

THE PROOF FROM MOVEMENT – PART II

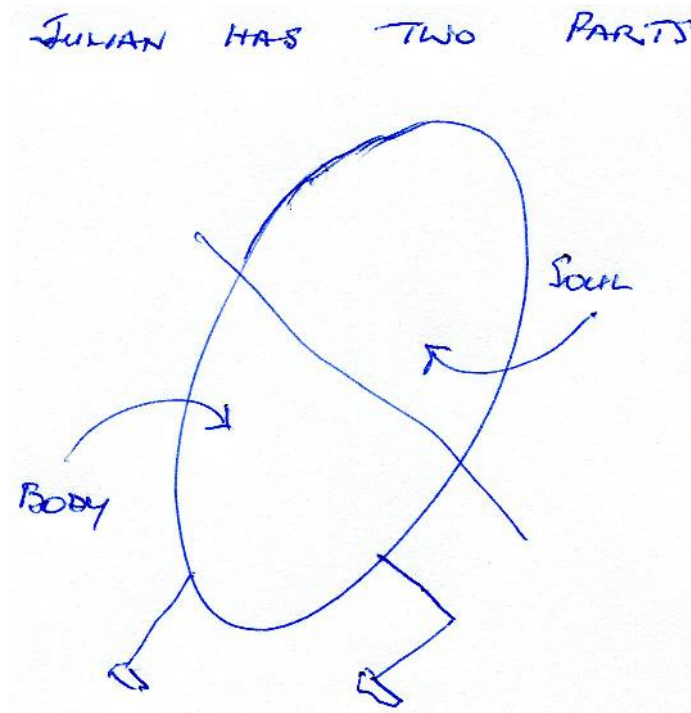
The first principle in relation to the proof from movement is this, *Everything that moves is moved by another, or Nothing moves itself.*

There is something of a difficulty presented by the movement of living things, that is, things that move themselves. Let's take the case of Julian passing from Tarlo to Goulburn, that is, from *can-be-in-Goulburn* to *does-be-in-Goulburn*. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that his mother is not available and he is unable to drive the car. He decides to walk to Goulburn. Which is the *mobile* and which is the *movent*? Isn't it Julian in each case?

<u>Movent</u>		<u>Mobile</u>
Julian		Julian

But this contradicts the need for real distinction between movent and mobile. How do we solve the dilemma? By looking for a distinction.

A living thing, like Julian, is a compound. He is comprised of two parts—not two *material* parts, but two parts nonetheless—his body (which is material) and his soul (the principle of his ability to operate as a living thing) which is immaterial.



By one part he is able to move the other. So the division, on the score of movement, is as follows.

<u>Movent</u>		<u>Mobile</u>
Julian's soul		Julian's body

And since, where Julian's body is, there his soul is too, when he moves his body by virtue of his soul, he moves his soul along with it. Needless to say, he must use the facilities with which Divine Providence has, through nature, thoughtfully equipped him, *legs*, in order to get there !

Whatever is in a state of potency under some respect (such as *can-be-in-Goulburn*) can only be brought to act (*does-be-in-Goulburn*) by that which is in act. But Julian's soul is not in Goulburn in act, so how can he bring his body there ? True, his soul is not in Goulburn in its faculty as Julian's principle of operation, but there is a manner in which Julian's soul *is* already in Goulburn. He knows Goulburn in its formality ; he remembers it from previous experience, and his knowledge and the appetite that follows on his power of knowing, his will, is sufficient for, through knowledge as Aristotle said, the soul becomes all things. If his body did not inhibit him Julian could, like an angel moving faster than the speed of light, be in Goulburn as quickly as he conceived it. The Angel Gabriel, unhampered by a body, needed only to will 'Nazareth' in order to arrive there to visit the Blessed Virgin at the moment of the Annunciation.

The American science fiction television series of the 1960s, *Star Trek*, featured an imaginary device on 'the Star Ship USS Enterprise', dubbed a 'teleporter', that could transport people by disassembling their bodies at one point and re-assembling them at another. The order of the principal, Captain Kirk, to achieve this was *Beam me up, Scotty !* an expression which has become a catchphrase of popular culture. Of course, bodies don't admit of such processes, but the thought behind it is sound, that it is the body which impedes our rapid movement from place to place.



While on the topic, we should note that this imaginary device is grounded in the lambent materialism which afflicts our age. It assumes that the body is a collection of material parts accidentally assembled, and that their dis-assembly (in one place) could be reversed by a process of re-assembly (in another). But the immensely sophisticated organisation of the human body is not simply the result of a fortunate collection of accidents. The human body is such by virtue of its *form*, that is, by virtue of its soul which is *eo ipso immaterial*. Destroy the body, by dis-assembly, and you kill it. The soul, the

principle that unifies it, departs for once the body is destroyed there is nothing for it to animate.

But back to our topic. What about living things ? The principle that we are insisting on is, *Everything that moves is moved by another ; or Nothing moves itself*. There is a difficulty here. A thing, like Julian, that is moved by an interior principle (the soul), and not by something exterior, seems not to be moved by another. Isn't it Julian that is doing the moving ?

We note, however, there are times when Julian is incapable of moving himself, such as when he is asleep, or when he is sick, or is afflicted with some disability. Then again, he can only move himself within the limitations imposed by his nature—something which he does not give himself but which is given him. Moreover, as Aristotle notes, living things move themselves only as regards local motion, i.e., movement as regards the accident *where*. They do not move themselves as regards *quantity* or *quality*.

“[T]hey seem to be without motion and then again to move. It is, therefore, important to note that this is only true of one order of their movements, and not strictly true even of that. For such motion in animals is not self-determined but is due to other natural changes which occur in them not by their own agency : growth, decay and breathing, for instance, go on naturally when they are at rest and not making movements they themselves determine...” (*Physics* VIII, vi, 259b)

Moreover, Julian did not always exist, nor will he live forever, at least here on this earth. He did not bring himself into existence. He does not keep himself in existence. He is determined by his nature (as man). He is dependent, and he is contingent. It is clear, then, that he relies on another influence than himself for his movements. Even as he clicks his fingers, this other influence must be cooperating with him, moving him, to enable him to do so.

Living things are divided, let's recall, into those that move themselves—

as to the end, form and execution of their acts—*men*

as to the form and execution of their acts—*brute animals*

as to the execution of their acts only—*plants*.

In each case they are moved to move themselves in accordance with the demands of their nature.

In our next lesson we will consider the second principle necessary to prove the existence of God from movement.
