

QUESTION 70

The Work of Adornment: The Fourth Day

The next thing to consider is the work of adornment: first, each of the days in itself (questions 70-73) and, second, all six days in general (question 74). On the first topic we must consider, first, the work of the fourth day (question 70); second, the work of fifth day (question 71); third, the work of the sixth day (question 72); and, fourth, matters pertaining to the seventh day (question 73).

On the first topic there are three questions: (1) Should the celestial lights (*luminaria*) have been produced on the fourth day? (2) What is the reason for their being produced? (3) Are they living beings?

Article 1

Should the celestial lights have been produced on the fourth day?

It seems that the celestial lights should not have been produced on the fourth day:

Objection 1: The lights are bodies that are incorruptible by nature. Therefore, their matter cannot exist without their forms. But their matter was produced in the work of creation, before any of the days. Therefore, their forms were produced in the work of creation, too. Therefore, they were not made on the fourth day.

Objection 2: The lights are, as it were, vessels of light (*vasa luminis*). But light (*lux*) was made on the first day. Therefore, the lights should have been made on the first day and not on the fourth day.

Objection 3: Just as plants are fixed in the earth, so the lights are fixed in the firmament; this is why Scripture says, “He set them in the firmament” (Genesis 1:17). But the production of plants is described simultaneously with the formation of the earth in which they inhere. Therefore, the production of the lights should likewise have been placed on the second day, in conjunction with the production of the firmament.

Objection 4: The sun and moon and other lights are causes of plants. But in the natural order a cause precedes its effect. Therefore, the lights should not have been made on the fourth day, but should instead have been made on the third day or earlier.

Objection 5: According to astronomers (*secundum astrologos*), many stars are greater than the moon. Therefore, it should not have been the case that the only two “great lights” (Genesis 1:16) posited are the sun and moon.

But contrary to this: The authority of Scripture suffices for the contrary.

I respond: In recapitulating God’s works Scripture says, “So the heavens and the earth were completed (*perfecti*), and all their adornments” (Genesis 2:1). Three works can be understood in these words:

The first is *the work of creation (opus creationis)*, through which heaven and earth are described as produced but unformed.

The second is *the work of division (opus distinctionis)*, through which heaven and earth are brought to completion (*sunt perfecta*), either (a) through substantial forms given to wholly unformed matter (as Augustine claims) or else (b) with respect to a fitting order and elegance (as the other saints claim).

To these two works is added the *work of adornment (opus ornatus)*, which differs from completion. For the completion of heaven and earth seems to involve what is intrinsic to heaven and earth, whereas adornment involves things that are distinct from heaven and earth—in the way that a man is completed by his proper parts and forms, while he is adorned by his clothes or things of that sort. Now the distinction among things is made especially clear through local motion, by which they are separated from one another. And so the work of adornment involves the production of those things that have motion in

heaven and on earth.

Now as was explained above (q. 69, a. 1), there are three things mentioned in the work of creation, viz., heaven, water, and earth. And the three of them receive formation through the work of division on the first three days: Heaven is divided on the first day; the waters are divided on the second day; and on the third day a division is made among the earth, the sea, and the dry land.

In similar manner, on the first day of the work of adornment, i.e., on the fourth day, there is the production of the lights that move in heaven, in order to adorn heaven. On the second day, i.e., on the fifth day, the birds and the fish are made, in order to adorn the middle element, since the birds and fish have motion in the air and water, which are taken as one. On the third day, i.e., on the sixth day, the animals that have motion on earth are produced, in order to adorn the earth.

Note that Augustine does not disagree with the other saints about the production of the lights. For he claims that they were made in actuality and not just virtually, since the firmament does not have the power to produce lights in the way that the earth does have the power to produce plants. Hence, Scripture does not say, “Let the firmament produce lights,” in the way that it does say, “Let the earth bring forth the green herb” (Genesis 1:11).

Reply to objection 1: According to Augustine’s position, this objection does not give rise to any difficulties. For he does not posit a temporal succession in these works, and thus he does not have to concede that the matter of the lights existed with any other form.

Likewise, if we follow those who hold that the celestial bodies are of the nature of the four elements, then there is no difficulty, since they can claim that the celestial bodies, like animals and plants, are formed from pre-existing matter.

However, according to those who hold that the celestial bodies are of a nature different from the elements and are incorruptible by their nature, one must claim that the substance of the lights was created at the beginning, but that they were at first unformed and are now formed—formed not, to be sure, by their substantial forms, but rather by the conferral of specific powers. And the reason why the lights are mentioned only on the fourth day and not at the beginning is, as Chrysostom says, in order to draw the people away from idolatry by showing them that the lights are not gods, since they did not exist from the beginning.

Reply to objection 2: According to Augustine’s position, no difficulty results, since the light which is mentioned on the first day was spiritual light, whereas in the present context it is corporeal light that is being made.

However, if the light made on the first day is understood to be corporeal light, then one must claim that light was produced on the first day with respect to the general nature of light, whereas on the fourth day the lights are given specific power for specific effects, in accord with which we see that the rays of the sun have different effects from the rays of the moon, and so on for the others. And it is because of this specification of power that Dionysius says, in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, that the sun’s light, which was at first unformed, was formed on the fourth day.

Reply to objection 3: According to Ptolemy, the lights are not fixed in the spheres, but instead have a motion that is distinct from the motion of the spheres. Hence, Chrysostom says that the reason why the text says “He set them in the firmament” is not that they were fixed there, but rather that He commanded them to exist there, just as He placed man in paradise, in order that he might exist there.

However, according to Aristotle’s opinion, the stars are fixed in their orbs and in reality are moved only with the motion of the orbs. Still, it is the motion of the lights and not the motion of the spheres that is perceived by the senses. And as has been explained (q. 67, a. 4 and q. 68, a. 3), Moses, accommodating himself to an uneducated people, followed what is apparent to the senses.

On the other hand, if the firmament made on the second day is distinct in nature from the one in which the stars are placed, then the objection disappears—even though the senses (which, as has been

explained, Moses is following) do not discern this distinction,. For in that case the firmament was made on the second day with respect to its lower part, whereas on the fourth day the stars were placed in the firmament with respect to its upper part—so that the firmament is taken as a whole for one single thing, as it appears to the senses.

Reply to objection 4: As Basil explains, the production of the plants is placed ahead of the production of the lights in order to discourage idolatry. For those who believe that the lights are gods claim that plants have their first origin from the lights—even though, as Chrysostom explains, through their motions the lights cooperate in the production of plants in just the way that a farmer does.

Reply to objection 5: As Chrysostom says, the two lights are called great because of their efficacy and power and not because of their size. For even if other stars exceed the moon in size, the moon’s effects are still sensed more in things here below. And the moon also appears greater to the senses.

Article 2

Is the reason for the production of the lights appropriately ascribed?

It seems that the reason for the production of the lights is not appropriately ascribed:

Objection 1: Jeremiah 10:2 says, “Be not afraid of the signs of heaven, which the heathens fear.” Therefore, the lights were not made “as signs” (Genesis 1:14).

Objection 2: A sign is opposed to a cause. But the lights are causes of what is done here below. Therefore, they are not signs.

Objection 3: The distinction among seasons and among days began on the first day. Therefore, the lights were not made “for seasons and for days and for years” (Genesis 1:14), i.e., for the distinctions among them.

Objection 4: Nothing is done for the sake of something more lowly than itself, since the end is better than the things that exist for the sake of the end. But the lights are better than the earth. Therefore, the lights were not made “in order to give light to the earth” (Genesis 1:15).

Objection 5: The moon does not “rule over the night” (Genesis 1:16) when it is a new moon (*luna prima*). But it is probable that the moon was a new moon when it was made, since men begin to make computations at the new moon. Therefore, the moon was not made to rule over the night.

But contrary to this: The authority of Scripture suffices for the contrary.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 65, a. 2) a corporeal creature can be said to have been made (a) for the sake of its proper act or (b) for the sake of some other creature or (c) for the sake of the whole universe or (d) for the sake of God’s glory. But in order to turn the people back from idolatry, Moses touched only on reasons that had to do with the usefulness to men of the things made. Hence, Deuteronomy 4:19 says, “Lest, perhaps, lifting up your eyes to heaven, you see the sun and the moon, and all the stars of heaven, and being deceived by error you adore and serve those things that the Lord your God created for the service of all the nations.”

Now at the beginning of Genesis Moses explains this service in three ways:

First, the lights are useful to men with respect to vision, which directs them in their works and is especially useful in coming to know things. In this regard God says, “Let them shine in the firmament ... and give light to the earth” (Genesis 1:15).

Second, he explains it by reference to the changes of seasons, through which weariness is relieved, health is conserved, and the conditions necessary for food are satisfied—none of which would be the case if there were always summer or always winter. And in this respect He says, “Let them be for

seasons and for days and years” (Genesis 1:14).

Third, he explains it by reference to the opportunities for business and work, given that the lights of heaven are taken to signal rainy weather or sunny weather, which are favorable for different kinds of occupations. And in this regard He says, “Let them be as signs” (Genesis 1:14).

Reply to objection 1: The lights are signs of corporeal changes—though not of those that depend on free choice.

Reply to objection 2: We are sometimes led by a sensible cause to the knowledge of a hidden effect, and vice versa. Hence, nothing prevents a sensible cause from being a sign. Yet the reason why he says “signs” rather than “causes” is to remove an occasion for idolatry.

Reply to objection 3: On the first day there was the general division of time into day and night, in accord with the diurnal motion, which is common to all of heaven and which can be understood to have begun on the first day. However, the specific divisions into days and seasons—in accord with which one day is hotter than another, and one season hotter than another, and one year hotter than another—comes from the stars’ particular motions and can be understood to have begun on the fourth day.

Reply to objection 4: The illumination of the earth is understood as being useful for man, who is better than the bodies of the lights because of his soul.

Yet there is nothing to prevent one from saying that a more worthy creature has been made for the sake of a lower creature, not insofar as the higher creature is considered in itself but insofar as it is ordered to the completeness (*integritas*) of the universe.

Reply to objection 5: When the moon is full (*luna perfecta*), it rises in the evening and sets in the morning, and in this sense it rules over the night. Also, it is probable enough that the moon was made when it was full, just as plants were made in their completeness, already productive of seeds, and likewise the animals and man. For even though natural processes go from the incomplete to the complete, nonetheless, what is complete is prior, absolutely speaking, to what is incomplete.

However, Augustine does not endorse this claim, since he asserts that it is not inappropriate for God to have made something incomplete which He later brought to completion.

Article 3

Are the celestial lights living beings?

It seems that celestial lights are living things:

Objection 1: A higher body ought to be adorned with more noble adornments. But the adornment of lower bodies consists in living beings, viz., fish, birds, and terrestrial animals. Therefore, the lights, which belong to the adornment of heaven, are living beings.

Objection 2: The form of a more noble body is itself more noble. But the sun and moon and other lights are more noble than the bodies of plants and animals. Therefore, they have a more noble form. But the most noble form of all is a soul, which is a principle of life; for as Augustine says in *De Vera Religione*, any living substance is more eminent (*praefertur*) in the order of nature than any non-living substance. Therefore, the celestial lights are living beings.

Objection 3: A cause is more noble than its effect. But the sun and moon and other lights are a cause of life, as is especially clear in the case of animals generated by putrefaction, which attain life by the power of the sun and stars. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the celestial bodies are alive and are living beings.

Objection 4: As is clear from *De Caelo* 1, the motions of heaven and of the celestial bodies are natural. But natural motion derives from an intrinsic principle. Therefore, since the principle of the

motion of the celestial bodies is an intelligent substance (*substantia apprehensiva*), which, as *Metaphysics* 12 says, is moved in the way that one who desires is moved by what he desires, it seems that the intelligent principle is a principle intrinsic to the celestial bodies. Therefore, they are living beings.

Objection 5: The first moveable being is heaven. But as is shown in *Physics* 8, within the genus of moveable beings, the first is one that moves itself, since that which is such-and-such through itself (*per se*) is prior to that which is such-and-such through another (*per aliud*). But as is shown in the same book, only living beings move themselves. Therefore, the celestial bodies are living beings.

But contrary to this: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2 Damascene says, “No one thinks that the heavens or the lights are living beings; for they are inanimate and insensible.”

I respond: On this question the philosophers had differing opinions. For as Augustine reports in *De Civitate Dei* 18, Anaxagoras “was found guilty by the Athenians of claiming that the sun is a hot rock and thereby denying that it is a god” or anything living. By contrast, the Platonists claimed that the celestial bodies are living beings.

Similarly, among the doctors of the faith there was a diversity of opinion on this topic. For Origen claimed that the celestial bodies are living beings. Jerome, too, seems to have thought the same thing in his exposition of Ecclesiastes 1:6 (“The spirit goes forth, surveying all places round about”). By contrast Basil and Damascene insist that the celestial bodies are not living beings. Augustine, on the other hand, leaves the matter in doubt, not embracing either side—as is clear from *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 2 and from *Enchiridion*, where he also adds that if the celestial bodies are living beings, then their souls belong in fellowship with the angels.

Now in order that the truth might to some extent come to be known amid this diversity of opinions, note that the union of the soul and the body is for the sake of the soul and not for the sake of the body; for form does not exist for the sake of matter, but just the opposite. But the nature and power of a soul are known from its operation, which is also in some sense its end.

Now as is clear from the works of nutritive and sentient souls, the body is necessary for those of a soul’s operations that are exercised by means of the body. Hence, it is necessary for souls of this kind to be united to bodies for the sake of their operations. Moreover, there are other operations of a soul that are not exercised by means of the body and yet which are such that some assistance is supplied by the body for those operations. For instance, the human soul is supplied by the body with phantasms, which it needs in order to exercise its act of understanding (*indiget ad intelligendum*). Hence, a soul of this sort has to be united with its body for the sake of its own operation, even though it is possible for such a soul to be separated from its body.

Now it is clear that the soul of a celestial body could not have the operations of a *nutritive* soul, viz., to take nourishment, to grow, and to generate. For operations of this sort do not belong to a body that is incorruptible by its nature.

Similarly, the operations of a *sentient* soul do not befit a celestial body, since all sensation is based on touch, which apprehends the elemental qualities. Again, all the organs of the sentient powers require a specific proportion in their mixture of the elements, whereas the celestial bodies are held to be devoid of the elemental natures.

Therefore, it follows that there are only two operations of a soul that could belong to a celestial soul, viz., to understand and to effect motion. (For desire follows upon sensation and intellection and is ordered in conjunction with them.)

Now since an intellectual operation is not exercised by means of a body, it needs the body only insofar as phantasms are supplied to it through the senses. But as has been explained, the operations of a sentient soul do not belong to the celestial bodies. So, then, it is not for the sake of any intellectual operation that a soul would be united to a celestial body.

It follows, then, that a soul would be united to a celestial body solely for the sake of motion. But in

order to effect motion, the soul does not need to be united to a body as the form of the body; instead, it effects motion through a contact of power, in the way that a mover is united to what is moveable. Hence, in *Physics* 8, after Aristotle has shown that the first self-mover is composed of two parts, one of which effects motion and the other of which is moved, and while he is explaining how these two parts are united, he says that they are united through contact, either (a) contact of the two of them with one another, if they are both bodies, or (b) contact of the one with the other and not vice versa, if the one is a body and the other is not a body. Likewise, the Platonists held that souls are united to bodies only through a contact of power, in the way that a mover is united to what is moveable. And so from the fact that Plato posits celestial bodies as living beings, nothing should be inferred other than that spiritual substances are united to celestial bodies in the way that movers are united to what is moveable.

Now the claim that the celestial bodies are moved by an intelligent substance—and not just by their natures, as are heavy and light things—is clear from the fact that a thing’s nature effects motion solely toward a single place which is such that the body comes to rest in it once it occupies it, whereas this is not the case with the motion of the celestial bodies. Hence it follows that the celestial bodies are moved by an intelligent substance. In *De Trinitate* 3 Augustine likewise says that “all bodies” are administered by God “through the spirit of life.”

So, then, it is clear that the celestial bodies are not living beings in the way that plants and animals are. Rather, they are ‘alive’ only in an equivocal sense. Hence, between those who claim that the celestial bodies are living beings and those who claim that they are inanimate there is only a verbal difference and little or no substantive difference.

Reply to objection 1: Some things pertain to adornment because of their proper motions. And in this regard, the celestial lights agree with other things that pertain to adornment, given that they are moved by a living substance.

Reply to objection 2: Nothing prevents a thing from being more noble absolutely speaking and yet not more noble in some given respect. Therefore, even if the form of a celestial body is not more noble, absolutely speaking, than the soul of an animal, it is nonetheless more noble with respect to the character of its form. For the form of a celestial body, unlike a soul, totally perfects its matter, with the result that its matter has no potentiality for any other form. Also, with respect to motion, the celestial bodies are moved by more noble movers.

Reply to objection 3: Since a celestial body is a moved mover, it has the character of an instrument that acts in the power of the principal agent. And so it is by virtue of its mover, which is a living substance, that it is able to be a cause of life.

Reply to objection 4: The motion of a celestial body is natural not because of its active principle but because of its passive principle, viz., because a celestial body has within its nature an aptitude for being moved with this motion by an intellect.

Reply to objection 5: A celestial body is said to move itself insofar as it is composed of a mover and a moveable thing—not in the sense of being composed of them as of form and matter, but in the sense of being composed of them according to a contact of power, as has been explained. And in this way one could even say that a celestial body’s mover is an intrinsic principle, so that its motion could be called natural even on the part of the active principle, in the way that a voluntary motion can be called natural to an animal insofar as it is an animal, as is explained in *Physics* 8.