

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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OF PRIDE (EIGHT ARTICLES)

We must next consider pride, and (1) pride in general; (2) the first man's sin, which we hold to have been pride. Under the first head there are eight points of inquiry:

- [\(1\)](#) Whether pride is a sin?
 - [\(2\)](#) Whether it is a special vice?
 - [\(3\)](#) Wherein does it reside as in its subject?
 - [\(4\)](#) Of its species;
 - [\(5\)](#) Whether it is a mortal sin?
 - [\(6\)](#) Whether it is the most grievous of all sins?
 - [\(7\)](#) Of its relation to other sins;
 - [\(8\)](#) Whether it should be reckoned a capital vice?
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Whether pride is a sin?

Objection 1: It would seem that pride is not a sin. For no sin is the object of God's promise. For God's promises refer to what He will do; and He is not the author of sin. Now pride is

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everlasting pride [Douay: 'glory'], a joy unto generation and generation." Therefore pride is not a sin.

Objection 2: Further, it is not a sin to wish to be like unto God: for every creature has a natural desire for this; and especially does this become the rational creature which is made to God's image and likeness. Now it is said in Prosper's Lib. Sent. 294, that "pride is love of one's own excellence, whereby one is likened to God who is supremely excellent." Hence Augustine says (Confess. ii, 6): "Pride imitates exaltedness; whereas Thou alone art God exalted over all." Therefore pride is not a sin.

Objection 3: Further, a sin is opposed not only to a virtue but also to a contrary vice, as the Philosopher states (Ethic. ii, 8). But no vice is found to be opposed to pride. Therefore pride is not a sin.

On the contrary, It is written (Tobias 4:14): "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words."

I answer that, Pride [superbia] is so called because a man thereby aims higher [supra] than he is; wherefore Isidore says (Etym. x): "A man is said to be proud, because he wishes to appear above (super) what he really is"; for he who wishes to overstep beyond what he is, is proud. Now right reason requires that every man's will should tend to that which is proportionate to him. Therefore it is evident that pride denotes something opposed to right reason, and this shows it to have the character of sin, because according to Dionysius (Div. Nom. iv, 4), "the soul's evil is to be opposed to reason." Therefore it is evident that pride is a sin.

Reply to Objection 1: Pride [superbia] may be understood in two ways. First, as overpassing [supergreditur] the rule of reason, and in this sense we say that it is a sin. Secondly, it may simply denominate "super-abundance"; in which sense any super-abundant thing may be called pride: and it is thus that God promises pride as significant of super-abundant good. Hence a gloss of Jerome on the same passage ([Is. 61:6](#)) says that "there is a good and an evil pride"; or "a sinful pride which God resists, and a pride that denotes the glory which He bestows."

It may also be replied that pride there signifies abundance of those things in which men may take pride.

Reply to Objection 2: Reason has the direction of those things for which man has a natural appetite; so that if the appetite wander from the rule of reason, whether by excess or by default, it will be sinful, as is the case with the appetite for food which man desires naturally. Now pride is the appetite for excellence in excess of right reason. Wherefore Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 13) that pride is the "desire for inordinate exaltation": and hence it is that, as he asserts (De Civ. Dei xiv, 13; xix, 12), "pride imitates God inordinately: for it hath equality of fellowship under Him, and wishes to usurp His dominion over our fellow-creatures."

Reply to Objection 3: Pride is directly opposed to the virtue of humility, which, in a way, is concerned about the same matter as magnanimity, as stated above ([Question \[161\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#), ad 3). Hence the vice opposed to pride by default is akin to the vice of pusillanimity, which is opposed by default to magnanimity. For just as it belongs to magnanimity to urge the mind to great things against despair, so it belongs to humility to withdraw the mind from the inordinate desire of great things against presumption. Now pusillanimity, if we take it for a deficiency in pursuing great things, is properly opposed to magnanimity by default; but if we

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Whether pride is a special sin?

Objection 1: It would seem that pride is not a special sin. For Augustine says (De Nat. et Grat. xxix) that "you will find no sin that is not labelled pride"; and Prosper says (De Vita Contempl. iii, 2) that "without pride no sin is, or was, or ever will be possible." Therefore pride is a general sin.

Objection 2: Further, a gloss on Job 33:17, "That He may withdraw man from wickedness [*Vulg.: 'From the things that he is doing, and may deliver him from pride']," says that "a man prides himself when he transgresses His commandments by sin." Now according to Ambrose [*De Parad. viii], "every sin is a transgression of the Divine law, and a disobedience of the heavenly commandments." Therefore every sin is pride.

Objection 3: Further, every special sin is opposed to a special virtue. But pride is opposed to all the virtues, for Gregory says (Moral. xxxiv, 23): "Pride is by no means content with the destruction of one virtue; it raises itself up against all the powers of the soul, and like an all-pervading and poisonous disease corrupts the whole body"; and Isidore says (Etym. [*De Summo Bono ii, 38]) that it is "the downfall of all virtues." Therefore pride is not a special sin.

Objection 4: Further, every special sin has a special matter. Now pride has a general matter, for Gregory says (Moral. xxxiv, 23) that "one man is proud of his gold, another of his eloquence: one is elated by mean and earthly things, another by sublime and heavenly virtues." Therefore pride is not a special but a general sin.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Nat. et Grat. xxix): "If he look into the question carefully, he will find that, according to God's law, pride is a very different sin from other vices." Now the genus is not different from its species. Therefore pride is not a general but a special sin.

I answer that, The sin of pride may be considered in two ways. First with regard to its proper species, which it has under the aspect of its proper object. In this way pride is a special sin, because it has a special object: for it is inordinate desire of one's own excellence, as stated ([Article \[1\]](#), ad 2). Secondly, it may be considered as having a certain influence towards other sins. In this way it has somewhat of a generic character, inasmuch as all sins may arise from pride, in two ways. First directly, through other sins being directed to the end of pride which is one's own excellence, to which may be directed anything that is inordinately desired. Secondly,

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man despise the Divine law which hinders him from sinning, according to Jer. 2:20, "Thou hast broken My yoke, thou hast burst My bands, and thou saidst: I will not serve."

It must, however, be observed that this generic character of pride admits of the possibility of all vices arising from pride sometimes, but it does not imply that all vices originate from pride always. For though one may break the commandments of the Law by any kind of sin, through contempt which pertains to pride, yet one does not always break the Divine commandments through contempt, but sometimes through ignorance. and sometimes through weakness: and for this reason Augustine says (De Nat. et Grat. xxix) that "many things are done amiss which are not done through pride."

Reply to Objection 1: These words are introduced by Augustine into his book De Nat. et Grat., not as being his own, but as those of someone with whom he is arguing. Hence he subsequently disproves the assertion, and shows that not all sins are committed through pride. We might, however, reply that these authorities must be understood as referring to the outward effect of pride, namely the breaking of the commandments, which applies to every sin, and not to the inward act of pride, namely contempt of the commandment. For sin is committed, not always through contempt, but sometimes through ignorance, sometimes through weakness, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 2: A man may sometimes commit a sin effectively, but not affectively; thus he who, in ignorance, slays his father, is a parricide effectively, but not affectively, since he did not intend it. Accordingly he who breaks God's commandment is said to pride himself against God, effectively always, but not always affectively.

Reply to Objection 3: A sin may destroy a virtue in two ways. In one way by direct contrariety to a virtue, and thus pride does not corrupt every virtue, but only humility; even as every special sin destroys the special virtue opposed to it, by acting counter thereto. In another way a sin destroys a virtue, by making ill use of that virtue: and thus pride destroys every virtue, in so far as it finds an occasion of pride in every virtue, just as in everything else pertaining to excellence. Hence it does not follow that it is a general sin.

Reply to Objection 4: Pride regards a special aspect in its object, which aspect may be found in various matters: for it is inordinate love of one's excellence, and excellence may be found in various things.

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Whether the subject of pride is the irascible faculty?

Objection 1: It would seem that the subject of pride is not the irascible faculty. For Gregory says (Moral. xxiii, 17): "A swollen mind is an obstacle to truth, for the swelling shuts out the light." Now the knowledge of truth pertains, not to the irascible but to the rational faculty. Therefore pride is not in the irascible.

conduct not so as to set themselves beneath them with humility, but so as to set themselves above them with pride": wherefore it would seem that pride originates in undue observation. Now observation pertains not to the irascible but to the rational faculty.

Objection 3: Further, pride seeks pre-eminence not only in sensible things, but also in spiritual and intelligible things: while it consists essentially in the contempt of God, according to Ecclus. 10:14, "The beginning of the pride of man is to fall off from God." Now the irascible, since it is a part of the sensitive appetite, cannot extend to God and things intelligible. Therefore pride cannot be in the irascible.

Objection 4: Further, as stated in Prosper's Liber Sententiarum, sent. 294, "Pride is love of one's own excellence." But love is not in the irascible, but in the concupiscible. Therefore pride is not in the irascible.

On the contrary, Gregory (Moral. ii, 49) opposes pride to the gift of fear. Now fear belongs to the irascible. Therefore pride is in the irascible.

I answer that, The subject of any virtue or vice is to be ascertained from its proper object: for the object of a habit or act cannot be other than the object of the power, which is the subject of both. Now the proper object of pride is something difficult, for pride is the desire of one's own excellence, as stated above ([Articles \[1\],2](#)). Wherefore pride must needs pertain in some way to the irascible faculty. Now the irascible may be taken in two ways. First in a strict sense, and thus it is a part of the sensitive appetite, even as anger, strictly speaking, is a passion of the sensitive appetite. Secondly, the irascible may be taken in a broader sense, so as to belong also to the intellective appetite, to which also anger is sometimes ascribed. It is thus that we attribute anger to God and the angels, not as a passion, but as denoting the sentence of justice pronouncing judgment. Nevertheless the irascible understood in this broad sense is not distinct from the concupiscible power, as stated above in the FP, Question [59], Article [4]; FS, Question [82], Article [5], ad 1 and 2.

Consequently if the difficult thing which is the object of pride, were merely some sensible object, whereto the sensitive appetite might tend, pride would have to be in the irascible which is part of the sensitive appetite. But since the difficult thing which pride has in view is common both to sensible and to spiritual things, we must needs say that the subject of pride is the irascible not only strictly so called, as a part of the sensitive appetite, but also in its wider acceptation, as applicable to the intellective appetite. Wherefore pride is ascribed also to the demons.

Reply to Objection 1: Knowledge of truth is twofold. One is purely speculative, and pride hinders this indirectly by removing its cause. For the proud man subjects not his intellect to God, that he may receive the knowledge of truth from Him, according to Mt. 11:25, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent," i.e. from the proud, who are wise and prudent in their own eyes, "and hast revealed them to little ones," i.e. to the humble.

Nor does he deign to learn anything from man, whereas it is written (Ecclus. 6:34): "If thou wilt incline thy ear, thou shalt receive instruction." The other knowledge of truth is affective, and this is directly hindered by pride, because the proud, through delighting in their own excellence, disdain the excellence of truth; thus Gregory says (Moral. xxiii, 17) that "the proud, although certain hidden truths be conveyed to their understanding, cannot realize their sweetness: and if they know of them they cannot relish them." Hence it is written ([Prov. 11:2](#)): "Where humility is there also is wisdom."

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rule of right reason whereby a man has true self-esteem. Now pride does not observe this rule of right reason, for he esteems himself greater than he is: and this is the outcome of an inordinate desire for his own excellence, since a man is ready to believe what he desires very much, the result being that his appetite is borne towards things higher than what become him. Consequently whatsoever things lead a man to inordinate self-esteem lead him to pride: and one of those is the observing of other people's failings, just as, on the other hand, in the words of Gregory (Moral. xxiii, 17), "holy men, by a like observation of other people's virtues, set others above themselves." Accordingly the conclusion is not that pride is in the rational faculty, but that one of its causes is in the reason.

Reply to Objection 3: Pride is in the irascible, not only as a part of the sensitive appetite, but also as having a more general signification, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 4: According to Augustine (De Civ. Dei xiv, 7,9), "love precedes all other emotions of the soul, and is their cause," wherefore it may be employed to denote any of the other emotions. It is in this sense that pride is said to be "love of one's own excellence," inasmuch as love makes a man presume inordinately on his superiority over others, and this belongs properly to pride.

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Whether the four species of pride are fittingly assigned by Gregory?

Objection 1: It seems that the four species of pride are unfittingly assigned by Gregory, who says (Moral. xxiii, 6): "There are four marks by which every kind of pride of the arrogant betrays itself; either when they think that their good is from themselves, or if they believe it to be from above, yet they think that it is due to their own merits; or when they boast of having what they have not, or despise others and wish to appear the exclusive possessors of what they have." For pride is a vice distinct from unbelief, just as humility is a distinct virtue from faith. Now it pertains to unbelief, if a man deem that he has not received his good from God, or that he has the good of grace through his own merits. Therefore this should not be reckoned a species of pride.

Objection 2: Further, the same thing should not be reckoned a species of different genera. Now boasting is reckoned a species of lying, as stated above ([Question \[110\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#); [Question \[112\]](#)). Therefore it should not be accounted a species of pride.

Objection 3: Further, some other things apparently pertain to pride, which are not mentioned here. For Jerome [*Reference unknown] says that "nothing is so indicative of pride as to show oneself ungrateful": and Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 14) that "it belongs to pride to excuse oneself of a sin one has committed." Again, presumption whereby one aims at having what is above one, would seem to have much to do with pride. Therefore the aforesaid division does not sufficiently account for the different species of pride.

[Donate bitcoin.](#) St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [SS](#) » [SS162.html](#)i, seqq.] divides the uplifting of pride, saying that there is "pride of will, pride of speech, and pride of deed." Bernard [*De Grad. Humil. et Superb. x, seqq.] also reckons twelve degrees of pride, namely "curiosity, frivolity of mind, senseless mirth, boasting, singularity, arrogance, presumption, defense of one's sins, deceitful confession, rebelliousness, license, sinful habit." Now these apparently are not comprised under the species mentioned by Gregory. Therefore the latter would seem to be assigned unfittingly.

On the contrary, The authority of Gregory suffices.

I answer that, As stated above ([Articles \[1\],2,3](#)), pride denotes immoderate desire of one's own excellence, a desire, to wit, that is not in accord with right reason. Now it must be observed that all excellence results from a good possessed. Such a good may be considered in three ways. First, in itself. For it is evident that the greater the good that one has, the greater the excellence that one derives from it. Hence when a man ascribes to himself a good greater than what he has, it follows that his appetite tends to his own excellence in a measure exceeding his competency: and thus we have the third species of pride, namely "boasting of having what one has not."

Secondly, it may be considered with regard to its cause, in so far as to have a thing of oneself is more excellent than to have it of another. Hence when a man esteems the good he has received of another as though he had it of himself, the result is that his appetite is borne towards his own excellence immoderately. Now one is cause of one's own good in two ways, efficiently and meritoriously: and thus we have the first two species of pride, namely "when a man thinks he has from himself that which he has from God," or "when he believes that which he has received from above to be due to his own merits."

Thirdly, it may be considered with regard to the manner of having it, in so far as a man obtains greater excellence through possessing some good more excellently than other men; the result again being that his appetite is borne inordinately towards his own excellence: and thus we have the fourth species of pride, which is "when a man despises others and wishes to be singularly conspicuous."

Reply to Objection 1: A true judgment may be destroyed in two ways. First, universally: and thus in matters of faith, a true judgment is destroyed by unbelief. Secondly, in some particular matter of choice, and unbelief does not do this. Thus a man who commits fornication, judges that for the time being it is good for him to commit fornication; yet he is not an unbeliever, as he would be, were he to say that universally fornication is good. It is thus in the question in point: for it pertains to unbelief to assert universally that there is a good which is not from God, or that grace is given to men for their merits, whereas, properly speaking, it belongs to pride and not to unbelief, through inordinate desire of one's own excellence, to boast of one's goods as though one had them of oneself, or of one's own merits.

Reply to Objection 2: Boasting is reckoned a species of lying, as regards the outward act whereby a man falsely ascribes to himself what he has not: but as regards the inward arrogance of the heart it is reckoned by Gregory to be a species of pride.

Reply to Objection 3: The ungrateful man ascribes to himself what he has from another: wherefore the first two species of pride pertain to ingratitude. To excuse oneself of a sin one has committed, belongs to the third species, since by so doing a man ascribes to himself the good of innocence which he has not. To aim presumptuously at what is above one, would seem to belong chiefly to the fourth species, which consists in wishing to be preferred to others.

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particular sin: for it begins by being conceived in thought, then is uttered in word, and thirdly is accomplished in deed.

The twelve degrees mentioned by Bernard are reckoned by way of opposition to the twelve degrees of humility, of which we have spoken above ([Question \[161\]](#), [Article \[6\]](#)). For the first degree of humility is to "be humble in heart, and to show it in one's very person, one's eyes fixed on the ground": and to this is opposed "curiosity," which consists in looking around in all directions curiously and inordinately. The second degree of humility is "to speak few and sensible words, and not to be loud of voice": to this is opposed "frivolity of mind," by which a man is proud of speech. The third degree of humility is "not to be easily moved and disposed to laughter," to which is opposed "senseless mirth." The fourth degree of humility is "to maintain silence until one is asked," to which is opposed "boasting". The fifth degree of humility is "to do nothing but to what one is exhorted by the common rule of the monastery," to which is opposed "singularity," whereby a man wishes to seem more holy than others. The sixth degree of humility is "to believe and acknowledge oneself viler than all," to which is opposed "arrogance," whereby a man sets himself above others. The seventh degree of humility is "to think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes," to which is opposed "presumption," whereby a man thinks himself capable of things that are above him. The eighth degree of humility is "to confess one's sins," to which is opposed "defense of one's sins." The ninth degree is "to embrace patience by obeying under difficult and contrary circumstances," to which is opposed "deceitful confession," whereby a man being unwilling to be punished for his sins confesses them deceitfully. The tenth degree of humility is "obedience," to which is opposed "rebelliousness." The eleventh degree of humility is "not to delight in fulfilling one's own desires"; to this is opposed "license," whereby a man delights in doing freely whatever he will. The last degree of humility is "fear of God": to this is opposed "the habit of sinning," which implies contempt of God.

In these twelve degrees not only are the species of pride indicated, but also certain things that precede and follow them, as we have stated above with regard to humility ([Question \[161\]](#), [Article \[6\]](#)).

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Whether pride is a mortal sin?

Objection 1: It would seem that pride is not a mortal sin. For a gloss on Ps. 7:4, "O Lord my God, if I have done this thing," says: "Namely, the universal sin which is pride." Therefore if pride were a mortal sin, so would every sin be.

Objection 2: Further, every mortal sin is contrary to charity. But pride is apparently not contrary to charity, neither as to the love of God, nor as to the love of one's neighbor, because the excellence which, by pride, one desires inordinately, is not always opposed to God's honor, or our neighbor's good. Therefore pride is not a mortal sin.

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on the contrary, it arises therefrom, for as Gregory says (Moral. xxxiv, 23), "sometimes a man is
elated by sublime and heavenly virtues." Therefore pride is not a mortal sin.

On the contrary, Gregory says (Moral. xxxiv, 23) that "pride is a most evident sign of the
reprobate, and contrariwise, humility of the elect." But men do not become reprobate on
account of venial sins. Therefore pride is not a venial but a mortal sin.

I answer that, Pride is opposed to humility. Now humility properly regards the subjection of
man to God, as stated above ([Question \[161\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#), ad 5). Hence pride properly regards
lack of this subjection, in so far as a man raises himself above that which is appointed to him
according to the Divine rule or measure, against the saying of the Apostle ([2 Cor. 10:13](#)), "But
we will not glory beyond our measure; but according to the measure of the rule which God
hath measured to us." Wherefore it is written (Ecclus. 10:14): "The beginning of the pride of
man is to fall off from God" because, to wit, the root of pride is found to consist in man not
being, in some way, subject to God and His rule. Now it is evident that not to be subject to God
is of its very nature a mortal sin, for this consists in turning away from God: and consequently
pride is, of its genus, a mortal sin. Nevertheless just as in other sins which are mortal by their
genus (for instance fornication and adultery) there are certain motions that are venial by
reason of their imperfection (through forestalling the judgment of reason, and being without
its consent), so too in the matter of pride it happens that certain motions of pride are venial
sins, when reason does not consent to them.

Reply to Objection 1: As stated above ([Article \[2\]](#)) pride is a general sin, not by its essence but
by a kind of influence, in so far as all sins may have their origin in pride. Hence it does not
follow that all sins are mortal, but only such as arise from perfect pride, which we have stated
to be a mortal sin.

Reply to Objection 2: Pride is always contrary to the love of God, inasmuch as the proud man
does not subject himself to the Divine rule as he ought. Sometimes it is also contrary to the love
of our neighbor; when, namely, a man sets himself inordinately above his neighbor: and this
again is a transgression of the Divine rule, which has established order among men, so that
one ought to be subject to another.

Reply to Objection 3: Pride arises from virtue, not as from its direct cause, but as from an
accidental cause, in so far as a man makes a virtue an occasion for pride. And nothing
prevents one contrary from being the accidental cause of another, as stated in Phys. viii, 1.
Hence some are even proud of their humility.

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Whether pride is the most grievous of sins?

Objection 1: It would seem that pride is not the most grievous of sins. For the more difficult a
sin is to avoid, the less grievous it would seem to be. Now pride is most difficult to avoid; for

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Objection 2: Further, "The greater evil is opposed to the greater good," as the Philosopher asserts (Ethic. viii, 10). Now humility to which pride is opposed is not the greatest of virtues, as stated above ([Question \[61\]](#), [Article \[5\]](#)). Therefore the vices that are opposed to greater virtues, such as unbelief, despair, hatred of God, murder, and so forth, are more grievous sins than pride.

Objection 3: Further, the greater evil is not punished by a lesser evil. But pride is sometimes punished by other sins according to Rm. 1:28, where it is stated that on account of their pride of heart, men of science were delivered "to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient." Therefore pride is not the most grievous of sins.

On the contrary, A gloss on Ps. 118:51, "The proud did iniquitously," says: "The greatest sin in man is pride."

I answer that, Two things are to be observed in sin, conversion to a mutable good, and this is the material part of sin; and aversion from the immutable good, and this gives sin its formal aspect and complement. Now on the part of the conversion, there is no reason for pride being the greatest of sins, because uplifting which pride covets inordinately, is not essentially most incompatible with the good of virtue. But on the part of the aversion, pride has extreme gravity, because in other sins man turns away from God, either through ignorance or through weakness, or through desire for any other good whatever; whereas pride denotes aversion from God simply through being unwilling to be subject to God and His rule. Hence Boethius [*Cf. Cassian, de Caenob. Inst. xii, 7] says that "while all vices flee from God, pride alone withstands God"; for which reason it is specially stated ([James 4:6](#)) that "God resisteth the proud." Wherefore aversion from God and His commandments, which is a consequence as it were in other sins, belongs to pride by its very nature, for its act is the contempt of God. And since that which belongs to a thing by its nature is always of greater weight than that which belongs to it through something else, it follows that pride is the most grievous of sins by its genus, because it exceeds in aversion which is the formal complement of sin.

Reply to Objection 1: A sin is difficult to avoid in two ways. First, on account of the violence of its onslaught; thus anger is violent in its onslaught on account of its impetuosity; and "still more difficult is it to resist concupiscence, on account of its connaturality," as stated in Ethic. ii, 3,9. A difficulty of this kind in avoiding sin diminishes the gravity of the sin; because a man sins the more grievously, according as he yields to a less impetuous temptation, as Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 12,15).

Secondly, it is difficult to avoid a sin, on account of its being hidden. In this way it is difficult to avoid pride, since it takes occasion even from good deeds, as stated ([Article \[5\]](#), ad 3). Hence Augustine says pointedly that it "lies in wait for good deeds"; and it is written ([Ps. 141:4](#)): "In the way wherein I walked, the proud [*Cf. Ps. 139:6, 'The proud have hidden a net for me.'] [Vulg.: 'they'] have hidden a snare for me." Hence no very great gravity attaches to the movement of pride while creeping in secretly, and before it is discovered by the judgment of reason: but once discovered by reason, it is easily avoided, both by considering one's own infirmity, according to Ecclus. 10:9, "Why is earth and ashes proud?" and by considering God's greatness, according to Job 15:13, "Why doth thy spirit swell against God?" as well as by considering the imperfection of the goods on which man prides himself, according to Is. 40:6,

Reply to Objection 2: Opposition between a vice and a virtue is inferred from the object, which is considered on the part of conversion. In this way pride has no claim to be the greatest of sins, as neither has humility to be the greatest of virtues. But it is the greatest on the part of aversion, since it brings greatness upon other sins. For unbelief, by the very fact of its arising out of proud contempt, is rendered more grievous than if it be the outcome of ignorance or weakness. The same applies to despair and the like.

Reply to Objection 3: Just as in syllogisms that lead to an impossible conclusion one is sometimes convinced by being faced with a more evident absurdity, so too, in order to overcome their pride, God punishes certain men by allowing them to fall into sins of the flesh, which though they be less grievous are more evidently shameful. Hence Isidore says (De Summo Bono ii, 38) that "pride is the worst of all vices; whether because it is appropriate to those who are of highest and foremost rank, or because it originates from just and virtuous deeds, so that its guilt is less perceptible. on the other hand, carnal lust is apparent to all, because from the outset it is of a shameful nature: and yet, under God's dispensation, it is less grievous than pride. For he who is in the clutches of pride and feels it not, falls into the lusts of the flesh, that being thus humbled he may rise from his abasement."

From this indeed the gravity of pride is made manifest. For just as a wise physician, in order to cure a worse disease, allows the patient to contract one that is less dangerous, so the sin of pride is shown to be more grievous by the very fact that, as a remedy, God allows men to fall into other sins.

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Whether pride is the first sin of all?

Objection 1: It would seem that pride is not the first sin of all. For the first is maintained in all that follows. Now pride does not accompany all sins, nor is it the origin of all: for Augustine says (De Nat. et Grat. xx) that many things are done "amiss which are not done with pride." Therefore pride is not the first sin of all.

Objection 2: Further, it is written (Ecclus. 10:14) that the "beginning of... pride is to fall off from God." Therefore falling away from God precedes pride.

Objection 3: Further, the order of sins would seem to be according to the order of virtues. Now, not humility but faith is the first of all virtues. Therefore pride is not the first sin of all.

Objection 4: Further, it is written ([2 Tim. 3:13](#)): "Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse"; so that apparently man's beginning of wickedness is not the greatest of sins. But pride is the greatest of sins as stated in the foregoing Article. Therefore pride is not the first sin.

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says (Ethic. iii, 7) that "pride apes fortitude and daring." Therefore the vice of daring precedes the vice of pride.

On the contrary, It is written (Ecclus. 10:15): "Pride is the beginning of all sin."

I answer that, The first thing in every genus is that which is essential. Now it has been stated above ([Article \[6\]](#)) that aversion from God, which is the formal complement of sin, belongs to pride essentially, and to other sins, consequently. Hence it is that pride fulfils the conditions of a first thing, and is "the beginning of all sins," as stated above ([FS, Question \[84\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#)), when we were treating of the causes of sin on the part of the aversion which is the chief part of sin.

Reply to Objection 1: Pride is said to be "the beginning of all sin," not as though every sin originated from pride, but because any kind of sin is naturally liable to arise from pride.

Reply to Objection 2: To fall off from God is said to be the beginning of pride, not as though it were a distinct sin from pride, but as being the first part of pride. For it has been said above ([Article \[5\]](#)) that pride regards chiefly subjection to God which it scorns, and in consequence it scorns to be subject to a creature for God's sake.

Reply to Objection 3: There is no need for the order of virtues to be the same as that of vices. For vice is corruptive of virtue. Now that which is first to be generated is the last to be corrupted. Wherefore as faith is the first of virtues, so unbelief is the last of sins, to which sometimes man is led by other sins. Hence a gloss on Ps. 136:7, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof," says that "by heaping vice upon vice a man will lapse into unbelief," and the Apostle says ([1 Tim. 1:19](#)) that "some rejecting a good conscience have made shipwreck concerning the faith."

Reply to Objection 4: Pride is said to be the most grievous of sins because that which gives sin its gravity is essential to pride. Hence pride is the cause of gravity in other sins. Accordingly previous to pride there may be certain less grievous sins that are committed through ignorance or weakness. But among the grievous sins the first is pride, as the cause whereby other sins are rendered more grievous. And as that which is the first in causing sins is the last in the withdrawal from sin, a gloss on Ps. 18:13, "I shall be cleansed from the greatest sin," says: "Namely from the sin of pride, which is the last in those who return to God, and the first in those who withdraw from God."

Reply to Objection 5: The Philosopher associates pride with feigned fortitude, not that it consists precisely in this, but because man thinks he is more likely to be uplifted before men, if he seem to be daring or brave.

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Whether pride should be reckoned a capital vice?

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[*Comment. in Deut. xvi] and Cassian [*De Inst. Caenob. v, 1: Collat. v, 2] number pride among the capital vices.

Objection 2: Further, pride is apparently the same as vainglory, since both covet excellence. Now vainglory is reckoned a capital vice. Therefore pride also should be reckoned a capital vice.

Objection 3: Further, Augustine says (De Virginit. xxxi) that "pride begets envy, nor is it ever without this companion." Now envy is reckoned a capital vice, as stated above ([Question \[36\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#)). Much more therefore is pride a capital vice.

On the contrary, Gregory (Moral. xxxi, 45) does not include pride among the capital vices.

I answer that, As stated above ([Articles \[2\]](#), 5, ad 1) pride may be considered in two ways; first in itself, as being a special sin; secondly, as having a general influence towards all sins. Now the capital vices are said to be certain special sins from which many kinds of sin arise. Wherefore some, considering pride in the light of a special sin, numbered it together with the other capital vices. But Gregory, taking into consideration its general influence towards all vices, as explained above ([Article \[2\]](#), [Objection \[3\]](#)), did not place it among the capital vices, but held it to be the "queen and mother of all the vices." Hence he says (Moral. xxxi, 45): "Pride, the queen of vices, when it has vanquished and captured the heart, forthwith delivers it into the hands of its lieutenants the seven principal vices, that they may despoil it and produce vices of all kinds."

This suffices for the Reply to the First Objection.

Reply to Objection 2: Pride is not the same as vainglory, but is the cause thereof: for pride covets excellence inordinately: while vainglory covets the outward show of excellence.

Reply to Objection 3: The fact that envy, which is a capital vice, arises from pride, does not prove that pride is a capital vice, but that it is still more principal than the capital vices themselves.