

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF TIME

fect way. But there are still many questions remaining, some of which are only made more pressing by what we have seen. Is there a first motion? If so, what is it? Can it be uniform? And how can motions which are distinct and each have their own before and after share any time, if time is the number of the before and after of motion, if, especially, as seems to be the case, there is a numerically one now for more than one motion? What is this supposed simultaneity? I hope to consider, even if very dialectically, these and other more concrete questions in a later article.

IN DEFENSE OF GOD'S POWER TO SATISFY THE HUMAN HEART

Michael Augros

Then Gideon built
an altar there to the Lord
and called it
The Lord is Peace

—Judges 6:24

Our heart is restless until it rest in thee. These well known words of St. Augustine summarize his own life, but they also describe the inclination of every soul, and encapsulate the spiritual writings of the saints. They declare the homing instinct of the creature back toward its creator. But what is the nature of that instinct? What manner of rest in God does the human heart desire? St. Augustine answers in no uncertain terms. He spells out in plain language the secret to man's happiness: There is a single good which is fully satisfying to the human heart—there is only one such good—it is God himself. The manner in which we possess God so as to bring our desires at last to rest is to share in the vision of his divine essence. Nothing else will satisfy us. Nothing else is needed.

This understanding of the purpose of our existence is not traditionally categorized as one of Augustine's personal opinions, but as a mere elaboration of divinely revealed truth,

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which he happened to put rather clearly and forcefully, and which has been ratified again and again since his time by doctors of the Church, by the saints, by the great spiritual writers, and not least of all by the Common Doctor, Thomas Aquinas.

There are some, however, even certain contemporary theologians,¹ who would call this doctrine the invention of St. Augustine, and who would have it that the vision of God is but one reward of the blessed among others, and that God alone would not suffice to satisfy the desire of his saints. This opinion, while an instructive occasion for deeper insight into the nature of beatitude, is most certainly an error. More than that, it is an error of particular gravity, because it concerns so central a matter, and because it detracts from the divine honor. Certainly those who hold it do not (for the most part) knowingly belittle the divine goodness, but their position does in fact do serious injustice to God, and violence to his scriptures, to say nothing of the Catholic tradition from Augustine to Aquinas. Throughout the scriptures the Holy Spirit has endeavored to

¹ For example, Germain Grisez has called this teaching of Augustine not only erroneous, but a "blunder" contrary to faith: "On the first page of his *Confessions*, St. Augustine addresses God: 'You have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you.' . . . At the end of the *Confessions*, Augustine again speaks of resting in God and alludes to the Letter to the Hebrews. But it seems that he understood our heart's relationship to God in light of the neo-Platonism he continued to hold, although with many Christian amendments, so that the dictum meant: *Because God constituted us so that we naturally tend toward as close a union with him as possible, our heart cannot rest unless we are united to God by the beatific vision.* I call that *the classical restless-heart thesis.* Many think an excellent explanation and defense of this thesis is provided by St. Thomas's treatise on beatitude. . . . Many proponents of the classical restless-heart thesis affirmed false propositions that Thomas denied. If his theory is untenable, the classical restless-heart thesis—which he may not have held—is even less tenable. So, my arguments, if cogent, will show that the classical restless-heart thesis was a theological blunder." From *The Restless-Heart Blunder*, Germain Grisez, 2005 Aquinas Lecture, Center for Thomistic Studies, University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas.

impress upon the faithful that God is good and we are not; that God is everything and that creatures, by comparison, are nothing; that to seek anything other than God, or in addition to God, as one's happiness, is a folly and an insult to the divinity. The scriptures move us not only to acknowledge these truths in ourselves, but to strive and pray for their acknowledgement in others—the first petition which our Lord has taught us to make is *Hallowed be thy name.* Accordingly, I here undertake the work of defending the teaching of St. Augustine as the true teaching of God, and even, if this may be said without offense, undertake the work of defending God himself, who, in accord with his wisdom, permits men at times to think falsely of him, and permits men at times to correct those false thoughts.

My defense will take a form similar to that of an article from the *Summa Theologiae*, beginning with arguments for the view I will oppose, followed by a determination of the truth in light of the scriptures and also in light of various arguments, and ending with a reply to the opposing arguments.

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

It may well seem that God cannot satisfy the human heart, not even in the beatific vision, and that we will always require certain creatures in order to be happy, since:

1. It is an error to confuse the principal part with the whole. Reason is the chief part of the soul, but is not the whole soul. The head is the chief part of the body, but is not the whole body. Likewise, the king is the chief of the kingdom, but is not the whole kingdom. Now our reward in the next life is not a king, but a kingdom ("Seek first the kingdom of God"²), and hence God, the king, though he is the supreme part of our reward in the next life, is not the whole reward. Since it

² Matthew 6:33.

is only our whole reward, and not just some part of it, which fully satisfies our desires and makes us happy, it follows that God alone cannot satisfy us, but only all the goods of his whole kingdom taken together. Hence the angels and saints are said to rejoice over the repentance of sinners, and in the increase in the number of the blessed,³ since a large part of their perfect joy is their communion together. A further sign that this is true is that in this life, too, the contemplation of God, though it is the supreme part, remains only a part of our whole happiness, since we must also contemplate other things besides God, and engage in other activities besides contemplation, such as the acts of friendship with one another, in order to be happy.⁴

2. The chief elements of happiness in this life are the acts of wisdom and friendship—hence we should expect that the perfect happiness of the next life will consist in the perfection of these two things. And indeed we are promised two things in the next life: a share in divine wisdom (the beatific vision) and a place in the communion of saints (eternal friendship with our fellow creatures). Therefore the beatific vision is not our whole happiness, but only a part of it.

3. The traditional division of “goods for man” is into goods of the soul, goods of the body, and outside goods,⁵ which seems to hold even for the next life, where man will still have body, soul, and external things. But God, whether in this life or the next, is only a good of the soul, not a good of the body (like health), nor an outside good (like a house). Nor is God

³ Luke 15:7.

⁴ Germain Grisez argues very similarly: “Strictly speaking, God is not the ultimate end toward which we should direct our lives. That end is God’s kingdom, which will be a wonderful communion of divine persons, human persons, and other created persons. Every member of the kingdom will be richly fulfilled in respect to all human goods, including friendship with God.” *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁵ See, for instance, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.8 1098b10–15.

every good of the soul (for instance he is not moral virtue or the science of geometry). Hence it is impossible for God to be the whole good of man, and hence it is impossible for God to satisfy the human heart.

4. It seems incongruous that the souls of the blessed should not care about their own bodies—both because the soul has a natural desire to be with the body, and because the resurrection is promised as a reward, and no one is justly rewarded with what he does not care about. But if the blessed souls care about their bodies, they cannot be completely satisfied without them, even though they already see God. Hence the vision of God does not completely satisfy human desire.⁶

5. Further, if God himself fully satisfied the human soul, he would not offer it any other goods, as they would be superfluous and pointless. But he promises “a new heaven and a new earth.”⁷ Now even if “a new heaven” means some spiritual good like the vision of God, then by contrast “a new earth” must mean a bodily good, such as a new corporeal abode for the glorified bodies of the saints. Hence God promises the blessed a wealth of external goods in addition to the beatific vision, and this can only be because the human heart cannot be perfectly happy without these things.

6. Again, if God alone were enough to satisfy the human heart, so that beyond the vision of God the human heart desired to see nothing else, then the blessed in heaven would

⁶ Germain Grisez makes a similar argument for his position: “The Apostles’ Creed ends with ‘the resurrection of the body and life everlasting’ and the Nicene Creed with ‘We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.’ The words *We look for* make it clear that we hope for both the resurrection and the life of the world to come. . . . And of course, the human body, raised in glory, remains a created reality. Therefore, it is not only false but implicitly contrary to Catholic faith to say, as Thomas does, that the true ultimate end ‘is not found in anything created, but only in God.’” *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁷ “We look for a new heaven and a new earth, according to his promises.” 2 Peter 3:13.

have no desire to see their persecutors punished by divine justice. But we read of the martyrs saying "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"⁸ The blessed who see God, therefore, are not fully satisfied with that vision, but desire to see other things, such as their own vindication before men.

7. If God alone satisfied the human soul, then the souls of the blessed would desire to do nothing else than to see God. But this is false, since we know that they do many things other than see God—they intercede for us, for instance. And when they receive their bodies back after the resurrection, it is inconceivable that they will not move about, and have sensations, and imaginings, and human thoughts and speech, lest they have their bodies and powers to no purpose. But it is impossible to do these things without choosing to do them, and hence it is impossible to do them without desire. Hence the saints will desire many things upon which their vision of God will not depend. Therefore the vision of God does not bring the desire of the blessed to rest.⁹

8. Again, seeing God cannot be fully satisfying, since a creature can see God only imperfectly, even in the vision of God, since the created intellect is finite.¹⁰ So, just as the imperfect understanding of God we have in this life leaves us desiring to see God better,¹¹ so too even our beatific vision will leave us desiring to see God better. Hence our desire cannot be brought to rest by the beatific vision, but rather is further

⁸ Revelation 6:10.

⁹ Germain Grisez argues the same way: "In praying to Mary and other saints, we ask them to pray on our behalf. We want them to take an interest in us, desire for us what we need, and ask God for it. And they do intercede for us. Therefore, although Mary and the other saints already enjoy the beatific vision, they desire still more the benefits they desire God to give us." *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁰ See *Summa Theologiae* I Q. 12, a. 7.

¹¹ See *Summa Theologiae* I Q. 12, a. 1 c., end.

provoked by it. If, then, we are to have full satisfaction in the next life, this can be only by successive desires and satisfactions of them, i.e. by advancing forever in our vision of God, seeing him better and better for all eternity. Hence it is not possible for the vision of God to be fully satisfying to us.

9. Every perfection goes with its proper perfectible. But our beatitude, whether in this life or the next, is our perfection, and hence must befit our human nature somehow. Now the vision of God is not properly human, but divine, and hence a share in this might be a part of properly human beatitude, since reason is a part of man and is in some sense divine, but our whole beatitude cannot consist in this, since we are human, not divine. This argument shows that we need not impute any deficiency to God's goodness in order to deny that he can satisfy us—this is due to our deficiency, not his. It is because we are creatures, and have our own limitations, that we cannot be satisfied with one, perfect good, but need a multitude of goods proportioned to our natures, which have parts and require succession from object to object.¹²

10. Furthermore, the human heart is not restless without the things it does not desire. But many, even among those who have heard of the possibility, do not desire the vision of God, but want money instead, or fame, or some other created good. Hence it is false to say that the human heart, as such, is restless until it sees God.¹³

¹² Germain Grisez argues similarly. According to him, the beatific vision "is not itself a human good. It does not fulfill any capacity of human nature; it is not attained by a human act of intellect, will, or any other power. . . . Our *human* heart is not restless for the beatific vision precisely because that gift is a *divine* perfection toward which we *human* persons can tend only if and insofar as we share in the *divine* nature and truly are children of God in the Child, Jesus Christ, who is at once our brother and our Lord." *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹³ Germain Grisez similarly argues that "what Thomas calls 'imperfect beatitude' can be the ultimate end of people trying to be all they can be in this world. Therefore, it is not true that everyone must take as his

Such are the principal arguments to be made for the opposing side, as I see it. But the testimonies to the contrary which might be brought forward from the Scriptures are so numerous, one hardly knows where to begin.

THE TESTIMONY OF REVELATION

The Psalmist most plainly proclaims the power of God alone to satisfy human desire:

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.¹⁴

I say to the Lord, *You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.*¹⁵

The Lord is my chosen portion, and my cup; you hold my lot.¹⁶

David further confesses that it is by *seeing* God that he will possess God to his satisfaction:

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with beholding your form.¹⁷

And whereas all other things weary him, and leave him hungry and thirsty, he uses the language of satiety to describe the effect which beholding God has upon his soul:

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where no water is. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,

or her ultimate end something expected to satiate desire. However, nobody could settle for less if the will necessarily tended toward complete fulfillment that leaves nothing more to desire." *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁴ Psalm 73[72]:25.

¹⁵ Psalm 16[15]:2.

¹⁶ Psalm 16[15]:5.

¹⁷ Psalm 17[16]:15.

beholding your power and glory. . . . My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips, when I think of you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night.¹⁸

Let no one doubt, then, that the Psalmist has anticipated Augustine, and that Augustine has not indulged his imagination, or his neo-Platonic leanings, but has only said summarily what David had already said dispersedly when he said "Our heart is restless until it rest in thee."

The scriptures affirm the goodness of creatures only for the sake of defending the goodness of their creator. That is why we find the goodness of creatures affirmed chiefly or only in those passages which touch upon creation—most notably at the opening of Genesis. By contrast, passages condemning creatures for their inability to satisfy human desire are everywhere. For instance:

He who loves money will not be satisfied with money.¹⁹

Now what sort of condemnation is this, if the very same can be said of the creator? Dare we say likewise that "He who loves God will not be satisfied with God?" Or shall we say that souls will indeed be satisfied with God, but not because of God himself, but because of the other things he can supply—like money, or the goods obtainable with money?

Speaking of temporal goods and human knowledge under the figure of water, Christ says

Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.²⁰

Well, then, dare we say that he who drinks of the water that Christ will give him will not be satisfied, but will thirst again? Speaking of food for the body, Christ says

¹⁸ Psalm 63[62]1-2, 5-6.

¹⁹ Ecclesiastes 5:10.

²⁰ John 4:13.

You seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food which perishes.²¹

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.²²

Shall we say likewise that he who comes to Christ, to the bread of life, shall still hunger?

And what was the significance of the multiplication of the loaves ("And they had eaten their fill")²³ if not to show that God can be received by many at once and lose none of his power to satisfy?

Someone may say: "Christ means indeed that we shall be satisfied in heaven, but not just with himself, but only together with many good things besides." Then why does he say "I am the bread of life",²⁴ and even more simply "I am the life",²⁵ rather than say "I will provide you with life"? And why does he define eternal life as knowing God?²⁶ And why does he say that only one thing is needful, rather than being busy with many things?²⁷ And why do we have but one spiritual food, the Eucharist? (And when we observe the Eucharistic fast in accord with the precept of the Church, are we not meant to feel somewhat hungry, empty, as a sensible sign of our dissatisfaction with the goods of this world, and of our hunger for God, who alone can satisfy us? And are we not supposed to have empty stomachs, as we approach him in the Eucharist, as though to confess that we are ready to receive him only when we have emptied ourselves of all other things? And are

²¹ John 6:26-27.

²² John 6:49.

²³ John 6:11-12.

²⁴ John 6:35.

²⁵ John 11:25, 14:6.

²⁶ John 17:3.

²⁷ Luke 10:40-41.

we not meant to feel still hungry, still dissatisfied, after our Eucharistic communion with him, precisely because even in the Eucharist we have not yet seen him, and must have faith in his invisible nourishment of our souls?)

Someone may say: "The goods of this world fail to satisfy us only because we can lose them, but in heaven such goods as our bodies, our friends, and our possessions, we will have securely, forever, and hence they will be an essential part of the satisfaction of our desires." But will God then be unable to satisfy us without these? Will he be unable to beatify us, then, if we are without our dearest friends, that is, our spouses, our parents, and our children? Are they necessary conditions for our eternal happiness? Why, then, does Christ say

Do not think that I came to bring peace upon earth: I came not to bring peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He who loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.²⁸

Someone may say: "Ah, but whoever loses his house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for the sake of Christ will receive these back a hundredfold."²⁹ But then these new relatives will only be others of the blessed in heaven, not necessarily our flesh and blood. So why will we be perfectly happy with such substitutions for our own flesh and blood? Is it not because in heaven we will love the company of others only insofar as they share our own true happiness with us, namely the vision of God? But then what we love in others is not themselves for their own sake, nor

²⁸ Matthew 10:34-37.

²⁹ Matthew 19:29.

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their natural connection to ourselves, but only the vision of God which we see multiplied in them, and which we enjoy in them and with them afresh.

And if anyone should say "Yes, God will satisfy us, but not by bringing our desire to rest, but by successively satisfying each desire as it arises in us," then let him explain the word of God which says "Better what the eye sees than the wandering of desire."³⁰

And let him explain away, if he can, why our eternal reward is defined as *rest*, and the punishment of the wicked as *unrest*, and why God alone is said to be capable of providing rest, of producing a calm:

The wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.³¹

And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord! We are perishing!" And he said to them "Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?" Then he arose and rebuked the winds of the sea, and there was a great calm.³²

Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³³

Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord . . . They will rest from their labors.³⁴

³⁰ Ecclesiastes 6:9.

³¹ Isaiah 57:20.

³² Matthew 8:24-26.

³³ Matthew 11:28-29.

³⁴ Revelation 14:13.

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Working out our salvation therefore consists in movement toward rest; a turning away from creatures, a returning toward God, and a resting in him:

In returning and rest you shall be saved.³⁵

God himself has commanded us to rest, even in this life, on his day, as a sign of our faith that we are in pilgrimage through this toilsome life, toward a life of rest, a share in God's own rest. In thus resting we prove that we trust not in our own work or power to make us blessed or deserving of blessedness; we show our contempt for creatures and their weakness, having seen that in this world we live among the works of our hands and blessed we are not. It is not even in the work of God that we are saved and blessed, since the work of God is a creature—his rest is himself. God has given us a choice: Trust in yourselves, *in man's work*, and you will have no more reward than this can provide, or else trust *in God's rest*, which is his own unmovable happiness, and which no human effort can attain:

You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you; every one who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.³⁶

Both our blessedness and our way of attaining it consist in rest: we attain blessedness by resting from the works of sin,³⁷ and our blessedness itself is a share in God's own rest:

³⁵ Isaiah 30:15.

³⁶ Exodus 31:13-14.

³⁷ "When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death." Romans 6:20-21.

Whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his.³⁸

But in what sense did God, who never changes, who never tires, "cease from his labors"? What does it mean for God to "rest"? For a man to rest is for him to stop producing things and to keep something of his power within himself. Analogously, for God to rest is for him to determine that only so many things will he create, only so much will he express of his power, wisdom, and goodness in creation—the remainder he will keep within himself, unexpressed in creatures. God's rest, then, is another name for the immobility of the divine substance, the inexpressibility of the divine essence: it cannot move out of itself, as it were, and be found fully in anything other than God. To enter into God's rest, accordingly, would mean to depart from creatures entirely, and enter into possession of the divine substance not as expressed in any creature, but as it is in itself.

When it is said we enter into "God's rest," this means not only the rest which God gives to us (as "God's punishment" means the punishment which God gives to us, but not the one he himself suffers), but it also means the rest which God himself enjoys. His rest is the same as his joy, and it is his joy in which we seek a share:

Come, enter into the joy of your master.³⁹

But God's joy is only in himself, and is unchanged and unaffected by creatures. So too, then, our heavenly joy is in God alone, since this is nothing else than a share in God's own joy.

Our reward is called not only *rest*, but also *peace*, which is not the mere absence of war, of strife, of labor, since one can be free of these yet remain in dire poverty, or in terrible illness, or in loneliness, and have no peace. True peace is a

³⁸ Hebrews 4:10.

³⁹ Matthew 25:21, 25:23.

secure rest in an abundance of goods. And it is not just any peace, but God's own peace, which we are promised:

Peace I leave you—my peace I give unto you.⁴⁰

And what is his peace? In what good does he rest? In the divinity of his Father.⁴¹ And while the world may also be said to "give peace", it is either a false peace or a false giving (or both). The goods of the world provide no true rest, but only cause desire, or "thirst", to return more intensely and with less satisfaction every time:

There is this difference between a spiritual thing and a temporal thing: although each produces a thirst, they do so in different ways. When a temporal thing is possessed it causes us to be thirsty, not for the thing itself, but for something else; while a spiritual thing when possessed takes away the thirst for other things, and causes us to thirst for it. The reason for this is that before temporal things are possessed, they are highly regarded and thought satisfying; but after they are possessed, they are found to be neither so great as thought nor sufficient to satisfy our desires, and so our desires are not satisfied but move on to something else. On the other hand, a spiritual thing is not known unless it is possessed: *No one knows but he who receives it* (Rev 2:17). So, when it is not possessed, it does not produce a desire; but once it is possessed and known, then it brings pleasure and produces desire, but not to possess something else. Yet, because it is imperfectly known on account of the deficiency of the one receiving it, it produces a desire in us to possess it perfectly.

⁴⁰ John 14:27.

⁴¹ In this world, the Son is not at home, and hence is not at rest here: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head." (Mt 8:20) He was "laid in a trough, because there was no room for him in the inn." (Lk 2:7) But his home is his origin, the Father, and hence it is there he returns to rest: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father." (Jn 16:28)

We read of this thirst: *My soul thirsted for God, the living fountain* (Ps 41:2). This thirst is not completely taken away in this world because in this life we cannot understand spiritual things; consequently, one who drinks this water will still thirst for its completion. But he will not always be thirsty, as though the water will run out, for we read (Ps 35:9): *They will be intoxicated from the richness of your house*. In the life of glory, where the blessed drink perfectly the water of divine grace, they will never be thirsty again: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what is right," that is, in this world, "for they will be satisfied," in the life of glory. (Mt 5:6)⁴²

The peace afforded by temporal goods, therefore, is no true peace. Moreover, the world offers such goods not freely, but at a cost, often at the cost of the soul. And therefore the Lord, who gives true peace, and gives it freely, goes on to distinguish his peace:

Not as the world gives, do I give unto you.

We find no true peace for our souls, then, until we find peace in God, and rest in him:

And the fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.⁴³

He himself is our peace.⁴⁴

In many places, scripture attests to the superabundance of the divine goodness as a total and more-than-sufficient cause of our happiness. Praising the gift of divine wisdom, it says

All good things came to me together with her.⁴⁵

⁴² St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Gospel of John, Ch. 4 verses 10-26, translated by James A. Weisheipl, Magi Books, Albany, N.Y., 1980, p. 242.

⁴³ Isaiah 32:17.

⁴⁴ Ephesians 2:14.

⁴⁵ Wisdom 7:11.

In Proverbs (3:18) we read that divine wisdom

is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy.

The possession of no good besides wisdom, then, is required to make a soul happy—although it must be held "fast", that is *securely*, with no possibility of losing it. But this is the manner in which wisdom is possessed in eternal life in the vision of God. Hence man is happy only in the vision of God.

Again, in the first and greatest of God's precepts we are commanded to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, our whole strength.⁴⁶ We are commanded to love nothing else in this way—not even ourselves or each other—since it is impossible to give our whole heart to two things: "No one can serve two masters."⁴⁷ But why is this? What does it mean to love something with one's "whole heart"? It means that all one's love is directed to that one object, and hence one loves nothing but that object, and one can be said to love other things only for the sake of that one object. If there is any love in one's heart for anything else, not for the sake of the one object, then the one object does not conquer the whole heart, but a place in the heart is reserved for other things. To love God with one's whole heart, then, means to love God alone for his own sake, and to love other things only through one's love for God—much as one loves an end for its own sake, and loves the means to it only for the sake of the end, and only with the love for the end.⁴⁸ But what it is right for us to love wholly in this way must be our whole good. Therefore God is not only our supreme good, but is our whole good. That is why the one requirement for deserving to see God is to place one's entire

⁴⁶ Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12, 11:13, 13:3, 30:6, 30:10, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27.

⁴⁷ Matthew 6:24.

⁴⁸ See *Summa Theologiae* 1-2 Q8 A3, 1-2 Q12 A4, for more on this.

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happiness in seeing him—to love God alone for his own sake and as one's complete happiness:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.⁴⁹

That God contains the totality of goodness in himself, and is the being in whom lies the fullness of every creature's end and purpose, is clear also when he says

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.⁵⁰

What does this mean, if not "I am the creator of all, the goal of all—and just as I the Lord alone am your first origin, so too I alone am your ultimate end"?

THE TESTIMONY OF REASON

One may reason to the same result from various truths of our faith, and even, to some extent, from the truths accessible to reason's natural light:

1. An infinite cause cannot fail to produce its effect upon a properly disposed subject. A finite heat might fail to ignite paper, even though the paper is nearby and dry, but an infinite heat could not fail to ignite it. Now it is the proper effect of the good, which is the *per se* object of all desire, to bring the corresponding desire to rest in itself. Therefore, although a finite good might fail to bring desire to rest, or to satisfy it, or to satisfy it fully and permanently, an infinite good could not fail to do so. God, of course, is an infinite good, and those who see him are properly disposed to receive his goodness, and therefore the desire of the blessed who enjoy the vision of God must rest fully in God. Moreover, no other good can give the human will complete rest, since every other good

⁴⁹ Matthew 5:8.

⁵⁰ Revelation 22:13.

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is finite and hence particular, while the will loves the good as such and universally, even as the mind conceives being as such and universally. Therefore the human heart cannot fully rest until it rests in the possession of God himself.

2. Nor can anyone object that God, while infinite, is an infinite good of just one kind, like an infinite wine, which, though an infinite good, leaves one still desiring other goods, like bread and meat to accompany it, and even other kinds of wine. To conceive of God's goodness thus is to make it finite in essence, and to limit him to some genus of perfection, whereas in truth he contains all modes of perfection, since all come forth entirely from him. God is not an infinite good of a specific kind, but an infinite good unlimited in kind, being a total and universal good. Therefore nothing possible to the nature of goodness is lacking in him. But any good which fails to satisfy a properly disposed⁵¹ desire fails because there is something of the nature of goodness missing in it. Hence God cannot fail to satisfy desire completely in those who possess him. Moreover, every good other than God is missing something possible to the nature of goodness, and therefore cannot bring to rest the human will, which inclines toward the good universally. Therefore our hearts are restless until they rest in him.

And if someone object that God does not contain all goods in himself in the same mode in which they may be found outside him in creatures, and that this might prevent him from satisfying creatures which desire goods in certain specific modes, this amounts to nothing, since desire rests when the good it seeks in some particular mode is possessed in another mode having all the advantages of the particular one originally sought, and

⁵¹ I add this qualification only to keep the statement universal. The truth in God's case is that his goodness cannot be seen and unappreciated, since the very seeing of it would render one properly disposed toward it.

none of the disadvantages. For example, if we have a natural desire to know in a mode that is natural to us, but in God we come to know the same things in a supernatural mode with none of the weakness inherent in human knowledge, we will not desire the limited goodness of human knowledge, or not as something necessary to our perfect happiness.

3. Again, it is the nature of the good to satisfy desire, and hence the perfect good must satisfy perfectly. But God is the perfect good, since he is goodness itself subsisting. As circularity itself cannot be imperfectly circular, but is that by which anything else is circular to whatever extent, so goodness itself cannot be imperfectly satisfying to desire, but is that by which anything else is satisfying to whatever extent. Therefore God satisfies perfectly. And when someone is perfectly satisfied by something, his desire rests in it, and he desires nothing further. Hence the same thing follows as before, namely that God, through himself and by himself, is perfectly satisfying to all desire, and he is the only being of that description, since he alone is goodness itself: "One is good: God."⁵²

4. Again, if the divine goodness cannot satisfy the human heart, then for like reasons neither can the divine truth satisfy the human mind, and therefore, however perfectly one understood God's substance, one could still acquire more perfect understanding by knowing other things separately and in themselves. But from this it follows that God's substance is not an adequate form by which to know all being, and hence God himself could not understand all being, or not perfectly, simply by knowing himself, which is absurd. Therefore the divine goodness perfectly satisfies the human heart, whereas no creature can do so any more than it could fully satisfy the human mind, which naturally desires to understand all being. Hence our hearts are restless until they rest in him in the beatific vision.

⁵² Matthew 19:17.

5. Again, it is plain in Scripture that our whole reward is none other than "eternal life." Now nothing is eternal but God, since "eternal" does not mean merely "will have no end" or even "without beginning or end", but also "without succession" and "all at once," which describes no actuality except the divine one. Hence our Lord reveals his divinity in speaking of the past as being in his present: "Before Abraham ever was, I am."⁵³ Eternal life, however, is nothing else than God's own eternal activity—his self-understanding. Since our whole reward is called "eternal life," it follows that our whole reward is a share in God's self-understanding. But our whole reward is perfectly satisfying, and hence that vision is perfectly satisfying to us. And nothing else can be perfectly satisfying to us, lest we say that something else is as good as God, or that God is offering us a life that is no better than some other life we might obtain by other means, which is against faith. Therefore our hearts are restless until they rest in the vision of God.

6. Again, for a creature to become a fitting recipient of some share in the divine blessedness requires that the creature become disposed toward that blessedness in a way conformed to God. Hence anyone who loves God's blessedness in a way that disagrees with the way God loves it (for example if he loves it less than some created good), is not fit to share in that blessedness. But God's blessedness consists in his possession of his own goodness, and not in the possession of creatures, upon which his blessedness in no way depends, and he loves and enjoys his blessedness and his goodness precisely in that way. Therefore the creature must become like God in this way before he is a fitting recipient of the divine blessedness, i.e. he must love God's own happiness as his own perfect happiness, for which no creature is necessary. But if this alone is our perfect happiness, we cannot be happy without it, and

⁵³ John 8:58.

hence our hearts are restless until they rest in the full possession of God.

7. When one thing contains in itself all the particulars, it does not form a whole together with those particulars, but rather it itself is a whole—hence we find fault with “dogs, cats, squirrels, animals” as a list of “mammals,” since “animals” contains all particular mammals, and more besides. Now God’s essence cannot be a part of the universe, or a part of any composite or multitude, in part because it is infinite and perfect, and the infinite cannot be numbered together with the finite, or the perfect with the imperfect, since the infinite and perfect virtually contain all the finite and imperfect particulars. Accordingly we find fault with “Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, The Word of God,” as a list of “wise persons”. For the same reason God’s goodness cannot be a part of some whole good, or of some multitude of goods—hence we find fault with “Candy, money, health, The Holy Spirit” as a list of “good things,” much as we find fault with “Candy, money, health, goodness” as a list of “good things.”

Now every community is a multitude of persons united by a single common good (else there will be no unity to the community). For a single community, this common good must be one either by the unity of order, or it must simply be one in number (it cannot be one only in species, since two cities might not even be aware of each others’ existence, while pursuing goods alike in species, and hence that type of unity does not produce a single community). Now the blessed are a single community, and hence the common good which defines them is either one by the unity of order, or else it is one in number. But God is certainly the supreme good of the blessed, and he is not a part of some multitude of goods which is one by the unity of order, as has just been shown. Therefore the common good which defines the community of the blessed is one in number, and it is God alone. Hence their hearts are fully satisfied in him, and nothing else defines

their society and its unity and its tranquil order other than the vision of God.

And this harmonizes wonderfully with the way that we are taught to speak of the city of God as a “communion” of saints. What, after all, is the difference between a “community” and a “communion”? The city of Ventura, California, is a community—but no one would speak of it as a “communion.” This is because the unity of the citizens of Ventura falls short of communion. The common good for which they strive is not one in number, but only one by order, being a multitude of shared goods which, taken together, provide a completeness of life for the citizens. Also, the citizens do not all know one another, and even those who do know each other are not always with each other and seeing each other, nor do they ever see each other through and through, or want to see or be seen in that way. The saints, by contrast, share a common good which is one single being, God, and in the very act of seeing him see also one another, always, without interruption, and thus, and only thus, are they in continual and intimate contact with each other. So their society is no mere community, but a communion. If we were to consider their connection with each other apart from their union in the vision of God, then many of the limitations of creatures return, and any one saint can be in the presence of only a limited number of others at once—if this were the only life of friendship among the saints, or the most important one, we would call them a “community” rather than a “communion.”

As it is, we believe in the communion of the saints, and confess that their union with one another is simultaneous and uninterrupted and eternal—which can only be insofar as they are in one another’s presence through the vision of God himself, in whose substance all things can be seen⁵⁴ in the most beautiful and revealing light.

⁵⁴ I do not say that everyone seeing God sees all things that can be

Nevertheless, since the souls of the blessed dead do desire their bodies, and desire the number of the elect to be completed, and since they do have joy in their communion with one another, it remains to explain how their desires for such things fit with the perfect satisfaction of their desire in seeing God.

The blessed are as God himself—they are blessed in one thing, God, and all things they love or desire or enjoy, they love or desire or enjoy only through their love for and enjoyment of God. Hence it is not right to divide “the goods of the blessed,” as though they were made blessed by many goods. Such a division, in other words, could not be that of a genus into its species, but must be the distinction of the meanings of an expression. In a similar way, if “good” be distinguished into “the end” and “the means,” “good” has not been divided into species, but its meanings have been distinguished—the end and the means are not “good” in the same sense, since one is called “good” only by reference to the goodness of the other. So too when we say that God is a “good of the blessed” and their bodies or their fellow citizens in the heavenly city are also a “good of the blessed,” these things are not “goods of the blessed” in the same sense. Rather, God is the one good thing by possession of which they are blessed, and all else that is called “good” for them, or “desirable” to them, is so called by reference to that one possession. This is best seen by going through the particular things they are said to desire:

1. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS. God had no need for creatures as friends, and yet he willed to create them and to commu-

seen in God. Nor, in particular, do I hold that those seeing God see all the things which depend upon God's will alone, such as the mysteries of grace. But those who see God see in him all the natures of things, and in those natures see also all the individuals existing in those natures (see *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.59). All the more will those who have loved one another in loving him, also see one another in seeing him.

nicate his goodness and happiness to them. This in no way proves his dissatisfaction with himself, or that the creation of friends improved his life. It is therefore the nature of perfect happiness that, although it fully satisfies the will of the blessed, it does not preclude the will from desiring other things which are compatible with that blessedness, things which extend that blessedness or magnify it in some sense, although they are in no way necessary for it. Were this not the case, we would have to say that God's act of creation proves he was not perfectly happy in himself, and hence he needed to create in order to become fully blessed—which is blasphemous and absurd.

It is in the same way that the blessed themselves enjoy God, and yet may be said to delight in each other or enjoy one another in God. Where the object causes perfect happiness for its possessor, he needs nothing further, but he will also, thanks to his love for the object, delight in seeing that same object anew in another—while this does not increase the object itself or improve upon it, it increases its extent, and whoever loves the object will love to see it thus spread abroad, as it were, and to see its power to benefit and beatify at work in others.

Hence the blessed are always said to rejoice in one another, not simply, but “in the Lord”,⁵⁵ i.e. precisely in the measure that they are sharers in the same vision and love the same object, and hence what they love in each other is that object. They do not rejoice in each other's company for any other reason.⁵⁶ Hence they are not said to be of one company with the damned, but are separated from them by a vast abyss,⁵⁷ even though they may share a common nature, and even ties of blood, with the damned.

Furthermore, their communion together is in and by means of the vision of God. It is a false imagination to suppose that

⁵⁵ “May I enjoy thee in the Lord,” Philemon, verse 20.

⁵⁶ “Let no man therefore glory in men,” 1 Corinthians 3:21.

⁵⁷ Luke 16:26.

the communion of the saints is a separate life from the life of the beatific vision.

2. THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS. The saints do not intercede for souls with any other end in view than completing the number of the elect who see God. If the souls of the blessed can be said to be unsatisfied until the end of the world, when the number of the elect will be filled, this is not a dissatisfaction with the object of their happiness, but with the number of subjects receptive of that object, whose completion they desire purely for the sake of a still fuller reception of the same object. Even this they desire only as a fitting accompaniment or extension of the object which they themselves already fully possess, and in which their desire fully rests, and hence such a desire is without pang or need, even as God himself is said to desire things external to himself.⁵⁸

3. THE VINDICATION OF THE SAINTS. Much in the same way that a saint loves to see other saints, to see God anew in other souls, so a saint loves to see his own deserving of God seen by other saints, which requires that his deserving be manifested by God to others. Now, it pertains to a saint's enjoyment of God to feel himself in some sense worthy, or fit, to see God, lest he feel ashamed or out of place like a thief. But while this assurance is antecedently necessary to his vision of God, or to his enjoyment of that vision, he in fact has this assurance simply by seeing God and seeing how God sees him. Hence he does not need to see his own deserving in the recognition accorded him by others, although there is a fittingness to this. So each saint desires to be known by other saints in much the same way as he desires to know them—as a fitting addition to his own happiness in God, but not as something necessary to it.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Summa Theologiae* 1-2 Q4 A8.

4. THE GLORIFIED BODIES OF THE SAINTS. Since the vision of God takes place in the intellect, which is not a power of the body, and since it takes place by God's own presence, rather than by means of a form inscribed in the possible intellect by the agent intellect abstracting from corporeal images, the vision of God in no way requires the body. Hence the blessed dead possess the essence of happiness without their bodies, and their desire is at rest in that object. But it remains that the soul's rejoicing in the vision of God is capable of overflowing into the body, even as in this life a man's intellectual discovery has corporeal expression in him, and so there is a natural consequence of the soul's blessedness which it desires to enjoy, but which it cannot enjoy until such time as it is again in the body. Accordingly, the souls of the dead who see God are satisfied as regards the object of their happiness, but are not yet fully satisfied as regards their own capacity for possessing that object.⁵⁹ Were it not true that the body can share in the rejoicing of the soul's vision, the saints would have no more desire for their bodies than for other natural goods, such as natural knowledge, which they could live quite happily without in heaven.

(The bodies of the saints are restored for many reasons, of course—it is a matter of justice, for instance, that the body which was an instrument of salvation should also share in the reward; and the resurrection of the saints likens them to Christ, exemplar of the sons of God; and the restoration of their bodies proves the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice for undoing the evils of original sin, and to consummate the reconciliation of man to God, since death came into the world only as a punishment for sin—but I am now addressing only the connection between the happiness of the saints and their bodies.)

Aside from its receptivity to the overflow of his own joy,

⁵⁹ Cf. *Summa Theologiae* 1-2 Q4 A5, especially ad 5.

each saint's resurrection in some degree also completes the communion of the saints, who will be reunited not only with their hearts, but also with their hands and faces and voices. But this will be a less intimate union than that which they share in the vision of God, in which they see one another always and through and through.

If the resurrected body is not absolutely necessary for the soul's vision of God, but only for its full efficacy, the glorified nature of that body is perhaps necessary for the enjoyment of God, once the body is present—at any rate, it is necessary that the body not be of such a sort as to interfere with the vision of God, if such a thing is possible.⁶⁰

The desire of the saints for their bodies, therefore, is not a desire for another object of their happiness, but for a completion of themselves as subjects receptive of that object. A wine connoisseur desires a clear palate, but not in the same sense that he desires wine. The thing desired is the wine, and the clear palate is only a part of the desirer himself, which he wants as a way of attaining and enjoying the thing desired. The desirer, in other words, desires first of all some good, and in a secondary sense, desires himself and everything in himself by which he can have that good. The blessed desire God alone as the good they seek to enjoy, and themselves and their own parts and powers as things needed for them to possess that good.

5. THE HEAVENLY ABODE OF THE SAINTS. Although the glorified bodies of the saints will, it seems, have a light of their own, and will have no need for food and shelter and the like, it is still fitting for them to have a place in which to abide and repose. It might also be a matter of justice, in some sense, that inanimate matter have a place in heaven, insofar as it was

⁶⁰ Cf. *Summa Theologiae* 1-2 Q4 A6.

an instrument in the Incarnation and in the salvation of man (think of water, wine, bread, wood, and the like); hence it should also be an instrument somehow of glorified life. But external goods of whatever kind, even in this life, are purely instrumental to happiness, and in the next life, they are not even necessary instruments, but merely fitting adornments.⁶¹

REPLIES TO OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. (*We seek not only a king, but a kingdom; not only the chief part of our happiness, but the whole of it; besides God, then, we need friendship with others, i.e. the communion of saints.*)

REPLY. When the king is only a partial and participated good, he cannot be the whole good of his kingdom, but must order that kingdom to some other good which is more complete and self-sufficient. But when the king is God, who is the universal good, he orders his kingdom to no good other than himself. To seek the kingdom of God, therefore, is nothing else than to seek a place among those who possess God. The blessed, then, do not need friendship with one another to be happy, although this is an extension of their joy, as was explained above. And the joy which the blessed take in one another is precisely the joy in seeing God afresh in another, not in one another for their own sake; furthermore, the very communion of the saints consists principally in their vision of God, not in some other activity, such as sitting down and talking in a human mode. The good of "others who see God," then, is not a different good, alongside of "seeing God," which is desirable independently of the vision of God, or which is possessed by means other than the vision of God. Hence it remains that the vision of God is the whole good of the blessed.

⁶¹ Cf. *Summa Theologiae* 1-2 Q4 A7.

2. (*In this life happiness consists chiefly in the acts of wisdom and friendship; hence we should expect the same in the next life, and indeed we are promised a twofold reward, i.e. the vision of God, and communion with the saints.*)

REPLY. One can answer this argument in the same way as the first. Also, this argument makes the additional error of assuming that what is true of happiness in this life must be true of the happiness of the next life, whereas this life's happiness is temporary, imperfect, natural, essentially dependent on external goods, and in many other ways different from the happiness of heaven. Hence what is true of the one need not be true of the other, nor does heavenly beatitude consist in the perfect possession of the objects of natural beatitude—for example in perfectly good food, perfectly good marriage, etc.

3. (*The good for man is divided into goods of the soul, of the body, and outside goods. But God is only one good of the soul, and hence cannot be the whole good for man.*)

REPLY. This division of the good for man is of the goods which he is able to obtain in this life. In the next life, "outside goods" hardly deserve a mention, since these are for the sake of the goods of the body and of the soul, as food and shelter are for the body, and books and music are for the soul, and money is for things such as food and shelter and books and music. But in the next life, the body will be glorified, and will not need food and shelter, much less money—such things will not be any good, any more. And once the soul knows God fully, it will see in God all the truth which is capable of perfecting its mind naturally, but in a superior way—hence it will not need a separate knowledge of geometry, and of natural science, as it will have a more brilliant knowledge of their truth in the creator: "And night shall be no more, and they shall not need the light of the lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them."⁶² As for the moral virtues,

⁶² Revelation 22:5.

these too will be largely unnecessary, as courage will not be used where there is no danger of death, nor temperance where there is no possibility of immoderate pleasure. Even the theological virtues of faith and hope are no longer necessary where one possesses, enjoys, and sees God. The virtue of charity remains, but to call this "a good of the soul other than God" would be rather odd—as though charity, the love of God, could somehow enter into competition with God in satisfying the human heart.

4. (*The blessed cannot be completely satisfied without their bodies.*)

REPLY. It is true that the blessed in some sense cannot be completely satisfied without their bodies—but this is not because they desire their bodies as goods which beatify them, but as means of completing their possession of God. So it remains that God alone is the complete object of their satisfaction, only they are not completely receptive of that object without their bodies.

5. (*God promises a new heaven and a new earth, which would seem pointless unless these will be part of the happiness of the blessed.*)

REPLY. If "new heaven" and "new earth" refer to external goods or an abode for the blessed, they are not pointless even if they are not necessary for the happiness of the blessed, as long as they are appropriate to it, even as the creation of heaven and earth in the first place were not pointless, even though they were not necessary to the happiness of God.

6. (*The saints desire to be vindicated by God, and avenged by him.*)

REPLY. The manner in which the happiness of the saints requires their vindication, and the manner in which this is only a fitting addition to their happiness, has already been explained. Insofar as the saints wish to be avenged by God, this is nothing else than their zeal for God's own honor, since the saint thinks nothing of injuries done to himself, except insofar as

these are also injuries to God's honor, since he loves himself not for his own sake, but for God's. Now it follows from the saint's love for God, the one object of his happiness, that he wants God to be honored by men, and those who dishonor him and remain impenitent he wishes to be silenced and punished, even as God can be said to desire these things—but this, again, is a desire for a good befitting the imperturbable divine beatitude, although in no way necessary to it. Hence it remains that the beatitude of the saints is complete in God.

7. (*The blessed will do many things with body and soul besides see God, and even now intercede for us, and desire to do these things.*)

REPLY. The saints' desire to intercede for us springs from their desire to have us see God with them, which is like the desire God himself has for others to see him and share in his blessedness—which is a desire for a fitting extension of one's own blessedness, but not for something necessary for one's own blessedness.

8. (*Even in the vision of God, a creature sees God less perfectly than God can be seen, which must inflame a further desire to see him still more perfectly. Hence desire cannot rest in the vision of God.*)

REPLY. The creature's vision of God is not imperfect in the sense of being unpleasantly defective, like blurry vision—it is not *poor* vision, but *rich* vision which happens not to be the richest possible. It is satisfying in the measure that its possessor has no capacity for any greater vision. Now each soul is given vision in the measure of its capacity, which is to say, in the measure of its love for God. It is, therefore, fully satisfied with that vision.

Someone, however, might think that the love for God, too, must forever increase, since those who love God less than he can be loved, to the extent that they love him, should want to love him more intensely. But just as God alone can see

himself in the full measure of his truth, so too God alone can love himself in the full measure of his goodness. If the saints desired to love God as fully as he can be loved, therefore, they would desire to be God, and would find it frustrating that they were not God, which is contrary to the love of God. So true love for God does not move the creature to love God as perfectly as God can be loved, but only as perfectly as God wishes to be loved and glorified in that creature. Where the love of God reigns supreme in any creature's heart, therefore, its desire is moved not to the ultimate perfection possible for itself absolutely, but for that perfection of itself which is most conducive to God's glory. It is for this reason that those who see God, who therefore love God as he loves himself, purely for his own sake, do not desire to be any more perfect than he has made them to be. To desire a superior place in charity or in vision is to desire a greater gift from God than he has deigned to give, which is not to love him for his own sake.

9. (*The reason we need a multitude of goods, not just one, to satisfy our desires, is not because of something deficient in God, but because we have many parts and many desires. In a word, it is because we are human; hence we need human goods, whereas the beatific vision is a divine good, and so that cannot be our whole good.*)

REPLY. In this life, man needs a multitude of goods because of the imperfection of his condition, and because he does not possess the universal good. In the next life, he will need far fewer goods by which to possess the object of his happiness, and only one good, God, will be the object of his happiness.

In the next life, in which man's body will be immortal and glorified, he will have no need of external goods that serve the goods of the body (such as food and medicine and shelter and furniture and the like), since the body will be sufficient unto itself. Nor will he need external goods that enable the body to serve the goods of the soul (such as books and music), since

the soul will possess all its good in the one vision of God, which vision requires no external aids. Hence in the next life man will have no need of external goods to satisfy him.

And although he will need his body and its perfections in order to have as full a possession of the vision of God as he can, so that the joy of the vision will overflow into his body, this completes the one desiring and receiving, not the desired object received.

And it was already said above that the blessed will have little need for the moral virtues, partly because in their new condition they will not need or desire the external goods and sense pleasures which are the concern of so many virtues, and partly because the vision of God itself will fully rectify their will, perfecting them in charity. The other theological virtues, faith and hope, will give way to vision and possession.

The remaining goods of the soul are the various habits of knowledge which, in this life, are many, since the human mode of knowing restricts man to knowing distinctly one thing at a time, and knowing it in light of its own proper principles. Hence there are many sciences, and even within one science, there are many distinctions, definitions, and demonstrations, each of which is a good of the soul. In the vision of God, however, man will know all the things that pertain to his natural knowledge, and will know them all at once, even as God knows them, seeing them not in their own light, but in the light of their creator, so that his natural desire for knowledge will be fully satisfied by this one vision.⁶³

⁶³ When Germain Grisez (who was quoted earlier in connection with the objection here answered) says that the beatific vision "is not itself a human good," and concludes that "It does not fulfill any capacity of human nature," he misreasons. Presumably, a "human good" means a good that is distinctly human, just human, is attainable by human action, and hence is especially fitted to human nature and of a dignity proportional to that nature, incapable of perfecting any superior nature—for instance, the science of geometry, or the moral virtue of temperance, which goods

10. (*Many place their ultimate end in some created good, and hence do not desire the vision of God, and hence are not restless for it.*)

REPLY. It is true that many people do not consciously desire to see God, but desire only "what will make them happy," that is, what will satisfy their desires, and they mistakenly think this description belongs to something other than God. Someone need not know what will make him happy in order to depend on it to make him happy, any more than he need know what will make him stop itching in order to make him depend on it to stop itching. So it is that many believe money, or fame, or pleasure, or some other such thing will make them happy and fully satisfy them, when in fact it will not.⁶⁴

are above the beasts, but beneath the angels, and are appropriate to man and lie within his power to attain. If that is what one means by "a human good," then indeed the beatific vision is not a human good, since it is a good not just for man, but also for the angels, and since its goodness is not of a properly human dignity, but of a dignity that is properly divine, and is not attainable by the powers natural to man. Nevertheless, the beatific vision is a "good for man," is in fact man's greatest good, and even his whole good. Now nothing is good for anything unless it perfects it—hence the beatific vision perfects man, and also some specific capacity in him, namely his intellect, which is entirely fulfilled by the vision of God, and by nothing else. If the beatific vision were not "a good for man" at all, *then* it would follow that it does not fulfill any capacity of human nature. In a similar way, one might say that a private good is an "individual good," that is, a good ordered to a single individual, and not capable of benefiting more than one at a time, or not so well, whereas a common good "is not itself an individual good," that is, it is not so limited, and is not proper to the individual as such, because it is capable of benefiting other individuals at the same time. Still, it would be a misreasoning to conclude that the common good is "not a good of the individual" or that it does not perfect the individual, and in fact more fully than his private goods do.

⁶⁴ Germain Grisez seems to say that some people are willing to "settle" for a happiness which they know will not completely satiate their desire—but it is very close to a contradiction to say that people can be "settled," or satisfied, in not being satisfied.

The objections, then, amount to nothing, and it remains that God, and God alone, fully satisfies the human heart as the object of its desire.

Now, lest anyone think that the ancient doctrine of Augustine has not been affirmed by recent Church teaching, I give the Church and the Pope the last word. If we consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the matter of beatitude, we find the following:

The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it: . . . God alone satisfies.⁶⁵

The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude.⁶⁶

The beatitude we are promised . . . invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not found . . . in any creature, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love.⁶⁷

What is this but to say "Our heart is restless until it rest in God"?

Pope Benedict XVI, too, addresses the question:

The Lord reminds us that fathers do not give their children stones when they ask for bread. He then goes on to say: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Mt 7:9ff) Luke specifies the "good gifts" that the Father gives; he says "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy

⁶⁵ CCC, no. 1718.

⁶⁶ CCC, no. 1719.

⁶⁷ CCC, no. 1723.

Spirit to those who ask him!" (Lk 11:13) This means that the gift of God is God himself. The "good things" that he gives us are himself. This reveals in a surprising way what prayer is really all about: It is not about this or that, but about God's desire to offer us the gift of himself—that is the gift of all gifts, the "one thing necessary."⁶⁸

Our mind in this life is not capable of conceiving the universal good, which is God. God therefore designates his goodness sometimes by a figure of speech, naming the universal by all the particulars which it virtually contains: he calls himself "all goods" or "every good."⁶⁹ In this expression, he manifests his power to satisfy, the inability of any particular good to satisfy, and the dispensability of all things other than himself.

⁶⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, translated from the German by Adrian J. Walker, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2007, pp. 136-7.

⁶⁹ See, for instance, Exodus 33:19. After Moses asks God "Show me your glory," God replies "I will show you every good." See also Psalm 103[102]:5, "Bless the Lord O my soul . . . who satisfies you with good things." And again, the Magnificat (Luke 1:53) "He has filled the hungry with good things."