

gives actual existence to it (this factor is the form in every concrete existent), and another factor which attains this actual existence but which in itself has only the potentiality of existence (and this factor is the matter in the concrete existent).

So if the soul is absolutely simple and is not divisible into matter and form, it will not admit of corruption. But if it is composite, let us leave the composite and consider only the substance which is its matter. We say: either that matter will continue to be divisible and so the same analysis will go on being applied to it and we shall then have a regress *ad infinitum*, which is absurd; or this substance and base will never cease to exist. But if so, then our present discourse is devoted to this factor which is the base and origin (i.e. the substance) and not to the composite thing which is composed of this factor and some other. So it is clear that everything which is simple and not composite, or which is the origin and base (i.e. the substance) of the composite thing, cannot in itself possess both the actuality of persistence and the potentiality of corruption. If it has the potentiality of corruption, it cannot possibly have the actuality of persistence, and if it has the actuality of persistence and existence, it cannot have the potentiality of corruption. Obviously, then, the substance of the soul does not have the potential-

ity of corruption. Of those things which come to be and are corrupted, the corruptible is only the concrete composite. The potentiality of corruption and of persistence at the same time does not belong to something which gives unity to the composite, but to the matter which potentially admits of both contraries. So the corruptible composite as such possesses neither the potentiality of persistence nor that of corruption, let alone both. As to the matter itself, it either has persistence not due to any potentiality, which gives it the capacity for persistence—as some people think—or it has persistence through a potentiality which gives it persistence, but does not have the potentiality of corruption; this latter being something which it acquires. The potentiality of corruption of simple entities which subsist in matter is due to matter and is not in their own substance. The argument which proves that everything which comes to exist passes away on account of the finitude of the potentialities of persistence and corruption is relevant only to those whose being is composed of matter and form. Matter has the potentiality that this form may persist in it, and at the same time the potentiality that this form may cease to exist in it. It is then obvious that the soul is absolutely incorruptible. This is the point which we wanted to make, and this is what we wanted to prove.

## 22. The Cure, "The Soul"

### Fifth Treatise

#### A Verification of the True Account of the Soul

[...] [1] It has become clear from what we have stated<sup>1</sup> that the different actions of the soul are attributable to

different faculties, and that each faculty, as such,<sup>2</sup> is like that only inasmuch as the first action that belongs to it issues from it. So the irascible faculty is not affected by pleasures nor is the appetitive faculty affected by pains. The faculty of perception does not suffer the effects that these two suffer, and nothing about these two, as such,<sup>3</sup> is receptive to the percepti-

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1. "The Soul," I.5.

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2. That is, different from another faculty.

3. That is, different from the perceptible faculty.

ble form and is informed by it.<sup>4</sup> This being an established fact, we say that these faculties must have a nexus that joins them all together and to which they are bound as a group, where the relation of that nexus to these faculties is the same as the relation of the common sense to the individual senses that are [like] nurslings. [There must be such a nexus], for we are certain that these faculties distract one another (as you have learned from what preceded).<sup>5</sup> If there were no such nexus employing these [faculties], such that [the nexus] would be distracted by one of them away from another, thus not employing the latter or managing it, then it would not be the case that one prevents another from its activity in some way nor is diverted from [its own activity]. [This is so] because when one faculty has no connection with another faculty, the activity of the first does not prevent the second from performing its own activity since the instrument is not common [to both], the location is not common, and there is nothing else in common to unite them. Now how can this be when we see that the act of sensing excites desire, but the appetitive faculty is not affected by the sensible object as a sensible object? If it is affected but not inasmuch as [the object] is a sensible object, then the affection cannot be attributable to the desire for that sensible object, so it would have to be [attributable to] what is doing the sensing. The two faculties, however, certainly cannot be a single faculty, and so the two faculties clearly belong to one thing. This is why we correctly say: “When we sense, we desire,” and “When we saw such-and-such, we became angry.”

[2] Now this single thing with respect to which these faculties are joined as a whole is the thing that each of us sees as himself such that he says truly: “When we sense, we desire.” This thing cannot be a body [for the following reasons]. First, it does not necessarily follow from being a body as such that it is a gathering place for these faculties. If that were the case, that would belong to every body rather than to some thing *by means of which* [every body] comes to be such, since that thing is what primarily does the gathering together, that is, it is the perfection of the

body inasmuch as it is a gathering place, and it is something other than the body. So the gathering place, then, is something that is not a body, that is, [it is] the soul.

[3] Second, it has already been made clear that these faculties include what cannot be a corporeal thing residing in a body.<sup>6</sup> So this could raise the following doubt: if it is conceivable for these faculties to belong to a single thing despite the fact that they are not gathered together in it—since some do not inhere in bodies and others do—and, as corollary to their individual distinctions, they cannot have a single description that can be related to one thing, then why is that not the case now when all of them can be related to a body or a corporeal part? We say in response: Because this thing—the one that is not a body—can be a source of the faculties, and so some of them spread out from it to the instrument [i.e., the body], others are proper to itself, but all of them are traced back to it in a particular manner. The ones gathered together in the [bodily] instrument at a particular originating point are gathered in the instrument by that originating point when it spreads out from the thing [i.e., the soul] that is sufficient in itself without the instrument (. . .).<sup>7</sup> All of these faculties, however, cannot spread out from the body, for the relation of these faculties to the body is not by way of spreading out [from it] but by way of [its] receiving [them]. Spreading out can occur as a departure of the flow from the source, but receiving cannot occur in such a manner.

[4] Third, such a body<sup>8</sup> is either (a) the whole body or (b) it is not the whole body. If (a) it is the whole body, then if it lost some part of itself, what we perceive to be us would not exist. It is not like that, however; for I would be myself even if I did not know that I have a hand or a leg or some other bodily member (as was stated earlier in other places).<sup>9</sup> I suppose instead that they are my appendages, and I believe that they are in-

4. See “The Soul,” I.5, pars. 8–9.

5. Ibid., V.3, par. 2.

6. See “The Soul,” V.2.

7. Omitted here is a reference to further treatment of this later in the chapter.

8. That is, the body that is posited as being “the thing that each of us sees as himself,” par. 2.

9. See “The Soul,” I.1, par. 7.

struments of mine that I use to fulfill certain needs. Were it not for those needs, I would have no use for them. I would also be myself when they did not exist. Let us return to what was stated earlier on our part. We say: If a human were created in a single instant such that his limbs were separated from one another and he could not see them, and it happened that he could not feel them and they did not touch one another and he could not hear a single sound, he would not know that any of his organs exist, but he would know that he exists as uniquely a single thing despite not knowing everything else. However, what is unknown is not the same as what is known! These bodily members that we have are really only just like clothes that, because they have always been associated with us, we have come to think of as parts of ourselves. When we imagine our selves, we do not imagine them bare; rather, we imagine [our selves] to have enveloping bodies. The reason for that is the permanent association [of the two]. The fact, however, is that we have become accustomed to stripping off and discarding clothes in a way we are not accustomed to doing with the bodily members, and so our belief that these are parts of us is more firmly entrenched than our belief that our garments are parts of us.

[5] If it is (b) that such a body is not the whole body but rather one specific bodily organ, then that organ would be the thing that I believe to be me—unless what is intended in my believing that it is me is not that organ, even if it must have that organ.<sup>10</sup> If, however, what that organ is, namely, its being a heart, a brain, or some other organ or organs with this description, is identical to it or its totality is identical to the thing that I perceive to be myself, then my perception that I am must be my perception of that thing. But one thing from a single perspective cannot be both what is perceived and other than what is perceived.<sup>11</sup> The situation is not like that anyway; for it is rather by sensing, listening, and experiential knowledge that I know that I have a heart and a brain, not because I know that I am I. Thus, that organ on its own

would not be the thing that I perceive to be me essentially but only me accidentally, whereas the aim in knowing about myself that I am me (that is, the aim that I intend when I say "I sensed, I intellected, I acted, and I, as something different than these descriptions, joined them together") is what I call "I."

[6] Now, if someone said, "You also do not know that [the 'I'] is a soul," I would say that I *always* know it as the thing intended by what I call the "soul." I might not know it by the term "soul," but once I understand what I mean by soul, I understand that it is that thing and that it is what uses [bodily] instruments such as the motive and perceptive faculties. It is only as long as I do not understand the meaning of "soul" that I do not recognize [that]. That is not the case with the heart or the brain; for I may understand what is meant by "heart" and "brain," but I do not know that [they are the "I"]. When I mean by "soul" that it is the thing that is the principle of these motions and perceptions that I have and is what these [motions and perceptions] are traced back to in this whole, I recognize that either it is in actual fact the "I" or it is the "I" as something using this body. Then, it would be as though I now am unable to distinguish the perception of me as distinct from the mixed perception that there is something that uses the body, and that there is something that is joined with the body.

[7] As for whether it is a body or not a body, in my opinion it is by no means necessary that it be a body, nor that it appear to me in imagined form as any body whatsoever. Instead, its imagined form appears to me to be precisely *without* any corporeality. So I will have understood some part of the aspect of its not being a body when I do *not* understand it to have any corporeality at the very same time that I understand [what it is]. Then, when I undertake an independent verification, the more I add corporeality to this thing that is the principle of these acts, the less conceivable it will be for that thing to be a body. How much more fitting it would be for its first representation in my soul to be something that is different from these exterior aspects, and I am then misled by the association with bodily instruments, the sensory observation of those, and the issuance of actions from them, and I believe that [those exterior aspects] are like parts of me. It is not when an error has been made about something that a judgment

10. If it is the latter, then the organ would be just part, albeit an essential one, of what is identified as the self.

11. That is, what would be doing the perceiving.

must pertain to it, but rather when the judgment pertains to what it is that has to be intellected. And it is not when I am investigating whether it exists and whether it is not a body that I am wholly ignorant of [these questions], but rather when I neglect [to consider these questions]. It is often the case that knowledge about something is close at hand but one overlooks it, and it becomes the very thing that is unknown and is investigated at the greatest remove. Sometimes

knowledge that is close at hand is like the reminder, and despite the least amount of effort it was like something overlooked, and so awareness does not turn to pursue it because it weakly understands it, in which case one needs to take a remote position in relation to it. From [all of] this, it has become clear that these faculties have a gathering place to which all of them can be traced back, and that it is not a body, regardless of whether it is or is not joined with the body.