

QUESTION 72

The Work of the Sixth Day

The next thing to consider is the work of the sixth day.

The Only Article

Is the Work of the Sixth Day Appropriately Described?

It seems that the work of the sixth day is not appropriately described:

Objection 1: Just as birds and fish have a living soul (*viventem animam*), so too do the terrestrial animals. And yet the terrestrial animals are not the living soul itself. Therefore, it was inappropriate to say, “Let the earth bring forth the living soul (*viventem animam*)” (Genesis 1:24); instead, it should have said, “Let the earth bring forth the four-footed animals (*quadrupedia*) that have a living soul.”

Objection 2: A genus should not be divided in such a way that it itself is a contrary of its own species (*genus non debet dividi contra speciem*). But *cattle* and *beast* fall under *four-footed animal*. Therefore, it is wrong for “four-footed animals” to be named alongside “cattle” and “beasts” (Genesis 1:25).

Objection 3: Just as the other animals are in a determinate genus and species, so too is man. But when man is made, there is no mention of his genus or species. Therefore, no mention of the genus or species should have been made in the case of the production of the other animals, either—as when it says, “... in their genus” or “... in their species” (Genesis 1:24-25).

Objection 4: Terrestrial animals are more similar to man, who is said to be blessed by God, than are the birds and fish. Therefore, since the birds and fish are said to be blessed (see Genesis 1:22), *a fortiori* this should likewise have been said of the other animals.

Objection 5: Some animals are generated from putrefaction, which is a certain kind of corruption. But corruption is not fitting in the first establishment of things. Therefore, animals should not have been produced in the first establishment of things.

Objection 6: Some animals are poisonous and harmful to man. But nothing harmful to man should have been created before the sin. Therefore, these animals either (a) should not have been made by God at all, since He is the author of good things, or (b) should not have been made before the sin.

But contrary to this: The authority of Scripture suffices for the contrary.

I respond: Just as the middle body is adorned on the fifth day, where this corresponds to the second day, so too the last body, viz., earth, is adorned on the sixth day, where this corresponds to the third day by the production of the terrestrial animals. Hence, on both the third day and the sixth day there is mention of the earth. And here again, according to Augustine the terrestrial animals are produced in potentiality, whereas according to the other saints they are produced in actuality.

Reply to objection 1: As Basil says, the different grades of life found among the different living things can be inferred from Scripture’s way of speaking. For instance, plants have the most imperfect and concealed form of life. Hence, in their production there is mention only of generation and not of life, since the act of life exists in them only with respect to generation—given that, as will be explained below (q. 78, a. 2), the powers of nutrition and growth are at the service of the power of generation.

Among the animals, by contrast, the terrestrial animals are, generally speaking, more perfect than the birds and the fish—not because the fish lack memory (which Basil asserts and Augustine disproves), but because of the distinctions among the organic parts of the terrestrial animals and the perfection of their act of generation (though with respect to some aspects of intelligence, certain imperfect animals, such as bees and ants, are more eminent). And so Scripture calls fish “creeping things having life” rather

than “living souls.” But it calls terrestrial animals “living souls” because of the perfection of life found in them. It is as if fish were bodies having some aspect of a soul, whereas terrestrial animals, because of the perfection of their life, were souls that dominate their bodies.

However, the most perfect grade of life exists in man. And so Scripture does not say that the life of man is produced from the water or from the earth, as with the rest of the animals. Rather, it says that the life of man is produced by God.

Reply to objection 2: By ‘beasts of burden’ (*iumenta*) or ‘cattle’ (*pecora*) Scripture means domestic animals, which are of service to man in some way or other. On the other hand, by ‘beasts’ it means wild animals such as bears or lions. And by ‘creeping animals’ (*reptilia*) it means either (a) animals that do not have feet by which to be raised from the earth, such as serpents, or (b) animals that have short feet by which they are raised just a little, such as lizards and turtles and others of this sort. However, because there are animals that are not included under any of these classifications, such as deer and goats, it added ‘four-footed animals’ in order to include them as well.

An alternative reply is that Scripture first used ‘four-footed animals’ as a genus, so to speak, and then added other things as something like species. For there are also certain four-footed reptiles, such as lizards and turtles.

Reply to objection 3: In the case of the other animals and plants, the text made mention of genera and species in order to signal the generation of like from like. In the case of man, however, it was unnecessary to say this, since what had already been said about the other animals could also be understood to apply to man.

An alternative reply is that animals and plants are produced “according to their own genera and species” (see Genesis 1:24-25) in the sense that they are far removed from being like God, whereas man is said to be formed to the image and likeness of God.

Reply to objection 4: God’s blessing bestowed the power to multiply through generation. And so given that this blessing was posited in the case of the birds and the fish, which are there first, it was unnecessary to repeat it in the case of the earthly animals; instead, it is taken for granted. However, in the case of men the blessing is repeated because among men there are special reasons for the multiplication, viz., (a) to bring to completion the number of the elect and (b) “lest anyone claim that there is some sin involved in the role of generating children” (*Super Genesim ad Litteram* 3). By contrast, plants “have no desire to propagate offspring, and they generate without any sensations; hence, they are judged unworthy of a verbal blessing” (*ibid.*).

Reply to objection 5: Since the generation of one thing is the corruption of something else, it is not incompatible with the first establishment of things that more noble things should be generated from the corruption of less noble things. Hence, animals that are generated from the corruption of inanimate things or of plants could have been generated at that time. However, animals that are generated from the corruption of animals could not have been produced at that time, except only in potentiality.

Reply to objection 6: As Augustine says in *Super Genesim contra Manichaeos* 1, “If an inexperienced man enters a craftsman’s workshop, he sees there many instruments, the reasons for which he does not know, and if he is really foolish, he thinks that they are superfluous. And if he incautiously falls into the fire or hurts himself with some sharp tool, he comes to believe that there are many harmful things there. But because the craftsman knows what these tools are used for, he laughs at the man’s foolishness. So, too, in this world some dare to find fault with many things, the reasons for which they do not see. For even if many things are not necessary for our own house, they nonetheless bring the universe to completion.”

Moreover, before the sin man had made ordinate use of the things of the world. Hence, the poisonous animals would not have been dangerous to him.