

Ordinatio prologue, q. 5, nn. 270–313

A. The views of others

270 Now that we have settled these issues, we should answer the first question [n. 217]. There are five ways to answer in the negative.

[The first way] One way¹ points out that there are two kinds of acts of will: one that perfects the will and one that is perfected by the will, as Henry of Ghent maintains in his *Summa*: see article 8, question 2, in the reply to the third argument.

271 The authority of Augustine in his sermon *On Jacob and Esau* favors this approach: “All our deeds are for the purpose of cleansing the eye by which God is seen.”²

272 Moreover, one can argue for this way as follows: only where error is possible does there need to be something that gives direction³; practical science gives direction⁴; therefore, the science that the blessed have is not practical, because the blessed cannot err; therefore, our science is not practical either, because it is the same as the science that the blessed have.⁵

273 Moreover, one can argue for it on the basis of a view he puts forward elsewhere⁶: God does not have practical science, but he has this science in the highest degree — or else he alone has it. Therefore, etc.

274 I argue against this. First, I show in four ways that the argument for this view actually leads to the opposite. First: even if the will can’t err concerning the end presented in general, it can indeed err concerning the end presented in particular; therefore, it needs direction in order to act correctly concerning a particular end that is

¹ Henry of Ghent, *Summa* a. 8 q. 3 ad 3.

² Henry of Ghent, *Summa* a. 8 q. 3 in corp.; Augustine, *Sermo* 88.5.6.

³ Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* VIII q. 1 in corp.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.* XII q. 22 in corp.

⁵ Henry identifies this as “created science.” See *Quodl.* XII q. 1 arg. in opp.

⁶ Henry of Ghent, *Summa* a. 36 q. 4 in corp., a. 37 q. 2 in corp., *Quodl.* V q. 4.

presented. Theology presents the end in particular, not universally, since the presentation of the end universally belongs to metaphysics.

275 Furthermore, a habit that gives direction is not posited on account of the substance of an act but on account of a circumstance. For example, temperance is not posited on account of the substance of an act of eating or anything else of that sort, but on account of a circumstance. Therefore, even if the will were determined to the substance of an act tending toward the end in particular, it would still need direction with respect to the circumstances of that act; direction with respect to the substance of the act would not be extended to those circumstances. – And on the basis of these two arguments I argue further that wherever it is possible either to err or to act rightly in praxis, practical knowledge is necessary for giving direction; in the very praxis that is love of the end, as it pertains to theology, there are two ways in which error is possible, as these arguments show: both with respect to the object in particular and with respect to the circumstances of the act. Therefore, etc.

276 Furthermore, third: the object love of which is principally intended outside the domain of cognition is the object knowledge of which is principally intended within the domain of cognition. Now according to them,⁷ love of the end is principally intended outside the domain of cognition; therefore, cognition of the end is principally intended within the domain of cognition. But in every science what is principally intended is the cognition of the science's first subject; therefore, the end is the principal subject of this science. Practical principles are drawn from the end; and practical principles give rise to practical conclusions; therefore, this science that first intends love of the end outside the domain of cognition is practical.

277 Furthermore, principles and conclusions belong to the same domain, whether praxis or speculation; for practical conclusions are derived from practical principles, not

⁷ Henry of Ghent, *Summa* a. 8 q. 3 ad 3.

from speculative principles. Therefore, since cognition of the end gives direction to acts concerning things that are for the end, and cognition of things that are for the end is a quasi-conclusion derived from the cognition of the end as a principle, given that cognition of things that are for the end is a cognition of practical conclusions, cognition of the end will be practical cognition, because it is cognition of a practical principle.

Thus it is clear how to reply to the first argument for this view [n. 270]: it presupposes something false, as if the will were determined in and of itself, which the first two arguments [nn. 274-275] prove. Similarly, if the will were determined, cognition would still be practical, as the two last arguments [nn. 276-277] prove.

278 As for the authority they cite [n. 271] (which seems to imply that the vision of God is the end of this science, which they themselves don't think⁸), I reply that this authority is speaking of exterior acts: fasting, vigils, and prayers. But every exterior act is by nature apt to be conformed to some interior act from which it has its goodness, and also to be ordered to some interior act, and finally to willing.

279 To the third argument [n. 282] I reply that an agent intends *per se* to induce a form; he does not intend the destruction of the contrary form, except *per accidens*. Thus, the habit gives direction *per se*, but *per accidens* it excludes error; and if the habit is perfect, it is incompatible with error—or rather if it is compatible with error, it is not perfect. So although the blessed cannot err, it does not follow that they do not have a habit that gives direction, since *per impossibile* that habit were removed, they could err; but with that habit in place, all error is excluded because of the perfection of that habit.

280 I will address the fourth argument [n. 273] below, after I have answered this first question, by answering the fourth objection against my view [nn. 324-331].

281 [The second way] The second way denies that love of the end is praxis, even though it can be elicited correctly or incorrectly, because it does not concern a

⁸ Henry of Ghent, *Summa* a. 8 q. 3 ad 3.

contingent object. For the Commentator⁹ says in Book I of his commentary on the *Ethics* that praxis is activity in accordance with choice; but according to *Ethics* III [111b29-30] choice concerns what is contingent, because it is deliberative appetite [1113a10-11], and there is deliberation only about what is contingent.¹⁰ And on this basis it is argued that the description of praxis offered in the first section of my response to the question [n. 228] is insufficient, because it misstates the precise object of praxis. Consequently, this way says that no knowledge that is extended to the volition of the ultimate end is practical, because the ultimate end is not a true contingent.

282 The fourth argument against the first way [n. 277] works against this way as well.

Moreover, the activity to which an appetitive virtue inclines is truly praxis, because any such virtue is a habit concerned with choice, according to *Ethics* II [1106b36-1107a2], and choice is praxis, as will be shown just below in my arguments against the third way [nn. 287-289]. And not only charity but also acquired love, which is an appetitive virtue because it is an acquired habit or appetite consonant with correct reason, incline to love of the end.

The underlying motivation for this view will be answered in the response to the second initial argument for the first question [nn. 346-351].

283 [Third way] The third way holds that either volition is not properly praxis but merely an act posterior to praxis, or, if volition is praxis, it is so in an ordering to some commanded act of a lower power, such as the sensory appetite or the motive power or something like that.

284 The argument given for this third way is that all praxis follows choice, which is proved from the Philosopher in *Ethics* VI [1139a31-32]: "Choice is the principle of an

⁹ Eustratius, *In Aristotelis Moralia explanationes* I c. 1.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Ethics* III, 1112a21-22, 30-31; 1112b8-9.

act—not that for the sake of which, but the source of motion,” that is, not the final but the efficient principle. An efficient principle naturally precedes its effect. Therefore, etc.

285 Furthermore, a practical habit is generated from praxes, and a practical habit is generated from acts that follow choice; therefore, those acts are praxes.

286 Moreover, the Commentator says on *Ethics* I [c. 1], “Praxis is activity in accordance with choice.” Therefore, praxis follows choice.

287 Against this, I prove that it is not only an act that follows choice that is praxis. In *Ethics* VI [1139a33-34] the Philosopher says that there is no correct choice without correct reason and a virtuous habit; therefore, virtue is required per se for correct choice; but virtue would not be required if it were a habit generated from acts posterior to choice, because then it would incline per se only to those acts, posterior to choice. The same conclusion¹¹ is reached by a different form of argument as follows: a habit is generated from the same acts to which it inclines, according to *Ethics* II [1103b21-23], and a moral virtue inclines per se to correct choice, since, as is clear from the definition of virtue in *Ethics* II [1106b36-1107a2], virtue is a “habit concerned with choice,” etc. Therefore, a moral virtue is generated per se from choices, and consequently it is not only acts that follow choice that are praxes.

288 Furthermore, not only is it false to deny that choice is praxis, as the foregoing argument shows, but as I proved in the first section [nn. 230, 234], an elicited act of will is praxis in the primary sense, and a commanded act is praxis only in virtue of an elicited act. So if there is just a choice without any ordering to a commanded act (say, because the matter for an exterior act is lacking), that choice by itself is genuinely praxis. An example will make this clear: suppose someone has no money, but he has a representation of money in his imagination before choice is an efficient principle of any act or commands any act. If he chooses to distribute the money generously if he should

¹¹ Reading *Idem* for the edition's *Ideo* (AD).

have it, then no further carrying out of this resolve, no actual distributing of money, is required for an act and habit of virtue. For on the basis of any object presented in imagination concerning which there can be an act of generosity, the choice from which generosity is generated, or which is elicited from generosity, is had completely. Nor is any further carrying out of one's resolve, or anything external, or any ordering to something external required if the matter for an exterior act is lacking.¹²

289 Moreover, this ordering can only be that of a cause to the effect that is to be caused. But it seems incongruous for a cause in itself not to be *F* as prior to its effect, but only because it is actually ordered to causing an effect; for a cause has nothing from its effect or from its ordering to that effect.

290 Then in response to the authoritative passage from *Ethics* VI [n. 284] I say that the Philosopher immediately adds, "But appetite and that-for-the-sake-of-which" —read: are the principle—"of choice" [1139a32-33]. Also, virtue in the appetite is required for choice to be correct; from this it follows that "there is no choice" —that is, correct choice—"without a moral habit" [1139a33-34]. Therefore, virtue has an elicited act that is more immediate than the act whose choice is the principle of the will as commanding; for the elicited act of will that is choice is a good act before the exterior act commanded by a good choice is good. This is proved from the Philosopher: after "neither is there choice without a habit" he immediately adds, "for there is no good action without character" [1139a34-35]. Now if this is the major premise in an argument for the foregoing claim about choice, let this be the minor premise: "a good choice is a good action." Therefore, I concede what the authoritative passage says affirmatively, namely that choice is the principle of an act in the sense of the origin [of motion], because an act commanded by choice is also a moral act; but it does not follow from this that *only* a commanded act is an act or praxis; indeed, choice is praxis in a prior way, and it is on

¹² Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Summa* a. 60 q. 1 ad 1 contra aliud.

account of choice that the commanded act also is good praxis.

291 To the second argument [n. 285], if the major premise is true, I say that a practical habit is generated from choices, as was said above concerning one who frequently chooses to give generously [n. 288]; generosity can be generated in him even without a commanded act, if the wherewithal to carry out such an act is lacking. Yet because it is not common for the will to make repeated correct choices concerning the matter of commanded acts when such acts are impossible—because as Augustine says,¹³ when we believe that something is impossible for us, either we do not will it or we will it feebly—it is not common for the practical habit that is virtue to be generated without commanded praxes that follow choice. Yet the virtue is generated from choices, not from the commanded acts that follow choice: moral goodness is formally in choices, only materially in commanded praxes.

292 As for the third argument, drawn from the Commentator [n. 286], if the description is to be convertible with the thing described, the expression “in accordance with” cannot be understood as indicating an efficient cause, as has already been proved on the basis of Aristotle’s words in *Ethics* VI [n. 290]. Rather, “in accordance with” must be understood in terms of either efficient or formal causality, or else “choice” must be taken as meaning freedom¹⁴ or a power that has control, or else “choice” must be taken as meaning the eliciting of an act of willing that is not choice or any volition. But every praxis, whether it is a choice or something that follows choice, is an action in the category of action in accordance with choice, because action in the category of action is reduced to an efficient principle.

293 These three ways hold that theology is purely speculative, notwithstanding the fact that it is extended to love of the end: whether because the will is quasi-naturally

¹³ Augustine, *De Trinitate* X.1.2.

¹⁴ Reading *libertate* (MSS) for the edition’s *liberalitate* (generosity).

determined to love of the end after the end has been presented to it [n. 270]; or because, although the will is related freely and contingently to love of the end, the end is not a contingent object that falls within the scope of action [n. 281]; or, third, because however the will might be related to a given object, it does not relate to the end by way of acting—that is, by way of an ordering to a commanded act, but instead stops with the first elicited act [n. 283].

294 There is, however, a persuasive argument for the claim that such extension does not automatically make something practical, because if it did, every instance of knowledge would be practical, because every instance of knowledge is accompanied by some delight or love.

295 Similarly, according to *Ethics X* [1179a22-24], the happy person “is most loving¹⁵ to God,” and yet the Philosopher maintains that this happiness is speculative and not practical [1177a12-117b1, 1179a22-32].

296 Against this conclusion, which is common to the three ways: it seems to follow that there is some activity within human power, so that it is truly a human act, and yet it is not properly either speculation or praxis, namely, love of the end. The consequent is evidently untenable.

297 Furthermore, it seems untenable to hold that cognition that gives direction in any volition is not practical, since it is “truth in conformity with correct appetite.” For such truth is the distinctive work of practical thought, according to *Ethics VI* [1139a29-31].

298 The additional argument about delight [n. 294] is beside the point. For since delight is a passion naturally consequent on perfect activity—whether it is delight in the speculation or delight in the object of speculation—no knowledge counts as practical just because it is extended to delight; for delight is not praxis either, strictly speaking.

¹⁵ “most loving”: *amantissimus*. It is used here in a passive sense, “most pleasing” or “dearest,” as Scotus will shortly explain. I have settled here for a literal but misleading translation because the arguments of nn. 299-302 depend on the fact that the word is (a) active in form and (b) a form of the verb ‘to love.’

This will be discussed in Book 3, distinction 15.¹⁶ By contrast, loving and desiring a cognized object, as characterized by such-and-such circumstances, is genuinely praxis; and it does not follow apprehension naturally, but freely, and as such it can be chosen correctly or incorrectly.

299 As for the additional argument that the person who has speculative happiness is most loving to God [n. 295], the authoritative text is not compelling, since its language is passive—in effect, “most loved by God”—not active, as is clear in that very passage. For he adds, “If the gods have any care for human affairs, it is reasonable that they”—meaning, the gods—“rejoice in what is best and most like them: and that is the intellect”; and he continues, “it is reasonable for the gods to reward those who love this”—meaning, the intellect—“as friends,” etc.¹⁷

300 But leaving that authoritative text aside, does Aristotle mean that the person who has speculative happiness is most loving in the sense in which love is distinguished from delight (whether in the speculative object or in the speculation itself)? I reply: in *Metaphysics* XII [1072b3] he claims that the first mover moves as an object of love; therefore, a lower intelligence loves the first. And yet he holds that the happiness of an intelligence consists in speculation, as is clear in *Ethics* X [1178b7-32]; therefore, he includes not only delight but also love within speculation. Therefore, according to Aristotle, its knowledge is not practical in virtue of being extended to such delight and love; such knowledge is speculative.

301 But why do we not go along with Aristotle on this point, given that we take the definition of practical and speculative knowledge from him—and thus the two first ways, which deny that theology is practical and maintain that it is speculative, are correct to do so, even according to the Philosopher? I reply: the love that he would

¹⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III d. 15 q. un. See also I d. 1 pars 2 q. 1 n. [2-4]; IV d. 49 pars 1 q. 7 n. [3-5].

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Ethics* X, 1179a24-29.

affirm in the intelligence is present in the will by natural necessity, in such a way that his will does not have both erring and acting rightly within its power. Thus, for an intelligence such knowledge would merely give information, not direction, whether with respect to the object in particular or with respect to any characteristic of the object or any circumstance of the act of willing.

302 This is not the way in which theologians would talk about the love intellectual¹⁸ creatures have for God in particular and with respect to the circumstances of the act, as I argued in the first two arguments against the first way [nn. 274-275]. So if Aristotle agreed with us in affirming that the end is loved freely, that such love can be elicited either correctly or not correctly, and that it is not elicited correctly unless it is elicited in conformity with correct reason—which does not merely present the object but also dictates that this act ought to be elicited in this way—then perhaps he would have affirmed that the knowledge involved in this love is practical knowledge, since it is in conformity with correct appetite. So it is better for a theologian, who has to disagree with Aristotle about the minor premise, to draw the correct inference and disagree with him about the conclusion as well, rather than agree with him in a conclusion that he would not have drawn himself if he had not affirmed the minor premise that a theologian must reject.¹⁹

So you are right in saying that we get the definition of practical and speculative knowledge from him, and we agree with him in the major premise that the knowledge he describes is speculative—that is, knowledge that is extended to love but that merely presents the object and in no way gives direction in the act as characterized by such-and-such circumstances and as it concerns this object in particular. But in connection with our present question we have to reject the minor premise that he asserts.

¹⁸ Reading *intellectualium* with [mss] for the edition's *intelligibilium* ("intelligible").

¹⁹ Cf. Scotus, *Ordinatio* II d. 3 pars 1 q. 7 n. [6].

303 [The fourth way] And so there is a fourth way that says that theology is affective.²⁰ This could make perfect sense if affective knowledge is understood as a kind of practical knowledge. But if affective knowledge is understood as a third kind, distinct from practical and speculative, then this view is contrary to what was said in the first section, where it was shown that love is genuinely praxis [nn. 228-235], and contrary as well to many authorities, who maintain that the division of knowledge into practical and speculative is exhaustive and there is no third kind.

304 [The fifth way] The fifth way says that theology is contemplative.²¹ In support of this view appeal is made to Augustine, *De Trinitate* XII.14.22, where he maintains that wisdom concerns contemplation and science concerns action; therefore, since theology is properly wisdom and not science, it is not practical but contemplative.

I reply: In *De Trinitate* XII.4.4 Augustine says that those two parts of the soul, the higher and lower, are distinguished only in terms of their functions. And there is a trinity in both (though in the higher part there is an image of the Trinity), and yet only the higher part is contemplative, because it has to do with eternal things.²² So the contemplation we're talking about now is not distinct from speculation within the genus of science: for the contemplative part includes memory, intelligence, and will, and thus in the contemplative part there can be an extension beyond the genus of science, just as there can be in the active part, that is, in the lower part of the soul, which has to do with temporal things, and which also has a trinity. So if theology is contemplative in the sense in which Augustine understands 'contemplative' in that passage, that doesn't mean that it can't be practical if it is extended to praxis in the higher part of the soul.

²⁰ Giles of Rome, *Sent.* prol. pars 4 q. un. in corp.; Albert the Great, *Sent.* I d. 1 a. 4 in corp., *ST* pars 1 tr. 1 q. 3 m. 3 in corp.; Gonsalvus of Spain, *Quaestiones disputatae et de Quodlibet* q. 5; Bonaventure, *Sent.* I proem. Q. 3 in corp.

²¹ William of Ware, *Sent.* prol. q. 1 in corp, q. 4

²² Cf. Scotus, *Ordinatio* I d. 3 pars 3 q. 4 n. [7].

305 [Another view] There is another view²³ that differs from the foregoing in its conclusion: this science is both speculative and practical. Two proofs are offered for this. First, a teaching in which some things were written about law and some about philosophy would be both speculative and practical, no matter whether they were written in distinct books or combined and mixed together; and in the same way, both speculative and practical matters are treated in this teaching, not in distinct books and chapters but combined and mixed together. Therefore, this teaching is both speculative and practical.

306 The second proof is as follows: no speculative cognition discusses things within the domain of action more distinctly than the cognition of those things is necessary for speculation, and no practical cognition discusses speculative matters more distinctly than the cognition of those things is required for the praxis to which such cognition is extended. Theology discusses things within the domain of action more distinctly than cognition of those things is necessary for speculation, and it discusses speculative matters more distinctly than the cognition of those things is required for practical cognition; therefore, theology is both speculative and practical. The major premise is clearly true, because speculative matters are considered in a practical science only for the sake of practical consideration, and things within the domain of action are considered in a speculative science only for the sake of speculative consideration. The minor premise is clearly true, because theology discusses things within the domain of action as distinctly as if it were precisely about them, and it discusses speculative matters as distinctly as if it were precisely about them.

307 I argue against this as follows: a habit that does not derive its evidentness from its object is not distinguished on the basis of a distinction in its objects (for in that case we would have to posit two infused faiths); this habit does not derive its evidentness

²³ Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* XIII q. 1.

from its object; therefore, it is not distinguished on the basis of a distinction in its objects; therefore, it is not two habits because of the distinction between speculative matters and things within the domain of action.

308 Furthermore, although this view about two habits could have some probability regarding theology as it is transmitted in Scripture, it does not seem probable regarding theology in itself, whose subject is the divine essence as this essence (as was said in the question on the subject of theology [n. 167]). Because that subject is most truly one cognizable object, the knowledge that is apt to be had of that subject primary is truly one. If some other knowledge is identified that is not of that subject but of another subject primarily, that other knowledge will not be theology in itself. Therefore, theology is unqualifiedly one habit, though perhaps there can be another knowledge, which is of another subject, presented along with it in Scripture.

309 Moreover, it is evident that the ordering of the sciences according to eminence comes to an end with a single most eminent science, for there cannot be two that are unqualifiedly first. It is that one and only most eminent²⁴ science that I call theology; it alone is primarily about the about the first²⁵ subject of theology.

310 Furthermore, I take their argument [n. 306] and use it to support the opposite conclusion: a cognition in which no more is determined concerning speculative matters than cognition of those matters belongs to praxis or practical cognition is itself practical; theology does not discuss speculative matters more distinctly than cognition of those matters is required for practical cognition or directing praxis; therefore, etc. – Proof of the minor premise: any cognition of the characteristics that make the end desirable, and of the characteristics of things that are for the end insofar as they are for the end, and, third, of the characteristics of these or other things concerning which an operative

²⁴ Reading *eminentissimam* for the edition's *eminentiam*.

²⁵ Most MSS omit "first."

power might go astray unless it receives direction, is necessary for practical cognition; no cognition of the end or of things that are for the end is transmitted in theology that is not of this sort; therefore, etc. Or at any rate a will that is ignorant of these things can go astray, as I will say in answering the third objection [n. 322] to my principal answer to the question.”²⁶

311 The assumption is evident, because all the characteristics of the end that are transmitted in theology are by nature apt to exhibit more clearly the desirability of the end, and the characteristics of things that are for the end are by nature apt to exhibit more clearly that they are ordered to the end.

312 In reply to the argument [n. 306], it is clear that the minor premise is false. By way of proving this, I say that however distinctly the cognized end and the things that are for the end are discussed, that whole cognition cannot fail to be practical for a created intellect, because that whole cognition is by nature apt to exhibit the end *as desirable* and the things that are for the end *as ordered to the end*, or to be about things concerning which a will that lacks direction can go astray.

313 [Another view] Another view²⁷ holds the same conclusion [that theology is both speculative and practical] but claims that nevertheless theology is unqualifiedly one habit.

²⁶ In most manuscripts there follows this text, which the editors mark as “canceled by Dun Scotus”: “For although the Trinity of persons does not show the end to be more desirable than it would be if it were non-triune (for God is the end insofar as he is one God, not insofar as he is three persons), nonetheless a will ignorant of the Trinity could go astray in loving or desiring the end by desiring to enjoy only one person. Similarly, someone ignorant of the fact that God made the world could go astray by not returning such love as gratitude would require for so great a sharing of his goodness, done for our utility. Thus someone who did not know the articles *pertinentes ad reparationem* (?) could be ungrateful by not returning the love due for so great a benefit. And so on for other theological truths.

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST I* q. 1 a. 4 in corp., a. 3 in corp. et ad 2.