

Objection 1. It would seem that charity can be without faith and hope. For charity is the love of God. But it is possible for us to love God naturally, without already having faith, or hope in future bliss. Therefore charity can be without faith and hope.

Objection 2. Further, charity is the root of all the virtues, according to Eph. 3:17: “Rooted and founded in charity.” Now the root is sometimes without branches. Therefore charity can sometimes be without faith and hope, and the other virtues.

Objection 3. Further, there was perfect charity in Christ. And yet He had neither faith nor hope: because He was a perfect comprehensor, as we shall explain further on (IIIa, q. 7, Aa. 3,4). Therefore charity can be without faith and hope.

On the contrary, The Apostle says (Heb. 11:6): “Without faith it is impossible to please God”; and this evidently belongs most to charity, according to Prov. 8:17: “I love them that love me.” Again, it is by hope that we are brought to charity, as stated above (q. 62, a. 4). Therefore it is not possible to have charity without faith and hope.

I answer that, Charity signifies not only the love of God, but also a certain friendship with Him; which implies, besides love, a certain mutual return of love, together with mutual communion, as stated in Ethic. viii, 2. That this belongs to charity is evident from 1 Jn. 4:16: “He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him,” and from 1 Cor. 1:9, where it is written: “God is

faithful, by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son.” Now this fellowship of man with God, which consists in a certain familiar colloquy with Him, is begun here, in this life, by grace, but will be perfected in the future life, by glory; each of which things we hold by faith and hope. Wherefore just as friendship with a person would be impossible, if one disbelieved in, or despaired of, the possibility of their fellowship or familiar colloquy; so too, friendship with God, which is charity, is impossible without faith, so as to believe in this fellowship and colloquy with God, and to hope to attain to this fellowship. Therefore charity is quite impossible without faith and hope.

Reply to Objection 1. Charity is not any kind of love of God, but that love of God, by which He is loved as the object of bliss, to which object we are directed by faith and hope.

Reply to Objection 2. Charity is the root of faith and hope, in so far as it gives them the perfection of virtue. But faith and hope as such are the precursors of charity, as stated above (q. 62, a. 4), and so charity is impossible without them.

Reply to Objection 3. In Christ there was neither faith nor hope, on account of their implying an imperfection. But instead of faith, He had manifest vision, and instead of hope, full comprehension*: so that in Him was perfect charity.

* See above, q. 4, a. 3