

QUESTION 84

How the Conjoined Soul Understands Corporeal Things That are Below Itself

Next we have to consider the acts of the soul with respect to the intellective and appetitive powers, since the other powers of the soul are not directly relevant to the theologian's inquiry. Now the acts of the appetitive part of the soul are relevant to moral knowledge (*moralis scientia*), and so they will be treated in the second part of this work (*ST* 1-2 and 2-2), in which moral matters will be discussed. At present, however, we will discuss the acts of the intellective part.

In the consideration of these acts, we will proceed in the following way: We have to consider, first, how the soul has intellective understanding when it is conjoined to the body (questions 84-88), and, second, how the soul has intellective understanding when it is separated from the body (question 89).

The consideration of the first topic will have three parts: We will consider, first, how the soul has intellective understanding of corporeal things, which are below it (questions 84-86); second, how it has intellective understanding of itself and of what is contained within itself (question 87); and, third, how it has intellective understanding of immaterial substances, which are above it (question 88).

As for the cognition of corporeal things, there are three matters to be considered: first, by what means (*per quid*) it has cognition of them (question 84); second, in what manner and order (*quomodo et quo ordine*) it has cognition of them (question 85); and, third, what (*quid*) it has cognition of in them (question 86).

On the first topic there are eight questions: (1) Does the soul have cognition of corporeal things through the intellect? (2) Does the soul have intellective understanding of them through its own essence or instead through species? (3) If through species, are the species of all intelligible things naturally inherent (*naturaliter innatae*) in the soul? (4) Do the species flow into the soul from immaterial separated forms? (5) Does our soul see in the eternal conceptions (*in rationibus aeternis*) all the things it has intellective understanding of? (6) Does it acquire intelligible cognition from the sensory power? (7) Can the intellect engage in actual intellective understanding through the intelligible species that it possesses without turning itself toward phantasms? (8) Is the intellect's judgment impeded when the sentient powers are impeded?

Article 1

Does the soul have cognition of bodies through the intellect?

It seems that the soul does not have cognition of bodies through the intellect:

Objection 1: In *Soliloquia* 2 Augustine says, "Bodies cannot be comprehended by the intellect; nor can a body be seen except by the senses." Also, in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 he says that intellectual vision is of things that by their essence exist in the soul. But bodies are not things of this sort. Therefore, the soul cannot have cognition of bodies through the intellect.

Objection 2: The intellect is related to sensible things in the same way that the sensory power is related to intelligible things. But through the sensory power the soul cannot in any way have cognition of spiritual things, which are intelligible. Therefore, through the intellect the soul cannot in any way have cognition of bodies, which are sensible.

Objection 3: The intellect has as its objects things that are necessary and always remain the same way. But all bodies are changeable and do not remain the same way. Therefore, the soul cannot have cognition of bodies through the intellect.

But contrary to this: Scientific knowledge (*scientia*) exists in the intellect. Therefore, if the intellect does not have cognition of bodies, it follows that there is no scientific knowledge of bodies.

And so natural science, which is about changeable bodies, will amount to nothing (*peribit*).

I respond: To make this question clear, note that the first philosophers who inquired into the natures of things thought that there was nothing in the world except bodies. And because they saw that all bodies are changeable and believed them to be in constant flux, they judged that we can have no certitude concerning the truth about things. For what is in continuous flux cannot be apprehended with certitude, because it perishes before the mind can reach a judgment about it; for instance, as the Philosopher reports in *Metaphysics* 4, Heraclitus claimed that “it is impossible to touch the water of a flowing stream twice.”

Coming along later, and wishing to be able to salvage the claim that we can have stable cognition (*certam cognitionem*) of truth through the intellect, Plato posited, over and beyond corporeal things, another kind of entity separated from matter and movement, which he called *species* or *ideas* (*species sive ideas*), through participation in which each singular and sensible thing is said to be either a man or a horse or something else of that sort. In this way, then, he claimed that scientific knowledge, definitions, and whatever else pertains to the act of intellectual understanding has to do not with sensible bodies but instead with those immaterial and separated entities. The result is that the soul does not have intellectual understanding of corporeal entities, but instead has intellectual understanding of the separated species of corporeal entities.

But there are two reasons why this view is evidently false:

First, since the species in question are immaterial and unchangeable, the cognition of motion and matter (which is proper to natural science), along with demonstration by means of moving causes and material causes, would be excluded from the sciences.

Second, it seems laughable that while we are seeking knowledge of things that are manifest to us, we should introduce other entities that cannot be the substances of those things, because they differ from them in *esse*; and so even if we do have cognition of the separated substances in question, we cannot on that account make judgments about sensible things.

Plato seems to have deviated from the truth in this matter because his view that every cognition involves some sort of likeness led him to believe that the form of a thing that is known must exist in the knower in the same way that it exists in the thing known. Now he thought that the form of a thing that is understood exists in the intellect in a way that is universal, immaterial, and without change. This is apparent from the very operation of the intellect, which has intellectual understanding in a mode that is universal and in some sense necessary; for the mode of an action corresponds to the mode of the agent’s form. And so he thought that the things that are understood must subsist in this same way in themselves, viz., immaterially and unchangeably.

However, this is not necessary. For we see even among sensible things that a form exists in one sensible thing in a way different from the way in which it exists in another sensible thing; for instance, in one thing whiteness is more intense (*intensior*) and in another it is less intense (*remissior*), and in one thing whiteness is combined with sweetness and in another thing it exists without sweetness. Along the same lines, a sensible form exists in one way in a thing that exists outside the soul and in another way in the sensory power, which receives the forms of sensible things without matter; for instance, it receives the color of the gold without the gold. Similarly, the intellect receives the species of corporeal things, which are material and changeable, in its own way, viz., immaterially and without change. For what is received exists in the thing receiving it according to the mode of the thing receiving it.

Therefore, one must reply that the soul, through the intellect, has cognition of bodies by means of a cognition that is immaterial, universal, and necessary.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine’s words should be taken to apply to the things *by which* our intellect has cognition and not to the things *of which* it has cognition. For the intellect has cognition by understanding bodies intellectually. But it understands not through the bodies, or through material and

corporeal likenesses, but instead through immaterial and intelligible species, which by their essence (*per sui essentiam*) are able to exist in the soul.

Reply to objection 2: As Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 22, one should not claim that just as the senses have cognition only of bodies, so the intellect has cognition only of spiritual things. For then it would follow that God and angels have no cognition of corporeal things. The reason for this disanalogy (*diversitas*) is that the lower power does not extend to those things that belong to the higher power, but the higher power accomplishes in a more excellent way what belongs to the lower power.

Reply to objection 3: Every change (*motus*) presupposes something that perdures (*aliquid immobile*). For instance, when there is a change (*transmutatio*) with respect to a quality, the substance perdures; and when a substantial form is changed, the matter perdures. Also, there are unchanged relations involving changing things; for instance, even if Socrates is not always sitting, it is nonetheless unchangeably true that whenever he is sitting, he remains in one place. Because of this, nothing prevents us from having unchangeable scientific knowledge about changeable things.

Article 2

Does the soul have intellectual understanding of corporeal things through its own essence?

It seems that the soul has intellectual understanding of corporeal things through its own essence:

Objection 1: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says that the soul “captures and collects images of bodies that are made in its very self and of its very self; for in forming them it communicates something of its own substance.” But it is through likenesses of bodies that the soul has intellectual understanding of bodies. Therefore, it is through its own essence, which it communicates in forming such likenesses and from which it forms them, that the soul has cognition of corporeal things.

Objection 2: In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, “The soul is in some sense all things.” Therefore, since like is known by like, it is through itself, it seems, that the soul has cognition of corporeal things.

Objection 3: The soul is higher than corporeal creatures. But as Dionysius says, lower things exist in a more eminent way in higher things than they do in themselves. Therefore, all corporeal creatures exist in a more noble way in the substance of the soul than they do in themselves. Therefore, it is through its own substance that the soul is able to have cognition of corporeal creatures.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 9 Augustine says, “The mind gathers knowledge of corporeal things through the body’s sensory power.” But the soul itself is not knowable through the bodily sensory power. Therefore, it does not have cognition of corporeal things through its own substance.

I respond: The ancient philosophers claimed that it is through its own essence that the soul has cognition of bodies. For it was generally instilled in the minds of all of them that like is known by like. And they believed that the form of the thing known exists in the knower in the same way that it exists in the thing known.

The Platonists, on the other hand, held a contrary opinion. For since Plato perceived that the intellectual soul is immaterial and has cognition immaterially, he claimed that the forms of the things that are known subsist immaterially.

By contrast, since the prior naturalists had believed that the things known were corporeal and material, they claimed that the things known must also exist materially in the soul when it has cognition. And so, in order to attribute cognition of all things to the soul, they claimed that the soul has a nature in common with all things. And since the nature of things that have a beginning (*natura principiatorum*) is

constituted from the principles, they attributed to the soul the nature of a principle, so that those who thought that fire was the principle of all things held that the soul has the nature of fire, and similarly for air and water. Empedocles, who posited four material elements and two principles that effect movement, likewise claimed that the soul was constituted by these. And so since they posited things materially in the soul, they held that all the soul's cognition is material, and they did not distinguish the intellect from the sensory power.

However, this opinion is disproved, first, by the fact that things that have a beginning exist only in potentiality in the material principle, which is what they were talking about. However, as is clear from *Metaphysics* 9, there is cognition of a thing only insofar as it exists in actuality and not insofar as it exists in potentiality, and so neither is the potentiality itself known except through the actuality. So, then, it would not be sufficient to attribute the nature of the principles to the soul in order for the soul to have cognition of all things—unless there existed within it the natures and forms of *all* the singular effects, e.g., bone and flesh and other things of this sort, as Aristotle argues, in opposition to Empedocles, in *De Anima* 1.

Second, if the thing known had to exist materially in the knower, then there would be no reason why entities subsisting materially outside the soul should themselves lack cognition; for instance, if it is by means of fire that the soul has cognition of fire, then fire which exists outside the soul would likewise have cognition of fire.

It follows, then, that material things that are known must exist in the knower not in a material way, but rather in an immaterial way. The reason for this is that an act of cognition extends to things that exist outside the one who has the cognition; for we have cognition even of those things that exist outside of us. But it is through matter that the form of an entity is determined to a singular thing (*determinatur ad aliquid unum*). Hence, it is clear that the nature of cognition stands in opposition to the nature of materiality. And so, as *De Anima* 2 says, things that receive forms only materially, such as plants, have no cognition at all (*nullo modo sint cognoscitiva*). But to the extent that something possesses the form of the thing known in a more immaterial way, its cognition is more perfect. Hence, our intellect, which abstracts species not only from matter but also from individuating material conditions, has more perfect cognition than does the sensory power, which receives without matter but with material conditions the forms of the things it has cognition of. And among the senses themselves, the sense of sight has the most perfect cognition (*est magis cognoscitivus*), since it is the least material—as was explained above (q. 78, a. 3). And among intellects themselves, any given one is more perfect to the extent that it is more immaterial.

From these considerations it is clear that if there is any intellect that has cognition of all things through its own essence, then its essence must possess everything within itself in an immaterial way—just as the ancients claimed that the soul's essence is actually composed of the principles of all material things, so that it might have cognition of all things. But it is proper to God that His essence should, in an immaterial way, comprehend all things in the sense in which effects preexist virtually in their cause. Therefore, it is God alone who has intellectual understanding of all things through His own essence—and not the human soul or even the angels.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine is talking here about imaginative vision, which is effected by the images of bodies. In forming these images, the soul communicates something of its own substance in the sense in which a subject exists in order to be informed by some form. And so it makes images of this sort 'from' itself—not in the sense that the soul or something of the soul is converted into this or that image, but in the sense in which a body is said to become something colored when it is informed by a color.

This interpretation is clear from what follows the quoted passage. For he says, "It keeps something"—namely, something not formed by such an image—"that freely judges concerning the species of such images"—and this, he says, is the mind or intellect. And he says that the part of the soul

which is informed by images of this sort, viz., the imagination (*partem imaginativam*), “is common to us and to the beasts.”

Reply to objection 2: Unlike the ancient naturalists, Aristotle did not claim that the soul is actually composed of all things. Rather, he said that “the soul is in some sense all things” insofar as it is in potentiality with respect to all things—in potentiality to sensible things through the senses and to intelligible things through the intellect.

Reply to objection 3: Every creature has finite and determinate *esse*. Hence, even if a higher creature’s essence bears a certain likeness to a lower creature’s essence insofar as they share in the same genus, it nonetheless does not bear a perfect likeness to it, since it is determined to a species that lies outside of the lower thing’s species. By contrast, God’s essence, as the universal principle of all things, is a perfect likeness of all things with respect to *everything* that is found in things.

Article 3

Does the soul have intellectual understanding of all things through species that it is naturally endowed with?

It seems that the soul has intellectual understanding of all things through species that it is naturally endowed with (*per species sibi naturaliter inditas*):

Objection 1: In his homily on the feast of the Ascension Gregory says, “Man has intellectual understanding in common with the angels.” But the angels have intellectual understanding through forms that they are naturally endowed with; thus, in the *Liber de Causis* it says, “Every intelligence is filled with forms.” Therefore, the soul likewise has species of things which it is naturally endowed with and by means of which it has intellectual understanding of corporeal things.

Objection 2: The intellectual soul is more noble than the primary matter of a corporeal thing. But primary matter is created by God with forms that it is in potentiality with respect to. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the intellectual soul is created by God with intelligible species. And so the soul has intellectual understanding of corporeal things through species that it is naturally endowed with.

Objection 3: No one can give true replies except about something he knows (*scit*). But even someone uneducated (*idiotia*), who has not acquired any scientific knowledge (*scientiam*), gives true replies about singular things if he is interrogated in the right order—as is told of a certain man in Plato’s *Meno*. Therefore, before someone acquires scientific knowledge, he has a cognition of things (*antequam aliquis acquirat scientiam, habet rerum cognitionem*). But this would not be so unless the soul had species that it is naturally endowed with. Therefore, the soul has intellectual understanding of corporeal things through species that it is naturally endowed with.

But contrary to this: In *De Anima* 3, talking about the intellect, the Philosopher says that it is “like a slate on which nothing has been written.”

I respond: Since a form is a principle of action, a thing has to be related to the form that is the principle of an action in the same way that it is related to the action; for instance, if moving upwards derives from the form of being lightweight (*ex levitate*), then what is borne upwards only in potentiality is lightweight only in potentiality, whereas what is being carried upwards in actuality is lightweight in actuality.

Now we see that a man sometimes has cognition only in potentiality, both respect to the sensory power and with respect to the intellect. And from this potentiality he is led into actuality (a) by the actions of sensible things on the sensory power in order to have sensation and (b) by learning or

discovery in order to have intellectual understanding. Hence, one must claim that a soul with cognitive powers (*anima cognoscitiva*) is in potentiality both with respect to those likenesses that are principles of sensing and also with respect to those likenesses that are principles of intellectual understanding. Because of this, Aristotle claimed that the intellect, by which the soul has intellectual understanding, does not have any species that it is naturally endowed with, but is in potentiality at the beginning with respect to all species of this sort.

Now that which actually has a form is sometimes unable to act in accord with that form because of some impediment, as when a lightweight thing is impeded from being borne upwards. For this reason, Plato claimed that man's intellect is naturally full of all the intelligible species, but is prevented by its union with the body from being able to make the transition into actual [understanding] (*exire in actum*).

However, this claim does not seem right.

For, first, if the soul has a natural knowledge of all things, it does not seem possible to suffer such a great forgetfulness of this natural knowledge that one would not know that he possesses knowledge of this sort. For no man is oblivious of those things that he knows naturally, such as that a whole is greater than its part, and other things of this sort. This seems especially problematic if one claims, as we established above (q. 76, a. 1), that it is natural for the soul to be united to the body; for it is absurd that a thing's natural operation should be totally impeded by something that belongs to it by nature.

Second, the falsity of the claim in question is manifestly obvious from the fact that when one of the senses is inoperative (*deficiente aliquo sensu*), there is no knowledge (*scientia*) of the things apprehended by that sense; for instance, someone born blind cannot have knowledge of colors (*notitiam de coloribus*). This would not be the case if the soul were naturally endowed with the notions of all intelligible things.

And so one should reply that the soul does not have cognition of corporeal things through species that it is naturally endowed with.

Reply to objection 1: Man does, to be sure, agree with the angels in having intellectual understanding, but he falls short of the eminence of their intellect, just as lower bodies, which *merely exist* according to Gregory, fall short of the sort of existence had by higher bodies. For the matter of the lower bodies is not totally perfected (*completa*) by their form, but instead remains in potentiality to forms that it does not now have, whereas the matter of the celestial bodies is totally perfected by their forms in such a way that it does not remain in potentiality with respect to any other form, as was established above (q. 66, a. 2). Similarly, an angel's intellect is by its own nature perfected by intelligible species, whereas the human intellect is in potentiality to species of this sort.

Reply to objection 2: Primary matter has substantial *esse* (*esse substantiale*) through form, and so it had to be created with some form; otherwise, it would not exist in actuality. Yet when it exists with one form, it remains in potentiality with respect to other forms. By contrast, the intellect does not have substantial *esse* through an intelligible species. And so the cases are not parallel.

Reply to objection 3: A well-ordered interrogation (*ordinata interrogatio*) proceeds from common principles, known *per se* (*per se notis*), to more particular matters (*ad propria*), and scientific knowledge is caused by such a progression in the learner's soul. Hence, when at a later point he gives true replies about the things concerning which he is being questioned, this is not because he knew those things beforehand; rather, it is because at that point he is learning them *de novo*. For regardless of whether it is by making a presentation or by asking a series of questions (*proponendo vel interrogando*) that the teacher proceeds from the common principles to the conclusions, in both cases the listener's mind becomes certain about the conclusions by means of the principles.

Article 4

Do the intelligible species flow into the soul from separated forms?

It seems that the intelligible species flow into the soul from separated forms (*effluent in animam ab aliquibus formis separatis*):

Objection 1: Everything that is such-and-such by participation is caused to be that way by something that is such-and-such by its essence; for instance, what is on fire is traced back to fire as a cause. But insofar as the intellective soul is actually engaged in intellective understanding, it participates in the intelligible things themselves; for the intellect in act is in a certain sense the thing understood in act. Therefore, the things that are actually understood in their own right and in their essence are causes of the intellective soul's actually having intellective understanding. But the things that are actually understood through their essence are forms that exist without matter. Therefore, the intelligible species by which the soul has intellective understanding are caused by separated forms.

Objection 2: Intelligible things are related to the intellect in the same way that sensible things are related to the sensory power. But sensible things, which exist in actuality outside the soul, are causes of the sensible species which exist in the sensory power and by which we have sensation. Therefore, the intelligible species by which our intellect has intellective understanding are caused by actually intelligible things that exist outside the soul. But intelligible things of this sort are not anything other than forms separated from matter. Therefore, the intelligible forms that belong to our intellect flow from separated substances.

Objection 3: Everything that is in potentiality is led into actuality by what is actual. Therefore, if our intellect, at first being in potentiality, later has actual intellective understanding, this must be caused by some intellect that is always active. But this is a separated intellect. Therefore, the intelligible species by which we have actual intellective understanding are caused by separated substances.

But contrary to this: On the view just proposed we would not need the sensory powers in order to have intellective understanding. That this is false is clear mainly from the fact that someone who lacks one of the sensory powers can in no way have scientific knowledge of the sensible things that correspond to that sensory power.

I respond: Some have claimed that the intelligible species that belong to our intellect proceed from certain separated forms or substances—and this in one of two ways.

For Plato, as has been explained (a. 1), posited forms of sensible things that subsist in their own right without matter, e.g., the form of man, which he called *man per se*, and the form or idea of a horse, which he called *horse per se*, and so on for the others. Therefore, he claimed that these separated forms are participated in both by our soul and by corporeal matter—by our soul in order for the soul to have cognition, and by corporeal matter in order for corporeal matter to exist. So just as corporeal matter, by participating in the idea *rock* becomes *this* rock, so our intellect, by participating in the idea *rock*, comes to have an intellective understanding of *rock*. Now this participation is effected by a likeness of the idea itself in the thing that participates in it, in the way in which an exemplar is participated in by an example of it. Therefore, just as he claimed that the sensible forms that exist in corporeal matter flow from the ideas as certain likenesses of them, so too he claimed that our intellect's intelligible species are likenesses of the ideas that they flow from. Because of this, as was explained above (a. 1), he referred scientific knowledge and definitions to the ideas.

However, since, as Aristotle proves a number of times, it is contrary to the nature of sensible things that their forms should subsist without matter, Avicenna, having rejected this position, claimed that the intelligible species of all sensible things do not, to be sure, subsist *per se* without matter, but that instead

they preexist in an immaterial way in separated intellects. Species of this sort flow from the first of these separated intellects into the next one, and so on for the others up to the last separated intellect, which he names ‘the active intellect’ (*intellectus agens*). From this active intellect, he says, intelligible species flow into our souls and sensible forms flow into corporeal matter. And so Avicenna agrees with Plato that our intellect’s intelligible species flow from certain separated forms, but whereas Plato claims that these forms subsist *per se*, Avicenna places them in the active intelligence (*in intelligentia agente*). They also disagree in that Avicenna claims that the intelligible species do not remain in our intellect after our intellect ceases to have actual intellectual understanding; instead, the intellect needs to turn itself [toward the active intelligence] once again in order to receive the intelligible species anew. Hence, he does not posit a knowledge that our soul is naturally endowed with, as Plato does when he claims that participations in the ideas remain in the soul permanently (*immobiliter*).

However, given this position, no sufficient reason can be given for why our soul is united with a body. For one cannot claim that the intellectual soul is united with a body for the sake of the body, since it is not the case that form exists for the sake of matter or that what effects movement exists for the sake of the thing moved; in fact, just the opposite is true. Now given that the soul does not depend on the body with respect to its *esse*, the body seems necessary to the intellectual soul mainly for the soul’s proper operation, i.e., intellectual understanding. But if the soul were by its nature apt to receive intelligible species only through the influence of separated principles and did not take them from the sensory powers, then it would not need the body in order to have intellectual understanding, and its union with the body would be pointless (*frustra corpori uniretur*).

Nor does it seem adequate to reply that our soul needs the sensory powers for intellectual understanding because it is in some way stimulated by them to consider the things whose intelligible species it has received from the separated principles. For a stimulation of this sort does not seem necessary to the soul except insofar as it is in some sense sleepy or oblivious because of its union with the body, as the Platonists claim. And so the sensory powers would be of no use to the intellectual soul except to remove an impediment that is posed for the soul because of its union with the body. Therefore, one still needs to ask what reason there is for the soul’s union with the body.

On the other hand, if one claims, in accord with Avicenna, that the sensory powers are necessary for the soul because the soul is stimulated by them to turn itself toward the active intelligence, from which it receives the species, then this, too, is inadequate. For if it were in the soul’s nature to have intellectual understanding through species that flow from the active intelligence, it would follow that the soul is sometimes able to turn itself toward the active intelligence by an inclination of its own nature—or even that it is sometimes stimulated by one of the other senses to turn itself toward the active intelligence in order to receive the species of sensible things for which the man in question does not have [the appropriate] sensory power. And in this way someone born blind would be able to have knowledge of colors—which is manifestly false.

Hence, one should reply that the intelligible species by which our soul has intellectual understanding do not flow from separated forms.

Reply to objection 1: The intelligible species that our intellect participates in are traced back, as to a first cause, to a principle that is intelligible through its essence, viz., God. But they proceed from that principle by the mediation of the forms of sensible and material things, from which, as Dionysius puts it, we gather knowledge.

Reply to objection 2: Given the *esse* that they have outside the soul, material things are able to be sensible in actuality, but not intelligible in actuality. Hence, there is no parallel between the sensory power and the intellect.

Reply to objection 3: Our passive intellect is led from potentiality into actuality by some actual being, viz., by the active intellect, which, as has been explained (q. 79, a. 4), is a certain power of our

soul. But it is not led into actuality by any separated intellect as a proximate cause—though perhaps as a remote cause.

Article 5

Does the intellectual soul have cognition of material things in the eternal conceptions?

It seems that the intellectual soul does not have cognition of material things in the eternal conceptions (*in rationibus aeternis*):

Objection 1: That *in which* something is known is itself known to a greater extent and in a prior way. But in the state of the present life, man's intellectual soul does not have cognition of the eternal conceptions, since it does not have cognition of God Himself, in whom the eternal conceptions exist, but is instead "conjoined to Him as something unknown," as Dionysius puts in *Mystica Theologia*, chap. 1. Therefore, the soul does not have cognition of all things in the eternal conceptions.

Objection 2: Romans 1:20 says, "The invisible things of God are clearly seen through the things that have been made." But the eternal conceptions are numbered among the invisible things of God. Therefore, it is the eternal conceptions that are known through material creatures, and not vice versa.

Objection 3: The eternal conceptions are nothing other than the ideas; for in *83 Quaestiones* Augustine says, "The ideas are stable conceptions of things that exist in God's mind." Therefore, if one claims that the intellectual soul has cognition of all things in the eternal conceptions, there will be a return to the opinion of Plato, who claimed that all knowledge is derived from the ideas.

But contrary to this: In *Confessiones* 12 Augustine says, "If both of us see that what you say is true and if both of us see that what I say is true, then where, I ask, do we see it? Certainly, I do not see it in you, and you do not see it in me; rather, both of us see it in that immutable truth that lies beyond our minds." But immutable truth is contained in the eternal conceptions. Therefore, the intellectual soul has cognition of all true things in the eternal conceptions.

I respond: As Augustine says in *De Doctrina Christiana* 2, "If those who are called philosophers have by chance made claims that are true and compatible with our Faith, then we must appropriate those truths from them, as from unjust possessors, for our own advantage. For the teachings of the Gentiles contain certain counterfeit and superstitious inventions (*simulata et superstitiosa figmenta*) that each of us who has left the company of the Gentiles should avoid." And so if Augustine, who had been imbued with the teachings of the Platonists, found anything consistent with the Faith in their sayings, he took it over, whereas when he found anything opposed to the Faith, he changed it into something better.

Now, as was explained above (a. 4), Plato claimed that the forms of things subsist in their own right separated from matter, and he claimed that through participation in these forms, which he called 'ideas', our intellect has cognition of all things. For instance, just as corporeal matter becomes a rock through participation in the idea *rock*, so too our intellect comes to have a cognition of *rock* through participation in that same idea. However, as Dionysius points out in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 11, it seems alien to the Faith that the forms of things should subsist in their own right without matter, as the Platonists claimed when they said that *life per se* or *wisdom per se* were certain creative substances. So in *83 Quaestiones* Augustine posited, in place of these ideas that Plato had posited, the conceptions of all creatures existing in God's mind; all things are formed in accord with these conceptions, and, in addition, the human soul has cognition of all things in accord with these conceptions (*secundum quas rationes*).

Therefore, when the question arises whether the human soul has cognition of all things in the eternal conceptions, one should reply that there are two senses of 'having a cognition of something in

something’.

The first sense is to have a cognition ‘in something’ as *in an object that is known*—as, for instance, when someone sees in a mirror those things whose images are reflected back in the mirror (*in speculo resultant*). And in this sense the soul, in the state of the present life, is unable to see all things in the eternal conceptions. However, the blessed in heaven, who see God and see all things in Him, do in this sense have cognition of all things in the eternal conceptions.

In the second sense, one is said to have a cognition of something ‘in something’ as *in a principle of cognition*, as if we were to say that we see ‘in the sun’ those things that we see because of the sun (*per solem*). And given this sense, one must claim that the human soul has cognition of all things in the eternal conceptions, by participation in which we have cognition of all things. For the intellectual light that exists in us is nothing other than a participated likeness of the uncreated light in which the eternal conceptions are contained. Hence, in Psalm 4:6-7 it says, “Many say, ‘Who shows us good things?’” And to this question the Psalmist replies by saying, “The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us”—as if to say that all things are shown to us by the very mark (*sigillatio*) of the divine light in us.

Still, since in addition to the intellectual light in us, intelligible species taken from the things are necessary for having scientific knowledge of material things, it follows that it is not solely through participation in the eternal conceptions that we have knowledge of material things, in the way that the Platonists claimed that participation in the ideas was by itself sufficient for having knowledge. Hence, in *De Trinitate* 4 Augustine says, “Given that the philosophers prove with convincing arguments that all temporal things are caused by the eternal conceptions, have they been able because of this to see in these conceptions, or infer from them, how many kinds of animals there are, or what the origins (*semina*) of each are? Have they not instead looked for all these things through the history of places and times?”

Moreover, Augustine did not think that all things are known in the eternal conceptions, or in immutable truth, in such a way that the eternal conceptions themselves are seen; this is clear from what he himself says in *83 Quaestiones*: “Not each and every rational soul is claimed to be fit for that vision”—namely, the vision of the eternal conceptions—“but only one that is holy and pure”—as are the souls of the blessed in heaven.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: The replies to the objections are clear from what has been said.

Article 6

Is intellective cognition taken from sensible things?

It seems that intellective cognition is not taken from sensible things:

Objection 1: In *83 Quaestiones* Augustine says, “Purity of truth should not be expected from the sensory powers of the body.” And there are two ways to prove this. First, from the fact that “everything that a corporeal sense touches is changing without any temporal intermission, and what does not remain the same cannot be perceived.” Second, from the fact that “even when all the things we sense through the body are not present to the senses, we still have their images, as when we are sleeping or furiously angry; but we are unable to discern with the senses whether we are sensing the sensible things themselves or their misleading images, and nothing can be perceived that is not distinguished from what is false.” And so he concludes that truth should not be expected from the sensory powers. But intellective cognition apprehends truth. Therefore, it is not the case that intellective cognition should be expected from the senses.

Objection 2: In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 Augustine says, “Do not think that the body has an effect on the spirit, as if the spirit, instead of matter, might be subjected to the body’s action; for what acts is in every way more excellent than what it acts on.” Hence, he concludes that “the body does not cause an image of a body in the spirit, but that the spirit itself causes an image within itself.” Therefore, intellectual cognition is not derived from sensible things.

Objection 3: An effect does not extend beyond the power of its cause. But intellectual cognition extends beyond sensible things; for we have intellectual cognition of certain things that cannot be perceived by the sensory power. Therefore, intellectual cognition is not derived from sensible things.

But contrary to this: In *Metaphysics* 1 and at the end of *Posterior Analytics* the Philosopher says that our cognition begins from the sensory power.

I respond: On this question philosophers have held three positions.

As Augustine explains in his letter *Ad Dioscorum*, Democritus claimed that “the only cause of our cognition is that images come from the bodies we are thinking about and enter into our souls.” And in *De Somno et Vigilia* Aristotle likewise says that Democritus claimed that cognition is effected “by images and discharges (*per idola et defluxiones*).” As Aristotle explains in *De Anima*, the reason for this position was that Democritus himself and the other ancient naturalists did not believe that the intellect differs from the sensory power. And so since the sensory power is affected by the sensible thing, they thought that all of our cognition is brought about just by the changes caused by sensible things. Democritus asserted that these changes are effected through a discharge of images.

By contrast, Plato claimed that the intellect differs from the sensory power, and that the intellect is an immaterial power that does not use a corporeal organ in its own act. And because what is immaterial cannot be affected by what is corporeal, he claimed that intellectual cognition comes about not through the intellect’s being affected by the senses, but rather, as was explained above (aa. 4 and 5), through the intellect’s participation in separated intelligible forms. Moreover, he claimed that the sensory power operates on its own (*operantem per se*). Hence, because the sensory power is a certain spiritual power, it is not affected by the sensible things; rather, the sensory organs are affected by the sensible things, and the soul is in some way stimulated by this change to form the species of sensible things within itself. This is the opinion that Augustine seems to be alluding to in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, when he remarks, “The body does not sense, but instead the soul senses through the body, which it uses as a messenger in order to form within itself what is announced from the outside.” So, then, according to Plato’s opinion, intellectual cognition does not proceed from the sensible thing; not even sentient cognition proceeds entirely from sensible things. Instead, sensible things stimulate the sentient soul to exercise sentient cognition and, similarly, the senses stimulate the intellectual soul to exercise intellectual understanding.

Aristotle, on the other hand, proceeded along a middle course. For with Plato he claimed that the intellect differs from the sensory power. But he claimed that the sensory power does not have a proper operation that the body does not share in (*sine communicatione corporis*), and so sensing is an act of the conjoined being and not of the soul alone; and he made a similar claim about all the operations of the sentient part of the soul. Therefore, since it is not unfitting that sensible things existing outside the soul should cause something in the conjoined being, Aristotle agreed with Democritus that the operations of the sentient part are caused by the impression sensible things make on the sensory power—not by way of discharges, as Democritus had held, but rather through a certain operation. (For as is clear from *De Generatione et Corruptione* 1, Democritus held that every action is effected by a discharge of atoms.) On the other hand, Aristotle held that the intellect has an operation that it does not share with the body. But nothing corporeal can leave an impression (*potest imprimere*) on an incorporeal entity. And so, according to Aristotle, the mere impression of sensible bodies is not enough to cause an intellectual operation; instead, what is required is something more noble, since “an agent is more honorable than a

patient,” as he himself puts it. However, it is not the case that intellectual operations are caused in us by the mere impression of some higher entities, as Plato had claimed. Instead, that higher and more noble agent, which Aristotle calls the ‘active intellect’ and which we have already talked about above (q. 79, aa. 3-4), makes the phantasms received from the senses intelligible in actuality, in the manner of a sort of abstraction (*per modum abstractionis cuiusdam*). Accordingly, as far as the phantasms are concerned, the intellectual operation is caused by the sensory power. But because (a) the phantasms are not sufficient to affect the passive intellect and because (b) they have to be made intelligible in actuality by the active intellect, it cannot be claimed that sentient cognition is the total and perfect cause of intellectual cognition; instead, it is more like a material cause.

Reply to objection 1: What these words of Augustine’s mean is that truth is not to be expected in its totality. What is required is the light of the active intellect, through which we have cognition in an unchangeable way of the truth in changeable things, and through which we distinguish those things from their likenesses.

Reply to objection 2: Augustine is talking here about imaginative cognition and not intellectual cognition. And since, according to Plato’s opinion, the power of imagining has an operation that belongs to the soul alone, Augustine used the same line of reasoning to show that bodies do not impress their likenesses on the power of imagining, but that the soul itself does this. Aristotle uses the same argument, viz., that an agent is more honorable than a patient, to prove that the active intellect is something separate. There is no doubt that, given Plato’s position, it necessary to posit in the power of imagining not just a passive power, but an active power as well.

However, if we hold, in accord with Aristotle’s opinion, that the operation of the power of imagining belongs to the conjoined being, then no difficulty ensues. For a sensible body is more noble than an animal’s sensory organ, since it is related to the sensory organ as a being in actuality is related to a being in potentiality—for instance, as something colored in actuality is related to the pupil, which is colored in potentiality.

Still, one could claim that even though the first change in the power of imagining is effected by the sensible things—given that “an image (*phantasia*) is a movement effected in the sensory power (*motus factus secundum sensum*),” as *De Anima* says—nonetheless, there is an operation of man’s soul which, by dividing and composing, fashions diverse images of things, even images that have not been received from the senses. And Augustine’s words can be understood to be making this point.

Reply to objection 3: Sentient cognition is not the total cause of intellectual cognition. And so it is no surprise that intellectual cognition extends further than sentient cognition does.

Article 7

Can the intellect have actual intellectual understanding through the intelligible species it has within itself, without turning itself to phantasms?

It seems that the intellect can have actual intellectual understanding through the intelligible species it has within itself, without turning itself to phantasms:

Objection 1: The intellect becomes active (*fit in actu*) because of the intelligible species by which it is informed. But the intellect’s becoming active is the very act of intellectual understanding. Therefore, the intelligible species are sufficient for the intellect’s actually engaging in intellectual understanding, without turning itself to phantasms.

Objection 2: The imagination depends more on the sensory power than the intellect depends on

the imagination. But the imagination can be actually engaged in imagining in the absence of sensible things. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the intellect can be actually engaged in intellectual understanding without turning itself to phantasms.

Objection 3: There are no phantasms of incorporeal things, since the imagination does not transcend time and continuous quantity (*continuum*). Therefore, if our intellect were unable to have actual intellectual understanding of anything without turning itself to phantasms, it would follow that it cannot have intellectual understanding of anything incorporeal. But this is clearly false, since we have intellectual understanding of truth itself and of God and of the angels.

But contrary to this: In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, “The soul does not have intellectual understanding of anything without a phantasm.”

I respond: In the state of our present life, in which our intellect is joined to a passible body, it is impossible for it to have an actual intellectual understanding of anything unless it turns itself toward phantasms. There are two indications that make this apparent.

First of all, given that the intellect is a power that does not use a corporeal organ, if no act of a power that uses a corporeal organ were required for its act, then the intellect would not in any way be impeded in its act by an injury to a corporeal organ. But the senses, the imagination, and all the other powers that belong to the sentient part of the soul use a corporeal organ. Hence, it is clear that in order for the intellect to be actually engaged in intellectual understanding—not only for attaining knowledge *de novo*, but also for making use of already acquired knowledge—what is required are acts of the imagination and of the rest of the powers. For we see that when the act of the power of imagining is impeded by an injury to an organ, as in the case of those who are delirious (*in phreneticis*) or, similarly, when the act of the power of remembering is impeded, as in those who are groggy (*in lethargicis*), a man is prevented from having actual intellectual understanding even of those things that he previously had scientific knowledge of.

Second, everyone can experience in his own case that when someone tries to have an intellectual understanding of something, he forms for himself phantasms as examples in which he inspects, as it were, what he is trying to understand. And so, too, when we want to make someone else understand something, we propose to him examples from which he can form phantasms in order to understand the matter at hand. The reason for this is that a cognitive power is proportioned to the thing it has cognition of. Hence, the proper object of an angelic intellect, which is totally separated from a body, is an intelligible substance separated from a body, and it is through intelligible things of this sort that an angel has cognition of material things. By contrast, the proper object of the human intellect, which is conjoined to a body, is a ‘what-ness’ or nature existing in corporeal matter (*quidditas sive naturam in materia corporali existens*), and it is through these natures of visible things that it ascends to some sort of cognition of invisible things as well. But it is part of the conception of this sort of nature that it exists in an individual and not without corporeal matter; for instance, it is part of the conception of the nature of a rock that it exists in individual rocks (*de ratione naturae lapidis est quod sit in hoc lapide*), and part of the conception of the nature of a horse that it exists in individual horses, and so on for the others. Hence, the nature of a rock, or of any material entity, is such that there cannot be a complete and true cognition of it except insofar as it is thought of as existing in a particular. But we apprehend particulars through the sensory power and the imagination. And so for the intellect to have an actual intellectual understanding of its own proper object, it is necessary that it turn itself to phantasms, in order that it might inspect the universal nature as it exists in the particular (*ut speculetur naturam universalem in particulari existentem*). On the other hand, if the proper object of our intellect were a separated form, or if the natures of sensible things did not subsist in particulars (as the Platonists held), then it would not be necessary that our intellect always turn itself to phantasms when engaging in intellectual understanding.

Reply to objection 1: As was explained above (q. 79, a. 6), the species that are conserved in the

passive intellect exist in it habitually when it is not actually engaged in intellectual understanding. Hence, the conservation of these species is not itself sufficient for us to be actually engaged in intellectual understanding; instead, it is necessary for us to make use of the species in a way appropriate to the entities whose species they are, and these entities are natures that exist in particulars.

Reply to objection 2: A phantasm is itself a likeness of a particular thing, and so the imagination does not need any other likeness of the particular in the way that the intellect does.

Reply to objection 3: We have cognition of incorporeal things, of which there are no phantasms, by way of a comparison to sensible bodies, of which there are phantasms. For instance, we come to an intellectual understanding of truth by considering things with respect to which we see the truth, whereas, as Dionysius says, we have cognition of God (a) as a cause, and (b) through preeminence (*per excessum*), and (c) through negation (*per remotionem*). Again, other incorporeal substances are such that, in the state of our present life, we cannot have cognition of them except through negation or through some sort of comparison to corporeal things. And so when we have intellectual understanding of something of this sort, we necessarily have to be turned toward the phantasms of bodies, even though there are no phantasms of these things themselves.

Article 8

Is the intellect's judgment impeded when the sensory power is inoperative?

It seems that the intellect's judgment is not impeded when the sensory power is inoperative (*per ligamentum sensus*):

Objection 1: Something higher is not dependent on something lower. But the intellect's judgment is higher than the sensory power. Therefore, the intellect's judgment is not impeded when the sensory power is inoperative.

Objection 2: Reasoning by means of a syllogism (*sylogizare*) is an act of the intellect. Now as *De Somno et Vigilia* says, during sleep the sensory power is inoperative; and yet it sometimes happens that someone who is sleeping reasons by means of a syllogism. Therefore, the intellect's judgment is not impeded by the fact that the senses are inoperative.

But contrary to this: As Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12, morally illicit things that occur during sleep (*contingunt in dormiendo*) do not count as sins. But this would not be so if a sleeping man had the free use of his reason and intellect. Therefore, the use of reason is impeded when the sensory power is inoperative.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 7), the proper object proportioned to our intellect is the nature of a sensible thing. Now a perfect judgment cannot be made about a thing if not everything that pertains to that thing is known, and especially if the terminus or end of the judgment is unknown. But in *De Caelo* 3 the Philosopher says, "Just as the end of productive knowledge (*factiva scientia*) is a piece of work (*opus*), so the end of natural knowledge (*naturalis scientia*) is that which is apparent principally to the senses." For a craftsman seeks to have cognition of knives only for the sake of his work, so that he might make this particular knife; and, similarly, a natural scientist seeks to have cognition of the nature of a rock or of a horse only in order to know the natures of those things that are apparent to the senses.

Now it is obvious that the craftsman could not render a perfect judgment about a knife if he did not know how to make one (*si opus ignoraret*); and, similarly, no perfect judgment of natural knowledge can be made about natural things if sensible things are not known. But all the things we have intellectual understanding of in our present state are such that we have cognition of them in relation to natural

sensible things. Hence, it is impossible for a perfect judgment of the intellect to exist in us when the sensory power is inoperative, since it is through the sensory power that we have cognition of sensible things.

Reply to objection 1: Even though the intellect is higher than the sensory power, it nonetheless receives in a certain way from the sensory power, and its first and principal objects are grounded in sensible things (*fundatur in sensibilibus*). And so it is necessary that the intellect's judgment should be impeded when the sensory power is inoperative.

Reply to objection 2: As *De Somno et Vigilia* says, the sensory power is inoperative in those who are asleep because of the release of certain vapors and fumes. And so the sensory power can be more or less inoperative, depending on the disposition of such evaporations.

For instance, when there is a lot of movement of vapors, both the senses and the imagination are inoperative, so that there are no phantasms; this happens especially when someone goes to sleep after heavy eating or drinking.

However, if the movement of vapors is a bit less intense, then phantasms appear, but they are distorted and chaotic (*distorta et inordinata*); this occurs in those who are feverish.

Again, if the movement is still more sedate, then well-ordered phantasms appear; this occurs mainly near the end of the time of sleep and in men who are sober and have a strong imagination.

On the other hand, if the movement of the vapors is minimal, not only does the imagination remain free, but even the common sensory power is partly operative (*ex parte solvitur*), so that a man sometimes judges in his sleep that what he is seeing are dreams, as if he were distinguishing between things and their likenesses. But to some extent the common sensory power remains inoperative, and so even if he distinguishes certain likenesses from the things, he is nonetheless always deceived about some matters.

So, then, depending on the way in which the sensory power and imagination are operating in sleep, the intellect's judgment is freed up, but not entirely. Hence, those who engage in syllogistic reasoning while asleep always recognize, when they wake up, that they have made a mistake in some matter.