

## QUESTION 72

### The Distinctions among Sins

Next we have to consider the distinctions among sins or vices. On this topic there are nine questions: (1) Are sins distinguished in species by their objects? (2) What of the distinction between spiritual sins and carnal sins (*de distinctione peccatorum spiritualium et carnalium*)? (3) Are sins distinguished in species by their causes? (4) Are sins distinguished in species by reference to those against whom one sins (*secundum eos in quos peccatur*)? (5) Are sins distinguished in species by the different degrees of guilt (*secundum diversitatem reatus*)? (6) Are sins distinguished in species by reference to omission and commission? (7) Are sins distinguished in species by reference to the different stages of a sin (*secundum diversum processum peccati*)? (8) Are sins distinguished in species by reference to excess and defect (*secundum abundantiam et defectum*)? (9) Are sins distinguished in species by their different circumstances (*secundum diversas circumstantias*)?

#### Article 1

##### Do sins differ in species according to their objects?

It seems that sins do not differ in species according to their objects (*non differant specie secundum obiecta*):

**Objection 1:** As was shown above (q. 18, a. 6), human acts are called ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mainly in relation to their end. Therefore, since, as has been explained (q. 21, a. 1 and q. 71, a. 1), a sin is nothing other than a man’s bad act, it seems that sins should be distinguished in species by their ends rather than by their objects.

**Objection 2:** Since badness is a privation, it is distinguished in species by the different species of opposites. But a sin is something bad in the genus of human acts. Therefore, sins are distinguished in species by opposites rather than by their objects.

**Objection 3:** If sins differed in species according to their objects, then it would be impossible to find specifically the same sin having diverse objects. But as Gregory points out in *Moralia* 34, pride (*superbia*) exists in both spiritual affairs and corporeal affairs; again, avarice (*avaritia*) exists with respect to different genera of things. Therefore, sins are not distinguished in species by their objects.

**But contrary to this:** A sin is “a word or deed or desire contrary to God’s law.” But words and deeds and desires are distinguished in species by their diverse objects, since, as was explained above (q. 18, a. 5), acts are distinguished by their objects. Therefore, sins are likewise distinguished in species by their objects.

**I respond:** As has been explained (q. 71, a. 6), two things come together for the nature of a sin, viz., (a) a voluntary act and (b) the act’s disorder, which exists because of its departure from God’s law (*quae est per recessum a lege Dei*). Now the first of these two things is related *per se* to the sinner, who intends to exercise such-and-such a voluntary act with respect to such-and-such a matter, whereas the second, viz., the act’s disorder, is related *per accidens* to the sinner’s intention, since, as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, “No one acts by intending the bad.”

Now it is clear that each thing receives its species in accord with what is *per se* and not in accord with what is *per accidens*, since what is *per accidens* lies outside the nature of the species. And so sins are distinguished in species by the voluntary acts rather than by the disorder that exists in the sin. But as was shown above (q. 18, a. 5), voluntary acts are distinguished in species by their objects. Hence, it follows that sins are properly distinguished in species by their objects.

**Reply to objection 1:** The end is what principally possesses the character of goodness, and so it is related to the act of willing, which is primordial in every sin, as an object. Hence, for sins to differ from one another according to their objects amounts to the same thing as for sins to differ from one another

according to their ends.

**Reply to objection 2:** A sin is not a pure privation, but is instead an act that is deprived of its due ordering. And so sins are distinguished in species according to the objects of the acts rather than according to opposites.

Again, even if they were distinguished by the virtues opposed to them, this would amount to the same thing; for as was established above (q. 60, a. 5), the virtues are distinguished in species by their objects.

**Reply to objection 3:** There is nothing to prevent one from finding in diverse things that differ in species or genus a single formal nature that belongs to the object and from which a sin receives its species. In this way, pride seeks to excel with respect to different matters, whereas avarice seeks an excessive amount (*abundantiam*) of what is accommodated to man's use.

## Article 2

### Is it appropriate to distinguish spiritual sins from carnal sins?

It seems inappropriate to distinguish spiritual sins from carnal sins:

**Objection 1:** In Galatians 5:19-21 the Apostle says, "The works of the flesh are obvious, viz., fornication (*fornicatio*), uncleanness (*immunditia*), immodesty (*impudicitia*), lust (*luxuria*), idolatry (*idolorum servitus*), sorcery (*veneficia*)," etc. From this it seems that all the kinds of sin are works of the flesh. But it is carnal sins that are being called "works of the flesh." Therefore, it is not the case that carnal sins should be distinguished from spiritual sins.

**Objection 2:** Whoever sins walks according to the flesh—this according to Romans 8:13 ("If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you shall live"). But living or walking according to the flesh seems to pertain to the notion of a carnal sin. Therefore, all sins are carnal. Therefore, it is not the case that carnal sins should be distinguished from spiritual sins.

**Objection 3:** The higher part of the soul, i.e., the mind or reason (*mens vel ratio*) is called the 'spirit'—this according to Ephesians 4:23 ("Be renewed by the spirit of your mind," where 'spirit' is being used for 'reason', as a Gloss points out in that place). But every sin that is committed according to the flesh flows from reason through its consent, since, as will be explained below (q. 74, a. 7), it belongs to higher reason to consent to an act of sinning. Therefore, the same sins are both carnal and spiritual. Therefore, they should not be distinguished from one another.

**Objection 4:** If some sins are by their species carnal sins, then it seems that the best way to understand this is in regard to those sins by which someone sins against his own body (*quibus aliquis in corpus suum peccat*). But as the Apostle says in 1 Corinthians 6:18, "Every sin whatsoever that a man commits exists outside of his body, but the one who fornicates sins against his own body." Therefore, fornication alone would be a carnal sin—even though in Ephesians 5:3 the Apostle also numbers avarice among the carnal sins.

**But contrary to this:** In *Moralia* 31 Gregory says, "Five of the seven capital vices are spiritual, and two are carnal."

**I respond:** As has been explained (a. 1), sins take their species from their objects. But every sin consists in a desire for some changeable good that is desired in a disordered way, and, as a result, one takes pleasure in it in a disordered way once it is had.

Now as is clear from what has gone before (q. 31, a. 3), there are two sorts of pleasure:

One of them is *pleasure that belongs to the soul (delectatio animalis)*; this sort of pleasure is consummated solely in the apprehension of a thing which is had in response to a longing (*rei ad votum habitae*), and it can also be called 'spiritual pleasure'—as, for instance, when someone delights in human

praise or something of that sort.

The other sort of pleasure is *corporeal* or *natural pleasure* (*delectatio coporalis sive naturalis*); this sort of pleasure is brought to completion within the corporeal sense of touch itself, and it can also be called ‘carnal pleasure’.

So, then, those sins that are brought to completion in spiritual pleasure are called ‘spiritual sins’; on the other hand, those sins that are brought to completion in carnal pleasure are called ‘carnal sins’, e.g., gluttony, which is brought to completion in the pleasure of food, and lust, which is brought to completion in the pleasure of sex.

Hence, in 2 Corinthians 7:1 the Apostle says, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit.”

**Reply to objection 1:** As a Gloss on the same passage says, the vices in question are called works of the flesh “not because they are brought to completion in the pleasure of the flesh; instead, ‘flesh’ is being used here for a man who, as long as he lives on his own (*secundum se*), is said to live ‘according to the flesh’.” Augustine says the same thing in *De Civitate Dei* 14. The reason for this is that every defect of human reason has its beginning in some way from the carnal sensory power.

**Reply to objection 2:** This makes clear the reply to the second objection.

**Reply to objection 3:** Even in the case of carnal sins there is some spiritual act, viz., an act of reason. However, the sins in question have an end from which they are named, and that end is carnal pleasure (*delectatio carnis*)

**Reply to objection 4:** As a Gloss on the same passage says, “In the sin of fornication the soul is subservient to the body in a special way, insofar as a man is not at liberty to think of anything else at that very moment.” By contrast, even though the pleasure of gluttony is carnal, it does not absorb reason in this same way.

An alternative reply is that in the sin of fornication a certain sort of injury is inflicted on one’s body for as long as the body is defiled in a disordered way (*dum inordinate maculatur*). And so it is through this sin alone that a man sins against the body in a special way. On the other hand, ‘avarice’, which is counted among the carnal sins, is being used for adultery, which is the unjust usurpation of another’s wife. Or one could claim that the thing in which an avaricious man takes pleasure is a certain sort of corporeal thing and that it is in this respect that avarice is counted among the carnal sins. However, the pleasure itself belongs to the spirit and not to the flesh, and so according to Gregory avarice is a spiritual sin.

### Article 3

#### Are sins distinguished in species according to their causes?

It seems that sins are distinguished in species according to their causes:

**Objection 1:** A thing has its species from the same thing that it has its *esse* from. But sins have *esse* from their causes. Therefore, they also receive their species from their causes. Therefore, sins differ in species according to the diversity of their causes.

**Objection 2:** Among the other causes, it is the material cause that seems to have the least relevance to the species. But in the case of a sin the object is like a material cause. Therefore, since sins are distinguished in species according to their objects, it seems that, *a fortiori*, sins are distinguished in species according to the other types of cause as well.

**Objection 3:** In his commentary on Psalm 79:17 (“Things set on fire and dug under .....”), Augustine says, “Every sin stems from a fear that abases one in a bad way or from a love that inflames one in a bad way.” Also, 1 John 2:16 says, “Everything that is in the world is the concupiscence of the

flesh (*concupiscentia carnis*), or the concupiscence of the eyes (*concupiscentia oculorum*), or pride of life (*superbia vitae*)." But as Augustine points out in *Super Ioannem*, something is said to be "in the world" because of sin, insofar as it is those who love the world who are being signified by the name 'world'. Again, in *Moralia* 31 Gregory distinguishes all sins according to the seven capital vices. But all divisions of this sort have to do with the causes of sins. Therefore, it seems that sins differ in species by the diversity of their causes.

**But contrary to this:** On this view all sins would belong to a single species, since they are caused by a single cause. For Ecclesiasticus 10:15 says, "The source of every sin is pride," and 1 Timothy 6:10 says, "The root of all evils is avarice (*cupiditas*)." But it is obvious that there are diverse species of sins. Therefore, it is not the case that sins are distinguished in species according to the diversity of their causes.

**I respond:** Since there are four types of causes, they are attributed to different things in different ways. For the formal and material causes have properly to do with the substance of a thing, and so substances are distinguished in species and in genus according to their form and matter.

On the other hand, the agent cause and the end have to do directly with movement and action, and so movements and actions are distinguished in species according to causes of this sort, though in different ways. For active natural principles are always determined to the same acts, and so in the case of natural acts diverse species are derived not only from the objects, viz., the ends or termini, but also from the active principles. For instance, to heat and to cool are distinguished in species by [the principles] *hot* and *cold*.

However, in the case of voluntary acts, including sinful acts, the active principles are not by necessity directed toward a single outcome (*non se habent ex necessitate ad unum*), and so diverse species of sin can proceed from a single active or moving principle. For instance, from "a fear that humbles one in a bad way" it can come about that a man steals or that he kills or that he deserts a flock that has been entrusted to him; and these same acts can proceed from love.

Hence, it is clear that sins differ in species not by their diverse active or moving causes, but only by the diversity of their final causes. Now the end is the will's object, since it was shown above (q. 1, a. 3 and q. 18, a. 6) that human acts have their species from their end.

**Reply to objection 1:** Since, in the case of voluntary acts, their active principles are not determined to a single outcome, they are not able to produce human acts unless the act of willing is determined to a single outcome by the act of intending the end (*non sufficiunt producendum humanos actos nisi determinetur voluntas ad unum per intentionem finis*); this is clear from the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* 9. And so both the *esse* and the species of a sin are brought to completion by the end.

**Reply to objection 2:** Insofar as the objects are compared to the exterior acts, they have the character of a *matter-with-respect-to-which* (*materia circa quam*), but insofar as they are compared to the will's interior act, they have the character of an end, and it is in light of the latter that they give the act its species.

Again, even though, as is explained in *Physics* 5 and *Ethics* 10, insofar as the objects are the *matter-with-respect-to-which*, they have the character of termini by which the movements are specified, it is nonetheless the case that the termini of a movement likewise give species to the movements insofar as they have the character of an end.

**Reply to objection 3:** These divisions of sins are put forward not in order to distinguish species of sins, but rather to make clear the diverse causes of sins.

#### Article 4

### Is it appropriate to divide sin into sins against God, sins against one's neighbor, and sins against oneself ?

It seems inappropriate to divide sin into sins against God, sins against one's neighbor, and sins against oneself (*in Deum, in proximum, et in seipsum*):

**Objection 1:** What is common to every sin should not be posited as one part of a division of sins. But it is common to every sin that it is against God (*contra Deum*), since, as was explained above (q. 71, a. 6), it is posited in the definition of a sin that a sin is "contrary to God's law." Therefore, 'sin against God' should not be posited as one part of a division of sins.

**Objection 2:** Every division should be made through opposites. But the three types of sin under discussion are not opposites, since everyone who sins against his neighbor is also sinning against himself and against God. Therefore, it is inappropriate for sin to be divided by the three parts in question.

**Objection 3:** Things that exist extrinsically do not confer a species. But God and our neighbor exist outside of us. Therefore, sins are not distinguished in species by them. Therefore, it is inappropriate for sins to be divided into these three parts.

**But contrary to this:** When distinguishing sins in *De Summo Bono*, Isidore says, "A man is said to sin against himself, against God, and against his neighbor."

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 71, a. 1), a sin is a disordered act. Now in a man there should be three sorts of order:

The first is in comparison to *the rule of reason*, viz., in the sense that all our actions and passions ought to be measured by the rule of reason. The second order is in comparison to *the rule of divine law*, by which a man ought to be directed in all things. And if man were naturally a solitary animal, then these two orders would be sufficient. However, since, as *Politics 1* proves, man is naturally a political and social animal, it is necessary that there be a third order by which a man is ordered *with respect to the other men* he has to live together with.

Now the second of these orders contains the first and goes beyond it. For whatever is contained under the order of reason is contained under the order of God Himself, but some of the things contained under the order of God Himself exceed human reason, e.g., those things that belong to the Faith and are owed to God alone. Hence, someone who sins in such matters is said to *sin against God*, e.g., the heretic, the sacrilegious man, and the blasphemer.

Similarly, the [first] order includes the third and goes beyond it. For in all the matters in which we are ordered toward our neighbor, we have to be directed by the rule of reason, but in certain matters we are directed by reason with respect to just ourselves and not with respect to our neighbor. And when he sins in such matters, a man is said to *sin against himself*, as is clear in the case of the gluttonous man, the lustful man, and the prodigal man. By contrast, when a man sins in those matters in which he is ordered toward his neighbor, he is said to *sin against his neighbor*, as is clear in the case of the thief and the murderer.

Now the matters in which a man is ordered toward God, toward his neighbor, and toward himself are diverse. Hence, this distinction among sins is exists because of their objects, by which the species of sin are diversified. Hence, this distinction among sins is, properly speaking, in accord with the diverse species of sin. For it is likewise the case that the virtues to which the sins are opposed are distinguished in species by this sort of difference, since it is obvious from what has been said (q. 62, a. 1 and q. 66, aa. 4 and 6) that by the theological virtues a man is ordered toward God, whereas by temperance and fortitude he is ordered toward himself, and by justice he is ordered toward his neighbor.

**Reply to objection 1:** To sin against God, in the sense that the order that is directed toward God includes every human order, is common to every sin. But in the sense in which God's order exceeds the

other two orders, *sin against God* is a special genus of sin.

**Reply to objection 2:** When two things which are such that the one includes the other are distinguished from one another, then the distinction is thought of as being made not because the one *is contained in* the other, but because the one *exceeds* the other. This is clear with the division of numbers and of shapes. For instance, a triangle is divided off from a quadrangle not because it is contained in the latter, but because it is exceeded by it. And the same holds in the case of the numbers *three* and *four*.

**Reply to objection 3:** Even though God and neighbor are exterior to the sinner himself, they are not extraneous to the act of sinning. Rather, they are related to the act as its proper objects.

## Article 5

### Does the division of sins according to the degree of guilt—as, e.g., when sin is divided into mortal sin and venial sin—make for a diversity of species?

It seems that the division of sins according to their degree of guilt (*secundum reatum*)—as, e.g., when sin is divided into mortal sin and venial sin—makes for a diversity of species:

**Objection 1:** Things that are infinitely different from one another cannot belong to a single species or even to a single genus. But venial sin and mortal sin are infinitely different from one another, since venial sin deserves a temporal punishment, whereas mortal sin deserves an eternal punishment. But a punishment's duration corresponds to the degree of guilt (*mensura poenae respondet quantitati culpae*)—this according to Deuteronomy 25:2 (“According to the measure of the crime shall the measure also of the blows be”). Therefore, venial sin and mortal sin do not even belong to the same genus, not to mention the same species.

**Objection 2:** Some sins, e.g., homicide or adultery, are mortal by their genus, whereas other sins, e.g., engaging in idle conversation or excessive laughter, are venial by their genus. Therefore, venial sins and mortal sins differ in species.

**Objection 3:** A sin is related to a punishment in the same way that a virtuous act is related to a reward. But the reward is the end of a virtuous act. Therefore, the punishment is likewise the end of a sin. But as has been explained (a. 3), sins are distinguished in species according to their ends. Therefore, they are likewise distinguished in species according to the degree of punishment deserved for them (*secundum reatum poenae*).

**But contrary to this:** The things that constitute a species, e.g., the specific differences, are prior to the species. But punishment follows upon a sin as its effect (*poena sequitur culpam sicut effectum eius*). Therefore, sins do not differ in species according to the degree of punishment deserved for them.

**I respond:** Two sorts of differences are found among things that differ in species:

One sort of difference *constitutes* the diversity of the species, and this sort of difference is never found except in diverse species, e.g., *rational* and *non-rational*, *living* and *non-living*.

However, there is another sort of difference that *follows upon* the diversity of the species, and even if this sort of difference follows upon a diversity of species in some cases, it can nonetheless in other cases be found within the same species. For instance, *white* and *black* follow upon the diverse species *crow* and *swan*, but this difference is found within the same species *man*.

Therefore, one should reply that the differences *venial* and *mortal* as applied to *sin*—or any other difference that is taken from the degree of guilt—cannot be differences that *constitute* a diversity of species. For what is *per accidens* never constitutes a species. But as is clear from *Physics 2*, what lies outside the agent's intention is *per accidens*. And it is obvious that punishment lies outside the sinner's intention. Hence, the punishment is related to the sin *per accidens* from the perspective of the sinner himself (*poena per accidens se habet ad peccatum ex parte ipsius peccantis*). Instead, it is ordered

toward the sin from without, viz., from the justice of the judge who inflicts diverse punishments according to the diverse status of the sins. Hence, the difference that stems from the degree of punishment deserved for the sins can *follow upon* the diverse species of sins but does not *constitute* the diversity of species.

Now the difference between *venial sin* and *mortal sin* follows upon the differences in disorderedness that bring the character of sinfulness to completion (*quae complet rationem peccati*). For there are two sorts of disorderedness, the one of which stems from removing the source of the order (*per subtractionem principii ordinis*) and the other of which, while preserving the source of the order, is a disorderedness with respect to things that come after the source—just as, in an animal body, a disordered condition (*inordinatio complexionis*) sometimes progresses to the point of destroying the principle of life, and this is *death*, whereas, given that the principle of life is preserved, there is sometimes a disorder in the humors, and in that case there is a *sickness*.

Now the source of all order in moral matters is the ultimate end, which, as *Ethics 7* says, bears the same relation to matters of action that an indemonstrable principle bears to speculative matters. Hence, when the soul is disordered by sin to the point of turning away from the ultimate end (*usque ad aversionem ab ultimo fine*), viz., God, to whom we are united through charity, then there is a *mortal sin*, whereas when there is a disorder without a turning away from God (*citra aversionem a Deo*), then it is a *venial sin*. For just as, in the case of corporeal things, the disorder of death, which occurs through the removal of the principle of life, is irreparable through nature, whereas the disorder of sickness can be repaired because the principle of life is preserved, so, too, something similar occurs in matters that pertain to the soul.

For in speculative matters someone who is mistaken about the principles is unpersuadable, whereas someone who makes a mistake while preserving the principles can be brought back through the principles themselves. Similarly, in matters of action someone who in sinning turns away from his ultimate end has an irreparable fall as far as the nature of his sin is concerned, and so he is said to sin mortally and to deserve to be punished eternally. On the other hand, someone who sins without turning away from God is by the very nature of his sin disordered in a reparable way, since the principle is preserved, and so he is said to sin venially. That is to say, he does not sin in such a way as to merit an interminable punishment.

**Reply to objection 1:** Mortal sin and venial sin differ infinitely from one another with respect to the turning-away (*ex parte aversionis*), but not with respect to the turning-toward (*non autem ex parte conversione*) by which one is related to the object that is the source of the sin's species. Hence, there is nothing to prevent mortal and venial sins from belonging to the same species. For instance, the first movement in the genus *adultery* is a venial sin; and idle conversation, which is a venial sin most of the time, can also be a mortal sin.

**Reply to objection 2:** From the fact that some sins are mortal by their genus and some sins are venial by their genus it follows that the difference between mortal sins and venial sins *follows upon* the diversity of sins in species and does not *cause* that diversity. Moreover, as has been explained, this sort of difference can likewise be found in sins that belong to the same species.

**Reply to objection 3:** The reward is part of the intention of the one who performs a meritorious act or who acts virtuously, but the punishment is not part of the sinner's intention (*non est de intentione peccantis*). Instead, it is contrary to his will. Hence, the arguments are not parallel.

## Article 6

### Do sins of commission differ in species from sins of omission?

It seems that sins of commission differ in species from sins of omission:

**Objection 1:** *Offense (delictum)* is divided off against *sin (peccatum)*—this according to Ephesians 2:1 (“When you were dead in your offenses and sins ...”). And a Gloss for this passage explains, “‘Offenses’, i.e., not doing what was commanded, and ‘sins’, i.e., doing what was forbidden.” From this it is clear that ‘offense’ means a sin of omission and ‘sin’ means a sin of commission. Therefore, they differ in species, since they are divided off as diverse species by opposites.

**Objection 2:** It belongs *per se* to a sin that it is contrary to God’s law, since, as is clear from what was said above (q. 71, a.6), this is part of the definition of a sin. But in God’s law there are some affirmative precepts that sins of omission are contrary to and some negative precepts that sins of commission are contrary to. Therefore, sins of omission differ in species from sins of commission.

**Objection 3:** Commission and omission differ as an affirmation and a negation. But it cannot be the case that the affirmation and the negation belong to the same species, since a negation does not have a species; for as the Philosopher says, “There is neither a species nor a difference for *non-being*.” Therefore, omissions and commissions cannot belong to the same species.

**But contrary to this:** Omissions and commissions are found within the same species of sin. For instance, an avaricious man both (a) seizes what belongs to another, which is a sin of commission, and (b) does not give what is his own to those he ought to give it to, which is a sin of omission. Therefore, omission and commission do not differ in species.

**I respond:** There are two sorts of differences found among sins, the one *material* and the other *formal*. The *material* difference is associated with the natural species of a sinful act, whereas the *formal* difference is associated with the act’s being ordered toward a single proper end, i.e., toward its proper object. Hence, there are some acts that differ in species *materially* and yet belong *formally* to the same species of sin because they are ordered toward the same thing. For instance, even though cutting someone’s throat, stoning him, and stabbing him differ in species as regards their *natural* species (*secundum speciem naturae*), they all belong to the single species *homicide*.

Therefore, if we are talking *materially* about the species of sins of omission and sins of commission, then they differ in species—though this is to speak about species in a broad sense in which a negation or privation can have a species. On the other hand, if we are talking *formally* about the species of sins of omission or commission, then they do not differ in species, since they are ordered toward the same thing and proceed from the same motive. For instance, it is in order to accumulate money that an avaricious man both (a) steals and (b) fails to give what he ought to give. Similarly, it is in order to satisfy his palate that the gluttonous man both (a) eats too much and (b) omits an obligatory fast. And we see the same thing in other cases as well. For among real things a negation is always based upon an affirmation that is in some sense its cause. Hence, among natural things, the fact that a fire gives heat to something has the same explanation (*est eiusdem rationis*) as the fact that it does not make the thing cold.

**Reply to objection 1:** As has been explained, the division in question, made by reference to *omission* and *commission*, yields only diverse *material* species and not diverse *formal* species (*non est secundum diversas formales species sed materiales tantum*).

**Reply to objection 2:** Diverse affirmative and negative precepts had to be proposed within God’s law in order that men might be introduced to virtue step by step—first by abstaining from what is bad, which we are led to by the negative precepts, and afterwards by doing what is good, which we are led to by the affirmative precepts. And so the affirmative and negative precepts do not pertain to different virtues, but instead pertain to diverse degrees of [the same] virtue. As a result, they do not have to be opposed to sins that are diverse from one another in species.

Moreover, a sin does not have its species from the turning-away (*ex parte aversionis*), since on this score it is a negation or privation; instead, a sin has its species from the turning-toward (*ex parte conversionis*) insofar as this turning-toward is an act.

Hence, sins are not diversified in species by the diverse precepts of the law.

**Reply to objection 3:** This objection has its source in the material diversity of the species.

Note, moreover, that even if a negation does not properly speaking belong to a species, it is nonetheless constituted in a species by being traced back to the affirmation that it follows upon.

### Article 7

#### Is it appropriate to divide sins into sins of the heart, sins of the mouth, and sinful deeds?

It seems inappropriate to divide sins into sins of the heart, sins of the mouth, and sinful deeds (*in peccatum cordis, oris, et operis*):

**Objection 1:** In *De Trinitate* 13 Augustine posits three stages (*gradus*) of sin: The first occurs “when the carnal senses offer some enticement,” i.e., a sin of thought (*peccatum cogitationis*). The second stage occurs “when one is content just with taking pleasure in the thought.” The third stage occurs when one decides by his consent to do something.” But these three stages all pertain to sins of the heart. Therefore, it is inappropriate to posit *sins of the heart* as a single genus of sin.

**Objection 2:** In *Moralia* 4 Gregory posits four stages of sin; The first is “a sin hidden in the heart.” The second is “when the sin is made public exteriorly.” The third is “when the sin is performed habitually (*consuetudine*).” The fourth is “when the man proceeds either to a presumption of God’s mercy or to despair.” Here, sinful deeds are not distinguished from sins of the mouth, and two other stages of sin are added. Therefore, the first division mentioned above is inappropriate.

**Objection 3:** A sin cannot exist in the mouth or in a deed unless it existed beforehand in the heart. Therefore, these sins do not differ in species. Therefore, they should not be divided off against one another.

**But contrary to this:** In *Super Ezechiel* Jerome says, “There are three general sorts of offenses (*delicta*) to which the human race is subject. For we sin either in thought or in word or in deed.”

**I respond:** There are two ways in which given things differ from one another in species: (a) first, because both have a *complete species*, in the way that a horse and an ox differ in species; (b) second, insofar as diverse species are associated with the *diverse stages* within some generation or movement, in the way that, as is clear from the Philosopher in *Ethics* 10, the act of building (*aedificatio*) is the complete generation of a house, whereas the act of laying the foundation and the act of erecting the walls are incomplete species (*collocatio fundamenti et erectio parietis sunt species incompletae*).

So, then, sin is not divided by *sin of the mouth*, *sin of the heart*, and *sinful deed* in the sense of being divided by diverse *complete species*. For the consummation of a sin lies in the deed, and because of this the sinful deed (*peccatum operis*) has a complete species. But the first beginning of the sin has, as it were, a foundation in the heart, whereas the second stage exists in the mouth insofar as a man readily breaks out into speech in order to manifest the conception of his heart, and the third stage then exists in the consummation of the deed. And so the three of them differ as the diverse stages of a sin.

However, it is clear that all three belong to a single *complete species* of sin, since they proceed from the same motive. For instance, given the fact that someone who is angry desires retribution, he is first disturbed in his heart, and, second, he breaks out into contentious words, and, third, he proceeds to his injurious deeds. And the same thing is clear in the case of lust, as well as with every other sin.

**Reply to objection 1:** All sins of the heart agree in being hidden, and because of this ‘sin of the heart’ is posited as a single stage. Yet this stage is itself divided into three, viz., the stage of thought, the stage of pleasure, and the stage of consent.

**Reply to objection 2:** Sins of the mouth and sinful deeds agree in being made manifest, and it is because of this that they are counted as one by Gregory. Jerome, on the other hand, distinguishes them from one another because in the case of sins of the mouth it is the manifestation alone that is principally intended, whereas in a sinful deed what is principally intended is the fulfillment of the heart’s interior

conception, and the manifestation comes along as a consequence.

On the other hand, habituation and despair are stages that follow after the sin's species is complete, in the way that adolescence and young adulthood (*adolescencia et iuventus*) follow after human generation is complete.

**Reply to objection 3:** The sin of the heart and the sin of the mouth are distinguished from the sinful deed not when they are all joined together simultaneously, but insofar as each of them is found existing on its own (*per se*). In the same way, a part of a movement is not distinguished from the whole movement when the movement is continuous; rather, it is distinguished from the whole movement only when that movement stops in the middle.

## Article 8

### Do excess and defect make for diverse species of sin?

It seems that excess (*superabundantia*) and defect (*defectus*) do not make for diverse species of sin:

**Objection 1:** Excess and defect differ as *more* and *less*. But *more* and *less* do not make for diverse species. Therefore, excess and defect do not make for diverse species.

**Objection 2:** Just as, in matters of action, a sin results from a departure from the rectitude of reason, so too, in speculative matters, falsity results from a departure from the truth of reality. But the species of falsity are not diversified by someone's asserting that there is more or there is less than exists in reality. Therefore, the species of sin are likewise not diversified by someone's departing by excess or by defect from the rectitude of reason (*ex hoc quod recedit a rectitudine rationis in plus vel in minus*).

**Objection 3:** As Porphyry says, "It is not the case that a single species is constituted from two species." But excess and defect are united in a single sin; for instance, some men are simultaneously ungenerous and prodigal, and of these two being ungenerous is a sin of defect, whereas being prodigal is a sin of excess. Therefore, excess and defect do make for diverse species of sin.

**But contrary to this:** Contraries differ in species, since, as *Metaphysics* 10 says, "Contrariety is a difference in form." But vices that differ according to excess and defect are contraries, in the way that being ungenerous is contrary to being prodigal. Therefore, they differ in species.

**I respond:** Given that a sin involves two things, viz., (a) the act itself and (b) its disorderliness in receding from the order of reason and of God's law, the sin's species is taken not from the side of the disorderliness—which, as has been explained (a. 1), falls outside the sinner's intention—but rather from the side of the act itself insofar as it is terminated in the object that the sinner's intention is directed toward. And so whenever there are diverse motives inclining one's intention toward sinning, there are diverse species of sin.

Now it is clear that the motive for sinning in the case of sins that involve excess is not the same as in the case of sins that involve defect; in fact, the motives are contrary. For instance, the motive in a sin of intemperance is the love of bodily pleasures, whereas the motive in a sin of insensibility is a hatred for those pleasures. Hence, sins of this sort not only differ in species but are also contrary to one another.

**Reply to objection 1:** Even if *more* and *less* are not a cause of diversity among species, they nonetheless sometimes follow upon diverse species insofar as they stem from different forms—as, for instance, if one says that fire is lighter than air. Hence, in *Ethics* 8 the Philosopher says that those who have denied that there are diverse species of friendship because these diverse species are predicated in accord with *more* and *less* "have put their trust in an insufficient indicator."

And the way in which exceeding what is in accord with reason, or falling short of it (*superexcedere rationem vel deficere ab ea*), belongs to sins that are diverse in species is that the sins follow upon diverse motives.

**Reply to objection 2:** It is not the sinner's intention to depart from reason, and so it is not the case that sins of excess and defect belong to the same species because they depart from the same rectitude of reason. However, someone who says what is false sometimes intends to hide the truth, and so in this regard it does not matter whether he says more or says less.

On the other hand, if departing from the truth lies beyond the speaker's intention, then it is clear that someone may be moved by diverse motives to say more or to say less, and in this regard there are diverse kinds of falsity. This is clear in the case of the braggart, who goes to excess in saying what is false out of a desire for glory, and in the case of the cheat, who says little in order to evade paying his debts. In this sense, it is even the case that certain false opinions are contrary to one another.

**Reply to objection 3:** Someone can be both prodigal and ungenerous in different respects—as when someone is ungenerous in taking what is not due to him and prodigal in giving away what he does not owe. But there is nothing to prevent contraries from existing in the same thing in different respects.

## Article 9

### Are vices and sins diversified in species by diverse circumstances?

It seems that vices and sins are diversified in species by diverse circumstances:

**Objection 1:** As Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, “Badness arises from each single defect.” But singular defects are corruptions of singular circumstances. Therefore, singular species of sin follow from singular corrupted circumstances.

**Objection 2:** Sins are a certain sort of human act. But as was established above (q. 18, a. 10), human acts sometimes take their species from the circumstances. Therefore, sins differ in species to the extent that diverse circumstances are corrupted.

**Objection 3:** Diverse species of gluttony are assigned by the words contained in the following verse: “Too quickly, too sumptuously, too much, too eagerly, too fastidiously (*praepropere, laute, nimis, ardentem, studiose*).” But these involve diverse circumstances: ‘too quickly’ means ‘before it is necessary’, ‘too much’ means ‘more than is necessary’, and the same thing is clear in the other cases. Therefore, the species of sin are diversified by diverse circumstances.

**But contrary to this:** In *Ethics* 3 and 5 the Philosopher says that *individual* vices sin by acting “more than is necessary and when it is not necessary,” and so on for all the other circumstances. Therefore, it is not in this way that the species of sin are diversified.

**I respond:** As has been explained (a. 8), whenever there is another motive for sinning, there is another species of sin, since the motive for sinning is the end and the object.

Now it sometimes happens that the same motive exists in the corruption of diverse circumstances; for instance, it is by the same motive that an ungenerous man is moved to take something *when* he should not and *where* he should not and to take *more than* he should, and so on for the other circumstances. For he does all this because of his disordered desire for accumulating money. And in such cases the corruption of diverse circumstances does not make for diverse species of sin; instead, it belongs to one and the same species of sin.

By contrast, it sometimes happens that the corruption of diverse circumstances proceeds from diverse motives. For instance, the fact that someone eats too quickly can stem from the fact that the man cannot tolerate a delay in eating because he easily becomes dehydrated (*propter facilem consumptionem humiditatis*), whereas the fact that he desires an immoderate amount of food can occur because he has a natural power capable of converting vast amounts of food; and the fact that he desires dainty foods happens because of his desire for the pleasure associated with food. Hence, in such cases the corruption of diverse circumstances makes for diverse species of sin.

**Reply to objection 1:** Badness as such is a privation, and so it is diversified in species in the way that the corresponding dispositions (*ea quae privantur*) are diversified in species—just as in the case of any other privation. But as has been explained (a. 1), a sin receives its species not from the side of the privation, i.e., the turning-away, but rather from the act's turning toward its object.

**Reply to objection 2:** Circumstances never transfer an act to another species except when there is another motive.

**Reply to objection 3:** As has been explained, there are diverse motives for the diverse species of gluttony.