

QUESTION 9

What Moves the Will

Next, we have to consider what moves the will (*de motivo voluntatis*). On this topic there are six questions: (1) Is the will moved by the intellect? (2) Is the will moved by the sentient appetite? (3) Does the will move itself? (4) Is the will moved by any principle exterior to it? (5) Is the will moved by a celestial body? (6) Is the will moved by God alone as an exterior principle?

Article 1

Is the will moved by the intellect?

It seems that the will is not moved by the intellect:

Objection 1: In commenting on Psalm 118:20 (“My soul has longed to desire your justifications”), Augustine says, “The intellect flies ahead, the desire (*affectus*) is late or non-existent; we know the good, but we do not desire to act.” But this would not be the case if the will were moved by the intellect; for a moveable thing’s movement follows upon the mover’s motion. Therefore, the intellect does not move the will.

Objection 2: The intellect is related to the will as that which exhibits what is desirable (*demonstrans appetibile*), in the way that the imagination exhibits what is desirable to the sentient appetite. But in exhibiting what is desirable, the imagination does not move the sentient appetite; in fact, sometimes we are related to what we imagine in the way that we are related to things that are shown to us in a picture and which, as *De Anima* says, we are not moved by. Therefore, neither does the intellect move the will.

Objection 3: It is not the case that the same thing is both mover and moved with respect to the same thing. But the will moves the intellect; for we engage in intellectual understanding when we will to. Therefore, the intellect does not move the will.

But contrary to this: In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, “An apprehended desirable thing is an unmoved mover, whereas the will is a moved mover.”

I respond: To the extent that a thing needs to be moved by something, it is in potentiality with respect to more than one thing. For what is in potentiality has to be brought to actuality by something that is actual (*quod est actu*), and this is what it is to effect movement (*hoc est movere*).

Now there are two ways in which a given power of the soul is in potentiality to diverse things: (a) with respect to *acting* and *not acting*, and (b) with respect to *doing this* or *doing that*. For instance, sometimes the power of sight is actually seeing, and sometimes it is not seeing; and sometimes it sees something white, and sometimes it sees something black. Therefore, such a power needs a mover (*indiget movente*) in two ways, viz., (a) with respect to the *exercise* or *employment* of its act (*quantum ad exercitium vel usum actus*), and (b) with respect to the *specification* of its act (*quantum ad determinationem actus*). The former concerns the *subject*, which is sometimes acting and sometimes not acting, while the latter concerns the *object* by which the act is specified.

Now the motion of the *subject* itself arises from some *agent*. And since, as was shown above (q.1, a. 2), every agent acts for the sake of an end, the principle of this motion comes from the end; this is why an art directed toward the end (*ars ad quam pertinet finis*) effects movement by its command in an art directed toward the means to the end (*movet suo imperio artem ad quam pertinet id quod est ad finem*), in the way that, as *Physics* 2 says, the navigational art commands the shipbuilding art. Now the good in general (*bonum in communi*), which has the nature of an end, is the will’s object. And so in this regard the will moves the other powers of the soul to their acts, since we use the other powers when we will to. For the ends and perfections of all the other powers are included as particular goods under the will’s object, and it is always the case that an art or power that is directed toward a universal end presses into action (*movet ad agendum*) an art or power that is directed toward a particular end included under that

universal end. For instance, the general of an army, who intends the common good (*qui intendit bonum commune*)—viz., the ordering of the whole army—effects movement by his command in one of the tribunes, who intends the good of a particular battalion.

By contrast, in giving the act its species (*determinando actum*), the *object* gives movement in the manner of a *formal* principle like that by which an action is given its species among natural things—in the way, for instance, that the act of giving warmth (*calefactio*) is given its species by heat (*a calore*). Now the first formal principle is being and truth in general (*ens et verum universale*), which is the object of the intellect. And so it is in this sense of ‘motion’ that the intellect moves the will by presenting to the will its object.

Reply to objection 1: This passage shows not that the intellect does not move the will, but that the intellect does not move the will with necessity.

Reply to objection 2: Just as imagining a form without judging whether it is fitting or harmful does not move the sentient appetite, so neither does an apprehension of what is true without thinking about whether it is good and desirable (*sine ratione boni et appetibilis*). Hence, as *De Anima* 3 says, it is not the speculative intellect that effects movement, but rather the practical intellect.

Reply to objection 3: The will moves the intellect with respect to the *exercise* of the intellect’s act, since the true, which is the perfection of the intellect, is itself contained under the universal good as a certain particular good.

But as regards the *specification* of the act, which involves the object, the intellect moves the will, since the good is itself apprehended as a certain special concept included under the universal concept of the true.

And so it is clear that it is not the case that the same thing is both moved and mover with respect to the same thing.

Article 2

Can the will be moved by the sentient appetite?

It seems that the will cannot be moved by the sentient appetite:

Objection 1: As Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 7, “The mover and agent is more preeminent than that which is acted upon (*praestantius patiente*). But just as the sensory power is lower than the intellect, so the sentient appetite is lower than the will, which is an intellective appetite. Therefore, the sentient appetite does not move the will.

Objection 2: No particularized power (*nulla virtus particularis*) can produce a universal effect. But the sentient appetite is a particularized power, since it follows upon the sensory power’s particularized apprehension. Therefore, it cannot be a cause of the movement of the will, which is universal in the sense that it follows upon the intellect’s universal apprehension.

Objection 3: As *Physics* 8 proves, a mover is not moved by what it moves in such a way that the motion would be reciprocal. But the will moves the sentient appetite insofar as the sentient appetite obeys reason. Therefore, the sentient appetite does not move the will.

But contrary to this: James 1:14 says, “Everyone is tempted by his own sentient desire (*a concupiscentia*), being drawn away and allured.” But no one would be drawn away by sentient desire unless his will were moved by the sentient appetite, in which sentient desire exists. Therefore, the sentient appetite moves the will.

I respond: As was explained above (a. 1), what is apprehended under the concept of the good and the fitting moves the will in the manner of an *object*. But something’s being seen as good and fitting depends on two things, viz., (a) the condition of the thing that is proposed and (b) the condition of the

one to whom it is proposed. For ‘fitting’ is a relational predicate (*secundum relationem dicitur*), and it depends on both relata (*ex utroque extremo*). So it is that as the sense of taste is differently disposed, it does not receive something as fitting or as not fitting in the same way. Hence, as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 3, “According as someone is, thus does the end seem to him.”

Now it is clear that a man is altered in his disposition by the passions of the sentient appetite. Hence, to the extent that a man is subject to some passion (*est in passione*), something will seem fitting to him that would not seem fitting to someone who was not subject to that passion; for instance, something will seem good to an angry man that would not seem good to a calm man. It is in this way, on the part of the object, that the sentient appetite moves the will.

Reply to objection 1: Nothing prevents that which is preeminent absolutely speaking and in its own right from being inferior in some respect. Thus, the will is preeminent over the sentient appetite absolutely speaking, but the sentient appetite is preeminent in the case of someone whom the passions dominate insofar as he is subject to some passion.

Reply to objection 2: Men’s acts and choices have to do with singular things. Hence, by the very fact that the sentient appetite is a power that deals with particulars (*virtus particularis*), it has a great ability (*habet magnam virtutem*) to dispose a man in such a way that something regarding singulars seems one way or another to him.

Reply to objection 3: As the Philosopher says in *Politics* 1, reason, in which the will resides, moves the irascible and concupiscible [appetites] by its command—not, to be sure, with a despotic rule, in the way that a servant is moved by his master, but rather with a regal or political rule, in the way that free men are directed by a governor, even though they are able to move in a contrary direction. Hence, the irascible and concupiscible appetites are likewise able to effect movement in a way contrary to the will. And so nothing prevents the will from sometimes being moved by them.

Article 3

Does the will move itself?

It seems that the will does not move itself:

Objection 1: Every mover, as such, is actual (*est in actu*), whereas what is moved is in potentiality (*est in potentia*); for “a movement is the act of something that is in potentiality insofar as it is in potentiality.” But it is not the case that the same thing is both actual and in potentiality with respect to the same thing. Therefore, nothing moves itself. Therefore, the will cannot move itself, either.

Objection 2: A movable thing is moved in the presence of the mover. But the will is always present to itself. Therefore, if the will moved itself, it would never stop being moved (*semper moveretur*). But this is clearly false.

Objection 3: As has been explained (a. 1), the will is moved by the intellect. Therefore, if the will moved itself, it would follow that the same thing is being moved directly by two movers at the same time—which seems absurd. Therefore, it is not the case that the will moves itself.

But contrary to this: Since the will is the master of its own activity, it is capable both of willing and of not willing. But this would not be the case if it did not have it within its power to move itself to will. Therefore, it moves itself.

I respond: As was explained above (a. 1), the will’s role is to move the other powers in light of the end, which is the will’s object. But as has been said (q. 8, a. 2), the end plays the same role among desirable things that a principle plays among intelligible things.

Now it is obvious that through its cognition of principles the intellect brings itself from potentiality to actuality with respect to its cognition of the conclusions, and in this way it moves itself. Similarly,

through its willing of an end the will moves itself to will the means to that end.

Reply to objection 1: It is not the case that the will is mover and moved with respect to the same thing, and so it is not the case that the will is both actual and in potentiality with respect to the same thing. Rather, insofar as it actually wills the end, it brings itself from potentiality to actuality with respect to the means to the end, so that it actually wills those means.

Reply to objection 2: The will's power is always actually present to it, but the will's act, by which it wills an end, does not always exist in the will. Now it is through this act that it moves itself. Hence, it does not follow that it is always moving itself.

Reply to objection 3: The way in which the will is moved by the intellect is not the same as the way in which it is moved by itself. Rather, it is moved by the intellect by reason of the *object* of the act, (*secundum rationem obiecti*), whereas in light of an end it is moved by itself as far the *exercise* of the act is concerned.

Article 4

Is the will moved by anything exterior to it?

It seems that the will is not moved by anything exterior to it (*non moveatur ab aliquo exteriori*):

Objection 1: The will's movement is voluntary. But it is part of the concept of the voluntary that what is voluntary is from an intrinsic principle, just as this is part of the concept of the natural. Therefore, it is not the case that the will's movement is from anything exterior to it.

Objection 2: As was shown above (q. 6, a. 4), the will cannot suffer violence. But the violent is that whose principle is exterior. Therefore, the will cannot be moved by anything exterior.

Objection 3: What is moved sufficiently by one mover does not need to be moved by any other mover. But the will moves itself sufficiently. Therefore, it is not moved by anything exterior to it.

But contrary to this: As has been explained (a. 1), the will is moved by its object. But the object of the will can be any exterior thing proposed to the sensory power. Therefore, the will can be moved by something exterior.

I respond: Insofar as the will is moved by its *object*, it is obvious that it can be moved by something exterior to it.

But even in the mode in which it is moved with respect to the *exercise* of its act, one must likewise affirm that the will is moved by some exterior principle. For everything that is sometimes an actual agent and sometimes [merely] a potential agent needs to be moved by some mover. Now it is obvious that the will begins to will something after not having previously willed it. Therefore, it has to be moved to will it by something. And to be sure, as has been explained (a. 3), the will moves itself to the extent that by willing an end, it brings itself to will the means to that end. But it cannot do this except by the mediation of deliberation. For instance, when someone wills to be made healthy, he begins to think about how to accomplish this, and through this deliberation he arrives at the conclusion that he can be made healthy by a physician, and then he wills this. But because he had not been actually willing health at every previous moment (*quia non semper sanitatem actu voluit*), he must have begun, via some mover, to will to be made healthy. And if the will moved itself to will this, then it must have done it by the mediation of a deliberation following upon some previously posited act of will (*ex aliqua voluntate praesupposita*). But this cannot go on *ad infinitum*. Therefore, as Aristotle concludes in one of the chapters of the *Eudemian Ethics*, it is necessary to claim that for the will's first movement, the act of willing (*voluntas*) proceeds from the impulse of an exterior mover (*ex instinctu alicuius exterioris moventis*).

Reply to objection 1: It is part of the concept of the voluntary that its principle is intrinsic, but it need not be the case that this intrinsic principle is a first principle not moved by another. Hence, even if

a voluntary movement has a proximate intrinsic principle, its first principle may nonetheless be external—just as the first principle of a natural movement is likewise external, viz., the thing that moves the nature.

Reply to objection 2: It is not sufficient for the concept of the violent that its principle be external; rather, it is necessary to add that the thing acted upon contributes nothing. But this does not happen when the will is moved by something exterior to it; for it itself is what does the willing, even though it is being moved by another.

Now this movement would be violent if it were contrary to the will's movement. But this is impossible in the case under discussion, since if it were contrary, then the will would be both willing and not willing the same thing.

Reply to objection 3: The will is a sufficient mover of itself in a certain respect and within its own order, viz., as a proximate cause. But as has been shown, it cannot move itself with respect to everything. Hence, it needs to be moved by another as by a first mover.

Article 5

Is the human will moved by any celestial body?

It seems that the human will is moved by a celestial body:

Objection 1: All varied and multifaceted movements (*motus varii et multiformes*) are traced back to a uniform movement as their cause, and, as is proved in *Physics* 8, this is the movement of a celestial body. But human movements are varied and multifaceted, and they begin after not having previously existed. Therefore, they are traced back to the movement of a celestial body as their cause, and this movement is uniform by nature.

Objection 2: According to Augustine in *De Trinitate* 3, “Lower bodies are moved by higher bodies.” But the movements of the human body that are caused by the will could not be traced back to the movement of a celestial body as their cause unless the will were likewise moved by a celestial body. Therefore, a celestial body moves the human will.

Objection 3: Through their observation of the celestial bodies astrologers (*astrologi*) make some true predictions (*quaedam vera prenuntiant*) about future human acts that proceed from the will. But this would not be the case if celestial bodies were unable to move the human will. Therefore, the human will is moved by celestial bodies.

But contrary to this: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2 Damascene says, “Celestial bodies are not causes of our acts.” But they would be causes of our acts if the will, which is a principle of human acts, were moved by celestial bodies. Therefore, it is not the case that the will is moved by celestial bodies.

I respond: In the sense in which the will is moved by an exterior *object*, it is clear that the will can be moved by celestial bodies, viz., insofar as exterior bodies, which move the will when proposed to the sensory power, as well as the very organs of the sentient powers, are subject to the movements of celestial bodies.

But even in the sense in which the will is moved by some exterior agent with respect to the *exercise* of its act, there are some who have claimed that celestial bodies directly affect the human will.

However, this is impossible. For as *De Anima* 3 says, “The will exists in reason.” But reason is a power of the soul that is not tied to a corporeal organ. Hence, it follows that the will is a power that is altogether immaterial and incorporeal. Now it is obvious that a body cannot act on something incorporeal; instead, the opposite is true, since things that are incorporeal and immaterial have a more formal and universal power than any corporeal thing. Hence, it is impossible for a celestial body to directly affect either the intellect or the will. For this reason, it is to those who claimed that the intellect

does not differ from the sensory power that Aristotle in the *De Anima* attributes the opinion that “the will in men is like the day which the father of men and of gods bring on”—referring to Jupiter, by whom they mean the whole of the heavens. For since all the sentient powers are the acts of corporeal organs, they can be moved incidentally (*per accidens*) by celestial bodies, viz., when the bodies of which they are the acts are moved.

However, since it has already been explained (a. 2) that the intellective appetite is moved in a certain way by the sentient appetite, the movements of the celestial bodies redound upon the will indirectly, viz., insofar as the passions of the sentient appetite are able to move the will.

Reply to objection 1: The multifaceted movements of the human will are traced back to a certain uniform cause; and yet it is a cause that is higher than the intellect and the will—which cannot be said of any corporeal thing, but is instead true of a higher immaterial substance. Hence, the will’s movements need not be traced back to the movement of the heavens as their cause.

Reply to objection 2: Human corporeal movements are traced back to the movement of a celestial body as their cause insofar as (a) the disposition of the organs that is conformed to the movement is itself something that derives in some sense from the influence of the celestial bodies, and insofar as (b) the sentient appetite is likewise moved by the influence of celestial bodies, and, further, insofar as (c) exterior bodies are moved in accord with the movement of the celestial bodies and at the occurrence of this movement the will begins to will something or not to will it—in the way that when it gets cold, someone begins to will to make a fire. But this sort of movement on the will’s part derives from an object which is presented from the outside and not from an interior impulse.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained (*ST* 1, q. 84, aa. 6-7), the sentient appetite is an act of a corporeal organ. Hence, nothing prevents someone from being made liable to anger or sentient desire, or liable to some other passion, because of the influence of celestial bodies—just as this also happens because of some natural condition. Now most men follow their passions, whereas only a few wise men resist them. And so in most cases what is predicted about human acts through a study of the celestial bodies comes true. Yet as Ptolemy says in *Centiloquium*, “The wise man dominates the stars”—viz., because in resisting the passions and not being subject in any way to celestial movements, he impedes this sort of effect on the part of the celestial bodies.

An alternative reply is that, as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 2, “One must claim that when truths are foretold by astrologers, this is attributed to a certain hidden inspiration that human minds are subject to unknowingly. And since this is done to deceive men, it is an operation of seductive spirits.”

Article 6

Is the will moved by God alone as an exterior principle?

It seems that the will is not moved by God alone as an exterior principle:

Objection 1: A lower thing is apt to be moved by something higher than it, in the way that lower bodies are moved by the celestial bodies. But man’s will has something higher in addition to God, viz., the angels. Therefore, man’s will can also be moved by an angel as an exterior principle.

Objection 2: The will’s act follows upon an act of the intellect. But as Dionysius says, man’s intellect is brought to its own act not only by God but also by the angels through illuminations. Therefore, the same line of reasoning applies to the will.

Objection 3: God is a cause only of the good—this according to Genesis 1:31 (“God saw all that He had done, and it was very good”). Therefore, if man’s will were moved by God alone, then it would never move toward evil—even though, as Augustine puts it, “it is the will by which one sins or lives

uprightly.”

But contrary to this: In Philippians 2:13 the Apostle says, “For it is God who works in us, to will and to accomplish.”

I respond: The will’s movement, just like natural movements, is from within. But even though it is possible for a natural thing to be moved by something that is not a cause of the nature of the thing moved, still, this mover cannot cause a *natural* movement unless it is in some sense a cause of the nature. For instance, a rock is moved upward by a man, who is not a cause of the rock’s nature, but this movement is not natural to the rock; rather, the rock’s natural movement is caused only by what causes its nature. Hence, according to *Physics* 8, what moves heavy and lightweight bodies with respect to place is that which generates them.

So, then, it is possible for a man who has a will to be moved by some extrinsic principle that is not a cause of him, but it is impossible that any *voluntary* act of his should be caused by an extrinsic principle that is not a cause of his will.

Now the cause of a will can be nothing other than God. There are two ways in which this is clear.

First, it is clear from the fact that the will is a power of the rational soul, which, as was established in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 90, aa. 2-3), is caused by God alone.

Second, it is clear from the fact that the will is ordered toward the universal good. Hence, nothing can be a cause of the will except God Himself, who is the universal good. Every other thing is called good by participation and is a certain particular good; but a particular cause does not bestow a universal inclination. Hence, primary matter, which is in potentiality with respect to all forms, cannot be caused by any particular agent, either.

Reply to objection 1: An angel is not higher than a man in the sense that he is a cause of a man’s will in the way that the celestial bodies are causes of the natural forms that the natural movements of natural bodies follow upon.

Reply to objection 2: Man’s intellect is moved by an angel with respect to the *object*, which is proposed for cognition by the power of the angelic light. And in this sense, as has been explained (a. 4), a man’s will can likewise be moved by a creature exterior to it.

Reply to objection 3: God moves a man’s will as a universal mover with respect to a universal object, i.e., the good. Without this universal motion a man would be unable to will anything. On the other hand, through his reason a man determines himself to willing *this* or *that*, which is either a real good or an apparent good.

However, God sometimes moves certain men in a special way to will some good determinately, as in the case of those whom He moves through grace. This will be explained below (q. 109, a. 2).