

St. Augustine's Use of « *Manens in Se* »

In the central seventh book of the *Confessions*, Augustine claims that he read in the *libri Platoniorum* :

« that the only-begotten Son of God remains unchangeably before and above all times and that souls receive from his fullness so that they might be happy and are renewed by sharing in the wisdom that remains in itself so that they might be wise¹ ».

Augustine clearly alludes to Wis 7 : 27b : *in seipsa manens innouat omnia*, though his words are less than a quotation. A few chapters later in the seventh book, Augustine explicitly cites Wis 7 : 27b, when he says,

« But it is good for me to cling to God, because, if I do not remain in him, I will not be able to remain in myself. He, while remaining in himself, renews all things, and you are my lord, because you have no need of my goods² ».

The purpose of this paper is to examine Augustine's use of the phrase « *manens in se* » and its variations in order to discover what it is precisely that he means by the phrase.

In her study of Augustine's use of the Book of Wisdom, A.-M. La Bonnardière says with regard to Augustine's use of Wis 7 : 27b, « C'est le verset qui exprime le mieux l'immutabilité divine, qu'il s'agisse de l'éternité de Dieu ou de son être. Mais le verset s'applique surtout au Fils de Dieu, en tant qu'il est Verbe »³. She

1. *Confessiones* VII, ix, 14 : CCL XXVII, 102 : « Quod enim ante omnia tempora et supra omnia tempora incommutabiliter manet unigenitus filius tuus coaeternus tibi et quia *de plenitudine eius* accipiunt animae, ut beatae sint, et quia participatione manentis in se sapientiae renouantur, ut sapientes sit, est ibi. »

2. *Confessiones* VII, ix, 17 : CCL XXVII, 104 : « Mihi autem inhaerere deo bonum est, quia, si non manebo in illo, nec in me potero. Ille autem in se manens innouat omnia ; et dominus meus es, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. »

3. See A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, *Biblia Augustiniana. A.T. Le livre de la Sagesse* (Paris : Études Augustiniennes, 1970), pp. 157-158.

has pointed out that Augustine cited Wis 7 : 27b fifteen times⁴. The text is, however, also cited, at times with slight variations, in at least five other passages, e.g., in *Sermo CXVII* II, 3 : « *manens in se, innouans omnia*, » in *Sermo CLXXXVII* II, 2 : « *in se manens innouat omnia*, » in *Sermo CCCLXI* XVI, 16 : « *in se ipsa manens, innouans omnia*, » and *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus XXXVIII*, 11 : « *in se manet, et innouat omnia*. » Finally, *Sermo LII* II, 2 : « *diuinitatem apud se ipsam manentem, omnia innouantem*, » which is closer to being a citation than *Confessiones* I, iv, 4 or VII, ix, 14. There are, moreover, many other instances in which Augustine uses the phrase, « *manens in se* », or a variation of it, particularly in regard to the immutable Word of God. Hence, there is reason to take another look at Augustine's use of the phrase « *manens in se* ».

At least from the time of *De immortalitate animae*, written while he was still in Rome, Augustine was concerned with the problem of how something unchanging could, nonetheless, be the source of change in other things. It would, for example, seem that the doctrine of temporal creation implies a change in the Creator, and Augustine met such a challenge both from the Manichees and from philosophers⁵. Very early in his works, Augustine argued against such a view, using an analogy with the will of a human artist :

« From this we conclude that there can exist something that is not changed when it moves changeable things. For there is no change in mover's intention of bringing the body he moves to the end he wants, while that body in which the change takes place is changed from moment to moment by the same motion, and it is clear that the

4. Cf. A.-M. LA BONNARDIÈRE, *Le livre de la Sagesse*, pp. 157 and 283-284. The fifteen citations she points to are : *De libero arbitrio* II, 17, 1. 15 ; *De fide et symbolo* III, 3 ; *Sermo XII*, 10 ; *Confessiones* I, iv, 4 ; VII, ix, 14 ; and VII, ix, 17 ; *De natura boni* XXIV, 24 ; *De trinitate* II, 8 ; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* CIX, 12 ; CXXXVI, 7 ; and CXXXVIII, 8 ; *Epistulae* CXLVII, 19 and CCXXXVIII, 4 ; *Quaestiones euangeliorum* I, 28 ; and *De octo quaestionibus ex ueteri testamento* II. With regard to these, it should be noted that the text is cited twice in *De trinitate* II, 8 and twice in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* CIX, 12. On the other hand, *Confessiones* I, iv, 4 has only « *innouans omnia* » and VII, ix, 14 is an allusion rather than a citation, as we have seen. Other variations in the fifteen passages are slight, e.g., « *in se* » or « *in se ipsa* » for « *in se ipsa*. »

5. See T.J. VAN BAVEL, « The Creator and the Integrity of Creation in the Fathers of the Church especially in Saint Augustine, » *Augustinian Studies* 21 (1990), 1-33, esp. pp. 5-6, where he points out that pagan authors found a god who acts at a certain moment ridiculous. In *Confessiones* XI, x, 12-xii, 14 : *CCL XXVII*, 200-201, Augustine faced the Manichean question as to what God was doing before he created the world. In *De ciuitate Dei* XII, 18 : *CCL 373-374*, he faces a similar objection from philosophers who claimed, « *bonitas autem eius numquam uacua fuisse credenda est, ne sit temporalis eius operatio, cuius retro fuerit aeterna cessatio, quasi paenituerit eum prioris sine initio uacationis ac propterea sit operis adgressus initium...* » In response to such a view, he says, « *Nobis autem fas non est credere, aliter affici Deum cum uacat, aliter cum operatur ; quia nec affici dicendus est, tamquam in eius natura fiat aliquid, quod ante non fuerit... Potest ad opus nouum non nouum, sed sempiternum consilium...* »

intention of accomplishing this remains utterly unchanged, while it moves the limbs of the artist and the wood or stone subject to the artist. Who, then, has any doubt that the conclusion we stated follows⁶ ? »

1) *Early Citations of an Allusions to Wis 7 : 27b*

As early as the Cassiciacum dialogues, Augustine uses the phrase « *apud eum ... manens* » to illustrate how divine law is unchanged, despite its being imprinted upon the souls of the wise. He says :

« This doctrine is the very law of God. While always remaining fixed and unshaken with him, it is, as it were, transcribed into wise souls so that they know that they live better and more sublimely to the extent that they contemplate it more perfectly with their intellect and keep it more diligently in their lives⁷ ».

Once Licentius uses « *in se manens* » of the wise man who embraces and enjoys God. « Though immobile and remaining in himself, the wise man cares for the private goods of his slave so that as a diligent servant he uses him as valuable and guards him with thriftiness⁸ ».

In *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et Manichaeorum*, Augustine once speaks of the highest Good as that which is most truly ; he adds in explanation of its meaning. « For it is that which is said to be most truly. After all, this word signifies a nature that remains in itself and exists immutably. We can call it nothing other than God...⁹ »

Augustine alludes to Wis 7 : 27b once in *De musica* in an exercise in versification, where he again emphasizes that the truth remains unchanged though it is the source of change other things.

6. *De immortalitate animae* III, 4 : CSEL LXXXIX, 105 : « Hinc iam colligimus, posse esse quiddam quod cum mouet mutabilia, non mutatur. Cum enim non mutetur mouentis intentio perducendi ad finem quem uolet corpus quod mouet, illudque corpus de quo aliquid fit eodem motu per momenta mutetur, atque illa intentio perficiendi quam immutatam manere manifestum est, et ipsa membra artificis, et lignum aut lapidem artifici subiectum moueat, quis dubitet consequens esse quod dictum est ? »

7. *De ordine* II, viii, 25 : CCL XXIX, 121 : « Haec autem disciplina ipsa dei lex est, quae apud eum fixa et inconcussa semper manens in sapientes animas quasi transcribitur, ut tanto se sciant uiuere melius tantoque sublimius, quanto perfectius eam contemplantur intellegendo et uiuendo custodiunt diligentius. »

8. *De ordine* II, ii, 6 : CCL XXIX, 110 : « Curat autem immobilis et in se manens serui sui quodam modo peculium, ut eo tamquam frugi et diligens famulus bene utatur parceque custodiat. »

9. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et Manichaeorum* II, i, 1 : PL XXXII, 1346 : « Id enim est quod esse uerissime dicitur. Subest enim huic uerbo manentis in se atque incommutabiliter sese habentis naturae significatio. Hanc nihil aliud quam Deum possumus dicere... »

« You see all things made by the truth are set in order. The truth remains ; making new, it moves what is renewed¹⁰ ».

The first citation of Wis 7 : 27b in Augustine's works is found in the second book of *De libero arbitrio*, where he speaks of the form by which bodies and souls are formed :

« To that Form Scripture says, ' You will change them, and they will be changed, but you are the Selfsame, and your years will not fail ' (Ps 101 : 27-28). The prophetic language uses ' years without fail ' in place of ' eternity '. Of this Form Scripture likewise says that, ' while remaining in itself, it renews all things '¹¹ ».

Earlier in the same book, Augustine contrasted our mutable minds with the immutable Truth : « At times our minds see it less, at times more, and by this very fact they acknowledge that they are mutable, while, remaining in itself, it neither increases when it is seen by us more, nor decreases when it is seen by us less »¹². Once Augustine alludes to the verse in *De uera religione* where he speaks of the incorruptible truths that reasoning does not produce, but discovers. « Therefore, before they are discovered, they remain in themselves, and when they are discovered, they renew us »¹³.

In *De fide et symbolo*, Augustine contrasts the Word of God with our words which pass away. « After all, that Word remains immutably. For Scripture spoke of it, when it said of wisdom : ' While remaining in itself, it renews all things'¹⁴. ' » Similarly, the verse is cited in *De natura boni*, where Augustine applies the verse to God. « Thus Scripture says that God is immutable in the Psalms : ' You will change them, and they will be changed, but you are the Selfsame, ' and in the Book of Wisdom it says of wisdom : ' While remaining in itself, it renews all things'¹⁵. ' »

10. *De musica* IV, PL XXXII, 1132 ; « ueritate facta cuncta cernis ordinata, / ueritas manet, nouans mouet quod innouatur. »

11. *De libero arbitrio* II, xvii, 45 : CCL XXVII, 267 : « Cui formae dictum est : *mutabis ea et mutabuntur ; tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient. Annos sine defectu, pro aeternitate posuit prophetica locutio. De hac item forma dictum est, quod in seipsa manens innouat omnia.* »

12. *De libero arbitrio* II, xii, 34 : CCL XXVII, 260 : « Mentis enim nostrae aliquando eam minus aliquando eam plus uident et ex hoc fatentur se esse mutabiles, cum illa in se manens nec proficiat cum plus a nobis uidetur nec deficiat cum minus... »

13. *De uera religione* XXXIX, 73 : CCL XXXII, 235 : « Ergo antequam inueniantur, in se manent, et cum inueniantur, nos innouant. »

14. *De fide et symbolo* III, 3 : CSEL XLI, 6-7 : « Manet enim illud uerbum incommutabiliter. Nam de ipso dictum est, cum de sapientia diceretur : *in se ipsa manens innouat omnia.* »

15. *De natura boni* XXIV : CSEL XXV, 866 : « Itaque Deum esse incommutabilem sic scriptum est in psalmis : *Mutabilis ea, et mutabuntur ; tu autem idem ipse es ;* et in libro sapientiae de ipsa sapientia : *in se ipsa manens innouat omnia.* »

2) *Wis 7 : 27b in De trinitate*

There are two citations of *Wis 7 : 27b* in *De trinitate*, as well as eight allusions to the phrase. Referring to the Arians, Augustine says, that he will pass over « those who have thought in an excessively carnal manner that the nature of the Word of God and the Wisdom, which, 'remaining in itself, renews all things,' whom we call the only Son of God, is not only subject to change, but also visible¹⁶. » A few lines later, he explains that it is the immutability of the Word which is expressed in *Wis 7 : 27b*¹⁷. Later in the same book Augustine speaks of the Father as appearing to Adam and the Patriarchs through a visible creature, « though he remains in himself and in his substance by which he is immutable and invisible¹⁸. » In the fourth book, speaking of the Platonists, Augustine says that

« they refused to consider how it could be that the Word of God, while remaining in himself and not subject to change through himself in any respect, was able to suffer something more lowly through the assumption of a lower nature – something that an unclean demon could not suffer, because it does not have an earthly body¹⁹. »

Augustine alludes to *Wis 7 : 27b* twice in book five, while arguing that the Holy Spirit is a principle along with the Father and the Son.

« If whatever remains in itself and gives birth to something or produces something is a principle for that thing to which he gives birth or which it produces, we cannot deny that the Holy Spirit is rightly called a principle, since we cannot deprive him of the title of 'creator'. And Scripture says that he produces things, and he, of course, produces them, while remaining in himself. After all, he is not changed and transformed into any of those things which he produces²⁰. »

16. *De trinitate* II, viii, 14 : CCL L, 98 : « Omittamus igitur eos qui nimis carnaliter naturam verbi dei atque sapientiam quae in se ipsa manens innouat omnia, quem unicum filium dei dicimus, non solum mutabilem uerum etiam uisibilem esse putauerunt. »

17. *De trinitate* II, viii, 14 : CCL L, 99 : « Eadem quippe incommutabilitas eius commemorata est ut diceretur : in se ipsa manens innouat omnia. »

18. *De trinitate* II, x, 17 : CCL L, 103 : « cum ipse in se ipso atque in substantia sua qua est incommutabilis atque inuisibilis maneat. »

19. *De trinitate* IV, xiii, 18 : CCL L, 185 : « Nec sic uolunt considerare quae fieri potuerit ut in se manens nec per se ipsum ex ulla parte mutabile uerbum dei per inferioris tamen naturae susceptionem aliquid inferius pati posset quod immundus daemon quia terrenum corpus non habet, pati non possit. »

20. *De trinitate* V, xiii, 13 : CCL L, 221 : « Si autem quidquid in se manet et gignit aliquid uel operatur principium est ei rei quam gignit uel ei quem operatur, non possumus negare etiam spiritum sanctum recte dici principium quia non eum separamus ab appellatione creatoris. Et scriptum est de illo quo operetur, et utique in se manens operatur ; non enim in aliquid eorum quae operatur ipse mutatur et uertitur. »

Here the Holy Spirit is said to remain in himself, precisely because he is a principle for creatures without himself being changed into that of which he is the principle.

In the seventh book Augustine again describes wisdom as remaining in itself, even though a soul which participates in wisdom loses its wisdom. « Wisdom remains in itself, nor is it changed when a soul has changed to folly²¹. » Furthermore, Augustine points out that the case with wisdom is not like that of whiteness, since, when a white body has been changed to another color, the whiteness does not remain, but simply ceases to be²². Hence, wisdom remains in itself, because it is not dependent upon those things that participate in it, as an accidental form, such as whiteness, is dependent for its continued existence upon the subject which has it. In book eight, Augustine expresses much the same idea with regard to the Good which remains in itself, even though the soul, which is good by conversion toward it, loses its goodness by turning away²³. Finally, in book ten Augustine says that « the immutably good Son of God, remaining in himself what he was and receiving on our behalf what he was not, without loss to his nature, deigned to share in ours...²⁴ ».

3) *Wis 7 : 27b in the Homilies and Sermons*

There is one citation of Wis 7 : 27b in *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus*. When asked who he is, Jesus answers, « ' The principle. ' Behold, what it means to be. The principle cannot be changed ; the principle remains in itself and renews all things ; the principle is he to whom it was said, ' You are the Selfsame, and your years will not fail²⁵. ' » One other time, in speaking of the forms of the dove and of the fire in which the Holy Spirit appeared, Augustine says that these forms « were made by God for a time from a creature in his service, not from that ruling

21. *De trinitate* VII, i, 2 : CCL L, 248 : « Et quoniam quaecumque anima participatione sapientiae fit sapiens, si rursus desipiat, manet tamen in se sapientia ; nec cum fuerit anima in stultitiam commutata, illa mutatur. »

22. *De trinitate* VII, i, 2 : CCL L, 248 : « Non ita est in eo qui ex ea fit sapiens quemadmodum candor in corpore quod ex illo candidum est ; cum enim corpus in alium colorem fuerit commutatum, non manebit candor ille atque omnino esse desinet. »

23. *De trinitate* VIII, iii, 4 : CCL L, 273 : « Vnde se si rursus auertat fiatque non bonus, hoc ipso quod se auertit a bono, nisi maneat in se illud bonum unde se auertit, non est quo se iterum si uoluerit emendare conuertat. »

24. *De trinitate* XIII, x, 13 : CCL L/A, 400 : « Dei filius immutabiliter bonus in se manens quod erat et accipiens quod non erat praeter suae naturae detrimentum nostrae dignatus inire consortium... »

25. *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* XXXVIII, 11 : CCL XXXVI, 344 : « Et ille : *Principium*. Ecce quod est esse. Principium mutari non potest ; principium in se manet, et innouat omnia ; principium est, cui dictum est : *Tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient.* »

nature which, while remaining in itself, moves what it wills and changes what it wills, while remaining immutable²⁶. »

Augustine cites Wis 7 : 27b for the first time in his *Sermones* in 394 or 395, arguing against the Manichees that the substance of the Lord underwent no change at the Incarnation. He points out that the Manichees do not want to read or understand Ps 101 : 27-28 and « what is written in the words of divine wisdom concerning wisdom : ' remaining in itself, it renews all things²⁷. ' » However, he alludes to Wis 7 : 27b in an earlier Sermon where he says of God :

« For he is not increased in time, or stretched out in place, or enclosed or bounded by some matter, but he remains with himself and in himself full and perfect eternity, which human thought cannot comprehend nor the human tongue express.²⁸ »

In the years 410 to 412 Augustine cited Wis 7 : 27b once and alluded to it twice. In *Sermo* LII he speaks of « this ineffable divinity remaining with itself, while renewing all things, creating, recreating, sending, recalling, judging, setting free...²⁹ ». In *Sermo* CCCLXI he poses the rhetorical question :

« Could there die even that divinity, the Word equal to the Father, the art of the omnipotent artist, through whom all things were made, the immutable wisdom, remaining in itself, renewing all things, stretching from end to end with strength, arranging all things with gentleness³⁰ ? »

In another text from this period, Augustine says of the Word by way of contrast with human words :

« How much the more could the Word of God, through which all things were made and which, while remaining in itself, renews all things, which is not enclosed in places, nor stretched out by times, nor changed by short or long pauses, nor formed by sounds, nor

26. *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* IC, 2 : CCL XXXVI, 583 : « Ista... ad horam diuinitus facta sunt de creatura seruiente, non de ipsa dominante natura, quae in se manens quod uult movet, et quod uult immutabilis mutat. »

27. *Sermo* XII 10 : CCL XLI, 172 : « Et quod diuinae in sapientiae litteris de ipsa sapientia scriptum est : *in seipsa manens innouat omnia.* »

28. *Sermo* CCXV 2 : RB 68 (1958), 19 : « Non enim tempore augetur, aut loco distenditur, aut aliqua materia concluditur aut terminatur : sed manet apud se et in se ipso plena et perfecta aeternitas, quae nec comprehendere humana cogitatio potest, nec lingua narrare. »

29. *Sermo* LII II, 2 : PL XXXVIII, 355 : « hanc ineffabilem diuinitatem apud se ipsam manentem, omnia innouantem, creantem, recreantem, mittentem, reuocantem, iudicantem, liberantem... »

30. *Sermo* CCCLXI XVI, 16 : PL XXXIX, 1607 : « Illa etiam diuinitas uerbum aequale patri, ars omnipotentis artificis, per quem facta sunt omnia, incommutabilis sapientia, in se ipsa manens, innouans omnia, attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponens omnia suaviter, mori potuit ? »

ended by silence — how much the more could this so great a Word make the womb of his mother fruitful when he assumed a body, without leaving the bosom of the Father ?³¹ »

Some years later, in 418, Augustine says of the incomprehensible Word, « the Word does not benefit or increase as a knower approaches, but it is whole if you remain, whole if you depart, whole when you return ; remaining in itself and renewing all things. Hence, it is the form of all things, the form that is not made...³² ». In the undated *Sermo CCCLXXVII* Augustine expresses much the same idea : « He is not distended by places nor changed by times, nor does he have increase and decrease. Remaining in himself, as a whole he is everywhere. What spaces are there that are without the Omnipotent... ?³³ » Finally, in contrast with us who fall if we do not remain in him, Christ is not homeless if he does not remain in us. « After all, he knows how to remain in himself, who has never abandoned himself³⁴. »

4) *Wis 7 : 27b in Enarrationes in Psalmos*

Augustine cites *Wis 7 : 27b* twice in the *Enarrationes*, once in *Enarratio in Psalmum CXXXVI*, where he says that « we do not now breathe the air of that liberty ; we do not enjoy the purity of the truth and that wisdom, which, while remaining in itself, renews all things³⁵. » Again speaking of the immutable wisdom of God, in a passage where he makes the interesting distinction between immutability and immobility, Augustine says after citing *Ps 101 : 27-28* :

« And in another place when Scripture was speaking of wisdom, it says, ' While remaining in itself, it renews all things '. That wisdom, then, standing — if one should say ' standing ', for it is immutability, not immobility that is meant — and always existing

31. *Sermo CLXXXVII* II, 2 : *PL XXXVIII*, 1001 : « Quanto magis Verbum Dei, per quod facta sunt omnia, et quod in se manens innovat omnia ; quod nec locis concluditur, nec temporibus tenditur, nec morulis brevibus longisque uariatur, nec vocibus textitur, nec silentio terminatur ; quanto magis hoc tantum et tale uerbum potuit matris uterum assumpto corpore fecundare, et de sinu patris non emigrare. »

32. *Sermo CXVII* II, 3 : *PL XXXVIII*, 663 : « Non enim uerbum proficit aut crescit accedente cognitore : sed integrum, si permanseris ; integrum, si recesseris ; integrum, cum redieris ; manens in se, et innouans omnia. Ergo est forma omnium rerum, forma infabrica... »

33. *Sermo CCCLXXVII* 1 : *PL XXXIX*, 1672 : « Locis non distenditur, neque temporibus uariatur, neque habet accessus et recessus : in se manens, ubique circuit totus, quae sunt spatia quae non habent omnipotentem... ? »

34. *Sermo CXXXIV* I, 1 : *PL XXXVIII*, 743 : « Nouit enim ille manere in se, qui nunquam deserit se. »

35. *Enarratio in Psalmum CXXXVI* 7 : *CCLXL*, 1968 : « Non enim respiramus iam in auras illius libertatis ; non enim fruimur puritate ueritatis, et illa sapientia quae in seipsa manens innouat Omnia. »

in the same way, changed by no place, by no time, nowhere different whether here or there, never different whether now or before, is the very speech of God³⁶. »

He cites the verse with slight variations twice in *Enarratio in Psalmum* CIX 12. In comparison with the form of the servant, he says :

« The immutable Truth, which is the Word of God, God with God, through whom all things were made, while remaining in himself, renews all things. In order that we might see it, there is needed great and perfect purity of heart, which comes about through faith³⁷. »

Later in the same paragraph he says, « The brightness of God is ineffable light, the source of light without any mutability, the truth without defect, wisdom remaining in itself, renewing all things ; this is the substance of God³⁸. »

Augustine speaks of God as « remaining in himself » twice. Once, while warning against our thinking of God as in place, he says :

« Think nothing of the sort about God, who is contained by no place and who dwells in the mind of the pious. And God dwells in the hearts of men in such a way that, if man falls away from God, God remains in himself, not as if he would fall because he does not find a place to be³⁹. »

In a similar vein, he says that one should not think that one is a temple that supports God so that God would fall if one withdrew. « If God should withdraw, woe to that man, because it is he who falls, for God always remains in himself⁴⁰. » Three times Augustine speaks of the Word « remaining in himself » in contrast to what he has become for us. Having cited Jn 1 : 14, he says, « He has come down to you in such a way that he remains in himself : he came down to you to become your valley of tears ; he remained in himself to be your mountain of ascent⁴¹. » In

36. *Enarratio in Psalmum* CXXXVIII 8 : CCL XL, 1994-1995 : « Et alio loco de sapientia cum scriptura diceret : *in seipsa manens*, ait, *innouat omnia*. Illa ergo sapientia stans (si dici debet vel stans : dicitur autem propter incommutabilitatem, non propter immobilitatem) et eodem modo se semper habens, nullo loco, nullo tempore uariata, nusquam aliter quam hic aut ibi, numquam aliter quam nunc aut antea, ipsa est locutio Dei. »

37. *Enarratio in Psalmum* CIX 12 : CCL XL, 1612 : « Veritas enim incommutabilis quod est Verbum Dei, Deus apud Deum, per quem facta sunt omnia, in se manens innouat omnia, hanc ut uideamus, magna et perfecta cordis munditia necessaria est, quae fit per fidem. »

38. *Enarratio in Psalmum* CIX 12 : CCL XL, 1612 : « Haec claritas Dei est ineffabilis lux, fons lucis sine commutabilitate, ueritas sine defectu, sapientia in seipsa manens, innovans omnia : haec substantia Dei est. »

39. *Enarratio in Psalmum* XLV 9 : CCL XXXVIII, 523 : « Nihil tale cogitetis de Deo, qui nullo capitur loco, cui sedes est conscientia piorum ; et ita sedes Dei est in cordibus hominum, ut si homo cecederit a Deo, Deus in se manet, non quasi cadat, non inueniendo ubi sit. »

40. *Enarratio in Psalmum* CXXII 4 : CCL XL, 1817 : « Vae illi si se subtraxerit Deus, quia ipse cadit ; nam Deus in se semper manet. »

41. *Enarratio in Psalmum* CXIX 1 : CCL XL, 1777 : « Sic descendit ad te, ut maneret in

the following paragraph he says that John speaks to spiritual persons on heights, but that he descends to speak to the carnals. « In order that you might know that, when he comes down, he speaks of him who came down, see, John speaks of him who remains in himself : ‘ In the beginning was the Word...⁴² ’ ». Again, after citing Jn 1 : 14, he says :

« The Word remains in himself ; that is, he is the truth to which we come and which sets us free. But that he is preached as the word of faith in which the Lord wants us to remain in order that we might know the truth ; that means, ‘ The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us ’⁴³ »

Once Augustine contrasts those who remain in temporal pleasure with « eternal life » which « remains in itself. »⁴⁴

5) *Wis 7 : 27b in the Letters*

Augustine cites and alludes to Wis 7 : 27b several times in *Epistula CXLVII*. First, in discussing the theophanies of the Old Testament, he speaks of the nature of God as « remaining immutable with itself, » though some persons who are not clean of heart might see God in the form which his will produced⁴⁵. Secondly, he points out that « God produces these [visions] for those to whom he appears as he wills, for whom he wills, when he wills, while his substance is hidden and remains immutably in itself⁴⁶. » Immediately thereafter he uses almost the same phrase with reference to the human will’s ability to reveal itself to God through speech, « while remaining with itself and hidden without any change in itself ». He goes on to ask :

« How much more easily can almighty God, while his nature is hidden and remains

se : descendit ad te, ut fieret tibi conuallis plorationis ; mansit in se, ut esset tibi mons adscensionis. »

42. *Enarratio in Psalmum CXIX 2 : CCL XL, 1778* : « Nam ut sciatis quia dum descendit, de illo qui descendit loquitur ; ecce Iohannes manentem in se loquitur : *in principio erat uerbum...* »

43. *Enarratio in Psalmum CXXIII 2 : CCL XL, 1826* : « Quod ergo manet Verbum in se, ueritas est ad quam uenimus, et quae nos liberat ; quod autem praedicatur uerbum fidei, in quo nos uult Dominus permanere, ut cognoscamus ueritatem, hoc est : *Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.* »

44. *Enarratio in Psalmum CXXXVI 15 : CCL XL, 1974* : « Vita enim aeterna manet in se ; illi remanent in delectatione temporali. »

45. *Epistula CXLVII XV, 37 : CSEL XLIV, 310* : « Verum tamen non esse mirandum, si aliqui etiam non mundi corde uident deum in specie, quam uoluntas eius fecerit, latente inuisibili et apud se incommutabili manente natura. »

46. *Epistula CXLVII XIX, 47 : CSEL XLIV, 322-323* : « Facit enim istas [uisiones] deus, quibus, ut uult, cui uult, quando uult, appareat sua latente atque in se incommutabiliter manente substantia. »

unchangeably, appear in whatever form he wills to whomever he wills, since he created all things from nothing and, while remaining in himself, he renews all things⁴⁷. »

In *Epistula* CLXX, he says of the Father that he « did not lessen himself in order that he might have the Son from himself, but he begot from himself an other than himself so that he might remain whole in himself and might be in the Son as great as he is alone⁴⁸. » In *Epistula* CLXXXVII, Augustine states that God, « while remaining in himself by his eternal stability, is able to be present whole to all things and whole to each of them, although those in whom he dwells have him, some more than others in accord with their different capacities...⁴⁹ » Finally, Augustine says against the Arians :

« If that wisdom of which Scripture said, ' it reaches everywhere because of its purity ' and ' nothing impure enters it ' and ' while remaining in itself, it renews all things '... is corruptible, I do not know what to say except that I grieve over man's presumption and that I am amazed at God's patience⁵⁰. »

6) Other Occurrences of Wis 7 : 27b

Augustine alludes to Wis 7 : 27b three times in *De Genesi ad litteram*. He says that the intellectual creature is formed when it is converted to its principle, the light of wisdom.

« The principle of the intellectual creature is, of course, eternal wisdom, and that principle, remaining in itself immutably, never ceases to speak by the hidden inspiration of his call to that creature whose principle it is in order that it might be converted to that from which it has its being. Otherwise, it could not be formed and perfect⁵¹. »

47. *Epistula* CXLVII XIX, 47 : *CSEL* XLIV, 323 : « Si enim uoluntas nostra apud se manens et latens sine ulla sui commutatione, per quas se utcumque ostendat, exprimit uoces, quanto facilius deus omnipotens sua latente et incommutabiliter manente natura, in qua uoluerit specie, potest, cui uoluerit, apparere, qui ex nihilo creauit omnia atque in se manens innouat omnia. »

48. *Epistula* CLXX 5 : *CSEL* XLIV, 625 : « Neque enim Pater, ut haberet filium de se ipso, minuit se ipsum, sed ita genuit de se alterum se, ut totus maneret in se et esset in filio tantus quantus est solus. »

49. *Epistula* CLXXXVII VI, 19 : *CSEL* LVII, 98 : « Sed aeterna stabilitate in se ipso manens totus adesse rebus omnibus potest et singulis totus, quamuis, in quibus habitat, habeant eum pro suae capacitatis diuersitate alii amplius alii minus... »

50. *Epistula* CCXXXVIII IV, 23 : *CSEL* LVII, 551-552 : « Iam uero sapientia illa, de qua dictum est : *adtingit ubique propter munditiam* et : *nihil inquinatum in eam incurrit* et : *in se ipsa manens innouat omnia*... si corruptibilis est, nescio quid dicam, nisi ut doleam praesumptionem humanam et mirer patientiam diuinam. »

51. *De Genesi ad litteram* I, v, 10 : *BA* 48, 94 : « Principium quippe creaturae intellectualis est aeterna sapientia : quod principium manens in se incommutabiliter nullo modo cessaret occulta inspiratione uocationis loqui ei creaturae, cui principium est, ut conuerteretur ad id, ex quo esset, quo aliter formata et perfecta esse non posset. »

Once he says that the whole of creation « does not remain in itself, but in him of whom Scripture says, 'In him we live and move and have our being⁵².' » Augustine adds in explanation that, though each part of creation is in the whole, the whole exists only in him by whom it was created. Again in the context of the angelic creature's conversion to its God, Augustine says, « And thus, while [God] remains in himself, he turns back toward himself whatever has its origin from him so that every creature might have in him the limit of its nature where it is not what he is, but has that place of rest in him where it might preserve what it is⁵³.

Once in *De ciuitate dei* Augustine uses the phrase « *in se incommutabiliter manens* » of the Son. « The grace of God could not be more graciously presented than that the only Son of God, while remaining in himself immutably, put on a man and gave the Spirit of his love to men by the mediation of a man...⁵⁴ ». In *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, while commenting on the Pauline phrase « *et habitu inuentus ut homo*, » Augustine explains his comparison of the assumed human nature to a garment. He points out that there are four kinds of « *habitus* ». First, some things which come to us and produce a habit « are not changed by us, but change us into themselves, while they remain whole and unaffected, as wisdom itself is not changed when it comes to someone, but changes the person from foolish to wise⁵⁵. » Second, there are things which both change the things to which they come and are changed by them, such as the food we eat. Third, there are those things which are changed by the things to which they come, but do not change them. For example, a robe's shape is changed when we put it on or take it off, without our being changed. Fourth, some things neither change the things to which they come nor are changed by them, such as a ring put on a finger⁵⁶. The « *habit* » in question is not one of the first kind, « for the nature of man, while remaining in itself, did not change the nature of God⁵⁷. » It is not one of the second

52. *De Genesi ad litteram* IV, xviii, 32 : BA 48, 322 ; « Neque enim caelum et terra et omnia, quae in eis sunt, uniuersa scilicet spiritalis corporalisque creatura in se ipsa manet, sed utique in illo, de quo dictum est : *in illo enim uiuimus et mouemur et sumus...* »

53. *De Genesi ad litteram* IV, xviii, 34 : BA 48, 326 : « Et ideo, dum ipse manet in se, quidquid ex illo est retorquet ad se, ut omnis creatura in se habeat naturae suae terminum, quo non sit, quod ipse est, in illo autem quietis locum, quo seruet, quod ipsa est. »

54. *De ciuitate dei* X, 29 : CCL XLVII, 305 : « Gratia Dei non potuit gratius commendari, quam ut ipse unicus Dei Filius in se incommutabiliter manens indueretur hominem et spiritum dilectionis suae daret hominibus homine medio... »

55. *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, qu. 73, 1 : CCL XLIV/A, 209-210 : « Verumtamen hoc interest, quod quaedam eorum quae accidunt nobis ut habitum faciant non mutantur a nobis, sed ipsa nos mutant in se, ipsa integra et inconcussa manentia, sicuti sapientia cum accidit homini non ipsa mutatur, sed hominem mutat, quem de stulto sapientem facit. »

56. Augustine confesses that this fourth kind really does not exist, if one looks at the matter with care.

57. *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, qu. 73, 2 : CCL XLIV/A, 211 : « Iste autem habitus non est ex primo genere, non enim manens in se natura hominis naturam dei commutauit. »

kind, since the man did not change God, while being also changed by him. Nor is it an example of the fourth kind, since in that case the man would not have been assumed by the Word. Hence, the « habit » in question is the third sort. While the Word remains unchanged in himself, the human nature « is assumed so that it is changed for the better and is formed by [the Word] with inexpressably more excellence and greater unity than a garment when one puts it on⁵⁸. »

Augustine cites Wis 7 : 27b in *De octo quaestionibus ex ueteri testamento*, in explaining that all of creation eternally existed in the divine art, though it unfolds gradually through time.

« Thus every creature, even that man who was going to receive in an inexpressible manner and bear mystically the person of the same Wisdom, always existed in that wisdom as if in the eternal art of God, though it brings about individual things in their own times. It stretches from end to end with power and arranges all things graciously ; while remaining in itself, it renews all things⁵⁹. »

In *Contra Faustum* Augustine explains that, because the Manichees can only think with bodily images, they « do not at all grasp how the Word of God, the power and wisdom of God, while both remaining in himself and with the Father and ruling all of creation, stretches from end to end mightily and arranges all things graciously⁶⁰. »

In *De doctrina christiana* Augustine compares the vocal expression of our mental word to the incarnation of the Word of God.

« The word which we bear in the heart becomes a sound and is called speech, and yet our thought is not transformed into that sound. Rather, while remaining whole with itself, it assumes the form of the spoken word by which it is conveyed to our ears without any taint of change. So the Word of God, without being changed, nonetheless became flesh...⁶¹ »

Augustine cites Wis 7 : 27b once in *Quaestiones euangeliorum*. He contrasts the

58. *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, qu. 73, 2 : CCL XLIV/A. 211 : « sic enim assumptus, est, ut commutaretur in melius, et ab eo formaretur ineffabiliter excellentius atque coniunctius quam uestis ab homine cum induitur. »

59. *De octo quaestionibus ex ueteri testamento* 1. 25 : « Sic omnis creatura et ipse homo qui eiusdem sapientiae personam mystice et inenarrabili susceptione gestaturus erat, in ipsa sapientia tamquam dei arte sempiterna semper erat, quamuis suis quaeque temporibus efficiat, quae pertendit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter, quae in se manens innouat omnia. »

60. *Contra Faustum* XXIII, 10 : CSEL XXV/2, 716 : « Ista omnino non capitis, quomodo dei uerbum, dei uirtus et sapientia et in se manens et apud patrem et uniuersam creaturam regens pertendat a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponat omnia suaviter. »

61. *De doctrina christiana* I, xiii, 12 : CCL XXXII, 13 : « fit sonus uerbum quod corde gestamus, et locutio uocatur, nec tamen in eundem sonum cogitatio nostra conuertitur, sed apud se manens integra, forman uocis qua se insinuet auribus, sine aliqua labe suae mutationis adsumit : ita uerbum dei non commutatum caro tamen factum est... »

temporal economy with « the eternity of the Word, which, while remaining in itself, renews all things⁶². » Once he says that, though numbers can vary due to the lack or presence of one, « the One itself, remaining in itself without any variation, perfects, when it approaches⁶³. »

Augustine clearly makes use of the phrase « *manens in se* » in its various forms chiefly in reference to the Word of God, often under the title of Wisdom or Truth, though he also uses the phrase in reference to God or the divine nature and a few times in explicit reference to the Father or in reference to the Holy Spirit. There are several times that he uses the expression of the human mind which need not be changed, though it produces change. At least once the phrase is used of the human nature of Christ assumed in the incarnation. Nonetheless, Augustine uses the phrase most often in reference to God and especially in reference to the Word. Though the phrase connotes immutability – or at least the absence of change – in that of which it is predicated, it is almost always used in a context where absence of change is asserted, despite what might seem grounds for its subject being changed. Augustine, that is, tends to use the phrase, as well as the verse from the Book of Wisdom in which it occurs, in contexts where he not merely affirms the immutability of God or of the Word or lack of change in a creature, but does so *despite* the fact that God or the Word or the human mind is the source of change in other things.

7) Sources of the Phrase « *manens in se* »

The frequent citation of Wis 7 : 27b is strong evidence that the principal source of the expression « *manens in se* » is the Book of Wisdom. There is, however, Augustine's explicit statement in *Confessions* VII, ix, 14 that he found this doctrine in the *libri Platoniorum* that he read in those momentous months prior to his baptism at Easter in 386. In his recent commentary on this passage in the *Confessions*, James J. O'Donnell has pointed out that « [t]he text of Wisd. is similar to Plot. 6.5.10.1, μένει οὖν ἐν ἑαυτῷ σωφρονοῦν, a passage with numerous parallels to the part of *lib. arb.* just cited (i.e., II, xii, 24)⁶⁴. »

There are in fact a number of texts in Plotinus in which Augustine could have found this phrase and this idea. Scholars remain quite divided on the issue of which *Enneads* Augustine read and when he read them⁶⁵. However, in *Ennead* I,

62. *Quaestiones euangeliorum* I, 28 : CCL XLIV/B, 23 : « Non enim sicut illa dispensatio temporalis ita etiam uerbi aeternitas transit, quae in se ipsa manens innouat omnia. »

63. *Quaestiones euangeliorum* II, 32 : CCL XLVI/B, 73 : « ipsum uero unum sine uarietate in se manens cum accesserit perficit... »

64. J.J. O'DONNELL, *Augustine : Confessions : Volume II : Commentary Book 1-7* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 447, where he refers to R.J. O'CONNELL, « Ennead VI, 4-5 in the Works of St. Augustine », *Revue des études augustiniennes* 9 (1963), 22.

65. A. Solignac, for example, listed in his introduction to *Les Confessions*, BA 13, p. 110 the following *Enneads* as ones that Augustine certainly read : I, 6 « On Beauty » ; I, 8 « On the

6 « On Beauty » – which is admitted to be one read by Augustine, even by those who would insist that Augustine read only « a very few books of Plotinus⁶⁶ », Augustine certainly found a text similar to Wis 7 : 27b. There Plotinus says of absolute beauty, « If then one sees that which provides for all and, remaining by itself (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ δὲ μένον, gives to all but receives nothing into itself, if he abides in the contemplation of this kind of beauty and rejoices in being made like it, how can he need any other beauty⁶⁷ ? » Similarly, in *Ennead* I, 8, which Augustine at least very probably read, Plotinus says of the Intellect that it « is the first act of the Good and the first being, while the Good remains in itself » (ἐκείνου μένοντος ἐν ἑαυτῷ)⁶⁸. So too, in *Ennead* VI, 9, Plotinus says of the One that « it is the source of the best things and the power generating beings, though it remains in itself (μένουσαν ἐν ἑαυτῇ) and is not diminished⁶⁹. » Augustine could have or, in some cases, most probably did read in the Latin translations of the *Enneads* the phrase, « *manens in se*. » Though Plotinus is speaking of the transcendent One, the Good, or absolute beauty, he uses the phrase in contexts where he stresses the immutable transcendence of the One, the Good, or absolute beauty, *despite* its bestowing beauty on all else or *despite* its generating beings or producing other good things which depend upon it. That is, the phrase occurs in Plotinus in contexts where he is teaching the undiminished sameness of the One, despite its activity in the world.

Hence, from a sampling of texts from the *Enneads* which Augustine certainly or at least very probably read, it is clear that Augustine could have found – or at least could have thought that he found – in the philosophy of Plotinus much the same idea that he found in his Bible in Wis 7 : 27b. One must, of course, admit

Origin of Evil » ; V, 1, « The Three Principal Hypostases » ; V, 2 « On the Origin and Order of Beings Following on the First » ; and III, 2-3 « On Providence. » He adds as ones which Augustine very probably read : V, 3 « On the Knowing Hypostases and the « Transcendent » ; VI, 6 « On Numbers » ; VI, 9 « On the Good or the One » and IV, 7 « On the Immortality of the Soul. » E. TeSelle adds to the list of those he believes that Augustine certainly read : IV, 3-4 « On the Soul » and VI, 4-5 « How That Which is One and the Same Can Be Everywhere, » while dropping I, 8 to the second group and dropping V, 2 from his list entirely. To the second group TeSelle adds : I, 2 « On the Virtues » ; I, 4 « On Happiness » ; III, 7 « On Eternity and Time » ; and V, 8 « On Intelligible Beauty » (E. TESELLE, *Augustine the Theologian*, pp. 43-45). For the current state of the question, see the articles by R.J. O'CONNELL and F. VAN FLETEREN in *Augustinian Studies* 21 (1990).

66. *De beata uita* I, 4 : CCLXXIX, 67 : « Lectis autem Plotini paucissimis libris... » See also the reference to the Neoplatonist writings in *Contra academicos* II, ii, 5 : CCLXXIX, 20 where Augustine speaks of *unguenti guttas paucissimas* that caused his love of philosophy to burst into flame.

67. *Ennead* I, 6, 7, 11. 25-28 ; the translation is mine and slightly modifies that of A.H. ARMSTRONG in Plotinus, *Ennead I* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 255.

68. *Ennead* I, 8, 2, 11. 21-22 ; the translation is mine and slightly modifies that of A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus I*, p. 281.

69. *Ennead* VI, 9, 5, 11. 36-37 ; my translation.

that Augustine – or perhaps the translator of the *Enneads* into Latin – had seen in the One of Plotinus the God Who Is of Exodus. But given this very basic shift in metaphysical perspective, he could have seen in both Wis 7 : 27b and in Plotinus the same idea, an idea that might, in almost every case, be summed up as saying that a higher reality can act upon the lower, while the higher reality remains unchanged,⁷⁰ or that the immutable God can act in the world, while remaining in himself absolutely unchanged.

Conclusion

Any philosopher or theologian in the theistic tradition is faced with the problem of reconciling the theses that God is absolutely immutable and that he is, nonetheless, active in the world at particular places and times. For the Christian theologian the Incarnation of the Word poses this problem in its sharpest possible form, for it means that the absolutely immutable Word of God, without any change to the Word, assumed into union with his person a mutable human nature at a particular time and place in human history. As early as the *De immortalitate animae*, Augustine was grappling with the problem of the immutable God active in human history. His frequent allusions to and citations of Wis 7 : 27b, at least from the time of *De libero arbitrio*, indicate that he found in that text of Scripture grounds for believing that Wisdom could remain immutable in itself, while making all things new. In his writings Augustine used Wis 7 : 27b most frequently and fruitfully, though not exclusively, in thinking of the immutability of the Word despite the Word's entrance into human history. Augustine tells us in *Confessions* VII, ix, 14, that he found in the *libri Platoniorum* that the Son remains coeternal with the Father above all time, that souls receive of his fullness, and that they are renewed by participation in wisdom, but that he did not find there that the Word became flesh, suffered, and died. Though Augustine did not find in Wis 7 : 27b or in Plotinus that the Word personally entered human history, he did find there that, while remaining immutable, God could act in the world. It is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that what he believed when he read Wis 7 : 27b, he came to understand when he encountered it in the philosophy of Plotinus and that he was able to extend the basic insight to his thinking of the Incarnation, the mystery of the eternal Word's entrance into human time and history, while remaining immutable in himself.

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70. The one obvious exception to this is the passage in *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, qu. 73, 2 (see note 57), where Augustine speaks of the human nature of Christ remaining in itself.

SUMMARY : We can find in Augustine's work several allusions to *Wis. 7 : 27b : in seipsa manens innouat omnia*. It is therefore an evidence that the principal source of the expression *manens in se*, frequently used by the African bishop, is the Book of Wisdom. Augustine says in *Confessions VII, ix, 14* that he found this doctrine in the *libri platonicorum*. The study shows that he could easily have found this phrase in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, and the idea too that while remaining immutable, God could act in the world. (A.D.)