

QUESTION 162

Pride

Next we have to consider pride (*superbia*): first, pride in general (question 162); second, the sin of the first man, which is claimed to be pride (questions 163-165).

On the first topic there are eight questions: (1) Is pride a sin? (2) Is pride a specific sin? (3) In which subject does pride exist? (4) What are the species of pride? (5) Is pride a mortal sin? (6) Is pride the most serious of all sins? (7) How is pride ordered with respect to other sins? (8) Should pride be posited as a capital vice?

Article 1

Is pride a sin?

It seems that pride (*superbia*) is not a sin:

Objection 1: No sin is promised by God, since God promises what He himself will do, and He is not an author of sin. But pride is counted among God's promises; for Isaiah 60:15 says, "I will make you to be a pride forever, a joy from age to age." Therefore, pride is not a sin.

Objection 2: It is not a sin to desire to be like God, since every creature naturally desires this, and what is best for it consists in this. And this is especially fitting for a rational creature, which is made to the image and likeness of God. But as it says in Prosper's *Sentences*, pride is "the love of one's own excellence," through which a man becomes like God, who is the most excellent of all. Hence, in *Confessiones* 2 Augustine says, "Pride imitates exaltedness, whereas you are the one high God above everything." Therefore, pride is not a sin.

Objection 3: As is clear from the Philosopher in *Ethics* 2, a sin is contrary not only to a virtue, but to the opposite vice. But there is no vice opposed to pride. Therefore, pride is not a sin.

But contrary to this: Tobit 4:14 says, "Never allow pride to reign in your understanding or in your words."

I respond: Pride (*superbia*) is named from the fact that an individual through his will tends toward going beyond (*supra*) what he is; hence, in *Etymologia* Isidore says, "Someone is called 'proud' (*superbus*) because he wants to be seen as higher than he in fact is. For an individual who wants to step beyond what he is, is proud." However, right reason holds that the will of each individual should tend toward what is proportionate to him. And so it is clear that pride implies something that is opposed to right reason. But this makes for the nature of a sin, since according to Dionysius in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, what is evil for the soul is "to live outside of reason." Hence, it is clear that pride is a sin.

Reply to objection 1: 'Pride' can be understood in two ways:

In one way, from the fact that it *oversteps the rule of reason*, and this is the sense in which we are claiming that it is a sin.

In the other way, pride can be named from abundance absolutely speaking (*potest nominari simpliciter a superexcessu*). And on this score anything that abounds can be named a pride. And this is the way in which pride is promised by God—in the sense of a sort of abundance of goods. Hence, Jerome's Gloss on the same passage says that there is good pride and bad pride.

However, one could also reply that 'pride' is being understood here *in a material sense* (*accipitur materialiter*) for an abundance of things in which men can take pride.

Reply to objection 2: Reason is what orders all the things that a man desires naturally, and so if an individual departs from the order of reason by either exceeding it or falling short of it, then such a desire will be sinful. This is clear in the case of the desire for food, which a man naturally desires.

Now as far as right reason is concerned, pride desires excellence in excess, and this is why in *De*

Civitate Dei 14 Augustine says that pride is “a perverse desire for exaltedness.” Hence it is that, as Augustine says in *De Civitate* 19, “Pride imitates God in a perverse way. For it hates equality with fellow human beings under Him, and instead wishes to impose its own domination over fellow human beings in place of Him.”

Reply to objection 3: *Pride* is directly opposed to the virtue of *humility*, which, as was explained above (q. 161, a. 1), has to do in a certain sense with the same things that *magnanimity* has to do with. Hence, the vice that is opposed to *pride* on the side of deficiency is close to the vice of *pusillanimity*, which is opposed to *magnanimity* on the side of deficiency. For just as *magnanimity* involves impelling the mind toward great things—and this against *despair*—so, too, *humility* involves drawing the mind back from a disordered desire for great things—and this against *presumption*.

Now if *pusillanimity* implies a deficiency in the pursuit of great things, then it is properly speaking opposed to *magnanimity* on the side of deficiency; on the other hand, if it implied *an application of the mind to certain things that are lower than is appropriate for a man*, it would be opposed to *humility* on the side of deficiency; for in both cases it would proceed from a smallness of mind.

In the same way, contrariwise, *pride* can be opposed on the side of excess to both *magnanimity* and *humility*—and this for different reasons: it is opposed to *humility* insofar as it chafes at submission, and it is opposed to *magnanimity* insofar as it extends itself to great things in a disordered way. However, since *pride* implies a certain sort of superiority, it is more directly opposed to *humility*, just as *pusillanimity*, which implies a smallness of mind in tending toward great things, is more directly opposed to *magnanimity*.

Article 2

Is pride a specific sin?

It seems that *pride* is not a specific sin (*non sit speciale peccatum*):

Objection 1: In *De Natura et Gratia* Augustine says, “You will find no sin without the name ‘pride’.” And in *De Vita Contemplativa* Prosper says, “Without *pride*, no sin can exist or has been able to exist or will be able to exist.” Therefore, *pride* is a general sin.

Objection 2: A Gloss on Job 33:17 (“... in order to turn man from iniquity”) says, “To rise up in *pride* against the Creator (*contra conditorem superbire*) is to transgress His commandments by sinning.” But according to Ambrose, every sin “involves transgressing God’s law and disobeying heavenly commandments.” Therefore, every sin is a sin of *pride* (*omne peccatum est superbia*).

Objection 3: Every specific sin is opposed to some specific virtue. But *pride* is opposed to every virtue; for in *Moralia* 34 Gregory says, “*Pride*, in no way content with the destruction of one virtue, raises itself up throughout all the parts of the soul and, like a general and poisonous disease, corrupts the whole body.” And in *Etymologia* Isidore says that *pride* “is the ruination of every virtue.” Therefore, *pride* is not a specific sin.

Objection 4: Every specific sin has a specific subject matter. But *pride* has a general subject matter; for in *Moralia* 34 Gregory says, “One individual is proud (*intumescit*) of his gold, another of his eloquence, another of his lowly and earthly possessions, another because of his high and heavenly virtues.” Therefore, *pride* is a general sin and not a specific sin.

But contrary to this: In *De Natura et Gratia* Augustine says, “He looks and he will find that, according to God’s law, *pride* is a sin very distinct from other sins.” But a genus is not distinct from its species. Therefore, *pride* is a specific sin and not a general sin.

I respond: The sin of *pride* can be thought of in two ways:

In one way, *pride* can be thought of *in accord with the proper species that it has by reason of its*

proper object. And on this score pride is a specific sin because it has a specific object; for as has been explained (a. 1), pride is a disordered desire for one's own excellence.

In the second way, pride can be thought of *in accord with the sort of overflow that it has into other sins*. And on this score it has a sort of generality, viz., insofar as all sins are such that they are able to arise from pride—and this in two ways:

(a) *in its own right (per se)*, viz., insofar as other sins are ordered toward the end of pride, which is one's own excellence and toward which everything that an individual desires in a disordered way can be ordered; and

(b) *indirectly and, as it were, incidentally (indirecte et quasi per accidens)*, i.e., by removing an obstacle, viz., insofar as through pride a man comes to disdain God's law, by which he is impeded from sinning—this according to Jeremiah 2:20 (“You have broken the yoke, you have thrown off the chains, you have said, ‘I will not serve’”). Notice, however, that this generality on the part of pride involves all sins being such that they can *sometimes arise* from pride, and *not* all sins being such that they *always arise* from pride. For even though an individual is able, by some sort of sin, to transgress each of the precepts of the law out of contempt, which belongs to pride, it is nonetheless *not always* the case that the individual transgresses divine precepts out of contempt; instead he sometimes transgresses them out of ignorance and sometimes out of weakness. And so it is that, as Augustine says in *De Natura et Gratia*, “Many things are done wrongly that are not done out of pride (*multa perperam fiunt quae non fiunt superbe*).”

Reply to objection 1: Augustine introduces these words in *De Natura et Gratia* not in his own person, but in the person of another individual against whom he is arguing. Hence, he also refutes these words, showing that it is not always the case that one sins out of pride.

However, one could reply that the passages in question are to be understood (a) as having to do with the *exterior effect* of pride, viz., *transgressing the precepts*, which is found in every sin, and (b) *not* as having to do with the *interior act* of pride, viz., *having contempt for the precepts*. For it is not the case that every sin is committed out of contempt; instead, as has been said, sometimes a sin is committed out of ignorance and sometimes out of weakness.

Reply to objection 2: Sometimes an individual commits a sin as regards *the effect*, but not as regards *the affection*. For instance, an individual who kills his father without knowing that it is his father (*ille qui ignoranter occidit patrem*) commits parricide as regards *the effect*, but *not* as regards *the affection*, since he did not intend to do this. And, accordingly, transgressing God's precept is said to be an instance of rising up in pride against God—always, to be sure, as regards *the effect*, but *not* always as regards *the affection*.

Reply to objection 3: There are two ways in which a sin can corrupt a virtue:

In one way, *by a direct contrariety to the virtue*. And on this score pride does not corrupt every virtue, but corrupts only humility, just as any other specific sin corrupts the specific virtue opposed to it by acting contrary to that virtue.

In a second way, a sin corrupts a virtue *by making bad use of that virtue*. And on this score pride corrupts every virtue, viz., insofar as it is from the virtues themselves that an individual takes the occasion of rising up in pride, just as it does with every other thing that involves excellence.

Hence, it does not follow that pride is a general sin.

Reply to objection 4: Pride focuses on a specific aspect of the object that can be found in diverse subject matters. For it is a disordered love for one's own excellence, and excellence can be found in diverse things.

Article 3

Does pride exist in the irascible power as in a subject?

It seems that pride does not exist in the irascible power as in a subject:

Objection 1: In *Moralia* 23 Gregory says, “The swelling of the mind is an obstacle to truth, since when the mind is swollen, it is clouded over.” But the cognition of the truth pertains to the rational power and not to the irascible power. Therefore, pride does not exist in the irascible power.

Objection 2: In *Moralia* 24 Gregory says, “The proud think not of the lives of those whom they might humbly place themselves lower than, but instead think of the lives of those they might proudly prefer themselves to.” And so it seems the pride proceeds from inappropriate thoughts. But thinking belongs to the rational power and not to the irascible power. Therefore, pride exists in the rational power rather than in the irascible power.

Objection 3: Pride seeks excellence not only in sensible things, but also in spiritual and intelligible things. In addition, it itself consists mainly in contempt for God—this according to Ecclesiasticus 10:14 “The beginning of man’s pride is to fall away from God (*apostatare a Deo*)”. But since the irascible power is part of the sentient appetite, it cannot extend itself to God or to intelligible things. Therefore, pride cannot exist in the irascible power.

Objection 4: In the *Sentences* of Prosper it says, “Pride is the love of one’s own excellence.” But love exists in the concupiscible part of the soul and not in the irascible part. Therefore, pride does not exist in the irascible power.

But contrary to this: In *Moralia* 2 Gregory posits the gift of fear [of the Lord] as contrary to pride. But fear belongs to the irascible power. Therefore, pride exists in the irascible power.

I respond: One has to ask about the subject of a virtue or vice on the basis of the proper object of that virtue or vice, since a habit or act cannot have an object that is not an object of the power that serves as the subject of the habit or act. Now the proper object of pride is *something arduous*, since, as has been explained (aa. 1-2), pride is a desire for one’s own excellence. Hence, it must be the case that pride belongs in some sense to the irascible power.

Now there are two possible ways to understand the irascible power:

In one way, it is understood *properly*. And on this score the irascible power is part of the sentient appetite, in the way that anger, understood properly, is a passion of the *sentient* appetite.

In the second way, the irascible power can be understood *in a broader sense*, so that, namely, it belongs to the *intellective* appetite, to which anger is also sometimes attributed, in the way that we attribute anger to God and the angels—not, to be sure, as a passion, but as a judge’s judgment of justice (*sed secundum iudicium iustitiae iudicantis*). And yet, as is clear from what was said in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 59, a. 4 and q. 82, a. 5), the irascible power so understood in a more general way (*sic communiter dicta*) is not a power distinct from the concupiscible power. Therefore, if the arduous thing that is the object of pride were only something sensible which the *sentient* appetite could tend toward, then pride would have to exist in that irascible power which is a part of the sentient appetite. However, since the arduous [good] that pride looks to is found in common both among sensible things and among spiritual things, one must claim that the subject of pride is the irascible power not only taken properly, insofar as it is a part of the *sentient* appetite, but also understood more generally, insofar as it is found in the *intellective* appetite. This is how pride is posited in the demons as well.

Reply to objection 1: There are two sorts of cognition of the truth:

The one is *purely speculative*, and pride impedes this sort of cognition *indirectly*, by removing its cause. For the prideful individual does not submit his intellect to God so that he might receive the cognition of truth from Him—this according to Matthew 11:25 (“You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent”—i.e., from the proud—“and have revealed them to children”—i.e., to the humble).

Nor do the proud deign to learn from men, even though Ecclesiasticus 6:34 says, “If you would turn your ear”—viz., by listening humbly—“you would receive instruction.”

The other sort of cognition is *affective* cognition of the truth. And pride impedes this sort of cognition *directly*. For while the proud delight in their own excellence, they disdain the excellence of truth. As Gregory puts it in *Moralia* 23, although the proud “perceive certain hidden truths with their understanding, they cannot experience the delightfulness of those truths, and even if they know how things are, they do not know how to savor them.” Hence, Proverbs 11:2 likewise says, “Where there is humility, there is wisdom.”

Reply to objection 2: As has been explained (q. 161, aa. 2 and 6), humility looks to the rule of right reason, according to which an individual has a true estimation of himself.

By contrast, pride does not look to the rule of right reason, but instead the individual thinks greater things of himself than are true. This happens because of a disordered desire for his own excellence, since an individual easily believes what he strongly desires. And, again, because of this his desire is drawn toward higher things than are appropriate for him. And so anything that contributes to a man’s thinking himself to be beyond what he in fact is induces him toward pride.

One of these things is that the individual keeps considering the defects of others—just as, contrariwise, Gregory says in the same place, “Holy men, because they in their turn keep considering the virtues of others, prefer those others to themselves.” Therefore, from the argument in question it follows not that pride exists in the rational power, but that a certain cause of pride exists in reason.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, pride exists in the irascible power not only insofar as it is a part of the sentient appetite, but also insofar as the irascible power is understood in a more general way.

Reply to objection 4: As Augustine explains in *De Civitate Dei* 14, love (*amor*) precedes all the other affections of the soul and is a cause of them. And so it can be posited in the place of any of the other affections. Accordingly, pride is said to be the love of one’s own excellence insofar as what is caused by this love is a disordered presumption that one surpasses others, and this is what pride properly involves.

Article 4

Are the four species of pride designated by Gregory in *Moralia* 23 correctly assigned?

It seems that the four species of pride designated by Gregory in *Moralia* 23 are not correctly assigned:

Objection 1: Gregory designates these four species when he says, “There are four species according to which every instance of the swelling up of arrogant individuals shows forth. For either (a) *they think that they have their goodness from themselves*, or (b) if they believe their goodness to have been given from above, then *they think they have received it by their own merits*, or (c) *they boast of having what they do not in fact have*, or (d) *looking down on others, they desire to appear to be the only ones who have what they have*.”

Now pride is a vice distinct from unbelief (*infidelitas*), just as humility is likewise a virtue distinct from faith (*fides*). But someone’s thinking that he does not have his good from God, or that he has the good of grace by his own merits, pertains to [the vice of] *unbelief*. Therefore, these should not be posited as species of [the vice of] *pride*.

Objection 2: It should not be the case that the same thing is posited as a species of diverse genera. But as was established above (q. 110, a. 2 and q. 112) boasting (*iactantia*) is a species of lying. Therefore, it should not be posited as a species of pride.

Objection 3: It seems that there are some other things pertaining to pride that are not enumerated here. For Jerome says, “Nothing seems as proud as *ingratitude*.” And in *De Civitate Dei* 14 Augustine says that *excusing oneself of a sin* that one has committed pertains to pride. Again, *presumption*, by which an individual tends to pursue something that lies beyond himself, seems especially to belong to pride. Therefore, the aforementioned division is not sufficiently comprehensive with respect to the species of pride.

Objection 4: There are alternative divisions of pride. For instance, Anselm divides the *exaltation* that belongs to pride, claiming that some instances of it exist “in the will,” some “in speech,” and some “in action.” Again, Bernard posits twelve degrees of pride, viz., “curiosity, levity of mind, improper rejoicing, boasting, individuality (*singularitas*), arrogance, presumption, defense of sinners, simulated confession, rebellion, autonomy (*libertas*), and habitual sinning.” These do not seem to be included among the species assigned by Gregory. Therefore, it seems that the latter are incorrectly assigned.

But contrary to this the authority of Gregory is enough.

I respond: As has been explained (aa. 1-3), pride implies an unmoderated desire for excellence that is not in accord with right reason. However, notice that any excellence follows upon some good that is possessed. Such a good can be thought of in three ways:

(a) *in its own right (secundum se)*, since it is clear that the greater the good that the individual has, the greater the excellence that can be acquired through it. And so when an individual attributes to himself a greater good than he in fact has, it follows that his appetite tends toward his own personal excellence beyond the mode that is appropriate for him. And so we have the *third* species of pride, viz., “when an individual boasts that he has what he does not in fact have.”

(b) *on the part of its cause (ex parte causae)*, in the sense that it is more excellent for the good to exist in an individual from himself than for it to exist in him from someone else. And so when an individual thinks of a good that he has from someone else as if he had it from himself, then as a result his appetite is carried toward his own excellence beyond his mode. Now there are two ways in which an individual is a cause of his own good: (a) as an *efficient* cause (*efficienter*) and (b) as a *meritorious* cause (*meritorie*). And it is from this that the *first two* species of pride are taken, viz., (a) “when an individual thinks that he has from himself what he in fact has from God,” and (b) “when he believes that what he has been given from above is due to his own merits.”

(c) *on the part of the mode of having it (ex parte modi habendi)*, in the sense that an individual is rendered more excellent by the fact that he possesses some good in a more excellent way than others do. Hence, it is because of this, too, that his appetite is carried in a disordered way toward his own excellence. And from this one takes the *fourth* species of pride, which occurs “when an individual, looking down on others, wants to seem to be the only one who has what he has (*singulariter vult videri*).”

Reply to objection 1: There are two ways in which a true assessment can be corrupted:

(a) *in general (in universali)*. And on this score, in the case of those matters that pertain to the end, a true assessment is corrupted by unbelief.

(b) *with respect to some particular choosable thing (in aliquo particulari eligibili)*. And this does not make for unbelief. For instance, someone who commits fornication thinks that at this particular time it is good for him to commit fornication, and yet he is not an unbeliever in the way that he would be if he claimed that fornication is good in general. And so it is in the case under discussion. For it does indeed belong to [the sin of] *unbelief* to claim *in general* that there is something good that is not from God, or that grace is given to men because of their own merits. By contrast, it belongs to *pride*— and not, properly speaking, to unbelief—for someone, out of a disordered desire for his own excellence, to glory in his own goods as if he had them from himself or because of his own merits.

Reply to objection 2: Boasting is posited as a species of lying as regards the *exterior act* by which an individual falsely attributes to himself what he does not have. But it is with respect to the individual’s *interior arrogance of heart* that boasting is posited by Gregory as a species of pride.

Reply to objection 3: An ingrate is someone who attributes to himself what he has from someone else. Hence, the *first two* species of pride involve *ingratitude*.

On the other hand, *someone's excusing himself of a sin* that he has committed belongs to the *third* species, since the individual is attributing to himself the good of innocence, which he does not possess.

Again, an individual's *presumptuously* tending toward something that lies beyond himself seems to involve mainly the *fourth* species, according to which one wants to be preferred to others.

Reply to objection 4: The three things that Anselm posits are taken from the progression that belongs to *every* sin, since a sin is, first, conceived in the heart; second, pronounced by the mouth; and, third, completed in the act.

Now the twelve degrees [of pride] posited by Bernard are taken from their opposition to the twelve degrees of humility that were established above (q. 161, a. 6):

For the first degree of humility is to “always exhibit humility with heart and body by fixing one’s eyes toward the ground,” and opposite of this is *curiosity*, by which an individual curiously looks around everywhere and in a disordered manner. The second degree of humility is to “speak few and reasonable words, but not in a loud voice.” Opposed to this is the *levity of mind* (*levitas mentis*) by which a man behaves in a prideful way with his words. The third degree of humility is “not to laugh easily or be prompt to laugh.” Opposed to this is *undue exultation* (*inepta laetitia*). The fourth degree of humility is “to be silent until asked” (*taciturnitas usque ad interrogationem*). And to this is opposed *boasting*. The fifth degree of humility is “to hold to what the common rule of the monastery dictates.” To this is opposed *high visibility* (*singularitas*) by which one wishes to appear more holy. The sixth degree of humility is “to believe and declare oneself to be of less value than anybody (*omnibus vilioem*).” To this is opposed *arrogance* (*arrogantia*), by which a man prefers himself to others. The seventh degree of humility is “to declare and believe oneself to be useless and unworthy.” To this is opposed *presumption*, by which an individual thinks himself sufficient for greater things. The eighth degree of humility is “the confession of sins.” To this is opposed *the defense of sinners* (*defensio peccatorum*). The ninth degree of humility is “to embrace patience in difficult and trying matters.” To this is opposed *simulated confession* (*simulata confessio*), by which an individual does not want to submit to punishment for the sins that he confesses in a simulated way. The tenth degree of humility is “obedience.” Opposed to this is *rebellion* (*rebellio*). The eleventh degree of humility is that “a man not delight in carrying out his own will.” To this is opposed “autonomy” (*libertas*), by which a man delights in doing on his own what he wants to do (*homo delectatur libere facere quod vult*). The last degree of humility is “the fear of God.” Opposed to this is *habitual sinning* (*peccandi consuetudo*), which implies contempt for God. Now in these twelve degrees what are touched upon are not only the species of pride, but also certain antecedents and consequences, as has already been explained above concerning humility (q. 161, a. 6).

Article 5

Is pride a mortal sin?

It seems that pride is not a mortal sin:

Objection 1: A Gloss on Psalm 7:4 (“O Lord, my God, if I have done that ...”) says, “That is, if I have committed the universal sin, viz., pride.” Therefore, if pride were a mortal sin, then *every* sin would be mortal.

Objection 2: Every [mortal] sin is contrary to charity. But the sin of pride does not seem to be contrary to charity, either with respect to love of God or with respect to love of neighbor; for the excellence that an individual desires in a disordered way through pride is not always contrary to God’s honor or to our neighbor’s advantage. Therefore, pride is not a mortal sin.

Objection 3: Every mortal sin is contrary to virtue. But pride is not contrary to virtue; instead, just the opposite, it arises from virtue; for as Gregory says in *Moralia* 34, “Sometimes a man is swollen up because of his own highest and most heavenly virtues.” Therefore, pride is not a mortal sin.

But contrary to this: In the same book Gregory says, “Pride is the most evident sign of the reprobate and, contrariwise, humility is the most evident sign of the elect.” But men do not become reprobate because of venial sins. Therefore, pride is a mortal sin and not a venial sin.

I respond: Pride is opposed to humility. But as was explained above (q. 161, a. 1), humility has to do, properly speaking, with a man’s submission to God. Hence, contrariwise, pride has to do, properly speaking, with the lack of such submission; more specifically, it has to do with an individual’s extolling himself beyond what is antecedently fixed for him by God’s rule and measure—contrary to what the Apostle says, “We will not glory beyond our measure, but according to the measure which God has measured for us” [2 Corinthians 10:13]. And this is why Ecclesiasticus 10:14 says, “The beginning of man’s pride is to fall away from God and His rule.”

Now it is clear that the very fact that one does not submit to God has the character of a mortal sin, since this is to be turned away from God. Hence, it follows that pride is by its genus a mortal sin.

Yet just as in the case of other sins that are by their genus mortal sins, e.g., fornication and adultery, there are some movements that are venial sins because of their incompleteness—viz., because they preempt the judgment of reason and lie beyond its consent—so, too, it happens in the case of pride that certain movements of pride are venial sins when reason does not consent to them.

Reply to objection 1: As was explained above (a. 2), pride is a universal sin not by its essence, but by a sort of overflow, i.e., insofar as all sins can arise from pride. Hence, it does not follow that all sins are mortal, but only when they arise from a complete act of pride (*ex superbia completa*), which we have claimed to be a mortal sin.

Reply to objection 2: Pride is, to be sure, always contrary to the love of God, viz., insofar as a proud individual does not submit himself to the divine rule as he should. And sometimes it is also contrary to love of neighbor, viz., insofar as an individual prefers himself to his neighbor in a disordered way, or insofar as he removes himself from submitting to his neighbor. In this, too, what is derogated is God’s rule, by which the various orderings of men are instituted, with the result that one man should submit to another.

Reply to objection 3: Pride arises from virtues not as from a *per se* cause, but as from an incidental cause (*causa per accidens*), viz., insofar as an individual takes an occasion for pride from his own virtues. However, as *Physics* 8 explains, there is nothing to prevent one of two contraries from being an incidental cause of the other. Hence, some individuals are proud because of their humility itself.

Article 6

Is pride the most serious of sins?

It seems that pride is not the most serious of sins:

Objection 1: The more difficult it is to avoid a given sin, the less grave the sin seems to be. But pride is the most difficult of all to avoid; for as Augustine says in *Regula*, “Other sins are exercised in evil works, in order that those works might be done, whereas pride lies in ambush for good works, in order that those works might be destroyed.” Therefore, pride is not the most serious of sins.

Objection 2: As the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 8, “A greater evil is opposed to a greater good.” But humility, to which pride is opposed, is not, as was established above (q. 161, a. 5), the greatest of the virtues. Therefore, vices that are opposed to greater virtues, e.g., unbelief, despair, hatred of God, homicide, and others of this sort, are more serious sins than pride is.

Objection 3: A greater evil is not punished by a lesser evil. But pride is sometimes punished by other sins; this is clear from Romans 1:28, where it is said that because of their pride of heart (*propter elationem cordis*) the philosophers “have been handed over to a reprobate sense, so that they do what is not fitting.” Therefore, pride is not the most serious of sins.

But contrary to this: A Gloss on Psalm 118:51 (“The proud were acting wickedly everywhere”) says, “The greatest sin in a man is pride.”

I respond: There are two things to pay attention to in a sin, viz., (a) the *turning toward a changeable good* (*conversio ad commutabile bonum*), which behaves as the *matter* in the sin, and (b) the *turning away from the unchangeable good* (*aversio a bono incommutabili*), which is *formal* in the sin and *brings it to completion*.

Now on the part of the *turning toward*, pride is not such as to be the greatest sin, since exalted status (*celsitudo*), which pride desires in a disordered way, does not by its nature conflict to the highest degree with the good of virtue.

However, on the part of the *turning away*, pride has the greatest seriousness. For in the case of the other sins a man turns away from God either because of ignorance or because of weakness or because of a desire for some other sort of good, whereas pride involves a turning away from God by the very fact that it does not want to submit to God and his rule. Hence, Boethius says, “While all the vices run away from God, only pride opposes itself to God.” It is because of this that James 4:6 says specifically, “God resists the proud.” And so turning away from God and His precepts—something that follows *as a consequence* (*ex consequenti*) in the case of other sins—belongs to pride *in its own right* (*per se*), since the act of pride is contempt of God. And because that which belongs to a thing in its own right (*per se*) is always more important than what belongs to it through something else (*per aliud*), it follows that pride is the most serious sin by its genus, since it exceeds the others in the *turning away*, which formally brings a sin to completion.

Reply to objection 1: There are two ways in which a sin is difficult to avoid:

In one way, *because of the vehemence of its attack*, in the way that anger attacks vehemently because of its impetus. And still more difficult to resist is disordered sentient desire, and this, as *Ethics 2* explains, is because of its connaturality. And this sort of difficulty in avoiding a sin diminishes the seriousness of the sin, since, as Augustine explains, to the extent that an individual falls to the impetus of a lesser temptation, the more grievously he sins.

The second way in which it is difficult to avoid a sin is *because of its hiddenness*. And this is the way in which it is difficult to avoid pride, since, as has been explained (a. 5), pride takes its occasion from goods themselves. This is why Augustine pointedly claims that [pride] lies in ambush for good works, and why Psalm 141:4 says, “In the path on which I walked, the proud have laid a trap for me.” And so when the movement of pride creeps in stealthily, it does not have great seriousness before it is taken into account by the judgment of reason. However, once it has been taken into account by reason, then it is easily avoided, both (a) because of the consideration of one’s own weakness—this according to Ecclesiasticus 10:9 (“What do dirt and ashes have to be proud of?”)—and also (b) because of the consideration of God’s greatness—this according to Job 15:13 (“Why does your spirit swell up against God?”)—and, again, (c) because of the imperfection of the goods that a man is proud of—this according to Isaiah 40:6 (“All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field”) and, later on, at 64:6 (“All our righteousness is like the rag of a menstruating woman”).

Reply to objection 2: The opposition of a vice to a virtue has to do with their objects, which are thought of as being on the side of the *turning toward*. And on this score pride is not the greatest of sins, just as humility is not the greatest virtue, either.

However, on the side of the *turning away*, pride is the greatest sin, since it confers greatness on other sins. For instance, the sin of unbelief is rendered more grave if it proceeds from the contempt that belongs to pride than if it proceeds from ignorance or weakness. And the same thing should be said of

despair and other sins of this sort.

Reply to objection 3: Just as in the case of syllogisms that lead to what is impossible, an individual is sometimes convinced by being led to a more manifest absurdity, so, too, in order to overcome men's pride, God punishes some of them by allowing them to fall into carnal sins, which, even if they are lesser sins [than pride], nonetheless involve a more manifest shamefulness. Hence, in *De Summo Bono* Isidore says, "Pride is worse than every other vice, either because it is taken on by the highest and most important persons, or because it originates from works of righteousness and virtue and its guilt is less perceptible. By contrast, carnal lust is apparent to everyone, because from the outset it is shameful in its own right. Lust is less grievous than pride and yet, under God's dispensation, an individual who is stuck in pride and does not realize it falls into carnal lust so that, humiliated by this, he might rise up from his confusion." From this the seriousness of the sin of pride is clear. For just as a wise physician, in curing a greater sickness, allows his patient to fall into a lesser sickness, so, too, the sin of pride is shown to be more serious by the very fact that, in order to cure it, God permits a man to fall into other sins.

Article 7

Is pride the first of all sins?

It seems that pride is not the first of all sins:

Objection 1: What is first is preserved in everything that follows. But not every sin is accompanied by pride or arises from pride; for in *De Natura et Gratia* Augustine says, "Many things that are badly done are not done with pride." Therefore, pride is not the first of all sins.

Objection 2: Ecclesiasticus 10:14 says, "The beginning of pride is to fall away from God (*apostatare a Deo*)." Therefore, falling away from God is prior to pride.

Objection 3: The ordering of the sins seems to correspond to the ordering of the virtues. But humility is not the first of the virtues; instead, faith is. Therefore, pride is not the first of the sins.

Objection 4: 2 Timothy 3:13 says, "Evil men and seducers keep getting worse," and so it seems that the beginning of a man's wickedness is not from the greatest of the sins. But as has been explained (a. 6), pride is the greatest of the sins. Therefore, it is not the first sin.

Objection 5: What happens in mere appearance and fiction is posterior to what happens in reality. But in *Ethics* 3 the Philosopher says, "The proud individual is a pretender with respect to fortitude and daring." Therefore, the vice of daring is prior to the vice of pride.

But contrary to this: Ecclesiasticus 10:15 says, "Pride is the beginning of every sin."

I respond: What is first in any genus is what is such-and-such in its own right (*quod est per se*). Now it was explained above (a. 6) that *turning away from God (aversio a Deo)*, which formally brings the nature of a sin to completion, belongs to pride *in its own right (pertinet ad superbiam per se)*, whereas it belongs to other sins *as a consequence (ex consequenti)*. And so it is that pride has the character of what is first and, as was explained above when we were talking about the causes of sin (*ST* 1-2, q. 84, a. 2), pride is also a principle of all sins on the part of the *turning away*, which is the most important thing in a sin.

Reply to objection 1: Pride is said to be the beginning of every sin not because every *individual* sin arises from pride, but because every *genus* or *kind* of sin is apt to arise from pride.

Reply to objection 2: Falling away from God (*apostatare a Deo*) is said to be the beginning of human pride not in the sense that it is *a sin other than pride*, but in the sense that it is *the first part of pride*. For it has been explained (a. 5) that pride has mainly to do with submission to God, which it disdains, and, as a result, it [likewise] disdains submitting to a creature for the sake of God.

Reply to objection 3: The virtues and the vices need not have the same ordering. For a vice corrupts a virtue, and what is first in being generated is last in being corrupted. And so just as faith is the first of the virtues, so unbelief is the last of the sins and one which a man is sometimes led to by other sins. Hence, a Gloss on Psalm 136:7 (“Raze it, raze it, even to its foundation”) says, “It is because of an accumulation of vices that a lack of faith (*diffidentia*) creeps in.” And in 1 Timothy 1:19 the Apostle says, “Some, warding off a good conscience, have come to shipwreck with respect to faith.”

Reply to objection 4: Pride is called the most serious sin because of what belongs to it in its own right (*ex eo quod per se competit peccato*), and this is what seriousness in a sin has to do with. And that is why pride causes seriousness in other sins. Therefore, it is possible that, prior to pride, they are less serious sins, i.e., sins that are committed out of ignorance or weakness.

On the other hand, among the serious sins pride is first as a cause by which other sins are aggravated. And since what is first in causing is also the last in receding, a Gloss on Psalm 18:14 (“I will be cleansed from the greatest sin”) says, “That is, from the sin of pride, which is the last sin for those returning to God and the first sin for those withdrawing from Him.”

Reply to objection 5: The Philosopher claims that pride is a pretender with respect to fortitude not because pride consists in this, but because a man especially believes that he will be able to attain excellence in the eyes of men if he is seen as audacious or brave.

Article 8

Should pride be posited as a capital vice?

It seems that pride should be posited as a capital vice:

Objection 1: Isidore, along with Cassian, numbers pride among the capital vices.

Objection 2: Pride (*superbia*) seems to be the same as vainglory (*inanis gloria*), since both of them seek excellence. But vainglory is posited as a capital vice. Therefore, pride should likewise be posited as a capital vice.

Objection 3: In *De Virginitate* Augustine says, “Pride gives birth to envy, and it is never without this companion.” But as was established above (q. 36, a. 4), envy is posited as a capital vice. Therefore, pride should all the more be posited as a capital vice.

But contrary to this: In *Moralia* 31 Gregory does not count pride among the capital vices.

I respond: As is clear from what was said above (aa. 2 and 5), pride can be thought of in two ways: (a) *in its own right (secundum se)*, viz., insofar as it is a *specific* sin; and (b) insofar as it has a sort of *general influence on all sins*.

Now the capital vices are posited as certain *specific* sins from which many genera of sins arise. And so some authors, thinking of pride insofar as it is a certain *specific* sin, have counted it among the capital vices.

By contrast, Gregory, thinking of the *general influence* that pride has on all sins did not, as noted above, count it along with the other capital vices, but instead claimed that it is the queen and mother of all vices. Hence, in *Moralia* 31 Gregory says, “When pride, the queen of the vices, has seized the fully conquered heart, it soon hands it over to the seven principal vices—to be devastated, as it were, by pride’s commanders, from whom multitudes of sins arise.”

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: Pride is not the same as vainglory, but is instead a cause of vainglory. For pride desires excellence in a disordered way, whereas vainglory desires the manifestation of excellence.

Reply to objection 3: From the fact that envy, which is a capital vice, itself arises from pride it follows not that pride is a capital vice, but that it is something more fundamental than the capital vices.