

Objection 1. It would seem that faith cannot be greater in one man than in another. For the quantity of a habit is taken from its object. Now whoever has faith believes everything that is of faith, since by failing in one point, a man loses his faith altogether, as stated above (a. 3). Therefore it seems that faith cannot be greater in one than in another.

Objection 2. Further, those things which consist in something supreme cannot be “more” or “less.” Now faith consists in something supreme, because it requires that man should adhere to the First Truth above all things. Therefore faith cannot be “more” or “less.”

Objection 3. Further, faith is to knowledge by grace, as the understanding of principles is to natural knowledge, since the articles of faith are the first principles of knowledge by grace, as was shown above (q. 1, a. 7). Now the understanding of principles is possessed in equal degree by all men. Therefore faith is possessed in equal degree by all the faithful.

On the contrary, Wherever we find great and little, there we find more or less. Now in the matter of faith we find great and little, for Our Lord said to Peter (Mat. 14:31): “O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?” And to the woman he said (Mat. 15: 28): “O woman, great is thy faith!” Therefore faith can be greater in one than in another.

I answer that, As stated above (Ia IIae, q. 52, Aa. 1,2; Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4), the quantity of a habit may be considered from two points of view: first, on the part of the object; secondly, on the part of its participation by the subject.

Now the object of faith may be considered in two ways: first, in respect of its formal aspect; secondly, in respect of the material object which is proposed to be believed. Now the formal object of faith is one and simple, namely the First Truth, as stated above (q. 1, a. 1). Hence

in this respect there is no diversity of faith among believers, but it is specifically one in all, as stated above (q. 4, a. 6). But the things which are proposed as the matter of our belief are many and can be received more or less explicitly; and in this respect one man can believe explicitly more things than another, so that faith can be greater in one man on account of its being more explicit.

If, on the other hand, we consider faith from the point of view of its participation by the subject, this happens in two ways, since the act of faith proceeds both from the intellect and from the will, as stated above (q. 2, Aa. 1,2; q. 4, a. 2). Consequently a man’s faith may be described as being greater, in one way, on the part of his intellect, on account of its greater certitude and firmness, and, in another way, on the part of his will, on account of his greater promptitude, devotion, or confidence.

Reply to Objection 1. A man who obstinately disbelieves a thing that is of faith, has not the habit of faith, and yet he who does not explicitly believe all, while he is prepared to believe all, has that habit. In this respect, one man has greater faith than another, on the part of the object, in so far as he believes more things, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 2. It is essential to faith that one should give the first place to the First Truth. But among those who do this, some submit to it with greater certitude and devotion than others; and in this way faith is greater in one than in another.

Reply to Objection 3. The understanding of principles results from man’s very nature, which is equally shared by all: whereas faith results from the gift of grace, which is not equally in all, as explained above (Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4). Hence the comparison fails.

Nevertheless the truth of principles is more known to one than to another, according to the greater capacity of intellect.