William of Ockham

Quodlibetal Questions

Volume 1

Quodlibets 1–4

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by the fire. For the heat exists without a subject, and a natural agent is not able to produce anything without a patient. 50 Hence, if God did not produce this heat, then nothing would be produced here in the presence of the fire. For there is no recipient subject here.

REPLY TO THE MAIN ARGUMENTS

The reply to the main arguments is evident from what has been said.

Question 10

Are the sentient and intellective souls really distinct in a human being? 51

For the negative: A composite entity has just one existence. But a human being is a composite entity. Therefore, a human being has just one existence. Therefore, a human being has just one form, since it is the form that gives existence.

For the opposite: An entity is an animal prior in nature to its being a human being. Therefore, a human being is an animal by virtue of one form and a human being by virtue of another form. /157/

REPLY TO THE QUESTION

Proof 1

To this question I reply that the answer is yes. However, it is difficult to prove this, since it cannot be proved from propositions that are known per se. Nonetheless, my first proof that they are really distinct is as follows: It is impossible that contraries should exist simultaneously in the same subject. But

50. Here Ockham is assuming that in the Eucharist the sensible qualities do not inhere in anything else, even in the quantity. Consequently, the heat in question inhere in no subject and thus cannot be said to be generated by the fire from the potency of the subject— and this even though it is produced in the presence of the fire.

51. The act of willing alluded to here is, of course, an act of the intellective or rational soul.

52. Ockham adds the stipulation that sensations exist in the sentient soul either medially or immediately in order to leave open the epistemic possibility that what exists immediately in the sentient soul is the sentient power, which itself then serves as the immediate subject of the sensations themselves.
ower is an accident of the soul, then it itself will exist subjectively in the
intelligent soul. The minor premise is proved by the fact that if it were not
tue, then each one of the sentient soul's apprehensions would be an act
understanding, since each one would exist subjectively in the intellective
soul. Similarly, if sensations existed subjectively in the intellective soul, then
separated soul would be able to sense. For if (i) a sensation exists subjectively
in the intellective soul and (ii) God is able to conserve every accident
its subject in the absence of everything else, then it follows that he is able
to conserve a sensation in a separated soul—which is absurd.

You might object that it is the whole composite, and not the form, that is
the immediate subject of a sensation or of the sentient power. Against this
[i reply that], as will become evident elsewhere, it is not the case that an
accident is more simple than its primary subject. /159/ Therefore, since a sen-
ation is a simple accident, it cannot have the composite as its immediate and
primary subject. Similarly, if the whole composite were the subject of the
entire powers, then those powers would not be powers of the soul more
than powers of the body, since they would not exist subjectively in the one
more than in the other.

Proof 3
Third, I argue as follows: It is not the case that what is numerically the same
form is both extended and non-extended, both material and immaterial. But
a human being the sentient soul is extended and material, whereas the
intellective soul is not, since it exists as a whole in the whole [body] and as a
whole in each part. Therefore, etc.

Objection 1
But against these claims it is argued, first, that in De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus
chap. 15] Augustine condemns the view that there are two souls in a human
being, and he says that this is the error of certain Syrians. /53/  

Objection 2
Second, during the triduum either (i) Christ's sentient soul remained with his
body or with his [intellective] soul, and in that case, whichever, *answer* is *is
given*, it follows that Christ did not die in the same sense that other human
beings die, or (ii) Christ's sentient soul was corrupted, in which case Christ
laid down a soul that he had assumed—which is contrary to what the holy
doctors* say. /54/ /160/

53. This work in fact belongs to Gennadius rather than to Augustine.
54. The tridium is the three-day period—counting both Friday and Sunday—between

QUESTION 10

Objection 3
Third, one of the Parisian articles says that the following is an error: When
the rational soul leaves the body, a living animal still remains. /55/ But if the
souls are distinct, then the sentient soul remains after the separation of the
intellective soul. For, in both generation and corruption, nature proceeds in
the same order, and in generation the sentient soul is introduced before the
intellective soul if the two are distinct. And this is what the Philosopher says
in On the Generation of Animals [3.7.6.432–7.6.65]. Therefore, etc.

Likewise, if the sentient soul were to remain without the intellective soul,
then the composite entity in question would be neither a human being nor
an irrational animal. And so it would be an animal and yet neither rational
nor irrational.

Reply to Objection 1
To the first of these objections I reply that Augustine is condemning the view
that in a human being there are two intellective souls, one of which is from
God and the other of which is from the devil. And this is what Augustine
means, as is evident to one who reads the book carefully.

Reply to Objection 2
To the second objection I reply that Christ's sentient soul remained wherever
God wanted it to. However, it was always united to the divine nature. /56/ But
whether it remained with the body or with the intellective soul, only God
knows. Still, either alternative can be asserted. /161/

And when it is argued that in that case Christ did not die in the same sense
that other human beings die, I deny this. For, on the basis of the same line
of reasoning, one could assert that Christ did not die in the same sense as
others because his body is not subject to decay, whereas the bodies of other
human beings are corruptible. So the argument is invalid. For he died in
the same sense as others because of the separation of the intellective soul.

Reply to Objection 3
To the third objection I reply that the sentient soul does not remain after the
separation of the intellective soul. Nor is it the case that in the generation of

Christ's death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Also, the term
'assume' is a technical term describing the act whereby the Second Person of the Trinity
unites himself in a hypostatic union with an individual composite human nature.

55. This is Error 114 of the Condemnations of 1277.
56. In claiming that the sentient soul was always united to the divine nature, Ockham
denies the objector's assertion that Christ 'laid down' the sentient soul.
a human being the sentient soul is introduced temporally prior to the intellectual soul. And as for the Philosopher, I claim that what he means is that it is prior in nature—and not prior in time—that the sentient soul exists in the body, since [the two souls] are introduced simultaneously and expelled simultaneously.

To the final argument I reply that if the sentient soul were by God’s power to remain in the body, then the composite entity in question would be a living thing, but neither a rational animal nor an irrational animal; nor would it be an animal that is truly contained under the genus animal. The whole reason is that it would not be a complete being that is per se in a genus. Rather, it would be apt by nature to be an essential part of something that is per se in a genus. And no such entity is per se in the genus of substance or the genus of animal; nor is any genus predicated of it in the first mode of per se predication. However, if one calls anything that has a sentient soul an animal, then it is indeed an animal. But in that case ‘animal’ is being predicated equivocally of the animal in question and of other animals.

REPLY TO THE MAIN ARGUMENT

To the main argument I reply that a human being has just one total existence but more than one partial existence. /162/

**Question 11**

*Are the sentient soul and the form of corporeity really distinct in brute animals and human beings?* \(^{57}\)

_For the negative:_ If they were, then the sentient soul would be added to an entity that is already actual, viz., matter informed by the corporeity. As a result, the sentient soul would be an accident.

_For the opposite:_ The sentient soul and the corporeity have operations that are distinct and of different types. Therefore, they are distinct principles.

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57. Corporeity (or the form of corporeity) is the form by which an animal’s body is a body. The question here amounts to this: Is the form by which a human being’s (or brute...
Further, this argument holds for all cases, since it is not because of a diversity of dispositions that the same natural cause produces contrary effects. For even though the sun melts ice and hardens mud, this happens because of the different partial concurrent causes, e.g., earth or water. Therefore, it is not a newly introduced form that causes the contrary accidents of the bodies.

Proof 3
Second, for the case of a human being I argue in a special way: If the corporeity did not differ from the sentient soul in a human being, then (i) Christ’s body in the tomb would never have been an essential part of the human nature /164/ in Christ, and (ii) the living body and the dead body would not have been the same, and (iii) the divine nature would not have been united to the body in the tomb except through a new assumption—which seems absurd. Similarly, the living and dead bodies of the saints would not be the same, and so their dead bodies should not be venerated as the bodies of the saints, since the saints never had those bodies. Therefore, it is more consonant with the faith of the Church to posit a distinction between the forms in question rather than an identity.

Two Problems
But there is a problem, first, about whether the vegetative and sentient souls in an animal are distinct from one another. Second, is it the matter or is it the form of corporeity that is the immediate subject of the sentient form?

Reply to Problem 1
To the first of these problems I reply that there is no necessity for positing a distinction between the vegetative soul and the sentient soul. For the argument from the diversity of the operations does not go through, since the same thing is able to be the principle of diverse operations.

Reply to Problem 3
To the second problem I reply that the sentient soul is either received immediately into the bodily form or received immediately into the matter—for there seems to be no cogent reason why two extended forms should not perfect the same matter immediately.

Question 12
Are the direct and reflexive acts a single act?

For the affirmative: If they were not a single act, then there would be an infinite regress among reflexive acts. This is manifestly obvious. Therefore, etc.

For the opposite: In us an act of understanding is not the same as its object. But a direct act is the object of a reflexive act. Therefore, etc.

Here I will first explain the meaning of the question; second, I will reply to the question.

First Article
As for the first article, I claim that acts are not properly taken to be direct and reflexive, since what is properly called reflexive begins from a given thing and terminates in that same thing. And so no act is properly called reflexive. But here the terms are being taken improperly. For an act by which we understand an object outside the mind is called a direct act, and an act by which that direct act is itself understood is called a reflexive act.

Second Article
As for the second article, I claim that the direct act and the reflexive act are not a single act. I prove this, first, as follows: If anything is cognized by a given power through an act that is of a different type from the object, then

59. See Quodlibet 1:14, n. 79, for background on this question.