

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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OF THE FRIENDLINESS WHICH IS CALLED AFFABILITY (TWO ARTICLES)

We must now consider the friendliness which is called affability, and the opposite vices which are flattery and quarreling. Concerning friendliness or affability, there are two points of inquiry:

(1) Whether it is a special virtue?

(2) Whether it is a part of justice?

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Whether friendliness is a special virtue?

Objection 1: It seems that friendliness is not a special virtue. For the Philosopher says (Ethic. viii, 3) that "the perfect friendship is that which is on account of virtue." Now any virtue is the cause of friendship: "since the good is lovable to all," as Dionysius states (Div. Nom. iv). Therefore friendliness is not a special virtue, but a consequence of every virtue.

Objection 2: Further, the Philosopher says (Ethic. iv, 6) of this kind of friend that he "takes everything in a right manner both from those he loves and from those who are not his friends." Now it seems to pertain to simulation that a person should show signs of friendship to those whom he loves not, and this is incompatible with virtue. Therefore this kind of friendliness is not a virtue.

Objection 3: Further, virtue "observes the mean according as a wise man decides" (Ethic. ii, 6). Now it is written ([Eccles. 7:5](#)): "The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and the heart

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pleasure" (Ethic. ii, 9). Now this kind of friendship, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. iv, 6),
"is essentially desirous of sharing pleasures, but fears to give pain." Therefore this kind of
friendliness is not a virtue.

On the contrary, The precepts of the law are about acts of virtue. Now it is written (Ecclus. 4:7): "Make thyself affable to the congregation of the poor." Therefore affability, which is what we mean by friendship, is a special virtue.

I answer that, As stated above ([Question \[109\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#); [FS](#), [Question \[55\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)), since virtue is directed to good, wherever there is a special kind of good, there must needs be a special kind of virtue. Now good consists in order, as stated above ([Question \[109\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#)). And it behooves man to be maintained in a becoming order towards other men as regards their mutual relations with one another, in point of both deeds and words, so that they behave towards one another in a becoming manner. Hence the need of a special virtue that maintains the becomingness of this order: and this virtue is called friendliness.

Reply to Objection 1: The Philosopher speaks of a twofold friendship in his Ethics. One consists chiefly in the affection whereby one man loves another and may result from any virtue. We have stated above, in treating of charity ([Question \[23\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#), ad 1; [Questions \[25\]](#), 26), what things belong to this kind of friendship. But he mentions another friendliness, which consists merely in outward words or deeds; this has not the perfect nature of friendship, but bears a certain likeness thereto, in so far as a man behaves in a becoming manner towards those with whom he is in contact.

Reply to Objection 2: Every man is naturally every man's friend by a certain general love; even so it is written (Ecclus. 13:19) that "every beast loveth its like." This love is signified by signs of friendship, which we show outwardly by words or deeds, even to those who are strangers or unknown to us. Hence there is no dissimulation in this: because we do not show them signs of perfect friendship, for we do not treat strangers with the same intimacy as those who are united to us by special friendship.

Reply to Objection 3: When it is said that "the heart of the wise is where there is mourning" it is not that he may bring sorrow to his neighbor, for the Apostle says ([Rm. 14:15](#)): "If, because of thy meat, thy brother be grieved, thou walkest not now according to charity": but that he may bring consolation to the sorrowful, according to Ecclus. 7:38, "Be not wanting in comforting them that weep, and walk with them that mourn." Again, "the heart of fools is where there is mirth," not that they may gladden others, but that they may enjoy others' gladness. Accordingly, it belongs to the wise man to share his pleasures with those among whom he dwells, not lustful pleasures, which virtue shuns, but honest pleasures, according to Ps. 132:1, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Nevertheless, as the Philosopher says (Ethic. iv, 6), for the sake of some good that will result, or in order to avoid some evil, the virtuous man will sometimes not shrink from bringing sorrow to those among whom he lives. Hence the Apostle says ([2 Cor. 7:8](#)): "Although I made you sorrowful by my epistle, I do not repent," and further on ([2 Cor. 7:9](#)), "I am glad; not because you were made sorrowful, but because you were made sorrowful unto repentance." For this reason we should not show a cheerful face to those who are given to sin, in order that we may please them, lest we seem to consent to their sin, and in a way encourage them to sin further. Hence it is written (Ecclus. 7:26): "Hast thou daughters? Have a care of their body, and show not thy countenance gay towards them."

Whether this kind of friendship is a part of justice?

Objection 1: It seems that this kind of friendship is not a part of justice. For justice consists in giving another man his due. But this virtue does not consist in doing that, but in behaving agreeably towards those among whom we live. Therefore this virtue is not a part of justice.

Objection 2: Further, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. iv, 6), this virtue is concerned about the joys and sorrows of those who dwell in fellowship. Now it belongs to temperance to moderate the greatest pleasures, as stated above ([FS, Question \[60\]](#), [Article \[5\]](#); [FS, Question \[61\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#)). Therefore this virtue is a part of temperance rather than of justice.

Objection 3: Further, to give equal things to those who are unequal is contrary to justice, as stated above ([Question \[59\]](#), [Articles \[1\]](#), 2). Now, according to the Philosopher (Ethic. iv, 6), this virtue "treats in like manner known and unknown, companions and strangers." Therefore this virtue rather than being a part of justice is opposed thereto.

On the contrary, Macrobius (De Somno Scip. i) accounts friendship a part of justice.

I answer that, This virtue is a part of justice, being annexed to it as to a principal virtue. Because in common with justice it is directed to another person, even as justice is: yet it falls short of the notion of justice, because it lacks the full aspect of debt, whereby one man is bound to another, either by legal debt, which the law binds him to pay, or by some debt arising out of a favor received. For it regards merely a certain debt of equity, namely, that we behave pleasantly to those among whom we dwell, unless at times, for some reason, it be necessary to displease them for some good purpose.

Reply to Objection 1: As we have said above ([Question \[109\]](#), [Article \[3\]](#), ad 1), because man is a social animal he owes his fellow-man, in equity, the manifestation of truth without which human society could not last. Now as man could not live in society without truth, so likewise, not without joy, because, as the Philosopher says (Ethic. viii), no one could abide a day with the sad nor with the joyless. Therefore, a certain natural equity obliges a man to live agreeably with his fellow-men; unless some reason should oblige him to sadden them for their good.

Reply to Objection 2: It belongs to temperance to curb pleasures of the senses. But this virtue regards the pleasures of fellowship, which have their origin in the reason, in so far as one man behaves becomingly towards another. Such pleasures need not to be curbed as though they were noisome.

Reply to Objection 3: This saying of the Philosopher does not mean that one ought to converse and behave in the same way with acquaintances and strangers, since, as he says (Ethic. iv, 6), "it is not fitting to please and displease intimate friends and strangers in the same way." This likeness consists in this, that we ought to behave towards all in a fitting manner.

