

QUESTION 161

Humility

Next we have to consider the species that belong to modesty (*modestia*): first, humility (*humilitas*) (question 161) and, opposed to it, pride (*superbia*) (questions 162-165); second, studiousness (*studiositas*) (question 166) and, opposed to it, curiosity (*curiositas*) (question 167); third, modesty as it exists in words or deeds (question 168); fourth, modesty as it exists in external attire (question 169).

On humility there are six questions: (1) Is humility a virtue? (2) Does humility reside in the appetite or in the judgment of reason? (3) Should an individual submit himself through humility to everyone? (4) Is humility a part of either modesty or temperance? (5) How is humility related to the other virtues? (6) What are the degrees of humility?

Article 1

Is humility a virtue?

It seems that humility (*humilitas*) is not a virtue:

Objection 1: A virtue involves a type of good. But humility seems to involve a type of evil of punishment (*rationem mali poenalis*)—this according to Psalm 104:8 (“They humbled his feet in fetters”). Therefore, humility is not a virtue.

Objection 2: Virtue and vice are opposed to one another. But humility sometimes sounds like a vice; for Ecclesiasticus 19:23 says, “There is one who humbles himself with wickedness.” Therefore, humility is not a virtue.

Objection 3: No virtue is opposed to another virtue. But humility is opposed to magnanimity, which tends toward great things, whereas humility flees from great things. Therefore, it seems that humility is not a virtue.

Objection 4: As *Physics* 7 says, a virtue is “a disposition that belongs to what is perfect.” But humility seems to belong to what is imperfect; hence, it is unfitting for God to be humble, since He cannot submit to anything. Therefore, it seems that humility is not a virtue.

Objection 5: As *Ethics* 2 says, “Every moral virtue has to do with actions and passions. But humility is not numbered by the Philosopher among the virtues that have to do with the passions, nor again is it contained under justice, which has to do with actions. Therefore, it seems that humility is not a virtue.

But contrary to this: In commenting on Luke 1:48 (“He has looked upon the humility of his handmaiden (*respexit humilitatem ancillae suae*)”), Origen says, “One of the virtues, humility, is particularly commended in the Scriptures; for our Savior said: ‘Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.’”

I respond: As was explained above when we were talking about the passions (*ST* 1-2, q. 23, a. 2), an *arduous good* has something that attracts the appetite, viz., the very nature of the good, and something that makes the appetite draw back, viz., the difficulty of acquiring that good. Given the former, a movement of *hope* arises, and given the latter, a movement of *despair* arises.

Now it was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 61, a. 2) that in the case of appetitive movements that behave by way of pushing one [toward something], there has to be a moral virtue that moderates them and holds them back, whereas in the case of those that behave by way of holding one back [from something], there has to be a moral virtue that firms one up and pushes him forward. And so in the case of an appetite for an arduous good, there have to be two virtues, (a) one of which tempers the mind and holds it back from tending toward the highest things without moderation, and this belongs to the virtue of *humility*, and (b) the other of which pushes the mind to pursue great things in accord with right reason, and this is *magnanimity*. And thus it is clear that humility is a virtue.

Reply to objection 1: In *Etymologia* Isidore says, “A individual is called ‘humble’ (*humilis*) in the sense of being bent toward the ground (*humi acclinis*),” i.e., sticking to the lowest place. This can happen in one of two ways:

(a) because of an *extrinsic principle*, as when an individual is thrown down by another, and in this case being humbled (*humilitas*) is a punishment;

(b) because of an *intrinsic principle*, and this can sometimes happen in a good way, as when an individual, considering his own defects, assumes the lowest place in his own mode, in the way that Abraham said to the Lord (Genesis 18:27), “... I will speak to my Lord, even though I am dust and ashes.” And on this score humility is posited as a virtue. On the other hand, this can sometimes happen in a bad way, as when “a man, not understanding his own dignity (*honor*), compares himself to senseless beasts, and becomes like them” (Psalm 48:13).

Reply to objection 2: As has just been explained, insofar as it is a virtue, humility by its nature implies a praiseworthy prostration of oneself toward lower things.

Now this sometimes happens only with respect to exterior signs as a pretense—and this is the *false humility* of which Augustine says in one of his letters that it is “an instance of great pride,” because it seems to tend toward the excellence of glory.

However, sometimes it happens in accord with an interior movement of the soul. And it is on this score that humility is properly posited as a virtue. For as is clear from the Philosopher in the *Ethics*, a virtue consists not in exterior things, but mainly in the mind’s interior act of choosing.

Reply to objection 3: *Humility* restrains the appetite from tending toward great things that lie outside of right reason. On the other hand, *magnanimity* impels the mind toward great things in accord with right reason. Hence, it is clear that magnanimity is not opposed to humility, but agrees with it in the fact that both accord with right reason.

Reply to objection 4: There are two ways in which something is said to be perfect:

In one sense a thing is said to be perfect *absolutely speaking* (*simpliciter*), with no defect being found in it either with respect to its nature or with respect to anything else. And the only one that is perfect in this sense is God, to whom humility belongs not with respect to His divine nature, but only with respect to His assumed nature.

In the other sense a thing is said to be perfect *in a certain respect* (*secundum quid*), viz., either with respect to its nature or with respect to its state or its time. And in this sense a virtuous man is perfect. However, a man’s perfection is defective in comparison to God—this according to Isaiah 40:17 (“Before Him, all the nations are as if they had no being at all”). And so *every* man is such that humility can be fitting for him.

Reply to objection 5: The Philosopher wanted to be talking about virtues insofar as they are ordered toward civic life, in which the submission to one man by another is determined in accord with law and so is contained under *legal justice*. *Humility*, on the other hand, insofar as it is a specific virtue, has to do mainly with a man’s submission to God, for whose sake the man submits himself to others by humbling himself.

Article 2

Does humility have to do with the appetite?

It seems that humility does not have to do with the appetite, but has to do instead with the judgment of reason:

Objection 1: Humility is opposed to pride (*superbia*). But pride consists especially in what pertains to cognition. For instance, in *Moralia* 34 Gregory says, “When pride is being extended exteriorly

right up to the body, it is first indicated by the eyes.” Hence, in Psalm 130:1 it likewise says, “Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lifted up.” But the eyes especially serve cognition. Therefore, it seems that humility has to do especially with cognition, which the humble individual thinks he has little of.

Objection 2: In *De Virginitate* Augustine says, “Humility is nearly the entirety of Christian teaching.” Therefore, nothing that is contained in Christian teaching is incompatible with humility. But in Christian teaching we are admonished to desire the better things—this according to 1 Corinthians 12:31 (“Be zealous for the better gifts”). Therefore, humility has to do with our *estimation* of arduous goods and not with our *desire* for them.

Objection 3: It is the same virtue that has to do both with controlling excessive movement [toward a good] and with firming up the mind against excessive withdrawal [from that good]; for instance, it is the same virtue of fortitude that keeps audacity under control and firms the mind up against fear. But magnanimity firms the mind up against the difficulties that occur in the pursuit of great things. Therefore, if humility restrained the desire for great things, then it would follow that humility is not a virtue distinct from magnanimity. But this is clearly false. Therefore, humility has to do not with the *desire* for great things but with the *estimation* of great things.

Objection 4: Andronicus claims that humility has to do with outward observances; for he says that humility “is the habit of avoiding excessive expenditures and preparations.” Therefore, humility does not have to do with the movement of the appetite.

But contrary to this: In *De Poenitentia* Augustine says that the humble individual is “one who chooses to be lowly in the house of the Lord rather than to live in the tents of sinners.” But the act of choosing belongs to the appetite. Therefore, humility has to do with the appetite more than with estimation.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), humility properly involves an individual’s restraining himself from striving for those things that are beyond him. Now for this the individual has to have cognition of how he falls short in relation to what exceeds his power. And so a cognition of his own defects belongs to humility as a sort of rule that directs his appetite.

However, humility by its essence resides in the appetite itself. And so one should reply that, properly speaking, humility moderates the movement of the appetite.

Reply to objection 1: The lifting of the eyes is a sign of pride insofar as it excludes reverence and fear. For it is especially those who are fearful and ashamed who lower their eyes as if they do not dare to compare themselves to others. However, from this it does not follow that humility in its essence has to do with cognition.

Reply to objection 2: It is contrary to humility to tend toward certain greater things with *confidence in one’s own powers*. But it is not contrary to humility for an individual to tend toward greater things *with confidence in God’s help*, especially given that one becomes more exalted in God’s eyes by submitting himself more to Him through humility. Hence, in *De Poenitentia* Augustine says, “It is one thing to lift oneself up *to* God; it is another thing to lift oneself up *against* God. He who throws himself down before God is lifted up by Him; he who lifts himself up against God is thrown down by Him.”

Reply to objection 3: In *fortitude* one finds the same reason for restraining [the passion of] audacity and firming the mind up against [the passion of] fear, since the reason for both of them stems from the fact that a man ought to prefer the good of reason over the dangers of death. However, there are different reasons for the curbing of the presumption of [the passion of] hope—something that belongs to *humility*—and for the firming up of the mind against [the passion of] despair—something that belongs to *magnanimity*. For the reason for firming the mind up against despair is the acquisition of the good, viz., lest by despairing, a man render himself unworthy of a good that was appropriate for him. By contrast, in the curbing of the presumption of hope, the principal reason stems from one’s reverence for God, and because of this reverence it happens that the man does not attribute to himself more than is appropriate

for him, given the status that has been assigned to him by God.

Hence, humility seems mainly to imply a man's submission to God. For this reason, in *De Sermone Domini in Monte* Augustine attributes humility, which he understands as being poor in spirit, to the gift of fear by which a man reveres God. And this is why fortitude is related to audacity in a way different from the way in which humility is related to hope. For fortitude makes use of audacity more than it curbs it, and so the excess is more similar to fortitude than is the deficiency. By contrast, humility curbs hope or trust in oneself more than it makes use of it, and so the excess is more opposed to it than the deficiency is.

Reply to objection 4: Excess in exterior expenditures and preparations is usually done for the sake of boasting, which is repressed by humility. And in this regard, humility resides secondarily in exterior things, insofar as they are signs of an interior appetitive movement.

Article 3

Should a man submit himself through humility to everyone?

It seems that a man should not submit himself through humility to everyone:

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 2), humility consists mainly in a man's submission to God. But as is clear with all acts of worship (*latría*), what is owed to God should not be given to any man. Therefore, a man should not submit himself through humility to another man.

Objection 2: In *De Natura et Gratia* Augustine says, "Humility should be located on the side of truth, not on the side of falsehood." But certain individuals occupy the highest status, and if they were to submit themselves to those of a lower status, this could not be done without falsehood. Therefore, a man should not submit himself through humility to everyone.

Objection 3: No one should do anything that contributes to the loss of someone else's salvation. But if an individual submits himself through humility to another, then this sometimes contributes to the loss of the one whom he submits himself to and who becomes proud or contemptuous because of this; hence, in *Regula* Augustine says, "... lest, when humility is observed to excess, one's authority to govern be shattered." Therefore, a man should not submit himself through humility to everyone.

But contrary to this: Philippians 2:3 says, "... in humility, thinking of the others as superior to themselves."

I respond: There are two things that can be considered in a man, viz., *what belongs to God* and *what belongs to the man*. Now whatever involves defectiveness belongs to the man, whereas what involves salvation and perfection belongs to God—this according to Hosea 13:9 ("Destruction is your own, O Israel; your help is from me alone").

Now as has been explained (aa. 1-2), humility has to do properly with the reverence by which a man submits himself to God. And so every man, as regards what is his own, ought to submit himself to every neighbor, as regards what belongs to God in that neighbor.

However, humility does not require that an individual should subject what belongs to God in himself to what appears to belong to God in another. For those who share in the gifts of God know that they have them—this according to 1 Corinthians 2:12 ("... that we may know which things have been given us from God"). And so without prejudice to humility, they can prefer the gifts that they themselves have received to the gifts of God which appear to have been granted to others, in the way that in Ephesians 3:5 the Apostle says, "In other generations it was not known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles."

Similarly, humility likewise does not require that an individual subject what belongs to him in himself to what belongs to the man in his neighbor. Otherwise, each individual would have to regard

himself as more of a sinner than anyone else, even though, without prejudice to his humility, the Apostle says in Galatians 2:15, "... we ourselves, who are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles."

Still, it is possible for an individual to think that there is something good in his neighbor which he himself does not have, or something bad in himself which does not exist in the other and in light of which he is able to submit himself through humility to him.

Reply to objection 1: Not only should we give reverence to God in Himself, but we should also revere what belongs to God in everything—though not with the same mode of reverence by which we give reverence to God [in Himself]. And so through humility we should submit ourselves to all our neighbors for the sake of God—this according to 1 Peter 2:13 ("Be subject to every human creature for the sake of God"), but we should give worship (*latría*) to God alone.

Reply to objection 2: If we prefer what belongs to God within our neighbor to what belongs to us within ourselves, then we cannot incur falsehood. Hence, in commenting on Philippians 2:3 ("... thinking of the others as superior to themselves"), a Gloss says, "We should not give esteem in such a way that we are pretending to give esteem. Instead, we should realize in truth that it is possible for there to be something hidden in the other individual by which he is better than we are, even if our own goodness, by which we seem to be better than that individual, is not hidden."

Reply to objection 3: Like the other virtues, humility resides mainly in the soul. And so a man is able to submit himself to another by an *interior* act of the soul without providing that individual with an occasion that might involve his losing his salvation. This is why in *Regula* Augustine says: "With fear, the prelate should prostrate himself at your feet in the sight of God."

However, in the case of *exterior* acts of humility, just as in the case of acts of the other virtues, appropriate moderation should be applied, in order that those act not be able to contribute to the loss of the other. Now if an individual does what he should do and others take this as an occasion for sinning, then this is not imputed to the one who acted with humility. For he is not giving scandal, even if someone else is scandalized.

Article 4

Is humility a part of either modesty or temperance?

It seems that humility is not a part of either modesty or temperance:

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 3), humility has mainly to do with the reverence by which an individual submits himself to God. But a virtue that involves having God as its object is a theological virtue. Therefore, humility should be posited as a theological virtue rather than as a part of temperance or of modesty.

Objection 2: [The virtue of] temperance exists in the concupiscible [part of the soul]. But humility seems to exist in the irascible [part of the soul], as does pride, which is opposed to humility and the object of which is something arduous. Therefore, it seems that humility is not a part of temperance or of modesty.

Objection 3: As is clear from what was said above (a. 1), humility and magnanimity have to do with the same things. But as was established above (q. 129, a. 5), magnanimity is posited as a part of [the virtue of] fortitude and not as a part of [the virtue of] temperance. Therefore, it seems that humility is not a part of either temperance or modesty.

But contrary to this: In *Super Lucam* Origen says, "If you want to hear the name of this virtue and what it was called by the philosophers, take heed that the humility which God looks for is the same as what they called *metriotes*"—i.e., measure or moderation, which clearly involves modesty and

temperance. Therefore, humility is a part of modesty and temperance.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 157, a. 3 and q. 137, a. 2), in assigning parts to the virtues, one pays attention mainly to similarity with respect to the *mode* of the virtue. Now the mode of temperance, on the basis of which it is especially praiseworthy, is its holding back or repressing the impetus of a given passion. And so all the virtues which hold back or repress the impetus of given affections, or which moderate actions, are posited as parts of temperance.

Now just as *gentleness* holds back the movement of [the passion of] *anger*, so, too, *humility* holds back the movement of [the passion of] *hope*, which is the movement of a spirit tending toward great things. And so just as gentleness is posited as a part of temperance, so, too, is humility. Hence, in *Ethics* 4 the Philosopher says that an individual who tends toward small things in his own mode is not called *magnanimous* but is instead called *temperate*—where we ourselves can say *humble*. And, among the other parts of temperance, humility is, for the reason explained above (q. 160, a. 2), contained under *modesty* in the sense in which Tully speaks of modesty, viz., insofar as humility is nothing other than a sort of moderation of the spirit. Hence, 1 Peter 3:4 says, “... in the incorruptibility of a quiet and modest spirit.”

Reply to objection 1: The theological virtues, which have to do with the ultimate end, i.e., the first principle among desirable things, are causes of all the other virtues. Hence, the fact that humility is caused by reverence for God does not rule out humility’s being a part of modesty or temperance.

Reply to objection 2: As noted above, parts are assigned to principal virtues not because of an agreement in their *subject* [of inherence] or in their *subject matter*, but because of an agreement in their *formal mode*. And so even though humility exists in the irascible part of the soul as in a subject [of inherence], it is nonetheless posited as a part of modesty and of temperance because of its mode.

Reply to objection 3: Even though magnanimity and humility agree in their *subject matter*, they nonetheless differ in their *mode*, and it is for this reason that magnanimity is posited as a part of fortitude, whereas humility is posited as a part of temperance.

Article 5

Is humility the most important of the virtues?

It seems that humility is the most important of the virtues (*humilitas sit potissima virtutum*):

Objection 1: In commenting on what is said in Luke 18:14 about the Pharisee and the publican, Chrysostom says, “If, even when mixed with sins, humility runs so swiftly that it passes justice conjoined with pride, where will it not reach to if you join it to justice? It will stand among the angels by the judgment seat of God.” Therefore, humility is the greatest of the virtues.

Objection 2: In *De Verbo Domini* Augustine says, “Are you thinking about building a great structure of spiritual loftiness? Think first of a foundation of humility.” From this it seems that humility is the foundation of all the virtues. Therefore, it seems to be more important than the other virtues.

Objection 3: A greater reward is due for a greater virtue. But the greatest reward is due for humility, since “he who humbles himself will be exalted,” as Luke 14:11 says. Therefore, humility is the greatest of the virtues.

Objection 4: In *De Vera Religione* Augustine says, “Christ’s whole life on earth was a lesson in moral conduct, through the man whom he deigned to become (*per hominem quem suscipere dignatus est*).” But he especially proposed that His own humility should be imitated, saying in Matthew 11:29, “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” And in *Regula Pastoralis* Gregory says, “The humility of God is the proof of our redemption.” Therefore, humility seems to be the greatest of the virtues.

But contrary to this: Charity is preferable to all the virtues—this according to Colossians 3:14 (“... above all, have charity”). Therefore, it is not the case that humility is the greatest of the virtues.

I respond: The good of human virtue consists in the order of reason, which is mainly thought of with respect to the end. Hence, the theological virtues, which have the ultimate end for their object, are the most important, whereas, secondarily, one thinks of the means to the end (*ea quae sunt ad finem*) insofar as they are ordered in accord with the nature of the end (*prout secundum rationem finis ordinantur*). And this ordering resides (a) *essentially* in reason itself doing the ordering and (b) *by participation* in the appetite that is being ordered by reason. To be sure, this ordering is in general made by justice, especially *legal justice*. But it is *humility* that makes a man correctly subject to the ordering in a universal way with respect to *everything*, whereas each of the other virtues does this with respect to some *specific subject matter*.

And so after the *theological virtues*, and after the *intellectual virtues*, which have to do with reason itself, and after *justice* (especially *legal justice*), humility is more important than the rest of the virtues.

Reply to objection 1: Humility is being preferred not to justice, but to a justice which pride is joined to and which already ceases to be a virtue—just as, contrariwise, sin is remitted through humility, since in Luke 18:14 it is said of the publican that “he went back down to his home justified.” Hence, Chrysostom also says, “Bring me a pair of two-horse chariots, the one joining pride with justice and the other joining sin with humility. And you will see the sin outrunning the justice not by its own strength, but by the strength of its conjoined humility, whereas you will see the other pair beaten, not because of the weakness of the justice, but because of the weight and swollenness of the pride.”

Reply to objection 2: Just as an ordered collection of virtues is compared by a certain similitude to a building, so, too, what is first in the acquisition of the virtues is compared to the foundation, which is the first thing established in a building.

Now the genuine virtues (*virtutes verae*) are infused by God. Hence, there are two possible ways to understand what comes first in the acquisition of the virtues:

(a) *The removal of an obstacle*. And on this score humility holds the first place, viz., insofar as it expels pride, which God resists, and, by deflating the swelling up of pride, gives to the man a foothold and permanent opening for receiving the influence of God’s grace. As James 4:6 puts it, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” And it is because of this that humility is called the foundation of the spiritual building.

(b) *Something first among the virtues directly*—i.e., something through which one already approaches God. Now the first access to God comes through [the virtue of] *faith*—this according to Hebrews 11:6 (“He who approaches God must have faith”). And on this score *faith* is posited as the foundation in a more noble way than humility is.

Reply to objection 3: Heavenly things are promised to those who disdain earthly things, just as heavenly treasures are promised to those who disdain earthly riches—this according to Matthew 6:19-20 (“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”). Similarly, heavenly consolations are promised to those who disdain the joys of the world—this according to Matthew 5:5 (“Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be consoled”).

In the same way, spiritual exaltation is promised for humility, not because humility itself merits it on its own, but because it is proper to humility to disdain earthly sublimity. Hence, in *De Poenitentia* Augustine says, “Do not think that he who humbles himself remains forever prostrate; for it is said, ‘He shall be exalted.’ And do not imagine that his exaltation in men’s eyes is effected by bodily sublimity.”

Reply to objection 4: The reason why Christ commended humility to us in a special way is that it especially removes the obstacle to human salvation—a salvation which consists in a man’s striving for heavenly and spiritual things and from which a man is blocked when he is eager to become great in earthly matters. And so our Lord, in order to take away this obstacle to salvation, showed through examples of humility that exterior status is to be disdained. And so humility is, as it were, a disposition

toward a man's freely approaching spiritual and divine goods. Therefore, just as the perfection is more important than the disposition, so, too, charity and the other virtues by which a man is directly moved toward God are more important than humility.

Article 6

Are the twelve degrees of humility posited in the Rule of St. Benedict correctly identified?

It seems that the twelve degrees of humility posited in the Rule of St. Benedict are not correctly distinguished:

Objection 1: The *first* degree is "to always show humility of heart and body by fixing one's eyes on the ground"; the *second* is "to speak few words and sensible words, and not with a loud voice"; the *third* is "not to be easily moved to laughter or to be disposed toward laughter"; the *fourth* is "to remain silent until one is asked"; the *fifth* is "to hold to what the common rule of the monastery says"; the *sixth* is "to believe and declare oneself to be of less value than anyone (*omnibus viliores*)"; the *seventh* is "to think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes"; the *eighth* is "to confess one's sins"; the *ninth* is "to embrace patience by obeying under difficult and trying circumstances"; the *tenth* is "to submit oneself with obedience to one's superior"; the *eleventh* is "not to take delight in fulfilling one's own will"; the *twelfth* is "to fear God and to be always mindful of everything that God has commanded."

Now enumerated among these degrees are some that belong to other virtues, e.g., obedience and patience. Again, enumerated among them are some that seem to involve a false opinion—something that cannot belong to any virtue—viz., to declare oneself as being of less value than anyone, and to confess and believe oneself to be in all ways worthless and unprofitable. Therefore, these are incorrectly posited among the degrees of humility.

Objection 2: Like the other virtues, humility proceeds from the interior to the exterior. Therefore, in the aforementioned degrees it is incorrect for those that involve exterior acts to be mentioned before those that involve interior acts.

Objection 3: In *De Similitudinibus* Anselm posits seven degrees of humility, the first of which is to acknowledge oneself as contemptible; second, to be sorry for this; third, to confess it; fourth, to convince others of it, i.e., to want it to be believed by them; fifth, to bear with patience that it is attributed to us; sixth, to let oneself be treated with contempt; seventh, to love this. Therefore, the degrees mentioned above seem to be unnecessary.

Objection 4: A Gloss on Matthew 3:15 says, "Perfect humility has three degrees. The first degree is to submit oneself to a superior and not to prefer oneself to an equal, and this is *sufficient*. The second degree is to submit oneself to an equal and not to prefer oneself to an inferior, and this is called *abundant*. The third degree is to submit oneself to an inferior, and in this lies *full righteousness*. Therefore, the aforementioned degrees seem to be unnecessary.

Objection 5: In *De Virginitate* Augustine says, "The measure of humility is apportioned to each one according to the measure of his greatness. What is most dangerous to one is pride, which lies in wait more for those who are greater." But the measure of human greatness cannot be determined by a fixed number of degrees. Therefore, it seems impossible to designate determinate degrees of humility.

I respond: Humility by its essence resides in the *appetite*, insofar as the individual curbs the impetus of his mind from tending toward great things in a disordered way, but it has its *rule* in *cognition*, viz., the rule that the individual should not think himself to be above what he is. And the principle and root of both of these is the reverence that the individual has for God.

Now from the interior disposition of humility proceed certain exterior signs in words and deeds and

gestures by which what is hidden within is manifested outside—just as happens with the rest of the virtues. For as Ecclesiasticus 19:26 says, “A man is recognized from how he looks ... and sensed by his countenance.”

And so in the aforementioned degrees of humility one finds something that belongs to the root of humility, viz., the *twelfth* degree, that the man “fears God and is mindful of everything that He has commanded.”

Likewise, something is posited that involves the appetite, viz., that he not tend toward his own excellence in a disordered way. This happens in three ways: (a) that the man does not follow his own will, which belongs to the *eleventh* degree; (b) that he regulates his will according to the judgment of his superior, which belongs to the *tenth* degree; and (c) that he does not give up because of difficulties and trying circumstances that occur, which belongs to the *ninth* degree.

Again, certain things are posited that pertain to the opinion of a man who recognizes his own defects. And this in three ways: (a) that he recognizes and confesses his own defects, which belongs to the *eighth* degree; (b) that from a consideration of his own defects he thinks himself insufficient for the greater things, which belongs to the *seventh* degree; and (c) that because of this he prefers others to himself, which belongs to the *sixth* degree.

Likewise, certain things are posited that involve exterior signs. One of them has to do with deeds, viz., (a) that the man does not withdraw from the customs of the community in his acts, which belongs to the *fifth* degree. The other two have to do with words: (b) that the man does not speak before his time for speaking, which belongs to the *fourth* degree, and (c) that he does not go beyond a moderated way of speaking, which belongs to the *second* degree.

Other things involve exterior gestures, viz., (a) in refraining from raising his eyes, which belongs to the *first* degree, and (b) in curbing exterior laughing and other signs of inappropriate exultation, which belongs to the *third* degree.

Reply to objection 1: An individual can without falsity “believe and declare himself to be of less value than anyone (*omnibus viliorem*),” and this because of the hidden defects that he recognizes within himself and because of the gifts of God that lie hidden within others. Hence, in *De Virginitate* Augustine says, “Be of the mind that some individuals whom you are better than outwardly are in hidden ways better than you.”

Similarly, given his own proper powers, an individual can without falsity confess and believe that he himself “is in all ways worthless and unprofitable,” with the result that he refers all of his sufficiency to God—this according to 2 Corinthians 3:5 (“Nor are we sufficient to think that anything is from ourselves, as if it were because of ourselves; rather, our sufficiency is from God”).

Nor is it incorrect to ascribe to humility what belongs to other virtues. For just as one vice arises from another, so the act of one virtue proceeds from the act of another virtue in a natural ordering.

Reply to objection 2: There are two things through which a man comes to humility:

First, and most importantly, he comes to humility through *the gift of grace*. And on this score what is interior precedes what is exterior.

The other thing is *human effort (humanum studium)*, through which the man first constrains exterior things and afterwards arrives at the point of extirpating the root. And it is in accord with this ordering that the degrees of humility are being assigned here.

Reply to objection 3: All the degrees that Anselm posits are traced back to the *recognition of*, the *manifestation of*, and the *desire for* one’s own lowliness (*abiectio*).

For instance, the first degree pertains to the recognition of one’s own defects. But since it would be shameful if an individual loved his own defects, this is excluded by the second degree.

On the other hand, the third and fourth degrees pertain to the manifestation of his defects, so that, namely, the individual not only simply announces his own defects, but also persuades others about them.

By contrast, the other three degrees pertain to the appetite, which does not seek exterior excellence,

but instead either seeks exterior humiliation or suffers it with equanimity, whether in words or in deeds. For as Gregory says in *Register* [2, 10, letter 36], “It is not a great thing for us to be humble toward those by whom we are honored, since all worldly people do this. Instead, we should be humble especially toward those who make us suffer.” And this belongs to the fifth and sixth degrees. Or, again, he embraces exterior humiliation with desire, which belongs to the seventh degree. And so all these degrees are contained under the sixth and seventh degrees enumerated above.

Reply to objection 4: These degrees are taken not from the side of the thing itself, i.e., according to the *nature* of humility, but are instead taken from a comparison among the degrees or levels of men, who are either greater [than oneself] or lesser [than oneself] or equal [to oneself].

Reply to objection 5: This argument likewise proceeds on the basis of grades of humility that are taken not from the very *nature* of humility, according to which the degrees explained above are assigned, but are instead taken from the different conditions of men.