SUMMA OF THE SUMMA

CHAPTERS SEVEN AND EIGHT

Question Seven

THE INFINITY OF GOD

Article One: Whether god Is Infinite?

I answer that—There has been a gross error regarding the first principle. The error has to do with associating a material thing being the first principle. That is from something material all things exist as a result of some cosmic event that happened completely by itself. Therefore, this is what always existed and brought forth actively or passively all that came about after it. That is to say something completely impersonal brought about all persons. Rather than someone being the first person brought about all persons to follow. One could say that all persons come into existence because the first person so willed it. By definition, a person is one who has a will and a purpose to live out. TA says, “matter is perfected by the form by which it is made finite: therefore infinite as attributed to matter, has the nature of something imperfect; for it is as it were formless matter. On the other hand form is not made perfect by matter, but rather is contracted by matter, and hence the infinite, regarded on the part of the form not determined by matter, has the nature of something perfect. “ The conclusion of the subject is that since divine personhood or being is self-existent and therefore follows after none, it is clear that God Himself is infinite and perfect.

Article Two: Whether Anything but God Can Be Essentially Infinite?

Objection One: The appearance of an infinite God with infinite power has the potential to produce an essential infinite essence.

I answer that: This might sound quite the natural conclusion. However, TA points out that the issue here is not infinitude so much as absolute infinitude. “Things other than God can be relatively infinite, but not absolutely infinite. PK clarifies this answer by giving the example in mathematics that all positive integers are infinite. But that is only the half of it. For it is also true that there also exists an infinity of negative integers.

Reply Obj. One: By definition a created thing cannot be absolutely infinite because its essence cannot be its existence by its nature. “Therefore the made thing by its nature cannot be absolutely infinite.”

Article Three: Whether an Actually Infinite Magnitude Can Exist?

On the contrary: PK reminds in note 54 that there are two false infinities that perplex man’s understanding of absolute infinity. They are the infinity imagined in terms of size and in terms of a line. That is the concept of an object being so big that it has no size limitations. But this cannot exist because nothing else could exist if a material object had absolute infinity because there would be no room for anything but itself. This idea also applies to an infinite multitude. The conclusion is that nothing can be infinite in magnitude.

Article Four: Whether an Infinite Multitude Can Exist?

I answer that: One can conceive of an infinite multitude as possible without the existence of the reality of it. Take for instance a ring and the infinite number of revolutions one can conceive by the nature of the shape of the ring. How many revolutions can be made? They are infinite. But the revolutions do not exist in infinity. However, the one divine person, the first principle does exist as infinite absolutely.

Questions and Answers on Chapter Seven

1. What is the problem with the first principle not being a person? That excludes the existence of the absolute divine essence without any proof.

2. Who has proved that God does not exist in eternity past, present and future? No one, because not a single creature can exist before it is created so there can be no experiential nor ontological evidence retrievable to prove the non-existence of an absolutely infinite divine person.

3. How can an object be essentially infinite? It can’t by nature of its own limitations. The key here is absolute essentiality. Only God is truly essential. Nothing in terms of the effects of the first cause has to exist. By nature, the absolute essentially infinite person exists without beginning and without end.

4. According to TA, why can a potentially infinite multitude be possible? Because the more a thing is divided, a greater number of things result.

Question Eight

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IN THINGS

Article One: Whether God Is in All Things?

Objection One: God is above all things. Therefore He cannot be wholly in all things.

Obj. Two: Augustine says that in Him things are, rather than He is in any place. God contains all and is not contained by things. “Therefore, God is not in things; but things are rather in Him.”

Objection Three: God is not necessarily required to be in all things because He is the most powerful of all agents. Therefore, God goes far beyond all known creation and is removed from things by the progression of creation. That is, God is near due imminent proximity, but not necessarily to all things.

Obj. Four: By definition the demons are opposed to God they are darkness without the light of God. Therefore, God cannot be within them.

On the contrary: God is in all things because God wrought all our works according to Isaiah 26:12. This is true because “a thing is wherever it operates.” And God operates everywhere. (See article two)

I answer that: God interfaces with his creation. The effect is not just a “touch and go” situation. The thing touched is also sustained by who did the touching. For without the life giver continually giving life there can exist no life. Once God removes the life of the creature the animation of the created thing is removed. Also when TA says, “Therefore, as long as the thing has being, God must be present to it, according to its mode of being...Hence it must be that God is in all things, and innermostly.”

Reply to Obj. One: Yes, it is true that God is above all things, but this does not exclude, by the excellence of his nature from being in all things.

Reply to Obj. Two: “All things are in God; inasmuch as they are contained by Him just as the soul contains the body in that the soul is not limited to the body.

Reply to Obj. Three: God is not distant to his creation. The distance is purely maintained by the creature. This distance is only by the unlikeness to Him in nature or grace, but not distant from Him as to be without God in itself.

Reply to Obj. Four: God and demons don’t mix. Demons have their nature from God, but the deformity of sin is not from God and therefore, “it is not to be absolutely conceded that God is in the demons, except with the addition, *inasmuch as they are beings.*”

Article Two: Whether God Is Everywhere?

On the contrary: “It is written, *I fill heaven and earth.* (Jer. 23:24)

I answer that: “God gives being to the things that fills every place, He Himself fills every place.” God fills every place but not like a body fills space. Just because God is present in one place does not exclude his being in any other place. Two things of physical being cannot occupy the same space, but the spiritual and the physical certainly do. The Bible tells us that God is Spirit. He did not contain Himself by a physical body. Jesus always spoke of His Father in Heaven. On the cross, He spoke, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.” God chose to limit himself in a body, but only in the second person of the trinity for thirty-three years.

Article Three: Whether God Is Everywhere by Essence, Presence, and Power?

I answer that: “Therefore, God is in all things by His power, inasmuch as all things are subject to His power; He is by His presence in all things, as all things are bare and open to His eyes; He is in all things by His essence, inasmuch as He is present to all as the cause of their being.”

Questions and Answers on Chapter 8

1. What makes something that is above what is made? Why does this require that something made also contains what or who made it? God is the Potter and we are the clay according Jeremiah chapter 18. “Therefore, God is in what He makes, not as a part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works.”

2. How can God be everywhere? God by definition is everywhere present. God is not a thing which is contained, but He is the Supreme Being by the fact of giving being to the things that fill every place. He Himself fills every place.

3. In what two ways does TA say that God is said to be in a thing? In one way after the manner of an efficient cause; and thus He is in all things created by Him; in another way He is in things as the object of operation is in the operator; and this is proper to the operations of the soul, accordingly as the thing known is in the one who knows, and the thing desired in the one desiring.