

ST. AUGUSTINE ON THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST AND TEMPTATION

In the Aquinas Lecture for 1999 Marilyn McCord Adams addressed the question of what sort of human nature the Word of God assumed in the incarnation according to various medieval thinkers. Given the Chalcedonian definition, one might suppose that there would not be much difference among the views of subsequent orthodox Christian thinkers.¹ She, however, examined the understanding of Christ's human nature in six theologians of the Middle Ages, namely, Anselm, Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Scotus, and Martin Luther, and showed that their conceptions of the human nature of Christ differed considerably and in interesting ways that had a significant impact on how they understood the role of Christ. This study will take Augustine of Hippo as example of another thinker with an interestingly different conception of the human nature assumed by Christ. Or, more precisely, this study will examine two aspects of Augustine's view of Christ's human nature which, I believe, have interesting implications for our understanding of Christ's role in our redemption and salvation and as a model for our imitation, especially in enduring temptation.

No one who accepts the Gospels can deny that Christ was tempted. His fast for forty days and subsequent temptation by the devil are presented in all three of the synoptic Gospels, and Augustine clearly recognized this and held that Christ's temptations were meant to teach us how we are to respond to temptation. He said, for example, in a homily on the Gospel of John that "he was tempted, but not in danger, in order that he might teach you who are in danger how to reply to the tempter and how not to follow the tempter, but to escape from the danger of temptation."² But he also claimed that Christ would not have been tempted if he had not willed to be. "For," Augustine says, "he also deigned to be tempted by the devil, by whom he, of course, would not have been tempted if he did not will to be, just as, if he did not will to, he would not have suffered, and he replied to the devil what you ought to reply to him

¹ Marilyn McCord Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology*. The Aquinas Lecture, 1999 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999). Adams briefly mentions Augustine's interpretation of the words of Psalm 21, which drew my attention to the topic of this paper.

² "Et ille quidem tentatus est, sed non periclitatus; ut doceret te in tentatione periclitantem tentatori respondere, et post tentatorem non ire, sed de periculo tentationis exire" (*In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 52, 3: CCL 36, 447).

in temptations.”³ Augustine sees the triple temptation of Christ by the devil as exemplifying every sort of temptation that a human being can face. Speaking of the triple sin of 1 John, Augustine says, “These are three, and you find nothing by which human cupidity can be tempted except the desire of the flesh or the desire of the eyes or the ambition of the world. Through these three the Lord was tempted by the devil.”⁴ Similarly, in a homily on Psalm 30, Augustine interprets the Psalmist’s words, “You will lead me out of the snare they have hidden for me,” as referring to the suffering of Christ and to the snare which the devil lays for every human being. Of that snare he says that the devil “put in the snare error and terror: error by which he entices, terror by which he breaks and snatches. Close the door of cupidity against error; close the door of fear against terror, and you will be led out of the snare. Your commander, who deigned even to be tempted on your account, revealed in himself an example of such a fight.”⁵ Clearly Augustine thought that Christ’s temptations by the devil were meant to be a lesson for Christians in facing and overcoming temptation.

There are, however, in Augustine limitations on the extent to which Christ was tempted. For example, the bishop of Hippo never directly cited Heb 4:15, which says, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one tempted in everything like us, but without sin. With confidence, therefore, let us approach the throne of grace in order that we may obtain mercy and find grace in timely help.” The author of the Letter to the Hebrews urges us to approach with confidence the throne of grace in order to obtain mercy and to find grace in opportune help, precisely because we have a high priest who can show compassion toward our weaknesses and who was tempted in all things like us, but was without sin. Augustine, however, alludes to it this passage only five times, always while quoting Ambrose of Milan as an authority against the Pelagians in order to show that Ambrose held the doctrine of original

³ “Nam et tentari dignatus est a diabolo, a quo utique si nollet non tentaretur, quemadmodum si nollet non pateretur: et ea respondit diabolo, quae tu in tentationibus debeas respondere. (Ibid.)

⁴ “Tria sunt ista, et nihil invenis unde tentetur cupiditas humana, nisi aut desiderio carnis, aut desiderio oculorum, aut ambitione saeculi. Per ista tria tentatus est Dominus a diabolo” (*In Johannis epistolam* 2, 14: P L 35, 1996).

⁵ “Posuit in muscipula errorem et terrorem: errorem quo illiciat, terrorem quo frangat, et rapiat. Tu claude januam cupiditatis contra errorem; tu claude januam timoris contra terrorem, et educeris de muscipula. Hujusmodi pugnae exemplum ipse tibi Imperator tuus, qui propter te etiam tentari dignatus est, in se demonstravit” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXX, Enarratio 2, Sermo 1, 10: CCL 38, 198).

sin.⁶ Each time he quotes the late bishop of Milan's words from his no longer extant commentary on Isaiah. Ambrose had said: "And so as a man, he was tempted in all things, and in the likeness of human beings he endured all things, but as one born of the Spirit, he held back from sin. For 'every human being is a liar' (Ps 115:2), and no one is without sin except the one God. It remained true, then, that from a man and a woman, that is, through that union of bodies, no one is found to be free of sin. But he who is free of sin is also free from this sort of conception."⁷ The allusion to Heb 4:15, while clear enough and noted by the editors of PL, is hardly the focal point of the quotation.

When, moreover, Augustine looks at certain specific instances in which Christ was, it would seem, tempted, he virtually removes him from any exposure to temptation. In the body of this paper I will look at two instances of this procedure, which throw interesting light upon the sort of human nature that Christ assumed and, I believe, raise some questions about whether the bishop of Hippo accepted in its literal sense the claim that our high priest was tempted like us in all things, while remaining without sin.

I. The Temptation to Despair in the Face of Death

In speaking of the fear of death, Karl Rahner said that a Christian needs not face death like a Stoic or like Socrates, but may "imitate Jesus in the Garden of Olives or pray as he did on the cross, 'God, my God, why have you abandoned me?' and then add, 'Into your hands I commend my spirit, O absolutely incomprehensible God.'"⁸ That is, in the face of death a Christian might acknowledge a desperate fear and yet also confidently entrust himself to the hands of

⁶ Augustine quotes Ambrose's *Expositio in Isaiam prophetam*, a work that is no longer extant, in *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* II, 41, 47, in *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* I, 35, 40, and II, 5, 15, in *Contra Julianum* I, 4, 11, and in *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* IV, 106, 3.

⁷ "Item idem ipse cum exponeret Isaiam prophetam loquens de Christo: 'Ideo,' inquit, 'et quasi homo per universa tentatus est, et in similitudine hominum cuncta sustinuit: sed quasi de Spiritu natus abstinuit a peccato. *Omnis enim homo mendax* (Ps 115:2); et nemo sine peccato, nisi unus Deus. Servatum est igitur, ut ex viro et muliere, id est, per illam corporum commixtionem, nemo videatur expers esse delicti. Qui autem expers est delicti, expers est etiam huiusmodi conceptionis" (*De peccato originali* II, 41, 47: PL 41, 410).

⁸ Karl Rahner, *Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews 1965-1982*, ed. Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowons, tr. Harvey Egan (New York: Crossroad, 1986), pp. 209-10.

God, as Christ did in confronting his death. But if Christ on the cross is to be a model for Christians in the face of death, Christ had to say those words from Psalm 21 as an expression of his own fear and feeling of abandonment in the face of death. Augustine, however, claims that Christ's words on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Mt 27:46) did not express Christ's own personal fear and feeling of abandonment by God. Rather, he claims that Christ spoke those words in the person of his body, the Church. In both his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* and *De gratia Novi Testamenti*, which are the only two of his writings in which he comments extensively on the Psalm, Augustine places Christ's expression of abandonment in the mouth of the Church.

In the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* he asks, "What did the Lord intend to say? After all, God had not abandoned him since he himself was God. Certainly, the Son of God is God; certainly, the Word of God is God."⁹ In confirmation that he is God, Augustine appeals to the words of John's Prologue and says, "And since God, the Word, became flesh, he hung upon the cross and said, 'My God, my God, look at me. Why have you abandoned me?'" (Ps 21:2)¹⁰ But Augustine goes on to ask why he said this: "Why does he say this if not because we were there, if not because the Church is the body of Christ."¹¹ Why did he say this "if not somehow to make us attentive, saying: 'This Psalm was written about me.'"¹² Augustine seems not to think that the incarnate Word could have addressed the words of the Psalm to God the Father.

But the Psalm continues: "Far from my salvation are the words of my sins" (Ps 21:2). Augustine asks, "Which sins? For it was said of him, 'He did not commit sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth'" (1 Pt 2:22).¹³ Hence, Augustine asks, "How could Christ have said, 'My sins,' except because he prays for our sins and made our sins his sins in order that he might make his righteousness our

⁹ "Quid voluit dicere Dominus? Non enim dereliquerat illum Deus, cum ipse esset Deus; utique Filius Dei Deus, utique Verbum Dei Deus" (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXI, enarratio 2, 3: CCL 38, 123).

¹⁰ "Et cum Verbum Deus factum esset caro, pendeat in cruce, et dicebat: Deus meus, Deus meus, respice me: quare me dereliquisti?" (*Ibid.*).

¹¹ "Quare dicitur, nisi quia nos ibi eramus, nisi quia corpus Christi Ecclesia" (*Ibid.*).

¹² "Utquid dixit, Deus meus, Deus meus, respice me: quare me dereliquisti? nisi quodammodo intentos nos faciens et dicens, Psalmus iste de me scriptus est?" (*Ibid.*).

¹³ "Quorum delictorum, de quo dictum est: Qui peccatum non fecit, nec inventus est dolus in ore ejus?" (*Ibid.*).

righteousness.”¹⁴ Since Christ himself had no sins, he must – at least on the assumption that the whole Psalm was about him – have said, “My sins,” in the person of the Church. And in the same way, he said, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” not in his own person, since he was God and could not abandon himself, but in the person of the Church. But in that case Christ the man on the cross was not tempted by thoughts of abandonment in the face of death, as other human beings might be tempted. That is, he is not himself someone who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because he experienced them, although he was instructing us on how we might behave.

Augustine is simply applying to the words of Christ on the cross the first rule of Tyconius, “On the Lord and his Body,” which the bishop had found in the Donatist exegete’s *Liber Regularum*.¹⁵ Augustine incorporated Tyconius’ seven rules in his own work on biblical interpretation, *De doctrina Christiana* III, 30, 42–56, 134.¹⁶ He illustrates the first rule with a verse from Isaiah: “He placed a crown on me as on a bridegroom and adorned me with jewels as a wife” (Is 61:10). Augustine says, “One person, after all, is speaking.... and yet it is of course necessary to understand which of these two statements belongs to the head and which to the body, that is, to Christ and to the Church.”¹⁷ Similarly Tyconius interprets the stone hewn from the mountain in Dan 2:24 as referring initially to Christ the head, but then to his body when it fills the whole world.

In Letter 140, which is also in the *Retractationes* called a work, namely, *De gratia Novi Testamenti*,¹⁸ Augustine uses Psalm 21 as a framework for structuring his response to the five questions posed for him by his friend and former Manichee, Honoratus,¹⁹ for whom he had earlier written *De utilitate credendi*. The first of Hon-

¹⁴ “Quomodo ergo dicit delictorum meorum; nisi quia pro delictis nostris ipse precatur, et delicta nostra sua delicta fecit, ut iustitiam suam nostram iustitiam faceret?” (Ibid.)

¹⁵ See *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, ed. F. C. Burkitt (Cambridge: University Press, 1894; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1967).

¹⁶ See *Augustine: De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. with an introduction, translation, and notes by R. P. H. Green, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹⁷ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* III, 31, 44: CCL 32, 104.

¹⁸ Augustine, *Retractationes* II, 36: CCL 57, 119–20.

¹⁹ In *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* V, 26: PL 45, 1464, Julian seems to confirm that the Manichean Honoratus was the same person as the Honoratus with whom Augustine later corresponded.

oratus' five questions asked what the words of the Lord, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" meant.²⁰ Turning to these words, Augustine says, "Hence, Christ the man and the same Christ God, by whose most merciful humanity and in whose form of a servant we ought to learn what we should scorn in this life and what we should hope for in the next, took up in his Passion... the voice of our weakness... said, 'God, my God, why have you abandoned me?' (Ps 22:2).²¹ Since Honoratus had asked about the meaning of these words, Augustine begins an explanation of the whole Psalm in order to distinguish the grace of the New Testament from that of the Old.

Christ's words on the cross, Augustine explains, show that the Psalm was a prophecy about him so that we can understand "how the grace of the New Testament did not go unmentioned even at that time when it was veiled in the Old."²² Augustine says that the Psalm says "in the person of Christ what belongs to the form of the servant in which he bore our weakness."²³ Augustine's words need to be read with care for he distinguishes the person of Christ, the form of the servant, and our weakness. He says that Christ said the words of the Psalm "in the voice of our weakness," and adds that Paul also prayed with that voice when his prayer was not heard and he was in some sense abandoned. "In the voice of this weakness of ours, which our head transferred to himself, there is said in the Psalm, 'My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?' He is, of course, abandoned in prayer insofar as he is not heard."²⁴

Up to this point it is not perfectly clear whose voice it is that speaks these words. But Augustine continues, "Jesus transferred this voice to himself, namely, the voice of his body, that is, of his Church, which needs to be reformed from the old human being into the new, the voice, namely, of his human weakness, to which the goods of the Old

²⁰ See Augustine, *Epistula* 140, 1, 2: CSEL 44, 156.

²¹ "Proinde homo Christus idemque Deus Christus, cujus misericordissima humanitate, atque in cujus forma servili discere deberemus quid in hac vita contemnendum, et quid in alia sperandum esset, in ipsa passione... suscepit vocem infirmitatis nostrae... et dixit: Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti?" (*Epistula* 140, 5, 14: CSEL 44, 165).

²² "Quemadmodum gratia Testamenti Novi nec eo tempore tacebatur, quando in Vetere velabatur" (*Epistula* 140, 6, 15: CSEL 44, 166).

²³ "Dicitur enim ex persona Christi, quod ad formam servi attinet, in qua portabatur nostra infirmitas" (*Ibid.*).

²⁴ "Ex voce ergo hujus infirmitatis nostrae, quam in se transfiguravit caput nostrum, dicitur in hoc psalmo, Deus meus, Deus meus, respice in me; quare me dereliquisti? In eo quippe derelinquitur deprecans, in quo non exauditur" (*Ibid.*).

Testament had to be denied in order that it would learn to desire and to hope for the goods of the New."²⁵ Among the goods of the old human being the continuation of the present life is chief. "But these words by which the human day and the length of this life are desired are words of sins and are far from that salvation of which we do not possess the reality, but for which we do already possess the hope."²⁶ Augustine explains that immediately after the words, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" the Psalm adds: "Far from my salvation are the words of my sins" (Ps 21:2). In one sense this can mean: "These are words of my sins, and they are far from that salvation of mine."²⁷ But the words could also be grouped in another way so that they say: "'Why have you abandoned me far from my salvation?' as if to say: 'By abandoning me, that is, by not hearing me you have become far from my salvation, that is, from the present salvation of this life,' so that the other sense is: The words of my sins, that is, these words I spoke, are words of my sins because they are the words of carnal desires."²⁸

At this point Augustine makes it clear that these are the words of the Church. "Christ says these words in the person of his body, which is the Church. He says these words in the person of the weakness of sinful flesh, which he transferred to that likeness of sinful flesh, which he assumed from the Virgin."²⁹ Here again it is important to see the distinction Augustine makes between sinful flesh, in the weakness of which Christ said these words, and the likeness of sinful flesh, which Christ assumed from the Virgin. He continues, "He speaks these words in the person of his spouse, because he has united her to himself in some way."³⁰ Augustine cites Is 61:10, which he had

²⁵ "Hanc in se vocem transfiguravit Jesus, vocem scilicet corporis sui, hoc est Ecclesiae suae a vetere homine in novum reformandae; vocem scilicet infirmitatis suae humanae, cui deneganda fuerant bona Veteris Testamenti, ut bona Novi Testamenti optare atque sperare jam disceret" (Ibid.).

²⁶ "Sed haec verba, quibus humanus dies et vitae hujus prolixitas concupiscitur, verba sunt delictorum, et longe sunt ab ea salute cujus nondum rem, sed jam spem gerimus" (Ibid.).

²⁷ "Haec verba delictorum meorum sunt, et longe ab illa salute mea sunt" (*Epistula* 140, 6, 17: CSEL 44, 167).

²⁸ "Quare me dereliquisti longe a salute mea? tanquam diceret, Relinquendo me, hoc est, non me exaudiendo, longe factus es a salute mea, praesenti scilicet salute hujus vitae: ut alius sensus sit, verba delictorum meorum, id est, ista quae dixi, verba sunt delictorum meorum, quia verba sunt carnalium desideriorum" (*Epistula* 140, 6, 17: CSEL 44, 166-7).

²⁹ "Haec ex persona sui corporis Christus dicit, quod est Ecclesia. Haec ex persona dicit infirmitatis carnis peccati, quam transfiguravit in eam quam sumpsit ex Virgine, similitudinem carnis peccati" (*Epistula* 140, 6, 18: CSEL 44, 168).

³⁰ "Haec Sponsus ex persona sponsae loquitur, quia univit eam sibi quodam modo" (Ibid.).

used in *De doctrina christiana* to exemplify Tyconius' first rule, and applies them to what Paul said about Christ and the Church in Eph 5:31-32. As if his readers might balk at this interpretation, Augustine asks, "Why, then, do we disdain to hear the voice of the body from the lips of the head? The Church suffered in him when he suffered for the Church, just as he suffered in the Church when the Church suffered for him. For, just as we heard the voice of the Church suffering in Christ: 'God, my God, look,' and so on, so we also heard the voice of Christ suffering in the Church: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'"³¹ Augustine uses his doctrine of the whole Christ (*totus Christus*), both head and body, in order to remove the cry of abandonment on the cross from the person of Christ the head and to apply it to Christ the body, that is, the Church. Thus on the cross Christ himself did not experience any thoughts of abandonment by God, but simply applied to himself the words of his body, the Church.

II. Christ and Sexual Temptation

In the fourth book of Julian of Eclanum's *Ad Florum* Augustine read quite to his surprise that Julian had accused him of reviving the heresy of the Apollinarists.³² Augustine had a right to be surprised since he was writing his reply to Julian's *Ad Florum*, the huge *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*, at the same time that he was writing for Quodvultdeus, a deacon and the future bishop of Carthage, *De haeresibus*, in which he, of course, dealt with Apollinarism, listing it as the fifty-fifth of the eighty-eight heresies that had arisen since the coming of Christ.³³ Augustine was well informed about what Apollinaris of

³¹ "Quid ergo dedignamur audire vocem corporis ex ore capitis? Ecclesia in illo patiebatur, quando pro Ecclesia patiebatur: sicut etiam in Ecclesia patiebatur ipse, quando pro illo Ecclesia patiebatur. Nam sicut audivimus Ecclesiae vocem in Christo patientis, Deus, Deus meus, respice, etc., sic etiam audivimus Christi vocem in Ecclesia patientis, Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris" (*Epistula* 140, 6, 18: CSEL 44, 169).

³² See *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum* IV, 47: PL 45, 1365. Apollinaris of Laodicea was a prominent theologian, exegete, polemicist, and man of letters in the 4th century. He broke away from the Church in 375. See Augustine, *De haeresibus* 55: CCL 46, 325; for an English translation see *Heresies in Arianism and Other Heresies* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1995). Or see Charles Kannengieser, "Apollinaris of Laodicea, Apollinarism," in *The Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), I, 58-59.

³³ See *Epistula* 224, 2: CSEL 57, 452, in which Augustine explains that he is writing his answer to Julian's *Ad Florum* and writing his *Retractationes*, but will, nonetheless, begin *De haeresibus* for Quodvultdeus.

Laodicea held according to the best sources available to him, namely, the *Anacephalaiosis* attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis and the *Diversarum haeresion liber* of Philaster of Brescia.³⁴

The accusation that Julian brought against Augustine of reviving the heresy of the Apollinarists initially stunned Augustine, but the ensuing debate presents a key for opening up the two quite different views of the humanity assumed by the Word according to the two bishops, especially with relation to Christ's experiencing sexual temptation. Both of them held that Christ, the Son of God, assumed a true human nature, like ours in all things save sin. But the nature that Christ assumed according to Julian and the nature that Christ assumed according to Augustine seem quite different and have quite different implications, not merely for the masculinity of Jesus, but also for his ability to function as a model, especially for male chastity. Hence, the difference between Augustine's view of the human nature of Christ and that of Julian is not merely speculatively interesting, though somewhat indelicate in the discussion of the body of the savior to which it leads. It is also practically of interest in terms of Christ's being a model of chastity, because, if Augustine is correct, then Jesus never experienced the sort of sexual arousal and temptations that other men experience and with which they have to struggle if they are to remain chaste.

In the fourth book of *Ad Florum* Julian warns his reader against the teaching of Augustine.³⁵ He says to Augustine, "I warn the reader, then, to be fully alert at this point, for he will see that you revive the heresy of the Apollinarists with an addition from Mani,"³⁶ Julian goes on to explain what Apollinaris held, namely, that he "is said to have first introduced such an incarnation of Christ that he said that he assumed from the human substance only the body, while the deity itself took the place of the soul. Christ would seem to have assumed,

³⁴ Epiphanius (315-403), bishop of Salamis on Cyprus, wrote a large work on heresies called *Panarion*, a "medicine chest" of antidotes for heresy. Augustine knew only the *Anacephalaiosis*, which he took to be a work of Epiphanius, though scholars now claim that the work was produced by someone else. Philaster of Brescia wrote his *Diversarum haeresion liber* between 380 and 390. For Philaster's work, see CCL 9, 207-324.

³⁵ Julian's work is extant only in the *Opus imperfectum*, though because of the bitterness that had arisen over Augustine's having allegedly misquoted Julian in *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, it seems certain that Augustine quoted the whole of the first six books of *Ad Florum*. The last two books of the work are lost, since Augustine died before responding to them.

³⁶ "Hic igitur ut adsit toto animo lector, admoneo: videbit enim Apollinaristarum haeresim, sed cum Manichaei per te adiectione reparari" (*Op. imp.* IV, 49: PL 45, 1365).

not a man, but the cadaver of a man.”³⁷ This first position of Apollinaris was, Julian notes, quickly and easily refuted by the words of the Lord: “I have it in my power to lay down my soul, and I have it in my power to take it up again” (Jn 10:18). But Apollinaris “thought up something else which might give birth to this heresy of his, which lasts up to the present, and he said that there was indeed a human soul in Christ, but that he did not have any senses of the body, and he declared that he was unable to suffer any sins.”³⁸

Augustine appeals to the book that Epiphanius of Cyprus wrote on heresies³⁹ and reports what the book contained, namely, that some Apollinarists held that Christ’s “body was consubstantial with the divinity,” while others “denied that he assumed a human soul,” and still others taught that “he did not assume flesh from created flesh, that is, of Mary, but that the Word became flesh,” and still later some claimed that “he did not assume a mind.”⁴⁰ Augustine insists, “I have never read, except in your book, your claim that the Apollinarists held that Christ did not have the senses of the body and was incapable of suffering, nor have I ever heard it from anyone.”⁴¹

Nello Cipriani has in a recent study examined the character of the Apollinarism with which Julian charges Augustine and has pointed to its sources in the anti-Apollinarism of the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia.⁴² Cipriani argues that Apollinaris himself

³⁷ “Apollinaris quippe primo talem incarnationem Christi induxisse fertur, ut diceret solum corpus de humana substantia assumptum videri, pro anima vero ipsam fuisse deitatem; Christusque non hominem, sed cadaver videretur hominis suscepisse” (Ibid.).

³⁸ “Excogitavit aliud unde ejus haeresis, quae perdurat hactenus, nasceretur; et dixit, animam quidem humanam in Christo fuisse, sed sensus in eo corporis non fuisse, atque impassibilem eum pronuntiavit universis exstistisse peccatis” (Ibid.).

³⁹ For the *Anacephalosis*, see *Epiphanius I: Panarion Haeres. 1-33*, ed. K. Holl (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1915), 234-237, *Epiphanius II: Panarion Haeres. 34-64*, ed. K. Holl and J. Dummer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980), 1-4, 211-214, and *Epiphanius III: Panarion Haeres. 65-80*, ed. K. Holl and J. Dummer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), or see PG 42, 853-873.

⁴⁰ “Epiphanius... dixit Apollinaristarum quosdam in Domino Jesu Christo divinitati corpus consubstantiale dixisse; alios autem negasse quod animam sumpserit; alios... contendisse non eum carnem sumpsisse de creata carne, id est, Mariae, sed Verbum carnem factum; postea vero... dixisse quod non sumpserit mentem” (*Op. imp.* IV, 49: PL 45, 1365).

⁴¹ “Quod ergo affirmas Apollinaristas asseverasse in Christo sensus corporis non fuisse, eumque illos pronuntiassse impassibilem; nec uspiam legi, nisi in hoc libro tuo, nec aliquando ab aliquo audiui” (Ibid.). See Augustine, *De haeresibus* 55,; CCL 46, 325 and *Anacephalosis* III, ii, 1: PG 42: 873.

⁴² See N. Cipriani, “Echi antiapollinaristici e aristotelismo nella polemica di Giuliano d’Eclano,” *Augustinianum* 21 (1981): 373-389.

did not deny the senses to Christ's body, as Julian claimed that he did.

Egli aveva semplicemente detto che i movimenti o affezioni (*pathemata*) della psiche animale e della carne, invece di essere guidati da un *nous* humano, erano guidati dal Verbo, perché questo era sufficiente a garantire la santità del Redentore. Erano stati i critici di Apollinare a dedurre dalla tesi della vivificazione della carne ad opera del Verbo, comme logica conseguenza, negazione della sensibilità corporale e perfino il carattere fittizio del corpo di Christo."⁴³

Cipriani also argues that it was Theodore of Mopsuestia who was the source of the Aristotelian elements that François Refoulé had pointed out in Julian's thought.⁴⁴

The accusation that Augustine denied bodily sensibility or senses to Christ must have initially struck Augustine as outlandish, but Julian soon makes it clear what he has in mind. He claims that, according to Apollinaris and Augustine, "Christ did not avoid sins by virtue of his judgment, but that by the blessedness of a flesh, which was deprived of our senses, he could not experience the desire for sins."⁴⁵ Apollinaris, Julian claims, "deprived [Christ] of the fullness of our natural senses for fear that he would become lowered in dignity by sharing in our flesh."⁴⁶ Julian points out that the Catholic opposition to Apollinaris was fierce "because in accord with such a faith the mysteries of Christ would suffer a greater loss than the members of Christ."⁴⁷ The Catholics argued, "For, if Christ... was born a son of David... in order that he might give us an example and that we might follow in the footsteps of him who committed no sin... but did not, nonetheless, put on the characteristics of our substance in every respect, if he possessed either flesh without a soul or a human nature without the senses that nature gave us, we are shown that he could not

⁴³ Cipriani, "Echi antiapollinaristici," p. 383. Cipriani cites a passage from a homily of Theodore of Mopsuestia in which he uses the same line of argument against Apollinarism.

⁴⁴ See François Refoulé, "Julien d'Éclane, théologien et philosophe," *Recherche de science religieuse* 53 (1964): 42-84 and 233-247.

⁴⁵ "Non qui virtute iudicii delicta vitasset; sed qui felicitate carnis a nostris sensibus sequestratae, cupiditatem vitiorum sentire nequivisset" (*Op. imp.* IV, 48: PL 45, 1366).

⁴⁶ "Ne carnis nostrae communione vilesceret, naturalium eum sensuum integritate fraudavit" (*Op. imp.* IV, 49: PL 45, 1367).

⁴⁷ "Quia apud talem fidem majus damnum mysteria Christi, quam membra perferrent" (*Ibid.*).

have fulfilled the role of an example and of the law.”⁴⁸ Julian runs through the temptations associated with the senses of sight, smell, taste, and hearing and claims that there would have been nothing praiseworthy in Christ’s self-discipline if he did not have these senses. Finally, however, he asks, “But what is the glory of chastity if he lacked virility rather than had will power, and if what he was thought to accomplish by the strength of his mind came from the weakness of his members?”⁴⁹ Not merely would Christ have lost all merit for his actions and suffering, but his teaching would have been charged with fraud if he said to human beings: “By conquering the real impulses of your nature, imitate the chastity of him whose impotence made him appear chaste.”⁵⁰ Then in a somewhat surprising turn, Julian acknowledges that Apollinaris did not say all these things, but he insists that they all follow from his one claim that “Christ the man lacked those senses that are given by nature and that fall into sins, not by use, but by excess.”⁵¹

Julian accuses Augustine of blaming “concupiscence of the flesh in accord with the statements of his teacher, Mani.”⁵² He continues, “You say that the concupiscence of the senses was not present in the body of Christ, either in accord with the Manichees or in accord with the Apollinarists.”⁵³ Then in another odd twist Julian seems to concede that Augustine really was not an Apollinarist, but was a Manichee – something that is, of course, worse. At that point Julian demands the passage of scripture where Augustine “reads that Christ was naturally a eunuch.”⁵⁴ He insists that Christ “did not shun the male sex, but assumed its reality, in every respect whole in his

⁴⁸ “Si enim... factus est Christus ex semine David... ut nobis daret exemplum, et sequeremur vestigia ejus, qui peccatum non fecit, ... nec tamen per omnia substantiae nostrae induit proprietatem, si vel carnem sine anima, vel hominem sine sensibus, quibus nos imbuunt natura, gestavit, exempli formam et legis non docetur implese” (Ibid.).

⁴⁹ “Quae autem gloria castitatis, si virilitas magis aberat quam voluntas, et quod putabatur fieri de vigore animi, veniebat de debilitate membrorum?” (Ibid.).

⁵⁰ “Imitamini castitatem, certa naturae vestrae irritamenta vincentes, illius quem debilitas fecit pudicum videri” (*Op. imp.* IV, 50: PL 45, 1368).

⁵¹ “Et Apollinaris omnia ista non dixerat: per illud unum quod pronuntiarat, homini Christo defuisse eos sensus, qui a natura inditi, non usu, sed excessu ad vitia labuntur; haec omnia quae a Catholicis relata sunt, praejudicio opinionis suae mutus excepit.” (Ibid.).

⁵² “Concupiscentiam carnis accusas, juxta praeceptoris tui dicta Manichaei” (Ibid.).

⁵³ “Dicis concupiscentiam sensuum in Christi corpore non fuisse, vel secundum Manichaeos, vel secundum Apollinaristas” (Ibid.).

⁵⁴ “Illud efflagito, ubi tu legeris Christum eunuchum fuisse naturaliter” (*Op. imp.* IV, 52: PL 45, 1369).

organs, whole in his body, a true human, a complete man" and that "there was in him the concupiscence of the flesh mingled with the senses of the whole body and the reality and sound condition of his members."⁵⁵ Against the docetist views of Mani and Apollinaris, by whom he means, of course, Augustine, Julian insists, "Nothing in my Lord causes me shame. I maintain the reality of the members into which he entered on account of my salvation in order that I might receive the solid support of his example."⁵⁶ The holiness of Christ was, Julian insists, due to "the goodness of his mind," not to "a defect of his flesh."⁵⁷ He proclaims that "the faith of Christians is not embarrassed to say that Christ has sexual organs, even though we conceal these in our own case as modestly as possible."⁵⁸ Christ lacked "nothing belonging to nature," and his "chastity was lofty in its constant integrity and was not aroused by the longing of desire because it was the virgin spouse of his holy mind."⁵⁹ Julian argues that, even if Christ had not assumed concupiscence of the flesh – for once using Augustine's biblical terminology – he would not have condemned it by not assuming it, just as he did not condemn marriage by choosing the higher good of chastity. He "would not have condemned the sense of the genital flesh, even if he had chosen not to have the capacity for it in his substance."⁶⁰

Augustine, on the other hand, insists that Christ did not have sinful flesh, but only the likeness of sinful flesh and that he, therefore, did not have concupiscence of the flesh that resists the spirit.⁶¹ He accused

⁵⁵ "Et tamen ita aversatus non est sexum virilem, ut ejus susciperet veritatem, integer per omnia viscerum, integer corporis, homo verus, vir perfectus... concupiscentiam carnis totius corporis immixtam sensibus, et veritatem ac sanitatem conditionemque membrorum fuisse in eo" (*Op. imp.* IV, 52: PL 45, 1369-70).

⁵⁶ "Nihil ergo me pudet in Domino meo: in quae propter salutem meam venit, teneo veritatem membrorum, ut exempli ejus soliditatem arcemque suscipiam" (*Op. imp.* IV, 52: PL 45, 1370).

⁵⁷ "Praedico omnem in eo sanctitatem beneficio animi, non carnis stetisse praejudicio" (*Op. imp.* IV, 54: 1371).

⁵⁸ "Non erubescit fides Christianorum, dicere Christum habuisse genitalia; cum tamen ea in nobis, quam honestissime possumus, occulamus" (*Ibid.*).

⁵⁹ "Castitasque ejus continua integritate celsa, nullo permota libidinis appetitu, quae virgo sanctae mentis exstiterat" (*Op. imp.* IV, 57: PL 45, 1373).

⁶⁰ "Ita nec sensum carnis genitalis damnasset, si ejus possibilitatem nec in substantia sua habere voluisset" (*Op. imp.* IV, 58: PL 45, 1374).

⁶¹ On the distinction between "sinful flesh" (*caro peccati*) and "the likeness of sinful flesh" (*similitudo carnis peccati*), which is based on Rom 8:3, see Thomas Weinandy, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh: An Essay on the Humanity of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993). Weinandy argues strongly that Christ assumed "our own sinful humanity" although "he never sinned personally, or... had an inner propensity to sin (concupiscence)..." (p. 18).

Julian of not even sparing Christ's dreams. Augustine regularly personifies "concupiscence of the flesh" in arguing against Julian and speaks of it as Julian's "darling" or "favorite." He says, "We know that Christ did, of course, sleep, and if your darling (*"suscepta"*) was present in him, she at times surely deluded his sleeping senses by such dreams that it seemed to him that he was even having intercourse, and so his flesh aroused by the stimulus of this good of yours would make his genitals uselessly erect and pour forth useless seed."⁶²

Again Julian argues that, even if Christ did not include in his own members "the sense of the sexual organs," he surely did not make something evil when he formed the members of the patriarchs and gave them "sex and its sense."⁶³ For Julian the body of the savior lacked nothing of the nature of human beings. Augustine, on the other hand, says to Julian "You blaspheme enormously when you make the flesh of Christ equal to the flesh of other human beings. You do not see that he came, not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh."⁶⁴ Augustine argues that "Christ abstained from sin in such a way that he abstained from every desire for sin, not so that he resisted a desire he had, but so that the desire never existed at all. It was not that he could not have had it, if he had willed to, but he would not have rightly willed to have what sinful flesh, which he did not have, would not have forced him to have even against his will."⁶⁵

The two bishops used a different language in referring to what one says Christ had and the other says he did not have. For Julian it is a natural sense of the body; more specifically it is the sense of the sexual organs, which for Julian includes a natural concupiscence or desire. At times he calls it simply virility.⁶⁶ Julian almost always

⁶² "Dormisse quippe novimus Christum, in quo si erat ista tua suscepta, profecto sopitos ejus sensus aliquando per talia somnia deludebat, ut sibi etiam concumbere videretur, atque ita caro ejus isto tuo bono stimulante commota, et in irritum extenderet genitalia et irrita effunderet semina. (Ibid.).

⁶³ "Fac ergo, quoniam Christus, cum sua membra formaret, noluerit eis sensum admiscere genitalium, quo usus non erat: num ideo cum Isaac, Jacob, et omnium membra fingeat, eisque et sexum dabat et sensum, malum aliquid faciebat? (*Op. imp. IV, 59: PL 45, 1375*).

⁶⁴ "Immaniter, Juliane, blasphemias, coequans carnem Christi caeterorum hominum carni; nec videns illum venisse non in carne peccati, sed in similitudine carnis peccati, quod nullo modo verum esset, nisi caeterorum esset caro peccati" (*Op. imp. IV, 60: PL 45, 1375*).

⁶⁵ "Christus abstinuit a peccato, ut abstineret etiam ab omni cupiditate peccati: non ut ei existenti resisteret, sed ut illa nunquam prorsus existeret; non quod eam non posset habere si vellet, sed non recte vellet, quod eum caro peccati quam non gerebat, etiam invitum habere non cogeret (*Op. imp. IV, 58: PL 45, 1374*).

⁶⁶ See above note 49.

avoids using the words "concupiscence of the flesh," by which Paul says the flesh lusts against the spirit (Gal 5:17) and which John says does not come from the Father (1 Jn 2:16). He prefers to speak of a "natural concupiscence," which he holds is not blameworthy in its genus, species, or moderate use, but only in its excess.⁶⁷ For Julian sexual desire is as natural and good as the desire for food and drink, provided, of course, it is not excessive. Without it Christ was, according to Julian, impotent, a eunuch, not a real man. As Julian sees the Augustine's position, Christ's discipline with regard to food, drink, and sex was due to a lack of human senses and their corresponding desires, not to the strength of his will. Just as he cannot serve as a model for temperance regarding food or drink, since he did not have the sense of taste and the desire for food and drink, so he cannot, in Julian's view, serve as a model of chastity, since he did not have any sensation in his sexual organs or any sexual desires. So too, for Julian his status as a teacher is undermined, since he could not know what he was talking about if he simply lacked the desires, urges, and longings of the rest of mankind.

For Augustine, on the other hand, what Christ lacked was not something natural, but a defect in human nature stemming from original sin and inclining one to sin. Christ had a human soul and a human, male body; what he lacked was "sinful flesh," the injured or damaged human nature the rest of us have inherited from Adam. He lacked the desire or longing of the flesh that rebels against the mind, but he had the full range of human senses and the male sexual organs, which he could have used if he had wanted to. What he lacked was any desire or longing that he had to fight against or resist in order to be temperate or chaste. For such a desire, which would have to be resisted, is for Augustine a sinful desire.

For Julian human nature is much closer to the sort of human nature of which Aristotle writes, namely, the specific essence as a source of activities, including natural desires. Refoulé argues that Julian derived his concept of nature along with numerous other features of his thought from the Aristotelian philosophy of the period.⁶⁸ In fact, he concludes, "Julien fut sans nul doute l'un des premiers à tenter une synthèse entre les principes de la philosophie aristotélicienne et les données de la Révélation."⁶⁹ He even likens Julian to Thomas

⁶⁷ "Clarebit... concupiscentiae naturalis non genus, non speciem, non modum, sed excessum tantum in culpam venire" (*Op. imp.* IV, 25: PL 45, 1351).

⁶⁸ Though others limit the influence of Aristotle to the categories and dialectic, Refoulé points to the Aristotelian influence on Julian's concepts of justice, of the virtues, and of nature. See Refoulé, pp. 233-244.

Aquinas!⁷⁰ Such an Aristotelian human nature contains only good characteristics, which for a Christian Aristotelian are God-given. For Augustine, on the other hand, "human nature," as it has existed, not as it will exist in the future life, means either that state in which Adam and Eve were created by God, a state in which there was nothing but good, or that state in which we humans are now born with the damage inherited from Adam's sin.⁷¹ Sexual desire (*libido*) can be called natural, "because every human being is born with it,"⁷² but in itself it is something evil. "It is not our nature, but a defect against which we must fight by means of virtue. For we do not conquer something good by a good, but something evil by a good"⁷³ For Augustine the human nature assumed by the Word is like the human nature with which Adam and Eve were created, not like the fallen human nature with which each of us is now born.⁷⁴ As Adam and Eve were not created with sinful flesh and its disorderly desires, so the human nature Christ assumed was not sinful flesh, but the likeness of sinful flesh, and had no such disorderly desires or concupiscence of the flesh.

Given Augustine's conviction rooted in the Letters of Paul and of John that concupiscence of the flesh is a disordered desire that is not merely the result of Adam's sin, but also an evil in itself, though an evil of which one can make good use within marriage, it is understandable why he denies its presence in Christ. The human Christ could not, according to Augustine, be subject to such disordered longings and desires, sexual or otherwise. Christ's sexuality was completely under the control of his will so that he experienced no rebellion of the flesh; he had no sexual desire since he did not will to. Otherwise, he would have had sinful flesh like ours rather than the

⁶⁹ Refoulé, p. 245.

⁷⁰ Refoulé, p. 44.

⁷¹ Augustine stated such a definition of "nature" in *De libero arbitrio* III, 19, 54: CCL 29, 307: "Sic etiam ipsam naturam aliter dicimus cum proprie loquimur naturam hominis in qua primum in suo genere inculpabilis factus est, aliter istam in qua ex illius damnati poena et mortales et ignari et carni subditi nascimur, iuxta quem modum dicit Apostolus: Fuimus enim et nos naturaliter filii irae sicut et ceteri."

⁷² "Quod autem nunc agitur, naturalem esse libidinem et ego dico, quia cum illa nascitur omnis homo..." (*Contra Iulianum* V, 7, 27: PL 44, 801).

⁷³ "Adhuc non euigilas, ut intelligas nostram naturam non esse, sed uitium, contra quod uirtute pugnamus? Neque enim bono bonum, sed bono utique malum uincimus" (*Contra Iulianum* V, 7, 28: PL 44, 801).

⁷⁴ This is especially apparent from Augustine's claim in *De civitate Dei* XIV, 23 that, if Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would have given birth to children in paradise without any lust and that their sexual organs would have obeyed their will in the same way as our hands and feet now are moved in obedience to our will.

likeness of sinful flesh. On the other hand, Julian certainly seems to have a strong argument when he claims that the Augustinian Christ cannot be a credible teacher or model of chastity if he had none of the urges and inclinations of other males. Hence, Julian presents us with a Christ who is, in some ways, a much more attractive teacher and example of the virtues, and especially of chastity, than the Christ of Augustine. The problem is a knotty one, and the heart of the problem lies in the different concepts of nature and their implications – an issue that will surface in different forms later in the history of theology at the time of Baius and Jansenius, especially in the latter's battle against the Jesuit defenders of the so-called "pure nature."⁷⁵ But that is another story for another time. For the present let it suffice that this paper has shown that the sort of human nature that Christ assumed according to Augustine, that is, the likeness of sinful flesh, is significantly different from the sort of human nature we have, that is, sinful flesh, so that the temptations that the Augustinian Christ faced seem quite different from the temptations that the rest of the human race encounters.

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⁷⁵ The literature on this topic is abundant; see, e.g., S. JOURNÉ, *Le Christ et l'homme* (S. Augustin), Naples, 1977; J.P. RUIZ, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Studies Augustiniana), Paris, 1980; R. KILIAN, *Grace et carnis*, *The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-called Semipelagians* (BETL, 100), Leuven, 1984 (with an extensive bibliography).

⁷⁶ This is not to say that Kraus' study is above critique. Cf. infra.

⁷⁷ See, e.g., P.-M. HODAR, *Opera gratia. De gratia et de fide, prima pars de de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce* (Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité, 146), Paris, 1996. Also note that there is no reference to the book of Kraus in the otherwise very exhaustive bibliography in the *Index des Études Augustiniennes*.

⁷⁸ See, e.g., I.M.J. LANGE VAN RAVENSWIJCK, *Augustinus over natuur. Een Augustijnverhandeling bij Johannes Calvus. Prolegomena zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte*, 45, Göttingen, 1990; J. LÉON, *Augustinus. Gratie. De ethische, theoretische und hermeneutische Dimensionen des christlichen Augustinus von Hippo*.

⁷⁹ See my "Augustine, Jansenius, and the State of Pure Nature," in *Augustinus in der Neuzeit*, ed. Kurt Flasch and Dominique de Courcelles (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 161-174.