

## QUESTION 5

### Those Who Have Faith

Next we have to consider those who have faith. And on this topic there are four questions: (1) Did an angel or a man have faith in his original condition? (2) Do the demons have faith? (3) Do heretics who are in error regarding one article of the Faith have faith with respect to the other articles? (4) Among those who have faith, does one have greater faith than another?

#### Article 1

##### In his original condition, did an angel or a man have faith?

It seems that in his original condition an angel or a man did not have faith (*in sua prima conditione fidem non habuerit*):

**Objection 1:** Hugo of St. Victor says, “Since man does not have an eye for contemplation (*oculum contemplationis non habet*), he is unable to see God and the things that exist in God.” But an angel in the state of his original condition, before either his confirmation or his fall, had “an eye for contemplation,” since, as Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 2, he saw things in the Word. And, similarly, in the state of innocence the first man seems to have had an eye open to contemplation (*oculum contemplationis apertum*). For in his *Sentences* Hugo of St. Victor says that in his original state “the man knew his creator not by a cognition that was outwardly perceived through hearing alone, but rather by a cognition that was ministered inwardly through inspiration, not by a cognition of the sort by which God is now sought by believers through faith as One who is absent, but a cognition by which He was discerned clearly through the presentness of contemplation.” Therefore, in the state of his original condition a man or an angel did not have faith.

**Objection 2:** The cognition had by faith is dark and obscure (*aenigmatica et obscura*)—this according to 1 Corinthians 13:13 (“We see now through a glass darkly”). But in the state of the original condition there was no obscurity either in a man or in an angel, since darkness (*tenebrositas*) is a punishment for sin. Therefore, in the state of the original condition faith could not have existed either in a man or in an angel.

**Objection 3:** In Romans 10:17 the Apostle says, “Faith comes from hearing.” But this had no place in the original state of either the angelic condition or the human condition, since there was no such thing as hearing something from another in that state. Therefore, in that state faith did not exist either in a man or in an angel.

**But contrary to this:** In Hebrews 11:6 the Apostle says, “One who approaches God must believe ... .” But in their original condition an angel and a man were in the state of approaching God. Therefore, they needed faith.

**I respond:** Some have claimed that faith did not exist in the angels before their confirmation and fall, or in man before sin, because of the clear contemplation that they had of divine things at that point. But since, according to the Apostle, faith is “the evidence of things that are not apparent,” and since, as Augustine puts it, “It is things that are not seen that are believed through faith,” this clarity, which renders apparent or seen the things that faith is principally about, by itself excludes the character of faith.

However, the principal object of faith is the First Truth, the vision of which beatifies [men and angels] and is the successor of faith (*cuius visio beatos facit et fidei succedit*). Therefore, since an angel before his confirmation, and a man before sin, did not have the beatitude by which God is seen through His essence, it is obvious that they did not have so clear a cognition (*non habuit sic manifestam cognitionem*) that the character of faith was excluded. Hence, unless they were totally ignorant of the things that faith is about, it could not have been the case that they did not have faith.

Again, if, as some claim, a man and an angel were created in a purely natural state (*in puris*

*naturalibus*), then one could perhaps hold that faith did not exist in an angel before his confirmation or in a man before sin, because the cognition that belongs to faith goes beyond the natural cognition of God that belongs not only to a man but even to an angel.

However, since we have already explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 62, a. 3 and q. 95, a. 1) that men and angels were created with the gift of grace, one has to reply that through the grace that was received and not yet consummated [in glory] there existed in them the beginnings of the beatitude which was hoped for and which, as was explained above (q. 4, a. 7), begins in the will through hope and charity, and in the intellect through faith. And so one has to claim that before his confirmation an angel had faith, and that the same thing holds for a man before sin.

Still, notice that in the object of faith there is something *formal*, viz., the First Truth, that lies beyond all of a creature's natural cognition, and something *material*, viz., what we ourselves assent to by adhering to the First Truth. As regards the former, faith is shared in common by everyone who has cognition of God and has not yet attained the future beatitude—and this by virtue of his adhering to the First Truth. However, as regards the things that are proposed to be taken materially on faith, some things are taken on faith by one individual that are known clearly by another—even in our present state, as was explained above (q. 1, a. 5). Accordingly, one can also assert that an angel before his confirmation and a man before sin knew by a clear cognition certain divine mysteries which we are now unable to have cognition of except by taking them on faith.

**Reply to objection 1:** Even though Hugo of St. Victor's words are those of a teacher and do not have the strongest authority (*robur auctoritatis non habeant*), one can nonetheless reply that the sort of contemplation that removes the necessity for faith is the heavenly contemplation (*contemplatio patriae*) by which the supernatural Truth is seen through His essence. But this is not the sort of contemplation that an angel had before his confirmation or that a man had before sin.

Still, their contemplation was higher than ours, and, approaching God more closely through that contemplation, they were able to have clear cognition of more divine effects and mysteries than we are able to. Hence, the faith that existed in them was not a faith by which an absent God was sought in the way that an absent God is sought by us. For He was more present to them through the light of wisdom than He is to us, even though He was not present to them in the way that He is present to the blessed in heaven through the light of glory.

**Reply to objection 2:** In the state of the original condition of a man or an angel there was no obscurity of sin or punishment. Still, there was a certain natural obscurity in the human and angelic intellects, insofar as every creature is darkness in comparison with the immensity of the divine light. This sort of obscurity is sufficient for the character of faith.

**Reply to objection 3:** In the state of the original condition the hearing was not from a man who was speaking to one outwardly; instead, the hearing was of God who was inspiring one interiorly, just as the prophets heard—this according to Psalm 84:9 (“I hear what the Lord God is saying within me”).

## Article 2

### Does faith exist in the demons?

It seems that faith does not exist in the demons:

**Objection 1:** In *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* Augustine says, “Faith exists in the will of believers.” But a will by which one wills to believe God (*credere Deo*) is a good will. Therefore, since, as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 64, a. 2), there is no good and deliberated act of will in the demons, it seems that faith does not exist in the demons.

**Objection 2:** Faith is a gift of God's grace—this according to Ephesians 2:8 (“By grace you have

been saved through faith ... for it is a gift of God”). But the demons lost their gifts of grace through sin, as is explained in a Gloss on Hosea 3:1 (“They look to strange gods, and love the husks of the grapes”). Therefore, faith did not remain in the demons after their sin.

**Objection 3:** As is clear from Augustine’s comments on John 15:22 (“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin”), unbelief (*infidelitas*) seems to be the gravest of sins. But the sin of unbelief exists in certain men. Therefore, if faith existed in the demons, then the sin of certain men would be more grave than the sin of the demons. But this seems absurd. Therefore, faith does not exist in the demons.

**But contrary to this:** James 2:19 says, “The demons believe, and they tremble.”

**I respond:** As has been explained above (q. 1, a. 4, and q. 2, aa. 1 and 9, and q. 4, aa. 1-2), the intellect of one who has faith assents to what he believes not because he sees it, either in itself or by resolving it into first principles that are seen in themselves, but rather because of the will’s command.

Now there are two possible ways in which the will moves the intellect to assent:

(a) from the ordering of the will toward the good, and on this score the act of faith (*credere*) is a praiseworthy act; or

(b) because the intellect is convinced to the point that it judges that what is being said should be believed, even though it is not convinced by the thing’s evidentness. For instance, if a prophet, in preaching the word of God, foretells some future event and performs a sign by raising a dead man, then the intellect of one who sees this is convinced by the sign he knows clearly that what was said was from God, who does not lie—even though the future event that is predicted is not evident in itself, so that the character of faith is not destroyed.

Thus, one should reply that in the case of Christ’s faithful ones, faith is praised in accord with the first way. And faith does not exist in the demons in this way; rather, it exists in them only in the second way. For they see many clear indications on the basis of which they perceive that the Church’s teaching is from God, even though they do not see the things themselves that the Church teaches, e.g., that God is three and one, or other things of this sort.

**Reply to objection 1:** The faith of the demons is in some sense compelled by the evidentness of the signs. And so the fact that they have faith does not make their act of will praiseworthy (*non pertinet ad laudem voluntatis ipsorum quod credunt*).

**Reply to objection 2:** The faith which is a gift of grace inclines a man to believe in accord with some affection for the good, even if the faith is unformed. Hence, the faith which is in the demons is not a gift of grace; rather, the demons are compelled to believe by the perspicacity of their natural intellect.

**Reply to objection 3:** It displeases the demons that the signs of the Faith are so evident that they are compelled to have faith because of them. And so their malice is in no way diminished by the fact that they have faith.

### Article 3

#### Can heretics who disbelieve one article of the faith have unformed faith with respect to the other articles?

It seems that heretics who disbelieve one article of the faith can have unformed faith with respect to the other articles:

**Objection 1:** A heretic’s natural intellect is no more powerful than a Catholic’s intellect. But a Catholic’s intellect needs to be aided by the gift of faith in order for him to take any article whatsoever on faith. Therefore, it seems that the heretic likewise cannot take any article on faith without the gift of unformed faith.

**Objection 2:** Just as many articles of the Faith are contained under faith, so, too, many conclusions are contained under a single science, e.g., geometry. But a man can have scientific knowledge of geometry with respect to some geometrical conclusions while being ignorant of other geometrical conclusions. Therefore, a man can have faith with respect to some articles of the Faith while not believing other articles of the Faith.

**Objection 3:** Just as a man obeys God in believing the articles of the Faith, so, too, he obeys God in fulfilling the commandments of the law. But a man can be obedient with respect to some commandments and not with respect to others. Therefore, he can have faith with respect to some articles and not with respect to others.

**But contrary to this:** Just as a mortal sin is contrary to charity, so, too, to disbelieve a single article is contrary to faith. But charity does not remain in a man after a single mortal sin. Therefore, neither does faith remain in a man once he disbelieves a single article of the Faith.

**I respond:** A heretic who disbelieves a single article of the Faith does not have either the habit of formed faith or the habit of unformed faith.

The reason for this is that the species of any habit depends on the formal character of its object, and when this is removed, the species of the habit cannot remain. Now the formal object of faith is the First Truth insofar as it is manifested in Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Church. Hence, if someone does not adhere to the teaching of the Church as an infallible and divine rule that proceeds from the First Truth manifested in Sacred Scripture, then he does not have the habit of faith; instead, he holds what belongs to the Faith in a way different from holding it by faith. It is as if someone were to mentally hold some conclusion without knowing the middle term of its demonstration; in such a case, it is clear that he has only opinion, and not scientific knowledge, with respect to that conclusion.

By contrast, it is clear that one who adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule assents to everything that the Church teaches. Otherwise, if, among the things that the Church teaches, he holds what he wills to hold and does not hold what he wills not to hold, then he is adhering to his own will and no longer adhering to Church teaching as to an infallible rule. And so it is clear that a heretic who obstinately disbelieves a single article is not prepared to follow the teaching of the Church in all things (for if he did not obstinately disbelieve, he would no longer be a heretic, but just someone with an erroneous belief). Hence, it is clear that someone who is a heretic with respect to one article does not have faith with respect to the other articles, but instead has a certain opinion with respect to the other articles in accord with his own will.

**Reply to objection 1:** A heretic does not hold the other articles, about which he is not in error, in the same way as one of the faithful holds them, viz., by adhering absolutely speaking to the First Truth—and for this a man needs to be aided by the habit of faith. By contrast, the heretic holds what belongs to the Faith by his own will and judgment.

**Reply to objection 2:** In the case of diverse conclusions that belong to a single science, the middle terms through which they are proved are diverse, and one of them can be known without another. And so a man can have scientific knowledge with respect to some of the conclusions of a single science while being ignorant of other conclusions.

By contrast, faith adheres to all the articles because of a single ‘middle term’ (*propter unum medium*), viz., because of the First Truth proposed to us in the Scriptures, which are understood correctly in accord with the teaching of the Church. And this is why anyone who falls away from this middle term lacks faith in its entirety (*qui ab hoc medio decidit totaliter fide caret*).

**Reply to objection 3:** Diverse precepts of the law can be referred either to (a) diverse proximate motives, in which case one can be fulfilled without another, or to (b) the single primary motive (*ad unum motivum primum*), which is to obey God perfectly, and whoever breaks a single commandment falls away from this motive—this according to James 2:10 (“He who offends in one point ... is guilty of all”).

#### Article 4

##### Can faith be greater in one individual than in another?

It seems that faith cannot be greater (*maior*) in one individual than in another:

**Objection 1:** A habit's quantity has to do with its objects. But anyone who has faith believes everything that belongs to the Faith, since, as was explained above (a. 3), whoever falls away from a single article loses faith in its entirety. Therefore, it seems that faith cannot be greater in one individual than in another.

**Objection 2:** What exists at a maximum (*ea quae sunt in summo*) does not admit of more and less. But the character of faith exists at a maximum, since it is required for faith that a man adhere to the First Truth above all things. Therefore, faith does not admit of *more* and *less*.

**Objection 3:** In the realm of grace-filled cognition (*in cognitione gratuita*) faith is like the understanding of principles in the realm of natural cognition; for, as is clear from what has been said (q. 1, a. 7), the articles of faith are the first principles of grace-filled cognition. But the understanding of principles is found equally in all men. Therefore, faith is likewise found equally in all the faithful.

**But contrary to this:** *More* and *less* is found wherever *little* and *great* is found. But *great* and *little* is found in the case of faith. For in Matthew 14:31 our Lord says to Peter, "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And in Matthew 15:28 He says to the woman, "How great your faith is!" Therefore, faith can be greater in one individual than in another.

**I respond:** As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 52, aa. 1-2 and q. 112, a. 4), there are two possible ways to think of the quantity of a habit: (a) on the part of *the habit's object* and (b) as measured by *the subject's participation (secundum participationem subiecti)*. Moreover, there are two possible ways to consider the *object* of faith: (i) in accord with its *formal character* and (ii) in accord with what is proposed *materially* to be taken on faith.

Now as was explained above (q. 1, a. 1), the *formal object* of faith is singular and simple (*unum et simplex*), viz., the First Truth. Hence, as was explained above (q. 4, a. 6), on this score faith is not diversified among believers, but is instead one in species in all believers.

By contrast, there are many things that are proposed *materially* to be taken on faith, and they can be accepted either more or less explicitly. And on this score it is possible for one man to take more things explicitly on faith than another. And so in one individual there can be more faith as far as a greater explicitness of faith is concerned.

On the other hand, if faith is considered in accord with *the subject's participation*, this happens in two ways. For as was explained above (q. 1, aa. 1-2 and q. 4, a. 2), the act of faith proceeds both from the *intellect* and from the *will*.

Thus, in one sense faith can be called greater in someone on the part of the *intellect* because of a greater certitude and firmness, whereas it can be called greater in someone on the part of the *will* because of a greater promptness, i.e., devotion, or confidence.

**Reply to objection 1:** One who obstinately disbelieves something of what is contained under the Faith does not have the habit of faith, and yet the habit of faith is had by someone who does not believe everything explicitly but is prepared to believe everything explicitly. And, as has been explained, on this score one individual has greater faith than another on the part of the object, insofar as he believes more things explicitly.

**Reply to objection 2:** It belongs to the nature of faith that the First Truth should be preferred above all things. Still, among those who do prefer it above all things, some submit themselves to it with more certitude and devotion than do others. And on this score faith is greater in one individual than in another.

**Reply to objection 3:** The understanding of principles follows upon human nature itself, which is

found equally in everyone. By contrast, faith follows upon the gift of grace which, as was explained above (*ST* 1-2 , q. 112, a. 4), does not exist equally in everyone. And yet, because of a greater capacity for understanding, one individual understands the force of the principles more than another.