

QUESTION 82

The Will

Next we have to consider the will. And on this topic there are five questions: (1) Does the will desire anything by necessity? (2) Does the will desire everything by necessity? (3) Is the will a more eminent power than the intellect? (4) Does the will move the intellect? (5) Is the will divided into the irascible and the concupiscible?

Article 1

Is there anything the will desires by necessity?

It seems that the will desires nothing by necessity (*nihil ex necessitate appetat*):

Objection 1: In *De Civitate Dei* 5 Augustine says that if something is necessary, then it is not voluntary. But everything that the will desires is voluntary. Therefore, nothing that the will desires (*appetit*) is desired necessarily (*est necessario desideratum*).

Objection 2: According to the Philosopher, rational powers are directed toward opposites. But the will is a rational power, since, as *De Anima* 3 says, the will exists in reason. Therefore, the will is directed toward opposites. Therefore, it is not determined to anything by necessity (*ad nihil de necessitate determinatur*).

Objection 3: Because of the will we are masters of our own acts (*domini nostrorum actuum*). But we are not masters of what exists by necessity (*ex necessitate*). Therefore, no act of the will can exist by necessity (*de necessitate*).

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 13 Augustine says, “Everyone desires beatitude with one accord (*una voluntate*).” But if this fact were contingent and not necessary, then in at least a few cases it would not be true. Therefore, there is something the will wills by necessity (*voluntas ex necessitate aliquid vult*).

I respond: There are many senses of ‘necessity’ (*necessitas*). Now the necessary is what is *not able not to be*.

One way in which this feature belongs to something is in virtue of an *intrinsic principle*—either a *material* intrinsic principle, as when we say that it is necessary for everything composed of contraries to be corrupted, or a *formal* intrinsic principle, as when we say that it is necessary for a triangle to have three angles equal to two right angles. This is *natural and absolute necessity* (*necessitas naturalis et absoluta*).

In a second way, some things are *not able not to be* in virtue of some *extrinsic principle*—either an *end* or an *agent*. In virtue of an *end*, as when without this thing one cannot attain a given end at all, or one cannot attain it in a satisfying way (*bene*); it is in this sense that food is said to be necessary for life, or that a horse is said to be necessary for a journey. This is called the *necessity of the end* (*necessitas finis*), and it is also sometimes called utility (*utilitas*). On the other hand, some things are not able not to be because of an *agent*, as when someone is coerced by some agent in such a way that he cannot do the contrary. And this is called the *necessity of coercion* (*necessitas coactionis*).

The necessity of coercion is altogether at odds with the will (*omnino repugnat voluntati*). For what is contrary to a thing’s inclination we call ‘violent’. But the movement of the will is itself an inclination toward something. And so just as something is called ‘natural’ because it accords with a natural inclination (*inclinatio naturae*), so something is called ‘voluntary’ because it accords with the will’s inclination. Therefore, just as it is impossible for something to be simultaneously both violent and natural, so it is impossible for something to be, absolutely speaking, both coerced (or violent) and

voluntary.

However, the necessity of the end is not at odds with the will when the end can be arrived at in just one way; for instance, given that one wills to cross the sea, a necessity arises in the will for willing a ship.

Similarly, a *natural necessity* is not at odds with the will, either. At the very least, it is necessary that just as the intellect adheres by necessity to its first principles, so too the will adheres by necessity to its final end, which is beatitude. For as *Physics 2* says, the end plays the role in matters of action (*in operativis*) that a [first] principle plays in speculative matters (*in speculativis*). For what belongs to something naturally and immutably must be the foundation and source (*fundamentum et principium*) of everything else, since in each thing what is primary is its nature, and all movement proceeds from something immovable.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine should be understood to be talking about the necessity of coercion. By contrast, natural necessity “does not destroy the will’s freedom,” as Augustine himself says in the same book.

Reply to objection 2: Insofar as the will wills something naturally, it is more like the intellective understanding of natural principles than it is like reason, which is directed toward opposites. Hence, in this sort of case the will is more an *intellectual* power than a *rational* power.

Reply to objection 3: We are masters of our own actions insofar as we are able to choose *this* or *that*. But as *Ethics 3* says, choice (*electio*) is about the means to an end and not about the end. Hence, the desire for the ultimate end is not among those acts of which we are the masters.

Article 2

Does the will will by necessity everything it wills?

It seems that the will wills by necessity everything it wills:

Objection 1: In *De Divinis Nominibus 4* Dionysius says, “Evil lies beyond the will.” Therefore, it is by necessity that the will tends toward the good proposed to it.

Objection 2: The will’s object is related to the will as a mover to what is moved. But the movement of what is moved follows necessarily from the mover. Therefore, it seems that the will’s object moves it by necessity.

Objection 3: Just as what is apprehended by the sensory power is an object of the sentient appetite, so what is apprehended by the intellect is an object of the intellective appetite, which is called the will. But what is apprehended by the sensory power moves the sentient appetite by necessity; for in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* Augustine says that animals are moved by what they see. Therefore, it seems that what is apprehended by the intellect moves the will by necessity.

But contrary to this: Augustine says, “The will is that by which one sins and that by which one lives in an upright way”—and so it is directed toward opposites. Therefore, it is not the case that the will wills by necessity everything it wills.

I respond: The will does not will by necessity everything it wills. To see this clearly, note that, as has already been explained (a.1), the will adheres to its ultimate end in the same way that the intellect adheres naturally and by necessity to its first principles.

Now some intelligible things do not have a necessary connection to the first principles, e.g., contingent propositions, the denial of which does not imply the denial of the first principles. Propositions like these are such that the intellect does not assent to them by necessity.

On the other hand, there are some propositions which are necessary and which have a necessary connection with the first principles, e.g., demonstrable conclusions, the denial of which implies the denial of the first principles. These propositions are such that the intellect assents to them by necessity once it recognizes the necessary connection of the conclusions to the principles by way of a demonstrative deduction; however, it does not assent to them by necessity before it recognizes the necessity of the connection by way of the demonstration.

Something similar holds for the will as well.

For there are some particular goods which do not have a necessary connection to beatitude and in the absence of which someone can have beatitude (*potest esse beatus*). The will does not adhere to goods of this sort by necessity.

On the other hand, there are some particular goods which have a necessary connection to beatitude and by which a man adheres to God, in whom alone true beatitude consists. However, before the necessity of this sort of connection is demonstrated by the certitude of the vision of God, the will does not adhere to God by necessity, or to the things that are of God. On the other hand, the will of one who sees God through His essence adheres to God necessarily, in the same way that we now will by necessity to have beatitude.

Thus, it is clear that the will does not will by necessity everything it wills.

Reply to objection 1: The will tends toward nothing except under the notion of the good (*sub ratione boni*). But because the good is complex (*quia bonum est multiplex*), the will is not determined by necessity to one alternative (*non ex necessitate determinatur ad unum*).

Reply to objection 2: A mover causes movement by necessity in the movable thing when the power of the mover exceeds the movable thing in such a way that the totality of the movable thing's possibilities is subject to the mover (*ita quod tota eius possibilitas moventi subdatur*). But since the will's possibilities encompass a universal and perfect good (*possibilitas voluntatis sit respectu boni universalis et perfecti*), it is not the case that the totality of its possibilities is subject to any particular good. And so no particular good moves it by necessity.

Reply to objection 3: The sentient power is not a power that brings together diverse things in the way that reason does; instead, it simply apprehends some one thing. And this is why one thing determinately moves the sentient appetite. By contrast, reason brings together many things, and for this reason the intellective appetite, i.e., the will, is able to be moved by many things and is not moved by any one of them with necessity.

Article 3

Is the will a higher power than the intellect?

It seems that the will is a higher power than the intellect:

Objection 1: The good or the end is the object of the will. But the end is the first and highest of all causes. Therefore, the will is the first and highest of all powers.

Objection 2: Natural entities proceed from the imperfect to the perfect. And this is also apparent among the powers of the soul; for they proceed from the sensory power to the intellect, which is the more noble. But there is a natural progression from an act of the intellect to an act of the will. Therefore, the will is a more perfect and more noble power than the intellect.

Objection 3: Habits are proportioned to their powers in the way that perfections are proportioned to the things they perfect. But the habit by which the will is perfected, viz., charity, is more noble than

the habits by which the intellect is perfected; for 1 Corinthians 13:2 says, “If I should know all mysteries and if I should have all faith and have not charity, I am nothing.” Therefore, the will is a higher power than the intellect.

But contrary to this: In *Ethics* 10 the Philosopher claims that the highest power of the soul is the intellect.

I respond: There are two ways to think about the eminence of two things with respect to one another: (a) absolutely speaking (*simpliciter*) and (b) relatively speaking (*secundum quid*). Something is thought of as such-and-such absolutely speaking insofar as it is such-and-such in its own right (*secundum seipsam tale*), whereas it is thought of as such-and-such relatively speaking insofar as it such-and-such in relation to something else (*secundum respectum ad alterum*).

Thus, if the intellect and the will are considered *in their own right*, then the intellect is the more eminent. This is apparent from a comparison of their objects to one another. For the intellect’s object is more simple and more absolute than the will’s object, since the notion *desirable good* is itself an object of the intellect (*objectum intellectus est ipsa ratio boni appetibilis*), whereas it is the desirable good, whose notion exists in the intellect, that is the will’s object. But the more simple and abstract something is, the higher and more noble it is in its own right. And so the intellect’s object is higher than the will’s object. Therefore, since the proper nature of a power has to do with the object it is ordered toward, it follows that the intellect is in its own right and absolutely speaking higher and more noble than the will.

On the other hand, *relatively speaking* and in relation to something else, the will is in some cases higher than the intellect, viz., because the will’s object exists in a higher entity than the intellect’s object does. For instance, I might claim that hearing is, relatively speaking, more noble than seeing, because some entity that makes a sound is more noble than some entity that is colored, even though color is more simple and more noble than sound. For as was explained above (q. 16, a. 1 and q. 27, a. 4), the intellect’s action consists in the nature of what is understood existing in the one who understands, whereas the act of the will is perfected in the will’s being inclined toward that thing as it exists in itself. And this is why in *Metaphysics* 6 the Philosopher says that the good and the bad, which are objects of the will, exist in the things, whereas the true and the false, which are objects of the intellect, exist in the mind. Therefore, when an entity in which a given good exists is more noble than the soul itself, in which the nature as understood exists, then the will is higher than the intellect in relation to such an entity. But when the entity in which a given good exists is inferior to the soul, then the intellect is higher than the will in relation to such an entity. Hence, the love of God is better than the cognition of God, whereas, conversely, the cognition of corporeal things is better than the love of corporeal things.

Still, absolutely speaking, the intellect is more noble than the will.

Reply to objection 1: The notion of a cause is taken from a comparison of the one thing to the other, and in such a comparison the notion of the good is the most important; but ‘true’ is said, rather, in an absolute sense, and it signifies the notion of the good itself. Hence, even the good is something true.

On the other hand, the true is itself a certain good, because the intellect is an entity, and the true is its end. And among other ends this end is the most excellent, just as the intellect is the most excellent among the powers.

Reply to objection 2: What is prior in generation and in time is less perfect, since in one and the same thing potentiality temporally precedes actuality and imperfection temporally precedes perfection.

However, what is prior absolutely speaking and according to the order of nature is more perfect, since this is the sense in which actuality is prior to potentiality. And it is in this sense that the intellect is prior to the will—as a mover is prior to what is moved, and as what is active is prior to what is passive. For it is the good as intellectually understood that moves the will.

Reply to objection 3: This argument goes through for the will taken in comparison to what is

above the soul. For the virtue of charity is the virtue by which we love God.

Article 4

Does the will move the intellect?

It seems that the will does not move the intellect:

Objection 1: The mover is more noble than and prior to what is moved, since the mover is an agent and, as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 and the Philosopher in *De Anima* 3, an agent is more noble than its patient. But as was explained above (a. 3), the intellect is prior to and more noble than the will. Therefore, the will does not move the intellect.

Objection 2: A mover is not moved by the thing it moves, except perhaps incidentally. But the intellect moves the will, since the desirable thing as apprehended by the intellect is an unmoved mover, whereas the appetite is a moved mover. Therefore, the intellect is not moved by the will.

Objection 3: We can will only what is understood intellectually. Therefore, if the will moves the intellect to intellectual understanding by willing to have intellectual understanding, then another act of intellectual understanding will have to precede this act of willing, and another act of willing will have to precede that act of intellectual understanding, and so on *ad infinitum*—which is impossible. Therefore, it is not the case that the will moves the intellect.

But contrary to this: Damascene says, “It is within our power to learn an art or not to learn it, as we will.” But something is within our power through the will, and we learn an art through the intellect. Therefore, the will moves the intellect.

I respond: There are two ways in which something is said to effect movement.

The first way is in the manner of an *end*, in the sense in which an end is said to move an agent. It is in this way that the intellect moves the will, since the will’s object is a good as intellectually understood, and it moves the will as an end.

The second way in which something is said to effect movement is in the manner of an *agent*—in the way in which the thing that effects an alteration moves the thing that is altered, and in the way in which the thing that gives an impulse moves the thing that is impelled. This is the way in which the will moves the intellect and all the powers of the soul, as Anselm explains in *De Similitudinibus*.

The reason for this is that in the case of all ordered active powers, the power that is directed toward a universal end moves the powers that are directed toward particular ends. This is apparent both in natural matters and political matters. For the heavens, which act for the sake of conserving generable and corruptible things in general, move all the lower bodies, each of which acts for the sake of conserving its own species or even the individual. Again, a king, who intends the common good of the whole kingdom, moves by his commands all the heads of the cities (*praepositi civitatum*), who devote themselves to ruling the individual cities.

Now the will’s object is the good and the end in general (*bonum et finis in communi*). But each power is directed toward some proper good that is appropriate for it, in the way that the power of sight is directed toward the perception of color, and in the way that the intellect is directed toward the cognition of what is true. And so the will moves all the powers of the soul to their acts in the manner of an agent—except for the natural powers of the vegetative part of the soul, which are not subject to our choice.

Reply to objection 1: The intellect can be thought of in two ways: first, insofar as it apprehends being and truth in general (*est apprehensivus entis et veri universalis*), and, second, insofar as it is a

certain entity and particular power that has a determinate act.

Similarly, the will can be thought of in two ways: first, according to the universality of its object, i.e., insofar as it desires the good in general (*appetitiva boni communis*), and, second, insofar as it is a certain determinate power of the soul having a determinate act.

Thus, if the intellect and will are compared with respect to the nature of the universality of both their objects, it has already been explained above (a. 3) that in this sense the intellect is absolutely speaking higher and more noble than the will.

Moreover, if the intellect is thought of with respect to the universality of its object and the will insofar as it is a certain determinate power, then, once again, the intellect is higher than and prior to the will, since the will itself, along with its act and its object, is contained under the notions *being* and *true*, which the intellect apprehends. Hence, the intellect has intellectual understanding of the will and of its act and its object, just as it has intellectual understanding of the other specific things it understands, such as a rock or a piece of wood, which are contained under the common notions *being* and *true*.

However, if the will is thought of with respect to the general notion of its object, which is the good, and the intellect is thought of insofar as it is a certain specific entity and power, then the intellect is contained under the common notion *good* as a certain specific good, along with the act of intellectual understanding itself and its object, which is the true; each of them is a certain specific good. And in this respect the will is higher than the intellect and able to move it.

From these considerations it is apparent that the reason why these powers include one another by their acts is that the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills that the intellect understand. And by a similar line of reasoning, the good is contained under the true insofar as the good is a certain true thing that is understood, and the true is contained under the good insofar as the true is a certain desired good.

Reply to objection 2: As has already been explained, the intellect moves the will in a way different from the way in which the will moves the intellect.

Reply to objection 3: There is no need to proceed to infinity; instead, one stops with the intellect as the first thing. For an apprehension must precede every movement of the will, but it is not the case that a movement of the will precedes every apprehension. Rather, the source of counsel and understanding is an intellectual principle that is higher than our intellect, viz., God. Aristotle likewise makes this claim in *Eudemian Ethics* 7, and in this way he shows that there is no infinite regress.

Article 5

Should the irascible and the concupiscible be distinguished in the higher appetite, i.e., the will?

It seems that the irascible and the concupiscible should be distinguished in the higher appetite, i.e., the will:

Objection 1: The name of the concupiscible power is taken from desire (*a concupiscendo*) and the name of the irascible power is taken from anger (*ab irascendo*). But there are some instances of desire (*concupiscentia*) that can involve only the intellectual appetite, i.e., the will, and cannot involve the sentient appetite, e.g., the desire for wisdom (*concupiscentia sapientiae*) of which Wisdom 6:21 says, “The desire for wisdom leads to the everlasting kingdom.” There are likewise instances of anger that can involve only the intellectual appetite and cannot involve the sentient appetite, as when we are angry about vices; hence, in *Super Matthaenum* Jerome says, “Let us have in the irascible power a hatred for vices.” Therefore, the irascible and the concupiscible should be distinguished in the intellectual appetite, just as in the sentient appetite.

Objection 2: According to what is commonly said, charity exists in the concupiscible power, whereas hope exists in the irascible power. But charity and hope cannot exist in the sentient appetite, since they are intelligible objects and not sensible objects. Therefore, the concupiscible and the irascible should be posited in the intellective part of the soul.

Objection 3: *De Spiritu et Anima* says, “The soul has these powers [viz., the irascible, the concupiscible, and the rational] before it is mixed with the body.” But no power of the sentient part belongs just to the soul; instead, as was explained above (q. 77, a. 5), it belongs to the conjoined being. Therefore, the irascible and the concupiscible exist in the will, i.e., in the intellective appetite.

But contrary to this: Gregory of Nyssa says that the non-rational part of the soul is divided into the desirous power and the irascible power (*dividitur in desiderativum et irascitivum*); and Damascene says the same thing in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2. Moreover, in *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says that “the will exists in reason, whereas concupiscence and anger, or desire and vehemence (*animus*), exist in the non-rational part of the soul.”

I respond: The irascible and the concupiscible are not parts of the intellective appetite, which is called the will. For, as was explained above (q. 59, a. 4 and q. 79, a. 7), a power that is ordered toward an object under a common notion is not diversified by special differences contained under that common notion. For instance, since the power of sight is directed to the visible under the notion *colored*, visual powers are not multiplied according to the diverse species of color. However, if there were a power that was directed toward what is white insofar as it is white and not insofar as it is colored, then it would be diverse from a power directed toward what is black insofar as it is black.

Now the sentient appetite is not directed toward the common notion *good*, since the sensory powers do not apprehend the universal. And so the parts of the sentient appetite are diversified in a way that corresponds to the diverse notions of particular goods. For the concupiscible is directed at the proper notion of the good insofar as it is pleasant to the senses and agreeable to the nature, whereas the irascible is directed toward the notion of the good insofar as it repels and attacks that which inflicts harm.

The will, however, is directed toward the good under the common notion *good*. And so it is not the case that appetitive powers are diversified within it, i.e., within the intellective appetite, in such a way that within the intellective appetite there would be a distinct irascible power and a distinct concupiscible power—just as it is not the case that apprehensive powers are multiplied in the intellect, even though they are multiplied among the sensory powers.

Reply to objection 1: Love (*amor*), concupiscence (*concupiscentia*), and other things of this sort are taken in two ways.

For sometimes they are taken insofar as they are certain passions, bringing with them a certain arousal of feeling (*cum concitatione animi*). This is the way they are commonly taken, and when they are taken in this way, they exist only in the sentient appetite.

In the second way, they signify a simple affection, without passion or an arousal of feeling. Taken in this way, they are acts of the will, and in this sense they are likewise attributed to the angels and to God. But insofar as they are taken in this way, they involve only a single power, which is called the will, and not diverse powers.

Reply to objection 2: The will can be called irascible insofar as it wills to fight off evil not from the force of passion, but by the judgment of reason. And, in the same way, it can be called concupiscible because of its desire for the good. And this is the sense in which charity and hope exist in a concupiscible power and an irascible power, i.e., they are in the will insofar as it is ordered toward acts of this sort.

This is likewise the way one can interpret what *De Spiritu et Anima* says, viz., that the irascible and the concupiscible belong to the soul before it is united to the body (insofar as one understands this to be a

natural ordering and not a temporal ordering)—even though it is unnecessary to pay heed to what this particular book says.

Reply to objection 3: From this the answer to the third objection is obvious.