

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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OF THE GOODNESS AND MALICE OF THE INTERIOR ACT OF THE WILL (TEN ARTICLES)

We must now consider the goodness of the interior act of the will; under which head there are ten points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether the goodness of the will depends on the subject?
 - (2) Whether it depends on the object alone?
 - (3) Whether it depends on reason?
 - (4) Whether it depends on the eternal law?
 - (5) Whether erring reason binds?
 - (6) Whether the will is evil if it follows the erring reason against the law of God?
 - (7) Whether the goodness of the will in regard to the means, depends on the intention of the end?
 - (8) Whether the degree of goodness or malice in the will depends on the degree of good or evil in the intention?
 - (9) Whether the goodness of the will depends on its conformity to the Divine Will?
 - (10) Whether it is necessary for the human will, in order to be good, to be conformed to the Divine Will, as regards the thing willed?
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Objection 1: It would seem that the goodness of the will does not depend on the object. For the will cannot be directed otherwise than to what is good: since "evil is outside the scope of the will," as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv). If therefore the goodness of the will depended on the object, it would follow that every act of the will is good, and none bad.

Objection 2: Further, good is first of all in the end: wherefore the goodness of the end, as such, does not depend on any other. But, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. vi, 5), "goodness of action is the end, but goodness of making is never the end": because the latter is always ordained to the thing made, as to its end. Therefore the goodness of the act of the will does not depend on any object.

Objection 3: Further, such as a thing is, such does it make a thing to be. But the object of the will is good, by reason of the goodness of nature. Therefore it cannot give moral goodness to the will. Therefore the moral goodness of the will does not depend on the object.

On the contrary, the Philosopher says (Ethic. v, 1) that justice is that habit "from which men wish for just things": and accordingly, virtue is a habit from which men wish for good things. But a good will is one which is in accordance with virtue. Therefore the goodness of the will is from the fact that a man wills that which is good.

I answer that, Good and evil are essential differences of the act of the will. Because good and evil of themselves regard the will; just as truth and falsehood regard reason; the act of which is divided essentially by the difference of truth and falsehood, for as much as an opinion is said to be true or false. Consequently good and evil will are acts differing in species. Now the specific difference in acts is according to objects, as stated above ([Question \[18\]](#), [Article \[5\]](#)). Therefore good and evil in the acts of the will is derived properly from the objects.

Reply to Objection 1: The will is not always directed to what is truly good, but sometimes to the apparent good; which has indeed some measure of good, but not of a good that is simply suitable to be desired. Hence it is that the act of the will is not always good, but sometimes evil.

Reply to Objection 2: Although an action can, in a certain way, be man's last end; nevertheless such action is not an act of the will, as stated above ([Question \[1\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#), ad 2).

Reply to Objection 3: Good is presented to the will as its object by the reason: and in so far as it is in accord with reason, it enters the moral order, and causes moral goodness in the act of the will: because the reason is the principle of human and moral acts, as stated above ([Question \[18\]](#), [Article \[5\]](#)).

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Whether the goodness of the will depends on the object alone?

Objection 1: It would seem that the goodness of the will does not depend on the object alone. For the end has a closer relationship to the will than to any other power. But the acts of the other powers derive goodness not only from the object but also from the end, as we have shown above ([Question \[18\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#)). Therefore the act also of the will derives goodness not only from the object but also from the end.

Objection 2: Further, the goodness of an action is derived not only from the object but also from the circumstances, as stated above ([Question \[18\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)). But according to the diversity of circumstances there may be diversity of goodness and malice in the act of the will: for instance, if a man will, when he ought, where he ought, as much as he ought, and how he ought, or if he will as he ought not. Therefore the goodness of the will depends not only on the object, but also on the circumstances.

Objection 3: Further, ignorance of circumstances excuses malice of the will, as stated above ([Question \[6\]](#), [Article \[8\]](#)). But it would not be so, unless the goodness or malice of the will depended on the circumstances. Therefore the goodness and malice of the will depend on the circumstances, and not only on the object.

On the contrary, An action does not take its species from the circumstances as such, as stated above ([Question \[18\]](#), [Article \[10\]](#), ad 2). But good and evil are specific differences of the act of the will, as stated above ([Article \[1\]](#)). Therefore the goodness and malice of the will depend, not on the circumstances, but on the object alone.

I answer that, In every genus, the more a thing is first, the more simple it is, and the fewer the principles of which it consists: thus primary bodies are simple. Hence it is to be observed that the first things in every genus, are, in some way, simple and consist of one principle. Now the principle of the goodness and malice of human actions is taken from the act of the will. Consequently the goodness and malice of the act of the will depend on some one thing; while the goodness and malice of other acts may depend on several things.

Now that one thing which is the principle in each genus, is not something accidental to that genus, but something essential thereto: because whatever is accidental is reduced to something essential, as to its principle. Therefore the goodness of the will's act depends on that one thing alone, which of itself causes goodness in the act; and that one thing is the object, and not the circumstances, which are accidents, as it were, of the act.

Reply to Objection 1: The end is the object of the will, but not of the other powers. Hence, in regard to the act of the will, the goodness derived from the object, does not differ from that which is derived from the end, as they differ in the acts of the other powers; except perhaps accidentally, in so far as one end depends on another, and one act of the will on another.

Reply to Objection 2: Given that the act of the will is fixed on some good, no circumstances can make that act bad. Consequently when it is said that a man wills a good when he ought not, or where he ought not, this can be understood in two ways. First, so that this circumstance is referred to the thing willed. And thus the act of the will is not fixed on something good: since to will to do something when it ought not to be done, is not to will something good. Secondly, so that the circumstance is referred to the act of willing. And thus, it is impossible to will something good when one ought not to, because one ought always to will what is good: except, perhaps, accidentally, in so far as a man by willing some particular good, is prevented from willing at the same time another good which he ought to will at that time. And then evil

Reply to Objection 3: Ignorance of circumstances excuses malice of the will, in so far as the circumstance affects the thing willed: that is to say, in so far as a man ignores the circumstances of the act which he wills.

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Whether the goodness of the will depends on reason?

Objection 1: It would seem that the goodness of the will does not depend on reason. For what comes first does not depend on what follows. But the good belongs to the will before it belongs to reason, as is clear from what has been said above ([Question \[9\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)). Therefore the goodness of the will does not depend on reason.

Objection 2: Further, the Philosopher says (Ethic. vi, 2) that the goodness of the practical intellect is "a truth that is in conformity with right desire." But right desire is a good will. Therefore the goodness of the practical reason depends on the goodness of the will, rather than conversely.

Objection 3: Further, the mover does not depend on that which is moved, but vice versa. But the will moves the reason and the other powers, as stated above ([Question \[9\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)). Therefore the goodness of the will does not depend on reason.

On the contrary, Hilary says (De Trin. x): "It is an unruly will that persists in its desires in opposition to reason." But the goodness of the will consists in not being unruly. Therefore the goodness of the will depends on its being subject to reason.

I answer that, As stated above ([Articles \[1\],2](#)), the goodness of the will depends properly on the object. Now the will's object is proposed to it by reason. Because the good understood is the proportionate object of the will; while sensitive or imaginary good is proportionate not to the will but to the sensitive appetite: since the will can tend to the universal good, which reason apprehends; whereas the sensitive appetite tends only to the particular good, apprehended by the sensitive power. Therefore the goodness of the will depends on reason, in the same way as it depends on the object.

Reply to Objection 1: The good considered as such, i.e. as appetible, pertains to the will before pertaining to the reason. But considered as true it pertains to the reason, before, under the aspect of goodness, pertaining to the will: because the will cannot desire a good that is not previously apprehended by reason.

Reply to Objection 2: The Philosopher speaks here of the practical intellect, in so far as it counsels and reasons about the means: for in this respect it is perfected by prudence. Now in regard to the means, the rectitude of the reason depends on its conformity with the desire of a

Reply to Objection 3: The will moves the reason in one way: the reason moves the will in another, viz. on the part of the object, as stated above ([Question \[9\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)).

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Whether the goodness of the will depends on the eternal law?

Objection 1: It would seem that the goodness of the human will does not depend on the eternal law. Because to one thing there is one rule and one measure. But the rule of the human will, on which its goodness depends, is right reason. Therefore the goodness of the will does not depend on the eternal law.

Objection 2: Further, "a measure is homogeneous with the thing measured" (Metaph. x, 1). But the eternal law is not homogeneous with the human will. Therefore the eternal law cannot be the measure on which the goodness of the human will depends.

Objection 3: Further, a measure should be most certain. But the eternal law is unknown to us. Therefore it cannot be the measure on which the goodness of our will depends.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Contra Faust. xxii, 27) that "sin is a deed, word or desire against the eternal law." But malice of the will is the root of sin. Therefore, since malice is contrary to goodness, the goodness of the will depends on the eternal law.

I answer that, Wherever a number of causes are subordinate to one another, the effect depends more on the first than on the second cause: since the second cause acts only in virtue of the first. Now it is from the eternal law, which is the Divine Reason, that human reason is the rule of the human will, from which the human derives its goodness. Hence it is written ([Ps. 4:6,7](#)): "Many say: Who showeth us good things? The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us": as though to say: "The light of our reason is able to show us good things, and guide our will, in so far as it is the light (i.e. derived from) Thy countenance." It is therefore evident that the goodness of the human will depends on the eternal law much more than on human reason: and when human reason fails we must have recourse to the Eternal Reason.

Reply to Objection 1: To one thing there are not several proximate measures; but there can be several measures if one is subordinate to the other.

Reply to Objection 2: A proximate measure is homogeneous with the thing measured; a remote measure is not.

Reply to Objection 3: Although the eternal law is unknown to us according as it is in the Divine Mind: nevertheless, it becomes known to us somewhat, either by natural reason which is derived therefrom as its proper image; or by some sort of additional revelation.

Whether the will is evil when it is at variance with erring reason?

Objection 1: It would seem that the will is not evil when it is at variance with erring reason. Because the reason is the rule of the human will, in so far as it is derived from the eternal law, as stated above ([Article \[4\]](#)). But erring reason is not derived from the eternal law. Therefore erring reason is not the rule of the human will. Therefore the will is not evil, if it be at variance with erring reason.

Objection 2: Further, according to Augustine, the command of a lower authority does not bind if it be contrary to the command of a higher authority: for instance, if a provincial governor command something that is forbidden by the emperor. But erring reason sometimes proposes what is against the command of a higher power, namely, God Whose power is supreme. Therefore the decision of an erring reason does not bind. Consequently the will is not evil if it be at variance with erring reason.

Objection 3: Further, every evil will is reducible to some species of malice. But the will that is at variance with erring reason is not reducible to some species of malice. For instance, if a man's reason err in telling him to commit fornication, his will is not willing to do so, cannot be reduced to any species of malice. Therefore the will is not evil when it is at variance with erring reason.

On the contrary, As stated in the FP, Question [79], Article [13], conscience is nothing else than the application of knowledge to some action. Now knowledge is in the reason. Therefore when the will is at variance with erring reason, it is against conscience. But every such will is evil; for it is written ([Rm. 14:23](#)): "All that is not of faith"---i.e. all that is against conscience---"is sin." Therefore the will is evil when it is at variance with erring reason.

I answer that, Since conscience is a kind of dictate of the reason (for it is an application of knowledge to action, as was stated in the FP, Question [19], Article [13]), to inquire whether the will is evil when it is at variance with erring reason, is the same as to inquire "whether an erring conscience binds." On this matter, some distinguished three kinds of actions: for some are good generically; some are indifferent; some are evil generically. And they say that if reason or conscience tell us to do something which is good generically, there is no error: and in like manner if it tell us not to do something which is evil generically; since it is the same reason that prescribes what is good and forbids what is evil. On the other hand if a man's reason or conscience tells him that he is bound by precept to do what is evil in itself; or that what is good in itself, is forbidden, then his reason or conscience errs. In like manner if a man's reason or conscience tell him, that what is indifferent in itself, for instance to raise a straw from the ground, is forbidden or commanded, his reason or conscience errs. They say, therefore, that reason or conscience when erring in matters of indifference, either by commanding or by forbidding them, binds: so that the will which is at variance with that erring reason is evil and sinful. But they say that when reason or conscience errs in commanding what is evil in itself, or in forbidding what is good in itself and necessary for

But this is unreasonable. For in matters of indifference, the will that is at variance with erring reason or conscience, is evil in some way on account of the object, on which the goodness or malice of the will depends; not indeed on account of the object according as it is in its own nature; but according as it is accidentally apprehended by reason as something evil to do or to avoid. And since the object of the will is that which is proposed by the reason, as stated above ([Article \[3\]](#)), from the very fact that a thing is proposed by the reason as being evil, the will by tending thereto becomes evil. And this is the case not only in indifferent matters, but also in those that are good or evil in themselves. For not only indifferent matters can receive the character of goodness or malice accidentally; but also that which is good, can receive the character of evil, or that which is evil, can receive the character of goodness, on account of the reason apprehending it as such. For instance, to refrain from fornication is good: yet the will does not tend to this good except in so far as it is proposed by the reason. If, therefore, the erring reason propose it as an evil, the will tends to it as to something evil. Consequently the will is evil, because it wills evil, not indeed that which is evil in itself, but that which is evil accidentally, through being apprehended as such by the reason. In like manner, to believe in Christ is good in itself, and necessary for salvation: but the will does not tend thereto, except inasmuch as it is proposed by the reason. Consequently if it be proposed by the reason as something evil, the will tends to it as to something evil: not as if it were evil in itself, but because it is evil accidentally, through the apprehension of the reason. Hence the Philosopher says (*Ethic. vii, 9*) that "properly speaking the incontinent man is one who does not follow right reason; but accidentally, he is also one who does not follow false reason." We must therefore conclude that, absolutely speaking, every will at variance with reason, whether right or erring, is always evil.

Reply to Objection 1: Although the judgment of an erring reason is not derived from God, yet the erring reason puts forward its judgment as being true, and consequently as being derived from God, from Whom is all truth.

Reply to Objection 2: The saying of Augustine holds good when it is known that the inferior authority prescribes something contrary to the command of the higher authority. But if a man were to believe the command of the proconsul to be the command of the emperor, in scorning the command of the proconsul he would scorn the command of the emperor. In like manner if a man were to know that human reason was dictating something contrary to God's commandment, he would not be bound to abide by reason: but then reason would not be entirely erroneous. But when erring reason proposes something as being commanded by God, then to scorn the dictate of reason is to scorn the commandment of God.

Reply to Objection 3: Whenever reason apprehends something as evil, it apprehends it under some species of evil; for instance, as being something contrary to a divine precept, or as giving scandal, or for some such like reason. And then that evil is reduced to that species of malice.

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Objection 1: It would seem that the will is good when it abides by erring reason. For just as the will, when at variance with the reason, tends to that which reason judges to be evil; so, when in accord with reason, it tends to what reason judges to be good. But the will is evil when it is at variance with reason, even when erring. Therefore even when it abides by erring reason, the will is good.

Objection 2: Further, the will is always good, when it abides by the commandment of God and the eternal law. But the eternal law and God's commandment are proposed to us by the apprehension of the reason, even when it errs. Therefore the will is good, even when it abides by erring reason.

Objection 3: Further, the will is evil when it is at variance with erring reason. If, therefore, the will is evil also when it abides by erring reason, it seems that the will is always evil when in conjunction with erring reason: so that in such a case a man would be in a dilemma, and, of necessity, would sin: which is unreasonable. Therefore the will is good when it abides by erring reason.

On the contrary, The will of those who slew the apostles was evil. And yet it was in accord with the erring reason, according to Jn. 16:2: "The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God." Therefore the will can be evil, when it abides by erring reason.

I answer that, Whereas the previous question is the same as inquiring "whether an erring conscience binds"; so this question is the same as inquiring "whether an erring conscience excuses." Now this question depends on what has been said above about ignorance. For it was said ([Question \[6\]](#), [Article \[8\]](#)) that ignorance sometimes causes an act to be involuntary, and sometimes not. And since moral good and evil consist in action in so far as it is voluntary, as was stated above ([Article \[2\]](#)); it is evident that when ignorance causes an act to be involuntary, it takes away the character of moral good and evil; but not, when it does not cause the act to be involuntary. Again, it has been stated above ([Question \[6\]](#), [Article \[8\]](#)) that when ignorance is in any way willed, either directly or indirectly, it does not cause the act to be involuntary. And I call that ignorance "directly" voluntary, to which the act of the will tends: and that, "indirectly" voluntary, which is due to negligence, by reason of a man not wishing to know what he ought to know, as stated above ([Question \[6\]](#), [Article \[8\]](#)).

If then reason or conscience err with an error that is involuntary, either directly, or through negligence, so that one errs about what one ought to know; then such an error of reason or conscience does not excuse the will, that abides by that erring reason or conscience, from being evil. But if the error arise from ignorance of some circumstance, and without any negligence, so that it cause the act to be involuntary, then that error of reason or conscience excuses the will, that abides by that erring reason, from being evil. For instance, if erring reason tell a man that he should go to another man's wife, the will that abides by that erring reason is evil; since this error arises from ignorance of the Divine Law, which he is bound to know. But if a man's reason, errs in mistaking another for his wife, and if he wish to give her her right when she asks for it, his will is excused from being evil: because this error arises from ignorance of a circumstance, which ignorance excuses, and causes the act to be involuntary.

Reply to Objection 1: As Dionysius says (Div. Nom. iv), "good results from the entire cause, evil from each particular defect." Consequently in order that the thing to which the will tends be

Reply to Objection 2: The eternal law cannot err, but human reason can. Consequently the will that abides by human reason, is not always right, nor is it always in accord with the eternal law.

Reply to Objection 3: Just as in syllogistic arguments, granted one absurdity, others must needs follow; so in moral matters, given one absurdity, others must follow too. Thus suppose a man to seek vainglory, he will sin, whether he does his duty for vainglory or whether he omit to do it. Nor is he in a dilemma about the matter: because he can put aside his evil intention. In like manner, suppose a man's reason or conscience to err through inexcusable ignorance, then evil must needs result in the will. Nor is this man in a dilemma: because he can lay aside his error, since his ignorance is vincible and voluntary.

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Whether the goodness of the will, as regards the means, depends on the intention of the end?

Objection 1: It would seem that the goodness of the will does not depend on the intention of the end. For it has been stated above ([Article \[2\]](#)) that the goodness of the will depends on the object alone. But as regards the means, the object of the will is one thing, and the end intended is another. Therefore in such matters the goodness of the will does not depend on the intention of the end.

Objection 2: Further, to wish to keep God's commandment, belongs to a good will. But this can be referred to an evil end, for instance, to vainglory or covetousness, by willing to obey God for the sake of temporal gain. Therefore the goodness of the will does not depend on the intention of the end.

Objection 3: Further, just as good and evil diversify the will, so do they diversify the end. But malice of the will does not depend on the malice of the end intended; since a man who wills to steal in order to give alms, has an evil will, although he intends a good end. Therefore neither does the goodness of the will depend on the goodness of the end intended.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Confess. ix, 3) that God rewards the intention. But God rewards a thing because it is good. Therefore the goodness of the will depends on the intention of the end.

I answer that, The intention may stand in a twofold relation to the act of the will; first, as preceding it, secondly as following [*Leonine edn.: 'accompanying'] it. The intention precedes the act of the will causally, when we will something because we intend a certain end. And then the order to the end is considered as the reason of the goodness of the thing willed: for instance, when a man wills to fast for God's sake; because the act of fasting is specifically good

depends on the goodness of the thing willed, as stated above ([Articles \[1\],2](#)), it must, of necessity, depend on the intention of the end.

On the other hand, intention follows the act of the will, when it is added to a preceding act of the will; for instance, a man may will to do something, and may afterwards refer it to God. And then the goodness of the previous act of the will does not depend on the subsequent intention, except in so far as that act is repeated with the subsequent intention.

Reply to Objection 1: When the intention is the cause of the act of willing, the order to the end is considered as the reason of the goodness of the object, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 2: The act of the will cannot be said to be good, if an evil intention is the cause of willing. For when a man wills to give an alms for the sake of vainglory, he wills that which is good in itself, under a species of evil; and therefore, as willed by him, it is evil. Wherefore his will is evil. If, however, the intention is subsequent to the act of the will, then the latter may be good: and the intention does not spoil that act of the will which preceded, but that which is repeated.

Reply to Objection 3: As we have already stated ([Article \[6\]](#), ad 1), "evil results from each particular defect, but good from the whole and entire cause." Hence, whether the will tend to what is evil in itself, even under the species of good; or to the good under the species of evil, it will be evil in either case. But in order for the will to be good, it must tend to the good under the species of good; in other words, it must will the good for the sake of the good.

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Whether the degree of goodness or malice in the will depends on the degree of good or evil in the intention?

Objection 1: It would seem that the degree of goodness in the will depends on the degree of good in the intention. Because on Mt. 12:35, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good," a gloss says: "A man does as much good as he intends." But the intention gives goodness not only to the external action, but also to the act of the will, as stated above ([Article \[7\]](#)). Therefore the goodness of a man's will is according to the goodness of his intention.

Objection 2: Further, if you add to the cause, you add to the effect. But the goodness of the intention is the cause of the good will. Therefore a man's will is good, according as his intention is good.

Objection 3: Further, in evil actions, a man sins in proportion to his intention: for if a man were to throw a stone with a murderous intention, he would be guilty of murder. Therefore, for the same reason, in good actions, the will is good in proportion to the good intended.

I answer that, In regard to both the act, and the intention of the end, we may consider a twofold quantity: one, on the part of the object, by reason of a man willing or doing a good that is greater; the other, taken from the intensity of the act, according as a man wills or acts intensely; and this is more on the part of the agent.

If then we speak of these respective quantities from the point of view of the object, it is evident that the quantity in the act does not depend on the quantity in the intention. With regard to the external act this may happen in two ways. First, through the object that is ordained to the intended end not being proportionate to that end; for instance, if a man were to give ten pounds, he could not realize his intention, if he intended to buy a thing worth a hundred pounds. Secondly, on account of the obstacles that may supervene in regard to the exterior action, which obstacles we are unable to remove: for instance, a man intends to go to Rome, and encounters obstacles, which prevent him from going. On the other hand, with regard to the interior act of the will, this happens in only one way: because the interior acts of the will are in our power, whereas the external actions are not. But the will can will an object that is not proportionate to the intended end: and thus the will that tends to that object considered absolutely, is not so good as the intention. Yet because the intention also belongs, in a way, to the act of the will, inasmuch, to wit, as it is the reason thereof; it comes to pass that the quantity of goodness in the intention redounds upon the act of the will; that is to say, in so far as the will wills some great good for an end, although that by which it wills to gain so great a good, is not proportionate to that good.

But if we consider the quantity in the intention and in the act, according to their respective intensity, then the intensity of the intention redounds upon the interior act and the exterior act of the will: since the intention stands in relation to them as a kind of form, as is clear from what has been said above ([Question \[12\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#); [Question \[18\]](#), [Article \[6\]](#)). And yet considered materially, while the intention is intense, the interior or exterior act may be not so intense, materially speaking: for instance, when a man does not will with as much intensity to take medicine as he wills to regain health. Nevertheless the very fact of intending health intensely, redounds, as a formal principle, upon the intense volition of medicine.

We must observe, however, that the intensity of the interior or exterior act, may be referred to the intention as its object: as when a man intends to will intensely, or to do something intensely. And yet it does not follow that he wills or acts intensely; because the quantity of goodness in the interior or exterior act does not depend on the quantity of the good intended, as is shown above. And hence it is that a man does not merit as much as he intends to merit: because the quantity of merit is measured by the intensity of the act, as we shall show later on ([Question \[20\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#); [Question \[114\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#)).

Reply to Objection 1: This gloss speaks of good as in the estimation of God, Who considers principally the intention of the end. Wherefore another gloss says on the same passage that "the treasure of the heart is the intention, according to which God judges our works." For the goodness of the intention, as stated above, redounds, so to speak, upon the goodness of the will, which makes even the external act to be meritorious in God's sight.

Reply to Objection 2: The goodness of the intention is not the whole cause of a good will. Hence the argument does not prove.

Whether the goodness of the will depends on its conformity to the Divine will?

Objection 1: It would seem that the goodness of the human will does not depend on its conformity to the Divine will. Because it is impossible for man's will to be conformed to the Divine will; as appears from the word of Isaias 55:9: "As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts." If therefore goodness of the will depended on its conformity to the Divine will, it would follow that it is impossible for man's will to be good. Which is inadmissible.

Objection 2: Further, just as our wills arise from the Divine will, so does our knowledge flow from the Divine knowledge. But our knowledge does not require to be conformed to God's knowledge; since God knows many things that we know not. Therefore there is no need for our will to be conformed to the Divine will.

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

On the contrary, It is written ([Mt. 26:39](#)): "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt": which words He said, because "He wishes man to be upright and to tend to God," as Augustine expounds in the Enchiridion [*Enarr. in Ps. 32, serm. i.]. But the rectitude of the will is its goodness. Therefore the goodness of the will depends on its conformity to the Divine will.

I answer that, As stated above ([Article \[7\]](#)), the goodness of the will depends on the intention of the end. Now the last end of the human will is the Sovereign Good, namely, God, as stated above ([Question \[1\]](#), [Article \[8\]](#); [Question \[3\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)). Therefore the goodness of the human will requires it to be ordained to the Sovereign Good, that is, to God.

Now this Good is primarily and essentially compared to the Divine will, as its proper object. Again, that which is first in any genus is the measure and rule of all that belongs to that genus. Moreover, everything attains to rectitude and goodness, in so far as it is in accord with its proper measure. Therefore, in order that man's will be good it needs to be conformed to the Divine will.

Reply to Objection 1: The human will cannot be conformed to the will of God so as to equal it, but only so as to imitate it. In like manner human knowledge is conformed to the Divine knowledge, in so far as it knows truth: and human action is conformed to the Divine, in so far as it is becoming to the agent: and this by way of imitation, not by way of equality.

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Whether it is necessary for the human will, in order to be good, to be conformed to the Divine will, as regards the thing willed?

Objection 1: It would seem that the human will need not always be conformed to the Divine will, as regards the thing willed. For we cannot will what we know not: since the apprehended good is the object of the will. But in many things we know not what God wills. Therefore the human will cannot be conformed to the Divine will as to the thing willed.

Objection 2: Further, God wills to damn the man whom He foresees about to die in mortal sin. If therefore man were bound to conform his will to the Divine will, in the point of the thing willed, it would follow that a man is bound to will his own damnation. Which is inadmissible.

Objection 3: Further, no one is bound to will what is against filial piety. But if man were to will what God wills, this would sometimes be contrary to filial piety: for instance, when God wills the death of a father: if his son were to will it also, it would be against filial piety. Therefore man is not bound to conform his will to the Divine will, as to the thing willed.

On the contrary, (1) On Ps. 32:1, "Praise becometh the upright," a gloss says: "That man has an upright heart, who wills what God wills." But everyone is bound to have an upright heart. Therefore everyone is bound to will what God wills.

(2) Moreover, the will takes its form from the object, as does every act. If therefore man is bound to conform his will to the Divine will, it follows that he is bound to conform it, as to the thing willed.

(3) Moreover, opposition of wills arises from men willing different things. But whoever has a will in opposition to the Divine will, has an evil will. Therefore whoever does not conform his will to the Divine will, as to the thing willed, has an evil will.

I answer that, As is evident from what has been said above ([Articles \[3\],5](#)), the will tends to its object, according as it is proposed by the reason. Now a thing may be considered in various ways by the reason, so as to appear good from one point of view, and not good from another point of view. And therefore if a man's will wills a thing to be, according as it appears to be good, his will is good: and the will of another man, who wills that thing not to be, according as it appears evil, is also good. Thus a judge has a good will, in willing a thief to be put to death, because this is just: while the will of another---e.g. the thief's wife or son, who wishes him not to be put to death, inasmuch as killing is a natural evil, is also good.

Now since the will follows the apprehension of the reason or intellect; the more universal the aspect of the apprehended good, the more universal the good to which the will tends. This is evident in the example given above: because the judge has care of the common good, which is

the common estate; whereas the thief's wife has to consider the private, the good of the family, and from this point of view she wishes her husband, the thief, not to be put to death. Now the good of the whole universe is that which is apprehended by God, Who is the Maker and Governor of all things: hence whatever He wills, He wills it under the aspect of the common good; this is His own Goodness, which is the good of the whole universe. On the other hand, the apprehension of a creature, according to its nature, is of some particular good, proportionate to that nature. Now a thing may happen to be good under a particular aspect, and yet not good under a universal aspect, or vice versa, as stated above. And therefore it comes to pass that a certain will is good from willing something considered under a particular aspect, which thing God wills not, under a universal aspect, and vice versa. And hence too it is, that various wills of various men can be good in respect of opposite things, for as much as, under various aspects, they wish a particular thing to be or not to be.

But a man's will is not right in willing a particular good, unless he refer it to the common good as an end: since even the natural appetite of each part is ordained to the common good of the whole. Now it is the end that supplies the formal reason, as it were, of willing whatever is directed to the end. Consequently, in order that a man will some particular good with a right will, he must will that particular good materially, and the Divine and universal good, formally. Therefore the human will is bound to be conformed to the Divine will, as to that which is willed formally, for it is bound to will the Divine and universal good; but not as to that which is willed materially, for the reason given above.

At the same time in both these respects, the human will is conformed to the Divine, in a certain degree. Because inasmuch as it is conformed to the Divine will in the common aspect of the thing willed, it is conformed thereto in the point of the last end. While, inasmuch as it is not conformed to the Divine will in the thing willed materially, it is conformed to that will considered as efficient cause; since the proper inclination consequent to nature, or to the particular apprehension of some particular thing, comes to a thing from God as its efficient cause. Hence it is customary to say that a man's will, in this respect, is conformed to the Divine will, because it wills what God wishes him to will.

There is yet another kind of conformity in respect of the formal cause, consisting in man's willing something from charity, as God wills it. And this conformity is also reduced to the formal conformity, that is in respect of the last end, which is the proper object of charity.

Reply to Objection 1: We can know in a general way what God wills. For we know that whatever God wills, He wills it under the aspect of good. Consequently whoever wills a thing under any aspect of good, has a will conformed to the Divine will, as to the reason of the thing willed. But we know not what God wills in particular: and in this respect we are not bound to conform our will to the Divine will.

But in the state of glory, every one will see in each thing that he wills, the relation of that thing to what God wills in that particular matter. Consequently he will conform his will to God in all things not only formally, but also materially.

Reply to Objection 2: God does not will the damnation of a man, considered precisely as damnation, nor a man's death, considered precisely as death, because, "He wills all men to be saved" ([1 Tim. 2:4](#)); but He wills such things under the aspect of justice. Wherefore in regard to such things it suffices for man to will the upholding of God's justice and of the natural order.

Wherefore the reply to the Third Objection is evident.

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his will to God's, in the aspect of reason of the thing willed, wills what God wills, more than the man, who conforms his will to God's, in the point of the very thing willed; because the will tends more to the end, than to that which is on account of the end.

To the second, it must be replied that the species and form of an act are taken from the object considered formally, rather than from the object considered materially.

To the third, it must be said that there is no opposition of wills when several people desire different things, but not under the same aspect: but there is opposition of wills, when under one and the same aspect, one man wills a thing which another wills not. But there is no question of this here.