

QUESTION 8

The Objects of the Will

Next, we have to consider voluntary acts themselves in particular. First, we have to consider the acts that belong immediately to the will in the sense that they are elicited by the will itself (questions 8-16), and, second, the acts that are commanded by the will (question 17).

Now the will is moved both toward the end and toward the means to the end (*in ea quae sunt ad finem*). Therefore, we first have to consider acts of the will by which it is moved toward the end (questions 8-12), and then acts of the will by which it is moved toward the means to the end (questions 13-16).

There seem to be three acts of the will with respect to the end, viz., to will (*velle*), to enjoy (*frui*), and to intend (*intendere*). Therefore, we will first consider the will (*voluntas*) (questions 8-10); second, the act of enjoying (*fruitio*) (question 11); and, third, the act of intending (*intentio*) (question 12).

Concerning the first point, there are three things to consider: (a) what the objects of the will are (*quorum voluntas sit*) (question 8), (b) what the will is moved by (*a quo moveatur*) (question 9), and (c) the manner in which the will is moved (*quomodo moveatur*) (question 10).

On the first topic there are three questions: (1) Is the will directed only toward the good? (*utrum voluntas sit tantum boni*) (2) Is the will directed only toward the end, or is it also directed toward the means to the end? (3) If the will is in some sense directed toward the means to the end, is it moved with a single movement toward both the end and the means to the end?

Article 1

Is the will directed only toward the good?

It seems that the will is not directed only toward the good:

Objection 1: The same power is directed toward opposites (*est oppositorum*), in the way that the power of seeing is directed toward the white and the black. But the good and the bad are opposites. Therefore, the will is directed not only toward good but also toward the bad.

Objection 2: According to the Philosopher, rational powers behave in such a way as to pursue opposites. But the will is a rational power, since, as *De Anima* 3 says, it exists “in reason.” Therefore, the will is directed to opposites (*se habet ad opposita*). Therefore, it is directed not only toward willing the good, but also toward willing the bad.

Objection 3: *Being* and *good* are convertible. But the will is directed not only toward beings, but also toward non-beings; for instance, we sometimes will not to walk and not to speak. We also sometimes will certain future things, which are not actual beings. Therefore, the will is not directed only toward the good.

But contrary to this: In *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, Dionysius says, “The bad lies beyond the will,” and “All things desire the good.”

I respond: The will is a certain rational appetite (*appetitus rationalis*). But every appetite is directed only toward the good. The reason for this is that an appetite is nothing other than an inclination toward something on the part of the thing that has the appetite (*inclinatio appetentis in aliquid*). But nothing has an inclination except toward something similar to and appropriate for itself. Therefore, since every entity, insofar as it is a being and a substance, is a certain good, it must be the case that every inclination is toward the good. And so it is that in *Ethics* 1 the Philosopher says that the good is “what all things desire” (*quod omnia appetunt*).

But note that since every inclination follows upon some form, a natural appetite follows upon a form that exists in *nature*, whereas a sentient appetite, as well as an intellective or rational appetite (which is called ‘will’), follows upon an *apprehended* form. Therefore, just as what a natural appetite tends toward is a *good that exists in reality*, so an animal or voluntary appetite tends toward an

apprehended good. Therefore, in order for the will to tend toward something, it is required not that the thing be good in reality, but rather that it be apprehended under the concept of the good (*quod apprehendatur in ratione boni*). It is for this reason that in *Physics 2* the Philosopher says, “The end is a good, or an apparent good.”

Reply to objection 1: The same power is directed to opposites, but it is not related to both of them in the same way. Thus, the will is related to both the good and the bad, but it is related to the good in the sense of desiring it (*appetendo ipsum*), whereas it is related to the bad in the sense of avoiding it (*fugiendo illud*). Therefore, an actual desire for the good is called ‘willing’ (*voluntas*) insofar as ‘willing’ names an act of the will; for this is the sense in which we are now speaking of the will. By contrast, avoiding the bad (*fuga mali*) would better be called ‘willing-against’ (*noluntas*). Hence, just as willing is directed toward the good, so willing-against is directed toward the bad.

Reply to objection 2: A rational power does not behave in such a way as to pursue all opposites whatsoever; rather, it pursues those opposites that are contained under its appropriate object. For no power pursues anything except its appropriate object. But the will’s object is the good. Hence, the will behaves in such a way as to pursue those opposites that are included under *good*, e.g., to be moved and to rest, to speak and to remain silent, and others of this sort. For the will is directed to both opposites under the concept *good*.

Reply to objection 3: What is not a being in reality (*ens in rerum natura*) is taken as a being in reason (*ens in ratione*); it is in this sense that negations and privations are called ‘beings of reason’ (*entia rationis*). It is in this sense, too, that future things, insofar as they are apprehended, are beings. Therefore, insofar as there are beings of this sort, they are apprehended under the concept *good*, and in this way the will tends toward them. Hence, in *Ethics 5* the Philosopher says that “a lack of badness (*carere malum*) has the nature of a good.”

Article 2

Is will (or willing) directed only toward the end or also toward the means to the end?

It seems that will (or willing) (*voluntas*) is directed only toward the end and not toward the means to the end:

Objection 1: In *Ethics 3* the Philosopher says, “Willing (*voluntas*) is directed toward the end, whereas choosing (*electio*) is directed toward the means to the end (*est eorum quae sunt ad finem*).”

Objection 2: As *Ethics 6* says, “Diverse powers of the soul are ordered toward things that are diverse in genus.” But the end is in a different genus of *good* from the means to the end; for as *Ethics 1* says, the end, which is a noble good (*bonum honestum*) or a pleasant good (*bonum delectabile*), is in the genus of quality (or of action or passion), whereas a means to the end is called a useful good (*bonum utile*) and is in the category of relation (*in ad aliquid*). Therefore, if will (*voluntas*) is directed toward the end, then it will not be directed toward the means to the end.

Objection 3: Habits are proportionate to their corresponding powers, since a habit is the perfection of its power. But among the habits that are called operative arts, the end pertains to one art, while the means to the end pertains to a different art. For instance, the use of a ship, which is the ship’s end, belongs to the navigator, while the construction of the ship, which is a means to the end, belongs to the art of shipbuilding. Therefore, since will (*voluntas*) is directed toward the end, it will not be directed toward the means to the end.

But contrary to this: Among natural things, it is by the same power that a thing passes through the medium and reaches the terminus. But the means to an end are, as it were, the medium through

which one reaches the end as a terminus. Therefore, if willing (*voluntas*) is directed toward the end, then it is likewise directed toward the means to the end.

I respond: Sometimes it is the very *power* by which we will that is called ‘will’ (*voluntas*), and sometimes it is the will’s *act* itself that is called ‘will’ (*voluntas*).

Thus, if we are talking about will insofar as ‘will’ names the *power*, then the will tends (*se extendit*) both toward the end and toward the means to the end. For each power tends toward those things in which the nature of its object (*ratio sui obiecto*) is found in some way; for instance, the power of seeing tends toward whatever in some way participates in color. But the nature of the good, which is the object of the *power* that is the will, is found not only in the end, but also in the means to the end.

On the other hand, if we are talking about will insofar as ‘will’ properly names the will’s *act*, then, properly speaking, it is directed only toward the end. For every act that is denominated from its power names the simple act of that power, in the way that ‘to understand intellectually’ (*intelligere*) names the simple act of intellectual understanding (*simplicem actum intellectus*). Now the simple act of a power is directed toward that which is in its own right the object of that power. But it is the end which is good for its own sake and willed for its own sake (*propter se bonum et volitum*). Hence, an act of willing (*voluntas*) is properly directed toward the end itself.

By contrast, a means to an end is good or willed not for its own sake but because it is ordered toward the end (*ex ordine ad finem*). Hence, an act of willing (*voluntas*) is directed toward the means only to the extent that it is directed toward the end, and so the very thing that it wills in the means is the end. Similarly, intellectual understanding is properly directed toward what is known in its own right (*secundum se cognoscuntur*), viz., the principles, whereas there is no intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*) with respect to those things that are known through the principles except to the extent that the principles are being thought of in them. For as *Ethics 7* says, “Among desirable things the end plays the same role that the principle plays among intelligible things.”

Reply to objection 1: The Philosopher is here speaking about will insofar as ‘will’ names the simple *act* of willing (*simplicem actum voluntatis*), and not insofar as it names the *power*.

Reply to objection 2: Diverse powers are ordered toward things that are diverse in genus and related as equals; for instance, *sound* and *color* are diverse genera among things that can be sensed, and the power of hearing and the power of seeing are ordered toward them (*ad quae ordinantur auditus et visus*). However, *useful* and *noble* are not related as equals, but are instead related as what is such-and-such in its own right and what is such-and-such because of another. And things of this sort are always referred back to the same power, in the way that both color and light, through which color is seen, are sensed through the power of seeing.

Reply to objection 3: It is not the case that whatever makes the habits diverse also makes the powers diverse, since habits channel their powers to certain specific acts (*habitus sunt determinationes potentiarum ad aliquos speciales actus*).

Yet every operative art considers both the end and the means to the end. For instance, the art of navigation takes account of the end as something that it *does* and takes account of the means to the end as something that it *commands*. Conversely, the art of shipbuilding takes account of the means to the end as something that it *does*, whereas it takes account of the end as that toward which what it does *is ordered*.

Again, in each operative art there is some proper end, along with something which is a means to the end and which properly pertains to that art.

Article 3

Is it by the very same act that the will is directed both toward the end and toward the means to the end?

It seems that it is by the very same act that the will is directed both toward the end and toward the means to the end:

Objection 1: According to the Philosopher, “In a case where one thing is for the sake of another, there is just a single thing (*unum tantum*).” But the will does not will the means to an end except for the sake of the end. Therefore, it is by the same act that it is moved toward both of them.

Objection 2: The end is the explanation (*ratio*) for willing the means to the end, in the way that light is the explanation for seeing colors. But it is by the same act that both light and color are seen. Therefore, the movement of the will by which it wills the end is the same as the movement by which it wills the means to the end.

Objection 3: It is numerically the same natural motion which goes through the medium all the way to the endpoint (*per media tendit ad ultimum*). But the means to an end are related to the end in the way that the medium is related to the endpoint. Therefore, the movement by which the will is directed toward the end is the same as the movement by which it is directed toward the means to the end.

But contrary to this: Acts are made diverse by their objects. But the end belongs to one species of the good and the means to the end, which is a useful good, belongs to a different species. Therefore, it is not by the same act that the will is directed toward both of them.

I respond: Since an end is willed in its own right (*secundum se volitus*), whereas a means to the end is, as such, willed only for the sake of the end, it is clear that the will can be directed toward an end without being directed toward the means to the end. By contrast, the will cannot be directed toward the means to an end, as such, without being directed toward the end.

So, then, there are two ways for the will to be directed toward the end itself: (a) it may be directed toward the end absolutely in its own right (*absolute secundum se*), or (b) it may be directed toward the end as a reason for willing the means to the end.

Therefore, it is clear that the movement of the will by which it is directed toward the end insofar as the end is a reason for willing the means to the end is the same as the movement by which it is directed toward the means themselves to the end.

However, the act by which it is directed to the end absolutely speaking is a different act. Sometimes this act temporally precedes the other one—as, for instance, when someone first wills health and later on, when deliberating about how he can be cured, wills to engage a physician in order to be cured. The same thing also occurs with respect to intellectual understanding; for someone first has an intellectual understanding of the principles in their own right, and then later on understands them in the conclusions themselves insofar as he assents to the conclusions because of the principles.

Reply to objection 1: This argument goes through for the case in which (*secundum quod*) the will is directed toward the end insofar as the end is a reason for willing the means to the end.

Reply to objection 2: Whenever color is seen, light is seen by the same act; and yet it is possible for light to be seen without color being seen. Similarly, whenever someone wills the means to an end, he wills the end by the same act—but not vice versa.

Reply to objection 3: In the *execution* of a work, the means to the end are like the medium and the end is like the terminus. Hence, just as a natural movement sometimes stops in the medium without reaching the terminus, so too sometimes one does something ordered toward the end and yet does not attain to the end.

But in the case of *willing*, the opposite holds true. For it is through the end that the will arrives at willing the means to the end, just as it is through the principles, which are called ‘means’, that the

intellect arrives at the conclusions. Hence, the intellect sometimes understands the ‘means’ without proceeding from there to the conclusion. Similarly, the will sometimes wills the end and yet does not proceed forward to willing the means to the end.

Reply to argument for the contrary: The answer to this argument is clear from what has been said above. For *useful* and the *noble* are not species of the good that are divided off from one another as equals. Rather, they are related as what is [good] because of itself (*propter se*) and what is [good] because of something else (*propter alterum*). Hence, an act of will can be directed toward the first without being directed toward the second, but not vice versa.