

Question 56. Of the Angel's Knowledge of Immaterial things (Three Articles)

Article One: Does and Angel know himself?

Obj. 1: Angels do not know themselves according to Dionysius because they do not understand their own powers except when their substance is known. On this basis Angels cannot know their own existence.

Obj. 2: Angels only possess knowledge which is intellectual. Act belongs to single subsistences and Angels are single substance and nothing single is intelligible.

Obj. 3: De Anima iii, 4 states that understanding is a kind of passion. An Angel cannot understand himself because no intelligible object is moved by itself passively as appears in corporeal things and the intellect is moved by the intelligible object.

On the Contrary: Augustine said in Gen. ad lit. ii the "the angel knew himself when he was established, that is, enlightened by truth."

I answer that: "If in the order of intelligible beings there be any subsisting, intelligible form, it will understand itself. And since an angel is immaterial, he is a subsisting form, and, consequently, he is actually intelligible. Hence it follows that he understands himself by his form, which is his substance."

Reply to Obj. 1: This objection is clearly due to a translation problem. The objection uses the old translation. The new one clarifies the phrase "they did not know their own powers to "knew their powers."

Reply to Obj. 2: "If there be any single things subsisting without matter, the angels are; there is nothing to prevent them from being actually intelligible."

Reply to Obj. 3: It belongs to the intellect, in so far as it is in potentiality, to be moved and to be passive. It follows that this does not happen in the angelic intellect, especially as regards the fact that he understands himself.

Article Two: Whether one angel knows another?

Obj. 1: "Since the angelic intellect has within itself some one determinate nature from the number of such natures, it would seem that it cannot understand other natures."

Obj. 2: Angels are aware of other angels being above or lower in terms of role or cause. Therefore, an angel is not the cause of another angel and in that sense an angel does not know another angel.

Question 56 Article 2 obj. 3

Obj. 3: "One angel cannot be known to another angel by the essence of the one knowing; because all knowledge is effected by way of a likeness. But the essence of the angel knowing is not like the essence of the angel known.

Obj. 4: In no way an angel can be known by another angel because if angels did know one another it would not be all angels for they are only able to comprehend their own species.

On the Contrary: De Causis states that "every intelligence knows the things which are not corrupted."

I answer that: God impressed angels with images of other things he produced in their own natural being. This is understood that the Word of God is Eternal and therefore, the angel knows himself and other creatures because of the Eternal Word of God.

Reply to obj. 1: The nature of an angel does not hinder him from knowing the other angelic natures. The varying degrees of perfection provide the only variation in knowledge of other angelic beings.

Reply to obj. 2: Cause and effect does not lead an angel to know or not know another. What matters most here is likeness without causality on account of likeness.

Reply to obj. 3: An angel knows another by the species of such angel existing in his intellect, which differs from the angel whose image it is, not according to material and immaterial nature, but according to natural and intentional existence.

Reply to obj. 4: On the basis that God is building a universe full of creatures it would only make sense that God would give angels an ability to distinguish themselves from one another.

Article Three: Whether an angel knows God by his own natural principles?

Obj. 1: God is remote from all knowledge so angels created by God cannot know God by natural principles.

Obj. 2: God is unreachable because God is infinitely greater than the created angels so that they cannot know God by natural principles.

Obj. 3: It has been shown before in Q12, A4 that an angel cannot have the former knowledge by his natural principles. 1 Cor. 13:12 speaks of seeing through a glass darkly implying that we cannot see God face to face now, but only as in a mirror. But angels do not gain their knowledge through sensible things, as Dionysius observes (Div. Nom. Vii). Therefore the angels cannot know God by their natural powers.

Question 56 Article 3 On the Contrary

On the contrary: According to Rom. 1:19 man knows God for the knowledge of God is in them. If men can know God by natural principles and angels are mightier than men it stands to reason that angels can know God by their natural powers.

I answer that: An angel has some knowledge of God by its own principles. Take for instance three ways of seeing that are available to us. They are what we see having light in our eyes, the second is that we see something because of the image in our eye and thirdly by a reflection. The first class of seeing is likened to knowing or seeing God's essence and this is not possible in our state right now. This cannot happen for any creature at this time. The third is by which we see God in this world as a reflection of who he is. Rom. 1:20 tells us that the invisible things of God are clearly understood by things that are made. The angel is a kind of mirror reflecting God, but in no way can any creature contain the essence of God. (PM)

Reply to obj. 1: "Dionysius is speaking of the knowledge of comprehension, as his words expressly state. In this way God is not known by any created intellect.

Reply to obj. 2: God is infinitely greater than all of his creatures and is therefore, not to be fully grasped by any of his creatures. However it does not mean that angels cannot know anything about God. Angels cannot see God's essence through his own nature.

Reply to obj. 3: The knowledge an angel has of God is closest to the middle means of seeing and knowing God. Jesus sits at the right hand of God in heaven right now. The angels minister in heaven and see Jesus glorified in heaven by his image.

Question 56 Q & A

1. Does an angel know himself? "If in the order of intelligible beings there be any subsisting, intelligible form, it will understand itself. And since an angel is immaterial, he is a subsisting form, and, consequently, he is actually intelligible. Hence it follows that he understands himself by his form, which is his substance."

2. Does one angel know another? God impressed angels with images of other things he produced in their own natural being. This is understood that the Word of God is Eternal and therefore, the angel knows himself and other creatures because of the Eternal Word of God.

3. Does the angel know God by his own natural principles? An angel has some knowledge of God by its own principles. Take for instance three ways of seeing that are available to us. They are what we see having light in our eyes, the second is that we see something because of the

Question 56 Q & A cont.

image in our eye and thirdly by a reflection. The first class of seeing is likened to knowing or seeing God's essence and this is not possible in our state right now. This cannot happen for any creature at this time. The third is by which we see God in this world as a reflection of who he is. Rom. 1:20 tells us that the invisible things of God are clearly understood by things that are made. The angel is a kind of mirror reflecting God, but in no way can any creature contain the essence of God. (PM)

Question 57 Of the Angel's Knowledge of Material Things (Five Articles)

Article One: Whether the angels know material things?

Obj. 1: It would seem that angels do not know material things because the object of things understood is the perfection of the one who understands it since material things are a little lower than the angels. (PM)

Obj. 2: There exist three types of vision; 1) intellectual, 2) imaginary and 3) sensible. The angels have intellectual vision and thereby cannot know material things because material things are grasped and seen in the imaginary and sensible mind of creatures created on earth. Since angels have only intellectual vision they cannot know material things.

Obj. 3: Material things are not wholly intellectual as the Angels are. Therefore, angels do not know material things.

On the contrary: Since man can know material things so can angels. It follows that all the lower creatures can be known by creatures higher than them.

I answer that: "The established order of things is for the higher beings to be more perfect than the lower; and for whatever is contained deficiently, partially, and in manifold manner in the lower beings, to be contained in the higher eminently, and in a certain degree of fullness and simplicity." The result is that Angels have the capacity to understand material things because angels are nearest to God and resemble Him most. As a result, angels share in the Divine Goodness more perfectly than the material creatures and consequently all material things pre-exist more simply and less materially even than in themselves, yet in a more manifold manner and less perfectly than in God. As God knows material things by His essence so too Angels do likewise. (PM)

Reply to Obj. 1: "The thing understood is the perfection of the one who understands, by reason of the intelligible species which he has in his intellect." Intelligible species in the intellect of the angels are perfections and acts in regard to that intellect. (PM)

Question 57 Cont. Reply to Obj. 2

Reply to Obj. 2: “ The intellect alone apprehends the essences of things. Hence it is said (De Anima iii, text. 26) that the object of the intellect is “what a thing is,” regarding which it does not err; as neither does sense regarding its proper sensible object. So therefore, the essence of material things is in the intellect of man and angels, as in the thing understood is in him who understands, and not according to their real natures.” (PM)

Reply to Obj. 3: Since angels comprehend all their knowledge and understanding through their intellect they do not have knowledge of material things by actually intelligible species of things, which species are connatural to him; just as our intellect has, by species which it makes intelligible by abstraction. (PM)

Article Two: Whether and angel knows singulars?

Obj. 1: “It would seem that angels do not know singulars. “ For the Philosopher says (Poster. I, text. 22) “The sense has for its object singulars, but universals.” According to what was said in (Q[54], A[5]). As a result, angels do not know singulars.”

Obj. 2: Angels and singular objects are not assimilated together. All knowledge comes by appropriating an accumulation of information known to the one who assimilates the object known at least so far as it is singular. We learned in (Q[50], A[2], an angel is immaterial, which matter is the principle of singularity. “Therefore, the angel cannot know singulars.”

Obj. 3: “If an angel does know singulars, it is either by singular or by universal species. It is not by singular species; because in this way he would require to have an infinite number of species. Among angels only in potentials can singular things be known in universal. Therefore the angel does not know singulars. (PM)

On the Contrary: Angels know singulars because God has given them to be guarded by angels according to Ps. 90:11. Therefore angels know singulars.

I answer that: TA indicates that the knowledge of singulars by angels has been denied by some, but he argues that according to Heb. 1:14 angels are ministering spirits and this means that they have to be interacting with singulars. That is individuals of many sorts for that passage of Scripture says, “They are all ministering spirits.” He goes on to say that if they had no knowledge of singulars, they could exercise no provision over what is going on in the world; since acts belong to individuals and this is against the text of Eccles. 5:5 which says “Say not before the angel: There is no providence.” There is also another argument which TA references in regards to philosophy which has stated that angels are thought to be the movers

Question 57 Article Two I Answer That cont.

of the heavenly movements since their name actually means, “messenger.” This movement must be according to their knowledge and will.

Reply to obj. 1: There is no comparison here because of what was said in (Q[555], A[2], A[3] and 1) . The Philosopher was speaking of our intellect and abstracted things are tending to be immaterial and thus universal and not singular. The comparison is not completely transferable.

Reply to obj. 2: Angels are immaterial and creatures on earth are singular as far as fleshly creatures. Yet, just as there exists traits of the higher found in the lower species so too the traits of the low species can be found in the greater for they all come from God whose qualities are found in those he created for they are good, universal and singular.

Reply to obj. 3: The angels know singulars by universal forms, which are having individuating principles in regards to images of things both as to their universal and their singularity.

Article three: Whether angels know the future?

Obj. 1: If men can perceive future events, much more can angels.

Obj. 2: Angels exist outside of time and therefore, can and do move in and out of events whether they are present or future situations.

Obj. 3: Angels know past, present and future events for they understand by innate universal species and not from things held by time.

Obj. 4: Angels know things by distance in space and in time.

On the contrary: Angels do not know future events for this is solely known by God.

I answer that: The future can be known in two ways. One is by a known cause which can be a kind of predicting the future with an expected outcome or effect. In this sense, angels are fully capable of seeing into the future. However in another way future events are known in themselves and in this case only God has the ability and the power to know and comprehend the future completely. And this is not shared with angels or with men without God granting it.

Reply to obj. 1: Both angels and men cannot know events of the future outside of cause unless by revelation as provided by God Himself. The angel’s discernment, however is greater than in men.

Reply to obj. 2: Not all things are present to the angelic mind for they happen in succession and even though an angel’s intellect is above that time according to which corporeal movements

Question 57 Article Two Reply to obj. 2 cont.

are reckoned, yet there is a time in his mind in that an angel knows one thing after another.

Reply to obj. 3: "Since the angels know corporeal things and their dispositions they can thereby know what is passing in the appetite or in the imaginative apprehension of the brute beasts, and even of man, in so far as the sensitive appetite sometimes through following some bodily impression. Since man is ruled by will and reason it may be very difficult for angels to tell by the nonverbal communication what they are thinking.

Article four: Whether they know secret thoughts?

Obj. 1: Angels appear to know secret thoughts because in the resurrection we will be known as they know themselves. Therefore, angels can know secret thought.

Obj. 2: When the intellectual substance is seen, the intelligible species within it is also seen. As a result, when one angel beholds another, or even a soul, it seems that he can see the thoughts of both.

Obj. 3: The images in our imagination can be known by an angel as corporeal things are known: because the imagination is a corporeal faculty. Therefore, it seems that an angel can know the thoughts of the intellect.

On the Contrary: This secret thought knowing belongs to God alone. The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable; who can know it? Jer 17:9

I answer that: There are two ways to know secret thoughts. 1) in its effect by reading body language. And 2) God alone knows the will of his creatures and it is not a window to look through by any other creature because God alone can work in it.

Reply to obj. 1: The will shuts up thoughts and the body is grossly unable to be deciphered. Also, angels do not share in the resurrection just because they do not die and the boundaries and benefits of those creatures who are resurrected do not transfer the changes that occur from this life to the other.

Reply to obj. 2: Just because an angel may know the thoughts of one angel by the fact that the species are proportioned to the rank of them, yet it does not follow that this is possible in humans.

Reply to obj. 3: The angels may read well the gross body language from experience, but not the sensitive appetite. These finer thoughts are not so easily read by experience.

Q 57 Article 5

Article five: Whether the angels know the mysteries of grace:

Obj. 1: It appears that angels know the mysteries of grace. Augustine says, "This mystery was hidden in God through the ages, yet so that it was known to the princes and powers in heavenly places." The Apostle says in 1 Tim. 3:16 that the great mystery of godliness appeared into angels. So it would seem that the mysteries of grace are known to angels.

Obj. 2: Since angels behold God's wisdom, which is His essence, therefore they know the mysteries of grace.

Obj. 3 According to Amos 1:7 "For the Lord God doth nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets." Therefore, angels know the grace of God.

On the contrary: The angels do not know the mysteries of grace because even the highest angels seek out and learn mysteries of grace.

I answer that: The angel has two kinds of knowledge. The first is natural and the second is that they see the Word and the things in the Word. By this knowledge the angels cannot know mysteries of grace. For those mysteries depend upon the pure will of God; and if an angel cannot learn the thoughts of another angel, which depend upon mysteries depend upon the pure will of God. And if an angel cannot learn the thoughts of another angel, which depend upon the will of such angel, much less can be ascertain what depends entirely upon God's will. According to 1 Cor. 2:11; "No one knows the things of man." And in the Vulgate, "What man knoweth the things of a man, but....the spirit of man that is in him."

Reply to obj. 1: "One can speak in two ways of the mystery of the Incarnation. First of all, in general, and in this way it was revealed to all from the commencement of their beatitude. The reason of this is, that this is a kind of general principle to which all their duties are ordered...We can speak of the mystery of the incarnation in another way, as to its special conditions."

Reply to obj. 2: "Although the angels in bliss behold the Divine wisdom, yet they do not comprehend it. It is not necessary for them to know everything hidden."

Reply to Obj. 3: "Whatever the prophets knew by revelation of the mysteries of grace, was revealed in a more excellent way to the angels".

Q&A Question 57

1. Do Angels know material things? "The established order of things is for the higher beings to be more perfect than the lower; and for whatever is contained deficiently, partially, and in

Q & A Question 57 cont.

manifold manner in the lower beings, to be contained in the higher eminently, and in a certain degree of fullness and simplicity.” The result is that Angels have the capacity to understand material things because angels are nearest to God and resemble Him most. As a result, angels share in the Divine Goodness more perfectly than the material creatures and consequently all material things pre-exist more simply and less materially even than in themselves, yet in a more manifold manner and less perfectly than I God. As God knows material things by His essence so too Angels do likewise. (PM)

2. Do Angels know singulars? TA indicates that the knowledge of singulars by angels has been denied by some, but he argues that according to Heb. 1:14 angels are ministering spirits and this means that they have to be interacting with singulars. That is individuals of many sorts for that passage of scripture says, “They are all ministering spirits.” He goes on to say that if they had no knowledge of singulars, they could exercise no provision over what is going on in the world; since acts belong to individuals and this is against the text of Eccles 5:5 which says “Say not before the angel: There is no providence.” There is also another argument which TA references in regards to philosophy which has stated that angels are thought to be the movers of the heavenly movements since their name actually means, “messenger.” This movement must be according to their knowledge and will.

3. Do Angels know the future? : The future can be known in two ways. One is by a known cause which can be kind of predicting the future with an expected outcome our effect. In this sense, angels are fully capable of seeing into the future. However in another way future events are known in themselves and in this case only God has to ability and the power to know and comprehend the future completely. And this is not shared with angels or with men without God granting it. Reply to obj. 1: Both angels and men cannot know events of the future outside of cause unless by revelation as provided by God Himself. The angel’s discernment, however is greater than in men.

4. Can angels know the secret thoughts of humans? There are two ways to know secret thoughts. 1) in its effect by reading body language. And 2) God alone knows the will of his creatures and it is not a window to look through by any other creature because God alone can work in it.

5. Can the angels know the mysteries of grace? The angel has two kinds of knowledge. The first is natural and the second is that they see the Word and the things in the Word. By this knowledge the angels cannot know mysteries of grace. For those mysteries depend upon the .pure will of God; and if an angel cannot learn the thoughts of another angel, which depend upon mysteries depend upon the pure will of God. And if an angel cannot learn the thoughts of

Q & A Question 57 cont.

another angel, which depend upon the will of such angel, much less can be ascertain what depends entirely upon God's will. According to 1 Cor. 2:11, "no one knows the things of man." And in the Vulgate, ""What man knoweth the things of a man, but....the spirit of man that is in him."

Question 58

Article one: Whether the angel's intellect be sometimes in potentiality, and sometimes in act?

Obj. 1: An angel's intellect is sometimes in potential and sometimes in act. Movement is the potential carried out by act. Angelic minds are sometimes moved by understanding. Dionysius says that the angelic minds are sometimes in potential.

Obj. 2: Angels want to look into the affairs of mankind according to 1 Pet. 1 :12) Therefore, the angel's intellect is sometimes in potential state.

Obj. 3: The angel's substance is sometimes a mixture of potentiality. Therefore, it sometimes understands potentially.

On the contrary: Augustine says: (Gen. ad lit. ii): "Since the angels were created in the eternity of the Word, they enjoy holy and devout contemplation. "Now a contemplating intellect is not in potential, but in act. Therefore the intellect of an angel is not in potentiality."

I answer that: "As the Philosopher states (De Anima iii, text. 8; Phys. Vii, 32), the intellect is in potentiality in two ways; 1) "as before learning or discovering," that is, before it has the habit of knowledge, 2) as "when it possesses the habit of knowledge, but does not actually consider." In the first the angel is not ever in potential in regards to the things to which his natural knowledge extends. For, as the higher, namely, the heavenly, bodies have no potentiality to existence, which is not fully actuated. Regarding things divinely revealed to them, there is nothing to hinder them from being in potentiality," In the second way an angel's intellect can be in potentiality with regard to things learnt by natural knowledge, in regards to the Word, he is never in potentiality for he is always actually beholding the Word and therefore, knows the Word by act and not by habit. (PM)

Reply to Obj. 1: Movement is not taken here as something imperfect acting or of something existing in potentiality, but as the act of something perfect, something actually existing.

Reply to Obj. 2: "Such desire on the part of the angels does not exclude the object desired, but weariness thereof. Or they are said to desire the vision of God with regard to fresh revelations, which they receive from God to fit them for the tasks which they have to perform."

Question 58 Article Two Obj. 3

Reply to Obj. 3: "In the angel's substance there is no potentiality divested of act. In the same way, the angel's intellect is never so in potentiality as to be without act."

Article two: Whether an angel can understand many things at the same time?

Obj. 1: The Philosopher says that angels can know many things but only understand one at a time.

Obj. 2: One body cannot be formed into many shapes. The intellect of the angels is such that it is informed by an intelligible species; similar as a body is formed by shape. (PM) "Therefore neither can one intellect simultaneously understand various intelligible things."

Obj. 3: To understand is a type of movement. Movement does not finish in various terms. Therefore understanding many things is not altogether likely. (PM)

On the Contrary: "Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. iv, 32) The spiritual faculty of the angelic mind comprehends most easily at the same time all things that it wills."

I answer that: Angels have the capability to grasp the object completely even composed of parts. In other words, angels get the big picture and it seems like understanding only one thing, but it really is comprised often of many things. (PM) Our intellect understands both the subject and the predicate at the same time, but it is viewed as understanding one sentence at a time.

Reply to Obj. 1: "To understand many things as one, is, so to speak, to understand one thing."

Reply to Obj. 2: The angelic mind can understand many intelligible objects under one species; as one body can by one shape be likened to many bodies. (PM)

Reply to Obj. 3: The answer is the same as for objection one.

Article three: Whether an angel's knowledge is discursive?

Obj. 1: It would seem that an angel's knowledge is discursive because knowing something through another is appropriate because angels know creatures by the Word.

Obj. 2: Also whatever the lower angels do can be done by the higher angels. Therefore it makes sense that angels know cause and effect and can syllogize because human intellect can do this and humans are lower on the order of creation than the angels.

Obj. 3: Experimental knowledge is discursive and it involves learning by watching. Angels have discursive knowledge because they appear to learn by experience such as recorded in the Scriptures that "angels look into the affairs of the earth."

Q. 58 Article 3 On the Contrary

On the Contrary: According to Dionysius angels do not get their knowledge by discursive means. “Angels do not acquire Divine knowledge from separate discourses.

I answer that: The difference between humans learning knowledge and angels is that humans gain their knowledge by reasoning and experience throughout the passing of time. Angels know and understand their knowledge of any informed subject of which they comprehend all they know about it all at once. Human knowledge is gained by movement. Angels do not exercise movement to completely understand what they know. “Angels know truths which they know naturally, they at once behold all things whatsoever that can be known in them.

Reply to obj. 1: Discursive knowledge comes about through movement and from something else than itself. Discursive knowledge builds upon what is known and is synchronistic. “But if in the thing perceived something else be seen at the same time, as an object and its image are seen simultaneously in a mirror, it is not discursive knowledge. And in this way the angels know things in the Word.”

Reply to obj. 2: Angels have the ability to syllogize and acquire knowledge as through observation of cause and effect relationships, but they do not acquire knowledge of an unknown truth by syllogizing from cause and effect, or *visa versa*.

Reply to obj. 3: Angels know by way of similitude and sensible things, but without the use of discursive knowledge.

Article four: Whether angels understand by composing and dividing?

Obj. 1: It appears that angels get their knowledge by composing and dividing because they understand multiple things apprehending them by various species, and not all at one time.

Obj. 2: Angels know things by diverse species having many and multiple distant natures. Therefore angels know affirmation and negation by diverse species. Angel would then have their knowledge understood by composing and dividing.

Obj. 3: Angels use speech in communication with humans and this would require that they know, understand and develop the use of composing and dividing. Angels learn from many passages of Scripture and so Angels gain their knowledge by analysis and synthesis.

On the Contrary: “Angels understand divine concepts with a clear and simplistic means. But a simple intelligence is without composition and dividing.”

Q 58 Article 3 I answer that

I answer that: Just as was brought out in the article on discursive knowledge the same principles apply to composing and dividing. Angels have the capacity to use those processes, it is not necessary for them to gain any knowledge by reasoning.

Reply to obj. 1: Angels grasp all that can be learned by composing and dividing in a complete picture. The knowledge that an Angel has on any given subject comes as a whole not in pieces.

Reply to obj. 2: If the truth be known by an angel then the opposite of that truth also is known. "The various natures of things differ less as to their mode of existing than do affirmation and negation. There is more in common than not between affirmation and negation." (PM)

Reply to obj. 3: The way in which angels speak in the Scriptures conveys that they know how to compose and divide, but their knowledge is not dependent upon them.

Article five: Whether there can be falsehood in the intellect of an angel?

Obj. 1: The demons are angels that have chosen to believe a lie and hold to falsehood. So it appears that angels have the same capacity.

Obj. 2: "Nescience is the cause of estimating incorrectly. Dionysius says, (Eccl. Hier. Vi), there can be nescience in the angels. Therefore it seems there can be falsehood in them."

Obj. 3: Dionysius goes on in (Div. Nom. Vii) that in demons there is depraved reason with a false and error ridden intellect. This would have to be the case with angels too. (PM)

On the Contrary: Both Dionysius and Augustine agree that "the intelligence is always true." Therefore, there can be no evil or falsehood in the intellect of the angel.

I answer that: Angels are not subject to error in their intellect in the way we think regarding human means of incorrect thinking. Angels have not error in the intellect except for the possibility by accident come to conclusions based in falsehood and not Divine wisdom. Such as when an angel perceives that a man is dead, he may accidentally not conceive of the fact that he will rise again. Now a demon may not perceive Divine knowledge for they may deny that Christ came in the flesh and that Jesus Christ is not God. This can occur without consulting the Divine source or may occur by simply ignoring what is plainly true. (PM) "However, angels do not have perverted Divine wisdom. While nescience is in the angels as regards things knowable, not naturally but supernaturally. It is, furthermore, evident that their understanding of what a thing is, is always true, save accidentally, according as it is, in an undue manner, referred to some composition or division."

Question 58 Article Six

Article six: Whether there is a “morning” and “evening” knowledge in the angels?

Obj. 1: Morning and Evening implies darkness. An angel’s intellect does not inherently contain darkness, the light of Divine knowledge. So it would seem highly unlikely that angels have morning and evening knowledge.

Obj. 2: If morning and evening knowledge is found in angels it would naturally follow that there is noon and night knowledge as well.

Obj. 3: “The sciences are divided just as things are.” There is a threefold existence of things in regards to angels. 1) The Word in their own natures and 2) An evening and morning knowledge because of the existence of things in the Word and in their own nature. 3) The existence of things in the angelic mind. (PM)

On the Contrary: Augustine initiates this thinking that angels have morning and evening knowledge. Augustine proposes that the Word portrays angelic knowledge as existing differently before and creation of the sun and the stars.

I answer that: “The expression “morning” and “evening” knowledge was devised by Augustine; who interprets the six days wherein God made all things, not as ordinary days measured by the solar circuit, since the sun was only made on the fourth day, but as one day, namely, the day of angelic knowledge as direct to six classes of things. As in the ordinary day, morning is the beginning, and evening the close of day, so, their knowledge of the primordial being of things is called morning knowledge; and this is according as things exist in the Word. But their knowledge of the very being of the thing created, as it stands in its own nature, is termed evening knowledge; because the being of things flows from the Word, as from a kind of primordial principle, and this flow is terminated in the being which they have in themselves.”

Reply to obj. 1: The emphasis is not to be construed as comparing light and dark knowledge, but rather beginning and ending knowledge in relation to how the Word presents it.

Reply to obj. 2: “The morning and evening knowledge belong to the day, that is, to the enlightened angels, who are quite apart from the darkness, that is, from the evil spirits. The good angels, while knowing the creature, do not adhere to it, for that would be to turn to darkness and to night; but they refer this back to the praise of God, in Whom, as in their principle, they know all things.” The evening actually ends with the morning in this illustration.

Reply to obj. 3: Existence of things in angels is on the basis of their own nature since they are themselves creatures. “The existence of things in the angelic knowledge is comprised under evening knowledge.

Question 58 Article Seven

Article Seven: Whether the morning and evening knowledge are one?

Obj. 1: "It would seem that the morning and the evening knowledge are one. For it is said (Gen. 1:5) 'There was evening and morning, one day.' But by the expression 'day' the knowledge of the angels is to be understood."

Obj. 2: There is only one knowledge necessary in angels and that is morning knowledge for they are always beholding God and things in God as recorded in Matt 18:10. Therefore, the evening knowledge would be the same for in regards to God there is nothing more or better to know.

Obj. 3: "The Apostle says in 1 Cor. 13:10 that 'When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' But, if evening knowledge be different from the morning, it is compared to it as the less perfect to the perfect. Evening knowledge cannot exist with morning knowledge."

On the Contrary: There exist two kinds of knowledge: 1) Knowing what is in the Word and 2) Knowing in it one's own nature. The former is morning and the latter is evening knowledge. (PM)

I answer that: "Angels know through a twofold medium, namely, by innate ideas, or by the forms of things existing in the Word. For by beholding the Word, they know not merely the being of things as existing in the Word, but the being as possessed by the things themselves; as God by contemplating Himself sees that being which things have in their own nature. It, therefore, it be called evening knowledge, in so far as when the angels behold the Word, they know the being which things have in their proper nature, then the morning and the evening knowledge are essentially one and the same, and only differ as to the things known. If it be called evening knowledge, in so far as through innate ideas they know the being which things have in their own natures, then the morning and the evening knowledge differ. Thus Augustine seems to understand it when he assigns one as inferior to the other."

Reply to Obj. 1: "Augustine understands the six days as six classes of things known by the angels, so that the day's unit is taken according to the unit of the thing understood; which, nevertheless, can be apprehended, by various ways of knowing it."

Reply to Obj. 2: "Augustine says, (Gen. ad lit. iv, 24), the evening knowledge is referred to the morning knowledge in the angels, hence there is nothing to hinder both from being at the same time in the angels."

Question 58 Article Seven Reply to Obj. 3

Reply to Obj. 3: On the coming of the perfect the opposite of the perfect is done away. There is no opposition of perfections in the morning and evening knowledge. (PM) “ For that a thing be known in itself, is not opposite to its being known it its cause. Nor, again, is there any inconsistency in knowing a thing through two mediums, one of which is more perfect and the other less perfect; just as we can have a demonstrative and a probable medium for reaching the same conclusion. In like manner a thing can be known by the angel through the uncreated Word, and through an innate idea.”

Q & A Question 58

1. Is the angel’s intellect sometimes in potentiality, and sometimes in act? “As the Philosopher states (De Anima iii, text. 8; Phys. Vii, 32), the intellect is in potentiality in two ways; 1) “as before learning or discovering,” that is, before it has the habit of knowledge, 2) as “when it possesses the habit of knowledge, but does not actually consider.” In the first the angel is not ever in potential in regards to the things to which his natural knowledge extends. For, as the higher, namely, the heavenly, bodies have no potentiality to existence, which is not fully actuated. Regarding things divinely revealed to them, there is nothing to hinder them from being in potentiality,” In the second way an angel’s intellect can be in potentiality with regard to things learnt by natural knowledge, in regards to the Word, he is never in potentiality for he is always actually beholding the Word and therefore, knows the Word by act and not by habit. (PM)

2. Can an angel understand many things at the same time? Angels have the capability to grasp the object completely even composed of parts. In other words, angels get the big picture and it seems like understanding only one thing, but it really is comprised often of many things. (PM) Our intellect understands both the subject and the predicate at the same time, but it is viewed as understanding one sentence at a time.

3. Can an angel’s knowledge be discursive? The difference between humans learning knowledge and angels is that humans gain their knowledge by reasoning and experience throughout the passing of time. Angels know and understand their knowledge of any informed subject of which they comprehend all they know about it all at once. Human knowledge is gained by movement. Angels do not exercise movement to completely understand what they know. “Angels know truths which they know naturally, they at once behold all things whatsoever that can be known in them.

4. Do angels understand by composing and dividing? Just as was brought out in the article on discursive knowledge the same principles apply to composing and dividing. Angels have the

Question 58 Q & A Cont.

capacity to use those processes, it is not necessary for them to gain any knowledge by reasoning.

5. Can falsehood be in the intellect of an angel? Angels are not subject to error in their intellect in the way we think regarding human means of incorrect thinking. Angels have not error in the intellect except for the possibility by accident come to conclusions based in falsehood and not Divine wisdom. Such as when an angel perceives that a man is dead, he may accidentally not conceive of the fact that he will rise again. Now a demon may not perceive Divine knowledge for they may deny that Christ came in the flesh and that Jesus Christ is not God. This can occur without consulting the Divine source or may occur by simply ignoring what is plainly true. (PM) “However, angels do not have perverted Divine wisdom. While nescience is in the angels as regards things knowable, not naturally but supernaturally. It is, furthermore, evident that their understanding of what a thing is, is always true, save accidentally, according as it is, in an undue manner, referred to some composition or division.”

6. Is there a “morning” and “evening” knowledge in the angels? “The expression “morning” and “evening” knowledge was devised by Augustine; who interprets the six days wherein God made all things, not as ordinary days measured by the solar circuit, since the sun was only made on the fourth day, but as one day, namely, the day of angelic knowledge as direct to six classes of things. As in the ordinary day, morning is the beginning, and evening the close of day, so, their knowledge of the primordial being of things is called morning knowledge; and this is according as things exist in the Word. But their knowledge of the very being of the thing created, as it stands in its own nature, is termed evening knowledge; because the being of things flows from the Word, as from a kind of primordial principle, and this flow is terminated in the being which they have in themselves.”

7. Are the morning and evening knowledge are one? “Angels know through a twofold medium, namely, by innate ideas, or by the forms of things existing in the Word. For by beholding the Word, they know not merely the being of things as existing in the Word, but the being as possessed by the things themselves; as God by contemplating Himself sees that being which things have in their own nature. It, therefore, it be called evening knowledge, in so far as when the angels behold the Word, they know the being which things have in their proper nature, then the morning and the evening knowledge are essentially one and the same, and only differ as to the things known. If it be called evening knowledge, in so far as through innate ideas they know the being which things have in their own natures, then the morning and the evening knowledge differ. Thus Augustine seems to understand it when he assigns one as inferior to the other.”

