

# ***Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Virtues: Selection of Texts and Commentary***

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## **The Theological Virtues: Faith**

### **Introduction**

*In this section you will learn how Thomas understands the virtue of faith, the first of the theological virtues and our assent to faith: what we believe, and how we come to believe. The virtue of faith is of obvious significance for the life of every Christian; but it is also of particular significance for Christian theology and how it is based on subscribing to the articles of faith.*

Thomas treats of the theological virtue of faith at the beginning of the second part of the second part of the *Summa Theologiae* (ST II-II, q. 1-16). His discussion of faith as such—as distinct from the consequences and gifts of the Holy Spirit associated with faith—is in turn subdivided into a number of topics, the main ones of which are:

- Q. 1: the object of faith: so here he deals with *what* we believe: truth (ultimately God) as explicated in the articles of faith (i.e., the Creed) as the object of faith;
- Q. 2-3 are concerned with the *act of believing*.
- Q. 4 considers the *virtue* of faith, or the disposition that the faithful have, while q. 5 looks at those who have, or do not have, the virtue of faith.
- Q. 6 examines the cause of faith, i.e., God (who infuses faith into us).

Further articles deal with the effects of faith (q.7); the two gifts of the Holy Spirit associated with faith, namely understanding (q. 8) and science or knowledge (q. 9), disbelief, heresy, apostasy, blasphemy, and blindness of mind (qq 10-15).

It is important to see the differences and the connections between those questions. For instance, issues concerning the contents of faith are subtly different from, and partly overlap with, those that deal with the act of believing, or the virtue of faith.

I will commence this discussion by looking at the virtue of faith first, which Thomas deals with in q. 4. This is probably the most common understanding of faith today—as a virtue which some of us have. ('Is she a person of faith?')

### **The virtue of faith**

In ST II-II, q. 4, a. 1 Thomas defines faith as “a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is non-apparent” (*fides est habitus mentis, qua inchoatur vita aeterna in nobis, faciens intellectum assentire non apparentibus*). This

comes at the end of a long discussion in which he is trying to make sense of the characterisation of faith he finds in the Letter to the Hebrews, where it says that faith is ‘the substance (*substantia*) of things to be hoped for, the evidence (*argumentum*) of things that appear not’. Thomas interprets ‘substance’ to refer to the beginning of any reality, when all that follows is contained virtually in its beginning: the kernel, core or essence. Interestingly, Thomas is aware that the word *argumentum* can be interpreted in an objective manner, as evidence that brings about the mind’s adherence to the truth, or more subjectively as ‘conviction’ (*convictio*).

Thomas writes that the virtue of faith is “a habit of the mind.” Thomas sees faith as a theological virtue. A virtue is a *habitus*, a disposition. The best way to grasp this Aristotelian concept is to think of the English phrase “something is second nature” to somebody (rather than translate it as a mere ‘habit’). Dispositions (*habitus*) have durability and dispose us towards good or bad acts. In the first case we talk of virtues: they are habits which render human acts good (see *ST II–II*, q. 4, a. 5); in the latter case we speak of vices. Thomas differs from Aristotle in that he claims that some of these dispositions (*habitus*) can be divinely produced, rather than being simply generated by society, upbringing and our own practices (*ST I–II*, q.51, a. 4). In that case they are infused by God. Thomas further distinguishes between intellectual virtues (wisdom, *scientia*, art), moral virtues (such as temperance or fortitude) and theological virtues (faith, hope and love). The latter are the ones infused by God, who is their object or goal. Faith, then, is a theological virtue because it has God as its final end (*ST II–II*, q. 4, a.7), and it does so, Thomas adds, under the aspect of Truth. This explains why faith resides in the intellect or mind, unlike the theological virtue of love, which resides in the will (God as the object of our love). This illustrates that Thomas is generally inclined to give primacy to intellect over will.

Faith is an inchoate participation in God, which can grow and fructify every aspect of our life, assisting us “on our journey towards the enjoyment of God” (*ST II–II*, q. 1, a.1)—which is why Thomas writes that through it “eternal life is begun in us.” Faith orients us to God and is a foretaste of heaven in which it will be fulfilled. The main object of faith (discussed in q. 1) is the First Truth, or God, and given the fact that this object is unseen in this life, faith relates to things that are not apparent.<sup>1</sup> Thomas understands the act of faith (discussed in q. 2) as “the firm adhesion of the intellect” of the believer to non-apparent truths. In the afterlife faith will cease as we will enjoy the beatific vision of God.

I will return to the issue of ‘the intellect assenting to what is not apparent’ when discussing the assent of faith.

### **The object of faith**

Let’s now turn to the first question – on the object of faith (*De fidei objecto*). In the first article Thomas distinguishes between the *material* object of faith—what we believe,

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<sup>1</sup> As will be explained, faith is oriented toward God, the First Truth, and God is the formal and material object of faith. The “formal” object refers to the authority of the One who makes us believe. We believe because *God* vouches for revelation (*ST II–II*, q.1, a.1). The “material” object of faith refers to the *contents* of our faith. This includes, first and foremost, God, as well as other things that relate to God and the salvation he works for us.

namely, God's truth and other truths related to God, i.e., the contents of faith—and the *formal* objective of faith, namely 'that by which the material object is known' (*id per quod cognoscitur, quod est formalis ratio objecti*). The formal objective is the overriding principle or concern of a discipline. In medicine, for instance, it is health (which finds expression in patientcare in multifarious ways, which are its 'object'). In geometry, the formal objective is demonstration. For our purposes it is essential to note that both the material object of faith and its formal objective, is God:

In faith, the formal aspect of the object[ive] (...) is nothing else than the First Truth. (...) If, however, we consider materially the things to which faith assents, they include not only God, but also many other things, which, nevertheless, do not come under the assent of faith, except as bearing some relation to God.<sup>2</sup>

The formal objective of faith is the medium for assenting to the material object: *credere Deo*—to give credence to God's authority—is the basis for *credere Deum*, to believe in God (and things related to God) as the material object of faith.<sup>3</sup> In plain English: it is through God that we come to know God. Commenting on Paul's passage from 2 Cor. 3:18 ('We all behold the glory of the Lord and are transformed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord') Thomas writes:

For since all knowledge involves the knower's being assimilated to the thing known (*per assimilationem cognoscentis ad cognitum*), it is necessary that those who see be in some way transformed into God (*transformentur in Deum*). If they see perfectly, they are perfectly reformed, as the blessed in heaven by the union of enjoyment: when he appears we shall be like him (1 John 3:2); but if we see imperfectly, then we are transformed imperfectly, as here by faith: now we see in a mirror dimly (1 Cor. 13:12).<sup>4</sup>

According to Thomas's realist intellectualism, we attain truth in general through an assimilation or convergence of mind and world. The world, shaped or in-formed as it is by forms, is inherently intelligible. In order to know, the mind abstracts these forms and absorbs them, so to speak. This is how knowledge of our world occurs naturally. In accordance with his key axiom that 'grace perfects nature' a similar assimilation takes place in faith. It prepares the mind for a convergence or assimilation to the divine truth that will come to fruition in the afterlife, as the reference to the blessed suggests. [Indeed, the beatific vision involves an even more radical transformation, whereby the intellect is strengthened by the light of glory<sup>5</sup> which renders us deiform.<sup>6</sup>] Faith prepares us for, and inchoatively actualises, this deiform assimilation that will come to fruition in heaven. As the

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<sup>2</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 1 (in this instance I borrow from the Blackfriars' edition).

<sup>3</sup> See *III Sent.* d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, qc. 2 and *ST II-II*, q. 2, a. 2. I am inclined to translate *credere in Deum* as 'to have faith in God.' This refers to the act of faith (as distinct from the object of faith) elicited by charity, creating a movement toward God. In *III Sent.* d. 23 Thomas explains *credere Deo* in terms of giving credence to God because God has spoken 'the way someone believes the testimony of a good person who sees what he himself does not see' (*sicut homo in his quae non videt, credit testimonio alicujus boni viri qui videt ea quae ipse non videt*). See also *On Romans* 4:3, no. 327.

<sup>4</sup> *Commentary on the Second Epistle to Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 3:12-18 (no. 114)

<sup>5</sup> *ST I*, q. 12, a. 2

<sup>6</sup> *ST I*, q. 12, a. 5

light of glory transforms our intellect in the afterlife, the light of faith on earth inaugurates this transformation of the intellect here and now.

Thomas discusses a range of other issues when treating of the object of faith. In *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 2 he raises the question whether faith is something complex by way of proposition. He argues that the object of faith is inherently simply – namely God – but we come to know God’s simplicity in a complex manner, through propositions. Article four asks whether the object of faith can be something seen. According to Thomas, the object of faith is unseen, and therefore we cannot have certain knowledge of it. Articles 4 and 5 combined offer some intriguing insights: faith and science (understood here as certain knowledge from derived from insight and/or demonstrative reasoning) are mutually exclusive. Thomas alludes to Hugh of Saint Victor’s view that ‘faith is between science and opinion’: it is not science, because ‘the object of science is something seen, whereas the object of faith is something unseen’ (*ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 5, ad 4). But it is also more than mere opinion, because, as we will see, in the assent of faith the mind assents firmly – with an inner certainty that resembles the certainty of secure knowledge (unlike opinion, where we waver). (I will return to this below). Articles 4 and 5 involve other interesting issues: How can theology be a proper science, based as it is upon faith in revelation (as argued in the very first question of the *Summa Theologiae*), if faith and science mutually exclude each other? (This was an objection that Duns Scotus raised against Thomas’s view).<sup>7</sup> Thomas considers the issue very briefly in *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2. This reply also nicely explicates how Thomas sees the role of philosophical arguments in theological discourse. He will return to this topic in *ST II-II*, q. 2, a. 3 (see also ad 2 of the same article).

I also would like to draw your attention to reply no. 3 in question 1, a. 4. The objection claims that faith is a spiritual light, making us see things. This counters a key insight in Thomas’s main response, namely that the object of faith cannot be seen by us in this life. Thomas tersely replies that faith does not make us see as such, but ‘the light of faith makes us see what we believe.’ So, Thomas is happy to say that faith relates to something we cannot see – the invisible God – and yet, as he writes later (*ST II-II*, q. 2, a. 3 ad 3) ‘in many respects faith perceives the invisible things of God in a higher way than natural reason does in proceeding to God from his creatures.’

In *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 6-8 (not included in the readings), Thomas deals with the articles of faith: they summarise the core of what we believe. In article 7 Thomas makes the interesting remark that ‘the articles of faith stand in the same relation to the doctrine of faith as self-evident principles to a teaching based on natural reason.’ This should be read in conjunction with *ST I*, q. 1 on the nature of *sacra doctrina*, of course, and its reliance on revelation: the articles of faith are the foundational principles for theology as a science. Without faith in them, the theological enterprise simply does not get off the ground.

### **The act of believing**

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<sup>7</sup> In my book *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* (Oxford University Press, 2021), ch. 5, especially p. 122-23 I have argued that there is a way around this objection, albeit by acknowledging a subjective element into Thomas’s notion of theological *scientia*.

Although Thomas sees faith as residing in the intellect (as distinct from the will) this is not to say that the will has no role to play in our act of faith. The act of believing takes place by the command of the will, which, in turn, responds to the stirring of divine grace. You cannot decide for yourself that you will become a believer: it is the result of the operation of God's grace on the will, which stirs the intellect to give its assent. Thomas puts it in his characteristically crisp manner as follows: "the act of believing is an act of the intellect assenting to divine Truth at the command of the will moved by the grace of God" (*ST II-II*, q.2, a.9).<sup>8</sup>

Thomas often draws an illuminating analogy with teaching to indicate how assenting to faith involves an assimilation that will come to fruition in the beatific vision:

Our ultimate happiness consists in a supernatural vision of God: to which vision we cannot attain unless we be taught by God (...) Now we acquire a share in this learning, not indeed all at once, but little by little, according to the mode of our nature: and everyone who learns thus must needs believe, in order that he may acquire science in a perfect degree; thus also the Philosopher remarks (*De Soph. Elench.* I. 2) that 'it behoves a learner to believe.' Hence, in order that one may arrive at the perfect vision of heavenly happiness, one must first of all believe God (*credat Deo*), as a disciple believes the master who is teaching him.<sup>9</sup>

*Crederet Deo* hints at the notion that God is the formal objective of faith, as explained earlier. In order to learn anything whatsoever we first need to acknowledge the authority of the teacher; only then can we meaningfully engage with the teachings. In *Summa contra Gentiles* III, 152 [no. 4] Thomas puts it as follows: 'When a person is being taught by a teacher, he must at the start accept the teacher's conceptions, not as one who understands them by himself, but by way of belief, as things which are beyond his capacity; but at the end, when he has become learned, he can understand them.' Similarly, the theologian submits in faith to mysteries she does not understand yet but which she will come to know in the afterlife. As the analogy with teaching suggests, this involves a gradual process of assimilation or convergence with divine truth, and not an extraneous imposition. Teaching, for Thomas, is never the imposition of extraneous knowledge. Rather, learning only takes place when the teacher leads her pupil to knowledge of things he does not know by re-traversing her own initial process of learning. By inviting him to revisit the process of learning that she herself pursued, the teacher can instil genuine learning in the student.<sup>10</sup> When applied to the issue at hand, it illustrates that assenting to faith, like the learning process, is not something extraneous but actually hints at a participation in the knowing of the teacher.

In light of this we come to appreciate fully Thomas's claim in *ST I*, q. 1, a. 1 that we need 'another schooling/teaching in what God has revealed (*doctrinam quamdam secundum revelationem divinam*), in addition to the philosophical researches (*disciplinas*) pursued by human reasoning'<sup>11</sup> *Doctrina* is derived from *docere*, meaning 'to teach' or 'instruct'. *Sacra*

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<sup>8</sup> See Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 106–113.

<sup>9</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 2. a. 3 ad 2

<sup>10</sup> *De Ver.* q. 11, a. 1

<sup>11</sup> In this instance I am using Thomas Gilby's translation from the Blackfriars Edition.

*doctrina* is a participation in holy learning or teaching that assists us in becoming assimilated to its truths through a growth in likeness to, and an assent to the authority of, the teacher without whom no teaching can originate. We believe in God (*credere Deum*) because we are inclined to believe him with whom we have entered (in varying degrees) into a relationship (*credere Deo*).<sup>12</sup> Belief in God as the formal objective contributes to, rather than reduces, the rationality of contemplating the truths of *sacra doctrina*.

Because we do not attain the full knowledge of God in faith, our ultimate fulfilment or felicity cannot lie in faith. As a matter of fact, Thomas argues that the knowledge of faith does not bring rest to desire but rather sets it aflame, since all of us desire to see what we believe (Cf. *ScG* III.40.5). Echoing Hugh of Saint Victor, Thomas writes that the act of believing is not the same as scientific knowledge (cf. *De Ver.* 14.2); nor is it the same as opinion (you are inclined to go with one view but you cannot rule out that the other view might be the correct one), or doubt (where you waver between two contradictory propositions). In short: faith is between opinion and science. Because the act of believing does not attain the perfection of perfect sight (such as in science), it shares some elements with doubt and opinion. The latter dimension (faith is not sight) explains the restlessness of faith (cf. *De Ver.* 14.1 *ad* 5). On the other hand, given the fact that believing implies firmly clinging to one side, it has something in common with certain knowledge or *scientia* (*ST* II–II q. 2, a. 1).<sup>13</sup>

In the readings I also included some texts regarding the merit of believing, which Thomas discusses in *ST* II–II, q. 2, a. 9 and 10. Thomas revisits the issue of faith situated between science and opinion, as well as the question of the relation between demonstrative, philosophical arguments and our will to believe. In *ST* II–II, q. 2, a. 10 Thomas explicitly addresses the question whether reasons in support of what we believe lessen the merit of faith. He first draws a distinction between reasons that may precede the act of faith, and those that are subsequent to it. If human reasoning is subsequent to the believer’s assent it deepens faith and is a source of merit: ‘when our will is ready to believe, we love the truth we believe, we think out and take to heart whatever reasons we can find in support thereof; and in this way human reason does not exclude the merit of faith but is a sign of greater merit.’ (In few places Thomas has given such a beautiful description of faith seeking understanding.) Engaging in rational arguments in order to conduce us to believe, however, he unequivocally rejects: ‘We ought to believe matters of faith, not on account of human reason, but on account of the divine authority.’<sup>14</sup>

My final selection concerns the **gifts of the Holy Spirit** that are associated with faith, namely understanding and knowledge. They allow us to penetrate deeper, in a non-discursive manner, in the mysteries of faith. These questions should be read in conjunction with *ST* I–II, q. 68.

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<sup>12</sup> We enter in a relationship with God in varying degrees: from a ‘dead faith’ to faith informed and enlivened by charity – cf. *ST* II–II, q. 4, a. 4.

<sup>13</sup> In claiming that our desire for ultimate fulfilment (felicity) will only come to rest when it meets God face to face, i.e., in the afterlife, Thomas radically transforms the Aristotelian legacy (who does not mention the significance of the afterlife in the attainment of happiness).

<sup>14</sup> *ST* II–II, q. 2, a. 10

## In conclusion

Avery Dulles has helpfully identified a number of the different models of faith and it may be useful, by way of summarizing this section, to examine how Thomas' definition of faith fits in. A first model is the propositional model, where faith is equated with a set of beliefs. A second model can be called a hermeneutical one, in which faith is seen as a perspective on the world. It is not (just) a set of beliefs but rather it offers us a different perspective on the world. The fiducial model understands faith mainly in terms of obedience and surrender – a view which is stressed in Reformation circles but one which Thomas would associate more with hope. Dulles goes on to discuss an affective-experiential model (which puts a distinct emphasis upon the experience of the Holy Spirit in us), a praxis model (which is concerned with the positive impact of faith on tackling socio-economic injustices) and a personalist model (which understands faith in terms of a special relationship with a personal God who communicates himself in love).<sup>15</sup> Our exposition of Thomas' understanding of faith allows us to show how he combines several models. For starters, Thomas adopts the *propositional* model. After all, the essence of the things we hope for are contained in the articles of faith (*Comm. on Heb* no. 557). Thomas' emphasis upon faith as a virtue or disposition, which resides in the intellect, allows us to link his analysis with the *hermeneutical* model. For Thomas faith is a way of relating to the world (it is, after all, a *habitus*, a disposition). It allows you to see things that mere reason, or a positivistic approach, cannot see (cf. *ST II-II*, q. 2, a. 3 *ad* 3). There is an element of the *fiducial* model in Thomas' approach, in so far as he emphasizes that it is the will, in response to the stirrings of God's grace, which makes the intellect assent (cf. *ST II-II*, q. 2, a. 9). The *affective-experiential* model is also accommodated in that Thomas sees faith as the beginning of eternal life here and now. Faith purifies the heart (*ST II-II*, q. 7, a.2). It cannot be reduced to extrinsic agreement with a set of propositions. In relation to the *praxis* approach, Thomas would certainly agree that faith must find expression in charitable works. He would, however, discuss these under the heading of charity rather than faith. For the *personalist* approach, we need to consider his views on charity as well.

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## Primary texts on faith

### The object of faith

#### *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 1. Whether the object of faith is the First Truth?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that the object of faith is not the First Truth. For it seems that the object of faith is that which is proposed to us to be believed. Now not only things pertaining to the Godhead, i.e. the First Truth, are proposed to us to be believed, but also

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<sup>15</sup>Avery Dulles, *The Assurance of Things Hoped For. A Theology of Christian Faith* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 170–84.

things concerning Christ's human nature, and the sacraments of the Church, and the condition of creatures. Therefore the object of faith is not only the First Truth.

**On the contrary,** Dionysius says (Div. Nom. vii) that "faith is about the simple and everlasting truth." Now this is the First Truth. Therefore the object of faith is the First Truth.

**I answer that,** The object of every cognitive habit includes two things: first, that which is known materially, and is the material object, so to speak, and, secondly, that whereby it is known, which is the formal aspect of the object. Thus in the science of geometry, the conclusions are what is known materially, while the formal aspect of the science is the mean of demonstration, through which the conclusions are known.

Accordingly if we consider, in faith, the formal aspect of the object, it is nothing else than the First Truth. For the faith of which we are speaking, does not assent to anything, except because it is revealed by God. Hence the mean on which faith is based is the Divine Truth. If, however, we consider materially the things to which faith assents, they include not only God, but also many other things, which, nevertheless, do not come under the assent of faith, except as bearing some relation to God, in as much as, to wit, through certain effects of the Divine operation, man is helped on his journey towards the enjoyment of God. Consequently from this point of view also the object of faith is, in a way, the First Truth, in as much as nothing comes under faith except in relation to God, even as the object of the medical art is health, for it considers nothing save in relation to health.

### **ST II-II, q. 1, a. 2. Whether the object of faith is something complex, by way of a proposition?**

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that the object of faith is not something complex by way of a proposition. For the object of faith is the First Truth, as stated above (Article 1). Now the First Truth is something simple. Therefore the object of faith is not something complex.

**Objection 2.** Further, the exposition of faith is contained in the symbol. Now the symbol does not contain propositions, but things: for it is not stated therein that God is almighty, but: "I believe in God . . . almighty." Therefore the object of faith is not a proposition but a thing.

**Objection 3.** Further, faith is succeeded by vision, according to 1 Corinthians 13:12: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known." But the object of the heavenly vision is something simple, for it is the Divine Essence. Therefore the faith of the wayfarer is also.

**On the contrary,** Faith is a mean between science and opinion. Now the mean is in the same genus as the extremes. Since, then, science and opinion are about propositions, it seems that faith is likewise about propositions; so that its object is something complex.

**I answer that,** The thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Now the mode proper to the human intellect is to know the truth by synthesis and analysis, as stated in I:85:5. Hence things that are simple in themselves, are known by the intellect with



a certain amount of complexity, just as on the other hand, the Divine intellect knows, without any complexity, things that are complex in themselves.

Accordingly the object of faith may be considered in two ways. First, as regards the thing itself which is believed, and thus the object of faith is something simple, namely the thing itself about which we have faith. Secondly, on the part of the believer, and in this respect the object of faith is something complex by way of a proposition.

Hence in the past both opinions have been held with a certain amount of truth.

**Reply to Objection 1.** This argument considers the object of faith on the part of the thing believed.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The symbol mentions the things about which faith is, in so far as the act of the believer is terminated in them, as is evident from the manner of speaking about them. Now the act of the believer does not terminate in a proposition, but in a thing (*non terminatur ad enuntiabile sed ad rem*). For as in science we do not form propositions, except in order to have knowledge about things through their means, so is it in faith.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The object of the heavenly vision will be the First Truth seen in itself, according to 1 John 3:2: "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is": hence that vision will not be by way of a proposition but by way of a simple understanding. On the other hand, by faith, we do not apprehend the First Truth as it is in itself. Hence the comparison fails.

#### **ST II-II, q. 1, a. 4. Whether the object of faith can be something seen?**

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that the object of faith is something seen. For Our Lord said to Thomas (John 20:29): "Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed." Therefore vision and faith regard the same object.

**Objection 2.** Further, the Apostle, while speaking of the knowledge of faith, says (1 Corinthians 13:12): "We see now through a glass in a dark manner." Therefore what is believed is seen.

**Objection 3.** Further, faith is a spiritual light. Now something is seen under every light. Therefore faith is of things seen.

**Objection 4.** Further, "Every sense is a kind of sight," as Augustine states (De Verb. Domini, Serm. xxxiii). But faith is of things heard, according to Romans 10:17: "Faith . . . cometh by hearing." Therefore faith is of things seen.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says (Hebrews 11:1) that "faith is the evidence of things that appear not."

**I answer that,** Faith implies assent of the intellect to that which is believed. Now the intellect assents to a thing in two ways. First, through being moved to assent by its very object, which is known either by itself (as in the case of first principles, which are held by

the habit of understanding), or through something else already known (as in the case of conclusions which are held by the habit of science). Secondly the intellect assents to something, not through being sufficiently moved to this assent by its proper object, but through an act of choice, whereby it turns voluntarily to one side rather than to the other: and if this be accompanied by doubt or fear of the opposite side, there will be opinion, while, if there be certainty and no fear of the other side, there will be faith.

Now those things are said to be seen which, of themselves, move the intellect or the senses to knowledge of them. Wherefore it is evident that neither faith nor opinion can be of things seen either by the senses or by the intellect.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Thomas "saw one thing, and believed another" [St. Gregory: Hom. xxvi in Evang.]: he saw the Man, and believing Him to be God, he made profession of his faith, saying: "My Lord and my God."

**Reply to Objection 2.** Those things which come under faith can be considered in two ways. First, in particular; and thus they cannot be seen and believed at the same time, as shown above. Secondly, in general, that is, under the common aspect of credibility; and in this way they are seen by the believer. For he would not believe unless, on the evidence of signs, or of something similar, he saw that they ought to be believed.

#### **Article 5. Whether those things that are of faith can be an object of science?**

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that those things that are of faith can be an object of science. For where science is lacking there is ignorance, since ignorance is the opposite of science. Now we are not in ignorance of those things we have to believe, since ignorance of such things savors of unbelief, according to 1 Timothy 1:13: "I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Therefore things that are of faith can be an object of science.

**Objection 2.** Further, science is acquired by reasons. Now sacred writers employ reasons to inculcate things that are of faith. Therefore such things can be an object of science.

**Objection 3.** Further, things which are demonstrated are an object of science, since a "demonstration is a syllogism that produces science." Now certain matters of faith have been demonstrated by the philosophers, such as the Existence and Unity of God, and so forth. Therefore things that are of faith can be an object of science.

**Objection 4.** Further, opinion is further from science than faith is, since faith is said to stand between opinion and science. Now opinion and science can, in a way, be about the same object, as stated in Poster. i. Therefore faith and science can be about the same object also.

**On the contrary,** Gregory says (Hom. xxvi in Evang.) that "when a thing is manifest, it is the object, not of faith, but of perception." Therefore things that are of faith are not the object of perception, whereas what is an object of science is the object of perception. Therefore there can be no faith about things which are an object of science.

**I answer that,** All science is derived from self-evident and therefore "seen" principles; wherefore all objects of science must needs be, in a fashion, seen.

Now as stated above (Article 4), it is impossible that one and the same thing should be believed and seen by the same person. Hence it is equally impossible for one and the same thing to be an object of science and of belief for the same person. It may happen, however, that a thing which is an object of vision or science for one, is believed by another: since we hope to see some day what we now believe about the Trinity, according to 1 Corinthians 13:12: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face": which vision the angels possess already; so that what we believe, they see. On like manner it may happen that what is an object of vision or scientific knowledge for one man, even in the state of a wayfarer, is, for another man, an object of faith, because he does not know it by demonstration.

Nevertheless that which is proposed to be believed equally by all, is equally unknown by all as an object of science: such are the things which are of faith simply. Consequently faith and science are not about the same things.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Unbelievers are in ignorance of things that are of faith, for neither do they see or know them in themselves, nor do they know them to be credible. The faithful, on the other hand, know them, not as by demonstration, but by the light of faith which makes them see that they ought to believe them, as stated above (Article 4, Replies to 2 and 3).

**Reply to Objection 2.** The reasons employed by holy men to prove things that are of faith, are not demonstrations; they are either persuasive arguments showing that what is proposed to our faith is not impossible, or else they are proofs drawn from the principles of faith, i.e. from the authority of Holy Writ, as Dionysius declares (Div. Nom. ii). Whatever is based on these principles is as well proved in the eyes of the faithful, as a conclusion drawn from self-evident principles is in the eyes of all. Hence again, theology is a science, as we stated at the outset of this work (I:1:2).

**Reply to Objection 3.** Things which can be proved by demonstration are reckoned among the articles of faith, not because they are believed simply by all, but because they are a necessary presupposition to matters of faith, so that those who do not know them by demonstration must know them first of all by faith.

**Reply to Objection 4.** As the Philosopher says (Poster. i), "science and opinion about the same object can certainly be in different men," as we have stated above about science and faith; yet it is possible for one and the same man to have science and faith about the same thing relatively, i.e. in relation to the object, but not in the same respect. For it is possible for the same person, about one and the same object, to know one thing and to think another: and, in like manner, one may know by demonstration the unity of the Godhead, and, by faith, the Trinity. On the other hand, in one and the same man, about the same object, and in the same respect, science is incompatible with either opinion or faith, yet for different reasons. Because science is incompatible with opinion about the same object simply, for the reason that science demands that its object should be deemed impossible to be otherwise, whereas it is essential to opinion, that its object should be deemed possible to be otherwise. Yet that which is the object of faith, on account of the certainty of faith, is also deemed impossible to be otherwise; and the reason why science and faith cannot be about the same object and in the same respect is because the

object of science is something seen whereas the object of faith is the unseen, as stated above.

### **The act of believing**

#### **ST II-II, q. 2, a. 1. Whether to believe is 'to think with assent'?**

*On the contrary,* This is how "to believe" is defined by Augustine (De Praedest. Sanct. ii).

*I answer that, (...)* For among the acts belonging to the intellect, some have a firm assent without any such kind of thinking, as when a man considers the things that he knows by science, or understands, for this consideration is already formed. But some acts of the intellect have unformed thought devoid of a firm assent, whether they incline to neither side, as in one who "doubts"; or incline to one side rather than the other, but on account of some slight motive, as in one who "suspects"; or incline to one side yet with fear of the other, as in one who "opines." But this act "to believe," cleaves firmly to one side, in which respect belief has something in common with science and understanding; yet its knowledge does not attain the perfection of clear sight, wherein it agrees with doubt, suspicion and opinion. Hence it is proper to the believer to think with assent: so that the act of believing is distinguished from all the other acts of the intellect, which are about the true or the false.

#### **Article 3. Whether it is necessary for salvation to believe anything above the natural reason?**

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Response: (...) the perfection of the rational creature consists not only in what belongs to it in respect of its nature, but also in that which it acquires through a supernatural participation of Divine goodness. Hence it was said above (I-II:3:8) that man's ultimate happiness consists in a supernatural vision of God: to which vision man cannot attain unless he be taught by God, according to John 6:45: "Every one that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me." Now man acquires a share of this learning, not indeed all at once, but by little and little, according to the mode of his nature: and every one who learns thus must needs believe, in order that he may acquire science in a perfect degree; thus also the Philosopher remarks (De Soph. Elench. i, 2) that "it behooves a learner to believe."

Hence in order that a man arrive at the perfect vision of heavenly happiness, he must first of all believe God, as a disciple believes the master who is teaching him.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Since man's nature is dependent on a higher nature, natural knowledge does not suffice for its perfection, and some supernatural knowledge is necessary, as stated above.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Just as man assents to first principles, by the natural light of his intellect, so does a virtuous man, by the habit of virtue, judge aright of things concerning that virtue; and in this way, by the light of faith which God bestows on him, a man assents to matters of faith and not to those which are against faith. Consequently "there is no"

danger or "condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," and whom He has enlightened by faith.

**Reply to Objection 3.** In many respects faith perceives the invisible things of God in a higher way than natural reason does in proceeding to God from His creatures. Hence it is written (Sirach 3:25): "Many things are shown to thee above the understandings of man."

### **ST II-II, q. 2, a. 9. Whether to believe is meritorious?**

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that to believe is not meritorious. For the principle of all merit is charity, as stated above (I-II:114:4). Now faith, like nature, is a preamble to charity. Therefore, just as an act of nature is not meritorious, since we do not merit by our natural gifts, so neither is an act of faith.

**Objection 2.** Further, belief is a mean between opinion and scientific knowledge or the consideration of things scientifically known. Now the considerations of science are not meritorious, nor on the other hand is opinion. Therefore belief is not meritorious.

**Objection 3.** Further, he who assents to a point of faith, either has a sufficient motive for believing, or he has not. If he has a sufficient motive for his belief, this does not seem to imply any merit on his part, since he is no longer free to believe or not to believe: whereas if he has not a sufficient motive for believing, this is a mark of levity, according to Sirach 19:4: "He that is hasty to give credit, is light of heart," so that, seemingly, he gains no merit thereby. Therefore to believe is by no means meritorious.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Hebrews 11:33) that the saints "by faith . . . obtained promises," which would not be the case if they did not merit by believing. Therefore to believe is meritorious.

**I answer that,** As stated above (I-II:114:3; I-II:114:4), our actions are meritorious in so far as they proceed from the free-will moved with grace by God. Therefore every human act proceeding from the free-will, if it be referred to God, can be meritorious. Now the act of believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the Divine truth at the command of the will moved by the grace of God, so that it is subject to the free-will in relation to God; and consequently the act of faith can be meritorious.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Nature is compared to charity which is the principle of merit, as matter to form: whereas faith is compared to charity as the disposition which precedes the ultimate form. Now it is evident that the subject or the matter cannot act save by virtue of the form, nor can a preceding disposition, before the advent of the form: but after the advent of the form, both the subject and the preceding disposition act by virtue of the form, which is the chief principle of action, even as the heat of fire acts by virtue of the substantial form of fire. Accordingly neither nature nor faith can, without charity, produce a meritorious act; but, when accompanied by charity, the act of faith is made meritorious thereby, even as an act of nature, and a natural act of the free-will.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Two things may be considered in science: namely the scientist's assent to a scientific fact and his consideration of that fact. Now the assent of science is not subject

to free-will, because the scientist is obliged to assent by force of the demonstration, wherefore scientific assent is not meritorious. But the actual consideration of what a man knows scientifically is subject to his free-will, for it is in his power to consider or not to consider. Hence scientific consideration may be meritorious if it be referred to the end of charity, i.e. to the honor of God or the good of our neighbor. On the other hand, in the case of faith, both these things are subject to the free-will so that in both respects the act of faith can be meritorious: whereas in the case of opinion, there is no firm assent, since it is weak and infirm, as the Philosopher observes (Poster. i, 33), so that it does not seem to proceed from a perfect act of the will: and for this reason, as regards the assent, it does not appear to be very meritorious, though it can be as regards the actual consideration.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The believer has sufficient motive for believing, for he is moved by the authority of Divine teaching confirmed by miracles, and, what is more, by the inward instinct of the Divine invitation: hence he does not believe lightly. He has not, however, sufficient reason for scientific knowledge, hence he does not lose the merit.

**ST II-II, q. 2. a. 10: Whether reasons in support of what we believe lessen the merit of faith?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that reasons in support of what we believe lessen the merit of faith. For Gregory says (Hom. xxvi in Evang.) that "there is no merit in believing what is shown by reason." If, therefore, human reason provides sufficient proof, the merit of faith is altogether taken away. Therefore it seems that any kind of human reasoning in support of matters of faith, diminishes the merit of believing.

**Objection 2.** Further, whatever lessens the measure of virtue, lessens the amount of merit, since "happiness is the reward of virtue," as the Philosopher states (Ethic. i, 9). Now human reasoning seems to diminish the measure of the virtue of faith, since it is essential to faith to be about the unseen, as stated above (II-II:1:5). Now the more a thing is supported by reasons the less is it unseen. Therefore human reasons in support of matters of faith diminish the merit of faith.

**On the contrary,** It is written (1 Peter 3:15): "Being ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that faith [Vulgate: 'Of that hope which is in you.' St. Thomas' reading is apparently taken from Bede.] and hope which is in you." Now the Apostle would not give this advice, if it would imply a diminution in the merit of faith. Therefore reason does not diminish the merit of faith.

**I answer that,** As stated above (Article 9), the act of faith can be meritorious, in so far as it is subject to the will, not only as to the use, but also as to the assent. Now human reason in support of what we believe, may stand in a twofold relation to the will of the believer. First, as preceding the act of the will; as, for instance, when a man either has not the will, or not a prompt will, to believe, unless he be moved by human reasons: and in this way human reason diminishes the merit of faith. On this sense it has been said above (I-II:24:3 ad 1; II-II:77:6 ad 2) that, in moral virtues, a passion which precedes choice makes the virtuous act less praiseworthy. For just as a man ought to perform acts of moral virtue, on account of the judgment of his reason, and not on account of a passion, so ought he to believe matters of

faith, not on account of human reason, but on account of the Divine authority. Secondly, human reasons may be consequent to the will of the believer. For when a man's will is ready to believe, he loves the truth he believes, he thinks out and takes to heart whatever reasons he can find in support thereof; and in this way human reason does not exclude the merit of faith but is a sign of greater merit. Thus again, in moral virtues a consequent passion is the sign of a more prompt will, as stated above (I-II:24:3 ad 1). We have an indication of this in the words of the Samaritans to the woman, who is a type of human reason: "We now believe, not for thy saying" (John 4:42).

**Reply to Objection 1.** Gregory is referring to the case of a man who has no will to believe what is of faith, unless he be induced by reasons. But when a man has the will to believe what is of faith on the authority of God alone, although he may have reasons in demonstration of some of them, e.g. of the existence of God, the merit of his faith is not, for that reason, lost or diminished.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The reasons which are brought forward in support of the authority of faith, are not demonstrations which can bring intellectual vision to the human intellect, wherefore matters of faith do not cease to be unseen.

But they remove obstacles to faith, by showing that what faith proposes is not impossible; wherefore such reasons do not diminish the merit or the measure of faith. But in the case not of articles of faith but of preambles to the articles - even though demonstrative reasons in support of them take away from the nature of faith, because they make apparent that which is proposed - nevertheless such reasons do not take away from the nature of charity, which makes the will ready to believe them, even if they are unseen; and so the measure of merit is not diminished.

### The virtue of faith

**ST II-II, q. 4, a. 1: Is Paul's definition of faith proper: "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (*fides substantia sperandarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium*)?**

**I answer that,** Though some say that the above words of the Apostle are not a definition of faith, yet if we consider the matter aright, this definition overlooks none of the points in reference to which faith can be defined, albeit the words themselves are not arranged in the form of a definition, just as the philosophers touch on the principles of the syllogism, without employing the syllogistic form.

In order to make this clear, we must observe that since habits are known by their acts, and acts by their objects, faith, being a habit, should be defined by its proper act in relation to its proper object. Now the act of faith is to believe, as stated above (II-II:2:3), which is an act of the intellect determinate to one object by reason of the will's command. Hence an act of faith is related both to the object of the will, i.e. to the good and the end, and to the object of the intellect, i.e. to the true. And since faith, through being a theological virtue, as stated above (I-II:62:2), having the one reality as its object and end, it follows that the object of faith and its end stand in a mutual relationship. Now it has been already stated (II-II:1:4)

that the object of faith is the First Truth, as unseen, and whatever we hold on account thereof.

Accordingly, the first truth necessarily stands to the act of faith as its end under the aspect of its being unseen. This in turn, involves the characteristic of being something to be hoped for; according to the Apostle (Romans 8:25): "We hope for that which we see not": because to see the truth is to possess it. Now one hopes not for what one has already, but for what one has not, as stated above (I-II:67:4). Accordingly the relation of the act of faith to its end which is the object of the will, is indicated by the words: "*Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for.*" For we are wont to call by the name of substance, the first beginning of a thing, especially when the whole subsequent thing is virtually contained in the first beginning; for instance, we might say that the first self-evident principles are the substance of science, because, to wit, these principles are in us the first beginnings of science, the whole of which is itself contained in them virtually. On this way then faith is said to be the "substance of things to be hoped for," for the reason that in us the first beginning of things to be hoped for is brought about by the assent of faith, which contains virtually all things to be hoped for. Because we hope to be made happy through seeing the unveiled truth to which our faith cleaves, as was made evident when we were speaking of happiness (I-II:3:8; I-II:4:3).

The relationship of the act of faith to the object of the intellect, considered as the object of faith, is indicated by the words, "*evidence of things that appear not,*" where "evidence" is taken for the result of evidence. For evidence induces the intellect to adhere to a truth, wherefore the firm adhesion of the intellect to the non-apparent truth of faith is called "evidence" here. Hence another reading has "conviction," (*convictio*) because to wit, the intellect of the believer is convinced by Divine authority, so as to assent to what it sees not. Accordingly if anyone would reduce the foregoing words to the form of a definition, he may say that "*faith is a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is non-apparent.*"

In this way faith is distinguished from all other things pertaining to the intellect. For when we describe it as "evidence," we distinguish it from opinion, suspicion, and doubt, which do not make the intellect adhere to anything firmly; when we go on to say, "of things that appear not," we distinguish it from science and understanding, the object of which is something apparent; and when we say that it is "the substance of things to be hoped for," we distinguish the virtue of faith from faith commonly so called, which has no reference to the beatitude we hope for.

Whatever other definitions are given of faith, are explanations of this one given by the Apostle. For when Augustine says (*Tract. xl in Joan.: QQ. Evang. ii, qu. 39*) that "faith is a virtue whereby we believe what we do not see," and when Damascene says (*De Fide Orth. iv, 11*) that "faith is an assent without research," and when others say that "faith is that certainty of the mind about absent things which surpasses opinion but falls short of science," these all amount to the same as the Apostle's words: "Evidence of things that appear not"; and when Dionysius says (*Div. Nom. vii*) that "faith is the solid foundation of the believer, establishing him in the truth, and showing forth the truth in him," comes to the same as "substance of things to be hoped for."



## The Cause of faith

### ST II-II, q. 6, a. 1: Whether faith is infused into man by God?

**Objection 3.** Further, that which depends on a man's will can be acquired by him. But "faith depends on the believer's will," according to Augustine (*De Praedest. Sanct. v*). Therefore faith can be acquired by man.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Ephesians 2:8-9): "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves . . . that no man may glory . . . for it is the gift of God."

**I answer that,** Two things are requisite for faith. First, that the things which are of faith should be proposed to man: this is necessary in order that man believe anything explicitly. The second thing requisite for faith is the assent of the believer to the things which are proposed to him. Accordingly, as regards the first of these, faith must needs be from God. Because those things which are of faith surpass human reason, hence they do not come to man's knowledge, unless God reveal them. To some, indeed, they are revealed by God immediately, as those things which were revealed to the apostles and prophets, while to some they are proposed by God in sending preachers of the faith, according to Romans 10:15: "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?"

As regards the second, viz. man's assent to the things which are of faith, we may observe a twofold cause, one of external inducement, such as seeing a miracle, or being persuaded by someone to embrace the faith: neither of which is a sufficient cause, since of those who see the same miracle, or who hear the same sermon, some believe, and some do not. Hence we must assert another internal cause, which moves man inwardly to assent to matters of faith.

The Pelagians held that this cause was nothing else than man's free-will: and consequently they said that the beginning of faith is from ourselves, inasmuch as, to wit, it is in our power to be ready to assent to things which are of faith, but that the consummation of faith is from God, Who proposes to us the things we have to believe. But this is false, for, since man, by assenting to matters of faith, is raised above his nature, this must needs accrue to him from some supernatural principle moving him inwardly; and this is God. **Therefore faith, as regards the assent which is the chief act of faith, is from God moving man inwardly by grace.**

**Reply to Objection 3.** **To believe does indeed depend on the will of the believer: but man's will needs to be prepared by God with grace,** in order that he may be raised to things which are above his nature, as stated above (II-II:2:3).

## The cognitive gifts of the Holy Spirit: understanding and knowledge

### ST II-II, q. 8, a. 1. Whether understanding is a gift of the Holy Ghost?

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**Objection 1.** **It would seem that understanding is not a gift of the Holy Ghost. For the gifts of grace are distinct from the gifts of nature, since they are given in addition to the latter. Now understanding is a natural habit of the soul, whereby self-evident principles**

are known, as stated in Ethic. vi, 6. Therefore it should not be reckoned among the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

**Objection 2.** Further, the Divine gifts are shared by creatures according to their capacity and mode, as Dionysius states (Div. Nom. iv). Now the mode of human nature is to know the truth, not simply (which is a sign of understanding), but discursively (which is a sign of reason), as Dionysius explains (Div. Nom. vii). Therefore the Divine knowledge which is bestowed on man, should be called a gift of reason rather than a gift of understanding.

**Objection 3.** Further, in the powers of the soul the understanding is condivided with the will (De Anima iii, 9,10). Now no gift of the Holy Ghost is called after the will. Therefore no gift of the Holy Ghost should receive the name of understanding.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Isaiah 11:2): "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom of understanding."

**I answer that,** Understanding implies an intimate knowledge, for "intelligere" [to understand] is the same as "intus legere" [to read inwardly]. This is clear to anyone who considers the difference between intellect and sense, because sensitive knowledge is concerned with external sensible qualities, whereas intellectual knowledge penetrates into the very essence of a thing, because the object of the intellect is "what a thing is," as stated in De Anima iii, 6.

Now there are many kinds of things that are hidden within, to find which human knowledge has to penetrate within so to speak. Thus, under the accidents lies hidden the nature of the substantial reality, under words lies hidden their meaning; under likenesses and figures the truth they denote lies hidden (because the intelligible world is enclosed within as compared with the sensible world, which is perceived externally), and effects lie hidden in their causes, and vice versa. Hence we may speak of understanding with regard to all these things.

Since, however, human knowledge begins with the outside of things as it were, it is evident that the stronger the light of the understanding, the further can it penetrate into the heart of things. Now the natural light of our understanding is of finite power; wherefore it can reach to a certain fixed point. Consequently man needs a supernatural light in order to penetrate further still so as to know what it cannot know by its natural light: and this supernatural light which is bestowed on man is called the gift of understanding.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The natural light instilled within us, manifests only certain general principles, which are known naturally. But since man is ordained to supernatural happiness, as stated above (II-II:2:3; I-II:3:8), man needs to reach to certain higher truths, for which he requires the gift of understanding.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The discourse of reason always begins from an understanding and ends at an understanding; because we reason by proceeding from certain understood principles, and the discourse of reason is perfected when we come to understand what hitherto we ignored. Hence the act of reasoning proceeds from something previously understood. Now a gift of grace does not proceed from the light of nature, but is added thereto as perfecting it. Wherefore this addition is not called "reason" but "understanding,"

since the additional light is in comparison with what we know supernaturally, what the natural light is in regard to those things which we know from the first.

**Reply to Objection 3.** "Will" denotes simply a movement of the appetite without indicating any excellence; whereas "understanding" denotes a certain excellence of a knowledge that penetrates into the heart of things. Hence the supernatural gift is called after the understanding rather than after the will.

### **ST II-II, q. 9, a. 1. Whether knowledge is a gift?**

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**I answer that,** Grace is more perfect than nature, and, therefore, does not fail in those things wherein man can be perfected by nature. Now, when a man, by his natural reason, assents by his intellect to some truth, he is perfected in two ways in respect of that truth: first, because he grasps it; secondly, because he forms a sure judgment on it.

Accordingly, two things are requisite in order that the human intellect may perfectly assent to the truth of the faith: one of these is that he should have a sound grasp of the things that are proposed to be believed, and this pertains to the gift of *understanding*, as stated above (II-II:8:6): while the other is that he should have a sure and right judgment on them, so as to discern what is to be believed, from what is not to be believed, and for this the gift of *knowledge* is required.

### **Questions**

How does the virtue of faith, which Thomas characterises as "between science and opinion," relate to the unknowability of God?

How do the gifts of understanding and knowledge perfect the theological virtue of faith?

# The Theological Virtue of Hope

*We continue our examination of the theological virtues and will now consider hope and love. Thomas has some very interesting things to say about the opposite of hope, namely despair and sloth, one of the capital sins. He defines the object of hope as "a future good, difficult but possible to obtain." (ST II-II, q. 17, a. 1) Whereas we can hope for many things (as a passion) theological hope concerns God and dwelling in his presence in eternal life: "For we should hope from God for nothing less than himself (...) therefore the proper and principal object of hope is eternal happiness." (ST II-II, q. 17, a. 2) Despair is a major vice which opposes hope, as is presumption – but despair is worse: it kills the soul. J. Pieper has written a brilliant little book on this ("On Hope") which I warmly recommend.*

## Article 2. Whether eternal happiness is the proper object of hope?

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**Objection 2.** Further, prayer is an expression of hope, for it is written (Psalm 36:5): "Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it." Now it is lawful for man to pray God not only for eternal happiness, but also for the goods, both temporal and spiritual, of the present life, and, as evidenced by the Lord's Prayer, to be delivered from evils which will no longer be in eternal happiness. Therefore eternal happiness is not the proper object of hope.

**Objection 3.** Further, **the object of hope is something difficult**. Now many things besides eternal happiness are difficult to man. Therefore eternal happiness is not the proper object of hope.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says (Hebrews 6:19) that we have hope "which entereth in," i.e. maketh us to enter . . . "within the veil," i.e. into the happiness of heaven, according to the interpretation of a gloss on these words. Therefore the object of hope is eternal happiness.

**I answer that,** As stated above (Article 1), the hope of which we speak now, attains God by leaning on His help in order to obtain the hoped for good. Now an effect must be proportionate to its cause. **Wherefore the good which we ought to hope for from God properly and chiefly is the infinite good, which is proportionate to the power of our divine helper, since it belongs to an infinite power to lead anyone to an infinite good. Such a good is eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of God Himself. For we should hope from Him for nothing less than Himself, since His goodness, whereby He imparts good things to His creature, is no less than His Essence. Therefore the proper and principal object of hope is eternal happiness.**

**Reply to Objection 2.** We ought not to pray God for any other goods, except in reference to eternal happiness. Hence hope regards eternal happiness chiefly, and other things, for which we pray God, it regards secondarily and as referred to eternal happiness: just

as faith regards God principally, and, secondarily, those things which are referred to God, as stated above (II-II:1:1).

**Reply to Objection 3.** To him that longs for something great, all lesser things seem small; wherefore to him that hopes for eternal happiness, nothing else appears arduous, as compared with that hope; although, as compared with the capability of the man who hopes, other things besides may be arduous to him, so that he may have hope for such things in reference to its principal object.

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**ST II-II, Question 17, article 6. Whether hope is distinct from the other theological virtues?**

**I answer that,** A virtue is said to be theological from having God for the object to which it adheres. Now one may adhere to a thing in two ways: first, for its own sake; secondly, because something else is attained thereby. Accordingly charity makes us adhere to God for His own sake, uniting our minds to God by the emotion of love. On the other hand, hope and faith make man adhere to God as to a principle wherefrom certain things accrue to us. Now we derive from God both knowledge of truth and the attainment of perfect goodness. Accordingly faith makes us adhere to God, as the source whence we derive the knowledge of truth, since we believe that what God tells us is true: while hope makes us adhere to God, as the source whence we derive perfect goodness, i.e. in so far as, by hope, we trust to the Divine assistance for obtaining happiness.

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**ST II-II, q. 20, a. 3. Whether despair is the greatest of sins?**

**I answer that,** Those sins which are contrary to the theological virtues are in themselves more grievous than others: because, since the theological virtues have God for their object, the sins which are opposed to them imply aversion from God directly and principally. Now every mortal sin takes its principal malice and gravity from the fact of its turning away from God, for if it were possible to turn to a mutable good, even inordinately, without turning away from God, it would not be a mortal sin. Consequently a sin which, first and of its very nature, includes aversion from God, is most grievous among mortal sins.

Now unbelief, despair and hatred of God are opposed to the theological virtues: and among them, if we compare hatred of God and unbelief to despair, we shall find that, in themselves, that is, in respect of their proper species, they are more grievous. For unbelief is due to a man not believing God's own truth; while the *hatred of God* arises from man's will being opposed to God's goodness itself; whereas *despair* consists in a man ceasing to hope for a share of God's goodness. Hence it is clear that unbelief and hatred of God are against God as He is in Himself, while despair is against Him, according as His good is partaken of by us. Wherefore strictly speaking it is more grievous sin to disbelieve God's truth, or to hate God, than not to hope to receive glory from Him.

If, however, despair be compared to the other two sins from our point of view, then despair is more dangerous, since hope withdraws us from evils and induces us to seek for good things, so that when hope is given up, men rush headlong into sin, and are drawn away from

good works. Wherefore a gloss on Proverbs 24:10, "If thou lose hope being weary in the day of distress, thy strength shall be diminished," says: "Nothing is more hateful than despair, for the man that has it loses his constancy both in the every day toils of this life, and, what is worse, in the battle of faith." And Isidore says (*De Sum. Bono* ii, 14): "To commit a crime is to kill the soul, but to despair is to fall into hell."

**ST II-II, q. 21, a. 1. Whether presumption trusts in God or in our own power?**

**I answer that,** Presumption seems to imply immoderate hope. Now the object of hope is an arduous possible good: and a thing is possible to a man in two ways: first by his own power; secondly, by the power of God alone. With regard to either hope there may be presumption owing to lack of moderation. As to the hope whereby a man relies on his own power, there is presumption if he tends to a good as though it were possible to him, whereas it surpasses his powers, according to Judith 6:15: "Thou humblest them that presume of themselves." This presumption is contrary to the virtue of magnanimity which holds to the mean in this kind of hope.

But as to the hope whereby a man relies on the power of God, there may be presumption through immoderation, in the fact that a man tends to some good as though it were possible by the power and mercy of God, whereas it is not possible, for instance, if a man hope to obtain pardon without repenting, or glory without merits. This presumption is, properly, the sin against the Holy Ghost, because, to wit, by presuming thus a man removes or despises the assistance of the Holy Spirit, whereby he is withdrawn from sin.

# The Theological Virtue of Love

## Introduction

In this session we will examine Thomas's understanding of love. I will deal with some of the following intriguing questions: What is love? Can we love God in this life? Should our love be disinterested (independent of our own needs) and universal (agapeic) or can it be particular and take into account our own needs and preferences (erotic)? Or is there a third possibility, namely an eschatological one (i.e., 'I love you for the sake of whom you may become in the presence of God!')? Do we love ourselves more than others? How does love for God radically transform our outlook on the world? How does love of God relate to love of neighbour? Should one love one's parents more than one's spouse? How is love different from other theological virtues?

It is important to remember that Thomas distinguishes between love (*amor; dilectio*)<sup>16</sup> as a 'passion' or emotion, and the theological virtue of love (*caritas*). The first is pretty universal in scope, broadly understood as attraction (eliciting desire and, if fulfilled, resulting in delight) or an inclination in all animate and even inanimate things. Sexual attraction is a classic example of love of this kind (but also, for instance, a longing for food or drink). Because it is a central intuition of Thomas's theology that 'grace perfects nature' I first discuss this broad notion of love before dealing with charity, or Christian love. I can only give a flavour of his discussion of love as a passion and its effects (*ST I-II*, qq. 27 & 28) and my discussion of charity will leave many major aspects out of consideration as well (*ST II-II*, qq. 23-46).

### *a. Love as a passion (in the broad sense)*

When treating of love in *ST I-II*, q. 26-28 Thomas takes a **broad view**. Love, as he understands the term, can be attributed to natural things of all kinds. An inanimate object, such as a stone, has a 'natural love' or inclination toward falling toward the centre; fire has an inclination to ascend. Plants (e.g., an acorn or flower) also have a natural appetite toward fulfilment.<sup>17</sup> Animals other than humans have a sensitive appetite (a dog has a desire for a bone), while we also have a rational appetite or will that is drawn toward goodness as its object.<sup>18</sup> Thus, love, although treated as a 'passion' in *ST I-II*, q. 26, a. 2, has metaphysical foundations: it is present throughout the world.<sup>19</sup>

In *ST I-II*, q. 26, a. 1 Thomas asks whether love (as a 'passion' or emotion) resides in the concupiscible power (as Aristotle had claimed in *Topics*, II.7). He confirms that it pertains to

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<sup>16</sup> *Amor* is very broad; *dilectio* implies an element of choice and is not as extensive. A stone might be said to have *amor* (in the broad sense) but not *dilectio*.

<sup>17</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 26, a. 1

<sup>18</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 26, a. 1

<sup>19</sup> See the helpful book by Anthony Flood, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Love. Aquinas on Participation, Unity, and Union* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018)

the appetite. So love has to do with attraction or inclination. He then states that ‘the name "love" (amor) is given to ‘the principal movement towards the end loved’ – whether that is at the level of sheer natural inclination, sensitive appetite, or rational or intellectual appetite, i.e., the will.’ As indicated, love is a universal, almost ontological force, operative throughout the world. It is ‘universally in all things: because, as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv), "Beauty and goodness are beloved by all things"; since each single thing has a connaturalness (*connaturalitas*) with that which is naturally suitable to it.’ (ST I-II, q. 26, a. 1 ad 3). (‘Connaturalness’ refers to an affinity of one thing for another.)

When expounding the nature of love, Thomas adopts an important distinction, inspired by Aristotle, between **love of concupiscence** and **love of friendship**.<sup>20</sup> It is not correct to interpret this distinction in terms of self-centred and altruistic love. The distinction relates, rather, to intrinsic love (for persons to whom we wish good) (*amor amicitiae*), and love (usually of things but occasionally also of persons)<sup>21</sup> which we wish for someone—be it oneself or another person (*amor concupiscentiae*).<sup>22</sup> Love of concupiscence is therefore love in a relative sense: we love something, not simply and for itself, but for a person. Love of friendship is proper love, whereby we love people simply and for themselves.<sup>23</sup> In short, in love of concupiscence the focus of our love is the good thing; in love of friendship we give precedence to the recipient.<sup>24</sup>

These two kinds of love neither exclude nor compete with one another. They are usually found together, and, in the words of David Gallagher, constitute ‘a single act’: ‘one does not love someone without wanting what is good for that person, nor does one love goods that are not persons without loving them for some person.’<sup>25</sup> Thus, love of friendship includes love of concupiscence, and is foundational to it. The object of love of friendship is loved for its own sake; the object of love of concupiscence is loved for the sake of something (or someone) other than itself. Love with which I love someone, that she may have some good (love of friendship) is love in the primary sense (*simpliciter*); and love which consists in loving a thing insofar as it contributes to someone else’s welfare (love of concupiscence) is love in the secondary sense.<sup>26</sup> In short, all motions of the will begin with and are based on love of a person (be it oneself or another person).

In accordance with his teleological worldview Thomas claims that the object or cause of love is the good (ST I-II, q. 27. a. 1). He quotes Aristotle who says that love consists ‘in wanting good things for someone.’ (*Rhetoric* II, 4). This coheres with the distinction between love of desire and love of friendship: the movement of love has a twofold object: the good which

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<sup>20</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk VIII. Thomas does not always characterize the distinction in the same manner. For a somewhat different account, see for instance II *Sent.* d. 3, q. 4, a. 1.

<sup>21</sup> As ST I-II, q. 28, a. 2 confirms.

<sup>22</sup> ST I-II, q. 26, a. 4: ‘we have love of concupiscence toward the good that we wish to others, and love of friendship towards those to whom we wish good.’

<sup>23</sup> ST I-II, q. 26, a. 4

<sup>24</sup> Peter King, ‘Emotions’ from Brian Davies & Eleonore Stump, *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 221

<sup>25</sup> David M. Gallagher, ‘The will and its acts’ from Stephen Pope (ed.), *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), p. 84

<sup>26</sup> ST I-II, q. 26, a. 4



we wish for someone (be it yourself or somebody else); and the one for whom it is wanted. The first is the object of love-of-desire (concupiscent love or *amor concupiscentiae*); the second one is the object of love-of-friendship (*amor amicitiae*). Although only the second is fully gratuitous (whereby we love the other for her sake) and is friendship in the full sense, these are not, as I mentioned earlier, mutually exclusive. For instance if I want a new edition of Thomas's *De Veritate* for myself, I purchase and come to possess it (love of concupiscence); or I can buy it for a friend whom I believe would be edified by reading some more Thomas. In this instance, it is a case of love of friendship, whereby I wish the other person good; and I love him or her with love of friendship because I consider my friend as "another self" (an idea indebted to *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 4 and *Confess.* IV, 6). So Thomas writes: 'When one has love-of-friendship for a person, one wants good things for him as one does for oneself; one therefore looks on him as another self, wishing him well in the same way as one does oneself.' (*ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 1)

Note that all love, for Thomas, is based on **union** of some kind, and we have a more intimate union with ourselves than with anybody else. (I will come back to this issue in the next section as well.) Thomas is therefore not afraid of stating that we love ourselves more than we love another human being ('because we are one with ourselves substantially, whereas we are one with another only in the likeness of form', i.e., we share a human nature – *ST I-II*, q. 27, a. 3). The distinction between love of friendship and concupiscence suggests that it is not fair to characterize Thomas's account of love as incapable of allowing for truly altruistic behaviour; but such behaviour is, however, founded on a natural union with self.<sup>27</sup>

In q. 28, then, he discusses the **effects** of love as passion. They include union (real, or merely intentional through affection), mutual indwelling (*inhaesio*), and ecstasy (*extasis*). I encourage you to have a look at these texts – they are very interesting and at times mildly erotically charged – but I cannot include a major selection of them. One of the effects of love is mutual indwelling (*mutua inhaesio*), which occurs through both the apprehensive and the appetitive powers.<sup>28</sup> In relation to apprehension, we strive 'to gain an intimate knowledge of everything pertaining to the beloved, so as to penetrate into our beloved's

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<sup>27</sup> In passing I want to raise a question (without pursuing it here): How does the object of love (i.e., the good) relate to beauty, which was such a major pole of attraction according to Platonism? The topic is too large to unpack here. I simply give Thomas's reply (which is very famous) to the objection (inspired by Pseudo-Dionysius, quoted in q. 27, a. 1, obj.3) that 'not just the good but the beautiful are beloved by all.' Thomas replies: "Reply to Objection 3. The beautiful is the same as the good, and they differ in aspect only. For since good is what all seek, the notion of good is that which calms the desire; while the notion of the beautiful is that which calms the desire, by being seen or known. Consequently those senses chiefly regard the beautiful, which are the most cognitive, viz. sight and hearing, as ministering to reason; for we speak of beautiful sights and beautiful sounds. But in reference to the other objects of the other senses, we do not use the expression "beautiful," for we do not speak of beautiful tastes, and beautiful odors. Thus it is evident that beauty adds to goodness a relation to the cognitive faculty: so that "good" means that which simply pleases the appetite; while the "beautiful" is something pleasant to apprehend."

<sup>28</sup> It is revealing that Thomas does not write 'intellect' and 'will': he still operates with a broad notion of love that, in principle, applies to all things, from elementary living things to angels, or, with qualifications, even God.

most intimate recesses' (*ad interiora eius ingreditur*).<sup>29</sup> Whenever we love somebody 'we dwell on the beloved (*meditari de amato*) and to dwell intently on one thing draws the mind from other things.'<sup>30</sup> As to the appetitive power, lovers dwell in each other by a kind of complacency (*per quamdam complacientiam*)—perhaps better rephrased as caring, loving attention and delight—in their affections, causing them to take pleasure in each other, or their good, when present; or through longing when the beloved is absent.

*Extasis* is a second primary effect of love.<sup>31</sup> Through love of friendship 'the lover is in the beloved, inasmuch as he reckons what is good or evil to his friend, as being so to himself; and his friend's will as his own, so that it seems as though he felt the good or suffered the evil in the person of his friend'.<sup>32</sup> The good that my friend enjoys becomes my good. Love of friendship thus expands and reconfigures what I consider to be my good. Through *extasis* love draws us out of ourselves, making us other-oriented, both in terms of knowledge and will. In terms of *knowledge*, this refers to acquiring knowledge in ways other than the normal manner (which is through the senses and intellect, as we saw in chapter two), such as in rapture, which Thomas discusses in *ST II-II*, q. 175.<sup>33</sup>

Thomas makes use of the distinction between love of concupiscence and love of friendship to describe the effect of *extasis* in terms of *desire*: through the former we are carried out of ourselves as we are drawn toward something but insofar as we want this extrinsic good for ourselves we do not become fully ecstatic or other-oriented: the movement remains ultimately within ourselves. On the other hand, in love of friendship our affection goes out from itself simply, because we wish, and do good, to our friend by caring and providing for her, for her own sake.<sup>34</sup>

In short, love of friendship—and it is in terms of friendship that charity will be defined—expands the horizon of our concern: through love of friendship the good of our friend becomes ours. When the other is God, charity, the graced perfection of love, points towards sharing in God's beatitude. As David Gallagher summarises:

If a person loves God with the love of friendship (*caritas*) then the good of God becomes his own good and his beatitude consists in possessing (by the *visio beatifica*) this good. (...). The will's natural inclination to beatitude does not lock a

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<sup>29</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 2

<sup>30</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 3

<sup>31</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 28

<sup>32</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 2

<sup>33</sup> It is fair to say that rapture sits uneasily with Thomas's overall epistemological inclinations. He reiterates that most mortals do not experience being rapt out of their senses (as Moses or St Paul did according to the Latin tradition, following St Augustine). The experience of rapture is difficult to reconcile with Thomas's emphasis upon our need to rely on the senses and phantasms in general and his belief that, in this life, we generally cannot attain the vision of God's essence (*ST II-II*, q. 180, a. 5 and ad 2). Thus, while Thomas is happy to affirm that St Paul, in his rapture, attained the highest degree of contemplation possible in this life, being midway between the present life and the life to come, he generally asserts that the state of rapture is highly exceptional, supernatural and beyond the ordinary order of things (*supernaturaliter et praeter communem ordinem*) (*ST I*, q. 12, a. 11 ad 2).

<sup>34</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 3

person inside himself; rather it draws him out of himself and into the possession of a larger good, which, through the love of friendship, has become his own.<sup>35</sup>

This has brought us to our next topic: Christian love or charity.

### b. Charity

Before I discuss the nature of charity, I want to return to the issue of love of self [or **union with self**] and how love of others builds on this (see also *ST II-II*, q. 44, a. 7). According to Thomas we cannot, strictly speaking, be a friend to ourselves because we are more intimately one with ourselves than friends could be united with us. There is, therefore, a metaphysical reason why love of self is the foundation of love of others: ‘just as unity is the principle of union (*unitas est principium unionis*), so the love with which somebody loves himself is the form and root of friendship.’<sup>36</sup> As suggested earlier, this does not imply that Thomas endorses the view that human beings are inherently selfish or even self-centred. On the contrary, those who pursue a life dominated by sensuality, for instance, do not love themselves truly. It is a case, if you like, of mistaken identity. If you assume that your true identity (or self) coincides with your sensitive or corporeal nature (‘the outward man’ from 2 Cor. 4:16), and structure your life accordingly, interior discord will be the outcome. Virtuous people love themselves with a proper self-love, i.e., one that perceives correctly that our true self resides in our rational nature: ‘the good know themselves truly, and therefore truly love themselves.’<sup>37</sup> Anthony Flood summarises it well: ‘Wicked or disordered love of self perverts natural self-love away from the full spectrum of goods perfective of human nature, including interpersonal unions, and toward a more restricted set of goods willed solely for oneself.’<sup>38</sup>

In a rich passage from his *Commentary on Galatians* in which he comments on the command to love your neighbour as yourself Thomas explains the relation between love of self and neighbour by referring to love of concupiscence and love of friendship, discussed earlier. To love your neighbour as yourself does not mean ‘as much as yourself’, Thomas notes, because we should love ourselves more than our neighbour.<sup>39</sup> Love of others presupposes a more foundational love of self. He then goes on to say:

For to love is to will good to someone: hence we are said to love both the one to whom we will a good and the very good which we will to someone, but not in the same way. For when I will a good to myself, I love myself absolutely for myself, but the good which I will to myself, I do not love for itself but for myself. Accordingly, I

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<sup>35</sup> Gallagher, ‘The will and its acts’, 85

<sup>36</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 25, a. 4. On this topic, see A. Flood, *The Metaphysical Foundation...*, ch. 1

<sup>37</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 25, a. 7

<sup>38</sup> A. Flood, *The Metaphysical Foundation...*, 15

<sup>39</sup> Again, this is not to be interpreted in an egotistical manner. The idea that we should love ourselves more than others is not as radical as it may seem in the medieval tradition. It was a commonplace, for instance, to hold that we should not choose damnation in order to save others (cf. Hugh of Saint Victor, *De Sacramentiis*).

love my neighbour as myself in the same way that I love myself, when I will him a good for his sake, and not because it is useful or pleasant to me.<sup>40</sup>

Let's unpack this quotation. First, Thomas distinguishes (implicitly) between love of friendship and love of concupiscence. He then contrasts love of a good and love of myself by pointing out that a love of a good ultimately implies a reference to a love of a self. But when I love myself, I love myself as someone to whom I wish good (a love of friendship, or even a deeper unity). I do not love myself with a love of concupiscence (for there already is unity anyhow). So, when we love others as ourselves, we love them with a love that is love of friendship, i.e., we love them in their own right, and not because it is pleasant or useful to us.

Thomas discusses charity in a number of places. The most important ones are III *Sent.*, d. 27-32, *De Perf.* and *ST* II-II, q. 23-45, especially q. 23-27. In *ST* II-II, q. 23, a. 1 he opens his discussion of **charity** with a remarkable move: he characterises charity in terms of Aristotelean **friendship between God and humans**. That is remarkable if only because, according to Aristotle, friendship implies equality, mutuality, and having things in common. How can Thomas possibly claim that any of this applies to the relation between God and human beings? An answer lies in the Biblical quotations and everything they suggest (Incarnation, beatific bliss) from the very first article on charity in *ST* II-II, q. 23, a.1. (Also, pay close attention to Obj.2 and the reply to it, which alludes to 'the triangular nature of love'. This is an important theme. I will use this texts and others to make clear how charity utterly transforms the way we relate to the world, that is, when we no longer love the word immediately but through God as an intermediary.<sup>41</sup>) Inspired by Aristotle, Thomas identifies three aspects central to friendship: first, it involves wishing the other person well (*benevolentia*); secondly, it requires mutual love (*mutua amatio*) which, thirdly, has to be founded on some kind of fellowship (*communicatio*), having things in common. Given the fact that Aristotle had emphasised that proper friendship can best flourish amongst equals, Thomas is presenting us with a astonishing claim: How can we have something in common with God who is so radically different from all things created, including ourselves? So how can there be friendship between God and humans? Thomas argues that through the incarnation of his Son God has entered into a relation of some kind of equality with us. The text which best captures this theme is not found in the *ST* but in the *ScG* IV. 54 [no. 6]:

Furthermore, since friendship consists in a certain equality, things greatly unequal seem unable to be coupled in friendship. Therefore, to get greater familiarity in friendship between humans and God it was helpful for us that God became man since even by nature man is man's friend; and so in this way, 'while we know God visibly, we may [through him] be borne to love of things invisible.'<sup>42</sup>

Thomas alludes to this same idea in the *ST* II-II, q. 23, a. 1, quoting John 15:15 in the *Sed contra* and 1 Cor. 1:9 ('God is faithful, by whom you are called unto the fellowship (*societas*) of his Son') in the main response. What we have in common with God, i.e., the fellowship or

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<sup>40</sup> *Commentary on Gal.* 5:14, lect. 3

<sup>41</sup> See Rik Van Nieuwenhove, 'The Religious Disposition as a Critical Resource to Critique Instrumentalisation' *The Heythrop Journal* 50 (2009): 689-96

<sup>42</sup> See also in this context *ScG* IV. 54 [no. 4]: 'we see that after Christ's Incarnation we were the more evidently and the more surely instructed in the divine knowledge; as Isaiah (11:9) has it: "The earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord."'

*communicatio* he mentions, is beatitude or happiness: 'there is a sharing (*communicatio*) between us and God by his sharing (*communicat*) his happiness with us, and it is on this that a friendship is based.' Charity, as our friendship for God, and God's friendship for us, is based on this fellowship of shared beatitude (a topic we will touch upon later in this chapter and discuss in more detail in chapter eight).

In *ST II-II*, q. 25 Thomas deals with the **object** of charity. Charity refers in the first place to our love of God; love of neighbour only flows from this. It is because we love God first, that we can love our enemies, not directly, so to say, but indirectly, through God:

Indeed, so much do we love our friends, that for their sake we love all who belong to them, even if they hurt or hate us; so that, in this way, the friendship of charity extends even to our enemies, whom we love out of charity in relation to God, to whom the friendship of charity is chiefly directed.<sup>43</sup>

Or as he puts it in *ST II-II*, q. 23, a. 5 ad 1: 'God is the principal object of charity while our neighbour is loved out of charity for God's sake' (*proximus autem ex caritate diligitur propter Deum*). Again, in *ST I-II*, q. 4 a. 8, ad 3: love of neighbour results from (*sequitur*) perfect love of God. Our love of neighbour is therefore an extension of our love of God, which in his *Commentary on the Sentences* he describes as the 'cause and reason of our love of neighbour'.<sup>44</sup> We love our neighbour in so far as she, too, may share in God's fellowship and beatitude:

Now the aspect under which our neighbour is to be loved, is God, since what we ought to love in our neighbour is that he may be in God. Hence it is clear that it is specifically the same act whereby we love God, and whereby we love our neighbour. Consequently, the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbour.<sup>45</sup>

Love of God is the cause of, and includes, love of neighbour as its effect.<sup>46</sup> In order to make this clear I will deal with the triangular nature of love below.

Before I do so, I would like to discuss the **gratuitous, non-instrumentalist** nature of charity in greater detail. In treating of this theme, I will also deal with a popular criticism, first aired by Hannah Arendt: Does the view that only God should be loved directly, and our neighbour through God, imply that we do not intrinsically love our neighbour at all? Does this view imply that our love of neighbour somehow dissolves into abstraction by becoming indirect, and is a mere occasion for the exercise of love of God? This criticism has been levelled against Augustine's notion of enjoying God only, which is the inspiration for Thomas's views. It is deeply mistaken.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 23, a. 1 ad 2; see also *ST II-II*, q. 25, a. 8

<sup>44</sup> *III Sent.* d. 30, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 25 a. 1: *Ratio autem diligendi proximum Deus est, hoc enim debemus in proximo diligere, ut in Deo sit. Unde manifestum est quod idem specie actus est quo diligitur Deus, et quo diligitur proximus. Et propter hoc habitus caritatis non solum se extendit ad dilectionem Dei, sed etiam ad dilectionem proximi.*

<sup>46</sup> *III Sent.* d. 30, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>47</sup> This criticism was raised by Hannah Arendt in her book *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*, published in 1929. An English translation is available in *Love and Saint Augustine* (Chicago: Chicago University

Charity infuses a radical theocentric dynamic upon all our pursuits, both practical and theoretical ones. In order to explain this, I will first discuss the relation between charity and fruition of God. Charity is ‘the movement of the soul towards the enjoyment of God for its own sake’, as stated in the *Sed contra* of *ST* II-II, q. 23, a. 2, with a reference to Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana*. In that book Augustine had argued that only God should be ‘enjoyed’ while creatures should be ‘used’. Formulating the distinction between ‘enjoying God’ and ‘using creatures’ is bound to evoke a range of negative connotations in the mind of the modern reader. The distinction does not aim to suggest that creatures as a mere means, and that an instrumentalist attitude towards created beings is warranted. What Augustine tries to make clear is that only God should be our ultimate concern in everything we pursue. To treat anything created as your ultimate concern is to be guilty of idolatry. To claim, therefore, that only God is to be ‘enjoyed’ is not to imply that created beings, including other people, do not have intrinsic value. On the contrary, Augustine suggests that just because we relate to God as our ultimate concern we can attribute intrinsic value to others. This is also Thomas’s view. Thomas stresses that we should love our fellow humans in their own right. The very distinction between love of friendship and love of concupiscence hinges on this, as we saw earlier. Yet Thomas also says that we should love other humans ‘for the sake of God’ (*propter Deum*). Unlike modern commentators, Thomas does not think there is a contradiction between the claims that we ought to love another person for God’s sake, and that we should love her in her own right.

How can Thomas (and Augustine before him) make these apparently opposing claims? To make this clear I will first outline the gratuitous nature of charity (or friendship) itself. Then I will explain how charity reorients our desire and will through God.

Thomas stresses the gratuitous, non-calculating nature of friendship throughout his writings. In the previous section we already alluded to the distinction between love of friendship and love of concupiscence and explained that the former implies a genuine love for the person in her own right. Some more examples will illustrate the point. When discussing the love of angels for God, for instance, he remarks that it is an essential feature of love that, even though it may have delights and useful benefits associated with it, ‘the gaze of the lover does not regard these but rather the beloved good’ (*non tamen ad has oculus amantis respicit, sed ad bonum amatum*).<sup>48</sup> Or again, in *III Sent.* d. 29, a. 4 when considering whether love of God permits consideration of a wage (*merces*) (understood here as a reward to which one is entitled), Thomas argues that ‘setting up some wage as the end of love (. . .) contradicts the definition of friendship. (. . .) charity cannot have an eye to a wage, for this would be to set up as the ultimate end not God, but the goods that derive

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Press, 1996). It was adopted uncritically by Werner Jeanrond in *A Theology of Love* (London: Continuum, 2010). For a courteous but devastating rebuttal, see ‘Augustinian Love’ from Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 191-206. I have discussed the gratuitous nature of charity in Thomas and other medieval thinkers and its significance for contemporary debates in ‘The Religious Disposition as a Resource to Resist Instrumentalisation’ in *The Heythrop Journal* 50/4 (2009): 689-96

<sup>48</sup> *II Sent.*, d. 3, q.4, a. 1

from him.<sup>49</sup> Our ultimate end has to be God himself, not the happiness we enjoy when we come to know him.

The second point (i.e., the reorientation of the will) is more complex. Essentially, Thomas describes charity in **triangular terms**:<sup>50</sup> it involves an ascending moment as charity is our love for God (in response to the free bestowal of his grace); and it entails a descending moment: from this love for God our love of created things flows. *ST II–II*, q. 27, a. 4, in which he deals with the question whether God can be loved immediately in this life, offers a useful starting point to explain this. Thomas points out that, since our knowledge is derived from the senses, those things are knowable first, which are nearer to our senses. He then states:

Accordingly, we must assert that to love which is an act of the appetitive power, even in this state of life, tends to God first (*tendit in Deum primo*), and flows on from him to other things (*et ex ipso derivatur ad alia*) and in this sense charity loves God immediately, and other things through God (*charitas Deum immediate diligit, alia vero Deo mediante*). On the other hand, with regard to knowledge, it is the reverse, since we know God through other things (...).

Charity ‘redirects’ human love and desire: it should immediately target God, and other things through God (*alia vero Deo mediante*). This is of fundamental importance for Thomas’s understanding of the way charity transforms human desire and will. If human desire, and its infinite dynamic, *directly* targets created things, there are two dangers. First, there is the danger of tedium, disenchantment, or lack of fulfilment. The pursuit of riches is an example of a kind of deceptive, merely horizontal infinity in which we need more material things because they fail to bring us fulfilment. Thomas writes that our desire for wealth, like our desire for God, can be infinite: ‘the desire for artificial wealth is infinite, for it is the servant of disordered concupiscence, which is not curbed ...’ He goes on to explain how this kind of infinite desire for wealth differs from ‘the desire for the sovereign good’ which succeeds in fulfilling us when it is possessed. Quoting John 4:13 he writes: ‘*Whosoever drinks of this water, by which temporal goods are signified, shall thirst again*. The reason for this is that we realise more their insufficiency when we possess them: and this very fact shows that they are imperfect, and that the sovereign good does not consist therein’. When we possess riches, we realise that they fail to fulfil us, and we seek more.<sup>51</sup> Desire for wealth leads to a bad infinity, a never-ending search for more wealth as it fails to grant fulfilment. The desire for God, in contrast, leads to fulfilment (and the more we possess the ultimate Good, the more we find fulfilment in it).

There is a second improper way of relating to things created. This occurs when our desire zooms in on one specific created good and invests it with its infinite dynamic. Thomas

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<sup>49</sup> I use the translation by Peter A. Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin and Joseph Bolin, *St Thomas Aquinas. On Love and Charity. Readings from the ‘Commentary on the Sentences by Peter Lombard’* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 271

<sup>50</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, ‘The theological virtue of charity (IIa IIae, qq. 23-46)’ in Stephen J. Pope (ed.), *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Washington DC: Georgetown Press, 2002), 244-58

<sup>51</sup> *ST I–II*, q. 2, a. 1 ad 3

considers it a kind of superstition (where divine worship is offered to whom it ought not)<sup>52</sup> or even (in the broadest sense of the word) idolatry, the gravest of sins.<sup>53</sup> In idolatry, our desire finds a momentary rest in something finite that becomes the exclusive focus of our will. Thus, given the almost inexhaustible dynamic of human desire, there is always the danger that human desire rests in a finite object which, so to speak, cannot support this burden or intensity—and then we end up idolising something finite. Alternatively, desire turns away in tedium, pursuing another transient object.

Religion solves the riddle of human desire by allowing it to maintain its dynamic (thus preventing it from over-investing itself in a particular created good, thereby ‘burning it away’) without, however, pursuing a ‘bad infinity’, wandering from one particular created thing to another in a futile quest for fulfilment in this life. By refocusing our desire via God our desire for created things is not abolished; but our desire for created things is now mediated through God.

Thomas is suggesting that it is exactly through charity, which reorients our desire for created things ‘through God’ (*Deo mediante*) that we can attribute intrinsic value to things. In other words, whereas some critics are worried that the notion that we have to love other people or things ‘for the sake of God’ will result in treating them as a means to an end, and instrumentalizing them, it is actually the other way around: just because we love God first and foremost, we can love created things with the reverence that is due to them. If our love directly targets created things, we are in danger of idolizing them, or abusing them. When our desire focuses on God first, these things can be enjoyed for what they are: valuable and perhaps beautiful, but not God.

To explain this, I would like to draw an analogy. Friendship comes undoubtedly with a set of benefits or advantages, such as mutual support and assistance. If, however, I immediately target these advantages, I am no longer acting as a friend (cf. the phenomenon of the social networker). It is by being a genuine friend that I can truly enjoy the benefits of friendship, that is, indirectly. The ‘social networker’ does not relate properly to the benefits that are associated with friendship if he pursues or desires them immediately. We can only genuinely relish the benefits of friendship by acting as a true friend and love our friend for her own sake. So too with our relation to created things: if we love them through God, we can truly relish them. If we target them immediately, we are in danger of relating them in an improper manner. This is a powerful and appropriate analogy, I hope, if only because Thomas characterizes charity itself in terms of friendship with God. In short, charity extends the gratuity or non-instrumentality at the heart of any genuine friendship by infusing all our desires and pursuits with a radical theocentricity. It is difficult to imagine a more radically different alternative to the modern, instrumentalist mindset.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Thomas’s views imply

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<sup>52</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 92, a. 1

<sup>53</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 94, a. 3: ‘the greatest of all [sins] seems to be for a man to give God’s honour to a creature, since, so far as he is concerned, he sets up another God in the world, and lessens the divine sovereignty’. Thomas mainly has in mind the worship of inanimate objects or animals but his remarks have a wider application (see *ST II-II*, q. 94, a. 1 *ad* 4).

<sup>54</sup> For a more expanded version of the argument developed here, see Rik Van Nieuwenhove, ‘The Religious Disposition as a Critical Resource to Resist Instrumentalisation’ *The Heythrop Journal* 50 (2009): 689-96 and Roger Scruton’s important essay, ‘On Humane Education’ from *The Aesthetic*



a powerful critique of today's society, in which processes of bureaucratisation and monetarisation intrude upon central areas of cultural reproduction, education, art, and even interpersonal relations. As Roger Scruton reminds us, one of the persistent fallacies of modern thinking is the belief that if something is of benefit to us, it is a means to the benefit it confers. Thomas reminds us that the things from which we benefit most (worship of God, art, knowledge, friendship and love...) are ends in themselves, and vanish as soon as we treat them otherwise. In light of this analysis one wonders whether the erosion of religion (and the theocentric focus it traditionally nurtures) has made modern society far more vulnerable to rampant instrumentalization and inane bureaucratisation.

## **Quotations *On love as passion (ST I-II, q. 28 (extr.) and charity (ST II-II, q. 27ff)***

### **ST I-II, q. 28, a. 2. Whether mutual indwelling is an effect of love?**

**I answer that,** This effect of mutual indwelling may be understood as referring both to the apprehensive and to the appetitive power. **Because, as to the *apprehensive* power, the beloved is said to be in the lover, inasmuch as the beloved abides in the apprehension of the lover, according to Philippians 1:7, "For that I have you in my heart": while the lover is said to be in the beloved, according to apprehension, inasmuch as the lover is not satisfied with a superficial apprehension of the beloved, but strives to gain an intimate knowledge of everything pertaining to the beloved, so as to penetrate into his very soul.** Thus it is written concerning the Holy Ghost, Who is God's Love, that He "searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10).

**As the *appetitive* power, the object loved is said to be in the lover, inasmuch as it is in his affections, by a kind of complacency: causing him either to take pleasure in it, or in its good, when present; or, in the absence of the object loved, by his longing, to tend towards it with the love of concupiscence, or towards the good that he wills to the beloved, with the love of friendship: not indeed from any extrinsic cause (as when we desire one thing on account of another, or wish good to another on account of something else), but because the complacency in the beloved is rooted in the lover's heart. **For this reason we speak of love as being "intimate"; and "of the bowels of charity."** On the other hand, the lover is in the beloved, by the love of concupiscence and by the love of friendship, but not in the same way. **For the love of concupiscence is not satisfied with any external or superficial possession or enjoyment of the beloved; but seeks to possess the beloved perfectly, by penetrating into his heart, as it were. Whereas, in the love of friendship, the lover is in the beloved, inasmuch as he reckons what is good or evil to his friend, as being so to himself; and his friend's will as his own, so that it seems as though he felt the good or suffered the evil in the person of his friend. Hence it is proper to friends "to desire the same things, and to grieve and rejoice at the same," as the Philosopher says (Ethic. ix, 3 and Rhet. ii, 4). Consequently in so far as he reckons what affects his friend as affecting himself, the lover seems to be in the beloved, as though he were become one with him: but in so far as, on the other hand, he wills and acts for his friend's sake as for his own sake, looking on his friend as identified with himself, thus the beloved is in the lover.****

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*Understanding. Essays in the Philosophy of Art and Culture* (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press: 1998)

In yet a third way, mutual indwelling in the love of friendship can be understood in regard to reciprocal love: inasmuch as friends return love for love, and both desire and do good things for one another.

### **Article 3. Whether ecstasy is an effect of love?**

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**On the contrary**, Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv) that "the Divine love produces ecstasy," and that "God Himself suffered ecstasy through love." Since therefore according to the same author (Div. Nom. iv), every love is a participated likeness of the Divine Love, it seems that every love causes ecstasy.

**I answer that**, To suffer ecstasy means to be placed outside oneself. This happens as to the apprehensive power and as to the appetitive power. As to the *apprehensive* power, a man is said to be placed outside himself, when he is placed outside the knowledge proper to him. This may be due to his being raised to a higher knowledge; thus, a man is said to suffer ecstasy, inasmuch as he is placed outside the connatural apprehension of his sense and reason, when he is raised up so as to comprehend things that surpass sense and reason: or it may be due to his being cast down into a state of debasement; thus a man may be said to suffer ecstasy, when he is overcome by violent passion or madness. As to the *appetitive* power, a man is said to suffer ecstasy, when that power is borne towards something else, so that it goes forth out from itself, as it were.

The first of these ecstasies is caused by love dispositively in so far, namely, as love makes the lover dwell on the beloved, as stated above (Article 2), and to dwell intently on one thing draws the mind from other things. The second ecstasy is caused by love directly; by love of friendship, simply; by love of concupiscence not simply but in a restricted sense. Because in love of concupiscence, the lover is carried out of himself, in a certain sense; in so far, namely, as not being satisfied with enjoying the good that he has, he seeks to enjoy something outside himself. But since he seeks to have this extrinsic good for himself, he does not go out from himself simply, and this movement remains finally within him. On the other hand, in the love of friendship, a man's affection goes out from itself simply; because he wishes and does good to his friend, by caring and providing for him, for his sake.

### **ST II-II, q. 23, a. 1. Whether charity is friendship?**

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**Objection 1.** It would seem that charity is not friendship. For nothing is so appropriate to friendship as to dwell with one's friend, according to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* viii, 5). Now charity is of man towards God and the angels, "whose dwelling [Douay: 'conversation'] is not with men" (Daniel 2:11). Therefore charity is not friendship.

**Objection 2.** Further, there is no friendship without return of love (*Ethic.* viii, 2). But charity extends even to one's enemies, according to Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies." Therefore charity is not friendship.

**Objection 3.** Further, according to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* viii, 3) there are three kinds of friendship, directed respectively towards the delightful, the useful, or the virtuous. Now

charity is not the friendship for the useful or delightful; for Jerome says in his letter to Paulinus which is to be found at the beginning of the Bible: "True friendship cemented by Christ, is where men are drawn together, not by household interests, not by mere bodily presence, not by crafty and cajoling flattery, but by the fear of God, and the study of the Divine Scriptures." No more is it friendship for the virtuous, since by charity we love even sinners, whereas friendship based on the virtuous is only for virtuous men (*Ethic.* viii). Therefore charity is not friendship.

**On the contrary,** It is written (John 15:15): "I will not now call you servants . . . but My friends." Now this was said to them by reason of nothing else than charity. Therefore charity is friendship.

**I answer that,** According to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* viii, 2,3) not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with **benevolence**, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him. If, however, we do not wish good to what we love, but wish its good for ourselves, (thus we are said to love wine, or a horse, or the like), it is love not of friendship, but of a kind of concupiscence. For it would be absurd to speak of having friendship for wine or for a horse.

Yet neither does well-wishing suffice for friendship, for a certain **mutual** love is requisite, since friendship is between friend and friend: and this well-wishing is founded on some kind of **communication**.

Accordingly, since there is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication, of which it is written (1 Corinthians 1:9): "God is faithful: by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son." The love which is based on this communication, is charity: wherefore it is evident that charity is the friendship of man for God.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Man's life is twofold. There is his outward life in respect of his sensitive and corporeal nature: and with regard to this life there is no communication or fellowship between us and God or the angels. The other is man's spiritual life in respect of his mind, and with regard to this life there is fellowship between us and both God and the angels, imperfectly indeed in this present state of life, wherefore it is written (Philippians 3:20): "Our conversation is in heaven." But this "conversation" will be perfected in heaven, when "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face" (Apocalypse 22:3-4). Therefore charity is imperfect here, but will be perfected in heaven.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Friendship extends to a person in two ways: first in respect of himself, and in this way friendship never extends but to one's friends: secondly, it extends to someone in respect of another, as, when a man has friendship for a certain person, for his sake he loves all belonging to him, be they children, servants, or connected with him in any way. **Indeed, so much do we love our friends, that for their sake we love all who belong to them, even if they hurt or hate us; so that, in this way, the friendship of charity extends even to our enemies, whom we love out of charity in relation to God, to Whom the friendship of charity is chiefly directed.**

**Reply to Objection 3.** The friendship that is based on the virtuous is directed to none but a virtuous man as the principal person, but for his sake we love those who belong to him, even though they be not virtuous: in this way charity, which above all is friendship based on the virtuous, extends to sinners, whom, out of charity, we love for God's sake.

*In the following articles we look at how charity relates to other virtues, Following St Paul in Corinthians 13:13 it will come as no surprise that Thomas considers charity the highest virtue. Pay also attention to the first Objection and its Reply. It is an important qualification of Thomas's intellectualism (over voluntarism).*

*ST II-II, q. 23, a. 7 touches on a delicate point, namely, whether true virtue is possible without charity. To deny this, is to downplay our natural goodness and the traditional virtues of the gentiles and the ancients; to affirm it, would appear to suggest that Christian salvation is redundant. Augustine's answer had veered toward the first point of view. Thomas's stance is somewhat more nuanced. Finally, and related to this question, is art. 8: charity as the form (or 'mother') of all virtues. It is a beautiful little article that suggests how charity informs one's entire moral outlook and practices. Incidentally, the role that charity plays in Thomas's theological ethics also has implications for the value of our works (in terms of merit before God), thus pre-empting to some degree the vexed discussions on the relation between faith and works in later centuries.*

### **ST II-II, q. 23, a. 6. Whether charity is the most excellent of the virtues?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that charity is not the most excellent of the virtues. Because the higher power has the higher virtue even as it has a higher operation. Now the intellect is higher than the will, since it directs the will. Therefore, faith, which is in the intellect, is more excellent than charity which is in the will.

**Objection 2.** Further, the thing by which another works seems the less excellent of the two, even as a servant, by whom his master works, is beneath his master. Now "faith . . . worketh by charity," according to Galatians 5:6. Therefore faith is more excellent than charity.

**Objection 3.** Further, that which is by way of addition to another seems to be the more perfect of the two. Now hope seems to be something additional to charity: for the object of charity is good, whereas the object of hope is an arduous good. Therefore hope is more excellent than charity.

**On the contrary,** It is written (1 Corinthians 13:13): "The greater of these is charity."

**I answer that,** Since good, in human acts, depends on their being regulated by the due rule, it must needs be that human virtue, which is a principle of good acts, consists in attaining the rule of human acts. Now the rule of human acts is twofold, as stated above (Article 3), namely, human reason and God: yet God is the first rule, whereby, even human reason must be regulated. Consequently the theological virtues, which consist in attaining this first rule,

since their object is God, are more excellent than the moral, or the intellectual virtues, which consist in attaining human reason: and it follows that among the theological virtues themselves, the first place belongs to that which attains God most.

Now that which is of itself always ranks before that which is by another. But **faith and hope attain God indeed in so far as we derive from Him the knowledge of truth or the acquisition of good, whereas charity attains God Himself that it may rest in Him**, but not that something may accrue to us from Him. Hence charity is more excellent than faith or hope, and, consequently, than all the other virtues, just as prudence, which by itself attains reason, is more excellent than the other moral virtues, which attain reason in so far as it appoints the mean in human operations or passions.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The operation of the intellect is completed by the thing understood being in the intellectual subject, so that the excellence of the intellectual operation is assessed according to the measure of the intellect. On the other hand, the operation of the will and of every appetitive power is completed in the tendency of the appetite towards a thing as its term, wherefore the excellence of the appetitive operation is gauged according to the thing which is the object of the operation. Now those things which are beneath the soul are more excellent in the soul than they are in themselves, because a thing is contained according to the mode of the container (De Causis xii). On the other hand, things that are above the soul, are more excellent in themselves than they are in the soul. **Consequently it is better to know than to love the things that are beneath us; for which reason the Philosopher gave the preference to the intellectual virtues over the moral virtues (Ethic. x, 7,8): whereas the love of the things that are above us, especially of God, ranks before the knowledge of such things. Therefore charity is more excellent than faith.**

**Reply to Objection 2.** Faith works by love, not instrumentally, as a master by his servant, but as by its proper form: hence the argument does not prove.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The same good is the object of charity and of hope: but charity implies union with that good, whereas hope implies distance therefrom. Hence charity does not regard that good as being arduous, as hope does, since what is already united has not the character of arduous: and this shows that charity is more perfect than hope.

### **ST II-II, q. 23, a.7. Whether any true virtue is possible without charity?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that there can be true virtue without charity. For it is proper to virtue to produce a good act. Now those who have not charity, do some good actions, as when they clothe the naked, or feed the hungry and so forth. Therefore true virtue is possible without charity.

**Objection 2.** Further, charity is not possible without faith, since it comes of "an unfeigned faith," as the Apostle says (1 Timothy 1:5). Now, in unbelievers, there can be true chastity, if they curb their concupiscences, and true justice, if they judge rightly. Therefore true virtue is possible without charity.

**Objection 3.** Further, science and art are virtues, according to Ethic. vi. But they are to be found in sinners who lack charity. Therefore true virtue can be without charity.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says (1 Corinthians 13:3): "If I should distribute all my goods to the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." And yet true virtue is very profitable, according to Wisdom 8:7: "She teacheth temperance, and prudence, and justice, and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life." Therefore no true virtue is possible without charity.

**I answer that,** Virtue is ordered to the good, as stated above (I-II:55:4). Now the good is chiefly an end, for things directed to the end are not said to be good except in relation to the end. Accordingly, just as the end is twofold, the last end, and the proximate end, so also, is good twofold, one, the ultimate and universal good, the other proximate and particular. The ultimate and principal good of man is the enjoyment of God, according to Psalm 72:28: "It is good for me to adhere to God," and to this good man is ordered by charity. Man's secondary and, as it were, particular good may be twofold: one is truly good, because, considered in itself, it can be directed to the principal good, which is the last end; while the other is good apparently and not truly, because it leads us away from the final good. Accordingly it is evident that simply true virtue is that which is directed to man's principal good; thus also the Philosopher says (Phys. vii, text. 17) that "virtue is the disposition of a perfect thing to that which is best": and in this way no true virtue is possible without charity.

If, however, we take virtue as being ordered to some particular end, then we speak of virtue being where there is no charity, in so far as it is directed to some particular good. But if this particular good is not a true, but an apparent good, it is not a true virtue that is ordered to such a good, but a counterfeit virtue. Even so, as Augustine says (Contra Julian. iv, 3), "the prudence of the miser, whereby he devises various roads to gain, is no true virtue; nor the miser's justice, whereby he scorns the property of another through fear of severe punishment; nor the miser's temperance, whereby he curbs his desire for expensive pleasures; nor the miser's fortitude, whereby as Horace, says, 'he braves the sea, he crosses mountains, he goes through fire, in order to avoid poverty'" (Epis. lib, 1; Ep. i, 45). If, on the other hand, this particular good be a true good, for instance the welfare of the state, or the like, it will indeed be a true virtue, imperfect, however, unless it be referred to the final and perfect good. Accordingly no strictly true virtue is possible without charity.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The act of one lacking charity may be of two kinds; one is in accordance with his lack of charity, as when he does something that is referred to that whereby he lacks charity. Such an act is always evil: thus Augustine says (Contra Julian. iv, 3) that the actions which an unbeliever performs as an unbeliever, are always sinful, even when he clothes the naked, or does any like thing, and directs it to his unbelief as end.

There is, however, another act of one lacking charity, not in accordance with his lack of charity, but in accordance with his possession of some other gift of God, whether faith, or hope, or even his natural good, which is not completely taken away by sin, as stated above (II-II:10:4; I-II:85:2). On this way it is possible for an act, without charity, to be generically good, but not perfectly good, because it lacks its due order to the last end.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Since the end is in practical matters, what the principle is in speculative matters, just as there can be no strictly true science, if a right estimate of the first indemonstrable principle be lacking, so, there can be no strictly true justice, or chastity, without that due ordering to the end, which is effected by charity, however rightly a man may be affected about other matters.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Science and art of their very nature imply a relation to some particular good, and not to the ultimate good of human life, as do the moral virtues, which make man good simply, as stated above (I-II:56:3). Hence the comparison fails.

### **ST II-II, q. 23, a. 8: Whether charity is the form of the virtues?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that charity is not the true form of the virtues. Because the form of a thing is either exemplar or essential. Now charity is not the exemplar form of the other virtues, since it would follow that the other virtues are of the same species as charity: nor is it the essential form of the other virtues, since then it would not be distinct from them. Therefore it is in no way the form of the virtues.

**Objection 2.** Further, charity is compared to the other virtues as their root and foundation, according to Ephesians 3:17: "Rooted and founded in charity." Now a root or foundation is not the form, but rather the matter of a thing, since it is the first part in the making. Therefore charity is not the form of the virtues.

**Objection 3.** Further, formal, final, and efficient causes do not coincide with one another (Phys. ii, 7). Now charity is called the end and the mother of the virtues. Therefore it should not be called their form.

**On the contrary,** Ambrose [Lombard, Sent. iii, D, 23 says that charity is the form of the virtues.

**I answer that,** In morals the form of an act is taken chiefly from the end. The reason of this is that the principal of moral acts is the will, whose object and form, so to speak, are the end. Now the form of an act always follows from a form of the agent. Consequently, in morals, that which gives an act its order to the end, must needs give the act its form. Now it is evident, in accordance with what has been said (Article 7), that it is charity which directs the acts of all other virtues to the last end, and which, consequently, also gives the form to all other acts of virtue: and it is precisely in this sense that charity is called the form of the virtues, for these are called virtues in relation to "informed" acts.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Charity is called the form of the other virtues not as being their exemplar or their essential form, but rather by way of efficient cause, in so far as it sets the form on all, in the aforesaid manner.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Charity is compared to the foundation or root in so far as all other virtues draw their sustenance and nourishment therefrom, and not in the sense that the foundation and root have the character of a material cause.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Charity is said to be the end of other virtues, because it directs all other virtues to its own end. And since a mother is one who conceives within herself and by another, charity is called the mother of the other virtues, because, by commanding them, it conceives the acts of the other virtues, by the desire of the last end.

*In q. 24 Thomas dealt with the subject of charity, and raised questions such as: Can charity increase? Can be it lost through mortal sin, etc. In q. 25 he treats of the object of charity, i.e., what is it that we love when loving with charity. In ST II-II, q. 25, a. 1 he asks whether charity stops at God, or extends to our neighbour. I do not include the full article but this extract is important...:*

### **ST II-II, q. 25, a. 1 Whether the love of charity stops at God, or extends to our neighbor?**

**I answer that:** ...the aspect under which our neighbor is to be loved, is God, since what we ought to love in our neighbor is that he may be in God. Hence it is clear that it is specifically the same act whereby we love God, and whereby we love our neighbor. Consequently the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor.

**Reply to Objection 3.** It is wrong to hope in man as though he were the principal author of salvation, but not, to hope in man as helping us ministerially under God. On like manner it would be wrong if a man loved his neighbor as though he were his last end, but not, if he loved him for God's sake; and this is what charity does.

*In the following articles, Thomas surveys a number of other 'objects' of charity. Should we love our bodies with charity (a. 5) (yes); or other animals? (they are irrational and cannot share in beatitude, but we can nonetheless still love them out of charity, in so far as 'we wish for their preservation, to God's honor and our service; thus too does God love them out of charity.' (a. 3) I include extracts from a. 4 (which returns to the topic of union as distinct from unity as the foundation of love), a. 6 (because it suggests an eschatological notion of love, distinct from the erotic or agapeic ones, which I think is very profound) and a. 8 (because it explains the triangular notion of love in a homely manner).*

### **ST II-II, q. 25, a. 4. Whether a man ought to love himself out of charity?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that a man is not bound to love himself out of charity. For Gregory says in a homily (In Evang. xvii) that there "can be no charity between less than two." Therefore no man has charity towards himself.

**Objection 2.** Further, friendship, by its very nature, implies mutual love and equality (Ethic. viii, 2,7), which cannot be of one man towards himself. But charity is a kind of friendship, as stated above (II-II:23:1). Therefore a man cannot have charity towards himself.



**Objection 3.** Further, anything relating to charity cannot be blameworthy, since charity "dealeth not perversely" (1 Corinthians 13:4). Now a man deserves to be blamed for loving himself, since it is written (2 Timothy 3:1-2): "In the last days shall come dangerous times, men shall be lovers of themselves." Therefore a man cannot love himself out of charity.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Leviticus 19:18): "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself." Now we love our friends out of charity. Therefore we should love ourselves too out of charity.

**I answer that,** Since charity is a kind of friendship, as stated above (II-II:23:1), we may consider charity from two standpoints: first, under the general notion of friendship, and in this way we must hold that, properly speaking, a man is not a friend to himself, but something more than a friend, since friendship implies union, for Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv) that "love is a unitive force," whereas a man is one with himself which is more than being united to another. Hence, just as unity is the principle of union, so the love with which a man loves himself is the form and root of friendship. For if we have friendship with others it is because we do unto them as we do unto ourselves, hence we read in Ethic. ix, 4,8, that "the origin of friendly relations with others lies in our relations to ourselves." Thus too with regard to principles we have something greater than science, namely understanding.

Secondly, we may speak of charity in respect of its specific nature, namely as denoting man's friendship with God in the first place, and, consequently, with the things of God, among which things is man himself who has charity. Hence, among these other things which he loves out of charity because they pertain to God, he loves also himself out of charity.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Gregory speaks there of charity under the general notion of friendship: and the Second Objection is to be taken in the same sense.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Those who love themselves are to be blamed, in so far as they love themselves as regards their sensitive nature, which they humor. This is not to love oneself truly according to one's rational nature, so as to desire for oneself the good things which pertain to the perfection of reason: and in this way chiefly it is through charity that a man loves himself.

#### **57 II-II, q. 25, a. 6. Whether we ought to love sinners out of charity?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that we ought not to love sinners out of charity. For it is written (Psalm 118:113): "I have hated the unjust." But David had perfect charity. Therefore sinners should be hated rather than loved, out of charity.

**Objection 2.** Further, "love is proved by deeds" as Gregory says in a homily for Pentecost (In Evang. xxx). But good men do no works of the unjust: on the contrary, they do such as would appear to be works of hate, according to Psalm 100:8: "In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land": and God commanded (Exodus 22:18): "Wizards thou shalt not suffer to live." Therefore sinners should not be loved out of charity.

**Objection 4.** Further, it is proper to friends to rejoice in, and will the same things. Now charity does not make us will what sinners will, nor to rejoice in what gives them joy, but rather the contrary. Therefore sinners should not be loved out of charity.

**Objection 5.** Further, it is proper to friends to associate together, according to Ethic. viii. But we ought not to associate with sinners, according to 2 Corinthians 6:17: "Go ye out from among them." Therefore we should not love sinners out of charity.

**On the contrary,** Augustine says (*De Doctr. Christ.* i, 30) that "when it is said: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor,' it is evident that we ought to look upon every man as our neighbor." Now sinners do not cease to be men, for sin does not destroy nature. Therefore we ought to love sinners out of charity.

**I answer that,** Two things may be considered in the sinner: his nature and his guilt. According to his nature, which he has from God, he has a capacity for happiness, on the fellowship of which charity is based, as stated above (Article 3; II-II:23:5), wherefore we ought to love sinners, out of charity, in respect of their nature.

On the other hand their guilt is opposed to God, and is an obstacle to happiness. Wherefore, in respect of their guilt whereby they are opposed to God, all sinners are to be hated, even one's father or mother or kindred, according to Luke 12:26. **For it is our duty to hate, in the sinner, his being a sinner, and to love in him, his being a man capable of bliss; and this is to love him truly, out of charity, for God's sake.**

**Reply to Objection 1.** The prophet hated the unjust, as such, and the object of his hate was their injustice, which was their evil. Such hatred is perfect, of which he himself says (Psalm 138:22): "I have hated them with a perfect hatred." Now hatred of a person's evil is equivalent to love of his good. Hence also this perfect hatred belongs to charity.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As the Philosopher observes (Ethic. ix, 3), when our friends fall into sin, we ought not to deny them the amenities of friendship, so long as there is hope of their mending their ways, and we ought to help them more readily to regain virtue than to recover money, had they lost it, for as much as virtue is more akin than money to friendship. When, however, they fall into very great wickedness, and become incurable, we ought no longer to show them friendliness. It is for this reason that both Divine and human laws command such like sinners to be put to death, because there is greater likelihood of their harming others than of their mending their ways. Nevertheless the judge puts this into effect, not out of hatred for the sinners, but out of the love of charity, by reason of which he prefers the public good to the life of the individual. Moreover the death inflicted by the judge profits the sinner, if he be converted, unto the expiation of his crime; and, if he be not converted, it profits so as to put an end to the sin, because the sinner is thus deprived of the power to sin any more.

**Reply to Objection 4.** We love sinners out of charity, not so as to will what they will, or to rejoice in what gives them joy, but so as to make them will what we will, and rejoice in what rejoices us. Hence it is written (Jeremiah 15:19): "They shall be turned to thee, and thou shalt not be turned to them."

**Reply to Objection 5.** The weak should avoid associating with sinners, on account of the danger in which they stand of being perverted by them. But it is commendable for the perfect, of whose perversion there is no fear, to associate with sinners that they may convert them. For thus did Our Lord eat and drink with sinners as related by Matthew 9:11-13. Yet all should avoid the society of sinners, as regards fellowship in sin; in this sense it is written (2 Corinthians 6:17): "Go out from among them . . . and touch not the unclean thing," i.e. by consenting to sin.

#### **ST II-II, q. 25, a. 8. Whether charity requires that we should love our enemies?**

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**On the contrary,** Our Lord said (Matthew 4:44): "Love your enemies."

**I answer that,** Love of one's enemies may be understood in three ways. First, as though we were to love our enemies as such: this is perverse, and contrary to charity, since it implies love of that which is evil in another.

Secondly love of one's enemies may mean that we love them as to their nature, but in general: and in this sense charity requires that we should love our enemies, namely, that in loving God and our neighbor, we should not exclude our enemies from the love given to our neighbor in general.

Thirdly, love of one's enemies may be considered as specially directed to them, namely, that we should have a special movement of love towards our enemies. Charity does not require this absolutely, because it does not require that we should have a special movement of love to every individual man, since this would be impossible. Nevertheless charity does require this, in respect of our being prepared in mind, namely, that we should be ready to love our enemies individually, if the necessity were to occur. That man should actually do so, and love his enemy for God's sake, without it being necessary for him to do so, belongs to the perfection of charity. For since man loves his neighbor, out of charity, for God's sake, the more he loves God, the more does he put enmities aside and show love towards his neighbor: thus if we loved a certain man very much, we would love his children though they were unfriendly towards us. This is the sense in which Augustine speaks in the passage quoted in the First Objection, the Reply to which is therefore evident.

*ST II-II, q. 26 deals with the order of charity. Should we love God more than neighbour? (No: God should be loved chiefly and before all out of charity, 'for he is loved as the cause of happiness, whereas our neighbour is loved as receiving together with us a share of happiness from him' (a. 1). Of course, if we fail to love our neighbour, a strong argument can be made that we do not love God in the first place (a. 1, ad 1). Should we love God more than ourselves with charity (a. 3) ?– (Yes). I include a. 4 which suggests a profound interpretation of the command to love your neighbour as yourself, a. 6 (a striking rebuttal of the view that our love should be entirely disinterested, radically universal and utterly non-preferential), and a. 11, which, as a balancing act, is mildly amusing.*

**ST II-II, q. 26, a. 4. Whether out of charity, man ought to love himself more than his neighbor?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that a man ought not, out of charity, to love himself more than his neighbor. For the principal object of charity is God, as stated above (Article 2; II-II:25:12). Now sometimes our neighbor is more closely united to God than we are ourselves. Therefore we ought to love such a one more than ourselves.

**Objection 2.** Further, the more we love a person, the more we avoid injuring him. Now a man, out of charity, submits to injury for his neighbor's sake, according to Proverbs 12:26: "He that neglecteth a loss for the sake of a friend, is just." Therefore a man ought, out of charity, to love his neighbor more than himself.

**Objection 3.** Further, it is written (1 Corinthians 13:5) "charity seeketh not its own." Now the thing we love most is the one whose good we seek most. Therefore a man does not, out of charity, love himself more than his neighbor.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39): "Thou shalt love thy neighbor (Leviticus 19:18: 'friend') as thyself." Whence it seems to follow that man's love for himself is the model of his love for another.

But the model exceeds the copy. Therefore, out of charity, a man ought to love himself more than his neighbor.

**I answer that,** There are two things in man, his spiritual nature and his corporeal nature. And a man is said to love himself by reason of his loving himself with regard to his spiritual nature, as stated above (II-II:25:7): so that accordingly, a man ought, out of charity, to love himself more than he loves any other person.

This is evident from the very reason for loving: since, as stated above (II-II:25:12), God is loved as the principle of good, on which the love of charity is founded; while man, out of charity, loves himself by reason of his being a partaker of the aforesaid good, and loves his neighbor by reason of his fellowship in that good. Now fellowship is a reason for love according to a certain union in relation to God. Wherefore just as unity surpasses union, the fact that man himself has a share of the Divine good, is a more potent reason for loving than that another should be a partner with him in that share. Therefore man, out of charity, ought to love himself more than his neighbor: in sign whereof, a man ought not to give way to any evil of sin, which counteracts his share of happiness, not even that he may free his neighbor from sin.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The love of charity takes its quantity not only from its object which is God, but also from the lover, who is the man that has charity, even as the quantity of any action depends in some way on the subject. Wherefore, though a better neighbor is nearer to God, yet because he is not as near to the man who has charity, as this man is to himself, it does not follow that a man is bound to love his neighbor more than himself.

**Reply to Objection 2.** A man ought to bear bodily injury for his friend's sake, and precisely in so doing he loves himself more as regards his spiritual mind, because it pertains to the perfection of virtue, which is a good of the mind. On spiritual matters, however, man ought not to suffer injury by sinning, in order to free his neighbor from sin, as stated above.

**Reply to Objection 3.** As Augustine says in his Rule (Ep. ccxi), the saying, "'charity seeks not her own,' means that it prefers the common to the private good." Now the common good is always more lovable to the individual than his private good, even as the good of the whole is more lovable to the part, than the latter's own partial good, as stated above (Article 3).

### ST II-II, q, 26, a. 6. Whether we ought to love one neighbor more than another?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that we ought not to love one neighbor more than another. For Augustine says (*De Doctr. Christ.* i, 28): "One ought to love all men equally. Since, however, one cannot do good to all, we ought to consider those chiefly who by reason of place, time or any other circumstance, by a kind of chance, are more closely united to us." Therefore one neighbor ought not to be loved more than another.

**Objection 2.** Further, where there is one and the same reason for loving several, there should be no inequality of love. Now there is one and the same reason for loving all one's neighbors, which reason is God, as Augustine states (*De Doctr. Christ.* i, 27). Therefore we ought to love all our neighbors equally.

**On the contrary,** One's obligation to love a person is proportionate to the gravity of the sin one commits in acting against that love. Now it is a more grievous sin to act against the love of certain neighbors, than against the love of others. Hence the commandment (Leviticus 10:9), "He that curseth his father or mother, dying let him die," which does not apply to those who cursed others than the above. Therefore we ought to love some neighbors more than others.

**I answer that,** There have been two opinions on this question: for some have said that we ought, out of charity, to love all our neighbors equally, as regards our affection, but not as regards the outward effect. They held that the order of love is to be understood as applying to outward favors, which we ought to confer on those who are connected with us in preference to those who are unconnected, and not to the inward affection, which ought to be given equally to all including our enemies.

But this is unreasonable (*irrationabiliter*). For the affection of charity, which is the inclination of grace, is not less orderly than the natural appetite, which is the inclination of nature, for both inclinations flow from Divine wisdom. Now we observe in the physical order that the natural inclination in each thing is proportionate to the act or movement that is becoming to the nature of that thing: thus in earth the inclination of gravity is greater than in water, because it is becoming to earth to be beneath water. Consequently the inclination also of

grace which is the effect of charity, must needs be proportionate to those actions which have to be performed outwardly, so that, to wit, the affection of our charity be more intense towards those to whom we ought to behave with greater kindness.

We must, therefore, say that, even as regards the affection we ought to love one neighbor more than another. The reason is that, since the principle of love is God, and the person who loves, it must needs be that the affection of love increases in proportion to the nearness to one or the other of those principles. For as we stated above (Article 1), wherever we find a principle, order depends on relation to that principle.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Love can be unequal in two ways: first on the part of the good we wish our friend. On this respect we love all men equally out of charity: because we wish them all one same generic good, namely everlasting happiness. Secondly love is said to be greater through its action being more intense: and in this way we ought not to love all equally.

Or we may reply that we have unequal love for certain persons in two ways: first, through our loving some and not loving others. As regards beneficence we are bound to observe this inequality, because we cannot do good to all: but as regards benevolence, love ought not to be thus unequal. The other inequality arises from our loving some more than others: and Augustine does not mean to exclude the latter inequality, but the former, as is evident from what he says of beneficence.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Our neighbors are not all equally related to God; some are nearer to Him, by reason of their greater goodness, and those we ought, out of charity, to love more than those who are not so near to Him.

### **ST II-II, q. 26, a. 11. Whether a man ought to love his wife more than his father and mother?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that a man ought to love his wife more than his father and mother. For no man leaves a thing for another unless he love the latter more. Now it is written (Genesis 2:24) that "a man shall leave father and mother" on account of his wife. Therefore a man ought to love his wife more than his father and mother.

**Objection 2.** Further, the Apostle says (Ephesians 5:33) that a husband should "love his wife as himself." Now a man ought to love himself more than his parents. Therefore he ought to love his wife also more than his parents.

**Objection 3.** Further, love should be greater where there are more reasons for loving. Now there are more reasons for love in the friendship of a man towards his wife. For the Philosopher says (Ethic. viii, 12) that "in this friendship there are the motives of utility, pleasure, and also of virtue, if husband and wife are virtuous." Therefore a man's love for his wife ought to be greater than his love for his parents.

**On the contrary,** According to Ephesians 5:28, "men ought to love their wives as their own bodies." Now a man ought to love his body less than his neighbor, as stated above (Article 5): and among his neighbors he should love his parents most. Therefore he ought to love his parents more than his wife.

**I answer that,** As stated above (Article 9), the degrees of love may be taken from the good (which is loved), or from the union between those who love. On the part of the good which is the object loved, a man should love his parents more than his wife, because he loves them as his principles and considered as a more exalted good.

But on the part of the union, the wife ought to be loved more, because she is united with her husband, as one flesh, according to Matthew 19:6: "Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh." **Consequently a man loves his wife more intensely, but his parents with greater reverence.**

**Reply to Objection 1.** A man does not in all respects leave his father and mother for the sake of his wife: for in certain cases a man ought to succor his parents rather than his wife. He does however leave all his kinsfolk, and cleaves to his wife as regards the union of carnal connection and co-habitation.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The words of the Apostle do not mean that a man ought to love his wife equally with himself, but that a man's love for himself is the reason for his love of his wife, since she is one with him.

**Reply to Objection 3.** There are also several reasons for a man's love for his father; and these, in a certain respect, namely, as regards good, are more weighty than those for which a man loves his wife; although the latter outweigh the former as regards the closeness of the union.

As to the argument in the contrary sense, it must be observed that in the words quoted, the particle "as" denotes not equality of love but the motive of love. For the principal reason why a man loves his wife is her being united to him in the flesh.

*ST II-II, q. 27 treats of the principal act of charity, which is to love. The most important article here (and one of the most important ones in his treatise on charity) is a. 4. Here he clearly outlines the triangular nature of love. You will find the same idea, oddly enough, in Kierkegaard who writes in his Works of Love that God is always 'the middle person' in Christian love.*

#### **ST II-II, q. 27, a. 4. Whether God can be loved immediately in this life?**

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**Objection 2.** Further, he who cannot do what is less, cannot do what is more. Now it is more to love God than to know Him, since "he who is joined" to God by love, is "one spirit with

Him" (1 Corinthians 6:17). But man cannot know God immediately. Therefore much less can he love Him immediately.

**On the contrary,** Knowledge of God, through being mediate, is said to be "enigmatic," and "falls away" in heaven, as stated in 1 Corinthians 13:12. But charity "does not fall away" as stated in the same passage (1 Corinthians 13:12). Therefore the charity of the way adheres to God immediately.

**I answer that,** As stated above (I:82:3; II-II:84:7), the act of a cognitive power is completed by the thing known being in the knower, whereas the act of an appetitive power consists in the appetite being inclined towards the thing in itself. Hence it follows that the movement of the appetitive power is towards things in respect of their own condition, whereas the act of a cognitive power follows the mode of the knower.

Now in itself the very order of things is such, that God is knowable and lovable for Himself, since He is essentially truth and goodness itself, whereby other things are known and loved: but with regard to us, since our knowledge is derived through the senses, those things are knowable first which are nearer to our senses, and the last term of knowledge is that which is most remote from our senses.

Accordingly, we must assert that to love which is an act of the appetitive power, even in this state of life, tends to God first, and flows on from Him to other things, and in this sense charity loves God immediately, and other things through God. On the other hand, with regard to knowledge, it is the reverse, since we know God through other things, either as a cause through its effects, or by way of pre-eminence or negation as Dionysius states (Div. Nom. i; cf. I, 12, 12).

**Reply to Objection 2.** Since to love God is something greater than to know Him, especially in this state of life, it follows that love of God presupposes knowledge of God. And because this knowledge does not rest in creatures, but, through them, tends to something else, love begins there, and thence goes on to other things by a circular movement so to speak; for knowledge begins from creatures, tends to God, and love begins with God as the last end, and passes on to creatures.

#### **ST II-II, q. 27, a. 7. Whether it is more meritorious to love an enemy than to love a friend?**

(...)Yet just as the same fire acts with greater force on what is near than on what is distant, so too, charity loves with greater fervor those who are united to us than those who are far removed; and in this respect the love of friends, considered in itself, is more ardent and better than the love of one's enemy.

*I insert an earlier article that compares charity with faith and hope. I also include an article that deals with sloth or spiritual apathy, which is a capital vice that is opposed to the joy of charity (ST II-II, q. 35, a. 3). Another article I include explains how we should love our neighbour as ourselves in more detail (ST II-II, q. 44, a. 7). Much more remains to be said, including the effects of love (joy, peace, mercy in qq. 28-30), the vices opposed to*



*charity, including hatred (q. 34), sloth (q. 35), envy (q. 36), discord (q. 37), and the gift of wisdom, which is attached to charity (q. 45).*

### **ST II-II, Question 17, article 6. Whether hope is distinct from the other theological virtues?**

**I answer that,** A virtue is said to be theological from having God for the object to which it adheres. Now one may adhere to a thing in two ways: first, for its own sake; secondly, because something else is attained thereby. Accordingly charity makes us adhere to God for His own sake, uniting our minds to God by the emotion of love. On the other hand, hope and faith make man adhere to God as to a principle wherefrom certain things accrue to us. Now we derive from God both knowledge of truth and the attainment of perfect goodness. Accordingly faith makes us adhere to God, as the source whence we derive the knowledge of truth, since we believe that what God tells us is true: while hope makes us adhere to God, as the source whence we derive perfect goodness, i.e. in so far as, by hope, we trust to the Divine assistance for obtaining happiness.

### **ST II-II, q. 35, a. 3. Whether sloth is a mortal sin?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that sloth is not a mortal sin. For every mortal sin is contrary to a precept of the Divine Law. But sloth seems contrary to no precept, as one may see by going through the precepts of the Decalogue. Therefore sloth is not a mortal sin.

**On the contrary,** It is written (2 Corinthians 7:10): "The sorrow of the world worketh death." But such is sloth; for it is not sorrow "according to God," which is contrasted with sorrow of the world. Therefore it is a mortal sin.

**I answer that,** As stated above (I-II:88:1; I-II:88:2), mortal sin is so called because it destroys the spiritual life which is the effect of charity, whereby God dwells in us. Wherefore any sin which by its very nature is contrary to charity is a mortal sin by reason of its genus. And such is sloth, because the proper effect of charity is joy in God, as stated above (II-II:28:1), while sloth is sorrow about spiritual good in as much as it is a Divine good. Therefore sloth is a mortal sin in respect of its genus. But it must be observed with regard to all sins that are mortal in respect of their genus, that they are not mortal, save when they attain to their perfection. Because the consummation of sin is in the consent of reason: for we are speaking now of human sins consisting in human acts, the principle of which is the reason. Wherefore if the sin be a mere beginning of sin in the sensuality alone, without attaining to the consent of reason, it is a venial sin on account of the imperfection of the act. Thus in the genus of adultery, the concupiscence that goes no further than the sensuality is a venial sin, whereas if it reach to the consent of reason, it is a mortal sin. So too, the movement of sloth is sometimes in the sensuality alone, by reason of the opposition of the flesh to the spirit, and then it is a venial sin; whereas sometimes it reaches to the reason, which consents in the dislike, horror and detestation of the Divine good, on account of the flesh utterly prevailing over the spirit. On this case it is evident that sloth is a mortal sin.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Sloth is opposed to the precept about hallowing the Sabbath day. For this precept, in so far as it is a moral precept, implicitly commands the mind to rest in God: and sorrow of the mind about the Divine good is contrary thereto.

### **ST II-II, q. 44, a.7. Whether the precept of love of our neighbor is fittingly expressed?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the precept of the love of our neighbor is unfittingly expressed. For the love of charity extends to all men, even to our enemies, as may be seen in Matthew 5:44. But the word "neighbor" denotes a kind of "nighness" which does not seem to exist towards all men. Therefore it seems that this precept is unfittingly expressed.

**Objection 2.** Further, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. ix, 8) "the origin of our friendly relations with others lies in our relation to ourselves," whence it seems to follow that love of self is the origin of one's love for one's neighbor. Now the principle is greater than that which results from it. Therefore man ought not to love his neighbor as himself.

**Objection 3.** Further, man loves himself, but not his neighbor, naturally. Therefore it is unfitting that he should be commanded to love his neighbor as himself.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Matthew 22:39): "The second" commandment "is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

**I answer that,** This precept is fittingly expressed, for it indicates both the reason for loving and the mode of love. The reason for loving is indicated in the word "neighbor," because the reason why we ought to love others out of charity is because they are nigh to us, both as to the natural image of God, and as to the capacity for glory. Nor does it matter whether we say "neighbor," or "brother" according to 1 John 4:21, or "friend," according to Leviticus 19:18, because all these words express the same affinity.

The mode of love is indicated in the words "as thyself." This does not mean that a man must love his neighbor equally as himself, but in like manner as himself, and this in three ways. First, as regards the end, namely, that he should love his neighbor for God's sake, even as he loves himself for God's sake, so that his love for his neighbor is a "holy" love. Secondly, as regards the rule of love, namely, that a man should not give way to his neighbor in evil, but only in good things, even as he ought to gratify his will in good things alone, so that his love for his neighbor may be a "righteous" love. Thirdly, as regards the reason for loving, namely, that a man should love his neighbor, not for his own profit, or pleasure, but in the sense of wishing his neighbor well, even as he wishes himself well, so that his love for his neighbor may be a "true" love: since when a man loves his neighbor for his own profit or pleasure, he does not love his neighbor truly, but loves himself.

This suffices for the Replies to the Objections.

*Again, Thomas explains how love of others presupposes a more foundational love of self as follows in his Commentary on Gal. 5:14, lect. 3:*

'For to love is to will good to someone: hence we are said to love both the one to whom we will a good and the very good which we will to someone, but not in the same way. For when I will a good to myself, I love myself absolutely for myself, but the good which I will to myself, I do not love for itself but for myself. Accordingly, I love my neighbour as myself in the same way that I love myself, when I will him a good for his sake, and not because it is useful or pleasant to me.'