

Novice Class Module 5

Theme: *The Evangelical Counsels*

Assignment

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* Part II of II, Question 184, Articles 1 to 4; Question 186, Articles 1 to 6; Suppl. 41, 42

Question 184. The state of perfection in general

1. Does perfection bear any relation to charity?
2. Can one be perfect in this life?
3. Does the perfection of this life consist chiefly in observing the counsels or the commandments?
4. Whether whoever is perfect is in the state of perfection?

Article 1. Whether the perfection of the Christian life consists chiefly in charity?

Objection 1. It would seem that the perfection of the [Christian](#) life does not consist chiefly in [charity](#). For the [Apostle](#) says ([1 Corinthians 14:20](#)): "In [malice](#) be children, but in sense be perfect." But [charity](#) regards not the senses but the affections. Therefore it would seem that the perfection of the [Christian](#) life does not chiefly consist in [charity](#).

Objection 2. Further, it is written ([Ephesians 6:1](#))³: "Take unto you the armor of [God](#), that you may be able to resist in the [evil](#) day, and to stand in all things perfect"; and the text continues ([Ephesians 6:1](#))^{4,16}, speaking of the armor of [God](#): "Stand therefore having your loins girt about with [truth](#), and having on the breast-plate of [justice](#) . . . in all things taking the shield of [faith](#)." Therefore the perfection of the [Christian](#) life consists not only in [charity](#), but also in other [virtues](#).

Objection 3. Further, [virtues](#) like other [habits](#), are specified by their acts. Now it is written ([James 1:4](#)) that "patience hath a perfect work." Therefore seemingly the state of perfection consists more specially in patience.

On the contrary, It is written ([Colossians 3:14](#)): "Above all things have [charity](#), which is the bond of perfection," because it binds, as it were, all the other [virtues](#) together in perfect unity.

I answer that, A thing is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection thereof. Now it is [charity](#) that unites us to [God](#), Who is the last end of the [human](#) mind, since "he that abideth in [charity](#) abideth in [God](#), and [God](#) in him" ([1 John 4:16](#)). Therefore the perfection of the [Christian](#) life consists radically in [charity](#).

Reply to Objection 1. The perfection of the [human](#) senses would seem to consist chiefly in their concurring together in the unity of [truth](#), according to ([1 Corinthians 1:10](#)), "That you be perfect in the same mind [sensu], and in the same judgment." Now this is effected by [charity](#) which operates consent in us men. Wherefore even the perfection of the senses consists radically in the perfection of [charity](#).

Reply to Objection 2. A [man](#) may be said to be perfect in two ways. First, simply: and this perfection regards that which belongs to a thing's [nature](#), for instance an animal may be said to be perfect when it lacks nothing in the disposition of its members and in such things as are [necessary](#) for an animal's life. Secondly, a thing is said to be perfect relatively: and this perfection regards something connected with the thing externally, such as whiteness or blackness or something of the kind. Now the [Christian](#) life consists chiefly in [charity](#) whereby the [soul](#) is united to [God](#); wherefore it is written ([1 John 3:14](#)): "He that loveth not abideth in death." Hence the perfection of the [Christian](#) life consists simply in [charity](#), but in the other [virtues](#) relatively. And since that which is simply, is paramount and greatest in comparison with other things, it follows that the perfection of [charity](#) is paramount in relation to the perfection that regards the other [virtues](#).

Reply to Objection 3. Patience is stated to have a perfect work in relation to [charity](#), in so far as it is an effect of the abundance of [charity](#) that a man bears hardships patiently, according to ([Romans 8:3](#))⁵, "Who . . . shall separate us from the love of [Christ](#)? Shall tribulation? Or distress?" etc.

Article 2. Whether any one can be perfect in this life?

Objection 1. It would seem that none can be perfect in this life. For the [Apostle](#) says ([1 Corinthians 13:1](#))⁰: "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Now in this life that which is in part is not done away; for in this life [faith](#) and hope, which are in part, remain. Therefore none can be perfect in this life.

Objection 2. Further, "The perfect is that which lacks nothing" (Phys. iii, 6). Now there is no one in this life who lacks nothing; for it is written ([James 3:2](#)): "In many things we all offend"; and ([Psalm 138:16](#)): "Thy eyes did see my imperfect being." Therefore none is perfect in this life.

Objection 3. Further, the perfection of the [Christian](#) life, as stated (1), relates to [charity](#), which comprises the love of [God](#) and of our neighbor. Now, neither as to the love of [God](#) can one have perfect [charity](#) in this life, since according to [Gregory](#) (Hom. xiv in Ezech.) "the furnace of love which begins to burn here, will burn more fiercely when we see Him Whom we love"; nor as to the love of our neighbor, since in this life we cannot love all our neighbors actually, even though we love them [habitually](#); and [habitual](#) love is imperfect. Therefore it seems that no one can be perfect in this life.

On the contrary, The [Divine law](#) does not prescribe the impossible. Yet it prescribes perfection according to [Matthew 5:48](#), "Be you . . . perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." Therefore seemingly one can be perfect in this life.

I answer that, As stated above ([Article 1](#)), the perfection of the [Christian](#) life consists in [charity](#). Now perfection implies a certain universality because according to Phys. iii, 6, "the perfect is that which lacks nothing." Hence we may consider a threefold perfection. One is absolute, and answers to a totality not only on the part of the lover, but also on the part of the object loved, so that [God](#) be loved as much as He is lovable. Such perfection as this is not possible to any creature, but is competent to [God](#) alone, in Whom [good](#) is wholly and [essentially](#).

Another perfection answers to an absolute totality on the part of the lover, so that the affective faculty always actually tends to [God](#) as much as it possibly can; and such perfection as this is not possible so long as we are on the way, but we shall have it in [heaven](#).

The third perfection answers to a totality neither on the part of the object served, nor on the part of the lover as regards his always actually tending to [God](#), but on the part of the lover as regards the removal of obstacles to the movement of love towards [God](#), in which sense [Augustine](#) says (QQ. LXXXIII, qu. 36) that "carnal desire is the bane of [charity](#); to have no carnal desires is the perfection of [charity](#)." Such perfection as this can be had in this life, and in two ways. First, by the removal from [man's](#) affections of all that is contrary to [charity](#), such as mortal [sin](#); and there can be no [charity](#) apart from this perfection, wherefore it is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#). Secondly, by the removal from [man's](#) affections not only of whatever is contrary to [charity](#), but also of whatever hinders the [mind's](#) affections from tending wholly to [God](#). [Charity](#) is possible apart from this perfection, for instance in those who are beginners and in those who are proficient.

Reply to Objection 1. The [Apostle](#) is speaking there of heavenly perfection which is not possible to those who are on the way.

Reply to Objection 2. Those who are perfect in this life are said to "offend in many things" with regard to venial [sins](#), which result from the weakness of the present life: and in this respect they have an "imperfect being" in comparison with the perfection of [heaven](#).

Reply to Objection 3. As the [conditions](#) of the present life do not allow of a man always tending actually to [God](#), so neither does it allow of his tending actually to each [individual](#) neighbor; but it suffices for him to tend to all in common and collectively, and to each [individual](#) [habitually](#) and according to the preparedness of his mind. Now in the love of our neighbor, as in the love of [God](#) we may observe a twofold perfection: one without which [charity](#) is impossible, and consisting in one's having in one's affections nothing that is contrary to the love of one's neighbor; and another without which it is possible to have [charity](#). The latter perfection may be considered in three ways. First, as to the extent of love, through a man [loving](#) not only his friends and acquaintances but also strangers and even his enemies, for as [Augustine](#) says (Enchiridion lxxiii) this is a mark of the perfect children of [God](#). Secondly, as to the intensity of love, which is shown by the things which [man](#) despises for his neighbor's sake, through his despising not only external goods for the sake of his neighbor, but also bodily hardships and even death, according to [John 15:13](#), "Greater love than this no [man](#) hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Thirdly, as to the effect of love, so that a man will surrender not only temporal but also [spiritual](#) goods and even himself, for his neighbor's sake, according to the words of the [Apostle](#) ([2 Corinthians 12:15](#)), "But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your [souls](#)."

5. Article 3. Whether, in this life, perfection consists in the observance of the commandments or of the counsels?

6. **Objection 1.** It would seem that, in this life, perfection consists in the observance not of the commandments but of the counsels. For [our Lord](#) said ([Matthew 19:21](#)): "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all [[Vulgate](#): 'what'] thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow Me." Now this is a counsel. Therefore perfection regards the counsels and not the precepts.
7. **Objection 2.** Further, all are bound to the observance of the commandments, since this is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#). Therefore, if the perfection of the [Christian](#) life consists in observing the commandments, it follows that perfection is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#), and that all are bound thereto; and this is evidently [false](#).
8. **Objection 3.** Further, the perfection of the [Christian](#) life is gauged according to [charity](#), as stated above ([Article 1](#)). Now the perfection of [charity](#), seemingly, does not consist in the observance of the commandments, since the perfection of [charity](#) is preceded both by its increase and by its beginning, as [Augustine](#) says (Super Canonic. Joan. Tract. ix). But the beginning of [charity](#) cannot precede the observance of the commandments, since according to [John 14:2-3](#), "If any one love Me, he will keep My word." Therefore the perfection of life regards not the commandments but the counsels.
9. **On the contrary,** It is written ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#)): "Thou shalt love the [Lord thy God](#) with thy whole heart," and ([Leviticus 19:18](#)): "Thou shalt love thy neighbor [[Vulgate](#): 'friend'] as thyself"; and these are the commandments of which [our Lord](#) said ([Matthew 22:40](#)): "On these two commandments dependeth the whole [law](#) and the [prophets](#)." Now the perfection of [charity](#), in respect of which the [Christian](#) life is said to be perfect, consists in our [loving God](#) with our whole heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore it would seem that perfection consists in the observance of the precepts.
10. **I answer that,** Perfection is said to consist in a thing in two ways: in one way, primarily and [essentially](#); in another, secondarily and [accidentally](#). Primarily and [essentially](#) the perfection of the [Christian](#) life consists in [charity](#), principally as to the love of [God](#), secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the [matter](#) of the chief commandments of the [Divine law](#), as stated above. Now the love of [God](#) and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. This is evident from the very form of the commandment, pointing, as it does, to perfection--for instance in the words, "Thou shalt love the [Lord thy God](#) with thy whole heart": since "the whole" is the same as "the perfect," according to the [Philosopher](#) (Phys. iii, 6), and in the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," since every one loves himself most. The reason of this is that "the end of the commandment is [charity](#)," according to the [Apostle](#) ([1 Timothy 1:5](#)); and the end is not subject to a measure, but only such things as are directed to the end, as the [Philosopher](#) observes (Polit. i, 3); thus a physician does not measure the amount of his healing, but how much medicine or diet he shall employ for the purpose of healing. Consequently it is evident that perfection consists [essentially](#) in the observance of the commandments; wherefore [Augustine](#) says (De Perf. Justit. viii): "Why then should not this perfection be prescribed to [man](#), although no [man](#) has it in this life?"
11. Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels, all of which, like the commandments, are directed to [charity](#); yet not in the

same way. For the commandments, other than the precepts of [charity](#), are directed to the removal of things contrary to [charity](#), with which, namely, [charity](#) is incompatible, whereas the counsels are directed to the removal of things that hinder the [act](#) of [charity](#), and yet are not contrary to [charity](#), such as marriage, the occupation of worldly business, and so forth. Hence [Augustine](#) says (Enchiridion cxxi): "Whatever things [God](#) commands, for instance, 'Thou shalt not commit [adultery](#),' and whatever are not commanded, yet suggested by a special counsel, for instance, 'It is [good](#) for a man not to touch a [woman](#),' are then done aright when they are referred to the love of [God](#), and of our neighbor for [God's](#) sake, both in this world and in the world to come." Hence it is that in the Conferences of the Fathers (Coll. i, cap. vii) the abbot [Moses](#) says: "Fasting, watchings, meditating on the [Scriptures](#), penury and loss of all one's [wealth](#), these are not perfection but means to perfection, since not in them does the school of perfection find its end, but through them it achieves its end," and he had already said that "we endeavor to ascend by these steps to the perfection of [charity](#)."

12. **Reply to Objection 1.** In this saying of [our Lord](#) something is indicated as being the way to perfection by the words, "Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor"; and something else is added wherein perfection consists, when He said, "And follow Me." Hence [Jerome](#) in his commentary on [Matthew 19:27](#), says that "since it is not enough merely to leave, Peter added that which is perfect: 'And have followed Thee'; and [Ambrose](#), [commenting](#) on [Luke 5:27](#), "Follow Me," says: "He commands him to follow, not with steps of the body, but with devotion of the [soul](#), which is the effect of [charity](#)." Wherefore it is evident from the very way of speaking that the counsels are means of attaining to perfection, since it is thus expressed: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell," etc., as though He said: "By so doing thou shalt accomplish this end."
13. **Reply to Objection 2.** As [Augustine](#) says (De Perf. Justit. viii) "the perfection of [charity](#) is prescribed to [man](#) in this life, because one runs not right unless one [knows](#) whither to run. And how shall we [know](#) this if no commandment declares it to us?" And since that which is a matter of precept can be fulfilled variously, one does not break a commandment through not fulfilling it in the best way, but it is enough to fulfil it in any way whatever. Now the perfection of Divine love is a matter of precept for all without exception, so that even the perfection of [heaven](#) is not excepted from this precept, as [Augustine](#) says (De Perf. Justit. viii [Cf. De Spir. et Lit. XXXVI]), and one escapes transgressing the precept, in whatever measure one attains to the perfection of Divine love. The lowest degree of Divine love is to love nothing more than [God](#), or contrary to [God](#), or equally with [God](#), and whoever fails from this degree of perfection nowise fulfils the precept. There is another degree of the Divine love, which cannot be fulfilled so long as we are on the way, as stated above ([Article 2](#)), and it is evident that to fail from this is not to be a transgressor of the precept; and in like manner one does not transgress the precept, if one does not attain to the intermediate degrees of perfection, provided one attain to the lowest.
14. **Reply to Objection 3.** Just as [man](#) has a certain perfection of his [nature](#) as soon as he is born, which perfection belongs to the very [essence](#) of his [species](#), while there is another perfection which he acquires by growth, so again there is a perfection of [charity](#) which belongs to the very [essence](#) of [charity](#), namely that [man](#) love [God](#) above all things, and love nothing contrary to [God](#), while there is another perfection of [charity](#) even in this life,

whereto a man attains by a kind of [spiritual](#) growth, for instance when a man refrains even from lawful things, in order more freely to give himself to the service of [God](#).

Article 4. Whether whoever is perfect is in the state of perfection?

Objection 1. It would seem that whoever is perfect is in the state of perfection. For, as stated above (3, ad 3), just as bodily perfection is reached by bodily growth, so [spiritual](#) perfection is acquired by [spiritual](#) growth. Now after bodily growth one is said to have reached the state of perfect age. Therefore seemingly also after [spiritual](#) growth, when one has already reached [spiritual](#) perfection, one is in the state of perfection.

Objection 2. Further, according to Phys. v, 2, movement "from one contrary to another" has the same aspect as "movement from less to more." Now when a man is changed from [sin](#) to [grace](#), he is said to change his state, in so far as the state of [sin](#) differs from the state of [grace](#). Therefore it would seem that in the same manner, when one progresses from a lesser to a greater [grace](#), so as to reach the perfect degree, one is in the state of perfection.

Objection 3. Further, a man acquires a state by being freed from servitude. But one is freed from the servitude of [sin](#) by [charity](#), because "[charity](#) covereth all [sins](#)" ([Proverbs 10:12](#)). Now one is said to be perfect on account of [charity](#), as stated above ([Article 1](#)). Therefore, seemingly, whoever has perfection, for this very reason has the state of perfection.

On the contrary, Some are in the state of perfection, who are wholly lacking in [charity](#) and [grace](#), for instance [wicked bishops](#) or religious. Therefore it would seem that on the other hand some have the perfection of life, who nevertheless have not the state of perfection.

I answer that, As stated above (Question 183, Article 1), state properly regards a [condition](#) of freedom or servitude. Now [spiritual](#) freedom or servitude may be considered in [man](#) in two ways: first, with respect to his internal actions; secondly, with respect to his external actions. And since according to ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)), "[man](#) seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart," it follows that with regard to [man's](#) internal disposition we consider his [spiritual](#) state in relation to the [Divine judgment](#), while with regard to his external actions we consider [man's spiritual](#) state in relation to the [Church](#). It is in this latter sense that we are now speaking of states, namely in so far as the [Church](#) derives a certain beauty from the variety of states [Cf. 183, 2].

Now it must be observed, that so far as men are concerned, in order that any one attain to a state of freedom or servitude there is required first of all an [obligation](#) or a release. For the mere fact of serving someone does not make a man a [slave](#), since even the free serve, according to ([Galatians 5:13](#)), "By [charity](#) of the spirit serve one another": nor again does the mere fact of ceasing to serve make a man free, as in the case of a runaway [slave](#); but properly speaking a man is a [slave](#) if he be bound to serve, and a man is free if he be released from service. Secondly, it is required that the aforesaid [obligation](#) be imposed with a certain [solemnity](#); even as a certain [solemnity](#) is observed in other matters which among men obtain a settlement in perpetuity.

Accordingly, properly speaking, one is said to be in the state of perfection, not through having the act of perfect love, but through binding himself in perpetuity and with a certain [solemnity](#) to those things that pertain to perfection. Moreover it happens that some [persons](#) bind themselves to that which they do not keep, and some fulfil that to which they have not bound themselves, as in the case of the two sons ([Matthew 21:28-30](#)), one of whom when his father said: "Work in my vineyard," answered: "I will not," and "afterwards . . . he went," while the other "answering said: I go . . . and he went not." Wherefore nothing hinders some from being perfect without being in the state of perfection, and some in the state of perfection without being perfect.

Reply to Objection 1. By bodily growth a man progresses in things pertaining to [nature](#), wherefore he attains to the state of [nature](#); especially since "what is according to [nature](#) is," in a way, "unchangeable" [Ethic. v, 7, inasmuch as [nature](#) is determinate to one thing. On like manner by inward [spiritual](#) growth a man reaches the state of perfection in relation to the [Divine judgment](#). But as regards the distinctions of ecclesiastical states, a man does not reach the state of perfection except by growth in respect of external actions.

Reply to Objection 2. This argument also regards the interior state. Yet when a man passes from [sin](#) to [grace](#), he passes from servitude to freedom; and this does not result from a mere progress in [grace](#), except when a man binds himself to things pertaining to [grace](#).

Reply to Objection 3. Again this argument considers the interior state. Nevertheless, although [charity causes](#) the change of [condition](#) from [spiritual](#) servitude to [spiritual](#) freedom, an increase of [charity](#) has not the same effect.

Question 186. Things in which the religious state properly consists

1. Is the religious state perfect?
2. Are religious bound to all the counsels?
3. Is voluntary poverty required for the religious state?
4. Is continency necessary?
5. Is obedience necessary?
6. Is it necessary that these should be the matter of a vow?

Article 1. Whether religion implies a state of perfection?

Objection 1. It would seem that religion does not imply a state of perfection. For that which is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#) does not seemingly pertain to perfection. But religion is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#), whether because "thereby we are bound [religamur] to the one almighty [God](#)," as [Augustine](#) says (De Vera Relig. 55), or because it takes its name from "our returning [religimus] to [God](#) Whom we had lost by neglecting Him" [Cf. 81, 1], according to [Augustine](#) (De Civ. Dei x, 3). Therefore it would seem that religion does not denote the state of perfection.

Objection 2. Further, religion according to Tully (De Invent. Rhet. ii, 53) is that "which offers worship and ceremony to the Divine [nature](#)." Now the offering of worship and ceremony to [God](#) would seem to pertain to the ministry of [holy](#) orders rather than to the diversity of states, as stated above (40, 2; 183, 3). Therefore it would seem that religion does not denote the state of perfection.

Objection 3. Further, the state of perfection is distinct from the state of beginners and that of the proficient. But in religion also some are beginners, and some are proficient. Therefore religion does not denote the state of perfection.

Objection 4. Further, religion would seem a place of repentance; for it is said in the Decrees (VII, qu. i, can. Hoc nequaquam): "The [holy](#) synod orders that any [man](#) who has been degraded from the [episcopal](#) dignity to the monastic life and a place of repentance, should by no means rise again to the [episcopate](#)." Now a place of repentance is opposed to the state of perfection; hence [Dionysius](#) (Eccl. Hier. vi) places penitents in the lowest place, namely among those who are to be cleansed. Therefore it would seem that religion is not the state of perfection.

On the contrary, In the Conferences of the Fathers (Collat. i, 7) abbot [Moses](#) speaking of religious says: "We must recognize that we have to undertake the hunger of [fasting](#), watchings, bodily toil, privation, reading, and other acts of [virtue](#), in order by these degrees to mount to the perfection of [charity](#)." Now things pertaining to [human acts](#) are specified and denominated from the [intention](#) of the end. Therefore religious belong to the state of perfection.

Moreover [Dionysius](#) says (Eccl. Hier. vi) that those who are called servants of [God](#), by reason of their rendering pure service and subjection to [God](#), are united to the perfection beloved of Him.

I answer that, As stated above (Question 141, Article 2) that which is applicable to many things in common is ascribed antonomastically to that to which it is applicable by way of excellence. Thus the name of "[fortitude](#)" is claimed by the [virtue](#) which preserves the firmness of the [mind](#) in regard to most difficult things, and the name of "[temperance](#)," by that [virtue](#) which tempers the greatest pleasures. Now religion as stated above (81, 2; 3, ad 2) is a [virtue](#) whereby a man offers something to the service and worship of [God](#). Wherefore those are called religious antonomastically, who give themselves up entirely to the divine service, as offering a [holocaust](#) to [God](#). Hence [Gregory](#) says (Hom. xx in Ezech.): "Some there are who keep nothing for themselves, but sacrifice to almighty [God](#) their tongue, their senses, their life, and the property they possess." Now the perfection of [man](#) consists in adhering wholly to [God](#), as stated above (Question 184, Article 2), and in this sense religion denotes the state of perfection.

Reply to Objection 1. To offer something to the worship of [God](#) is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#), but to offer oneself wholly, and one's possessions to the worship of [God](#) belongs to perfection.

Reply to Objection 2. As stated above (81, 1, ad 1; 4, ad 1, 2; 85, 3) when we were treating of the [virtue](#) of religion, religion has reference not only to the offering of [sacrifices](#) and other like things that are proper to religion, but also to the acts of all the [virtues](#) which in so far as these are referred to [God's](#) service and [honor](#) become acts of religion. Accordingly if a man devotes his

whole life to the divine service, his whole life belongs to religion, and thus by reason of the religious life that they lead, those who are in the state of perfection are called religious.

Reply to Objection 3. As stated above (184, 4,6) religion denotes the state of perfection by reason of the end intended. Hence it does not follow that whoever is in the state of perfection is already perfect, but that he tends to perfection. Hence [Origen commenting on Matthew 19:21](#), "If thou wilt be perfect," etc., says (Tract. viii in Matth.) that "he who has exchanged [riches](#) for [poverty](#) in order to become perfect does not become perfect at the very moment of giving his goods to the poor; but from that day the [contemplation](#) of [God](#) will begin to lead him to all the [virtues](#)." Thus all are not perfect in religion, but some are beginners, some proficient.

Reply to Objection 4. The religious state was instituted chiefly that we might obtain perfection by means of certain exercises, whereby the obstacles to perfect [charity](#) are removed. By the removal of the obstacles of perfect [charity](#), much more are the occasions of [sin](#) cut off, for [sin](#) destroys [charity](#) altogether. Wherefore since it belongs to penance to cut out the [causes](#) of [sin](#), it follows that the religious state is a most fitting place for penance. Hence (XXXIII, qu. ii, cap. Admonere) a man who had killed his wife is counseled to enter a monastery which is described as "better and lighter," rather than to do public penance while remaining in the world.

Article 2. Whether every religious is bound to keep all the counsels?

Objection 1. It would seem that every religious is bound to keep all the counsels. For whoever professes a certain state of life is bound to observe whatever belongs to that state. Now each religious professes the state of perfection. Therefore every religious is bound to keep all the counsels that pertain to the state of perfection.

Objection 2. Further, [Gregory](#) says (Hom. xx in Ezech.) that "he who renounces this world, and does all the [good](#) he can, is like one who has gone out of [Egypt](#) and offers sacrifice in the wilderness." Now it belongs specially to religious to renounce the world. Therefore it belongs to them also to do all the [good](#) they can. and so it would seem that each of them is bound to fulfil all the counsels.

Objection 3. Further, if it is not requisite for the state of perfection to fulfil all the counsels, it would seem enough to fulfil some of them. But this is [false](#), since some who lead a secular life fulfil some of the counsels, for instance those who observe [continence](#). Therefore it would seem that every religious who is in the state of perfection is bound to fulfil whatever pertains to perfection: and such are the counsels.

On the contrary, one is not bound, unless one bind oneself, to do works of supererogation. But every religious does not bind himself to keep all the counsels, but to certain definite ones, some to some, others to others. Therefore all are not bound to keep all of them.

I answer that, A thing pertains to perfection in three ways. First, [essentially](#), and thus, as stated above (Question 184, Article 3) the perfect observance of the precepts of [charity](#) belongs to

perfection. Secondly, a thing belongs to perfection consequently: such are those things that result from the perfection of [charity](#), for instance to [bless](#) them that curse you ([Luke 6:27](#)), and to keep counsels of a like kind, which though they be binding as regards the preparedness of the [mind](#), so that one has to fulfil them when [necessity](#) requires; yet are sometimes fulfilled, without there being any [necessity](#), through superabundance of [charity](#). Thirdly, a thing belongs to perfection instrumentally and dispositively, as [poverty](#), [contenance](#), abstinence, and the like.

Now it has been stated (1) that the perfection of [charity](#) is the end of the religious state. And the religious state is a school or exercise for the attainment of perfection, which men strive to reach by various practices, just as a physician may use various remedies in order to heal. But it is evident that for him who works for an end it is not [necessary](#) that he should already have attained the end, but it is requisite that he should by some means tend thereto. Hence he who enters the religious state is not bound to have perfect [charity](#), but he is bound to tend to this, and use his endeavors to have perfect [charity](#).

For the same reason he is not bound to fulfil those things that result from the perfection of [charity](#), although he is bound to intend to fulfil them: against which [intention](#) he acts if he contemns them, wherefore he [sins](#) not by omitting them but by contempt of them.

In like manner he is not bound to observe all the practices whereby perfection may be attained, but only those which are definitely prescribed to him by the rule which he has professed.

Reply to Objection 1. He who enters religion does not make profession to be perfect, but he professes to endeavor to attain perfection; even as he who enters the schools does not profess to have [knowledge](#), but to study in order to acquire [knowledge](#). Wherefore as [Augustine](#) says (*De Civ. Dei* viii, 2), [Pythagoras](#) was unwilling to profess to be a wise [man](#), but acknowledged himself, "a lover of wisdom." Hence a religious does not violate his profession if he be not perfect, but only if he despises to tend to perfection.

Reply to Objection 2. Just as, though all are bound to love [God](#) with their whole heart, yet there is a certain wholeness of perfection which cannot be omitted without [sin](#), and another wholeness which can be omitted without [sin](#) (184, 2, ad 3), provided there be no contempt, as stated above (ad 1), so too, all, both religious and seculars, are bound, in a certain measure, to do whatever [good](#) they can, for to all without exception it is said ([Ecclesiastes 9:1](#)): "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly." Yet there is a way of fulfilling this precept, so as to avoid [sin](#), namely if one do what one can as required by the [conditions](#) of one's state of life: provided there be no contempt of doing better things, which contempt sets the [mind](#) against [spiritual](#) progress.

Reply to Objection 3. There are some counsels such that if they be omitted, [man's](#) whole life would be taken up with secular business; for instance if he have property of his own, or enter the [married](#) state, or do something of the kind that regards the [essential vows](#) of religion themselves; wherefore religious are bound to keep all such like counsels. Other counsels there are, however, about certain particular better actions, which can be omitted without one's life being taken up with secular actions; wherefore there is no need for religious to be bound to fulfil all of them.

Article 3. Whether poverty is required for religious perfection?

Objection 1. It would seem that [poverty](#) is not required for religious perfection. For that which it is unlawful to do does not apparently belong to the state of perfection. But it would seem to be unlawful for a man to give up all he possesses; since the [Apostle](#) ([2 Corinthians 8:12](#)) lays down the way in which the faithful are to give [alms](#) saying: "If the [will](#) be forward, it is accepted according to that which a man hath," i.e. "you should keep back what you need," and afterwards he adds ([2 Corinthians 8:13](#)): "For I mean not that others should be eased, and you burthened," i.e. "with [poverty](#)," according to a [gloss](#). Moreover a [gloss](#) on [1 Timothy 6:8](#), "Having food, and wherewith to be covered," says: "Though we brought nothing, and will carry nothing away, we must not give up these temporal things altogether." Therefore it seems that [voluntary poverty](#) is not requisite for religious perfection.

Objection 2. Further, whosoever exposes himself to danger [sins](#). But he who renounces all he has and embraces [voluntary poverty](#) exposes himself to danger--not only [spiritual](#), according to [Proverbs 30:9](#), "Lest perhaps . . . being compelled by [poverty](#), I should steal and forswear the name of my [God](#)," and [Sirach 27:1](#), "Through [poverty](#) many have [sinned](#)"--but also corporal, for it is written ([Ecclesiastes 7:13](#)): "As wisdom is a defense, so money is a defense," and the [Philosopher](#) says (Ethic. iv, 1) that "the waste of property appears to be a sort of ruining of one's self, since thereby [man](#) lives." Therefore it would seem that [voluntary poverty](#) is not requisite for the perfection of religious life.

Objection 3. Further, "Virtue observes the mean," as stated in Ethic. ii, 6. But he who renounces all by [voluntary poverty](#) seems to go to the extreme rather than to observe the mean. Therefore he does not act virtuously: and so this does not pertain to the perfection of life.

Objection 4. Further, the ultimate perfection of [man](#) consists in [happiness](#). Now [riches](#) conduce to [happiness](#); for it is written ([Sirach 31:8](#)): "Blessed is the rich [man](#) that is found without blemish," and the [Philosopher](#) says (Ethic. i, 8) that "[riches](#) contribute instrumentally to [happiness](#)." Therefore [voluntary poverty](#) is not requisite for religious perfection.

Objection 5. Further, the [episcopal](#) state is more perfect than the religious state. But [bishops](#) may have property, as stated above (Question 185, Article 6). Therefore religious may also.

Objection 6. Further, almsgiving is a work most acceptable to [God](#), and as [Chrysostom](#) says (Hom. ix in Ep. ad Hebr.) "is a most effective remedy in repentance." Now [poverty](#) excludes [almsgiving](#). Therefore it would seem that [poverty](#) does not pertain to religious perfection.

On the contrary, [Gregory](#) says (Moral. viii, 26): "There are some of the righteous who bracing themselves up to lay hold of the very height of perfection, while they aim at higher objects within, abandon all things without." Now, as stated above, (1 and 2), it belongs properly to religious to brace themselves up in order to lay hold of the very height of perfection. Therefore it belongs to them to abandon all outward things by [voluntary poverty](#).

I answer that, As stated above ([Article 2](#)), the religious state is an exercise and a school for attaining to the perfection of [charity](#). For this it is [necessary](#) that a man wholly withdraw his affections from worldly things; since [Augustine](#) says (Confess. x, 29), speaking to [God](#): "Too little doth he love Thee, who loves anything with Thee, which he loveth not for Thee." Wherefore he says (QQ. lxxxiii, qu. 36) that "greater [charity](#) means less cupidity, perfect [charity](#) means no cupidity." Now the possession of worldly things draws a man's mind to the love of them: hence [Augustine](#) says (Ep. xxxi ad Paulin. et Theras.) that "we are more firmly attached to earthly things when we have them than when we desire them: since why did that young [man](#) go away sad, save because he had great [wealth](#)? For it is one thing not to wish to lay hold of what one has not, and another to renounce what one already has; the former are rejected as foreign to us, the latter are cut off as a limb." And [Chrysostom](#) says (Hom. lxiii in Matth.) that "the possession of [wealth](#) kindles a greater flame and the desire for it becomes stronger."

Hence it is that in the attainment of the perfection of [charity](#) the first foundation is [voluntary poverty](#), whereby a man lives without property of his own, according to the saying of [our Lord](#) ([Matthew 19:21](#)), "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all [[Vulgate](#): 'what'] thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow Me."

Reply to Objection 1. As the [gloss](#) adds, "when the [Apostle](#) said this (namely "not that you should be burthened," i.e. with [poverty](#))," he did not mean that "it were better not to give: but he feared for the weak, whom he admonished so to give as not to suffer privation." Hence in like manner the other [gloss](#) means not that it is unlawful to renounce all one's temporal goods, but that this is not required of [necessity](#). Wherefore [Ambrose](#) says (De Offic. i, 30): "[Our Lord](#) does not wish," namely does not command us "to pour out our [wealth](#) all at once, but to dispense it; or perhaps to do as did Eliseus who slew his oxen, and fed the poor with that which was his own so that no household care might hold him back."

Reply to Objection 2. He who renounces all his possessions for [Christ's](#) sake exposes himself to no danger, neither [spiritual](#) nor corporal. For [spiritual](#) danger ensues from [poverty](#) when the latter is not [voluntary](#); because those who are unwillingly poor, through the desire of money-getting, fall into many [sins](#), according to ([1 Timothy 6:9](#)), "They that will become rich, fall into [temptation](#) and into the snare of the [devil](#)." This attachment is put away by those who embrace [voluntary poverty](#), but it gathers strength in those who have [wealth](#), as stated above. Again bodily danger does not threaten those who, intent on following [Christ](#), renounce all their possessions and entrust themselves to [divine providence](#). Hence [Augustine](#) says (De Serm. Dom. in Monte ii, 17): "Those who seek first the [kingdom of God](#) and His [justice](#) are not weighed down by anxiety lest they lack what is [necessary](#)."

Reply to Objection 3. According to the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. ii, 6), the mean of [virtue](#) is taken according to right reason, not according to the [quantity](#) of a thing. Consequently whatever may be done in accordance with right reason is not rendered [sinful](#) by the greatness of the [quantity](#), but all the more [virtuous](#). It would, however, be against right reason to throw away all one's possessions through intemperance, or without any useful purpose; whereas it is in accordance with right reason to renounce [wealth](#) in order to devote oneself to the [contemplation](#) of wisdom. Even certain [philosophers](#) are said to have done this; for [Jerome](#) says (Ep. xlviij ad Paulin.): "The famous Theban, Crates, once a very wealthy [man](#), when he was going to Athens to study

[philosophy](#), cast away a large amount of gold; for he considered that he could not possess both gold and [virtue](#) at the same time." Much more therefore is it according to right reason for a man to renounce all he has, in order perfectly to follow Christ. Wherefore [Jerome](#) says (Ep. cxxv ad Rust. Monach.): "Poor thyself, follow Christ poor."

Reply to Objection 4. Happiness or felicity is twofold. One is perfect, to which we look forward in the life to come; the other is imperfect, in respect of which some are said to be [happy](#) in this life. The [happiness](#) of this life is twofold, one is according to the active life, the other according to the contemplative life, as the [Philosopher](#) asserts (Ethic. x, 7,8). Now [wealth](#) conduces instrumentally to the [happiness](#) of the active life which consists in external actions, because as the [Philosopher](#) says (Ethic. i, 8) "we do many things by friends, by [riches](#), by political influence, as it were by instruments." On the other hand, it does not conduce to the [happiness](#) of the contemplative life, rather is it an obstacle thereto, inasmuch as the anxiety it involves disturbs the quiet of the [soul](#), which is most [necessary](#) to one who contemplates. Hence it is that the [Philosopher](#) asserts (Ethic. x, 8) that "for actions many things are needed, but the contemplative [man](#) needs no such things," namely external goods, "for his operation; in fact they are obstacles to his [contemplation](#)."

Man is directed to future [happiness](#) by [charity](#); and since [voluntary poverty](#) is an efficient exercise for the attaining of perfect [charity](#), it follows that it is of great avail in acquiring the [happiness](#) of [heaven](#). Wherefore [our Lord](#) said ([Matthew 19:21](#)): "Go, sell all [[Vulgate](#): 'what'] thou hast, and give to the [poor](#), and thou shalt have treasure in [heaven](#)." Now [riches](#) once they are possessed are in themselves of a [nature](#) to hinder the perfection of [charity](#), especially by enticing and distracting the [mind](#). Hence it is written ([Matthew 13:22](#)) that "the care of this world and the deceitfulness of [riches](#) choketh up the word" of [God](#), for as [Gregory](#) says (Hom. xv in Ev.) by "preventing the [good](#) desire from entering into the heart, they destroy life at its very outset." Consequently it is difficult to safeguard [charity](#) amidst [riches](#): wherefore [our Lord](#) said ([Matthew 19:23](#)) that "a rich [man](#) shall hardly enter into the [kingdom of heaven](#)," which we must understand as referring to one who actually has [wealth](#), since He says that this is impossible for him who places his affection in [riches](#), according to the explanation of [Chrysostom](#) (Hom. lxxiii in Matth.), for He adds ([Matthew 19:24](#)): "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich [man](#) to enter into the [kingdom of heaven](#)." Hence it is not said simply that the "rich [man](#)" is blessed, but "the rich [man](#) that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold," and this because he has done a difficult thing, wherefore the text continues ([Matthew 19:9](#)): "Who is he? and we will praise him; for he hath done wonderful things in his life," namely by not [loving riches](#) though placed in the midst of them.

Reply to Objection 5. The [episcopal](#) state is not directed to the attainment of perfection, but rather to the effect that, in virtue of the perfection which he already has, a man may govern others, by administering not only [spiritual](#) but also temporal things. This belongs to the active life, wherein many things occur that may be done by means of [wealth](#) as an instrument, as stated (ad 4). Wherefore it is not required of [bishops](#), who make profession of governing [Christ's](#) flock, that they have nothing of their own, whereas it is required of religious who make profession of learning to obtain perfection.

Reply to Objection 6. The renouncement of one's own [wealth](#) is compared to almsgiving as the universal to the particular, and as the [holocaust](#) to the sacrifice. Hence [Gregory](#) says (Hom. xx in Ezech.) that those who assist "the needy with the things they possess, by their [good deeds](#) offer sacrifice, since they offer up something to [God](#) and keep back something for themselves; whereas those who keep nothing for themselves offer a [holocaust](#) which is greater than a sacrifice." Wherefore [Jerome](#) also says (Contra Vigilant.): "When you declare that those do better who retain the use of their possessions, and dole out the fruits of their possessions to the [poor](#), it is not I but the Lord Who answers you; If thou wilt be perfect," etc., and afterwards he goes on to say: "This [man](#) whom you praise belongs to the second and third degree, and we too commend him: provided we acknowledge the first as to be preferred to the second and third." For this reason in order to exclude the [error](#) of Vigilantius it is said (De Eccl. Dogm. xxxviii): "It is a [good](#) thing to give away one's goods by dispensing them to the poor: it is better to give them away once for all with the [intention](#) of following the Lord, and, free of solicitude, to be poor with [Christ](#)."

Article 4. Whether perpetual continence is required for religious perfection?

Objection 1. It would seem that perpetual [continence](#) is not required for religious perfection. For all perfection of the [Christian](#) life began with [Christ's apostles](#). Now the [apostles](#) do not appear to have observed [continence](#), as evidenced by Peter, of whose mother-in-law we read [Matthew 8:14](#). Therefore it would seem that perpetual [continence](#) is not requisite for religious perfection.

Objection 2. Further, the first example of perfection is shown to us in the [person](#) of [Abraham](#), to whom the Lord said ([Genesis 17:1](#)): "Walk before Me, and be perfect." Now the copy should not surpass the example. Therefore perpetual [continence](#) is not requisite for religious perfection.

Objection 3. Further, that which is required for religious perfection is to be found in every religious order. Now there are some religious who lead a [married](#) life. Therefore religious perfection does not require perpetual [continence](#).

On the contrary, The [Apostle](#) says ([2 Corinthians 7:1](#)): "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting sanctification in the fear of [God](#)." Now cleanness of flesh and spirit is safeguarded by [continence](#), for it is said ([1 Corinthians 7:3](#))⁴: "The unmarried [woman](#) and the [virgin](#) thinketh on the things of the Lord that she may be [holy](#) both in spirit and in body [[Vulgate](#): 'both in body and in spirit']." Therefore religious perfection requires [continence](#).

I answer that, The religious state requires the removal of whatever hinders [man](#) from devoting himself entirely to [God's](#) service. Now the use of sexual union hinders the [mind](#) from giving itself wholly to the service of [God](#), and this for two reasons. First, on account of its vehement delectation, which by frequent repetition increases [concupiscence](#), as also the [Philosopher](#) observes (Ethic. iii, 12): and hence it is that the use of venery withdraws the [mind](#) from that perfect intentness on tending to [God](#). [Augustine](#) expresses this when he says (Solil. i, 10): "I consider that nothing so casts down the manly mind from its height as the fondling of [women](#),

and those bodily contacts which belong to the [married](#) state." Secondly, because it involves [man](#) in solicitude for the control of his wife, his children, and his temporalities which serve for their upkeep. Hence the [Apostle](#) says ([1 Corinthians 7:3](#))^{2,33}: "He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please [God](#); but he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife."

Therefore perpetual [continence](#), as well as [voluntary poverty](#), is requisite for religious perfection. Wherefore just as Vigilantius was condemned for equaling [riches](#) to [poverty](#), so was Jovinian condemned for equaling marriage to [virginity](#).

Reply to Objection 1. The perfection not only of [poverty](#) but also of [continence](#) was introduced by [Christ](#) Who said ([Matthew 19:12](#)): "There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs, for the [kingdom of heaven](#)," and then added: "He that can take, let him take it." And lest anyone should be deprived of the hope of attaining perfection, he admitted to the state of perfection those even who were [married](#). Now the husbands could not without committing an [injustice](#) forsake their wives, whereas men could without [injustice](#) renounce [riches](#). Wherefore Peter whom He found [married](#), He severed not from his wife, while "He withheld from marriage John who wished to marry" [Prolog. in Joan. among the supposititious works of [St. Jerome](#)].

Reply to Objection 2. As [Augustine](#) says (De Bono Conjug. xxii), "the [chastity](#) of celibacy is better than the [chastity](#) of marriage, one of which [Abraham](#) had in use, both of them in [habit](#). For he lived chastely, and he might have been chaste without marrying, but it was not requisite then." Nevertheless if the patriarchs of old had perfection of mind together with [wealth](#) and marriage, which is a mark of the greatness of their [virtue](#), this is no reason why any weaker [person](#) should presume to have such great [virtue](#) that he can attain to perfection though rich and [married](#); as neither does a man unarmed presume to attack his enemy, because Samson slew many foes with the jaw-bone of an ass. For those fathers, had it been seasonable to observe [continence](#) and [poverty](#), would have been most careful to observe them.

Reply to Objection 3. Such ways of living as admit of the use of marriage are not the religious life simply and absolutely speaking, but in a restricted sense, in so far as they have a certain share in those things that belong to the religious state.

Article 5. Whether obedience belongs to religious perfection?

Objection 1. It would seem that obedience does not belong to religious perfection. For those things seemingly belong to religious perfection, which are works of supererogation and are not binding upon all. But all are bound to obey their superiors, according to the saying of the [Apostle](#) ([Hebrews 13:17](#)), "Obey your [prelates](#), and be subject to them." Therefore it would seem that obedience does not belong to religious perfection.

Objection 2. Further, obedience would seem to belong properly to those who have to be guided by the sense of others, and such [persons](#) are lacking in discernment. Now the [Apostle](#) says ([Hebrews 5:1](#))⁴ that "strong meat is for the perfect, for them who by custom have their senses exercised to the discerning of [good](#) and [evil](#)." Therefore it would seem that obedience does not belong to the state of the perfect.

Objection 3. Further, if obedience were requisite for religious perfection, it would follow that it is befitting to all religious. But it is not becoming to all; since some religious lead a solitary life, and have no superior whom they obey. Again religious superiors apparently are not bound to obedience. Therefore obedience would seem not to pertain to religious perfection.

Objection 4. Further, if the [vow of obedience](#) were requisite for religion, it would follow that religious are bound to obey their superiors in all things, just as they are bound to abstain from all venery by their [vow of continence](#). But they are not bound to obey them in all things, as stated above (Question 104, Article 5), when we were treating of the [virtue](#) of obedience. Therefore the [vow of obedience](#) is not requisite for religion.

Objection 5. Further, those services are most acceptable to [God](#) which are done freely and not of [necessity](#), according to ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)), "Not with sadness or of [necessity](#)." Now that which is done out of obedience is done of [necessity](#) of precept. Therefore those [good](#) works are more deserving of praise which are done of one's own accord. Therefore the [vow of obedience](#) is unbecoming to religion whereby men seek to attain to that which is better.

On the contrary, Religious perfection consists chiefly in the imitation of [Christ](#), according to [Matthew 19:21](#), "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all [[Vulgate](#): 'what'] thou hast, and give to the [poor](#), and follow Me." Now in [Christ](#) obedience is commended above all according to ([Philippians 2:8](#)), "He became [[Vulgate](#): 'becoming'] obedient unto death." Therefore seemingly obedience belongs to religious perfection.

I answer that, As stated above (A2,3) the religious state is a school and exercise for tending to perfection. Now those who are being instructed or exercised in order to attain a certain end must needs follow the direction of someone under whose control they are instructed or exercised so as to attain that end as [disciples](#) under a master. Hence religious need to be placed under the instruction and command of someone as regards things pertaining to the religious life; wherefore it is said (VII, qu. i, can. Hoc nequaquam): "The monastic life denotes subjection and discipleship." Now one [man](#) is subjected to another's command and instruction by obedience: and consequently obedience is requisite for religious perfection.

Reply to Objection 1. To obey one's superiors in matters that are [essential](#) to [virtue](#) is not a work of supererogation, but is common to all: whereas to obey in matters pertaining to the practice of perfection belongs properly to religious. This latter obedience is compared to the former as the universal to the particular. For those who live in the world, keep something for themselves, and offer something to [God](#); and in the latter respect they are under obedience to their superiors: whereas those who live in religion give themselves wholly and their possessions to [God](#), as stated above (1 and 3). Hence their obedience is universal.

Reply to Objection 2. As the [Philosopher](#) says (Ethic. ii, 1,2), by performing actions we contract certain [habits](#), and when we have acquired the [habit](#) we are best able to perform the actions. Accordingly those who have not attained to perfection, acquire perfection by obeying, while those who have already acquired perfection are most ready to obey, not as though they need to be directed to the acquisition of perfection, but as maintaining themselves by this means in that which belongs to perfection.

Reply to Objection 3. The subjection of religious is chiefly in reference to [bishops](#), who are compared to them as perfecters to perfected, as [Dionysius](#) states (Eccl. Hier. vi), where he also says that the "monastic order is subjected to the perfecting [virtues](#) of the [bishops](#), and is taught by their godlike enlightenment." Hence neither hermits nor religious superiors are exempt from obedience to [bishops](#); and if they be wholly or partly exempt from obedience to the [bishop](#) of the diocese, they are nevertheless bound to obey the [Sovereign Pontiff](#), not only in matters affecting all in common, but also in those which pertain specially to religious discipline.

Reply to Objection 4. The [vow of obedience](#) taken by religious, extends to the disposition of a man's whole life, and in this way it has a certain universality, although it does not extend to all [individual](#) acts. For some of these do not belong to religion, through not being of those things that concern the love of [God](#) and of our neighbor, such as rubbing one's beard, lifting a stick from the ground and so forth, which do not come under a [vow](#) nor under obedience; and some are contrary to religion. Nor is there any comparison with [continence](#) whereby acts are excluded which are altogether contrary to religion.

Reply to Objection 5. The [necessity](#) of coercion makes an act involuntary and consequently deprives it of the character of praise or [merit](#); whereas the [necessity](#) which is consequent upon obedience is a [necessity](#) not of coercion but of a [free will](#), inasmuch as a man is willing to obey, although perhaps he would not be willing to do the thing commanded considered in itself. Wherefore since by the [vow of obedience](#) a man lays himself under the [necessity](#) of doing for [God's](#) sake certain things that are not pleasing in themselves, for this very reason that which he does is the more acceptable to [God](#), though it be of less account, because [man](#) can give nothing greater to [God](#), than by subjecting his will to another [man's](#) for [God's](#) sake. Hence in the *Confessions of the Fathers* (Coll. xviii, 7) it is stated that "the Sarabaitae are the worst class of monks, because through providing for their own needs without being subject to superiors, they are free to do as they will; and yet day and night they are more busily occupied in work than those who live in monasteries."

Article 6. Whether it is requisite for religious perfection that poverty, continence, and obedience should come under a vow?

Objection 1. It would seem that it is not requisite for religious perfection that the three aforesaid, namely [poverty](#), [continence](#), and obedience, should come under a [vow](#). For the school of perfection is founded on the principles laid down by [our Lord](#). Now [our Lord](#) in formulating perfection ([Matthew 19:21](#)) said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all [[Vulgate](#): 'what'] thou hast, and give to the [poor](#)," without any mention of a [vow](#). Therefore it would seem that a [vow](#) is not [necessary](#) for the school of religion.

Objection 2. Further, a [vow](#) is a promise made to [God](#), wherefore ([Ecclesiastes 5:3](#)) the wise [man](#) after saying: "If thou hast vowed anything to [God](#), defer not to pay it," adds at once, "for an unfaithful and foolish promise displeaseth Him." But when a thing is being actually given there is no need for a promise. Therefore it suffices for religious perfection that one keep [poverty](#), [continence](#), and obedience without. vowing them.

Objection 3. Further, [Augustine](#) says (Ad Pollent., de Adult. Conjug. i, 14): "The services we render are more pleasing when we might lawfully not render them, yet do so out of love." Now it is lawful not to render a service which we have not vowed, whereas it is unlawful if we have vowed to render it. Therefore seemingly it is more pleasing to [God](#) to keep [poverty](#), [continence](#), and obedience without a [vow](#). Therefore a [vow](#) is not requisite for religious perfection.

On the contrary, In the [Old Law](#) the Nazareans were [consecrated](#) by [vow](#) according to [Numbers 6:2](#), "When a man or [woman](#) shall make a [vow](#) to be sanctified and will [consecrate](#) themselves to the Lord," etc. Now these were a figure of those "who attain the summit of perfection," as a [gloss](#) [Cf. Moral. ii] of [Gregory](#) states. Therefore a [vow](#) is requisite for religious perfection.

I answer that, It belongs to religious to be in the state of perfection, as shown above (Question 174, Article 5). Now the state of perfection requires an [obligation](#) to whatever belongs to perfection: and this [obligation](#) consists in binding oneself to [God](#) by means of a [vow](#). But it is evident from what has been said (A3,4,5) that [poverty](#), [continence](#), and obedience belong to the perfection of the [Christian](#) life. Consequently the religious state requires that one be bound to these three by [vow](#). Hence [Gregory](#) says (Hom. xx in Ezech.): "When a man [vows](#) to [God](#) all his possessions, all his life, all his [knowledge](#), it is a [holocaust](#)"; and afterwards he says that this refers to those who renounce the present world.

Reply to Objection 1. [Our Lord](#) declared that it belongs to the perfection of life that a man follow Him, not anyhow, but in such a way as not to turn back. Wherefore He says again ([Luke 9:62](#)): "No [man](#) putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the [kingdom of God](#)." And though some of His [disciples](#) went back, yet when [our Lord](#) asked ([John 6:68-69](#)), "Will you also go away?" Peter answered for the others: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Hence [Augustine](#) says (De Consensu Ev. ii, 17) that "as Matthew and Mark relate, Peter and Andrew followed Him after drawing their boats on to the beach, not as though they purposed to return, but as following Him at His command." Now this unwavering following of [Christ](#) is made fast by a [vow](#): wherefore a [vow](#) is requisite for religious perfection.

Reply to Objection 2. As [Gregory](#) says (Moral. ii) religious perfection requires that a man give "his whole life" to [God](#). But a man cannot actually give [God](#) his whole life, because that life taken as a whole is not simultaneous but successive. Hence a man cannot give his whole life to [God](#) otherwise than by the [obligation](#) of a [vow](#).

Reply to Objection 3. Among other services that we can lawfully give, is our liberty, which is dearer to [man](#) than aught else. Consequently when a man of his own accord deprives himself by [vow](#) of the liberty of abstaining from things pertaining to [God's](#) service, this is most acceptable to [God](#). Hence [Augustine](#) says (Ep. cxxvii ad Paulin. et Arment.): "Repent not of thy [vow](#); rejoice rather that thou canst no longer do lawfully, what thou mightest have done lawfully but to thy own cost. Happy the [obligation](#) that compels to better things."

Supplement to the Third Part (Supplementum Tertiae Partis)

Question 41. The sacrament of Matrimony as directed to an office of nature

1. Is it of natural law?
2. Is it a matter of precept?
3. Is its act lawful?
4. Can its act be meritorious?

Article 1. Whether matrimony is of natural law?

Objection 1. It would seem that matrimony is not [natural](#). Because "the [natural law](#) is what [nature](#) has taught all animals" [Digest. I, i, de justitia et jure, 1.] But in other animals the sexes are united without matrimony. Therefore matrimony is not of [natural law](#).

Objection 1. Further, that which is of [natural law](#) is found in all [men](#) with regard to their every state. But [matrimony](#) was not in every state of [man](#), for as Tully says (De Inv. Rhet.), "at the beginning men were savages and then no [man](#) [knew](#) his own children, nor was he bound by any marriage tie," wherein [matrimony](#) consists. Therefore it is not [natural](#).

Objection 3. Further, [natural](#) things are the same among all. But [matrimony](#) is not in the same way among all, since its practice varies according to the various laws. Therefore it is not [natural](#).

Objection 4. Further, those things without which the [intention](#) of [nature](#) can be maintained would seem not to be [natural](#). But [nature](#) intends the preservation of the [species](#) by generation which is possible without [matrimony](#), as in the case of fornicators. Therefore [matrimony](#) is not [natural](#).

On the contrary, At the commencement of the Digests it is stated: "The union of male and female, which we call [matrimony](#), is of [natural law](#)."

Further, the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. viii, 12) says that "[man](#) is an animal more inclined by [nature](#) to connubial than political society." But "[man](#) is [naturally](#) a political and gregarious animal," as the same author asserts (Polit. i, 2). Therefore he is [naturally](#) inclined to connubial union, and thus the conjugal union or [matrimony](#) is [natural](#).

I answer that, A thing is said to be [natural](#) in two ways. First, as resulting of [necessity](#) from the principles of [nature](#); thus upward movement is [natural](#) to fire. In this way [matrimony](#) is not [natural](#), nor are any of those things that come to pass at the intervention or motion of the [free-will](#). Secondly, that is said to be [natural](#) to which [nature](#) inclines although it comes to pass

through the intervention of the [free-will](#); thus acts of [virtue](#) and the [virtues](#) themselves are called [natural](#); and in this way [matrimony](#) is [natural](#), because [natural reason](#) inclines thereto in two ways. First, in relation to the principal end of [matrimony](#), namely the [good](#) of the offspring. For [nature](#) intends not only the begetting of offspring, but also its education and development until it reach the perfect state of [man](#) as [man](#), and that is the state of [virtue](#). Hence, according to the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. viii, 11,12), we derive three things from our parents, namely "[existence](#)," "nourishment," and "[education](#)." Now a child cannot be brought up and instructed unless it have certain and definite parents, and this would not be the case unless there were a tie between the [man](#) and a definite [woman](#) and it is in this that [matrimony](#) consists. Secondly, in relation to the secondary end of [matrimony](#), which is the mutual services which [married persons](#) render one another in household matters. For just as [natural reason](#) dictates that men should live together, since one is not self-sufficient in all things concerning life, for which reason [man](#) is described as being [naturally](#) inclined to political society, so too among those works that are [necessary](#) for [human](#) life some are becoming to [men](#), others to [women](#). Wherefore [nature](#) inculcates that society of [man](#) and [woman](#) which consists in [matrimony](#). These two reasons are given by the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. viii, 11,12).

Reply to Objection 1. [Man's nature](#) inclines to a thing in two ways. In one way, because that thing is becoming to the generic [nature](#), and this is common to all animals; in another way because it is becoming to the [nature](#) of the difference, whereby the [human species](#) in so far as it is rational overflows the genus; such is an act of [prudence](#) or [temperance](#). And just as the generic [nature](#), though one in all animals, yet is not in all in the same way, so neither does it incline in the same way in all, but in a way befitting each one. Accordingly [man's nature](#) inclines to [matrimony](#) on the part of the difference, as regards the second reason given above; wherefore the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. viii, 11,12; Polit. i) gives this reason in men over other animals; but as regards the first reason it inclines on the part of the genus; wherefore he says that the begetting of offspring is common to all animals. Yet [nature](#) does not incline thereto in the same way in all animals; since there are animals whose offspring are able to seek food immediately after birth, or are sufficiently fed by their mother; and in these there is no tie between male and female; whereas in those whose offspring needs the support of both parents, although for a short time, there is a certain tie, as may be seen in certain birds. In [man](#), however, since the child needs the parents' care for a long time, there is a very great tie between male and female, to which tie even the generic [nature](#) inclines.

Reply to Objection 2. The assertion of Tully may be [true](#) of some particular nation, provided we understand it as referring to the proximate beginning of that nation when it became a nation distinct from others; for that to which [natural reason](#) inclines is not realized in all things, and this statement is not universally [true](#), since [Holy Writ](#) states that there has been [matrimony](#) from the beginning of the [human race](#).

Reply to Objection 3. According to the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. vii) "[human nature](#) is not unchangeable as the Divine [nature](#) is." Hence things that are of [natural law](#) vary according to the various states and [conditions](#) of [men](#); although those which [naturally](#) pertain to things Divine nowise vary.

Reply to Objection 4. Nature intends not only being in the offspring, but also perfect being, for which [matrimony](#) is [necessary](#), as shown above.

Article 2. Whether matrimony still comes under a precept?

Objection 1. It would seem that [matrimony](#) still comes under a precept. For a precept is binding so long as it is not recalled. But the primary institution of [matrimony](#) came under a precept, as stated in the text (Sent. iv, D, 26); nor do we read anywhere that this precept was recalled, but rather that it was confirmed ([Matthew 19:6](#)): "What . . . [God](#) hath joined together let no [man](#) put asunder." Therefore [matrimony](#) still comes under a precept.

Objection 2. Further, the precepts of [natural law](#) are binding in respect of all time. Now [matrimony](#) is of [natural law](#), as stated above ([Article 1](#)). Therefore, etc.

Objection 3. Further, the [good](#) of the [species](#) is better than the [good](#) of the [individual](#), "for the [good](#) of the State is more Godlike than the [good](#) of one [man](#)" (Ethic. i, 2). Now the precept given to the first [man](#) concerning the preservation of the [good](#) of the [individual](#) by the act of the nutritive power is still in force. Much more therefore does the precept concerning [matrimony](#) still hold, since it refers to the preservation of the [species](#).

Objection 4. Further, where the reason of an [obligation](#) remains the same, the [obligation](#) must remain the same. Now the reason why men were bound to marry in olden times was lest the [human race](#) should cease to multiply. Since then the result would be the same, if each one were free to abstain from marriage, it would seem that [matrimony](#) comes under a precept.

On the contrary, It is written ([1 Corinthians 7:38](#)): "He that giveth not his [virgin](#) in marriage doth better [[Vulgate](#): 'He that giveth his [virgin](#) in marriage doth well, and he that giveth her not doth better']," namely than he that giveth her in marriage. Therefore the contract of marriage is not now a matter of precept.

Further, no one deserves a reward for breaking a precept. Now a special reward, namely the aureole, is due to [virgins](#) [Cf. 96, 5]. Therefore [matrimony](#) does not come under a precept.

I answer that, [Nature](#) inclines to a thing in two ways. In one way as to that which is [necessary](#) for the perfection of the [individual](#), and such an [obligation](#) is binding on each one, since [natural](#) perfections are common to all. In another way it inclines to that which is [necessary](#) for the perfection of the community; and since there are many things of this kind, one of which hinders another, such an inclination does not bind each [man](#) by way of precept; else each [man](#) would be bound to husbandry and building and to such offices as are [necessary](#) to the [human](#) community; but the inclination of [nature](#) is satisfied by the accomplishment of those various offices by various individuals. Accordingly, since the perfection of the [human](#) community requires that some should devote themselves to the contemplative life to which marriage is a very great obstacle, the [natural](#) inclination to marriage is not binding by way of precept even according to the [philosophers](#). Hence Theophrastus proves that it is not advisable for a wise [man](#) to marry, as [Jerome](#) relates (Contra Jovin. i).

Reply to Objection 1. This precept has not been recalled, and yet it is not binding on each [individual](#), for the reason given above, except at that time when the paucity of [men](#) required each one to betake himself to the begetting of children.

The Replies to objections 2 and 3 are clear from what has been said.

Reply to Objection 4. [Human nature](#) has a general inclination to various offices and acts, as already stated. But since it is variously in various subjects, as individualized in this or that one, it inclines one subject more to one of those offices, and another subject more to another, according to the difference of temperament of various [individuals](#). And it is owing to this difference, as well as to [Divine providence](#) which governs all, that one [person](#) chooses one office such as husbandry, and another [person](#) another. And so it is too that some choose the [married](#) life and some the [contemplative](#). Wherefore no danger threatens.

Article 3. Whether the marriage act is always sinful?

Objection 1. It would seem that the marriage act is always [sinful](#). For it is written ([1 Corinthians 7:29](#)): "That they . . . who have wives, be as if they had none." But those who are not [married](#) do not perform the marriage act. Therefore even those who are [married sin](#) in that act.

Objection 2. Further, "Your iniquities have divided between you and your [God](#)." Now the marriage act divides [man](#) from [God](#) wherefore the people who were to see [God](#) ([Exodus 19:11](#)) were commanded not to go near their wives ([Exodus 19:20](#)); and [Jerome](#) says (Ep. ad Ageruch.: Contra Jovini, 18) that in the marriage act "the [Holy Ghost](#) touches not the hearts of the [prophets](#)." Therefore it is [sinful](#).

Objection 3. Further, that which is shameful in itself can by no means be well done. Now the marriage act is always connected with [concupiscence](#), which is always shameful. Therefore it is always [sinful](#).

Objection 4. Further, nothing is the object of excuse save [sin](#). Now the marriage act needs to be excused by the marriage blessings, as the [Master](#) says (Sent. iv, D, 26). Therefore it is a [sin](#).

Objection 5. Further, things alike in [species](#) are judged alike. But marriage intercourse is of the same [species](#) as the act of [adultery](#), since its end is the same, namely the [human species](#). Therefore since the act of [adultery](#) is a [sin](#), the marriage act is likewise.

Objection 6. Further, excess in the [passions](#) corrupts [virtue](#). Now there is always excess of pleasure in the marriage act, so much so that it absorbs the reason which is [man's](#) principal [good](#), wherefore the [Philosopher](#) says (Ethic. vii, 11) that "in that act it is impossible to understand anything." Therefore the marriage act is always a [sin](#).

On the contrary, It is written ([1 Corinthians 7:28](#)): "If a [virgin](#) marry she hath not [sinned](#)," and ([1 Timothy 5:14](#)): "I will . . . that the younger should marry," and "bear children." But there can be no bearing of children without carnal union. Therefore the marriage act is not a [sin](#); else the [Apostle](#) would not have approved of it.

Further, no [sin](#) is a matter of precept. But the marriage act is a matter of precept ([1 Corinthians 7:3](#)): "Let the husband render the debt to his life." Therefore it is not a [sin](#).

I answer that, If we suppose the corporeal [nature](#) to be [created](#) by the [good God](#) we cannot hold that those things which pertain to the preservation of the corporeal [nature](#) and to which [nature](#) inclines, are altogether [evil](#); wherefore, since the inclination to beget an offspring whereby the specific [nature](#) is preserved is from [nature](#), it is impossible to maintain that the act of begetting children is altogether unlawful, so that it be impossible to find the mean of [virtue](#) therein; unless we suppose, as some are mad enough to assert, that corruptible things were [created](#) by an [evil god](#), whence perhaps the opinion mentioned in the text is derived (Sent. iv, D, 26); wherefore this is a most [wicked heresy](#).

Reply to Objection 1. By these words the [Apostle](#) did not forbid the marriage act, as neither did he forbid the possession of things when he said ([1 Corinthians 7:31](#)): "They that use this world" (let them be) "as if they used it not." In each case he forbade enjoyment ["Fruitionem," i.e. enjoyment of a thing sought as one's last end]; which is clear from the way in which he expresses himself; for he did not say "let them not use it," or "let them not have them," but let them be "as if they used it not" and "as if they had none."

Reply to Objection 2. We are united to [God](#) by the [habit](#) of [grace](#) and by the act of [contemplation](#) and love. Therefore whatever severs the former of these unions is always a [sin](#), but not always that which severs the latter, since a lawful occupation about lower things distracts the [mind](#) so that it is not fit for actual union with [God](#); and this is especially the case in carnal intercourse wherein the [mind](#) is withheld by the intensity of pleasure. For this reason those who have to contemplate Divine things or handle sacred things are enjoined not to have to do with their wives for that particular time; and it is in this sense that the [Holy Ghost](#), as regards the actual [revelation](#) of hidden things, did not touch the hearts of the [prophets](#) at the time of the marriage act.

Reply to Objection 3. The shamefulness of [concupiscence](#) that always accompanies the marriage act is a shamefulness not of guilt, but of punishment inflicted for the first [sin](#), inasmuch as the lower powers and the members do not obey reason. Hence the argument does not [prove](#).

Reply to Objection 4. Properly speaking, a thing is said to be excused when it has some appearance of [evil](#), and yet is not [evil](#), or not as [evil](#) as it seems, because some things excuse wholly, others in part. And since the marriage act, by reason of the corruption of [concupiscence](#), has the appearance of an inordinate act, it is wholly excused by the marriage [blessing](#), so as not to be a [sin](#).

Reply to Objection 5. Although they are the same as to their [natural species](#), they differ as to their moral [species](#), which differs in respect of one circumstance, namely intercourse with one's wife and with another than one's wife; just as to kill a man by assault or by [justice](#) differentiates the moral [species](#), although the [natural species](#) is the same; and yet the one is lawful and the other unlawful.

Reply to Objection 6. The excess of [passions](#) that corrupts [virtue](#) not only hinders the [act](#) of [reason](#), but also destroys the order of [reason](#). The intensity of pleasure in the marriage act does not do this, since, although for the moment [man](#) is not being directed, he was previously directed by his [reason](#).

Article 4. Whether the marriage act is meritorious?

Objection 1. It would seem that the marriage act is not [meritorious](#). For [Chrysostom](#) [Hom. i in the Opus Imperfectum, [falsely](#) ascribed to [St. John Chrysostom](#)] says in his commentary on Matthew: "Although marriage brings no punishment to those who use it, it affords them no meed." Now [merit](#) bears a relation to meed. Therefore the marriage act is not [meritorious](#).

Objection 2. Further, to refrain from what is [meritorious](#) deserves not praise. Yet [virginity](#) whereby one refrains from marriage is praiseworthy. Therefore the marriage act is not [meritorious](#).

Objection 3. Further, he who avails himself of an [indulgence](#) granted him, avails himself of a favor received. But a man does not [merit](#) by receiving a favor. Therefore the marriage act is not [meritorious](#).

Objection 4. Further, [merit](#) like [virtue](#), consists in difficulty. But the marriage act affords not difficulty but pleasure. Therefore it is not [meritorious](#).

Objection 5. Further, that which cannot be done without venial [sin](#) is never [meritorious](#), for a man cannot both [merit](#) and demerit at the same time. Now there is always a venial [sin](#) in the marriage act, since even the first movement in such like pleasures is a venial [sin](#). Therefore the aforesaid act cannot be [meritorious](#).

On the contrary, Every act whereby a precept is fulfilled is [meritorious](#) if it be done from [charity](#). Now such is the marriage act, for it is said ([1 Corinthians 7:3](#)): "Let the husband render the debt to his wife." Therefore, etc.

Further, every act of [virtue](#) is [meritorious](#). Now the aforesaid act is an act of [justice](#), for it is called the rendering of a debt. Therefore it is [meritorious](#).

I answer that, Since no act proceeding from a deliberate [will](#) is indifferent, as stated in the Second Book (Sent. ii, D, 40, 1, 3; I-II, 18, 9), the marriage act is always either [sinful](#) or [meritorious](#) in one who is in a state of [grace](#). For if the motive for the marriage act be a [virtue](#), whether of [justice](#) that they may render the debt, or of religion, that they may beget children for the worship of [God](#), it is [meritorious](#). But if the motive be [lust](#), yet not excluding the marriage blessings, namely that he would by no means be willing to go to another [woman](#), it is a venial [sin](#); while if he exclude the marriage blessings, so as to be disposed to act in like manner with any [woman](#), it is a mortal [sin](#). And [nature](#) cannot move without being either directed by reason, and thus it will be an act of [virtue](#), or not so directed, and then it will be an act of [lust](#).

Reply to Objection 1. The root of [merit](#), as regards the [essential](#) reward, is [charity](#) itself; but as regards an [accidental](#) reward, the reason for [merit](#) consists in the difficulty of an act; and thus the marriage act is not [meritorious](#) except in the first way.

Reply to Objection 2. The difficulty required for [merit](#) of the [accidental](#) reward is a difficulty of labor, but the difficulty required for the [essential](#) reward is the difficulty of observing the mean, and this is the difficulty in the marriage act.

Reply to Objection 3. First movements in so far as they are venial [sins](#) are movements of the [appetite](#) to some inordinate object of pleasure. This is not the case in the marriage act, and consequently the argument does not [prove](#).

Question 42. Matrimony as a sacrament

1. Is Matrimony a sacrament?
2. Should it have been instituted before sin was committed?
3. Does it confer grace?
4. Does carnal intercourse belong to the integrity of Matrimony?

Article 1. Whether matrimony is a sacrament?

Objection 1. It would seem that [matrimony](#) is not a [sacrament](#). For every sacrament of the [New Law](#) has a form that is [essential](#) to the [sacrament](#). But the [blessing](#) given by the [priest](#) at a wedding is not [essential](#) to [matrimony](#). Therefore it is not a [sacrament](#).

Objection 2. Further, a [sacrament](#) according to Hugh (De Sacram. i) is "a material element." But [matrimony](#) has not a material element for its [matter](#). Therefore it is not a [sacrament](#).

Objection 3. Further, the [sacraments](#) derive their efficacy from [Christ's Passion](#). But [matrimony](#), since it has pleasure annexed to it, does not conform [man](#) to [Christ's Passion](#), which was painful. Therefore it is not a [sacrament](#).

Objection 4. Further, every sacrament of the [New Law](#) [causes](#) that which it signifies. Yet [matrimony](#) does not [cause](#) the union of [Christ](#) with the [Church](#), which union it signifies. Therefore [matrimony](#) is not a [sacrament](#).

Objection 5. Further, in the other [sacraments](#) there is something which is reality and sacrament. But this is not to be found in [matrimony](#), since it does not imprint a character, else it would not be repeated. Therefore it is not a [sacrament](#).

On the contrary, It is written ([Ephesians 5:32](#)): "This is a great sacrament." Therefore, etc.

Further, a [sacrament](#) is the sign of a sacred thing. But such is Matrimony. Therefore, etc.

I answer that, A sacrament denotes a sanctifying remedy against [sin](#) offered to [man](#) under sensible signs [Cf. III, 61, 1; III, 65, 1]. Wherefore since this is the case in [matrimony](#), it is reckoned among the [sacraments](#).

Reply to Objection 1. The words whereby the marriage consent is expressed are the form of this [sacrament](#), and not the [priest's blessing](#), which is a sacramental.

Reply to Objection 2. The sacrament of Matrimony, like that of Penance, is perfected by the act of the recipient. Wherefore just as Penance has no other [matter](#) than the sensible acts themselves, which take the place of the material element, so it is in Matrimony.

Reply to Objection 3. Although Matrimony is not conformed to [Christ's Passion](#) as regards pain, it is as regards [charity](#), whereby He suffered for the [Church](#) who was to be united to Him as His spouse.

Reply to Objection 4. The union of [Christ](#) with the [Church](#) is not the reality contained in this [sacrament](#), but is the reality signified and not contained--and no sacrament [causes](#) a reality of that kind--but it has another both contained and signified which it [causes](#), as we shall state further on (ad 5). The [Master](#), however (Sent. iv, D, 26), asserts that it is a non-contained reality, because he was of opinion that Matrimony has no reality contained therein.

Reply to Objection 5. In this [sacrament](#) also those three things [Cf. III, 66, 1] are to be found, for the acts externally apparent are the sacrament only; the bond between husband and wife resulting from those acts is reality and sacrament; and the ultimate reality contained is the effect of this [sacrament](#), while the non-contained reality is that which the [Master](#) assigns (Sent. iv, D, 26).

Article 2. Whether this sacrament ought to have been instituted before sin was committed?

Objection 1. It would seem that Matrimony ought not to have been instituted before [sin](#). Because that which is of [natural law](#) needs not to be instituted. Now such is Matrimony, as stated above (Question 41, Article 1). Therefore it ought not to have been instituted.

Objection 2. Further, [sacraments](#) are medicines against the disease of [sin](#). But a medicine is not made ready except for an actual disease. Therefore it should not have been instituted before [sin](#).

Objection 3. Further, one institution suffices for one thing. Now Matrimony was instituted also after [sin](#), as stated in the text (Sent. iv, D, 26). Therefore it was not instituted before [sin](#).

Objection 4. Further, the institution of a [sacrament](#) must come from [God](#). Now before [sin](#), the words relating to Matrimony were not definitely said by [God](#) but by [Adam](#); the words which [God](#)

uttered ([Genesis 1:22](#)), "Increase and multiply," were addressed also to the brute creation where there is no marriage. Therefore Matrimony was not instituted before [sin](#).

Objection 5. Further, Matrimony is a [sacrament](#) of the [New Law](#). But the [sacraments](#) of the [New Law](#) took their origin from [Christ](#). Therefore it ought not to have been instituted before [sin](#).

On the contrary, It is said ([Matthew 19:4](#)): "Have ye not read that He Who made [man](#) from the beginning 'made them male and female'?"

Further, Matrimony was instituted for the begetting of children. But the begetting of children was [necessary](#) to [man](#) before [sin](#). Therefore it behooved Matrimony to be instituted before [sin](#).

I answer that, [Nature](#) inclines to marriage with a certain [good](#) in view, which [good](#) varies according to the different states of [man](#), wherefore it was [necessary](#) for [matrimony](#) to be variously instituted in the various states of [man](#) in reference to that [good](#). Consequently [matrimony](#) as directed to the begetting of children, which was [necessary](#) even when there was no [sin](#), was instituted before [sin](#); according as it affords a remedy for the wound of [sin](#), it was instituted after [sin](#) at the time of the [natural law](#); its institution belongs to the [Mosaic Law](#) as regards personal disqualifications; and it was instituted in the [New Law](#) in so far as it represents the [mystery](#) of [Christ's](#) union with the [Church](#), and in this respect it is a [sacrament](#) of the [New Law](#). As regards other advantages resulting from [matrimony](#), such as the friendship and mutual services which husband and wife render one another, its institution belongs to the [civil law](#). Since, however, a [sacrament](#) is [essentially](#) a sign and a remedy, it follows that the [nature](#) of sacrament applies to [matrimony](#) as regards the intermediate institution; that it is fittingly intended to fulfill an office of [nature](#) as regards the first institution; and, as regards the last-mentioned institution, that it is directed to fulfill an office of society.

Reply to Objection 1. Things which are of [natural law](#) in a general way, need to be instituted as regards their determination which is subject to variation according to various states; just as it is of [natural law](#) that evil-doers be punished, but that such and such a punishment be appointed for such and such a crime is determined by positive [law](#).

Reply to Objection 2. Matrimony is not only for a remedy against [sin](#), but is chiefly for an office of [nature](#); and thus it was instituted before [sin](#), not as intended for a remedy.

Reply to Objection 3. There is no reason why [matrimony](#) should not have had several institutions corresponding to the various things that had to be determined in connection with marriage. Hence these various institutions are not of the same thing in the same respect.

Reply to Objection 4. Before [sin](#) [matrimony](#) was instituted by [God](#), when He fashioned a helpmate for [man](#) out of his rib, and said to them: "Increase and multiply." And although this was said also to the other animals, it was not to be fulfilled by them in the same way as by [men](#). As to [Adam's](#) words, he uttered them inspired by [God](#) to understand that the institution of marriage was from [God](#).

Reply to Objection 5. As was clearly stated, [matrimony](#) was not instituted before [Christ](#) as a [sacrament](#) of the [New Law](#).

Article 3. Whether matrimony confers grace?

Objection 1. It would seem that [matrimony](#) does not confer [grace](#). For, according to Hugh (De Sacram. i) "the [sacraments](#), by virtue of their sanctification, confer an invisible [grace](#)." But [matrimony](#) has no sanctification [essential](#) to it. Therefore [grace](#) is not conferred therein.

Objection 2. Further, every sacrament that confers [grace](#) confers it by virtue of its [matter](#) and [form](#). Now the acts which are the [matter](#) in this [sacrament](#) are not the [cause](#) of [grace](#) (for it would be the [heresy](#) of Pelagius to assert that our acts [cause grace](#)); and the words expressive of consent are not the [cause](#) of [grace](#), since no sanctification results from them. Therefore [grace](#) is by no means given in [matrimony](#).

Objection 3. Further, the [grace](#) that is directed against the wound of [sin](#) is [necessary](#) to all who have that wound. Now the wound of [concupiscence](#) is to be found in all. Therefore if [grace](#) were given in [matrimony](#) against the wound of [concupiscence](#), all [men](#) ought to contract marriage, and it would be very stupid to refrain from [matrimony](#).

Objection 4. Further, sickness does not seek a remedy where it finds aggravation. Now [concupiscence](#) is aggravated by [concupiscence](#), because, according to the [Philosopher](#) (Ethic. iii, 12), "the desire of [concupiscence](#) is insatiable, and is increased by congenial actions." Therefore it would seem that [grace](#) is not conferred in [matrimony](#), as a remedy for [concupiscence](#).

On the contrary, Definition and thing defined should be convertible. Now [causality](#) of [grace](#) is included in the definition of a [sacrament](#). Since, then, [matrimony](#) is a [sacrament](#), it is a [cause](#) of [grace](#).

Further, [Augustine](#) says (De Bono Viduit. viii; Gen. ad lit. ix, 7) that "[matrimony](#) affords a remedy to the sick." But it is not a remedy except in so far as it has some efficacy. Therefore it has some efficacy for the repression of [concupiscence](#). Now [concupiscence](#) is not repressed except by [grace](#). Therefore [grace](#) is conferred therein.

I answer that, There have been three opinions on this point. For some [[Peter Lombard](#), Sent. iv, D, 2 said that [matrimony](#) is nowise the [cause](#) of [grace](#), but only a sign thereof. But this cannot be maintained, for in that case it would in no respect surpass the [sacraments](#) of the [Old Law](#). Wherefore there would be no reason for reckoning it among the [sacraments](#) of the [New Law](#); since even in the [Old Law](#) by the very [nature](#) of the act it was able to afford a remedy to [concupiscence](#) lest the latter run riot when held in too strict restraint.

Hence others [[St. Albert Magnus](#), Sent. iv, D, 26 said that [grace](#) is conferred therein as regards the withdrawal from [evil](#), because the act is excused from [sin](#), for it would be a [sin](#) apart from [matrimony](#). But this would be too little, since it had this also in the [Old Law](#). And so they say that it makes [man](#) withdraw from [evil](#), by restraining the [concupiscence](#) lest it tend to something outside the marriage blessings, but that this [grace](#) does not enable a man to do [good](#) works. But

this cannot be maintained, since the same [grace](#) hinders [sin](#) and inclines to [good](#), just as the same heat expels cold and gives heat.

Hence others [[St. Bonaventure](#), Sent. iv, D, 26 say that [matrimony](#), inasmuch as it is contracted in the [faith](#) of [Christ](#), is able to confer the [grace](#) which enables us to do those works which are required in [matrimony](#). and this is more probable, since wherever [God](#) gives the faculty to do a thing, He gives also the helps whereby [man](#) is enabled to make becoming use of that faculty; thus it is clear that to all the [soul's](#) powers there correspond bodily members by which they can proceed to act. Therefore, since in [matrimony](#) [man](#) receives by Divine institution the faculty to use his wife for the begetting of children, he also receives the [grace](#) without which he cannot becomingly do so; just as we have said of the sacrament of orders (35, 1). And thus this [grace](#) which is given is the last thing contained in this [sacrament](#).

Reply to Objection 1. Just as the baptismal water by virtue of its contact with [Christ's](#) body [Cf. III, 66, 3, ad 4] is able to "touch the body and cleanse the heart" [[St. Augustine](#), Tract. lxxx in Joan.], so is [matrimony](#) able to do so through [Christ](#) having represented it by His [Passion](#), and not principally through any [blessing](#) of the [priest](#).

Reply to Objection 2. Just as the water of [Baptism](#) together with the form of words results immediately not in the infusion of [grace](#), but in the imprinting of the character, so the outward acts and the words expressive of consent directly effect a certain tie which is the sacrament of [matrimony](#); and this tie by virtue of its Divine institution works dispositively [Cf. 18, 1], where [St. Thomas](#) uses the same expression; and Editor's notes at the beginning of the Supplement and on that Article] to the infusion of [grace](#).

Reply to Objection 3. This argument would hold if no more efficacious remedy could be employed against the disease of [concupiscence](#); but a yet more powerful remedy is found in [spiritual](#) works and mortification of the flesh by those who make no use of [matrimony](#).

Reply to Objection 4. A remedy can be employed against [concupiscence](#) in two ways. First, on the part of [concupiscence](#) by repressing it in its root, and thus [matrimony](#) affords a remedy by the [grace](#) given therein. Secondly, on the part of its act, and this in two ways: first, by depriving the act to which [concupiscence](#) inclines of its outward shamefulness, and this is done by the marriage blessings which justify carnal [concupiscence](#); secondly, by hindering the shameful act, which is done by the very [nature](#) of the act. because [concupiscence](#), being satisfied by the conjugal act, does not incline so much to other [wickedness](#). For this reason the [Apostle](#) says ([1 Corinthians 7:9](#)): "It is better to marry than to burn." For though the works congenial to [concupiscence](#) are in themselves of a [nature](#) to increase [concupiscence](#), yet in so far as they are directed according to reason they repress [concupiscence](#), because like acts result in like dispositions and [habits](#).

Article 4. Whether carnal intercourse is an integral part of this sacrament?

Objection 1. It would seem that carnal intercourse is an integral part of marriage. For at the very institution of marriage it was declared ([Genesis 2:24](#)): "They shall be two in one flesh." Now this is not brought about save by carnal intercourse. Therefore it is an integral part of marriage.

Objection 2. Further, that which belongs to the signification of a [sacrament](#) is [necessary](#) for the [sacrament](#), as we have stated above (2; 9, 1). Now carnal intercourse belongs to the signification of [matrimony](#), as stated in the text (Sent. iv, D, 26). Therefore it is an integral part of the [sacrament](#).

Objection 3. Further, this [sacrament](#) is directed to the preservation of the [species](#). But the [species](#) cannot be preserved without carnal intercourse. Therefore it is an integral part of the [sacrament](#).

Objection 4. Further, Matrimony is a [sacrament](#) inasmuch as it affords a remedy against [concupiscence](#); according to the [Apostle's](#) saying ([1 Corinthians 7:9](#)): "It is better to marry than to burn." But it does not afford this remedy to those who have no carnal intercourse. Therefore the same conclusion follows as before.

On the contrary, There was [matrimony](#) in Paradise, and yet there was no carnal intercourse. Therefore carnal intercourse is not an integral part of [matrimony](#).

Further, a [sacrament](#) by its very name denotes a sanctification. But [matrimony](#) is [holier](#) without carnal intercourse, according to the text (Sent. D, 26). Therefore carnal intercourse is not [necessary](#) for the [sacrament](#).

I answer that, Integrity is twofold. One regards the primal perfection consisting in the very [essence](#) of a thing; the other regards the secondary perfection consisting in operation. Since then carnal intercourse is an operation or use of marriage which gives the faculty for that intercourse, it follows, that carnal intercourse belongs to the latter, and not to the former integrity of marriage [Cf. III, 29, 2].

Reply to Objection 1. [Adam](#) expressed the integrity of marriage in regard to both perfections, because a thing is [known](#) by its operation.

Reply to Objection 2. Signification of the thing contained is [necessary](#) for the [sacrament](#). Carnal intercourse belongs not to this signification, but to the thing not contained, as appears from what was said above (1, ad 4,5).

Reply to Objection 3. A thing does not reach its end except by its own act. Wherefore, from the fact that the end of [matrimony](#) is not attained without carnal intercourse, it follows that it belongs to the second and not to the first integrity.

Reply to Objection 4. Before carnal intercourse marriage is a remedy by virtue of the [grace](#) given therein, although not by virtue of the act, which belongs to the second integrity.

Supplemental Readings

Treatise on the Love of God; St. Francis de Sales

Book VIII

OF THE LOVE OF CONFORMITY, BY WHICH WE UNITE OUR WILL TO THE WILL OF GOD, SIGNIFIED UNTO US BY HIS COMMANDMENTS, COUNSELS AND INSPIRATIONS.



CHAPTER VIII.

THAT THE CONTEMPT OF THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS IS A GREAT SIN.

The words in which our Saviour exhorts us to tend towards and aim at perfection, are so forcible and so pressing, that we cannot dissemble the obligation we have to undertake to carry out that design. Be holy, says he, because I am holy. [380] He that is holy, let him be sanctified still; and he that is just, let him be justified still. [381] Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. [382] For this cause, the great S. Bernard writing to the glorious S. Guerin, Abbot of Aulps, whose life and miracles have left so sweet an odour in this diocese: "The just man," says he, "never says it is enough; he still hungers and thirsts after justice."

Truly, Theotimus, in temporal matters nothing suffices him who is not satisfied with what is enough; for what can suffice him to whom sufficiency is not sufficient? But in spiritual goods he has not sufficient who is satisfied with what is enough, and sufficiency is not sufficient, because true sufficiency in divine things consists partly in the desire of affluence. God in the beginning commanded the earth to bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after its kind, which has also seed in itself. [383]

And do we not see by experience, that plants and fruits are not come to their full growth and maturity till they bring forth their seeds and pips, whence other trees and plants of the same kind spring. Never do our virtues come to their full stature and measure, till such time as they beget in us desires of progress, which like spiritual seeds serve for the production of new degrees of virtue. And, methinks, the earth of our heart is commanded to bring forth the plants of virtue, which bear the fruits of good works, every one in its kind, and having the seeds of desires and resolutions of ever multiplying and advancing in perfection. And the virtue that bears not the seed of these desires is not yet come to its growth and maturity. "So then," says S. Bernard to the tepid man, "you do not want to advance in perfection? No. Nor yet grow worse? No, truly. What, then, you would neither grow better nor worse?" poor man, you would be what cannot be. Nothing, indeed, in the world is either stable or constant; but of man it is said even more specially that he never remaineth in the same state. [384] It is necessary then that he either go

forward or backward."

Now I say not, any more than does S. Bernard, that it is a sin not to practise the counsels. No, in truth, Theotimus: for it is the very difference between commandments and counsels, that the commandment obliges us under pain of sin, and the counsel only invites us without pain of sin. Yet I distinctly say that to contemn the aiming after Christian perfection is a great sin, and that it is a still greater to contemn the invitation by which our Saviour calls us to it; but it is an insupportable impiety to contemn the counsels and means which our Saviour points out for the attainment of it. It were a heresy to say, that our Saviour had not given us good counsel, and a blasphemy to say to God: Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: [385] but it is a horrible irreverence towards him who with so much love and sweetness invites us to perfection, to say: I will not be holy or perfect, nor have any larger portion of thy benevolence, nor follow the counsels which thou givest me to make progress in perfection.

We may indeed without sin not follow the counsels, on account of the affection we may have to other things: as for example, it is lawful for a man not to sell what he possesseth to give to the poor, because he has not the courage to make so entire a renunciation. It is also lawful to marry, because one loves, or because one has not strength of mind necessary to undertake the war which must be waged against the flesh. But to profess not to wish to follow the counsels, nor any one of them, cannot be done without contempt of him who gives them. Not to follow the counsel of virginity, and so to marry, is not wrong, but marrying as if putting marriage higher than chastity, as heretics do, that is a great contempt either of the counsellor or of his counsel. To drink wine against the doctor's advice when overcome with thirst or with a desire to drink, is not precisely to contemn the doctor nor his advice: but to say "I will not follow the doctor's advice" must necessarily proceed from some bad opinion one harbours of him. Now as regards men, one may often contemn their counsel, without contemning those who give it, because to think that a man may have erred is not to contemn him. But to reject and contemn God's counsel, can only spring from an idea that he has not counselled us well; which cannot be thought but by a spirit of blasphemy, as though God were not wise enough to be able, or good enough to will, to give good advice. We may say the same of the counsels of the Church, which by reason of the continued assistance of the Holy Ghost, who instructs and conducts her in all truth, can never give evil advice.

[380] Levit. xi. 44.

[381] Apoc. xxii. 11

[382] Matt. v. 48.

[383] Gen. i. 11.

[384] Job xiv. 2.

[385] Job xxi. 14.

Book VIII

*OF THE LOVE OF CONFORMITY, BY WHICH WE UNITE OUR WILL TO
THE WILL OF GOD, SIGNIFIED UNTO US BY HIS COMMANDMENTS,
COUNSELS AND INSPIRATIONS.*



CHAPTER IX.

***A CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING DISCOURSE. HOW
EVERY ONE, WHILE BOUND TO LOVE, IS NOT BOUND TO
PRACTISE, ALL THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS, AND YET HOW EVERY
ONE SHOULD PRACTISE WHAT HE IS ABLE.***

Although all the Evangelical Counsels cannot and should not be practised by every Christian in particular, yet every one is obliged to love them all, because they are all very good. If you have a sick headache, and the smell of musk annoys you, will you therefore deny that this smell is good and delightful? If a robe of gold does not suit you, will you say that therefore it is worth nothing? Or will you throw a ring into the dirt because it fits not your finger? Praise therefore, Theotimus, and dearly love, all the counsels that God has given unto men.

Oh! blessed be the Angel of Great Counsel for ever, together with all the counsels he gives and exhortations he makes to men! Ointment and perfumes rejoice the heart, says Solomon, and the good counsels of a friend are sweet to the soul! [386] But of what friend, and of what counsels, do we speak? O God! it is of the friend of friends; and his counsels are more delightful than honey: our friend is our Saviour, his counsels are to save us. Let us rejoice, Theotimus, when we see others undertake to follow those counsels, which we either cannot or must not observe; let us pray for them, bless, favour and assist them: for charity obliges us not only to love what is good for ourselves, but that also which is good for our neighbour.

We shall sufficiently testify our love for all the counsels, when we devoutly observe such as are suitable to our calling. For, as he that believes one article of faith because God has revealed it by his Word (announced and declared by the Church), cannot disbelieve the others: and as he who observes one commandment for the pure love of God is most ready to observe the others when occasion offers: so he that loves and prizes one evangelical counsel because it came from God, must necessarily love all the others, because they are also from God. Now we may with ease practise some of them, though not all of them together; for God has given many, in order that every one may observe some of them, and not a day passes without our having some opportunity of doing so.

If charity require that to assist your father or mother you must live with them, preserve at the same time the love and affection for your seclusion; do not keep your heart in your father's house more than is required for doing what charity orders to be done there. Is it inexpedient for you, on account of your rank, to preserve perfect chastity? Keep it at least, as much as you may without violating charity. Let him who cannot do all, at least do some part. You are not obliged to seek

out him who has offended you, for it is his place to return to himself, and to come to you to give you satisfaction, since he began the injury and outrage: yet go, Theotimus, follow our Saviour's counsel, prevent him in good, render him good for evil, cast upon his head and heart the burning coals of signs of charity, that may wholly inflame him and force him to a reconciliation. You are not bound by rigour of law to give alms to all the poor you meet, but only to such as are in very great need of them: yet do not therefore cease to give willingly, according to our Saviour's counsel, to every poor person you find, so far as your condition and your real necessities may allow. You have no obligation to make any vow at all, yet make some, such as shall be judged fit by your ghostly father for your advancement in Divine love. You have liberty to use wine within the limits of propriety; yet following S. Paul's counsel to Timothy, take only so much as is requisite for your stomach's sake.

In counsels there are various degrees of perfection. To lend to such poor people as are not in extreme want is the first degree of the counsel of alms-deeds; to give it them is a degree higher; higher still to give all; but the highest is to give oneself, dedicating our person to their service. Hospitality except in extreme necessity is a counsel. To entertain strangers is the first degree of it; but to stay by the wayside to invite them as Abraham did, is a degree higher; and yet higher than that is it to live in places of danger, in order to rescue, help and wait upon travellers: in this excelled that great S. Bernard of Menthon, a native of this diocese, who, being a scion of a most noble house, did for many years inhabit the precipices and peaks of our Alps, and there got together many associates to wait for, lodge and rescue, and to deliver from the danger of the storm, travellers and passers-by who would often perish amidst the tempests, snow and colds, were it not for the hospices which this great friend of God erected and founded upon the two mountains, which, taking their names from him, are called the Great S. Bernard, in the diocese of Sion, and the Little S. Bernard, in the diocese of Tarentaise. To visit the sick who are not in extreme necessity is a laudable charity, to serve them is yet better, but to consecrate a man's self to their service is the excellence of that counsel: this, by their institute, the Clerks of the Visitation of the Sick exercise; as do many ladies in various places; in imitation of the great S. Samson, a gentleman and physician of Rome, who at Constantinople, where he was made priest, with a wonderful charity devoted himself to the service of the sick in a hospital which he began there, and which the Emperor Justinian erected and finished: and in imitation of SS. Catharine of Siena and of Genoa, S. Elizabeth of Hungary, and the glorious friends of God S. Francis and the Blessed (S.) Ignatius of Loyola, who in the beginning of their Orders performed this exercise with an incomparable fervour and spiritual profit.

Virtues have then a certain sphere of perfection, and commonly we are not obliged to practise them to the height of their excellence. It is sufficient to go so far in the practice of them as really to enter upon them. But to go farther, and to advance in perfection, is a counsel, as the acts of heroic virtues are not ordinarily commanded, but counselled only. And if upon some occasion we find ourselves obliged to exercise them, it is by reason of some rare and extraordinary occurrence, which makes them necessary for the preservation of God's grace. The blessed door-keeper of the prison of Sebaste, seeing one of the forty who were then martyred lose courage and the crown of martyrdom, took his place without being apprehended, and thus made up the forty of those glorious and triumphant soldiers of Our Lord. S. Adauctus seeing S. Felix led to martyrdom, "I, quoth he (no one urging him), I also am as much a Christian as he, worshipping the same Saviour; and with that, kissing S. Felix, he walked with him to martyrdom and was

beheaded. Thousands of the ancient martyrs did the like, and having it equally in their power to avoid or undergo martyrdom without sin, they chose rather generously to undergo it than lawfully to avoid it. In these, martyrdom was an heroic act of the fortitude and constancy which a holy excess of love gave them. But when it is necessary to endure martyrdom or else to renounce the faith, of martyrdom does not cease to be martyrdom, and an excellent act love and valour, yet do I scarcely think it is to be termed an heroic act, not being chosen by any excess of love but by force of the law which in that case commands it. Now in the practice of the heroic acts of virtue consists the perfect imitation of our Saviour, who, as the great S. Thomas says, had all the virtues in an heroic degree from the first instant of his conception; yea I would willingly say more than heroic, since he was not simply more than man but infinitely more than man, that is, true God.