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T. C. O'Brien

Excerpt

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FAITH
(2a 2æ. 1–7)

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de fide

CIRCA VIRTUTES IGITUR THEOLOGICAS primo erit considerandum de fide; secundo, de spe; tertio de caritate.

Circa fidem vero quadruplex consideratio occurrit:

prima, quidem de ipsa fide;
 secunda, de donis intellectus et scientiæ sibi correspondentibus;
 tertia, de vitiis oppositis;
 quarta, de præceptis ad hanc virtutem pertinentibus.

Circa fidem vero primo erit considerandum:

de ejus objecto;
 secundo, de ejus actu;
 tertio, de ipso habitu.

^aThese Questions form the content of Vol. 31; Questions 8–16, of Vol. 32.

^bThis order of Questions is based on the determinative function of object in regard

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faith

AS TO THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES, then, the first topic will be faith (1-16), the second, hope (17-22), the third, charity (23-46).

As to faith, four themes present themselves:

- the first, faith itself (1-7);^a
- the second, the corresponding Gifts, Understanding and Knowledge (8-9);
- the third, vices opposed (10-15);
- the fourth, related precepts (16).

As to faith itself, we must discuss:

- first, the object of faith (1);
- secondly, the act (2-3);
- thirdly, the habit (4-7).^b

to an act of virtue, and therefore in regard to the virtue as habitual disposition towards such an act. See Appendix 1.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2æ. I, 1

Quæstio I. de fidei objecto

Circa primum quærentur decem:

1. utrum objectum fidei sit veritas prima;
2. utrum objectum fidei sit aliquid complexum vel in-complexum, id est res aut enuntiabile;
3. utrum fidei possit subesse falsum;
4. utrum objectum fidei possit esse aliquid visum;
5. utrum possit esse aliquid scitum;
6. utrum credibilia debeant distingui per certos articulos;
7. utrum iidem articuli subsint fidei secundum omne tempus;
8. de numero articuloꝝ;
9. de modo tradendi articulos in symbolo;
10. cujus sit fidei symbolum constituere.

articulus I. utrum objectum fidei sit veritas prima

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ I. Videtur quod objectum fidei non sit veritas prima. Illud enim videtur esse objectum fidei quod nobis proponitur ad credendum. Sed non solum proponuntur nobis ad credendum ea quæ pertinent ad divinitatem, quæ est veritas prima, sed etiam ea quæ pertinent ad humanitatem Christi et Ecclesiæ sacramenta et creaturarum conditionem. Ergo non solum veritas prima est fidei objectum.

¹cf III *Sent.* 24, 1, i. *De Veritate* XIV, 8. *De Spe* 1

^cThe contents of this Question are stated within a framework of presupposed theological data: that by revelation for man's beatitude God has made himself and his saving ways known. The matters surpassing natural knowledge that God has revealed are expressed in the biblical word and in ecclesial symbols of faith, creeds. Faith is the grace-given power to hold fast to God as he speaks his word. For an understanding of the progress of Question I as it seeks an intelligible expression of the meaning and order of the data, 1a. 16 should be reread. There the statement, "Truth means that towards which the mind tends (art. 1)," is an equation between the true and the object of the intellect that explains why the meaning of faith is discussed in terms of truth: faith is presupposed to be a way in which man *knows* God. This further involves the presupposition that grace empowers the mind and will and takes up their pattern of interaction into the life of communion with God (see 1a2æ. 62, 1 & 3; 110, 1-4; also 1a. 93, 4 & 7; 1a2æ. 3, 3-8). The light shed by 1a. 16 on the order of the present Question is its explanation of the meanings of truth. The first is the truth whereby things are said to be true; the second, the truth whereby knowledge is said to be true (art. 1). The way that faith reaches the true in the first sense, as that which is conformed to God's own knowing, is the issue here in art. 1. Truth in the second sense is the issue in art. 2-10. Truth known exists in the mind's judging its own conformity to the existent (1a. 16, 2); for the human mind that necessarily involves a complex act of which a proposition is the expression; art. 2 & 3 deal with this fact and its relationship to the point made in art. 1. Art. 4 & 5

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THE OBJECT OF FAITH

Question I. the object of faith

As to the object of faith, there are ten points of inquiry:

1. whether the first truth is the object of faith;
2. whether faith has a complex or a simple object, i.e. a proposition or a reality;
3. whether something false can come under faith;
4. whether it is possible for the object of faith to be something seen;
5. or a matter known in a science;
6. whether matters of belief should be set forth in distinct articles;
7. whether at all times faith has centred upon the same articles;
8. the number of the articles of faith;
9. the way the articles are handed down in creeds;
10. the one empowered to authorize a creed.^e

article 1. whether the first truth is the object of faith

THE FIRST POINT:¹ I. The object^d of faith is not, it seems, the first truth.^e The object of faith is, of course, whatever is proposed for our belief. This includes not only matters regarding the Godhead, i.e. the first truth, but also some referring to Christ's humanity, the sacraments of the Church, the condition of creatures. The first truth is not, therefore, the sole object of faith.

compare the status of the object of faith in the mind with the status of objects of other primary forms of true knowledge, insight into principles (art. 4) and science of conclusions (art. 5). Art. 6–10, presupposing that propositions in which the objects of faith are enunciated have a particular formulation into articles, deal with the reason for this (art. 6), their variations in the course of time (art. 7), their formulation into creeds by the Church (art. 9–10).

^a*objectum*, object, the term that bears the heaviest burden in this treatise and throughout the 2a2ae. The Reply will give its main inflections; the translation will apply them throughout as the context demands.

^e*prima veritas* is translated always as 'the first truth'. St Thomas is talking about God, the God who is true and is truth ('Not only is truth in God, but he is the supreme and the first truth'. 1a. 16, 5); it is not an abstraction or an 'object' in an impersonal sense that is being discussed. The logic of arguing from universal to particular, the language of philosophical categories are techniques; they should not be allowed to obscure the reality being expressed. The theological virtues are not an instance of something more universal; the techniques are meant to express the unique, singular reality of life in grace: 'There is nothing like grace in the characteristics of the soul that the philosophers have thought about.' (*De Veritate* xxvii, 2 ad 7).

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2æ. I, I

2. Præterea, fides et infidelitas sunt circa idem, cum sint opposita. Sed circa omnia quæ in sacra scriptura continentur potest esse infidelitas; quidquid enim horum homo negaverit, infidelis reputatur. Ergo etiam fides est circa omnia quæ in sacra Scriptura continentur. Sed ibi multa de hominibus continentur et de aliis rebus creatis. Ergo objectum fidei non solum est veritas prima, sed etiam veritas creata.

3. Præterea, fides caritati condividitur, ut supra dictum est.² Sed caritate non solum diligimus Deum, qui est summa bonitas, sed etiam diligimus proximum. Ergo fidei objectum non est solum veritas prima.

SED CONTRA est quod Dionysius dicit quod *fides est circa simplicem et semper existentem veritatem*.³ Hæc autem est veritas prima. Ergo objectum fidei est veritas prima.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod cujuslibet cognoscitivi habitus objectum duo habet, scilicet id quod materialiter cognoscitur, quod est sicut materiale objectum; et id per quod cognoscitur, quod est formalis ratio objecti. Sicut in scientia geometriæ materialiter scita sunt conclusiones; formalis vero ratio sciendi sunt media demonstrationis, per quæ conclusiones cognoscuntur.

Sic igitur in fide si consideremus formalem rationem objecti, nihil est aliud quam veritas prima. Non enim fides de qua loquimur assentit alicui nisi quia* est a Deo revelatum, unde ipsi veritati divinæ fides innititur tanquam medio. Si vero consideremus materialiter ea quibus fides assentit, non solum est ipse Deus, sed etiam multa alia. Quæ tamen sub assensu fidei non cadunt nisi secundum quod habent aliquem ordinem ad Deum, prout scilicet per aliquos divinitatis effectus homo adjuvatur ad tendendum in divinam fruitionem. Et ideo etiam ex hac parte objectum fidei est quodammodo veritas prima, inquantum nihil cadit sub fide nisi

*Piana: *quod*

²1a2æ. 62, 3

³*De divinis nominibus* 7. PG 3, 872. The Pseudo-Dionysius or Denis is an anonymous writer of c. A.D. 500, probably from Syria; in the early Middle Ages he was identified as the Areopagite of *Acts* 17, 34. His writings, Neo-Platonic in inspiration, were thus accorded quasi-apostolic authority. In the present Questions his teaching on the hierarchic enlightenment of the angels influences St Thomas.

⁴*homo* when used by St Thomas is most often not a reference to a grand, universal Man but simply, in disregard of a correct Latinity, the equivalent of the indefinite pronoun, 'one' in English or *on* in French. See R. A. Gauthier in *Sententia libri Ethicorum, Sancti Thomæ de Aquino Omnia Opera* XLVII, I (Rome, 1971) p. 196. ⁵i.e. of theological virtue.

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2. Further, as opposites, faith and unbelief are about the same points. Unbelief can occur with regard to all that is contained in sacred Scripture; a person^f is counted an unbeliever for denying any one of such matters. Faith as well, then, is about all that is in Scripture; this comprises many things about men and the rest of the created world. The object of faith, therefore, is not the first truth alone, but created truths as well.

3. Further, as established earlier,² faith and charity are co-members of a division.^g Now in charity we love not only God, the first goodness, but also our neighbour. Neither, therefore, is the object of faith the first truth alone.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Dionysius says that *faith regards the simple and everlasting truth*,³ i.e. the first truth. Therefore, the object of faith is the first truth.

REPLY: The object of any cognitive habit^h includes two elements: that which is known, the content, and this stands as the material object; that by which the material object is known, and this is the formal objective.ⁱ An example: in the science of geometry the content known is the

^hOn *habitus*, habit, see 1a2æ. 49–54, Vol. 22, ed. A. Kenny; as used here it means a disposition or training of a faculty to act with readiness and facility in a certain way. *Habitus cognoscitivus* refers here primarily to dispositions of mind, not of the senses; see 1a2æ. 50, 3 & ad 3.

ⁱPowers or faculties of soul and the habits added to them both have their meaning by reference to their acts; acts have their meaning and character by reference to their objects. This is the point being introduced here and it is a constant for determining the meaning of each virtue and vice throughout the *Secunda Secundæ*. The interpretation of 'specification by object' is given in Appendix 1. Here note that *objectum* has a basic and constant meaning: the reality (person or thing) with which an act is concerned (*objectum* literally is that which is thrown up against the act); St Thomas keeps that sense in speaking of the *objectum materiale* and the *formalis ratio objecti*. Object does have the sense of 'term' and the immanent actions of knowing and loving are thought of after the fashion of movement towards or engagement with a term. The material object is the reality terminative of an act. The formal objective—this will always be the translation of *formalis ratio objecti*—is the basis in the object upon which the action relies for its termination; it is the motive, the special interest or value in the reality whereby it engages the act. It thus delineates the act and determines what the material object is. The present article should be read in conjunction with 2a2æ. 17, 2–4, with a view to appreciating that St Thomas sees the immediacy of man's union with God by faith and hope, as well as their character as theological virtues, on the basis of their formal objectives. '(Man) reaches God in his very being . . . when by faith he adheres to the first truth' (1 *Sent.* 37, 1, 2).

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2A2Æ. I, 1

in ordine ad Deum. Sicut etiam objectum medicinae est sanitas, quia nihil medicina considerat nisi in ordine ad sanitatem.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ea quae pertinent ad humanitatem Christi et ad sacramenta ecclesiae vel ad quascumque creaturas cadunt sub fide in quantum per haec ordinamur ad Deum. Et eis etiam assentimus propter divinam veritatem.

2. Et similiter dicendum est ad secundum, de omnibus illis quae in sacra scriptura traduntur.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod etiam caritas diligit proximum propter Deum, et sic objectum ejus proprie est ipse Deus, ut infra dicitur.⁴

⁴2a2æ. 25, 1

¹See also 1a. 1, 1 ad 2; 3 & ad 2; 7. On the example of geometry note the difference between the formal status of the probative syllogism—made up of premisses with a common middle term (*medium demonstrationis*) and the conclusion following—and the reality that is known through such a process. In that reality the feature expressed as a middle term is the reason why what is known (subject in the conclusion) is characterized by some attribute (predicate in the conclusion). That is the formal objective, that aspect or feature of the reality known which leads to, and validates the mind's terminating in the reality as described in the conclusion; see *In Poster. II, lect. 1*. This perfective function of the medium explains the application of the terms 'material' and 'formal'.

²*veritas prima* here means the first truth in a distinctive sense, implicit in the reference to revelation. That sense may be in part suggested by the virtue of truth, 'the truth as that by which a person speaks the truth' (2a2æ. 109, 1, Vol. 41, ed. T. C. O'Brien). But there is more: God speaks what he knows and his knowledge is not only in conformity but one with his own being and is the measure and cause of all other beings (1a. 16, 5); by adhering to God as the first truth, man by faith shares in this, God's own knowing: '... that faith which is a virtue makes a person's mind adhere to the truth which consists in God's own knowing, and so to transcend the truth of man's own mind' (*De Veritate* XIV, 8); see 1a2æ. 110, 4. The force of 'medium' as it indicates the basis for assent to the contents of faith, may be seen from the following: 'a kind of share in and likeness to the divine knowing comes about in this life in that by infused faith we hold fast to the divine truth for its own sake' *In De Trin.* II, 2. The formal objective of faith is the God who is true, who knows and speaks the truth; faith assents to God himself. This determination has all the theological force and intensity contained in the biblical notion of the word of God. Considering the primacy of a formal objective, we see that it is through this adherence to God that faith is a theological virtue, having God himself as its immediate object (see 1a2æ. 62, 1). Under the colourless language of 'object' the reality of God's special presence through grace is asserted; see 1a. 8, 3 & ad 4; Appendix 2. This immediate relationship with God contrasts with the way that in its natural knowing the mind is said to judge all things on the basis of divine truth; here the divine truth is reflected in the mind through the mind's own first principles; this is a mediate relationship to God, through a likeness, in that the first principles are derived and seen through the experience of created being; see 1a. 16, 6 ad 1. Finally this Reply makes revelation to mean primarily not a body of truths, but

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conclusions; the formal objective of the science's assent to them is the medium of demonstration through which the conclusions are known.^j

With regard to faith, then, if we look to its formal objective, it is the first truth, nothing else. The reason: faith as we mean it here assents to anything only because it is revealed by God, and so faith rests upon the divine truth itself as the medium of its assent.^k But if we look to the content to which faith assents, this includes not only God, but also many other matters. Even so, the assent of faith terminates in such things only in so far as they have some reference to God, i.e. as they are the workings of God that help man in his striving towards joyous rest^l in God. Consequently, even from the side of its material object faith is in some sense about the first truth, namely in that nothing comes under faith except in reference to God.^m For an example take health as it is the object of medical science, which studies nothing except as related to health.

Hence: 1. Matters about Christ's humanity, the Church's sacraments or anything else created come under faith in that through them we are led towards God.ⁿ Furthermore we assent to such matters on the basis of God's truthfulness.^o

2. The same applies to the second argument concerning the contents of Scripture.

3. Charity also loves neighbour on account of God and thus, precisely speaking, its object is God, as we will explain later.⁴

God himself revealing and faith itself first accepts God himself speaking before it terminates in what God speaks; see 2, 2.

^jOn *fruitio*, enjoyment, the joyous rest in the good reached, see 1a2ae. 11, Vol. 17 ed. T. Gilby, especially Appendix 1 on the structure of the human act, in which *fruitio* is the final completion.

^mThere is present here the general conception of faith as the beginning of the life of grace that comes from God's special love communicating the eternal good which is himself, drawing man into his own blessed life (see 1a2ae. 110, 1; 2a2ae. 17, 2; 23, 1; II *Sent.* 26, 1, 1 ad 2). Faith is the response to God's speaking (*In Rom.* 4, *lect.* 1 notes that one has faith only when he believes anything 'because it is spoken by God' *quod est a Deo dictum*), and so initiating that communication; God himself speaks and speaks first of himself as the one in whose blessedness man shares, and then of the things whereby God brings man to himself. From the outset faith is placed in the context of the special, person-to-person life of beatitude and grace; that essential note will be sounded repeatedly throughout these Questions.

ⁿ*ordinamur* suggests the divine plan that gives unified meaning to all the contents of faith, their reference to salvation and beatitude.

^ocf 2a2ae. 17, 2 ad 2. Note also the following capsule of the whole article here: 'Although through the first truth we are led to (a knowledge of) creatures, nevertheless we are led above all to God himself, because the first truth bears witness above all to himself. Thus for faith the first truth stands both as medium and as term' *De Veritate* XIV, 8 ad 9.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2æ. 1, 2

articulus 2. utrum objectum fidei sit aliquid complexum per modum enuntiabilis

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur¹ 1. Videtur quod objectum fidei non sit aliquid complexum per modum enuntiabilis. Objectum enim fidei est veritas prima, sicut dictum est.² Sed prima veritas est quid incomplexum. Ergo objectum fidei non est aliquid complexum.

2. Praeterea expositio fidei in symbolo continetur. Sed in symbolo non ponuntur enuntiabilia, sed res; non enim dicitur ibi quod Deus sit omnipotens, sed, *Credo in Deum omnipotentem*.³ Ergo objectum fidei non est enuntiabile, sed res.

3. Praeterea, fidei succedit visio, secundum illud 1 *ad Cor.*, *Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem; nunc cognosco ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum*.⁴ Sed visio patriæ est de incompleto, cum sit ipsius divinæ essentiae. Ergo etiam fides viæ.

SED CONTRA, fides est media inter scientiam et opinionem. Medium autem et extrema sunt ejusdem generis. Cum ergo scientia et opinio sint circa enuntiabilia, videtur quod similiter fides sit circa enuntiabilia. Et ita objectum fidei, cum fides* sit circa enuntiabilia, est aliquid complexum.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod cognita sunt in cognoscente secundum

*Piana omits

¹cf 1 *Sent.* 41, exposit. text.; III *Sent.* 24, 1, ii. *De Veritate* XIV, 8 ad 5 & ad 12

²art. 1

³*Apostles' Creed*

⁴1 *Corinthians* 13, 12

³The article is about the principal, material object of faith, the true God whom faith accepts. The central point to be grasped is that 'the act of the believer does not have a proposition as term, but a reality' (ad 2). The problem envisioned is implicit in the terminology taken from logic. That terminology derives from the following definition: 'A proposition (*enuntiatio*) is a sentence in which there is truth or falsity (*In Periherm.* 1, lect. 7). The term *enuntiatio* or *enuntiabile* is from *oratio enuntiativa*, the Latin translation St Thomas had of Aristotle's *logos apophantikos* (*On Interpretation* 4. 17a1-5: 'But while every sentence (*logos*) has meaning . . . not every one can be a proposition (*apophantikos*). We call propositions those only that have truth or falsity in them'). Thus in this use 'proposition' can be compared to what grammar calls a declarative sentence. (St Thomas follows Aristotle in distinguishing between *enuntiatio* and *propositio*, the second meaning strictly a premiss in a syllogism; but the distinction has no importance here, so 'proposition' is used.) The term *complexum* appears because a proposition is an *oratio*, which, in the language of logic, is a complex or composite term, as distinct from a simple one. A spoken or written proposition is regarded as a sign, an expression of a mental concept ('that which is conceived by the mind, whereby a person expresses mentally those things he is thinking about', 1a2æ. 93, 1 ad 2). The attention of the article is fixed on the mental concept; this is the force of *enuntiabile*. The fact that a proposition is concerned with truth or falsity indicates that the problem of the article is the relationship between the composite way in which the mind knows truth and the fact that faith has God as its real term. See Appendix 3.