SUMMA OF THE SUMMA

Chapter 9

The immutability of God

Article One: Whether God Is Altogether Immutable?

Obj. 3... This objection brings out the inevitable concern that if there exists movement in God there can be change in God. The verse quoted is James 4:8 *“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”* This implies that God changes since in relationship to mankind there is movement.

On the Contrary: The Scripture verse Malachi 3:6 says it so well, *“I am the Lord, and I change not.”*

I answer that: TA indicates that God is pure act without admixture of any potentiality. Change always introduces potentiality. “Potentiality is posterior to act.” Potentials and actions do not mix with God. “From what precedes, it is shown that God is altogether immutable.” The second thought proposed on the article is that God is simple and not a kind of composition. God is not moved nor is He moveable. “Hence it is manifest that God is not changeable.” The third answer proposed by TA is that something moved gains or loses something in the process and therefore indicates change is required upon the mover. But God is infinite as was established in two chapters before. God cannot acquire anything to His being which adds or subtracts from Him since He is perfect and complete. Hence movement in no way belongs to Him.

Living in a changing world and relating to an unchanging God would not be entirely possible. (See note 64 on page 105 by PA) Knowing God requires that God is knowable. If God continually changes into something other than was previously known about this God, then a loving relationship could not be established since knowing another always precedes loving a person

Article Two: Whether to Be Immutable Belongs to God Alone?

On the Contrary: Augustine indicates that God alone is unchanging and what God has made from nothing does change.

I answer that: Yes, “God alone is altogether immutable; whereas, every creature is in some way mutable.” This is so because the creature is brought into existence by another. And also the creature is producible from nothing by Him, and are by Him reducible from existence to non-existence.

Questions and Answers on Chapter 9

1. So why be concerned whether God is immutable or not? If God is changeable then one can also wonder if God will manifest Himself to creation in a totally different manner communicating potential changes which contradicts the idea that God is not moved or is not moveable. For in Him there is no potentiality since the absolute God is pure act.

2. What is the critical difference between God’s immutable nature and His creation’s mutable nature? God is in no way mutable and His creation is only in remote ways unchanging, certainly not absolutely immutable.

Chapter 10

The Eternity of God

Article One: Whether This Is a Good Definition of Eternity, “The Simultaneously-Whole and Perfect Possession of Interminable Life”?

I answer that: There exists no before and after in the Absolute God. The knowledge of eternity is made evident by the existence of time. If time were not created by God there would be no distinct awareness of eternity because there would be no succession. Everything would exist simultaneously and without end. Movement implies the passing of time, but with God there is no movement for He is always in the now. There is no past or future in God. He is! Further, everything that is moved has a beginning and an end. With God there is no beginning and certainly no end. The two sources from which eternity is known is that it has no beginning and no ending and eternity has no progression or succession and is whole and entire in and of itself.

Article two: Whether God Is Eternal?

Obj. 4: Since Scripture reminds us that God is spoken of in terms of time indicators such as words indicating present, past and future God cannot be eternal.

Reply to Obj. 1: Eternity only touches time in the present for the now stands still. Even though God interacts with those within time, it in no ways omits His eternality.

Question 10 cont.

Reply to Obj. 4: God is not altered by the past, present or the future. His eternity includes all three According to Pk, in note 73, aeviternity is the mode of existence or duration of angels. Medieval astronomy taught it was also the mode of existence of the changeless heavenly bodies This duration has simultaneous quality, but not before and after. According to PK in note 74 angels and the heavenly bodies are linked. In that stars were thought to be made of different matter than the things of earth. Angels have an unchangeable quality of being as regards to their nature with changeableness. “ They have a changeableness of intelligence, of affections, and of places, in their own degree. They are measured by their aeviternity, which is a mean between eternity and time.”

Reply Obj. 2: Aeviternity is not eternity even though it is simultaneously whole. This is because before and after are compatible with it in that it can have both after and before annexed to it.

Questions and Answers for Chapter 10

1. What are the two parts of a good definition of eternity according to TA? “First, because what is eternal is immutable—that is , has no beginning nor end, (that is no term either way); secondly, because eternity has no succession, being simultaneously whole...””

2. What are the distinguishing factors of God being eternal? God is not tied to a present, past or future. He exists outside of time and is in no way limited to it. The eternity of God includes all times; yet not as if God is changed in any way throughout the passing of time or in eternity. God is absolutely and substantially simultaneous.

3. According to Jerome, does eternity belong to God alone? Why or why not? God is the only one who is eternal since He is the only one who has no beginning.

4. How does eternity differ from time? Eternity is simultaneously whole. But time has a before and after. Therefore time and eternity are not the same thing.

5. According to TA what is the key distinguishing factor between eternity and time? It is not that eternity has no beginning and end , but that the absolute difference is that eternity is simultaneously whole...

6. What is aeviternity according to PK? In note 73, aeviternity is the mode of existence or duration of angels. Medieval astronomy taught it was also the mode of existence of the changeless heavenly bodies.

7. So what does aeviternity have to do with eternity anyway? Aeviternity is a mean between time and eternity. It includes parts of each, is completely neither either. TA states that aeviternity helps us to understand the nature, similarities and difference between angels who are between time and eternity.