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# Aquinas on Blameworthiness and the Virtue of Faith

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**Abstract:** Many Christians seem to have a difficulty in their worldview insofar as they affirm: (1) If a person cannot do something, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action, (2) No one has it within his or her power to acquire faith, and (3) Some individuals who do not have the virtue of faith are nevertheless blameworthy for not having faith. These propositions together appear to entail a contradiction. In this paper I show how the Christian philosopher, St. Thomas Aquinas, affirms these propositions but avoids the contradiction because of his understanding of faith, blame and grace.

**Key words:** St. Thomas Aquinas; blame; Christianity; faith

Christians believe that it is very important to have faith in God. Christians believe in an afterlife. According to Christians, in order to be with God in the afterlife for eternity in never-ending joy and love, one needs faith. Without faith, as the Bible says, it is impossible to please God.<sup>①</sup> Moreover, Christians believe that one cannot acquire faith for oneself.<sup>②</sup> God must give a person faith—a person cannot earn it or come to it without God's help. Finally, very many Christians believe that some people are blameworthy for not having faith. But, if one needs faith to be with God in the afterlife, and one cannot do anything to acquire faith, it doesn't seem fair that God would hold people accountable for not having faith. God is supposed to be perfectly just. However, holding people accountable for something they cannot control—like getting faith—seems most unjust. It looks like Christians have a big problem here. In order to examine this problem more deeply, I will focus on the work of one important Christian philosopher—St. Thomas Aquinas. As we will see, Aquinas provides one way for the Christian to affirm these teachings without throwing out any of these important parts of Christian doctrine.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican friar who synthesized Aristotelian philosophy and Christianity in the thirteenth century, seems to permit a difficulty in his philosophical theology in his teaching on the virtue of faith; he affirms three propositions that appear to entail a formal contradiction. First, he maintains:

(1) If a person cannot do something, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action.<sup>③</sup>

Another formulation of the same principle is the following: If a person is blameworthy for an action not being done, then she could have done it. This principle is a near neighbor to the principle that philosophers generally refer to as the 'ought implies can' principle – if I ought to perform an action, then I can perform that action; if I can't perform an action then it is not the case that I ought to perform that action.

The thought with (1) is that if I am accountable or responsible for an action or a state of affairs not occurring, it must be the case that I can actually perform that action or bring about that state of affairs. So, for example, if I cannot get myself to the planet Pluto (and I can't), I am not blameworthy for my not getting there. You would be wrong in blaming me for not being on Pluto. If I cannot stop an armed bank robber from robbing a bank, then I am not responsible for her robbing of the bank.<sup>④</sup> In general, if it is not possible for a person to do something, then blaming a person for not performing that action would be wrong.

Secondly, Aquinas maintains the following:

(2) No one has it within his or her power to acquire faith.<sup>⑤</sup>

<sup>①</sup> Hebrews 11:6: And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. All quotations from the Bible taken from the *New Revised Standard Version*, available for download at: <http://www.anova.org/sev/>.

<sup>②</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

<sup>③</sup> See, for instance, St. Aquinas's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Chapter 15, Lecture 5, 2046. I will discuss this particular text in the sequel. See also *ST II-II q.10 a.1 Resp.* Quotations from the *Summa Theologiae* in this paper are taken from the Benziger Brothers edition, 1947, available for download at: <http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/home.html>.

<sup>④</sup> Barring, of course, bizarre situations such as when I use a mind controlling device to make her rob the bank, then break the device and lock myself in a room, thus causing myself to be unable to stop her though causing her to do it.

<sup>⑤</sup> See, for instance, *ST II-II q.6 a.1 Resp* or *SCG III. 150*.

Faith is a gift from God, according to Christianity. As we will see later, Aquinas cannot affirm that a person has it under his or her own power to acquire faith and remain consistent with his other commitments (such as his commitment to the Christian religion).

From (1) and (2), it seems to follow straightforwardly that people are not blameworthy for not having faith if they, in fact, do not have faith. After all, (1) says that if I cannot do something then I cannot be blamed for it not occurring, and (2) says that I cannot acquire the virtue of faith for myself – how could these both be true and yet I am still blameworthy for not having faith?

However, this is precisely what Aquinas teaches. He maintains:

(3) Some individuals who do not have the virtue of faith are nevertheless blameworthy for not having faith.<sup>①</sup>

As I will show, Aquinas does, in fact, hold these three propositions to be true. That is, he holds that if one cannot bring it about that a state of affairs obtains, then one isn't responsible for that state of affairs not obtaining; that humans cannot bring it about that they have the virtue of faith; and that, regardless, some humans are blameworthy for not having faith.

In this paper I will do the following: I will present what Aquinas means by 'faith' and 'blame'. Next, I will defuse one possible response to this apparent difficulty in Aquinas's philosophical theology; namely, that Aquinas does not hold at least one of these three propositions. Finally, I will present Aquinas's method for alleviating the tension in affirming (1)-(3), which has to do with his view on the grace that God provides to humans. In the end, we will see that Aquinas's view on faith and blame is consistent.

### (I) Of Faith and Blame

By *faith*, Aquinas means the infused, theological virtue that God provides gratuitously to some, which is a precondition for hope and charity, and a necessary condition for salvation.<sup>②</sup> By *virtue*, Aquinas means a stable disposition to act well in doing the good. By *infused*, Aquinas means to differentiate it from being *acquired*: infused virtues are given directly from God without human work, whereas humans form acquired virtues through continual work. By *theological*, he means to differentiate it from the virtues which are natural, such as fortitude, temperance, prudence, and justice. By *gratuitously*, Aquinas means that God gives the virtue to humans, not because of what they do or will do with it, but because of God's goodness and favor. By *being a precondition for hope and charity*, Aquinas means that without faith one cannot have hope and charity. And, by *a necessary condition for salvation*, Aquinas means that without faith human beings cannot spend eternity with God. So, Aquinas sees faith as a gift from God which humans cannot earn themselves or gain for themselves, a gift which is necessary for a human to reach her final goal of spending eternity with God. These are all properties of faith, but they do not tell us what faith is. What is faith?

Aquinas affirms the standard and traditional usage of the term *faith* in the book of the New Testament, Hebrews, verse 11:1, which reads "Faith is the assurance of things to be hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." He adds,

Accordingly if anyone would reduce the foregoing words to the form of a definition, he may say that "faith is a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is non-apparent."<sup>③</sup>

Faith is a disposition that begins eternal life in the subject through making the intellect assent to truths that are beyond its natural grasp. Faith, then, properly speaking, is a virtue, not an act, according to Aquinas. It is the virtue of the intellect that leads humans to assent to the teachings of God that are not apparent.

Aquinas offers a conception of blameworthiness and praiseworthiness in the *Summa Theologiae*. He writes,

Just as evil is more comprehensive than sin, so is sin more comprehensive than blame. For an action is said to deserve praise or blame, from its being imputed to the agent: since to praise or to blame means nothing else than to impute to someone the malice or goodness of his action. Now an action is imputed to an agent, when it is in his power, so that he has dominion over it: because it is through his will that man has dominion over his actions, as was made clear above [ST I-II q.1 aa. 1,2]. Hence it follows that good or evil, in voluntary actions alone, renders them worthy of praise or blame: and in such like actions, evil, sin and guilt are one and the same thing.<sup>④</sup>

First there are evil actions; this is the largest of the three sets of actions discussed here. A subset of evil actions is those that are also sinful. A subset of those sinful actions is those for which a person is blameworthy. Analogously, consider the sets: Animals, Mammals and Dogs. Animals are the largest set, and contained in Animals are Mammals. Then, contained in

<sup>①</sup> ST II-II q.10 aa.1, 3.

<sup>②</sup> Virtue – ST II-II q.4 a.5; Infused – ST II-II q.6 a.1; Theological – ST I-II q.62 a.3; Given to some – SCG III. 162; Precondition for hope and charity – ST I-II q.62 a.4; Necessary for salvation – ST II-II q.2 a.5.

<sup>③</sup> ST II-II q.4 a.1 Resp.

<sup>④</sup> ST I-II q.21 a.2 Resp.

Mammals, there is a smaller set of things, those being the Dogs.

Here Aquinas affirms that if an individual is blameworthy for an action, the action must be a sin, and the agent must be in control of acting in that way. Sin, according to Aquinas (here he follows St. Augustine), is “nothing else than a bad human act.”<sup>①</sup> The action must come from the agent’s will, as Aquinas says in the *Respondeo* of the following article: “It is therefore evident that a good or evil action deserves praise or blame, in so far as it is in the power of the will: that it is right or sinful, according as it is ordained to the end.”<sup>②</sup> This is not to say that the only actions one is blameworthy for are those that one wills. There are many actions that one doesn’t will that arise from negligence for which one is blameworthy – for instance, if I come across a drowning person that I could easily save with no possibility of danger to myself and let that person drown anyway, our moral intuitions tell us that I am blameworthy, at least partially, for that person’s death. Thus, the individual deserves praise or blame for an action if she is responsible for it in some way through something voluntary she has done.<sup>③</sup>

The tension that the three propositions at the beginning of this paper produce is clear. No one has the power to acquire faith for herself; nevertheless, Aquinas claims some people are blameworthy for not having it. Moreover, Aquinas thinks that if someone cannot control something, that person should not be blamed for it not happening. If it is beyond our power, no matter what we do, to bring about a state of affairs, then to blame us for not bringing about that state of affairs is unjust. The difficulty for Aquinas here is that he seems to take the principle affirmed in (1) – that if a person cannot do something, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action – affirm the first clause (that a person cannot acquire faith for herself), and deny the second (that she is blameworthy for not having faith). The problem with this is that it produces a contradiction!

The easiest way to bypass this problem is to show that Aquinas does not hold at least one of (1)-(3). With this in mind, I turn to show that Aquinas does believe these propositions.

## (II) Does Aquinas Affirm (1), (2) and (3)?

Consider (1), if a person cannot do something, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action. (1) seems right intuitively, and moreover it is commonplace in moral philosophy; but, is there any evidence that Aquinas believed it? I think there is. Take, for instance, the following segment from Aquinas’s commentary on the Gospel of John.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says,

Remember the word I have said to you, ‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they [anyone] persecuted me they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.*<sup>④</sup>

What does it mean when Jesus says that if he had not come and spoken to the people, that they would not have sin, but that now they have no excuse for their sin? Aquinas (following St. Augustine) understands it in the following way:

[I]f Christ had not come and spoken to them [the individuals to whom he spoke in this passage], they could not have believed. And *no one is charged with a sin for not doing what he can’t do at all.*<sup>⑤</sup>

That last sentence is the important one. ‘No one is charged with a sin for not doing what he can’t do at all. That is, if a person can’t bring it about that thus-and-such occurs, then he hasn’t sinned in not bringing thus-and-such about. Remember Aquinas’s conception of blameworthiness. Blameworthiness is contained in sinfulness, just like dog is contained in mammal. If

<sup>①</sup> *ST I-II q.71 a.6 Resp.* Of course, Aquinas is referring to humans only here – he thinks angels can sin too, but he does not think that an angel’s sin is a ‘bad human act’.

<sup>②</sup> *ST I-II q.21 a.3 Resp.* Through using the terminology of being ordained to an end, Aquinas shows the similarities between blameworthiness and culpability. Aquinas claims, following Gregory, that, “culpability is measured by inordinateness in respect of the end.” (*ST II-II q.142 a.4 ad. 1*) It seems, then, that one runs no great risk by using the terms blameworthy and culpable to mean the same thing.

<sup>③</sup> At first glance it looks like Aquinas thinks that performing sins, and not having vices, is blameworthy. One should not think this restrictive understanding of blameworthiness is Aquinas’s position. Aquinas does refer to blameworthiness for vices elsewhere, when he writes, asking if vices are worse than vicious acts, that “it is more blameworthy to do evil, than to be able to do evil.” (*ST I-II q.71 a.4*). The implication here is that it is also blameworthy to be inclined to do evil, that is, to have a vice. It appears, then, that even if his explication of blameworthiness is given using actions, it can still be applied to vices. Also, Aquinas says in multiple places that he is discussing the vice of unbelief, and while discussing that vice, he calls it a sin. For instance, he writes, “In due sequence we must consider the contrary vices: first, unbelief, which is contrary to faith...” as a preface to the question on unbelief in general (*ST II-II q.10*). But, in the very first article of this question, he writes “Vice is opposed to virtue. Now faith is a virtue, and unbelief is opposed to it. Therefore unbelief is a sin.” So, Thomas clearly says that unbelief is a sin, and also that it is a vice. Thus, the discussion of blameworthiness I include here works perfectly well for the context.

<sup>④</sup> John, 15:20-22, NRSV; Emphasis mine.

<sup>⑤</sup> St. Thomas’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Chapter 15, Lecture 5, 2046 emphasis mine.

something is not a mammal, it can't be a dog. Likewise, if something is not a sin, it cannot be blameworthy. Therefore, if it is not within someone's power to bring it about that a state-of-affairs obtains, that person cannot be held blameworthy for it not obtaining – and that is precisely what (1) above says. So, we see, Aquinas holds (1).

Consider (2), that a person cannot acquire faith. Aquinas is clear that humans can do nothing at all to acquire faith for themselves. He writes,

The Pelagians held that this cause [the internal cause which moves a person inwardly to accept faith] was nothing else than man's free-will: and consequently they said that the beginning of faith is from ourselves ... But this is false, for, since man, by assenting to matters of faith, is raised above his nature, this must needs accrue to him from some supernatural principle moving him inwardly; and this is God. Therefore faith, as regards the assent which is the chief act of faith, is from God moving man inwardly by grace.<sup>①</sup>

So, a human cannot come to faith without God inwardly moving him or her. Indeed, the Pelagian heresy is precisely the claim that humans *can* acquire faith for themselves. Since Aquinas does not want to affirm a heresy, he cannot affirm that humans can acquire faith for themselves. Not only can humans not acquire faith according to Aquinas, they cannot even get themselves in a position to acquire faith. Aquinas writes:

[T]hat they [humans] are "turned" to God can only spring from God's having "turned" them. Now to prepare oneself for grace is, as it were, to be turned to God; just as, whoever has his eyes turned away from the light of the sun, prepares himself to receive the sun's light, by turning his eyes towards the sun. Hence it is clear that man cannot prepare himself to receive the light of grace except by the gratuitous help of God moving him inwardly.<sup>②</sup>

Not only am I unable to gain faith without God, I can't even get myself in a position to prepare myself to gain faith. God must move me first to be in the position to receive faith, according to Aquinas. I can't acquire the virtue of faith, and I can't, by any of my actions, place myself in a position to acquire the virtue of faith.

Consider (3), that disbelief is a sin. Is it clear from Aquinas's work that he holds this proposition to be true? Aquinas not only claims that disbelief is a sin, but that it is the most grievous sin that arises from the perversion of morals.<sup>③</sup> Aquinas reasons, the more a sin turns someone away from God, the more grave or serious the sin is. No sin turns a person further away from God than unbelief, because unbelief not only turns a person away from God, but it also removes the ability to have knowledge about God from that person.<sup>④</sup>

Thus, Aquinas holds these three propositions, (1)-(3). No person can acquire faith, or even prepare for faith, and a person sins by not having faith. With these three propositions supplied and supported, the technical terms defined, and the fact that Aquinas holds them proven, I turn now to show that Aquinas is not inconsistent in maintaining these three propositions.

### (III) Why Some Are Responsible For Not Having Faith?

Aquinas explicitly raises this question in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Thomas writes, in a long but important passage:

Since no one can be set on the way to his last end without the aid of divine grace, or without it have the necessary means of reaching that end, as are faith, hope, love and perseverance, some might think that man is not to blame for being destitute of these gifts, especially seeing that he cannot merit the assistance of divine grace, nor be converted to God unless God convert him: for none is responsible for that which depends on another

Here, Aquinas affirms both (1) and (2). He affirms (1) in saying that none is responsible for that which depends on another. From the context, it is clear that he means that since an individual cannot control receiving the gift of faith, that person is not responsible (read as, cannot be held blameworthy) for not being in that state. He affirms (2) insofar as he explicitly says that God is the one that converts a person to having faith. From here, in this important text, Aquinas goes on to say why (3), nevertheless, is true. He writes:

To solve this doubt, we must observe that though one can neither merit divine grace beforehand, nor acquire it by movement of his free will, still he can hinder himself from receiving it: for it is said of some: *They have said unto God, 'Depart*

<sup>①</sup> ST II-II q.6 a.1 Resp.

<sup>②</sup> ST I-II q.109 a.6 Resp.

<sup>③</sup> ST II-II q.10 a.3

<sup>④</sup> ST II-II q.10 a.3 Resp.

from us, we will not have the knowledge of thy ways' (Job xxi, 14). And since it is in the power of free will to hinder the reception of divine grace or not to hinder it, not undeservedly may it be reckoned a man's own fault, if he puts an obstacle in the way of the reception of grace. For God on His part is ready to give grace to all men: *He wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim. ii, 4). But they alone are deprived of grace, who in themselves raise an obstacle to grace. So when the sun lights up the world, any evil that comes to a man who shuts his eyes is counted his own fault, although he could not see unless the sunlight first came in upon him.<sup>Ⓞ</sup>

This text is vital and merits careful attention. While no one has the ability to acquire faith, we do have the ability to either hinder God's gift of faith or not hinder it. Furthermore, God is ready to offer faith to everyone and anyone. So, while it is not in a person's control whether or not God offers faith, as a matter of fact, God is ready to offer the grace necessary for the virtue of faith.

Although it is not in my power to gain faith for myself, *it is in my power not to gain it*. That is, though I cannot earn faith for myself, I can keep myself from having faith. Following Aquinas's example, though it is not in my power to cause the sun to come out and the light to shine, it is in my power, after the light is shining, to not see. Though it is not in my power that I come to be (and how could it be, since I do not exist before I am to cause myself to be), it is within my power that I *cease* to be alive – I could, regrettably, commit suicide.

It is in my power not to let God give faith to me, to put an impediment in God's way. If this is so, then I can cause myself not to have faith, and thus I can be blameworthy for not having faith – my own free choice to put up an impediment is the reason why I don't have faith. I can bring it about that I don't have faith by impeding God's grace.

Consider (1) and (2). What happens if we substitute in *disbelief* for *faith*? In particular, consider whether you are blameworthy for having disbelief. A person *can* acquire for herself disbelief; all she has to do is impede God's work in her. Since she can acquire for herself disbelief, (1) doesn't rule out her being blameworthy for having disbelief (though, of course, it doesn't entail that she is blameworthy either). The point is: a person can be blameworthy for acquiring disbelief.

Here, then, are two reasons why it seems someone can be blameworthy for not having faith. The first is that a person can acquire disbelief. Since she can acquire disbelief, she *can be* blameworthy for acquiring disbelief. Since not having faith *just is* having disbelief, she can be responsible for not having faith. The second is that God offers the grace sufficient for faith to all people. If someone does not have faith, it is because she impedes God's work. Her impeding of God's work is something under her control, so she can be blameworthy for impeding God's work of giving her faith. So, she can be blameworthy for her not having faith.

However, these two reasons do not show what is wrong with (1)-(3) as stated. (1)-(3) seem to entail a contradiction, and even if I can show that there are reasons to think that they are all true, it is still important to show *why* it is that (1)-(3) apparently entail a contradiction. After all, the two reasons in the above paragraph for why someone can be blameworthy for not having faith only serve to help the case *against* Aquinas if we cannot show why something is amiss with (1)-(3). All these reasons do is reinforce the fact that Aquinas should hold (3), which is contradictory with an entailment of (1) and (2). What is the fallacy in the reasoning that derives the contradiction from (1)-(3)?

The reason that (1)-(3) apparently entail a contradiction is because (1) and (2) are ambiguous between two readings.<sup>Ⓞ</sup> Consider the following example. Sam has no money at all and lives on the street. All the food stores are locked up, and Sam doesn't have access to them. Sam is starving. Now, if Sam cannot get for himself the food in the food stores, then Sam is not blameworthy for not being able to get the food in the food stores. Furthermore, Sam cannot get for himself the food in the food stores. So, it follows that Sam is not blameworthy for not getting the food in the food stores.

However, consider the following change to the example. Suppose you have a key to the food stores and you try to give it to Sam, not because he earned it, but because you are just that good of a person. You try to give it to him out of your own goodwill. But, Sam puts up impediments to your giving him the key. He either rejects the key outright, or he hides from you so you can't give it to him. *Now*, is Sam responsible for his not getting the food in the food stores?

It seems he is. He had every opportunity to get the food, but he put up impediments to getting it. The difference in the two cases is that in the first Sam *is on his own* and in the second Sam *is not on his own*. We don't hold Sam responsible for not getting the food in the first case because he does not have the ability. However, in the second case, he can get the food through

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<sup>Ⓞ</sup> SCG III, 160, quotation taken from [http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/gc3\\_160.htm](http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/gc3_160.htm).

<sup>Ⓞ</sup> I am thankful to Br. James Brent, O.P. for making this point clear to me in correspondence.

your charitable work. The same insight holds for the cases of faith that Aquinas discusses. We have to ask whether we should understand (1) and (2) as *with God's help* or *without God's help*.

Consider (1) again – If a person cannot do something, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action. We can understand (1) in two ways. First:

(1a) If a person cannot do something *without God's help*, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action *without God's help*.

(1b) If a person cannot do something *with God's help*, then that person is not blameworthy for not doing that action *with God's help*.

Consider (2) again – No one has it within his or her power to acquire faith. We can read (2) in two ways as well:

(2a) No one has it within his or her power to acquire faith *without God's help*.

(2b) No one has it within his or her power to acquire faith *with God's help*.

Can we derive something that contradicts (3) – Some individuals who do not have the virtue of faith are nevertheless blameworthy for not having faith – from either (1a) and (2a) or (1b) and (2b)?

From (1a) and (2a) we can derive conclusion (Ca):

(Ca) A person is not blameworthy for not acquiring faith *without God's help*.

This conclusion is acceptable to Aquinas. Remember from section (II), no one at all can acquire faith without God's help – to hold that one can is to affirm the heresy of Pelagianism, something Aquinas would not do. So, (Ca) is not problematic for Aquinas. Also, (3) can be added to (1a), (2a) and (Ca) without inconsistency. The people who are blameworthy for not having faith are those that God has helped and have put up impediments, and nothing in (1a), (2a) or (Ca) rule that out. So, on the first reading, Aquinas can consistently hold (1)-(3) as (1a), (2a) and (3).

From (1b) and (2b) it follows that:

(Cb) A person is not blameworthy for not acquiring faith *with God's help*.

Aquinas does not accept (Cb). Remember from the above quotation, the only people who do not come to faith are those that put impediments in the way of God's work in their lives. The person who does not come to faith even with God's help is like Sam after you try in vain to give him the key. Neither does Aquinas accept (2b). This is because he thinks that humans can come to have faith with the help of God – that's the *only* way they *can* come to have faith!

In conclusion, (1)-(3) can be understood in two ways. This is because (1) and (2) are ambiguous between two readings: without God's help, or with God's help. Understood in the first way, Aquinas affirms (3) and the disambiguation of (1) and (2): (1a) and (2a). Furthermore, (1a) and (2a) do not entail a contradiction with (3), as the ambiguous (1) and (2) seemed to. So, understood in the first way, Aquinas is free from contradiction.

If (1) and (2) are understood in the second way – with God's help – as (1b) and (2b), then Aquinas rejects (2b) and the faulty conclusion of (1b) and (2b); namely, (Cb). Since Aquinas does not affirm all the propositions in the inconsistent set on this reading, Aquinas is free from contradiction. So, either way, Aquinas does not contradict himself. Thus, Aquinas is freed from this particular charge of inconsistency in his account of the virtue of faith and the blameworthiness of lacking it.<sup>①</sup> And, importantly, Christians in general have at least one way out of the difficulty presented at the beginning of this article.

#### [Reference]

- [1] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [M].
- [2] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* [M].
- [3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* [M].

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