

## QUESTION 10

### Unbelief in General

Next we have to consider the opposed vices: first, unbelief (*infidelitas*), which is opposed to faith (questions 10-12); second, blasphemy (*blasphemia*), which is opposed to confessing [the Faith] (questions 13-14); and, third, ignorance (*ignorantia*), which is opposed to [the gifts of] knowledge and understanding (question 15).

As regards [unbelief], we have to consider unbelief in general (question 10); second, heresy (*haeresis*) (question 11); and, third, apostasy from the Faith (*apostasias a fide*).

On the first topic there are twelve questions: (1) Is unbelief a sin? (2) In what does unbelief exist as in a subject? (3) Is unbelief the greatest of sins? (4) Is every action of a non-believer a sin? (5) What are the species of unbelief? (6) How are the species of unbelief related to one another? (7) Should one dispute with non-believers about the Faith? (8) Should non-believers be compelled to the Faith? (9) Should [the faithful] commune with non-believers (*utrum sit eis communicandum*)? (10) Can non-believers be in charge of the Christian faithful (*possint Christianis fidelibus praeesse*)? (11) Should the rites of non-believers be tolerated? (12) Should the children of non-believers be baptized against their parents' wishes?

### Article 1

#### Is unbelief a sin?

It seems that unbelief (*infidelitas*) is not a sin:

**Objection 1:** As is clear from Damascene in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2, every sin is contrary to nature. But unbelief does not seem to be contrary to nature; for in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* Augustine says, "The ability to have faith, just as the ability to have charity, belongs to the nature of men, but having faith or having charity belongs to the grace of the faithful." Therefore, not having faith, i.e., being a non-believer, is not a sin.

**Objection 2:** No one sins in what he is unable to avoid, since every sin is voluntary. But it does not lie within a man's power to avoid unbelief, which one cannot avoid except by having faith; for in Romans 10:14 the Apostle says, "How will they believe Him of whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without someone to preach to them?" Therefore, unbelief does not seem to be a sin.

**Objection 3:** As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 84, a. 4), there are seven capital vices to which all sins are traced back. But unbelief does not seem to fall under any of them. Therefore, unbelief is not a sin.

**But contrary to this:** What is contrary to a virtue is a vice. But faith is a virtue, and unbelief is contrary to it. Therefore, unbelief is a sin.

**I respond:** 'Unbelief' can be taken in two ways:

In one way, as a *pure negation*, so that someone is called a non-believer from the mere fact that he does not have faith.

In the second way, unbelief can be understood as *having contrariety with respect to the Faith* (*secundum contrarietatem ad fidem*), viz., because someone refuses to hear about the Faith or even disdains it—this according to Isaiah 53:1 ("Who has believed our report?"). This contrariety is what properly brings the character of unbelief to completion, and it is in this sense that unbelief is a sin.

By contrast, if unbelief is taken as a pure negation, as in the case of those who have never heard of the Faith, then it has the character not of a *sin*, but rather of a *punishment*, since this sort of ignorance of divine things follows from the sin of the first parent. Those who are non-believers in this sense are damned because of other sins, which cannot be remitted without faith, but they are not damned because of the sin of unbelief. Hence, in John 15:22 our Lord says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they

would not have sin.” In commenting on this passage Augustine says, “He is talking about that sin by which they did not believe in the Christ.”

**Reply to objection 1:** Having faith does not belong to human nature (*non est in natura humana*), but it does belong to human nature that a man’s mind should not reject its interior instinct for the truth or the exterior preaching of the truth. Hence, unbelief is in this sense contrary to nature.

**Reply to objection 2:** This argument is talking about unbelief insofar as it implies a simple negation.

**Reply to objection 3:** Insofar as unbelief is a sin, it stems from pride (*superbia*), because of which it happens that a man wills not to subject his intellect to the rules of the faith and the sound understanding that belongs to the Fathers. Hence, in *Moralia* 31 Gregory says, “The presumption that belongs to novelties arises from vainglory.”

However, one could reply that just as the theological virtues are not reduced to the cardinal virtues but are instead prior to them, so, too, the vices opposed to the theological virtues are not reduced to the capital vices.

## Article 2

### Does unbelief exist in the intellect as in a subject?

It seems that unbelief does not exist in the intellect as in a subject:

**Objection 1:** As Augustine says in *De Duabus Animabus*, every sin exists in the will. But as has been explained (a. 1), unbelief is a sin. Therefore, unbelief exists in the will and not in the intellect.

**Objection 2:** Unbelief has the character of a sin from the fact that the preaching of the Faith is disdained (*praedicatio fidei contemnitur*). But disdain (*contemptus*) belongs to the will. Therefore, unbelief exists in the will.

**Objection 3:** A Gloss on 2 Corinthians 11:14 (“Satan transforms himself into an angel of light”) says, “If a bad angel pretends to be good, then even if he is believed to be good, it is not a dangerous or unhealthy error, as long as the angel says and does things that befit a good angel.” The explanation for this seems to be the rectitude of will of the one who clings to him, given that he intends to cling to a good angel. Therefore, the whole sin of unbelief seems to lie in a perverse will. Therefore, unbelief does not exist in the intellect as in a subject.

**But contrary to this:** Contraries exist in the same subject. But faith, which unbelief is contrary to, exists in the intellect as in a subject. Therefore, unbelief likewise exists in the intellect.

**I respond:** As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 74, aa. 1-2), a sin is said to exist in the power that is a principle of the sin. But a sinful act can have two principles:

One is a *first and general principle* (*primum et universale*) that *commands* all sinful acts; and this principle is the *will*, since every sin is voluntary.

The other principle of a sinful act is the *proximate and proper principle* (*proprium et proximum*) that *elicits* the sinful act. For instance, the concupiscible power is the principle of acts of gluttony and lust, and, accordingly, gluttony and lust are said to exist in the concupiscible power.

Now the act of dissenting (*dissentire*), which is the proper act of unbelief, is, like the act of assenting, an act of the intellect but as moved by the will. And so unbelief, like belief, exists in the intellect as in its proximate subject, but in the will as in its first mover (*sicut in primo motivo*). And it is in this sense that every sin exists in the will.

**Reply to objection 1:** This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

**Reply to objection 2:** The will’s disdain causes the intellect’s dissent, in which the character of unbelief is brought to completion. Hence, the cause of unbelief exists in the will, but the unbelief itself

exists in the intellect.

**Reply to objection 3:** One who believes that a bad angel is good does not dissent from what belongs to the Faith. For as a Gloss on that same passage says, “His body’s sensory power makes a mistake, but his mind does not withdraw from a true and correct judgment.”

By contrast, if he were to cling to Satan when he began to be led toward Satan’s own things, i.e., toward what is evil and false, then, as it says in the same place, he would not be lacking in sin.

### Article 3

#### Is unbelief the greatest of sins?

It seems that unbelief is not the greatest of sins (*non sit maximum peccatorum*):

**Objection 1:** Augustine says (and this is contained in *Decretals* 5, q. 1), “I dare not rush to judgment about whether we should prefer a Catholic with very bad morals to a heretic in whose life men find nothing reprehensible beyond the fact that he is a heretic.” But a heretic is a non-believer. Therefore, one should not claim without qualification (*simpliciter*) that unbelief is the greatest of sins.

**Objection 2:** What diminishes or excuses a sin does not seem to be the greatest sin. But unbelief excuses or diminishes a sin; for in 1 Timothy 1:13 the Apostle says, “I was a blasphemer before, and a persecutor and insolent; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Therefore, unbelief is not the greatest sin.

**Objection 3:** A greater sin should deserve a greater punishment—this according to Deuteronomy 25:2 (“According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be”). But the punishment is owed to believers who sin is greater than that owed to non-believers—this according to Hebrews 10:29 (“How much more, do you think, he deserves worse punishments, who has trampled on the Son of God, and has reckoned the blood of the covenant unclean, by which he was sanctified?”). Therefore, unbelief is not the greatest sin.

**But contrary to this:** In commenting on John 15:22 (“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin”) Augustine says, “He means a great sin to be understood here by the general name ‘sin’. For this is a sin [read: unbelief] by which all sins are bound together.” Therefore, unbelief is the greatest of all sins.

**I respond:** As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 71, a. 6), every sin consists formally in a turning away from God (*consistit in aversione a Deo*). Hence, the more a man is separated from God by a given sin, the more grave the sin is.

Now a man is especially (*maxime*) distanced from God by unbelief, since he does not have a true cognition of God, and through his false cognition of Him he is more distanced from Him and does not approach Him. Nor is it possible for one who has a false opinion about God to understand Him in any respect; for what he has an opinion about is not God.

Hence, it is clear that the sin of unbelief is greater than any of the sins that involve moral perversity (*maius omnibus peccatis quae contingunt in perversitate morum*). However, as will be explained below (q. 34, a. 2 and q. 39, a. 2), this does not hold in the case of sins that are opposed to the other theological virtues.

**Reply to objection 1:** Nothing prevents a sin from being more grave in its genus but less grave because of certain circumstances. It is because of this that Augustine does not want to rush to judgment about the bad Catholic and the heretic who does not commit other sins. For even if the heretic’s sin is more grave in its genus, it can nonetheless be extenuated by some circumstance, and, conversely, the Catholic’s sin can be aggravated by some circumstance.

**Reply to objection 2:** Unbelief has both (a) an ignorance conjoined to it and also (b) a resistance

to what belongs to the Faith, and it is on this last score that it has the character of a very grave sin. By contrast, on the part of the ignorance it has the character of an excuse (*habet rationem excusationis*), and especially when, as was the case with the Apostle, one does not sin out of malice.

**Reply to objection 3:** Just considering the genus of the sin, a non-believer is punished more gravely for the sin of unbelief than another sinner is punished for any other sin. However, in the case of some other sin, e.g., adultery, if this sin is committed by a believer and by a non-believer, then, all other things being equal, the believer sins more gravely than does the non-believer, both because of the knowledge of the truth he has from the Faith, and also because of the sacraments of the Faith with which he has been imbued and which he shows contempt for by sinning.

#### Article 4

##### Is every action of a non-believer a sin?

It seems that every action of a non-believer is a sin:

**Objection 1:** A Gloss on Romans 14:23 (“Everything that is not of faith is sin”) says, “The whole life of the non-believer is a sin.” But everything that non-believers do belongs to their life. Therefore, every action of a non-believer is a sin.

**Objection 2:** Faith directs one’s intention. But there cannot be anything good that is not from an upright intention. Therefore, in the case of non-believers, no action can be good.

**Objection 3:** When what is prior is corrupted, what is posterior is corrupted. But the act of faith is prior to the acts of all the virtues. Therefore, since there is no act of faith in non-believers, they cannot do any good work, but instead they sin in each of their acts.

**But contrary to this:** It is said (Acts 10:4) that while Cornelius was still a non-believer, his almsgiving was acceptable to God (*acceptae erant Deo elemosynae eius*). Therefore, not every action of a non-believer is a sin, but some of his actions are good.

**I respond:** As was explained above (ST 1-2, q. 85, aa. 2 and 4), a mortal sin removes sanctifying grace (*tollit gratiam gratum facientem*) but does not totally corrupt the good of the nature. Hence, since unbelief is a mortal sin, non-believers do, to be sure, lack grace, and yet some good of the nature remains in them.

Hence, it is clear that non-believers cannot do good works that stem from grace, i.e., meritorious works, and yet they can in some way do good works for which the good of the nature is sufficient. Thus, it does not have to be the case that they sin in each of their actions; however, whenever they do a work that stems from their unbelief (*ex infidelitate*), then they sin. For just as someone who has faith can sometimes commit a sin in an act which he does not refer to faith as an end—and this by sinning venially or even mortally—so, too, a non-believer can effect a good act in a matter which he does not refer to unbelief as an end.

**Reply to objection 1:** This passage should be taken to mean either that (a) a non-believer’s life cannot be without sin, since sins are not removed without faith, or that (b) whatever non-believers do out of unbelief is a sin. Hence, in the same place this is added: “... since everyone living or acting with unbelief (*infideliter vivens vel agens*) sins grievously.”

**Reply to objection 2:** Faith directs one’s intention with respect to the ultimate supernatural end. But even the light of natural reason can direct one’s intention with respect to some connatural end.

**Reply to objection 3:** Natural reason is not totally corrupted in non-believers in such a way that there remains in them no cognition of the truth by which they are able to do works that are good in their genus.

**Reply to argument for the contrary:** As for Cornelius, note that he was not a non-believer;

otherwise, his act would not have been acceptable to God, whom no one can please without faith. To the contrary, he had implicit faith (*habebat fidem implicitam*) at the time when the truth of the Gospel had not yet been made clear to him. Hence, Peter is sent to him in order to instruct him fully in the Faith.

## Article 5

### Are there several species of unbelief?

It seems that there are not several species of unbelief:

**Objection 1:** Since faith and unbelief are contraries, they must have to do with the same thing. But the formal object of faith is the First Truth, from which faith has its oneness, even though it believes many things materially. Therefore, the object of unbelief is likewise the First Truth, whereas the things that the unbeliever disbelieves are related materially to unbelief. But a specific difference (*differentia secundum speciem*) has to do with formal principles and not with material principles. Therefore, there are not diverse species of unbelief corresponding to the diversity of the things about which non-believers are mistaken.

**Objection 2:** There are infinitely many ways in which someone can deviate from the truth of the Faith. Therefore, if diverse species of unbelief are assigned in a way corresponding to the diversity of the errors, it seems to follow that there are infinitely many species of unbelief. And so species of this sort should not be taken account of.

**Objection 3:** The same being does not exist in diverse species. But it is possible for someone to be a non-believer by being mistaken about diverse things. Therefore, a diversity of errors does not make for diverse species of unbelief. So, then, there are not several species of unbelief.

**But contrary to this:** There are several species of vice opposed to each virtue; for, as is clear from Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4 and from the Philosopher in *Ethics 2*, “Good occurs in one way, whereas evil occurs in many ways.” But faith is a virtue. Therefore, there are several species of unbelief is opposed to it.

**I respond:** As was explained above (*ST 1-2*, q. 64), every virtue consists in being conformed to some rule of human cognition or operation (*consistit in hoc quod attingat regulam aliquam cognitionis vel operationis humanae*). Now there is a single way to be conformed to a rule with respect to a single subject matter, whereas there are many ways in which one can deviate from the rule. And this is why many vices are opposed to a single virtue.

Now there are two possible ways to think of the diversity of the vices that are opposed to each virtue:

In one way, *according to their diverse relations to the virtue*. On this score, there are certain determinate species of vices that are opposed to the virtue, in the way that one vice is opposed to a moral virtue because of excess with respect to the virtue and another vice is opposed by falling short of the virtue.

In the second way, the diversity of vices opposed to a given virtue can be thought of as involving *the corruption of the diverse things that are required for the virtue*. On this score, infinitely many vices are opposed to a single virtue, e.g., temperance or fortitude, since there are infinitely many ways for the diverse circumstances of the virtue to be corrupted in such a way as to recede from the virtue’s rectitude. This is why the Pythagoreans claimed that evil is infinite.

So, then, one should reply that if unbelief is thought of in comparison with faith, then the species of unbelief are diverse and determinate in number. For since the sin of unbelief consists in resisting the Faith (*consistat in renitendo fidei*), there are two ways in which this can happen. For either (a) one resists the Faith when the Faith has not already been accepted, and this is the unbelief of the pagans and

gentiles, or (b) one resists the Christian Faith after it has been accepted either (i) in its prefiguration, and this is the unbelief of the Jews, or (ii) in the very manifestation of the truth, and this is the unbelief of the heretics. Hence, these three species of unbelief can be assigned in general.

On the other hand, if the species of unbelief are distinguished by errors in the diverse matters which pertain to the Faith, then the species of unbelief are not determinate, since, as is clear from Augustine in *De Haeresibus*, the errors can be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

**Reply to objection 1:** There are two possible ways to understand the formal character of a given sin:

In one way, according to *the intention of the sinner*, and in this sense what the sinner is *turning toward* is the formal object of the sin, and its species are differentiated by this.

In the second way, according to *the character of the evil*, and in this sense the good that the sinner is *withdrawing from* is the formal object of the sin. But on this score a sin does not have a species; indeed, this is a privation of a species.

So, then, one should reply that the formal object of unbelief in the sense of that *from which* unbelief is withdrawing is the First Truth. However, its formal object in the sense of that *toward which* it is turning is the false judgment which it follows, and it is on this score that its species are diversified. Hence, just as charity is a single virtue that adheres to the highest good, whereas there are diverse vices opposed to charity, which withdraw from the highest good by turning toward diverse temporal goods and, again, in accord with diverse disordered relations to God, so, too, faith is a single virtue because of which one adheres to the First Truth, but the species of unbelief are many, because non-believers follow diverse false judgments.

**Reply to objection 2:** This objection is talking about the distinction among the species of unbelief that corresponds to the diverse things in which one is mistaken.

**Reply to objection 3:** Just as faith is one because it believes many things in relation to one thing, so unbelief is one even if there are many things in which it errs, insofar as it has a relation to one thing. But nothing prevents a man from erring by diverse species of unbelief, just as it is likewise possible for one man to be subject to diverse vices or diverse corporeal sicknesses.

## Article 6

### Is the unbelief of the gentiles or pagans more grave than the others?

It seems that the unbelief of the gentiles or pagans is more grave than the others:

**Objection 1:** Just as a corporeal sickness is more grave to the extent that it is contrary to the health of a more important bodily member, so a sin seems to be more grave to the extent that it is contrary to what is more important in a virtue. But what is more important in faith is the faith in God's oneness, which the gentiles fall short of because they believe in a multitude of gods. Therefore, their sort of unbelief is the most grave.

**Objection 2:** Among the heretics, the heresy of some is more detestable to the extent that they contradict the truth of the Faith in more ways and in more important ways—in the way that the heresy of Arius, which separated off the divine nature [from Christ], was more detestable than the heresy of Nestorius, which separated off the human nature from the person of the Son of God. But the gentiles recede from the Faith in more ways and in more important ways than do the Jews and the heretics, because the gentiles accept nothing at all of the Faith. Therefore, their unbelief is the most grave.

**Objection 3:** Every good diminishes evil. But there is some good in the Jews, because they confess that the Old Testament is from God; and there is likewise some good in the heretics, because they venerate the New Testament. Therefore, [the Jews and the heretics] sin less than do the gentiles, who

detest both Testaments.

**But contrary to this:** 2 Peter 2:21 says, “It would have been better for them not to know the way of justice, than to turn back after having known it.” But the gentiles did not know the way of justice, whereas the heretics and Jews in some sense deserted it knowingly (*cognoscentes*). Therefore, their sin is the more grave.

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 5), there are two things to consider in unbelief:

One of them is *the relation of unbelief to the Faith*. And on this score someone who resists the Faith which he has already accepted sins more gravely than someone who resists the Faith without ever having accepted it, just as someone who does not fulfill what he has promised sins more gravely than if he does not fulfill what he never promised. Accordingly, the unbelief of heretics, who profess the Faith of the Gospel and resist it by corrupting it, sin more gravely than the Jews, who never accepted the Faith of the Gospel. But because they accepted its prefigurement in the Old Law, which they corrupted by badly interpreting it, it likewise follows that their unbelief is a graver sin than the unbelief of the gentiles, who did not in any way accept the Faith of the Gospel.

The other thing to consider in unbelief is *the corruption of what belongs to the Faith*. And on this score, since the gentiles err in more things than the Jews, and the Jews in more things than the heretics, the unbelief of the gentiles is worse than that of the Jews, and the unbelief of the Jews is worse than that of the heretics—except perhaps of certain heretics, e.g., the Manicheans, who also err with respect to what is to be taken on faith more than the gentiles do.

However, of these two sorts of graveness it is the first that preponderates over the second with respect to the character of guilt. For as was explained above (a. 1), unbelief has the character of a sin more from the fact that it resists the Faith than from the fact that it does not hold what belongs to the Faith. For, as was explained above (a. 1), the latter sort of unbelief seems to have more of the character of a punishment (*hoc videtur magis ad rationem poenae pertinere*); hence, absolutely speaking, the unbelief of the heretics is the worst.

**Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3:** This makes clear the reply to the objections.

## Article 7

### Should one dispute in public with non-believers?

It seems that one should not dispute in public with non-believers:

**Objection 1:** 2 Timothy 2:14 says, “Do not contend with words. For it is of no use except for subverting the listeners.” But one cannot have a public disputation with non-believers without verbal contention. Therefore, one should not dispute in public with non-believers.

**Objection 2:** The law of Marcianus Augustus, confirmed by the canons, says this: “It is an insult to the judgment of the most religious synod, if anyone ventures to debate or dispute in public about matters which have once been judged and rightly disposed.” But everything that belongs to the Faith has been determined by the holy Councils. Therefore, if anyone presumes to dispute in public about the things that belong to the Faith, then he sins gravely by insulting the synod.

**Objection 3:** A dispute is carried on by means of arguments. But an argument is a line of reasoning that effects faith about a doubtful matter. Now since what belongs to the Faith is most certain, it should not be given over to doubt. Therefore, one should not dispute in public about what belongs to the Faith.

**But contrary to this:** Acts 9 says, “Saul grew in strength and confounded the Jews” (9:22) and “He spoke to the gentiles and disputed with the Greeks” (9:29).

**I respond:** In disputing about the Faith, there are two things that should be considered, one on the part of *the one who is disputing* and the other on the part of *those who are listening*.

On the part of *the one who is disputing*, his intention must be considered. For if he is disputing as one who doubts the Faith, and if he is not presupposing the truth of the Faith as something certain but intends to put the Faith to the test with his arguments, then there is no question that he sins as one who is doubtful about the Faith and a non-believer. By contrast, if someone is disputing about the Faith in order to refute errors, or even in order to exercise his faith, then this is praiseworthy.

On the part of *those who are listening*, one has to consider whether those who are listening to a disputation are instructed and firm in the Faith, or whether they are untutored and faltering in their faith (*simplices et in fide titubantes*). There is no danger in disputing about the Faith in the presence of the wise who are firm in their faith. But as regards the untutored, a distinction must be drawn. For either (a) they are being stirred up or pressured by non-believers (*sollicitati sive pulsati ab infidelibus*), e.g., Jews or heretics or pagans, who are trying to corrupt their faith, or (b) they are not in any way being stirred up for this purpose, as in lands in which there are no non-believers. In the first case, it is necessary to dispute in public about the Faith, as long as there are some who are sufficient for this and suited to it and who can refute the errors. For the untutored will thereby be strengthened in their faith, and the ability of the non-believers to deceive them will be undermined; moreover, the very silence of the ones who should be resisting those who subvert the truth of the Faith would be a confirmation of their error. Hence, in *Pastoralis 2* Gregory says, “Just as incautious speech leads to error, so indiscreet silence abandons in error those who could have been instructed.” By contrast, in the second case it is very dangerous to publicly dispute about the Faith in the presence of the untutored, whose faith is more firm because they have heard nothing different from those who believe. And so it is not expeditious for them to hear the words of non-believers who are debating against the Faith.

**Reply to objection 1:** The Apostle is not totally prohibiting disputation; rather, he is prohibiting disordered disputation, which is characterized more by verbal contentiousness than by firmness of judgment (*magis fit contentione verborum quam firmitate sententiae*).

**Reply to objection 2:** The law in question prohibits the sort of public disputation about the Faith which proceeds by putting the Faith in doubt, but not the sort of public disputation which is aimed at conserving the Faith.

**Reply to objection 3:** One should dispute about the things that belong to the Faith not by putting them into doubt, but rather for the sake of manifesting their truth and refuting errors. For in order to confirm the Faith, it is sometimes necessary to dispute with non-believers, in some cases by defending the Faith—this according to 1 Peter 3:15 (“Always be ready to satisfy anyone who asks you the reason for the hope and faith that is in you”)—and in some cases in order to convince those who are in error—this according to Titus 1:9 (“... that he might be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers”).

## Article 8

### Should non-believers be compelled to the Faith?

It seems that non-believers should in no way be compelled to the Faith:

**Objection 1:** In Matthew 13:28-29 the servants of the householder in whose field the weeds had been sown asked him, “Do you want us to go and gather up the weeds?” And he replied, “No, lest in gathering up the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them.” Chrysostom comments on this passage, “Our Lord said this in order to forbid killings from being perpetrated. Neither should you kill heretics, since if you kill them, then many of the saints will necessarily be destroyed along with them.” Therefore, it



seems that, by parity of reasoning, neither should any non-believers be compelled to the Faith.

**Objection 2:** In *Decretals* 45 it says, “Concerning the Jews, the holy synod commands that from now on no one should use force to make them believe.” Therefore, by parity of reasoning, neither should other non-believers be compelled to the Faith.

**Objection 3:** Augustine says that it is possible for an unwilling man to do other things, but that it is impossible for him to have faith unless he wills to. But the will cannot be coerced. Therefore, it seems that non-believers should not be compelled to the Faith.

**Objection 4:** Ezechiel 18:23 says under the personage of God, “I do not wish the death of the sinner.” But as was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 19, aa. 9 and 10), we ought to conform our will to God’s will. Therefore, we likewise should not will that non-believers be killed.

**But contrary to this:** Luke 14:23 says, “Go out into the roads and hedges and compel them to enter, in order that my house might be filled up.” But men enter into the house of God, i.e., into the Church, through faith. Therefore, some should be compelled to the Faith.

**I respond:** There are some, like the gentiles and Jews, who have never accepted the Faith. And such individuals should in no way be compelled to the Faith in order that they might believe, since having faith belongs to the will. However, they should be compelled by the faithful, if it is possible, not to impede the Faith by their blasphemies or evil persuasions or even by open persecutions. And for this reason Christ’s faithful frequently make war against non-believers—not, to be sure, in order to compel them to have faith (since even if they were to conquer them and hold them captive, they would leave it up to their freedom whether they wished to believe), but in order to compel them not to impede the Faith of Christ.

By contrast, there are other non-believers, such as heretics or apostates, who at one time accepted the Faith and professed it. Non-believers such as these should be compelled—even corporeally—to fulfill what they promised and to hold to what they once accepted.

**Reply to objection 1:** As is clear from the quote adduced from Chrysostom, some have interpreted this passage as prohibiting not the excommunication of heretics, but the killing of heretics. And in *Ad Vincentum* Augustine says of himself, “At first it was my view that no one should be forced to be one with Christ, that this should be done with words and fought by means of disputations. However, this opinion of mine is defeated not by the words of those who contradict me, but by the examples of those who convince me. For the fear of laws is so profitable that many say, ‘Thank God, who has broken our chains!’”

Thus, the way in which we should interpret what our Lord said, viz., “Let both grow until the harvest,” is clear from what it is then added, “... lest perhaps in collecting the weeds, they might uproot the wheat along with them.” As Augustine puts it in *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, “These words show clearly that when this sort of fear is not present, i.e., when someone’s crime is so widely known and appears so despicable to everyone that he has no defenders at all or, at least, no defenders by whom a schism might be caused, then severity of discipline should not slacken.”

**Reply to objection 2:** If Jews have in no way accepted the Faith, then they should not be compelled to the Faith. However, if they have accepted the Faith, then they must be forced by necessity to retain the Faith, as is stated in the same chapter.

**Reply to objection 3:** Just as vowing belongs to the will, whereas keeping the vow belongs to necessity, so accepting the Faith belongs to the will, but holding to what has already been accepted belongs to necessity. And so heretics should be compelled to hold the Faith. For in *Ad Bonifacium Comitem* Augustine says, “Where is it that they used to cry out, ‘One is free to believe or not to believe. Whom did Christ compel?’ Let them acknowledge that in the case of Paul, Christ first compelled him and afterwards taught him.”

**Reply to objection 4:** As Augustine says in the same letter, “None of us wishes for a heretic to perish. But David’s house would not have deserved to have peace if his son Absalom had not been

snuffed out in the war that he was waging against his father. So, too, if the Catholic Church gathers some because others perish, she heals the sadness of her maternal heart by the liberation of so many peoples.”

## Article 9

### Is it possible to commune [licitly] with non-believers?

It seems that it is possible to commune [licitly] with non-believers:

**Objection 1:** In 1 Corinthians 10:27 the Apostle says, “If a non-believer invites you to dinner and you are willing to go, eat whatever is set before you.” And Chrysostom says, “We permit you, without any prohibition, to eat with pagans if you wish to go.” But to go to dinner with someone is to commune with him. Therefore, it is permissible to commune with non-believers.

**Objection 2:** 1 Corinthians 5:12 says, “What is it to me to judge those who are outsiders?” But non-believers are outsiders (*foris sunt infideles*). Therefore, since it is through the judgment of the Church that the faithful are kept from communing with given individuals, it seems that the faithful should not be kept from communing with non-believers.

**Objection 3:** A master cannot make use of a servant unless he communes with him at least verbally. But Christians can have non-believing servants, whether Jews or pagans or Muslims (*vel Iudaeos vel etiam paganos vel Sacracenos*). Therefore, they can licitly commune with them.

**But contrary to this:** Deuteronomy 7:2-3 says, “You shall enter into no agreement with them or show mercy to them; nor shall you make marriages with them.” And a Gloss on Leviticus 13:22 (“A woman whose monthly time returns ...”) says, “It is necessary to abstain from idolatry, so that we have no contact with idolaters or their disciples, and have no communion with them.”

**I respond:** There are two ways in which communion with some person is forbidden to the faithful: in one way, as a *punishment* for the one who is cut off from communion with the faithful and, in the second way, as a *precaution* for those who are forbidden from communing with the other. And both of these causes can be taken from the Apostle’s words in 1 Corinthians 5. For after he has pronounced the sentence of excommunication, he adds by way of giving a reason, “Do you not know that a little leaven corrupts the whole mass?” And afterwards he adds a reason for the punishment inflicted by the judgment of the Church, when he says, “Do you not pass judgment on those who are insiders (*qui intus sunt*)?”

Therefore, in the *first* way the Church does not forbid the faithful from having communion with those who have in no way accepted the Christian Faith, viz., pagans or Jews, since it is up to them to judge not by a spiritual judgment, but only by a temporal judgment in cases in which pagans or Jews living among Christians commit some crime and are temporally punished by the faithful. By contrast, in this first way, viz., the one having to do with punishment, the Church forbids the faithful to have communion with those non-believers who have strayed from the Faith after having accepted it, either by corrupting the Faith, as in the case of heretics, or even by totally withdrawing from the Faith, as in the case of apostates. For on both of these sorts of non-believers the Church pronounces the sentence of excommunication.

As for the *second* way, on the other hand, it seems that distinctions have to be drawn according to the different conditions of persons, situations, and times. For instance, if certain of the faithful are firm in the Faith, so that from their communing with non-believers there can be more expectation that the non-believers will be converted than that the faithful will turn away from the Faith, then the faithful should not be prohibited from communing with non-believers who have never accepted the Faith, viz., the pagans and the Jews—especially if there is some urgent necessity. On the other hand, if the faithful in question are simple and weak in their faith, so that their subversion can be feared with some probability, then they should be prohibited from communing with non-believers, and especially from

having any great familiarity with them or communing with them in the absence of necessity.

**Reply to objection 1:** This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

**Reply to objection 2:** The Church does not have judgment over non-believers as regards inflicting spiritual punishments on them. However, it does have judgment over some non-believers as regards inflicting temporal punishments. And in this respect the Church does in some cases, because of certain special sins, remove communion with the faithful from certain non-believers.

**Reply to objection 3:** It is more probable that the servant, who is governed by his master's rule, will be converted to the Faith of a faithful master, than vice versa. And so the faithful are not forbidden to have non-believers as servants.

However, if there is an imminent danger to the master posed by his communion with such a servant, then he ought to let him go—this according to our Lord's command in Matthew 5:30 and 18:8 ("If your foot scandalizes you, then cut it off and cast it from yourself").

**Reply to the argument for the contrary:** The Lord gave this command with respect to those gentiles whose lands the Jews were entering. For the Jews were themselves prone to idolatry, and so it was to be feared that through continuous commerce with the gentiles they would be alienated from the Faith. This is why it is added in the same place (Deuteronomy 7:4), "For she will seduce your son, lest he follow me."

## Article 10

### Can non-believers be in charge of or have dominion over the faithful?

It seems that non-believers can be in charge of or have dominion over the faithful (*possit habere praelationem vel dominium supra fideles*):

**Objection 1:** In 1 Timothy 6:1 the Apostle says, "Whoever are servants under the yoke, let them think of their masters as worthy of all honor," and the fact that he is talking about non-believers is clear from what he adds, "But those who have masters who are believers should not despise them." And 1 Peter 2:18 says, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle ones, but also to the irritable ones." But these commands would not be given by apostolic teaching unless non-believers could be in charge of the faithful. Therefore, it seems that non-believers can be in charge of the faithful.

**Objection 2:** Anyone who belongs to the family of a ruler is subject to him. But some of the faithful belonged to the families of non-believing rulers; hence, Philippians 4:22 says, "All the saints greet you, especially those who belong to the household of Caesar," i.e., Nero, who was a non-believer. Therefore, non-believers can be in charge of the faithful.

**Objection 3:** As the Philosopher says in *Politics* 1, a servant is the instrument of his master in those matters that pertain to human life, in the way that the craftsman's assistant is the craftsman's instrument in matters that pertain to carrying out his craft. But in cases such as the latter, a believer can be subject to a non-believer; for instance, it is possible for believers to farm for non-believers. Therefore, non-believers can have authority over the faithful, even with respect to dominion.

**But contrary to this:** It belongs to the one who is in charge to have judgment over those he is in charge of. But non-believers cannot have judgment over the faithful; for in 1 Corinthians 6:1 the Apostle says, "Do any of you, having a matter against another, dare to be judged before the unjust," i.e. non-believers, "and not before the saints?" Therefore, it seems that non-believers cannot be in charge of the faithful.

**I respond:** With respect to this matter there are two possible ways to speak.

In one way, we can talk about a dominion or authority of non-believers over the faithful *that is*

*going to be instituted de novo.* This should in no way be permitted. For it results in scandal and in danger for the Faith, since those who are subject to the jurisdiction of others can easily be changed by those to whom they are subject so as to follow their rule—unless these subjects have great virtue. Similarly, non-believers despise the Faith if they come to recognize the defects of believers; this is why the Apostle forbade the faithful to contend judicially in front of a non-believing judge. And so the Church does not in any way permit non-believers to acquire dominion over the faithful, or to have authority over them in any official position (*in aliquo officio*).

In the second way, we can talk about an *already existing authority or dominion*. Notice here that the dominion and authority have been introduced by human law, whereas the distinction between the faithful and the non-believers comes from divine law. Now divine law, which stems from grace, does not remove human law, which stems from natural reason. And so the distinction between the faithful and the non-believers, considered in its own right, does not remove the dominion and authority of non-believers over the faithful. Yet through the judgment or ordination of the Church, which has the authority of God, such a law of dominion or authority can be justly removed, since non-believers, by virtue of their unbelief, deserve to lose their power over the faithful, who are transformed into children of God.

However, the Church does this at some times and not at others. For instance, in the case of those non-believers who are subject to the Church and its members by a temporal subjection, the law of the Church has decreed that someone who is a servant of Jews, immediately upon becoming a Christian, is freed from servitude with no recompense paid, if he is a ‘vernaculus’, i.e., someone who was born into servitude or, similarly, if he was bought for service while still a non-believer. However, if he was bought to be sold, then he must be offered for sale within three months. The Church inflicts no injury in this, because, given that the Jews are themselves servants of the Church, the Church can dispose of their belongings, just as secular rulers have likewise issued many laws with respect to their subjects in favor of their freedom. By contrast, in the case of non-believers who are not subject temporally to the Church or its members, the Church has not established the law just mentioned, even though *de iure* she could have established it. And she acts in this way to avoid scandal—just as in Matthew 17:24 our Lord showed that He could have excused Himself from paying the tribute because the children [of the king] go free, but nonetheless commanded that the tribute be paid in order to avoid scandal. So, too, with Paul. After he had said that servants should honor their masters, he added, “... lest the name of the Lord and his teaching should be blasphemed.”

**Reply to objection 1:** This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

**Reply to objection 2:** Caesar’s rule preceded the distinction between the faithful and the non-believers, and so it was not ended by the conversion of some to the Faith. And it was useful for some of the faithful to find a place in the emperor’s family, in order to defend the other faithful, in the way that St. Sebastian strengthened the spirits of the Christians whom he saw to be faltering under torture, even while he was still hiding under his military cloak in the house of Diocletian.

**Reply to objection 3:** Servants are subject to their masters for their whole lives, and they are subject to those who have authority over them with respect to all their dealings. By contrast, the assistants of craftsmen are subject to the craftsmen with respect to certain special actions. Hence, it is more dangerous that non-believers should have dominion or authority over the faithful than it is that they should receive assistance from the faithful in some craft. This is why the Church allows that Christians can cultivate the lands of Jews; for this does not involve the necessity of living with them. As 3 Kings 5:6 reports, Solomon likewise asked the king of Tyre for master workers to cut down trees.

Still, if the subversion of the faithful were feared because of communion or dealings of this sort, it should be altogether forbidden.

## Article 11

### Should the rites of non-believers be tolerated?

It seems that the rites of non-believers should not be tolerated:

**Objection 1:** It is clear that non-believers sin in their rites by observing them. But someone who does not forbid a sin when he is able to forbid it seems to consent to it—as is established in a Gloss on Romans 1:32 (“... not only those who commit [such acts], but also those who consent to those who commit them”). Therefore, those who tolerate their rites commit a sin.

**Objection 2:** The rites of the Jews are comparable to idolatry, since a Gloss on Galatians 5:1 (“Do not be held again under the yoke of servitude”) says, “This servitude of the Law is no lighter than that of idolatry.” But it would not be permissible (*non sustineretur*) for anyone to carry out an idolatrous rite—at the very least, as Augustine reports in *De Civitate Dei* 18, Christian rulers brought about at first the closing of the temples of the idols and afterwards their destruction. Therefore, the rites of the Jews should likewise not be tolerated.

**Objection 3:** As was explained above (a. 3), the sin of unbelief is the gravest of sins. But other sins are not tolerated; rather, adultery, theft and other sins of this sort are punished by law. Therefore, the rites of non-believers should likewise not be tolerated.

**But contrary to this:** Commenting on *Decretals* 45, Canon *Qui sincera*, Gregory says of the Jews, “They should have free license to observe and celebrate all their feasts in the ways in which they worship to this day and in which their fathers worshiped for long ages.”

**I respond:** Human government is derived from divine government and should imitate it. But even though God is almighty and supremely good, He nonetheless permits many bad things to occur in the universe which He could prohibit—lest, if those bad things were suppressed, greater goods should be removed or even worse bad things should follow. As Augustine puts it in *De Ordine* 2, “Remove prostitutes from human affairs, and you will convulse the world with lust.”

So, then, even though non-believers sin in their rites, these rites can be tolerated either for the sake of some good that comes from them or for the sake of some evil that is avoided.

Now the good that comes from the fact that the Jews observe their rites, which in times past prefigured the truth of the Faith that we hold, is that we have testimony for our Faith from our enemies in the sense that what we believe is represented to us in prefiguration. And so the Jews are tolerated in their rites.

As for the rites of other non-believers, which do not involve any truth or usefulness, they should not in any way be tolerated except, perhaps, to avoid something bad—more specifically, to prevent the scandal or discord that might stem from this, or to prevent an obstacle to the salvation of those who might, when thus tolerated, little by little be converted to the Faith. It is for this reason that the Church has at times tolerated the rites even of heretics and pagans, when there was a great number of non-believers.

**Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3:** This makes clear the replies to the objections.

## Article 12

### Should the children of Jews and of other non-believers be baptized against their parents’ wishes?

It seems that the children of Jews and of other non-believers should be baptized against their

parents' wishes (*parentibus invitis*):

**Objection 1:** The marriage bond (*vinculum matrimoniale*) is stronger than the right of a father's power (*ius patriae potestatis*), since the right of a father's power can be set aside by man when a son of the family is declared free and independent (*cum filiusfamilias emancipatur*), whereas the marriage bond cannot be dissolved by man—this according to Matthew 19:6 (“What God has joined together, let no man put asunder”). But the marriage bond is dissolved by unbelief; for in 1 Corinthians 7:15 the Apostle says, “If the non-believer leaves, then let him leave; for a brother or sister is not subject to compulsion in such cases” (*non servituti subiectus*). And a canon says, “If a non-believing spouse, without insult to his creator, does not wish to stay with the other, the other spouse does not have to live with him.” Therefore, *a fortiori*, the right of a father's power over his children is removed because of unbelief. Therefore, the children of non-believers can be baptized against their parents' wishes.

**Objection 2:** One is more bound to aid a man because of the danger of eternal death than because of the danger of temporal death. But if someone were to see a man in danger of temporal death and did not help him, he would sin. Therefore, since the children of the Jews and of other non-believers are in danger of eternal death if they are left to their parents, who form them in unbelief, it seems that they should be carried away and baptized and instructed in the Faith.

**Objection 3:** The children of servants are themselves servants and in the power of the master. But Jews are the servants of the kings and the princes. Therefore, so are their children. Therefore, kings and princes have the power to do what they want to with the children of the Jews. Therefore, there will be no injury or injustice (*nulla erit iniuria*) if they baptize them against their parents' wishes.

**Objection 4:** Each man belongs more to God, from whom he has his soul, than to his carnal father, from whom he has his body. Therefore, it is not unjust if the children of the Jews are taken from their carnal parents and consecrated to God through Baptism.

**Objection 5:** Baptism is more efficacious for salvation than preaching is, since through Baptism the stain of sin and the condition of deserving punishment are immediately removed, and the gate of heaven is opened. But if danger follows from a lack of preaching, it is imputed to the one who did not preach—this according to Ezechiel 3:18 and 33:6, in the passage about the one “who saw the sword coming and did not sound the trumpet.” Therefore, *a fortiori*, if the children of the Jews are damned because of a lack of Baptism, it is imputed as a sin to those who could have baptized them and did not baptize them.

**But contrary to this:** Injury or injustice (*iniuria*) should not be done to anyone. But injustice would be done to the Jews if their children were baptized against their wishes, since they would lose a father's right over his now believing children. Therefore, the children should not be baptized against their parents' wishes.

**I respond:** The Church's custom, which is to be emulated in all cases, has the greatest authority. For the teaching of the Catholic doctors itself has its authority from the Church. Hence, one should abide by the authority of the Church more than by the authority of Augustine or Jerome or any of the doctors. Now it has never been the practice of the Church (*Ecclesiae usus numquam habuit*) to baptize the children of the Jews against the wishes of their parents, even though in past times there have been many powerful Catholic rulers, such as Constantine and Theodosius, with whom very holy bishops were on familiar terms, like Sylvester with Constantine and Ambrose with Theodosius, and even though these bishops would in no way have failed to ask the rulers for this favor if it had been consonant with reason. And so it seems dangerous to introduce the assertion *de novo*, as something that lies outside the custom of the Church observed until now, that the children of the Jews should be baptized against the wishes of the their parents;

There are two reasons for this:

The first is that it is dangerous to the Faith. For if children who do not yet have the use of reason were to receive Baptism, then afterwards, when they had come of age (*ad perfectam aetatem*

*pervenirent*), they could easily be induced by their parents to abandon what they had received in ignorance, and this would be detrimental to the Faith.

The second reason is that [this practice] conflicts with natural justice. For a child naturally belongs to his father. Indeed, at first he is not distinct in body, for as long as he is carried in his mother's womb. But later, after he has left the womb but before he has the use of reason, he is under his parents' care as under a sort of spiritual womb, because as long as a child does not have the use of reason, he does not differ from a non-rational animal. Hence, just as, in accord with civil law, an ox or a horse belongs to someone in the sense that he uses it when he wants to as his own instrument, so, in accord with natural law, a child, before he has the use of reason, is under the care of his father. Hence, it would be contrary to natural justice if, before a child has the use of reason, he were taken away from the care of his parents or something were ordained for him against his parents' wishes. However, after he has begun to have the use of reason, then he begins to belong to himself (*iam incipit esse suus*) and can provide for himself with respect to those things that belong to divine or natural law. And at that time he should be led toward the faith not by coercion, but by persuasion, and he can even consent to the Faith and be baptized against his parents' wishes—though not before he has the use of reason. Hence, it is said of the children of the fathers of old that “they were saved in the faith of their parents”—which means that it belongs to the parents to provide for their children as regards their salvation, especially before they have the use of reason.

**Reply to objection 1:** In the case of the marriage bond both spouses have the use of free choice and each can assent to the Faith against the wishes of the other. But this has no place in the case of a child before he has the use of reason. However, after he has the use of reason, then the parallel holds if he wishes to convert.

**Reply to objection 2:** No one should be snatched from natural death in a way contrary to the order of civil law. For instance, if someone is condemned to temporal death by his judge, then no one should violently snatch him away. Hence, neither should anyone violate the order of the natural law, by which a child is under the care of his father, in order to free him from the danger of eternal death.

**Reply to objection 3:** The Jews are servants of the rulers by a *civil* servitude, but this does not remove the order of *natural law* or *divine law*.

**Reply to objection 4:** A man is ordered toward God by reason, through which he is able to have cognition of Him. Hence, before a child has the use of reason, he is ordered by a natural ordering toward God through the reason of his parents, to whose care he is naturally subject, and it is according to their disposition that divine things are to be done with respect to him.

**Reply to objection 5:** The danger that follows upon neglected preaching threatens only those to whom the role of preaching has been committed. Hence, in Ezechiel it says before this, “I have given you as a watchman to the children of Israel” (3:17). Now it belongs to the parents of the children of non-believers to provide for their children as regards the sacraments of salvation. Hence, the danger threatens the parents, if, because they have withheld the sacraments, their children suffer the loss of salvation.