

The Texts of the Convivium

ARE THE MANY COMMANDMENTS AND PROHIBITIONS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD GOALS PER SE OR ARE THEY A MEANS FOR OUR GOOD?

Some religious people have and cultivate and strengthen a vision of laws imposed by God, which human beings must abide by; they are either rewarded or, if they fail to abide by it, punished.

“God wants it” as the saying goes. But why ?

Dantes’ Virgil would reply:

“It is so willed there where is power to do
That which is willed; and farther question not”.

And here the motives remain obscure. It is said that divine power is impenetrable.” However many who insist on its rationality, supreme unparalleled rationality indeed, relate every human action to a fitting purpose”.

Now, assuming that God’s love is aimed at creation, what prevents us from reaching the conclusion that God loves his creation infinitely, just as He is infinite in every one of His actions?

Whoever loves truly cannot limit themselves to contemplating his/her loved one, but truly wants his/her good and fosters it. As far as God is concerned, the fruit of this fostering by the Giver of all life is that the loved one is bound to receive an ever greater fullness of life.

Assuming that God’s work cannot stop halfway, such giving of life by God certainly wants to be complete. And such giving of life shall be complete only when God donates himself so that creation becomes part of God. This is how the deification of human beings and all things is supposed to come about.

“Deification of all things?” Also of material things? But how can you deify a human body? Obviously, if we conceive the human being as soul and body together, we may be led to conclude that the sanctification of the soul entails the sanctification of the body.

The body can be conceived as the extension of the soul; and then one should also consider the environment where the body lives, which the body feeds on, which body and soul together act upon, and on which – to use more accurate terms – the soul knows and acts through the mediation of the body”.

There is a large number of bodies, they may even appear numberless; and they are all part of a common environment, which is their common extension. Through the mediation of the environment they share, each body is strictly linked to all the others. So that by developing and delving into and extending the notion of that common environment, one could speak of a single shared human body.

To the one and only God would thus correspond a similarly one and only creation. The latter would be the object of God’s love, which like all things pertaining to God, cannot but be boundless and infinite.

If true love tends to become giving, and if true giving is self-giving, as far as God’s love is concerned, we cannot but conclude that God, the infinite Being, must tend to

give Himself to His creation in an infinite measure. This means that potentially creation itself is infinitely perfect, because it is bound for such a supreme degree of perfection.

But how can so many imperfections and ills be explained? However, in reply to such an objection one can say that creation has not been completed yet, but it is work in progress.

In other words the phrase “God is creating” should be preferred over “God created”.

God advances in his creation to the extent that He enriches it with His gifts, by completing the totality of these divine donations through self-giving.

In short, one can say that the utmost expression of love is gift, and that self-giving is the perfect gift. God is – par excellence - the One who gives himself fully and totally.

This giving of Himself by God reaches us to the extent that we as creatures are willing to receive Him. Therefore He who gives us everything, besides donating himself to us, makes us fully receptive to Him.

Now, what is the point of the Ten Commandments? They are just advice. Advice on what is best for us to do or what we should avoid, so as to be as receptive as possible.

By denying the absolute nature of these commandments and prohibitions, I tried to clarify their relativity and role.

I hope that this discourse will prove to be valuable or that it can at least open up a more reasonable avenue to answer the question: “Why so many commandments and prohibitions? Do they serve a purpose? And if so, what purpose?”