

## QUESTION 45

### The Gift of Wisdom

Next we have to consider the gift of wisdom, which corresponds to charity: first, wisdom itself (question 45) and, second, the opposite vice (question 46).

On the first topic there are six questions: (1) Should wisdom be numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit? (2) Which subject does wisdom exist in? (3) Is wisdom speculative only, or also practical? (4) Can the wisdom which is a gift exist along with mortal sin? (5) Does wisdom exist in everyone who has habitual grace (*gratia gratum faciens*)? (6) Which of the beatitudes does wisdom correspond to?

#### Article 1

##### Should wisdom be numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

It seems that wisdom should not be numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

**Objection 1:** As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, 68, a. 8), the gifts are more perfect than the virtues. But a virtue is related only to what is good; hence, in *De Libero Arbitrio* Augustine says, “No one uses the virtues badly.” Therefore, *a fortiori*, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are related only to what is good. But wisdom is related to what is bad as well; for James 3:15 says that a certain sort of wisdom is “worldly (*terrena*), animalistic (*animalis*), diabolical (*diabolica*).” Therefore, wisdom should not be posited among the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**Objection 2:** In *De Trinitate* 14 Augustine says, “Wisdom is the cognition of divine things.” But the cognition of divine things that a man can have by his natural powers belongs to the sort of wisdom that is an intellectual virtue, whereas the supernatural cognition of divine things belongs to faith, which, as is clear from what was said above (q. 1, a. 1), is a theological virtue. Therefore, wisdom should be called a virtue rather than a gift.

**Objection 3:** Job 28:27 says, “Behold, the fear of the Lord is itself wisdom, and to withdraw from evil is itself understanding”—where, the Septuagint, which Augustine uses, has, “Behold, piety is itself wisdom.” But both fear of the Lord and piety are posited as gifts of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, wisdom should not be numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a gift distinct from the others.

**But contrary to this:** Isaiah 11:2 says, “The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding ...”

**I respond:** According to the Philosopher at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, it belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause, by reference to which one judges with certainty about other things and in accord with which all things have to be ordered.

Now ‘highest cause’ can be taken in two senses, either (a) absolutely speaking (*simpliciter*) or (b) within some genus (*in aliquo genere*).

Therefore, one who has cognition of the cause that is highest within some genus, and who is able to judge and order all things belonging to that genus by reference to it, is said to be wise within that genus, e.g., in medicine or in architecture—this according to 1 Corinthians 3:10 (“As a wise architect, I have laid the foundation”).

Now one who has cognition of the highest cause absolutely speaking, i.e., God, is said to be wise absolutely speaking, insofar as he is able to judge and order all things by reference to divine norms (*per regulas divinas*). But a man attains judgment of this sort through the Holy Spirit—this according to 1 Corinthians 2:15, “The spiritual man judges all things,” because, as it says in the same place, “the Spirit scrutinizes all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

Hence, it is clear that wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Reply to objection 1:** ‘Good’ is said in two ways. In one way, something is said to be good when it is *truly* good and *absolutely* perfect. In the second way, as is clear from the Philosopher in

*Metaphysics 5*, something is said to be good when, in accord with a certain similarity, it is perfect in badness, as when someone is called a ‘good’ thief or a ‘perfect’ thief. And just as, with respect to what is truly good, there is a highest cause, i.e., the highest good, which is the ultimate end and through the cognition of which a man is called truly wise, so, too, among bad things there is something which other things are referred back to as their ultimate end, and through the cognition of this thing a man is said to be ‘wise’ in doing what is bad—this according to Jeremiah 4:22 (“They are wise in doing evil, but they do not know how to do good”).

Anyone who turns away from an end that is obligatory (*a fine debito*) must set up for himself some unsuitable end (*aliquem finem indebitum*), since every agent acts for the sake of an end. If he sets up for himself an end in worldly things, then the corresponding wisdom is called ‘worldly’, whereas if he sets it up in corporeal things, the wisdom is called ‘animalistic’, and if he sets it up in some sort of excellence, then the wisdom is called ‘diabolical’, because it imitates the pride of the devil that is spoken of in Job 41:25 (“He is king over all the children of pride”).

**Reply to objection 2:** The wisdom that is posited as a gift differs from the wisdom that is posited as an acquired intellectual virtue. For the latter is acquired by human study, whereas the former “descends from above,” as James 3:15 puts it.

Similarly, the gift of wisdom differs from faith. For faith *assents* to divine truth in its own right, whereas what belongs to wisdom is *judgment* in accord with divine truth. And so the gift of wisdom presupposes faith, since, as *Ethics 1* says, “each individual judges well what he has cognition of.”

**Reply to objection 3:** Just as piety, which pertains to the worship of God, makes faith manifest insofar as we profess our faith through our worship of God, so, too, piety makes wisdom manifest. And this is why it is said that piety is wisdom.

The same line of reasoning holds for fear. For the fact that a man fears and worships God shows that he has correct judgment concerning divine things.

## Article 2

### Does wisdom exist in the intellect as its subject?

It seems that wisdom does not exist in the intellect as its subject:

**Objection 1:** In *De Gratia Novi Testamenti* Augustine says, “Wisdom is the charity of God.” But as was established above (q. 24, a. 1), charity exists in the will as its subject and not in the intellect. Therefore, wisdom does not exist in the intellect as its subject.

**Objection 2:** Ecclesiasticus 6:23 says, “The wisdom that belongs to doctrine is like her name.” But the name ‘wisdom’ (*sapientia*) means, as it were, ‘tasty knowledge’ (*sapida scientia*), which seems to pertain to affection, and affection has to do with experiencing spiritual pleasure and sweetness. Therefore, wisdom exists in the affections rather than in the intellect.

**Objection 3:** The intellective power is sufficiently perfected by the gift of understanding. But it is superfluous to posit more than one thing for what can be brought about by one thing. Therefore, wisdom does not exist in the intellect.

**But contrary to this:** In *Moralia 2* Gregory says that wisdom is contrary to foolishness or stupidity (*stultitia*). But foolishness exists in the intellect. Therefore, wisdom does, too.

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 1 and q. 8, a. 6), wisdom implies a certain rectitude of judgment by reference to divine things. Now rectitude of judgment can occur in two ways: (a) by a perfect use of reason or (b) by a certain connaturality with the things concerning which one has now to judge. For instance, one who learns moral science judges rightly through the inquiry of reason about the things that pertain to chastity, whereas one who has the habit of chastity judges rightly about those things

through a sort of connaturality.

So, then, it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to have right judgment about divine things by the inquiry of reason, whereas it pertains to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit to have right judgment about those things by a sort of connaturality with them. For instance, in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 2, Dionysius says that Herotheus is perfect in divine matters, “not only in learning divine things, but also in experiencing them (*sed et patiens divina*).” Now this sort of connaturality or communion of affection (*compassio*) in divine things is effected by charity, which unites us to God—this according to 1 Corinthians 6:17 (“He who adheres to God is one spirit”).

So, then, the wisdom that is a gift has a cause in the will, viz., charity, but it has its essence in the intellect, the act of which, as was established above (*ST* 1, q. 79, a. 3), is to judge rightly.

**Reply to objection 1:** Augustine is speaking about wisdom as regards its cause. The name ‘wisdom’ (*sapientia*) is likewise taken from this, insofar as wisdom implies a sort of tasting (*saporem quendam importat*.)

**Reply to objection 2:** From this the reply to the second objection is clear, if what it says is indeed the meaning of the text in question.

However, it does not seem to be the meaning of the text, since this sort of exposition applies only to the name that wisdom has in Latin, whereas it does not belong to the name that wisdom has in Greek or perhaps in any other language. Hence, it seems better to take “the name of wisdom” here for wisdom’s reputation (*fama*), for which it is commended by all.

**Reply to objection 3:** The intellect has two acts, viz., to grasp (*percipere*) and to judge (*iudicare*). The gift of *understanding* is ordered toward the first act, whereas the gift of *wisdom* is ordered toward the second act when one is working from divine reasons (*secundum rationes divinas*), and the gift of *knowledge* is ordered toward it when one is working from human reasons (*secundum rationes humanas*).

### Article 3

#### Is wisdom just speculative or practical as well?

It seems that wisdom is just speculative and not practical:

**Objection 1:** The gift of wisdom is more excellent than wisdom insofar as it is an intellectual virtue. But wisdom insofar as it is an intellectual virtue is just speculative. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the wisdom that is a gift is speculative and not practical.

**Objection 2:** The practical intellect has to do with actions, which are contingent. But wisdom has to do with divine things, which are eternal and necessary. Therefore, wisdom cannot be practical.

**Objection 3:** In *Moralia* 6 Gregory says, “In contemplation one seeks the principle, which is God, whereas in action one labors under a heavy burden of necessity.” But the vision of divine things belongs to wisdom, to which it does not belong to labor under any burden of necessity; for as Wisdom 8:16 says, “Her conversation has no bitterness, nor does her company have any weariness.” Therefore, wisdom is just contemplative and not practical or active.

**But contrary to this:** Colossians 4:5 says, “Walk with wisdom toward those who are outside.” But this pertains to action. Therefore, wisdom is not just speculative, but also practical.

**I respond:** As Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 12, the higher part of reason is assigned to wisdom, whereas the lower part is assigned to scientific knowledge. Now as he himself says in the same book, higher reason is intent on “seeing and consulting heavenly reasons,” i.e., the divine reasons—*seeing* insofar as it contemplates divine things in themselves, and *consulting* insofar as it judges human things by reference to divine things, directing human acts by reference to divine rules. So, then, wisdom, insofar as it is a gift, is not only speculative but also practical.

**Reply to objection 1:** As is established in the *Liber de Causis*, a virtue is higher to the extent that it extends to more things. Hence, from the fact that the wisdom which is a gift is more excellent than the wisdom which is an intellectual virtue, in the sense that it gets closer to God, viz., through a certain union of the soul to God, it has the character of directing one not only in contemplation but also in action.

**Reply to objection 2:** Divine things are, to be sure, necessary and eternal in their own right, but they are rules for the contingent matters that underlie human acts.

**Reply to objection 3:** To consider something in itself is prior to comparing it to something else. Hence, the contemplation of divine things, i.e., the vision of the principle, belongs to wisdom first of all, and after that what belongs to it is to direct human acts by reference to divine reasons. And yet no bitterness or weariness arises in human acts from wisdom's directing them; instead, bitterness is turned into sweetness because of wisdom, and labor into rest.

#### Article 4

##### Can wisdom exist in the absence of grace and along with mortal sin?

It seems that wisdom can exist in the absence of grace and along with mortal sin:

**Objection 1:** The saints especially take glory in those things that cannot be had along with mortal sin—this according to 2 Corinthians 1:12 (“Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience”). But one ought not to glory in wisdom—this according to Jeremiah 9:23 (“Let the wise man not glory in his wisdom”). Therefore, wisdom can exist in the absence of grace and along with mortal sin.

**Objection 2:** As has been explained (a. 1), wisdom involves the cognition of divine things. But someone who has mortal sin can have cognition of divine truth—this according to Romans 1:18 (“They retain the truth of God in their injustice”). Therefore, wisdom can exist along with mortal sin.

**Objection 3:** In speaking of charity in *De Trinitate* 15 Augustine says, “There is nothing more excellent than this gift from God, which alone is what divides the children of the eternal kingdom from the children of eternal perdition.” But wisdom differs from charity. Therefore, it does not divide the children of the kingdom from the children of perdition. Therefore, it can exist along with mortal sin.

**But contrary to this:** Wisdom 1:4 says, “Wisdom will not enter into a malevolent soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins.”

**I respond:** As has been explained (aa. 2-3), the wisdom that is a gift of the Holy Spirit brings about rectitude of judgment with respect to divine things or, through divine rules, with respect to other things, out of a sort of connaturality or union with divine things. This occurs through charity, as has been explained (a. 2). But as is clear from what was said above (q. 24, a. 12), charity cannot exist along with mortal sin. Hence, it follows that the wisdom of which we are now speaking cannot exist along with mortal sin.

**Reply to objection 1:** The last passage should be understood to apply to wisdom in worldly matters, or even to wisdom in divine matters by reference to human reasons. This is not what the saints glory in, but is instead something that they claim not to have—this according to Proverbs 30:2 (“The wisdom of men is not with me”). But they do indeed glory in divine wisdom—this according to 1 Corinthians 1:30 (“Christ Jesus has been made wisdom unto us by God”).

**Reply to objection 2:** This argument goes through for the cognition of divine things which is had through reason's study and inquiry. This sort of cognition can be had along with mortal sin, but not the wisdom of which we are now speaking.

**Reply to objection 3:** Even though wisdom differs from charity, it nonetheless presupposes charity, and because of this it divides the children of perdition from the children of the kingdom.

## Article 5

### Does wisdom exist in all who have grace?

It seems that wisdom does not exist in all who have grace:

**Objection 1:** It is greater to have wisdom than to hear wisdom. But it belongs only to the perfect to hear wisdom—this according to 1 Corinthians 2:6 (“We speak wisdom among the perfect”). Therefore, since not everyone who has grace is perfect, it seems all the less true that everyone who has grace has wisdom.

**Objection 2:** As the Philosopher says at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, “It belongs to the wise man to order.” And James 3:17 says that the wise “judge without dissimulation.” But it does not belong to everyone who has grace to pass judgment on others or to order others; this belongs only to those in authority (*solum prelatorum est*). Therefore, it does not belong to everyone who has grace to have wisdom.

**Objection 3:** As Gregory says in *Moralia* 2, wisdom is opposed to folly or foolishness. But many who have grace are naturally foolish, as is clear in the case of mindless individuals who are baptized, or those who fall into mindlessness afterwards in the absence of sin. Therefore, wisdom does not exist in everyone who has grace.

**But contrary to this:** If an individual is without mortal sin, then he is loved by God; for he has charity, by which he loves God, and, as Proverbs 8:17 says, “God loves everyone who loves Him.” But Wisdom 7:28 says, “God does not love anyone who does not dwell with wisdom.” Therefore, wisdom exists in everyone who has grace and who is without mortal sin.

**I respond:** As has been explained (aa. 1 and 3), the wisdom of which we are speaking implies a certain rectitude of judgment concerning divine things that are to be seen and consulted. As regards both of these, there are some who, because of their union with divine things, receive wisdom of varying degrees.

For instance, some receive wisdom with respect to right judgment only to the extent that it is necessary for salvation, both in the contemplation of divine things and in the ordering of human things by reference to divine rules. And this much is not lacking to anyone who, through habitual grace (*per gratiam gratum facientem*), does not have mortal sin; for if nature does not fall short in what is necessary, much less will grace fall short in what is necessary. Hence, 1 John 2:27 says, “His anointing teaches you about everything.”

However, there are others who receive the gift of wisdom to a higher degree, both (a) with respect to contemplating divine things, insofar as they have cognition of certain deeper mysteries and can make them manifest to others, and also (b) with respect to directing human things by reference to divine rules, insofar as they are able to order not only themselves but also others by reference to those rules. And this level of wisdom is not common to everyone who has habitual grace, but is instead one of the gratuitous graces (*gratiae gratis datae*) that the Holy Spirit distributes as He wills—this according to 1 Corinthians 12:8 (“... to another the word of wisdom is given through the Spirit ...”).

**Reply to objection 1:** In this passage the Apostle is talking about wisdom insofar as it extends to the hidden mysteries of divine things, just as he says in the same place, “We speak God’s wisdom, hidden in mystery.”

**Reply to objection 2:** Even though ordering other men and passing judgment on them belongs to authorities alone, still, ordering one’s own acts and passing judgment on them belongs to each individual. This is clear from Dionysius in his letter to Demophilus.

**Reply to objection 3:** Like baptized children, mindless individuals who have been baptized have the *habit* of wisdom insofar as it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but they do not have the *act* of that habit because of a corporeal impediment by which the use of reason is impeded in them.

## Article 6

### Does the seventh beatitude correspond to the gift of wisdom?

It seems that the seventh beatitude does not correspond to the gift of wisdom:

**Objection 1:** The seventh beatitude is ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God’. Now both parts belong immediately to charity. For Psalm 118:165 says of peace, “Much peace is had by those who love your law.” And as the Apostle says in Romans 5:5, “The charity of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given to us and who is the Spirit of filial adoption (*spiritus adoptionis filiorum*), in which we cry, ‘Abba, Father’.” Therefore, the seventh beatitude should be attributed to charity rather than to wisdom.

**Objection 2:** Each thing is such that it is made more manifest by its proximate effect than by its remote effect. But the proximate effect of wisdom seems to be charity—this according to Wisdom 7:27 (“Through the nations she conveys herself into holy souls; she creates friends of God and prophets”)—whereas peace and filial adoption seem to be wisdom’s remote effects, since, as has been explained (q. 19, a. 2 and q. 29, a. 3), they proceed from charity. Therefore, the beatitude corresponding to wisdom should be determined more by the love of charity than by peace.

**Objection 3:** James 3:17 says, “But the wisdom from above is first of all chaste (*pudica*), then gentle (*pacifica*), moderate (*modesta*), easily persuadable (*suadibilis*), in agreement with what is good (*bonis consentiens*), full of mercy and good fruits (*plena misericordia et fructis bonis*), judging without false pretense (*iudicans sine simulatione*).” Therefore, the beatitude that corresponds to wisdom should not be taken from peace more than from the other effects of heavenly wisdom.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Sermone Domine in Monte* Augustine says, “Wisdom befits the peaceable, in whom there is conformity to reason and no rebellious movement.”

**I respond:** The seventh beatitude is fittingly adapted to the gift of wisdom, both with respect to its *merit* and with respect to its *reward*.

The phrase “Blessed are the peacemakers” pertains to the *merit*. Now peacemakers are those who ‘make peace’, either within themselves or among others as well. Both of these occur because the things in which peace is constituted are brought back to their appropriate order; for as Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 19, “Peace is the tranquility of order.” But as is clear from the Philosopher at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, it belongs to wisdom to bring order. And so being a peacemaker is appropriately attributed to wisdom.

On the other hand, the phrase “they will be called children of God” pertains to the *reward*. Now individuals are called children of God insofar as they participate in a similarity to the only-begotten and natural Son—this according to Romans 8:29, “... whom He foreknew ... to be conformed to the image of His Son,” who is Wisdom Begotten. And so in receiving the gift of wisdom, a man attains divine filiation.

**Reply to objection 1:** To *have* peace belongs to charity, but to *make* peace belongs to wisdom bringing order (*est sapientiae ordinantis*). Similarly, the Holy Spirit is called the “spirit of adoption” to the extent that through Him we are made similar to (*datur nobis similitudo*) the natural Son, who is Wisdom Begotten.

**Reply to objection 2:** This passage should be understood to apply to Uncreated Wisdom, who as the First Wisdom unites Himself to us through the gift of charity and thereby reveals to us the mysteries, the cognition of which is infused wisdom. And so infused wisdom, i.e., the gift of wisdom, is not a cause of charity but instead its effect.

**Reply to objection 3:** As has already been explained (a. 3), it belongs to wisdom, insofar as it is a gift, not only to contemplate divine things, but also to regulate human acts. In this direction of human acts, there first occurs a withdrawal from the evils that are contrary to wisdom; hence, fear is said to be

the beginning of wisdom insofar as it makes one withdraw from evils. But the ultimate, i.e., the end, is that everything should be brought back to an appropriate order, which pertains to peace. And so James appropriately says that the wisdom that is from above and is a gift of the Holy Spirit is, first of all, *chaste*, in the sense of avoiding the seduction of sin, and then *gentle*, which is the final effect of wisdom and that because of which the beatitude is posited.

However, at this point everything that follows [in the quoted passage] makes manifest the things through which wisdom arrives at peace, and in the correct order. For in the case of a man who is withdrawing from corruption through *chastity*, the first thing that occurs with him is that, as much as he can, he holds to the mean (*modum teneat*) in all things, and in this respect he is called *moderate*. Second, in things in which he himself is not sufficient, he acquiesces in the advice of others, and in this respect it is added that he is *easily persuadable*. These two things pertain to a man's attaining peace within himself. But further, in order for him to be a peacemaker for others as well, it is required, first, that he not oppose their good, and in this respect it is added that he is *in agreement with what is good*. Second, he both (a) has compassion on the needs of his neighbors in what he feels and (b) helps them in what he effects, and in this respect it is added that he is *full of mercy and good works*. Third, it is required that he take the trouble to correct sins in a charitable way, and in his regard it is added that he *judges without false pretense*—i.e., lest, pretending to give correction, he should intend to satisfy his hatred instead.