

# Questiones Disputatae de Veritate

TRUTH  
by  
Thomas Aquinas

Questions 1-9  
translated by Robert W. Mulligan, S.J.  
Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952

Questions 10-20  
translated by James V. McGlynn, S.J.  
Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953

Questions 21-29  
translated by Robert W. Schmidt, S.J.  
Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954

Html edition by Joseph Kenny, O.P.

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### ARTICLE I

**This question concerns prophecy,  
and in the first article we ask:  
Is prophecy a habit or an act?**

[Parallel readings: *Quodl.* , XII, 17, 26; *C.G.* , III, 154; *1 Cor.* , c. 14, lect. 6; *Q.D.* *de pot.* , 6, 4; *S.* *T.* , I-II, 68, 3, ad 3; II-II, 171, 2; 176, 2, ad 3.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it is not a habit, for

1. As the Commentator says, a habit is that by which one performs an activity when he wants to. But the prophet cannot make use of prophecy when he wants to, as is clear of Eliseus in the fourth Book of Kings (3:14, 15), who, on being questioned by the king, could not give him an answer without calling the

minstrel, so that the hand of the Lord might come upon him. Therefore, prophecy is not a habit.

2. Whoever has a cognitive habit can consider the subject matter of that habit without receiving anything from another. For one who needs an instructor for this does not yet have the habit. But a prophet cannot examine the subject matter of prophecy unless each event is revealed to him. Hence, in the fourth Book of Kings (4:27) Eliseus said of the woman whose son was dead: "Her soul is in anguish, and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me." Therefore, prophecy is not a cognitive habit. Nor can it be a different habit, for prophecy belongs to cognition.

3. It was said that the prophet needs a habit to be able to know those things which are divinely shown him.—On the contrary, divine speech is more efficacious than human speech. But no habit is needed for one to understand from human speech that something will take place. Therefore, there seems much less need of a habit to perceive the revelation by which God speaks to the prophet.

4. A habit suffices for the knowledge of the whole subject matter of that habit. But by the gift of prophecy one is not taught everything that can be prophesied. For, as Gregory says and proves by examples: "Sometimes the spirit of prophecy inspires the mind of the one prophesying for present events and not at all for the future, and sometimes touches it for the future and not for the present." Therefore, the gift of prophecy is not a habit.

5. It was said that the subject matter of the gift of prophecy is not everything which can be prophesied but only that for the revelation of which the gift is given.—On the contrary, an inpouring can be limited only by that which gives it or by that which receives it. But the one receiving the inpouring of the gift of prophecy imposes no limitation to prevent it from extending to everything which can be prophesied, for the human intellect is capable of knowing all that can be prophesied. Nor is it limited by the one who gives it, for His liberality is infinite. Therefore, the gift of prophecy extends to everything which can be prophesied.

6. The affective part of the soul is so constituted that the one influx of grace frees the soul from all guilt. Therefore, the intellective part, also, is such that the influx of the one light of prophecy will cleanse the soul from all ignorance of things that can be prophesied.

7. A freely given habit is more perfect than an acquired habit. But an acquired habit extends to many acts. Therefore, if prophecy is a freely given habit, it, too, will extend not to only one of the things which can be prophesied, but to all of them.

8. If we had one habit for each conclusion, those habits would not be joined together in the habit of one complete science, unless the conclusions had some

connection in so far as they are deduced from the same principles. But future contingents of this sort and other things which prophecy concerns, do not have any interconnection, as the conclusions of a single science have. Therefore, it follows that, if prophecy is a habit, and if the gift of prophecy extends to only one of the things prophesied, there will be in one prophet as many habits of prophecy as there are things which he knows can be prophesied.

9. It was said that the habit of prophecy, once infused, extends to all that can be prophesied, but still a new revelation is needed to disclose certain species.—On the contrary, the infused habit of prophecy ought to be more perfect than the habit of an acquired science, and the prophetic light ought to be more perfect than the natural light of the agent intellect. But with the power of the light of the agent intellect and with the habit of a science, plus the added assistance of the power of imagination, we can form as many species as we need for the actual consideration of those things to which the habit extends. Therefore, if a prophet has a habit, he can do this much more readily without a new disclosure of any species.

10. As the Gloss reads: "Prophecy is a divine inspiration, which announces the outcomes of things with immutable truth. But inspiration does not signify a habit, but an act. Therefore, prophecy is not a habit.

11. According to the Philosopher seeing is a kind of passivity. Therefore, sight is a passive operation. But prophecy is a kind of sight, for, according to the first Book of Kings (9:9): "He that is now called a prophet, in times past was called a seer." Therefore, prophecy is not a habit, but rather a passive operation.

12. According to the Philosopher, a habit is "a quality which is hard to change." But prophecy is easily changed, since it does not remain in the prophet at all times but only now and then. As the Gloss on Amos (7:4), "am not a prophet," says: "The spirit does not give prophecy to the prophets at all times, but only now and then. And when they are enlightened, they are rightly called prophets." Gregory also says: "Sometimes the spirit of prophecy fails prophets and it is not always at the service of their minds, for, when they do not have it, they know that it is a gift when they do have it." Therefore, prophecy is not a habit.

## **To the Contrary**

1. According to the Philosopher, there are three things in the soul: powers, habits, and passive operations. But prophecy is not a power, for, then, everyone would be a prophet, since the powers of the soul are common to all. Similarly, it is not a passive operation, for they exist only in the sensitive part of the soul, as is said in the *Physics*. Therefore, it is a habit.

21. Everything which is known is known through some habit. But the prophet knows the things which he declares; he does not know them, however, by reason

of a natural or an acquired habit. Therefore he knows them by some infused habit, which we call prophecy.

3. If prophecy is not a habit, this is so only because the prophet can. not see everything else which can be prophesied, unless he receives a new inspiration. But this does not prevent it from being a habit, for one who has a habit of common principles cannot consider the particular conclusions of some particular science unless he receives in addition some habit of the particular science. Therefore, there is nothing to prevent prophecy from being a common habit, which still demands a new revelation for the knowledge of the individual things to be prophesied.

4. Faith is the habit of everything which must be believed, yet one who has the habit of faith does not immediately have distinct knowledge of each matter of belief, but needs instruction to know the articles of faith distinctly. Therefore, although prophecy is a habit, there still is need of divine revelation, as a kind of speech, for the prophet to know distinctly what is to be prophesied.

## REPLY

As is said in the Gloss: Prophecy is called sight, and the prophet is called seer." This is clear from the first Book of Kings (9:9), as was mentioned earlier." Still, not every sight can be called prophecy, but

only the sight of those things which are far beyond our ordinary knowledge. As a result, the prophet is said to be not only one who *speaks from afar* (*procul fans*), that is, one who announces, but also one who *sees from afar* (*procul videns*), from the Greek *phanos*, which is an appearing.

However, since everything which is revealed is revealed under some light, as can be seen in Ephesians (5:13), those things which are revealed to man beyond the ordinary course of knowledge must be made manifest by a higher light. This is called the prophetic light and by receiving it one is made a prophet.

However, we must bear in mind that a thing can be received in someone in two ways. In one, it is received as a form which remains in the subject; in the other, it is received after the manner of a transient impression. Thus, pallor exists as a quality in one who has this color naturally or from some serious accident, but exists as a transient impression in one who suddenly turns white from some fear. Similarly, physical light is in the stars as a quality of the stars, since it is a form remaining in them. But it is in air as a transient impression, since air does not retain light, but only receives it by being placed in the path of a shining body.

Accordingly, in human understanding there is a light which is a quality or permanent form, namely, the essential light of the agent intellect, by reason of

which our soul is called intellectual. But the prophetic light in the prophet cannot be this. For whoever knows certain objects by means of intellectual light, which has become a property in him, existing there as a form, must have stable knowledge of those things. And this cannot be unless he sees them in a principle in which they can be known. For, as long as the things known are not reduced to their principles, the knowledge is not established as certain, but is apprehended by him as having some probability, inasmuch as it has been spoken by others. Hence, for each thing he must receive word from others. Thus, if someone did not know how to deduce the conclusions of geometry from the principles, he would not have the habit of geometry, but would apprehend whatever he knew of the conclusions of geometry as one who believes his teacher. Hence, he would have to be instructed on each point, for he would not be able securely to proceed from some points to others without making a resolution to first principles.

Now, God Himself is the principle in which we can know future contingents and other things which exceed natural knowledge and with which prophecy deals. Hence, since the prophets do not see God's essence, they cannot know the things which they see prophetically by a light which is a kind of habitual form inhering in them, but they have to be taught each thing individually. Thus it is that the prophetic light must not be a habit, but must exist in the soul of the prophet in the manner of a transient impression, as the light of the sun exists in the air. And, as the light remains in the air only when the sun is shining, so the previously mentioned light remains in the mind of the prophet only when it is actually being divinely inspired.

And thus it is that the saints, when they talk about prophecy, speak of it as a transient impression and call it an inspiration or a kind of touch by which the Holy Spirit is said to touch the heart of the prophet. They also speak of prophecy with other words of this kind. And thus it is clear that, as far as the prophetic light is concerned, prophecy cannot be a habit.

But we must remember that in bodily things, after something has undergone a transient impression, even after the impression has left, it is rendered more apt to undergo the impression, as water, once warmed, is warmed more easily afterwards when it has become cold, and a man, after he has been sad many times, is saddened more easily. Hence, the mind, when it has been under the influence of a divine inspiration, even after that inspiration has gone, remains more fit to receive it again, just as the mind remains more devout after devout prayer. It is for this reason that Augustine says: "Lest the mind which begins to grow lukewarm from cares and occupations become altogether cold and its fire die out completely, unless it is frequently enkindled, at set hours we call our mind back to the business of prayer."

Hence, the mind of the prophet, after it has received a divine inspiration one or more times, remains more apt to receive the inspiration again, even after the

actual inspiration has ceased. And this aptitude can be called the habit of prophecy, just as Avicenna says that in us habits of science are nothing but certain aptitudes of our soul ordained for the reception of the illumination of the agent intelligence and the intelligible species flowing forth from it into our soul. However, it cannot properly be called habit, but an aptitude or disposition by reason of which one is called a prophet even when he is not actually being inspired. Nevertheless, lest an argument be built on the strength of the word, habit, we will uphold both sides and answer both sets of reasons.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. The definition given fits habit in the strict sense, and in this sense the previously mentioned aptitude of prophesying cannot be called a habit. Nevertheless, taken in this way, the aptitude of our soul to receive something from the agent intelligence can also be called a habit, according to Avicenna, for in his opinion that reception is natural. Thus, according to him, one who has an aptitude has the power to receive when he so wishes, for a natural influx does not fail when the matter is disposed. But the influx of prophecy depends on the divine will alone; hence, it is not in the power of a prophet to use prophecy, no matter how great an aptitude he has for it in his mind.
2. If prophetic light existed in the mind as a habit of knowledge about things to be prophesied, a prophet would not need new revelation to know anything that can be prophesied. But he does need new revelation, because that light is not a habit. The aptitude itself to perceive the light is like a habit and without this light things to be prophesied cannot be known.
3. Beyond the perception of the divine speech by which God talks interiorly to the prophet, and which is nothing but the enlightening of his mind, no habit is needed to perceive interiorly what has been said. But an aptitude seems to have a greater effect toward the perception of this speech, the more noble the speech is and the more its perception surpasses the natural powers.
4. The solution to the fourth difficulty is clear from what has been said.
5. The prophetic light, once infused, does not give knowledge of all that can be prophesied, but only of those things for the knowledge of which it is given. This limitation does not come from lack of power in the giver, but from the ordination of His wisdom, which distributes to each as He wishes.
6. All mortal sins have this in common, that through any one of them man is separated from God. Hence, grace, which joins man to God, frees him from every mortal sin, but not from every venial sin, for venial sins do not separate him from God. But things which can be prophesied have a connection among themselves only in the order of God's wisdom. Hence, one can be seen without another by those who do not see divine wisdom completely.



7. An infused habit is more perfect than an acquired habit according to its genus, namely, by reason of its origin and by reason of the object which it is given to attain, which is higher than that to which an acquired habit is ordained. But nothing prevents an acquired habit from being more perfect in the manner in which it is possessed or perfected. Thus, it is clear that through the infused habit of faith we do not see the matters to be believed as perfectly as we see the conclusions of the sciences through the acquired habit of a science. Similarly, although the prophetic light is infused, still it does not exist as perfectly in us as the acquired habits. This also attests to the dignity of infused habits, for, since they are so excellent, human weakness cannot fully possess them.

8. The reasoning would conclude correctly if the light with which the mind of the prophet is flooded were a habit, but not if we hold that this habit or quasi habit is an aptitude for perceiving the aforesaid light, since this one thing could render a man apt to be enlightened about anything.

9. We will treat later of the way in which the species have to be formed anew for prophetic revelation.

10. Although inspiration does not signify a habit, it cannot be proved from this that prophecy is not a habit. For it is customary to define habits through their acts.

11. According to the Philosopher, to see can be taken in two ways: actually and habitually. Hence, sight can mean the act or the habit.

12. Prophetic light is not a quality which is hard to change, but something transient. It is in this sense that the authoritative citations mentioned speak. But that aptitude which remains for perceiving the illumination again is not easily changed; in fact, it remains a long time unless there is a great change in the prophet, through which such an aptitude is taken away.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

1. Since acts arise completely from habits, they are therefore reduced to habit in that division of the Philosopher. Or they are also reduced to passive operations, since passive operations are acts of the soul, as to be angry or to desire.

But prophecy, in so far as it refers to the sight of the prophet, is an act of the mind; in so far as it refers to the light, which is received suddenly and in a passing manner, it is like a passive operation, inasmuch as a reception in the intellective part is called a passive operation, for to understand is a kind of passivity, as is said in *The Soul*.

Or it can be said that, if the members of the division are taken strictly, that division of the Philosopher does not adequately comprehend everything which is in the soul, but only that which relates to moral matters, about which the

Philosopher is thinking, as is clear from the examples with which he there explains himself.

2. Not everything which is known is known by some habit, but only that of which we have perfect knowledge. For there are in us imperfect acts, which do not come from habits.

3. In the demonstrative sciences there are certain general things in which particular conclusions are contained virtually, as it were in embryo. Hence, one who has the habit of those general things is only in remote potency to the particular conclusions, and this potency needs a mover to reduce it to act. But in things to be prophesied there is no such connection requiring that some knowledge be deduced from other prior knowledge in such a way that one possessing the knowledge involved in the prior habits would possess in a confused way the knowledge involved in the subsequent habits. Hence, the argument does not follow.

4. Our understanding is perfected in different ways by prophecy and by faith. For prophecy perfects understanding in itself, and thus it is necessary that the prophet be able to see distinctly those things for which he has the gift of prophecy. But faith perfects our understanding in the affective order, for the act of faith is an act of the understanding commanded by the will. Hence, through faith the understanding is only prepared to assent to those things which God orders to be believed. It is for this reason that faith is likened to hearing, but prophecy to sight. And thus it is not necessary for one who has the habit of faith to know all the matters of belief distinctly, as one who has the habit of prophecy must know distinctly all that is to be prophesied.

## Q. 12: Prophecy

### ARTICLE II

**In the second article we ask:**

**Does prophecy deal with conclusions which can be known scientifically?**

[Parallel readings: *C.G.* , III, 154; In *Isaiam*, I; *S.T.* , II-II, 171, 3; In *Psalms*. 50; *Ad Rom.* , c. 12, lect. 2.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it does not, for

1. Prophecy is "the inspiration which announces the outcomes of things with immutable truth." But the outcomes of things are called future contingents, and the conclusions of the demonstrative sciences do not concern matters of this sort. Therefore, there cannot be prophecy about such things.

2. Jerome says that prophecy is "a sign of divine foreknowledge." But foreknowledge refers to the future. Since, therefore, futures, especially future contingents, which prophecy seems mainly to deal with, cannot be the conclusions of any science, it seems that prophecy cannot deal with conclusions scientifically knowable.

3. Nature does not provide superfluities nor fail in necessary matters. Much less does God, whose activity is most wisely disposed. But to know the conclusions of the demonstrative sciences man has another way than prophecy, namely, through self-evident principles. Therefore, if things of this sort were known through prophecy, it would seem to be superfluous.

4. A different manner of generation is an indication of diversity of species. Thus, as the Commentator says, mice begotten from seed cannot be of the same species as mice begotten from decaying matter. But men naturally reach conclusions of the demonstrative sciences from self-evident principles. Therefore, if there are some men who receive knowledge of the demonstrative sciences in another way, as through prophecy, they will be of another species and will be called men equivocally, which seems absurd.

5. The demonstrative sciences deal with those things which relate indifferently to every time. But prophecy does not have a similar relation to every time, in fact, "sometimes the spirit of the prophets stirs the heart of a prophet for the present and not for the future, and sometimes just the opposite," as Gregory says. Therefore, prophecy does not deal with those things about which there is scientific knowledge.

6. The mind of the prophet and the mind of anyone else do not relate in the same way to those things which are known through prophecy. But in things which are known through demonstration the judgment of the prophet and of anyone else who knows it is the same, and neither is preferred to the other, as Rabbi Moses says. Therefore, prophecy does not deal with those things which are known through demonstration.

## **To the Contrary**

1. We believe the prophets only in so far as they are inspired by the spirit of prophecy. But we have to give belief to those things written in the books of the prophets even though they treat of conclusions of scientific knowledge, as in Psalms (135:6): "Who established the earth above the waters," and whatever else there is of this sort. Therefore, the spirit of prophecy inspires the prophets even about conclusions of the sciences.

2. As the grace of miracles relates to the performance of deeds which are beyond the power of nature, so the gift of prophecy relates to the knowledge of things which surpass natural knowledge. But through the grace of miracles there take

place not only things which nature cannot do, as to give sight to the blind and to raise the dead, but also things which nature can do, as to cure those with fevers. Therefore, through the gift of prophecy one can know not only those things to which natural knowledge does not extend, but also things to which natural knowledge does extend, and conclusions of the sciences are among these latter. Thus, it seems that prophecy can treat of them.

## REPLY

In all things which exist for the sake of an end the matter is determined according to the exigency of the end, as is clear in the *Physics*. But the gift of prophecy is given for the use of the Church, as is clear in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (12:7): "And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit." The letter adds many examples among which prophecy is numbered. Therefore, all those things the knowledge of which can be useful for salvation are the matter of prophecy, whether they are past, or future, or even eternal, or necessary, or contingent. But those things which cannot pertain to salvation are outside the matter of prophecy. Hence, Augustine says: "Although our authors knew what shape heaven is, [the spirit] wants to speak through them only that which is useful for salvation. And to the Gospel of St. John (16:13), "But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth," the Gloss adds: "necessary for salvation."

Moreover, I say necessary for salvation, whether they are necessary for instruction in the faith or for the formation of morals. But many things which are proved in the sciences can be useful for this, as, for instance, that our understanding is incorruptible, and also those things which when considered in creatures lead to admiration of the divine wisdom and power. Hence, we find that mention of these is made in Holy Scripture.

However, we should bear in mind that, since prophecy is knowledge of things which are far away, it does not have the same relation to all the things we have mentioned. For some things are far from our knowledge because of the things themselves and some are such because of something in us.

Future contingents are beyond us because of the things themselves, for they are unknown because they lack existence, since they neither exist in themselves nor are determined in their causes. But the things beyond us because of something in us are those which we have difficulty knowing because of our own inadequacy and not because of the things themselves, since they are the most knowable and the most perfect beings, such as things which are intelligible by nature, and especially things which are eternal.

Now, what belongs to a thing in itself belongs to it more truly than that which belongs to it by reason of something else. Hence, since future contingents are more truly beyond our knowledge than anything else, they seem, therefore, to

belong especially to prophecy. And they pertain to it so much that, in the definition of prophecy, they are given as the special matter of prophecy. Thus: "Prophecy is a divine inspiration which announces the outcomes of things with immutable truth." And even the name of prophecy seems to be taken from this. Thus, Gregory says: "Prophecy is so called because it predicts the future. When it speaks of the present or the past, it loses the character of its name."

Now, among those things which are beyond us because of something in us there is likewise a difference which we must consider some things are beyond us because they surpass all human knowledge, as that God is three and one, and other such things. These are not conclusions of the sciences.

Some things, however, are beyond us because they surpass the knowledge of some men, but not human knowledge simply. In this class there are those things which the educated know through demonstration, but which the uneducated do not grasp with natural knowledge, although they are sometimes elevated to them by divine revelation. These things do not belong to prophecy simply, but with reference to men of this type. Thus, conclusions which are demonstrated in the sciences can belong to prophecy.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. The outcomes of things are put in the definition of prophecy as the most proper matter of prophecy, but not as the whole matter of prophecy.
2. Similarly, prophecy is called a sign of foreknowledge by reason of its principal matter.
3. Although conclusions of the sciences can be known in another way than through prophecy, it is not superfluous for them to be shown by prophetic light, for through faith we cling more firmly to what the prophets say than we do to the demonstrations of the sciences. And in this, too, the grace of God is praised and His perfect knowledge is shown forth.
4. Natural causes have determinate effects, since their powers are finite and limited to one type of effect. Therefore, it is necessary that those things which are brought into being by different natural causes according to different ways of generation be specifically different. But, since the divine power is infinite, it can without the work of nature produce effects specifically the same as those which nature produces. Hence, if those things which can be known naturally are divinely revealed, it does not follow that those who receive knowledge in a different way are specifically different.
5. Although prophecy sometimes concerns things which are separated as belonging to different divisions of time, it sometimes concerns those things which are true for all times.

6. Rabbi Moses does not mean that a revelation could not be made to a prophet of those things which are known through demonstration, but that, as soon as they are known by a demonstration, it makes no difference whether there is prophecy about them or not.

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

### **ARTICLE III**

**In the third article we ask:**

**Is prophecy natural?**

[Parallel readings: *S.T.* , III, 154; *S.T.* , I, 86, 4; II-II, 172, 1.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that it is, for

1. The cognition of one who is awake is preferable to that of one who is sleeping. But it is natural for people who are asleep to foresee the future, as is clear in the divinations of dreams. Therefore, with much greater reason some can see the future naturally while awake. But this is the office of the prophet. Therefore, one can naturally be a prophet.

2. But it was said that the cognition of one who is awake is better for judgment, but the cognition of one who is asleep is better for reception.—On the contrary, the cognoscitive power can judge of something in so far as it receives its species. Therefore, judgment follows reception and, where the reception is better, the judgment is also more perfect. Thus, if one who is asleep is better in receiving, he ought also to be better in judging.

3. Our understanding is hampered in sleep only from without, namely in so far as it depends on sense. But the judgment of our understanding does not depend on sense, since the operation of our understanding depends on sense in so far as it receives from sense. But judgment follows reception. Therefore, the judgment of our understanding is not hampered in sleep. Hence, the distinction given seems to be of no importance.

4. What belongs to something because it is kept free from something else belongs to it by reason of its nature, just as brightness, which is natural to iron, comes to it because the iron is kept free from rust. But, as Augustine shows by many examples, it belongs to the soul to see the future in so far as it is cut off from the senses of the body. Therefore, it seems natural for the human soul to foresee the future. Thus, we conclude as before.

5. Gregory says: "Sometimes the very power of souls foresees something by its subtlety, for sometimes souls about to leave the body know through revelation

things to come.” But the things which the soul can see because of its subtlety it sees naturally. Therefore, the soul can naturally know future things, and so naturally have prophecy, which consists especially in foreknowledge of the future.

6. It was said that the futures which the soul foresees by natural knowledge are those which have fixed causes in nature, but that prophecy deals with other futures.—On the contrary, those things which depend on free will do not have fixed causes in nature. But those things which the soul foresees from its subtlety depend altogether on free will, as is clear from the example of Gregory, who tells of a man who, when he was sick and his burial in a certain church had been arranged for, arose as he neared death, dressed, and predicted that he wanted to go by the Appian Way to the Church of St. Sixtus. When he died a short while later, as his funeral procession was going out along the Appian Way, they suddenly decided to bury him in the Church of St. Sixtus, since it was a long way to the church where they were supposed to bury him. And they did this without knowing what he had said. As Gregory adds, he would not have been able to predict this if the power and subtlety of his soul had not foreseen what would happen to his body. Therefore, man can naturally foresee those futures which are independent of non-free causes. The same conclusion follows as before.

7. From natural causes we cannot perceive the meaning of those things which do not take place naturally. But astrologers perceive the meanings of prophecies from the movements of the heavenly bodies. Therefore, prophecy is natural.

8. In natural science the philosophers discuss only those things which can happen naturally. But Avicenna discusses prophecy. Therefore, prophecy is natural.

9. For prophecy, as Avicenna says, only three things are needed: clearness of intelligence, perfection of the imaginative power, and power of soul so that external matter obeys it. But these three things can be had naturally. Therefore, one can naturally be a prophet.

10. But it was said that our understanding and imagination can naturally be brought to the point where they have foreknowledge of natural future events, but that prophecy does not deal with these. On the contrary, those things which depend on lower causes are said to be natural. But Isaiah (38:1) foretold that Ezechias would die, and he did this on the basis of [the expected outcome of] the order of created causes, as the Gloss on that passage states. Therefore, prophecy is the foreknowledge of natural future events.

11. To the things which are brought into existence divine providence grants the possession of those things without which they could not be preserved in existence, as in the human body it put members with which food can be taken and digested, without which mortal life would not be maintained. But the human race cannot be maintained without society, for one man is not sufficient unto himself in the necessities of life. Hence, man is “naturally a political animal,” as is

said in the *Ethics*.

But society cannot be maintained without justice, and prophecy is the rule of justice. Therefore, human nature is endowed with the ability naturally to arrive at prophecy.

12. In any class there is that which is most perfect in that class. But among men the most perfect is the prophet, who transcends the others in that which is higher in man, his intellect. Therefore, man can naturally arrive at prophecy.

13. The properties of God are farther from the properties of creatures than the properties of future things are from present things. But man can reach the knowledge of God by natural knowledge through the properties of creatures, according to Romans (1:20): "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world,..." Therefore, from the things which now exist man can arrive at the knowledge of future things. Thus, he can be a prophet naturally.

14. It was said that future things are more remote in knowledge although God is more remote in being.—On the contrary, the principles of being and of knowing are the same. Therefore, that which is more remote in being is more remote in knowledge.

15. Augustine distinguishes<sup>9</sup> three kinds of goods: "insignificant, important, and ordinary." But prophecy is not numbered among the insignificant goods, for the goods of this sort are bodily goods. Nor is it classed among the most important goods, for these are those by which we live rightly and which no one can abuse. And this does not seem to fit prophecy. Therefore, it remains that prophecy belongs to the ordinary goods, which are the natural goods of the soul. Thus, prophecy seems to be natural.

16. Boethius says that in one sense all that "can act or be acted upon" is called nature. But for someone to be a prophet he must undergo some spiritual change, which consists in the reception of the prophetic light, as was said above. Therefore, it seems that prophecy is natural.

17. If to act is natural for the agent and to receive is natural for that which is acted upon, the act of receiving must be natural. But it is natural for God to infuse the perfection of prophecy into men. For by His very nature He is good, and it is natural for the good to communicate itself. Likewise, it is natural for the human mind to receive things from God, since its nature is made up only of those things which it receives from God. Therefore, the reception of prophecy is natural.

18. There is a natural active potency corresponding to every natural passive potency. But in the human soul there is a natural potency for the reception of the light of prophecy. Therefore, there is also some natural active potency through which one is brought to the act of prophecy. Therefore, it seems that prophecy is natural.

19. Naturally, man has more perfect knowledge than other animals. But some



animals are naturally prescient of those future things which especially concern them. This is clear of ants, who have foreknowledge of future rains, and of some fishes, which foretell future storms. Therefore, man, also, ought to be naturally prescient of those things which concern him. Thus, it seems that man naturally can be a prophet.

### **To the Contrary**

1. In the second Epistle of St. Peter (1:21) is said: "For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time: but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit."
2. That which depends on an external cause does not seem to be natural. But prophecy depends on an external cause, for the prophets read in the mirror of eternity. Therefore, it seems that prophecy is not natural.
3. Those things which are in us naturally are within our power. "But it was not in the power of a prophet to possess the spirit of predicting the future," as is clear from the Gloss on the second Epistle of St. Peter (1:19): "We have the more firm prophetic word." Therefore, prophecy is not natural.
4. Things which are natural happen as the more common occurrence. But prophecy exists in very few men. Therefore, it is not natural.

### **REPLY**

A thing is called natural in two ways. In one it is so called because its active principle is natural, as it is natural for fire to be borne aloft. It is so called in another way when nature is the source not of any of its dispositions whatever, but of those which are a necessity for such a perfection. In this way, the infusion of the rational soul is called natural, inasmuch as through the activity of nature the body is given a disposition which is a necessity for the reception of the soul.

Some, then, were of the opinion that prophecy is natural in the first sense, for they said: "The soul had in itself a power of divination," as Augustine relates. But in the same place he rejects that, for, if that were so, then the soul would be able to have foreknowledge of the future whenever it so wished. And this is clearly false.

Furthermore, the falsity of this is manifest because the nature of the human mind cannot naturally be the source of any knowledge to which it cannot arrive by means of self-evident principles, which are the prime instruments of the agent intellect. It cannot arrive at a knowledge of future contingents from these principles, except, perhaps, by studying some natural signs, as the doctor foresees that health or death will come, or a meteorologist foresees the storm or fair weather. But such knowledge of future things is not ascribed to divination or prophecy, but to technical knowledge.

Hence, some. have said that prophecy is natural in the second sense. For nature can bring man to such a state that he will have to receive foreknowledge of futures through the action of some higher cause. Indeed, this opinion is true of a certain type of prophecy, but not, however, of that type which the Apostle numbers among the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10).

And so, to see the difference between these types we should keep in mind that, before they exist, future contingents pre-exist in two ways, that is, they are contained in the divine foreknowledge and in the created causes, by whose power they will be brought into existence. In these two the futures pre-exist in a doubly different manner.

The first difference is this, that all that pre-exists in created causes pre-exists in the divine foreknowledge, but not conversely. For God holds within Himself the principles which will determine some future things without infusing them into created things. An example of this is the principles which will determine those things which happen miraculously by the divine power alone, as Augustine says.

The second is this, that some things pre-exist in created causes changeably, since the power of the cause which is directed to bringing about such an effect can be hindered by some event. But all future things are in the divine foreknowledge unchangeably, for futures are objects of the divine foreknowledge not only as regards the order of their causes to those futures, but also as regards the outcome of that order or the event.

Accordingly, there are two ways in which foreknowledge of the future can be caused in the human mind. One is derived from the preexistence of futures in the divine mind. It is this prophecy that is called a gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is not natural. For those things which are executed by the divine power without natural intermediary causes are not said to be natural, but miraculous. Now the revelation of futures of this sort takes place without intermediary natural causes, for they are not revealed in so far as the principles which determine future things exist in created causes, but in so far as they exist in the divine mind, from which they flow into the mind of the prophet.

In the second way it is derived from the power of created causes, in so far as certain movements can be impressed on the human imaginative power, for instance, by the power of the heavenly bodies, in which there pre-exist some signs of certain future events. And, in so far as it is natural for the human understanding, as inferior, to receive instruction from the illumination of the separated intellects, and to be raised up to the knowledge of other things, prophecy can be called natural in the sense which was mentioned.

But this natural prophecy differs in three ways from that about which we are now speaking. It differs, first, in this, that the prophecy of which we speak gets its foreknowledge of future things immediately from God, although an angel can be

an intermediary, inasmuch as he acts in virtue of the divine light. But natural prophecy is due to the proper activity of second causes. Second, it differs in this that natural prophecy extends only to those future things which have determinate causes in nature, but the prophecy of which we speak relates indifferently to all things. Third, they differ in this, that natural prophecy does not foresee infallibly, but predicts those things which are true for the most part, whereas the prophecy which is a gift of the Holy Spirit foresees the future infallibly. Hence, it is called a sign of the divine foreknowledge, since it foresees with that infallibility with which future things are foreseen by God.

This threefold difference can be noted in the definition of Cassiodorus. The first difference is in the word "divine"; the second is in the general phrase, "outcomes of things"; and the third in the words, "which announces with immutable truth."

But two of the differences, the first and second, remain in prophecy in so far as it deals with things which are necessary, as those which can be known with scientific knowledge. For by natural prophecy man does not receive immediately from God the knowledge of the things which are known scientifically, but gets it through the mediation of second causes, and through the activity of second causes acting with their natural power. Nor, again, does such knowledge extend to things which are necessary, but only to those which can be known through first principles. For the power of the light of the agent intellect does not extend any farther and is not naturally elevated to other things as divine prophecy is raised to certain things which are beyond natural knowledge, such as that God is three and one and other things of this sort.

In this matter the third difference has no place, for both kinds of prophecy give the prophet knowledge of necessary conclusions of this kind as unchangeably and certainly as if they were known through the principles of demonstration. Furthermore, the mind of man is elevated by both prophecies so that it understands in a way similar to the separated substances, who understand the principles and the conclusions with the utmost certainty in a simple intuition without deducing one from the other.

Again, both prophecies differ from dreams and visions, in so far as we call a dream an apparition which comes to a man who is asleep and a vision one which comes to a man who is awake but carried out of his senses, because in both the dream and the simple vision the soul is fettered completely or partially by phantasms which are seen in such a way that the soul completely or partially clings to them as to things which are true. But, although in both prophecies some phantasms may be seen in sleep or in a vision, the soul of the prophet is not under the control of those phantasms, but knows through the prophetic light that the objects which it sees are not things, but likenesses of them with some meaning. And it knows their meaning for, as is said in Daniel (10:1): "There is need of understanding in a vision."

Thus it is clear that natural prophecy is midway between dreams and divine prophecy. Hence it is that a dream is said to be a part of or an instance of natural prophecy, as also, that natural prophecy is an imperfect likeness of divine prophecy.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. There are two things to be considered in knowledge: reception and judgment about that which is received. Accordingly, in the matter of judgment the cognition of one who is awake is preferable to that of one who is asleep, for the judgment of one who is awake is free, whereas the judgment of one who is asleep is fettered, as is said in *Sleeping and*

*Wakefulness*. But the cognition of one who is asleep is preferable for reception, because internal impressions from external movements can be received better when the senses are at rest. This is so whether they come from the separated substances or from the heavenly bodies. Thus we can understand in this sense that which is said of Balaam in Numbers (24:16): "who falling," that is, sleeping, "hath his eyes opened."

2. Judgment does not depend only on the reception of the species, but also on the examination of the matter to be judged with reference to some principle of knowledge, just as we judge about conclusions by analyzing them back to principles.

Therefore, when the exterior senses are bound in sleep, the interior powers are, as it were, free from the bustle of the external senses and can better perceive the internal impressions made on the understanding or the imagination by a divine or angelic light, or by the power of the heavenly bodies, or by anything else, just as it seems to one who is asleep that he is eating something sweet when thin phlegm flows across his tongue. But, since the senses are the first source of our knowledge, we must in some way reduce to sense everything about which we judge. Hence, the Philosopher says" that the sensible visible thing is that at which the work of art and nature terminates, and from which we should judge of other things. Similarly, he says that the senses deal with that which is outermost as the understanding deals with principles. He calls outermost those things which are the term of the resolution of one who judges. Since, then, in sleep the senses are fettered, there cannot be perfect judgment so that a man is deceived in some respect, viewing the likenesses of things as though they were the things themselves. However, it sometimes does happen that one who is asleep knows that some of these are not things, but the likenesses of things.

3. The judgment of our understanding does not depend on sense in such a way that the act of understanding takes place by means of a sensible organ. However, it does need the senses as that which is last and outermost to terminate its analysis.

4. Some have held that the rational soul "has within itself some power of divination," as Augustine says. But he himself rejects this in that same place, for, if this were so, the soul would be prepared to foresee futures when it so desired. And this is obviously false. For the soul at times sees the future when it is carried out of its senses, not because this belongs to it by reason of its natural power, but because it is thus rendered more fit to perceive the impressions of those causes which can give some foreknowledge of the future.

5. Subtlety of soul, which Gregory says is a cause of foreknowledge of futures, should be taken to mean that aptitude of the soul to receive something from the separated substances, not only in the order of grace, in so far as things are revealed to holy people by angels, but also in the order of nature, in so far as lower intellects in the order of nature are naturally fitted to receive perfection from the higher intellects, and in so far as human bodies are subject to the impressions of the heavenly bodies, in which there is a provision for some future events. The soul by its subtlety foresees these events through certain likenesses left in the imagination by the impression of the heavenly bodies.

6. Although free choice is not subject to natural causes, natural causes sometimes do facilitate or hinder the things which are done by free choice, as in the case mentioned rain or excessive heat could engender weariness in those who were carrying the bier, so that they would not carry it to the assigned place. And we could get foreknowledge of these happenings by means of the heavenly bodies.

7. Since human bodies are under the influence of the heavenly bodies, from the movements of the heavenly bodies we can perceive some indication of any disposition of the human body. Since, therefore, a certain constitution or disposition of the human body is a kind of prerequisite for natural prophecy, it is not inappropriate that an indication of natural prophecy be received from the heavenly bodies. But no indication of the prophecy which is a gift of the Holy Spirit is thus received.

8. Those philosophers who have treated of prophecy were not able to treat of the prophecy about which we are now speaking, but only of natural prophecy.

9. One of those three things cannot naturally belong to the soul, namely, that it have such power that external matter would be under its control, since, as Augustine says: "The matter in bodies is not subject to the arbitrary will even of the angels themselves." Thus, on this point, what Avicenna or any other philosopher says cannot be held. The other two things which the objection deals with, in so far as they arise naturally in man, can cause natural prophecy, but not the prophecy of which we are talking.

10. Although only those things which fall under the influence of natural causes can be revealed through natural prophecy, nevertheless, not only other things

but those, too, can be known through divine prophecy.

11. The society of men, in so far as it is ordained to eternal life as its end, can be preserved only through the justice of faith, of which prophecy is the source. Hence, Proverbs (29:18) says: "When prophecy shall fail, the people shall be scattered abroad." But, since this end is supernatural, the justice, which is ordained to this end, and the prophecy, which is its source, will both be supernatural. But the justice through which human society is ruled in its ordination to the civil good can be had adequately through natural principles implanted in man. Hence, it is not necessary for prophecy to be natural.

12. By reason of the nobility of man there can be found in the human race a perfection so becoming that it could be produced only by a supernatural cause. But irrational creatures are not capable of such perfection. Therefore, it is not necessary that that which is most perfect in the human race should be obtained by the power of nature. This is necessary only for that which is most perfect according to the order of nature, not for that which is most perfect according to the order of grace.

13. A thing can be known in two ways: with reference to its existence, and to its quiddity. But, since the properties of creatures from which we get our knowledge are extremely remote from the properties of God, thence it is that we cannot have quidditative knowledge of God. However, since creatures depend on God, by looking at creatures we can know that God exists. But, since the things which now exist do not depend on future things, but do have similar properties, we cannot therefore know from present things whether certain future things will follow from them. However, we can know what their nature and properties will be if they should exist.

14. God is more remote from creatures than one creature is from another in His manner of existing, but not in the relation which exists between the principle of existing and that which has existence from such a principle. Therefore, by means of creatures we can know that God exists, but we cannot know His quiddity. It is just the opposite with the knowledge of future contingents by means of present or past things.

15. Prophecy is classified among the greatest goods, since it is a free gift. For, although it does not act as an immediate principle of meritorious action to make one live properly, the whole of prophecy is directed to the virtuous life. Nor, again, does one misuse prophecy in such a way that the misuse itself is an act of prophecy, as when someone misuses a natural power. For one who uses prophecy to seek gain or the favor of men has, indeed, a good act of prophecy, which is to know hidden things and to announce them, but the abuse of this good is an act of cupidity or some other vice. Nevertheless, although one does not misuse prophecy as a principle of action, he does misuse it as an object. In a

similar way, those who are proud of their virtues misuse them, although the virtues are counted among the greatest goods.

16. We do not say that something is natural if it comes from nature taken in any sense, but taken in the third meaning which Boethius gives it there, namely, inasmuch as nature is "the principle of motion" and rest in the thing in which it is, and the essential, not the accidental, principle. Otherwise it would be necessary to say that all activities, receptions, and properties are natural.

17. To communicate His goodness is natural for God in the sense that it is in harmony with His nature and not in the sense that He communicates it because of some necessity of His nature. For such communication is made by the divine will in keeping with the order of wisdom which distributes His goods to all in an orderly way. It is also natural for a creature to receive from God not any goodness, but that which belongs to its nature, as to be rational belongs to man but not to a stone or an ass. Hence, if some perfection is received in man by reason of divine power, it is not necessary for it to be natural to man when it exceeds what is due to human nature.

18. In human nature there is a passive potency for the reception of prophetic light, which is not natural but only obediential, like the potency which is in physical nature for those things which happen miraculously. Hence, it is not necessary to have a natural active potency corresponding to such a passive potency.

19. Brute animals can be prescient only of those future events concerning them which depend on the movement of the heavens. And by the impressions of the heavens their imagination is stirred to do something which is an appropriate sign of the future. This kind of imprint has more place in brutes than in men because, as Damascene says, brutes "are more acted upon than acting." Hence, they follow the impressions of the heavenly bodies completely. Man, however, who has free will, does not act in this way. Nor should a brute be called prescient of the future on this account, although a sign of some future event can be drawn from its activity. For it does not act to give any sign of the future, as though it knew the reason for its activity; rather, it is led on by a natural instinct.

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

### **ARTICLE IV**

**In the fourth article we ask: is some natural  
Disposition needed for prophecy?**

[Parallel readings: *S.T.* , II-II, 172, 3.]

## Difficulties

It seems that it is, for

1. Every perfection which in its reception must conform to the disposition of the receiver requires some definite disposition in the receiver. But prophecy is such a perfection, as is clear from Amos (1:2), "The Lord will roar from Sion," on which the Gloss says: "It is natural, he says, for all who want to compare one thing to another to use comparisons taken from those things which they have experienced and among which they have been brought up. For example, sailors compare their enemies to storms, and loss to shipwreck. And shepherds liken their fear to the roaring of a lion, and call their enemies lions, bears, and wolves. Thus, the prophet, who was a shepherd, likens the fear of God to the roaring of a lion." Therefore, prophecy requires some definite disposition in human nature.
2. Perfection of the imagination is needed for prophecy, since prophecy operates through the sight of imagination. But to have perfection of the power of imagination its organ must be in good condition and properly disposed. Therefore, a natural disposition is needed for prophecy.
3. A natural hindrance is stronger than one which comes from without. But some passions which are aroused from without interfere with prophecy. Thus, Jerome says: "At that time when the marital act is performed the presence of the Holy Spirit will not be given, even though the one who fulfills the duty of procreation seems to be a prophet." Nor is this due to guilt, for there is no guilt in the marital act, but to the passion of the concupiscence connected with it. Therefore, an indisposition of the natural constitution is a much greater hindrance, tending to make it impossible for one to become a prophet.
4. Nature has an ordination to grace as grace has to glory. But the perfection of grace in one who would arrive at glory is a prerequisite for glory. Therefore, a natural disposition is prerequisite for prophecy and the other free gifts.
5. The contemplation in prophecy is higher than that in acquired scientific knowledge. But the contemplation in acquired scientific knowledge is hindered if the natural constitution lacks the proper disposition, for some are so unfit by reason of their natural constitution that they can hardly, if ever, progress far enough to acquire scientific knowledge. Therefore, if the natural constitution lacks the proper disposition, it is a much greater hindrance to the contemplation in prophecy.
6. As is said in Romans (13:1): "The things which are from God have order in them." But the gift of prophecy is from God. Therefore, He dispenses it in an orderly manner. But there would be no orderly distribution if it were given to someone who had not the proper disposition to possess it. Therefore, prophecy requires a natural disposition.



## To the Contrary

11. That which depends solely on the free choice of the giver does not require any disposition in the receiver. But prophecy is such a gift, as is clear from the first Epistle to the Corinthians (12:11), which, after it has listed prophecy and other gifts of the Holy Spirit, adds: "But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone as he will." And the Gospel of St. John (3:8) says: "The Spirit breatheth where he will." Therefore, a natural disposition is not needed to have prophecy.

2. The Apostle says in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1:27-28): "The weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong. And the base things of the world and things that are not, that he might bring to naught things that are." Therefore, no disposition in the subject is a necessary prerequisite for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

31. Gregory says: "The Holy Spirit fills the boy harpist and makes him a prophet; He fills the shepherd who is railing at the sycamore trees and makes him a prophet." Therefore, the gift of prophecy does not require any disposition in him to whom it is given, but its bestowal depends on the divine will alone.

## REPLY

There are two things to be considered in prophecy: the gift of prophecy itself, and the use of such a gift once received.

The gift itself of prophecy, which exists beyond the capacity of man, is given by God and not through the power of some created cause, although natural prophecy is produced in us by the power of some created cause, as has been said earlier.

But between the operation of a creature and that of God there is this difference, that, to bring about an effect, God's activity does not need matter or any material disposition, for by His activity He produces not only the form but also the matter. However, He does not make the form without matter or without a disposition, but He can make matter and form together in one operation, or He can transform the matter, however unfit, to the proper disposition which is needed for the perfection which He gives. This is clear in resuscitation of a dead man, for the dead body is altogether unfit to receive the soul. Yet by the one divine action the body receives the soul and the disposition for the soul. But matter and the disposition of the matter are required for the activity of a creature, for a created power cannot make whatever it wishes from anything.

It is clear, then, that natural prophecy requires the proper disposition of the natural constitution, but the prophecy which is the gift of the Holy Spirit does not need this. However, it does require that the natural disposition which is suitable for prophecy be given with the gift of prophecy.

But the use of any prophecy is within the power of the prophet. It is in keeping with this that the first Epistle to the Corinthians (14:3 2) says: "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Therefore, one can prevent himself from using prophecy. And the proper disposition is a necessary requirement for the proper use of prophecy, since the use of prophecy proceeds from the created power of the prophet. Hence, a definite disposition is also required.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Certain dispositions are unconnected with prophecy, and these are not changed in the prophet by the divine activity, but prophecy proceeds in harmony with these dispositions. For it is indifferent to prophecy, whether the thing prophesied be represented under one likeness rather than another. However, God takes away from the prophet the dispositions which oppose prophecy and gives, him the dispositions which are necessary.

2. Perfection of the imagination is needed for prophecy, but it is not necessarily needed beforehand. For God Himself, who infuses the gift of prophecy, can improve the constitution of the organ of the imaginative power, as He can make bleary eyes see clearly.

3 Strong passions of this sort draw the attention of reason completely to themselves and, consequently, withdraw it from the study of spiritual things. Therefore, strong passions of anger or sorrow or pleasure hinder the use of prophecy in one who has received the gift of prophecy. Thus, the unfitness of the natural constitution would be a hindrance, unless it were somehow remedied by the divine power.

4. The application of the proposed likeness is limited to this, that as grace is added to nature, so glory is added to grace. But there is no likeness in all respects, for grace merits glory, but nature does not merit grace. Therefore, the merit of grace is prerequisite for glory, but the disposition of nature is not prerequisite for the reception of grace.

5. In some sense, acquired scientific knowledge is caused by us. But it is not in our power to improve the constitution of the organs of the soul, as it is within the divine power, which infuses the gift of prophecy. So, they are not alike.

6. The gift of prophecy is dispensed by God in a most orderly way. The orderly distribution of this gift also entails conferring it at times on those who seem least disposed for it, so that it will thus be attributed to the divine power and, as the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1:29) says: "That no flesh should glory in his sight."

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

## ARTICLE V

### In the fifth article we ask: Is moral goodness required for prophecy?

[Parallel readings: *S.T.* , II-II, 17., 4; *In Ioan.* , c. 11, lect. 7.]

#### Difficulties

It seems that it is, for

1. In Wisdom (7:27) we read: "Through prophecies [she] conveyeth herself into holy souls, she maketh the friends of God and prophets." But only those who have moral goodness are the friends of God. As the Gospel of St. John (14:2 3) says: "If anyone love me, he will keep my word." Therefore, one who does not have moral goodness is not appointed a prophet.
2. Prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit does not dwell in a sinner. As Wisdom (1:5) says: "For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful." Therefore, the gift of prophecy cannot exist in a sinner.
3. That which one cannot put to an evil use cannot exist in a sinner. But no one can put prophecy to an evil use for, since the act of Prophecy is from the Holy Spirit, if someone put it to an evil use, sin and the Holy Spirit would be causes of the same act. And this cannot be. Therefore, prophecy cannot exist in a sinner.
4. The Philosopher says: "If prophecy through dreams comes from God, it is unfitting for Him to give it to any but the best men." But it is clear that the gift of prophecy is from God alone. Therefore, it is unfitting to say that it is given to any but the best men.
5. Plato says that it belongs to that which is best to produce what is best. But prophecy is more suitable in a good man than in a bad one. Therefore, since God is best, He will never give the gift of prophecy to evil men.
6. We find a likeness of the divine activity in the activity of nature. Hence, Dionysius compares<sup>3</sup> the divine goodness to the light of the sun, because of the similarity of their effects. But natural activity gives more perfections to the things which are more disposed, as the more permeable bodies receive more light from the sun. Therefore, since the good man is more disposed to receive the gift of prophecy than the evil man, it seems that it should be given much more to good men than to evil men. But it is not given to all good men. Therefore, it should not be given to any evil man.
7. Grace is given to elevate nature. But nature should be elevated more in good men than in evil men. Therefore, the grace of prophecy should be given to good men rather than to evil men. We conclude as before.

## To the Contrary

1. Balaam is said to have been a prophet, yet he was evil.
2. In the Gospel of St. Matthew (7:22), this statement is put in the mouth of the damned: "Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name...?" Therefore, prophecy can exist in evil men.
3. Whoever does not have charity is evil. But prophecy can exist in one who does not have charity, as is clear from the first Epistle to the Corinthians (13:2) which says: "And if I should have knowledge and should know all mysteries... and have not charity... Therefore, prophecy can exist in a sinner.

## REPLY

Man's goodness consists in charity, through which he is united to God. Therefore, whatever can exist without charity, can be found indifferently in good men and in evil men. For the divine goodness is held in high esteem chiefly for this, that it uses both good and evil men to implement its designs. Therefore, it gives to both good and evil those gifts which do not have a necessary dependence on charity.

Now, prophecy does not have any necessary connection with charity for two reasons. First, because prophecy is in the understanding and charity is in the affections. But the understanding has priority over the affections, and, thus, prophecy and the other perfections of the understanding do not depend on charity. And for this reason faith, prophecy, knowledge, and everything else of this sort can exist in good men and in evil men.

The second reason is that prophecy is given to a person for the profit of the Church and not for himself. But it does happen that someone who is not good in himself and united to God by charity can be of profit to the Church in some fashion. Thus, prophecy, the working of miracles, ecclesiastical ministries, and all the other things of this sort, which contribute to the benefit of the Church, are sometimes found apart from charity, which alone makes men good.

However, we must bear in mind that some of the sins by which charity is lost hinder the use of prophecy, and some do not. For, since sins of the flesh draw the mind entirely away from things spiritual, by the very fact that one is given to sins of the flesh he is rendered unfit for prophecy. For the mind must have supreme competence in things spiritual to have the revelation of prophecy. But spiritual sins do not to the same extent interfere with the mind's competence in spiritual things. Therefore, it happens that one who is a slave to spiritual sins, but not to those of the flesh, or even to the endless cares of this life, which withdraw the mind from its spiritual competence, can be a prophet.

And, therefore, Rabbi Moses says that entanglement in the pleasures and cares of this world is a sign that one is a false prophet. And this agrees with what we

read in the Gospel of St. Matthew (7:15): "Beware of false prophets," and a little later (7:16): "By their fruits you shall know them." The Gloss on this passage reads that this must be understood of those sins "which are in plain sight," and the foremost of these are the sins of the flesh, for spiritual sins lie hidden within.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Wisdom enters the soul in two ways. In one way, it so enters that the very wisdom of God dwells in the soul. This makes the man holy and a friend of God. In the other way, it enters only in its effects. In this way it does not have to make the man holy or a friend of God. It is in this second way that it enters the minds of the evil men whom it makes prophets.
2. Although prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is not given with the gift of prophecy, but only with the gift of charity. Hence, the reasoning does not follow.
3. There is never an evil use of prophecy in the sense that the act itself of prophecy, in so far as it comes from prophecy, is evil. For, when someone directs the act of prophecy toward some evil end, the act itself of prophecy is good and comes from the Holy Spirit, but the direction of that act toward an improper end does not come from the Holy Spirit, but from the perverse will of man.
4. The Philosopher intends to say that those things which are given by God depend on the will of the giver, and this will cannot be unreasonable. Hence, if the foreknowledge of the future which takes place in dreams were from God, some discrimination would appear in its infusion. But there is no discrimination there, since such divination takes place in anybody, and this shows that divination of dreams comes from nature. But we find discrimination in the gift of prophecy, for it is not given to everybody, even though they have this or that disposition, but only to those whom the divine will chooses. Nevertheless, these are not apt subjects or the best subjects simply in themselves. They are, however, apt subjects in so far as they perform the function of the prophet to the extent which the divine wisdom judges to be fitting.
5. That God is best appears in this, that He knows how to make good use not only of good men, but also of evil men. Hence, if he makes evil prophets perform the good functions of prophecy, this in no wise detracts from His supreme goodness.
6. Not every good man is more fit to become a prophet than every sinner. For some who lack charity have minds more fit to perceive spiritual things, since they are free from carnal affections and wordly cares and are gifted with a natural clarity of understanding. And, on the other hand, some who have charity are occupied with worldly business, are busy begetting children, and do not have a naturally acute understanding. Therefore, because of these and similar

conditions, the gift of prophecy sometimes is given to some evil men and denied to some good men.

7. Through the grace of prophecy man's nature receives an elevation ordained not directly to the participation of glory, but to the utility of others. However, in good men, nature rather receives an elevation ordained to the obtaining of glory from the grace which makes its recipient pleasing to God. Hence, the reasoning does not follow.

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

### **ARTICLE VI**

**In the sixth article we ask:**

**Do the prophets see in the mirror of eternity?**

[Parallel readings: *In Isaiam* , cc. 1, 6; *S.T.* , II-II, 173, 1.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that they do, for

1. The Gloss on Isaiah (38:1), "Take order with thy house," says: "Prophets read in the book of the foreknowledge of God, in which all things are written." But the book of the foreknowledge of God seems to be nothing else but the mirror of eternity, in which all the forms of things shine forth from eternity. Therefore, the prophets see in the mirror of eternity.

2. But it was said that the prophets are not said to read in the book of foreknowledge or see in the mirror of eternity in a material sense, as if they saw the mirror or the book itself, but in a causal sense, for their knowledge of prophecy is derived from that book or mirror. On the contrary, the prophets are said to see in the mirror of eternity or in the book of foreknowledge in this sense, that a kind of privileged knowledge is attributed to these prophets. But no privilege of knowledge is signified by saying that some knowledge is derived from the eternal mirror or from the book of divine foreknowledge, since all human knowledge is derived from that source, as Dionysius clearly shows. Therefore, the prophets are not said to see in the mirror of eternity in the sense that they derive knowledge from it, but in the sense that when they see the mirror itself, they see other things in it.

3. Nothing can be seen except where it is. But future contingent things, according to the unchangeable truth with which they are seen by the prophets, exist only in the divine foreknowledge. Therefore, the prophets see them only in the foreknowledge of God. Thus, we reach the same conclusions as before.

4 It was said that future contingent things are indeed in God as their source, but flow thence through certain species to the human mind, where they are seen by the prophet.—On the contrary, whatever is received in a thing exists there according to the manner of that which receives it and not according to its own manner. But the mind of the prophet is changeable. Therefore, future contingent things cannot be received in it in their unchanging truth.

5. That which is proper to the divine knowledge can be known only in God. But to know futures is proper to God, as is clear from Isaiah (41:23): "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, and we shall say that ye are gods." Therefore, future contingent things can be seen by the prophets only in God.

6. Avicenna says that sometimes the mind of man is elevated so high that it is united to the world of foreknowledge. But the human mind has its highest elevation in the knowledge of prophecy. Therefore, it seems that it is so united to the world of foreknowledge that future things are seen in the very foreknowledge of God.

7. As the philosophers tell us, the end of human life is the union of man's mind with a higher world, which is the world of the intelligible substances. But it would hardly fit in with what we know if man did not reach his end. Therefore, at some time man's mind will be united with the intelligible substances, the highest of which is the divine essence, in which everything shines forth. Therefore, the prophet, who among men has the mind which receives the loftiest elevation, will have his mind united with the divine essence, which seems to be the mirror of eternity. The same conclusions follow as before.

8. If there should be two mirrors, one higher and the other lower, and the likenesses come into the lower from the higher, one who sees the species in the lower mirror is not said to see them in the higher, although his sight is in a way derived from the higher mirror. But the species of future things come into the mind of the prophet from the divine mind, as into a lower mirror from a higher mirror. Therefore, the fact that the prophet sees in his own mind species received from the divine mind does not force us to say that he sees them in the divine mind, but rather in his own mind. But his own mind is not the mirror of eternity, but a mirror dependent on time. Therefore, if the prophets see only in their own minds, as has just been said, we should not say that they see in the mirror of eternity, but in a mirror which is dependent on time, although derived from the eternal mirror.

9. But it was said that someone is said to see not only in the thing illumined by the sun, but also in the sun itself, in so far as he sees by reason of the illumination of the sun.—On the contrary, the likenesses of visible things do not exist in the sun, yet this seems to pertain to the nature of a mirror. Therefore, it seems that to see something in the sun does not mean the same as to see it in a

mirror.

10. The sight by which we see God as the object of beatitude is more lofty than that by which we see Him as an intentional likeness of things, for the former makes one blessed, and the latter does not. But a man living in this life can be raised up to see God as the object of beatitude by a loftier elevation, namely, that by which the mind is altogether transported out of the senses, as happens in rapture. Therefore, the mind of a prophet can be raised up to see the divine essence as the intentional likeness of things by a lesser elevation without rapture. Thus, the prophet can see things in the mirror of eternity.

11. The difference between the divine essence as considered in itself and as the likeness of something else, is greater than the difference between the divine essence as the likeness of one thing and as the likeness of another. For God is farther from any creature than one creature is from another. But one can see God in so far as He is the intentional likeness of one thing without seeing Him in so far as He is the likeness of something else. Otherwise, it would be necessary for all who saw God to know everything. Therefore, one can see God as the intentional likeness of some things without seeing His essence in itself. Therefore, those who do not see God through His essence can see in the mirror of eternity. And this seems especially to belong to the prophets.

12. Augustine says that the minds of some are elevated in such a manner that they look at the unchangeable intelligible natures in the highest citadel of all reality. But the minds of the prophets seem to have the most lofty elevation. Therefore, it seems that those things which they see prophetically they see in the very citadel of all reality, that is to say, in the divine essence. The same conclusion follows as before.

13. A thing can be judged only by that which is superior to it, as is clear from Augustine. But the prophets judge about the unchangeable truths of reality. Therefore, it is not possible for them to judge of these things through anything transitory and changeable, but through the unchangeable truth, which is God Himself. Thus, we reach the same conclusion as before.

### **To the Contrary**

1. The Gloss on the Gospel of St. Luke (10:24), "Many kings and prophets..." says" that the prophets and just men saw the glory of God from afar, through a mirror darkly. But one who sees in the eternal foreknowledge of God does not see darkly. Therefore, prophets did not see in the divine foreknowledge, which they call the mirror of eternity.

2. Gregory says: "As long as we live in this mortal flesh, no one advances so far in the power of contemplation that he fixes the eyes of his mind on that incomprehensible beam of light. For we do not now see the omnipotent God in



His brightness, but the soul does observe something beneath that brightness. Strengthened by this sight, it advances and later reaches the glory of His sight. It was thus that the prophet Isaiah (6:1), when he confessed that he had seen the Lord, said immediately: 'I saw the Lord sitting...' and added: 'and the things beneath him filled the temple,' because, as has been said, when the mind advances in contemplation, it does not fix its gaze on what He is, but on that which is below Him." From this it is clear that Isaiah and the other prophets did not see anything in the eternal mirror.

3. No evil man can see in the eternal mirror, for Isaiah (26:10) says, according to a variant reading: "Let the wicked man be carried away, lest he see the glory of God." But some evil men are prophets. Therefore, prophetic vision does not take place in the eternal mirror.

4. The prophets have distinct knowledge of the things which they see prophetically. But, since the eternal mirror is entirely uniform, it does not seem to be the kind of thing in which one could perceive many things separately. Therefore, there is no prophetic sight in the eternal mirror.

5. We do not see something in a mirror which is in contact with the sense of sight, but in a mirror which is at a distance. But the mirror of eternity is in contact with the mind of the prophet, since God is in everything by His essence. Therefore, the mind of the prophet cannot see in the eternal mirror.

## REPLY

Properly speaking, a mirror exists only in material things. But in spiritual things something is called a mirror in a transferred sense, because of the likeness taken from the material mirror. Thus, in spiritual things we call that a mirror in which other things are represented, just as the forms of visible things appear in a material mirror.

Therefore, some" say that the divine mind, in which all the intelligible characters of things shine forth, is a kind of mirror, and that it is called the mirror of eternity because it is eternal, inasmuch as it has eternity. Accordingly, they say that that mirror can be seen in two ways. It can be seen either through its essence, as the object of beatitude, and in this way it is seen only by those who have beatitude in its fullness or in some respect, as those in a rapture. Or it can be seen in so far as the likenesses of things are reflected in it, and in this way it is properly seen as a mirror. And they say that the mirror of eternity was seen in this way by the angels before they received beatitude, and by the prophets. But this opinion seems unreasonable on two scores.

First, these intentional likenesses of things reflected in the divine mind are not really anything different from the divine essence itself. But the likenesses and intelligible natures of this sort are distinguished in it in so far as it is related

differently to different creatures. Therefore, to know the divine essence and the intentional likenesses reflected in it is nothing else than to know the divine essence in itself and in relation to other things. But one knows something in itself before knowing it as related to something else. Hence, the vision by which God is seen as the intentional likeness of things presupposes that vision by which He Himself is seen as an essence, in so far as He is the object of beatitude. Thus, it is impossible for someone to see God as the species of things and not to see Him as the object of beatitude.

Second, the intentional likeness of one thing is found in another in two ways. In the first way, it is there as pre-existing before the thing of which it is the likeness, and, in the second, as arising from the thing itself. Accordingly, that in which the likenesses of things appear as existing before the things cannot properly be called a mirror, but, rather, an exemplar. But that in which likenesses of things are caused by the things themselves can be called a mirror.

Accordingly, it has never been said by the saints that God is the mirror of things, because there are in God the intentional likenesses or intelligible natures of things, but that created things themselves are the mirror of God, according to the first Epistle to the Corinthians (13:12): "We see now through a glass in a dark manner." And it is thus, too, that the Son is called the mirror of the Father, inasmuch as the species of Divinity is received in Him from the Father, according to Wisdom (7:2 6): "For she is the brightness of eternal light and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty."

But when the Masters say that the prophets see in the mirror of eternity, we should not take this to mean that they see the eternal God Himself in so far as He is the mirror of things, but that they see something created, in which the eternity of God is portrayed. Thus, we understand that the mirror of eternity is not itself eternal, but represents eternity. For it belongs to God to have the same certain knowledge of the future as He has of the present, as Boethius says, because His sight is measured by eternity, in which everything is simultaneous. Hence, all times and all that take place in them are present to His sight at once.

Accordingly, in so far as the knowledge of the future is reflected in the mind of the prophet from that divine sight by means of the prophetic light and through the species in which the prophet sees, those species together with the prophetic light are called the mirror of eternity, since they represent the divine sight in so far as in eternity it sees all future events as present.

Therefore, we must concede that the prophets see in the mirror of eternity, but not that they see the eternal mirror as the first set of difficulties seemed to show. Therefore, we must answer them in order.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. The metaphor which says that the prophets read in the book of foreknowledge means that the book of divine foreknowledge is a source of the knowledge of the future in the mind of the prophet, just as reading a book is the source of knowledge in the mind of the reader of the things which are written in the book. It does not mean that the prophet sees the very foreknowledge of God as one who reads a material book sees the material book.

Or we can say that the knowledge which is caused in the mind of the prophet is called the mirror of eternity, that is, something which represents eternity. Thus, it can be called the book of foreknowledge in a material sense, since the foreknowledge of God is to some extent copied in that knowledge.

2. Although all knowledge is derived from the divine foreknowledge, not all knowledge represents it in such a way that its eternity makes us see even future things as present. Hence, not any knowledge can be called a mirror of eternity. But in this we see the privileged nature of the knowledge of the prophets.

3. The intelligible natures of future contingent things exist according to unchangeable truth in the divine mind as in their source, but they flow thence to the mind of the prophet. Hence, in the revelation which he receives the prophet can have unchangeable knowledge of future things.

4. A form which is received follows the manner of the receiver in some respects, in so far as it has existence in the subject. For it is there materially or immaterially, uniformly or variably, according to the requirements of the subject receiving it. But the form which is received does in some respects draw the subject to its own mode of being, in so far as, for instance, the excellences which belong to the nature of the form are communicated to the receiving subject. For in this way the subject is perfected and ennobled through the form. And in this way the corruptible body is made immortal by reason of the glory of immortality, and similarly, by the light of unchangeable truth the mind of the prophet is raised up to see changeable things in their unchangeable truth.

5. Since knowledge of the future is proper to God, it therefore can be received only from God. Nevertheless, it is not necessary for everyone who learns the future from God to see God Himself.

6. According to that philosopher, the mind of the prophet is united to the world of the intelligences or foreknowledge, not in the sense that it sees these intelligences themselves, but in the sense that it shares in their foreknowledge from their illumination.

7. According to the faith, too, the end of human life is for man to be united with a higher world. But man reaches this end only in heaven, not in this life.

8. Although the mirror in which the prophet sees is dependent on time, it represents the eternal foreknowledge of God. And in this sense he sees in the

mirror of eternity.

9. Although the sun cannot be called the mirror of visible things, visible things can in some way be called the mirror of the sun, in so far as the brightness of the sun shines in them. Thus, too, the knowledge caused in the mind of the prophet is called the mirror of eternity.

10. The sight by which God is seen as the intentional likeness of things is more perfect than that by which He is seen as the object of beatitude. For the latter presupposes the former and shows that it is more perfect. For one who can see the effects in the cause sees better than one who sees only the essence of the cause.

11. The relation by which God is referred to one creature does not presuppose the relation by which He is referred to another the way the relation by which He is referred to a creature presupposes the essence of God taken absolutely. Thus, the argument does not follow.

12. We should not apply Augustine's words to the sight of the prophets, but to the vision of the saints in heaven, or of those who, in this life, see in the manner of heaven, as Paul did when enraptured (2 Cor. 12:1-13).

13 Prophets judge about the unchangeable truth of future events by means of uncreated truth, not because they see it, but because they are enlightened by it.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

We concede the reasons to the contrary in so far as they state that the prophets do not see the eternal God Himself, although they do see in the mirror of eternity, as we have said. But the last two arguments do not conclude correctly, for, although there is complete uniformity in God, nevertheless, in Him things can be known distinctly inasmuch as He is the proper exemplar of each one. Similarly, although mirror is transferred from material to spiritual things, in this transfer we do not apply all the conditions of the material mirror, so that all of these conditions have to be found in the spiritual mirror. Rather, we take it only according to the act of representing.

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

### **ARTICLE VII**

**In the seventh article we ask:**

**Does God in the revelation made to a prophet imprint on the mind of the prophet new species of things or only intellectual light?**

[Parallel readings: *1 Cor.* , c. 14, lect. i; *In*  
*Isaiam* , 1; *S.T.* , II-II, 173, 2.]

## Difficulties

It seems that He imprints only intellectual light without the species, for

1. The Gloss on the first Epistle to the Corinthians (14:2): says that one is called prophet because of intellectual sight alone. But intellectual sight does not refer to things through likenesses of the things, but through their very essences, as is said in the same Gloss. Therefore, in prophetic sight no species are imprinted on the mind of the prophet.

2. Our understanding abstracts from matter and material conditions. If, therefore, in the intellectual sight which constitutes prophecy some likenesses are produced, those likenesses will not be involved with matter or material conditions. Therefore, through them the prophet will not be able to know particular things, but only universals.

3 Prophets have in their minds some species of those things which are revealed to them. Thus, Jeremiah, who prophesied the burning of Jerusalem, had in his soul a species of that city received from sense, and, similarly, he had a species of fire burning, which he had frequently seen. If, then, other species of the same things are imprinted by God on the mind of the prophet, it follows that there would be in the same subject two forms with the same specific nature. But this is incorrect.

4. The sight by which one sees the divine essence is more powerful than the sight by which one sees the species of anything else whatever. But the sight by which one sees the divine essence is not enough to acquire knowledge of all things whatever. Otherwise, those who saw the divine essence would see everything. Therefore, no matter what species are imprinted on the mind of the prophet, they will not be able to cause the prophet to know reality.

5. It is not necessary for the divine action to produce in the prophet that which anyone can do of his own power. But through the power of imagination, which joins and divides the images received from things, anyone can form in his mind the species of anything whatever. Therefore, it is not necessary for the species of things to be impressed by God on the soul of the prophet.

6. Nature works through the shortest way possible; much more so does God, whose works have even better order. But the shorter way is to bring the prophet to some knowledge of things by means of the species which are in his soul, rather than by other newly imprinted species. Therefore, it does not seem that any species are imprinted anew.

7. The gloss of Jerome on Amos(1:2) reads: "Prophets use likenesses of things with which they are familiar." But this would not be so if their visions took place through newly imprinted species. Therefore, no new species, but only the

prophetic light, is imprinted on the soul of the prophet.

### **To the Contrary**

1. It is not through light, but through a species of something visible, that sight receives the determination to know some definite visible object. Likewise, it is not through the light of the agent intellect, but through an intelligible species, that the possible intellect receives the determination to know intelligible objects. Therefore, since the knowledge of the prophet receives a determination to some things which he did not know before, it seems that the infusion of light without the impression of species is not sufficient.

2. Dionysius says: "It is impossible for the divine radiance to shine on us unless it is shrouded with a variety of sacred veils." But for him figures are veils. Therefore, intelligible light is showered on the prophet only with figurative likenesses.

3. The infusion of light is uniform in all the prophets. But not all the prophets receive uniform knowledge, since some prophesy of the present, some of the past, and some of the future, as Gregory says. Therefore, there is not only the infusion of prophetic light but the impression of certain species by which the knowledge of the various prophets is distinguished.

4. The prophet receives the prophetic revelation through internal speech made to him by God or by an angel. This is clear to anyone who looks at the writings of all the prophets. But all speech takes place through some signs. Therefore, prophetic revelation takes place through some likenesses.

5. The sight of the imagination and of the understanding are higher than bodily sight. But when bodily sight takes place supernaturally, a new bodily species is shown to the eyes of the one who sees, as is evident in the case of the hand of one writing on the wall which appeared to Baltassar (Daniel 5:5). Therefore, it is much more necessary for new species to be imprinted on the sight of the imagination and the understanding when these take place supernaturally.

### **REPLY**

Prophecy is a kind of supernatural knowledge. But two things are required for knowledge: reception of the things known, and judgment of what is received, as we have said previously. Accordingly, knowledge is supernatural sometimes only in reception, sometimes only in judgment, and sometimes in both.

However, one is not called a prophet if this knowledge is supernatural only in reception, just as Pharaoh, who supernaturally received a sign of abundance and famine under the figures of oxen and ears of corn (Genesis 41:25-36), was not called a prophet. But, if someone has supernatural judgment or judgment and reception together, he is called a prophet.

Now, supernatural reception can take place only through the three kinds of sight:

through *bodily sight* , when certain things are shown to the bodily eyes by the divine power, as the hand of one writing was shown to Baltassar (Daniel 5:5); through the *sight of imagination*, when by the divine power some figures of things appear to the prophets, as the boiling cauldron appeared to Jeremiah (1:13) and horses and mountains to Zacharias (6:1-6); and through *intellectual sight* , when something is shown to the understanding in a way which surpasses its natural capacity.

But, since the human understanding is in natural potency to all the intelligible forms of sensible things, no matter what intelligible species arise in the understanding, there will be no supernatural reception; as there was supernatural reception in bodily vision when it saw things which were not formed naturally, but only by the divine power in order to reveal something. Similarly, there was supernatural reception in the sight of imagination when it saw some likenesses not received from the senses, but fashioned through some force of the soul. But our understanding receives supernaturally only when it sees through their essence the intelligible substances themselves, such as God and the angels. For it cannot reach this by virtue of its nature.

But the last of these three supernatural receptions surpasses the mode of prophecy. Hence, we read in Numbers (12:6-8): "If there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will appear to him in a vision, or I will speak to him in a dream. But it is not so with my servant Moses... and plainly, and not in riddles and figures doth he see the Lord." But to see God in His essence, as He is seen in rapture or by the blessed, or to see other intelligible substances through their essence, surpasses the mode of prophetic sight.

But the first supernatural reception , which takes place through bodily sight, is lower than prophetic reception. For in this reception the prophet is not given preference over anyone else, since all can equally see a species which God fashions for sight. Therefore, the supernatural reception which is proper to prophecy is the reception of the sight of imagination. Thus, every prophet has either only supernatural judgment of those things which are seen by another, as Joseph did about the things which Pharaoh saw (Genesis 41:25-36), or reception through the sight of imagination together with judgment.

Therefore, supernatural judgment is given to the prophet through the light infused in him which gives his understanding strength to judge. For this no species are required, but for reception there must be a new formation of species, whether to produce in the mind of the prophet species which were not there previously, as the species of colors might be imprinted on one born blind, or by the divine power to set in order and join the pre-existing species in a way which is capable of signifying the things which should be shown to the prophet. We

must concede that revelation is made to the prophet in this way not only through the light, but also through species; but sometimes it is according to the light alone.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Although only he who has intellectual sight is called a prophet, yet, not only intellectual light pertains to prophecy, but also the sight of imagination, in which suitable species can be formed to represent singular things.
2. The solution to the second difficulty is clear from the first response.
3. The prophet does not need a new infusion of the species of those things which he has seen, but only an orderly grouping of the species retained in the storehouse of the imaginative power, which can suitably designate the thing to be prophesied.
4. The divine essence, in so far as it exists in itself, represents all things whatsoever more explicitly than any species or figure does. But, since the sight of the one who looks at it is overcome by the loftiness of that essence, the one who sees the essence does not see all that it represents. But the species imprinted on the imagination are proportioned to us; hence, from them we can come to knowledge of things.
5. just as one who receives knowledge from signs reaches the things themselves by way of the signs, so, conversely, one who uses signs to express something must know the thing represented before he can form the symbol. For one cannot use fitting signs for things which he does not know. Therefore, although any man can by his natural power form any images whatever, only one who knows the future events to be symbolized can form figures to represent them properly. This formation of images in the sight of imagination takes place supernaturally in the prophet.
6. The species pre-existing in the imaginative power of the prophet, in so far as they exist there, are not capable of signifying future things. Therefore, they must be reshaped into something else by the divine power.
7. The species pre-existing in the imagination of the prophet are, as it were, the elements of that sight of imagination which is revealed by the divine power, since it is somehow made up of them. Thus it is that the prophet uses the likenesses of things with which he is familiar.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

But, since prophetic revelation does not always take place through species, as has been said, we must answer the arguments given to the contrary.

1. Although the knowledge of the prophet receives no determination to some



particular thing from the intellectual light when he receives supernatural judgment alone, his knowledge does receive its determination from species seen by someone else, as Joseph's knowledge received its determination from the species seen by Pharaoh, or from any species seen by Joseph himself without supernatural aid.

2. When the rays of divine light shine on the prophet, they are always veiled in figures, not in the sense that species are always infused, but that these rays are always combined with the pre-existing species.

3. The revelation which the prophets receive is also differentiated by reason of the intellectual light, which some perceive more fully than others, and by reason of the species, which either exist beforehand or are received anew by the prophet himself or by another.

4. As Gregory says: "God speaks to the angels by the very act by which He shows His invisible secrets to their hearts," and he adds that He speaks to holy souls by infusing certainty in them. Thus, in speech with which God is said to have spoken to the prophets in Holy Scripture, we consider not only the species of things which are imprinted, but also the light which is given, by which the mind of the prophet is made certain of something.

5. Since the sight of understanding and imagination are higher than bodily sight, through them we know not only things which are present, but even things which are absent, whereas with bodily sight we perceive only things which are present. Therefore, the species of things are stored in the imagination and the understanding, but not in the senses. Consequently, for bodily sight to be supernatural new bodily species must always be formed. But this is not needed for the sight of imagination or understanding to be supernatural.

## Q. 12: Prophecy

### ARTICLE VIII

**In the eighth article we ask:**

**Does all prophetic revelation take place through the mediation of an angel?**

[Parallel readings: *In Matth.* , 2; *C.G.* , III, 154;  
*In Isaiam* , 6; *S.T.* , II-II, 172, 2.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it does not, for

1. As Augustine says, the minds of some are so elevated that they do not see the unchangeable natures through an angel, but in the highest citadel of reality itself.

But this seems especially to belong to the prophets. Therefore, their revelation does not take place through the mediation of an angel.

2. The gifts of the Holy Spirit and the infused habits come directly from God. But prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, as is clear from the first Epistle to the Corinthians (12:10). It is also a kind of infused light. Therefore, it is from God without the mediation of an angel.

3. The prophecy which proceeds from a created power is natural prophecy, as has been said. But an angel is a creature. Therefore, prophecy which is not natural but the gift of the Holy Spirit is not produced through the mediation of an angel.

4. Prophecy takes place through the infusion of light and the imprinting of species. But it seems that neither of these can take place through an angel. For the angel would have to be the creator either of the light or of the species, since these cannot be made from anything pre-existing. Therefore, prophetic sight does not take place through the mediation of an angel.

5. In the definition of prophecy we read that prophecy is a divine revelation or inspiration. But, if it took place through the mediation of an angel, it would be called angelic and not divine. Therefore, it does not take place through the mediation of angels.

6. Wisdom (7:27) says that the divine wisdom, "through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls, she maketh the friends of God and prophets." Therefore, one is made a prophet directly by God Himself, and not through an angel.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Moses seems to have been higher than the other prophets, as is clear in Numbers (11:16-17,25; 12:3,-8) and Deuteronomy (34:10). But God made the revelation to Moses through the mediation of angels. Hence, it is said in Galatians (3:19): "(the law) being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator:" and in Acts (7:3 8) Stephen said of Moses: "This is he that was in the Church in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers." Therefore, the other prophets with much greater reason received their revelation through the mediation of an angel.

21. Dionysius says: "Our glorious fathers received divine visions through the mediation of the celestial powers."

3. Augustine says that all appearances made to the fathers in the Old Testament took place through the ministration of the angels.

### **REPLY**

Two things concur in effecting prophetic revelation: the illumination of the mind

and the formation of the species in the imaginative power.

Therefore, the prophetic light itself, by which the mind of the prophet is enlightened, comes from God as its primary source. Nevertheless, the human mind is strengthened and to some extent prepared for its proper reception by the angelic light. For, since the power of the divine light is most simple and most universal, there is no proportion between it and reception of it by the human soul in this life, unless it is limited and specified through union with the angelic light, which is narrower, in scope and more commensurate with the human mind.

But the formation of the species in the imaginative power must be attributed properly to the angels, since the whole of bodily creation is under the direction of the spiritual creation, as Augustine proves. Now, the imaginative power uses a bodily organ; hence, the formation of species in the imaginative power is part of the work proper to the angels.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. As has been said earlier, Augustine's words are to be taken as referring to the vision of heaven or to the sight of rapture, but not to prophetic sight.
2. Prophecy is numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit by reason of the prophetic light, which, it is true, is directly infused by God. Still, the ministration of the angels assists in its proper reception.
3. That which a creature performs by its own power is in some way natural, but that which a creature performs not of its own power, but in so far as it is moved by God or is an instrument of the divine activity, is supernatural. Hence, the prophecy which takes its origin from an angel according to the natural knowledge of the angel is natural prophecy. But that which takes its origin from an angel in so far as the angel receives revelation from God is supernatural prophecy.
4. An angel does not create light in the human understanding or species in the imaginative power. But God uses the activity of the angel to strengthen the natural light in the human understanding. In this way an angel is said to illuminate man. Also, since an angel has the power to move the organ of phantasy, it can fashion the sight of imagination in the way which befits prophecy.
5. Activity is not attributed to the instrument, but to the principal agent, as a bench is not called the effect of the saw, but of the carpenter. Similarly, since an angel is the cause of prophetic revelation only as a divine instrument using the revelation received from God, the prophecy should not be called angelic, but divine.
6. The divine wisdom, in transferring itself to the soul, brings about some effects without the mediation of the ministration of the angels, as the infusion of grace, through which one is made a friend of God. But nothing hinders it from bringing

about some other effects through the mediation of the aforesaid ministration. And, transferring itself to holy souls in this way, it makes prophets through the mediation of an angel.

## Q. 12: Prophecy

### ARTICLE IX

**In the ninth article we ask:**

**Does a prophet always lose sense-consciousness when he is under the influence of the spirit of prophecy?**

[Parallel readings: *S.T.* , II-II, 173, 3.]

#### Difficulties

It seems that he does, for

1. Numbers (12:6) says: "If there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will appear in a vision or I will speak to him in a dream." But as the Gloss says, prophecy takes place "through dreams and visions" when it takes place "through those things which seem to be said or done." But when there is an appearance of those things which seem to be said or done and they are not actually said or done, a man is transported out of his senses. Therefore, the sight of prophecy is always in a prophet who is transported out of his senses.

2. When one power is applied intensely to its activity, another power must be withdrawn from its activity. But in the sight of prophecy the interior powers, that is, the intellect and the imagination, are intensely applied to their activities, since prophetic sight is the most perfect thing which they can reach in this life. Therefore, in prophetic sight the prophet is always withdrawn from the activity of the exterior powers.

3. Intellectual sight is more noble than the sight of imagination, and this latter is more noble than bodily sight. But combination with that which is less noble detracts somewhat from the perfection of the more noble. Therefore, intellectual sight and the sight of imagination are more perfect when they are not combined with bodily sight. Therefore, since they reach their highest perfection in this life in prophetic sight, it seems that they are not at all combined with bodily sight in such a way that the prophet would make use of bodily sight together with them.

4. The senses are more remote from the understanding and the imagination than lower reason is from higher reason. But the consideration of higher reason, by which one devotes himself to the contemplation of eternal things, withdraws man from the consideration of lower reason, by which man employs himself in things temporal. With much more reason does the prophetic sight of the understanding

and the imagination withdraw man from bodily sight.

5. One and the same power cannot apply itself to many things simultaneously. But, when one is using his bodily senses, his understanding and imagination are occupied with those things which are seen bodily. Therefore, one cannot at the same time occupy himself with this and with those things which appear in prophetic sight apart from the senses of the body.

### **To the Contrary**

1. The first Epistle to the Corinthians (14:32) says: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." But this would not be so if the prophet lost sense-consciousness, for then he would not have control over himself. Therefore, prophecy does not take place in a man who has lost sense-consciousness.

2. Through the sight of prophecy one receives certain and inerrant knowledge of things. But in those who are transported out of their senses, either in a dream, or in some other way, the knowledge is mixed with error and is uncertain. For they hold fast to likenesses of things as if they were the things themselves, as Augustine says. Therefore, prophecy does not take place when one loses sense-consciousness.

3. If we posit this, we seem to fall into the error of Montanus, who said that the prophets spoke as insane people who did not know what they were saying.

4. As the Gloss says, prophecy sometimes takes place through words and deeds: "Through deeds, as the ark of Noe signified the Church, and through words, as those which the angels spoke to Abraham." But it is clear that Noe, when building the ark, and Abraham, when conversing with angels and serving them, were not transported out of their senses. Therefore, prophecy does not always take place through transport out of the senses.

### **REPLY**

Prophecy has two acts: one is principal, namely, sight, and the other is secondary, namely, announcing.

The prophet does the announcing either by words or even by deeds, as is clear in Jeremiah (13:5), inasmuch as he put his girdle near the river to rot. But in whichever of the two ways the prophetic announcing is made, it is always made by a man not transported out of his senses, for such an announcing takes place through certain sensible signs. Hence, the prophet doing the announcing has to use his senses for his announcement to be perfect. Otherwise, he would make the announcement like an insane person.

But in the sight of prophecy two things concur, as we have said earlier, namely, judgment and the proper reception of the prophecy. Now, when the prophet is divinely inspired, so that only his judgment is supernatural, and not his reception,

such inspiration does not require transport out of the senses, for the judgment of the understanding is more perfect according to its nature in one who has the use of his senses than in one who does not have the use of them.

But the supernatural reception proper to prophecy is in the sight of imagination, and in order to see this vision human power is enraptured by some spirit and transported out of the senses, as Augustine says. The reason for this is that the power of imagination is mainly intent on the things which are received through the senses, as long as one uses his senses. Hence, its primary attention can be transferred to those things which are received from another source only when the man is transported out of his senses. Hence, whenever prophecy takes place according to the sight of imagination, the prophet must be transported out of his senses.

But this transport happens in two ways. In one it is from some cause in the soul, and in the other, from a physical cause. It comes from a physical cause when the external senses become dull either because of sickness or because of the vapors occurring in sleep, which ascend to the brain and deaden the organ of touch. It comes from a cause in the soul when a man, from too much attention to the objects of the understanding or the imagination, is altogether abstracted from the external senses.

However, transport from the bodily senses never takes place in a prophet through sickness, as happens in epileptics and those who are mad, but only through a properly disposed physical cause, as through sleep. Therefore, prophecy which takes place with the sight of imagination always comes either in a dream, when one is deprived of sense-consciousness through a properly disposed physical cause, or in a vision, when the transport comes from some cause in the soul.

Nevertheless, between the prophet in his transport out of the senses, whether it be through a dream or through a vision, and all others who are carried out of their senses, there is this difference, that the mind of the prophet is enlightened about those things which are seen in the sight of imagination. Consequently, he knows that they are not things, but in some way, the likenesses of things about which his judgment is certain because of the light of the mind. Therefore, it is clear from this that the inspiration of prophecy takes place sometimes with transport out of the senses and sometimes without it. Hence, we must answer both sets of difficulties.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. In those words our Lord wanted to show the pre-eminence of Moses over the other prophets in supernatural reception. For Moses was raised to the sight of the very essence of God in itself. But everything which the prophets have received they have received only in the likenesses belonging to dreams or visions.

Nevertheless, the judgment of the prophet is not by means of the likenesses belonging to dreams or visions. Hence judgment of prophecy takes place without transport out of the senses.

2. When an interior power applies itself to the sight of its object, if there is perfect attention, it is cut off from exterior sight. But no matter how perfect the judgment of the interior power is, it does not withdraw from exterior activity, for it is the duty of the internal power to judge of the external. Hence, the judgment of that which is higher is ordained to the same thing as the exterior activity. Therefore, they do not hinder each other.

3. This argument follows for the sight of the intellect and the imagination according to reception, but not according to judgment, as has been said.

4. The powers of the soul hinder each other in their operations because they are rooted in the one essence of the soul. Hence, the closer the powers are to each other, the more they naturally hinder each other if they are directed toward different objects. Hence, the argument does not follow.

5. This argument follows for supernatural reception of the imaginative or intellectual power, but not for judgment.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

1. The Apostle is speaking of the announcing of prophecy, for it is in the power of free choice to announce or not to announce those things about which he is inspired. However, as concerns the revelation, the prophet himself is subject to the spirit, for the revelation does not take place as the prophet wishes, but as the revealing spirit wishes.

2. It is from the light of prophecy that the mind of the prophet is so enlightened that even in the transport out of his senses he has a true judgment about those things which he sees in the dream or vision.

3. Montanus erred on two points. First, he took away from the prophets the light of mind by which they have true judgment about the things which they have seen. Second, he said that, when they were announcing, they were carried out of their senses, as happens with those who are mad, or with those who talk in their sleep. But this does not follow from the above position.

4. The fact that prophecy is said to take place through words or deeds is to be referred more to the announcing of prophecy than to prophetic sight.

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

### **ARTICLE X**

**In the tenth article we ask:  
Is prophecy suitably divided into prophecy of predestination,  
foreknowledge, and threats?**

[Parallel readings: *In Matth.* , 1i; *In Ierem.* , 18; *S.T.* , II-II, 174, 1.]

**Difficulties**

It seems that it is not, for

1. When the Gloss divides prophecy, it says: "One type of prophecy is according to foreknowledge, and this must be fulfilled in every way according to the meaning of the words. 'Behold a virgin shall conceive' (Isaiah 7:14) belongs to this type. The other kind of prophecy is a threat, as: 'Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed' (Jonas 3:4). This is not fulfilled in the superficial meaning of the words, but in the meaning of a tacit construction put on the words." Therefore, it seems that the third division which Jerome made of prophecy of predestination is superfluous.
2. That which is a property of all prophecy should not be set down as a member dividing prophecy. But to be according to divine foreknowledge is a property of all prophecy, for, as the Gloss reads: "The prophets read in the book of foreknowledge." Therefore, prophecy according to foreknowledge should not be set down as a division of prophecy.
3. Since foreknowledge is a more general term than predestination, inasmuch as it is part of its definition, foreknowledge can be divided from predestination only with reference to those things in which the extension of foreknowledge is greater than that of predestination. But it is with respect to evil things that the extension of foreknowledge is greater than that of predestination, for there is foreknowledge of these and not predestination. But there is both foreknowledge and predestination of good things. Therefore, when there is said to be one prophecy of predestination and another of foreknowledge, this means that one concerns good acts and the other evil. But as far as dependence on free will is concerned, there is no difference between good and evil. Therefore, there is no difference at all between these two kinds of prophecy which Jerome distinguishes when he says: "The prophecy of predestination is that which is fulfilled without our free choice, but the prophecy of foreknowledge is that in which our free choice is involved."
4. As Augustine says, predestination concerns goods connected with salvation. But our merits, also, which depend on free choice, are numbered among these goods. Therefore, our free choice is involved in prophecy of predestination. Thus, Jerome made a poor division.



5. Only three things can be considered in prophecy: that from whom it is, that in which it is, and that about which it is. But there is no distinction in that from whom it is, for all prophecy is from one source, the Holy Spirit. Nor is there any difference in that in which it is, for the human spirit is the subject of prophecy. And those things which prophecy concerns are only good and evil things. Therefore, prophecy should be divided only into a division with two members.

6. Jerome says<sup>6</sup> that the prophecy, "Behold a virgin shall conceive" (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23), is a prophecy of predestination. But, for the fulfillment of that prophecy, free choice played a part in the assent of the Blessed Virgin. Therefore, the prophecy of predestination has free will involved in it, and, thus, it does not differ from the prophecy of foreknowledge.

7. Every declaration about something future which we do not know will exist, is either false or doubtful to the one making the declaration. But through the prophecy containing a threat one predicts that something will exist, as for example, the destruction of some city. Since this declaration is neither false nor doubtful because there is neither falsity nor doubt in the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the prophecy, this has to be foreknown at least by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the prophecy containing a threat is not distinct from the prophecy of foreknowledge.

8. When something is predicted according to the prophecy containing a threat, the prediction should be interpreted conditionally or unconditionally. If conditionally, it is not said to belong to prophecy, which consists in a kind of supernatural knowledge, for even natural reason can know that some things will happen if certain conditions are fulfilled. Therefore, it must be interpreted unconditionally. Accordingly, either the prophecy is false, or the outcome is as predicted. And this must be known beforehand by God. Therefore, prophecy containing a threat should not be distinguished from the prophecy of foreknowledge.

9. In Jeremiah (17:18, 24-27) there is a similar rule for the fulfillment of divine promises and threats, for the threats are recalled when the nation against whom the threat was made repents of its sins, and similarly the promise ceases when the nation to whom it was made leaves the path of justice. Therefore, just as one makes the prophecy containing a threat a division of prophecy, he ought to make the prophecy containing a promise a fourth division.

10. Isaiah (38:1) spoke prophetically to Ezechias: "Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die..." This is not a prophecy of predestination, for that kind must be fulfilled in every way even apart from our free choice. Again, it is not a prophecy of foreknowledge because God did not have foreknowledge of this future event, otherwise there would have been falsity in His foreknowledge. Similarly, it does not belong to prophecy containing a threat, since the event was predicted

unconditionally. Therefore, there must be a fourth class of prophecy.

11. It was said that this was predicted to happen according to the lower causes, and thus was a prophecy containing a threat.—On the contrary, by the art of medicine man can know the lower causes of the death of a sick man. Therefore, if Isaiah predicted this only according to lower causes, either he did not predict it prophetically, or prophetic prediction does not differ from the prediction of a doctor.

12. Every prophecy deals with things either by viewing the higher causes or by viewing the lower causes. If we take the previously mentioned prophecy as conditional, since it is according to some causes, namely, lower causes, there is equal reason to say that all prophecy is conditional. Thus, all prophecy will have the same character as the prophecy containing a threat.

13. Although the prophecy of threatening is not fulfilled “in the superficial meaning of the words, nevertheless it is fulfilled in the meaning of the tacit construction put on the words,” as Cassiodorus says..Thus, Jonas’ words, “Niniveh shall be destroyed” (Jonas 3:4), were fulfilled according to Augustine, for, “although the walls of Niniveh remained standing, its evil ways were wiped out.” But the fulfillment of prophecy, not according to the exterior superficial meaning of the words, but according to their spiritual sense, takes place in the prophecy of predestination and of foreknowledge. We see this in Isaiah (54:11) “I will lay thy foundations with sapphires, Jerusalem,” and in Daniel (2:45): “the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and broke in pieces the statue,” and in many other similar passages. Therefore, prophecy containing a threat should not be distinguished from the prophecy of foreknowledge and predestination.

14. If likenesses of future things are shown to someone, he still is not called a prophet unless he understands the things signified through these likenesses. Thus, Pharaoh was not called a prophet when he saw the ears of corn and the cattle, “for there is need of understanding in a vision,” as Daniel (10:1) says. But those through whom the divine threats are made understand what they declare only according to the superficial meaning of the words, for they are not enlightened about the things which are signified through the words. This is clear in the case of Jonas, who understood that Ninive was to be overturned materially. Hence, he grieved as though his prophecy were not fulfilled when the city was not overturned but mended its ways. Therefore, one should not on this account be called a prophet, and, thus, threatening should not be made a species of prophecy. Hence, the distinction previously mentioned seems no distinction at all.

### **To the Contrary**

The opposite appears from the Gloss on Matthew(1:23): “Behold a virgin shall conceive.” Here, the above division is given and explained.

## REPLY

Prophecy is derived from the divine foreknowledge, as has been said above. But we must bear in mind that God knows futures differently from all others who have foreknowledge of them. For there are two things to consider in the knowledge of the future: the order of the causes to the future effects and the outcome or execution of this order in the actual procession of the effects from their causes.

Accordingly, no matter what created power has some knowledge of the future, its knowledge reaches only the order of the causes. Thus, a doctor is said to foreknow future death in so far as he knows that natural principles have an ordination to death. And a meteorologist is said to foresee future rains and winds in the same way. Hence, if these causes are such that their effects can be impeded, the event which is thus foreseen to happen does not always come to pass.

But God knows the future not only by reason of the order of the causes, but also in the very outcome or execution of that order. The reason for this is that His vision is measured by eternity, which comprehends all times in one indivisible present. Thus, in one simple glance He sees that to which the causes are ordered and how that order is fulfilled or obstructed. But this is impossible for a creature whose gaze is limited to a determined time. Hence, He knows those things which exist at that time. And at the time when futures are still future they exist only in the order of their causes, and hence, we can know them only in this way. Consequently, it is clear to all who consider it correctly that when we are said to foresee the future we have knowledge more of present things than of the future. And, so, it remains proper to God alone to have true foreknowledge of future events.

Therefore, prophecy is derived from divine foreknowledge sometimes by reason of the order of the causes and sometimes by reason of the execution or fulfillment of that order. Therefore, when prophetic revelation concerns only the order of the causes, it is called prophecy containing a threat. For, then, all that is revealed to the prophet is that according to the things which now exist such a person is ordained to this or that.

The fulfillment of the order, however, takes place in two ways. Sometimes it comes from the activity of the divine power alone, as the resuscitation of Lazarus, the conception of Christ, and things of this sort. And the prophecy of predestination follows this divine activity, for, as Damascene says: "Those things which God predestines are not in our power." Hence, predestination is called a kind of preparatory action on the part of God. Now, preparatory action concerns that which one will do himself and not what someone else will do.

Some things, however, are brought to completion by the operation of other

causes, whether natural or voluntary. These things, in so far as they are accomplished through other causes, are not predestined, but they are nevertheless foreknown. Hence, prophecy of these things is said to be according to foreknowledge. However, since prophecy takes place for the sake of men, the prophecy of foreknowledge especially concerns those things which men do by their free will. For this reason Jerome puts aside other created causes and makes mention only of free will when referring to the prophecy of foreknowledge.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. The threefold division which Jerome makes is reduced to a twofold division, as has been said, because one division looks to the order of causes and the other to the outcome of that order. This is the division which Cassiodorus held. But Jerome subdivided the second member; thus, Cassiodorus gave two members of the division and Jerome three. Cassiodorus also took foreknowledge in its generality, for it refers to all existing things, whether they come about through created or uncreated power. But Jerome took foreknowledge with a certain restriction, inasmuch as it concerns only those things about which there is no predestination by reason of themselves, that is to say, those things which come to pass by created power.

2. Every prophecy has divine foreknowledge as its root. But, since there is knowledge of the order and the outcome in divine foreknowledge, one kind of prophecy is derived from the one of these and one from the other. However, the foreknowledge of God is properly called foreknowledge in so far as it looks to an outcome which is future. For the order to the outcome is in the present; hence, of it there is knowledge rather than foreknowledge. Thus, not that prophecy which looks to the order, but only that which deals with the outcome, is said to take place according to foreknowledge.

3. Foreknowledge is taken here in contrast with predestination in so far as foreknowledge has a broader extension than predestination. Now, foreknowledge has a broader extension than predestination not only in evil things, if predestination be taken strictly, but also in all good things which do not take place exclusively by the divine power. Hence, the argument does not follow.

4. Our merit is from grace and from free will. However, it belongs to predestination only in so far as it comes from grace, which is from God alone. Hence, that which is from our free will is said to belong to predestination for some extrinsic reason.

5. Here, prophecy is distinguished according to the things of which it treats. This is not according to good and evil, for differences of this sort are related by some extrinsic reason to the future thing which is known through prophecy, but rather according to that which concerns the order or the outcome of the order, as has been said.

6. The consent of the Blessed Virgin intervened in the conception of Christ as something which removed a hindrance and not as an operative cause. For it was not fitting that so great a benefit be given to one who was unwilling.

7. We can say that something will exist not only from the fact that it will exist in this way, but also from the fact that it is so ordained in its causes that it will thus exist. For it is in this way that a doctor says: "That man will be cured or will die." And, if the event prove otherwise, he does not speak falsely. For at that time this was about to take place from the order of the causes, although it was possible for this to be impeded. Then, that which beforehand was going to take place in the event will not take place. For this reason the Philosopher says: "One who is about to enter will not enter." And according to this the threat of the prophet is neither false nor doubtful, although what he has predicted does not come to pass.

8. If the prophecy containing a threat is referred to the ordination of causes to which it directly looks, it is consequently free from all condition. For it is absolutely true that it is so ordained in the causes that this happen. But, if it is referred to the event to which it looks indirectly, it must be understood under this condition: if the cause acts. Nevertheless, it is supernatural, because we cannot know by natural knowledge that precisely such or such a punishment is deserved according to divine justice, even if the cause does exist, namely, if the wickedness remain.

9. We take the prophecy containing a promise as belonging to the prophecy containing a threat because both have the same intelligible nature. However, this nature is better expressed in prophecy containing a threat, because threats are more frequently revoked than promises, for God is more inclined to be merciful than to punish.

10. That prophecy was a prophecy containing a threat, and although the condition was not stated explicitly, that threat should be interpreted under the implicit condition: if such an order of things continues.

11. Lower causes include not only natural causes, which doctors can know beforehand, but also meritorious causes, which are known from divine revelation alone. Likewise, the natural causes of health or death can be known much more perfectly by divine revelation than by human ingenuity.

12. Higher causes, which are the intelligible natures of things [represented] in the divine foreknowledge, never fail of fulfillment of their effects, as lower causes do. Therefore, the outcomes of things are known absolutely in the higher causes, but only conditionally in lower causes.

13. Although in the prophecy of predestination and of foreknowledge the truth to be fulfilled is presented under some likenesses, no literal sense is understood by reason of those likenesses, but the literal sense is grasped according to those

things which are signified through the likenesses, as happens in all metaphorical expressions. Hence, in such prophecies we find no truth in the likenesses, but only in those things which are declared through the likenesses.

But, in the prophecy containing a threat, the literal sense of the words of the prophet is considered according to those likenesses of the things which will come to pass, because those likenesses are not given only as likenesses but as things. Hence, that which will come to pass and is represented through likenesses of this sort does not belong to the literal sense, but to the mystical sense. Thus, when it is said that Ninive will be destroyed, material destruction belongs to the literal sense, but destruction of evil ways belongs to the moral sense. By reason of the order of causes we see some truth in the literal sense itself, as has been said.

14. The ears of corn and the cattle were not shown in Pharaoh's dream as things, but only as likenesses. Therefore, Pharaoh, who saw only those likenesses, had no understanding of any thing and for this reason was not a prophet. But Jonas, to whom it was said: "Ninive shall be destroyed," had some understanding of a thing, namely, of the ordination of merits to destruction, even though, perhaps, he had no foreknowledge of the other thing, namely, the conversion. Thus, he was not a prophet in that which he did not understand. Nevertheless, Jonas and the prophets who threatened knew that the prophecy they foretold was not a prophecy according to foreknowledge, but according to threat. Hence, it is said in Jonas (4:2): "Therefore I went before to flee into Tharsis: for I know that thou art a gracious and merciful God."

## Q. 12: Prophecy

### ARTICLE XI

**In the eleventh article we ask:**

**Is there unchangeable truth in prophecy?**

[Parallel readings: *C.G.* , III, 154; *S.T.* , II-II, 171,6; 172, 5, ad 3; 172, 6, ad 2.]

### Difficulties

It seems that there is not, for

1. Since unchangeable truth is put in the definition of prophecy, if it belongs to prophecy at all, it must belong to it for some intrinsic reason. But future contingent things, about which we have prophecy, are not unchangeable for any intrinsic reason, but only in so far as they are referred to the divine foreknowledge, as Boethius says. Therefore, unchangeable truth should not be attributed to prophecy as part of its definition.

2. That which is fulfilled only if some changeable condition exists does not have unchangeable truth. But there is a prophecy, that containing a threat, which is fulfilled only if there exists a changeable condition, namely, persistence in justice or wickedness, as we see this in Jeremiah (18:8). Therefore, not all prophecy possesses unchangeable truth.

3. The Gloss on Isaiah (38:1) reads: "God reveals His sentence (*sententia*) but not His chosen plan (*consilium*) to the prophets." But His sentence is changeable, as is said in the same place. Therefore, prophecy does not possess unchangeable truth.

4. If prophecy contains unchangeable truth, this happens because of the prophet who sees it, or because of the thing which is seen, or because of the eternal mirror by reason of which it is seen. But its source is none of these. Not the seer, for human knowledge is changeable. Not the thing which is seen, for that is contingent. Finally, not the divine foreknowledge or mirror, for this does not impose necessity on things. Therefore, prophecy in no way contains unchangeable truth.

5. It was said that divine foreknowledge does not impose a necessity which makes it impossible for the outcome to be different, but nevertheless the outcome which was foreknown will not be different, and that in this way prophecy contains unchangeable truth. For, according to the Philosopher, that is called unchangeable which cannot be changed, or is changed with difficulty, or simply does not change.—On the contrary, granted the occurrence of what is possible, nothing impossible follows. If, therefore, that which is foreknown and prophesied can vary, then, if we assume that it does vary, nothing impossible follows. But it does follow that prophecy possesses changeable truth. Therefore, prophecy does not necessarily contain unchangeable truth.

6. The truth of a proposition follows the condition of the thing, for: "A statement is true or false as the thing is or is not," as the Philosopher says. But the things about which there is prophecy are contingent and changeable. Therefore, the prophetic statement contains changeable truth.

7. An effect is called necessary or contingent from the proximate cause, not from the first cause. But the proximate causes of the things of which we have prophecy are changeable causes, although the first cause is unchangeable. Therefore, prophecy does not possess unchangeable, but changeable, truth.

8. If prophecy possesses unchangeable truth, it is impossible for something to be prophesied and not happen. But it is impossible for what has been prophesied not to have been prophesied. Therefore, if prophecy has unchangeable truth, that which has been prophesied must necessarily happen. Thus, prophecy will not concern future contingent things.

## **To the Contrary**

1. The Gloss says: "Prophecy is divine inspiration or revelation which announces the outcomes of things with immutable truth."
2. "Prophecy is a sign of divine foreknowledge," as Jerome says. But things which are foreknown are necessary in so far as they are subjects of foreknowledge. Therefore, the things prophesied are also necessary in so far as there is prophecy about them. Therefore, prophecy has unchangeable truth.
3. God's knowledge about changeable things can be unchangeable, for He does not obtain it from things. But in the same way prophetic knowledge is not received from the things themselves. Therefore, Prophecy has unchangeable truth about changeable things.

## **REPLY**

In prophecy there are two things to consider, the things prophesied and the knowledge which is had of those things. And the order of the causes in these two is different. For the things prophesied come immediately from changeable causes as from their proximate cause, but from the unchangeable causes as from their remote cause. Prophetic knowledge, on the other hand, comes from the divine foreknowledge as its proximate cause and depends on the things prophesied not as a proximate cause, but only as a sign of these things.

Moreover, the necessity and contingency of every effect depends on the proximate cause and not on the first cause. Hence, the things prophesied are changeable, but the prophetic knowledge is unchangeable, just as is the divine foreknowledge from which it is derived as a copy from the pattern. For, just as the necessity of the truth of the understanding causes necessary truth in the statement which is a sign of understanding, so also the immutable divine foreknowledge causes unchangeable truth in the prophecy which is its sign.

But the way in which God's foreknowledge can be unchangeably true about changeable things is explained in another question, on God's knowledge. Consequently, it is not necessary to repeat it here, since the whole immutability of prophecy depends on the immutability of the divine foreknowledge.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Nothing prevents something from being in another thing for an extrinsic reason, if that thing is taken in itself, and yet being in the thing for an intrinsic reason, if it is taken together with something else. Thus, to be moved belongs to man for an extrinsic reason, but, in so far as he is running, it belongs intrinsically to a man. So also, to be unchangeable does not belong intrinsically to the thing which is prophesied, but belongs to it only inasmuch as it is prophesied. Therefore, it is fittingly included in the definition of prophecy.



2. The prophecy containing a threat fully possesses unchangeable truth, for it does not deal with the outcomes of things, but with the order of the causes to the outcomes, as has been said. And this order, predicted by the prophet, must necessarily be, although sometimes the events do not follow.

3. That eternal disposition of God which never changes we call the chosen plan of God. For this reason Gregory says: "God never changes His chosen plan." Sentence, however, is that to which some causes are ordained. Moreover, sentences are handed down in trials according to the merits of the cases (*causae*). However, sometimes that to which the causes (*causae*) are ordained is arranged by God from eternity. And, then, God's chosen plan and sentence are the same. But, sometimes, causes are ordained to something which is not arranged by God from eternity. Then, God's chosen plan and sentence are directed to different things. Therefore, there is mutability in the sentence which looks to lower causes, but there is always immutability in the chosen plan.

Sometimes, then, a sentence which is in conformity with the chosen plan is revealed to the prophet. In this case, the prophecy possesses unchangeable truth even with reference to the outcome. Sometimes, however, there is revealed a sentence which is not in conformity with the chosen plan. In this case, there is unchangeable truth with reference to the order, but not with reference to the outcome, as we have said.

4. The eternal mirror gives immutability to prophecy, not because it imposes necessity on the things prophesied, but because it makes the prophecy about contingent things necessary just as it itself is necessary.

5. Given that something has been prophesied according to foreknowledge, although in itself it is possible for it to fail to exist, still, granted that it is said to be foreknown, it is then impossible for it not to exist. For, from the fact that it is established as foreknown, it is established that it will be so, since foreknowledge looks to the outcome.

6. The truth of a proposition follows the condition of the thing when the knowledge of the one proposing the truth has its origin from things. However, this is not so in our case.

7. Although the proximate cause of the thing prophesied is changeable, the proximate cause of the prophecy itself is unchangeable, as has been said. Therefore, the argument does not follow.

8. We should pass like judgment on the failure of what is prophesied to come to pass and on the failure of what is foreknown to come to pass. To what extent this should be conceded and to what extent it should be denied is treated in the question on God's knowledge.

## Q. 12: Prophecy

### ARTICLE XII

**In the twelfth article we ask:**

**Is the prophecy which is according to the sight of understanding alone higher than that which has the sight of understanding together with imagination?**

[Parallel readings: *S.T.* , II-II, 174, 2-3; III, 30, 3, ad 1.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that it is not, for

1. Prophecy which has the sight of understanding along with imagination includes that which has the sight of understanding alone. Therefore, the prophetic sight which has both is better than that which has only one. For that which embraces something surpasses that which it embraces.

2. The more abundantly the light of understanding is in a prophecy, the more perfect it is. But, because of the fullness of the light of understanding in prophecy, there is an overflow from the understanding into the imagination, so that the sight of imagination is produced there.

Therefore, the prophecy which has the sight of imagination added to it is more perfect than that which has the sight of understanding alone.

3 It is said of John the Baptist that he is a prophet and "more than a prophet" (Mat 11:9). But this is stated because he saw Christ not only through his understanding or imagination, as the other prophets did, but also physically pointed him out. Therefore, prophecy with which bodily sight is combined is the most noble, and for the same reason that to which the sight of imagination is added is more noble than that which has the sight of understanding alone.

4. The more fully a thing contains the differences which make up the intelligible nature of the species, the more perfect it is. But the differences which constitute prophecy are sight and declaration. Therefore, the prophecy which includes declaration seems to be more perfect than that which does not have it. But the declaration cannot take place without the sight of imagination, because the one who declares a prophecy must have in his imagination the words he is going to speak. Therefore, the prophecy which includes the sight of imagination and of understanding is more perfect.

5. The Gloss on "Yet by the Spirit he speaketh mysteries" (1 Cor. 14:2) says: "One who by spirit alone sees the likenesses of the things signified is less a prophet, and one who is granted only the understanding of them is more a

prophet, but he is most a prophet who excels in both." Thus, we conclude as before.

6. As Rabbi Moses says, prophecy begins in the understanding and is completed in the imagination. Therefore, prophecy which has the sight of imagination is more perfect than that which has only the sight of understanding.

7. Weakness of the light of understanding betrays an imperfection of the prophecy. But the fact that prophetic sight does not overflow into the imagination seems to come from weakness of the light of understanding. Therefore, prophecy which has the sight of imagination seems to be more perfect.

8. To know a thing as it is in itself and as the sign of something else is more perfect than to know it only in itself. Therefore, for the same reason it is more perfect to know a thing as it is represented in a sign than to know it only in itself. But, in the prophecy which has the sight of imagination and that of understanding, the thing prophesied is known not only in itself but also as it is represented by the images. Therefore, the prophecy which has the sight of imagination is more noble than that which contains only the sight of understanding, in which one understands the things prophesied only in themselves and not as represented in a sign.

9. Dionysius says: "It is impossible for the divine radiance to shine on us unless it is shrouded with a variety of sacred veils."s But, for him veils are the imagery of the imagination, in which the purity of the light of understanding is, as it were, shrouded. Therefore, in every prophecy there must be imagery of the imagination either formed by man or introduced by God. Now, the imagery introduced by God seems to be more noble than that formed by man. Therefore, those prophecies seem to be most noble in which God at the same time infuses the light of understanding and the imagery of the imagination.

10. As Jerome says, the prophets are distinguished from the writers of sacred books. But, of those whom he calls the prophets, all, or almost all, received revelation under the imagery of imagination. But many of those whom he calls writers of sacred books received revelation without imagery. Therefore, those to whom revelation is given according to the sight of understanding and imagination are more properly called prophets than those to whom revelation is given according to the sight of understanding only.

11. According to the Philosopher, our understanding is related to the first causes of things, which naturally are most knowable, "just as the eye of the owl is related to the light of the sun." But the eye of the owl can look at the light of the sun only when it is darkened to some extent. Therefore, our understanding, too, understands divine things when they are dimmed to some extent, and therefore seems to understand them in this way under certain likenesses. Consequently, the sight of understanding will not be more certain than that of imagination, since

both take place under likenesses. Hence, it seems that the addition of the sight of imagination to that of understanding does not lessen the nobility of the latter. Thus, that prophecy which takes place under both sights is either of greater dignity or at least of equal dignity.

12. That which can be understood is related to the understanding as that which can be imagined is related to the imagination. But that which can be imagined is apprehended by the imagination only through the mediation of a likeness. Therefore, what can be understood is apprehended by the understanding only in the same way. Thus, we conclude as before.

### **To the Contrary**

1. The Gloss says: "There is another kind of prophecy which is of greater dignity than the others, that in which one prophesies by means of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit alone and apart from every outside help of action or word or vision or dream." But the prophecy which has the sight of imagination joined to it takes place with the help of a dream or a vision. Therefore, the prophecy which has the sight of understanding alone is more noble.

2. Everything which is received into a thing is received there according to the manner of the receiver. But the understanding, in which something is received by the sight of understanding, is more noble than the imagination, in which it is received by the sight of imagination. Therefore, prophecy which takes place according to the sight of understanding is more noble.

3. Where there is sight of understanding there can be no deception, for one who is mistaken does not understand, as Augustine says. However, the sight of imagination contains a great mixture of falsity. Hence, in the *Metaphysics* it is given as a kind of source of falsity. Therefore, the prophecy which has the sight of understanding is more noble.

4. When one power of the soul recedes from its activity, another is strengthened in its activity. Therefore, if the power of imagination is completely inactive in some prophecy, the sight of understanding will be stronger. Therefore, the prophecy will also be more noble.

5. The acts of the powers are related to each other just as the powers are. But understanding not joined to imagination, as in the angels, is more noble than understanding joined to imagination, as in men. Therefore, the prophecy which contains the sight of understanding without the sight of imagination is more noble than that which has both.

6. Assistance in an action shows imperfection in the agent. But the sight of imagination is given in the Gloss as a help to prophecy. Therefore, the prophecy which has the sight of imagination is more imperfect.

7. The more remote light is from darkness or clouds, the brighter it is. But the imagery of imagination is, as it were, clouds which darken the light of understanding. For this reason Isaac says that human reason, which abstracts from phantasms, has its origin in the shadow of intelligence. Therefore, prophecy which has the light of understanding without images is more perfect.

8. The whole nobility of prophetic knowledge consists in this, that it imitates God's foreknowledge. But prophecy which has no sight of imagination imitates divine foreknowledge, in which there is no imagination, more than that which has the sight of imagination. Therefore, that which does not have the sight of imagination is more noble.

## REPLY

Since the nature of a species is made up of the nature of the genus and the nature of the difference, the dignity of the species can be estimated from either of these. Likewise, according to these two considerations; certain things sometimes surpass each other in dignity. In so far as the nature of the species is concerned, that in which the difference formally constituting the species exists more nobly, always participates more perfectly in the nature of the species. But, absolutely speaking, sometimes that in which the nature of the genus is more perfect is more noble and sometimes that in which the nature of the difference exists more perfectly is more noble.

For, since the difference adds some perfection to the nature of the genus, the excellence which comes from the difference makes the thing more noble absolutely. Thus, just as in the species of man, who is a rational animal, he is more noble absolutely who is more gifted in rationality than one who is more gifted in the things which refer to the animal nature, as the senses, movement, and other things of this sort.

However, when the difference implies a certain imperfection, then that which has the nature of the genus more completely is more noble absolutely. This is clear in faith, which is an obscure knowledge, namely, of things which are not seen. For one who has a large share of the nature of the genus of faith and is deficient in the difference (as one of the faithful who has some understanding of matters of belief and in a way already sees them) has a faith simply more noble than one who has less knowledge. Nonetheless, as far as the nature of faith is concerned, he has it more properly who does not at all see the things which he believes.

The same is true in prophecy. For prophecy seems to be a knowledge which is shadowy and mixed with darkness, as the second Epistle of St. Peter (1:19) has: "We have the more firm prophetic word: whereunto you do well to attend, as to a light that shineth in a dark place." This, too, the very name prophecy shows, for prophecy is called a kind of sight from afar. And things which are seen clearly are seen, as it were, from nearby.

Therefore, if we compare the types of prophecy on the basis of the difference which completes the essence of prophecy, we find that the prophecy in which there is admixture of the sight of imagination possesses that nature of prophecy more perfectly and more properly. For in this the knowledge of prophetic truth is darkened.

But if we compare prophecies according to the attributes of the nature of the genus, namely, knowledge or sight, we see that we have to make a distinction. For all perfect knowledge has two elements, reception and judgment about that which is received. Now, in prophecy, judgment about that which is received is according to the understanding alone, but reception is according to the understanding and the imagination. Sometimes, therefore, there is no supernatural reception in prophecy, but only supernatural judgment. Thus, the understanding alone is enlightened without any sight of imagination. Perhaps Solomon's inspiration was of this nature, since by a divine impulse he made more certain judgments than the rest of us about human actions and the natures of things, which we perceive naturally.

But, sometimes, there is also supernatural reception, and this takes place in two ways. For there is either reception by the imagination, as when images of things are formed by the divine power in the spirit of the prophet, or reception by the understanding, as happens when the understanding is so clearly flooded with knowledge of the truth that it does not grasp the truth from the likeness of any images, but in fact can form images for itself from the truth it has seen. And it uses these because of the nature of our understanding. But there can be no prophecy in which there is reception without judgment. Hence, no one can have sight of imagination without that of understanding.

Thus, it is clear that the pure sight of understanding, which has judgment alone without supernatural reception, is inferior to that which has judgment and the reception of imagination. But the sight of understanding which has judgment and supernatural reception is more noble than that which has judgment and the reception of imagination. In this respect we must concede that prophecy which contains the sight of understanding alone is more worthy than that which has sight of imagination joined to it.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Although the prophecy which consists of both sights does also have sight of understanding, it does not include the prophecy which consists of the sight of understanding alone, because the latter has the sight of understanding more nobly than the former, since in it the perception of the light of understanding is sufficient for reception and judgment, whereas in the other it is sufficient only for judgment.
2. In both types of prophecy the prophetic light descends from the understanding

to the imagination, but in different ways. For in the type of prophecy which is said to contain the sight of understanding alone we perceive the whole fullness of the prophetic revelation in the understanding. Thereupon, because of the nature of our understanding, which cannot understand without phantasms, images are suitably formed in the imaginative power as the one who understands wishes. But in the other type of prophecy the whole fullness of prophetic revelation is not received in the understanding, but partly in the understanding, in so far as there is judgment, and partly in the imagination, in so far as there is reception.

Hence, the sight of understanding is more complete in the prophecy which contains only the sight of understanding. For the deficiency of the light received in the understanding causes it, in a sense, to fall to some extent from the intelligible purity into the imagery of imagination, as happens in dreams.

3. That John pointed out Christ physically does not belong to prophetic sight in the way we are now speaking about the comparison of prophecy. Rather, it belongs to the declaration of prophecy. Also, that he saw Christ bodily did not give him prophecy of a more perfect nature, but was a concession greater than prophecy given him by God. Hence, Luke (10:24) says: "Many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see..."

4. Declaration through words or deeds is common to both kinds of prophecy, for even the prophecy which has the sight of understanding alone can be declared according to images which [the prophet] freely forms.

5. That Gloss speaks of one who in his understanding has only judgment about those things which are received by another, as Joseph had only judgment about the things which Pharaoh had seen and he himself did not receive [knowledge of] what would happen. Thus, the argument does not reach any conclusion about the prophecy which has the sight of understanding alone. And it is of this that we are now speaking.

6. On this point we do not follow the opinion of Rabbi Moses, for he holds that the prophecy of David was below that of Isaiah and Jeremiah, which is the opposite of what holy men say. Still, there is some truth in what he says, because the judgment is not completed unless the things about which we are to judge are brought forward. Hence, in the prophecy in which the light of understanding is perceived only in order to make a judgment, there is only the light itself, which does not cause determinate knowledge of anything until some things about which we must judge are put before it, whether these are received either from the light itself or from another. Thus, the sight of understanding is perfected through the sight of imagination as what is common is determined through that which is particular.

7. It is not always weakness of the light of understanding which is the source of prophecy according to the sight of understanding alone. But sometimes it is

caused by a very complete reception of the understanding, as we have noted.” Therefore, the argument does not follow. 8. A sign as such is a cause of knowledge. The thing which is represented is that which is known through something else. But, just as that which is known in itself and makes other things known is known in a more noble way than that which is known only in itself, so also, on the other hand, that which is known through itself and not through something else is known in a more noble way than that which is known through something else. Thus, principles are known in a more noble way than conclusions, and therefore, the case is just the opposite with the sign and the thing signified. Hence, the argument does not follow.

9. Although images imprinted by God are more noble than images formed by a man, the reception of knowledge which is in the mind from God is more noble than that which takes place through the forms of imagination.

10. Those who have prophecy according to visions of imagination are more especially called prophets in the above-mentioned distinction, for in them there is a fuller character of prophecy even by reason of the difference. They, however, are called sacred writers who had only intellectual visions supernaturally, whether in judgment alone or in judgment and reception together.

11. Although our intellect understands divine things through certain likenesses, still, because these are immaterial, they are more noble than the likenesses of imagination. Hence, the sight of understanding, also, is more noble.

12. A thing cannot be imaginable through its essence as it can be intelligible through its essence, for the imagination concerns only material things. Yet, it cannot receive anything except without matter. Consequently, it is always necessary for the imagination to attain an object not through its essence, but through its likeness. But understanding receives things immaterially, and so, knows not only material things, but also immaterial things. Hence, it knows some things through their essence and some through likenesses.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

The response to the difficulties to the contrary is easily seen, in so far as they conclude to something false.

## **Q. 12: Prophecy**

### **ARTICLE XIII**

**In the thirteenth article we ask:**

**Are the grades of prophecy distinguished according to the sight of imagination?**



[Parallel readings: *IV Sent.*, 49, 2, 7, ad 2; 1  
*Cor.*, c. 13, lect. 4; *S.T.*, II-II, 174, 3.]

## Difficulties

And it seems that they are, for

1. Prophecy is more noble where the reception of the thing prophesied is more noble. But, sometimes, the reception of the thing prophesied takes place through the sight of imagination. Therefore, grades of prophecy can be distinguished according to the sight of imagination.
2. A more perfect medium of knowing produces more perfect knowledge. It is for this reason that scientific knowledge is more perfect than opinion. But the likenesses of imagination are a medium of knowing in prophecy. Therefore, where the sight of imagination is more noble, the grade of prophecy will be higher.
3. In all knowledge which takes place through a likeness the knowledge is more perfect where the likeness is more explicit. But in prophecy the imagery of imagination is made up of the likenesses of the things about which there is revelation of prophecy. Therefore, where the sight of imagination is more perfect, the grade of prophecy is higher.
4. Since the prophetic light descends from the understanding to the imagination, when the light in the understanding of the prophet is more perfect, the sight of imagination is the more perfect. Therefore, different grades of the sight of imagination show different grades of the sight of understanding. But where the sight of understanding is more perfect, the prophecy is more perfect. Therefore, grades of prophecy are distinguished according to the sight of imagination.
5. It was said that diversity of the sight of imagination does not distinguish species of prophecy and, therefore, grades of prophecy are not distinguished according to it.—On the contrary, every warm element is of the same species, but doctors distinguish warmth into first, second, third, and fourth grades. Therefore, the distinction of grades does not require the distinction of species.
6. Greater and less do not constitute distinct species. But even the sight of understanding is distinguished in prophecy only according to the more or less perfect reception of the prophetic light. Therefore, difference in the sight of understanding does not constitute distinct species of prophecy and so it does not constitute distinct grades of prophecy according to the response just given. Thus, there would not be grades in prophecy if it were distinguished neither according to the sight of understanding nor the sight of imagination. Therefore, it remains that grades of prophecy are distinguished according to the sight of imagination.

## To the Contrary

1. Only the sight of understanding, and not the sight of imagination, makes one a prophet. Therefore, neither are grades of prophecy distinguished according to the sight of imagination.
2. That which is distinguished by reason of something intrinsic is distinguished according to that which is formal to it. But in prophecy the sight of understanding is formal and the sight of imagination is, as it were, material. Therefore, grades of prophecy are distinguished according to the sight of understanding and not according to the sight of imagination.
3. The visions of imagination frequently vary in the same prophet, for sometimes he apprehends revelation in one way and sometimes in another. Therefore, it does not seem possible to distinguish grades of prophecy according to the sight of imagination.
4. Prophecy is related to the things prophesied just as scientific knowledge is related to the things known. But the sciences are distinguished according to the things known, as is said in *The Soul* . Therefore, prophecy is distinguished according to the things prophesied and not according to the sight of imagination.
5. According to the Gloss, prophecy consists in "words and deeds, dreams and visions." Therefore, grades of prophecy should not be distinguished more according to the sight of imagination to which visions and dreams belong than according to words and deeds.
6. Miracles also are needed for prophecy. Hence, when Moses was sent by the Lord (Exodus 3:11-13), he sought a sign. And in Psalms (73:9) we read: "Our signs we have not seen, there is now no prophet..." Therefore, grades of prophecy should not be distinguished according to the sight of imagination rather than according to signs.

## REPLY

When two things combine to make up something, and one of them is more important than the other in the composite which they constitute, we can consider grades of comparison according to that which is primary and according to that which is secondary. But a high degree of that which is primary shows an absolute pre-eminence, whereas a high degree of that which is secondary shows a pre-eminence in some respect and not absolutely, unless the high degree of that which is secondary is a sign of a high degree of that which is primary.

Thus, for human merit, charity, as that which is primary, unites with an external work, as that which is secondary. However, absolutely speaking, that is to say, with reference to the essential reward, we judge merit to be greater when it proceeds from greater charity. And the magnitude of the work makes for greater merit in so far as it refers to some accidental reward, but not absolutely, except

in so far as it shows intensity of charity, according to what Gregory says: "Love of God, if it exists, does great things." Therefore, since prophecy is achieved through the joint activity of both the sight of understanding and that of imagination, the former functioning as the principal factor, and the latter in a secondary capacity, it follows that pre-eminence of the sight of understanding should be the basis for judging one grade of prophecy as absolutely superior. However, pre-eminence of the sight of imagination shows a grade of prophecy to be higher in some respect, and not absolutely, unless to the extent that perfection of the sight of imagination exhibits perfection of the sight of understanding.

But we cannot perceive determinate grades of the sight of understanding, because the fullness of the light of understanding is displayed only through certain signs. Hence, we must distinguish grades of prophecy according to those signs. And in this way there are four bases on which we can distinguish grades of prophecy.

The first is according to the elements which are necessary for prophecy. Now, prophecy has two acts: sight and declaration. For sight, however, two things are needed: judgment, which is in the understanding, and reception, which is sometimes in the understanding and sometimes in the imagination. But for declaration something is needed in the one declaring, namely, a certain boldness so that he will not be afraid to speak the truth because of the opponents of the truth. In this sense the Lord said to Ezechiel (3:8-9): "Behold I have made thy face stronger than their faces: and thy forehead harder than their foreheads..., fear them not, neither be thou dismayed at their presence." And something else is needed in the thing to be declared, namely, a sign through which the truth of the thing declared is made known. Thus, Moses received a sign from God in order that he might be believed.

But, since the place of declaration in prophecy is not primary but only secondary, the lowest grade of prophecy exists in one in whom there is a certain boldness or readiness to say or do something without having a revelation. This would be the case if we say that there was a grade of prophecy in Samson, taking prophecy in a broad sense in which every supernatural influx is reduced to prophecy. The second grade will be that in which the prophet has the sight of understanding only according to judgment, as in Solomon. The third grade is that in which one has the sight of understanding together with that of imagination, as in Isaiah and Jeremiah. The fourth is that in which the prophet has the very fullness of the sight of understanding in judgment and reception, as in David.

A second basis on which grades of prophecy can be distinguished is the disposition of the one prophesying. Thus, since prophecy takes place in a dream or in a vision when one is awake, as we read in Numbers (12:6), the grade of prophecy which takes place when one is awake is more perfect than that which

takes place in a dream. This is so both because the understanding is better disposed for judging when one is awake and because the transport from sensible things does not take place naturally, but comes from the perfect concentration of the inner powers on the things which God is disclosing.

A third basis is the manner of perceiving these things, for the more distinctly the things prophesied are signified, the higher is the grade of prophecy. But no signs portray anything more distinctly than words. Therefore, when one perceives words expressly indicating the thing prophesied, as we read of Samuel in the first Book of Kings (3:11), the grade of prophecy is higher than when certain figures which are likenesses of the things are shown to us, as the boiling caldron which was shown to Jeremiah (1:13). From this it is clearly shown that the prophetic light is better grasped in its power when the things to be prophesied are exhibited according to more distinct likenesses.

The fourth basis is the one who makes the revelation. For the grade of prophecy is higher when he who speaks is seen than when one only hears the words, whether in a dream or in a vision. For this shows that the prophet approaches closer to the knowledge of him who reveals. And the grade of prophecy is higher when he who speaks is seen under the guise of an angel than when he is seen in the form of a man, and even higher if he should be seen in the image of God, as in Isaiah (6:1) "I saw the Lord sitting...." For, since revelation of prophecy descends from God to an angel and from the angel to man, the reception of prophecy is manifestly fuller, the more it approaches the first source of prophecy.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

We must concede the arguments which show that grades of prophecy are distinguished according to sight of imagination in the manner we have explained. And we must not say that diversity of grade requires distinction of species.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

1. The answer to the first difficulty is clear from what has been said.
2. When something is distinguished according to species, the distinction must be made according to that which is formal. But if there is distinction of grades within the same species, it can be according to that which is material, as animal is distinguished according to male and female, which are material differences, as is said in the *Metaphysics*.
3. Since prophetic light is not something abiding in the prophet, but a kind of transient impression, it is not necessary for the prophet always to possess the same grade of prophecy. In fact, revelation comes to him sometimes according to one grade and sometimes according to another.
4. Since some things which are more noble are at times known less perfectly, as

when there is opinion about things divine and scientific knowledge about creatures, we cannot derive grades of prophecy from the things prophesied. This is especially true when the things which are to be declared are revealed to the prophet according to the demands of the disposition of those for whose sake the prophecy is given.

Still, it can be said that grades of prophecy are distinguished according to the things prophesied, but, because of their great diversity, we cannot thus assign definite grades of prophecy, except perhaps in a general way, as if we should say that the grade is higher when something about God is revealed than when something about creatures is revealed.

5. The words and deeds treated in this objection do not belong to the revelation of prophecy, but to the declaration which takes place according to the disposition of those to whom it is declared. Consequently, we cannot distinguish grades of prophecy according to this. The grace of working miracles differs from prophecy, yet it can be reduced to prophecy inasmuch as the truth of the prophet is shown forth through miracles. Hence, in this respect the grace of working miracles is better than prophecy, just as scientific knowledge which gives the reason is better than scientific knowledge which gives the fact. For this reason the grace of working miracles is put before the grace of prophecy in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (12:10).

Therefore, he is the most distinguished prophet who has prophetic revelation and also works miracles. However, if he works miracles without prophetic revelation, he is not more noble in what belongs to the nature of prophecy, although, perhaps, all things considered, he is more noble. But such a one is numbered among those in the lowest grade of prophecy, just as one who has only the boldness to do something.

## Q. 12: Prophecy

### ARTICLE XIV

**In the fourteenth article we ask:**

**Was Moses more outstanding than other prophets?**

[Parallel readings: *De ver.* , 12, 9, ad 1; *In Isalam* , 6; *S.T.* , II-II, 174,4.]

### Difficulties

It seems that he was not, for

1. Gregory says: "As there has been a growth age by age, there has been an increase in the knowledge about God." Therefore, the later prophets were more

outstanding than Moses.

2. The Gloss reads: "David was the most outstanding of the prophets. Therefore, Moses was not the most outstanding.

3. Greater miracles were worked through Joshua, who made the sun and the moon stand still (Joshua 10:13), than through Moses. Greater miracles were also worked through Isaiah, who made the sun go backward (Isaiah 38:8). Therefore, Moses was not the greatest prophet.

4. In Sirach (48:4-5) there is this said of Elijah: "Who can glory like to thee who raisedst up a dead man from below... ? " Thus, we conclude as before.

5. In Matthew (11:11), we read of John the Baptist: "There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist." Therefore, Moses was not greater than he. Thus, we conclude as before.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Deuteronomy (34: 10) says: "And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses."

2. Numbers (12:6-7) says: "If there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will appear to him in a vision, or I will speak to him in a dream. But it is not so with my servant Moses who is most faithful in all my house." From this it is clear that he is given preference over the other prophets.

### **REPLY**

Among the prophets, eminence can, according to various criteria, be attributed to some in a qualified way, but speaking without qualification, Moses was the greatest of them all. For in him the four things necessary for prophecy were present in a most outstanding manner.

First, the sight of understanding was most eminent in him, and through this he was lifted up to see the very essence of God, as is said in Numbers (12:8): "And plainly, and not by riddles and figures doth he see the Lord." Moreover, this sight of his did not take place through the mediation of an angel, as it did in other prophetic visions. Hence, in the same place in Numbers (12:8) we read: "For I speak to him mouth to mouth." And Augustine says this plainly.

Second, the sight of imagination existed in Moses most perfectly because he had it, as it were, at will. Hence, we read in Exodus (33:10: "And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man is wont to speak to his friend." We can also note in this another excellence with reference to the sight of imagination, that he not only heard the words of the one revealing, but saw Him, and this not in the shape of a man or an angel, but as God Himself; not in a dream, but when awake. We read this of none of the other prophets.

Third, his declaration was most outstanding because all who were before him taught their families as one teaches a lesson, but Moses was the first who spoke for the Lord, saying: "The Lord says this." And he spoke to the whole people and not to one family. Nor did he declare something for the Lord in such a way that his hearers should give heed to what another previous prophet said, as the prophets by their preaching led the people to observe the law of Moses. Hence, the preaching of previous prophets was a preparation for the law of Moses, and this law was the foundation of the preaching of subsequent prophets. Fourth, he was more outstanding in the matters which refer to the declaration of prophecy. For, as regards miracles, he worked signs for the conversion and teaching of a whole race, whereas other prophets worked particular miracles for special persons and special tasks. Hence, we read in Deuteronomy (34:10): "And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face". as for pre-eminence of revelation: "In all the signs and wonders, which he sent by him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants" (Deuteronomy 34:11); and "Great miracles, which Moses did before all Israel" (Deuteronomy 34:12). He also showed himself most outstanding in boldness, for with only a rod he went down into Egypt, not only to preach the words of the Lord, but also to scourge Egypt and to free his people.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. We should take what Gregory says as referring to the things which pertain to the mystery of the Incarnation. Later prophets received more explicit revelations about these than Moses did. However, they did not receive more explicit revelations of the Divinity, about which Moses was most fully taught.
2. David is called the most outstanding of the prophets because he prophesied most clearly about Christ without any vision of imagination.
3. Although those miracles were greater than the miracles of Moses in the substance of what was done, the miracles of Moses were greater in the manner in which they were performed because they were performed for the whole people and for the instruction of the people in a new law and for their liberation. These other miracles were for particular tasks.
4. The pre-eminence of Elijah is noted especially in this, that he was preserved from death and was more outstanding than many other prophets in boldness, by reason of which he did not fear the rulers of his times, and in greatness of miracles, as appears from the same place in Sirach (48:4).
5. When Moses is put before the other prophets, we should understand this as referring to prophets of the Old Testament, for, at that time especially, when the world awaited the coming of Christ, to whom all prophecy was ordained, prophecy was in its proper environment. John, however, belongs to the New Testament. Hence, Matthew (11:13) has: "For all the prophets and the law

prophesied until John.” However, there is a clearer revelation in the New Testament; the second Epistle to the Corinthians (3:18) has: “But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face...” Here, the Apostle distinctly puts himself and the other apostles ahead of Moses. Nevertheless, granted that no man was greater than John the Baptist, it does not follow from this that no prophet had a higher grade of prophecy than he, for one can be greater in prophecy and less in merit, since prophecy is not a gift of sanctifying grace.



## Question Thirteen: Rapture

What is rapture?

1. Did Paul see God through His essence when he was enraptured?
2. Can one in this life have his understanding raised to see God through His
3. essence without being carried out of his senses?
4. How great an abstraction is required for our understanding to be able to see
5. God through His essence?

What did the Apostle know and not know about his rapture?

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### ARTICLE I

**The question is about rapture.**

**In the first article we ask:**

**What is rapture?**

[Parallel readings: *De ver.*, 13, 2, ad 9; *2 Cor.*, c. 12., lect. 1; *S.T.*, II-II, 175, 1.]

The Masters describe it in this way: "Rapture is elevation, by the power of a higher nature, from that which is according to nature to that which is contrary to nature."

### Difficulties

It seems that rapture is unsuitably described, for

1. Augustine says: "Man's understanding knows God naturally." But, in rapture, man's understanding is raised to a knowledge of God. Therefore, it is not raised to that which is contrary to nature, but to that which is according to nature.
2. A created spirit depends more on the uncreated spirit than a lower body depends on a higher body. But impressions from higher bodies are natural to lower bodies, as the Commentator says. Therefore, elevation of the human spirit, even though it takes place in virtue of a higher nature, is only natural.
3. The Gloss on Romans(11:24), "Contrary to nature [thou] wert grafted into the good olive tree," reads that God, the author of nature, "does nothing contrary to nature," since that which each one receives from the source of all rule and order of nature is the nature for it. But the elevation of rapture is from God, who is the creator of human nature. Therefore, it is not against nature but according to it.
4. It was said that it is against nature because it is done in a divine manner and not in the manner of human spirit.—On the contrary, Dionysius says: "We see the

justice of God in this that He distributes [His goods] to all things according to the measure of their worth." But God cannot do anything contrary to His justice. Therefore, He does not give a thing something which is not according to its manner of being.

5. If man's manner is changed in some respect, it is not changed in such a way that man's proper good would be taken away. For, as Augustine says, God is not the cause of man's deterioration. But man's proper good is to live according to reason and to act in a voluntary way, as is clear in Dionysius. Therefore, since violence is contrary to what is voluntary and does away with the good of reason (for necessity causes sorrow since it is contrary to the will, as is said in the *Metaphysics*), it seems that God brings about no violent elevation in man contrary to nature. Now, this is what seems to take place in rapture, as the very name implies, and as the previously mentioned description points out in the words, "by the power of a higher nature."

6. According to the Philosopher," excessive intensity of sensible objects destroys the senses, but excessive intensity of intelligible objects does not destroy the understanding. Now, the senses fail of knowledge of intense sensible objects because they are destroyed by them. Therefore, the understanding can know intelligible objects naturally no matter how intense they are. Hence, no matter to what intelligible objects the mind of man is raised up, the elevation will not be contrary to nature.

7. Augustine says that angels and souls have similar natures but dissimilar duties." Now, it is not contrary to the nature of an angel to know the things to which man is raised in rapture. Therefore, for man, the elevation of rapture is not contrary to nature.

8. If any movement is natural, arrival at the term of the movement will also be natural, since no movement is infinite. But the mind of man is naturally moved toward God. This is clear from the fact that it rests only when it has reached God. Hence, Augustine says: "You made us for Thee, Lord; and our heart is not at rest until it rests in Thee." Therefore, the elevation by which the mind reaches God, as happens in rapture, is not contrary to nature.

9. It was said that it is not natural for the human mind to be drawn to God by reason of the mind itself, but by reason of an ordination of God. Thus, it is not natural simply.—On the contrary, a lower nature does not engage in activity or tend toward any end except by reason of a divine ordination. It is for this reason that every natural work is called a work of intelligence. Nevertheless, we say that the movements and activities of natural things are simply natural. Therefore, to be drawn toward God should also be judged simply natural if it is natural to the mind by reason of a divine ordination.

10. The soul, in so far as it exists in itself and is thus called a spirit, is prior to the

soul as joined to the body and, accordingly, called a soul. But the activity of the soul as a spirit is to know God and the other separated substances. But, in so far as it is joined to the body, its activity is to know corporeal and sensible things. Therefore, the capacity of the soul to know intelligible things is prior to that to know sensible things. Since, therefore, it is natural for the soul to know sensible things, it is also natural for it to know divine intelligible things. Thus, we conclude as before.

11. The ordination of a thing to its final end is more natural than the ordination to the means, for the ordination to the means exists because of the ordination to the final end. But sensible things are the means by which we reach the knowledge of God, as we see in Romans (1:20): "For the invisible things of him... are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." But the knowledge of sensible things is natural to man. Therefore, knowledge of intelligible things is also natural. We conclude as before.

12. Nothing that takes place by a natural power can be said to be unconditionally contrary to nature. But certain things, as herbs or stones, have natural powers to release the mind from the senses, so that wonderful visions are beheld. This is what seems to happen in rapture. Therefore, rapture is not an elevation contrary to nature.

### **To the Contrary**

The Gloss on the passage in the second Epistle to the Corinthians (12:2), "I know a man in Christ," says: "Rapture, that is exaltation contrary to nature..." Therefore, rapture is an elevation contrary to nature.

### **REPLY**

just as everything else has a certain activity which is natural to it in so far as it is this thing, fire or a stone, for example; so, too, man as man has a certain activity which is natural to him.

Now, in physical reality the natural activity of a thing may be modified in two ways. In one, the change arises from a deficiency of its proper power, whatever be the source of such a deficiency, whether an extrinsic or an intrinsic cause. Thus, an abnormal fetus is produced because of a lack of formative power in the seed. In the other way, the change arises from the activity of the divine power, whose will all nature obeys. This happens in miracles, as when a virgin conceives or a blind man is made to see. Similarly, man's natural and proper activity can be modified in two ways.

Man's proper activity, however, is to understand through the mediation of sense and imagination. For the activity by which he fixes on intellectual things alone, passing over all lower things, does not belong to man as man, but in so far as something divine exists in him, as is said in the *Ethics*.

Moreover, the activity by means of which he grasps only sensible things apart from understanding and reasoning does not belong to him as man, but according to the nature which he has in common with the brute animals. Therefore, when man is transported out of his senses and sees things beyond sense, his natural mode of knowing is modified.

Sometimes, this change takes place because of some deficiency in man's proper power, as happens with insane people and others who are mentally deranged. This kind of transport out of their senses is not an elevation but rather a debasing of man. Sometimes, however, such transport takes place through the divine power, and then it is properly an elevation. For, since the agent makes that which is passive like itself, the transport which takes place by the divine power, and which is above man, has an ordination to something higher than that which is natural to man.

Thus, in the foregoing description of rapture, which defines it as a movement, "elevation" gives its genus, and "by the power of a higher nature" gives the efficient cause. "From that which is according to nature to that which is contrary to nature" gives the starting point and the term of the movement.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. One can know God in many ways: through His essence, through sensible things, or through intelligible effects. We have to make a similar distinction about that which is natural to man. For something is contrary to nature and according to nature for one and the same thing according to its different states, because the nature of the thing is not the same when it is in the state of becoming and when it has complete existence, as Rabbi Moses says. Thus, full stature and other things of the kind are natural to man when he has reached maturity, but it would be contrary to nature for a boy to have full stature at birth.

Thus, it must be said that to know God in some fashion is natural for the human intelligence according to any state. But in the beginning, that is, in this life, it is natural for it to know God through sensible creatures. It is also natural for it to reach the knowledge of God through Himself when it reaches its full perfection, that is, in heaven. Thus, if in this life it is raised to the knowledge of God which it will have in heaven, this will be contrary to nature, just as it would be contrary to nature for a baby boy to have a beard.

2. Nature can be taken in two ways: in particular, as proper to each thing, and in general, as embracing the whole order of natural causes. For this reason a thing is said to be according to nature or contrary to nature in two ways: in one, with reference to nature in particular; in the other, with reference to nature in general. Thus, every deficiency, decay, and the weakness of old age is contrary to nature in particular, but, according to nature in general, it is natural for everything which is composed of contraries to decay.

Therefore, since the universal order of causes is so ordained that lower things should be moved by those which are higher, all movement which takes place in lower nature because of the impressions of what is higher, whether this be in physical or in spiritual things, is natural according to universal nature, but not according to particular nature unless the impression made on the lower nature by the higher nature is such that the very impression is its nature. Thus, it is clear how the effects which God brings about in creatures can be called according to nature or contrary to nature.

3. The answer to the third difficulty is clear from this. Or else we should say that that elevation is called contrary to nature because it is contrary to the ordinary course of nature, as the Gloss explains.

4. Although God never acts contrary to justice, He sometimes does do something beyond justice. For a thing is contrary to justice when something one deserves is taken away from him. This is clear in human dealings when someone robs another. But, if out of liberality one gives what is not deserved, this is not contrary to justice, but beyond it. Accordingly, when in this life God raises a human mind above its proper level, He does not act contrary to justice, but beyond it.

5. By the very fact that a man's work has a meritorious value it must be under the direction of reason and the will. But the good which is imparted to a work in rapture is not of this sort. Hence, it is not necessary that it proceed from the human will, but only from the divine power. Nevertheless, we cannot call it violence in every respect, unless in the sense that we say there is violent movement when a stone is thrown down faster than it would fall by its natural motion. Nevertheless, properly speaking, "that is violent in which that which is passive contributes nothing," as is said in the *Ethics*.

6. Understanding and sense have this in common, that both fail of perfect perception of an excessively intense object, although both perceive something of it. The difference lies in this, that sense is destroyed by an excessively intense sensible object, so that afterwards it cannot know lesser sensibles, but understanding is strengthened through reception of an excessively intense intelligible object, so that afterwards it can know lesser intelligible objects better. Hence, the authoritative statement of the Philosopher cited above is not to the point.

7. Angels and souls are said to be equal in nature only in relation to the state of final perfection in which men will be like angels in heaven, as is said in Matthew (22:30), or in so far as they share in intellectual nature, although it is more perfect in the angels.

8. Arrival at the term of natural movement is natural, not in the beginning or middle of the movement, but at the end. Hence, the argument does not follow.

9. Activities of physical things which come from a divine ordination are said to be natural when the sources of these activities are implanted in things in the way in which their natures are. However, God does not ordain the elevation of rapture for man in this way. Hence, they are not alike in this respect.

10. That which is prior in the intention of nature is sometimes subsequent in time, as actuality relates to potentiality in the same receiving subject, for to be in act is prior in nature, although in time one and the same thing is first in potentiality before it is in actuality. In like manner, the activity of the soul, in so far as it is a spirit, is prior, relative to the intention of nature, but subsequent in time. Hence, if one activity takes place at the time for another activity, this is contrary to nature.

11. Although the ordination to the means is because of the ordination to the final end, it is only through the means that one arrives naturally at the final end. If it happens otherwise, the arrival is not natural. And it is thus in the case in question.

12. The transport out of the senses which is brought about by the power of physical things is classified with that transport which takes place because of a deficiency of the proper power. For the nature of those things is such that they can effect a transport out of the senses only in so far as they deaden the senses. Hence, it is clear that such transport from sense is foreign to rapture.

## **Q. 13: Rapture**

### **ARTICLE II**

**In the second article we ask:**

**Did Paul see God through his essence when he was enraptured?**

[Parallel readings: *IV Sent.* , 49, 2, 7, ad 5; *2 Cor.* , c. 12, lect. 1-2; *S.T.* , I, 12, 11, ad 2; II-II, 175,3.]

### **Difficulties**

It seems that he did not, for

1. The Gloss on Ephesians (4:18), "Having their understanding darkened... " says: "Everyone who understands is enlightened with an inner light." Therefore, if the understanding is raised up to see God, it must be enlightened by some light proportionate to this kind of sight. But the only such light is the light of glory, of which Psalms (35:10) says: "In thy light we shall see light." Therefore, God can be seen through His essence only by an intellect enjoying beatitude. And, since Paul was not glorified when he was enraptured, he could not see God through His essence.

2. It was said that in that state Paul did enjoy beatitude.—On the contrary, perpetuity is of the nature of beatitude, as Augustine says. But that state did not remain in Paul forever. Therefore, he did not enjoy beatitude in that state.
3. From the glory in the soul glory overflows into the body. But Paul's body was not glorified. Therefore, neither was his mind enlightened by the light of glory. And, so, he did not see God through His essence.
4. It was said that by seeing God through His essence in that state he was made blessed, not without qualification, but only in a qualified way.—On the contrary, all that is needed for one to be blessed in all respects is the act of glory and the gift of glory, which is the principle of that act. Thus, Peter's body would have been glorified if, along with being held up on the water, he had also had within him agility, which is the principle of this act. But splendor, the principle of the vision of God, which is the act of glory, is the gift of glory. Therefore, if Paul's mind saw God through His essence and was enlightened by the light which is the source of this vision, he was glorified without qualification.
5. While he was enraptured, Paul had faith and hope. But these are incompatible with the vision of God through His essence, for faith concerns things that appear not, as is said in Hebrews (11:1), and: "What a man seeth, why doth he hope for?" as is said in Romans (8:24). Therefore, he did not see God through His essence.
6. In heaven, charity is not a principle of merit. But in his rapture Paul was capable of meriting, since his soul had not yet been separated from the corruptible body, as Augustine says. Therefore, he did not have the charity proper to heaven. But where there is the vision proper to heaven, which is perfect, there also is the charity proper to heaven, which is perfect, for one loves God to the extent that he knows about God. Therefore, Paul did not see God through His essence.
7. The divine essence cannot be seen without joy, as Augustine says. Therefore, if Paul saw God through His essence, he took delight in that sight. Accordingly, he did not wish to be separated from it, nor, on the other hand, did God cut him off from it against his wishes. For, since God is most generous, He does not on His part withdraw His gifts. Therefore, Paul would never have been cut off from that state. But he was cut off. Therefore, he did not see God through His essence.
8. No one who has a good because of merit loses it without sin. Therefore, since to see God through His essence is a good which one has because of merit, no one who sees God through His essence can be cut off from this sight unless he should happen to sin. But this cannot be said of Paul, who says in Romans (8:38, 39): "For I am sure that neither death, nor life... shall... separate us..." We conclude as before.

9. When Paul is said to be enraptured, there is also question of the difference between his rapture and the deep sleep of Adam and the rapture of John the Evangelist, in which he says he "was in the spirit" (Apocalypse 1:10), and the "ecstasy of mind" which Peter had (Acts 11:5).

### To the Contrary

From what Augustine says and from the Gloss" we see clearly that Paul saw God through His essence when he was enraptured.

### REPLY

Concerning this, some have said that Paul, when he was enraptured, did not see God through His essence, but with a vision midway between the vision had in this life and the vision had in heaven. We can take this intermediate vision to mean the kind of vision which is natural to an angel, such that he would see God, not, indeed, through His essence with natural knowledge, but through intelligible species, in so far as he considers his own essence, which is an intelligible likeness of the uncreated essence, according to the saying of *The*

*Causes* that an intelligence knows what is above it in so far as it is caused by it. According to this, Paul, when enraptured, is conceived of as having seen God through the refulgence of some intelligible light in his mind. However, the knowledge of this life, which is through the mirror and obscurity of sensible creatures, is natural to man. And the knowledge of heaven, by which we see God through His essence, is natural only to God. But this opinion is contrary to what Augustine says, for he states expressly that, when Paul was enraptured, he saw God through His essence.

Nor is it likely that a minister of God to the Jews of the Old Testament would see God through His essence, as appears from Numbers (12:8): "Plainly and not by riddles and figures doth he see the Lord," and that this would not be granted to the minister of the New Testament, the Teacher of the Gentiles. This is especially true since the Apostle himself argues in this way: "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory" (2 Cor 3:9).

Still, he did not have beatitude without qualification, but only in some respects, although his mind was enlightened with supernatural light to enable it to see God. This will become clear from the example of physical light. For, in some things, we find the light from the sun as an abiding form, as though it had become connatural to them, as in the stars, rubies, and things of this sort. But, in other things, the light from the sun is received as a passing impression, as light in the air. For the light does not become a form abiding in the air, as though connatural to it, but passes when the sun leaves.

In like fashion, also, the light of glory is infused into the mind in two ways. In



one, it follows the mode of a form which becomes connatural and abiding. This makes the mind blessed without qualification, and is the manner in which it is infused in the blessed in heaven. In the other way, the mind receives the light of glory as a passing impression. It was in this way that Paul's mind was enlightened with the light of glory when he was enraptured. The very name shows that this took place quickly (*raptim* ) and in passing.

Hence, he was not glorified without qualification, nor did he have the gift of glory, since that splendor did not become a property in him. For this reason it did not flow down from the soul to the body, nor did he remain in this state permanently.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1-4. The response to the first four objections is clear from what has been said.

5. When full vision comes, faith leaves. Hence, in so far as Paul had the vision of God through His essence, he did not have faith. Now, he had the vision of God through His essence by way of act, not according to the habit of glory. Consequently, he had faith not in act but habitually, and hope likewise.

6. Although Paul was then in a state in which he could merit, he did not actually merit, for, just as he had the act of vision possessed by those in heaven, so he had the act of charity possessed by those in heaven. Nevertheless, some say that, although he had the vision of those in heaven, he did not have the act of charity of those in heaven. For, although his understanding was rapt, his affections were not. But this is clearly contrary to what the Gloss on "He was caught up into paradise" (2 Cor 12:4), says: "That is, into that tranquility which those who are in the heavenly Jerusalem enjoy." But enjoyment takes place through love.

7. That the vision did not remain in Paul was due to the nature of the light which illumined his mind, as is clear from what has been said.

8. Although in the blessed the vision of God is due to merit, at that time it was not given to Paul as a reward of merit. Hence, the reasoning does not follow. However, it should be noted that these last two objections bring no better argument against the fact that Paul saw God through His essence than against the fact that he saw Him in any way which surpassed the common manner of sight.

9. In the Scriptures, transport of mind, ecstasy, and rapture are all used in the same sense and indicate some raising up of the mind from sensible things outside of us toward which we naturally turn our attention, to things which are above man. This takes place in two ways. For, at times, this transport from things outside is taken to refer to attention only, as when someone makes use of the external senses and things about him, but his whole attention is engaged in

contemplating and loving things divine. Such is the state of anyone who contemplates and loves things divine in transport of the mind, whether ecstasy or rapture. For this reason Dionysius says: "Divine love brings about ecstasy." And Gregory, speaking of contemplation, says: "One who is rapt in order that he may understand the things within closes his eyes to visible things."

Ecstasy or rapture or transport of the mind take place in another way, and the names are more generally used in this sense, when one is also deprived of the use of his senses and sensible things in order to see certain things supernaturally. Now, a thing is seen supernaturally when it is seen beyond sense, understanding, and imagination, as we said in the question on prophecy.

Therefore, Augustine distinguishes" two kinds of rapture. There is one in which the mind is carried out of the senses to the vision in the imagination. This is what happened to Peter and to John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse, as Augustine says. There is another in which the mind is at once transported out of the senses and out of the imagination to an intellectual vision. This happens in two ways.

In one, the intellect understands God through certain intelligible communications, and this is proper to angels. Adam's ecstasy was of this sort, as the Gloss on Genesis(2:21)says: "The correct interpretation of this ecstasy is that it was given so that Adam's mind might become a member of the heavenly court and, entering into the sanctuary of God, might understand the last things." In the other way, the understanding sees God through His essence. It was for this that Paul was enraptured, as we have said.

## Q. 13: Rapture

### ARTICLE III

**In the third article we ask:**

**Can one in this life have his understanding raised to see God through his essence without being carried out of his senses?**

[Parallel readings: *De ver.* , 10, 11; IV Sent., 49, 2, 7, ad 4; *Quodl.* , I, 1; 2 *Cor.* , c. 12, lect. 1; *S.T.* , II-II, 175, 4; 180, 5; *In Ioan.* , c. 1, lect. 11.]

### Difficulties

It seems that he can, for

1. Man's nature is the same in this life and after the resurrection. For, if it were not specifically the same, numerically the same man would not arise. But after the resurrection the saints will see God mentally through His essence and no transport out of the senses will take place. Therefore, the same thing is possible

for those in this life.

2. But it was said that, since the body of one in this life is corruptible, it weighs down the understanding so that it cannot be drawn freely to God unless it is carried out of the senses of the body. And this corruption will be gone after the resurrection.—On the contrary, nothing is hindered, just as nothing suffers, except through the activity of its contrary. But bodily corruption does not seem to be opposed to the act of understanding, since understanding is not an act of the body. Therefore, corruption of the body does not prevent the understanding from being drawn freely to God.

3. It is certain that Christ took on our mortality and the corruption which is a punishment for us. But His understanding enjoyed the sight of God continuously, although He was not always transported out of his external senses. Therefore, corruption does not make it impossible for the understanding to be drawn to God without being transported out of the senses.

4. After Paul had seen God through His essence, he remembered the things which he had seen in that vision. Otherwise, if he had not remembered them, he would not have said: "He heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4). Therefore, while he saw God through His essence, something was being imprinted on his memory. But memory belongs to the sensitive part of man, as the Philosopher plainly shows. Therefore, when in this life someone sees God through His essence, he is not entirely transported out of his bodily senses.

5. The sensitive powers are closer to each other than the intellective powers are to the sensitive powers. But the imagination, which is one of the sensitive powers, can actually grasp any of its objects whatever without being cut off from the external senses. Therefore, the understanding, too, can actually see God without being cut off from the sensitive powers.

6. That which is according to nature does not require for its existence anything which is contrary to nature. But it is natural for the human understanding to see God through His essence, since it was created for this. Therefore, since transport out of the senses is contrary to nature for man, inasmuch as sensitive cognition is natural to him, it seems that he does not require transport from the senses as a prerequisite to see God through His essence.

7. Only those things which are joined together can be cut off from each other. But intelligence, whose object is God, as is said in *Spirit and Soul*, does not seem to be joined to the bodily senses but rather seems extremely distant from them. Therefore, for man to see God through His essence by means of intelligence he does not need to be cut off from the senses.

8. Paul seems to have been raised up to the sight of God so that there would be a witness of the glory which is promised to the saints. Hence, Augustine says: "Why should we not believe that it was God's wish to show to this great Apostle, the Teacher of the Gentiles, that life which is to be lived forever after this life? [God did this] while Paul was raised in rapture to that most lofty sight." But, after the resurrection, in that vision of the saints which will be given to those who see God in the next life, there will be no transport out of the bodily senses. Therefore, it seems that this kind of transport did not take place in Paul either, when he saw God through His essence.

9. During their sufferings and torments the martyrs inwardly perceived something of the divine glory. Hence, Vincent says: "Behold, I am already raised on high, and from above the world I look down on all your distinguished men, O tyrant." And in other records of the sufferings of the saints we read many passages which seem to have the same tenor. But it is obvious that there was no withdrawal from the senses in these people. Otherwise, they would not have felt the pain. Therefore, there is no transport out of the senses in order for one to share in the glory by which God is seen through His essence.

10. The practical understanding is closer than the speculative understanding to the activity which has sensible things as its object. But, as Avicenna says,, it is not necessary for the practical understanding always to pay attention to man's operations which are concerned with sensible objects. Otherwise, the best harpist would seem to be the worst if it were necessary for him to give artistic reflection to each stroke of the strings. For, in such a case, there would be too much interruption of the sounds, which would hurt the proper melody. Therefore, it is far less necessary for the speculative understanding to pay attention to man's operations which concern sensible things. Thus, it remains free to be drawn to any act of understanding, even to the divine essence itself, while the sense powers are engaged in sensible activities.

11. While Paul saw God through His essence, he still had faith. But it belongs to faith to see darkly through a mirror. Therefore, while Paul saw God through His essence, at the same time he saw darkly through a mirror. But this obscure knowledge is through a mirror and through sensible things. Therefore, while he saw God through His essence, he also gave his attention to sensible things. The conclusion is the same as before.

## **To the Contrary**

1. As Augustine says, and is quoted in the Gloss on the second Epistle to the Corinthians(12:2): "No man who sees God, as He is in Himself, lives the mortal life which we live in the bodily senses. But unless one in some way dies to this life, either leaving the body completely, or so turning away and cutting himself off from the bodily senses that with good reason he does not know whether he is in

the body or outside of it, he is not enraptured and transported to that vision."

2. The Gloss on the second Epistle to the Corinthians (5:13), "Whether we be transported in mind, it is to God," says: "He calls ecstasy that by which the mind is raised to an understanding of heavenly things, so that in some sense lower things drop from the memory. All the saints to whom secrets of God which surpass this world have been revealed were in this ecstasy." Therefore, it is necessary for everyone who sees God through His essence to be withdrawn from the consideration of lower things, and, consequently, also from the use of the senses with which we see only lower things.

3. The Gloss on Psalms (67:28), "There is Benjamin, a youth in ecstasy of mind," says: "Benjamin, (that is, Paul), in ecstasy, that is, with his mind unconscious of the bodily senses, as when he was carried up into the third heaven." But the third heaven means vision of God through His essence, as Augustine says. Therefore, the vision of God through His essence requires loss of consciousness of the bodily senses.

4. The activity of an understanding which is raised to see the essence of God is more effective than any activity of the imagination. But, sometimes, a man is transported out of the bodily senses because of the intensity of the activity of the imagination. Therefore, he should be transported out of them with much greater reason when he is lifted up to the vision of God.

5. Bernard says: "Divine consolation is sensitive and will not be given to those who admit any other." So, for the same reason, the divine vision does not tolerate sight of anything else along with it. Therefore, neither does it tolerate the use of the senses along with it.

6. The greatest cleanness of heart is needed to see God through His essence, according to Matthew (5:8): "Blessed are the clean of heart." But the heart is sullied in two ways, namely, by the contamination of sin, and by phantasies of material things. This is clear from what Dionysius says: "Those [celestial essences] should be considered pure, not in the sense that they are free of unclean stains and defilements (in which he refers to uncleanness because of guilt, which never existed in the blessed angels), nor in the sense that they are receptive of phantasies of material things" (in which is included the uncleanness which comes through phantasies, as is clear from Hugh of St. Victor.) Therefore, the mind of one who sees God through His essence must be transported not only out of the external senses, but also out of the internal phantasms.

7. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians (13:10) we read: "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be put away." But, here, "perfect" refers to the vision of God through His essence, and "imperfect" refers to vision through a mirror darkly, which is through sensible things. Therefore, when one is raised to the vision of God through His essence, he must be deprived of the

vision of sensible things.

## REPLY

As is clear from the authoritative statement of Augustine, a man living in this mortal body cannot see God through His essence, unless he is made unconscious of the bodily senses. We can see the reason for this from two things. First, from that which is common to the understanding and the other powers of the soul, for with all the powers of the soul we find that, when the act of one power becomes intense, the act of another is either weakened or entirely suppressed. Thus, it is clear that, when one is giving very close attention to the activity of sight, his hearing does not perceive the things which are being said, unless, perhaps, their force attracts the sense of the hearer to them.

The reason for this, as Augustine proves, is that attention is needed for the act of any cognoscitive power. Moreover, one's attention cannot be given to many things at once, unless they are related to one another in such a way that they can be taken as one, just as the motion or activity of a thing cannot have two termini not related to each other. Hence, since there is one soul, in which all cognoscitive powers are rooted, the attention of one and the same soul is needed for the acts of all the cognoscitive powers. Therefore, when the soul gives complete attention to the act of one power, the man is cut off from the act of another power.

But for the understanding to be raised up to the vision of the divine essence, the whole attention must be concentrated on this vision, since this is the most intensely intelligible object, and the understanding can reach it only by striving for it with a total effort. Therefore, it is necessary to have complete abstraction from the bodily senses when the mind is raised to the vision of God.

Second, we can find a reason for this in that which is proper to the understanding. For, since we know things in so far as they are in act, and not in so far as they are in potency, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, the understanding, which holds the highest place in knowledge, properly deals with immaterial things, which are most in act. Hence, every intelligible thing is either free from matter or separated from it by the activity of the understanding. Therefore, the freer the understanding is of contact, as it were, with material things, the more perfect it is.

For this reason, the human understanding, which reaches material things by considering phantasms; from which it abstracts intelligible species, has less efficacy than the angelic understanding, which always considers purely immaterial forms. Nevertheless, in so far as the purity of intellectual knowledge is not wholly obscured in human understanding, as happens in the senses whose knowledge cannot go beyond material things, it has the power to consider things which are purely immaterial by the very fact that it retains some purity.

Therefore, if it is ever raised beyond its ordinary level to see the highest of immaterial things, namely, the divine essence, it must be wholly cut off from the sight of material things at least during that act. Hence, since the sensitive powers can deal only with material things, one cannot be raised to vision of the divine essence unless he is wholly deprived of the use of the bodily senses.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. After the resurrection the beatified soul will be joined to the body in a different way from that in which it is now united to it. For, in the resurrection, the body will be entirely subject to the spirit to such an extent that the properties of glory will overflow from the spirit into the body. Hence, they will be called spiritual bodies.

Moreover, when two things are united and one of them has complete control over the other, there is no mixture there, since the one falls completely under the power of the other which rules it. Thus, if one drop of water is poured into a thousand jars of wine, the purity of the wine is not at all impaired. Therefore, in the resurrection there will be no defilement of the understanding and its power will not be weakened in any way by any union whatsoever with the body. Hence, even without transport out of the bodily senses, it will contemplate the divine essence. However, the body is not now subject to the spirit in this way, and, therefore, the reasoning does not have the same force.

2. Our body is corruptible because it is not fully subject to the soul. For, if it were fully subject to the soul, immortality would also overflow into the body from the immortality of the soul, as will happen after the resurrection. It is for this reason that the corruption of the body oppresses the understanding. Although in itself it is not directly opposed to the understanding, its cause impairs the purity of the understanding.

3. From the fact that Christ was God and man, He had full power over all the parts of His soul and over His body. Hence, as Damascene says, by the power of the Godhead He permitted each power of the soul to do that which is proper to it in so far as it fitted in with our redemption. Thus, it was not necessary for Him to have an overflow from one power to another, nor for one power to be deprived of its act because of the intensity of the act of another power. Consequently, the fact that His understanding saw God did not necessitate any transport out of the bodily senses. However, it is different with other men, in whom redundancy or interference of one power with another necessarily follows from the intimate connection of the powers of the soul with one another.

4. After Paul had stopped seeing God through His essence, he remembered what he had known in that vision by means of certain species which remained in his understanding and were relics, so to speak, of the previous vision. For, although he saw the very Word of God through His essence, and from the vision of that

essence knew many truths, (and thus neither for the Word Himself nor for the things which he saw in the Word did this vision take place through any species, but only through the essence of the Word), nevertheless, by reason of the vision of the Word, certain likenesses of the things which he saw were imprinted on his understanding. And with these likenesses he could see afterwards the things which he had previously seen through the essence of the Word. Later, by applying these intelligible species to the individual intentions or forms which were stored in his memory or imagination, he could remember the things which he had seen previously, and this even through the activity of memory, which is a sensitive power. Thus, it is not necessary to hold that in the act of seeing God something took place in his memory, which is part of the sensitive power, but only in his mind.

5. Although transport from the external senses does not arise from every act of imaginative power, the transport mentioned above does take place when the act of the imagination is very intense. Similarly, it is not necessary that transport out of the senses take place because of every act of understanding; nevertheless, it does come about through the most intense act, which is the vision of God through His essence.

6. Although it is natural for the human understanding at some time to reach the vision of God through His essence, it is not natural for it to reach this in the conditions of this life, as we have said. For this reason the conclusion does not follow.

7. Although our intelligence, with which we grasp things divine, does not combine with the senses in the process of perception, it does combine with them in the process of judging. Hence, Augustine says: "Through the light of our intelligence we judge even of the lower things and we perceive things which are neither bodies nor bear forms like those of bodies."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, our intelligence is said at times to abstract from the senses when it does not make judgments concerning them, but focuses its attention on the vision of heavenly things alone.

8. The essence of the beatitude of the saints consists in the vision of the divine essence. Hence, Augustine says: "Vision is the whole reward." For this reason one could be a suitable witness of that beatitude because he had seen the divine essence. Still, it would not be necessary for him to experience all the privileges which belong to the blessed. But, from that which he did experience, he could also know the other things. For he was not enraptured to become blessed, but to be a witness of beatitude.

9. In their sufferings the martyrs perceived something of divine glory, not as if they drank it at its source, as do those who see God through His essence, but, rather, they were refreshed by a sprinkling of that glory. Hence, Augustine says: "There," where God is seen through His essence, "the blessed life is drunk from



its source. From that source some of it is sprinkled on this human life, so that in the temptations of this world that life may be lived temperately, justly, bravely, and prudently.”

10. The speculative understanding is not forced to turn its attention to the activities in which one is occupied with sensible things, but it can busy itself with other intelligible things. Moreover, the intensity of the act of speculation can be so great that it is altogether abstracted from sensible activity.

11. Although in that act Paul had the habit of faith, he did not have the act of faith.

## Q. 13: Rapture

### ARTICLE IV

**In the fourth article we ask:**

**How great an abstraction is required for our understanding to be able to see god through his essence?**

[Parallel readings: *De ver.* , 10, 11; *Quodl.* , I, 1; 2  
*Cor.* , c. 12, lect. 1; *S.T.* , I, 12, 11; II-II, 17, 5; *In*  
*loan.* , c. 1, lect. 11.]

### Difficulties

And it seems that there has to be an abstraction from the very union by which the soul is united to the body as its form, for

1. The powers of the vegetative soul are more material than the powers of the sensitive soul. But for our understanding to see God through His essence it must abstract from the senses, as has been said., Therefore, abstraction from the acts of the vegetative soul is much more urgently required for the purity of that vision. But this abstraction cannot take place where there is brute life as long as the soul is united to the body as its form. For, as the Philosopher says: “In animals the process of nutrition is always going on.” Therefore, for the vision of the divine essence there must be an abstraction from the union by which the soul is united to the body as its form.

7. The gloss of Augustine on Exodus (33:20), “For man shall not see me and live,” says: “This shows that God cannot appear as He is to this life of corruptible flesh. But He can in the other life, which one can live. only by dying to this life.” The gloss of Gregory reads: “He who sees the wisdom which is God dies entirely to this life.” But death is the result of the separation of the soul from the body to which it was united as its form. Therefore, there has to be a complete separation of the soul from the body in order to see God through His essence.

3 "For a living thing, its act of life is its act of existence," as is said in *The Soul*. But the act of existence of a man who is alive arises from the union of his soul with his body as its form. But Exodus (33:20) says: "For man shall not see me and live." Therefore, as long as the soul is united to the body as its form, he cannot see God through His essence.

4. The union by which the soul is united to the body as its form is stronger than that by which it is united to the body as a mover. From this latter union arise the activities of the powers and the activities which are carried on through bodily organs. But this latter union hinders the vision of the divine essence, for which there must be abstraction from the bodily senses. Therefore, the first union will interfere with it much more, and thus it will be necessary to dissolve it.

5. Since powers flow from the essence and are rooted in it they are not raised to a level higher than that of their essence. Therefore, if the essence of the soul is united to a material body as its form, it is not possible for the power of understanding to be raised to things which are altogether immaterial. We conclude as before.

6. Greater contamination results in the soul from its connection with the body than from its union with a bodily likeness. But for the mind to see God through His essence, it must be purified of bodily likenesses, which are perceived through imagination and sense, as has been said. Therefore, for the soul to see God through His essence, it must with much greater reason be separated from the body.

7. In the second Epistle to the Corinthians (5:6, 7) we read: "While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, and not by sight.) " Therefore, as long as the soul is in the body, it cannot see God as He is in Himself.

### **To the Contrary**

1. The gloss of Gregory on the passage from Exodus (33:20), "For man shall not see me and live," says: "The splendor of the eternal God can be seen by some who live in this flesh, but who are growing in priceless virtue." But the splendor of God is His essence, as the same gloss says. Therefore, it is not necessary to have complete separation of soul from body to see the essence of God.

2. Augustine says: "The soul is enraptured not only to the vision of imagination, but also to the vision of understanding, through which the truth itself is clearly seen. Meanwhile, it has been carried out of its senses less than in death, but more than in sleep." Therefore, to see the uncreated truth of which Augustine is speaking there is no need to dissolve the union whereby the soul is united to the body as its form.

3. The same thing is clear from these words of Augustine: "It is not beyond belief

that even that lofty degree of revelation"—to see God through His essence—"was given to some holy men before they were dead and their corpses ready for burial." Therefore, while the soul is still united to the body as its form, it can see God.

## REPLY

To see the divine essence, which is the most perfect act of understanding, there must be an abstraction from those things which of their nature interfere with the excessive intensity of the act of understanding and which are hindered by this same intensity. This happens in some things because of something intrinsic to the act itself, and in others merely for some extrinsic reason.

The activities of sense and understanding interfere with each other by reason of the acts themselves, inasmuch as attention is needed for both activities, and also because the understanding in some fashion enters into the sensible activities since it receives something from the phantasms. Thus, the purity of the understanding is contaminated to some extent by sense activities, as we have said. But no attention is needed for the union of the soul to the body as its form, since this union does not depend on the will of the soul, but on nature.

In the same way, the purity of the understanding is not directly contaminated by such a union. For the soul is not joined to the body as its form through the mediation of its powers, but through its essence, since nothing stands as a medium between matter and form, as is proved in the *Metaphysics*. Furthermore, the essence of the soul is not united to body in such a way that it follows the condition of the body completely, as other material forms, which are, as it were, completely engulfed in matter to such an extent that only material power or activity can proceed from them. Now, from the essence of the soul there proceed not only the forces and powers which are in some sense bodily, as the existent acts of the bodily organs, that is, the sensitive and vegetative powers, but also the powers of understanding, which are completely immaterial and not the existent acts of any body or part of a body, as is proved in *The Soul*.

From this it is clear that the powers of our understanding do not proceed from the essence of the soul in so far as it is united to the body, but, rather, in so far as it stays free of the body and is not entirely bound down to it. In this sense the union of the soul with the body does not extend to the activity of the understanding and so cannot interfere with its purity. Hence, if we consider what is intrinsic to the acts, the dissolution of the union by which the soul is united to the body as its form is not a necessary condition for the activity of the understanding, no matter how intense.

In like manner, there is no need for the suppression of the activities of the vegetative soul. For the activities of this part of the soul are really natural, as is

clear from the fact that they are brought to full perfection by the power of the active and passive qualities, namely, the warm and the cold, the moist and the dry. For this reason they

obey neither reason nor will, as is clear in the *Ethics*. Thus, it is plain that attention is not needed for actions of this kind, and so it is not necessary to turn our attention from intellectual activity because of the acts of these qualities.

In like manner, the activity of the understanding has nothing to do with the activities of this sort, since it receives nothing from them, because they are not related to knowledge and because the understanding does not use any bodily instrument which would have to be sustained through the activities of the vegetative soul, as is the case with the organs of the sensitive powers. Thus, the purity of our understanding is in no wise impaired through the activities of the vegetative soul. From this it is clear that, if we consider merely what is intrinsic to the acts themselves, the activity of the vegetative and the activity of the intellectual soul do not hinder each other.

Nevertheless, one of these can interfere with the other for some extrinsic reason; for example, in so far as the understanding receives something from the phantasms, which are in bodily organs, which must be nourished and sustained through the activity of the vegetative soul. Thus, because of the acts of the nutritive power variation may occur in the disposition of the organs, and, consequently, in the activity of the sensitive power from which the understanding receives

something. Thus, the activity of the understanding itself is hindered for an extrinsic reason. This is plain during sleep and after eating. On the other hand, also, the activity of understanding interferes with the activity of the vegetative soul in this way, inasmuch as the activity of the power of imagination is needed for the activity of understanding.

And intensity of the imagination requires the co-operation of heat and the [animal] spirits. Thus, the act of the nutritive power is hindered by the intensity of contemplation. But this plays no part in the contemplation by which God's essence is seen, since such contemplation does not need the activity of the imagination.

From this it is clear that abstraction from the acts of the vegetative soul or any impairment of those acts is not in any way required for the vision of God through His essence. All that is required is abstraction from the acts of the sensitive powers.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Although the powers of the vegetative soul are more material than the powers

of the sensitive soul, still, along with this they are more remote from the understanding and so are less able to interfere with the intensity of the understanding or be hindered by it.

2. "To live" can be taken in two senses. In one, it means the very act of existence of that which is living, which rests on the union of the soul to the body as its form. In the other sense, "to live" is taken to mean the activity of life. Thus the Philosopher distinguishes living into understanding, sensing, and the other activities of the soul.

Similarly, since death is the loss of life, we must distinguish it in like manner. Thus, sometimes it means the loss of that union by which the soul is joined to the body as its form, and sometimes it means the loss of the vital activities. For this reason Augustine says: "One dies to this life to some extent whether he leaves the body entirely, or whether he is transported out of the senses of the body and made unconscious of them." Death is thus understood in the glosses which have been cited," as is plain from the words following the quotation from the gloss of Gregory: "He who sees the wisdom which is God dies entirely to this life, so that he may not be held back by love of it."

3. The solution to the third difficulty is clear from what has just been said.

4. Since the union by which the soul is united to the body as its form is stronger, it follows that it is less possible to withdraw from it.

5. The reasoning would conclude correctly if the essence of the soul were so united to the body that it were entirely bound down to the body. But we have already said that this is false.

6. Although the bodily likeness which is necessary for the activity of the imagination and the senses is more immaterial than the body itself, it has a closer relation to the activity of the understanding. Thus, it is more able to hinder it, as we have said.

7. What the Apostle says should be applied to our existence in the body not only by reason of the union of the soul with the body as its form, but also by reason of our use of the bodily senses.

## **Q. 13: Rapture**

### **ARTICLE V**

**In the fifth article we ask:**

**What did the apostle know and not know about his rapture?**

[Parallel readings: 2 Cor. , c. 12, lect. 1; S.T. , II-II, 175,6; 180, 5.]

## Difficulties

It seems that he knew whether his soul was in the body, for

1. He knew this better than any of those who followed, But many commonly agree that during the rapture Paul's soul was united to his body as its form. Therefore, with much greater reason Paul knew this.

2. In the rapture Paul knew what he saw and with what vision he saw it. This is clear from the second Epistle to the Corinthians (12:2), because he says: "I know a man... caught up to the third heaven." Therefore, he knew what that heaven was, whether it was something corporeal or spiritual, and he knew whether he saw it spiritually or corporeally. But it follows from this that he knew whether he saw it while in the body or out of it. For bodily vision cannot take place except through the body, and the vision of understanding is always without the body. Therefore, he knew whether he was in the body or out of it.

3. As Paul himself says, he knew "a man [who was] caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2). But man means that which is made up of the union of the body and the soul. Therefore, he knew that the soul was united to the body.

4. He himself knew that he was enraptured, as is clear from what he says. But dead people are not said to be enraptured. Therefore, he knew that he was not dead. Therefore, he knew that his soul was joined to his body.

5. As Augustine says, in the rapture he saw God with that vision with which the saints in heaven see God. But the souls of the saints in heaven know whether they are in the body or out of it. Therefore, the Apostle also knew this.

6. Gregory says: "What is there that they do not see who see Him who sees everything?" This seems to refer especially to the things which pertain to those who are seeing. But whether it is united to the body or not has very special pertinence to the soul. Therefore, the soul of Paul knew whether it was united to the body or not.

## To the Contrary

In the second Epistle to the Corinthians (12:2) it says: "I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth." Therefore, he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body.

## REPLY

There are many opinions on this point. For some have understood the Apostle to say that what he did not know was not whether he was in the body or not, but whether the rapture was one of the soul and the body together, so that he was carried bodily to heaven, as we read in Daniel (14:35) that Habakkuk was

transported, or whether it was a rapture of the soul alone, that is, in the visions of God, as is said in Ezechiel (40:2): "In the visions of God he brought me into the land of Israel." And Jerome adopts this interpretation of a certain Jew when he says: "Finally, our Apostle, too, did not dare to assert that he was caught up in body, but said: "Whether in body or out of the body, I know not...."

Augustine, however, disapproves of this interpretation. For it is clear from the words of the Apostle that he himself knew that he was caught up to the third heaven. Therefore, it is clear that that heaven to which he was transported was truly heaven, and not some likeness of heaven.

For, if he had wanted to mean that, when he said he was caught up to heaven, he was transported in order to see a likeness of heaven in his imagination, he could have asserted in the same way that he was transported in the body, that is, to a likeness of this body. Thus, it would not have been necessary to distinguish between what he knew and what he did not know, since he would know both equally, that is, that he was in heaven and that he was transported in the body, that is, to a likeness of the body, as happens in dreams.

Therefore, he knew for certain that that to which he was transported was really heaven. Therefore, he knew whether it was a body or something incorporeal. For, if it was a body, he was transported to it bodily, but, if it was something incorporeal, he could not be transported to it bodily.

Therefore, it remains that the Apostle did not doubt whether he was enraptured bodily or only spiritually, but knew that he was transported to that heaven only in his understanding. However, he did have doubts whether in that rapture his soul was in his body, or not.

Some others concede this, but say that, although during the rapture the Apostle did not know this, he did, nevertheless, know it afterwards, surmising it from the vision which he had had. For in the rapture his whole mind was given over to things divine, and he did not perceive whether his soul was in his body or not. But this opinion, too, is openly opposed to what the Apostle says. For, as he distinguishes what he knew and did not know, so he distinguishes the present from the past. And he speaks of the man enraptured, as in the past, fourteen years before, but he admits, as in the present, that he knows something and does not know something. Therefore, fourteen years after that rapture he still did not know whether he was in the body or not when the rapture took place.

Hence, others have said that he did not know either during the rapture or after it whether his soul was in the body to some extent and not completely. For they say that he knew both then and afterwards that his soul was united to the body as its form, but did not know whether it was so united to it that it could receive something from the senses. Or, according to others, he did not know whether the nutritive powers exercised their activities by means of which the soul takes care

of the body.

But this, too, does not seem to fit the words of the Apostle, for he said with no reservations that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of it. Furthermore, it would not seem very much to the point to say that he did not know whether the soul was in the body in this way or that way, when these did not cut the soul off entirely from the body.

Therefore, we have to say that he simply did not know whether his soul was united to the body or not. This is the conclusion which Augustine reaches after a long investigation, when he says: "Perhaps, then, we should conclude that he was ignorant of this matter: while he was transported to the third heaven, was he in the body—that is, as the soul of one awake, or asleep, or in ecstasy and completely unconscious of the bodily senses, is in the body when the body is said to be alive—or did he leave the body completely so that the body lay dead until, the vision finished, the soul returned to the dead members, and he was not as one awaking from sleep or returning to his senses from the transport of ecstasy, but as one completely dead returning to life?

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. As Augustine says: "The Apostle doubts whether he was in the body or out of it. Hence, if he is in doubt, which of us dares to be certain?" Thus, Augustine leaves the question undecided. When later writers take a stand on this question, they are speaking with probability rather than with certitude. For, since it could happen that one would be enraptured in the way the Apostle says he was enraptured while his soul remained united to the body, as is clear from what has been said, it is more probable that it did remain united to the body.
2. The reason given here holds against the interpretation of the words of the Apostle first given, in which he is considered to have doubted not about the state of the one enraptured, that is, whether the soul was united to the body, but of the manner of the rapture, namely, whether the rapture was bodily or only spiritual.
3. Through synecdoche, sometimes only a part of man is called man, especially the soul, which is the more noble part of man. Yet this can also be taken to mean that the one who he says was enraptured was not a man during the rapture, but was a man fourteen years later, that is, when the Apostle said this.
4. Granted that in that state the soul of the Apostle was separated from the body, that separation was not due to any natural mode of acting, but to the divine power which transported the soul out of the body, not to have it remain separated permanently, but for a time, and to this extent one can be said to be enraptured, although not every dead person can be said to be enraptured.
5. As Augustine says: "When the Apostle was carried out of the senses of the



body to the third heaven and paradise, he certainly fell short of the full and perfect knowledge of things which the angels have, in so far as he did not know whether he was in the body or outside of it. And, so, this will not be lacking when this corruption puts on incorruption in the resurrection of the dead." Thus, it is clear that his vision was to some extent more imperfect than the sight of the blessed, although in some respects it was like theirs.

6. Paul was not transported to see God in order to have beatitude without qualification, but to be a witness of the beatitude of the saints and of the divine mysteries which were revealed to him. Consequently, he saw in the vision of the Word only those things the knowledge of which the rapture was ordained to communicate. Thus, he did not see everything as the blessed do, especially after the resurrection. For, then, as Augustine adds to the words already cited: "All things will be plain, and there will be no falsity nor ignorance."

## Question Fourteen: Faith

[What is belief?](#)

1. [What is faith?](#)
2. [Is faith a virtue?](#)
3. [What is the subject in which faith exists?](#)
4. [Is charity the form of faith?](#)
5. [Is formless faith a virtue?](#)
6. [Is the habit of formless faith the same as that of formed faith?](#)
7. [Is first truth the proper object of faith?](#)
8. [Can faith deal with things which are known as scientific](#)
9. [conclusions?](#)
10. [Is it necessary for man to have faith?](#)
11. [Is it necessary to believe explicitly?](#)
12. [Is there one faith for moderns and ancients?](#)

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### ARTICLE I

**The question treats of faith,  
and in the first article we ask:  
What is belief?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 23, 2, 2, sol. 1; *Ad Hebr.*, c. 11, lect. 1; *S.T.* , II-II, 2, 1.]

#### Difficulties

Augustine says, and the Gloss on the second Epistle to the Corinthians (3:5), "Not that we are sufficient to think repeats: "to believe is to think with assent." But this description does not seem to fit in with our other knowledge, for

1. The knower is distinguished from the believer, as is clear from Augustine. But the knower, precisely as knowing, thinks something over and gives assent to it. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that "belief is thought with assent."

2. Such thought (*cogitatio* ) implies some inquiry, for so to think (*cogitare* ) is, as it were, to shake together (*coagitare* ), that is, to separate and compare one thing with another. But inquiry is not part of the concept of faith, for Damascene says: "Faith is consent without inquiry." Therefore, it is wrong to say that "belief is thought with assent."

3. Belief is an act of the understanding. But assent seems to belong to the

affections, for we are said to consent to something with the affections. Therefore, assent has no place in belief.

4. We do not say that a person is thinking [discursively] unless he is actually considering something, as is clear from Augustine. But even one who is not actually considering something is said to believe, for example, one of the faithful who is asleep. Therefore, to believe is not to think in this way.

5. A simple light is the principle of simple knowledge. But faith is a kind of simple light, as is clear from Dionysius. Therefore, belief, which is from faith, is simple knowledge, and so it is not [discursive] thought, which means knowledge involving comparison.

6. Faith, as is commonly said, assents to the first truth because of itself. But one who gives assent to something after comparison does not accept it because of itself, but because of the other thing with which he compared it. Therefore, in the act of believing there is no comparison and, consequently, no [discursive] thought.

7. Faith is said to be more certain than every science and all knowledge. But principles, because of their certitude, are known without [discursive] thought or comparison. Therefore, belief, also, takes place without such thought.

8. A spiritual power has greater efficacy than a bodily power. Therefore, a spiritual light has greater efficacy than a bodily light. But an external bodily light gives the eye the perfection immediately to perceive visible bodies for which the inborn light was insufficient. So the spiritual light, coming from on high, gives the intellect the perfection to know without comparison and [discursive] thought even those things which our natural reason cannot reach. And, so, in belief there is no [discursive] thought.

9. Philosophers assign the cogitative power to the sensitive part of man. But belief belongs only to the mind, as Augustine says. Therefore, belief is not thought.

## REPLY

Augustine has given a satisfactory description of belief, since such a definition shows forth the nature of belief and distinguishes it from all other acts of understanding. This is clear in the following. For, according to the Philosopher, our understanding has a twofold operation. There is one by which it forms the simple quiddities of things, as what man is, or what animal is. This operation of itself does not involve truth or falsity, just as phrases do not. The second operation of the understanding is that by which it joins and divides concepts by affirmation or denial. Now, in this operation we do find truth and falsity, just as we do in the proposition, which is its sign. Belief, however, does not occur in the first operation, but only in the second, for we believe what is true and disbelieve

what is false. For this reason, also, the first operation of the understanding is called imagination of the understanding and the second faith, even among the Arabians, as is clear from the words of the Commentator.

The possible intellect, however, as far as its own nature is concerned, is in potency to all intelligible forms, just as first matter of itself is in potency to all sensible forms. Therefore, it has no intrinsic determination which necessitates joining rather than dividing concepts, or the converse. Now, everything which is undetermined with reference to two things is not limited to one of them unless by something which moves it. But only two things move the possible intellect: its proper object, which is an intelligible form, that is, a quiddity, as is said in *The Soul*, and the will, which moves all the other powers, as Anselm says. In this way, then, our possible intellect is related differently to the extremes of a contradictory proposition.

For, sometimes, it does not tend toward one rather than the other, either because of a lack of evidence, as happens in those problems about which we have no reasons for either side, or because of an apparent equality of the motives for both sides. This is the state of one in doubt, who wavers between the two members of a contradictory proposition.

Sometimes, however, the understanding tends more to one side than the other; still, that which causes the inclination does not move the understanding enough to determine it fully to one of the members. Under this influence, it accepts one member, but always has doubts about the other. This is the state of one holding an opinion, who accepts one member of the contradictory proposition with some fear that the other is true.

Sometimes, again, the possible intellect is so determined that it adheres to one member without reservation. This happens sometimes because of the intelligible object and sometimes because of the will. Furthermore, the intelligible object sometimes acts mediately, sometimes immediately. It acts immediately when the truth of the propositions is unmistakably clear immediately to the intellect from the intelligible objects themselves. This is the state of one who understands principles, which are known as soon as the terms are known, as the Philosopher says. Here, the very nature of the thing itself immediately determines the intellect to propositions of this sort. The intelligible object acts mediately, however, when the understanding, once it knows the definitions of the terms, is determined to one member of the contradictory proposition in virtue of first principles. This is the state of one who has science.

Sometimes, however, the understanding can be determined to one side of a contradictory proposition neither immediately through the definitions of the terms, as is the case with principles, nor yet in virtue of principles, as is the case with conclusions from a demonstration. And in this situation our understanding is

determined by the will, which chooses to assent to one side definitely and precisely because of something which is enough to move the will, though not enough to move the understanding, namely, since it seems good or fitting to assent to this side. And this is the state of one who believes. This may happen when someone believes what another says because it seems fitting or useful to do so.

Thus, too, we are moved to believe what God says because we are promised eternal life as a reward if we believe. And this reward moves the will to assent to what is said, although the intellect is not moved by anything which it understands. Therefore, Augustine says: "Man can do other things unwillingly, but he can believe only if he wills it."

It is clear from what has just been said that assent is not to be found in that operation of the understanding by which it forms the simple quiddities of things, for there is no truth or falsity there. For we are not said to assent to anything unless we hold it as true. Likewise, one who doubts does not have assent, because he does not hold to one side rather than the other. Thus, also, one who has an opinion does not give assent, because his acceptance of the one side is not firm. The Latin word *sententia* (judgment), as Isaac and Avicenna say, is a clear or very certain comprehension of one member of a contradictory proposition. And *assentire* (assent) is derived from *sententia*. Now, one who understands

gives assent, because he holds with great certainty to one member of a contradictory proposition. Such a one, however does not employ discursive thought, because he fixes on one side without any process of comparison. One who has scientific knowledge, however, does use discursive thought and gives assent, but the thought causes the assent, and the assent puts an end to the discursive thought. For by the very act of relating the principles to the conclusions he assents to the conclusions by reducing them to the principles. There, the movement of the one who is thinking is halted and brought to rest. For in scientific knowledge the movement of reason begins from the understanding of principles and ends there after it has gone through the process of reduction. Thus, its assent and discursive thought are not Parallel, but the discursive thought leads to assent, and the assent brings thought to rest.

But, in faith, the assent and the discursive thought are more or less parallel. For the assent is not caused by the thought, but by the will, as has just been said. However, since the understanding does not in this way have its action terminated at one thing so that it is conducted to its proper term, which is the sight of some intelligible object, it follows that its movement is not yet brought to rest. Rather, it still thinks discursively and inquires about the things which it believes, even though its assent to them is unwavering. For, in so far as it depends on itself alone, the understanding is not satisfied and is not limited to one thing; instead, its action is terminated only from without. Because of this the understanding of

the believer is said to be "held captive," since, in place of its own proper determinations, those of something else are imposed on it: "bringing into captivity every understanding..." (2 Cor. 10:5). Due to this, also, a movement directly opposite to what the believer holds most firmly can arise in him, although this cannot happen to one who understands or has scientific knowledge.

Accordingly, it is thus by assent that belief is distinguished from the operation through which the understanding sees simple forms, that is, quiddities; thus, too, it is distinguished from doubt and opinion. It is by discursive thought, however, that it is distinguished from understanding, and by the fact that assent and discursive thought are, as it were, parallel and simultaneous, that it is distinguished from scientific knowledge.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. The answer to the first difficulty is clear from the reply.
2. Faith is called a consent without inquiry in so far as the consent of faith, or assent, is not caused by an investigation of the understanding. Nonetheless, this does not prevent the understanding of one who believes from having some discursive thought or comparison about those things which he believes.
3. The will looks to a power which precedes it, namely, the intellect, but the intellect does not. Therefore, assent properly belongs to the intellect, because it means an absolute adherence to that to which assent is given. Consent (*consentire*) belongs properly to the will, because to consent is to think something (*sentire*) along with something else (*simul cum alio*). And it is so called in relation to, or in comparison with, something which went before.
4. Since habits are known through their acts, and are themselves the source of their acts, habits are thus sometimes given the names of the acts. For this reason the names of acts sometimes are taken in their proper sense, that is, as referring to the acts themselves, and sometimes as referring to the habits. Belief, therefore, as meaning the act of faith, always includes actual consideration. However, when it is taken for the habit of belief, it does not. It is in this sense that one who is asleep is said to believe, in so far as he has the habit of faith.
5. In faith there is some perfection and some imperfection. The firmness which pertains to the assent is a perfection, but the lack of sight, because of which the movement of discursive thought still remains in the mind of one who believes, is an imperfection. The perfection, namely, the assent, is caused by the simple light which is faith. But, since the participation in this light is not perfect, the imperfection of the understanding is not completely removed. For this reason the movement of discursive thought in it stays restless.
6. The argument given proves or concludes that discursive thought is not the

cause of the assent of faith, but not that it does not accompany the assent of faith.

7. Certitude can mean two things. The first is firmness of adherence, and with reference to this, faith is more certain than any understanding [of principles] and scientific knowledge. For the first truth, which causes the assent of faith, is a more powerful cause than the light of reason, which causes the assent of understanding or scientific knowledge. The second is the evidence of that to which assent is given. Here, faith does not have certainty, but scientific knowledge and understanding do. It is because of this, too, that understanding has no discursive thought.

8. The argument given would conclude correctly if we had perfect participation in that spiritual light, as we will in heaven, where we shall see perfectly the things which we now believe. But now, the things which are known because of that light do not clearly appear, because of our defective participation in that light, and not because of the power of the spiritual light itself.

9. The cogitative power is that which is highest in the sensitive part of man, and, thus, sense in some way comes in contact with the intellective part so that it participates in something of that which is lowest in the intellective part, namely, discursive reason. This is in accord with the rule of Dionysius that contact is established where the lower begins and the higher leaves off. For this reason, also, the cogitative power is called the particular reason, as is clear from the Commentator. This exists only in man; in brutes, its place is taken by the natural judgment [of instinct]. Therefore, reason as a faculty, which is in the intellective part, sometimes receives its name from discursive thought because of the similarity of operation.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE II

**In the second article we ask:  
What is faith?**

[Parallel readings: S.T. , II-II, 4, 1.]

### Difficulties

The Apostle says (Hebrews 11:1) that faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [*argumentum*] of things that appear not."  
This seems to be incorrect, for

1. No quality is a substance, but faith is a quality since it is a virtue, which is a good quality.... Therefore, faith is not a substance.

2. Spiritual being is added to natural being and is its perfection. For this reason it should be similar to it. But in man's natural being the substance of his being is called the very essence of the soul, which is first act. But a power, which is the principle of second act, is not called the essence. So, also, in spiritual being neither faith nor any virtue should be called the essence, for a virtue is a proximate principle of operation and so perfects the power. Grace should rather be called the essence, for spiritual being comes from grace as from its first act, and grace perfects the very essence of the soul.

3 It was said that faith is called substance because it is first among the virtues.— On the contrary, virtues can be considered in three ways: with reference to their habits, to their objects, and to their powers. But with reference to their habits faith is not prior to the others, for this definition seems to give the definition of faith only in so far as it is formed (*formata* ). For it is only in this way that it is a foundation, as Augustine says. All freely given habits, however, are infused at the same time. Likewise, faith seems to have no priority over the others with reference to their objects. For faith does not strive more for the true itself, which seems to be its proper object, than charity does for the highest good, or hope does for that which is hardest to attain, or for God's greatest generosity. Nor is faith prior with reference to their powers, for every freely given virtue seems to look to the affections. Therefore, faith is in no way prior to the others, and so it should not be called the foundation or the substance of the others.

4. Things to be hoped for exist in us through charity rather than through faith. Therefore, this definition seems to fit charity better than faith.

5. Since hope is begotten of faith, as is clear from the Gloss, if one defines hope correctly, faith must be included in its definition. Hope, however, is included in the definition of the thing to be hoped for. Now, if the thing hoped for is included in the definition of faith, we shall have a circle in our definitions; but this is illogical because thus something would be prior to, and better known than, itself. For the thing itself would then be put in its own definition, since definitions are used in place of the names of things. Hence, in defining a thing there would be an unending process.

6. Different habits have different objects. But the theological virtues have the same thing for their end and object. Therefore, in the theological virtues there must be different ends for the different virtues. But the thing to be hoped for is the proper end of hope. Therefore, it should not be included in the definition of faith either as its end or its object.

7. Faith is brought to perfection through charity rather than through hope, and so it is said to be formed through charity. Therefore, in the definition of faith we should include the object of charity, which is the good or what is to be loved,



rather than the object of hope, which is the thing to be hoped for.

8. Faith refers especially to the articles of faith. However, not all these articles, but only one or two, "the resurrection of the body and life everlasting," refer to things to be hoped for. Therefore, the thing to be hoped for should not be included in the definition of faith.

9. Argument (*argumentum*) is an act of reason. But faith pertains to those things which are above reason. Therefore, faith should not be called an argument.

10. In the soul there is a twofold movement, one from the soul and one to the soul. In the movement to the soul the principle is extrinsic; in that from the soul, it is intrinsic. Now, the same principle cannot be intrinsic and extrinsic. Therefore, the same principle of movement cannot be to the soul and from the soul. However, cognition takes place through a movement to the soul, but affection through a movement from the soul. Therefore, neither faith nor anything else can be the principle of affection and cognition. For this reason it is illogical to put in the definition of faith something pertaining to affection: "the substance of things hoped for," and something pertaining to cognition: "evidence of things that appear not."

11. One habit cannot belong to different powers. But the affective and the intellective are different powers. Since, then, faith is one habit, it cannot pertain to cognition and affection. We conclude as before.

12. Each habit has one act. Since, therefore, two acts are included in the definition of faith, namely, to make things hoped for subsist in us, in so far as it is called "the substance of things hoped for," and to convince the mind, in so far as it is called "the evidence of things that appear not," this does not seem a satisfactory description.

13. Understanding is prior to the affections. But that which is called "the substance of things hoped for" pertains to the affections, while that which is added in the words, "evidence of things that appear not," belongs to understanding. Therefore, the parts of the aforesaid definition are not in their proper order.

14. Evidence is said to be that which convinces the mind to assent to something. But the mind is convinced to give assent to things because they become apparent to it. Therefore, the object, which is said to be "evidence of things that appear not," seems to involve a contradiction.

15. Faith is a sort of knowledge. But all knowledge takes place in so far as something appears to the knower, for something appears in sensitive as well as in intellectual knowledge. Therefore, it is illogical to say that faith is "of things that appear not."

## REPLY

According to some, when the Apostle gave this definition, he did not want to show what faith is, but what faith does. However, it seems that we should rather say that this description is a very complete definition. It is such, not in the sense that it is given according to the required form of a definition, but because in it there is sufficient mention of everything which is necessary for a definition of faith. For, sometimes, even when dealing with philosophers themselves, it is enough to mention the principles of syllogisms and definitions because, once they have them, it is a simple matter to reduce them to due form according to the rules of the art. This is clear from three considerations.

First, from the fact that it mentions all the principles on which the nature of faith depends. For the state of the believer, as has been said above, is such that the intellect is determined to something through the will, and the will does nothing except in so far as it is moved by its object, which is the good to be sought for and its end. In view of this, faith needs a twofold principle, a first which is the good that moves the will, and a second which is that to which the understanding gives assent under the influence of the will.

Man, however, has a twofold final good, which first moves the will as a final end. The first of these is proportionate to human nature since natural powers are capable of attaining it. This is the happiness about which the philosophers speak, either as contemplative, which consists in the act of wisdom, or active, which consists first of all in the act of prudence, and in the acts of the other moral virtues as they depend on prudence.

The other is the good which is out of all proportion with man's nature because his natural powers are not enough to attain to it either in thought or desire. It is promised to man only through the divine liberality: "The eye hath not seen..." (1 Cor. 2:9). This is life everlasting. It is because of this good that the will is inclined to give assent to those things which it holds by faith. Thus the Gospel according to St. John (6:40) reads: "Everyone who seeth the Son, and believeth in him may have life everlasting."

But nothing can be directed to any end unless there pre-exists in it a certain proportion to the end, and it is from this that the desire of the end arises in it. This happens in so far as, in a certain sense, the end is made to exist inchoatively within it, because it desires nothing except in so far as it has some likeness of the end. This is why there is in human nature a certain initial participation of the good which is proportionate to that nature. For self-evident principles of demonstrations, which are seeds of the contemplation of wisdom, naturally preexist in that good, as do principles of natural law, which are seeds of the moral virtues.

For this reason also, for man to be ordained to the good which is eternal life,

there must be some initial participation of it in him to whom it is promised. However, eternal life consists in the full knowledge of God, as is clear from John (17:3): "Now this is eternal life...." Consequently, we must have within us some initial participation of this supernatural knowledge. We have it through faith, which by reason of an infused light holds those things which are beyond our natural knowledge.

Now, in composite things whose parts have an order, it is customary to call the first part the substance of the whole thing, for in that part there is a beginning of the whole. Examples of this are the foundation of a house and the hull of a ship. In keeping with this, the Philosopher says: "If being were one whole, its first part would be substance." Similarly, faith is called "the substance of things hoped for," inasmuch as it is for us an initial participation of the eternal life for which we hope by reason of the divine promise. And in this way mention is made of the relation between faith and the good which moves the will in its determination of the intellect.

But the will, under the movement of this good, proposes as worthy of assent something which is not evident to the natural understanding. In this way it gives the understanding a determination to that which is not evident, the determination, namely, to assent to it. Therefore, just as the intelligible thing which is seen by the understanding determines the understanding, and for this reason is said to give conclusive evidence (*arguere*) to the mind; so also, something which is not evident to the understanding determines it and convinces (*arguere*) the mind because the will has accepted it as something to which assent should be given. For this reason another reading has proof (*convictio*) [in place of evidence (*argumentum*)], for it convinces the intellect in the aforesaid manner. So, in the words, "evidence of things that appear not," mention is made of the relation of faith to that to which the understanding assents.

And, so, in the words, "of things that appear not," we have the subject matter or object of faith; in "evidence" we have the act; and in "the substance of things to be hoped for" we have the ordination to the end. From the act we can understand the genus, that is, habit, which is known through the act, and the subject, that is, the mind. And nothing else is needed for the definition of a virtue. Consequently, from what has been said, we can establish a definition scientifically, and say: "Faith is a habit of our mind, by which eternal life begins in us, and which makes our understanding assent to things which are not evident."

The second sign that this is a good definition is that through it we can distinguish faith from everything else. For by the words, "of those things that appear not," faith is distinguished from scientific knowledge and understanding. By the word "evidence" it is distinguished both from opinion and doubt, in which the mind is

not convinced, that is, is not determined to one thing. This also distinguishes it from all habits which are not cognitive. By the words, "substance of things to be hoped for," it is distinguished from faith in the wide sense, namely, that by which we are said to believe that about which we have an opinion which we hold tenaciously, or to believe on the testimony of some man. This also distinguishes it from prudence and from the other cognitive habits, which are either not ordained to things hoped for, or, if so ordained, do not include an initial participation in us of the things hoped for.

The third sign that this is a good definition derives from this, that anyone wanting to define faith will have to include the whole definition or some part of it in other words. For, when Damascene says: "Faith is the substance [hypostasis] of those things that are hoped for, and the proof of those things which are not seen," he obviously is saying the same thing as the Apostle. When he adds: "Unshakeable and irreproachable hope of those things which have been announced to us by God, and of the fulfillment of our petitions," he is explaining what had been included in the words, "substance of things to be hoped for." For the things primarily to be hoped for are the rewards promised us by God, and, secondarily, whatever else we seek from God which is necessary for the former and about which our faith gives us certain hope. This hope cannot fail, and so it is called "unshakeable." Nor can it be justly censured as vain, and so it is called "irreproachable."

Augustine's statement: "Faith is the virtue by which what is not seen is believed"; and Damascene's: "Faith is a consent without inquiry"; and Hugh of St. Victor's: "Faith is a certainty of the mind about things absent which is more than opinion, but less than scientific knowledge," all mean the same as the Apostle's words: "Evidence of things that appear not." Yet, it is said to be "less than scientific knowledge" because faith does not have vision as science does, although it has the same firm adherence. And yet it is said to be "more than opinion" because of the firmness of the assent. Thus, it is said to be "less than science" in so far as it refers to "things that appear not," and "more than opinion" in so far as it refers to conviction (*argumentum*). For the rest, what we have said is explanation enough.

Moreover, when Dionysius says: "Faith is the solid foundation of those who believe, establishing them in the truth, and the truth in them," he is saying the same thing that the Apostle says in the words: "substance of things to be hoped for." For knowledge of the truth is a thing to be hoped for, since "beatitude is nothing else than rejoicing over the truth," as Augustine says.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Faith is called a substance, not because it is in the category of substance, but because it has a certain similarity to substance, namely, in so far as it is the initial

participation and a kind of foundation of the whole spiritual life, just as substance is the foundation of all beings.

2. The Apostle wanted to compare faith with those things which are outside of us, and not with what is within us. However, even though the essence of the soul in its natural being is that which is first and is substance with reference to the powers, habits, and everything consequent upon substance which inheres in it, nevertheless, the relation to external things is not primarily in the essence but in the powers. Likewise, this relation is not found in grace, but in virtue, and primarily in faith. Hence, it could not be said that grace was the substance of things to be hoped for, but that faith was.

3. Faith precedes the other virtues, with reference to its object, the power in which it inheres, and its habit. With reference to its object it takes precedence, not because it has a stronger inclination toward its object than the other virtues toward theirs, but because it is natural for its object to cause movement before the objects of charity and the other virtues. This is evident because it is only through understanding that a good causes movement, as is said in *The Soul*, but the true does not need any movement of appetite to set the understanding in motion. Consequently, the act of faith is naturally prior to the act of charity. Similarly, the habit is also prior, although, when faith is formed (*formata*), they are simultaneous. For the same reason the cognitive power is naturally prior to the affective. Now, faith belongs to the cognitive part, as is clear from the fact that its proper object is the true and not the good. But faith does in a certain sense have its fulfillment in the will, as will be shown later.

4. As is clear from what has already been said, the initial participation of things to be hoped for is not produced in us by means of charity, but by faith. Besides, charity is not evidence, so this description does not fit it at all.

5. Since that good which inclines us to faith surpasses reason, it has no name. Therefore, the Apostle used the circumlocution, that which is to be hoped for, in its stead. This happens frequently in definitions.

6. Every power has an end, which is its own good, but not every power refers to the character of end or good in so far as it is good. Only the will does this. Hence it is that the will moves all the other powers, because all movement begins from an intending of the end. Therefore, although the true is the end of faith, the true does not express the character of end. Consequently, not the true, but something pertaining to the affections ought to be taken as the end of faith.

7. A thing to be loved can be present or absent, but a thing to be hoped for must be absent. Romans (8:24) says: "For what a man seeth, why doth he hope for?" Since, then, faith concerns what is absent, its end is more properly characterized by the thing to be hoped for than by the thing to be loved.

8. An article [of faith] is the subject matter of faith. But the thing to be hoped for should be considered not as its subject matter, but as its end. Thus, the reasoning does not follow.

9. Evidence (*argumentum*) has many meanings. Sometimes it means the very act of reason proceeding from principles to conclusions. And since the whole force of the proof (*argumentum*) consists in the middle term, the middle term is therefore sometimes called the argument (*argumentum*). Thence it is that the preface of a book is sometimes called the argument, because in it there is a sort of brief foretaste of the whole work that follows. Again, since something is made to appear through evidence and the principle by which something appears is light, the light itself, by which it is known, can be called evidence.

And faith is called evidence in these four ways. It is used in the first sense, in so far as reason assents to something because it was said by God. Thus, assent in the believer is caused by the authority of the speaker, since even in dialectical matters there is a proof (*argumentum*) from authority. In the second way, faith is called the evidence of those things which do not appear, in so far as the faith of the faithful is a means of proving the existence of what does not appear, or in so far as the faith of our fathers is a means of making us believe, or in so far as faith in one article is the means to faith in another, as the resurrection of Christ is to the general resurrection, as is clear from the first Epistle to the Corinthians (15:12). In the third way, faith is a brief foretaste of the knowledge which we shall have in the future. In the fourth way, faith is evidence with reference to the light of faith through which we know what is to be believed. Faith, however, is said to surpass reason, not because there is no act of reason in faith, but because reasoning about faith cannot lead to the sight of those things which are matters of faith.

10. The act of faith consists essentially in knowledge, and there we find its formal or specific perfection. This is clear from its object, as has been said. But, with reference to its end, faith is perfected in the affections, because it is by reason of charity that it can merit its end. The beginning of faith, too, is in the affections, in so far as the will determines the intellect to assent to matters of faith. But that act of the will is an act neither of charity nor of hope, but of the appetite seeking a promised good. From this it is clear that faith is not in two powers as in its subjects.

11. The answer to the eleventh difficulty is clear from the answer to the tenth.

12. When we say "substance of things to be hoped for," we are not dealing with the act of faith, but only with its relation to its end. The act is indicated by the reference to the object, when we say "evidence of things that appear not."

13. That to which the understanding gives assent does not move the understanding by its own power, but by the influence of the will. As a result, the good which moves the affective part has the role of first mover in the act of faith, but that to which the understanding gives assent is like a mover which is moved. Therefore, in the definition of faith we first give its reference to the good of the affections before the reference to its proper object.

14. Faith does not convince the mind or satisfy (*arguere*) it so as to assent because of the evidence of the thing, but because of the influence of the will, as was said. Therefore, the reasoning does not follow.

15. Knowledge can have two meanings: sight or assent. When it refers to sight, it is distinguished from faith. Thus, Gregory says: "Things seen are the object not of faith, but of knowledge." According to Augustine, those things "which are present to the senses or the understanding" are said to be seen. But those things are said to be present to the understanding which are not beyond its capacity.

But, in so far as there is certainty of assent, faith is knowledge, and as such can be called certain knowledge and sight. This appears in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (13:12): "We see now through a glass in a dark manner." And this is what Augustine says: "If it is not unfitting to say that we know that also which we believe to be most certain, it follows from this that it is correct to say that we see with our minds the things which we believe, even though they are not present to our senses.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE III

**In the third article we ask:  
Is faith a virtue?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.*, 23, 2, 4, sol. 1; 3, 1, sol. 2.; *Ad Rom.*, c. 1, lect. 6; *S.T.*, I-II, 65, 41, II-II, 4, 5; *Q. D. de virt. in comm.*, 7.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it is not, for

1. Virtue is distinguished from knowledge. So, virtue and knowledge are classified in different genera, as is clear from the Topics. But faith is contained under the genus of knowledge. Therefore, it is not a virtue.

2. It was said that, as ignorance is a vice because it is caused by a neglect of knowledge, so faith is a virtue because it resides in the will of the believer.—On the contrary, the mere fact that something is the result of guilt does not make it

possible to put guilt in its definition. Otherwise, punishment, as such, would have guilt in its definition. Therefore, ignorance cannot be called a vice because it arises from the vice of neglect. For the same reason, faith cannot be called a virtue because it is consequent upon the will.

3. Virtue is so called because of its relation to the good. For virtue is "that which makes its possessor good, and makes his work good," as is said in the *Ethics*. But the object of faith is the true, not the good. Therefore, faith is not a virtue.

4. It was said that the true which is the object of faith is the first truth, which is also the highest good, and, so, faith fulfills the definition of virtue.—On the contrary, in the distinction of habits and acts we must consider the formal distinction of objects, not their material distinction. Otherwise, sight and hearing would be the same power because the same thing happens to be audible and visible. But, no matter how much the good and the true are identified in reality; formally, one aspect founds the concept of its truth and another of its goodness. Therefore, a habit which is directed toward the true, as such, is distinguished from that habit which is directed toward the good as such. Thus, faith is distinguished from virtue.

5. The mean and the extremes are in the same genus, as is clear from the Philosopher. But faith is a mean between scientific knowledge and opinion, for Hugh of St. Victor says that faith is "a certainty of mind which is more than opinion and less than scientific knowledge. But neither opinion nor science is a virtue. So, neither is faith.

6. The presence of the object does not destroy the habit of a virtue. But, when the object of faith, which is first truth, is present to Our minds so that we see it, we will not have faith but vision. Therefore, faith is not a virtue.

7. "Virtue is the fullest development of a power," as is said in *Heaven and Earth*. But faith is not the fullest development of a human power, because it is capable of something fuller, plain sight. Therefore, faith is not a virtue.

8. According to Augustine, through the virtues the acts of powers are made easier. Faith, however, does not make the act of understanding easier, but rather hinders it, because by it our understanding is made captive, as is said in the second Epistle to the Corinthians (10:5). Therefore, faith is not a virtue.

9. The Philosopher divides virtues into intellectual and moral. This division is made according to immediate differences, because the intellectual is that which is in the part which is essentially rational, and the moral is that which is in the part which is rational by participation. There is no other sense in which we can understand rational; nor can human virtue be in any but the rational part taken in



some sense. But faith is not a moral virtue, because, then, its subject matter would be actions and emotions. Nor is it an intellectual virtue, because it is not any of those five virtues which the Philosopher gives. For it is not wisdom, or understanding, or science, or art, or prudence. Therefore, faith is not a virtue at all.

10. That which belongs to a thing because of something extrinsic to it is not in that thing essentially, but accidentally. Faith, however, is not fittingly called a virtue except because of something else, as has been said, namely, because of the will. Therefore, to be a virtue belongs accidentally to faith; hence, faith cannot be classified as a species of virtue.

11. There is more perfect knowledge in prophecy than in faith. But prophecy is not classified as a virtue. Therefore, neither should faith be called a virtue.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Virtue is a disposition of something perfect to that which is best. But this fits faith, for faith orders man to beatitude, which is that which is best. Therefore, faith is a virtue.

21. Every habit by which one is given strength to act and endurance to suffer is a virtue. But faith is of this nature, for "faith worketh by charity" (Gal 5:6). Faith also makes the faithful strong in resisting the devil, as is said in the first Epistle of Peter (5:9). Therefore, faith is a virtue.

3. Hugh of St. Victor says<sup>10</sup> that there are three sacramental virtues by which we receive our initiation [into the Church]: faith, hope, and charity. We conclude as before.

### **REPLY**

Everybody agrees that faith is a virtue. For a proof of this we should note that virtue by its very name means the completion of an active power. Now, there are two kinds of active powers, one whose action terminates in something performed outside the agent, as the action of the power of building terminates in the edifice; and the other, whose action does not terminate outside of the agent, but remains within him' as sight remains within one who sees, as the Philosopher says. In these two kinds of powers completion is taken in different senses. Since acts of the first type of power are not in the maker, but in what is made, as the Philosopher says, the completion of the power is to be considered in reference to that which is done. Thus, the power of one who carries burdens is said to consist in this, that he carries a very heavy burden, as is evident from

*Heaven and Earth* ; and the power of one who builds consists in this, that he makes a very good house. However, since the act of the other type of power remains in the agent and not in anything produced, the completion of that type of power is conceived according to its

mode of acting, namely, that it act well and fittingly. And it is because of this that its act is called good. And so it is that in this type of power we call virtue that which makes the work good.

But the philosopher considers one thing as final good and the theologian another. For the philosopher considers as final good that which has a proportion to the human powers and exists in the act of man himself. Thus, he says that happiness is an activity. Therefore, according to the philosopher, a good act, whose principle is called a virtue, is said to be good without qualification in so far as it is in conformity with the potency as that which perfects it. Consequently, when the philosopher finds any habit which elicits such an act, he calls it a virtue, whether it be in the intellectual part, as science, understanding of principles, and intellectual virtues of this sort, whose acts are the good of the power itself, namely, to consider the true; or whether it be in the affective part, as temperance, bravery, and the other moral virtues.

But the theologian considers as the final good that which is beyond the capacity of nature, namely, everlasting life, as has been said. Thus, he does not consider the good in human acts without qualification, because he puts the end not in the acts themselves, but in the disposition to that good which he makes the end. He says that only that act is completely good which has a proximate relation to the final good, that is, an act which merits eternal life. He says that every such act is an act of virtue, and every habit properly eliciting such an act he calls a virtue.

However, an act can be called meritorious only if it lies within the power of the agent. For it is necessary for one who merits to present something. Nor can he present something unless it is in some way his own, that is, from himself. Now, an act lies within our power, in so far as it belongs to our will, whether as elicited by the will, as to love and to wish, or as commanded by the will, as to walk and to talk. Hence, with reference to any such act, we can posit as a virtue that which elicits perfect acts of this type.

As has been said above, there is assent in belief only by reason of the command of the will. Therefore, it depends on the will according to its very nature. It is for this reason that to believe can be meritorious, and that faith, which is the habit eliciting the act of believing, is a virtue for the theologian.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Knowledge and science are not distinguished from virtue taken simply, but from moral virtue, which is more commonly called virtue.
2. Although the fact that something is caused by a virtue or a vice is not enough to put virtue or vice in its definition, the fact that it can be commanded by a virtue or a vice is enough to make an act be the act of a vice or virtue.
3. The good toward which a virtue gives an ordination should not be taken as the

object of some act; rather, that good is the perfect act itself, which the virtue elicits. And, although the true differs from the good in its intelligible content, the act of considering the true is a good of the understanding, and to give assent to first truth on its own account is a good worthy of merit. Consequently, faith, which is ordained to this act, is called a virtue.

4. The answer to the fourth difficulty is clear from the third response.

5. Neither scientific knowledge nor opinion, but only faith, can be called a virtue in the sense in which we are now speaking of virtue. For faith is not a mean between science and opinion with reference to that which concerns the will, and it is according to this that it is classified as a virtue in the way we have mentioned. For in science and opinion there is no inclination because of the will, but only because of reason. If, however, we are talking about them with reference only to knowledge, neither opinion nor faith would be a virtue, since they do not have perfect knowledge. Only science has this.

6. First truth is the proper object of faith only under the character of nonappearing, as is clear from the definition of the Apostle, where it is said that the proper object of faith is that which does not appear. Consequently, when first truth is present, it loses its character of object.

7. Faith is said to be the fullest development of a power in so far as it adds to the power that which is needed to elicit a good and meritorious act. For a virtue really to be a virtue, however, it does not have to elicit the best act possible from that power, for in the same power there may be several virtues, one of which elicits an act more noble than another, as magnificence over liberality.

8. In any two things which are ordained to each other the perfection of the lower is for it to be subject to the higher, as the concupiscible which is subject to reason. Because of this, the habit of a virtue is said to make it easy for the concupiscible power to act, not in the sense so that it makes it pursue concupiscible objects without restraint, but because it brings it perfectly under the dominion of reason. Similarly, the good of understanding itself is to be subject to the will which adheres to God. Thus, faith is said to help the understanding in so far as it makes it captive under such a will.

9. Faith is not an intellectual or moral virtue, but a theological virtue. And, although the theological virtues have the same subject as moral and intellectual virtues, they have a different object. For the object of the theological virtues is the last end itself, whereas the object of the other virtues is the means to the end. Therefore, the theologians propose certain virtues which concern the end itself. But the philosophers do not do this, because the end of human life which the philosophers study does not transcend the power of nature. Hence, man's pursuit of that end is the result of a natural inclination, and to pursue that end he does not need to be elevated by any habits, as he does to pursue the end

considered by the theologians, which transcends the power of nature.

10. Faith is in the intellect only in so far as it is commanded by the will, as is clear from what has been said. Hence, although that which comes from the will can be said to be accidental to the intellect, it is still essential to faith. The same holds for the rational element, which is accidental to the concupiscible, but essential to temperance.

11. Prophecy does not depend on the will of the prophet, as is said in the second Epistle of St. Peter(1:21). Faith, however, is to some extent dependent on the will of the believer. Therefore, prophecy cannot be called a virtue as faith can.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE IV

**In the fourth article we ask:  
What is the subject in which faith exists?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 23, 2, 3, sol. 1; *S.T.* , II-II, 4, 2.]

#### Difficulties

It seems to be not the cognitive, but the affective, part, for

1. All virtue seems to exist in the affective part, since virtue is a kind of "well-ordered love," as Augustine says. But faith is a virtue. Therefore, it exists in the affective part.

2. Virtue implies some perfection, since it is "the disposition of something perfect to that which is best," as is said in the *Physics* . But, since faith has some perfection and some imperfection, the imperfection derives from the cognitive element and the perfection derives from the volitional element, namely, that it hold firmly to things invisible. Therefore, in so far as it is a virtue, it is in the affective part.

3. Augustine says: "Although a child does not have the faith which is in the will of those who believe, he has the sacrament of faith." From this we clearly see that faith is in the will.

4. Augustine says: "The Apostle's words, 'Or what hast thou that thou hast not received' (1 Cor 4:7), refer to the faith which is in the will of those who believe." We conclude as before.

5. A disposition and its perfection seem to belong to the same thing. But faith is a disposition for glory, which is in the affective part. Therefore, faith, also, is in the affective part.

6. Merit resides in the will, because only the will is master of its acts. But the act of faith is meritorious. Therefore, it is an act of the will, and so it would seem that faith resides in the will.

7. It was said that faith is in both the affective and the cognitive parts. —On the contrary, one habit cannot belong to two powers. Faith, however, is one habit. Therefore, it cannot be in the affective and cognitive parts, which are two powers.

### **To the Contrary**

1. A habit which perfects a power has the same object as the power. Otherwise, the act of the power and of the habit could not be one. But faith has the same object, not as the affective part, but as the cognitive part, since the object of both is the true. Therefore, faith is in the cognitive part.

2. Augustine says that faith is the “enlightening” of the mind for the first truth. But to be enlightened pertains to the cognitive part. Therefore, faith is in the cognitive part.

3. If faith is said to be in the will, it is so only because we believe willingly. But, in like manner, all the activities of the virtues take place in us knowingly, as is clear from the *Ethics*. Therefore, for the same reason all the virtues would be in the cognitive part, which is obviously false.

4. Through grace, which is in the virtues, the image which is in the three powers of memory, intelligence, and will is refashioned. But the three virtues which primarily have reference to grace are faith, hope, and charity. Therefore, one of these is in the intelligence. It is evident, however, that neither hope nor charity is there. So, faith is there.

5. The cognitive power has the same relation to that which can or cannot be proved, as the affective power has to that which can or cannot be approved. But the virtue by reason of which we approve that which, according to human reason, should not be approved is in the affective part. This virtue is charity, by which we love our enemies, a thing which naturally seems something not to be approved. Therefore, faith, by which we prove or assert that which to reason seems incapable of proof, is in the cognitive part.

### **REPLY**

There are many, different opinions about this question. For some have said that faith is in both the affective and cognitive powers. But this cannot be true at all if it means that it is in both equally. For each habit must have one act, and one act cannot belong equally to two powers. Seeing this, some of these people” say that faith is principally in the affective power. But this does not seem to be true, since to believe implies some “thought,” as is clear from Augustine. Thought, however, is an act of the cognitive part. Faith is also in some sense called scientific

knowledge and sight, as was said above. And all of these belong to the cognitive power.

Others" say that faith is in the understanding, but the practical understanding, because they say the practical understanding is that to which desire tends, or which desire follows, or which inclines to a work. And these three are found in faith. It is because of desire that one is inclined to faith, for we believe what we will. Desire itself also follows faith, inasmuch as the act of faith in some sense produces the act of charity. It also leads to a work, for "faith... worketh by charity" (Gal 5:6).

But these people do not seem to understand what the practical understanding is. For the practical understanding is the same as the operative understanding. Hence, only extension to a work makes an understanding practical. Reference to desire, however, either antecedent or consequent, does not withdraw the understanding from the category of speculative understanding. For, unless one were attracted to speculating about the truth, there would never be any pleasure in the act of speculative understanding. And this is contrary to the Philosopher, who says that the purest pleasure is in the act of speculative understanding.

Nor does every reference to a work make the understanding practical, because simple speculation can be for someone the remote occasion of doing something. Thus, a philosopher contemplates the immortality of the soul, and from this, as from a remote cause, he takes occasion to do something. But, to be practical, the understanding must be the proximate rule of action, as that by which one studies the thing to be done, the methods of operation, and the causes of the work. It is evident, however, that the object of faith is not a truth which can be produced, but the uncreated truth, which can be an object only of speculative understanding. Consequently, faith is in the speculative understanding, although it is the remote occasion of doing something. For this reason, also, activity is attributed to it only through the mediation of charity.

We must bear in mind, nevertheless, that it is not in the speculative understanding absolutely, but only in so far as it is subject to the will. Similarly, temperance is in the concupiscible power only in so far as it participates to some extent in reason. For, since the good of the act of a power requires its subjection to a higher power by following its command, it is necessary not only that the higher have the perfection to command or direct correctly, but that the lower have the perfection to obey promptly. Hence, he who has right reason, but an uncontrolled concupiscible appetite, does not have the virtue of temperance, because he is harassed by his passions, even though he is not led astray by them. Consequently, he does not perform the act of virtue with the ease and pleasure which are needed for virtue. But, to have temperance, the concupiscible appetite itself must be perfected by a habit so that it is subject to the will without any difficulty. It is in this way that the habit of temperance is said to be in the

concupiscible appetite. Similarly, for the understanding promptly to follow the command of the will, there must be a habit in the speculative understanding itself. This is the divinely infused habit of faith.

### Answers to Difficulties

1. That passage of Augustine should be understood of the moral virtues, about which he is there speaking. Or it can be said that we are speaking of the virtues with reference to their form, which is charity.
2. The cognitive part has some perfection in so far as it obeys a will which clings to God.
3. Augustine is talking about the act of faith, which, indeed, is said to be in the will not as in a subject, but as in a cause, in so far as it is commanded by the will.
4. The same holds for the fourth difficulty.
5. It is not necessary for disposition and habit to be in the same subject except when the disposition itself becomes the habit. This is evident in members of the body, in which an effect results in one member because of the disposition in another member. Something similar happens in the powers of the soul, for the perfection of knowledge in the understanding follows from a good disposition of the imagination.
6. Not only the act which the will elicits, but also that which it commands, is called an act of the will. Therefore, there can be merit in both, as is clear from what has been said.
7. There cannot be one habit belonging equally to two powers, but there can be a habit of one power in so far as it has an ordination to another. And this is the case with faith.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE V

**In the fifth article we ask:  
Is charity the form of faith?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 23,3, 1, sol. 1; *S.T.* , II-  
II, 4, 3; 23, 8; *Q.D. de car.* , 3.]

### Difficulties

And it seems that it is not, for

1. One of two things which are distinguished from each other as opposites cannot

be the form of the other. But faith and charity are distinguished from each other as opposites. Therefore, charity is not the form of faith.

2. It was said that they are distinguished from each other as opposites in so far as they are considered in themselves, but that charity is the form of faith in so far as they are directed to the one end which they merit by their acts.—On the contrary, two of the causes are extrinsic, namely, agent and end; and two are intrinsic, form and matter. Now, two diverse things can have one common extrinsic principle, but they do not on this account have one common intrinsic principle. Therefore, we cannot conclude from the ordination of faith and charity to one end that charity is the form of faith.

3. It was said that charity is not an intrinsic but an extrinsic form, a kind of exemplary form.—On the contrary: The facsimile takes its species from the exemplar. Hence, Hilary says: "The image is not of a different species from the thing which is represented." But faith does not take its species from charity. Therefore, charity cannot be the exemplary form of faith.

4. Every form is either substantial, or accidental, or exemplary. But charity is not the substantial form of faith, for, if it were, it would be an integral part of faith. Nor is it an accidental form, for faith thus would be more noble than charity, since the subject is more noble than the accident. Nor is it the exemplary form, because charity then would be able to exist without faith, since the exemplar can exist without the facsimile. Therefore, charity is not the form of faith.

5. Reward is proportionate to merit. But our reward consists principally in three gifts: vision, which takes the place of faith; possession, which takes the place of hope; and enjoyment, which corresponds to charity. However, our reward consists mainly in vision, and, so, Augustine says: "Vision is the whole reward." Therefore, merit and reward should both be attributed to faith. Therefore, in so far as they are ordained to acquiring merit, faith seems rather to be the form of charity, rather than charity that of faith.

6. For every subject of perfectibility there is one corresponding perfection. But the form of faith is grace. Therefore, charity is not its form, since charity is not the same as grace.

7. The Gloss on "Abraham begot Isaac" (Matt. 1:2) says: "Faith begot hope, and hope, charity." This is taken as referring to acts, not to habits. Therefore, the act of charity depends on the act of faith. Now, a form does not depend on that of which it is the form, but the opposite. Therefore, charity is not the form of faith in so far as faith is ordained to a meritorious act.

8. Habits are distinguished through their objects. But the objects of faith and charity are diverse, namely, the good and the true. Therefore, the habits are formally distinct, too. But every act is from a form. Therefore, the acts of those



habits are diverse. Consequently, charity cannot be the form of faith even in its ordination to act.

9. Charity is the form of faith in so far as it forms faith; therefore, if it forms faith only through an ordination to its act, charity will not be the form of faith, but its act.

10. The Apostle says: "And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three" (1 Cor. 13:13). Here, faith, hope, and charity are distinguished as opposed to each other. But he seems to be talking about formed faith, for formless faith is not considered to be a virtue, as will be said later. Therefore, formed faith is distinguished from charity, and, so, charity cannot be the form of faith.

11. For an act to be an act of virtue it must be morally good and voluntary. But reason is the principle of a morally good action, just as the will is the principle of a voluntary action. Therefore, something from reason is needed for an act of virtue, just as something from the will is needed. Therefore, just as charity, which is in the will, is the form of the virtues, so faith, which is in the reason, is also their form. Therefore, one should not be called the form of the other.

12. The same source gives a thing both life and its form. But spiritual life is attributed to faith, as is clear in Habakkuk (2:4): "But my just man liveth by faith." Therefore faith, rather than charity, should be said to form the virtues.

13. The act of faith is formed in one who has grace. But it is possible for the act of faith of such a man to have no relation to charity. Therefore, the act of faith can be formed without charity. So, charity does not seem to be the form of faith even with reference to its act.

## **To the Contrary**

1. That without which faith is formless is the form of faith. But without charity faith is formless. Therefore, charity is the form of faith.

2. Ambrose says: "Charity is the mother of all the virtues and forms all of them."

3. A virtue is said to be formed in so far as it is able to elicit a meritorious act. But no act can be meritorious and acceptable to God unless it proceeds from love. Therefore, charity is the form of all the virtues.

4. The form of a thing is that from which it gets its power to act. But faith gets its power to act from charity, for "faith... worketh by charity" (Gal. 5:6). Therefore, charity is the form of faith.

## **REPLY**

On this question there are different opinions. Some have said that grace itself is the form of faith and of the other virtues, but no other virtue is a form except in so far as, in their opinion, grace is essentially identified with virtue. But this

cannot be. For, whether grace and virtue differ essentially or only conceptually, grace refers to the essence of the soul and virtue to a power. And, although the essence is the root of all the powers, all the powers do not proceed from the essence in the same way. For some powers are naturally prior to others and move them. Consequently, it is necessary for habits in the lower powers to be formed through the habits which are in the higher powers. Thus, the formation of the lower virtues should come from some higher virtue and not immediately from grace.

Hence, it is commonly admitted that charity, as a sort of preeminent virtue, is the form of the other virtues, not only in so far as it is the same as grace or is inseparably connected with it, but also from the very fact that it is charity. And in this way, also, it is said to be the form of faith.

We should understand the manner in which faith is formed by charity in the following way. For, whenever there are two principles of motion or action with an ordination to each other, that in the effect which is due to the higher agent is, as it were, formal, and that which is from the lower agent is, as it were, material. This is clear in both physical things and moral matters.

For in the act of the nutritive power the power of the soul acts as first agent, and fiery heat acts as an instrumental agent, as is said in *The Soul*.

And in flesh, which is produced by nutrition, the assembling of the parts, or dryness, or something of this sort, which comes from fiery heat, is material with reference to the species of flesh, which comes from the power of the soul.

Similarly, when reason commands the lower powers, such as the irascible and concupiscible appetites, that in the habit of the concupiscible appetite which is from that appetite, namely, a certain inclination to some use of desirable things, is, as it were, material in temperance; whereas the order, which is of reason, and the rectitude, are formal. And the same holds in the other moral virtues. For this reason some philosophers have called all virtues, sciences, as is said in the *Ethics*.

Since, therefore, faith is in the understanding in so far as the understanding is moved and commanded by the will, that which is from knowledge is material in faith, but its formation must be received from the will. Accordingly, since charity is a perfection of the will, faith is formed by charity. And for the same reason so are all the other virtues, in so far as they are studied by the theologian, that is, in so far as they are principles of meritorious acts. Now, no act can be meritorious unless it is voluntary, as has been said. And, so, it is evident that all the virtues with which the theologian is concerned are in the powers of the soul in so far as they are moved by the will.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Charity is not called the form of faith in the way in which a form is part of an

essence. For in that way it could not be distinguished from faith. It is called form in so far as faith acquires some perfection from charity. This is also the manner in which the higher elements in the universe are said to be the form of the lower elements, as air of water and water of earth, as is said in the *Physics*.

2. The answer to the second difficulty is clear from the first response.

3. The manner in which charity is called form approximates the manner in which we call an exemplar a form. For what there is of perfection in faith is derived from charity, so that charity has essentially what faith and the other virtues have by participation.

4 Since the habit of charity is not intrinsic to faith, it cannot be called either its substantial or its accidental form. But it can in a certain way be called an exemplary form. Nevertheless, it is not necessary that charity be able to exist without faith. For faith is not patterned on charity in so far as that which constitutes it faith is concerned, for in this way faith precedes charity in regard to the merely cognitional element of faith; rather, it is patterned on charity only in so far as faith is perfect. Hence, nothing prevents faith from being prior to charity in this regard, and charity from being unable to exist without it, while in some other respect charity may be the exemplar of faith which it always informs, in so far as faith is always present to it. But that which results in faith from charity is intrinsic to faith. We shall say later in what way this is accidental or substantial to faith.

5. Will and understanding precede each other in different ways. For the understanding precedes the will in the process of reception, since, if something is to move the will, it must first be received into the understanding, as is clear in *The Soul*. But, in causing motion or in acting, the will is prior, for every action or motion comes from a striving for a good. It is for this reason that the will, whose proper object is the good in its character as good, is said to move all the lower powers.

Reward, however, expresses the idea of reception, but merit expresses the idea of action. Hence it is that the whole reward is attributed mainly to the understanding, and vision is called the whole reward, because the reward begins in the understanding and is brought to completion in the affections. Merit, however, is attributed to charity, because the will, which charity perfects, is the first mover in the performance of meritorious works.

6. It is impossible for one thing to have many perfections in the same order. Now, grace is the first [that is, remote] perfection of the virtues, but charity is their proximate perfection.

7. The act of faith which precedes charity is an imperfect act awaiting completion

from charity. For faith is prior to charity in one respect and subsequent to it in another, as has been said.

8. This difficulty proceeds correctly for the act of faith as it is in itself, but not as it is perfected by charity.

9. When a higher power is perfect, some of its perfection is found in the lower power. And, so, when charity is in the will, its perfection in some manner flows over into the intellect. So, charity forms not only the act of faith, but faith itself.

10. In those words the Apostle seems to be speaking of these habits without considering the character of virtue in them, but, rather, looking at them in so far as they are certain gifts and perfections. For this reason, in the same context he mentions prophecy and certain other charisms, which are not classified as virtues.

Even if he is speaking of them in so far as they are virtues, the reasoning does not proceed correctly. For division into opposites sometimes takes place between things, one of which is the cause or perfection of the other. Thus, local motion is distinguished from other types of motion, although it is, nevertheless, the cause of the others. So, charity is distinguished from the other virtues, although it is their form.

11. Reason can be considered in two ways. In one, it is taken in itself; in the other, in so far as it regulates the lower powers. In so far as it regulates the lower powers it is perfected through prudence. Thus it is that all the other moral virtues, by which the lower powers are perfected, are formed through prudence as by a proximate form. But faith perfects reason taken in itself, in so far as it considers the truth. Consequently, it does not belong to faith to form the lower virtues, but itself to be formed by charity, which forms the other virtues, even prudence itself, inasmuch as prudence itself, because of the end which is the object of charity, reasons about means to the end.

12. Something common is especially attributed to a thing in two ways, either because it is most perfectly appropriate to it, as we attribute knowledge to the understanding; or because it is first found there, as life is attributed to the plant soul, as is clear in *The Soul*, because life makes its first appearance in its acts. Spiritual life is, therefore, attributed to faith because spiritual life makes its first appearance in the act of faith, although its completion comes from charity, which for this reason is the form of the other virtues.

13. In one who has charity there can be no act of virtue not formed by charity. For, either the act will be directed to the proper end, and this can be only through charity in one who has charity, or the act is not directed to the proper end, and so is not an act of virtue. Consequently, it is not possible for an act of faith to be formed by grace and not by charity, since grace has no ordination to act except through the mediation of charity.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE VI

#### In the sixth article we ask: Is formless faith a virtue?

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 23, 3, 1, sol. 2; *S.T.* , II-II, 4, 4-5.]

#### Difficulties

It seems that it is, for

1. That which faith obtains from charity cannot be essential to faith itself, since faith can exist without it. But a thing is not put in a genus by reason of something accidental to it. Therefore, faith is not put in the genus of virtue by reason of its formation by charity. So, it is a virtue without the form of charity.
2. Only a virtue or a vice is opposed to a vice. But the vice of unbelief is not opposed to formless faith as to a vice. Therefore, it is opposed to it as to a virtue. We conclude as before.
- 3 It was said that unbelief is opposed only to formed faith.—On the contrary, habits must be opposed whose acts are opposed. But the acts of formless faith and unbelief, namely, assent and dissent, are opposed. Therefore, formless faith is opposed to unbelief.
4. A virtue seems to be nothing else but a habit which tends to perfect some power. But our understanding is perfected through formless faith. Therefore, it is a virtue.
5. Infused habits are more noble than acquired habits. But acquired habits, such as the habits of life in a society, are called virtues even apart from charity according to their classification by the philosophers. Therefore, the formless habit of faith, since it is an infused habit, is a virtue with much greater reason.
6. Augustine says that all the virtues except charity can exist without grace. Therefore, unformed faith, which exists without grace, is a virtue.

#### To the Contrary

1. All the virtues are connected with each other, so that a person who has one of them has all of them, as Augustine says. But formless faith is not connected with the others. Therefore, it is not a virtue.
2. There are no virtues in the evil spirits. But there is formless faith in the evil spirits, for “the devils also believe” (James 2:19). Therefore, formless faith is not

a virtue.

## REPLY

If we take virtue in its proper sense, formless faith is not a virtue.

The reason for this is that virtue, properly speaking, is a habit capable of eliciting a perfect act. However, when an act depends on two powers, it cannot be said to be perfect unless the perfection is found in both powers. This is evident in the moral as well as the intellectual virtues. For knowledge of conclusions requires two things: an understanding of principles, and reasoning, which draws the conclusions from the principles. Therefore, whether one is mistaken or has doubts about principles, or whether there is some defect in his reasoning, or he does not grasp the force of the reasoning, in all these cases he will not know the conclusions perfectly. Consequently, he will not have scientific knowledge, which is an intellectual virtue. Similarly, the proper act of the concupiscible power depends on reason and the concupiscible power. Hence, if reason is not perfected by prudence, no matter what inclination to the good is in the concupiscible power, it cannot have its perfect act. For this reason there can be neither temperance nor any other moral virtue without prudence, as is said in the *Ethics*.

Since, therefore, the act of believing depends on the understanding and the will, as is clear from what has been said such an act cannot be perfect unless the will is made perfect by charity and the understanding by faith. Thus, formless faith cannot be a virtue.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Something can be accidental to a thing in so far as its natural constitution is concerned and essential to it with reference to its morality, that is, in so far as it is a virtue or a vice. Such a relation exists between eating and its due end or any other proper circumstance. Similarly, that which faith receives from charity is accidental to faith in its natural constitution, but essential to it with reference to its morality. Therefore, through charity it is put in the genus of virtue.

2. Vice is opposed not only to perfect virtue, but also to that which is imperfect among the virtues. Thus, intemperance is contrary to the natural aptitude for good which is in the appetite. And, so, unbelief is opposed to formless faith.

3 We concede the third difficulty.

4. Formless faith does not bring the understanding to a perfection sufficient for virtue, as is clear from what has been said.

5. The philosophers do not consider virtues as the principles of meritorious acts. Therefore, habits not formed by charity can be virtues for them, though not for the theologian.

6. Augustine takes virtue in the broad meaning of all habits which give the perfection needed for praiseworthy acts. We can also say that Augustine did not mean that habits existing without grace should be called virtues, but that, although some habits, which are virtues when grace is present, remain after grace leaves, it does not follow that they are then virtues.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE VII

**In the seventh article we ask:**

**Is the habit of formless faith the same as that of formed faith?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 23, 3, 4, sol. 1, sol. 3; *Ad Rom.* , c. 1, lect. 6; *S.T.* , II-II, 4, 4.]

#### Difficulties

It seems that it is not, for

1. When grace comes, it has as much influence on one who believes as on one who does not believe. But, when the unbeliever is converted, the habit of faith is infused in him together with grace. Therefore, there is a similar infusion in the believer [that is, when he is reinstated in grace]; hence, the habit of formed faith is different from the habit of formless faith.
2. Formless faith is the principle of servile fear. But formed faith is the principle of holy or initial fear. But, when holy or filial fear arrives, servile fear is driven out. Therefore, also, when formed faith comes, formless faith is driven out. So, it is not the same habit for both.
3. As Boethius says, accidents can cease to exist, but they can in no wise undergo alteration. But the habit of formless faith is an accident. Therefore, it cannot undergo alteration so that it becomes itself the formed habit.
4. When life comes, what is dead leaves. But formless faith, which is "without works is dead," as is said in James (2:26). Therefore, when charity, which is the principle of life, comes, formless faith is removed, and, so, does not become formed.
5. One thing does not result from two accidents. But formless faith is an accident. Therefore, it cannot unite with charity to make one thing, as would seem to be necessary if formless faith itself became formed.
6. Any things which differ generically also differ specifically and numerically. But formless faith and formed faith differ generically, since one is a virtue and the other is not. Therefore, they also differ specifically and numerically.

7. Habits are distinguished according to their acts. But formless faith and formed faith have different acts: to tend toward God by faith, to believe on God's word, or in God. Therefore, they are different habits.

8. Different habits are lost by different vices, since each is lost because of its opposite, and each thing has only one opposite. But formed faith is lost through the sin of fornication, but formless faith is not, for it is lost only through the sin of unbelief. Therefore, formed and formless faith are different habits.

### **To the Contrary**

1. James (2:20, 26) says: "Faith without works is dead" and the Gloss adds: "by which [works] it lives once more." Therefore, the very formless faith which was dead is formed and comes to life again.

2. Things are not differentiated except by those things which are outside of their essences. But charity is outside of the essence of faith.

Therefore, the habit of faith is not differentiated because it has or does not have charity.

### **REPLY**

There are different opinions on this matter, for some say that a habit which was formless never becomes formed, but that a new habit, formed faith, is infused with grace. When it arrives, the habit of formless faith leaves. But this cannot be, for a thing is expelled only by its opposite. If, therefore, the habit of formed faith drove out the habit of formless faith, since it is not contrary to it except by reason of its formlessness, it would be necessary that the very formlessness belong to the essence of formless faith. Thus, it would be essentially an evil habit and could not be a gift of God.

Furthermore, when someone sins mortally, grace and formed faith are taken away. Still, we see that faith remains. Nor can it be shown that, as they say, the gift of formless faith is given them again, because then, from the very fact that someone had sinned, he would be made fit to receive a gift from God.

Others therefore say that the habit is not taken away, but just the act of formless faith is removed with the coming of charity. But neither can this stand, for thus the habit would remain idle. Furthermore, since the act of formless faith has no essential contrariety to the act of formed faith, it cannot be hindered by it. Nor, again, can it be said that both acts and habits are there together, for formed faith can perform every act which formless faith performs. Thus, the same act would come from the two powers, which is not reasonable.

Hence, we must say with the others that formless faith stays when charity comes, and is itself formed. In this way only the formlessness is removed. This can be



seen from what follows. For in powers or habits we can see two sources of differentiation: objects and different ways of acting. Diversity of objects differentiates habits essentially, in the manner sight differs from hearing, and chastity from bravery. But, with reference to their manner of acting, powers or habits are not differentiated according to their essence, but according to completeness and incompleteness. For the fact that one sees more or less clearly, or performs chaste actions more or less readily, does not differentiate the power of sight or the habit of chastity, but does show that the power and habit are more perfect and less perfect.

Now, formed faith and formless faith do not have different objects, but only different ways of acting. For formed faith, assents to first truth with a perfect will, whereas formless faith does the same with an imperfect will. So, formed faith and formless faith are not distinguished as two different habits, but as a perfect habit and an imperfect habit. Consequently, since the same habit, which formerly was imperfect, becomes perfect, the very habit of formless faith later becomes formed.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Grace does not have less effectiveness when infused into one who has faith than when infused into one who has not faith. But the fact that it does not cause another habit of faith in one who already has faith is due to an extrinsic reason, namely, because it finds the habit already there. This is like the case in which one who is ignorant is taught by the instruction of the teacher, while one who knows does not acquire a new habit but is strengthened in the knowledge he had before.
2. The arrival of charity does not expel servile fear in its substance as a gift, but only with reference to its servility. Similarly, it is only with reference to its formlessness that faith is formed when grace arrives.
3. Although an accident cannot undergo alteration, the subject of the accident can be altered with reference to some accident. That accident is said to be altered in this way, as whiteness increases or decreases when the subject is altered with reference to whiteness.
4. When life comes, it is not necessary for that which is dead to leave, but for death to leave. Hence, not formless faith but only the formlessness is removed through charity.
5. Although one thing cannot arise from two accidents, one accident can be perfected through another, as color through light. In this way faith is perfected through charity.
6. Formless and formed faith are not said to differ according to genus, as though they were things existing in different genera. Rather, they are as the perfect, which attains to the character of the genus, and the imperfect, which has not yet attained to it. Thus, it is not necessary that they differ numerically, just as the

embryo and the animal do not have to differ numerically.

7. To believe on God's word, to believe in God, and to tend toward God by faith do not indicate different acts, but different circumstances of the same act of virtue. For in faith something derives from knowledge, inasmuch as faith is evidence. In this way the act of faith is said to believe on God's word when there is question of the principle of this evidence. For one who believes something is moved to assent because it was said by God. But, when there is question of the conclusion to which he assents, he is said to believe in God. For first truth is the proper object of faith. With reference to what derives from the will, the believer in his act of faith is said to tend toward God by faith. Moreover, it is not completely an act of virtue unless it has all three of these circumstances.

8. By fornication and other sins except unbelief formed faith is lost, not with reference to the substance of the habit, but only with reference to its form.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE VIII

**In the eighth article we ask:**

**Is first truth the proper object of faith?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 74, 1, sol. 1; *S.T.* , II-II, 1, 1; *Q.D. de spe* , 1.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it is not, for

1. Faith is explained in the Creed. But in the creed there are included many things which refer to creatures. Therefore, first truth is not the only object of faith.

2. It was said that those things in the Creed which refer to creatures belong to faith nonessentially and secondarily.—On the contrary, by its nature the consideration of a science extends to everything within the power of the proper means from which it proceeds. But the means of faith is belief in God when He says something. For a believer is moved to assent because he thinks something was said by God. But we should believe God's word not only about first truth, but about any truth. Therefore, any truth is of itself the subject matter and object of faith.

3. Acts are distinguished through their objects. But the act of faith and the vision of God in Himself are different acts. Therefore, since the object of the aforesaid vision is first truth itself, that will not be the object of the act of faith.

4. First truth is related to faith as light is to sight. But, of itself, light is not an

object of sight; rather, color in act is, as the Philosopher says., Therefore, first truth is not the essential object of faith.

5. Faith deals with propositions, for these alone can be true and an object of someone's assent. But first truth is not a proposition. Therefore, the object of faith is not first truth.

6. If first truth were the essential object of faith, nothing which refers entirely to creatures would pertain to faith. But the resurrection of the body refers entirely to creatures, and still is numbered among the articles of faith. Therefore, first truth is not the only essential object of faith.

7. Just as the visible is the object of sight, so the credible is the object of faith. But many other things besides first truth are credible. Therefore, first truth is not the essential object of faith.

8. Things related are known with the same act of knowledge because one is included in the understanding of the other. But Creator and creature are thus related. Therefore, any cognitive habit which has the Creator as its object will have the creature as its object. So, first truth cannot alone be the object of faith.

9. In any knowledge the object is that to which the process leads us. That through which the process leads us to the object is the means. But in faith, by reason of first truth we are led to assent to certain truths about God and creatures, in so far as we believe God to be truthful. Therefore, first truth does not have the role of object of knowledge, but of means to knowledge.

10. Faith, like charity, is a theological virtue. But charity has not only God, but also the neighbor, for its object. Hence, there are two commandments of charity concerning love of God and of the neighbor. Therefore, faith, also, has for its object not only first truth but also created truth.

11. Augustine says that in heaven we shall see things themselves, though here we look at the images of things. But the sight of faith belongs to this life. Therefore, the sight of faith takes place through images. But the images through which our understanding sees are created things. Therefore, the object of faith is created truth.

12. Faith is a mean between scientific knowledge and opinion, as is clear from the definition of Hugh of St. Victor. But scientific knowledge and opinion deal with a proposition. Therefore, faith does, also. Hence, first truth, which is a concept, cannot be its object.

13. Prophetic revelation, through which things divine are announced to us, seems to be a source of faith. But the object of prophecy is not first truth, but, rather, created things, which are subject to determinate temporal differences. Therefore, first truth is not the object of faith.

14. Contingent truth is not first truth. But at least one truth of faith is a contingent truth. For it was contingent that Christ suffer, since it depended on His free will and that of those who killed Him. Nevertheless, we have faith in the passion of Christ. Therefore, first truth is not the proper object of faith.

15. Faith, properly speaking, is concerned only with propositions. But first truth is in certain articles of faith without the complexity of a proposition, as when we say: God, who suffered, or God, who died. Therefore, first truth is not there considered as the object of faith.

16. First truth has a double relation to faith: as that which bears witness, and as that with which faith is concerned. In so far as it bears witness, it cannot be called the object of faith, for under this aspect it is outside the essence of faith. Nor is it the object of faith in so far as it is that with which faith is concerned, for, thus, any proposition formed about first truth would be an object of faith. And this is evidently false. Therefore, first truth is not the proper object of faith.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Dionysius says that faith is "concerned with the simple and never changing truth. But only first truth is such. Therefore.

2. A theological virtue has the same thing for its end and its object. But the end of faith is first truth, the plain sight of which faith merits. Therefore, its object, too, is first truth.

3. Isidore says that an article [of the Creed] is the perception of divine truth. But faith is contained in the articles [of the Creed]. Therefore, divine truth is the object of faith.

4. As charity is related to the good, so faith is related to the true. But the essential object of charity is the highest good, because charity loves God and the neighbor because of God. Therefore, the object of faith is first truth.

### **REPLY**

The essential object of faith is first truth. This should be understood from the following. Only that habit has the character of virtue whose act is always good. Otherwise, a virtue would not be the perfection of a power. Accordingly, since the act of our understanding is good because it considers the true, it must be impossible for a habit existing in the understanding to be a virtue unless it is such that by it one infallibly speaks the truth. For this reason opinion is not an intellectual virtue, whereas scientific knowledge and understanding of principles are, as is said in the *Ethics*.

However, faith cannot thus stand as a virtue, deriving from the evidence of things, since it deals with things which do not appear. Consequently, it must derive this infallibility from its adherence to some testimony in which the truth is

infallibly found. But, just as every created being of itself is empty and liable to fail, unless it is supported by uncreated being, so all created truth is liable to fail except in so far as it is regulated by uncreated truth. Hence, to assent to the testimony of a man or an angel would lead infallibly to the truth only in so far as we considered the testimony of God speaking in them. Consequently, faith, which is classified as a virtue, must surpass the truth of man's own understanding and thus make it embrace that truth which is in the divine knowledge. In this way, through the simple and never-changing truth the believer is freed from the instability and multiplicity of error, as Dionysius says.

Now, the truth of the divine knowledge is so constituted that it belongs first and foremost to the uncreated thing itself, but to creatures somehow subsequently, in so far as by knowing itself it knows everything else. Hence, faith, which through assent unites man to divine knowledge, has God as its principal object, and anything else as a consequent addition.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. All those things included in the Creed which refer to creatures are matters of faith only in so far as something of first truth is connected with them. For the passion itself is not an object of faith except in so far as we believe that God suffered, nor is the resurrection an object of faith except in so far as we believe that it took place through divine power.
2. Although we must believe everything because of the divine testimony, the divine testimony, like the divine knowledge, first and foremost refers to itself, and subsequently to other things. As is said in John (8:18): "I am one that gives testimony of myself, and the Father that sent me giveth testimony of me." Thus, faith is principally about God, and about other things in consequence of this.
3. First truth, in so far as it appears in its proper form, is the object of the vision of heaven. But, in so far as it does not appear, it is the object of faith. So, although the object of both acts is the same thing in reality, it differs in intelligible aspect. The object thus formally different makes the species of the act different.
4. In some sense light is the object of sight and in another sense not. For, since light is seen by our sight only if through reflection or in some other way it is united to a body having a surface, it is not called the essential object of sight. This is, rather, color, which is always in a body having a surface. However, in so far as nothing can be seen except by reason of light, light itself is said to be the first visible thing, as the Philosopher says. Similarly, first truth is primarily and essentially the object of faith.
5. The thing known in so far as it exists in itself outside the knower is said to be the object of knowledge, although knowledge of such a thing takes place only

through that which arises from it in the knower. In this way, the color of a stone, which is the object of sight, is known only through its species in the eye. Accordingly, first truth, which is in itself simple, is the object of faith. But our understanding receives it in its own manner by means of the composition [of judgment]. Thus, our understanding, by giving assent as true to the composition which is made in judgment, tends toward first truth as toward its object. Thus, nothing prevents first truth from being the object of faith, although faith treats of propositions.

6. The resurrection of the body and other things of this sort also pertain to first truth in so far as they are caused by divine power.

7. Everything worthy of belief must belong primarily to first truth and, secondarily, to created things because God bears witness to them, as is evident from what has been said. Other things worthy of belief are not the object of the faith with which we are now dealing.

8. The Creator is not the object of faith under the aspect of Creator, but under the aspect of first truth. Consequently, it is not necessary for creatures to be an essential object of faith. For it does not follow, from the fact that the knowledge of master and slave, as such, is the same, that whoever knows something about the master knows something about the slave.

9. Although we are led to creatures by reason of first truth, through it we are led mainly to first truth itself, since it gives witness primarily about itself. So, in faith, first truth acts both as means and object.

10. In the neighbor, charity loves only God. Therefore, it does not follow from this that the object of charity is anything other than the highest good.

11. The representations through which faith looks at something are not the object of faith, but that through which faith tends toward its object.

12. Although faith deals with a proposition in so far as we are concerned, it nevertheless deals with a simple truth in so far as there is question of the object to which we are led through faith.

13. Although prophecy has for its subject matter created and temporal things, it has the uncreated reality for its end. For all the prophetic revelations, even those made about created things, are ordained to make us know God. Therefore, prophecy leads to faith as to its end. Nor is it necessary for faith and prophecy to have the same object or subject matter. And if at times faith and prophecy deal with the same thing, still they do not treat it under the same aspect. Thus, the ancients had prophecy and faith about the passion of Christ. However, the prophecy had reference to that which was temporal in it, and faith to that which was eternal in it.

14. Faith does not concern the passion except in so far as it is connected with eternal truth, as the passion is considered with reference to God. For, although the passion, considered in itself, is contingent, still, as it falls under the divine foreknowledge, and as faith and prophecy concern it, it has changeless truth.

15. The subject of a proposition acts as matter for the whole proposition. So, although in such propositions, when we say that God has suffered, only the subject denotes something uncreated, the whole proposition is said to have something uncreated as its subject matter. Thus, it does not deny that faith has first truth for its object.

16. First truth is called the object of faith only in so far as faith concerns it. Nevertheless, it is not necessary that every proposition made about God be something to be believed, but only that to which divine truth bears witness. Similarly, mobile body is the subject of the philosophy of nature, yet not every proposition that can be formed about mobile body is subject to scientific knowledge, but only those which are proved from the principles of the philosophy of nature. Moreover, in faith the witness of first truth acts as a principle does in scientific demonstrations.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE IX

**In the ninth article we ask:**

**Can faith deal with things which are known as scientific conclusions?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 24, 2, sol. 2; *Ad Hebr.* , c. 11, lect. 1; *S.T.* , I-II, 67, 3; II-II, 1, 5.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it can, for

1. Anything which can be proved by a necessary argument can be known as a scientific conclusion. But, according to Richard of St. Victor, everything which must be believed has not only a probable argument, but also a necessary argument. Therefore, we can have scientific knowledge about things believed.

2. The divinely infused light of grace is more powerful than the light of nature. But we do not only believe, but know and understand, those things which are shown to us through the natural light of reason. Therefore, we also know and do not only believe those things which are made known to us through the divinely infused light of faith.

3. The testimony of God is more certain and effective than that of a man, no matter how much he knows. But one who proceeds [to conclusions] on the basis

of the statement of someone who has scientific knowledge, himself achieves scientific knowledge, as is clear in the subalternate sciences, which borrow their principles from the subalternating sciences. Therefore, with much greater reason we have scientific knowledge of matters of faith, since they are based on divine testimony.

4. Whenever the understanding is forced of necessity to assent to something, it has scientific knowledge of those things to which it assents. For inference from what is necessary produces scientific knowledge. But one who believes necessarily assents to matters of faith, for St. James says (2:19): "The devils also believe and tremble." This cannot be due to their will, since their will cannot do anything praiseworthy. So, they must necessarily give assent to matters of faith. Therefore, there can be scientific knowledge about matters of faith.

5. Those things which are known naturally are objects of scientific knowledge or are known with greater certainty than such objects. But "the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in us," as Damascene says. Faith, however, is ordained to knowledge of God. Therefore, matters of faith can be objects of scientific knowledge.

6. Opinion is farther from scientific knowledge than faith is. But we can have scientific knowledge and opinion about the same thing, as happens when one knows one and the same conclusion through a demonstrative and a dialectical syllogism. Therefore, there can be scientific knowledge and faith about the same thing.

7. That Christ was conceived is an article of faith. But the Blessed Virgin knew this from experience. Therefore, the same thing can be known and believed.

8. That God is one is included among objects of faith. But philosophers give demonstrative proof of this. Therefore, it can be known scientifically. So, we can have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.

9. That God exists is an object of faith. However, we do not believe this because it is acceptable to God, for no one can think that something is pleasing to God unless he first thinks that there is a God to whom it is pleasing. Hence, the judgment by which one thinks that God exists precedes the judgment by which he thinks something is pleasing to God. Nor can the former cause the latter. But we are led to believe something which we do not know through that which we believe is pleasing to God. Therefore, that God exists is believed and known.

## **To the Contrary**

1. First truth is the principal subject matter or object of faith. But man cannot have scientific knowledge about first truth, that is, about God, as we see from Dionysius. Therefore, we cannot have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.



2. It is by reason that scientific knowledge is made perfect. But reason destroys faith, "for faith deserves no merit when human reason offers it proof. Therefore, faith and scientific knowledge do not engage the same object.

3. The first Epistle to the Corinthians (13:10) says: "But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be put away." The knowledge of faith is in part, that is, is imperfect; but the knowledge of science is perfect. Therefore, science destroys faith.

## REPLY

According to Augustine: "We believe those things which are not present to our senses, if the witness which is offered for them seems suitable. However, we see those things which are present either to the senses of the mind or of the body."

This difference is quite clear with reference to the things which are present to the senses of the body, for among these it is evident what is present to them and what is not. But it is more obscure when we say something is present to the senses of the mind. Yet those things are said to be present to the understanding which do not exceed its capacity, so that the gaze of understanding may be fixed on them. For a person gives assent to such things because of the witness of his own understanding and not because of someone else's testimony. Those things, however, which are beyond the power of our understanding are said to be absent from the senses of the mind. Hence, our understanding cannot be fixed on them. As a result, we cannot assent to them on our own witness, but on that of someone else. These things are properly called the objects of faith.

Consequently, the object of faith is that which is absent from our understanding. (We believe that which is absent, but we see that which is present, as Augustine says.) For "not present" we can say "the thing which does not appear," that is, the thing not seen, for, as Hebrews (11:1) says: "faith is... the evidence of things that appear not." Now, whenever the determinate principle of the proper object is lacking, the act also must necessarily cease. Hence, as soon as something begins to be present or to appear, it cannot be an object of an act of faith. Whatever things we know with scientific knowledge properly so called we know by reducing them to first principles which are naturally present to the understanding. In this way, all scientific knowledge terminates in the sight of a thing which is present. Hence, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.

We must note, however, that a thing can be the object of belief in two ways. In one it is such absolutely, that is, it exceeds the intellectual capacity of all men who exist in this life, for instance, that there is trinity and unity in God, and so on. Now, it is impossible for any man to have scientific knowledge of these. Rather, every believer assents to such doctrines because of the testimony of God

to whom these things are present and by whom they are known.

A thing is, however, an object of belief not absolutely, but in some respect, when it does not exceed the capacity of all men, but only of some men. In this class are those things which we can know about God by means of a demonstration, as that God exists, or is one, or has no body, and so forth. There is nothing to prevent those who have scientific proofs of these things from knowing them scientifically, and others who do not understand the proofs from believing them. But it is impossible for the same person to know and believe them.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. For everything which must be believed, if it is not self-evident, there is an argument which is not only probable but necessary, "yet our diligence may not uncover that argument," as Richard adds. So, for us, the arguments for matters of faith are unknown, although they are known to God and to the blessed who have vision and not faith about these things.
2. Although the divinely infused light is more powerful than natural light, in our present state we do not share it perfectly, but imperfectly. Therefore, because of this defective participation, through that infused light itself we are not brought to the vision of those things for the knowledge of which it was given us. But we will have it in heaven when we will share that light perfectly and in the light of God we will see light.
3. One who has a subalternate science does not perfectly possess the character of knowing unless his knowledge is united in some way with the knowledge of one who has the subalternating science. Nonetheless, the one who knows on the lower level is not said to have scientific knowledge about those things which he presupposes, but about the necessary conclusions which are drawn from the presupposed principles. In this sense, also, one who believes can be said to have scientific knowledge about those things which he concludes from the articles of faith.
4. It is not their wills which bring demons to assent to what they are said to believe. Rather, they are forced by the evidence of signs which convince them that what the faithful believe is true. However, these signs do not cause the appearance of what is believed so that the demons could on this account be said to see those things which are believed. Therefore, belief is predicated equivocally of men who believe and of the demons. And faith does not result in them from any infused light of grace as it does in the faithful.
5. God is an object of faith, not with reference to what is naturally known about God, but with reference to that which surpasses natural knowledge.
6. It does not seem possible for a person simultaneously to have scientific knowledge and opinion about the same thing, for opinion includes a fear that the

other part [of the contradiction] is true, and scientific knowledge excludes such fear. Similarly, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.

7. The Blessed Virgin could know that her Son was not conceived as a result of sexual intercourse. She could not, however, know what power caused that conception, but believed the angel who said: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee (Luke 1:35).

8. We do not say that the proposition, God is one, in so far as it is proved by demonstration, is an article of faith, but something presupposed before the articles. For the knowledge of faith presupposes natural knowledge, just as grace presupposes nature. But the unity of the divine essence such as is conceived by the faithful, that is to say, together with omnipotence, providence over all things, and the other attributes of this sort, which cannot be proved, makes up the article of faith.

9. Someone can begin to believe what he did not believe before but which he held with some hesitation. Thus, it is possible that, before believing in God, someone might think that God exists, and that it would be pleasing to God to have him believe that He exists. In this way a man can believe that God exists because such a belief pleases God, although this is not an article of faith, but preliminary to the article, since it can be proved by a demonstration.

## Q. 14: Faith

### ARTICLE X

**In the tenth article we ask:**

**Is it necessary for man to have faith?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 24, 3, sol. 1; *In Boet. De Trinit.* , 3, 1; *C.G.* , I, 5; *III*, 118, 15 2; *S.T.* , II-II, 2, 3; *Expos. symb.* ]

### Difficulties

It seems that it is not, for

1. As is said in Deuteronomy (32:4): "The works of God are perfect." But nothing is perfect unless it is provided with those things which it must have to attain its proper end. Therefore, sufficient means to attain its final end are given to each thing when God creates its nature. But matters of faith are beyond the knowledge which belongs to men by reason of the constitution of their nature. Therefore, to reach his end man does not need faith, through which these things are perceived or known.

2. It was said that by reason of the constitution of his nature man receives those things which are necessary to reach his natural end, such as the happiness of life of which the philosophers speak, but does not receive the things needed to reach the supernatural end, which is everlasting happiness.—On the contrary, man, because of his essential constitution, is made to be a sharer of eternal happiness. It was for this that God created a rational nature which could know Him, as we see in the *Sentences*. Therefore, the principles through which he can reach that end should be innate in man's very nature.

3. We have to have activity as well as knowledge to reach our end. But the habits of virtue given us to attain our supernatural end do not give us an ordination to works other than those toward which we are ordered by natural reason, but, rather, to a more perfect performance of those same works. For acquired and infused chastity seem to have the same act, namely, to control venereal pleasure. Therefore, to reach a supernatural end we do not need the infusion of a cognitive habit ordained to knowledge of something besides what we naturally know, but only to a more perfect knowledge of these same natural objects. Hence, it seems that to have faith in things which are not evident to reason would not be necessary for salvation.

4. A power has no need of a habit for that to which it has a natural determination, as is evident in irrational powers, as the nutritive and the generative, which carry on their activity without the mediation of a habit. Now, the human understanding is naturally directed to knowledge of God. Therefore, it does not need a habit to lead it to this knowledge.

5. That which can reach its final end by itself is more perfect than that which cannot do so. But brute animals can attain their ends by means of natural principles. Therefore, since man is more perfect than they, it seems that natural knowledge should be enough for him to reach his end. Thus, he does not need faith.

6. What is considered to be a vice does not seem necessary for salvation. But credulity is considered to be a vice. Thus, in Sirach (19:4) we read: "He that is hasty to give credit is light of heart." Therefore, belief is not necessary for salvation.

7. Since God must be believed above all else, our belief should be greater in one through whom it is clearer that God is speaking. But it is clearer that God has spoken through the natural instinct of reason than through any prophet or apostle, since by this it is most certain that God is the author of all nature. Therefore, we should hold more firmly the things which reason proposes than those which the prophets and apostles preach, and which are the objects of faith. Therefore, since these latter sometimes seem to conflict with what natural reason dictates, as when they say that God is three and one, or that a virgin conceived,

and so on, it does not seem reasonable to put faith in such things.

8. That which is rendered useless by the arrival of another thing does not seem to be needed for that thing. For it would not become useless unless there were some opposition between it and the other. Now, a thing does not incline toward its opposite; rather, it withdraws from it. But faith becomes useless when glory arrives. Therefore, faith is not necessary to obtain glory.

9. Nothing in order to reach its end needs that which destroys it. But faith destroys reason, for, as Gregory says: "Faith deserves no merit when human reason offers it proof." Therefore, reason does not need faith to reach its end.

10. A heretic does not have the habit of faith. But, sometimes, a heretic believes in certain truths which are beyond the reach of reason. Thus, he may believe that the Son of God was made flesh, although he does not believe that He suffered. Therefore, the habit of faith is not needed to know things which are above reason.

11. When something is proved by means of many middle terms, the whole proof is ineffective if one of the middle terms is weak. This is evident in syllogistic deductions, where the existence of one false or doubtful proposition makes the whole proof ineffectual. But the truths of faith reach us through many intermediaries. For God told them to the apostles or prophets, who related them to their followers. These men in turn told others, and in this way they finally reached us through various intermediaries. Now, it is not certain that there was infallible truth in all of these intermediaries. For, since they were men, they could deceive and be deceived. Therefore, we can have no certainty about matters of faith, and so it seems foolish to assent to them.

12. That in a work which lessens the merit for eternal life does not seem necessary to obtain eternal life. But, since difficulty makes for merit, habit, which brings facility, lessens merit. Therefore, the habit of faith is not necessary for salvation.

13. The powers of reason are more noble than the powers of physical nature. But physical powers do not need habits for their acts. Therefore, understanding does not need the habit of faith for its acts.

### **To the Contrary**

1. In Hebrews (11:6) we read: "But without faith it is impossible to please God."

2. That without which man is damned is necessary for salvation. But faith is so needed, as appears in Mark (16:16): "He that believeth not shall be condemned." Therefore, faith is necessary for salvation.

3. A higher life needs a higher knowledge. But the life of grace is higher than the life of nature. Therefore, it needs some supernatural knowledge, which is the knowledge of faith.

## REPLY

To obtain eternal life it is necessary to have faith in those things which are beyond the grasp of reason. We can understand this from what follows. For a thing is brought from imperfection to perfection only through the activity of something perfect. Nor does the imperfect thing at once in the very beginning fully receive the action of that which is perfect; at first it receives it imperfectly and, later, more perfectly. And it continues in this way until it reaches perfection. This is evident in all physical things, which acquire a perfection gradually.

We see the same thing in human works, especially in the learning process. For in the beginning a man has incomplete knowledge, and, if he is to reach the perfection of scientific knowledge, needs an instructor to bring him to that perfection. Nor could the teacher do this unless he himself had full knowledge of the science, that is unless he understood the intelligible principles of the things which form the subject matter of the science. At the outset of his teaching, however, he does not explain to his pupil the intelligible principles of the things to be known which he intends to teach, because then, at the very beginning, the pupil would [have to] know the science perfectly. Instead, the teacher proposes some things, the principles of which the pupil does not understand when first taught, but will know later when he has made some progress in the science. For this reason it is said that the learner must believe. And he could not acquire mastery of the science in any other way unless he accepted without proof those things which he is taught at first and the arguments for which he cannot then understand.

The final perfection toward which man is ordained consists in the perfect knowledge of God, which, indeed, man can reach only if God, who knows Himself perfectly, undertakes to teach him. Early in his life, however, man is not capable of receiving perfect knowledge. So, he has to accept certain things on faith and by means of these he is led on till he arrives at perfect knowledge.

Now, some of these things are such that they can never be perfectly known in this life, for they wholly transcend the power of human reason. These we must believe as long as we are in this life. However, we shall see them perfectly in heaven.

There are others which we can know perfectly in this life, as, for instance, the things which we can prove conclusively about God. Still, in the beginning, we have to believe these for five reasons, which Rabbi Moses gives. The first reason is the depth and subtlety of these objects of knowledge which are farthest removed from the senses. Hence, at the very beginning, man is not qualified to know them perfectly. The second reason is the weakness of human understanding when it begins to operate. The third is the number of things needed for a conclusive proof of these. And a man can learn them all only after a

long time. The fourth reason is the disinclination for scientific investigation which some men have because they lack the proper temperament. The fifth is the need of engaging in other occupations to provide the necessities of life.

From all this it is clear that, if it were necessary to use a strict demonstration as the only way to reach a knowledge of the things which we must know about God, very few could ever construct such a demonstration and even these could do it only after a long time. From this it is evident that the provision of the way of faith, which gives all easy access to salvation at any time, is beneficial to man.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. In the constitution of man's nature full provision is made for him, in so far as, to attain the end which is within the power of nature, he is given principles which are capable of causing that end. However, for the end which is beyond his natural ability man is given principles which are not a cause of the end, but which give him a capacity for those things which do bring him to his end. For this reason Augustine says: "The capacity to have faith and charity is due to man's nature, but their actual possession is due to the grace which the faithful receive."

2. In the very beginning of creation, human nature was ordained to beatitude, not as to an end proper to man by reason of his nature, but given him solely by divine liberality. Therefore, there is no need for the principles of nature to have sufficient power to achieve that end without the aid of special gifts with which God in His generosity supplements them.

3. One who is some distance from an end can know the end and desire it; however, he cannot engage in activity which directly concerns the end, but only in that which is connected with the means to the end. Therefore, if we are to reach our supernatural end, we need faith in this life to know the end, for natural knowledge does not go that far. But our natural powers do extend to the means to the end, although not precisely as ordained to that end. Therefore, we do not need infused habits for any other activity than that which natural reason dictates, but just for a more perfect performance of the same activity. However, this is not the case with knowledge for the reason given above.

4. Our understanding does not have a natural determination to matters of faith in the sense that it should know them naturally, but it does in some sense have a natural ordination to a knowledge of them in so far as nature is said to have an ordination to grace by reason of a divine decree. Consequently, this does not remove the need we have for the habit of faith.

5. Man is more perfect than the other animals. However, nature does not determine what is necessary for him to reach his end as it does for other animals, and this for two reasons. First, since man is ordained to a higher end, therefore, even though he needs more helps to reach that end and natural principles are

not enough for him, he is nonetheless more perfect. Second, the very fact that he can have many ways to reach his end is a perfection in man. For this reason he cannot be limited to one natural way as other animals are. But, instead of all the means which nature provides for other animals, man is given reason, through which he can take care of the necessities of this life and make himself fit to receive the divine helps for the future life.

6. Credulity is called a vice because it means an excess of belief, just as to be a drinker means an excess in drinking. However, one who believes God does not believe immoderately, because we cannot put too much faith in Him. So, the conclusion does not follow.

7. The apostles and prophets under divine inspiration have never said anything contrary to the dictates of natural reason. Nevertheless, they have said things which are beyond the comprehension of reason, and so to this extent seem to contradict reason, although they do not really oppose it. In a similar way, to an unlettered person it seems contrary to reason to say that the sun is larger than the earth and the diagonal is incommensurable with the side. However, these appear reasonable to those who are educated.

8. It is because of its imperfection that faith is rendered useless when glory arrives. And on this account it has a certain opposition to the perfection of glory. But, as far as the knowledge of faith is concerned, faith is necessary for salvation. For there is nothing unreasonable in the fact that something imperfect, which is directed to the perfection of the end, ceases to exist when the end is reached, as motion ceases to be when rest, which is its end, is reached.

9. Faith does not destroy reason, but goes beyond it and perfects it, as has been said above.

10. A heretic does not have the habit of faith even if it is only one article of faith which he refuses to believe. For infused habits are lost through one contrary act. And the habit of faith has this power, that through it the understanding of the believer is withheld from giving assent to things contrary to faith, just as chastity restrains us from acts opposed to chastity. Now, when a heretic believes something which is beyond the scope of natural knowledge, he does this not by reason of an infused habit, for such a habit would direct him equally to all objects of belief, but by reason of some human judgment, as happens also with pagans who believe certain things surpassing nature about God.

11. All the intermediaries through which faith comes to us are above suspicion. We believe the prophets and apostles because the Lord has been their witness by performing miracles, as Mark (16:20) says: "...and confirming the word with signs that followed." And we believe the successors of the apostles and prophets only in so far as they tell us those things which the apostles and prophets have left in their writings.



12. There are two kinds of difficulty, one arising from the nature of the work itself, and such difficulty has value for merit; the other arising from the disorder or sluggishness of the will. This latter rather lessens merit, and habit destroys it but not the former.

13. Natural powers have a determination to one object, and so do not need a habit to give them this determination as do the rational powers, which are related equally to things opposed to each other.

## **Q. 14: Faith**

### **ARTICLE XI**

**In the eleventh article we ask:  
Is it necessary to believe explicitly?**

[Parallel readings: *I Sent.* , 33, 5; *III Sent.*, 25, 2, 1, sol. 1, 2; *S.T.* , II-II, 2, 5.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that it is not, for

1. We should not posit any proposition from which an untenable conclusion follows. But, if we claim that explicit belief is necessary for salvation, an untenable conclusion follows. For it is possible for someone to be brought up in the forest or among wolves, and such a one cannot have explicit knowledge of any matter of faith. Thus, there will be a man who will inevitably be damned. But this is untenable. Hence, explicit belief in something does not seem necessary.
2. We have no obligation to that which is not within our power. But to believe something explicitly we have to hear it from within or without, for "faith cometh by hearing," as is said in Romans (10:17). However, hearing is within the power of a person only if there is someone to speak. Thus, to believe something explicitly is not necessary for salvation.
3. Very subtle matters should not be taught to the uneducated. But there is nothing more subtle or more exalted than things which are beyond reason, such as the articles of faith. Therefore, such things should not be taught to the people. Therefore, at least not everybody is required to believe something explicitly.
4. Man is not bound to know that which even the angels do not know. But before the Incarnation the angels did not know the mystery of the Incarnation, as Jerome seems to say. Therefore, the men of those times, at least, were not bound to know or believe something explicitly about the Redeemer.
5. Many Gentiles were saved before the coming of Christ, as Dionysius says.

However, they could know nothing explicitly about the Redeemer, since the prophets had not come to them. Therefore, explicit belief in the articles about the Redeemer does not seem necessary for salvation.

6. One of the articles of faith about the Redeemer concerns the descent into hell [that is, limbo]. But, according to Gregory, John doubted about this article when he asked: "Art thou he that art to come?" (Mat 11:3). Therefore, since he is one of the greater men, for no one is greater than he, as is said in the same passage, it seems that even the greater men are not bound to know explicitly the articles about the Redeemer.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Explicit belief in everything seems necessary for salvation, for everything pertains to faith in the same way. So, everything has to be believed explicitly for the same reason that one truth has to be believed explicitly.

2. Everyone is bound to avoid all errors which are against the faith. This can be done only by having explicit knowledge of all the articles which the errors oppose. Therefore, we have to have explicit belief in all the articles.

3. As commands direct our action, so articles direct our belief. But everyone is bound to know all the commandments of the Decalogue, for a man is not excused if he commits some sin through ignorance of the commandments. Therefore, everyone is also bound to believe all the articles explicitly.

4. just as God is the object of faith, so, also, He is the object of charity. But we should not love anything implicitly in God. Therefore, neither should we believe anything implicitly about Him.

5. A heretic, however uneducated, is questioned about all the articles of faith. This would not be done if he were not bound to believe all of them explicitly. This brings us to the same conclusion as before.

6. The habit of faith is specifically the same in all believers. If, then, some of the faithful must believe everything explicitly, all are bound to the same thing.

7. Formless faith is not enough for salvation. But to believe implicitly is to have formless faith, for superiors on whose faith depends the faith of uneducated people, who believe implicitly, often have formless faith. Therefore, to believe implicitly is not enough for salvation.

### **REPLY**

Properly speaking, that is called implicit in which many things are contained as in one, and that is called explicit in which each of the things is considered in itself. These appellations are transferred from bodily to spiritual things. When a number of things are contained virtually in one thing, we say they are there implicitly, as,

for instance, conclusions in principles. A thing is contained explicitly in another if it actually exists in it. Consequently, one who knows some general principles has implicit knowledge of all the particular conclusion. One, however, who actually considers the conclusions is said to know them explicitly. Hence, we are also said explicitly to believe certain things when we affirm those things about which we are actually thinking. We believe these same things implicitly when we affirm certain other things in which they are contained as in general principles. Thus, one who believes that the faith of the Church is true, implicitly in this believes the individual points which are included in the faith of the Church.

We must note, accordingly, that there are some matters of faith which everyone is bound to believe explicitly in every age. Other matters of faith must be believed explicitly in every age but not by everyone. Still other matters everyone must believe explicitly, but not in every age. And, finally, there are things that need not be believed explicitly by everyone nor in every age.

That all the faithful in every age must believe something explicitly is evident from the fact that there is a parallel between the reception of faith with reference to our ultimate perfection and a pupil's reception of those things which his master first teaches him, and through which he is guided to prior principles. However, he could not be so guided unless he actually considered something. Hence, the pupil must receive something for actual consideration; likewise, the faithful must explicitly believe something. And these are the two things which the Apostle tells us must be believed explicitly: "For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is the rewarder to them that love Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, everyone in every age is bound explicitly to believe that God exists and exercises providence over human affairs.

However, it is not possible for anyone in this life to know explicitly the whole of God's knowledge, in which our beatitude consists. Yet it is possible for someone in this life to know all those things which are proposed to the human race in its present state as first principles with which to direct itself to its final end. Such a person is said to have faith which is completely explicit. But not all believers have this completeness; hence, there are levels of belief in the Church, so that some are placed over others to teach them in matters of faith. Consequently, not all are required explicitly to believe all matters of faith, but only those are so bound who are appointed teachers in matters of faith, such as superiors and those who have pastoral duties.

And even these are not bound to believe everything explicitly in every age. For there is a gradual progress in faith for the whole human race just as there is for individual men. This is why Gregory says<sup>4</sup> that down the ages there has been a growing development of divine knowledge.

Now, the fullness of time, which is the prime of life of the human race, is in the

age of grace. So, in this age, the leaders are bound to believe all matters of faith explicitly. But, in earlier ages, the leaders were not bound to believe everything explicitly. However, more had to be believed explicitly after the age of the law and the prophets than before that time.

Accordingly, before sin came into the world, it was not necessary to believe explicitly the matters concerning the Redeemer, since there was then no need of the Redeemer. Nevertheless, this was implicit in their belief in divine providence, in so far as they believed that God would provide everything necessary for the salvation of those who love Him. Before and after the fall, the leaders in every age had to have explicit faith in the Trinity. Between the fall and the age of grace, however, the ordinary people did not have to have such explicit belief. Perhaps before the fall there was not such a distinction of persons that some had to be taught the faith by others. Likewise, between the fall and the age of grace, the leading men had to have explicit faith in the Redeemer, and the ordinary people only implicit faith. This was contained either in their belief in the faith of the patriarchs and prophets or in their belief in divine providence.

However, in the time of grace, everybody, the leaders and the ordinary people, have to have explicit faith in the Trinity and in the Redeemer. However, only the leaders, and not the ordinary people, are bound to believe explicitly all the matters of faith concerning the Trinity and the Redeemer. The ordinary people must, however, believe explicitly the general articles, such as that God is triune, that the Son of God was made flesh, died, and rose from the dead, and other like matters which the Church commemorates in her feasts.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Granted that everyone is bound to believe something explicitly, no untenable conclusion follows even if someone is brought up in the forest or among wild beasts. For it pertains to divine providence to furnish everyone with what is necessary for salvation, provided that on his part there is no hindrance. Thus, if someone so brought up followed the direction of natural reason in seeking good and avoiding evil, we must most certainly hold that God would either reveal to him through internal inspiration what had to be believed, or would send some preacher of the faith to him as he sent Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10:20)..
2. Although it is not within our power to know matters of faith by ourselves alone, still, if we do what we can, that is, follow the guidance of natural reason, God will not withhold from us that which we need.
3. Matters of faith are not presented to the uneducated for minute explanation, but in a general way, for in this way they have to believe them explicitly as has been said.
4. According to Dionysius and Augustine, the angels knew the mystery of the

Incarnation of Christ before men did, since it was through the angels that the prophets were told of the Incarnation. But Jerome says that the angels learned this mystery through the Church, in so far as the mystery of the salvation of the Gentiles was fulfilled through the preaching of the Apostles. In this way, their knowledge was more complete with reference to certain circumstances, since they now saw as present what they had foreseen as future.

5. The Gentiles were not established as teachers of divine faith. Hence, no matter how well versed they were in secular wisdom, they should be counted as ordinary people. Therefore, it was enough for them to have implicit faith in the Redeemer, either as part of their belief in the faith of the law and the prophets, or as part of their belief in divine providence itself. Nevertheless, it is likely that the mystery of our redemption was revealed to many Gentiles before Christ's coming, as is clear from the Sibylline prophecies.

6. Although John the Baptist should be counted among the greater persons of his time because God made him a herald of truth, it was not necessary for him to believe explicitly all the matters of revelation which are explicitly believed after Christ's passion and resurrection in the age of grace. For, in his time, the knowledge of the truth had not reached the fullness which it received especially with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Some, however, say that in this passage John did not ask personally for himself, but for his disciples who doubted about Christ. Some also say that this was the question not of one who doubted but of one who had a holy admiration for the humility of Christ, that He would deign to descend into hell.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

1. All things which pertain to faith do not have the same rational connection with the direction of man to his final end, for some are more obscure than others and some are more necessary to it than others. Therefore, some articles rather than others must be believed explicitly.

2. One who does not believe all the articles explicitly can still avoid all errors because the habit of faith keeps him from giving assent to things against the articles which he knows only implicitly. Thus, for instance, if something unusual is proposed, he is suspicious of it and delays assent until he gets instruction from him whose duty it is to decide about doubtful matters of faith.

3. The commandments of the Decalogue deal with things that are dictated by natural reason. Therefore, everyone is required to know them explicitly. A similar argument cannot be used for the articles of faith, which are above reason.

4. Love is distinguished into implicit and explicit only in so far as it follows faith. For love terminates at some individual thing existing outside the soul, whereas knowledge terminates at that which is within the perception of the soul, which

can perceive something in general or in particular. Therefore, faith and charity do not work in the same way.

5. An uneducated person who is accused of heresy is not examined on all the articles of faith because he must believe them all explicitly, but because he must not obstinately maintain the opposite of any of the articles.

6. That some of the faithful must believe<sup>10</sup> explicitly what others have to believe only implicitly does not come from a difference in the habit of faith, but from different duties. For one who is made a teacher of the faith should know explicitly those things which he must or ought to teach. And the higher his position is, the more perfect a knowledge of matters of faith he should have.

7. Ordinary people do not have implicit faith in the faith of some particular men, but in the faith of the Church, which cannot be formless. Furthermore, one is said to have implicit faith in the faith of another, because of an agreement in belief, and not because they have the same mode of informed or formless faith.

## **Q. 14: Faith**

### **ARTICLE XII**

**In the twelfth article we ask:**

**Is there one faith for moderns and ancients?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 25, 2, 2, sol. 1; *S.T.* , II-II, 1, 7; 2, 7; 174, 6.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that there is not, for

1. Universal knowledge differs from particular knowledge. But the ancients knew the matters of faith as it were in general, believing them implicitly, whereas moderns believe them explicitly and in particular. Therefore, the faith of the ancients and moderns is not the same.

2. Faith concerns a proposition. But the propositions which we believe are not the same as the ones they believed, as, for instance, Christ will be born, and Christ has been born. Therefore, our faith is not the same as that of the ancients.

3. In matters of faith a definite time is a necessary element of belief. Thus, a man would be called an unbeliever if he believed that Christ had not yet come, but would come. But there is temporal variation in our faith and that of the ancients, for we believe about the past what they believed about the future. Hence, our faith and that of the ancients is not the same.

#### **To the Contrary**

1. In Ephesians (4:5) we read: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

## REPLY

We must firmly hold that there is one faith for ancients and moderns; otherwise, there would not be one Church. To support this position some have said that the proposition about the past which we believe and the one about the future which the ancients believed is the same proposition. But it does not seem right that the proposition should remain the same when its essential parts are changed. For we see that propositions are changed by reason of changes in the subject and verb.

For this reason, others have said that the propositions which we believe and which they believed are different, but that faith does not concern propositions but things. The thing, however, is the same, although the propositions are different. For they say that it belongs intrinsically to faith to believe in the resurrection of Christ, but only accidentally to faith to believe that it is or was. But this is obviously false, for, since belief is called assent, it can only be about a proposition, in which truth or falsity is found. Thus, when I say: "I believe in the resurrection," I must understand some union [of subject and predicate]. And I must do this with reference to some time which the soul always adds in affirmative and negative propositions, as is said in *The Soul*. Accordingly, the sense of "I believe in the resurrection" is this: "I believe that the resurrection is, was, or will be."

Therefore, we must say that the object of faith can be considered in two ways. First, we have the object in itself as it exists outside the soul. And it is properly in this sense that it has the character of object and is the reason why habits are one or many. Second, we have the object as it exists in the knower as participated by him. Accordingly, we have to say that, if we take as the object of faith the thing believed as it exists outside the soul, it is in this way that each thing is related to us and to the ancients. And faith gets its unity from the oneness of the object. However, if we consider faith as it is in our perception of it, it is multiplied according to different propositions. But faith is not differentiated by this diversity. From this it is evident that faith is one in every way.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. To know in general and in particular differentiates knowledge only with reference to the manner of knowing, not with reference to the thing known, from which the habit has its unity.
2. The answer to the second difficulty is clear from what has been said.
3. Time does not change because of something in the thing, but because of relation to us or the ancients. For there is one time in which Christ suffered. Under different aspects it is called past or future for some people in comparison

with things which precede or follow.



## Question Sixteen: Synderesis

1. [Is synderesis a power or a habit?](#)
  2. [Can synderesis err \(\*peccare\* \)?](#)
  3. [Are there some in whom synderesis is extinguished?](#)
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### ARTICLE I

**The question treats of synderesis  
and in the first place we ask:  
Is synderesis a power or a habit?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 24, 2, 3; *S.T.* , I, 79, 12.]

#### Difficulties

It seems to be a power, for

1. Parts resulting from the same division belong to the same genus. But, as Jerome says, synderesis is differentiated from reason, the concupiscent, and the irascible. Therefore, since the irascible, the concupiscent, and reason are powers, synderesis will also be a power.
2. It was said that synderesis does not denote a power alone, but an habituated power.—On the contrary, a subject with an accident is not divided from a subject alone. For a division of animals into man and white man would be improper. Therefore, since a habit is related to a power as an accident to its subject, it does not seem that that which denotes a power alone, as reason, the irascible, and the concupiscent, can be fittingly divided from that which denotes an habituated power.
3. The same power may have different habits. Therefore, if one power is distinguished from another by reason of a habit, the division in which the parts of the soul are distinguished from each other ought to have as many members as there are habits of the powers.
- 4 One and the same thing cannot be regulator and that which is regulated. But a power is regulated by its habit. Therefore, a power and a habit cannot so blend into one thing that one name will at the same time denote the power and the habit.
5. Nothing is inscribed in a habit, but only in a power. But the general principles of law are said to be inscribed in synderesis. Therefore, it denotes a power without qualification.

6. One thing cannot arise from two things unless one of the two is changed. But the natural habit which the name synderesis is said to represent is not changed, since what is natural must be permanent. Neither are the faculties of the soul changed. Therefore, it seems that one thing cannot result from a habit and a faculty so that both can be given the one name.

7. Synderesis is opposed to sensuality, for, as sensuality always inclines to evil, so synderesis always inclines to good. But sensuality is simply a faculty without a habit. Therefore synderesis denotes simply a faculty.

8. As is said in the *Metaphysics*, the nature which the name signifies is the definition. Therefore, that which is not one in such a way that it can be defined, cannot be signified by one name. Rather, it is a combination made up of a subject and an accident. Thus, when I say "white man," it cannot be defined, as is proved in the *Metaphysics*. The same is true of the combination of a power and a habit. Consequently, a power together with a habit cannot be denoted by one name.

9. Higher reason is the name of a power alone. But synderesis seems to be the same thing as higher reason. For, as Augustine says, in the seat of natural judgment, which we call synderesis, "there are certain rules and lights of the virtues, and things true and things unchangeable." However, it belongs to higher reason, according to Augustine, to grasp unchangeable natures. Therefore, synderesis is simply a power.

10. According to the Philosopher, everything that is in the soul is either a power, a habit, or a passion. Therefore, either the division of the Philosopher is inadequate or there is nothing in the soul which is at once a power and a habit.

11. Opposites cannot exist in the same thing. But we have an innate tendency (*fomes*) which always inclines to evil. Therefore, there cannot be in us a habit which always inclines to good. Thus, synderesis, which always inclines to good, is not a habit, nor an habituated power, but simply a power.

12. A power and a habit suffice for activity. Therefore, if synderesis is a power with an innate habit, since synderesis inclines to good, man will be capable of performing good actions by reason of purely natural gifts. But this seems to be the heresy of Pelagius.

13 If synderesis is an habituated power, it will not be a passive power but an active one, since it will have some activity. Moreover, just as a passive power is rooted in matter, so an active power is rooted in a form. But in the human soul there is a twofold form: one through which it corresponds to the angels, in so far as it is a spirit, and this is the higher form; and another, the lower form, through which it gives life to the body, in so far as it is a soul. Therefore, synderesis must

be based on the higher or the lower form. If on the higher, it is higher reason; if on the lower, it is lower reason. But both higher and lower reason designate simply a power. Therefore, synderesis is simply a power.

14. If synderesis denotes an habituated power, the habit must be innate. For, if it were an acquired or an infused habit, it would be possible to lose synderesis. But synderesis does not denote an innate habit. Therefore, it signifies simply a power. We prove the minor in this way. Every habit which presupposes an act [prior] in time is not an innate habit. But synderesis presupposes an act [prior] in time, for it belongs to synderesis to speak out against evil and stir on to good. And this could not take place unless good and evil are actually known beforehand. Therefore, synderesis requires an act [prior] in time.

15. The function of synderesis seems to be to make judgments. Hence it is called the natural seat of judgment. But free choice takes its name from judging. Therefore, free choice is the same as synderesis. But free choice is simply a power. Therefore, so is synderesis.

16. If synderesis is an habituated power, a kind of composite of the two, it will not be such by logical composition, by which a species is composed of genus and difference, for a power is not related to a habit as genus to difference. For, thus, any habit added to a power would constitute a distinct power. Therefore, it is natural composition. But in natural composition the compound is different from the elements that make it up, as is proved in the *Metaphysics*. Therefore, synderesis is neither a power nor a habit, but something else. But this cannot be. Therefore, it remains that it is simply a power.

## To the Contrary

1. If synderesis is a power, it must be a power of reason. But the powers of reason are directed to opposites. Therefore, synderesis will be directed to opposites, which is clearly false, because it always urges to good and never to evil.

2. If synderesis is a power, it is either the same as reason, or it is different from it. But it is not the same, because it is distinguished from reason in the comment of Jerome, as noted above. And we cannot say that it is different from reason, for a special power requires a special activity. And there is no act ascribed to synderesis which cannot be performed by reason. For reason itself urges to good and speaks out against evil. Therefore, synderesis is in no way a power.

3. The tendency to evil (*fomes* ) always inclines to evil, and synderesis always to good. Therefore, these two are directly opposed. But the tendency to evil is a habit, or acts like habit, for concupiscence, which, according to Augustine, is habitual in children and actual in adults, is called the tendency to

evil. Therefore, synderesis, also, is a habit.

4. If synderesis is a power, it is either cognitive or tends to action. But it is clear that it is not simply cognitive from the fact that its act is to incline us to good and warn us against evil. Therefore, if it is a power, it will tend to action. But this is obviously false, for the powers which tend to action are adequately divided into the irascible, the concupiscent, and the rational. And synderesis is distinguished from these, as has been said. Therefore, synderesis is in no way a power.

5. just as in the operative part of the soul synderesis never errs, so in the speculative part understanding of principles never errs. But understanding of principles is a habit, as is clear from the Philosopher. Therefore, synderesis is a habit.

## REPLY

There are various opinions on this question. For some say that synderesis designates simply a power, different from, and higher than, reason. Others say that it is, indeed, simply a power which is really identical with reason, but is considered as different from it. For reason is considered as reason, that is, in so far as it reasons and compares, and as such is called the reasoning power; it is also considered as a nature, that is, in so far as one knows something naturally, and thus it is called synderesis. Still others say that synderesis denotes the power of reason with a natural habit. We can see which of these is more true from what follows.

As Dionysius says, divine wisdom "joins the ends of nobler things with the beginnings of lesser things." For natures which are ordained to one another are related to each other as contiguous bodies, the upper limit of the lower body being in contact with the lower limit of the higher one. Hence, at its highest point a lower nature attains to something which is proper to the higher nature and shares in it imperfectly.

Now, the nature of the human soul is lower than the angelic nature, if we consider the natural manner in which each knows. For the natural and proper manner of knowing for an angelic nature is to know truth without investigation or movement of reason. But it is proper to human nature to reach the knowledge of truth by investigating and moving from one thing to another.

Hence, the human soul, according to that which is highest in it, attains to that which is proper to angelic nature, so that it knows some things at once and without investigation, although it is lower than angels in this, that it can know the truth in these things only by receiving something from sense.

However, there is a double knowledge in the angelic nature: one, speculative, by which angels see the truth of things simply and independently; and the other, practical. This second type of knowledge is posited both by the philosophers, who

hold that the angels are the movers of the heavens and that all natural forms pre-exist in their foreknowledge, and by the theologians, who hold that the angels serve God in spiritual duties, according to which the orders of angels are distinguished.

Hence it is that human nature, in so far as it comes in contact with the angelic nature, must both in speculative and practical matters know truth without investigation. And this knowledge must be the principle of all the knowledge which follows, whether speculative or practical, since principles must be more stable and certain. Therefore, this knowledge must be in man naturally, since it is a kind of seed plot containing in germ all the knowledge which follows, and since there pre-exist in all natures certain natural seeds of the activities and effects which follow. Furthermore, this knowledge must be habitual so that it will be ready for use when needed.

Thus, just as there is a natural habit of the human soul through which it knows principles of the speculative sciences, which we call understanding of principles, so, too, there is in the soul a natural habit of first principles of action, which are the universal principles of the natural law. This habit pertains to *synderesis*. This habit exists in no other power than reason, unless, perhaps, we make understanding a power distinct from reason. But we have shown the opposite above.

It remains, therefore, that the name *synderesis* designates a natural habit simply, one similar to the habit of principles, or it means some power of reason with such a habit. And whatever it is makes little difference, for it raises a doubt only about the meaning of the name. However, if the power of reason itself, in so far as it knows naturally, is called *synderesis*, it cannot be so considered apart from every habit, for natural knowledge belongs to reason by reason of a natural habit, as is clear of the understanding of principles.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Things can be parts of the same division in so far as both share in something common, whatever that common thing be, whether genus or accident. Accordingly, in the fourfold division in which *synderesis* is distinguished from the three powers, the members of the division are not distinguished from each other because all are powers, but because all are principles of action. Therefore, it does not follow that *synderesis* is a power, but that it is a principle of action.

2. Whenever something special, over and above that which belongs to a subject by its nature, is added to it by an accident, nothing prevents the accident from being distinguished from the subject, or the subject with the accident from being distinguished from the subject taken simply, as if I were to distinguish a colored surface from surface taken simply. For, in so far as surface is taken simply, it is something mathematical, but, if it is considered as colored, it is classified as part

of physical reality. So, reason, also, designates knowledge on the human level, but knowledge through a natural habit is on a generically different level, as is clear from what has been said. Consequently, there is nothing to prevent the habit itself from being distinguished from the power in the division in which motive principles are distinguished, nor to prevent the power endowed with that habit from being distinguished from the power taken simply.

3. The other habits which inhere in the power of reason cause movement in the same way, according to the manner which is proper to reason as reason. Therefore, those habits cannot be distinguished from reason as is the natural habit from which synderesis takes its name.

4 We do not say that synderesis means a power and a habit, as though the power and the habit were one thing, but because the power together with the habit which it underlies is designated by one name.

5. That something is inscribed in another is understood in two ways. In one way, as in a subject, and in this sense something can be inscribed in a soul only with reference to a power. In another way, as in a container, and in this sense there is no reason why something cannot be inscribed even in a habit. It is in this sense that we say the single elements pertinent to geometry are inscribed in geometry itself.

6. This difficulty proceeds correctly when one thing results from two because of a mixture. But one thing does not thus result from a habit and a power which is like the union of an accident and its subject.

7. Sensuality always inclines to evil by reason of the corruption of the tendency to evil, and this corruption is in it after the manner of a habit. It is thus, too, that synderesis, by reason of a natural habit, always inclines to good.

8. White man cannot be defined with a strict definition, such as the definition of substances, which denotes something that is essentially one, but it can be defined by a definition in a loose sense, in so far as something that is loosely one results from an accident and its subject. This kind of unity is enough to give it one name. Hence, the Philosopher says" that a subject and its accident can be indicated by one name.

9. Synderesis does not denote higher or lower reason, but something that refers commonly to both. For in the very habit of the universal principles of law there are contained certain things which pertain to the eternal norms of conduct, such as, that God must be obeyed; and there are some that pertain to lower norms, such as, that we must live according to reason. However, synderesis is said to refer to these unchangeable things in one way, and higher reason in another. For something is called unchangeable because of an immutability of its nature, and it is thus that divine things are unchangeable. Higher reason is said to deal with

unchangeable things in this way. A thing is also said to be unchangeable because of the necessity of a truth, although the truth may concern things which according to their nature can change. Thus the truth: every whole is greater than its part, is unchangeably true even in changeable things. Synderesis is said to refer to unchangeable things in this way.

10. Although everything, in the soul is only habit, or only power, or only passion, not everything which is given a name in the soul is one of these alone. For things which are distinct in reality can be joined and given one name by our understanding.

11. The innate habit which inclines to evil belongs to the lower part of the soul, by which it is joined to the body. But the habit which naturally inclines to good belongs to the higher part of the soul. Therefore, these two opposite habits do not belong to the same thing in the same way.

12. A habit together with a power is enough for the act of that habit. But the act of the natural habit called synderesis is to warn against evil and to incline to good. Therefore, men are naturally capable of this act. However, it does not follow from this that a man with purely natural gifts can perform a meritorious act. To impute this to natural capability alone is the Pelagian impiety.

13. In so far as synderesis means a power, it seems to indicate a passive rather than an active power. For an active power is not distinguished from a passive power because it has an activity, for since every power of the soul, active as well as passive, has some activity, every power would be active.

We learn the distinction between the two by comparing the power to its object. For, if the object relates to the power as that which undergoes and is changed, the power will be active. If, on the other hand, it relates as agent and mover, the power is passive. Hence it is that all the powers of the vegetative soul are active, because in nutrition, growth, and generation food is changed through the power of the soul. On the other hand, all the sensitive powers are passive, because they are set in motion and come into act through sensible objects. In our understanding, however, there is an active and a passive power, because through intellect the intelligible in potency becomes intelligible in act. This is the activity of the agent intellect, and our understanding is, thus, an active power. The thing actually intelligible also makes the understanding in potency understanding in act, and in this way the possible intellect is a passive power. The agent intellect, however, is not said to be the subject of habits. Rather, the possible intellect plays this role. Consequently, the power to which the natural habit is joined seems to be a passive rather than an active power.

But, granted that it is an active power, the reasoning is incorrect when it proceeds farther. For there are not two forms in the soul, but only one, which is its essence. For by its essence it is spirit, and by its essence it is the form of the

body. It is not this by reason of anything else. As a result, higher and lower reason are not rooted in two forms, but in the one essence of the soul. Nor is it true that lower reason is rooted in the essence of the soul according to the relation by which it is the form of the body. For only the powers which are attached to organs are thus rooted in the essence of the soul, and lower reason does not belong to this class. Granted, too, that the power which synderesis denotes is the same thing as higher or lower reason, nothing prevents us from calling reason, the power simply, and synderesis, the same power with a habit inhering in it.

14. An act of knowing is not prerequisite for the power or habit of synderesis, but only for its act. Hence, this does not prevent the habit of synderesis from being innate.

15. Judgment is twofold: of universal [principles], which belongs to synderesis; and of particular activities, which is the judgment of choice and belongs to free choice. Consequently, it does not follow that they are the same.

16. Natural composition is manifold. One kind is the composition of a compound from elements. The Philosopher says<sup>19</sup> that in this composition the form of the compound must be something entirely different from the elements. There is also the composition of a substantial form and matter, from which a third thing arises, the specific form, which is not altogether different from the matter and the form, but relates to them as a whole to its parts. There is also the composition of subject and accident, in which no third thing results from the two. The composition of a power and a habit is of this sort.

## Q. 16: Synderesis

### ARTICLE II

**Secondly, we ask:**

**Can synderesis err [peccare]?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.*, 24, 3, 3; 39, 3, ; *S.T.*, 1, 79, 12.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it can, for

1. After discussing synderesis, Jerome remarks: "We sometimes see this fall down." But, in matters of action, to fall down is nothing else than error. Therefore, synderesis can err.

2. Although error, properly speaking, belongs not to a habit or a power, but to the man, since acts belong to individuals, a habit or a power is said to err in so



far as through the act of some habit or power a man is led into error. But a man is sometimes led into error through the act of synderesis. For in the Gospel of St. John (16:2) it is said: "Yea, the hour cometh, when whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God." Thus, from the judgment that worship must be offered to God, which judgment certainly pertains to synderesis, some were disposed to kill the Apostles. Therefore, synderesis errs.

3. Jeremiah (2:16) says: "The children, also, of Memphis, and of Taphnes have deflowered thee, even to the crown of thy head." But the crown is the higher part of the soul, as the Gloss on Psalms (7:17) says: "His iniquity shall come down on his crown. Thus, it belongs to synderesis, which is the highest thing in the soul. Therefore, synderesis is deflowered through sin by demons.

4. According to the Philosopher<sup>4</sup> the power of reason is related to opposites. But synderesis is a power of reason. Therefore, it is related to opposites, and so can do good and commit sin.

5. Opposites are naturally produced in connection with the same thing. But virtue and sin are opposed to each other. Since, therefore, the act of virtue is in synderesis, because it urges on to good, the act of sin will also be in it.

6. Synderesis takes the place in matters of action which the understanding of principles does in speculative matters. But all the activity of our reason arises from first principles. Therefore, all the activity of practical reason has its beginning from synderesis. Therefore, just as the activity of practical reason which is virtuous is ascribed to synderesis, so the activity of reason which is sinful is also attributed to it.

7. The punishment corresponds to the crime. But the whole soul of the damned, including syndousis, will be punished. Therefore, synderesis also sins.

## **To the Contrary**

1. Good can be more pure than evil, for there is some good in which there is no admixture of evil, but there is nothing so bad that it does not have some admixture of good. But in us there is something which always inclines to evil, namely, the tendency to sin [*fomes* ]. Therefore, there will be something which always inclines to good. But this seems to be only synderesis. Therefore, synderesis never sins.

2. What is naturally present is always present. But it is natural for synderesis to warn against evil. Therefore, it never consents to evil, and so never sins.

## **REPLY**

In all its activities nature intends what is good and the conservation of the things which are produced through the activity of nature. Therefore, in all the works of nature, the principles are always permanent and unchangeable and preservative

of right order. For, as is said in the *Physics* : "Principles should be permanent." For it would not be possible to have any stability or certainty in things which flow from principles if the principles themselves were not firmly established.

Consequently, all changeable things are reduced to some first unchangeable thing. Hence, too, it is that all speculative knowledge is derived from some most certain knowledge concerning which there can be no error. This is the knowledge of the first general principles, in reference to which everything else which is known is examined and by reason of which every truth is approved and every falsehood rejected. If any error could take place in these, there would be no certainty in the whole of the knowledge which follows.

As a result, for probity to be possible in human actions, there must be some permanent principle which has unwavering integrity, in reference to which all human works are examined, so that that permanent principle will resist all evil and assent to all good. This is synderesis, whose task it is to warn against evil and incline to good. Therefore, we agree that there can be no error in it.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Synderesis never falls down in a general principle, but error can happen in some application of a general principle to some particular case because of a false deduction, or because of a false assumption. Therefore, it does not say that synderesis simply falls headlong, but that conscience does, which applies the general judgment of synderesis to particular matters.

2. When in a syllogism one arrives at a false conclusion from two propositions, one of which is true and the other false, the mistaken conclusion is not attributed to the true, but to the false, proposition. Therefore, in that choice by which the murderers of the Apostles thought they were offering worship to God, the error did not come from the universal judgment of synderesis, that worship should be offered to God, but from the false judgment of higher reason, which considered the killing of the Apostles as pleasing to God. Therefore, we need not concede that they were inclined to sin through an act of synderesis.

3. As the crown of the body is the highest part of the body, so the crown of the soul is the highest part of the soul. Hence~ the crown of the soul is understood to mean different things according to the different distinctions of the parts of the soul. If we distinguish the intellectual part from the sensitive part, the whole intellective part of the soul can be called the crown. If we distinguish the intellective part further into higher and lower reason, higher reason is called the crown. If we distinguish reason further into natural judgment and deliberation of reason, natural judgment is called the crown. Therefore, when the soul is said to

be deflowered even to its crown, crown isto be taken as denoting higher reason and not synderesis.

4. The power of reason, which of itself is related to opposites, is sometimes limited to one thing through a habit, especially if the habit is completely formed. Moreover, synderesis does not mean the rational power simply, but as perfected by a completely determined habit.

5. The act of synderesis is not strictly an act of virtue, but a kind of prelude to the act of virtue, just as natural endowments are preludes to freely given and acquired virtues.

6. just as in speculative matters, although a mistaken reason starts from principles, it does not derive its falsity from first principles, but from wrong use of the principles, so the same thing also happens in practical matters. Therefore, the conclusion does not follow.

7. Augustine shows that this argument does not hold. For he says that "the whole man is damned" for the sin of lower reason alone, and this because both reasons belong to the "one person," to whom sinning properly belongs. Therefore, the punishment looks directly to the person and not the power, except in so far as the power belongs to the person. For the person of man deserves punishment in all the parts of his person for a sin which he commits by one part of himself. Hence, also, in a civil trial the hand alone is not punished for the murder which a man commits with his hand.

## **Q. 16: Synderesis**

### **ARTICLE III**

**In the third article we ask:**

**Are there some in whom synderesis is extinguished?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.*, 24, 2, 3, ad 5; 39, 3, 1.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that there are, for

1. On Psalms (5 2:2), "They are corrupted and become abominable," the Gloss has: "Corrupted, that is, deprived of all light of reason." But the light of synderesis is the light of reason. Therefore, in some men synderesis is extinguished.

2. Heretics sometimes have no remorse of conscience for their infidelity. But infidelity is a sin. Accordingly, since the function of synderesis is to protest against sin, it seems that it is extinguished in them.

3. According to the Philosopher, one who has a habit of vice loses the principles of action. But principles of action belong to synderesis. Therefore, in everyone who has the habit of some vice synderesis is extinguished.

4. Proverbs (18:3) says: "The wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth." When this happens, "synderesis does not hold its ground," as Jerome says. Therefore, in some men it is extinguished.

5. Every inclination to evil is taken away from the blessed. Conversely, therefore, every inclination to good is taken away from the damned. But synderesis inclines to good. Therefore, it is extinguished in them.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Isaiah (66:24) says: "Their worm shall not die." According to Augustine this refers to the worm of conscience, which is remorse of conscience. But remorse of conscience is caused by synderesis protesting against evil. Therefore, synderesis is not destroyed.

2. Despair, which is a sin against the Holy Spirit, is in the lowest depths of sin. But, even in those who despair, "synderesis is not extinguished," as is plain from Jerome, who says of synderesis: "Not even in Cain was it suppressed." Nevertheless, it is clear that he despaired, for he said: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon" (Genesis 4:13). We conclude as before.

### **REPLY**

That synderesis is extinguished can be understood in two ways. In one, it is considered in so far as it is an habitual light, and in this sense it is impossible for synderesis to be extinguished, just as it is impossible for the soul of a man to be deprived of the light of the agent intellect, through which first principles in speculative and practical matters are made known to us. For this light belongs to the nature of the soul, since by reason of this the soul is intellectual. In Psalms (4:7) it is said of this: "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us," so that it shows good things to us. For this was the answer to the question: "Many say: Who sheweth us good things?" (Psalms 4:6).

In the other way, in so far as it is an act, it can be extinguished in two ways. In one, the act of synderesis is said to be extinguished inasmuch as it is completely interfered with. This happens in those who do not have the use of free choice or of reason because of an impediment due to an injury to the bodily organs from which our reason needs help. In the other way, the act of synderesis is deflected toward the contrary of synderesis. It is impossible for the universal judgment of synderesis to be destroyed in this way, but in a particular activity it is destroyed whenever one sins in choice. For the force of concupiscence, or of another passion, so absorbs reason that in choice the universal judgment of synderesis is not applied to the particular act. But this does not destroy synderesis altogether,

but only in some respect, Hence, absolutely speaking, we concede that synderesis is never destroyed.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Some sinners are said to be deprived of all light of reason in the act of choice, in which reason errs because it is engrossed by some passion, or oppressed by some habit so that it does not follow the light of synderesis in making its choice.

2. In heretics their conscience does not reprove their infidelity by reason of the error in their higher reason, because of which the judgment of synderesis is not applied to this particular case. For the universal judgment of synderesis remains in them, since they judge it to be evil not to believe what God has said. But they err in higher reason, because they do not believe that God has said this.

3 One who has the habit of some vice does indeed lose the principles of activity, not as universal principles, but in their application to some particular case, in so far as through some vicious habit his reason is stifled in order to keep it from applying the universal judgment to its particular activity when making its choice. In this way, also, the wicked man who falls into the depths of sin is said to have contempt.

4. The solution to the fourth difficulty is clear from the answer to the third.

5. Evil is not part of a nature; therefore, there is nothing to prevent the removal of the inclination to evil from the blessed. But good and the inclination thereto result from the nature itself; hence, as long as the nature remains, the inclination to good cannot be taken even from the damned.

## Question Seventeen: Conscience

[Is conscience a power, a habit, or an act?](#)

1. [Can conscience be mistaken?](#)
  2. [Does conscience bind?](#)
  3. [Does a false conscience bind?](#)
  4. [Does conscience in indifferent matters bind more than the command of a](#)
  5. [superior, or less?](#)
- 

### ARTICLE I

**The question treats of conscience.**

**In the first article we ask:**

**Is conscience a power, a habit, or an act?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 24, 2, 4; *S.T.* , 1, 79, 13.]

#### **Difficulties (First Series)**

It seems to be a power, for

1. After mentioning synderesis, Jerome says: "We see that this conscience is cast down headlong at times." From this it seems that conscience and synderesis are the same thing. But synderesis is in some sense a power. Therefore, conscience is, too.
2. Only a power of the soul is the subject of a vice. But conscience is the subject of the defilement of sin, as is clear from Titus (1:15): "Both their mind and their conscience are defiled." Therefore, conscience is a power.
3. It was said that the defilement is not in conscience as in a subject. —On the contrary, nothing numerically the same can be defiled and clean, unless it is the subject of defilement. But everything which is changed from defilement to cleanness while remaining numerically the same, is clean at one time and defiled at another. Therefore, everything which is changed from defilement to cleanness, or the converse, is a subject of defilement and cleanness. But conscience is changed from defilement to cleanness, according to Hebrews (9:14): "How much more shall the blood of Christ... cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Therefore, conscience is a power.
4. Conscience is said to be a dictate of reason, a dictate which is nothing else but the judgment of reason. But a judgment of reason pertains to free choice from which it gets its name. Therefore, free choice and conscience seem to be the same thing. But free choice is a power. Therefore, so is conscience.

5. Basil says that conscience is "the natural power of judgment." But the natural power of judgment is synderesis. But synderesis is in some sense a power. Therefore, so is conscience.
6. Sin exists only in the will or in the reason. But sin exists in conscience. Therefore, conscience is the reason or the will. But reason and will are powers. Therefore, conscience is, too.
7. Neither a habit nor an act is said to know. But conscience is said to know, according to Ecclesiastes (7:23): "For thy conscience knoweth that thou also hast often spoken evil of others." Therefore, conscience is not a habit or an act. Therefore, it is a power.
8. Origen says that conscience is "a correcting and guiding spirit accompanying the soul, by which the soul is kept free from evil and made to cling to good." But spirit designates a power or even the essence of the soul. Therefore, conscience designates a power.
9. Conscience is an act, a habit, or a power. But it is not an act, because it does not always remain in act, for its act is not present in one who is asleep. Yet one who is asleep is said to have conscience. Nor is it a habit. Therefore, it is a power.

### **Difficulties (Second Series)**

1. That it is not a habit is shown in this way: No habit of reason deals with individual things. But, conscience is concerned with particular acts. Therefore, conscience is not a habit of reason. It is not a habit of any other power since conscience pertains to reason.
2. In reason there are only speculative and operative habits. But conscience is not a speculative habit, since it has an ordination to activity. Nor is it an operative habit, since it is neither an art nor prudence. And the Philosopher puts only these in the operative part. Therefore, conscience is not a habit.

That it is not an art is clear. That it is not prudence is proved in this way: Prudence is the correct ordering of acts, as is said in the

*Ethics*. But it does not consider individual actions, for, since there are an infinite number of these, there can be no ordering of them. Again, it would follow that prudence, taken in itself, would be essentially increased as it considered many individual actions. But this does not seem to be true. However, conscience considers individual actions. Therefore, conscience is not prudence.

3. It was said that conscience is a habit by which the universal judgment of reason is applied to a particular undertaking.—On the contrary, two habits are not needed for something which one can do. But one who has habitual knowledge of a universal can make the application to singulars with the intervention of the sensitive faculty alone. Thus, from the habit by which one

knows that all mules are sterile, he will know that this mule is sterile when through his senses he perceives that this is a mule. Therefore, a habit is not needed for the application of a universal judgment to a particular act. Thus, conscience is not a habit. We conclude as before.

4. Every habit is either natural, infused, or acquired. But conscience is not a natural habit because such a habit is the same in all men. But not all men have the same conscience. Again, it is not an infused habit, because such a habit is always correct. But conscience is sometimes erroneous. Again, it is not an acquired habit, because, if it were, conscience would not exist in children or in a man before he had acquired it through many acts. Therefore, it is not a habit. We conclude as before.

5. According to the Philosopher, a habit is acquired from many acts. But one has conscience from one act. Therefore, conscience is not a habit.

6. The Gloss indicates that conscience in the damned is a punishment. But a habit is not a punishment; rather it is a perfection of the one who has it. Therefore, it is not a habit.

### **To the Contrary (First Series)**

1. Conscience seems to be a habit. For, according to Damascene, it is "the law of our understanding." But the law of our understanding is the habit of the universal principles of law. Therefore, conscience is a habit.

2. The Gloss on Romans (2:14) says: "Although the Gentiles do not have the written law, they have the natural law, which each one understands and by which he is conscious of what is good and what is evil." From this it seems that the natural law is that by which one is conscious. But everyone is conscious through consciousness (*conscientia*). Therefore, conscience (*conscientia*) is the natural law. We conclude as before.

3. Science denotes habitual knowledge of conclusions. But conscience is scientific knowledge. Therefore, it is a habit.

4. A habit is formed by repeated acts. But one acts repeatedly according to conscience. Therefore, from such acts a habit is formed, which can be called conscience.

5. On the first Epistle to Timothy (1:5), "Now the end of the commandment is charity, from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith," the Gloss says: "A good conscience, that is, hope." But hope is a habit. Therefore, conscience is, too.

6. That which is implanted in us by God seems to be an infused habit. But, according to Damascene, "just as the tendency to sin is implanted in us by the



devil, so conscience is implanted in us by God. Therefore, conscience is an infused habit.

7. According to the Philosopher, everything which is in the soul is habit, faculty, or passion. But conscience is not a passion, for by such things we do not merit or demerit, nor are we praised or blamed for them, as the Philosopher also says. Nor is conscience a power, for a power cannot be set aside, but conscience can be set aside. Therefore, conscience is a habit.

*To the Contrary (Second Series):*

1. Conscience seems to be an act, for it is said to accuse and excuse. But one is not accused or excused unless he is actually considering something. Therefore, conscience is an act.

2. Knowledge which consists in comparison is actual knowledge. But conscience denotes knowledge with comparison. For one is said to be conscious (*conscire*), that is, to know together (simul *scire*). Therefore, conscience is actual knowledge.

## REPLY

Some say that conscience can have three meanings. For, at times it is taken for the thing itself of which one is conscious, just as faith is taken for the thing believed. Sometimes it is taken for the power by which we are conscious, and sometimes for the habit. And some say that it is also taken for the act. The reason for this distinction seems to be that, since there is an act of conscience, and since an object, a power, a habit, and the act itself are considered with reference to the act, we sometimes find a name which is used equivocally for all four of these. Thus, the name *understanding* sometimes signifies the thing understood (*intellectam*), as names are said to denote concepts (*intellectus*); sometimes, it signifies the intellectual power itself; sometimes, a habit, and, sometimes, an act.

However, with names such as these, the commonly accepted meaning should be followed, because words should be used in their more common signification, as is said in the Topics. But the name *conscience*, according to common usage, seems at times to be used for the thing of which one is conscious, as when one says: "I will reveal my conscience to you," that is, what is in my conscience. But this title cannot properly be given to the power or the habit, but only to the act. For all the things which are attributed to conscience fit only this meaning.

We must bear in mind that it is not customary to have one name for a power, an act, and a habit, unless the act is proper to the power or habit, as to see is

proper to the power of sight, and to know is proper to the habit of knowledge. As a result, sight sometimes means the power and sometimes the act. Knowledge is used in a similar way. However, if there is an act which is proper to many or all habits or powers, it is not customary to indicate a power or a habit by such a name of the act. This is clear with the noun *use*, for it denotes the act of any habit and power, since *use* belongs to that of which it is the act. Hence, this name *use* so signifies an act that it does not mean a habit or a power at all.

This seems to be the case with conscience. For the name *conscience* means the application of knowledge to something. Hence, to be conscious (*conscire*) means to know together (*simul scire*). But any knowledge can be applied to a thing. Hence, conscience cannot denote a special habit or power, but designates the act itself, which is the application of any habit or of any knowledge to some particular act.

Moreover, knowledge is applied to an act in two ways. According to one way, we consider whether the act exists or has existed; according to the other, whether it is correct or not. According to the first mode of application, we are said to have conscience [that is, consciousness] of an act inasmuch as we know that the act has been placed or has not been placed, as happens in the common manner of speaking when one says: "As far as my conscience [consciousness] is concerned, this has not taken place; that is, I do not know or I did not know whether this took place." It is according to this manner of speaking that we understand the passage in Genesis (4 3:2 2): "We cannot tell [*non est in conscientiis nostris*] who put it (the money) in our bags"; and the passage in Ecclesiastes (7:23): "For thy conscience knoweth that thou also hast often spoken evil of others." It is according to this that conscience is said to bear witness of some thing, as in Romans (9:1): "my conscience bearing me witness..."

According to the second mode of application, by which knowledge is applied to an act, so that one knows whether the act is right or not, there is a double course. There is one according to which we are directed through the habit of scientific knowledge to do or not to do something. There is a second according to which the act, after it has taken place, is examined with reference to the habit of knowledge to see whether it was right or not. This double course in matters of action is distinguished according to the double course which exists in things speculative, that is, the process of discovery and the process of judging. For the process by which through scientific knowledge we look for what should be done, as it were taking counsel with ourselves, is similar to discovery, through which we proceed from principles to conclusions. The other process, through which we examine those things which already have been done and consider whether they are right, is like the process of judging, through which we reduce conclusions to

principles.

We use the name *conscience* for both of these modes of application. For, in so far as knowledge is applied to an act, as directive of that act, conscience is said to prod or urge or bind. But, in so far as knowledge is applied to act, by way of examining things which have already taken place, conscience is said to accuse or cause remorse, when that which has been done is found to be out of harmony with the knowledge according to which it is examined; or to defend or excuse, when that which has been done is found to have proceeded according to the form of the knowledge.

But we must bear in mind that in the first application, in which scientific knowledge is applied to an act to know whether it has taken place, it is application to a particular act of sensitive knowledge, as of memory, through which we recall what was done, or of sense, through which we perceive the particular act in which we are now engaged. But in the second and third applications, by which we deliberate about what should be done, or examine what has already been done, the operative habits of reason are applied to an act. These are the habit of synderesis and the habit of wisdom, which perfect higher reason, and the habit of scientific knowledge, which perfects lower reason. Of these, either all are applied at the same time, or only one of them is applied. We examine what we have done according to these habits, and, according to them, we take counsel about what should be done. Examination, however, concerns not only what has been done, but also what is to be done. But counsel concerns only what is to be done.

### Answers to Difficulties (First Series)

1. When Jerome says: "We see that this conscience is cast down headlong at times," synderesis, which he calls a spark of conscience, is not indicated, but conscience itself, which he had mentioned earlier. Or we can say that the whole force of conscience, as examining or taking counsel, depends on the judgment of synderesis, just as the whole truth of speculative reason depends on first principles. Therefore, he calls conscience *synderesis* in so far as conscience acts by reason of its power. This answer is especially apt because he wanted to show how synderesis can fail. For it does not err in regard to universal principles, but only in regard to the application to individual acts. Thus, synderesis does not err in itself, but, in a sense, errs in conscience. Therefore, he joins conscience with synderesis to explain this failure of synderesis.

2. Defilement is not said to be in conscience as in a subject, but as the thing known is in knowledge. For one is said to have a defiled conscience when he is conscious within himself of some defilement.

3. A defiled conscience is said to be cleansed, in so far as one who was earlier conscious of sin knows later that he has been cleansed from the sin. Thus, he is

said to have a pure conscience. Accordingly, it is the same conscience which first was unclean and later clean, not, however, in the sense that conscience is the subject of cleanness and uncleanness, but that through examination made by conscience both are known. It is not that it is numerically the same act by which one knew he was unclean before and knows he is clean afterwards, but that both are known from the same principles, just as consideration which proceeds from the same principles is called the same.

4. The judgments of conscience and of free choice differ to some extent and correspond to some extent. For they correspond in this, that both refer to this particular act. However, the judgment of conscience applies to it in so far as conscience examines it. On this point the judgment of both conscience and free choice differ from the judgment of synderesis. They differ from each other, since the judgment of conscience consists simply in knowledge, whereas the judgment of free choice consists in the application of knowledge to the inclination of the will. This is the judgment of choice.

Thus, it sometimes happens that the judgment of free choice goes astray, but not the judgment of conscience. For example, one debates something which presents itself to be done here and now and judges, still speculating as it were in the realm of principles, that it is evil, for instance, to fornicate with this woman. However, when he comes to apply this to the act, many circumstances relevant to the act present themselves from all sides, for instance, the pleasure of the fornication, by the desire of which reason is constrained, so that its dictates may not issue into choice. Thus, one errs in choice and not in conscience. Rather, he acts against conscience and is said to do this with an evil conscience, in so far as the deed does not agree with the judgment based on knowledge. Thus, it is clear that it is not necessary for conscience to be the same as free choice.

5. Conscience is called the natural power of judgment in so far as the whole examination or counseling of conscience depends on the natural power of judgment, as we said earlier.

6. Sin is in the reason and the will as in a subject, but it is in conscience in a different way, as has been said.

7. Conscience is said to know something not in a proper sense, but in the sense that knowledge is predicated of that by which we know.

8. Conscience is called spirit, that is, an impulse of our spirit, just as reason is called spirit.

9. Conscience is neither a power nor a habit, but an act. And, although the act of conscience does not always exist, and does not exist in one who is asleep, the act itself remains in its principle, that is, in habits which can be applied to act.

### **Answers to Difficulties (Second Series)**

1-6. We concede the difficulties which prove that conscience is not a habit.

### **Answers to Difficulties to the Contrary (First Series)**

1. Conscience is called the law of our understanding because it is a judgment of reason derived from the natural law.

2. One is said to be conscious within himself through the natural law, in the sense in which one is said to deliberate according to principles, but he is conscious within himself through conscience, in the sense in which he is said to deliberate by means of the very act of consideration.

3. Although scientific knowledge is a habit, its application to something is not a habit, but an act. And this is what is indicated by the word *conscience*.

4. From these acts there does not arise a habit of a different mode from the habit by which the acts are elicited, but either a habit of the same nature is formed, as the habit of love is formed from acts of infused charity, or an already present habit is strengthened, as in one who has acquired the habit of temperance from repeated acts, the habit itself is strengthened. Accordingly, since the act of conscience proceeds from a habit of wisdom and science, a new habit will not be formed from them, but those habits will be perfected.

5. When conscience is called hope, the predication is causal in nature, inasmuch as a good conscience makes a man be of good hope, as the Gloss explains.

6. Even natural habits exist in us because they were put there by God. Consequently, since conscience is an act proceeding from the natural habit of synderesis, God is said to have imprinted it in the way in which He is said to be the source of all knowledge of truth which is in us. For God endows our nature with the knowledge of first principles.

7. Act is included in habit in that division of the Philosopher because he had proved that habits are formed from acts, and that habits were the principle of similar acts. Accordingly, conscience is not a passion nor a power, but an act, which is reduced to a habit.

### **Answers to Difficulties to the Contrary (Second Series)**

We concede the difficulties which prove that conscience is an act.

## **Q. 17: Conscience**

### **ARTICLE II**

**In the second article we ask:**

## Can conscience be mistaken?

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 24, 2, 4; 39, 3, 1, ad 1; 39, 3, 2; *Quodl.* , III, 12, 26.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it cannot, for

1. The natural power of judgment is never mistaken. But, according to Basil, conscience is "the natural power of judgment." Therefore, it is not mistaken.
2. Conscience adds something to scientific knowledge. Moreover, that which it adds in no way detracts from the nature of scientific knowledge. But scientific knowledge is never mistaken, since it is the habit by which one always speaks the truth, as is clear in the *Ethics*. Therefore, neither can conscience be mistaken.
- 3 Synderesis is "a spark of conscience," as Jerome says. Therefore, conscience is related to synderesis as fire is to a spark. But the activity and movement of a fire and of a spark [from it] are the same. Therefore, the activity and movement of conscience and synderesis are also the same. But synderesis is never mistaken. Therefore, neither is conscience.
4. According to Damascene, conscience is the "law of our understanding." But the law of our understanding is more certain than the understanding itself, and, "understanding is always correct," as is said in *The Soul*. Therefore, with much greater reason, conscience is always correct.
5. Reason, in so far as it is coincident with synderesis, does not make mistakes. But reason joined to synderesis constitutes conscience. Therefore, conscience never makes mistakes.
6. The testimony of witnesses is decisive in court. But conscience is the witness in the divine court, as is clear from Romans(2:15): "their conscience bearing witness to them." Therefore, since the divine court never can be deceived, it seems that conscience can never err.
7. In all things, the rule which regulates other things must be infallibly correct. But conscience is a rule of human actions. Therefore, conscience must always be correct.
8. Hope depends on conscience, according to the Gloss" on the first Epistle to Timothy (1:5): "From a pure heart, and a good conscience..." But hope is most certain, according to Hebrews (6:18): "we have the most certain comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us." Therefore, conscience is infallibly correct.

### To the Contrary

1. In John (16:2) we read: "The hour cometh, when whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God." Therefore, their conscience told those who killed the Apostles that they would please God by this action. But this was a mistake. Therefore, conscience makes mistakes.

2. Conscience includes comparison. But reason can be deceived when it makes comparisons. Therefore, conscience can make mistakes.

## REPLY

As is clear from what has been said, conscience is nothing but the application of knowledge to some special act. Error, however, can occur in this application in two ways; in one, because that which is applied has error within it, and, in the other, because the application is faulty. Thus, in using a syllogism, mistakes can happen in two ways: either from the use of false premises, or from faulty construction of the syllogism. But this use of something false takes place only in one of the premises and not in the other. For, as has been said, through conscience the knowledge of synderesis and of higher and lower reason are applied to the examination of a particular act.

However, since the act is particular and the judgment of synderesis is universal, the judgment of synderesis can be applied to the act only if some particular judgment is used as the minor premise. Sometimes, higher reason furnishes this particular judgment; sometimes, lower reason does. Thus, the act of conscience is the result of a kind of particular syllogism. For example, if the judgment of synderesis expresses this statement: "I must not do anything which is forbidden by the law of God," and if the knowledge of higher reason presents this minor premise: "Sexual intercourse with this woman is forbidden by the law of God," the application of conscience will be made by concluding: "I must abstain from this intercourse."

Error has no place in the general judgment of synderesis, as is clear from what we have said earlier, but a mistake can occur in the judgment of higher reason, as happens when one judges something to be licit or illicit which is not, as heretics who believe that oaths are forbidden by God. Therefore, mistakes occur in conscience because of the error which existed in the higher part of reason. Similarly, error can occur in conscience because of error which exists in the lower part of reason, as happens when one is mistaken about civil norms of what is just or unjust, good or bad. Error also occurs because conscience does not make a correct application to acts. For, as in constructing speculative syllogisms one can neglect the proper form of argumentation, and thus arrive at a false conclusion, so he can do the same in practical syllogisms, as has been said.

Still, we must remember that in some things conscience can never make a mistake, namely, when the particular act to which conscience is applied has a

universal judgment about it in synderesis. For, as in speculative matters, error does not occur when we are dealing with particular conclusions which are derived directly from universal principles and expressed in the same terms—as for instance, no one is deceived in the judgment: “This whole is greater than its part,” just as no one is deceived in the judgment: “Every whole is greater than its part”—so, too, no conscience can err in the judgments: “I should not love God” or “Some evil should be done.” For, in each of these syllogisms, the speculative as well as the practical, the major premise is self-evident in so far as it exists in the universal judgment, and the minor, by means of which the particular predication of identity is made, is also self-evident. This is the case when one says: “Every whole is greater than its part. This whole is a whole. Therefore, it is greater than its part.”

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Conscience is called the natural power of judgment in so far as it is a conclusion derived from that power. And in this conclusion there can be error; not, however, because of error in the natural power of judgment, but because of an error of the particular judgment used in the minor premise or because of a faulty reasoning process, as has been said.
2. Conscience adds to scientific knowledge the application of that knowledge to a particular act. There can be error in the application, although there is not error in the scientific knowledge itself. Or we should say that, when I say conscience, I do not imply scientific knowledge (*scientia*) alone, taken strictly in so far as it deals only with things which are true, but taken in the broad sense for any knowledge (*notitia*). In this sense, according to the common use of the word, we say that we know (*scire*) everything with which we are acquainted (*novisse*).
3. Just as the spark is that part of fire which is purer and hovers above the whole fire, so synderesis is that which is supreme in the judgment of conscience. And it is according to this metaphor that synderesis is called a spark of conscience, nor is it necessary for the relation between synderesis and conscience to be the same as that between a spark and fire in all other respects. Yet, even in material fire the fire receives some modification because a foreign element is added to it, a modification which a spark, because of its purity, does not receive. So, too, some error can find its way into conscience because it has to do with particulars, which are, as it were, matter foreign to reason. This error does not occur in synderesis existing in its purity.
4. Conscience is called the law of understanding by reason of that which it has from synderesis. It is never this, but something else which is the source of error, as has been said.



5. Although reason does not err because it is united to synderesis, still, when higher or lower reason is mistaken, it can be applied to synderesis, just as a false minor premise is united with a true major.
6. The testimony of witnesses is decisive in court when it cannot be shown false through other clear evidence. But, in one whose conscience is erroneous, the testimony of his conscience is shown to be false by the very dictate of synderesis. Thus, in the divine court not the testimony of a mistaken conscience, but the dictates of the natural law, will be decisive.
7. Not conscience, but synderesis, is the first rule of human activity. Conscience, however, is a kind of rule which is itself regulated. Hence, it is not strange that it can make mistakes.
8. The hope which is based on a correct conscience has certainty, and this hope is freely given hope. However, the hope which is based on a false conscience is that of which it is said: "The hope of the wicked shall perish" (Proverbs 10:2 8).

## **Q. 17: Conscience**

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **In the third article we ask: Does conscience bind?**

[Parallel readings: *Quodl.* , III, 12, 26; *S.T.* , 1, 79, 13.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that it does not, for

1. No one is bound to do anything except by some law. But man does not make the law for himself. Therefore, since conscience arises from the act of man, it does not bind.
2. One is not bound to follow the counsels. But conscience operates as a counsel, for conscience seems to precede choice in the way counsel does. Therefore, conscience does not bind.
3. One is bound only by something superior. But the conscience of a man is not superior to the man himself. Therefore, a man is not bound by his conscience.
4. The same thing binds and frees [from an obligation]. But conscience cannot free a man [from an obligation]. Therefore, it cannot bind him, either.

#### **To the Contrary**

1. The Gloss on Ecclesiastes (7:23), "Your conscience knows," says: "No one who

is guilty is set free by this judge." But the command of a judge is binding. Therefore, the dictate of conscience binds.

2. On Romans (14:23), "All that is not of faith..." Origen says: "The Apostle desires that I Say, think, or do nothing against conscience. Therefore, conscience binds.

## REPLY

Conscience is certainly binding. But, to see how it binds, we must bear in mind that binding, taken metaphorically from corporeal things and applied to spiritual, means imposing necessity. For he who is bound must necessarily stay in the place where he is bound, and the power to go off to other places is taken away from him. Hence, it is clear that binding has no place in things which have internal necessity. For we cannot say that fire is bound to rise, although it is necessary for it to rise. Binding, then, has place only in things which are necessary with a necessity imposed by something else.

Now, there is a twofold necessity which can be imposed by an outside agent. One is the necessity of coercion, through which someone with absolute necessity does that which the agent forces him to do. Otherwise, it is not properly called coercion, but inducement. The other necessity is conditional, on the presupposition, that is, of an end to be attained. In this way, necessity is so imposed on one that, if he does not do a certain thing, he will not receive his reward.

The first necessity, that of coercion, has no place in movements of the will, but only in physical things, because by its nature the will is free from coercion. The second necessity, however, can be imposed on the will, so that one must, for example, choose this means if he is to acquire this good, or avoid this evil. For, in such matters, avoiding evil is considered equivalent to achieving some good, as is clear from the Philosopher.

Moreover, as necessity of coercion is imposed on physical things by means of some action, so, too, it is by means of some action that conditional necessity is imposed on the will. But the action by which the will is moved is the command of the one ruling or governing. Consequently, the Philosopher says<sup>4</sup> that by means of his command the king is the source of movement.

Similarly, too, where the will is concerned, the relation between the command of a ruler and the imposition of the kind of obligation by which the will can be bound is like the relation between physical action and the binding of physical things through the necessity of coercion. However, the action of a physical agent never imposes necessity on another thing except by the contact of its action with the object on which it is acting. So, no one is bound by the command of a king or lord unless the command reaches him who is commanded; and it reaches him

through knowledge of it.

Hence, no one is bound by a precept except through his knowledge of the precept. Therefore, one who is not capable of the knowledge of a precept is not bound by the precept. Nor is one who is ignorant of a precept bound to carry out that precept except in so far as he is required to know it. If, however, he is not required to know it, and does not know it, he is in no way bound by the precept. Thus, as in physical things the physical agent acts only by means of contact, so in spiritual things a precept binds only by means of knowledge. Therefore, just as it is the same power by which touch acts and by which the power of the agent acts, since touch acts only by the power of the agent and the power of the agent acts only through the mediation of touch, so it is the same power by which the precept binds and by which knowledge binds, since the knowledge binds only through the power of the precept, and the precept only through the knowledge. Consequently, since conscience is nothing else but the application of knowledge to an act, it is obvious that conscience is said to bind by the power of a divine precept.

### Answers to Difficulties

1. Man does not make the law for himself, but through the act of his knowledge, by which he knows a law made by someone else, he is bound to fulfill the law.

2. *Counsel* has two meanings. Sometimes, counsel is nothing other than the action of reason inquiring about things to be done. In this sense, the relation of counsel to election is the same as that of a syllogism or question to a conclusion, as is clear from the Philosopher. Taken in this sense, counsel is not opposed to precept, for we take counsel in this way about matters of precept. Hence, obligation can arise from such counsel. It is in this sense that counsel is found in conscience in so far as it is applied to one function of conscience, when, namely, it makes an investigation into some action.

In the other sense, counsel is called persuasion or inducement to do something when it does not have compelling force. In this sense, counsel is opposed to precept. Friendly exhortations are of this sort, and, sometimes, conscience proceeds from that type of counsel. For the knowledge of this counsel is sometimes applied to a particular act. But, since conscience does not bind except in virtue of that which is in conscience, conscience which follows from counsel cannot bind in any other way than the counsel itself. Consequently, one is bound not to despise it, but he is not obliged to follow it.

3. Although man is not higher than himself, the one whose precept he knows is higher than man. This is how he is bound by his conscience.

4. When a man sins in making the error itself, a false conscience is not enough to excuse him. This is the case when he makes a mistake about things which he is

required to know. However, if the error is about things which he is not required to know, he is excused by his conscience, as is clear when one sins from ignorance of a fact, as when one approaches another's wife, whom he thinks is his own.

## Q. 17: Conscience

### ARTICLE IV

#### In the fourth article we ask: Does a false conscience bind?

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 39, 3, 3; *Quodl.* , III, 12, 27; VIII, 6,13; IX, 7,15; *Ad Rom.* , c. 14, lect. 2; *Ad Gal.* , c. 5, lect. 1; *S.T.* , I-II, 19, 5.]

#### Difficulties

It seems that it does not, for

1. Augustine says that sin is a word, deed, or desire contrary to the law of God. Therefore, nothing binds under pain of sin except God's law. But a false conscience is not in accordance with God's law. Therefore, it does not bind under pain of sin.
2. On Romans (13:1), "Let every soul be subject to higher powers," Augustine says that we should not obey a lower power contrary to the commandment of a higher power, just as we should not obey the proconsul if his order is contrary to that of the emperor. But a false conscience is inferior to God. Therefore, when conscience gives orders contrary to the commands of God, the command of a mistaken conscience seems to impose no obligation whatever.
3. According to Ambrose, sin is "a transgression of the divine law and disobedience to the heavenly commands." Therefore, whoever disobeys the divine law sins. But a false conscience makes a man disobey the divine power when, for instance, his conscience tells him to do something which is forbidden by the divine law. Therefore, a false conscience leads one into sin if he follows it, rather than binds him under pain of sin if he does not follow it.
4. According to the law, if a man's conscience tells him that he and his wife are related within the forbidden degrees of kindred, and that conscience is probable, then he must follow it against a precept of the Church, even if an excommunication is attached to the precept. However, if his conscience is not probable, he is not bound to follow it, but should obey the Church. But a false conscience, especially about things which are intrinsically evil, has no probability at all. Therefore, such a conscience does not bind.

5. God is more merciful than a temporal lord. But a temporal lord does not accuse a man of sin in something which he did by mistake. Therefore, in God's sight a man is much less obliged under pain of sin by a mistaken conscience.

6. It was said that a false conscience binds with reference to indifferent things, but not with reference to things which are intrinsically evil.—On the contrary, a mistaken conscience is said not to bind when dealing with things which are intrinsically evil because the dictate of natural reason opposes it. But natural reason in like manner opposes the false conscience which is mistaken about indifferent things. Therefore, that, too, does not bind.

7. An indifferent action may be accepted or rejected. But there is no necessary obligation to do or omit an action which may be accepted or rejected. Therefore, conscience imposes no necessary obligation to indifferent actions.

8. If from a false conscience one acts contrary to the law of God, he is not excused from sin. Accordingly, if one who acted against his conscience, even when it was mistaken, were to sin, it would follow that, whether he acted according to his false conscience or not, he would sin. Therefore, he would be so perplexed that it would be impossible for him to avoid sin. But this seems impossible, because, according to Augustine: "No one sins in that which he cannot avoid." Therefore, it is impossible for such a false conscience to bind.

9. Every sin belongs to some genus of sin. But, if conscience tells one that he should fornicate, to abstain from fornication cannot be classified in any genus of sin. Therefore, he would not sin in thus acting contrary to his conscience. Therefore, such a conscience does not bind.

## **To the Contrary**

1. On Romans (14:23), "For all that is not of faith is sin," the Gloss says: "That is, it is a sin in conscience, even if it is good in itself." But conscience which forbids that which is good in itself is false. Therefore, such a conscience binds.

2. Observance of the legal prescriptions of the Mosaic law in the new dispensation of grace was not indifferent but intrinsically evil. Hence, Galatians (5:2) says: "If you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Nevertheless, conscience prescribing the observance of circumcision was binding. Hence, in the same Epistle (5:3) we read: "And I testify again to every man circumcising himself, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Therefore, a false conscience binds in things intrinsically evil.

3. Sin is principally in the will. But whoever decides to transgress a divine commandment has an evil will. Therefore, he sins. Whoever believes that something is a command and decides to violate it wills to break the law. Therefore, he sins. Moreover, one who has a false conscience, whether in things intrinsically evil or in anything at all, believes that what is opposed to his

conscience is contrary to the law of God. Therefore, if he decides to do that, he decides to act contrary to the law of God, and, so, he sins. Consequently, conscience, no matter how false it is, obliges under pain of sin.

4. According to Damascene: "Conscience is the law of our understanding." But to act contrary to a law is a sin. Therefore, it is also a sin to act against conscience in any way.

5. One is bound by a precept. But that which conscience dictates becomes a precept. Therefore, conscience binds, no matter how false it may be.

## REPLY

There are different opinions on this matter. For some say that conscience can be mistaken both in things which are intrinsically evil and also with regard to indifferent things. Furthermore, a mistaken conscience does not bind in things which are intrinsically evil, but does bind with regard to indifferent things. But those who say this do not seem to understand in what sense conscience imposes an obligation. For conscience is said to bind in so far as one sins if he does not follow his conscience, but not in the sense that he acts correctly if he does follow it. Otherwise, a counsel would be called obligatory, for one who fulfills a counsel acts correctly. Still, we do not say that we are bound to counsels, since one who neglects what is of counsel does not sin. But we say that we are bound to precepts because, if we do not 1~ecp them, we commit sin. Therefore, conscience is not said to bind in the sense that what one does according to such a conscience will be good, but in the sense that in not following it he will sin.

Moreover, it does not seem possible for a man to avoid sin if his conscience, no matter how mistaken, declares that something which is indifferent or intrinsically evil is a command of God, and with such a conscience he decides to do the opposite. For, as far as he can, he has by this very fact decided not to observe the law of God. Consequently, he sins mortally. Accordingly, although such a false conscience can be changed, nevertheless, as long as it remains, it is binding, since one who acts against it necessarily commits a sin.

However, a correct conscience and a false conscience bind in different ways. The correct conscience binds absolutely and for an intrinsic reason; the false binds in a qualified way and for an extrinsic reason.

I say that a correct conscience binds absolutely because it binds without qualification and in every circumstance. For, if one's conscience tells him to avoid adultery, he cannot change that conscience without sin, since he would commit a serious sin in the very error of changing such a conscience. Moreover, as long as it remains, it cannot actually be set aside without sin. Thus, it binds absolutely and in every event. But a false conscience binds only in a qualified way, since it binds conditionally. For one whose conscience tells him he must fornicate is not

obliged in such a way that he cannot omit the fornication without sin except on condition that such a conscience remains. But this situation can be changed, and without sin. Hence, such a conscience does not oblige in every event. For something can happen, namely, a change of conscience, and, when this takes place, one is no longer bound. That which is only conditional is said to be qualified.

I also say that a correct conscience binds for an intrinsic reason, and a false conscience binds for an extrinsic reason. This is clear from the following. For one who wishes or desires something because of something else desires that because of which he desires the others for an intrinsic reason, and the other for an extrinsic reason, as it were. Thus, one who loves wine because of its sweetness loves sweetness for an intrinsic reason, and wine for an extrinsic reason. But one who has a false conscience and believes that it is correct (otherwise, he would not be mistaken), clings to his false conscience because of the correctness he believes is there, and, strictly speaking, clings to a correct conscience, but one which is false accidentally, as it were, in so far as this conscience, which he believes to be correct, happens to be false. It is for this reason that, strictly speaking, he is bound by a correct conscience, but accidentally by a false conscience.

We can find this solution from what the philosopher says when he asks almost the same question, that is, whether one is guilty of excess only if he departs from right reason, or also if he departs from a mistaken reason. His solution is that one who departs from right reason goes to excess essentially, and one who departs from mistaken reason goes to excess accidentally. And a man departs absolutely from the former and with some qualification from the latter, for what is essential is absolute, and what is accidental is qualified.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. Although that which a false conscience dictates is out of harmony with the law of God, the one who is mistaken considers it the law of God. Therefore, taking the thing in itself, if he departs from this, he departs from the law of God, although it would be accidental that he does not depart from the law of God.
2. The argument proceeds correctly when there are distinct commands from higher and lower sources, and both, as essentially distinct, reach the one who is obliged by the command. But this is not the situation here, since the dictate of conscience is nothing other than the delivery of a divine command to him who has the conscience, as is clear from what we have said. In the proposed example the cases would be similar if the command of the emperor could never reach a man except through the proconsul, and the proconsul would not order anything except in so far as he repeated the emperor's commands. Then, it would be the same thing to despise the command of the emperor and the command of the

proconsul, whether the latter spoke the truth or lied.

3. A false conscience which is mistaken in things which are intrinsically evil commands something which is contrary to the law of God. Nevertheless, it says that what it commands is the law of God. Accordingly, one who acts against such a conscience becomes a kind of transgressor of the law of God, although one who follows such a conscience and acts according to it acts against the law of God and sins mortally. For there was sin in the error itself, since it happened because of ignorance of that which one should have known.

4. When a conscience is not probable, it should be changed. But, as long as such a conscience remains, one sins mortally if he acts against it. Hence, this does not prove that a false conscience does not bind as long as it remains, but that it does not bind absolutely and in every event.

5. We do not conclude from that argument that a false conscience does not bind under pain of sin if it is not followed, but that, if it is followed, it excuses from sin. Consequently, the argument is not to the point. When the error itself is not a sin, the conclusion is true, as when the error is due to ignorance of some fact. But, if it is ignorance of a law, the conclusion is wrong because the ignorance itself is a sin. For before a civil judge, also, one who thus appeals to ignorance of a law which he should know is not excused.

6. Although in natural reason there is a basis for proceeding to the opposite of that which a false conscience dictates, whether the mistake is about indifferent things or things intrinsically evil, natural reason does not actually dictate the opposite. For, if it did dictate the opposite, conscience would not be mistaken.

7. Although an indifferent action, in so far as the act itself is concerned, can be accepted or rejected, still, when one thinks that such an action has been commanded, it loses its indifference because of his judgment.

8. One whose conscience tells him to commit fornication is not completely perplexed, because he can do something by which he can avoid sin, namely, change the false conscience. But he is perplexed to some degree, that is, as long as the false conscience remains. And there is no difficulty in saying that, if some condition is presupposed, it is impossible for a man to avoid sin; just as, if we presuppose the intention of vainglory, one who is required to give alms cannot avoid sin. For, if he gives alms, because of such an intention, he sins; but, if he does not give alms, he violates the law.

9. When a false conscience says that something must be done, it commands this under some aspect of good, either as a work of justice, or temperance, and so forth. Therefore, one who acts against such a conscience falls into the vice opposed to the virtue to which his conscience thinks it belongs when commanding it. Or, if such a conscience orders something under the guise of a



command of God, or only of some superior, he commits the sin of disobedience by going against it.

## **Q. 17: Conscience**

### **ARTICLE V**

**In the fifth article we ask:**

**Does conscience in indifferent matters bind more than the command of a superior, or less?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 39, 3, 3, ad 3; *Ad Rom.* , c. 14, lect. 2.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems to bind less, for

1. A religious subject vows obedience to his superior. But he is required to keep his vow, as is said in Psalms (75:12): "Vow ye, and pay [them] to the Lord your God." Therefore, one seems to be obliged to obey a superior against his own conscience, and, thus, one is more obliged to obey a superior than conscience.
2. A superior must always be obeyed in things which are not against God's will. But indifferent things are not against God's will. Therefore, one is obliged to obey a superior in these matters. We conclude as before.
3. The higher power should be more obeyed than the lower power, as the Gloss says. But the soul of a prelate is higher than the soul of a subject. Therefore, the subject is bound more by the command of the superior than by his own conscience.
4. A subject should not pass judgment on the command of a superior, but the superior should judge the acts of the subject. But the subject would judge the command of the superior if he refused the command because of his own conscience. Therefore, no matter what conscience dictates in indifferent matters, the command of the superior should prevail.

#### **To the Contrary**

A spiritual bond is stronger than a physical bond, and an intrinsic bond stronger than an extrinsic bond. But conscience is an intrinsic spiritual bond, whereas the office of the superior is physical and extrinsic, as it seems, because all his authority is based on a dispensation which is limited to time. Hence, when we reach eternity, it will cease, as the Gloss indicates. Therefore, it seems that one should obey his conscience rather than a superior.

#### **REPLY**

The answer to this question is clear enough from what has been said. For it has been mentioned above that conscience binds only in virtue of a divine command, either in written law or in the law inherent in our nature. Therefore, to compare the bond of conscience with the bond resulting from the command of a superior is nothing else than to compare the bond of a divine command with the bond of a superior's command. Consequently, since the bond of a divine command binds against a command of a superior, and is more binding than the command of a superior, the bond of conscience is also greater than that of the command of a superior. And conscience will bind even when there exists a command of a superior to the contrary.

Nevertheless, the situation is not the same in the case of a correct conscience and that of a false conscience. For a correct conscience binds absolutely and perfectly against the command of a superior. It binds absolutely, because one cannot be freed from its obligation, for such a conscience cannot be changed without sin. And it binds perfectly, because a correct conscience binds in the sense not only that one who follows it does not commit sin, but also that he is free from sin, no matter what command of a superior there is to the contrary.

But a false conscience binds against the command of a superior even in indifferent matters with some qualification and imperfectly. It binds with some qualification, because it does not bind in every event, but on condition that it endures. For one can and should change such a conscience. It binds imperfectly, because it binds in the sense that the one who follows it does not commit a sin, but not in the sense that one who follows it avoids sin when there is a command of a superior to the contrary, and the command of the superior still binds to that indifferent thing. For in such a case he sins in not acting, because he acts against his conscience, and in acting, because he disobeys the superior. However, he sins more if he does not do what his conscience dictates, as long as that conscience remains, since it binds more than the precept of the superior.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. One who vows obedience must obey in those things to which the vow of obedience extends. He is not freed from that obligation by a mistake of conscience, nor, on the other hand, is he freed from the bond of conscience by that obligation. Thus, there remain in him two opposite obligations. One of these, conscience, is greater, because more intense, and less, because more easily removed; the other is just the opposite. For the obligation to obey the superior cannot be removed, whereas a false conscience can be changed.

2. Although of itself the work is indifferent, it loses its indifference because of the dictate of conscience.

3. Although a superior is higher than a subject, God, in virtue of whose command

conscience binds, is greater than the superior.

4. The subject does not have to judge about the command of the superior, but only about its fulfillment, which is his concern. For each is bound to examine his actions according to the knowledge he has from God, whether natural, acquired, or infused. For every man should act according to reason.

## Question Eighteen: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence

Did man in that state know God through His essence?

1. Did man in the state of innocence see God through creatures?
2. Did Adam in the state of innocence have faith about God?
3. Did Adam in the state of innocence have knowledge of all creatures?
4. Did Adam in the state of innocence see the angels through their essence?
5. Could Adam in the state of innocence be mistaken or deceived?
6. Would the children who were born of Adam in the state of innocence have
7. had full knowledge of all things, as Adam did?
8. In the state of innocence would children have had the full use of reason immediately at birth?

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### ARTICLE I

**The question concerns the knowledge of the first man in the state of innocence,**

**and in the first article we ask:**

**Did man in that state know God through his essence?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 23, 2, 1; *S.T.* , 1, 94, 1.]

### Difficulties

It seems that he did, for

1. The Master says: "Before sin, man saw God independently of any medium." But to see God independently of any medium is to see God through His essence. Therefore in the state of innocence man saw God through His essence.
2. It was said that the Master means that man saw God without a medium as far as obscurity due to sin is concerned, but not that he saw God without using creatures as a medium.—On the contrary, in that same place the Master says that, since we see God through a medium, we must reach Him by means of visible creatures. Therefore, he seems to mean the use of creatures as a medium. But to see without the use of creatures as a medium is to see through the essence. Therefore.
3. In Philippians (4:7) it is said: "And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding." But this means the peace which God gives the blessed in heaven. The Gloss explains it in this way: "All understanding, that is, our understanding, not the understanding of those who always see the face of the

Father." From this we see that the peace or joy of the blessed surpasses the understanding of all those who do not possess that joy. But Adam in his innocence saw the joys of the blessed. Hence, Gregory says: "Man, losing himself by sin, could not then see those joys of heaven which he was accustomed to contemplate before." Therefore, in that state Adam possessed the joy of heaven.

4. Hugh of St. Victor says: "In that state man knew his Creator with the knowledge with which He was then more clearly seen as present in contemplation. But to see God as present in contemplation would seem to be to see Him through His essence. Therefore, in the state of innocence Adam saw God through His essence.

5. Man was made to see God. For God made rational creatures to participate in His beatitude. This consists in seeing Him, as is shown in the *Sentences*.

Therefore, if Adam in the state of innocence did not see God through His essence, this was only because some medium prevented him from doing so. However, the medium due to sin did not prevent him, for he was then free from sin. Nor did the use of creatures as a medium prevent him, for God is closer to the rational soul than any creature is. Therefore, in the state of innocence Adam saw God through His essence.

6. just as the affective part of man is perfected only by the highest good, so the cognitive part is perfected only by the highest truth, as is clear from

*Spirit and Soul*. But everyone has within him the desire of his perfection. Therefore, in his original state Adam desired to see God through His essence. But whoever is deprived of that which he desires suffers. Therefore, if Adam did not then see God through His essence, he suffered. However, this is false, because suffering, since it is a punishment, cannot precede sin. Therefore, he saw God through His essence.

7. The soul of man "is so made to God's image that it is formed by the first truth itself without the interposition of any creature," as is said in

*Spirit and Soul*. But the image remained pure and whole in man in the state of innocence. Therefore, he was brought to the highest truth itself without any medium. Consequently, he saw God through His essence.

8. For us actually to understand something, all that is needed is the formation of actually intelligible species through abstraction from matter and the conditions of matter, which is the work of the agent intellect, and reception in our understanding, which is the work of the possible intellect. But the divine essence is of itself intelligible, inasmuch as it is completely separated from matter. It was also at the very center of man's soul, since God is said to be in all things through His essence. Therefore, since in the state of innocence there would be no obstacle in the soul of man, it seems that he saw God through His essence.

9. Since in the state of innocence Adam's soul was properly ordered, higher reason was not less perfectly disposed toward its object than lower reason toward its proper object. But lower reason, whose task it is to give its attention to temporal things, could see those temporal things immediately. Therefore, higher reason, whose task it is to contemplate eternal things, could see immediately the eternal essence of God.

10. That by which something is made actually sensible, namely, light, is known immediately by the sense of sight. Therefore, that by which something becomes actually intelligible is known immediately by man's understanding. But a thing is made actually intelligible by another only in so far as that other is in act. So, since God alone is pure act, He Himself is that by which all things become intelligible. Therefore, man's understanding in the first state saw God immediately, since then it had no obstacle.

11. Damascene says that in the state of innocence man "had a life which was blessed and rich in all things." But life's beatitude consists in seeing God through His essence. Therefore, he then saw God through His essence.

12. Damascene says: "Man was then refreshed by the enjoyment of the sweetest contemplation, like another angel." But the angels see God through His essence. Therefore, in that state Adam saw God through His essence.

13. Man's nature was more perfect in the state of innocence than after the fall. But after the fall some were allowed to see God through His essence while they still lived in this mortal life, as Augustine says of Paul and Moses. Therefore, with much greater reason Adam in the state of innocence saw God through His essence.

14. The Gloss on Genesis (2:2 1), "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam," says: "The correct interpretation is that Adam was made to fall into the ecstasy so that his mind, becoming a part of the angelic court and entering the sanctuary of God, might understand the last things."<sup>6</sup> From this it seems that that sleep was a kind of rapture. But those who are enraptured see God through His essence. Therefore, Adam, also, saw Him through His essence.

15. According to Damascene, Adam was placed not only in a corporeal but also in a spiritual paradise. But spiritual paradise is nothing other than beatitude, which consists in the sight of God through His essence. Therefore, he saw God through His essence.

16. Augustine says: "In the state of innocence nothing was missing which a good will could acquire." But a good will could acquire the sight of God through His essence. Therefore, this was not missing in the first parents. Therefore, they saw God through His essence.

## **To the Contrary**

1. Augustine says. that the sight of God through His essence is "the whole reward" of the saints. But in the state of innocence Adam was not one of the blessed. Therefore, he did not see God through His essence.
2. Bernard says that in this life God can be loved entirely, but not seen entirely. But He would be seen entirely if He were seen through His essence, since His essence is simple. Therefore, while he was in this life Adam could not see God through His essence.
3. When the soul is weighed down by the burden of the flesh, it loses distinct knowledge of things. Hence, Boethius says: "Retaining the sum total, it loses the individuals." But in the state of innocence man's soul was weighed down to some extent by the body, although not as much as after sin. Therefore, he was withheld from sight of the divine essence, for which the mind must be most perfectly disposed.
4. It is proper to Christ alone to be wayfarer and possessor at the same time. But in the state of innocence Adam was a wayfarer, as is clear from the fact that he could sin. Hence, he was not a possessor, and so did not see God through His essence.

## REPLY

Some have said that there is sight of God through His essence not only in heaven but also in this life, although not as perfectly in this life as in heaven. According to this opinion, man in the state of innocence had a sight midway between the sight of the blessed and the sight of man after the fall. For he saw less perfectly than the blessed, but more perfectly than man can see after the fall.

But this position is contrary to the testimony of Scripture, which consistently makes the sight of God man's final beatitude. Hence, from the very fact that a man sees God through His essence he is blessed. Thus, as the common opinion maintains, no one still on the way to beatitude can see God through His essence, not even Adam in the state of innocence. And reason can show the truth of this.

For every nature has something ultimate in which its final perfection consists. Now, the perfection of man, in so far as he is man, consists only in the act of understanding, by which he is constituted man. However, in the activity of understanding different levels can be distinguished in two ways. In one they derive from the diversity of intelligible objects. For, as the intelligible object which a person understands is more noble, so the more noble is his intelligence. For this reason, the *Ethics* says that the most perfect activity of understanding is the activity of that understanding which is well ordered to the best intelligible thing, just as the most beautiful physical sight is that of the sight "which is well ordered to the most beautiful object of sight." In the other way, levels in the activity of understanding derive from the manner of understanding.

For it is possible for one and the same intelligible object to be understood differently by different minds, more perfectly by one, and less perfectly by another.

However, it is not possible for the final limit of human perfection to be taken according to some manner of understanding, for among these modes of understanding one can perceive an infinite number of levels, one of which understands more perfectly than another. Nor is there any one who understands so perfectly that it is impossible to devise another who understands more perfectly, except God, who understands everything with infinite clarity. Hence, the final term of human perfection must lie in the understanding of some most perfect intelligible object, which is the divine essence.

Accordingly, every rational creature finds its beatitude in this, that it sees the essence of God, and not in this, that it sees it with such a degree of clarity, or more or less. Consequently, the sight of the blessed is not distinguished from the sight of those in this life because the former see more perfectly and the latter less perfectly, but because the former see and the latter do not see. Therefore, since Adam was still on the way to beatitude, he did not see God through His essence.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. In a given sight a threefold medium can be discerned. One is the medium *under which* it is seen; the second that by *which* it is seen, and this is the intentional likeness of the thing seen; the third is that *from which* one obtains knowledge of the thing seen. Thus, for instance, in bodily sight the medium under which a thing is seen is light, by which the thing becomes actually visible and the power of sight is given the perfection of seeing. The medium by which a thing is seen is the sensible species itself of the thing existing in the eye, which, as the form of the one seeing in so far as he is seeing, is the principle of the activity of sight. And the medium from which one receives knowledge of a thing seen is like a mirror, from which the eye at times receives the species of some visible thing, for example, a stone, and not from the stone itself.

We find these three in intellectual sight, too. Thus, the light of the agent intellect corresponds to physical light as the medium under which our understanding sees. The intelligible species, by which the possible intellect is made actually to understand, corresponds to the visible species. And, finally, the effects from which we come to a knowledge of a cause correspond to the medium from which knowledge of the thing seen is obtained, as from a mirror. For the likeness of the cause is not imprinted on our understanding directly by the cause, but by the effect, in which a likeness of the cause shines forth. Consequently, this type of knowledge is called "mirrored" knowledge because of the likeness which it has to



sight which takes place through a mirror.

Therefore, to know God, man, as he is after the fall, needs a medium which is like a mirror, in which there arises a likeness of God himself. For we must reach "the invisible things of him... by the things that are made," according to Romans (1:20). Man in the state of innocence, however, did not need this medium, but he did need a medium which is somewhat like the species of the thing seen, because he saw God through a spiritual light which was given to the human mind by God, and which was a kind of expressed likeness of the uncreated light.

But he will not need this medium in heaven, because he will see the essence of God in itself and not through any intelligible or sensible likeness of it, since no created likeness can so perfectly represent God that one who sees through it can know the essence of God. Yet, he will need the light of glory, which will be a kind of medium under which God is seen, according to Psalms (35:10): "In thy light we shall see light." The reason for this is that this sight is not natural to any creature, but only to God. As a result, no creature can reach it by his own natural power, but to acquire it one must be enlightened by a divinely given light.

The second sight, through a medium which is an intentional likeness, is natural to the angels, but above human nature. Accordingly, for it man needs the light of grace.

The third Sight is proper to human nature; hence, it alone remains in man after the fall. Therefore, it is clear that the sight by which man in the state of innocence saw God was midway between the sight which we now have and the sight of the blessed.

Accordingly, it is clear that after the fall man needs a triple medium to see God: creatures themselves, from which he rises to knowledge of God; a likeness of God, which he gets from creatures; and a light from which he receives the perfection of being directed toward God. This light may be the light of nature, such as the light of the agent intellect, or the light of grace, such as that of faith and wisdom. In the state before the fall, however, he needed a double medium: one which is a likeness of God, and one which is a light elevating and directing his mind. The blessed, however, need only one medium, the light of glory which elevates the mind. And God sees Himself without any medium, for He Himself is the light by which He sees Himself.

2. The Master does not reject the possibility of seeing God in the state of innocence through some likeness of a creature as a medium, but only the necessity of the medium of visible creation.

3. In the state of innocence Adam did not perceive the joys of the heavenly court so that he understood what and how great they were, for this belongs only to the blessed. However, he did know that they existed, because he, had some

participation of them.

4. In contemplation, God is seen through a medium which is the light of wisdom. This elevates the mind to the sight of things divine, not, however, to immediate vision of the divine essence itself. And it is in this way that God is seen through grace by the contemplatives after the fall, although He is seen more perfectly in the state of innocence.

5. Man was made to see God, not in the beginning but in the last stage of his perfection. Therefore, that he did not see God through His essence at the beginning of his existence was not the result of being hindered by some obstacle, but only the result of his own imperfection, because he did not then have that perfection which is needed to see the divine essence.

6. In the state of innocence Adam desired to see God through His essence, but that desire of his was well ordered. For he strove to see God when it would be time for him to do so. Hence, he did not suffer at all at not seeing God before the proper time.

7. Our mind is said to be formed immediately by the first truth itself, not because [there is question whether] it knows the first truth at times through the mediation of some habit, species, or creature, but because it is formed by it as a copy is formed to the likeness of its immediate exemplar. For some have held, as Dionysius points out, that among beings the higher are the models for the lower, and thus the soul of man proceeds from God through the mediation of angels, and is formed to the divine model through the mediation of an angelic model. The passage cited denies this, for the human mind is created immediately by God and formed immediately by Himself as its exemplar. For this reason, also, it achieves beatitude immediately in Him as its end.

8. Although, intrinsically, God is completely intelligible, and was present to the mind of man in the state of innocence, He was not there as an intelligible form. For man's understanding did not yet have the perfection needed for this.

9. The object of higher reason according to its natural state is not the divine essence itself, but certain intelligible characters which flow into the mind from God and are received from creatures. By these we are brought to the perfection of sight of eternal things.

10. The agent intellect is the immediate and proximate principle by which things which are potentially intelligible become actually intelligible. But the first principle by which all things become intelligible is uncreated light itself. Thus, the divine essence is compared to intelligible things as the substance of the sun is to visible bodies. However, it is not necessary for one who sees some color to see the substance of the sun, but only the light of the sun, in so far as it illumines color. Similarly, it is not necessary for one who knows some intelligible thing to see the

divine essence, but only to perceive intelligible light, which originally derives from God, in so far as by it something is made actually intelligible.

11. We should not take what Damascene says to mean that Adam was one of the blessed simply, but that he had the kind of beatitude which fitted his state. Similarly, in the state of affliction some are said to be blessed in some respect by reason of some perfection which exists in them, as in Matthew (5:3): "Blessed are the poor in spirit..."

12. Even the angels in the state of their original nature did not see God through His essence; this belonged to them only through glory. But in the state of innocence Adam had through grace the kind of sight which the angels had naturally, as has been said. Therefore, he is said to have seen as another angel.

13. By a certain privilege of grace Moses and Paul saw God through His essence. Still, although simply they were in the state of wayfarers, in some respect, that is, in so far as they saw God through His essence, they were not in that state. Therefore in the state of innocence, in which he was still a wayfarer, Adam had no claim to vision of God through His essence. Yet, if by a rapture he was raised above the ordinary knowledge which belonged to him, and so saw God through His essence, it is not strange, for such a grace can be given just as well in the state of innocence as after the fall.

14. If we maintain that Adam's ecstasy was of the same nature as Paul's rapture, then we will say that that vision surpassed the ordinary manner of sight which then belonged to him. But, since it does not explicitly say that in that sleep he saw God through His essence, we can say that in that ecstasy he was not elevated to a vision of the essence of God, but to a knowledge of certain more profound truths about the divine mysteries than was fitting for him to know at that time according to the common manner of human cognition.

15. Spiritual paradise, in so far as it means perfect delight, which makes one blessed, consists in the sight of God. But, in so far as it means delight about God without qualification, it consists in any kind of contemplation which has God as its object.

16. His will would not have been good and well ordered if he had desired to have at that time what did not then belong to him. For this reason, the conclusion does not follow.

## **Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence**

### **ARTICLE II**

**In the second article we ask:**

**Did man in the state of innocence see god through creatures?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 2 3, 2, 1; *S.T.* , I, 94, 1.]

## Difficulties

It seems that he did not, for

1. To know God through creatures is to know a cause through an effect. But this is knowledge which involves comparison and investigation, and, since this is feeble and imperfect, it did not befit man in the state of innocence. Therefore, in the state of innocence Adam did not see God through creatures.
2. When the cause is removed the effect is removed. But Isidore says that the cause why man sees God through creatures is that he turned from the Creator and toward creatures. This was not yet so at that time in the state of innocence. Therefore, at that time man did not see God through creatures.
3. According to Hugh of St. Victor, man in that state knew God, tcontemplating Him as present." But He is seen in contemplation without the medium of creatures. Therefore, he did not see God through creatures.
4. Isidore says that the angels, created before the rest of creation, did not know God through creatures. But, according to Damascene, man in the state of innocence saw God as another angel. Therefore, he did not know God from creatures.
5. Darkness is not the reason for knowing light. But, compared to the Creator, every creature is darkness. Therefore, the Creator cannot be known through creatures.
6. Augustine says: "I say that perhaps He spoke with them [our first parents] in this way, although not with the same degree of participation in the divine wisdom as the angels possess, yet, with whatever greater limitations imposed by human nature, within the same general category of vision and conversation. " From this it seems that we can conclude that man in the state of innocence knew God with the same mode of knowledge with which the angels know him. But angels do not know God through creatures, as is clear in Augustine and Dionysius. Therefore, man in the state of innocence did not see God through creatures.
7. The soul of man is more like God than is any sensible creature, Therefore, when the soul of man was in its purity, it did not seek knowledge of God through visible creation.
8. Less perfect knowledge is superfluous when more perfect is given. But, as Hugh of St. Victor says," man in the state of innocence knew God "as present in contemplation." Therefore, he did not know God through creatures.

## To the Contrary

Damascene says that Adam was established in a bodily paradise that there he might view his Creator through creatures.

## REPLY

For a clear understanding of this question we must bear in mind that, according to Boethius, nature begins with perfect things. This can be seen in divine works, for in any work of God the things which are first are perfect. Hence, since in the state of innocence God made Adam the source of the whole human race, not only to transmit human nature to posterity but also to pass on original justice to others, man in the state of innocence must be considered as having had a twofold perfection. One of these is natural and the other is given freely by God over and above what is due from natural principles.

According to natural perfection, however, man could fittingly know God only from creation. This is clear from the following. In any genus a passive power extends only to those things to which an active power extends. Therefore, the Commentator says" that there is no passive power in nature for which there is not a corresponding active power.

In human nature, however, there is a double power for understanding: one passive, which is the possible intellect, and the other active, which is the agent intellect. Consequently, the possible intellect according to the natural process is in potency only to those forms which become actually intelligible through the agent intellect. But these are only the forms of sensible things which are abstracted from phantasms' For immaterial substances are intelligible of themselves and not because we make them intelligible. Therefore, our possible intellect cannot reach any intelligible objects except through those forms which it abstracts from phantasms. Thus it is that by our natural power we can know God and' other immaterial substances only through sensible things.

But, in the state of innocence, man, by reason of the perfection of grace, received a knowledge of God by means of an internal inspiration due to the irradiation of divine wisdom. In this way he did not know God from visible creation but from a spiritual likeness imprinted on his mind.

Accordingly, there were thus in man two kinds of knowledge of God, one, by which he knew God as the angels do, through an internal inspiration; the other, by which he knew God as we do, through sensible creatures. However, this second knowledge of his differed from our knowledge as the investigation of one who has the habit of a science and proceeds from things he knows to a consideration of things which he had once known differs from the investigation of one who is learning and strives to proceed from what he knows to things which he does not know. However, we cannot have knowledge of God any other way except by coming to know Him from creatures. But Adam, who already knew God in a different way, that is, through an internal inspiration, also possessed a

knowledge of Him from creatures.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. That process of reasoning by which we reach the unknown from the known includes imperfection, since through it what is sought is unknown. But the process of reasoning which man in the state of innocence made use of was not of that sort. However, there is nothing to prevent us from saying that something [im]perfect belonged to man in that state, not indeed [im]perfect in that which was due to his nature, but by comparison with a higher nature. For, when human nature was created, it did not have as much perfection as an angelic nature or the divine nature.
2. What Isidore says gives the reason why man had of necessity to get his knowledge of God, as an unknown, from creatures. Man in the state of innocence did not need this, as has been said.
3. Besides the knowledge of contemplation, he had another knowledge of God by which he knew Him from creatures, as was said above.
4. Through grace, Adam was like an angel in the knowledge of contemplation., But besides this he had another knowledge belonging to his nature, as has been said.
5. Creatures are darkness in so far as they are from nothing, but, in so far as they are from God, they participate in some likeness of Him and thus lead to His likeness.
6. There, Augustine is talking of that knowledge which is had through divine inspiration. This is clear from the fact that he mentions there the speech of God, and is not altogether silent about the other mode of knowledge, when he adds: "Perhaps, also, God spoke to him with that manner of speaking which takes place through creatures," whether by images of bodies in ecstasy of spirit, or by some image presented to the senses of the body themselves.
7. Although the soul is more like God than any other creature is, it cannot reach a knowledge of His nature so that it can distinguish it from other things except through sensible creatures, from which our knowledge takes its origin.
8. Although Adam saw God through the light of contemplation, the knowledge by which he saw God by means of creatures was not superfluous, that is to say, it was not superfluous that he knew the same thing in several ways, and that he had not only gratuitous but also natural knowledge.

## **Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence**

### **ARTICLE III**

**In the third article we ask:  
Did adam in the state of innocence have faith about God?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 29, 3; *S.T.* , I, 95, 3; *II-II*, 5, 1.]

**Difficulties**

It seems that he did not, for

1. The knowledge of faith is obscure knowledge, as is clear in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (13:12): "We see now in a glass..." But in the state of innocence Adam had plain, not obscure, knowledge. Therefore, he did not have faith.
2. Hugh of St. Victor says: "He knew his Creator not with the knowledge with which believers now seek their absent Creator by faith." We conclude as before.
3. Gregory says that faith belongs to him "who cannot know by experience" the things which must be believed. But, as is said in the same place, Adam knew by experience what we believe. Therefore, he did not have faith.
4. Faith concerns not only the Creator but also the Redeemer. But in the state of innocence Adam seems to have known nothing about the Redeemer, because he did not foresee his fall, without which there would have been no redemption. Therefore, Adam did not have faith.

**To the Contrary**

1. Augustine says<sup>3</sup> that in the state of innocence Adam had "the charity of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned."
2. As the Master says, he had all the virtues. Therefore, he also had faith.

**REPLY**

In his first state, Adam had faith. This becomes evident if we consider the object of faith. For the object of faith is the first truth itself, in so far as it is not evident. Moreover, I say not evident, either through an intentional likeness, as it appears to the blessed, or through natural reason, as some things about God are known to some philosophers, as that He is intelligible, incorporeal, and so on. Adam, however, knew not only what can be known about God by natural reason, but even more. However, he did not attain to vision of God through His essence. Consequently, it is clear that he had knowledge of God through faith.

But faith is twofold, according to a twofold hearing and a twofold speaking. For "faith cometh by hearing," as is said in Romans (10:17). Now, there is an external speaking, by which God speaks to us through preachers, and an interior speaking, by which He speaks to us through an internal inspiration. This internal inspiration is called a kind of speaking in view of its likeness to external speaking.

For, as in external speaking we present to the hearer not the thing itself which we want to make known but a sign of that thing, that is to say, a word which expresses some meaning; so in internal inspiration it is not His essence which God presents to view, but some sign of His essence, which is some spiritual likeness of His wisdom.

Faith arises in the hearts of the faithful from both kinds of hearing. By interior hearing it arose in those who first received faith and taught it, as in the Apostles and Prophets. Hence, in Psalms (84:9) we read: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me." But faith arises in the hearts of the rest of the faithful, who receive knowledge of the faith through other men, by the second kind of hearing. Adam, however, had faith, and as one who first learned it from God. Therefore, he should have had faith through interior speaking.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. He did not have knowledge so plain that it was enough to remove the obscurity of faith. This is removed only through the appearance of the first truth.
2. Hugh denies to the first man the kind of knowledge of faith which belongs to us, who have knowledge of faith, not through a revelation made to us, but through adherence to revelations made to others.
3. That experience which man had was not the kind which those who see God through His essence have, as has been said earlier. Therefore, it is not enough to make faith superfluous.
4. Adam had only implicit and not explicit faith about the Redeemer in so far as he believed that God would make ample provision for all the things which would be necessary for his salvation.

## **Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence**

### **ARTICLE IV**

**In the fourth article we ask:**

**Did Adam in the state of innocence have knowledge of all creatures?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.*, 23, 2, 2; *S.T.*, I, 94, 3; *II-II*, 5, 2, ad 2.]

### **Difficulties**

It seems that he did not, for

1. He did not have knowledge of futures, since this is proper only to God, according to Isaiah (41:23): "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, and we



shall know that ye are gods." But among creatures there were many things which were in the future. Therefore, he did not have knowledge of all creatures.

2. As Avicenna says, the senses are necessary to the human soul so that through them it may get perfect knowledge of things. Therefore, if the soul of Adam had knowledge of all things from the beginning, his senses would have been given to him to no purpose. But this cannot be, since nothing is to no purpose in the works of God. Therefore, he did not have knowledge of all things.

3. As Boethius says: "Though the mind is born enfolded in the cloud of bodily members, it has not completely forgotten itself, and, while losing the particulars, it retains the sum." Here it is shown that the soul, when first created, had confused knowledge, by which it knew things in general, but did not have distinct knowledge, by which it knew individual things in their proper natures. Therefore, if Adam had the kind of knowledge which it is fitting for the human soul to have when it is created, it seems that he did not have knowledge of creatures distinctly, but only in a confused way.

4. Proper knowledge of a thing is had only through the existence of its proper species in the soul. But, as appears from the Philosopher, when the human soul is created, it is "like a tablet on which nothing is written." Therefore, when Adam was first created, he could not have proper knowledge of created things.

5. It was said that, although he did not have this in virtue of his nature, he had it by divine gift.—On the contrary, when first created, all men are equal with respect to merit, and specifically similar to each other. Therefore, if perfect knowledge of things was conferred on Adam by God when he was first created, it seems that with equal reason this is conferred on all other men when they are created. But we see that this is false.

6. Nothing which is moved toward the perfection of knowledge is at the term of its perfection. But Adam was moved toward the perfection of knowledge. Therefore, he was not at the term of knowledge, as one who had perfect knowledge of creatures. I prove the minor: According to the Philosopher, before the intellect understands, it is not anything of the things which exist. But, after it understands, it is actually something of those things. Thus, at some time it is actually something of things that exist, and sometimes it is not. But everything which has this kind of existence is on the way to perfect act. Therefore, when first created, the human understanding is on the way to perfect knowledge. Hence, when Adam's understanding was first created, it was not at the term of perfect knowledge, but on the way to perfection.

7. For angels to be infused with knowledge of all natural things as soon as they are created is part of the excellence of angelic nature, according to *The Causes*: "Every intelligence is full of forms." But human nature does not rise to the excellence of angelic nature. Therefore, it was not fitting for

the soul of the first man, when first created, to have knowledge of all things.

8. It is possible for the intellect to understand only when it actually becomes the intelligible thing. But the human understanding cannot actually become many intelligible things at once. Therefore, neither can it know many intelligible things at once; hence, the first man could not have knowledge of all things at once.

9. For every subject of perfectibility there *is* one corresponding perfection, because one power cannot be perfected at one time except by one act of one kind. Thus, in first matter there can be only one substantial form, and in a body only one color. But the human understanding is a power which is perfected by the habits of the sciences. Therefore, it is impossible for many habits to be in the soul at the same time. Consequently, Adam's soul could not have knowledge of all things, since different things are known through different habits.

10. If Adam knew all creatures, he knew them either in the Word, or in their proper natures, or in his intelligence. But he did not know them in the Word, for that is the knowledge of the blessed, who see the Word. Nor did he see them in their proper natures, since all of them did not yet exist in their proper natures. Nor did he see them in his own intelligence, for it is not contrary to the perfection of the first state for a higher power to receive something from a lower power, as imagination from sense. Hence, it was appropriate for the human soul to have the intellect receive from sense. Consequently, since he did not perceive all creatures through sense, it was impossible for all things to be in his intelligence. Therefore, he did not in any way have knowledge of all creatures.

11. Adam was created in a state in which he could with equal reason progress in understanding as well as in affection. But he who has knowledge of all things cannot make progress in that knowledge. Therefore, he did not have knowledge of all things.

12. Augustine seems to say that Adam was placed in paradise to work, not from necessity but for the pleasure of tilling the soil. This comes from the fact that "human reason in a certain sense converses with physical reality, with the seeds which have been sown, with the shoots which have been planted, as if it asked them what the power of the root and the seed was, what it could do or could not do." But to ask nature about the power of nature is nothing else but to learn the powers of nature from seeing the activities of nature. Therefore, Adam had to receive knowledge of things from things. Thus, he did not have knowledge of all creatures.

13. In the state of innocence Adam was not more perfect than the beatified angels. But they do not know everything. For this reason, Dionysius says that the lower angels are purified from ignorance by the higher angels. Therefore, neither did man in the state of innocence know all things.

14. As Augustine says, the demons can know the secrets of hearts only in so far as these become known from movements of the body. Therefore,, since the angelic understanding has clearer sight than the human understanding, it seems that even Adam in the state of innocence could not know the secrets of hearts. Thus, he did not have knowledge of all creatures.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Augustine says" that in that state "nothing was missing which a good will could acquire." But with a good will he could want to have knowledge of all things. Therefore, he had knowledge of all things.

2. Adam was an image [of God] more in his soul than in his body. But, when first created, Adam was perfect in body as regards age, stature, and all his members. Therefore, he was perfect also in soul as regards all knowledge.

3. The perfection of nature when it was created is greater than the perfection of fallen nature. But knowledge of the future pertains to the state of fallen nature. Hence, after the fall some saints were raised to the perfection of knowing the future through the gift of prophecy. Therefore, with much greater reason Adam had knowledge of the future, and much more of the present.

[4. Adam had all the virtues. Therefore, he had all knowledge.]

5. The names of things should fit their properties. But Adam gave names to things, as is clear from Genesis(2:20). Therefore, he had full knowledge of the nature of things.

### **REPLY**

Adam had a twofold knowledge: one natural and one due to grace. Natural human knowledge can extend to those things which we can know under the guidance of natural reason. And there is a beginning and a term of this natural knowledge. It has its beginning in a kind of confused knowledge of all things, in so far as man naturally has within him a knowledge of the general principles in which, as in seeds, there virtually pre-exist all the objects of knowledge which can be known by natural reason. This knowledge reaches its term when the things which are virtually in the principles are expressed in act, as animal generation is said to reach its term when the animal, with all its members perfect and distinct, is developed from the seed of the animal in which all its members pre-existed virtually.

Adam, however, when first created, had to have natural knowledge not only in its first stage but also in its term, because he was created as the father of the whole human race. For the sons should receive from their father not only existence through generation, but also instruction through teaching.

One is not a principle in so far as he is in potency, but in so far as he is in act,

and, for this reason, act is naturally prior to potency, and the activity of nature always begins from things which are perfect. Because of this, the first man had to be set at the term of perfection as soon as he was created, and this both in body, so that he would be a suitable principle of generation of the whole human race, and in mind, so that he would be an adequate principle of instruction.

And, just as nothing in his body which pertained to bodily perfection was not actually developed, so, too, whatever there was seminally or virtually in the first principles of reason was developed in its entirety, in so far as the perfect knowledge of all those things to which the power of the first principles could extend was concerned. Consequently, we must say that whatever knowledge of things any man could ever acquire by his natural talents Adam had in its entirety by habitual natural knowledge.

There also are many things in creatures which cannot be known by natural knowledge, that is, those to which the power of first principles does not extend, such as future contingents, the secret thoughts of men, and the dispositions of creatures in so far as they are subject to divine providence. For he could not have a comprehensive grasp of divine providence, and so no comprehensive grasp of the order of creatures themselves in so far as they are subject to divine providence. For providence sometimes ordains creatures to many things beyond their natural capacity. But he was helped to know these things to some extent by the other knowledge, which is knowledge due to grace, through which God spoke internally to him, as Augustine says. But the first man was not given this knowledge as though he were placed at the term of its perfection, since one reaches the term of this freely conferred knowledge only in the vision of glory, to which he had not yet arrived. Therefore, he did not know all of these things, but only as much of them as God revealed to him. Accordingly, we have to answer both sets of difficulties.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. There are some futures which can be known naturally in their causes. Adam had knowledge of these. But he did not know all the others which cannot be known naturally, but only those which were revealed to him by God.
2. Adam should've had in its perfection everything which human nature requires. But, just as the power of growth is given to man so that he may reach perfect stature, so the senses are given to the human soul to attain the perfection of knowledge. Accordingly, just as Adam did not have the power of growth, in order through it to grow larger, but in order that he might lack nothing of what is needed for the perfection of his nature, so, too, he did not have senses to acquire knowledge through them, but to have a perfect human nature, and so that through the senses he might experience again what he knew habitually.
3. Adam, in so far as he was made the source of all human nature, had

something more than is commonly due to all men. For, in so far as he was the teacher of the whole human race, it was incumbent on him not to have confused, but distinct, knowledge, so that with it he could teach. And for this reason it was also necessary that, when he was first created, his understanding should not be like a tablet on which nothing is written, but should have the fullness of knowledge by reason of God's action. Nor was this necessary for other men, who were not made the source of the human race.

4.-6. The solution to the fourth, fifth, and sixth difficulties is clear from the third response.

7. The angels were created with full knowledge of physical reality because it is due to their nature, but this is not so with man, who obtained this knowledge by reason of God's action. Therefore, human nature still remains lower than the angelic nature. Similarly, man's body is naturally more imperfect than a heavenly body, even though, by the power of God, Adam's body had its full stature when it was created. This belongs to heavenly bodies as due to their nature.

8. Adam's understanding could not actually be many intelligible things, as actually informed by them; however, it could simultaneously be habitually informed by many intelligible things.

9. That argument is valid when the power is perfected completely by one perfection, as a substantial form perfects matter and color perfects the potency of a surface. But one habit of knowledge does not fully perfect the power of understanding with reference to all intelligible things. Therefore the case is not the same.

10. Adam had knowledge of all natures, not in the Word, but in their proper nature and in his intelligence. This twofold manner of knowing is not distinguished according to the species of things in so far as something is known by these species, but in so far as they are what is known. For, even when the understanding knows things in their proper nature, it knows them only through species which are present to it. Accordingly, when through species which are present to it the understanding is directed to things which are outside the soul, then it is said to know things in their proper nature. But, when the understanding stops at the species themselves, studying their nature and arrangement, then is it said to know things in its intelligence, as, for instance, when it understands that it understands and how it understands.

Therefore, to say that all things did not yet exist in their proper nature, and so could not be known in their proper nature, does not follow. For to know a thing in its proper nature is used in two senses. In one, it is used by way of a statement, namely, when the thing itself is known to be in its own proper nature. And this can be done only when the thing exists in its proper nature. Adam did not know all things in their proper nature in this way, for all things did not yet exist in their

proper nature, unless we were to say that they were not in their proper nature perfectly, but imperfectly. For all things which were produced later in the works of the six days [of creation] did pre-exist in some way, as is clear from Augustine.

In the other way, one is said to know a thing in its proper nature by way of a definition, that is to say, when one knows what the proper nature of a thing is. In this way, even things which do not exist can be known in their proper nature. Thus, I would be able to know what a lion is even if all lions were dead. In this way, Adam could know in their proper nature even things which did not then exist.

Similarly, there is nothing to prevent all creatures from being in his intelligence through their likenesses, although he did not perceive them all by his senses. For, although it is not contrary to the dignity of the first state for a higher power to receive something from a lower, to be created without the fullness of knowledge and to have to receive knowledge only from sense were contrary to the perfection which belonged to the first man.

11. Adam could make progress in knowledge in two ways. One of these related to things which he did not know, that is, those to which natural reason could not reach. In these he could make progress partly by reason of divine revelation, as in knowledge of divine mysteries, and partly from sense experience, as in knowledge of futures, which, though previously unknown to him, would become known when they came to pass. The other way related to that which he knew, and thus he could later know also through sense experience that which he knew only through intellectual knowledge.

12. Those words of Augustine are not to be taken as though he meant that Adam had to, know the power of nature from the works of nature, but that he knew by experience that the nature, which he knew interiorly with his mind, acted according to that which pre-existed in his knowledge. And this he found delightful.

13. The angels are purified from ignorance, not of natural things, but of divine mysteries. This ignorance existed in Adam, too, as has been said. And for this he himself needed an angelic illumination.

14. The secret thoughts of men are among those things to which natural reason cannot extend its knowledge. Hence, our judgment about these is the same as that about the knowledge of future contingents.

### **Answers to Contrary Difficulties**

1. With a good will Adam was able to will only what he willed according to right order, that is, to seek to have what he wanted at its proper time, and not to want what did not benefit him.

2. Adam had natural perfection in his body, but not the supernatural perfection

which is the perfection of glory. Consequently, it does not follow that he had in his soul any other than the perfection of natural knowledge.

3. Foreknowledge of futures is indeed a perfection of human nature, because it does have this perfection even after the fall; it is not a perfection, however, in such a way that it is natural to man. Hence, there was no need for Adam to have such a perfection. For it belongs to Christ alone to be given everything which the other saints had through grace, because He is the source of grace for us, as Adam is the source of nature. It was for this reason that the perfection of natural knowledge was due to Adam.

4. It was by reason of the state of innocence that Adam had all the virtues, for, if any were lacking in him, he would not have had original justice. But the state of innocence does not require the possession of all knowledge. Hence, the case is not the same.

5. We read that Adam gave names to the animals and knew their natures fully, and, consequently, knew the natures of all other natural things. But it does not follow from this that he knew things which surpass natural knowledge.

## **Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence**

### **ARTICLE V**

**In the fifth article we ask:**

**Did Adam in the State of innocence see the angels through their essence?**

[Parallel readings: *S.T.* , I, 94, 2.]

### **Difficulties**

It seems that he did, for

1. Gregory says: "In paradise man was accustomed to enjoy the words of God and to share in purity of heart and loftiness of vision with the spirits of the beatified angels." Therefore, through the loftiness of his vision he seems to have attained even to the vision of the angels.

2. On the words of Genesis (2:2 1), "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam," the Gloss reads: "The correct interpretation of this ecstasy is that it was given so that Adam's mind, sharing the company of the heavenly court, might enter into the sanctuary of God and understand the last things." But he could not share the company of the heavenly court unless he knew the angels. Therefore, he had knowledge of the angels.

3. The Master says: "Man had a knowledge of the things which were made for his sake." But, along with other creatures, even the angels are made in some way for

man's sake, as the Master says. Therefore, he had knowledge of the angels.

4. It is more difficult to make something which is intelligible in potency become intelligible actually and to understand it than to understand that which is of itself actually intelligible. But Adam's understanding could make species of material things, which of themselves are intelligible in potency, become actually intelligible, and in this way understand material things. Therefore, with much more reason he was able to understand the essences of the angels, which of themselves are actually intelligible, since they are free of matter.

5. That someone does not better understand things which are of themselves more intelligible is due to a defect of his understanding. But the essences of the angels are of themselves more intelligible than the essences of material things, and there was no defect in Adam's understanding. Accordingly, since he knew material things through their essence, with much more reason he could know the angels through their essence.

6. The intellect can understand material things by abstracting the quiddity from the material supposite. And, if that quiddity is again a supposite having a quiddity, it can with equal reason abstract the quiddity from it. And, since this cannot go on to infinity, it will at last arrive at the understanding of some simple quiddity, which does not have [another] quiddity. But such a quiddity is the quiddity of a separate substance, that is to say, of an angel. Therefore, Adam's intellect could know the essence of an angel.

7. According to the Philosopher, since understanding is a power not joined to an organ, it is not destroyed by an excessively intelligible object. "For, after it has understood the highest intelligible, it does not understand the lowest intelligibles; less, but more," contrary to what takes place in sense. But Adam's understanding in the state of innocence was whole and complete. Therefore, the excellence of an intelligible object was not an impediment to his understanding of it. Consequently, he was able to know the angels through their essence, since the only impediment to this knowledge seems to be the excellence of the intelligible object.

8. As was mentioned above, Adam, as soon as he was created, had all the knowledge to which a man can come naturally. But man can naturally come to a knowledge of the separated substances through their essence, as is clear from the statements of many philosophers, which the Commentator mentions. Therefore, Adam knew the angels through their essence.

9. It is evident that Adam knew his own soul through its essence. But the essence of the soul is free from matter, just as an angel's essence. Therefore, he could also know the angels through their essence.

10. Adam's knowledge was intermediate between our knowledge and that of the



blessed. But the blessed see and know the essence of God, and we know the essence of material things. But between God and material things are spiritual substances, that is, the angels. Therefore, Adam knew the angels through their essence.

### **To the Contrary**

1. In its knowledge no power can reach beyond its object. But the objects of the intellective soul are phantasms, to which the intellective soul is related, as sense is to sensibles, as is said in *The Soul*. Therefore, our soul can attain to knowledge only of those things which it can derive from phantasms. But the essence of the angels is beyond all phantasms. Therefore, by natural knowledge, the perfection of which we assign to Adam, man cannot reach a knowledge of the angels through their essence.

2. It was said that, although an angel cannot be perceived through phantasms, some effect of an angel can be grasped under the guise of a phantasm, and from such an effect the angel can be known.—On the contrary, no effect which is not equal to its cause is sufficient of itself to be a means to knowledge of the essence of its cause. Otherwise, those who know God from creatures would see the essence of God, which is false. But a physical effect, which alone can be grasped in a phantasm, is the kind of effect which is not equal to the power of the angels. Therefore, through this kind of effect one cannot know what an angel is, but only whether he exists.

3. It was said that Adam was able to know the angels through some intelligible effect, according to the dictum of Avicenna that the presence of intelligences in us is nothing other than the presence of their imprints in us.—On the contrary, what is received in a thing is received there according to the mode of being of that in which it is received. But the mode of being of the human soul is lower than that of the angelic nature. Therefore, the imprint made on the human soul by an angel, or by the angelic light, with which it enlightens the mind, is in the human soul in a lower manner than in the angelic nature. Accordingly, since the soul knows a thing through the mode in which the thing known is within it, through this kind of imprint the soul does not reach knowledge of an angel as it is in its essence.

### **REPLY**

There is a twofold knowledge by which something can be known. One is that by which we know whether a thing exists, and according to this in the state of innocence Adam knew the angels both by natural knowledge and divine revelation far more fully and familiarly than we know them. The other is that by which we know what a thing is, and this is to know it through its essence. And, as I see it, Adam in the state of innocence did not know the angels in this way. The reason for this is that a twofold knowledge is ascribed to Adam: natural

knowledge and knowledge due to grace.

That he did not know angels through their essence with natural knowledge can be seen with certainty from this. In no genus does a natural passive power extend farther than that to which the active power of the same genus extends, just as in nature there is a passive power only with reference to those things to which some natural active power can extend, as the Commentator says. In the understanding of the human soul, however, there is a twofold power: one passive, the possible intellect, and the other active, the agent intellect. Consequently, the possible intellect is naturally in potency to have produced in it only those things which the agent intellect is naturally constituted to produce. However, this does not exclude the possibility of other things being produced in it by divine activity, as they are produced in physical nature through miraculous activity. But the action of the agent intellect does not make intelligible those things which are of themselves intelligible, such as the essences of the angels, but things which of themselves are potentially intelligible, such as the essence of material things, which are received through sense and imagination. Hence, in the possible intellect there are naturally produced only those intelligible species which are abstracted from phantasms. However, it is impossible to reach vision of the essence of separated substances through this type of species, since they have no proportion to separated substances and belong, as it were, to a different genus from spiritual essences. Therefore, by natural knowledge man cannot attain to knowledge of the angels through their essence.

Similarly, Adam was not capable of this even through the knowledge due to grace. For knowledge due to grace is higher than knowledge due to nature, but this elevation can be taken with reference either to the intelligible object or to the manner of understanding. With reference to the intelligible object, man's knowledge is indeed raised through grace even without a change of state, as when we are raised to a knowledge of things which are above reason through the grace of faith, and similarly through the grace of prophecy. But, in so far as its manner of knowing is concerned, human knowledge is not elevated without a change of man's state. But the manner in which his understanding knows naturally is by receiving from phantasms, as has been said. Consequently, unless there is a change in man's state, his understanding, even in the knowledge due to grace, which is through divine revelation, must always recur to phantasms. This is what Dionysius says: "It is impossible for the divine radiance to shine on us in any other way, except as shrouded in a variety of sacred veils." But in the state of innocence Adam was in the state of a wayfarer. Hence, in all knowledge due to grace he had to look to phantasms. The essences of angels, however, cannot be seen with that mode of knowledge, as has been said. 13 Thus, Adam did not know the angels through their essence either through natural knowledge or through knowledge due to grace, unless, perhaps, we say that he was elevated to a higher state through grace, as Paul was in his rapture.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. All we can conclude from the authoritative citation from Gregory is that Adam knew the angels in some lofty vision, not, however, so lofty that it reached a knowledge of their essence.
2. If we understand that Adam's sleep was of the same nature as Paul's rapture, there would be nothing to prevent us from saying that he saw the angels through their essence in that rapture. But this was above the common mode of knowing which then belonged to him. However, if we understand that his sleep was not of such a nature that in it Adam in some respect was elevated to the state of the blessed, but was like that in which it is customary for the minds of the prophets to be raised to vision of the divine mysteries, as the words of the Gloss seem to intend, then he is said to have shared the company of the heavenly court through a certain pre-eminence of knowledge, which still did not reach their essence.
3. Adam had knowledge of the angels in so far as they were made for his sake. For he knew that they would be companions of his beatitude and helpers for his salvation in this life, in so far as he knew the distinction of [angelic] orders and their duties much better than we know them.
4. Difficulty in understanding arises in two ways. In one, the difficulty comes from the thing known; in the other, from the one knowing. On the part of the thing known, it is more difficult to make something intelligible and understand it than to understand that which of itself is intelligible. But, on the part of the one knowing, it can be more difficult to know that which is itself intelligible. And this is the case with the human understanding, since naturally to understand separated essences is out of proportion with its power, for the reason we have given.
5. Adam's understanding did not suffer from the lack of any perfection which should have been in it at that time. However, it did have some natural deficiencies, among which one was that in knowing it had to look to phantasms. But this is a natural condition of human understanding by reason of its union with the body, and by reason of the fact that by its nature it is the lowest in the order of intellects.
6. By abstraction, understanding can reach a quiddity of a natural thing which does not have another quiddity, and which it can understand because it abstracts it from phantasms and makes it intelligible through the light of the agent intellect. From this it receives the possibility of being perfected by the quiddity as by a proper perfection. But it cannot rise from this quiddity to a knowledge of the essence of a separated substance, because the former quiddity is completely incapable of representing the latter, since quiddity does not exist in separated substances and in material things in entirely the same manner, but, as it were, equivocally, as the Commentator says. And, granted that through this quiddity he

could know in some general way that the quiddity of separated substance is of such a nature, he nevertheless would not see the essence of an angel in such a way that he could know the difference between any one separated essence and the others.

7. Although human understanding is not destroyed by an excessively intelligible object, it lacks the proportion needed to be able naturally to reach the highest intelligibles. Hence, we cannot conclude from what the Philosopher says that it understands the highest intelligibles; but only that, if it did understand them, it would not understand others less.

8. The Philosopher leaves this question unsolved when he inquires whether an intellect joined [to a body] can understand separated substances. Nor does he solve the question anywhere else in the works which have come down to us. And his followers have disagreed on this point.

For some have said that our intellect cannot achieve an understanding of separated essences. Some, however, have held that it can. Some of these men have given insufficient reasons, as Avempace, who gave the argument about quiddity, and Themistius, who gave the argument about ease of understanding. Both of these arguments, the Commentator answered. Some, however, as Alexander and the Commentator himself, have taken non-Aristotelian positions, which are against the faith. For Alexander says that, since the possible intellect can be produced by generation and can perish, it can in his theory in no wise reach an understanding of the separated substances. But, at the term of its perfection, it does reach the point where the agent intellect, which Alexander makes one of the separated substances, is united to us as form. In that state we understand through the agent intellect, just as now we understand through the possible intellect. And it is because the agent intellect, as a separated substance, understands separated substances that we understand separated substances in that state. In his opinion it is in this that the final happiness of man will consist.

However, since it does not seem possible for something which is incorruptible and separated, as the agent intellect, to be united as the form for the possible intellect, which, for Alexander, is corruptible and material, it has seemed to others that the possible intellect itself is separated and incorruptible. Hence, Themistius says that the possible intellect, too, is separated, and that it is natural to it to understand not only material things but also separated substances. He adds that its intelligible objects are not temporal, but eternal, things, and that the speculative intellect, by which we understand, is made up of the agent and the possible intellects. But, if this is so, we can know separated substances from the beginning, since the possible intellect is united to us from the beginning.

Therefore, the Commentator takes a third way, between the opinion of Alexander and that of Themistius. For he says that the possible intellect is separated and

eternal, in which he agrees with Themistius and differs from Alexander, and, nevertheless, that the objects of the speculative understanding are temporal things and produced through the activity of the agent intellect. In this he agrees with Alexander and differs from Themistius. He says that these objects have a double existence: one, by which they are based on phantasms, and in this sense they are in us; the other, by which they are in the possible intellect.

Consequently, through the mediation of these intelligible objects the possible intellect is united to us.

Now, the agent intellect is related to these intelligible things as form to matter. For, since the possible intellect receives intelligibles of this type which are grounded in phantasms, and also receives the agent intellect, and since the agent intellect is more perfect, the proportion of the agent intellect to intelligibles of this sort, which are in us, must be like the proportion of form to matter. This is like the reciprocal proportion between light and color which are received in the transparent, as also between all things, one of which is more perfect than the other, which are received in one thing. Therefore, when the production of such intelligibles takes place in us, then the agent intellect is united to us perfectly as a form. And in this way we will be able to know separated substances through the agent intellect, just as we are now able to know through the understanding which is in its habitual state.

It is evident from the statements of these philosophers that they could find no way for us to understand separated substances except by understanding through some separated substance. But it is not in harmony with the truths of the faith to say that the possible or the agent intellect is a separated substance. Neither does it agree with the opinion of the Philosopher, who holds that agent and possible intellects are part of the human soul.

Accordingly, if we retain that position, it does not seem possible for man by his natural knowledge to achieve a knowledge of separated essences.

9. In the state of Innocence man knew his act of understanding perfectly because he understood some intelligible object perfectly. And, since the act of understanding is an effect proportionate to, and commensurate with, the power from which it proceeds, it follows that he understood the essence of his soul perfectly. But it does not follow from this that he understood the essence of the angels, since that act of understanding is not commensurate with the power of his understanding.

10. As the angelic nature is intermediate between the divine and physical nature, so the knowledge by which an angelic essence is known is intermediate between the knowledge by which the divine essence is known and by which the essences of material things are known. But there can be many things intermediate between two extremes. And it is not necessary for anyone who exceeds one

extreme to reach every intermediate level, but to reach some intermediate level. Accordingly, in the state of innocence man reached one intermediate level, namely that of receiving knowledge of God not from sensible creatures but from internal revelation. However, he did not arrive at the level of knowing angelic essences. Nevertheless, when the angels were created and not yet beatified, they had arrived at this level.

## **Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence**

### **ARTICLE VI**

**In the sixth article we ask:**

**Could Adam in the state of innocence be mistaken or deceived?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.* , 23, 2, 3; *S.T.* , I, 94, 4.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that he could, for

1. As Ambrose says, error is the source of every sin. But Adam could sin. Therefore, he could be mistaken.
2. The will concerns only that which is good or regarded as good. But, when the will deals with what is good, there is no sin. Therefore, there is never sin unless there is an antecedent evaluation in which something is regarded as good, but is not. But in every such evaluation there is deception of some sort. Therefore, before he sinned, Adam in the state of innocence was deceived.
3. The Master says: "The woman was not frightened by the fact that the serpent talked because, since she knew it, was created, she considered that it had received even the power of speech from God." But this was false. Therefore, the woman judged falsely before she sinned. Hence, she was deceived.
4. According to the Master, and as Augustine also says: "The devil was allowed to come in that form in order that his malice could be easily detected." But, if in the state of innocence man could not have been deceived, the devil could have been detected in any form in which he came. Therefore, man could be deceived.
5. When the woman heard what the serpent promised, she hoped to be able to obtain it; otherwise, her desire would have been stupid. I foxvever, there was no stupidity before the fall. But no one hopes for what he considers impossible. Therefore, since what the devil promised was impossible, it seems that in believing this the woman was deceived before the fall.
6. In the state of innocence man's understanding argued to conclusions and needed deliberation. But it needed deliberation only to avoid error. Therefore, in

the state of innocence it could err.

7. The understanding of demons, since it is not united to a body, seems to be much more discerning than the understanding of man in the state of innocence, which was joined to a body. But a demon can be deceived. Consequently, the saints say that, when the demons saw Christ suffering infirmities, they thought He was simply man, but, when they saw him working miracles, they thought He was God. Therefore, man in the state of innocence with much greater reason can be deceived.

8. While man was committing the first sin, in that act itself he was not in the state of guilt. For, since the state of guilt is caused by sin, there would have been another sin before the first sin. But in the act by which man first sinned he was deceived. Therefore, he could be deceived before the state of guilt.

9. Damascene says: "This," that is, fallacious knowledge, "existed in Adam when he was first created." But whoever has fallacious knowledge is deceived. Therefore, Adam was deceived when he was first created.

10. Speculative knowledge is distinguished from the affections. But there can be sin in the affective part without deception in the speculative part. For, many times we have knowledge and act contrary to it. Therefore, in the first man, too, there could have been deception in the speculative part before there was sin in the affective part.

11. As the Gloss on the first Epistle to Timothy (2:14), "Adam was not seduced..." reads: "Adam was not led astray in the way the woman was, that is, so that he thought that what the devil suggested was true. Still we can believe that he was led astray in this, that he thought that the sin committed was venial when it was mortal." Therefore, before the fall Adam could be deceived.

12. No one is freed from deception except through knowledge of the truth. But Adam did not know all things. Therefore, he could not have been free from deception in all things.

13 It was said that through divine providence he was saved from deception.—On the contrary, divine providence brings assistance especially in necessary matters. But in his greatest need, when it would have been most useful for him to be freed from being led astray, divine providence did not protect him from being misled. Therefore, with much less reason would divine providence have freed him from being led astray in other matters.

14. In the state of innocence man would have slept, and likewise would have dreamed, as Boethius says. But every man is deceived in dreams, since to some extent he considers the likenesses of things as if they were the things themselves. Therefore, in the state of innocence Adam could be deceived.

15. Adam would have used his bodily senses. But there is frequent deception in sense knowledge, as when one thing seems to be two, and when something which is seen from a distance seems small. Therefore, in the state of innocence Adam would not have been altogether free from deception.

### **To the Contrary**

1. As Augustine says: "To accept as true things that are false is not natural for man as he was created, but a punishment for the condemned."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in the state of innocence he could not be deceived, which is to accept as true things which are false.

2. The soul is more noble than the body. But in the state of innocence man could suffer no bodily defect. Therefore, much less could he suffer deception, which is a defect of the soul.

3. In the state of innocence there could be nothing contrary to man's will, since pain thus would have been able to exist in him. But in man, to be deceived is contrary to his will, according to Augustine, even in those who want to deceive. Therefore, in the state of innocence man could not be deceived.

4. Every error is due either to guilt or to punishment, neither of which could exist in the state of innocence. Therefore, error could not exist there either.

5. When that which is higher in the soul directs what is lower, there cannot be any error, because the whole of man's knowledge is corrected by that which is higher in the soul, that is to say, by synderesis and the understanding of principles. But in the state of innocence that which is lower in man was subject to higher reason. Therefore, there could not then be deception.

6. According to Augustine: "The capacity to believe is in man's nature, but actual belief is a gift of grace to the faithful." Therefore, by the same token, the capacity to be deceived is due to nature, but to be deceived is a defect. But in the state of innocence there were no defects. Therefore, neither could there be deception.

7. Damascene says that in the state of innocence man "delighted in the sweetest fruit of contemplation, being nourished by this [contemplation 1. <sup>1</sup> But, when man is turned toward the things of God, he is not deceived. Therefore, in that state Adam could not be deceived.

8. Jerome says: "Whatever evil we suffer, our sins have merited." But deception is evil. Therefore, it could not exist before sin.

### **REPLY**

There are two opinions on this question. For some<sup>2</sup> say that, since Adam did not have full knowledge of everything, but knew some things and was ignorant of others, in the things which he knew he could not be deceived, that is, in those



which he knew naturally and those which were divinely revealed to him. But in other things, which he did not know, such as men's secret thoughts, future contingents, and individual things absent from his senses, he could indeed judge falsely, if without serious consideration he formed some false opinion about these things, not, however, in such a way that he gave unqualified assent. Accordingly, they say that error could have no place in him, nor could he accept something false as true, because in these things there is question of unqualified assent to that which is false.

But others attempt to reject this declaration because Augustine calls every false judgment error and also says that every error is evil, great in important matters, and small in small matters.

But we should not insist too much on this, because we should pass over the question of names when we are treating of things. Hence, I say that in the state of innocence there could be not only no error but not even false opinion of any sort. This is evident from the following.

Although in the state of innocence some good could be absent, in no sense could there be any corruption of a good. However, the good of our understanding is the knowledge of truth. Accordingly, those habits by which the understanding is perfected for knowledge of the truth are called virtues, as is said in the *Ethics*, because they make the act of the understanding good. Falsity, on the other hand, is not only lack of truth but also a corruption of it. For one who has no knowledge of truth at all, who lacks the truth, yet has no contrary opinion, does not have the same relation to truth as one who holds some false opinion and whose judgment is vitiated by falsity. Consequently, just as truth is the good of the understanding, so that which is false is its evil. For this reason, the habit of opinion is not an intellectual virtue, since by it one says what is false, as we see in the *Ethics*. But no act of virtue can be evil, as if the false opinion itself would be an evil act of [the virtue of ] understanding. Consequently, since in the state of innocence there was not any corruption or any evil, there could not be any false opinion in that state.

The Commentator also says that a false opinion has the same place in matters of knowledge as a monstrosity has in physical nature. For a false opinion is one which originates without being intended by first principles, which are the seminal powers, as it were, of knowledge, just as monstrosities originate without being intended by the natural power which is at work. This is because all evil is "unintended," as Dionysius says. Hence, just as in the state of innocence there would be no monstrosities in the conception of the human body, so in understanding there could be no falsity.

This is likewise clear from the fact that disorder always arises when a thing is moved by something which is not its proper mover, as would happen if the will

should be moved by what gives pleasure to sense, since it should be moved only by what is noble. The proper mover of the understanding, however, is that which contains infallible truth. Consequently, whenever the understanding is moved by some fallible sign, there is some disorder in it, whether the movement is complete or incomplete. As a result, since in the state of innocence there could be no disorder in man's understanding, it would never have been inclined more to one part than to the other except by an infallible motive.

From this it is clear that not only was there no false opinion in man's understanding, there was no opinion there at all. And whatever he knew, he knew with certainty.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. That error from which all sin proceeds is an error of choice, in so far as one chooses what should not be chosen. According to this, the Philosopher says<sup>20</sup> that everyone who is evil lacks knowledge. But this error presupposes disorder in the appetitive part. For it is due to the fact that sensible appetite is drawn toward that which delights it and the higher appetite does not resist it, that reason is hindered from choosing that which it has habitually. Consequently, it is evident that this error does not entirely precede sin, but follows it.

2. That which is perceived as an apparent good cannot lack all goodness whatsoever. Rather, it is good to some extent, and in this respect it is perceived as good from the beginning. This is the case when some forbidden food is perceived as agreeable to see and pleasant to taste, and when the sensible appetite is attracted to such a good as to its proper object. But when the higher appetite follows the lower, it follows that which is good in some respect, as though it were good for it without qualification. Therefore, error of choice follows afterward from disorder of appetite, as has been said.

3. If we understand that the woman believed that the serpent had received the use of speech as part of its nature, this argument seems to be contrary to both opinions. For those who believe that in the state of innocence man could be deceived do not at all believe that he could be deceived when judging about the natures of things, since he had full knowledge of natural things. However, it is contrary to the serpent's nature to have the use of speech naturally, since this belongs only to rational animals. Therefore, we have to say that the woman did not believe that the serpent had the use of speech by its nature, but by reason of some power acting inside it in a hidden way. She did not consider whether it was from God or from the demon.

4. That reason why he appeared in the form of a serpent should not be taken to mean that he could not be detected under whatever form he appeared, but that he could be more easily detected under such a form.

5. The woman hoped that in some way she would be able to get what the serpent promised, and she believed that this was in some way possible. In this she was led astray, as the Apostle says (1 Tim. 2:14). But a certain elation of mind preceded that leading astray, and because of it she inordinately desired her own excellence, which she realized as soon as the serpent spoke, as men frequently are lifted above themselves when they hear words of flatterers. And this exaltation which preceded concerned her own proper excellence in general and is the first sin. There followed this the seduction by which she believed that what the serpent was saying was true. Thus, there resulted the exaltation with which she definitely desired this excellence which the serpent promised.

6. In the state of innocence man's understanding needed deliberation in order not to fall into error, just as he needed to eat in order that his body might not waste away. However, he was so gifted with correct deliberation that by deliberating he would be able to avoid every error, just as by eating he could avoid every bodily infirmity. Therefore, just as he would commit a sin of omission if he did not eat, so,, if he did not deliberate when the occasion was given, error and sin would follow.

7. It was by his natural power that man in the state of innocence was protected from internal bodily suffering, as that of fever and the like, but it was not by any internal power that he was protected from external suffering, as blows or wounds, since he did not have the gift of impassibility. This was due rather to divine providence, which preserved him from all injury. Similarly, it was by the strength of his own reason that he was protected from the deception which comes from within, as when someone independently reasons incorrectly, but it was by the divine aid, which he had at that time for all necessary matters, that he was protected from deception from without. The demons, however, do not have this; hence, they can be deceived.

8. Instantaneous actions have their effect as soon as they begin, just as the eye sees in the same instant that the air is illuminated. Hence, since the movement of will, in which sin primarily consists, is instantaneous, one loses the state of innocence in the same instant in which he sins. Thus, he could be deceived in that instant.

9. Damascene is speaking of the fallacy of the first man by which he was deceived in the sin itself. And, indeed, he committed this sin shortly after he was created, for he did not long persevere in the state of innocence.

10. Since the soul of man in the state of innocence was united to the highest good, there could be no defect in man as long as this union lasted. But this union was brought about principally through the affections. Consequently, no deception could exist in the understanding nor any defect in the body before the affective part was corrupted, although, conversely, there could be defect in the affections

without a pre-existing defect in speculative understanding, since the union with God is not completed in the understanding but in the affections.

11. In Adam the elation of spirit preceded the false opinion by which he believed that what was mortally sinful was only venially so, just as happened with the woman, as has been said.

12. In those things which he did not know he was able to be protected from deception partly from within, since his understanding would not be inclined to one part except for a sufficient motive, and partly, and more especially, by divine providence, which preserved him from deception.

13. In the state in which he sinned had he turned to God, he would have had divine help to keep him from being led astray. But, since he did not do this, he fell into sin and was led astray. Yet, his being led astray followed the sin, as is clear from what has been said.

14. Some say that in the state of innocence Adam did not dream. But this is not necessary, for the vision of dreams is not in the intellective, but in the sensitive, part. Hence, the deception would not have been in the understanding, which does not have free exercise in sleep, but in the sensitive part.

15. When sense represents what it receives, there is no falsity in sense, as Augustine says, but falsity is in the understanding, which judges that things exist in reality in the way in which sense portrays them. However, this never happened in Adam, since his understanding would either have refrained from judgment, as in dreams, or, when judging about sensible objects when awake, would have had a true judgment.

## **Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence**

### **ARTICLE VII**

**In the seventh article we ask:**

**Would the children who were born of Adam in the state of innocence have had full knowledge of all things, as Adam did?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.*, 23, 2, 2; *S.T.*, I, 101, 1.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that they would, for

1. According to Anselm, Adam would have begotten sons such as he himself was. But Adam had full knowledge of all natural things, as has been said. Therefore, his sons, too, would have had that knowledge immediately at birth.

2. As the affections are perfected by virtue, so the understanding is perfected by

knowledge. But the sons born of Adam, in the state of innocence, would have had the fullness of all the virtues immediately at birth. For he would have passed original justice on to them, as Anselm says. Therefore, they would likewise have had all knowledge.

3. According to Bede, weakness, concupiscence, ignorance, and malice result from sin. But there would have been no wickedness, weakness, or concupiscence in those children immediately at birth. Therefore, there would not have been any ignorance either; hence, they would have had all knowledge.

4. It would have been more fitting for them to be born perfect in soul than in body. But they would have been born without any bodily defect. Therefore, there would likewise have been no ignorance in their souls.

5. According to Damascene, man in the state of innocence was "as another angel." But, immediately upon their creation, the angels had knowledge of all natural things. Therefore, for the same reason, men in the state of innocence had it, also.

6. Adam's soul and the souls of his sons had the same nature. But in its very beginning Adam's soul was created full of all natural knowledge, as has been said. Therefore, the souls of his sons would have been created with the same fullness of knowledge.

7. Greater perfection of knowledge belongs to man than to the other animals. But, immediately at birth, the other animals have natural [instinctive] judgment of what is helpful and what is harmful. Thus, a newborn lamb flees from the wolf and follows its mother. Therefore, children in the state of innocence with much greater reason would have had perfect knowledge.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Hugh of St. Victor says that they would not have been born with perfect knowledge, but would have reached it in the course of time.

2.. Since the soul is the perfection of the body, its development must be proportionate to that of the body. But in the state of innocence Adam's children would not have had full bodily stature as Adam did when he was first created. Therefore, for the same reason they would not have had the fullness of knowledge as Adam had.

3. Sons receive existence, nature, and instruction from their father. But, if Adam's sons had had full knowledge as soon as they were born, they would not have been able to receive instruction from him. Therefore, the full relationship of paternity would have not been preserved between them and the first parent.

### **REPLY**

On this question there have been two opinions. For some have said that children in the state of innocence would have been perfect, just as Adam, with reference to everything belonging to the soul, that is, as regards both virtues and knowledge. They would not, however, have been perfect as regards the body. This was due to the exigencies of their mother's womb, for they had to be born.

Others, however, following Hugh, say that, just as they would not immediately have received perfect stature of body, but in time would have reached it, so, too, they would in time have reached perfect knowledge.

However, in order to know which of these opinions contains more truth, we must remember that the same reasons do not hold for Adam and for his sons immediately upon birth. For, since Adam was ordained to be the source of the whole human race, as soon as he was created he had to have not only what belonged to the beginning of natural perfection but also that which belonged to its term. But his sons, who were not constituted the source of the human race, but as having existence from its source, did not have to be set at the term of natural perfection. It was enough for them to have at birth only as much as the initial state of natural perfection demands.

However, according to two opinions, the initial stage of the natural perfection of knowledge is placed at different levels. For some, as the Platonists, have held that the soul comes to the body filled with all the sciences, but it is clouded over by the body and thus its capacity for free use of the knowledge which it has is inhibited except with reference to some universals. But afterwards, through the exercise of study and of the senses, these obstacles are removed, so that it can use its knowledge freely. Thus, they say that learning is the same as remembering. But, if this opinion were true, we would have to say that in the state of innocence, as soon as children were born, they would have had knowledge of all things because the body in that state of innocence was altogether subject to the soul, and, so, the weight of the body would not have been able so to oppress the soul that it would lose its perfection in any way.

But this opinion seems to proceed from the position that the nature of the angels and of the soul is the same, so that the soul would have full knowledge as soon as it is created, just as an intelligence is said to be created full of forms. For this reason, the Platonists said that souls existed before being united to bodies and, after leaving bodies, return as intelligences to stars of rank equal to theirs. But this opinion is out of harmony with Catholic truth.

Therefore, others according to the opinion of Aristotle say that human understanding is last in the order of intelligible things, just as first matter is last in the order of sensible things. And as matter, considered in its essence, has no form, so the human understanding, in the beginning, is "like a tablet, on which nothing is written," but, later, acquires knowledge through the senses by virtue of

the agent intellect. Thus, the beginning of natural human knowledge is, indeed, to be in potency to all things knowable, but to know from the beginning only those things which are known immediately through the light of the agent intellect, that is to say, universal first principles.

Hence, it was not necessary for Adam's sons to have knowledge of all things immediately at birth, but they would have reached it as they advanced in age. Nevertheless, it is necessary to ascribe to them some perfect knowledge, namely, the knowledge of things which must be chosen or avoided, a knowledge which pertains to prudence. For, as is proved in the *Ethics*, without prudence the other virtues cannot exist. And Adam's children must have had these virtues because of original justice.

To me this opinion seems to contain more truth, if we look to what was required by the integrity of nature. But, if by divine grace anything else had been given them beyond that which integrity of nature required, this could not be asserted, since there is no express authority for it.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. Adam would have begotten sons like himself in those things which were due to him by his specific nature. But it was not necessary for his sons to be born like him in those things which were due to him as the source of the whole human race.
2. For the perfect union with God, which the state of innocence demands, all the virtues are needed, but not all the sciences.
3. Although the children would not have all knowledge as soon as they were born, they would not have had the ignorance which follows from sin, which is a lack of knowledge of things which ought to be known. For they would have been ignorant of those things which their state did not require them to know.
4. In the bodies of these children there would have been no defect by which they would be deprived of a good which then was their due. Nevertheless, their bodies did lack a good which would accrue to them later, such as fullness of stature and the gifts of glory. The same must be said of the soul.
5. Angels are on a higher level of nature than souls, although souls can be equal to them in the gifts of grace. Consequently, it is not necessary to concede to the soul as something natural that which is naturally due to angels. However, in the state of innocence, man is said to be as another angel because of the fullness of grace.
6. Although the soul of Adam and the souls of his sons had the same nature, they did not have the same office. For Adam's soul was made a source from which all teaching would come to posterity. Therefore, it had to be perfect immediately,

which was not necessary for the souls of his children.

7. At the beginning, brute animals receive natural [instinctive] judgment in order to know what is harmful and what is helpful, because they cannot reach this through their own investigation. Man, however, can reach this and many other things through the investigation of reason. Hence, it is not necessary for all knowledge to exist in him naturally. Nevertheless, the knowledge of practical matters, which pertains to prudence, is more natural to man than the knowledge of speculative matters. For this reason we find that some are naturally prudent but do not naturally possess learning, as is said in the *Ethics*.

For this reason men do not forget prudence as easily as they forget science.

Therefore, at that time the children would have been more perfect in the matters which pertain to prudence than in those which pertain to speculative science, as has been said.

## Q. 17: The Knowledge of the First Man in the State of Innocence

### ARTICLE VIII

**In the eighth article we ask:**

**In the state of innocence would children have had the full use of reason immediately at birth?**

[Parallel readings: *II Sent.*, 20, 2, 2; *S.T.*, I, 101, 2.]

#### Difficulties

It seems that they would, for

1. If they were restricted in its use, this would have resulted only from some bodily defect. But in that state there was nothing in which the body resisted the soul. Therefore the use of reason could not be restricted.
2. A virtue or power which does not use an organ is not restricted in its activity because of a defect of an organ. But the understanding is a power which does not use an organ as is said in *The Soul*. Therefore, the act of the understanding could not then be impeded because of the defect of a bodily organ.
3. If it be said that the act of understanding was restricted because of a defect of body in so far as the understanding received something from the senses, the answer is that the understanding is higher than any sense power. But it seems to be out of order for the higher to receive from the lower. Therefore, since there was nothing out of order in man's nature in that state, it seems that it would not have been necessary for the understanding to receive from the senses.
4. The understanding needs the senses to acquire knowledge through them. But,



once it has acquired knowledge, it does not need them, just as a man does not need a horse once he has finished his journey, as Avicenna says. But, according to one opinion, children in the state of innocence had the fullness of all knowledge. Therefore, they could not be kept from using the knowledge they had because of imperfection in the sense organs.

5. Defect of bodily organs hinders sense more than understanding. But children do not suffer so great a bodily defect that they cannot see and hear. Therefore, neither is their understanding hindered because of bodily defect, but seemingly because of the punishment for the first sin. But this would not have existed before the fall. Therefore, children at that time would have had the full use of understanding as soon as they were born.

6. Man's relation to the knowledge which he has naturally is the same as that which brute animals have to natural [instinctive] judgment. But brute animals can make use of this natural judgment immediately at birth. Therefore, in the state of innocence children were able to make use of natural knowledge, at least of first principles, immediately at birth.

7. Wisdom (9:15) says: "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul..." But in the state of innocence the body was not corruptible. Therefore, the soul was not weighed down by it, and so kept from having free use of reason.

### **To the Contrary**

1. Every activity which is common to soul and body is hindered because of a defect of the body. But understanding is an activity common to soul and body, as is clear from *The Soul*. Therefore, the use of reason could be hindered by a bodily defect or imperfection which the children suffered.

2. According to the Philosopher: "The soul in no way understands without a phantasm." But the use of the imagination can be hindered by a defect of a bodily organ. Therefore, so can the use of understanding. We conclude as before.

### **REPLY**

There are two opinions on this question. For some say that children in the state of innocence would have had the full use of all their bodily members and that the clumsiness which we now see in children, that they are not able to use their feet to walk, their hands to carve, and so on, comes entirely from the first sin.

Others, thinking that this type of clumsiness has its cause in natural principles, as moistness, which must abound in children, say that in the state of innocence the members of children would not have been altogether suitable for their acts, although they would not be so completely deficient as they now are, since now what is due to corruption has been added to that which is due to nature. And this opinion seems more probable.

Hence, since it is necessary that moistness, especially in the brain, abound in children, and it is the brain in which imagination, natural judgment, memory, and common sense have their organs, the acts of these powers must be particularly hindered, and, consequently, understanding, which receives something immediately from these powers, and turns to them whenever it is in act, must be hindered, too. Nevertheless, the use of understanding was not fettered in children to the extent that it is now. However, if the other opinion were true, the use of understanding in children at that time would not have been fettered in any way.

## Answers to Difficulties

1. The soul can be restricted by the body in two ways. One is by way of opposition, as happens when the body resists the soul and obscures it. This, however, would not have happened in the state of innocence. The other is by way of incapacity and defect, namely, in so far as the body is unable to execute all that the soul would be capable of considered in itself. And there was nothing to keep the soul from being restricted by the body in this way in the state of innocence. For it is thus evident that by reason of the body the soul is hindered from passing through things thrust in its path and from changing its location with as much ease as it does when separated from the body. In this way, also, it is kept from being able to have perfect use of its powers. Still, there would have been no pain in this, since the soul, by reason of its orderly disposition, would have given only those commands which the body could carry out.

2. Although the understanding does not use an organ, nevertheless, it receives something from faculties which use an organ. Therefore, its act can be restricted because of an impediment or defect of the bodily organs.

3. The intelligible species has that which is formal in it, through which it is actually intelligible, from the agent intellect, which is a higher power than the possible intellect, although that which is material in it is abstracted from phantasms. Therefore, more properly, the possible intellect receives from what is higher than from what is lower, since that which is from the lower can be received by the possible intellect only in so far as it receives the form of intelligibility from the agent intellect.

Or we should say that the lower powers are higher in some respect, especially in the ability to act and to cause. This is due to their greater proximity to external things, which are the cause and measure of our knowledge. It is for this reason that the sense serves imagination, not of itself, but in so far as it is informed by the species of a sensible thing, and so for the rest.

4. According to the Philosopher, the intellectual soul is related to phantasms as to its objects. Consequently, our understanding needs conversion to phantasms not only in acquiring knowledge but also in using knowledge once it is acquired. This

is evident from the fact that, as long as the soul is in the body, a man cannot use even previously acquired knowledge if the organ of the power of imagination is injured, as happens in the insane. What Avicenna says should be taken of the soul separated from the body, which has a different mode of understanding.

5. The organ of the power of imagination, of memory, and of the cogitative sense is in the brain itself, which is the place of greatest moistness in the human body. Therefore, because of the large measure of moistness which is in children, the acts of these powers are hindered more than the acts of the external senses. But understanding receives immediately from the interior and not the exterior senses.

6. Some other animals naturally have a dry disposition; hence, at their birth there is not so great a profusion of moistness which greatly impedes the acts of the interior senses. But man naturally has a moderate disposition, and therefore he must have a high degree of warmth and moistness. So, at the beginning of his existence there has to be proportionately more moistness in him. For all animal and plant generations begin from moistness.

7. The body which corrupts weighs down the soul not only because it is powerless but also because it resists and obscures the soul. However, the human body in the state of innocence hindered the acts of the soul only because of the imperfection of a power or disposition.

# Question Nineteen: Knowledge of the Soul after Death

1. [Can the soul understand after death?](#)
2. [Does the separated soul know singulars?](#)

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## ARTICLE I

**The question treats of the knowledge of the soul after death.**

**In the first article we ask:**

**Can the soul understand after death?**

[Parallel readings: *III Sent.* , 31, 2, 4; *IV Sent.* , 50, 1, 1; *Quodl.* , III, 9, 21; XII, 9, 12; *S.T.* , II, 81; III, 45; *1 Cor.* , c. 13, lect. 3; *S.T.* , I, 89, 1-3; *Q.D. de anima* , aa. 15, 17, 18.]

### Difficulties

It seems that it cannot, for

1. No activity common to soul and body can remain in the soul after death. But understanding is an activity common to soul and body. For the Philosopher says: "To say that the soul understands is like saying that it weaves or builds." Therefore, after death the soul cannot understand.

2. It was said that the Philosopher is speaking of the act of understanding which befits the soul in its lower aspect, but not about the act which befits it in its higher aspect.—On the contrary, the higher aspect of the soul is that according to which it turns to the things of God. However, even when man understands something by reason of divine revelation, his understanding depends on the body, because he must understand through conversion to phantasms, which are in a bodily organ. For, as Dionysius says: "It is impossible for the divine radiance to shine on us unless it is shrouded with a variety of sacred veils. For him, veils are the bodily forms under which spiritual things are revealed. Therefore, the act of understanding which belongs to the soul according to its higher aspect depends on the body. Consequently, understanding in no way remains in the soul after death.

3. In Ecclesiastes (9:5) it is said: "For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know nothing more." The Gloss reads: "For they make no more progress." Therefore, it seems that after death the soul either knows nothing, if we take "more" in a temporal sense, or at least that it can understand nothing it did not understand before. For it thus would make more progress, which is

contrary to the Gloss.

4. According to the Philosopher, the understanding is related to phantasms as the senses are to sensible things. But sense can have sensation only when sensible things are presented to it. Therefore, neither can the human soul understand anything unless phantasms are presented to it. But they are not presented to it after death, because they are presented only in a bodily organ. Therefore, after death the soul cannot understand.

5. It was said that the Philosopher is speaking of the soul according to the state in which it is in the body.—On the contrary, the object of a power is determined by the nature of the power itself. But the nature of the intellective soul is the same before and after death. Therefore, if the intellective soul has an ordination to phantasms as objects before death, it seems that it will likewise have it after death. We conclude as before.

6. The soul cannot understand if the intellective power is taken away from it. But, after death, the intellective powers, agent and possible intellect, do not remain in the soul, for these powers belong to it by reason of its union with the body. For, if it were not united to the body, it would not have these powers, just as an angel does not have them. Therefore, after death the soul cannot understand.

7. The Philosopher says: "Understanding is destroyed when something within us is destroyed." But that thing within us, about which the Philosopher is speaking, is destroyed in death. Therefore, there will be no understanding after death.

8. If the soul understands after death, it must understand through some power, because everything which acts, acts through some active power, and everything which is acted upon is acted upon through some passive power. Therefore, it will understand either through the same power which it had in this life or through another. If through another, it seems that new powers are produced in it when it is separated from the body. But this does not seem probable. However, if it understands through the same power, this does not seem correct either, since the powers which it has are in it by reason of its union with the body. And this union ceases with death. Therefore, the soul cannot understand after death.

9. If the intellective power remains in the soul, it remains only in so far as it is grounded in the substance of the soul, or in so far as it has reference to act. But it does not remain in so far as it is grounded in the substance of the soul, since, if it remained only in this way, after death it would be able to understand nothing but itself. Nor does it remain in so far as it has reference to act, for, in so far as it has reference to act, it is brought to completion through the habits which it has acquired in the body, and these habits depend on the body. Therefore, it seems that the intellective power does not remain after death; hence, the soul will not understand after death.

10. Everything which is understood is understood through the essence of the thing understanding, through the essence of the thing understood, or through a likeness of the thing understood which exists in the one understanding. But it cannot be said that the soul understands things only through the essence of the thing understood, for thus it would understand only itself, its habits, and other things the essences of which are present in the soul. Likewise, it cannot be said to understand only through the essence of itself as understanding for, if it understood things beside itself in this way, its essence would have to be the exemplar of other things, just as the divine essence is the exemplar of all things, for which reason God understands all other things by understanding His essence. But this cannot be said of the soul. Again, it cannot be said to understand through likenesses of the things understood which exist in the soul, since it would seem that above all it understands through the species which it has acquired in the body. And it cannot be said to understand only through them, because the souls of children, which have received nothing from the senses, would thus understand nothing after death. Therefore, it seems that the soul cannot understand in any way after death.

11. If it be said that it knows through species with which it is created, the answer is that whatever is created along with the soul belongs to it just as much when it is existing in the body as when it is separated from the body. Therefore, if species through which it can know are created along with the human soul, to know through these species befits the soul not only after it is separated from the body but also while it is in the body. Thus, it seems that the species which it receives from things would be superfluous.

12. If it be said that the body makes it impossible for the soul to use these while it is joined to the body, the answer is that if the body keeps the soul from using these species, this will be either because of the body's nature, or because of corruption. But it is not because of the body's nature, since that is not directly opposed to understanding. And nothing is naturally impeded except by its opposite. Likewise, it is not because of corruption, since, if it were, in the state of innocence, when there was none of this corruption, man would have been able to use these species, and so would not have needed his senses in order that through them the soul might receive species from things. But this seems to be false. Therefore, it does not seem that the separated soul understands through innate species.

13. If it be said that the soul understands through infused species, the answer is that such species were infused either by God or by an angel. But not by an angel, because, if they were, these species would have to be created in the soul by the angel. Similarly, they are not infused by God, because it is not probable that God would infuse His gifts into souls existing in hell. Hence, it would follow that the

souls in hell would not understand. Therefore, it does not seem that the separated soul understands through infused species.

14. Augustine gives the mode in which the soul knows when he says: "Since the soul cannot bring bodies themselves into itself, as though it brought them within the limits of incorporeal nature, it fashions likenesses of bodies and seizes upon these likenesses which are made in the soul by itself. For, in forming them, it gives them something of its own substance. However, it saves something with which freely to judge of the species of such images. This is mind, that is, the rational intelligence, which is kept to judge. For we perceive that we have in common with beasts those parts of the soul which are informed by bodily likenesses." In these words he says that the judgment of the rational soul deals with the images with which the sensitive powers are informed. But these images do not remain after death, since they are received in a bodily organ. Therefore, neither does the judgment of the rational soul, which is its understanding, remain in the soul after death.

### **To the Contrary**

1. According to Damascene, no substance is deprived of its proper activity. But the proper activity of the rational soul is to understand. Therefore, the soul understands after death.

2. just as something is made passive by its union with a material body, so it is made active by its separation from the same body. For something hot acts and is acted upon because of the union of heat with matter. But, if there were heat without matter, it would act and not be acted upon. Therefore, the soul is made completely active by its separation from the body. But it is due to the passivity of the powers of the soul that they cannot know of themselves without exterior objects, as the Philosopher says of the senses. Therefore, after the separation from the body, the soul will be able to understand of itself without reception from any objects.

3. Augustine says: "Just as the mind itself obtains knowledge of bodily things through the senses of the body, so it obtains knowledge of incorporeal things through itself." But it will always be present to itself. Therefore, it will be able to have understanding at least of incorporeal things.

4. As is clear from the passage quoted above from Augustine, the soul knows bodily things in so far as it fashions likenesses of these things and draws them within itself. But it can do this more freely after its separation from the body, especially since Augustine there says that it does this by itself. Therefore, the soul can understand better when separated from the body.

5. In *Spirit and Soul* it is said that the soul takes its powers along with it when it is separated from the body. But it is called

cognoscitive because of its powers. Therefore, it will be able to know after death.

## REPLY

As the Philosopher says, if none of the activities of the soul is proper to it, that is to say, in such a way that it would not be able to have it without the body, it is impossible for the soul to be separated from the body. For the activity of anything is its end, in a sense, since it is what is best in it. Hence, just as we firmly maintain according to the Catholic faith that the soul continues to exist after being separated from the body, so must we maintain that it can understand when it exists without the body. But it is hard to see the way in which it understands, because we have to say that it has a different mode of understanding than it has now, since it is quite clear that it can understand now only if it turns to phantasms, and these will not remain in any way after death.

Accordingly, some say, that, just as the soul now receives species from sensible things through the mediation of the senses, so, then, it will be able to receive them without the intervention of any sense. But this seems to be impossible, because a thing cannot pass from one extreme to the other except through the intermediate things. But in the sensible thing the species has an extremely material existence, but, in the understanding, a very highly spiritual existence. Hence, it has to pass to this spirituality through certain intermediate levels, inasmuch as it has a more spiritual existence in sense than in the sensible thing, and a still more spiritual existence in imagination than in sense, and so on as it goes higher.

Hence, others, therefore, say that the soul understands after death through the species which were received from the senses while it was in the body, and which are retained within the soul itself. But this opinion is attacked by some who follow Avicenna's opinion. For, since the intellective soul does not use a bodily organ in order to understand, there cannot be anything in the intellective part of the soul except in so far as it is intelligible. In powers which use a physical organ, however, something can be retained, not in so far as it is knowable, but as in some kind of physical subject. It is because of this that there are certain sensitive powers which do not always actually apprehend the species or intentions which are retained in them. This is clearly the case with imagination and memory. Thus, it seems that only what is actually perceived is retained in the intellective part of the soul. Accordingly, after death the soul can in no way understand through the species which it previously received from things.

But this does not seem to be true, because everything which is received in a thing is received in it according to the mode of the recipient. However, since an immaterial substance has a more stable existence than a physical substance, the species will be received with greater firmness and immobility in the intellective part than in any material thing. And, although they are received in it in so far as



they have the character of an intelligible, it is not necessary for the soul actually to understand them at all times, because they are not always in the soul in perfect act. Nor are they there in pure potency, but in incomplete act, which is intermediate between potency and act, which is to say that something exists habitually in the understanding. For this reason, also, the Philosopher" wants to make the intellective soul "the place of the species," inasmuch as it retains and preserves them in itself. However, such species, previously received and preserved, do not suffice for the knowledge which we must ascribe to the separated soul because of the souls of children and because of the fact that there are many things now not known to us, such as the punishments of hell and so forth, which will be known by the separated souls.

Therefore, others say that, although the separated soul does not receive anything from things, still, in their presence it has the power to conform itself to the things it is to know. We see that the imagination of itself makes up forms in this way which it has never received through the senses. But this cannot stand either, for it is impossible to have something which reduces itself from potency into act. And our soul is in potency to the likenesses of the things by which it knows. Consequently, they have to be made actual, not through the soul, but through something which has these likenesses actually, either through the things themselves or through God, in whom all forms are in actuality. Thus, neither imagination nor understanding constructs a new form except from those already in existence, as it fashions the form of a golden mountain from the pre-existing likenesses of gold and mountain.

Therefore, others say that the forms by which the separated soul knows are imprinted on it by God from its very creation, and according to some, we now understand through these forms in such a way that no new species are acquired for the soul through the senses, but the soul is only aroused to look at the species which it has within itself. And the Platonists, who wanted learning to be nothing but remembering, have spoken in this way. But experience contradicts this opinion, for we see that one who lacks one sense lacks one type of knowledge, so that one who does not have sight cannot have knowledge of colors. But this would not be so if the soul did not need to receive from the senses the species by which it knows.

However, according to others, while the soul is joined to the body and is hindered by the body, it understands nothing through these concreated species. But it does understand through them once it is separated from the body. But, again, it seems difficult to admit that species which are naturally implanted in the soul should be hindered completely by the body, even though the union of body and soul is natural to the soul and not adventitious. For we do not find that one of two elements which are natural to a given thing hinders the other in every respect. Otherwise, the second element would be to no purpose. This position also disagrees with that of the Philosopher, who compares the understanding of

the human soul to "a tablet on which nothing is written."

Therefore, we must give a different answer, namely, that each thing is influenced by that which is above it according to the mode of its own being. But the rational soul receives its being in a mode midway between separated forms and material forms. For immaterial forms, that is to say, angels, receive from God a being which does not depend on matter and is not in any matter. But material forms receive from God a being which is in matter and depends on matter, since they cannot be conserved without matter. The soul, however, receives from God a being which is in matter, for it exists in matter in so far as it is the form of the body, and through this it is united to the body in its being, but it is not dependent on matter, since the being of the soul can be maintained without the body. Therefore, the rational soul receives God's influence in a manner midway between that of angels and that of material things.

For it receives intellectual light in such way that its intellective knowledge has an ordination to the body, in so far as it receives something from the powers of the body and has to refer to them in the act of consideration. In this it is lower than the angels. Nevertheless, this light is not so confined to the body that its activity is performed by means of a bodily organ. In this it is above every material form, which performs only the activity in which matter has a share. But, when the soul will be separated from the body, just as it will have its being neither dependent on the body nor existing in the body, so, too, it will receive an influx of intellectual knowledge in such a way that it will neither be confined to the body, as though it had to be exercised through the body, nor will it have any ordination to the body at all.

Therefore, when at its creation the soul is infused in the body, the only intellectual knowledge that is given it is ordained to the powers of the body. Thus, through the agent intellect it can make potentially intelligible phantasms actually intelligible, and through the possible intellect it can receive the intelligible species thus abstracted. Hence it is, too, that, as long as it has being united to the body in the state of this life, it does not know even those things whose species are preserved in it except by insight into phantasms. And for this reason, also, God does not make any revelations to it except under the species of phantasms, nor is it able to understand separated substances, inasmuch as these cannot be sufficiently known through the species of sensible things.

But, when it will have its being free of the body, then it will receive the influx of intellectual knowledge in the way in which angels receive it, without any ordination to the body. Thus, it will receive species of things from God himself, in order not to have to turn to any phantasms actually to know through these species or through those which it acquired previously. Nevertheless, it will be able to see separated substances, as the angels and demons, with natural knowledge, although it will not be able to see God in this way, for, without grace this is not

given to any creature.

From all this we can conclude that the soul understands in three ways after death. In one, it understands through species which it received from things while it was in the body. In the second, through species which God infuses in it at the time of its separation from the body. In the third, by seeing separated substances and looking at the species of things which are in them. But this last mode does not lie within their free choice but within that of the separated substance, which opens its intelligence when it speaks and closes it when it is silent. We have said before what sort of speech this is.

## **Answers to Difficulties**

1. The activity of understanding which is common to soul and body is that activity which now belongs to the intellective soul in its relation to the powers of the body, whether we take this with reference to the higher part of the soul or to the lower part. But, after death, the soul, separated from the body, will have an activity which will not take place through a bodily organ and will have no ordination to the body.
2. The solution to the second difficulty is clear from the first response.
3. This authoritative citation is speaking of progress in merit, as it is clear from another gloss on the same passage which says: "Some assert that merit increases and decreases after death, so that it be understood that there is no further advance in knowledge, which is to say, that they have more merit or reward, or that they deserve clearer knowledge, but it does not mean that they will not then know anything which was previously unknown. For it is clear that they will then know the punishments of hell, which they do not know now.
4. The Philosopher is here speaking only of the understanding united to the body. Otherwise, the consideration of understanding would not belong to natural science.
5. Although the nature of the soul is specifically the same before and after death, its mode of being is not the same. Consequently, its mode of activity is not the same.
6. The power of understanding and the agent and possible intellects will remain in the separated soul. For the existence of these powers is not caused in the soul by the body, although, while they exist in the soul united to the body, they do have an ordination to the body which they will not have in the separated soul.
7. The Philosopher is speaking of the act of understanding which is now proper for us with our dependence on phantasms. For this is hindered when the bodily organ is inhibited and it is completely destroyed when the organ is destroyed.
8. The same intellective powers which are now in the soul will be in the separated

soul because they are natural. And things which are natural have to remain, although they now have an ordination to the body which they will not have then, as has been said.

9. The intellective powers remain in the separated soul both in their radication in the essence of the soul and in their relation to act. Nor is it necessary that the habits which were acquired in the body be destroyed, except, perhaps, according to the opinion mentioned above, which says that no species remains in the understanding, unless actual intellection continues. But, even granting that those habits would not remain, the intellective power with an ordination to acts of a different type would remain.

10. After death, the soul understands through certain species. It can, indeed, understand through the species which it has acquired in the body, although these are not entirely adequate, as the difficulty points out.

11-12. We concede these two difficulties.

13. The infusion of the gifts of grace does not reach those who are in hell, but these souls are not deprived of the things which belong to the state of nature. "For nothing is completely deprived of a share in the good," as Dionysius says. But the infusion of species mentioned above, which is given when the soul is separated from the body, belongs to the natural state of separated substances. Therefore, the souls of the damned are not deprived of this infusion.

14. Augustine is here trying to show how the soul clothes itself with likenesses of physical things, so that it sometimes thinks it is itself a body, as appears in the opinion of the ancient philosophers. He says that this happens because the soul with its attention focused on bodies is attracted to them through the external senses. For this reason, it strives to bring these bodies into itself in so far as possible. However, since the soul is incorporeal, it cannot bring the bodies themselves into itself, but it does bring likenesses of bodies into the domain of incorporeal nature, as it were, in so far as the forms existing in imagination are without matter; however, they do not yet reach the limits of incorporeal nature, because they are still not free of the conditions of matter.

The soul is said to seize upon these likenesses in so far as it immediately abstracts them from sensible things. And it is said to fashion them to the extent that it simplifies them, or in so far as it joins and divides them. It constructs them in itself in so far as it receives them in a power of the soul, the imagination. It constructs them by itself because the soul itself is that which fashions imaginations of this sort in itself, so that the word by denotes the efficient principle. Therefore, he adds that the soul gives these species something of its substance when it forms them, since a part of the soul, rooted in As substance, is given this role of forming images.

But, since everything which passes judgment on a thing has to be free from that thing, understanding has been made pure and unmixed in order to judge of all things, according to the Philosopher. Therefore, for the soul to judge of these images, which are not things themselves, but likenesses of things, there has to be something higher in the soul which is not occupied by these images. This is the mind, which can judge of such images. However, it is not necessary that the mind judge only of these images, but at times it also judges of things which are neither bodies nor the likeness of bodies.

## **Q. 19: Knowledge of the Soul after Death**

### **ARTICLE II**

**In the second article we ask:**

**Does the separated soul know singulars?**

[Parallel readings; *IV Sent.*, 50,1, 3; *S.T.*, I, 89,4;  
*Q.D. de anima*, 20.]

#### **Difficulties**

It seems that it does not, for

1. If it knows singulars, it knows them either through species created with the soul, or through species it has acquired. But it does not know them through species which it has acquired, because the species received in the intellective part of the soul are not singular but universal. And it is only this part of the soul which is separated from the body, "as the perpetual from the corruptible," according to the Philosopher. Similarly, it does not know them through species created with the soul, for, since singulars are countless, there would have to be an infinite number of species created with the soul. But this is impossible. Therefore, the separated soul does not know singulars.
2. It was said that it knows singulars through a universal species. On the contrary, an indistinct species cannot be the source of distinct knowledge. But the universal species is indistinct, and knowledge of singulars is distinct. Therefore, separated souls cannot know singulars through universal species.
3. It was said that the separated soul conforms itself to the singular when the singular is present to it and thus knows the singular.—On the contrary, when the singular thing is present to the soul, either something passes over from the singular into the soul, or nothing passes over. If something passes over, the separated soul receives something from singulars, which seems unfitting, but, if nothing passes over, the species existing in the soul remain general, and, so, nothing singular can be known through them.

4. Nothing which is in potency reduces itself from potency to act. But the cognoscitive soul is in potency to things which can be known. Therefore, it cannot reduce itself to act, and so conform itself to them. Consequently, it seems that the separated soul does not know singulars when they are present to it.

### **To the Contrary**

1. In Luke (16:23) we read that Dives in hell knew Abraham and Lazarus, and retained the knowledge of his brothers still living. Therefore, the separated soul knows singulars.

2. There is not pain without knowledge. But the soul will undergo pain from the fire and the other punishments of hell. Therefore, it will know singulars.

### **REPLY**

The separated soul, as has been said knows in two ways. In one it knows through species infused when it is separated from the body; in the other, through species which it received while in the body.

According to the first mode, we have to ascribe to the separated soul a knowledge which is like angelic knowledge. Consequently, just as angels know singulars through the species given them at their creation, so, too, the soul will know them through the species given it at its separation from the body. For, since the ideas which exist in the divine mind are productive of things according to form and matter, they must be exemplars and likenesses of things according to both form and matter. Hence, through them God knows things not only in their generic and specific nature, which is derived from formal principles, but also in its singularity, whose principle is matter. But the forms which are created with angelic minds and which souls acquire when they are separated from the body are likenesses of those ideal forms which exist in the divine mind. Therefore, just as things derive from these ideas and so exist in form and matter, so also the species in created minds derive from them. And these species can know things according to form and to matter, that is, according to their universal nature and their singular nature. It is through this kind of species that the separated soul knows singulars.

But the species which it has received from the senses are like things only in so far as these latter can act, and they act according to their form. Therefore, singulars can be known through them only in so far as they are received in another power which uses a bodily organ, in which they exist materially in some way, and so are received as individual. In the understanding, however, which is entirely free from matter, they can be a principle only of universal knowledge, unless, perhaps, through some reflection on phantasms, from which the intelligible species are abstracted. After death, when phantasms have been destroyed, there cannot be this reflection. However, the soul can apply universal forms of this type to

singulars which it knows through another type of knowledge.

### **Answers to Difficulties**

1. The separated soul does not know singulars through the species which it acquired while in the body, nor through species created with the soul, but through species given it when it is separated from the body. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to have an infinite number of species infused into the soul to know singulars, because the singulars which it is to know are not actually infinite in number, and because a separated substance can know all the individuals of a species through one likeness of the species, in so far as that likeness of the species is made the proper likeness of each of the singulars according to its proper relation to this or that individual, as we said of the angels. This is also clear of the divine essence which is the proper likeness not only of the individuals of one species but of all beings according to the different relations which it has to different things.

2. Although the species by which the separated soul knows singulars are intrinsically immaterial and therefore universal, they are likenesses of things both in their general nature and in their singular nature. Therefore, nothing prevents the soul from knowing singulars through them.

We concede the other difficulties.