

Objection 1. It would seem that beneficence is a special virtue. For precepts are directed to virtue, since law-givers purpose to make men virtuous (Ethic. i 9,13; ii, 1). Now beneficence and love are prescribed as distinct from one another, for it is written (Mat. 4:44): “Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.” Therefore beneficence is a virtue distinct from charity.

Objection 2. Further, vices are opposed to virtues. Now there are opposed to beneficence certain vices whereby a hurt is inflicted on our neighbor, for instance, rapine, theft and so forth. Therefore beneficence is a special virtue.

Objection 3. Further, charity is not divided into several species: whereas there would seem to be several kinds of beneficence, according to the various kinds of benefits. Therefore beneficence is a distinct virtue from charity.

On the contrary, The internal and the external act do not require different virtues. Now beneficence and goodwill differ only as external and internal act, since beneficence is the execution of goodwill. Therefore as goodwill

is not a distinct virtue from charity, so neither is beneficence.

I answer that, Virtues differ according to the different aspects of their objects. Now the formal aspect of the object of charity and of beneficence is the same, since both virtues regard the common aspect of good, as explained above (a. 1). Wherefore beneficence is not a distinct virtue from charity, but denotes an act of charity.

Reply to Objection 1. Precepts are given, not about habits but about acts of virtue: wherefore distinction of precept denotes distinction, not of habits, but of acts.

Reply to Objection 2. Even as all benefits conferred on our neighbor, if we consider them under the common aspect of good, are to be traced to love, so all hurts considered under the common aspect of evil, are to be traced to hatred. But if we consider these same things under certain special aspects of good or of evil, they are to be traced to certain special virtues or vices, and in this way also there are various kinds of benefits.

Hence the Reply to the Third Objection is evident.