plato's statements on the constitution of the world

In paragraph 8 Augustine continues his treatment of Porphyry's statement: "Corpus est omne fugiendum". He refutes this with two arguments deduced from Plato's account of the constitution of the universe. It is to be noted that the force of Augustine's argument centers not only on their content but also on the authority of Plato himself. He refers to Plato as the *magister istorum omnium*, a title which gives Plato precedence in authority over all philosophers even over Porphyry himself. In fact Augustine not only corroborates but even justifies Paul's statement in *1 Cor.* 15,40-42 on the basis of Plato's statements. The first argument is: deities and heavenly bodies have physical bodies. Therefore, not all bodies are shunned.

"What do we find but that Plato himself, the master of all these, in a certain book of his on the constitution of the universe, says that God, the maker of deities, makes these heavenly deities, all the stars, the sun and the moon? He, therefore, says that God is the maker of all the heavenly deities. He says that the stars themselves have intelligent souls that comprehend God; they have visible bodies which we actually see. I tell you in order that you may understand: the sun itself, which you see, would not be seen unless it had a body; this is true. Any star or the moon would not be seen unless it had a body; this is true. Therefore, also the Apostle says: 'There are both celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies'. And he continues: 'the glory of the celestial bodies and the glory of the terrestrial are different'. And again speaking of the glory of these heavenly bodies, the apostle continues with the words: 'The glory of the sun, and the glory of the moon, and the glory of the stars are different. For a star differs in glory from another star; so it is at the resurrection of the dead'" (*1 Cor.* 15,40-42)⁴⁸.

Although Augustine does not mention here which book of Plato he is referring to, it is certainly *Timaeus* 38c-38e, where Plato speaks of the structure and the role of the planets and of the heavenly bodies. Here Plato says that God made the sun, the moon and the five planets in order to

⁴⁸ "Quid quod invenius eundem Platonem, magistrum istorum omnium, in libro quodam suo quem scripsit de constitutione mundi, inducere Deum fabricatorem deorum, facientem scilicet deos coelestes, stellas omnes, solem et lunam? Dicit ergo Deum opificem deorum coelestium: dicit ipsas stellas habere animas intellectuales, quae intelligunt Deum, et corpora visibilia quae cernuntur. Dico, ut intelligates: Sol iste quem videtis, non videretur, nisi corpus esset: hoc verum est. Stella ulla vel luna non videretur, nisi corpus esset: verum dicit. Ideo dicit et Apostolus: *Et corpora coelestia, et corpora terrestria*. Et sequitur: *Alia gloria coelestium, alia et terrestrium*. Et rursus dicens de gloria coelestium corporum Apostolus adjunxit, et ait: *Alia gloria solis, alia gloria lunae, alia gloria stellarum. Stella enim ab stella differt in gloria; sic et resurrectio mortuorum* (*1 Cor.* 14,40-42)". *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1138.

define and to preserve the measures of time. God gave a physical body to each of them and placed the seven heavenly bodies in the seven orbits of the circle of the Different. In the text quoted above it is important to note that Paul's statement on the difference in glory and on the nature of bodies is made under the influence of Platonic thought. For this reason Augustine himself, who was also to a great extent a loyal follower of Paul, was similarly greatly influenced by Plato with respect to the difference of the glory of the resurrection-life bodies. This shows in his thought that glories of the resurrection-life bodies will vary according to the degree of merit earned here.

"You see that glorification has been promised to the bodies of the saints; and there are different degrees of glorifications, since there are varying degrees of merits for charity"⁴⁹.

It appears, however, that with the first argument Augustine does not convince his philosopher-opponents: "But what do they say?" This question indicates their reluctance, in Augustine's eyes, to admit his point. In fact they present another difficulty which makes the status of the heavenly bodies an exception.

"But what do they say? These stars which you see are, indeed, bodies; but they have intelligent souls; and they are gods"⁵⁰.

The phrase "they have intelligent souls" apparently is the main reason *in contra* presented by the philosophers. Augustine dismisses this argument, and takes no interest in making a rebuttal⁵¹. Instead, he proceeds to give the second argument *in contra*. Although the *Timaeus* (ps. 40-41) is not expressly mentioned, this time he uses Plato's statements on the constitution of the gods, explaining its connotations and implications. He arrives at the conclusion that in Plato's account God has willed the soul not to leave the bodily world behind. This second argument is thus an argument from the will and omnipotence of God.

In Plato's account gods were made by God with corporeal and incorporeal substances. Being created, gods are not immortal and indissoluble. This means that according to Plato to be composed both of corporeal and incorporeal substances and to have a beginning is to be mortal. But in Plato's account this mortality is overcome. He explains this in the follow-

⁴⁹ "Videtur quia promissa est sanctorum corporibus claritas, et diversa species claritatis, quia diversa sunt merita charitatis". *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1138.

⁵⁰ "Sed illi quid dicunt? Stellae istae quas videtur, corpora quidem sunt, sed habent suas animas intellectuales, et sunt dii". *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1138.

⁵¹ "Interim de corporibus, quia corpora sunt, verum dicunt: sed utrum habeant animas suas, utquid discutio?". *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1138.

ing manner: God addresses the deities in order to make them conscious of their dissoluble constitution. At this they shiver in fear, for they do not want to die but to be immortal. God, however, assures them that they will not perish. He wills that they should not die. This is now the case with these gods. The will of God has given them the security of remaining immortal because His will is a stronger and a more sovereign bond than those with which they are bound at birth. In Augustine's interpretation of Plato's account it is within the will of God to free these gods from dissolution. In fact God has willed that the soul will not leave the physical world behind. This proves that not all sorts of bodies should be shunned.

"Let us come now to the point. Plato himself imagines God addressing the gods, whom He has made from corporeal and incorporeal substances; among other things He says to them: 'since you were created, you cannot be immortal and indissoluble'. At this utterance they could tremble in fear. Why? Because they wished to be immortal; and they did not wish to die. Therefore, in order to remove their fear he goes on to add the words: 'But you will never disintegrate, nor will disasters of death fall upon you; they will not be stronger than my will, which is a stronger bond for your perpetuity than those with which you are bound'. See, God gives security to the gods He has made. He gives them the security of immortality; He gives them the security that they will not leave the physical masses of their bodies. Is it really true that every kind of body should be shunned?"⁵²

At the end of *Sermo* 241,8 Augustine considers the objection of the philosophers as answered, their contentions as defeated⁵³; not, however, in every respect since he promises to take up the rest of the objections in the following sermon. He does this in *Sermo* 242,7-10.

⁵² "Modo veniamus ad rem. Inducitur Deus a Platone ipso alloqui deos, quos fecit de corporali et de incorporali substantia, atque inter caetera dicere illis: 'Quoniam estis orti, immortales esse et indissolubiles non potestis'. Jam ad istam vocem illi intremiscere poterant. Quare? Quia immortales esse cupiebant, et mori, nolebant. Ergo ut eis auferret timorem, secutus adjunxit atque ait: 'Non tamen dissolvemini, neque vos ulla mortis fata periment, nec erunt valentiora quam consilium meum, quod majus est vinculum ad perpetuitatem vestram, quam illa quibus colligati estis'. Ecce Deus dat securitatem diis a se factis: securitatem illis dat immortalitatis: securitatem illis dat, quod non relinquunt globos corporum suorum. Certe corpus est omne fugiendum?" *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1138.

⁵³ "Quantum existimo, responsum est illis, sicut intelligere potestis: sicut et nos loqui possumus, quantum hora sermonis permittit, quantum vestra capacitas sinit, responsum est eis". *Sermo* 241,7, PL 38,1138.

G. Sermo 242,7: It is within the will of God to raise up bodies

The philosophers contend that bodies made of earth cannot exist in heaven⁵⁴. Here Augustine does not give explicitly the reason why for these philosophers bodies made of earth cannot exist in heaven. However, in the following paragraph, he gives *weight* as a reason; and another reason is the irreversibility of the order of the four elements of the universe, namely, earth, water, air and fire. Meanwhile in paragraph 7 Augustine continues to refute them on the basis of God's power and will, which these philosophers themselves acknowledge. This argument is no more than a repetition of the argument given in the previous homily, although this time this argument from God's will is applied to a different problem. In *Sermo* 241,8 Augustine applies the argument to the dwelling of the souls of the gods in the physical heavenly bodies in accordance with Plato's teaching. Here he applies the same argument to the power of God to make solid bodies rise.

"But they say that a body made of earth cannot exist in heaven. What if God were to will it? Contradict God, and say: 'God cannot do it'. It is not that you just as every pagan say that God is omnipotent? Is it not that in a book of Plato, as I demonstrated yesterday, one reads that the uncreated God said to the gods He made: 'Since you have been created, you certainly cannot be immortal and indissoluble. But you will not disintegrate nor will disasters of death fall upon you; they will not be stronger than my will, which is a stronger bond than those with which you are bound'. God has brought everything under His will. He is able to do even what apparently is impossible. For what does it mean, you cannot be immortal, but I make it possible that you will not die, except that I make possible even what apparently cannot be done?"⁵⁵

Augustine's question, "for what does it mean, you cannot be immortal, but I make it possible that you will not die, except that I make possible even what apparently cannot be done?", indicates that from Pla-

⁵⁴ "Sed non potest, inquit, esse terrenum corpus in coelo". *Sermo* 242,7, PL 38, 1141.

⁵⁵ "Sed non potest, inquit, esse terrenum corpus in coelo. Quid, si hoc velit Deus? Responde contra Deum, et dic: Non potest Deus. Nonne et tu quicumque paganus, dicis omnipotentem Deum? nonne in libro Platonis, quod hesterno die demonstravi, legitur dixisse Deus non factus diis a se factis: 'Quoniam estis orti, immortales quidem esse et indissolubiles non potestis; non tamen dissolvemini, neque ulla vos mortis fata periment; nec erunt valentiora quam consilium meum, quod majus est vinculum ad perpetuitatem vestram, quam illa quibus estis colligati?' Totum ad voluntatem suam redegit Deus, qui potest et quod impossibile est. Nam quid est aliud, non potestis esse immortales, sed ut non moriamini ego facio; nisi, et quod fieri non potest, ego facio?". *Sermo* 242,7, PL 38, 1141.

to's account it can be deduced that it is by the will of God that bodies are made to rise. He bolsters this argument in the following paragraphs.

H. Sermo 242,8-10: Weight is not an argument against the resurrection of the body

In paragraph 8-10 Augustine demonstrates how bodies, although made of earth and solid, can rise up. He gives the following examples: a block of wood rises up to the surface of the water⁵⁶, a concave vessel made of lead can float⁵⁷. By giving these examples, it is apparently his intention to oppose the theory of the philosophers of the school of Plato that the order of the four elements in the physical universe is irreversible⁵⁸. We wonder, however, whether Plato himself, when speaking of the order of the elements of the universe, means to apply it also to particular substances in the universe. In *Timaeus* 42 Plato speaks vaguely of the sufferings of the souls in their association with the four elements, but there is no mention whatsoever of the inability of bodies to rise up because of their association with the four elements. In fact in *Timaeus* 49c Plato admits a process of cyclical transformation of the four elements. Because of this transformation Plato hesitates to call any of these elements by a fixed name. For example, water solidifies into a stone and earth, and it evaporates and dissolves into wind and water. It may therefore be said that the idea of the impossibility of particular solid substances to rise may possibly have been conceived only by those other philosophers. Augustine refutes this in paragraph 10 by a comparison, among many others, between a thin but sickly man and a robust but healthy man. The former, although thin, can hardly move because of ill-health; the latter, although heavy, can easily and swiftly move because of good-health. This proves that good health is the reason for facility in movement. From this he concludes that if here good health facilitates movement, then after resurrection immortality will facilitate it even more so. This deduction points to Augustine's concept of the quality of the transformed resurrection-life bodies, although this concept is not explicitly mentioned here.

"Which body moves more easily? Which body runs faster? Is it the one with a heavier body, or, the one with a lighter body? Won't everybody answer: the lighter? For lighter bodies move easily; they act more quickly; heavier bodies move with more difficulty; they act more slowly. You rightly fix the norm. You have reckoned it well indeed, and after having considered all aspects you

⁵⁶ "Quare lignum natat super aquam?". *Sermo* 242,8, PL 38,1141.

⁵⁷ "Aliquid vas concavum, et natat plumbum super aquam". *Sermo* 242,9, PL 38,1142.

⁵⁸ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 31-32.

answered that lighter bodies move more easily and act more quickly than heavier bodies. Yes, you say. Answer me then. Why is it that the lightest spider moves slow, and a heavier horse runs fast? I will speak about men themselves: a man with a bigger build is heavier; and a man with a shorter build is lighter. This is normally the case, but only when someone else carries them. But if each person carries his own body, the bigger and healthier runs, while the shorter, unhealthy man hardly walks. Weigh a thin and a robust man; the thin and unhealthy weighs hardly a few pounds; the robust and healthy man weighs many pounds with his flesh. Try to remove both from the weighing scale. The heavy one is the healthy; the lighter one is thin. Take away the one who carries them; let them walk; leave them to themselves; let them move their bodies. I see that the thin one hardly makes a step; whereas I see the healthy and robust one running. If health can achieve this, how much more will immortality do so?"⁵⁹

II. DISCUSSIONS WITH PHILOSOPHERS IN *DE CIVITATE DEI*

In *De Civitate Dei* 22,25 Augustine specifies his main point of conflict with the philosophers.

"Now there is no dispute between us and the well-known philosophers about the blessings that the soul will enjoy in perfect felicity after this life. But they quarrel with us about the resurrection of the body; in fact they strenuously deny it"⁶⁰.

In this section we attempt to expose the several discussions between Augustine and those philosophers in detail, as found in *De Civitate Dei*. We are, however, going to exclude some points which we judge

⁵⁹ "Quid facilius movetur, quid velocius agitur, gravius corpus, an levius? Quis non respondeat, Levius? Leviora enim corpora facilius moventur, velocius aguntur: graviora difficiliter atque tardius. Certe regulam fixisti, certe considerasti, et circumspicisti omnibus respondisti quia facilius moventur et velocius aguntur corpora leviora, quam graviora. Ita est, dicis. Responde ergo mihi. Quare levissima aranea tarde se movet, et gravis equus velociter currit? De ipsis hominibus loquar: majus corpus hominis gravius est; brevius corpus quod minus habet ponderis, levius est. Ita vero est, sed si alius portet. Si autem ipse homo corpus suum portet, validus currit, macer languore vix ambulat. Appende macrum et robustum hominem; illum languore vix paucas libellas appendentem, illum salubritate corporis multa pondo in carne sua gerentem: tenta tu ambos tollere; gravis est validus, levis est macilentus. Recedat portator, appareat ambulator; ipsos dimitte sibi, agant corpora sua; video macrum vix passum moventem, video validum robustumque currentem. Si hoc valet sanitas, immortalitas quid valebit?". *Sermo* 242,10, PL 38,1142. See also *De Civitate Dei* 13,18, CSEL 40(1), 640: similar examples are given.

⁶⁰ "Verum de animi bonis, quibus post hanc vitam beatissimus perfruetur, non a nobis dissentiunt philosophi nobiles: de carnis resurrectione contendunt, hanc quantum possunt negant". *De Civitate Dei* 22,25, CSEL 40(2),650. Transl. by H.BETTENSON, *City of God*, p. 1076.

only to be remotely connected with the main theme of resurrection or transformation of the body. For our purpose we limit ourselves to the following books and chapters: Book 10,24,29,30,31,32; Book 13,16,17,18,19,20; Book 22,25-28.

A. Book 10, 24 and 29: Porphyry's refusal to believe in the resurrection of the body originates from his refusal to acknowledge Christ as the "principle"

In Book 10,23, which is an introductory chapter to the discussions in chapters 24 and 29, Augustine opens his discussion with Porphyry on the question of purification. The main question to be tackled is: Who effects purification in us? Porphyry's reply to this — in the account of Augustine — is not the initiatory rites of the sun and the moon but the "principles". Porphyry's motivation in giving this answer, according to Augustine, is "to prevent the belief in the efficiency of the rites of any other god, among the crowd of divinities"⁶¹.

In Augustine's interpretation, the term "principles" in Porphyry refers to God the Father and God the Son, whom he (Porphyry) calls in Greek the Intellect or Mind of the Father⁶². Augustine bases his interpretation on Porphyry's being a Platonist. From this basis he proceeds to explain why Porphyry does not make any statement — or at least no clear statement — about the Holy Spirit. Porphyry disagrees with Plotinus on the category of the soul. Porphyry infers from Plotinus' discussion on the "principal substances" that the third entity is the natural substance of the soul, and this soul occupies the middle position *between* God the Father and God the Son, but not a position *below* them which Plotinus reserves for the soul. Augustine claims that on the question and nature of the third entity in the Trinity Porphyry refers exactly to our belief concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father or only the Spirit of the Son, but of both⁶³.

⁶¹ "Denique eodem dicit oraculo expressum principia posse purgare, ne forte, cum dictum esset non purgare teletas solis et lunae, alicuius alterius dei de turba valere ad purgandum teletae crederentur". *De Civitate Dei* 10,23, CSEL 40(1),484. See also G. FAGGIN, "S. Agostino e Porfirio", in *S. Agostino e le grandi correnti della filosofia contemporanea*, Tolentino (1956) 376-382, p. 381.

⁶² "Quae autem dicat esse principia tamque Platonici, novimus. Dicit enim Deum Patrem et Deum Filium, quem Graece appellat paternum intellectum vel paternam mentem". *De Civitate Dei* 10,23, CSEL 40(1),484.

⁶³ "Postponit quippe Plotinus anima naturam paterno intellectui; iste autem cum dicit medium, non postponit, sed interponit. Et nimirum hoc dixit, ut potuit sive ut voluit, quod nos sanctum Spiritum, nec Patris tantum nec Filii tantum, sed utriusque Spiritum dici-

From the discussion in chapter 23 on the nature of the "three principles" Augustine continues in chapter 24 to show how these three could be taken only as one, "the principle", when we speak of God. He does this through two illustrations. First, he points out that when we speak of God, we do not speak of two or three principles as we do not speak of two or three gods, although in taking each of them as a Person, we acknowledge that each of them is God. Second, he contrasts our concept of the Trinity with that of the Sabellians. The Sabellians identify the Father and the Son. We, however, believe that the Father is the Father of the Son, the Son is the Son of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, but the Holy Spirit is not identical with either. Thus the three could be taken as one principle.

Further in chapter 24 Augustine gives the reason why Porphyry refuses to admit Christ as the principle: Porphyry is subject to "envious powers" (*invidis potestatibus*); he is ashamed of his subjection; yet he is afraid to contradict these envious powers. It is difficult to understand here what Augustine means in his rendering of Porphyry's attitude towards Christ; Augustine does not give any further explanation. However, in *Adversus Libros Athei Juliani* 8,271⁶⁴, Cyril of Alexandria († 444) refers to Porphyry's concept, following Plato, of the three principles or of the Trinity, found in the fourth book of Porphyry's *Philosophicae Historiae*: the substance of God issues from three subsistences: the Supreme God being the Good; next to Him is the Creator; and in the third place is the soul of the World. In the Trinity of Neoplatonism the Creator is represented by the Demiurge. Given this view and representation it now becomes understandable why Augustine says that Porphyry was ashamed of being in subjection to these "envious powers" because of the nature of Demiurge; and yet Porphyry was afraid to contradict them. Insofar as Porphyry believes that purification is effected by the principles, and insofar as we Christians, as Augustine claims, believe that Christ, by virtue of his oneness in divine nature with the Father, is the Son of God, whereas Porphyry does not, it is logical that Porphyry denies Christ to be the principle by whose incarnation we are purified. For the same reason Porphyry despises Christ because He appeared in His flesh.

"But Porphyry, being subject to the envious powers, because of which he was both ashamed and at the same time afraid to contradict them openly, refused

mus". *De Civitate Dei* 10,23, CSEL 40/1,484.

⁶⁴ CYRILLUS ALEXANDRINUS, *Adversus Libros Athei Juliani* 6,271, PG 76,916.

to acknowledge the Lord Christ to be the principle by whose incarnation we are purified. In fact he despised Him in His appearance in the flesh"⁶⁵.

Augustine rebukes Porphyry for failing to see Christ as the principle. In Augustine's teaching it is not the flesh of Christ which is the principle — this is what Porphyry thinks that Christians hold — nor the human soul, but the Word through whom everything was created. The flesh does not purify us by itself; it purifies us through the Word that became incarnate.

"This Platonist did not know Him (Christ) to be the principle; otherwise he would know him as a means of purification. For it is not the flesh or the human soul that is the principle, but the Word through whom everything was created. It is therefore not that the flesh purifies us by itself; it purifies us through the Word by which it has been assumed, when 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'" (*Jo. 1,14*)⁶⁶.

In chapter 29 Augustine recalls his discussion with Porphyry in chapter 24; and he interchanges Porphyry himself with the Platonists with whom he was discussing, thus identifying these Platonists' teaching with that of Porphyry with respect to the subject of purification. Augustine starts by indicating a point of similarity between these Platonists and Christianity. He illustrates that in asserting with Porphyry the truth of the Trinity even when this does not correspond exactly to the teaching of Christianity, because of the use of irregular terminology ("etsi verbis indisciplinatis utimini"), they have a certain intuition of the goal Christianity must strive for. Yet they deviate from the way that Christianity follows⁶⁷. Augustine wants to bring these Platonists to the acknowledgement of Christ's incarnation and its effect of purification. At the same time, he wants to prevent the audience who holds them in high esteem for their love of wisdom from being misled. Therefore he exploits further another point of similarity. The next point he brings out is the fact that Porphyry acknowledges the existence of grace and its being granted to few to reach

⁶⁵ "Sed subditus Porphyrius invidis potestatibus, de quibus et erubescibat, et eas libere redarguere formidabat, noluit intellegere Dominum Christum esse principium, cuius incarnatione purgamur. Eum quippe in ipsa carne contempsit". *De Civitate Dei* 10,24, CSEL 40/1,485.

⁶⁶ "Hunc ille Patonicus non cognovit esse principium; nam cognosceret purgatorium. Neque enim caro principium est aut anima humana, sed Verbum per quod facta sunt omnia. Non ergo caro per se ipsam mundat, sed per Verbum a quo suscepta est cum Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis". *De Civitate Dei* 10,24, CSEL 40/1,486.

⁶⁷ "Itaque videtis utcumque, etsi de longinquo, etsi acie caligante, patriam in qua manendum est, sed viam qua eundem est non tenetis". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496.

God by virtue of their intelligence⁶⁸. Augustine focuses the attention of the Platonists on this particular point in their teaching and in Porphyry's: grace is "granted" (*esse concessum*). For Augustine this concept is of key importance; it is a confession also, from the part of the Platonists, of the grace of God and of the insufficiency of man⁶⁹. Further, this shows that for the Platonists the grace of God makes possible the fulfillment or the perfection of the life of wisdom, since they believe, in following Plato⁷⁰, that the life of wisdom is not perfectly attainable here but only in the afterlife.

"Nevertheless you acknowledge the existence of grace, when you say that it has been granted to few to reach God through the virtue of their intelligence. For you do not say: it has pleased few, or few have wished it. But when you say 'it has been granted', without doubt you acknowledge the grace of God and the insufficiency of man. You also use this word (grace) more openly, when, following Plato's opinion, you yourself do not doubt that man in no way in this life reaches the perfection of wisdom; nevertheless all that is wanting can be granted for their fulfillment by the providence and grace of God after this life to those who live according to their intelligence"⁷¹.

It is in connection with the point of similarity in the concept of grace that Augustine brings into his theology of resurrection the role of Christ's incarnation in all its aspects, namely, His love expressed in mediation, His birth from a virgin, and finally His death and resurrection. Augustine calls the incarnation of Christ "the supreme instance of grace" (*summum exemplum gratiae*). The grace of God cannot be shown more clearly than in the mediation of the only Son of God through incarnation. Incarnation gave to men the hope of love (*spem dilectionis*), by which men would come to God through Christ. The Son of God implanted in our

⁶⁸ "Confiteris tamen gratiam, quando quidem ad Deum per virtutem intellegentiae pervenire paucis dicis esse concessum". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496.

⁶⁹ "Sed cum dicis esse concessum, procul dubio Dei gratiam, non hominis sufficientiam confiteris". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496.

⁷⁰ See PLATO, *Phaedrus* 249e-250a, p. 42-43: Plato speaks of those possessed by the divine. Cf. *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496.

⁷¹ "Confiteris tamen gratiam, quando quidem ad Deum per virtutem intellegentiae pervenire paucis dicis esse concessum. Non enim dicis: Paucis placuit, vel: Pauci voluerunt; sed cum dicis esse concessum, procul dubio Dei gratiam, non hominis sufficientiam confiteris. Uteris etiam hoc verbo apertius, ubi Platonis sententiam sequens nec ipse dubitas in hac vita hominem nullo modo ad perfectionem sapientiae pervenire, secundum intellectum tamen viventibus omne quod deest providentia Dei et gratia post hanc vitam posse compleri". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496.

nature the desire for blessedness and immortality⁷². By His sufferings and death Christ taught us to look beyond our own sufferings.

"If only you had recognized the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and His incarnation itself, in which he assumed a human soul and body! If only you could see the supreme instance of grace! ... The grace of God could not be more gratefully emphasized than when the only Son of God himself, while remaining unchangeable Himself, clothed Himself in humanity and gave the hope of His love to men by the mediation of a man, so that by his hope of love they would come to him, who was formerly so far from mortals in His immortality, far from the changeable in His unchangeableness, far from the wicked in His righteousness, far from the wretched in his blessedness. And because He has implanted in us the desire to be happy and immortal, He assumed a mortal [*sc.* flesh], while remaining in his blessedness, in order to give us what we love; and by suffering He taught us to look beyond what we dread"⁷³.

Augustine does not consider that the birth of Christ from a virgin poses a great difficulty to the Platonists. He does not discuss it with them; he simply justifies it by saying: "a wonderful being was born in a wonderful way"⁷⁴. The case, however, is different with the death, resurrection, and the transformation of the body of Christ. This was the main difficulty for the Platonists; and Augustine discusses this with them critically. The discussion of Augustine with the platonists on the death, resurrection, and transformation of the body of Christ, centers on resolving the difficulty of the Platonists in accepting resurrection and transformation of the body of Christ, which, as Augustine points out is possibly (*fortasse*) influenced by Porphyry's theory: "one must escape any kind of body in order for the

⁷² "Et quia naturaliter indidit nobis, ut beati immortalesque esse cupiamus...". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496.

⁷³ "O si cognovisses Dei gratiam per Iesum Christum dominum nostrum ipsamque eius incarnationem, qua hominis animam corpusque suscepit, summum esse exemplum gratiae videre potuisse ... Gratia Dei non potuit gratius commendari, quam ut ipse unicus Dei Filius in se incommutabiliter manens indueretur hominem et spem dilectionis suae daret hominibus homine medio, qua ad illum ab hominibus veniretur, qui tam longe erat immortalis a mortalibus, incommutabilis a commutabilibus, iustus ab iniis, beatus a miseris. Et quia naturaliter indidit nobis, ut beati immortalesque esse cupiamus, manens beatus suscipiensque mortalem, ut nobis tribueret quod amamus, perpetiundo docuit contemnere quod timemus". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,496-497.

⁷⁴ "... mirabilis mirabiliter natus est". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

soul to dwell with God in blessedness"⁷⁵. It is from this point that Augustine begins his discussion with the Platonists.

First he contends that Porphyry's theory has to be corrected. It can be corrected by means of the Platonists' theory, which Augustine calls an "incredible notion", taken from Plato, concerning the soul of the visible world. Plato teaches that the world is a living being; it has a soul. The world is the happiest living being⁷⁶. And the Platonists wish it to be eternal. This would mean that for these Platonists the soul of the world never departs from the physical constitution of the world; yet it is very happy. According to Augustine, this goes contrary to the Platonists' theory, and for that matter contrary to Porphyry's theory, that any kind of body should be abandoned in order that the soul may be happy.

"But he himself [Porphyry], by holding this opinion, stood in need of correction particularly in view of the quite incredible notion of this vast corporeal mass which you share with him concerning the soul of this world. For you say, on the authority of Plato, that the world is a living being and a very happy living being, which you wish to be eternal. How, therefore, on the one hand the soul never departs from the body, and on the other hand always enjoys happiness, if for the soul to be happy every body is to shunned?"⁷⁷

In the second place Augustine confronts the Platonists with their own belief that the sun and planets are bodies; these are living beings of utter blessedness; and they are eternal in their corporeal forms.

"You also confess in your books that this sun and other planets are bodies. All mankind try to join and concur with you in this conviction. Moreover with lofty thinking, as you think, you consider these living beings to be very happy and eternally united with their corporeal forms"⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ "An vero quod ipsum corpus morte depositum et in melius resurrectione mutatum iam incorruptibile neque mortale in superna subvexit, hoc fortasse credere recusatis intuitentes Porphyrium in his ipsis libris, ex quibus multa posui, quos de regressu animae scripsit, tam crebro praecipere omne corpus esse fugiendum, ut anima possit beata permanere cum Deo?" *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

⁷⁶ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 30f.

⁷⁷ "Sed ipse potius ista sentiens corrigendus fuit, praesertim cum de anima mundi huius visibilis et tam ingentis corporeae molis cum illo tam incredibilia sapiatis. Platone quippe auctore animal esse dicitis mundum et animal beatissimum, quod vultis esse etiam sempiternum. Quo modo ergo nec umquam solvetur a corpore, nec umquam carebut beatitudine, si, ut beata sit anima, corpus sit omne fugiendum?" *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

⁷⁸ "Solem quoque istum et cetera sidera non solum in libris vestris corpora esse fatemini, quod vobiscum omnes homines et conspiciere non cunctantur et dicere; verum etiam altiore, ut putatis, peritia haec esse animalia beatissima perhibetis et cum his corporibus sempiterna". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

This would argue against the Platonists themselves; and Augustine tries to bring this to the attention of the Platonists, who, he thinks, pretend not to have knowledge of their usual way of discussing or of their usual teaching; or else they simply forget, when presented with the Christian teaching or the resurrection and the transformation of the body.

"Why, therefore, is it that when the Christian faith is urged upon you, at once you forget, or you pretend not to know your usual argument and teaching?"⁷⁹

After confronting the Platonists with their own teachings Augustine claims that discussion on the question of resurrection is only within the competence of those who are well-instructed in the Scriptures⁸⁰. He does not give here the reason for this claim. In Book 22,25, however, he insinuates that these Platonists consider scriptural evidence to be nonsense⁸¹. Against this background Augustine, we may suspect, wants to assert the truth of Holy Scriptures; and it is because of this that he makes this claim, not only in order to assert the authority of Christianity to establish as true the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, but also in order to persuade the Platonists to accept humbly Christian teaching. For the second aim, that is, in order to persuade the Platonists, Augustine repeatedly brings to their notice their proud attitude in not acknowledging Christ⁸². For the first aim, that is, to establish as true the resurrection of the body, he appeals to the fact of Christ's resurrection, which he takes as *the* example which demonstrated the truth of Christian teaching on the future resurrection and transformation of our bodies. But even this Christian teaching has its parallel, as Augustine points out, in the teaching of the Platonists on the presence of immortal bodies in the celestial sphere where they are immortally happy⁸³. Thus, as Augustine says, there is no basis for them to say that one has to flee from any kind of body in order that one's soul may be happy.

"What the qualities of the bodies of the saints at the resurrection will be can be discussed in more detail among those who are more learned in the Chris-

⁷⁹ "Quid ergo est, quod, cum vobis fides Christiana suadetur, tunc obliviscimi, aut ignorare vos fingitis, quid disputare aut docere soleatis?". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

⁸⁰ "Qualia sanctorum corpora in resurrectione futura sint, potest aliquanto scrupulosius inter Christianorum scripturarem doctissimos disputari...". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

⁸¹ "Si vana dixerunt esse conscripta". *De Civitate Dei* 22,25, CSEL 40/2,650.

⁸² "Quid causae est, quor propter opiniones vestras, quas vos ipsis obpugnatis, Christiani esse nolitis, nisi quia Christus humiliter venit et vos superbi estis?". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498.

⁸³ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 30-34 and 41, p. 142-147 and 156-157.

tian Scriptures. Of this, however, we have no doubt: the future resurrected bodies will be eternal; their qualities will be like that example which Christ gave at his own resurrection. But, whatever the qualities of those bodies may be, the fact is that when Christian teaching is that these bodies will be incorruptible, and will not be an obstacle to contemplation by the soul, in which it is fixed on God, you also say that in the heavens there are immortal bodies of the immortally blessed. What then is the basis of your thinking that for us to be happy we should shun every kind of body, so that you seem to shun as it were rationally the Christian faith. Or, if you have a reason, is it not what I repeatedly say: Christ is humble, whereas you are proud? Or is it possibly because you are ashamed of being corrected? And this is a vice of none other than the proud"⁸⁴.

Chapter 29 ends with a direct quotation of *John* 1,1-5: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. This was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him; and nothing that was created came into being without Him. In Him was life; and that life was the light of men. The light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not overwhelm it". Augustine cites this text not only to emphasize the humility of the Son of God, "who by His Spirit taught a fisherman [John] wisdom in order to know and to say" the words cited above, but also and foremost in order to bring to their knowledge that in fact in Christian belief, Christ is the principle. This principle, with His life, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension, all taken interconnected, effects in righteous believers all that pertains to and leads towards their resurrection and transformation for the better.

B. Book 10,30: Plato's teaching suffers from flaws. Porphyry corrects them

There are several points in the teachings of Plato which Porphyry does not agree with. The first is: after death the souls of men return to earth, and enter into the bodies even of beasts⁸⁵. This is also held by Plo-

⁸⁴ "Qualia sanctorum corpora in resurrectione futura sint, potest aliquanto scrupulosius inter Christianarum scripturarum doctissimos disputari; futura tamen sempiterna minime dubitamus, et talia futura, quale sua resurrectione Christus demonstravit exemplum. Sed qualiacumque sint, cum incorruptibilia prorsus et immortalia nihiloque animae contemplationem, qua in Deo fugitur, inpedientia praedicentur vosque etiam dicatis esse in caelestibus immortalia corpora immortaliter beatorum: quid est quod beata simus, omne corpus fugiendum esse opinamini, ut fidem Christianam quasi rationabiliter fugere videamini, nisi quia illud est, quod iterum dico: Christus est humilis, vos superbi? An forte corrigi pudet? Et hoc vitium non nisi superbiorum est". *De Civitate Dei* 10,29, CSEL 40/1,498-499.

⁸⁵ See PLATO, *Phaedrus* 249b, p. 41; *Republic* 10,619d-620b, p. 121-122; *Timaeus* 42, p. 158.

tinus⁸⁶. The second is: just as the dead came from the living, so the living always come from the dead⁸⁷. The third is: out of forgetfulness of past miseries the souls take delight in coming back to earth in order to assume bodies⁸⁸. The fourth is: there is a kind of inevitable cycle of departure from evil followed by return to evil.

Augustine states that Porphyry refuses to accept the first point; and Porphyry, as Augustine comments, does this quite rightly. In Augustine's supposition Porphyry's reason is this: he was ashamed to hold Plato's teaching because "he fears that a mother might come back as a mule and be ridden by her son"⁸⁹! For this reason Porphyry proposes another theory: human souls return into men's bodies, but not into the same bodies which they have left behind; they come back to assume other new human bodies. Augustine criticizes this theory. For, as Augustine points out, it would be in accordance with Porphyry's theory that a mother would return as a girl and possibly marry her own son⁹⁰.

"If after Plato has said something it would be thought improper to correct it, then why did Porphyry offer corrections on some, and not a few, points? For it is very certain that Plato wrote that after death the souls of men return even to bodies of beasts. Even Plotinus, the teacher of Porphyry, held this opinion. However, Porphyry rightly did not care for it. He thought that souls of men return into the bodies of men, not, however, their own, which they have abandoned, but into new bodies. It clearly made him blush to believe it, lest a mother who possibly turned into a mule would be ridden by her son; however, it did not make him blush to believe this: a mother who has turned into a daughter would possibly marry her son"⁹¹.

With this text Augustine renders Porphyry's theory ridiculous, although he points out its partial correctness, i.e., that souls will return

⁸⁶ PLOTINUS, *Enneades* 3:4,2; PLOTIN, *Enneades* III, (É. BRÉHIER, ed.), Paris, p.65.

⁸⁷ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 70c f.; cf. *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,501.

⁸⁸ PLATO, *Phaedrus* 249a, p. 41; *Republic* 10,619f., p. 120f.; see also VIRGIL, *Aeneid* 6,751, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, p. 192. The text from VIRGIL is quoted directly in *De Civitate Dei* 22,26, CSEL 40/2,653.

⁸⁹ "Puduit scilicet illud credere, ne mater fortasse filium in mulam revoluta vectaret..." *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,500.

⁹⁰ "... et non puduit hoc credere, ubi revoluta mater in puellam filio forsitan nuberet". *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,500.

⁹¹ "Si post Platonem aliquid emendare existimatur indignum, quid ipse Porphyrius nonnulla et non parva emendavit? Nam Platonem animas hominum post mortem revolvī usque ad corpora bestiarum scripsisse certissimum est. Hanc sententiam Porphyrii doctor tenuit et Plotinus; Porphyrio tamen iure displicuit. In hominum sane non sua quae dimiserant, sed alia nova corpora redire humanas animas arbitratus est. Puduit scilicet illud credere, ne mater fortasse filium in mulam revoluta vectaret; et non puduit hoc credere, ubi revoluta mater in puellam filio forsitan nuberet". *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1, 500.

only into human bodies⁹². With this he likewise praises the Christian doctrine taught by the prophets: "The belief that souls return only once to their own bodies is more honorable than that they return time and again to different bodies"⁹³.

With respect to the second point in Plato's teaching, to wit, just as the dead came from the living so the living always come from the dead, Porphyry says that God has placed the soul in this world in order that it may realize the evils of material world and from here go back to the Father, never again to be drawn back into contact with evil. For Porphyry the souls of the thoroughly purified do not come back to assume bodies. Augustine, however, sees an incorrectness in this theory of Porphyry. For Augustine the soul is given to the body in order to do good. Evil is only recognized by man when he does good.

"Porphyry also says that God had given a soul to the world for this purpose: in order that the soul, realizing the evils of the material world, would hurry to the Father and would no longer be held back once again by the pollution of such evils. Here, though, Porphyry is inconsistent with the facts; for the soul is given to the body in order that it may do good; it would not know evil if it did not do evil. Nevertheless in this [theory] he corrected the opinion of other Platonists, and he did so on an important question, because he admitted that the soul after it has been purified from all evils and has been established with the Father will never suffer the evils of this world. With this opinion he did away with a principal Platonic theory which stated that just as the dead come from the living so the living come always from the dead"⁹⁴.

On the third point, namely, out of forgetfulness of past miseries the soul takes delight in coming back to assume a body, Augustine corrects Porphyry's position by reference to Virgil's poetical description of the joys of the blessed after their purification:

⁹² "Verum tamen, ut dixi, ex magna parte correctus est in hac opinione Porphyrius, ut saltem in solos homines humanas animas praecipitari posse sentiret, beluinos autem carceres evertere minime dubitaret". *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,500.

⁹³ "Quanto, inquam, honestius creditur reverti animas semel ad corpora propria quam reverti totiens ad diversa"! *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,500.

⁹⁴ "Dicit etiam ad hoc Deum animam mundo dedisse, ut materiae cognoscens mala ad Patrem recurreret nec aliquando iam talium polluta contagione teneretur. Ubi etsi aliquid inconvenienter sapit (magis enim data est corpori, ut bona faceret; non enim mala disceret, si non faceret), in eo tamen aliorum Platoniorum opinionem et non in re parva emendavit, quod mundatam ab omnibus malis animam et cum Patre constitutam numquam iam mala mundi huius passuram esse confessus est. Qua sententia profecto abstulit, quod esse Platonium maxime perhibetur, ut mortuos ex vivis, ita vivos ex mortuis semper fieri". *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,500-501.

"So that, forgetful, they may seek again The vault of heaven, and once more desire To take a mortal body"⁹⁵.

Virgil, following Plato, describes that after their purification, the souls are sent to the Elysian Fields and are called to the river of Lethe, which means that they are summoned to forgetfulness of the past such that they again desire to go back to mortal bodies⁹⁶. Augustine shows agreement with Porphyry's refusal to accept this idea of Virgil. Just as Augustine does not accept the original version of Plato for this theory, so he rejects that of Virgil. Here in chapter 30 he repeats his argument given in *Sermo* 240,5 and 6:

"Porphyry rightly did not like this, since it is really absurd to believe that from that other life, which could not be completely happy unless there were complete assurance of its eternity, the souls would desire the taint of corruptible bodies and to return thence to those bodies. It is as if final purification is achieved in order that the soul may long for renewed defilement. For if, when they are perfectly purified, the result is that they forget evil, the forgetfulness of evils nevertheless produces a longing for the bodies, in which the souls will again be implicated in evils, it follows that supreme felicity is the cause of infelicity, the perfection of wisdom is the cause of folly, and perfect cleansing is the cause of uncleanness. And there the soul, however long it may stay, will not be happy on the basis of truth, since it is in a state where it must be deceived in order to be happy. For it will not be happy unless it has security; however, in order to have security, it will believe that it will always be happy; but this is false, since sometimes it will come even to misery. how then will it enjoy in truth when its joy will depend on false believe? Porphyry saw this, and for this reason he said that after it has been purified the soul returns to the Father so that it may not at some stage be held back any more by the pollution of these evils"⁹⁷.

Augustine turns to the fourth point, that is, that there is an evitable cycle of departure from evil which is followed by a return to evil. In order

⁹⁵ "Scilicet inmemores supera ut convexa revisant Rursus et incipiant in corpora velle reverti". VIRGIL, *Aeneid* 6,750 f., p.192. This is directly quoted in *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,501.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ "Merito displicuit hoc Porphyrio, quoniam re vera credere stultum est ex illa vita, quae beatissima esse non poterit nisi de sua fuerit aeternitate certissima, desiderare animas corruptibilium corporum labem et inde ad ista remeare, tamquam hoc agat summa purgatio, ut inquinatio requiratur. Si enim quod perfecte mundantur hoc efficit, ut omnium obliviscantur, ubi rursus implicantur malis; profecto erit infelicitatis causa summa felicitas et stultitiae causa perfectio sapientiae et immunditiae causa summa mundatio. Nec veritate ibi beata erit anima, quamdiucumque erit, ubi oportet fallatur, ut beata sit. Non enim beata erit nisi segura; ut autem segura sit, falso putabit semper se beatam fore, quoniam aliquando erit et misera. Cui ergo gaudendi causa falsitas erit, quo modo de veritate gaudebit? Vidit hoc Porphyrius purgatamque animam ob hoc reverti dixit ad Patrem, ne aliquando iam malorum polluta contagione teneatur". *De Civitate Dei* 10,30, CSEL 40/1,501.

to reject as false this theory of Plato, he applies Porphyry's theory that perfectly purified souls do not return to bodies⁹⁸.

C. Book 12,27: Augustine refutes both Plato and Porphyry

In Book 12,27 Augustine becomes even more severe with the Platonists. Whereas in Book 10,29 and 30 he expresses fear concerning the influence which the Platonists had on many who were attracted to their search for wisdom, here in Book 12,27 he takes an aggressive position against those Platonists, commanding them to stop threatening with their teachings and branding their opinions as entirely false (*falsissimum*).

There are two points against which Augustine reacts strongly. The first is the teaching of Plato that the lesser gods, who themselves were created by the Supreme God, are the makers of other living creatures. These gods, however, took the soul from God, and what they did was just to fashion the physical frame⁹⁹. The second point is the theory of Porphyry that souls should flee from all kinds of bodies in order to be purified. However, Porphyry agrees with Plato that those who lived an unrighteous life return to assume bodies as a punishment, although Porphyry rejects the idea of a return to bodies of beasts, and admits that of a return only to new human bodies. Augustine concludes from these two opinions that the two thinkers are in fact asserting that their gods are makers of our chains and prison cells instead of being our creators ("fabros conpedum carcerumve nostrorum, nec institutores"). Let us take note of Augustine's words in the description. The words "fabros carcerumve nostrorum, nec institutores" are said not only in order to accuse the Platonists of teaching a negative conception of the bodies, but also in order to deny their belief in gods. This second intention is of importance to our understanding of Augustine's strong reaction. In Book 12,25 he says that these philosophers not only worship these gods¹⁰⁰ but are also active in dragging others to worship them together with them. It is thus because of both fear for influence on others and for the negative conception of bodies that he commands them to stop in their belief and in dragging others to worship their gods with them.

⁹⁸ "Vidit hoc Porphyrius purgatamque animam ob hoc reverti dixit ad Patrem, ne aliquando iam malorum polluta contagione teneatur. Falso igitur a quibusdam est Platonicis creditus quasi necessarius orbis ille ab eisdem abeundi et ad eadem revertendi". *De Civitate Dei* 10,,30, CSEL 40/1,501.

⁹⁹ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 41c, p. 157.

¹⁰⁰ Augustine identifies these gods with angels. See *De Civitate Dei* 12,25, CSEL 40/1,608.

"The Platonists should either cease threatening us with punishments for souls coming from these bodies or they should not preach to us to worship those gods, while urging us to flee from and to shun as much as possible their handwork [sc. the body] in us. Both in fact are entirely false"¹⁰¹.

The statement "Both in fact are entirely false" is not just a denial of the two positions mentioned above, namely, bodies are fetters and prison cells, and gods are to be worshipped. It is rather a means of showing the truth of the contrary statements in Christian teaching: (i) souls do not return to earthly bodies for punishment, and (ii) there is only One Creator of all living things either in heaven or on earth; He who created both heaven and earth.

"For it is not that souls so expiate for their punishment when they are sent back anew to this earthly life; and there is no other Creator of all living things, either in heaven or on earth, except the One who made heaven and earth"¹⁰².

These two statements serve to demonstrate Augustine's double intention. The first demonstrates that even on the basis of Plato's opinion, that is, "the world could only have reached the highest beauty and worth by being filled with living beings of all kinds, that is, with immortal and mortal beings"¹⁰³, we can claim that it is not a punishment to return to bodies, since our being created, even though we were made mortal, is a gift of God. The second serves to show that even on the basis of Plato's teaching, that is, "God's eternal understanding contains the form of the whole universe and also the forms of all living creatures"¹⁰⁴, we can conclude that all living creatures, without exception, were created by God, and that therefore they all are good. We say "even" above because it seems that Plato himself or the Platonists, in the interpretation of Augustine, seem unaware of their inconsistency, namely, while on the one hand he or they teach that the world, which is the principal creature for them, could only have reached the highest beauty and worth by being filled by all kind of living creatures, both mortal and immortal, on the other hand they contra-

¹⁰¹ "Aut ergo desinant Platonici poenas animarum ex istis corporibus comminari, aut eos nobis deos colendos non praedicent, quorum in nobis operationem, ut quantum possumus fugiamus et evadamus, hortantur, cum tamen sit utrumque falsissimum". *De Civitate Dei* 12,27, CSEL 40/1,612-613.

¹⁰² "Nam neque ita luunt poenas animae, cum ad istam vitam denuo revolvuntur, et omnium viventium sive in caelo sive in terra nullus est conditor, nisi a quo facta sunt caelum et terra". *De Civitate Dei* 12,27, CSEL 40/1,613.

¹⁰³ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 30d and 90-92, p. 143 and p. 225-228.

¹⁰⁴ PLATO, *Timaeus* 30d, p. 143; 32c-33a, p. 145.

dict this by saying that a return to bodies is a punishment. Augustine will remain consistent in bringing this to their notice.

"In fact, if there is no other cause for living in this body except that we should pay our punishment, how is it that Plato himself says that the world could not have become other than being the most beautiful and the best, unless it were filled with all kinds of living creatures, that is, both immortal and mortal? If, however, our creation, by which we have been made mortal, is a gift of God, how could it be a punishment to return to these bodies, that is, to these blessings of God? And if, as Plato repeatedly insists, God contained in His eternal understanding the forms of the whole universe as well as all living creatures, how did He himself not create all? Or, would He refuse to be the craftsman of some, when the art of producing them is in His mind that is beyond our comprehension and ineffably praiseworthy?"¹⁰⁵

D. Book 13,16: It is not the body as such but the corruptible body that is a burden to the soul

In Book 13,16 the discussion between Augustine and the Platonists is focused more on the word and dignity of the body. The exchange of arguments becomes colourful and full of ridicule. The Platonists seem to laugh at (*videntur inridere*) the Christian teaching that death is to be reckoned among the punishments for the soul. For them by its separation from the body by death the soul becomes perfectly happy and returns to the father. Augustine defends the Christian position. Hesitantly he presents arguments first from Catholic teaching: "Ubi si nihil, quo ista refelleretur opinio, in eorum litteris invenirem, operosius mihi disputandum esset". This statement is put in an hypothetical form. With it Augustine indicates not only his hesitation to confront them at the outset with Christianity's teaching for fear that he would not be effective in this manner, but also to point out clearly to them that in their very own account of their own doctrine there are elements that defeat their own position. Accordingly, reference to *Wis.* 9,15 is made without any exception of being accepted by the Platonists.

"But the philosophers, against whose attacks we defend the City of God, that is His church, think that they are wise in laughing at us because we say that

¹⁰⁵ "Nam si nulla causa est vivendi in hoc corpore nisi propter pendenda supplicia: quo modo dicit idem Plato aliter mundum fieri non potuisse pulcherrimum adque optimum, nisi omnium animalium, id est et immortalium et mortalium, generibus inpleretur? Si autem nostra institutio, qua vel mortales conditi sumus, divinum munus est: quo modo poena est ad ista corpora, id est ad divina beneficia, remeare? Et si Deus quod adsidue Plato commemorat, sicut mundi universi, ita omnium animalium species aeterna intelligentia continebat: quo modo non ipse cuncta condebat? An aliquorum esse artifex nollet, quorum efficiendorum artem ineffabilis eius et ineffabiliter laudabilis mens haberet?". *De Civitate Dei* 12,27, CSEL 40/1,613.

the separation of the soul from the body should be reckoned among the soul's punishments. They think that the soul becomes perfectly happy when it has been completely stripped of the body and returns to God, simple and alone, and, in a manner of saying, naked. On this point, if I had not found anything in their own writings with which I could refute their opinions, I should have engaged in more laborious arguments, with which I would prove that it is not the body but the corruptible body which is a burden to the soul. It is for this reason that in the previous book we quoted the statement: 'For the corruptible body weighs down the soul' (*Wis.* 9,15). By adding the word 'corruptible' the author meant that the soul is weighed down not by some kind of body but by a body that has changed quality because of sin and its consequent punishment. even if he had not added this, we ought to understand it in no other way"¹⁰⁶.

It is, however, from their very own teaching that Augustine deduces arguments with which to confront them: "Sed cum apertissime Plato deos a summo Deo factos habere immortalia corpora praedicet". With these words, with the use of the word in its superlative form *apertissime*, Augustine expresses his intention of drawing the attention of the Platonists to facts found in their own doctrine. These facts are found in Plato's accounts, first, of the creation of deities with physical bodies¹⁰⁷, and second, of the constitution of the heavenly bodies with physical forms¹⁰⁸. These two are acknowledged by the Platonists as Augustine points out to them. We have shown this already in our analysis of Book 10,29. This makes the last part of Book 13,16 appear as a doublet of Book 10,29. But here in Book 13,16 Augustine adds another reason why these Platonists are ashamed of joining the rank of Christians: they are afraid to be ranked among the ordinary people by joining them; and they think that it will cheapen the value of their *pallium* (a conventional garb of philosophers). Thus the reason is to protect their pretentious social and academic status.

"I thought it right to mention this only against those who pride themselves on being called or on being Platonists, who because of their pride in this name are ashamed to be Christians, lest by joining them the ordinary name may

¹⁰⁶ "Sed philosophi, contra quorum calumnias defendimus civitatem Dei, hoc est eius ecclesiam, sapienter sibi videntur inridere, quod dicimus animae a corpore separationem inter poenas eius esse deputandum, quia videlicet eius perfectam beatitudinem tunc illi fieri existimant, cum omni prorsus corpore exuta ad Deum simplex et sola et quodam modo nuda redierit. Ubi si nihil, quo ista refelleretur opinio, in eorum litteris invenirem, operosius mihi disputandum esset, quo demonstrarem non corpus esse animae, sed corruptibile corpus onerosum. Unde illud est quod de scripturis nostris in superiore libro commemoravimus: *Corpus enim corruptibile adgravat animam*. Addendo utique *corruptibile* non qualicumque corpore, sed quale factum est ex peccato consequente vindicta, animam perhibuit adgravari. Quod etiamsi non addidisset, nihil aliud intellegere deberemus". *De Civitate Dei* 13,16, CSEL 40/1,634.

¹⁰⁷ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 38c, p.152.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

cheapen the value of the wearers of the pallium; which value is inflated more when it is more rare. These philosophers, trying to find something to criticize in Christian doctrine, attack the immortality of the body, as if there were a contradiction between our seeking for happiness for the soul and our wish to have it always in our body, bound to the body as though to a burdensome fetter. And yet their own founder and teacher Plato says that a gift has been granted by the Supreme God to the gods made by Him that they would not someday die, that is, they would not be separated from the bodies with which He had linked them"¹⁰⁹.

E. Book 13,17: It is within the will of God to raise up human bodies

Augustine's purpose in Book 13,17 is similar to that in *Sermo* 242, 7-10. In both he attempts to show to the Platonists that weight is not an obstacle to the resurrection of the body. It is within the will of God that human bodies, despite of their weight, should rise. In each of these two places, however, Augustine uses different approaches. In *Sermo* 242,7-10 he refutes the Platonists on the basis of examples. In Book 13,17 he refutes them on the basis of their own account of the constitution of the universe and on the nature of the gods as willed by God. Augustine's point of departure is the Platonists' own concept of the whole earth. For them the whole earth is a part (*membrum*) of their great God, which is the whole universe¹¹⁰. The whole universe has four elements¹¹¹, which are distributed and ordered each in its own place. In order to ensure that the whole universe, which is a living being and a great god, will not die the Supreme God has *willed* that the conjunction of these elements should be indissoluble and everlasting¹¹². Given this belief of the Platonists

¹⁰⁹ "Hoc tantum contra istos commemorandum putavi, qui se Platonicos vocari vel esse gloriantur, cuius superbia nominis erubescunt esse Christiani, ne commune illis cum vulgo vocabulum vilem faciat palliatorum tanto magis inflatam, quanto magis exiguum paucitatem; et quaerentes, quid in doctrina Christiana reprehendant, exagitant aeternitatem corporum, tamquam haec sint inter se contraria, ut et beatitudinem quaeramus animae et eam semper esse velimus in corpore, velut aerumnoso vinculo conligatam; cum eorum auctor et magister Plato donum a deo summo dis ab illo factis dicat esse concessum, ne aliquando moriantur, id est a corporibus, quibus eos conexuit, separentur". *De Civitate Dei* 13,16, CSEL 40/1,636.

¹¹⁰ See PLATO, *Timaeus* 40b; *Phaedrus* 246b: the soul taken as a whole traverses the whole universe. Earth is symbolized by Hestia.

¹¹¹ PLATO, *Timaeus* 31b-32c: the four elementary constituents are earth, water, air, and fire; two of these are bonds, namely, water and air. The unity of the bonds and the terms they are combining is effected by a continued geometrical proportion.

¹¹² PLATO, *Timaeus* 33a: God made the universe free from any decay through age and diseases that could arise from heat and cold and other factors.

Augustine sees an apparent inconsistency on their part in their denial that earthly bodies can be immortal? Why? It is because they say that the earth, being the "central member" (*medium membrum*) of the whole universe, is animated by the universe itself such that it is immortal, while at the same time they deny earthly bodies the possibility of being immortal. In his analysis Augustine takes note of the account of the Platonists. All their gods owe their immortality to the will of the Supreme God. Gods are immortal because God has willed it. Thus the universe, the earth, and all the other heavenly bodies are immortal because God has willed and established them to be immortal. If this is so, then, Augustine asks, why make other living bodies an exception? Would it not be possible for human bodies to be immortal if God has willed them to be immortal in the future?

"[These Platonists] contend that terrestrial bodies cannot be immortal, when they do not doubt that the whole earth itself is a part of their god, who is not supreme, but nevertheless great, that is, the whole of this universe. When, therefore, that Supreme God created for them another being whom they regard as god, that is, this universe, and this should be ranked above all other gods which are under him, they suppose that this same god is an animating agent; that is to say, God has implanted in it a soul that is rational or intelligent, which is enclosed in the quite vast mass of its body; God has also established the four elements of the same body to be its parts that are placed and arranged in their proper places. The Platonists would wish that the junctures of these four elements be indissoluble and everlasting, lest their great god die. On this assumption that the earth, a central member in the body of the great animate god, is immortal, what reason is there that the bodies of other living beings on earth cannot also be immortal, if God wills that likewise?"¹¹³

The next difficulty that the Platonists present is the impossibility of earthly bodies to be immortal on the basis that earth, of which they have been made, will eventually disintegrate and perish, and that they will finally return to earth, their origin. Augustine wonders why Platonists attribute this nature only to earth and not to the other elements. Why not apply it

¹¹³ "Contendunt etiam isti terrestria corpora sempiterna esse non posse, cum ipsam universam terram dei sui, non quidem summi, sed tamen magni, id est totius huius mundi, membrum in medio positum et sempiternum esse non dubitent. Cum ergo deus ille summus fecerit eis alterum quem putant deum, id est istum mundum, ceteris dis, qui infra eum sunt, praefendum, eundemque esse existiment animantem, anima scilicet, sicut adserunt, rationali vel intellectuali in tam magna mole corporis eius inclusa, ipsiusque corporis tamquam membra locis suis posita adque digesta quattuor constituerit elementa, quorum iuncturam, ne umquam deus eorum tam magnus moriatur, insolubilem ac sempiternam velint: quid causae est, ut in corpore maioris animantis tamquam medium membrum aeterna sit terra, et aliorum animantium terrestrium corpora, si Deus sicut illud velit, aeterna esse non possint?". *De Civitate Dei* 13,17, CSEL 40/1,637.

also to fire, he asks. Supposing this is applied to the element of fire, would Plato's account of God's promise of immortality to the gods not fall a victim? Or, is it because this does not apply to fire on the basis that God has not willed it? If so, then it is again, Augustine points out, because of God's will that earthly bodies can rise.

"But they say that earth has to return to earth from where the earthly bodies of animals have been taken. This is the reason why they say, it is necessary that they disintegrate and perish, and, in this way, they are restored to the enduring and everlasting earth from where they have been taken. If someone makes a similar assertion also about fire and says that bodies which have been taken from the universal fire should return to the universal fire in order to become heavenly living beings, would the immortality which Plato promised, as though speaking for the supreme God, to those gods not fall by the violence of this argument? Or does this not happen because God does not will it, whose will, as Plato says, no force can conquer? What then prevents the will of God from effecting this also in earthly bodies, seeing that Plato admits that God is able to ensure that things which have come to existence should not perish, things which have been bound together should not be surrendered, things which have been taken from the elements should not return to them, and that souls established in bodies should not ever forsake them but should enjoy with them immortality and everlasting happiness?"¹¹⁴

The last argument that Augustine uses against the Platonists is no longer directly connected with their position. He rather questions their authority to speak on God's affairs. He denies the validity of their claim; and he asserts the prophets' authority, claiming for them the guidance of the Spirit.

"Why should not God be able to ensure that earthly bodies do not die? Are we to suppose that God is not powerful to the extent that Christians believe, but only as far as the Platonists believe? Those philosophers, to be sure, could know the purpose and the power of God, and the prophets could not? In fact the contrary is true. As far as He deigns to reveal, the Spirit of God has taught

¹¹⁴ "Sed terrae, inquiunt, terra reddenda est, unde animalium terrestria sumta sunt corpora; ex quo fit, inquiunt, ut ea sit necesse dissolvi et emori et eo modo terrae stabili ac sempiternae, unde fuerant sumta, restitui. Si quis hoc etiam de igne similiter adfirmet et dicat reddenda esse universo igni corpora, quae inde sumta sunt, ut caelestia fierent animalia: nonne immortalitas, quam talibus dis, velut deo summo loquente, promisit Plato, tamquam violentia disputationis huius intercideret? An ibi propterea non fit, quia Deus non vult, cuius voluntatem, ut ait Plato, nulla vis vincit? Quid ergo prohibet, ut hoc etiam de terrestribus corporibus Deus possit efficere, quandoquidem, ut nec ea quae orta sunt occidunt nec ea quae sunt vineta solvantur nec ea quae sunt ex elementis sumta reddantur adque ut animae in corporibus constitutae nec umquam ea deserant et cum eis immortalitate ac sempiterna beatitudine perfruantur, posse Deum confitetur Plato?". *De Civitate Dei* 13,17, CSEL 40/1,637.

the prophets to make known His will. The philosophers, however, are deceived by human speculation when they tried to know this [will]"¹¹⁵.

F. Book 13,18: The natural heavy weight of the body will be transformed

Book 13,18 stand even closer to *Sermo* 242,7-10. In both works Augustine refutes the argument from natural weight presented by the Platonists in order to dismiss the possibility of human bodies to resurrect and exist in heaven. To this end he cites different examples. Here, however, in Book 13,18, he adds *the* example, which is the resurrection and the ascension of Christ's body. He posits this as a well-measured opposition to the argument given by the Platonists. These Platonists point to the situation of our first parents in their primitive state. They argue that the first couple, because of the natural weight of their bodies, lived on earth, which was given the name "paradise".

"But, they say, it is necessary that natural weight either holds earthly bodies down on earth or forces them down to earth, that therefore, they could not exist in heaven. Indeed, those first human beings lived on earth, in a wooded and fruitful land which was given the name "paradise". But because they insist on the weight of earthly bodies we should reply to this objection either in view of the body of Christ, with which He ascended into heaven, or in view of the sort of bodies that the saints will have at the resurrection"¹¹⁶.

Augustine's choice of the example set by Christ's ascension, and, by extension, of our own future resurrection is not a mere presentation of a contrary example against the example of our first parents in their primitive happy state. It is to illustrate as well the effect that the resurrection will bring about to the transformation of our *corpus animale* to *corpus spiritale*. In paradise Adam and Even bore a *corpus animale*. At the resurrection the just will bear a *corpus spiritale*. This discussion is continued in the next chapter.

¹¹⁵ "Quir ergo non possit, ut nec terrestria moriantur? An Deus non est potens quo usque Christiani credunt, sed quo usque Platonici volunt? Nimirum quippe consilium Dei et potestatem potuerunt philosophi, nec potuerunt nosse prophetae; cum potius e contrario Dei prophetas ad enuntiandum eius, quantum dignatus est, volutatem Spiritus eius docuerit, philosophos autem in ea cognoscenda coniectura humana deceperit". *De Civitate Dei* 13,17, CSEL 40/1,637.

¹¹⁶ "Sed necesse est, inquit, ut terrena corpora naturale pondus vel in terra teneat vel cogat ad terram et ideo in caelo esse non possint. Primi quidem illi homines in terra erant nemorosa adque fructuosa, quae paradisi nomen obtinuit; sed quia et ad hoc respondendum est vel propter Christi corpus cum quo ascendit in caelum vel propter sanctorum qualia in resurrectione futura sunt, intueantur paulo adtentius pondera ipsa terrena". *De Civitate Dei* 13,18, CSEL 40/1,639.

G. Book 13,19: Souls of the just will live better with their transformed bodies

Augustine asserts a Christian teaching: Death could not have befallen on human beings if sin had not been committed. Despite death, however, the souls of the just live at rest after they have departed from this life. Yet it is true that they will live in a better state after they have been united again with their bodies in perfect health: "*eis melius esset cum suis corporibus bene valentibus vivere*". The opinion that the souls of the just live in a better state in union with their bodies in perfect health is better, in Augustine's observation, than the opinion that souls stripped of the bodies and lived in the height of happiness. He finds this true even among the Platonists themselves: "*ut etiam illi, qui omni modo esse sine corpore beatissimum existimant, hanc opinionem suam sententia repugnante convincant*". The phrase "*hanc opinionem suam sententia repugnante convincant*" shows that in Augustine's judgement even among the Platonists themselves there are divergent opinions regarding their own teaching (*hanc opinionem suam*). Thus he disproves their theory that the souls are in the height of felicity when stripped of the bodies, while, on the other hand, he favors to a certain extent the Christian teaching that the souls are in a better state when they are united with their bodies in a better condition.

The conflicting opinions are shown by the opposition in the theories of Plato and Porphyry, which, as Augustine recalls here, he has already demonstrated in Book 10,30. For Plato both the souls of the just and the unjust, after differing periods of time, will come back to assume bodies in order to undergo sufferings again. Porphyry, however, reacts to the harshness of Plato's theory, in denying the return of souls into the bodies of beasts, but accepts a return to other new human bodies until finally they are completely released from every kind of body and enter into everlasting felicity, and will no longer return to misery. There is, however, in the teaching of both Plato and Porphyry, and for that matter in that of Platonists themselves, an aspect which, according to Augustine, favors the Christian teaching that union with bodies in perfect state is better than disjunction from bodies. Augustine has perceived this as becomes clear from the following passage.

"For no one of them will rank wise men, whether those who are still to die or those who are already dead, that is to say, whether those who are without bodies or those who will leave behind their bodies, above the immortal gods, to whom the Supreme God, according to Plato, promises an inestimable gift,

namely, an indissoluble life, that is, an everlasting union with their bodies."¹¹⁷

Here Augustine indicates that union with bodies which are immortal is a better state than the state of the souls in separation from the bodies. He argues that this opinion is even deductible from Porphyry's position.

"Therefore, lest he would appear conquered by Christ, who promises eternal life to His saints, Porphyry also established purified souls in a state of everlasting happiness, without any return to their former miseries; and in order to contradict Christ he denies the resurrection of the incorruptible bodies, and asserts that souls will live for eternity without any sort of body. However, with this opinion, whatever its worth may be, he taught that souls must submit themselves even to gods with bodies in religious homage. Why was this, unless it was because he believed that those souls, although not associated with bodies, are not superior to the deities"¹¹⁸.

His aim in this text is clear: to show that the souls of the just are in a better state when they are in union with their bodies in perfect health¹¹⁹. This could have happened with the first human beings had they not sinned. They would have been rewarded with transformed immortal bodies, with which they would have been united and lived forever. This will also happen to the just at the resurrection. They will be united with their former bodies, but then already free from any sort of corruption; there will be no instance where something will interfere with their perfect felicity.

"Therefore, if those Platonists will not dare, as I do not think they will, to rank human souls above the gods who are in the height of happiness and yet incorporated in eternal bodies, why is it that it seems ridiculous for them that the Christian faith teaches that the first human beings were so created that, if they had not sinned, death would not have sundered them from their bodies, but for their merits in observing obedience they would have received the gift of immortality of bodies with which they would have lived for ever; and that

¹¹⁷ "Neque enim quisquam audebit illorum sapientes homines, sive morituros sive iam mortuos, id est aut carentes corporibus aut corpora relicturos, dis immortalibus antepone, quibus Deus summus apud Platonem munus ingens, indissolubilem scilicet vitam, id est aeternum cum suis corporibus consortium pollicetur". *De Civ. Dei* 13,19, CSEL 40/1,641.

¹¹⁸ "Itaque ne a Christo vinci videretur vitam sanctis pollicente perpetuam, etiam ipse purgatas animas sine ullo ad miseras pristinas reditu in aeterna felicitate constituit; et ut Christo adversaretur, resurrectionem incorruptibilium corporum negans non solum sine terrenis, sed sine ullis omnino corporibus eas adseruit in sempiternum esse victuras. Nec tamen ista qualicumque opinione praecepit saltem ne dis corporatis religionis obsequio subderentur. Quid ita, nisi quia eas, quamvis nulli corpori sociatas, non credidit illis esse meliores?". *De Civitate Dei* 13,19, CSEL 40/1,642-643.

¹¹⁹ "Licet enim iustorum ac piorum animae defunctorum quod in requie vivant dubitare fas non sit, usque adeo tamen eis melius esset cum suis corporibus bene valentibus vivere ...". *De Civitate Dei* 13,19, CSEL 40/1,641.

at the resurrection the just will inhabit the same bodies in which they lived in hardship on earth; yet these bodies will be such that no trace of corruption and hardship will affect their flesh, nor will any sort of sorrow or pain interfere with their happiness?"¹²⁰

The words "no trace of corruption and hardship will affect their flesh, nor will any sort of pain and sorrow interfere with their happiness" serve to describe the total transformation of the just, both in their physical constitution and in their psychological and spiritual condition.

H. Book 13,20: The flesh of the saints "rests in hope"

There is a further point in the teaching of the philosophers which Augustine opposes in Book 13,20, namely: it is through forgetfulness that souls long to have their bodies again. This time, however, he no longer challenges them with arguments that could be deduced from their own teaching but with the teaching of the Christian faith. For Augustine the flesh of the just whose souls have already departed rests in hope.

"Accordingly now the souls of the departed just do not find death grievous, when they are separated from their bodies, because their flesh rests in hope."¹²¹

The expression "the flesh of the just rests in hope" is a surprising one in Augustine. One would rather expect from him "the souls of the just rest in hope". He says, however, the former. We suspect that he means that even after death the souls of the just still retain a certain kind of relationship with their bodies. Even when already separated from each other by death, the soul and the flesh still retain the longing to be united someday with each other. We notice this theme at once in this chapter. Augustine easily interchanges the soul and flesh with respect to hope. Thus, from saying that the "flesh rests in hope" he at once shifts to saying that the souls "look for the resurrection of their bodies with patient longing". In this chapter Augustine is motivated in depicting the continued relationship

¹²⁰ "Quapropter, si non audebunt iste, sicut eos ausuros esse non arbitror, dis beatissimis et tamen in aeternis corporibus constitutis humanas animas anteponere: quor eis videtur absurdum, quod fides Christiana praedicat, et primos homines ita fuisse conditos, ut, si non peccassent, nulla morte a suis corporibus solverentur, sed pro meritis oboedientiae custoditae immortalitate donati cum eis viverent in aeternum; et talia sanctos in resurrectione habituros ea ipsa, in quibus hic laboraverunt, corpora, ut nec eorum carni aliquid corruptionis vel difficultatis nec eorum beatitudini aliquid doloris et infelicitatis possit accidere?". *De Civitate Dei* 13,19, CSEL 40/1,643.

¹²¹ "Proinde nunc sanctorum animae defunctorum ideo non habent gravem mortem, qua separatae sunt a corporibus suis, quia caro eorum requiescit in spe". *De Civitate Dei* 13,20, CSEL 40/1,643.

between the soul and the flesh by the wish to oppose Plato's teaching that the flesh is a source of misery and that the soul, because of forgetfulness of past misery which it shared with the flesh, wishes to return to a body. Thus, by presenting both the soul and the flesh as continually longing for each other, Augustine attempts to overcome both of Plato's teachings, namely, his negative concept of the flesh and his theory of forgetfulness. For Augustine the flesh in itself is good and an integral part of human beings, and, therefore, it is only when they are united again with their bodies in perfect health that human beings can be more perfectly happy; and it is not because of forgetfulness but because of memory (*meminerunt*) of the promise of Christ, "who never deceives any one", expressed in *Lk.* 21,18: "even the hairs would remain intact", that the soul longs to be united with the flesh. This is again, in my opinion, anti-Platonic, directed especially against Porphyry.

"Accordingly now the souls of the just who have departed do not find death grievous, when they have been separated from their bodies, because their flesh rests in hope, whatever may be the indignity it received after it was already bereft of sensation. For it is not, as Plato imagined, that they long for their bodies through forgetfulness, but rather, because they have remembered what has been promised to them by him, who deceives no one, and who also gave them the assurance of the integrity even of their hairs (*Lk.* 21,18), they hope for the resurrection of the bodies with patient longing, for though they suffered much hardship in those bodies, they will experience nothing of the kind hereafter"¹²².

The object of hope is the transformed bodies, which will have qualities even better than those enjoyed by our first parents in their primitive life of happiness. Augustine mentions here their several different and better qualities. The transformed bodies will not have the possibility of dying, in contrast to the pristine bodies which could not have died; they will not have any need of nourishment, in contrast to the pristine bodies which needed food and drink in order to survive. The transformed bodies will be much better than the animal bodies now and in paradise¹²³. They will be

¹²² "Proinde nunc sanctorum animae defunctorum ideo non habent gravem mortem, qua separatae sunt a corporibus suis, quia caro eorum requiescit in spe, quaslibet sine ullo iam sensu contumelias accipisse videatur. Non enim, sicut Platoni visum est, corpora oblivione desiderant, sed potius, quia meminerunt quid sibi ab eo sit promissum, qui neminem fallit, qui eis etiam de capillorum suorum integritate securitatem dedit, resurrectionem corporum, in quibus multi dura perpassi sunt, nihil in eis ulterius tale sensuri desiderabiliter et patienter expectant". *De Civitate Dei* 13,20, CSEL 40/1,643.

¹²³ "Non solum enim non erit tale, quale nunc est in quavis optima valetudine, sed nec tale quidem, quale fuit in primis hominibus ante peccatum, qui licet morituri non essent, nisi peccassent, alimentis tamen ut homines utebantur, nondum spiritalia, sed adhuc animalia corpora terrena gestantes". *De Civitate Dei* 13,20, CSEL 40/1,644.

spiritual; the flesh will be in perfect obedience to the spirit in such a manner that the relationship between them will be so complete so as to bring assurance of indissoluble immortality¹²⁴. These thoughts appear repeatedly like a refrain in Augustine's discussions whenever he speaks of the antithesis of suffering now and of resurrection and transformation of bodies later.

I. Book 22,25-28: The problem in the discussion on the resurrection with the philosophers can be tackled and resolved

Chapters 25 to 28 can be taken as one unit. Referring to the texts he assembled from the four chapters, J. O'Meara, in *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine*, puts it as follows:

"This whole passage, excerpted from four of the concluding chapters of the *civ. Dei*, deals with the resurrection of the flesh: the theme is introduced at the beginning of 25: *de carnis resurrectione contendunt*, and completed with the last words of 28: *tota quaestio de carnis resurrectione solvetur*"¹²⁵

The discussion is not held with Porphyry himself but with the obstinate deniers who represent Porphyry. The main question to be tackled is given in chapter 25: If many have come to believe in the prediction of God (who is Christ for the Christians), whom also Porphyry acknowledges as God such that he calls Him Father and King, why not believe the prediction of Christ Himself on the resurrection of the bodies, when Christ Himself demonstrated it with His own resurrection? From this question we can see that for Augustine the prediction extends from the Old Testament to the New Testament. In his exposition, however, he is apparently inclined to show only the prophecy and its fulfillment in the New Testament.

The question covers two main difficulties: (i) the difficulty of proving the credibility of Christ, and (ii) the difficulty of proving that Christ truly rose from the dead. Concerning the first difficulty, Augustine presents the fact of the fulfillment first of the prophecy of belief in Christ. This point is not made clear in chapter 25; but, because of the hint given that this is to counteract an invented story that Peter's witchcraft compelled God to make a prediction¹²⁶, one can easily see that Augustine is

¹²⁴ *De Civitate Dei* 13,20, CSEL 40/1,644: The flesh will be spiritual but not spirit. Here Augustine warns against a wrong interpretation of *1 Cor.* 15,44.

¹²⁵ J. O'MEARA, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine*, Paris, 1959, p. 74.

¹²⁶ "Neque enim Petri maleficiis eam cum laude credentium tanto ante prenuntiare compulsus est". *De Civitate Dei* 22,25, CSEL 40/2,650. This passage is about a false oracle on the duration of the Christian religion.

referring to the fulfillment of the prophecy of belief in Christ. This is made clear in Book 18,53, where Augustine contradicts pagans who "go on to say that Peter used sorcery to ensure that the name of Christ should be worshipped for 365 years, and on the completion of that number of years it should come to an immediate end"¹²⁷.

With respect to the second difficulty, Augustine insists on the correctness of the belief of Christians, on the basis that God Himself has approved it, that He Himself has fulfilled it¹²⁸.

The followers of Porphyry react to this insistence by Augustine. They say that those predictions should be understood in another way. Whichever is this other way is not specified by Augustine. However, Augustine quite clearly is referring to the opposition of these philosophers to the teaching of the Christians that Christ resurrected, who for them (the Christians) is equal with the Father despite of His incarnation. It is to be noted that Porphyry himself was a bitter opponent to the teaching that God became incarnate in Christ¹²⁹. This is illustrated in Book 10,24 and 29, as we have already shown. And in Book 22,25 Augustine stamps his seal on the teaching of the Christian religion on the truth of Christ's own prediction and its fulfillment by Himself on the basis of the truthfulness of God himself. Christ, he claims, truly rose from the dead; and by extension of the truth of His prediction, there will also be a resurrection of the bodies. Thus, in order to put clear his point, addressing the philosophers, Augustine says that "if they want to discover something that the Almighty cannot do, it is this: God cannot lie".

"For are we to suppose that God cannot affect the flesh to rise and to live an eternal life, or, are we to believe that He will not do it because it is evil and unworthy of Him? But as for God's omnipotence, by which he makes many and great marvels, we have already said much. If they want to discover what the Almighty cannot do, here they have it; I will say: He cannot lie"¹³⁰.

¹²⁷ "Petrum autem maleficia fecisse subiungunt, ut coleretur Christi nomen per trecentos sexaginta quinque annos, deinde completo memorato numero annorum, sine mora sumeret finem". *De Civitate Dei* 18,53, CSEL 40/2,358.

¹²⁸ "Si enim propterea dicunt alio modo esse credenda, ne, si dixerint vana esse conscripta, iniuriam faciant illi Deo, cui tam magnum perhibent testimonium: tantam prorsus ei vel etiam graviolem faciunt iniuriam, si aliter dicunt esse intellegenda, non sicut mundus ea credit, quem crediturum ipse laudavit, ipse promisit, ipse conplevit". *De Civitate Dei* 22,25, CSEL 40/2,650-651.

¹²⁹ "Eum quippe in ipsa carne contempsit". *De Civitate Dei* 10,24, CSEL 40/1,485.

¹³⁰ "Utrum enim non potest facere ut resurgat caro et vivat in aeternum, an propterea credendum non est id eum esse facturum, quia malum est adque indignum Deo? Sed de omnipotentia eius, qua tot et tanta facit incredibilia, iam multa diximus. Si volunt invenire quod omnipotens non potest, habent prorsus; ego dicam, mentiri non potest". *De Civitate Dei* 22,25, CSEL 40/2,651.

This idea of prediction and fulfillment by God can even be reconciled with the teaching of Plato. Augustine points this out in chapter 26, where he again takes up the philosophical appeal to Porphyry's rejection of resurrection of the bodies on the basis that souls should avoid any contact with bodies if they are to be in bliss. Augustine's appeal to Plato is presented forcefully. He suggests that Plato, whom they consider to have the highest authority, should correct his teaching if Porphyry is to be followed: "Emendet libros suos istorum omnium magister Plato". In Augustine's understanding of Plato the raising up of bodies must be possible while God promised to perform an apparently impossible deed. Referring to Plato's account of the cause of immortality of the deities, Augustine addresses the philosophers as follows:

"If those who hear these things are not only stupid but not deaf, they will surely not doubt that according to Plato what is impossible has been promised to the deities to be so made by the God who created them. For He who says: 'It is true that you cannot be immortal, but by my will you will be immortal', what does He mean but that 'Nevertheless, by my act you will become something that cannot be done'? Therefore, He, who according to Plato has promised to do what is impossible, will raise the flesh up incorruptible, immortal and spiritual. Why do these philosophers still cry out that what God has promised is impossible, when the world has believed in God's promise, as it was promised that the world itself will believe, and when we cry out that it is God who will do it, who, as even Plato declares, does the impossible?"¹³¹.

In chapter 27 Augustine is apparently no longer debating with the philosophers. Thus, instead of his usual way of refuting them on the basis of the contradictory opinions of Plato and Porphyry, he now attempts to reconcile both, if their theories are combined, with Christianity. From Plato this is the point of possible reconciliation: no soul can exist for ever in a bodiless state. From Porphyry the point is this: the soul which is completely purified and has gone back to the Father will never return to the evils of this world. Augustine thinks that if Plato and Porphyry had communicated with each other and had combined the truth which each one of them had seen, they would have come to the same conclusion: souls would

¹³¹ "Si non solum absurdi, sed surdi non sunt qui haec audiunt, non utique dubitant dis factis ab illo Deo qui eos fecit secundum Platonem quod est impossibile fuisse promissum. Qui enim dicit: 'Vos quidem immortales esse non potestis, sed mea voluntate eritis', quid aliud dicit quam 'id quod fieri non potest me faciente tamen eritis'? Ille igitur carnem incorruptibilem, immortalem, spiritalem resuscitabit, qui iuxta Platonem id quod impossibile est se facturum esse promisit. Quid adhuc, quod promisit Deus, quod Deo promittenti credidit mundus, qui etiam ipse promissus est crediturus, esse impossibile clamant, quando quidem nos Deum, qui etiam secundum Platonem facit impossibilia, id facturum esse clamamus?". *De Civitate Dei* 22,25, CSEL 40/2,652-653.

return to bodies and would receive bodies in which they might live immortally in happiness.

"Plato and Porphyry each made certain statements, which, if they had exchanged them, could have possibly made them Christians. Plato said that souls could not exist forever without bodies; for that is why he said that even the souls of the wise, after no matter how long, will nevertheless return to bodies. Porphyry, on the other hand, said that the perfectly purified soul, after it had gone back to the Father, will never return to these evils of the world. And by this means, that is, if Plato had communicated the truth which he saw to Porphyry, namely, that even the completely purified souls of the just and of the wise will return to human bodies, and, similarly, if Porphyry had communicated to Plato the truth that he saw, namely, that the holy souls will never return to the misery of the corruptible body, such that both would not say singly but jointly would say both things, then I think that they would have already seen this to be the conclusion: that souls would return to bodies and would receive the kind of bodies in which they would live happily and immortally"¹³².

In chapter 28 Augustine moves further in order to see how he may more exactly reconcile the philosophers' standpoint with that of Christianity. The only remaining aspect of the question is to show that it is the very same souls and the very same bodies which will unite again and live immortally in happiness¹³³. He does this by integrating the teaching of Marcus Varro, found in his book *De gente populi Romani*, on the re-union of the same soul and of the same body. Augustine thought it best to quote Varro's own words:

"Some 'genethliaci' [*sc.* astrologers], he said, have written that for men who are to be born again there is what the Greeks call *παλιγγενεσία*; with this, they write that rebirth takes place after four hundred and forty years. Its effect

¹³² "Singula quaedam dixerunt Plato adque Porphyrius, quae si inter se communicare potuissent, facti essent fortasse Christiani. Plato dixit sine corporibus animas in aeternum esse non posse. Ideo enim dixit etiam sapientum animas post quamlibet longum tempus, tamen ad corpora redituras. Porphyrius autem dixit animam purgatissimam, cum redierit ad Patrem, ad haec mala mundi numquam esse redituram. Ac per hoc, quod verum vidit Plato, si dedisset Porphyrio, etiam iustorum adque sapientum purgatissimas animas ad humana corpora redituras; rursus quod verum vidit Porphyrius, si dedisset Platoni, numquam redituras ad miseras corruptibilis corporis animas sanctas; ut non singuli haec singula, sed ambo et singuli utrumque dicerent: puto quod viderent esse iam consequens, ut et redirent animae ad corpora et talia reciperent corpora, in quibus beate adque immortaliter viverent". *De Civitate Dei* 22,27, CSEL 40/2,653-654.

¹³³ Here Augustine asserts a theory of a permanent union of souls and bodies against a theory of temporary union which also Cicero and Labeo held. See *De Civitate Dei* 22,27, CSEL 40/2,655.

is to bring into conjunction again the same soul and the same body which formerly were united in a human being"¹³⁴.

Augustine does not confirm this to be right, for the reason that Christianity does not teach temporary re-union of bodies at the resurrection. However, he calls it meritorious for two reasons: (i) it overthrows and destroys arguments which deny the possibility of resurrection of bodies, and (ii) it teaches re-union of the same souls and bodies at the resurrection¹³⁵.

With the teaching of Plato on the return of souls of the just to bodies, together with that of Porphyry on non-return to the misery of corruptible bodies, and finally together with that of Varro on the return of the same souls and of the same bodies to each other, Augustine considers the difficulty about the resurrection of the flesh has been solved for the philosophers.

"Therefore if Plato and Porphyry, or, rather, those who love them and are still alive, agree with us that even the holy souls will return to bodies, as Plato says, but that they will not return to any evil, as Porphyry says, the consequence of these premises would be what the Christian faith teaches: souls will receive the kind of bodies in which they may live happily forever without evil. Let them also assimilate this from Varro: that souls will return to the same bodies in which they were formerly united; and then the whole question about the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life will be solved for them."¹³⁶

This shows that the philosophers' teaching on the resurrection of bodies can be reconciled with that of Christianity. The transformation of the body is also included in their teaching.

Iloilo City

Mamerto ALFECHE, O.S.A.

¹³⁴ "Genethliaci quidam scripserunt, inquit, esse in renascendis hominibus quam appellant *παλιγγενεσιάν* Graeci; hac scripserunt confici in annis numero quadringentis quadraginta, ut idem corpus et eadem anima, quae fuerint coniuncta in homine aliquando, eadem rursus redeant in coniunctionem". *De Civitate Dei* 22,28, CSEL 40/2,655.

¹³⁵ "Iste Varro quidem sive illi genethliaci nescio qui (non enim nomina eorum prodidit, quorum commemoravit sententiam) aliquid dixerunt, quod licet falsum sit (cum enim semel ad eadem corpora quae gesserunt animae redierint, numquam ea sunt postea relicturae), tamen multa illius impossibilitatis, qua contra nos isti garriunt, argumenta convellit et destruit". *De Civitate Dei* 22,28, CSEL 40/2,655.

¹³⁶ "Quapropter Plato et Porphyrius, vel potius quicumque illos diligunt et adhuc vivunt, si nobis consentiunt etiam sanctas animas ad corpora redituras, sicut ait Plato, nec tamen ad mala ulla redituras, sicut ait Porphyrius, ut ex his fiat consequens, quod fides praedicat Christiana, talia corpora recepturas, in quibus sine ullo malo in aeternum feliciter vivant, adsumant etiam hoc de Varrone, ut ad eadem corpora redeant, in quibus antea fuerunt, et apud eos tota quaestio de carnis in aeternum resurrectione solvetur". *De Civitate Dei* 22,28, CSEL 40/2,655-656.