



SELECTED TEXTS OF

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From

SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES

and

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE

for

*Why Should We Believe:
Is Religious Faith Reasonable?*

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From *Quaestiones Disputatae Q14 (De Fide) A1*

“What is it To Believe?”

[1] Augustine says in his book *On the Predestination of the Saints* (and it is written in a Gloss on the passage in 2 Corinthians [3:5] saying “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves ...”) that “to believe is to think with assent.”

[2] I respond that Augustine sufficiently defined “believing”, since such a definition shows its essence and its distinction from all the other acts of the intellect, which is made clear as follows.

[3] Our intellect, according to the Philosopher [Aristotle] in his book *About the Soul*, has two acts: (1) One by which it forms the simple whatnesses of things, such as “what a man is,” or “what an animal is,” in which act we do not find the true or the false as such, just as we don’t find it in non-combinatory speech; (2) The other act of the intellect is the one by which it combines and separates by affirming and denying, and in this act we find the true and the false, just as we find it in the combinatory speech which signifies it.

[4] Now we do not find “believing” in the first act, but in the second, since we believe true things and disbelieve false ones. And so among the Arabs the first act of the intellect is actually called “imagination”, but the second one is called “faith,” as is clear from the words of the Commentator [Averroes] in his commentary on the third part of Aristotle’s book *About the Soul*.

[5] But our potential intellect, since in itself it is in potency with respect to all intelligible forms (much as the first matter is with respect to all sensible forms), is therefore not of itself restricted to adhering to an affirmation any more than to the opposite negation, or vice versa.

[6] And whatever is open to two things is not restricted to one of them except by something else moving it. But our potential intellect is moved only by two things, namely by its proper object, which is an intelligible form, namely the “what it is” of something (as it says in the third part of *About the Soul*), and by the will, which moves all the other powers [of the soul], as Anselm says.

[7] So then our potential intellect is disposed in diverse ways with respect to the two sides of a contradiction:

[8] Sometimes it is not inclined more to one side than to the other, either on account of a deficiency in the things moving it, as in the case of those problems about which we do not have decisive arguments, or on account of the apparent equality of the things which endeavor to move us toward opposite sides. And this is the disposition of **doubting**, which fluctuates between the two sides of a contradiction.

[9] But other times the intellect is inclined more to one side than to the other, and yet the inclination does not sufficiently move the intellect so that it restricts itself to one side entirely—and so it accepts one

side, yet it still has uncertainty about the opposite. And this is the disposition of **opining**, which accepts one side of the a contradiction with a fear of the other side.

[10] And other times our potential intellect is restricted in such a way that it totally adheres to one side of a contradiction. But this is sometimes caused by the intelligible object, and other times by the will.

[11] It is caused by the intelligible object sometimes mediately, other times immediately.

[12] Immediately, when from the very intelligible things themselves the truth of intelligible statements is clear without the possibility of error. And this disposition is the **natural understanding** we have of first principles, which become known to us as soon as their terms are known, as the Philosopher says [in the *Posterior Analytics*]. And in this way, just from [understanding] the “what it is” of certain things, our intellect is immediately restricted to [adhering to] such statements.

[13] Mediately, when, after knowing the definitions of certain terms, our intellect is restricted to one side of a contradiction by virtue of [reasoning from] the first principles. And this is the disposition of the one who has [reasoned out] **knowledge** [or of the one who has science].

[14] But other times our intellect cannot be restricted to one side of a contradiction either immediately, by the definitions of the terms in the statement (as happens with first principles), or by the power of those principles (as happens happens with demonstrable conclusions), but it is restricted instead by the will, which chooses to assent to one side decisively and exclusively on account of something which is sufficient to move the will, but not to move the intellect, namely that it is seen to be good or appropriate to assent to this one side. And this is the disposition of the one **believing**, as when someone believes the sayings of some man because he is seen to be honest or capable.

[15] And in this way are we moved to believe certain sayings inasmuch as there is promised to us, if we believe them, the reward of eternal life. By this reward the will is moved to assenting to certain things said, although the intellect is not moved by something understood. And so Augustine says that other things a man can do when unwilling, but believing he cannot do unless he is willing.

[16] It is clear, then, from the things that have been said, that in the **first act** of the intellect which forms the simple “whatnesses” of things, there is not found any assent, since there is no true or false there. For we are not said to assent to something except when we adhere to it as something true. Similarly, **doubting** does not include assent, since by it one does not adhere to one side of a contradiction rather than to the other. Similarly, too, **opining** does not include assent, since its acceptance of one side rather than the other is not firmly established. (For a “sentence,” as Isaac and Avicenna say, is “a distinct and very certain conception of one side of a contradiction”—and “assenting” comes from “sentence.”) Now **understanding** of first principles does include assent, because it adheres with certainty to one side—but it does not include thinking, because without any thinking it is restricted to one side of a contradiction. Now **knowing** [or having reasoned-out knowledge] includes both thinking and assent, but the thinking causes the assent, and the assent terminates the thinking. For, by bringing together premises for conclusions, one assents to the conclusions by resolving them into the premises, and there the motion of thinking is affixed and put to rest.

[17] But in **faith** there is assent and thinking with equality, as it were. For the assent is not caused by the thinking, but by the will, as was said. But because the intellect in this way is restricted to one [possibility] not as though led all the way to its proper terminus (which is the seeing of something intelligible), so it is that its motion is not yet put to rest, but it still has a thinking and an inquiry about the things which it believes, even though it most firmly assents to them. For so far as the intellect is concerned, it is not in itself satisfied with it, nor is it in itself restricted to the one side, but it is restricted only by something extrinsic. And so it is that the intellect of the believer is said to be held captive, because it is held by foreign bonds, and not its own: “Bringing every intellect into captivity ...” (2 Corinth. 10:5). So it is that even in the believer there can arise a motion from the contrary to what he most firmly holds, while this cannot happen in someone understanding or knowing.

[18] So then, by “assent” believing is separated from the act by which the intellect inspects simple forms or “whatnesses,” and also from doubt, and from opinion; but by “thinking” believing is separated from understanding; and because it includes “thinking” and “assent” with equality, it is separated from science.

Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 1, Chapter 4

THAT THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD TO WHICH THE NATURAL REASON REACHES IS FITTINGLY PROPOSED TO MEN FOR BELIEF

[19] Since, therefore, there exists a twofold truth concerning the divine being, one to which the inquiry of the reason can reach, the other which surpasses the whole ability of the human reason, it is fitting that both of these truths be proposed to man divinely for belief. This point must first be shown concerning the truth that is open to the inquiry of the reason; otherwise, it might perhaps seem to someone that, since such a truth can be known by the reason, it was uselessly given to men through a supernatural inspiration as an object of belief.

[20] Yet, if this truth were left solely as a matter of inquiry for the human reason, three awkward consequences would follow.

[21] The first is that few men would possess the knowledge of God. For there are three reasons why most men are cut off from the fruit of diligent inquiry which is the discovery of truth. Some do not have the physical disposition for such work. As a result, there are many who are naturally not fitted to pursue knowledge; and so, however much they tried, they would be unable to reach the highest level of human knowledge which consists in knowing God. Others are cut off from pursuing this truth by the necessities imposed upon them by their daily lives. For some men must devote themselves to taking care of temporal matters. Such men would not be able to give so much time to the leisure of contemplative inquiry as to reach the highest peak at which human investigation can arrive, namely, the knowledge of God. Finally, there are some who are cut off by indolence. In order to know the things that the reason can investigate concerning God, a knowledge of many things must already be possessed. For almost all of philosophy is directed towards the knowledge of God, and that is why metaphysics, which deals with divine things, is the last part of philosophy to be learned. This means that we are able to arrive at the inquiry concerning the aforementioned truth only on the basis of a great deal of labor spent in study. Now, those who wish to undergo such a labor for the mere love of knowledge are few, even though God has inserted into the minds of men a natural appetite for knowledge.

[22] The second awkward effect is that those who would come to discover the abovementioned truth would barely reach it after a great deal of time. The reasons are several. There is the profundity of this truth, which the human intellect is made capable of grasping by natural inquiry only after a long training. Then, there are many things that must be presupposed, as we have said. There is also the fact that, in youth, when the soul is swayed by the various movements of the passions, it is not in a suitable state for the knowledge of such lofty truth. On the contrary, "one becomes wise and knowing in repose," as it is said in the *Physics* [of Aristotle]. The result is this. If the only way open to us for the knowledge of God were solely that of the reason, the human race would remain in the blackest shadows of ignorance. For then the knowledge of God, which especially renders men perfect and good, would come to be possessed only by a few, and these few would require a great deal of time in order to reach it.

[23] The third awkward effect is this. The investigation of the human reason for the most part has falsity present within it, and this is due partly to the weakness of our intellect in judgment, and partly to the admixture of images. The result is that many, remaining ignorant of the power of demonstration, would hold in doubt those things that have been most truly demonstrated. This would be particularly the case since they see that, among those who are reputed to be wise men, each one teaches his own brand of doctrine. Furthermore, with the many truths that are demonstrated, there sometimes is mingled something that is false, which is not demonstrated but rather asserted on the basis of some probable or sophistical argument, which yet has the credit of being a

demonstration. That is why it was necessary that the unshakeable certitude and pure truth concerning divine things should be presented to men by way of faith.

[24] Beneficially, therefore, did the divine mercy provide that it should instruct us to hold by faith even those truths that the human reason is able to investigate. In this way, all men would easily be able to have a share in the knowledge of God, and this without uncertainty and error. Hence it is written: “Henceforward you walk not as also the gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened” (Eph 4:17-18). And again: “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord” (Isa 54:13).

Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 1, Chapter 5

THAT THE TRUTHS THE HUMAN REASON IS NOT ABLE TO INVESTIGATE ARE FITTINGLY PROPOSED TO MEN FOR BELIEF

[25] Now, perhaps some will think that men should not be asked to believe what the reason is not adequate to investigate, since the divine wisdom provides in the case of each thing according to the mode of its nature. We must therefore prove that it is necessary for man to receive from God as objects of belief even those truths that are above the human reason.

[26] No one tends with desire and zeal towards something that is not already known to him. But, as we shall examine later on in this work, men are ordained by the divine providence towards a higher good than human fragility can experience in the present life. That is why it was necessary for the human mind to be called to something higher than the human reason here and now can reach, so that it would thus learn to desire something and with zeal tend towards something that surpasses the whole state of the present life. This belongs especially to the Christian religion, which in a unique way promises spiritual and eternal goods. And so there are many things proposed to men in it that transcend human sense. The Old Law, on the other hand, whose promises were of a temporal character, contained very few proposals that transcended the inquiry of the human reason. Following this same direction, the philosophers themselves, in order that they might lead men from the pleasure of sensible things to virtue, were concerned to show that there were in existence other goods of a higher nature than these things of sense, and that those who gave themselves to the active or contemplative virtues would find much sweeter enjoyment in the taste of these higher goods.

[27] It is also necessary that such truth be proposed to men for belief so that they may have a truer knowledge of God. For then only do we know God truly when we believe him to be above everything that it is possible for man to think about him; for, as we have shown, the divine substance surpasses the natural knowledge of which man is capable. Hence, by the fact that some things about God are proposed to man that surpass his reason, there is strengthened in man the view that God is something above what he can think.

[28] Another benefit that comes from the revelation to men of truths that exceed their reason is the curbing of presumption, which is the mother of error. For there are some who have such a presumptuous opinion of their own ability that they deem themselves able to measure the nature of everything; I mean to say that, in their estimation, everything is true that seems so to them, and everything is false that does not. So that the human mind, therefore, might be freed from this presumption and come to a humble inquiry after truth, it was necessary that some things should be proposed to man by God that would completely surpass his intellect.

[29] A still further benefit may also be seen in what Aristotle says in the *Ethics*. There was a certain Simonides who exhorted people to put aside the knowledge of divine things and to apply their talents to human occupations.

He said that “he who is a man should know human things, and he who is mortal, things that are mortal.” Against Simonides Aristotle says that “man should draw himself towards what is immortal and divine as much as he can.” And so he says in the *De Animalibus* that, although what we know of the higher substances is very little, yet that little is loved and desired more than all the knowledge that we have about less noble substances. He also says in the *De Caelo et Mundo* that when questions about the heavenly bodies can be given even a modest and merely plausible solution, he who hears this experiences intense joy. From all these considerations it is clear that even the most imperfect knowledge about the most noble realities brings the greatest perfection to the soul. Therefore, although the human reason cannot grasp fully the truths that are above it, yet, if it somehow holds these truths at least by faith, it acquires great perfection for itself.

[30] Therefore it is written: “For many things are shown to thee above the understanding of men” (Ecclus. 3:25). Again: “so the things that are of God no man knoweth but the Spirit of God. But to us God hath revealed them by his Spirit.” (1 Cor 2:11, 10).

Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 1, Chapter 6

THAT TO GIVE ASSENT TO THE TRUTHS OF FAITH IS NOT FOOLISHNESS EVEN THOUGH
THEY ARE ABOVE REASON

[31] Those who place their faith in this truth, however, “for which the human reason offers no experiential evidence” (St. Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia*), do not believe foolishly, as though “following made up stories” (2 Peter 1:16). For these “secrets of divine wisdom” (Job 11:6) the divine wisdom itself, which knows all things to the full, has deigned to reveal to men. It reveals its own presence, as well as the truth of its teaching and inspiration, by fitting arguments; and in order to confirm those truths that exceed natural knowledge, it gives visible manifestation to works that surpass the ability of all nature. Thus, there are the miraculous cures of illnesses, there is the raising of the dead, and the miraculous change of heavenly bodies; and what is more wonderful, there is the inspiration given to human minds, so that simple and untutored persons, filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit, come to possess instantaneously the highest wisdom and readiest eloquence. When these arguments were examined, through the efficacy of the abovementioned proof, and not the violent assault of arms or the promise of pleasures, and (what is most wonderful of all) in the midst of the tyranny of the persecutors, an innumerable throng of people, both simple and most learned, flocked to the Christian faith. In this faith there are truths preached that surpass every human intellect; the pleasures of the flesh are curbed; it is taught that the things of the world should be spurned. Now, for the minds of mortal men to assent to these things is the greatest of all miracles, just as it is a manifest work of divine inspiration that, spurning visible things, men should seek only what is invisible. Now, that this has happened neither without preparation nor by chance, but as a result of the disposition of God, is clear from the fact that through many pronouncements of the ancient prophets God had foretold that he would do this. The books of these prophets are held in veneration among Christians, since they give witness to our faith.

[32] The manner of this confirmation is touched on by St. Paul: “Which,” that is, human salvation, “having begun to be declared by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that hear Him: God also bearing them witness of signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost” (Heb. 2:3-4).

[33] This miraculous conversion of the world to the Christian faith is the clearest witness of the signs given in the past; so that it is not necessary that they should be further repeated, since they appear most clearly in their effect. For it would be truly more miraculous than all signs if the world had been led by simple and humble men to believe such lofty truths, to accomplish such difficult actions, and to have such high hopes. Yet it is also a fact

that, even in our own time, God does not cease to work miracles through his saints for the confirmation of the faith.

Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 1, Chapter 7

THAT THE TRUTH OF REASON IS NOT OPPOSED TO THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

[34] Now, although the truth of the Christian faith which we have discussed surpasses the capacity of the reason, nevertheless that truth that the human reason is naturally endowed to know cannot be opposed to the truth of the Christian faith. For that with which the human reason is naturally endowed is clearly most true; so much so, that it is impossible for us to think of such truths as false. Nor is it permissible to believe as false that which we hold by faith, since this is confirmed in a way that is so clearly divine. Since, therefore, only the false is opposed to the true, as is clearly evident from an examination of their definitions, it is impossible that the truth of faith should be opposed to those principles that the human reason knows naturally.

[35] Furthermore, that which is introduced into the soul of the student by the teacher is contained in the knowledge of the teacher—unless his teaching is fictitious, which would be impious to say about God. Now, the knowledge of the principles that are known to us naturally has been implanted in us by God; for God is the author of our nature. These principles, therefore, are also contained by the divine wisdom. Hence, whatever is opposed to them is opposed to the divine wisdom, and, therefore, cannot come from God. That which we hold by faith as divinely revealed, therefore, cannot be contrary to our natural knowledge.

[36] Again, in the presence of contrary arguments our intellect is chained, so that it cannot proceed to the knowledge of the truth. If, therefore, contrary knowledges were implanted in us by God, our intellect would be hindered from knowing truth by this very fact. Now, such an effect cannot come from God.

[37] And again, what is natural cannot change as long as nature does not. Now, it is impossible that contrary opinions should exist in the same knowing subject at the same time. No opinion or belief, therefore, is implanted in man by God which is contrary to man's natural knowledge.

[38] Therefore, the Apostle says: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. This is the world of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8). But because it overcomes reason, there are some who think that it is opposed to it: which is impossible.

[39] The authority of St. Augustine also agrees with this. He writes as follows: "That which truth will reveal cannot in any way be opposed to the sacred books of the Old and the New Testament."

[40] From this we evidently gather the following conclusion: whatever arguments are brought forward against the doctrines of faith are conclusions incorrectly derived from the first and self-evident principles imbedded in nature. Such conclusions do not have the force of demonstration; they are arguments that are either probable or sophistical. And so, there exists the possibility to answer them.

Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 1, Chapter 9

THE ORDER AND MANNER OF PROCEDURE IN THIS WORK (The *Summa Contra Gentiles*)

[41] It is clearly apparent, from what has been said, that the intention of the wise man ought to be directed toward the twofold truth of divine things, and toward the destruction of the errors that are contrary to this truth. One kind of divine truth the investigation of the reason is competent to reach, whereas the other surpasses every effort of the reason. I am speaking of a “twofold truth of divine things” not on the part of God himself, who is truth one and simple, but from the point of view of our knowledge, which is variously related to the knowledge of divine things.

[42] Now, to make the first kind of divine truth known, we must proceed through demonstrative arguments, by which our adversary may become convinced. However, since such arguments are not available for the second kind of divine truth, our intention should not be to convince our adversary by arguments: it should be to answer his arguments against the truth; for, as we have shown, the natural reason cannot be contrary to the truth of faith. The sole way to overcome an adversary of divine truth is from the authority of Scripture—an authority divinely confirmed by miracles. For that which is above the human reason we believe only because God has revealed it. Nevertheless, there are certain likely arguments that should be brought forth in order to make divine truth known. This should be done for the training and consolation of the faithful, and not with any idea of refuting those who are adversaries. For the very inadequacy of the arguments would rather strengthen them in their error, since they would imagine that our acceptance of the truth of faith was based on such weak arguments.

[43] This, then, is the manner of procedure we intend to follow. We shall first seek to make known that truth which faith professes and reason can investigate. This we shall do by bringing forward both demonstrative and probable arguments, some of which were drawn from the books of the philosophers and of the saints, through which truth is strengthened and its adversary overcome. Then, in order to follow a development from the more manifest to the less manifest, we shall proceed to make known that truth which surpasses reason, answering the objections of its adversaries and setting forth the truth of faith by probable arguments and by authorities, to the best of our ability.

Summa Theologiae 2-2 Q2 A9 Obj.3 & reply

Whether It Is Meritorious to Believe?

[44] It would seem that to believe is not meritorious, since ... [Obj.3] he who assents to a point of faith, either has a cause sufficient to induce him to believe, or he has not. If he has a sufficient inducement to believing, this does not seem to imply any merit on his part, since he is no longer free to believe or not to believe: whereas if he has not a sufficient inducement to believe, this is a mark of levity, according to Ecclus. 19:4 “He that is hasty to give credit, is light of heart,” so that, seemingly, he gains no merit thereby. Therefore to believe is by no means meritorious.

... One must say in reply to the third objection that he who believes has a sufficient inducement for *believing*, for he is induced by the authority of divine teaching confirmed by miracles, and, what is more, by the interior prompting of God inviting [him to believe]. And so he does not believe lightly. Still, he does not have an inducement sufficient for *knowing*. And therefore the aspect of merit is not removed.

Summa Theologiae 2-2 Q4 A8

Whether Faith is More Certain Than Science and the Other Intellectual Virtues?

[45] Objection 1. It would seem that faith is not more certain than science and the other intellectual virtues. For doubt is opposed to certitude, wherefore a thing would seem to be the more certain, through being less doubtful, just as a thing is whiter, the less it has of an admixture of black. Now the understanding of first principles, and science, and also wisdom are free of any doubt about their objects; whereas the believer may sometimes suffer a movement of doubt, and doubt about matters of faith. Therefore faith is no more certain than the intellectual virtues.

[46] Obj.2. Further, sight is more certain than hearing. But faith is through hearing according to Rom. 10:17; whereas understanding of first principles, science, and wisdom imply some kind of intellectual sight. Therefore science and understanding are more certain than faith.

[47] Obj.3. Further, in matters concerning the intellect, the more perfect is the more certain. Now understanding is more perfect than faith, since faith is the way to understanding, according to another translation of Isaiah 7:9: "If you will not believe, you shall not understand". And Augustine says that "faith is strengthened by science". Therefore it seems that science or understanding is more certain than faith.

[48] ON THE CONTRARY, The Apostle says (1 Thess. 2:15) "When you had received of us the word of the hearing," i.e. by faith, "... you received it not as the word of men, but, as it is indeed, the word of God." Now nothing is more certain than the word of God. Therefore science is not more certain than faith; nor is anything else.

[49] I ANSWER THAT, As stated above (1-2 Q57 A4 Ad2), two of the intellectual virtues are about contingent matter, namely prudence and art; to which faith is preferable in point of certitude, by reason of its matter, since it is about eternal things, which never change, whereas the other three intellectual virtues, namely wisdom, science, and understanding, are about necessary things, as stated above (1-2, Q57, A5, Ad3). But it must be observed that wisdom, science, and understanding may be taken in two ways: first, as intellectual virtues, according to the Philosopher (*Ethics* 6.2,3); secondly, for gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If we consider them in the first way, we must note that certitude can be looked at in two ways. First, on the part of its cause, and thus a thing which has a more certain cause, is itself more certain. In this way faith is more certain than those three virtues, because it is founded on the divine truth, whereas the aforesaid three virtues are based on human reason. Secondly, certitude may be considered on the part of the subject [to which the certitude belongs], and thus the more a man's intellect lays hold of a thing, the more certain it is. In this way, faith is less certain, because matters of faith are above the human intellect, whereas the objects of the aforesaid three virtues are not. Since, however, a thing is judged simply with regard to its cause, but relatively, with respect to a disposition on the part of the subject, it follows that faith is more certain simply, while the others are more certain in some respect, i.e. for us.

Likewise if these three be taken as gifts received in the present life, they are related to faith as to their principle which they presuppose: so that again, in this way, faith is more certain.

[50] REPLY 1. This doubt is not on the side of the cause of faith, but on our side, in so far as we do not fully grasp matters of faith with our intellect.

[51] REPLY 2. Other things being equal, sight is more certain than hearing; but if the authority of the person from whom we hear greatly surpasses that of the seer's sight, hearing is more certain than sight: thus a man of little science is more certain about what he hears on the authority of an expert in science, than about what is apparent to him according to his own reason: and much more is a man certain about what he hears from God, who cannot be deceived, than about what he sees with his own reason, which can be mistaken.

[52] REPLY 3. The gifts of understanding and knowledge are more perfect than the knowledge of faith in the point of their greater clearness, but not in regard to more certain adherence, because the whole certitude of the gifts of understanding and knowledge arise from the certitude of faith, even as the certitude of the knowledge of conclusions arises from the certitude of their premises. But in so far as science, wisdom, and understanding are intellectual virtues, they are based upon the natural light of reason, which falls short of the certitude of God's word, on which faith is founded.

Summa Theologiae 2-2 Q6 A1 C

Whether Faith is Infused into Man by God?

[53] It is written (Eph. 2:8-9) "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ... that no man may glory ... for it is the gift of God."

[54] I ANSWER THAT Two things are requisite for faith. First, that the things which are of faith should be proposed to man: this is necessary in order that man believe anything explicitly. The second thing requisite for faith is the assent of the believer to the things which are proposed to him. Accordingly, as regards the first of these, faith must needs be from God, because those things which are of faith surpass human reason, hence they do not come to man's knowledge unless God reveal them. To some, indeed, they are revealed by God immediately, as those things which were revealed to the apostles and prophets, while to others they are proposed by God in sending preachers of the faith, according to Rom. 10:15, "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?"

[55] As regards the second, namely man's assent to the things which are of faith, we may observe a twofold cause, one of external inducement, such as seeing a miracle, or being persuaded by someone to embrace the faith: neither of which is a sufficient cause, since of those who see the same miracle, or who hear the same sermon, some believe, and some do not. Hence we must admit another internal cause, which moves man inwardly to assent to matters of faith.

[56] The Pelagians held that this cause was nothing else than man's free-will: and consequently they said that the beginning of faith is from ourselves, inasmuch as, to wit, it is in our power to be ready to assent to things which are of faith, but that the consummation of faith is from God, who proposes to us the things we have to believe. 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.