

QUESTION 65

The Connectedness of the Virtues

Next we have to consider the connectedness of the virtues (*de connexione virtutum*). On this topic there are five questions: (1) Are the moral virtues connected with one another? (2) Can the moral virtues exist without charity? (3) Can charity exist without the moral virtues? (4) Can faith and hope exist without charity? (5) Can charity exist without faith and hope?

Article 1

Are the moral virtues necessarily connected with one another?

It seems that the moral virtues are not necessarily connected with one another:

Objection 1: As is proved in *Ethics 2*, the moral virtues are sometimes caused by the exercise of acts. But a man can be well versed (*potest exercitari*) in the acts of one virtue without being well versed in the acts of another virtue. Therefore, one moral virtue can be had without another.

Objection 2: Magnificence and magnanimity are moral virtues. But someone can have other moral virtues without having magnificence and magnanimity. For in *Ethics 4* the Philosopher says, “A poor man cannot be magnificent,” even though he can have certain other virtues; and he also says, “One who is worthy in small things and dignifies himself in them is temperate, but he is not magnanimous.” Therefore, the moral virtues are not connected.

Objection 3: Just as the moral virtues perfect the appetitive part of the soul, so the intellectual virtues perfect the intellective part. But the intellectual virtues are not connected, since someone can have one type of scientific knowledge without having another. Therefore, the moral virtues are not connected, either.

Objection 4: If the moral virtues were connected, this would only be because they are connected in prudence. But this is not sufficient for the connectedness of the moral virtues. For it seems that someone can be prudent with respect to actions (*agibilia*) that belong to one virtue without being prudent with respect to actions that belong to another virtue—just as someone can have an art or craft (*ars*) with respect to certain makeable things (*factibilia*) without having an art or craft with respect to other things. But prudence is right reason with respect to what is doable (*recta ratio agibilium*). Therefore, it is not necessary for the moral virtues to be connected.

But contrary to this: In *Super Lucam* Ambrose says, “The virtues are connected and concatenated, with the result that whoever has one of them seems to have more.” Likewise, in *De Trinitate 6* Augustine says, “The virtues that exist in a man’s mind are in no way separated from one another.” And in *Moralia 22* Gregory says, “One virtue without the others is either nothing at all or imperfect.” And in *De Tusculanis Quaestionibus 2* Tully says, “If there is a virtue that you admit not having, then it must be that you have no virtues at all.”

I respond: A moral virtue can be thought of as either *perfect* or *imperfect*.

An *imperfect* moral virtue, e.g., temperance or fortitude, is nothing other than an inclination that exists in us for doing some action in a genus of good actions (*ad opus aliquod de genere bonorum faciendum*), whether this inclination is in us by nature or by habituation (*a natura sive ex assuetudine*). And if we understand the moral virtues in this way, then they are not connected with one another. For instance, we see that someone, whether by natural temperament or by habituation, is prompt with respect to acts of generosity but not prompt with respect to acts of chastity.

By contrast, a *perfect* virtue is a habit that inclines one to do a good action in the right way (*in bonum opus bene agendum*). And if we understand the moral virtues in this way, then one must assert that they are connected—as is claimed by almost everyone.

Two arguments can be given for this, given that different authors distinguish the cardinal virtues in different ways.

For as has been explained (q. 61, aa. 3-4), some authors distinguish the cardinal virtues as certain *general conditions of the virtues*, so that no matter what subject matter is being thought of, discernment (*discretio*) pertains to *prudence*, rectitude to *justice*, moderation to *temperance*, and firmness of mind to *fortitude*. And on this score, the explanation for the connectedness is readily apparent. For instance, firmness does not receive the praise that belongs to virtue if it exists without moderation, rectitude, or discernment. And the same line of reasoning holds for the others. This is the argument for connectedness that Gregory uses in *Moralia* 22, when he says that, given the nature of a virtue, “the virtues cannot be perfect if they are not joined together, since there is no true prudence that is not just, temperate, and firm.” And he adds the same thing about the other virtues. Augustine gives a similar argument in *De Trinitate* 6.

Others, however, distinguish the cardinal virtues by their *subject matters* and, accordingly, the explanation for connectedness is the one given by Aristotle in *Ethics* 6. For as was explained above (q. 58, a. 4), no moral virtue can be had without prudence, because it is proper to a moral virtue to make a correct choice, since a virtue is an elective habit. But what is sufficient for a correct choice is not only an inclination toward a fitting end, which comes directly through the habit of a moral virtue, but also one’s directly choosing a means to that end, which comes through prudence and which involves deliberation, judgment, and command with respect to the means to an end (*quod est consiliativa et iudicativa et praeceptiva eorum quae sunt ad finem*). Likewise, prudence cannot be had unless the moral virtues are had, since prudence is right reason with respect to what is doable, and so prudence proceeds, as from its principles, from the ends of doable things—and one is rightly ordered toward these ends by the moral virtues. Hence, just as speculative scientific knowledge cannot be had without an understanding of its principles, so neither can prudence be had without the moral virtues. From this it clearly follows that the moral virtues are connected.

Reply to objection 1: Some moral virtues perfect man in accord with his *common condition*, i.e., with respect to doing what occurs generally in every human life. Hence, a man has to be simultaneously well versed in the subject matters of all the moral virtues. And, to be sure, if he is well versed in operating in the right way with respect to all these subject matters, then he will acquire the habits of all the moral virtues. However, if he is well versed in acting in the right way with respect to one subject matter but not with respect to another—for instance, if he behaves well with respect to anger but not with respect to sentient desires—then he will acquire a habit of refraining from anger, but this habit will not have the character of a virtue because of his lack of prudence, which is corrupted with respect to sentient desires—in the same way that natural inclinations do not have the perfect character of a virtue if prudence is lacking.

On the other hand, there are certain moral virtues, e.g., magnificence and magnanimity, that perfect a man in accord with some *lofty condition* (*secundum aliquem eminentem statum*). And because being well versed in the subject matters of these virtues is not something that occurs to everyone in general, it is possible for someone to have other moral virtues without having the habits of these virtues *in actuality*—speaking now of the acquired virtues. Yet once he has acquired the other virtues, he will have the virtues in question *in proximate potentiality*. For when someone becomes adept, through practice, at being generous with respect to moderate donations and expenditures (*circa mediocres donationes et sumptus*), then if a large sum of money comes his way, he will, with a modicum of practice, acquire the habit of magnificence—just as a geometer, with a modicum of study, acquires scientific knowledge of a conclusion that he has never before thought about. But we are said to have what we are on the verge of having (*illud habere dicimur quod in promptu ut habeamus*)—this according to the Philosopher in *Physics* 2 (“What is barely lacking seems not to be lacking at all”).

Reply to objection 2: This makes clear the reply to the second objection.

Reply to objection 3: The intellectual virtues have to do with diverse subject matters that are not ordered toward one another, as is clear in the case of the diverse arts and of the diverse types of scientific

knowledge. And so one does not find among them the sort of connection that is found among the moral virtues, which have to do with passions and operations and which clearly do have an ordering toward one another. For all the passions, which proceed from certain primary passions, viz., love and hate, are terminated in certain other passions, viz., pleasure and sadness. And, similarly, all the operations that are the subject matter of a moral virtue have an ordering toward one another, as well as toward the passions. And so the entire subject matter of the moral virtues falls under the unified consideration of prudence (*sub una ratione prudentiae cadit*).

To be sure, all intelligible things have an ordering toward their first principles. And, accordingly, all the intellectual virtues depend on the intellective understanding of first principles in the way that, as has been explained, prudence depends on the moral virtues. However, the universal principles that understanding has to do with do not depend on the conclusions that the other intellectual virtues have to do with, in the way that the moral virtues depend on prudence. For as was explained above (q. 9, a. 1 and q. 58, a. 5), there is a sense in which the appetite moves reason, and there is another sense in which reason moves the appetite.

Reply to objection 4: What the moral virtues incline one toward is related to prudence as a principle, but makeable things are related to an art or craft solely as their matter and not as principles. But it is clear that even if reason can be correct or right in one part of a subject matter and not in another, there is no way in which reason can be called ‘right reason’ if there is a defect in any of its principles. For instance, if someone erred with respect to the principle ‘Every whole is greater than its part’, then he would not be able to have geometrical scientific knowledge, since he would have to depart greatly from the truth in his conclusions. What’s more, as has been explained, doable things are ordered to one another, but makeable things are not. And so a lack of prudence with respect to one set of doable things would also induce a lack of prudence with respect to other doable things. But this does not happen in the case of makeable things.

Article 2

Can the moral virtues exist without charity?

It seems that the moral virtues can exist without charity:

Objection 1: Prosper’s *Liber Sententiarum* says, “Every virtue except for charity is common to good and bad individuals.” But as is pointed out in the same place, “Charity can exist only in good individuals.” Therefore, the other virtues can be had without charity.

Objection 2: As *Ethics 2* says, the moral virtues can be acquired by human acts. But charity is had only by infusion—this according to Romans 5:5 (“The charity of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given to us.”) Therefore, the other virtues can be had without charity.

Objection 3: The moral virtues are connected with one another, insofar as they depend on prudence. But charity does not depend on prudence; indeed, it surpasses prudence—this according to Ephesians 3:19 (“The charity of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge ...”). Therefore, the moral virtues are not connected with charity and can exist without it.

But contrary to this: 1 John 3:14 says, “He who does not love abides in death.” But the spiritual life is perfected by the virtues, since, as Augustine says in *De Libero Arbitrii 2*, “It is by the virtues that one lives rightly.” Therefore, the virtues cannot exist without the love that belongs to charity.

I respond: As has been explained (q. 63, a. 2), insofar as the moral virtues do what is good in relation to an end that does not exceed a man’s natural power, they can be acquired through human actions. And in this sense they can exist without charity, as they did in many Gentiles.

However, insofar as the moral virtues do what is good in relation to our supernatural end, then in

this sense they have the character of virtue perfectly and truly, and they are infused by God and cannot be acquired by human acts. And moral virtues of this sort cannot exist without charity. For it was explained above (q. 58, aa. 4-5) that the other moral virtues cannot exist without prudence, and that prudence cannot exist without the moral virtues, since the moral virtues bring it about that one is related in the right way to certain ends from which prudence's reasoning proceeds. But the right reason that belongs to prudence requires much more that a man be related in the right way to his ultimate end—a relation that is effected by charity—than that he be related in the right way to other ends—a relation that is effected by the moral virtues—just as right reason in speculative matters especially requires the first indemonstrable principle, viz., that contradictories are not simultaneously true. Hence, it is clear that infused prudence cannot exist without charity and, as a result, neither can the other moral virtues, which cannot exist without prudence.

Thus, it is clear from what has been said that only the infused virtues are perfect virtues, and only the infused virtues should be called virtues absolutely speaking, since they order a man in the right way, absolutely speaking, toward his ultimate end. The other virtues, i.e., the acquired virtues, are virtues in a certain respect and not virtues absolutely speaking, since they order a man in the right way with respect to the ultimate end in a certain genus, but not with respect to the ultimate end absolutely speaking. Hence, Augustine's Gloss on Romans 14:23 ("All that is not of faith is sin") says, "Where cognition of the truth is lacking, there is false virtue even in good behavior."

Reply to objection 1: 'Virtues' is being taken here in the imperfect sense of virtue. Alternatively, if 'moral virtue' is being taken in the perfect sense of virtue, then it makes the one having it good and, as a result, it cannot exist in bad individuals.

Reply to objection 2: This argument goes through for the case of the acquired moral virtues.

Reply to objection 3: Even if charity surpasses prudence and scientific knowledge, nonetheless, as has been explained, prudence depends on charity and, as a result, so do all the infused moral virtues.

Article 3

Can charity be had without the other moral virtues?

It seems that charity can be had without the other moral virtues:

Objection 1: What one thing is sufficient for is such that it is inappropriate for more than one thing to be ordered toward it. But as is clear from 1 Corinthians 13:4ff ("Charity is patient, charity is kind ..."), charity is sufficient for doing all the works of the virtues. Therefore, it seems that once charity is had, the other virtues are superfluous.

Objection 2: If an individual has the habit of a virtue, then it is easy for him to do what belongs to the virtue and pleases him in its own right; hence, as *Ethics* 2 says, "A sign of a habit is the pleasure that is effected in its work." But there are many who have charity, existing without mortal sin, and who nonetheless experience difficulty with the works of the virtues and take pleasure in them not in their own right but only insofar as they are referred back to charity. Therefore, there are many individuals who have charity but do not have the other virtues.

Objection 3: Charity is found in all the saints. But some are saints and yet lack certain virtues; for Bede says that the saints are humiliated by the virtues that they do not have more than they glory in the virtues that they do have. Therefore, it is not necessary for an individual who has charity to have all the moral virtues.

But contrary to this: The whole law is fulfilled through charity, since Romans 13:8 says, "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law." But the whole law can be fulfilled only by all the moral virtues together, since, as *Ethics* 5 says, the law has precepts concerning all the acts of the virtues.

Therefore, whoever has charity has all the moral virtues. Again, in a certain letter Augustine says that charity includes within itself all the cardinal virtues.

I respond: All the moral virtues are infused simultaneously with charity. The reason for this is that God does not operate less perfectly in the works of grace than He does in the works of nature. But we see in the case of the works of nature that there is no principle of any work in any entity that is not necessary for perfecting works of that sort; for instance, in animals there are organs by which the works which the soul has to power to carry out are perfected.

Now it is clear that insofar as charity orders a man toward his ultimate end, charity is a principle of all the good works that can be ordered toward the ultimate end. Hence, it is necessary for all the moral virtues by which a man perfects every genera of good works to be infused along with charity. And so it is clear that the infused moral virtues are connected not only because of prudence, but also because of charity, and that an individual who loses charity through mortal sin loses all the infused moral virtues.

Reply to objection 1: The perfection of a work of a lower power requires not only that perfection be present in the higher power but also that perfection be present in the lower power; for even if the principle agent were what it ought to be, a perfect action would not follow if its instrument were not well disposed. Hence, in order for a man to act well in regard to the means to his end, it is necessary for him to have not only the virtue by which he is well ordered toward his end, but also the virtues by which he is well ordered toward the means to that end. For a virtue that has to do with the end is like a principle and motive with respect to the means to that end. And so it is necessary for him to have the other moral virtues along with charity.

Reply to objection 2: It sometimes happens that someone who has a habit experiences difficulty in acting and, as a result, does not feel any pleasure or satisfaction in his act, and this because of some impediment that comes from the outside—as when someone who has the habit of a type of scientific knowledge experiences difficulty in understanding because of drowsiness or because of some sickness. Similarly, habits of the infused moral virtues sometimes experience difficulty in acting because of certain contrary dispositions that are left over from previous acts. This sort of difficulty does not occur in the same way in the case of the acquired moral virtues, because contrary dispositions are removed through the exercise of the acts by which those virtues are acquired.

Reply to objection 3: Some saints are said not to have certain virtues because, for the reason already explained, they experience difficulty with the acts of those virtues—even though they have the habits of all the virtues.

Article 4

Do faith and hope ever exist without charity?

It seems that faith and hope never exist without charity:

Objection 1: Since faith and hope are theological virtues, they seem to have more dignity than the moral virtues—even the infused moral virtues. But the infused moral virtues cannot exist without charity. Therefore, neither can faith or hope.

Objection 2: As Augustine says in *Super Ioannem*, “No one has faith unless he wills to” (*nullus credit nisi volens*). But as was explained above (q. 62, a. 3), charity exists in the will as its perfection. Therefore, faith cannot exist without charity.

Objection 3: In *Enchiridion* Augustine says, “Hope cannot exist without love” (*sine amore*). But love is charity (*caritas*), since he is talking about that sort of love in the place cited. Therefore, hope cannot exist without charity.

But contrary to this: An interlinear Gloss on Matthew 1:2 says, “Faith generates hope, whereas

hope generates charity.” But what generates is prior to what is generated and can exist without it. Therefore, faith can exist without hope, and hope can exist without charity.

I respond: Just as the moral virtues can be thought of in two ways, so, too, faith and hope can be thought of in two ways: (a) *in an inchoative state (secundum inchoationem quandam)* and (b) as *having the perfect esse of a virtue (secundum perfectum esse virtutis)*. For since a virtue is ordered toward doing a good work, the virtue is called ‘perfect’ from the fact that it is capable of the good work in a perfect or complete way, which occurs when it is the case not only that there is a good that is effected but also that this good is effected in the right way (*bene fit*). Otherwise, if a good were effected but were not effected in the right way, then the habit which is the principle of such a work would not perfectly possess the character of a virtue. For instance, if someone were to do just works, he would do what is good, but the work would not be the work of a perfect virtue unless he did it in the right way, i.e., in accord with a correct choice, which comes about through prudence; and this is why justice cannot be a perfect virtue without prudence.

So, then, there is, to be sure, a sense in which faith and hope can exist without charity; however, without charity they do not have the character of perfect virtues. For since it is a work of faith to put one’s faith in God (*credere Deo*), where putting one’s faith in someone is to assent by one’s own will, it follows that if one does not will this in the right way, i.e., through charity, then the work of faith will not be perfect. But the fact that one wills in the right way comes from charity, which perfects the will, since, as Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 14, every upright movement of the will proceeds from an upright love. So, then, faith exists without charity, but not as a perfect virtue—in the way that temperance or fortitude exists without prudence.

The same thing should be said about hope. For hope’s act is to expect future beatitude from God. This act is perfect if it is done on the basis of the merits one has—but this cannot be the case without charity. On the other hand, if one expects future beatitude from God on the basis of merits that he does not have but intends to acquire in the future, then the act of hope will be imperfect—and this can be the case without charity.

And so faith and hope can exist without charity, but without charity they are not, properly speaking, virtues. For as *Ethics* 2 says, it belongs to the nature of a virtue not only that we do some good in accord with the virtue, but also that we do it in the right way (*sed etiam bene*).

Reply to objection 1: The moral virtues depend on prudence, but infused prudence cannot have the character of a virtue without charity, i.e., without having the appropriate relationship to its first principle, which is the ultimate end.

However, faith and hope, according to their proper concepts, depend on neither prudence nor charity. And so they can exist without charity, even though, as has been explained, they are not virtues without charity.

Reply to objection 2: This argument goes through for the case of a faith that has the perfect character of a virtue.

Reply to objection 3: In the cited passage Augustine is talking about hope insofar as one expects future beatitude because of the merits that he already has—which cannot be the case without charity.

Article 5

Can charity exist without faith and hope?

It seems that charity can exist without faith and hope:

Objection 1: Charity is love for God (*caritas est amor Dei*). But God can be naturally loved by us, even without presupposing either faith or the hope of future beatitude. Therefore, charity can exist

without faith and hope.

Objection 2: Charity is the root of all the virtues—this according to Ephesians 3:17 (“Rooted and founded in charity”). But sometimes a root exists without branches. Therefore, charity can sometimes exist without faith and hope and the other virtues.

Objection 3: Perfect charity existed in Christ. Yet He did not have faith and hope, since, as will be explained below (*ST* 3, q. 7, aa. 3-4), He was the perfect ‘comprehender’. Therefore, charity can exist without faith and hope.

But contrary to this: In Hebrews 11:6 the Apostle says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” and, as is obvious, this applies especially to charity—this according to Proverbs 8:17 (“I love those who love me”). Hope is likewise something that leads one into charity, as was explained above (q. 62, a. 4). Therefore, charity cannot be had without faith and hope.

I respond: ‘Charity’ signifies not only love for God but also a certain sort of friendship with Him, which, as *Ethics* 2 says, adds to love a certain mutual return of love along with a mutual sharing (*addit mutuum redamtionem cum quadam mutua communicatione*). What is said in 1 John 4:16 makes it clear that this belongs to charity: “The faithful God, by whom you have been called into fellowship with His Son.” Now this fellowship of man with God, which is an intimate sharing of life with Him (*quaedam familiaris conversatio cum ipso*), begins in the present life through grace but will be perfected in the future life through glory—both of which theses are held to by faith and hope. Hence, just as one could not have friendship with anyone if he disbelieved in, or despaired of, the possibility of having fellowship or close communion with him, so, too, one cannot have friendship with God, i.e., charity, unless he has faith by which he believes in this sort of fellowship and communion of man with God, and unless he hopes that he will attain to this fellowship. And so there is no way in which charity can exist without faith and hope.

Reply to objection 1: Charity is not just any sort of love for God, but a love for God by which He is loved as the object of the beatitude toward which we are ordered by faith and hope.

Reply to objection 2: Charity is the root of faith and hope insofar as it gives them the perfection of virtue. But as was explained above (q. 62, a. 4), according to their *proper concepts*, faith and hope are presupposed by charity. And so charity cannot exist without them.

Reply to objection 3: Faith and hope were missing in Christ because they involve some imperfection (*propter id quod est imperfectionis in eis*). But in place of faith, He had the clear vision [of God], and instead of hope, He had full comprehension. And so perfect charity existed in Him.