

Objection 1. It would seem that corporeal creatures are not from God. For it is said (Eccles. 3:14): “I have learned that all the works which God hath made, continue for ever.” But visible bodies do not continue for ever, for it is said (2 Cor. 4:18): “The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Therefore God did not make visible bodies.

Objection 2. Further, it is said (Gn. 1:31): “God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good.” But corporeal creatures are evil, since we find them harmful in many ways; as may be seen in serpents, in the sun’s heat, and other things. Now a thing is called evil, in so far as it is harmful. Corporeal creatures, therefore, are not from God.

Objection 3. Further, what is from God does not withdraw us from God, but leads us to Him. But corporeal creatures withdraw us from God. Hence the Apostle (2 Cor. 4:18): “While we look not at the things which are seen.” Corporeal creatures, therefore, are not from God.

On the contrary, It is said (Ps. 145:6): “Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.”

I answer that, Certain heretics maintain that visible things are not created by the good God, but by an evil principle, and allege in proof of their error the words of the Apostle (2 Cor. 4:4), “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers.” But this position is altogether untenable. For, if things that differ agree in some point, there must be some cause for that agreement, since things diverse in nature cannot be united of themselves. Hence whenever in different things some one thing common to all is found, it must be that these different things receive that one thing from some one cause, as different bodies that are hot receive their heat from fire. But being is found to be common to all things, however otherwise different. There must, therefore, be one principle of being from which all things in whatever way existing have their being, whether they are invisible and spiritual, or visible and corporeal. But the devil is called the god of this world, not as having created it, but because worldlings serve him, of whom also the Apostle says, speaking in the same sense, “Whose god is their belly” (Phil. 3:19).

Reply to Objection 1. All the creatures of God in some respects continue for ever, at least as to matter, since

what is created will never be annihilated, even though it be corruptible. And the nearer a creature approaches God, Who is immovable, the more it also is immovable. For corruptible creatures endure for ever as regards their matter, though they change as regards their substantial form. But incorruptible creatures endure with respect to their substance, though they are mutable in other respects, such as place, for instance, the heavenly bodies; or the affections, as spiritual creatures. But the Apostle’s words, “The things which are seen are temporal,” though true even as regards such things considered in themselves (in so far as every visible creature is subject to time, either as to being or as to movement), are intended to apply to visible things in so far as they are offered to man as rewards. For such rewards, as consist in these visible things, are temporal; while those that are invisible endure for ever. Hence he said before (2 Cor. 4:17): “It worketh for us... an eternal weight of glory.”

Reply to Objection 2. Corporeal creatures according to their nature are good, though this good is not universal, but partial and limited, the consequence of which is a certain opposition of contrary qualities, though each quality is good in itself. To those, however, who estimate things, not by the nature thereof, but by the good they themselves can derive therefrom, everything which is harmful to themselves seems simply evil. For they do not reflect that what is in some way injurious to one person, to another is beneficial, and that even to themselves the same thing may be evil in some respects, but good in others. And this could not be, if bodies were essentially evil and harmful.

Reply to Objection 3. Creatures of themselves do not withdraw us from God, but lead us to Him; for “the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Rom. 1:20). If, then, they withdraw men from God, it is the fault of those who use them foolishly. Thus it is said (Wis. 14:11): “Creatures are turned into a snare to the feet of the unwise.” And the very fact that they can thus withdraw us from God proves that they came from Him, for they cannot lead the foolish away from God except by the allurements of some good that they have from Him.