

SUPPLEMENT TO THE THIRD PART, QUESTION 84

Of the Agility of the Bodies of the Blessed (In Three Articles)

We must now consider the agility of the bodies of the blessed in the resurrection. Under this head there are three points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether the glorified bodies will be agile?
- (2) Whether they will move?
- (3) Whether they will move instantaneously?

Whether the glorified bodies will be agile?

Suppl. q. 84 a. 1

Objection 1. It would seem that the glorified bodies will not be agile. For that which is agile by itself needs not to be carried in order to move. But the glorified bodies will, after the resurrection, be taken up by the angels (according to a gloss) in the clouds “to meet Christ, into the air” (1 Thess. 4:16). Therefore the glorified bodies will not be agile.

Objection 2. Further, no body that moves with labor and pain can be said to be agile. Yet the glorified bodies will move thus, since the principle of their movement, namely the soul, moves them counter to their nature, else they would always move in the same direction. Therefore they are not agile.

Objection 3. Further, of all the animal operations sense surpasses movement in nobility and priority. Yet no property is ascribed to glorified bodies as perfecting them in sensation. Therefore neither should agility be ascribed to them as perfecting them in movement.

Objection 4. Further, nature gives different animals instruments of different disposition according to their different powers: hence she does not give instruments of the same disposition to slow as to fleet animals. Now God’s works are much more orderly than those of nature. Since then the glorified body’s members will have the same disposition, shape and quantity as they now have, it would seem that it will have no agility other than it has now.

On the contrary, It is written (1 Cor. 15:43): “It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power,” that is, according to a gloss, “mobile and living.” But mobility can only signify agility in movement. Therefore the glorified bodies will be agile.

Further, slowness of movement would seem especially inconsistent with the nature of a spirit. But the glorified bodies will be most spiritual according to 1 Cor. 15:44. Therefore they will be agile.

I answer that, The glorified body will be altogether subject to the glorified soul, so that not only will there be nothing in it to resist the will of the spirit, for it was even so in the case of Adam’s body, but also from the glorified soul there will flow into the body a certain perfection, whereby it will become adapted to that subjection: and this perfection is called “the gift of the glorified body.” Now the soul is

united to body not only as its form, but also as its mover; and in both ways the glorified body must needs be most perfectly subject to the glorified soul. Wherefore even as by the gift of subtlety the body is wholly subject to the soul as its form, whence it derives its specific being, so by the gift of agility it is subject to the soul as its mover, so that it is prompt and apt to obey the spirit in all the movements and actions of the soul.

Some, however, ascribe the cause of this agility to the fifth, i.e. the heavenly essence, which will then be predominant in the glorified bodies. But of this we have frequently observed that it does not seem probable (q. 82, a. 1; q. 83, a. 1). Wherefore it is better to ascribe it to the soul, whence glory flows to the body.

Reply to Objection 1. Glorified bodies are said to be borne by the angels and also on the clouds, not as though they needed them, but in order to signify the reverence which both angels and all creatures will show them.

Reply to Objection 2. The more the power of the moving soul dominates over the body, the less is the labor of movement, even though it be counter to the body’s nature. Hence those in whom the motive power is stronger, and those who through exercise have the body more adapted to obey the moving spirit, labor less in being moved. And since, after the resurrection, the soul will perfectly dominate the body, both on account of the perfection of its own power, and on account of the glorified body’s aptitude resulting from the outflow of glory which it receives from the soul, there will be no labor in the saints’ movements, and thus it may be said that the bodies of the saints’ will be agile.

Reply to Objection 3. By the gift of agility the glorified body will be rendered apt not only for local movement but also for sensation, and for the execution of all the other operations of the soul.

Reply to Objection 4. Even as nature gives to fleet animals instruments of a different disposition in shape and quantity, so God will give to the bodies of the saints a disposition other than that which they have now, not indeed in shape and quantity, but in that property of glory which is called agility.

Objection 1. It would seem that the saints will never use their agility for the purpose of movement. For, according to the Philosopher (Phys. iii, 2), “movement is the act of the imperfect.” But there will be no imperfection in glorified bodies. Neither therefore will there be any movement.

Objection 2. Further, all movement is on account of some need, because whatever is in motion is moved for the sake of obtaining some end. But glorified bodies will have no need, since as Augustine says (De Spiritu et Anima, lxiii), “all thou wilt will be there, and nothing that thou wilt not.” Therefore they will not move.

Objection 3. Further, according to the Philosopher (De Coelo et Mundo ii), “that which shares the Divine goodness without movement shares it more excellently than that which shares it with movement.” Now the glorified body shares the Divine goodness more excellently than any other body. Since then certain bodies, like the heavenly bodies, will remain altogether without movement, it seems that much more will human bodies remain so.

Objection 4. Further, Augustine says (De Vera Relig. xii) that the soul being established in God will in consequence establish its body. Now the soul will be so established in God, that in no way will it move away from Him. Therefore in the body there will be no movement caused by the soul.

Objection 5. Further, the more noble a body is, the more noble a place is due to it: wherefore Christ’s body which is the most exalted of all has the highest place of all, according to Heb. 7:26, “Made higher than the heavens,” where a gloss[†] says, “in place and dignity.” And again each glorified body will, in like manner, have a place befitting it according to the measure of its dignity. Now a fitting place is one of the conditions pertaining to glory. Since then after the resurrection the glory of the saints will never vary, neither by increase nor by decrease, because they will then have reached the final term of all, it would seem that their bodies will never leave the place assigned to them, and consequently will not be moved.

On the contrary, It is written (Is. 40:31): “They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint”; and (Wis. 3:7): “(The just) shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.” Therefore there will be some movement in glorified bodies.

I answer that, It is necessary to suppose that the glorified bodies are moved sometimes, since even Christ’s body was moved in His ascension, and likewise the bodies of the saints, which will arise from the earth, will ascend to the empyrean[‡]. But even after they have climbed the heavens, it is likely that they will sometimes move according as it pleases them; so that by actually putting into practice that which is in their power, they may show forth the excellence of Divine wisdom, and that furthermore their vision may be refreshed by the beauty of the variety of creatures, in which God’s wisdom will shine forth with great evidence:

for sense can only perceive that which is present, although glorified bodies can perceive from a greater distance than non-glorified bodies. And yet movement will nowise diminish their happiness which consists in seeing God, for He will be everywhere present to them; thus Gregory says of the angels (Hom. xxxiv in Evang.) that “wherever they are sent their course lies in God.”

Reply to Objection 1. Local movement changes nothing that is intrinsic to a thing, but only that which is without namely place. Hence that which is moved locally is perfect as to those things which are within (Phys. viii, 7), although it has an imperfection as to place, because while it is in one place it is in potentiality with regard to another place, since it cannot be in several places at the same time, for this belongs to God alone. But this defect is not inconsistent with the perfection of glory, as neither is the defect whereby a creature is formed from nothing. Hence such like defects will remain in glorified bodies.

Reply to Objection 2. A person is said to need a thing in two ways, namely absolutely and relatively. One needs absolutely that without which one cannot retain one’s being or one’s perfection: and thus movement in glorified bodies will not be on account of a need, because their happiness will suffice them for all such things. But we need a thing relatively when without it some end we have in view cannot be obtained by us, or not so well, or not in some particular way. It is thus that movement will be in the blessed on account of need, for they will be unable to show forth their motive power practically, unless they be in motion, since nothing prevents a need of this kind being in glorified bodies.

Reply to Objection 3. This argument would prove if the glorified body were unable even without movement to share the Divine goodness much more perfectly than the heavenly bodies, which is untrue. Hence glorified bodies will be moved, not in order to gain a perfect participation in the Divine goodness (since they have this through glory), but in order to show the soul’s power. On the other hand, the movement of the heavenly bodies could not show their power, except the power they have in moving lower bodies to generation and corruption, which is not becoming to that state. Hence the argument does not prove.

Reply to Objection 4. Local movement takes nothing away from the stability of the soul that is established in God, since it does not affect that which is intrinsic to a thing, as stated above (ad 1).

Reply to Objection 5. The fitting place assigned to each glorified body according to the degree of its dignity belongs to the accidental reward. Nor does it follow that this reward is diminished whenever the body is outside its place; because that place pertains to reward, not as actually containing the body located therein (since nothing flows therefrom into the glorified body, but rather does it receive splendor therefrom), but as being due to merits. Wherefore, though out of that place, they will still continue to rejoice in it.

[†] Cf. q. 70, a. 2, ad 1. [‡] Gloss on Heb. 1:3: “On the right hand of the majesty.” [§] The empyrean was the highest of the concentric spheres or heavens, and was identified by Christian writers with the abode of God. Cf. Ia, q. 56, a. 3.

Objection 1. It would seem that movement of the saints will be instantaneous. For Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* xxii, 30) that “wherever the spirit listeth there will the body be.” Now the movement of the will, whereby the spirit wishes to be anywhere, is instantaneous. Therefore the body’s movement will be instantaneous.

Objection 2. Further, the Philosopher (*Phys.* iv, 8) proves that there is no movement through a vacuum, because it would follow that something moves instantaneously, since a vacuum offers no resistance whatever to a thing that is in motion, whereas the plenum offers resistance; and so there would be no proportion between the velocity of movement in a vacuum and that of movement in a plenum, since the ratio of movements in point of velocity is as the ratio of the resistance offered by the medium. Now the velocities of any two movements that take place in time must needs be proportional, since any one space of time is proportional to any other. But in like manner no full place can resist a glorified body since this can be in the same place with another body, no matter how this may occur; even as neither can a vacuum resist a body. Therefore if it moves at all, it moves instantaneously.

Objection 3. Further, the power of a glorified soul surpasses the power of a non-glorified soul, out of all proportion so to speak. Now the non-glorified soul moves the body in time. Therefore the glorified soul moves the body instantaneously.

Objection 4. Further, whatever is moved equally soon to what is near and what is distant, is moved instantaneously. Now such is the movement of a glorified body, for however distant the space to which it is moved, the time it takes to be moved is imperceptible: wherefore Augustine says (*QQ. De Resurrectione*, Ep. cii, qu. 1) that “the glorified body reaches equally soon to any distance, like the sun’s ray.” Therefore the glorified body is moved instantaneously.

Objection 5. Further, whatever is in motion is moved either in time or in an instant. Now after the resurrection the glorified body will not be moved in time, since time will not be then according to *Apoc.* 10:6. Therefore this movement will be instantaneous.

On the contrary, In local movement space, movement and time are equally divisible, as is demonstrated in *Phys.* vi, 4. Now the space traversed by a glorified body in motion is divisible. Therefore both the movement and the time are divisible. But an instant is indivisible. Therefore this movement will not be instantaneous.

Further, a thing cannot be at the same time wholly in one place and partly in another place, since it would follow that the remaining part is in two places at the same time, which is impossible. But whatever is in motion is partly in a term “wherefrom” and partly in a term “whereto,” as is proved in *Phys.* vi, 6: while whatever has been in motion is wholly in the term whereto the movement is directed; and it is impossible at the same time for it to be moved and to have been moved. Now that which is moved instantaneously is being

moved and has been moved at the same time. Therefore the local movement of a glorified body cannot be instantaneous.

I answer that, Opinion is much divided on this point. For some say that a glorified body passes from one place to another without passing through the interval, just as the will passes from one place to another without passing through the interval, and that consequently it is possible for the movement of a glorified body like that of the will to be instantaneous. But this will not hold: because the glorified body will never attain to the dignity of the spiritual nature, just as it will never cease to be a body. Moreover, when the will is said to move from one place to another, it is not essentially transferred from place to place, because in neither place is it contained essentially, but it is directed to one place after being directed by the intention to another: and in this sense it is said to move from one place to another.

Hence others^{*} say that it is a property of the nature of a glorified body, since it is a body, to pass through the interval and consequently to be moved in time, but that by the power of glory, which raises it to a certain infinitude above the power of nature, it is possible for it not to pass through the interval, and consequently to be moved instantaneously. But this is impossible since it implies a contradiction: which is proved as follows. Suppose a body which we will call Z to be in motion from A to B. It is clear that Z, as long as it is wholly in A is not in motion; and in like manner when it is wholly in B, because then the movement is past. Therefore if it is at any time in motion it must needs be neither wholly in A nor wholly in B. Therefore while it is in motion, it is either nowhere, or partly in A, and partly in B, or wholly in some other intervening place, say C, or partly in A and C and partly in C and B. But it is impossible for it to be nowhere, for then there would be a dimensive quantity without a place, which is impossible. Nor again is it possible for it to be partly in A and partly in B without being in some way in the intervening space. for since B is a place distant from A, it would follow that in the intervening space the part of Z which is in B is not continuous with the part which is in A. Therefore it follows that it is either wholly in C, or partly in C, and partly in some other place that intervenes between C and A, say D, and so forth. Therefore it follows that Z does not pass from A to B unless first of all it be in all the intervening places: unless we suppose that it passes from A to B without ever being moved, which implies a contradiction, because the very succession of places is local movement. The same applies to any change whatever having two opposite terms, each of which is a positive entity, but not to those changes which have only one positive term, the other being a pure privation, since between affirmation and negation or privation there is no fixed distance: wherefore that which is in the negation may be nearer to or more remote from affirmation, and conversely, by reason of something that causes either of them or disposes thereto: so that while that which is moved is wholly under a negation it is changed into affirmation, and “vice versa”; wherefore in

^{*} Alexander of Hales, *Sum. Th.* III, q. 23, mem. 3.

such things “to be changing precedes to be changed,” as is proved in *Phys. vi, 5*. Nor is there any comparison with the movement of an angel, because being in a place is predicated equivocally of a body and an angel. Hence it is clear that it is altogether impossible for a body to pass from one place to another, unless it pass through every interval.

Wherefore others grant this, and yet they maintain that the glorified body is moved instantaneously. But it follows from this that a glorified body is at the same instant in two or more places together, namely in the ultimate term, and in all the intervening places, which is impossible.

To this, however, they reply that, although it is the same instant really, it is not the same logically, like a point at which different lines terminate. But this is not enough, because an instant measures the instantaneous, according to its reality and not according to our way of considering it. Wherefore an instant through being considered in a different way is not rendered capable of measuring things that are not simultaneous in time, just as a point through being considered in a different way does not make it possible for one point of place to contain things that are locally distant from one another.

Hence others with greater probability hold that a glorified body moves in time, but that this time is so short as to be imperceptible; and that nevertheless one glorified body can pass through the same space in less time than another, because there is no limit to the divisibility of time, no matter how short a space we may take.

Reply to Objection 1. That which is little lacking is as it were not lacking at all (*Phys. ii, 5*); wherefore we say: “I do so and so at once,” when it is to be done after a short time. It is in this sense that Augustine speaks when he says that “wheresoever the will shall be, there shall the body be forthwith.” Or we may say that in the blessed there will never be an inordinate will: so that they never will wish their body to be instantaneously where it cannot be, and consequently whatever instant the will shall choose, at that same instant the body will be in whatever place the will shall determine.

Reply to Objection 2. Some have demurred to this proposition of the Philosopher’s, as the Commentator thereon observes. They say that the ratio of one whole movement to another whole movement is not necessarily as the ratio of one resisting medium to another resisting medium, but that the ratio of the intervening mediums gives us the ratio of retardations attending the movements on account of the resistance of the medium. For every movement has a certain fixed speed, either fast or slow, through the mover overcoming the movable, although there be no resistance on the part of the medium; as evidenced in heavenly bodies, which have nothing to hinder their movement; and yet they do not move instantaneously, but in a fixed time proportionate to the power of the mover in comparison with the movable. Consequently it is clear that even if we suppose something to move in a vacuum, it does not follow that it moves instantaneously, but that nothing is added to the time which that movement requires in the aforesaid proportion of the mover to the movable, because the movement is not retarded.

But this reply, as the Commentator observes, proceeds from an error in the imagination; for it is imagined that the retardation resulting from the resistance of the medium is a part of movement added to the natural movement, the quantity of which is in proportion to the mover in comparison with the movable, as when one line is added to another: for the proportion of one total to the other is not the same as the proportion of the lines to which an addition has been made.^{*} And so there would not be the same proportion between one whole sensible movement and another, as between the retardations resulting from the resistance of the medium. This is an error of the imagination, because each part of a movement has as much speed as the whole movement: whereas not every part of a line has as much of the dimensive quantity as the whole line has. Hence any retardation or acceleration affecting the movement affects each of its parts, which is not the case with lines: and consequently the retardation that comes to a movement is not another part of the movement, whereas in the case of the lines that which is added is a part of the total line.

Consequently, in order to understand the Philosopher’s argument, as the Commentator explains, we must take the whole as being one, that is we must take not only the resistance of the movable to the moving power, but also the resistance of the medium through which the movement takes place, and again the resistance of anything else, so that we take the amount of retardation in the whole movement as being proportionate to the moving power in comparison with the resisting movable, no matter in what way it resist, whether by itself or by reason of something extrinsic. For the movable must needs always resist the mover somewhat, since mover and moved, agent and patient, as such, are opposed to one another. Now sometimes it is to be observed that the moved resists the mover by itself, either because it has a force inclining it to a contrary movement, as appears in violent movements, or at least because it has a place contrary to the place which is in the intention of the mover; and such like resistance even heavenly bodies offer their movers. Sometimes the movable resists the power of the mover, by reason only of something else and not by itself. This is seen in the natural movement of heavy and light things, because by their very form they are inclined to such a movement: for the form is an impression of their generator, which is the mover as regards heavy and light bodies. On the part of matter we find no resistance, neither of a force inclining to a contrary movement nor of a contrary place, since place is not due to matter except in so far as the latter, being circumscribed by its dimensions, is perfected by its natural form. Hence there can be no resistance save on the part of the medium, and this resistance is connatural to their movement. Sometimes again the resistance results from both, as may be seen in the movements of animals.

Accordingly when in a movement there is no resistance save on the part of the movable, as in the heavenly bodies, the time of the movement is measured according to the proportion of the mover to the movable, and the Philosopher’s argument does not apply to these, since if there be no

^{*} The same applies to mathematical quantities: for instance the ratio 2 + 1 to 4 + 1 is not as 2 to 4.

medium at all their movement is still a movement in time. on the other hand, in those movements where there is resistance on the part of the medium only, the measure of time is taken only according to the obstacle on the part of the medium, so that if the medium be removed there will be no longer an obstacle; and so either it will move instantaneously, or it will move in an equal time through a vacuum and through a plenum, because granted that it moves in time through a vacuum, that time will bear some proportion to the time in which it moves through a plenum. Now it is possible to imagine another body more subtle in the same proportion than the body which filled the space, and then if this body fill some other equal space it will move in as little time through that plenum as it did previously through a vacuum, since by as much as the subtlety of the medium is increased by so much is the length of time decreased, and the more subtle the medium the less it resists. But in those other movements where resistance is offered by both the movable and the medium, the quantity of time must be proportionate to the power of the mover as compared with the resistance of both movable and medium together. Hence granted that the medium be taken away altogether, or that it cease to hinder, it does not follow that the movement is instantaneous, but that the time is measured according only to the resistance of the movable. Nor will there be any inconsistency if it move in an equal time through a vacuum, and through a space filled with the most subtle body imaginable, since the greater the subtlety we ascribe to the medium the less is it naturally inclined to retard the movement. Wherefore it is possible to imagine so great a subtlety, as will naturally retard the movement less than does the resistance of the movable, so that the resistance of the medium will add no retardation to the movement.

It is therefore evident that although the medium offer no resistance to the glorified bodies, in so far as it is possible for them to be in the same place with another body, nevertheless their movement will not be instantaneous, because the movable body itself will resist the motive power from

the very fact that it has a determinate place, as we have said in reference to the heavenly bodies.

Reply to Objection 3. Although the power of a glorified soul surpasses immeasurably the power of a non-glorified soul, it does not surpass it infinitely, because both powers are finite: hence it does not follow that it causes instantaneous movement. And even if its power were simply infinite, it would not follow that it causes an instantaneous movement, unless the resistance of the movable were overcome altogether. Now although the resistance of the movable to the mover, that results from opposition to such a movement by reason of its being inclined to a contrary movement, can be altogether overcome by a mover of infinite power, nevertheless the resistance it offers through contrariety towards the place which the mover intends by the movement cannot be overcome altogether except by depriving it of its being in such and such a place or position. For just as white resists black by reason of whiteness, and all the more according as whiteness is the more distant from blackness, so a body resists a certain place through having an opposite place and its resistance is all the greater, according as the distance is greater. Now it is impossible to take away from a body its being in some place or position, except one deprive it of its corporeity, by reason of which it requires a place or position: wherefore so long as it retains the nature of a body, it can not be moved instantaneously, however greater be the motive power. Now the glorified body will never lose its corporeity, and therefore it will never be possible for it to be moved instantaneously.

Reply to Objection 4. In the words of Augustine, the speed is said to be equal because the excess of one over the other is imperceptible, just as the time taken by the whole movement is imperceptible.

Reply to Objection 5. Although after the resurrection the time which is the measure of the heaven's movement will be no more, there will nevertheless be time resulting from the before and after in any kind of movement.