

## QUESTION 89

### A Separated Soul's Cognition

Next we have to consider a separated soul's cognition. And on this topic there are eight questions: (1) Can a soul that has been separated from its body have intellectual understanding? (2) Does a separated soul have intellectual understanding of separated substances? (3) Does a separated soul have intellectual understanding of all natural things? (4) Does a separated soul have cognition of singulars? (5) Does a habit of knowledge acquired here remain in a separated soul? (6) Can a separated soul make use of a habit of knowledge acquired here? (7) Does spatial distance impede a separated soul's cognition? (8) Do souls separated from their bodies have cognition of what is happening here?

#### Article 1

##### Can a separated soul have intellectual understanding of anything at all?

It seems that a separated soul cannot have intellectual understanding of anything at all:

**Objection 1:** In *De Anima* 1 the Philosopher says, "Understanding is corrupted when something is corrupted interiorly." But everything interior that belongs to a man is corrupted by death. Therefore, understanding is itself likewise corrupted.

**Objection 2:** As was explained above (q. 84, a. 7 and 8), the human soul is prevented from understanding by impediments in the sensory power (*per ligamentum sensus*) and by an unruly imagination. But as is clear from what was said above (q. 77, a. 8), the sensory power and imagination are totally corrupted by death. Therefore, after death the soul does not have intellectual understanding of anything at all.

**Objection 3:** If a separated soul has intellectual understanding, then it must have this understanding by means of certain [intelligible] species. But it does not have understanding by means of innate species, since in the beginning the soul "is like a slate on which nothing has been written." Nor does it have understanding by means of species that it abstracts from things, since it no longer has the organs associated with the sensory power and imagination, by the mediation of which intelligible species are abstracted from things. Nor does it have understanding by means of species that have been previously abstracted and are now conserved in the soul; for in that case a child's soul would not understand anything after death. Nor does it have understanding even by means of intelligible species that flow into it from God (*per species intelligibiles divinitus influxas*), since this sort of cognition would not be natural cognition—which is what we are talking about now—but would instead be a cognition associated with grace. Therefore, a soul separated from its body cannot have intellectual understanding of anything.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Anima* 1 the Philosopher says, "If the soul had no proper operations, then it would not be possible for the soul to be separated." But it is possible for the soul to be separated. Therefore, it has proper operations—and especially that operation which is intellectual understanding (*intelligere*). Therefore, it has intellectual cognition when it exists without its body.

**I respond:** This question derives its difficulty from the fact that as long as a soul is conjoined with its body, it cannot have intellectual understanding of anything except by turning itself toward phantasms. This is clear from experience.

Now if, as the Platonists held, this fact were not due to the nature of the soul, but instead belonged to the soul incidentally (*per accidens*) because it is tied to a body, then the question could easily be answered. For once the impediment of the body were removed, the soul would revert to its own nature, so that it would understand intelligible things directly (*simpliciter*) and without turning itself to

phantasms—just as happens in the case of other separated substances.

However, on this view, the soul would not be united to its body for the soul's own good, given that its intellectual understanding would be poorer (*peius*) when it is united with the body than when it is separated. Instead, the union would be solely for the sake of the betterment of the body. But this is ludicrous (*irrationabile*), since the matter exists for the sake of the form, and not vice versa.

By contrast, if we hold that it is by its nature that the soul has to turn itself toward phantasms in order to have intellectual understanding, then, since the soul's nature is not changed by the death of the body, it seems that a [separated] soul cannot have intellectual understanding of anything. For there are no phantasms at hand toward which it might turn itself.

So to remove this difficulty, note that since nothing operates except insofar as it is actualized, each thing's mode of operating (*modus operandi*) follows upon its mode of being (*modus essendi ipsius*). But even while a soul's nature remains the same, its mode of being when it is united with a body is different from its mode of being when it is separated from its body—not in such a way that the soul's being united to a body is incidental (*accidentale*) to it, but rather in such a way that it is by reason of its nature that the soul is united to a body. In the same way, the nature of something lightweight is not changed when it goes from being in its proper place, which is natural to it, to being outside its proper place, which lies beyond its nature (*est ei praeter naturam*). Therefore, corresponding to the mode of being by which a soul is united to a body, the soul has a mode of understanding that involves turning toward the phantasms of bodies that exist in the bodily organs. But when a soul is separated from its body, it has a mode of understanding that involves turning toward those things that are intelligible absolutely speaking—just like the mode of understanding had by the other separated substances. Hence, the mode of understanding that involves turning toward phantasms is natural to a soul in the same way that being united to a body is likewise natural to it, whereas being separated from its body lies outside the conception of its nature (*praeter rationem suae naturae*), just as understanding without turning toward phantasms lies outside its nature. And so a soul is united to a body in order that it might exist and operate in accord with its nature.

However, this reply once again provokes a doubt. For since (a) nature is always ordered toward what is better, and since (b) the mode of understanding that involves turning toward intelligible things absolutely speaking is better than the mode of understanding that involves turning toward phantasms, God should have constituted the soul's nature in such a way that (a) the more noble mode of understanding would be natural to it and that (b) for this reason it would not need to be united to a body.

Notice, then, that even if intellectual understanding by turning toward higher things is more noble, absolutely speaking, than understanding by turning toward phantasms, nonetheless, the former mode of understanding was less perfect as a possibility for the soul (*prout erat possibilis animae erat imperfectior*). This is made clear as follows:

In all intellectual substances the intellectual power comes through the influence of the divine light. This light is unitary and simple in the first principle, and the further away intellectual creatures are from the first principle, the more this light is divided and differentiated, like lines emanating from a central point. And so it is that God understands all things through His own unitary essence. The higher intellectual substances, on the other hand, even if they have intellectual understanding through more than one form (*per plures formas*), nonetheless understand through forms that are fewer and more universal and more powerful for comprehending things because of the efficacy of the intellectual power that exists in them, whereas in the lower intellectual substances, to the extent that they fall short of the intellectual power of the higher substances, the forms are greater in number, less universal, and less efficacious for comprehending things. Therefore, if the lower substances had forms with the same degree of universality that the higher substances do, then because they have weaker intellects, they would not receive through those forms a perfect cognition of things, but would instead have a cognition that was somewhat general and indistinct. In a certain way, this same thing is apparent among men; for those of weaker intellect do

not receive perfect cognition through the universal conceptions had by more intelligent men, unless each individual case is specifically (*in speciali*) explained to them.

Now it is clear that, according to the order of nature, human souls are the lowest among intellectual substances. The perfection of the universe requires this, so that diverse grades might exist among things. Therefore, if human souls had been constituted by God in such a way as to have intellectual understanding in the mode in which separated substances have it, then they would not have had perfect cognition, but would instead have had indistinct cognition in general. Therefore, in order for them to be able to have perfect and proper cognition of things, they were naturally constituted in such a way as to be united to bodies and so to receive their proper cognition of sensible things from the things themselves, in much the same way that uneducated men cannot be led to scientific knowledge except through sensible examples.

So, then, it is clear that it is for the soul's own good that it should be united to a body and have intellectual cognition by turning itself toward phantasms. And yet the soul is able to be separated and to have a different mode of intellectual understanding.

**Reply to objection 1:** If the Philosopher's words are carefully unpacked (*diligenter discutantur*), the Philosopher asserted this claim after having first made a certain assumption, viz., that the act of intellectual understanding is a certain movement of the conjoined being in the same way that the act of sensing is. For he had not yet shown the difference between intellectual understanding and sensing.

An alternative reply is that he is speaking of the mode of intellectual understanding which involves turning toward phantasms.

**Reply to objection 2:** The second objection is about this same mode of intellectual understanding.

**Reply to objection 3:** A separated soul has intellectual understanding neither through innate [intelligible] species, nor through species that it abstracts during the time it is separated, nor solely through conserved species, as the objection proves. Instead, it has intellectual understanding through participated species which come from the influence of God's light and which the soul comes to participate in just as the other separated substances do, though in an inferior mode. Hence, as soon as it ceases to turn itself toward the body, the soul turns itself toward higher things. And yet the cognition is not for this reason non-natural. For God is the source not only of the influence of the light of grace, but also of the influence of the natural light.

## Article 2

### Does a separated soul have intellectual understanding of separated substances?

It seems that a separated soul does not have intellectual understanding of separated substances:

**Objection 1:** A soul that is joined to a body is more perfect than a soul separated from a body, since the soul is naturally part of a human nature, and every part is more perfect within its own whole. But as was established above (q. 88, a. 1), a soul conjoined to a body does not have intellectual understanding of separated substances. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it does not have such understanding when it has been separated from its body.

**Objection 2:** If anything is understood, it is understood either through its presence or through a species of it. But separated substances cannot be understood by the soul through their presence, since nothing penetrates the soul except God alone. Nor can they be understood by the soul through any species of them that the soul is able to abstract from an angel, since an angel is more simple than the soul is. Therefore, there is no way in which a separated soul is able to have cognition of separated substances.

**Objection 3:** Certain philosophers have held that man's ultimate happiness consists in the cognition of separated substances. Therefore, if a separated soul is able to have intellectual understanding of separated substances, it will attain happiness solely by virtue of being separated. But this is absurd.

**But contrary to this:** Separated souls have cognition of other separated souls. For instance, the rich man in hell sees Lazarus and Abraham, according to Luke 16:23. Therefore, separated souls also see both demons and angels.

**I respond:** As Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 9, "Our mind receives cognition of incorporeal things through itself," i.e., by having cognition of itself, as was explained above (q. 88, a. 1). Therefore, by appeal to the fact that a separated soul has cognition of itself, we are able to grasp the way in which it understands other separated substances.

Now it was explained above (a. 1) that as long as a soul is united to its body, it has intellectual understanding by turning itself toward phantasms. And so it cannot even understand itself except insofar as it comes to be actually engaged in intellectual understanding through a species abstracted from phantasms. For as was explained above (q. 87, a. 1), it is through its own act that it understands itself. However, when it has been separated from its body, it will have intellectual understanding by turning itself not toward phantasms but toward things that are intelligible in their own right, and so it will understand itself through itself.

Now it is common to each separated substance that it understands what lies above it and what lies below it in a mode that corresponds to its own substance. For a thing is understood intellectually insofar as it exists in the one who is engaged in understanding, and something exists in another in accord with the mode of thing that it exists in. Now the mode of a separated soul's substance is lower than an angelic substance's mode, but it is similar to the mode of other separated souls. And so a separated soul has perfect cognition of other separated souls, whereas it has imperfect and deficient cognition of the angels.

Now I am speaking here of the *natural* cognition had by a separated soul; there is a different account of the cognition associated with [the light of] *glory*.

**Reply to objection 1:** A separated soul is indeed less perfect if one considers the nature that it shares in common with the nature of the body (*natura qua communicat cum natura corporis*). However, a separated soul is nonetheless more free with respect to intellectual understanding, since the soul is kept from a purity of understanding by the burdensomeness of the body and its care for it (*per gravedinem et occupationem corporis*).

**Reply to objection 2:** A separated soul has intellectual understanding of the angels through divinely impressed likenesses (*per similitudines divinitus impressas*). However, these likenesses fall short of a perfect representation of the angels, because the soul's nature lies below that of an angel.

**Reply to objection 3:** Man's ultimate happiness does not consist in the cognition of just any separated substances; rather, it consists solely in the cognition of God, who cannot be seen except through grace. However, there is indeed a great, even if not ultimate, happiness in the cognition of other separated substances—if, that is, they are understood perfectly. However, as has been explained, a separated soul does not understand them perfectly by its natural cognition.

### Article 3

#### Does a separated soul have cognition of all natural things?

It seems that a separated soul has cognition of all natural things:

**Objection 1:** In separated substances there are conceptions (*rationes*) of all natural things. But separated souls have cognition of the separated substances. Therefore, they have cognition of all natural things.

**Objection 2:** If someone has intellectual understanding of something more intelligible, then, *a fortiori*, he can have intellectual understanding of something less intelligible. But a separated soul has intellectual understanding of the separated substances, which are the greatest among intelligible things. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it can have intellectual understanding of all natural things, which are less intelligible.

**But contrary to this:**

1. Natural cognition is more vigorous in the demons than in a separated soul. But the demons do not have cognition of all natural things; instead, as Isidore says, they learn many things by experience over a long period of time. Therefore, neither do separated souls have cognition of all natural things.

2. If as soon as a soul were separated, it had cognition of all natural things, then it would be pointless for men to study diligently in order to gain scientific knowledge of things. But this is absurd. Therefore, it is not the case that a separated soul has cognition of all natural things.

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 1), a separated soul has intellectual understanding through species that it receives by the influence of the divine light, just as angels do. However, since the soul's nature lies below the nature of an angel, for whom this mode of cognition is connatural, a separated soul does not acquire perfect cognition of things through species of this sort, but instead receives a cognition that is general and indistinct. Therefore, a separated soul bears the same relation to imperfect and indistinct cognition of natural things through these species that angels bear to perfect cognition of natural things.

Now through species of this sort angels understand all natural things by a perfect cognition, since, as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram*, God effects in the angelic understanding whatever He effects in the proper natures of things. Hence, separated souls likewise have a cognition of all things—not a certain and proper cognition, but a general and indistinct cognition.

**Reply to objection 1:** As was explained above (q. 55, a. 1 and q. 87, a. 4), an angel has cognition of all natural things through [intelligible] species and not through his own substance. And so from the fact that a soul has some sort of cognition of a separated substance it does not follow that it has cognition of all natural things.

**Reply to objection 2:** Just as a separated soul does not have a perfect intellectual understanding of the separated substances, so neither does it have a perfect intellectual understanding of all natural things. Instead, as has been explained, it has a sort of indistinct cognition of natural things.

**Reply to argument 1 for the contrary:** Isidore is here talking about the cognition of *future* things, which angels and demons and separated souls have cognition of only in their causes or through divine revelation. By contrast, we ourselves are talking about the cognition of *natural* things.

**Reply to argument 2 for the contrary:** Cognition that is acquired in this life through study is proper and perfect cognition, whereas the cognition in question is indistinct. Hence, it does not follow that an eagerness for learning is pointless.

#### Article 4

##### Does a separated soul have cognition of singulars?

It seems that a separated soul does not have cognition of singulars:

**Objection 1:** As is clear from what was said above (q. 77, a. 8), the only cognitive power that remains in a separated soul is the intellect. But as was established above (q. 86, a. 1), the intellect does not have cognition of singulars. Therefore, a separated soul does not have cognition of singulars.

**Objection 2:** A cognition by which something is understood as a singular (*in singulari*) is more determinate than a cognition by which something is understood in general (*in universali*). But a separated soul does not have determinate cognition of the species of natural things. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it does not have cognition of singulars.

**Objection 3:** If a separated soul had cognition of singulars and not through the sensory power, then by parity of reasoning it would have cognition of all singulars. But it does not have cognition of all singulars. Therefore, it does not have cognition of any singulars.

**But contrary to this:** In Luke 16:27 the rich man situated in hell said, “I have five brothers.”

**I respond:** Separated souls have cognition of some singulars, but not all of them, not even all of the ones that exist at the present time (*quae sunt praesentia*). To see this clearly, note that there are two modes of intellectual understanding. One mode is through abstraction from phantasms and, in accord with this mode, singulars cannot be understood directly by the intellect; instead, they are understood indirectly, as was explained above (q. 86, a. 1). The second mode of intellectual understanding is through an influx of species from God, and, in accord with this mode, the intellect can have cognition of singulars. For just as in accord with what was explained above (q. 14, aa. 5-8), God Himself has cognition of all things, both universals and singulars, through His essence and insofar as He is a cause of all universal and individual principles, so too, through the species that are certain participated likenesses of the divine essence, separated substances are able to have cognition of singulars.

However, on this score there is a difference between angels and separated souls. For through species of this sort angels have perfect and proper cognition of things, whereas separated souls have indistinct cognition. Hence, because of the efficacy of their intellect angels have, through species of this sort, a perfect and proper cognition not only of the natures of things at the level of a species (*in speciali*) but also of the singulars contained under those species. By contrast, through species of the sort in question separated souls can have cognition only of those singulars on which they are in some way fixed (*ad quae quodammodo determinantur*), viz., either by a previous cognition or by some affective tie (*per aliquam affectionem*) or by a natural relation or by divine ordination. For everything that is received in an entity has determinate conditions (*determinatur*) that correspond to the mode of the recipient.

**Reply to objection 1:** The intellect does not have cognition of singulars by way of abstraction. But this is not the manner in which a separated soul has intellectual understanding; instead, that manner is the one that has been explained.

**Reply to objection 2:** As has been explained, a separated soul’s cognition is fixed on the species of those things that it bears some determinate relation to, or on individuals belonging to those species.

**Reply to objection 3:** A separated soul is not related in the same way to all singulars; instead, it has a relation to some of them that it does not have to others. And so there is no universally applicable reason (*aequalis ratio*) why a separated soul should have cognition of all singulars.

## Article 5

### Does a habit of scientific knowledge acquired here remain in a separated soul?

It seems that a habit of scientific knowledge acquired here does not remain in a separated soul:

**Objection 1:** In 1 Corinthians 13:8 the Apostle says, “Knowledge shall be destroyed.”

**Objection 2:** In this world some less virtuous men (*quidam minus boni*) abound in scientific knowledge, while other more virtuous men lack scientific knowledge. Therefore, if a habit of scientific knowledge remained in the soul after death, it would follow that some less virtuous men would be more competent (*potiores*) in the future state than some more virtuous men. But this seems absurd.

**Objection 3:** Separated souls will have scientific knowledge because of the influx of the divine light. Therefore, if scientific knowledge acquired here remains in the separated soul, it follows that two forms of the same species will exist in the same subject. But this is impossible.

**Objection 4:** In the *Categories* the Philosopher says that a habit is a quality that is difficult to change, whereas scientific knowledge is sometimes corrupted by illness or something else of this sort. But no change in this life is as powerful as the change effected by death. Therefore, it seems that a habit of knowledge is corrupted by death.

**But contrary to this:** In his letter to Paulinus Jerome says, “Let us learn on earth things such that the knowledge of them will survive for us in heaven.”

**I respond:** Some have claimed that (a) a habit of scientific knowledge exists not in the intellect itself but in the sentient powers—more specifically, in the power of imagining, in the cogitative power, and in the power of remembering—and that (b) intelligible species are not conserved in the passive intellect. And if this opinion were true, then it would follow that once the body is destroyed, any habit of scientific knowledge acquired here would be totally destroyed.

However, since scientific knowledge exists in the intellect, which, as *De Anima* 3 says, is “the locus of species,” a habit of scientific knowledge acquired here exists partly in the aforementioned sentient powers and partly in the intellect itself. This can be thought about by appeal to the very acts by which a habit of scientific knowledge is acquired, since, as *Ethics* 2 says, “habits are similar to the acts by which they are acquired.” Now the acts of the intellect by which scientific knowledge is acquired in the present life involve the intellect’s turning itself toward phantasms, which exist in the aforementioned sentient powers. Hence, through such acts the passive intellect itself acquires a certain capacity (*facultas*) for thinking by means of the species it has received, and the aforementioned lower powers acquire a certain aptitude (*habilitas*) such that the intellect, by turning toward them, is more easily able to think about intelligible things. But just as an act of the intellect principally and formally exists in the intellect itself, whereas it exists materially and dispositively in the lower powers, so too the same thing must be said about the corresponding habit.

Therefore, as regards what someone has of present scientific knowledge in the lower powers, this will not remain in a separated soul; on the other hand, what he has in the intellect itself must remain. For as *De Longitudine et Brevitate Vitae* says, there are two ways in which a form is corrupted, viz., (a) *per se*, when it is corrupted by its contrary, e.g., hot by cold, and (b) *per accidens*, viz., through the corruption of its subject. Now it is clear that the scientific knowledge that exists in a human intellect cannot be corrupted through the corruption of its subject; for as was shown above (q. 79, a. 2), the intellect is incorruptible. Similarly, neither can the intelligible species that exist in the passive intellect be corrupted by a contrary; for there is no contrary to an intelligible intention, especially with respect to the simple understanding by which one understands a thing’s ‘what-ness’ (*praecipue quantum ad simplicem intelligentiam, qua intelligitur quod quid est*). On the other hand, as regards the operation by which the intellect composes and divides, or even as regards the operation by which it reasons discursively, contrariety is found in the intellect in the sense that falsity in a proposition or argument is contrary to truth. And in this sense scientific knowledge is sometimes corrupted by a contrary, viz., when someone is drawn away from knowledge of the truth by false argumentation. And so the Philosopher, in the book already cited, claims that there are two ways in which scientific knowledge is corrupted *per se*, viz., through forgetfulness on the part of the memory and through deception by false argumentation. But

these have no relevance in the case of a separated soul.

Hence, one should reply that to the extent that a habit of scientific knowledge exists in the intellect, it remains in a separated soul.

**Reply to objection 1:** In this passage the Apostle is speaking not about scientific knowledge as a habit, but about the act of cognition. Hence, he adds by way of proof: “Now I know in part ...”

**Reply to objection 2:** Just as someone who is less virtuous will be greater in bodily stature than someone who is more virtuous, so too nothing prevents someone who is less virtuous from having in the future a habit of scientific knowledge that someone more virtuous does not have. But this is of no importance in comparison with the other prerogatives that more virtuous men will have.

**Reply to objection 3:** The two types of knowledge do not have the same nature. Hence, nothing absurd follows.

**Reply to objection 4:** This argument goes through in the case of the corruption of scientific knowledge as regards that part of it that belongs to the sentient powers.

## Article 6

### Does an act of scientific knowledge acquired here remain in a separated soul?

It seems that an act of scientific knowledge acquired here does not remain in a separated soul:

**Objection 1:** In *De Anima* 1 the Philosopher says that when the body is corrupted, the soul “neither remembers nor loves.” But to remember is to think about things that one previously knew. Therefore, a separated soul cannot have an act of the scientific knowledge which it acquired here.

**Objection 2:** Intelligible species will not be more powerful in a separated soul than they are in a soul united to a body. But as was established above (q. 84, a. 7), we are at present able to have an act of intellective understanding through intelligible species only by turning ourselves toward phantasms. Therefore, a separated soul will not be able to do this. And so there is no way in which a separated soul will be able to have an act of intellective understanding through intelligible species acquired here.

**Objection 3:** In *Ethics* 2 the Philosopher says, “Habits give rise to acts that are similar to the acts through which they are acquired.” But a habit of scientific knowledge is acquired here through acts of an intellect that is turning itself toward phantasms; therefore, this habit cannot give rise to other sorts of acts (*alios actus reddere*). But acts of the sort in question do not belong to a separated soul. Therefore, a separated soul will not have any acts of the scientific knowledge that has been acquired here.

**But contrary to this:** In Luke 16:25 the following is said to the rich man who is in hell: “Remember that you received good things in your life.”

**I respond:** There are two things to consider in an act, viz., the species of the act and its mode. The species of an act is thought of by reference to the object which the act of the cognitive power is directed toward through the [intelligible or sensible] species that is a likeness of the object, whereas the mode is thought of by reference to the agent’s power. For instance, the fact that someone sees a rock depends on the species of a rock that exists in the eye, but the fact that he sees it in a sharp-sighted way (*acute*) depends on the eye’s visual power.

Therefore, since, as has been explained (a. 5), the intelligible species remain in a separated soul despite the fact that a separated soul’s status is not the same as it is at present, it follows that a separated soul is able to understand what it previously understood through the intelligible species acquired here. However, it does not understand them in the same mode, viz., through turning toward phantasms. Instead, it understands them in a mode appropriate to a separated soul. And so an act of scientific

knowledge acquired here remains in a separated soul, but not with the same mode.

**Reply to objection 1:** The Philosopher is talking about memory (*reminiscentia*) insofar as memory (*memoria*) pertains to the sentient part of the soul, but not insofar as memory exists in a certain way in the intellect, as was explained above (q. 79, a. 6).

**Reply to objection 2:** Different modes of intellective understanding stem from the different states of the soul that is engaged in understanding and not from different levels of power (*ex diversa virtute*) on the part of the [intelligible] species.

**Reply to objection 3:** It is with respect to the species of the acts, but not with respect to the mode of acting, that the acts through which a habit is acquired are similar to the acts which the habit causes. For instance, performing just deeds without performing them justly, i.e., with delight, causes a habit of political justice, through which one operates with delight.

## Article 7

### Does spatial distance impede a separated soul's cognition?

It seems that spatial distance (*distantia localis*) impedes a separated soul's cognition:

**Objection 1:** In *De Cura pro Mortuis Agenda* Augustine says, "The souls of the dead are in a place where they cannot know what is happening here." But they do know what is happening among themselves. Therefore, spatial distance impedes a separated soul's cognition.

**Objection 2:** In *De Divinatione Daemonum* Augustine says, "Because of their swift motion, the demons report certain things that are unknown to us." But agility of movement would not matter if spatial distance did not impede the demons' cognition. Therefore, *a fortiori*, spatial distance impedes the cognition of a separated soul, which is inferior in nature to a demon.

**Objection 3:** In the same way that someone is distant with respect to place, so too he can be distant with respect to time. But temporal distance impedes a separated soul's cognition, since a separated soul does not have cognition of future things. Therefore, it seems that distance with respect to place likewise impedes a separated soul's cognition.

**But contrary to this:** Luke 16:23 says, "When the rich man was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham in the distance." Therefore, spatial distance does not impede a separated soul's cognition.

**I respond:** Some have claimed that a separated soul has cognition of singulars by abstracting from sensible things. If this were true, then one could claim that spatial distance impedes a separated soul's cognition. For it would be required either that sensible things act on a separated soul or that a separated soul acts on sensible things—and in either case determinate distances would be required.

But the position just described is impossible, since the abstraction of species from sensible things is effected by means of the senses and other sentient powers, which do not remain as actualities in a separated soul.

Now a separated soul has intellective understanding of singulars through an influx of species from the divine light, and this light is related in the same way to what is distant as to what is close by. Hence, spatial distance does not in any way impede a separated soul's cognition.

**Reply to objection 1:** Augustine is not claiming that the reason why the souls of the dead cannot see things *here* is that they are *there*, as if he believed spatial distance to be the cause of this ignorance. Rather, the ignorance can be due to something else, as will be explained below (a. 8).

**Reply to objection 2:** Augustine is here speaking in accord with the opinion by which some had claimed that demons have bodies naturally united to them. According to this position, they can even

have sentient powers whose cognition requires determinate distances. Augustine also touches on this position explicitly in the same book, even though he seems to touch on it by reciting it rather than by asserting it. This is clear from what he says in *De Civitate Dei* 21.

**Reply to objection 3:** Future things, which are distant with respect to time, are not actual entities (*entia in actu*). Hence, they are unknowable in themselves, since something lacks knowability in the same way that it lacks being (*entitas*). But things that are distant with respect to place are actual entities and knowable in their own right. Hence, the argument from spatial distance is distinct from the argument from temporal distance.

## Article 8

### Do separated souls have cognition of what is happening here?

It seems that separated souls have cognition of what is happening here:

**Objection 1:** If they did not have cognition of these things, then they would not care about them. But they do care about what is happening here—this according to Luke 16:28 (“I have five brothers ... so that he might give witness to them, lest they, too, come into this place of torment”). Therefore, separated souls have cognition of what is happening here.

**Objection 2:** The dead frequently appear to the living, whether asleep or awake, and warn them about what is happening here—in the way that Samuel appeared to Saul, as 1 Kings 28:11 reports. But this would not be the case if they had no cognition of what is happening here. Therefore, they have cognition of what is happening here.

**Objection 3:** Separated souls have cognition of what is happening around them. Therefore, if they did not have cognition of what is happening among us, then it would be the case that their cognition is impeded by spatial distance. But this was denied above (a. 7).

**But contrary to this:** Job 14:21 says, “He will not know whether his children turn out noble or ignoble.”

**I respond:** As regards natural cognition, which is what we are now talking about, the souls of the dead do not know what is happening here. The reason for this can be gathered from what has already been said (a. 4). For a separated soul has cognition of singulars by being in some sense directed toward them (*determinata ad illa*), either through a vestige of some previous cognition or affective tie, or else through divine ordination. Now it is both because of divine ordination and because of their mode of being that the souls of the dead are segregated off from fellowship with the living and joined in fellowship with spiritual substances that are separate from bodies. Hence, they are ignorant of what is happening among us. In *Moralia* 12 Gregory gives this explanation: “The dead do not know how life after them in the flesh is going among the living. For the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and just as the corporeal and the incorporeal are diverse in genus, so too they are distinct in cognition.” Augustine seems to touch on this, too, in *De Cura pro Mortuis Agenda*, where he says, “The souls of the dead are not involved (*non intersunt*) in the affairs of the living.”

However, there seems to be a disagreement between Gregory and Augustine as far as the souls of the blessed in heaven are concerned.

For in the same place Gregory adds, “Yet do not think the same way about the saintly souls, for since they see interiorly the clarity of almighty God, it is impossible to believe that there is anything exterior that they do not know.”

By contrast, in *De Cura pro Mortuis Agenda* Augustine explicitly says, “The dead, even the saints,

do not know what the living are doing, even their own children”—as we have it in a Gloss on Isaiah 63:16 (“Abraham has not known us ...”). Augustine confirms this claim by appeal to the fact that he was not visited by his mother or consoled by her in his sorrows, as he was when she was alive, and it is unlikely that she is less kind in her happier life. He also confirms it by the fact that the Lord promised king Josiah that he would die first, lest he see the evils that were going to befall his people (4 Kings 22:20). However, Augustine says this with hesitation; that is why he prefaces his remarks by saying, “Let each one take as he wishes what I am about to say.”

Gregory, on the other hand, speaks with confidence (*assertive*), as is evident from the fact that he says, “It is impossible to believe ...” But according to Gregory’s opinion, it seems that the souls of the saints, seeing God, have cognition of all present things that are happening here. For these souls are equal to the angels, of whom even Augustine asserts that they are not ignorant of what is happening among the living. But because the souls of the saints are most perfectly joined to God’s justice, they do not grieve; nor do they enter into the affairs of the living, except insofar as the order of divine justice requires it.

**Reply to objection 1:** The souls of the dead can care about the affairs of the living, even if they do not know their condition—just as we ourselves exercise care for the dead by offering suffrages for them, even though we do not know their condition.

It is also possible for the souls of the dead to have cognition of the deeds of the living not on their own, but through the souls of those who join them from here, or through the angels or demons, or even when God’s Spirit reveals these things to them, as Augustine says in the same book.

**Reply to objection 2:** When the dead appear in some way to the living, either (a) this happens because of God’s specially arranging for the souls of the dead to enter into the affairs of the living, in which case it is counted among God’s miracles, or (b) apparitions of this sort are effected by the actions of good or bad angels, even when the dead do not know about it—just as the living likewise, without knowing it, appear in the dreams of others of the living, as Augustine says in the aforementioned book.

Hence, one can say of Samuel that he appeared through a divine revelation—this according to Ecclesiasticus 46:23 (“He slept, and he made known to the king ... the end of his life”). Or else, if one does not accept the authority of Ecclesiasticus because it was not counted by the Hebrews among the canonical writings, one can claim that the apparition was arranged by demons.

**Reply to objection 3:** This sort of ignorance occurs for the reasons explained above and not because of spatial distance.