

QUESTION 73

The Seventh Day

The next things to consider are those that are relevant to the seventh day. On this topic there are three questions: (1) about the completion of the works, (2) about God's rest, and (3) about the blessing and sanctification of this day.

Article 1

Should the completion of God's works be ascribed to the seventh day?

It seems that the completion of God's works (*completio divinorum operum*) should not be ascribed to the seventh day:

Objection 1: All the things that are done in the world belong to God's works. But as Matthew 13:37ff. says, the consummation of the ages (*consummatio saeculi*) will occur at the end of the world (*in fine mundi*). Again, the time of Christ's Incarnation is the time of a certain completion and is thus called "the fullness of time" in Galatians 4:4. And, as John 19:30 reports, Christ Himself said at His death, "It is finished." Therefore, it is not the case that the completion of God's works belongs to the seventh day.

Objection 2: If someone is completing his work, then he is doing something. But God is not said to have done anything on the seventh day; just the opposite, He is said to have "rested from all His work" (Genesis 2:2). Therefore, the completion of the works does not belong to the seventh day.

Objection 3: If something is such that many things are being added to it, then it is not said to be complete (*completum*), unless perhaps those things are superfluous. For what is called perfect (*perfectum*) is such that it lacks nothing it ought to have. But many things have been made since the seventh day; there has been the production of many individuals and even of new species that often come to light, especially in the case of animals generated from putrefaction. Also, God creates new souls even now. The Incarnation was likewise a new work; Jeremiah 31:22 says of it, "The Lord has created something new on the earth." Moreover, there are new miraculous works, about which Ecclesiasticus 36:6 says, "Renew your signs, and work new miracles." Again, all things will be made new in the glorification of the saints—this according to Apocalypse 21:5 ("And He who sat on the throne said: "Behold, I make all things new"). Therefore, the completion of God's works should not be attributed to the seventh day.

But contrary to this: Genesis 2:2 says, "On the seventh day God completed His work which He had done."

I respond: There are two kinds of perfection for a thing, first perfection and second perfection. A thing has *first perfection* (*prima perfectio*) insofar as it is perfect in its substance. This perfection is the form of the whole that arises from the integration of the parts. On the other hand, *second perfection* (*secunda perfectio*) is the end. Now the end is either (a) an operation, e.g., the end of the harpist is the playing of the harp, or (b) something that is arrived at through an operation, e.g., the end of the builder is the house that he makes by building it. First perfection is a cause of second perfection, since the form is a principle of operation.

Now the last perfection, which is the end of the whole universe, is the perfect happiness of the saints, which will come at the last consummation of the ages. But the first perfection, which consists in the completeness of the universe (*integritas universi*), existed in the first establishment of things. It is this perfection that is ascribed to the seventh day.

Reply to objection 1: As has been explained, first perfection is a cause of second perfection. Now two things are required to attain happiness, viz., nature and grace. As has been explained, the perfection

itself of happiness will come at the end of the world. But this consummation will have pre-existed in its causes—with respect to *nature*, in the first establishment of things, and with respect to *grace*, in Christ's Incarnation, since, as John 1:17 says, grace and truth were made through Jesus Christ. So, then, (a) on the seventh day there was the consummation of *nature*, (b) in Christ's Incarnation there was the consummation of *grace*, and (c) at the end of the world there will be the consummation of *glory*.

Reply to objection 2: God did something on the seventh day—not by making a new creature, but rather by governing (*administrando*) his creatures and moving them to their proper operations, which already in some sense belongs to a sort of initiation of second perfection.

And so the consummation of His works is attributed to the seventh day, according to our version of Scripture (*secundum nostram translationem*), whereas, according to the other version, it is attributed to the sixth day. And both versions can stand. For the consummation that involves the *completeness* of the parts of the universe belongs to the sixth day, whereas the consummation that involves the *operations* of the parts belongs to the seventh day.

A possible alternative reply is to claim that in the case of continuous motion, as long as something can continue moving (*potest moveri ulterius*), the motion is not said to be complete (*perfectus*) until there is rest, since rest signals a completed motion (*motum consummatum*). Now God could have made more creatures beyond those that He had made in the six days. Hence, by the very fact that He stopped making new creatures on the seventh day, He is said to have finished His work.

Reply to objection 3: Nothing made afterwards by God is totally new, without in some sense having pre-existed in the work of the six days. For certain things pre-existed *in their matter* (*materialiter*), in the sense in which God formed the woman from Adam's rib. Others pre-existed in the work of the six days not only in their matter but also *in their causes* (*causaliter*), in the sense in which individuals that are now being generated pre-existed in the first individuals of their species. Also, if any new species arise, they pre-existed *in certain active powers*; for instance, animals generated from putrefaction are produced by the powers that the stars and elements received at the beginning—even if new species of such animals are produced. Again, animals of new species sometimes arise from *mixing animals of diverse species*, as when a mule is generated from a donkey and a horse, and these likewise pre-existed in their causes in the work of the six days. On the other hand, some things pre-existed *by way of likeness*, in the way that [human] souls are now created; the same holds for the work of the Incarnation, since, as Philippians 2:7 says, “The Son of God was made in the likeness of men.” Also, spiritual glory pre-existed in the angels by way of likeness, whereas bodily glory pre-existed in the heavens, mainly the empyrean heaven.

Thus, Ecclesiastes 1:10 says, “Nothing under the sun is new; for it has already pre-existed in the ages that were before us.”

Article 2

Did God rest from all His work on the seventh day?

It seems that God did not rest from all His work on the seventh day:

Objection 1: John 5:17 says, “My Father is working even until now, and I am working.” Therefore, He did not rest from all His work on the seventh day.

Objection 2: Rest is opposed to movement or to the labor that is sometimes caused by movement. But God produced His works without movement (*immobiliter*) and without labor. Therefore, He cannot be said to have rested from His work on the seventh day.

Objection 3: If someone replies that God rested on the seventh day by virtue of His making man rest, then against this: Rest is a counterbalance to His operation. But the expression “God created or made this or that” is not understood to mean that God made man create or make things. Therefore, neither can it be correct to claim that God is said to have rested by virtue of His making man rest.

But contrary to this: Genesis 2:2 says, “God rested on the seventh day from all the work He had done.”

I respond: Rest is properly opposed to movement and, as a result, it is opposed to labor, which arises from movement. Now even though movement is properly understood of bodies, the name ‘movement’ (*motus*) is nonetheless extended to spiritual things in two ways. First, insofar as every operation is called a movement; for instance, even God’s goodness is said to be moved in a certain sense and to proceed into things insofar as it communicates itself to them—this according to Dionysius in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 2. Second, a desire that tends toward something else is said to be a sort of movement. Hence, rest is likewise understood in two ways: first, it is taken for the cessation of work; second, it taken for the fulfillment of desire.

God is said to have rested in both these ways on the seventh day. First of all, on the seventh day He stopped making new creatures, since, as has been explained (a. 1), afterwards He made nothing that did not in some sense pre-exist in those first works. Second, He did not need the things that had been made, but was happy in enjoying Himself. Hence, after all His works were posited, He is not said to have rested “*in His works*,” in the sense that He needed them for His happiness; instead, He is said to have rested “*from His works*,” i.e., He rested in Himself, since He is sufficient for Himself and He fulfills His own desire.

Moreover, even though He rested from eternity in Himself, still, it is the fact that He rested in Himself after His works were finished that pertains to the seventh day. And this is what it is to rest *from* His works, as Augustine explains in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 4.

Reply to objection 1: God is operating even until now by conserving and governing the creatures He has made and not by making new creatures.

Reply to objection 2: As has been explained, rest is opposed not to labor or movement but rather to the production of new things and to a desire that tends toward another.

Reply to objection 3: Just as God rests in Himself alone and is happy in His enjoyment of Himself, so too we are likewise made happy only through the enjoyment of God. And so He likewise makes us rest in Himself from His works and our works. Therefore, it is appropriate to interpret this passage as saying that God rested by virtue of His making man rest.

However, this explanation should not be proposed by itself; instead, the other explanation is more principal than and prior to this one.

Article 3

Do blessing and sanctification befit the seventh day?

It seems that blessing and sanctification do not befit the seventh day:

Objection 1: It is customary to call a time blessed or holy because of something good that happens at that time or because some evil is avoided. But God gains nothing and loses nothing, regardless of whether he works or ceases to work. Therefore, it is not the case that a special blessing and sanctification befit the seventh day.

Objection 2: ‘Blessing’ (*benedictio*) comes from ‘goodness’ (*bonitas*). But according to

Dionysius, the good diffuses and communicates itself. Therefore, it would have been fitting for the days on which God produced creatures to be blessed rather than the day on which He stopped producing creatures.

Objection 3: Before this in the text, a blessing had been recorded in the case of each creature, when it said in the case of each of the works, “God saw that it was good.” Therefore, it was unnecessary for the seventh day to be blessed, after the production of all things.

But contrary to this: Genesis 2:3 says, “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on that day He rested from all His work.”

I respond: As was explained above (a. 2), there are two ways to understand God’s resting on the seventh day: (a) insofar as He stopped doing new works, though in such a way that He conserves and governs the creatures that have been made; (b) insofar as He rested in Himself after His works.

Thus, with respect to the former, a blessing befits the seventh day. For as was explained above (q. 72), the blessing pertains to multiplication; hence, He said to the creatures He blessed, “Grow and multiply.” But the multiplication of things is accomplished through the creature’s being governed, insofar as like comes from like.

With respect to the latter, sanctification befits the seventh day. For sanctification occurs especially in the fact that one rests in God, and this is why things dedicated to God are called holy.

Reply to objection 1: The seventh day is sanctified not because God is able to acquire or lose anything, but because something accrues to creatures through multiplication and through rest in God.

Reply to objection 2: On the first six days things were produced in their first causes. But afterwards things are multiplied and conserved from those first causes, and this likewise pertains to God’s goodness. The perfection of God’s goodness is especially shown by the fact it is in God’s goodness alone that He Himself rests and that we are able to rest, enjoying that goodness.

Reply to objection 3: The good that is recalled on each of the days pertains to the first establishment of nature, whereas the blessing of the seventh day pertains to the propagation of nature.