

**Objection 1.** It would seem that it is not natural for man to possess external things. For no man should ascribe to himself that which is God's. Now the dominion over all creatures is proper to God, according to Ps. 23:1, "The earth is the Lord's," etc. Therefore it is not natural for man to possess external things.

**Objection 2.** Further, Basil in expounding the words of the rich man (Lk. 12:18), "I will gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods," says\*: "Tell me: which are thine? where did you take them from and bring them into being?" Now whatever man possesses naturally, he can fittingly call his own. Therefore man does not naturally possess external things.

**Objection 3.** Further, according to Ambrose (De Trin. i<sup>†</sup>) "dominion denotes power." But man has no power over external things, since he can work no change in their nature. Therefore the possession of external things is not natural to man.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Ps. 8:8): "Thou hast subjected all things under his feet."

**I answer that,** External things can be considered in two ways. First, as regards their nature, and this is not subject to the power of man, but only to the power of God Whose mere will all things obey. Secondly, as regards

their use, and in this way, man has a natural dominion over external things, because, by his reason and will, he is able to use them for his own profit, as they were made on his account: for the imperfect is always for the sake of the perfect, as stated above (q. 64, a. 1). It is by this argument that the Philosopher proves (Polit. i, 3) that the possession of external things is natural to man. Moreover, this natural dominion of man over other creatures, which is competent to man in respect of his reason wherein God's image resides, is shown forth in man's creation (Gn. 1:26) by the words: "Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea," etc.

**Reply to Objection 1.** God has sovereign dominion over all things: and He, according to His providence, directed certain things to the sustenance of man's body. For this reason man has a natural dominion over things, as regards the power to make use of them.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The rich man is reproved for deeming external things to belong to him principally, as though he had not received them from another, namely from God.

**Reply to Objection 3.** This argument considers the dominion over external things as regards their nature. Such a dominion belongs to God alone, as stated above.

\* Hom. in Luc. xii, 18 † De Fide, ad Gratianum, i, 1