

QUESTION 19

The Goodness and Badness of the Interior Act of Willing

Next we have to consider the goodness of the interior act of willing. And on this topic there are ten questions: (1) Does the goodness of an act of willing depend on the object? (2) Does it depend solely on the object? (3) Does it depend on reason? (4) Does it depend on the eternal law? (5) Does reason oblige when it is mistaken? (6) Is an act of willing bad if it is opposed to God's law but is following mistaken reason? (7) Does the goodness of an act of willing directed toward the means to an end depend on the act of intending the end? (8) Does the amount of goodness or badness in an act of willing track the amount of goodness or badness in the act of intending? (9) Does the goodness of an act of willing depend on its being conformed to God's will? (10) In order for an act of willing to be good, must it be conformed to God's will with respect to what is willed?

Article 1

Does the goodness of an act of willing depend on its object?

It seems that the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on its object:

Objection 1: An act of willing is not directed at anything except what is good (*voluntas non potest esse nisi boni*), since, as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, evil lies "outside of the will." Therefore, if the goodness of an act of willing were judged by its object, then it would follow that every act of willing is good and that no act of the willing is bad.

Objection 2: Goodness is found, first of all, in the end. Hence, the end's goodness does not as such depend on anything else. But according to the Philosopher in *Ethics* 6, "Good *acting* is the end, whereas good *making* is never the end." For good making is always ordered toward the thing that is made as its end. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on any object.

Objection 3: Each thing is like what it makes. But the object of an act of willing is what is good by a goodness of *nature*. Therefore, this object cannot give *moral* goodness to an act of willing. Therefore, the moral goodness of an act of willing does not depend on its object.

But contrary to this: In *Ethics* 5 the Philosopher says that justice is that in accord with which someone wills just things and, for the same reason, virtue is that in accord with which someone wills good things. But a good act of willing is an act in accord with virtue. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing derives from the fact that someone wills what is good.

I respond: *Good* and *bad* are *per se* specific differences of acts of willing. For *good* and *bad* belong to the will *per se*, in the way that *true* and *false* belong to reason, whose acts are distinguished *per se* by the differences *true* and *false*, in the sense in which we say that an opinion is true or false. Hence, a good act of willing and a bad act of willing are acts that differ in species from one another. But as has been explained (q. 18, a. 5), diversity of species among acts follows from their objects (*est secundum obiecta*). And so the goodness and badness of acts of willing is attendant upon their objects (*proprie attenditur secundum obiecta*).

Reply to objection 1: Acts of willing are not always directed toward a genuine good; rather, they are sometimes directed at an apparent good, which, to be sure, has some aspect of goodness but not a goodness that it is right to desire absolutely speaking. And for this reason acts of willing are not always good, but are sometimes bad.

Reply to objection 2: As was explained above (q. 1, a. 1), even though man's ultimate end can in some sense be an act, that act is not an act of willing.

Reply to objection 3: A good is presented by reason to the will as an object (*bonum per rationem repraesentatur voluntati ut obiectum*); and insofar as that good falls under reason's prescription (*cadit sub ordine rationis*), it belongs to the genus *moral* and is a cause of moral goodness in the act of willing. For as was explained above (q. 18, a. 5), reason is the principle of acts that are human and moral.

Article 2

Does the goodness of an act of willing depend solely on its object?

It seems that the goodness of an act of willing does not depend solely on its object:

Objection 1: An end has more affinity to the will than to any other power. But as is clear from what was said above (q. 18, a. 4), the acts of the other powers receive their goodness not only from their object, but also from their end. Therefore, an act of willing likewise receives its goodness not only from its object, but also from its end.

Objection 2: As was explained above (q. 18, a. 3), an act's goodness comes not only from its object, but also from its circumstances. But a diversity of goodness and badness in acts of willing can come from diverse circumstances—e.g., that someone wills when he should and where he should and as much as he should and how he should, or that he wills in a way he should not. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing depends not only on the object, but also on the circumstances.

Objection 3: As was established above (q. 6, a. 8), ignorance of the circumstances excuses the badness of an act of willing. But this would not be the case if the goodness and badness of acts of willing did not depend on the circumstances. Therefore, the goodness and badness of acts of willing depends on the circumstances and not on the object alone.

But contrary to this: As was explained above (q. 18, a. 10), an act does not have its species from its circumstances as such. But as has been explained (a. 1), *good* and *bad* are specific differences of acts of willing. Therefore, the goodness and badness of acts of willing depends on the object alone and not on the circumstances.

I respond: The closer something is to being first in a given genus (*quanto aliquid est prius*), the simpler it is and the fewer things it consists in; for instance, the first bodies are simple. And so we find that the things that are first in any given genus are in some sense simple and consist in just one thing. But the beginning (*principium*) of the goodness and badness of human acts is from an act of willing. And so the goodness and badness of acts of willing are attendant upon some one thing, whereas the goodness and badness of other acts can be attendant on diverse things.

Now this one thing which is the beginning in a given genus is *per se* and not *per accidens*, since what is *per accidens* is traced back to what is *per se* as to its principle. And so the goodness of an act of willing depends on just this one thing that makes for goodness in an act *per se*, viz., the object, and it does not depend on the circumstances, which are accidents of the act.

Reply to objection 1: The end is an object of an act of willing, but not of the acts of the other powers. Hence, as far as an act of willing is concerned, the goodness that derives from the object does not differ, as it does with the acts of the other powers, from the goodness that derives from the end—except perhaps *per accidens*, given that one end depends on another and given that one act of willing depends on another.

Reply to objection 2: On the assumption that an act of willing is directed at the good, no circumstance can make that act bad. Therefore, there are two possible ways to understand the claim that someone wills something good when he should not or where he should not:

(a) He wills something in such a way that the circumstance in question is ascribed to *what is willed* (*referatur ad volitum*). And in such a case the act of willing is not after all directed toward what is good, since an act of willing *to-do-something-when-it-should-not-be-done* is not an act of willing what is good.

(b) He wills something in such a way that the circumstance in question is ascribed to *the act of willing*. And on this understanding it is impossible for someone to will a good when he ought not to, since it is always the case that a man should will the good—except perhaps *per accidens*, insofar as someone, by willing this good, is prevented from then willing some other good that he should will. And in such a case badness occurs not because the individual wills the first good, but because he does not will

the second good.

The same reply should be given for other types of circumstance as well.

Reply to objection 3: Ignorance of the circumstances excuses the badness of an act of willing to the extent that the circumstances are relevant to what is willed (*secundum quod circumstantiae se tenent ex parte voliti*), i.e., to the extent that the agent does not know the circumstances of the act that he wills.

Article 3

Does the goodness of an act of willing depend on reason?

It seems that the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on reason:

Objection 1: What is prior does not depend on what is posterior. But as is clear from what was said above (q. 9, a. 1), the good pertains to the will prior to pertaining to reason. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on reason.

Objection 2: In *Ethics* 6 the Philosopher says that the goodness of the practical intellect is “the true conformed to upright desire” (*verum conforme appetitui recto*). But upright desire is a good act of willing. Therefore, the goodness of practical reason depends on the goodness of the act of willing rather than vice versa.

Objection 3: It is not the mover that depends on what is moved, but vice versa. But as was explained above (q. 9, a. 1), the will moves reason and the other powers. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on reason.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 10 Hilary says, “All persistence in acts of willing that are undertaken is immoderate when the will is not subject to reason.” But the goodness of an act of willing consists in its not being immoderate. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing depends on its being subject to reason.

I respond: As has been explained (aa. 1 and 2), the goodness of an act of willing depends, properly speaking, on its object. But the object of an act of willing is proposed to the will by reason. For an intellectually understood good is an object of the will that is proportioned to it, whereas a sensible or imagined good is proportioned to the sentient appetite and not to the will, since the will is able to tend toward a universal good that is apprehended by reason, whereas the sentient appetite tends only toward a particular good that is apprehended by the sensory power. And so the goodness of an act of willing depends on reason in the sense that it depends on its object.

Reply to objection 1: It is the good under the concept *good*, i.e., the concept *desirable*, that pertains to the will prior to pertaining to the intellect. However, the good under the concept *true* pertains to reason prior to the good under the concept *desirable* pertaining to the will. For the will’s desire cannot be a desire for the good unless the good is first apprehended by reason.

Reply to objection 2: In the place in question the Philosopher is talking about the practical intellect insofar as it is deliberating and reasoning about the means to an end, since it is in this context that it is perfected by prudence. And in the case of the means to an end, the rectitude of reason consists in its conformity to the desire for the right sort of end. But this very desire for the right sort of end presupposes a correct apprehension of the end, and this apprehension occurs through reason.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 9, a. 1), there is a sense in which the will moves reason, and there is another sense in which reason moves the will, viz., by means of the object.

Article 4

Does the goodness of a human act of willing depend on the eternal law?

It seems that the goodness of a human act of willing does not depend on the eternal law:

Objection 1: There is a single rule and measure for a single thing. But the rule for a human act of willing, on which its goodness depends, is right or correct reason (*ratio recta*). Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on the eternal law.

Objection 2: As *Metaphysics* 10 says, “A measure is homogeneous with what it measures.” But the eternal law is not homogeneous with a human act of willing. Therefore, the eternal law cannot be a measure of a human act of willing in the sense that the act of willing depends on it for its goodness.

Objection 3: A measure should be absolutely certain (*certissima*). But the eternal law is not known to us. Therefore, it cannot be the measure of our acts of willing in the sense that the goodness of our acts of willing depends on it.

But contrary to this: In *Contra Faustum* 22 Augustine says, “A sin is something done, said, or desired contrary to the eternal law.” But the badness of an act of willing is the root of sin. Therefore, since badness is opposed to goodness, the goodness of an act of willing depends on the eternal law.

I respond: In the case of all ordered causes, the effect depends more on the first cause than on a secondary cause, since a secondary cause acts only in the power of the first cause. Now the fact that human reason is a rule for human acts of willing and that by which their goodness is measured is something reason has from the eternal law, which is God’s reason. Hence, Psalm 4:6-7 says, “Many say, ‘Who shows us good things?’ The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us”—as if to say, “The light of your reason, which exists in us, can show us good things and regulate our will to the extent that it is the light of your countenance, i.e., the light derived from your countenance.”

Hence, it is clear that the goodness of human acts of willing depends much more on the eternal law than it does on human reason; and when human reason fails, it is necessary to have recourse to eternal reason.

Reply to objection 1: There is not more than one *proximate* measure of a single thing, but there can be more than one measure, one of which is subordinate to another.

Reply to objection 2: It is a proximate measure, not a remote measure, that is homogeneous with what it measures.

Reply to objection 3: Even though the eternal law is not known to us as it exists in God’s mind, it is nonetheless known to us in some way either (a) through natural reason, which is derived from the eternal law as its proper image, or (b) through some sort of supplementary revelation (*per aliqualem revelationem superadditam*).

Article 5

Is an act of willing bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken?

It seems that an act of willing is not bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken:

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 4), it is insofar as it is derived from the eternal law that reason is a rule for human acts of willing. But when reason is mistaken, it is not derived from the eternal law. Therefore, when reason is mistaken, it is not a rule for human acts of willing. Therefore, an act of willing is not bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken.

Objection 2: According to Augustine, the precept of a lower power does not impose an obligation (*non obligat*) if it is contrary to the precept of a higher power—as, for instance, if a proconsul commands something that the emperor forbids. But when reason is mistaken, it sometimes proposes something that

is contrary to the precept of someone higher, viz., God, whose power is the highest. Therefore, when reason is mistaken, its dictate does not impose an obligation. Therefore, it is not the case that an act of willing is bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken.

Objection 3: Every bad act of willing is traced back to some species of badness. But if an act of willing disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken, then that act cannot be traced back to any species of badness. For instance, if reason makes a mistake by dictating that one ought to fornicate, then the act of willing of someone who does not will to fornicate cannot be traced back to any sort of badness. Therefore, an act of willing is not bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken.

But contrary to this: As was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 79, a. 13), conscience is nothing other than an application of knowledge to some act. But knowledge exists in reason. Therefore, an act of willing that disagrees with mistaken reason is contrary to conscience. But every such act of willing is bad; for Romans 14:23 says, “Everything that is not of faith is a sin”—that is, everything that is contrary to conscience. Therefore, an act of willing is bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken.

I respond: Since conscience is in some sense a dictate of reason (for, as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 79, a. 13), conscience is a certain sort of application of knowledge to an act), it follows that asking whether an act of willing is bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken is the same as asking whether a mistaken conscience imposes an obligation.

On this matter, there are those who have distinguished three types of acts: (a) some acts are *good of their kind* (*boni ex genere*), (b) some acts are *indifferent* (*indifferentes*), and (c) some are *bad of their kind* (*mali ex genere*).

Then they claim that if reason or conscience dictates that something which is good of its kind should be done, then there is no mistake in such a case. The same holds if reason or conscience says that something which is evil of its kind should not be done; for good things are prescribed for the same reason that bad things are forbidden.

However, if reason or conscience dictates to a man that (a) he is obligated by precept to do things that are in their own right bad, or that (b) things that are in their own right good are prohibited, then reason or conscience will be mistaken. And, similarly, if reason or conscience dictates to someone that what is in its own right indifferent, e.g., picking up a leaf from the ground, is forbidden or commanded, then reason or conscience will be mistaken.

Thus, they claim that when reason or conscience is mistaken about something indifferent, either by commanding it or by forbidding it, then it imposes an obligation, with the result that an act of willing that disagrees with reason in such a case will be bad or a sin. By contrast, when reason or conscience is mistaken because it commands what is *per se* bad or because it forbids what is *per se* good and necessary for salvation, then it does not impose an obligation. Hence, in such case an act of willing is not bad if it disagrees with reason or conscience when reason or conscience is mistaken.

But it is implausible to make these claims. For in the case of indifferent acts, if an act of willing disagrees with reason or conscience when reason or conscience is mistaken, then the act is, to be sure, in some sense bad because of its object, on which the goodness or badness of an act of willing depend. However, the act is bad not because of the object’s *own nature* (*non propter obiectum secundam sui naturam*), but rather because reason apprehends the object *per accidens* as something bad to do or avoid. And since, as has been explained (a. 3), the object of an act of willing is what is proposed by reason, by the very fact that something is proposed by reason as bad, an act of willing takes on the character of something bad when it is directed toward that thing.

Moreover, this happens not only in the case of indifferent acts, but also in the case of acts that are *per se* good or *per se* bad. For it is not only what is indifferent that can take on the character of goodness or badness *per accidens*; it is likewise the case that, because of reason’s apprehension, what is good can take on the character of badness and what is bad can take on the character of goodness. For instance, abstaining from fornication is a certain good, and yet the will is not directed toward this good except insofar as it proposed by reason. Therefore, if it is proposed as something bad by reason when reason is

mistaken, then an act of willing will be directed toward it under the notion of badness. Hence, the act of willing will be bad, since it wills something bad—not, to be sure, something that is bad *per se*, but something that is bad *per accidens* because of reason’s apprehension. Similarly, believing in Christ is *per se* good and necessary for salvation, but an act of willing is directed toward this good only insofar as it is proposed by reason. Hence, if believing in Christ is proposed as something bad, then an act of willing will be directed toward it as something bad—not because it is bad in its own right, but because it is bad *per accidens* in light of reason’s apprehension.

This is why, in *Ethics 7*, the Philosopher says, “Speaking *per se*, the incontinent man is one who does not follow correct reason; however, speaking *per accidens*, he is one who does not follow even incorrect reason.” Hence, one should claim that, absolutely speaking, every act of willing that disagrees with reason—regardless of whether reason is correct or mistaken—is invariably bad.

Reply to objection 1: Even though, when reason is mistaken, its judgment is not derived from God, nonetheless, reason, though mistaken, proposes its judgment as true and, consequently, as derived from God, from whom all truth comes.

Reply to objection 2: Augustine’s claim has a place when the lower power is known to be prescribing something contrary to the higher power’s precept. But if someone believed that the proconsul’s precept were the emperor’s precept, then by disdaining the proconsul’s precept he would be disdaining the emperor’s precept. Similarly, if a man knew that human reason were dictating something contrary to God’s precept, he would not be obligated to follow reason, but in that case reason would not be totally mistaken. On the other hand, if, though it is mistaken, reason proposes something as God’s precept, then disdaining reason’s dictate is the same as disdaining God’s precept.

Reply to objection 3: When reason apprehends something as bad, it always apprehends it under some type of badness—for instance, its being contrary to God’s precept, or its being scandalous, or for some other such reason. And in such a case it is to this species of badness that the bad act of willing is traced back.

Article 6

Is an act of willing good if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken?

It seems that an act of willing is good if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken:

Objection 1: Just as an act of willing that disagrees with reason tends toward what reason judges to be bad, so an act of willing that agrees with reason tends toward what reason judges to be good. But an act of willing that disagrees with reason is bad, even when reason is mistaken. Therefore, an act of willing that agrees with reason is good, even when reason is mistaken.

Objection 2: It is always the case that an act of willing that agrees with God’s precept and with the natural law is good. But the eternal law and God’s precept are proposed to us through reason’s apprehension, even when reason is mistaken. Therefore, an act of willing that agrees reason is good, even when reason is mistaken.

Objection 3: An act of willing is bad if it disagrees with reason when reason is mistaken. Therefore, if an act of willing is likewise bad if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken, then it seems that every act of willing that belongs to a man whose reason is mistaken is invariably bad. And so the man in question will be in a dilemma (*erit perplexus*) and will of necessity sin—which seems wrong. Therefore, an act of willing is good if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken.

But contrary to this: The act of willing that belonged to those who killed the Apostles was bad. But it nonetheless agreed with their mistaken reason—this according to John 16:2 (“The hour will come when everyone who kills you will think that he is rendering a service to God”). Therefore, an act of willing can be bad if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken.

I respond: Just as the previous question was the same as the question of whether a mistaken conscience imposes an obligation, so the present question is the same as the question of whether a mistaken conscience excuses.

Now this question depends on what was said in the question above about ignorance (q. 6, a. 8). For it was explained above that ignorance is sometimes a cause of involuntariness and sometimes not. And since, as is clear from what has gone before (a. 2), moral goodness and moral badness (*bonum et malum morale*) are found in an act insofar as it is voluntary, it is obvious that the sort of ignorance which is a cause of involuntariness removes the character of moral goodness and moral badness, whereas the sort of ignorance which is not a cause of involuntariness does not. It was also explained above (q. 6, a. 8) that ignorance which is in any sense willed, whether directly or indirectly, is not a cause of involuntariness. I call ignorance *directly voluntary* when an act of willing is directed toward it, whereas I call ignorance *indirectly voluntary* when, because of negligence, someone does not will to know what he is obligated to know—this was explained above (q. 6, a. 8).

Thus, if reason or conscience is mistaken because of a voluntary error, either directly or because of negligence, then since this involves a mistake about what one is obligated to know, it follows that such a mistake on the part of reason or conscience does not excuse an act of willing from being bad if it agrees with reason or conscience when they are mistaken in this way.

On the other hand, if the mistake in question is the sort of mistake that is a cause of involuntariness and that arises from ignorance of a circumstance without any negligence, then such a mistake on the part of reason or conscience does excuse, so that the act of willing is not bad if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken. For instance, if reason mistakenly dictates that a man is obligated to have intercourse with another man's wife, an act of willing is bad if it agrees with reason when reason is mistaken in this way; for this mistake arises from not knowing God's law, which one is obligated to know. On the other hand, if reason is mistaken in such a way that a man believes that a certain woman who submits to him is his own wife, and if he has intercourse with her when she seeks it, then his act of willing is excused as not bad, because the mistake in question arose from ignorance of a circumstance, and this sort of ignorance excuses and is a cause of involuntariness.

Reply to objection 1: As Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, "Goodness results from the whole cause, whereas evil is caused by any single defect." And so in order for what the will is directed toward to be called bad, it is sufficient that it be bad by its nature or that it be apprehended as bad. But in order for it to be good, it is necessary for it to be good in both ways.

Reply to objection 2: The eternal law cannot be mistaken, but human reason can be mistaken. And so an act of willing that agrees with human reason is not always correct and does not always agree with the eternal law.

Reply to objection 3: Just as, in syllogistic reasoning, when one incongruity is granted, other incongruities necessarily follow, so too, in moral matters, when one incongruity is posited, others follow by necessity. For instance, on the assumption that someone is seeking empty glory, he will sin regardless of whether what he is obligated to do is such that (a) he does it because of vainglory or (b) he fails to do it. Yet he is not in a dilemma, since he can abandon his bad intention.

Similarly, on the assumption that there is a mistake on the part of reason or conscience because of the sort of ignorance that does not excuse, badness will necessarily follow in the act of willing. And yet the man in question is not in a dilemma, since he can draw back from the mistake, given that his ignorance is vincible and voluntary.

Article 7

Does the goodness of an act of willing depend on the act of intending the end?

It seems that the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on the act of intending the end:

Objection 1: It was explained above (a. 2) that the goodness of an act of willing depends on its object alone. But in the case of the means to an end, the object of the act of willing is one thing and the intended end is another. Therefore, in such cases the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on the act of intending the end.

Objection 2: To will to follow God's command is a good act of willing. But this act can be directed toward a bad end, e.g., to the end of vainglory or greed, when someone wills to obey God for the sake of gaining temporal things. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing does not depend on the act of intending the end.

Objection 3: Just as *good* and *bad* make for diverse acts of will, so too they make for diverse ends. But the badness of an act of willing does not depend on the badness of the intended end; for instance, someone who steals in order to give alms has a bad act of willing, even though he intends a good end. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing likewise does not depend on the goodness of the intended end.

But contrary to this: In *Confessiones* 9 Augustine says that one's act of intending is rewarded by God. But something is rewarded by God because it is good. Therefore, the goodness of an act of willing depends on the act of intending the end.

I respond: The act of intending the end can be related in two ways to an act of willing: (a) as *preceding* it and (b) as *being consequent* to it.

An act of intending the end causally *precedes* an act of willing when we will something because we intend a certain end (*quando volumus propter intentionem alicuius finis*). And in such a case the act's being ordered toward the end is thought of as a certain reason for the goodness of what is willed—as, for instance, when someone wills to fast for the sake of God. For the fasting has an aspect of goodness from the very fact it is done for the sake of God. Hence, since, as was explained above (aa. 1 and 2), the goodness of an act of willing depends on the goodness of what is willed, it necessarily depends on the act of intending the end.

On the other hand, the act of intending the end is *consequent* to the act of willing when it is appended to a preexisting act of willing—as, for instance, when someone wills to do something and then afterwards directs this thing to God. In such a case the goodness of the first act of willing does not depend on the subsequent act of intending except insofar as the act of willing is reiterated with that subsequent act of intending.

Reply to objection 1: As has been explained, when the act of intending is a cause of the act of willing, then the ordering toward the end is taken as a reason for the goodness that exists in the object.

Reply to objection 2: An act of willing cannot be called good if a bad act of intending is a cause of the act of willing. For instance, someone who gives alms for the sake of attaining empty glory wills something that is good taken by itself (*de se est bonum*) under the character of badness, and so, insofar as it is willed by him, it is bad. Hence, his act of willing is bad.

On the other hand, if the act of intending is consequent, then the act of willing was able to have been good, and that prior act of willing is not made bad by the consequent act of intending—though the act of willing that is reiterated with the consequent act of intending is made bad by that act of intending.

Reply to objection 3: As has already been explained (a. 6), “badness occurs because of any single defect, whereas goodness occurs because of the total and whole cause.” Hence, regardless of whether an act of willing is directed toward something bad in its own right, even under the notion of the good, or whether it is directed toward something good under the notion of the bad, the act of willing will always be bad. By contrast, in order for an act of willing to be good, it is required that it be directed

toward something good under the notion of the good—that is, that one will something good and for the sake of something good.

Article 8

Does the quantity or amount of goodness in an act of willing depend on the amount of goodness in the act of intending?

It seems that the quantity or amount of goodness in an act of willing (*quantitas bonitatis in voluntate*) depends on the amount of goodness in the act of intending:

Objection 1: The Gloss on Matthew 12:35 (“A good man brings forth good things out of the good treasure of his heart”) says, “Someone does good to the extent that he intends good” (*tantum boni quis facit quantum intendit*). But as has been explained (a. 7), the act of intending bestows goodness not only on the exterior act but also on the act of willing. Therefore, one has an act of willing that is as good as his act of intending (*tantum habet bonam voluntatem quantum intendit*).

Objection 2: If a cause is augmented, then its effect is augmented. But the goodness of an act of intending is a cause of a good act of willing. Therefore, one’s act of willing is as good as the amount of goodness had by his act of intending (*quantum quis intendit de bono, tantum voluntas est bona*).

Objection 3: In the case of bad acts, one’s sin is as great as [the evil] that he intends; for instance, if someone throwing a rock intended to commit homicide, then he would be guilty of homicide. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, in the case of good acts, one’s act of willing is as good as the good that he intends.

But contrary to this: It is possible for the act of intending to be good and the act of willing to be bad. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, it is possible for the act of intending to have more goodness and the act of willing to have less goodness.

I respond: There are two sorts of quantity that can be thought of with respect to the act of willing and the act of intending the end (*circa actum et intentionem finis*): (a) *quantity on the part of the object*, in the sense that one wills or effects a greater good (*maius bonum*), and (b) *quantity in the intensity of the act*, in the sense that one wills or does something intensely, and this is a greater quantity on the part of the *agent*.

Thus, if we are talking about the quantity of each of the acts as far as its *object* is concerned, then it is clear that the quantity of the act of willing diverges from the quantity of the act of intending (*non sequitur quantitatem intentionis*).

There are two ways in which this can happen in the case of an *exterior act*:

(a) It happens in the first way because the object that is ordered toward an intended end is not proportionate to that end. For instance, if someone offered to pay ten dollars (*daret decem libras*), then he would not be able to fulfill his intention if he had intended to buy something that costs a hundred dollars,.

(b) It happens in the second way because of obstacles that can affect the exterior act and are not within our power to overcome. For instance, someone intends to go all the way to Rome, and certain obstacles prevent him from doing this.

In the case of an *interior act of willing*, there is just one way in which this can happen, since interior acts of willing are within our power, even if the exterior acts are not. However, the will is able to will an object that is not proportionate to the intended end, and in this way an act of willing that is directed toward that object, considered absolutely, is not as good as the act of intending. (Yet because the act of intending is itself in some sense relevant to the act of willing, given that it is the reason for that act, the quantity of a good act of intending spills over into the act of willing (*redundat quantitas bonae intentionis in voluntatem*) to the extent that the will wills a great good as its end—even if the means by

which it wills to attain this great good is not appropriate for that good.)

On the other hand, if one is considering the quantity of the act of intending and the act of willing as regards their *intensity*, then the intensity of the act of intending spills over into the interior and exterior acts of willing (*redundat in actum interiorem et exteriorem voluntatis*). For as is clear from what was said above (q. 12, a. 4 and q. 18, a. 6), the act of intending is itself in some sense related as a form to the other two. However, even if, materially speaking, there is an intense act of intending, there can be an interior or exterior act that is not as intense, materially speaking—as, for instance, when someone wills to take medicine, but not as intensely as he wills health. Yet the very fact that he intends health intensely spills over, formally speaking, into his willing the medicine intensely.

But there is still this to consider: The intensity of an interior or exterior act can be referred back to the act of intending as an *object*—as, for instance, when someone intends to will with intensity or to do something with intensity. And yet he does not for this reason will or act with intensity, since, as has been explained, the goodness of the interior or exterior act does not conform to the quantity of the intended good. And this is why someone does not merit as much as he intends to merit. For as will be explained below (q. 20, a. 4 and q. 114, a. 4), the amount of merit has to do with the intensity of the act.

Reply to objection 1: This Gloss is talking about *God's* way of thinking (*loquitur quantum ad reputationem Dei*), since God mainly considers the act of intending the end. Hence, another Gloss in the same place says that the “treasure of the heart” is the intention, on the basis of which God judges our works. For, as has been explained, the goodness of the act of intending in some sense spills over into the goodness of the act of willing, and this goodness makes even the exterior act meritorious in the sight of God.

Reply to objection 2: The goodness of an act of intending is not the total cause of a good act of willing. Hence, the argument does not go through.

Reply to objection 3: The badness of an act of intending is by itself sufficient for the badness of the act of willing, and so it is also the case that the act of willing is as bad as the act of intending is. But as has been explained, the same reasoning does not hold for goodness.

Article 9

Does the goodness of a human will or act of willing depend on its being conformed to God's will?

It seems that the goodness of a human will or act of willing (*bonitas voluntatis humanae*) does not depend on its being conformed to God's will (*non dependeat ex conformitate ad voluntatem Dei*):

Objection 1: It is impossible for a man's act of willing to be conformed to God's will, as is clear from Isaiah 55:9: “As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.” Therefore, if being conformed to God's will were required for the goodness of our act of willing, then it would follow that it is impossible for a man's act of willing to be good. But this is absurd.

Objection 2: Just as our will is derived from God's will, so too our knowledge is derived from God's knowledge. But it is not required that our knowledge be conformed to God's knowledge; for God knows many things of which we are ignorant. Therefore, it is not required that our will should be conformed to God's will.

Objection 3: The will is a principle of action. But our action cannot be conformed to God's action. Therefore, neither can our will be conformed to God's will.

But contrary to this: Matthew 26:39 says, “Not as I will, but as you will”—which our Lord says because He is an upright man and is directed toward God, as Augustine explains in *Enchiridion*. But the will's rectitude is its goodness. Therefore, the goodness of our will or act of willing depends on its being conformed to God's will.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 7), the goodness of an act of willing depends on the act of intending the end. Now as was explained above (q. 1, a. 8 and q. 3, a. 1), the ultimate end of the human will is the highest good, viz., God. Hence, for the goodness of a human act of willing, it is required that it be ordered toward the highest good, viz., God. But this goodness is *per se* and primarily related to God's will as its proper object. And that which is first in any given genus is the measure of and rationale for all the things that belong to that genus. But each thing is upright and good insofar as it attains to its proper measure. Therefore, in order for a human act of willing to be good, it must be conformed to God's will.

Reply to objection 1: A man's will cannot be conformed to God's will by equality, but it can be conformed to God's will by imitation. Similarly, a man's knowledge is conformed to God's knowledge to the extent that it has cognition of the truth. And a man's act is conformed to God's action to the extent that it is fitting for the agent. And all this is by way of *imitation* and not by way of *equality*.

Reply to objection 2 and objection 3: The replies to the second and third objections are clear from what was just said.

Article 10

Should a human act of willing always be conformed to God's will with respect to what is willed?

It seems that a human act of willing need not always be conformed to God's will with respect to what is willed (*in volito*):

Objection 1: We are unable to will what we do not know; for it is an apprehended good that is the object of an act of willing. But, for the most part, we do not know what God wills. Therefore, a human act of willing cannot be conformed to God's will with respect to what is willed.

Objection 2: God wills to damn a man whom He foreknows will die in mortal sin. Therefore, if the man were obligated to conform his own will to God's will with respect to what is willed, it would follow that the man is obligated to will his own damnation. But this is absurd.

Objection 3: No one is obligated to will anything that is contrary to piety. But if a man willed what God wills, then this would sometimes be contrary to piety. For instance, when God wills that someone's father should die, if the son were to will this same thing, it would be contrary to piety. Therefore, a man is not obligated to conform his own act of willing to God's will with respect to what is willed.

But contrary to this:

1. Psalm 32:1 says, "Praise is fitting for the upright," and the Gloss on this verse says, "An upright heart is had by one who wills what God wills." But everyone is obligated to have an upright heart. Therefore, everyone is obligated to will what God wills.

2. The form of an act of willing comes from its object, as it does for any sort of act. Therefore, if a man is obligated to conform his act of willing to God's will, then it follows that he is obligated to conform his act of willing to God's will with respect to what is willed.

3. An opposition of wills consists in men willing diverse things. But if anyone has an act of willing opposed to God's will, then he has a bad act of willing. Therefore, if anyone does not conform his own will to God's will with respect to what is willed, then he has a bad act of willing.

I respond: As is clear from what has been said above (aa. 3 and 5), an act of willing is directed toward its object insofar as that object is proposed by reason. Now it is possible for a thing to be thought of in various ways by reason, so that it is good under one conception and not good under another conception. And so if someone's will wills that such-and-such a thing exist, insofar as that thing has the character of goodness, then this act of willing will be good; and if someone else wills that the very same thing not exist, insofar as that thing has the character of badness, then that act of willing will likewise be

good. For instance, a judge has a good act of willing when he wills that the highwayman be put to death (*vult occisionem latronis*), since this act is just, whereas someone else's act of willing—say, that of the highwayman's wife or child—who does not will that he be put to death, insofar as being put to death is by its nature bad (*inquantum est secundam naturam occisio*), is likewise good.

Now since an act of willing follows upon an apprehension by reason or the intellect, it follows that the more general the notion of the apprehended good is, the more general is the good that the act of willing is directed toward—just as in the proposed example. For the judge has care for the common good, i.e., for justice, and so he wills the highwayman's death, which has the nature of a good in its relation to the common social condition (*quae habet rationem boni secundum relationem ad statum communem*). By contrast, the highwayman's wife has to consider the private good of her family, and accordingly she wills that her husband, the highwayman, not be put to death.

Now it is the good of the whole universe that is apprehended by God, who makes and governs the universe. Hence, He wills whatever He wills under the notion of the common good, i.e., His own goodness, which is the good of the whole universe. By contrast, a creature's apprehension is by its nature directed toward some particular good that is proportionate to its own nature. But, as has been explained, it is possible for something to be good in accord with a particular conception and not to be good in accord with a more universal conception, and vice versa. And so it is possible for an act of willing to be such that (a) it is good when it wills something thought of in accord with a particular conception, and yet (b) God does not will it in accord with His universal conception, and vice versa. And because of this it is also the case that diverse acts of willing with respect to opposite things on the part of diverse men can both be good, insofar as they will that a given thing exist or not exist under diverse particular conceptions.

However, when a man wills some particular good, his act of willing is upright only if it refers that good to the common good as its end, since the natural appetite of each part is ordered toward the common good of the whole. Now it is from the end that one takes the formal notion, as it were, of willing the means to the end. Hence, in order for someone to will a particular good by an upright act, it must be that (a) this particular good is willed *materially* and that (b) God's common good is willed *formally*. Therefore, a human act of willing has to be conformed to God's will *formally* with respect to what is willed, since it has to will the divine and common good, but it does not have to will the divine and common good *materially*, for the reason already explained.

Yet a human act of willing in some sense is conformed to God's will with respect to *both* objects. For insofar as it is conformed to God's will with respect to the *general* conception of what is willed, it is conformed to it with respect to the ultimate end. On the other hand, insofar as it is not conformed to God's will with respect to what is willed *materially*, it is conformed to it in accord with the conception of an efficient cause, since a thing has, from God as an efficient cause, *this* proper inclination that follows from its nature or the particular apprehension of *this* thing. Hence, it used to be said that a man's act of willing is conformed to God's will in the sense that he wills what God wills that he will.

In addition, there is another mode of conformity corresponding to the nature of a *formal* cause—in the sense, namely, that a man wills something out of charity, in the way that God wills. And this mode of conformity is likewise traced back to the formal conformity which stems from the act's being ordered toward the ultimate end, which is the proper object of charity.

Reply to objection 1: We can know with a general conception what sort of thing God wills. For we know that whatever God wills, He wills under the notion of the good. And so if anyone wills something under some notion of the good, then he has an act of willing that is conformed to God's will with respect to the nature of what is willed (*quantum ad rationem voliti*).

However, we do not know what God wills in particular. And in this regard, we are not obligated to conform our act of willing to God's will. Yet in the state of glory all will see, in each particular thing that they will, how it ordered toward what God wills concerning that thing. And so then they will conform their wills to God in all things not only formally but also materially.

Reply to objection 2: God does not will the damnation of anyone under the notion of damnation and He does not will death insofar as it is death, since He wills that all men be saved. Instead, He wills these things under the notion of justice. Hence, with regard to such things, it is enough for a man to will that God's justice and the order of nature be preserved.

Reply to objection 3: The answer to the third objection is clear from what was just said.

Reply to argument 1 for the contrary: One wills more of what God wills when he conforms his own act of willing to God's will with respect to the notion *what God wills (quantum ad rationem voliti)* than when he conforms his act of willing to God's will with respect to the very thing willed. For an act of willing is directed toward the end more principally than toward the means to the end.

Reply to argument 2 for the contrary: An act's species and form have more to do with nature of the object than with what is material in the object.

Reply to argument 3 for the contrary: There is no opposition of wills when the different individuals are not willing in accord with the same conception. But if it were under the very same conception that something was willed by one of them and willed against by the other, then this would induce an opposition of wills. However, this is not what happens in the case under discussion.