

QUESTION 70

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

We next have to consider the fruits of the Holy Spirit. On this topic there are four questions: (1) Are the fruits of the Holy Spirit acts? (2) Do they differ from the beatitudes? (3) How many fruits of the Holy Spirit are there? (4) In what sense are they opposed to the works of the flesh?

Article 1

Are the fruits of the Holy Spirit named by the Apostle in Galatians 5 acts?

It seems that that the fruits of the Holy Spirit named by the Apostle in Galatians 5:22-23 are not acts :

Objection 1: That which has something else as a fruit (*fructus*) should not itself be called a fruit, since otherwise there would be an infinite regress. But our acts bear fruit; for instance, Wisdom 3:15 says, “Glorious is the fruit of our labors,” and John 4:36 says, “He who reaps receives his wages, and he gathers fruit unto everlasting life.” Therefore, our acts should not themselves be called fruits.

Objection 2: As Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 10, “We enjoy (*fruor*) the things we know when our will comes to rest in them because they are pleasing (*delectata*) in themselves.” But our will should not come to rest in our acts for their own sake. Therefore, our acts should not be called fruits.

Objection 3: The Apostle numbers among the fruits of the Holy Spirit certain of the virtues, viz., charity, meekness, faith, and chastity. But virtues are not acts; instead, they are habits, as was explained above (q. 55, a. 1). Therefore, the fruits are not acts.

But contrary to this: Matthew 12:33 says, “A tree is known by its fruit”—i.e., a man is known by his works, according to the way this passage is explained by the saints. Therefore, human acts are themselves called fruits.

I respond: The name ‘fruit’ (*fructus*) is here being transferred from corporeal things to spiritual things.

In the case of corporeal things, what is called a fruit is something which is produced by a plant that has reached maturity (*perfectio*) and which has a certain pleasingness (*delectatio*). Such fruit can be thought of either in relation to the tree that produces it or in relation to the man who possesses the fruit that comes from the tree.

Accordingly, in the case of spiritual things we can take the name ‘fruit’ in either of two ways: (a) so that what we call a man’s fruit is what is produced by him, in the way that fruit is produced by a tree; or (b) so that what we call a man’s fruit is what he possesses.

Now not everything a man possesses has the character of a fruit; rather, it is only what comes along last and is pleasing (*est ultimum et habet delectationem*). For the man possesses both the field and the tree, neither of which is called a fruit; instead, the only thing called a fruit is what comes along last, i.e., what the man intended to get from the field and the tree. In this sense, then, it is a man’s ultimate end, when it is his to enjoy, that is called a man’s fruit.

On the other hand, if what is being called a man’s fruit is what is produced by the man, then human acts are themselves called fruits. For an action (*operatio*) is the agent’s second act (*actus secundus operantis*) and is pleasing if it suits the agent. Therefore, if a man’s act proceeds from the man in accord with his faculty of reason, then it is called a fruit of reason; and if it proceeds from the man in accord with a higher virtue, i.e., a virtue of the Holy Spirit, then the man’s action is said to be a fruit of the Holy Spirit—the fruit, as it were, of a divine seed. For 1 John 3:9 says, “Anyone who is born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him.”

Reply to objection 1: Since a fruit has the character of being last or final in some way or other, nothing prevents one fruit from being the fruit of another fruit, just as one end may be ordered toward another end. Therefore, our works have the character of a fruit insofar as they are the effects of the Holy Spirit working within us, whereas insofar as they are ordered toward the end of eternal life, they are more like blossoms (*flores*). Hence, Ecclesiasticus 24:23 says, “My blossoms are the fruit of honor and uprightness.”

Reply to objection 2: There are two possible ways to understand the will’s being pleased with something for its own sake (*propter se*).

In the first way, the phrase ‘for its own sake’ expresses a final cause, and on this reading it is only the ultimate end that someone is pleased with for its own sake.

In the second way, the phrase ‘for its own sake’ designates a formal cause, and on this reading someone can be pleased with anything for its own sake if that thing is pleasing because of its form. For instance, it is clear that a sick person is pleased with health for its own sake as an end, whereas he is pleased with good-tasting medicine (*medicina suavis*) not as an end but as something that has a pleasing taste; and yet he would not be pleased with bitter medicine for its own sake in either of these ways, but would instead be pleased with it only for the sake of something else.

So, then, one should reply that a man ought to be pleased with God for His own sake as an ultimate end, whereas he should be pleased with virtuous acts not as an end but rather because of the uprightness they contain, which is something pleasing to virtuous men. Hence, Ambrose says that virtuous works are called fruits “because they refresh those who have them with a holy and sincere delight.”

Reply to objection 3: The names of the virtues are sometimes taken for their acts, as when Augustine says, “Faith is believing what you do not see” and “Charity is a movement of the mind toward loving God and neighbor.” And it is in this way that the names of virtues are being used in the enumeration of the fruits.

Article 2

Do the fruits of the Holy Spirit differ from the beatitudes?

It seems that the fruits do not differ from the beatitudes:

Objection 1: As was explained above (q. 69, a. 1), the beatitudes are attributed to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But the gifts perfect a man with respect to his being moved by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the beatitudes are themselves fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Objection 2: The fruits of the present life are related to the beatitudes of the present life, which have to do with hope, in the same way that the fruit of eternal life is related to future beatitude. But the fruit of eternal life is future beatitude itself. Therefore, the fruits of the present life are the beatitudes themselves.

Objection 3: It is part of the concept (*ratio*) of a fruit that it is something pleasing that comes along last. But as was explained above (q. 3, a. 1), this pertains to the concept of beatitude or happiness. Therefore, a fruit and a beatitude have the same concept. Therefore, they should not be distinguished from one another.

But contrary to this: Things that contain diverse species are themselves diverse from one another. But as is clear from the enumeration of the fruits and the beatitudes, the two of them are divided into diverse parts. Therefore, the fruits differ from the beatitudes.

I respond: More is required for the concept (*ratio*) of a beatitude than for the concept of a fruit.

For it is enough for the concept of a fruit that the thing have the character of being pleasing and being last, whereas the concept of a beatitude requires further that it be perfect and excellent. Hence, all the beatitudes can be called fruits, but not vice versa. For every virtuous action is a fruit that a man is pleased with, but the only things called beatitudes are perfect works which also, by reason of their perfection, are attributed more to the gifts than to the virtues, as has been explained (q. 69, a. 1).

Reply to objection 1: This argument proves that the beatitudes are fruits, but not that every fruit is a beatitude.

Reply to objection 2: The fruit of eternal life is last and perfect absolutely speaking, and so it is not distinct from future beatitude. However, the fruits of the present life are not last or perfect absolutely speaking, and that is why not all fruits are beatitudes.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, the concept of a beatitude includes something more than the concept of a fruit does.

Article 3

Did the Apostle correctly enumerate the fruits in Galatians 5?

It seems that the Apostle did not correctly enumerate twelve fruits in Galatians 5:22-23:

Objection 1: In other places he says that there is just one fruit of the present life—this according to Romans 6:22 (“You will have your fruit in holiness”). Again, Isaiah 27:9 says, “This is all the fruit: that sin be taken away.” Therefore, it was incorrect for twelve fruits to be posited.

Objection 2: As has been explained (a. 1), the fruit comes from a spiritual seed. But in Matthew 13:23 our Lord posits three kinds of fruit that grow out of good earth from the spiritual seed, viz., “fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold.” Therefore, it was incorrect for twelve fruits to be posited.

Objection 3: A fruit contains within its concept that it is something that comes last and is pleasing. But this concept is not found in all of the fruits enumerated by the Apostle. For instance, patience and longsuffering seem to be for those who are displeased (*contristantes*), whereas faith has the character of a first foundation rather than the character of something that comes last. Therefore, too many fruits of the Holy Spirit are enumerated by the Apostle.

But contrary to this: It seems that there are too few and not enough fruits enumerated. For it was claimed above (a. 2) that all the beatitudes can be called fruits; and yet not all the beatitudes are enumerated in this passage. Also, in this passage nothing is said about the act of wisdom or about the acts of many of the other virtues. Therefore, it seems that the fruits were incorrectly enumerated.

I respond: The number of the twelve fruits enumerated by the Apostle is correct, and these twelve fruits are perhaps signified by the twelve fruits of which Apocalypse 22:2 says, “On both sides of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits.”

Since a fruit is said to proceed from some source (*ex aliquo principio*) as from a seed or root, the distinctions among these fruits should be thought of in a way corresponding to the diversified working of the Holy Spirit in us. This working is thought of as follows: first, a man’s mind is ordered *within itself*; second, it is ordered to what is *joined to it*; and, third, it is ordered to things *below it*.

Now a man’s mind is well disposed within itself when it behaves appropriately in the face of both goods and evils.

The first disposition of the human mind toward the good is through love, which is the first affection and the root of all affections, as was explained above (q. 27, a. 4). And so among the fruits of the Holy Spirit the first one posited is *charity* (*caritas*), in which the Holy Spirit is given in a special way, as in a

proper likeness of Himself, since He Himself is the Love (*Amor*) (cf. *ST* 1, q. 37). Hence, Romans 5:5 says, “The love (*caritas*) of God is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

Now joy necessarily follows upon the love of charity. For every lover rejoices at being joined to what he loves. But charity always has God, whom it loves, present—this according to 1 John 4:16 (“Whoever remains in charity remains in God, and God in him”). Hence, what follows from charity is *joy* (*gaudium*).

Moreover, the perfection of joy is peace and this in two respects:

The first involves repose from external disturbances, since one cannot rejoice perfectly over a loved good if his enjoyment of it is disturbed by other things. Again, one who has his heart perfectly resting in one thing cannot be troubled by other things, since he regards all other things as nothing. Hence, Psalm 118:165 says, “Much peace have they who love Your law, and to them there is no stumbling block,” viz., because they are not disturbed by exterior things in such a way that they do not enjoy God.

The second respect involves the pacification of restless desire. For one does not rejoice perfectly over something if what he rejoices over does not satisfy him (*cui non sufficit*).

So peace implies two things, viz., (a) that we are not disturbed by exterior matters, and (b) that our desires come to rest in one thing. Hence, after charity and joy, the third fruit posited is *peace* (*pax*).

Now there are two respects in which a mind does well in the face of evils. First, the mind is not disturbed by the threat of evil things, and this pertains to *patience* (*patientia*). Second, it is not disturbed when good things are delayed, and this pertains to *longsuffering* (*longanimitas*). For as *Ethics* 5 says, “To lack a good has the character of an evil.”

Now as for what *is joined to* a man, viz., his neighbor (*proximus*), a man’s mind is well disposed, first, when it intends to act well, and the relevant fruit is *goodness* (*bonitas*). Second, our minds are well disposed when we execute our good actions (*ad beneficentiae executionem*), and the relevant fruit here is *kindness* (*benignitas*); for kind men are those whom the good fire of love makes fervent in doing good for their neighbors. Third, our minds are well disposed when we bear with equanimity the evils inflicted on us by our neighbors, and the relevant fruit is *meekness* (*mansuetudo*), which curbs anger. Fourth, our minds are well disposed when we do no harm to our neighbors, either through anger or through fraud or deceit; and here the relevant fruit is *faith* (*fides*), as long as faith is being understood as *faithfulness* (*fidelitas*). (However, if faith is understood as that by which one believes in God, then through faith in this sense a man is ordered toward that which lies *above him* in such a way that he subjects his intellect to God and, as a result, subjects everything which is his to God.)

As for what *lies below* him, a man is well disposed, first, with respect to exterior actions, through *modesty* (*modestia*), which preserves a careful measure (*modus*) in everything that is said and done. Second, with respect to sense desires, a man is well disposed through *continence* (*continentia*) and *chastity* (*castitas*), where the two are distinguished either (a) by the fact that chastity curbs a man’s unlawful desires, whereas continence curbs his lawful desires, or (b) by the fact that a continent man experiences sense desires but is not led astray by them, whereas a chaste man neither experiences them nor is led astray by them.

Reply to objection 1: Sanctification is effected through all the virtues, and it is also through all the virtues that sins are taken away. Hence, in the cited passage ‘fruit’ is taken in the singular because of the unity of the genus, which is then divided into many species insofar as there are said to be many fruits.

Reply to objection 2: The hundredfold fruit, the sixtyfold fruit, and the thirtyfold fruit are differentiated not by diverse species of virtuous acts but rather by diverse levels of perfection even within a single virtue. For instance, conjugal continence is said to be signified by the thirtyfold fruit, the continence of widows by the sixtyfold fruit, and virginal continence by the hundredfold fruit. And there are also other ways in which the saints distinguish the three evangelical fruits in accord with the three

degrees of virtue. (They posit three degrees because the perfection of any given thing has a beginning, a middle, and an end.)

Reply to objection 3: The very fact that someone is not disturbed in the face of sorrows has the character of something pleasing. Again, even if ‘faith’ is taken for the foundational [virtue], it has the character of something that comes last and is pleasing to the extent that it contains certitude. Hence, a Gloss on this passage says, “Faith, i.e., certitude concerning invisible things”

Reply to the argument for the contrary: As Augustine points out in *Super Epistolam ad Galatas*, the Apostle did not undertake here to teach what either the works of the flesh or the fruits of the Holy Spirit are; rather, he was trying to show in general which things are to be avoided and which things pursued. Hence, more (or, for that matter, fewer) fruits could have been enumerated. And yet all the acts of the gifts and the virtues can appropriately be traced back to the ones he mentions, insofar as all the virtues and gifts necessarily order the mind in one of the ways mentioned above. Hence, the act of wisdom and the acts of all the other gifts that order one toward the good are traced back to charity, joy, and peace. Yet the reason why he enumerated these fruits rather than others is that the ones enumerated in this passage convey either the fruition of goods or the allaying of evils—and this seems pertinent to the notion of a fruit.

Article 4

Are the fruits contrary to the works of the flesh enumerated by the Apostle?

It seems that the fruits are not contrary to the works of the flesh enumerated by the Apostle:

Objection 1: Contraries belong to the same genus. But the works of the flesh are not called ‘fruits’ of the flesh. Therefore, the fruits of the Spirit are not their contraries.

Objection 2: A single thing is a contrary to just one thing. But the Apostle enumerates more works of the flesh than fruits of the Spirit. Therefore, the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh are not contraries.

Objection 3: Among the fruits of the Spirit the first ones mentioned are charity, joy, and peace, which do not correspond to the works of the flesh that are enumerated first, viz., fornication (*fornicatio*), uncleanness (*immunditia*), and immodesty (*impudicitia*).

But contrary to this: The Apostle says in the same place that “the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.”

I respond: There are two possible ways to understand the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The first way is according to their *general* concepts. And in this sense the fruits of the Holy Spirit are contrary to the works of the flesh. For the Holy Spirit moves the human mind toward that which accords with reason or, better, toward that which lies beyond reason, whereas the appetite of the flesh, i.e., the sentient appetite, draws the mind toward sensible goods, which lie below man. Hence, just as upward movements and downward movements are contrary to one another in the case of natural things, so the works of the flesh are contrary to the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the case of human works.

The second possible way to think of them is according to the *proper* concepts of each of the enumerated fruits. And in this sense it need not be the case that the individual fruits of the Holy Spirit are counterposed to individual works of the flesh. For as was pointed out above (a. 3), the Apostle did not intend to enumerate all the spiritual works or all the works of the flesh. Still, in *Super Epistolam ad Galatas* Augustine, making a sort of adaptation, counterposes individual fruits to individual works of the

flesh: “*Charity*, through which the soul is joined to the God and in which there is also true *chastity*, is opposed to *fornication*, which is the love of satisfying one’s sexual desire separated from licit marriage. *Uncleanness* of various sorts, which consists in disturbances that find their source in this fornication, is opposed to the *joy* of tranquillity. *Slavery to idols*, for the sake of which war is waged against the Gospel of God, is opposed to *peace*. Against *sorcery* (*veneficium*), *enmities* (*inimicitiae*), *contentions* (*contentiones*), *jealous rivalries* (*aemulationes*), *animosities* (*animositates*), and *quarrels* (*dissensiones*), there is *longsuffering*, to bear the evils inflicted by the men among whom we live; *kindness*, to cure those evils; and *goodness*, to forgive them. *Faith* is opposed to *heresy*, *meekness* to *envy*, and *continence* to instances of *drunkenness* and *revelry* (*ebrietatibus et comessationibus*).”

Reply to objection 1: What comes from a tree in opposition to the tree’s nature is not said to be its fruit, but is instead called a sort of corruption. And it is because the works of the virtues are connatural to reason, whereas the works of the vices are contrary to reason, that the works of the virtues, but not the works of the vices, are called fruits.

Reply to objection 2: As Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, “Good occurs in a single way, whereas evil occurs in many ways.” Hence, more than one vice is opposed to a single virtue. For this reason, it is not surprising that more works of the flesh are posited than fruits of the Spirit.

Reply to objection 3: The reply to this objection is obvious from what has been said.