

## QUESTION 87

### Being Deserving of Punishment as an Effect of Sin

Next we have to consider the state of being deserving of punishment (*de reatu poenae*): first, the state itself of being deserving of punishment (question 87); and, second, mortal and venial sin, which are distinguished from one another by the punishment deserved for them (*quae distinguuntur secundum reatum*) (questions 88-89).

On the first topic there are eight questions: (1) Is it an effect of sin to be deserving of punishment? (2) Can one sin be the punishment for another sin? (3) Does any sin make one deserving of an eternal punishment? (4) Does any sin make one deserving of a punishment that is infinite with respect to quantity? (5) Does every sin make one deserving of an eternal and infinite punishment? (6) Can the state of being deserving of punishment remain after the sin? (7) Is every punishment imposed for some sin? (8) Is one individual deserving of punishment for someone else's sin?

### Article 1

#### Is it an effect of sin to be deserving of punishment?

It seems that it is not an effect of sin to be deserving of punishment (*reatus poenae non sit effectus peccati*):

**Objection 1:** What a thing is related to *per accidens* does not seem to be a proper effect of it. But to be deserving of punishment is related *per accidens* to a sin, since it lies outside of the sinner's intention. Therefore, it is not an effect of sin to be deserving of punishment.

**Objection 2:** Evil is not a cause of good. But punishment is a good, because it is just and because it is from God. Therefore, punishment is not an effect of sin, which is evil.

**Objection 3:** In *Confessiones* 1 Augustine says, "Every disordered affection (*inordinatus animus*) is its own punishment." But a punishment is not a cause of one's being deserving of another punishment, since if that were the case, then there would be an infinite regress (*sic iretur in infinitum*). Therefore, sin does not cause one to be deserving of punishment.

**But contrary to this:** Romans 2:9 says, "[He will render] tribulation and anguish to every soul that does evil." Therefore, sin incurs punishment, which is here designated by the names 'tribulation' and 'anguish'.

**I respond:** From the case of natural things it devolves to human affairs that what rises up against a thing suffers some loss (*detrimentum*) from that thing. For instance, we see in the case of natural things that one of two contraries acts more strongly when the other contrary is present; this is why, as *Meteorologia* 1 points out, heated water cools more quickly. Hence, among men one finds that by a natural inclination each one presses back anyone who rises up against him (*deprimat eum qui contra ipsum insurgit*).

Now it is clear that the things contained within any given order are in some sense unified in their relation to the principle of that order. Hence, the result is that whatever rises up against a given order is pressed back by that order or by the principle of that order. But since a sin is a disordered act, it is clear that anyone who sins is acting against some order. And so the result is that he is pressed back by that order. And this pressing back is punishment (*quae depressio poena est*).

Thus, there are three sorts of punishment by which a man can be punished, corresponding to the three orders to which the human will is subject. For, first of all, human nature is subject to the *order of its own reason*; second, it is subject to the *order of other men*, who govern it either spiritually or temporally, whether politically or in a household; and, third, it is subject to the *universal order of God's rule*. Hence, each of these orders is perverted by sin, while the one who sins acts contrary to reason, contrary to human law, and contrary to God's law. Hence, he incurs three sorts of punishment: one from

himself, viz., remorse of conscience; a second from man; and a third from God.

**Reply to objection 1:** Punishment follows upon sin insofar as sin is evil by reason of its disorder. Hence, just as evil is *per accidens* in the sinner's act, falling outside of his intention, so too with his being deserving of punishment.

**Reply to objection 2:** Punishment can be just both when it is inflicted by God and when it is inflicted by man, and so *the punishment itself* is only a dispositive effect of sin and not a direct effect (*non est effectus directe sed solum dispositive*).

However, sin makes a man to be *deserving of punishment*, and this is something bad. For in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, Dionysius says, "To be punished is not an evil, but to become deserving of punishment is an evil." Hence, to be deserving of punishment is posited as a direct effect of sin (*reatus poenae directe ponitur effectus peccati*).

**Reply to objection 3:** This particular punishment for disordered affection is due for a sin because the sin perverts the *order of reason*. But there are other punishments one comes to be deserving of for perverting the *order of divine law* or the *order of human law*.

## Article 2

### Can a sin be the punishment for a sin?

It seems that a sin cannot be the punishment for a sin.:

**Objection 1:** As is clear from the Philosopher in *Ethics* 10, punishments are inflicted so that through them men might be led back to the good of virtue. But a man is not led to the good of virtue by a sin; instead, he is led to just the opposite. Therefore, a sin is not a punishment for a sin.

**Objection 2:** As is clear from Augustine in *83 Quaestiones*, just punishments are from God. But a sin is unjust and not from God. Therefore, a sin cannot be the punishment for a sin.

**Objection 3:** It is part of the nature of punishment that it be contrary to the will. But as clear from what was said above (q. 74, aa. 1 and 2), sin comes from the will. Therefore, a sin cannot be the punishment for a sin.

**But contrary to this:** In *Super Ezechiel* Gregory says that some sins are a punishment for sin.

**I respond:** There are two ways in which we can speak about sin, *per se* and *per accidens*.

*Per se*, there is no way in which a sin can be the punishment for sin. For sin is thought of *per se* insofar as it comes from the will. But as was established in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 48, a. 5), it is part of the nature of punishment that it is contrary to the will. Hence, it is clear that, speaking *per se*, there is no way in which a sin can be the punishment for a sin.

But *per accidens*, there are three ways in which a sin can be the punishment for a sin:

First, *on the part of a cause which is the removal of an obstacle*. For there are causes that incline one toward sin, such as the passions, the devil's temptations, and others of this sort. These causes are impeded by the assistance of God's grace, which is taken away through sin. Hence, since, as was explained above (q. 79, a. 3), the removal of grace is itself a certain punishment and from God, it follows that, *per accidens*, even the sin which follows from the removal of grace is itself called a punishment. And this is the sense in which Apostle is speaking in Romans 1:24 when he says, "Because of this, God handed them over to the desires of their heart," i.e., to the passions of the soul, because when men are deserted by the assistance of God's grace, they are conquered by their passions. And in this sense it is always the case that a sin is called a punishment for a preceding sin.

Second, *on the part of the substance of the act*, when it involves an affliction, whether this affliction is an interior act, as is clear in the case of anger and envy, or an exterior act, as is clear when individuals are burden themselves with great trouble and loss in order to complete their sinful act—this

according to Wisdom 5:7 (“We tired ourselves out along the way of iniquity”).

Third, *on the part of the effect*, so that some sins are called punishments because of the effects that follow from them.

And in these last two ways, one sin is not only a punishment for a preceding sin, but even a punishment for itself.

**Reply to objection 1:** Even the fact that some are being punished by God when he permits them to fall into sin is ordered to the good of virtue—sometimes even for the good of virtue for those who are sinning, viz., because after their sin they rise up more humble and more cautious, but always for the correction of others who, seeing some individuals tumble from one sin to another, come to fear sin more greatly.

Now in the other two ways in which a sin can be the punishment for sin, it is clear that the punishment is ordered correction, since the very fact that a man undergoes trouble and loss in his sinning is apt to draw men back from sin.

**Reply to objection 2:** The argument proceeds from sin taken in its own right (*secundum se*).

**Reply to objection 3:** The same thing should be said in reply to the third argument.

### Article 3

#### Does any sin make one deserving of an eternal punishment?

It seems that no sin makes one deserving of an eternal punishment (*nullum peccatum inducat reatum aeternae poenae*):

**Objection 1:** A just punishment is equal to the sin, since justice is equality; hence, Isaiah 27:8 says, “In measure against measure, when it shall be cast off, You will judge it.” But a sin is temporal. Therefore, no sin makes one deserving of an eternal punishment.

**Objection 2:** As *Ethics 2* says, “Punishments are certain medicines.” But no medicine should be infinite, since a medicine is ordered toward an end and, as the Philosopher says in *Politics 1*, what is ordered toward an end is not infinite. Therefore, no punishment should be infinite.

**Objection 3:** If anyone is always doing something, it is only because he delights in it for its own sake. But as Wisdom 1:13 says, “God does not delight in the destruction of men.” Therefore, He will not punish men with an everlasting punishment.

**Objection 4:** Nothing which is *per accidens* is infinite. But punishment is *per accidens*, since it is not in accord with the nature of the one who is punished. Therefore, it cannot last for an infinitely long time (*non potest in infinitum durare*).

**But contrary to this:** Matthew 25:46 says, “These shall go into everlasting punishment.” And Mark 3:29 says, “He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit shall not have forgiveness unto eternity, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin.”

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 1), sin makes one deserving of punishment because it perverts some order. But as long as the cause remains, the effect remains. Hence, as long as the perversion of the order remains, one must remain deserving of punishment.

Now someone perverts an order at times in a way that is repairable and at times in a way that is irreparable. For a defect by which the principle is taken away is always irreparable, whereas if the principle is preserved, the defects can be repaired by its power. For instance, if the visual principle is corrupted, then vision cannot be restored except by God’s power alone, but as long as the visual principle is preserved, then if impediments to vision come along, they can be repaired either by nature or by art.

Now every order has a principle through which an individual comes to participate in that order. And so if, through sin, there is a corruption of the principle by which a man’s will is subject to God, then

the disorder, taken in its own right (*quantum est de se*), is irreparable, even though it can be repaired by God's power. But the principle of this order is the ultimate end, to which a man adheres through charity. And so if there are sins that involve a turning away from God and remove charity, then, taken in their own right, they make one deserving of an eternal punishment.

**Reply to objection 1:** The punishment is proportioned to the sin *with respect to its severity*, both in God's judgment and in human judgments. But as Augustine points out in *De Civitate Dei* 21, in no judgment is it required that the punishment be equal to the sin *with respect to its duration*. For instance, it is not the case that because adultery or homicide is committed in a moment, it is therefore punished by a momentary punishment; indeed, sometimes it is punished by perpetual incarceration or exile—and sometimes even by death, where what is taken into consideration is not the temporal duration of the execution (*occisionis mora*), but rather the fact that the individual is being permanently excluded from the society of the living, and so the punishment represents in its own way the eternity of the punishment inflicted by God.

Now it is just, according to Gregory, that someone who in his own eternity has sinned against God should be punished in God's eternity (*in aeterno Dei*), where someone is said to have sinned in his own eternity not only because of the continuation of an act that endures for all of a man's life, but because by the very fact that he fixes his end in sin, he has a willingness to sin forever (*voluntatem habet in aeternum peccandi*). This is why, in *Moralia* 34, Gregory says, "The wicked want to live without end, so that they might be able to remain in their wickedness without end."

**Reply to objection 2:** Even a punishment inflicted in accord with human laws is not always medicinal for the one who is being punished, but medicinal only for the others—as, for instance, when a robber is hanged not in order that he might change, but for the sake of the others, viz., in order that they might refrain from sinning at least out of fear of punishment—this according to Proverbs 19:25 ("When the wicked man is scourged, the fool will become wiser").

So, then, the eternal punishments inflicted by God on the reprobate are medicinal for those who abstain from sins because they are thinking about the punishments—this according to Psalm 59:6 ("You have given to those who fear you a sign, that they may flee from before the bow, that those You love might be delivered").

**Reply to objection 3:** God does not delight in the punishments for their own sake, but instead delights in the order of His justice, which requires these punishments.

**Reply to objection 4:** Even though a punishment is ordered *per accidens* with respect to one's nature, it is nonetheless ordered *per se* with respect to the privation of order and with respect to God's justice. And so the punishment will always endure as long as the disorder endures.

#### Article 4

##### Should the punishment for sin be infinite with respect to quantity?

It seems that the punishment for sin should be infinite with respect to quantity:

**Objection 1:** Jeremiah 10:24 says, "Correct me, O Lord, but yet in Your judgment and not in Your fury, lest You reduce me to nothingness." But the words 'God's anger' or 'God's fury' metaphorically signify the retribution belonging to God's justice, whereas being reduced to nothingness is an infinite punishment, just as to make something *ex nihilo* belongs to an infinite power. Therefore, in accord with God's retribution (*secundum vindictam divinam*), a sin is punished by a punishment that is infinite with respect to quantity.

**Objection 2:** The quantity of the punishment corresponds to the quantity of the guilt—this according to Deuteronomy 25:2 ("According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the

stripes be”). But a sin that is committed against God is infinite, since the greater the person against whom one sins, the greater the sin; for instance, it is a graver sin to strike a prince than to strike a private man. But God has infinite greatness. Therefore, an infinite punishment is fitting for a sin that is committed against God.

**Objection 3:** There are two sorts of infinity, infinity of duration and infinity of quantity. But the punishment is infinite in duration. Therefore, it is infinite in quantity as well.

**But contrary to this:** If this were so, then there would be equal punishments for every mortal sin, since it is not the case that one infinity is greater than another.

**I respond:** The punishment is proportioned to the sin. But there are two things in a sin. The first is the turning away from an unchangeable good that is infinite, and so on this score the sin is infinite. The other thing in a sin is the disordered turning toward a changeable good. And on this score the sin is finite, both because the changeable good is itself finite, and also because the turning-toward is finite, since a creature’s acts cannot be infinite.

Therefore, as far as the turning-away is concerned, what corresponds to the sin is the *punishment of loss* (*poena damni*), which is likewise infinite, since it is the loss of an infinite good, viz., God (*est amissio infiniti boni, scilicet Dei*). But as far as the disordered turning-toward is concerned, what corresponds to it is the punishment of the sensory power (*poena sensus*), which is finite.

**Reply to objection 1:** It is not part of God’s justice to reduce the one who sins to nothingness, since this is incompatible with the everlasting punishment that, as has been explained (a. 3), is in accord with God’s justice. Instead, it is the one who is deprived of spiritual goods that is being said to be ‘reduced to nothingness’—this according to 1 Corinthians 13:22 (“If I do not have charity, I am nothing”).

**Reply to objection 2:** This argument is talking about sin as regards the turning-away, since it is in this sense that a man sins against God.

**Reply to objection 3:** The *duration* of the punishment corresponds to the duration of the guilt—not on the part of the *act*, but on the part of the *stain*, which is such that as long as it remains, one is deserving of punishment (*ex parte maculae, qua durante manet reatus poenae*).

On the other hand, the *severity* of the punishment corresponds to the gravity of the fault (*acerbitas poenae respondet gravitati culpae*). Now a fault that is irreparable is of itself such that it endures forever, and so it deserves an eternal punishment. However, it is not infinite as regards the turning-toward, and so on this score it does not deserve a punishment that is infinite with respect to quantity.

## Article 5

### Does every sin make one deserving of an eternal punishment?

It seems that every sin makes one deserving of an eternal punishment (*omne peccatum inducat reatum poenae aeternae*):

**Objection 1:** As has been explained (a. 4), the punishment is proportioned to the guilt. But an eternal punishment differs infinitely (*differt in infinitum*) from a temporal punishment. And yet no sin seems to differ infinitely from any other sin, since every sin is a human act, which cannot be infinite. Therefore, since, as has been explained (a. 3), some sins deserve an eternal punishment, it seems that no sin deserves just a temporal punishment (*nulli peccato debeatur poena temporalis tantum*).

**Objection 2:** Original sin is the least among sins; this is why, in *Enchiridion*, Augustine says, “The mildest punishment belongs to those who are punished solely for original sin.” But original sin deserves an everlasting punishment, since children who have died in original sin without Baptism never

see the kingdom of God, as is clear from what our Lord says in John 3:3 (“Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”). Therefore, *a fortiori*, there will be an eternal punishment for every other sin.

**Objection 3:** A sin does not deserve a greater punishment from the fact that it is joined to another sin, since each sin has its own punishment attached to it in accord with God’s justice. But a venial sin deserves an eternal punishment if it exists with a mortal sin in someone who is damned, since in Hell there cannot be any forgiveness. Therefore, a venial sin deserves an eternal punishment absolutely speaking. Therefore, no sin deserves a temporal punishment.

**But contrary to this:** In *Dialogi* 4, Gregory says that certain less serious sins (*quaedam leviores culpa*) are forgiven after this life. Therefore, not every sin is punished by an eternal punishment.

**I respond:** As was explained above (a. 3), sin causes one to be deserving of an eternal punishment insofar as it irreparably attacks the order of divine justice, viz., by being contrary to the very principle of that order, which is the ultimate end. Now it is clear that in some sins there is, to be sure, a disorder, and yet this disorder comes about through an opposition not to the ultimate end, but only to the means to that end, insofar as the means are intended more than they should be or less than they should be (*inquantum plus vel minus debite eis intenditur*), while the ordering with respect to the ultimate end is still preserved—as, for instance, when a man, even though he is too attached to some temporal end, nonetheless would not will to offend God for the sake of that end by doing something contrary to God’s precept. Hence, sins of this sort deserve a temporal punishment and not an eternal punishment.

**Reply to objection 1:** Sins do not differ infinitely from one another as regards the turning toward a changeable good, which is what the substance of the act consists in; however, they do differ infinitely from one another as regards the turning-away. For some sins are committed through a turning away from the ultimate end, whereas other sins are committed through a disorder with respect to the means to the end. And the ultimate end differs infinitely from the means to the end.

**Reply to objection 2:** Original sin deserves an eternal punishment not by reason of its gravity, but by reason of the condition of its subject, viz., a man who is without grace; for it is only through grace that a remission of punishment is effected.

**Reply to objection 3:** A similar reply should be given to the third objection, which concerns venial sin. For as was explained above (a. 3), the fact that a punishment is eternal corresponds not to the quantity of the sin, but to the fact that the sin is not forgivable (*aeternitas poenae non respondet quantitati culpa*, sed *irremissibilitati ipsius*).

## Article 6

### Does one’s being deserving of punishment remain after the sin?

It seems that one’s being deserving of punishment does not remain after the sin (*reatus poenae non remaneat post peccatum*):

**Objection 1:** When the cause is removed, the effect is removed. But sin is the cause of one’s being deserving of punishment. Therefore, when the sin is removed, one ceases to be deserving of punishment.

**Objection 2:** A sin is removed by the man’s returning to virtue. But a virtuous man deserves a reward and not a punishment. Therefore, when the sin is removed, one does not remain deserving of punishment.

**Objection 3:** As *Ethics* 3 says, punishments are medicines. But after someone has already been cured of an ailment, he is not given medicine. Therefore, once the sin is removed, one does not remain deserving of punishment.

**But contrary to this:** 2 Kings 12:13-14 says, “David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has taken away your sin. You shall not die. Nevertheless, because you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born to you shall die.’” Therefore, someone is being punished by God even after his sin is forgiven. And so one’s being deserving of punishment remains after the sin has been removed.

**I respond:** There are two things that can be considered in a sin: (a) the act of sinning (*actus culpae*) and (b) the ensuing stain.

Now it is clear that in the case of all actual sins, one’s deserving to be punished remains after the *act of sinning* has ceased. For the act of sinning renders a man deserving of punishment insofar as he is transgressing the order of God’s justice, and he does not return to that order except through some sort of compensatory punishment (*nisi per quandam recompensationem poenae*), which leads him back to the equality of justice. More specifically, someone who has indulged his own will more than he should, acting contrary to God’s commandment, must, in accord with the order of God’s justice, undergo, whether willingly or unwillingly, something contrary to what he wills. We likewise observe in the case of injuries inflicted on men that the equality of justice is reestablished by compensatory punishment. Hence, it is clear that even after the sinful act has ceased or after the injury has been inflicted, the debt of punishment remains.

However, if we are talking about the removal of the *stain of sin* (*si loquamur de ablatione peccati quantum ad maculam*), then it is likewise clear that the stain of sin cannot be removed from the soul except by the soul’s being joined to God; for it is because of the the soul’s distance from God that it incurred the loss of its proper luster, where, as was explained above (q. 86, a. 1), this loss of luster is the stain of sin. Now a man is joined to God through his will. Hence, the stain of sin cannot be removed from a man unless the man’s will accepts the order of God’s justice, so that either (a) he willingly undertakes a punishment for himself in compensation for his past sin or (b) he patiently undergoes a punishment inflicted on him by God. For in both these ways the punishment has the character of *satisfaction*. Now a punishment that is *satisfactory* in this way loses something of the character of punishment. For it is part of the nature of punishment to be contrary to the will. But satisfactory punishment, even if it is contrary to the will when considered just by itself (*secundum absolutam considerationem*), is nonetheless voluntary at *this* time and for *this* purpose. Hence, it is voluntary absolutely speaking and involuntary in a certain respect (*simpliciter est voluntaria, secundum quid autem involuntaria*), as is clear from what was said above about the voluntary and the involuntary (q. 6, a. 6). Therefore, one should reply that even when the stain of sin has been removed, one can still remain deserving of punishment—not punishment absolutely speaking, but satisfactory punishment.

**Reply to objection 1:** As was explained above (q. 86, a. 2), the stain of sin remains even after the sinful act has ceased, and so the state of one’s deserving punishment can likewise remain. But as was just explained, when the stain has ceased to exist, then one does not remain deserving of punishment in exactly the same sense (*non remanet reatus secundum eandem rationem*).

**Reply to objection 2:** The virtuous man does not deserve punishment absolutely speaking, and yet punishment can be appropriate for him as satisfactory punishment. For a man’s making satisfaction for acts in which he has offended God or man is itself something that belongs to virtue.

**Reply to objection 3:** When the stain of sin has been removed, then the wound of sin has been healed with respect to the will. But punishment is still required for cleansing the other powers of the soul that have been disordered by the previous sin, in order that they might be cured through contrary movements. Punishment is also required in order to restore the equality of justice and to remove the scandal of others, in order that they who were scandalized by the sin might be edified by the punishment. This is clear from the example adduced about David.

## Article 7

### Is every punishment because of some sin?

It seems that not every punishment is because of some sin:

**Objection 1:** John 9:2-3 says of the man born blind, “Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, that he should be born blind.” Similarly, we see that many children, even baptized children, suffer grave punishments—for instance, fevers and demonic disturbances (*daemonum oppressiones*) and many other things of this sort—even though no sin exists in them after they have been baptized. And before they were baptized, there was no more sin in them than in other children who do not suffer from these things. Therefore, not every punishment is for some sin.

**Objection 2:** Sinners prospering seems to be the same sort of thing as innocent men being punished. But we find both happening frequently in human affairs; for Psalm 72:5 says of the wicked, “They are not in the labor of men; neither shall they be scourged like other men.” And Job 21:7 says, “The wicked live, are consoled, and are strengthened with riches.” And Habakuk 1:13 says, “Why do You look upon the contemptuous and hold Your peace while the wicked man oppresses the man that is more just than himself?” Therefore, not every punishment is inflicted for some sin.

**Objection 3:** 1 Peter 2:22 says of Christ, “He did not sin, nor was guile found in His mouth.” And yet in the same place it says that He suffered for us. Therefore, it is not the case that punishments are always dispensed by God for some sin.

**But contrary to this:** Job 4:7 says, “Who was ever innocent when he perished? And when have the upright been destroyed? Nay rather, I have seen those who work iniquity perishing by the blast of God.” And in *Retractationes* 1 Augustine says, “Every punishment is just, and it is inflicted for some sin.”

**I respond:** As has already been explained (a. 6), there are two ways in which punishment can be thought of: (a) *absolutely speaking* and (b) insofar as it is *satisfactory*.

*Satisfactory punishment* is in some sense voluntary. And since it is possible for those who differ in deserving punishment to be one in their wills by a union of love, it is sometimes the case that someone who has not sinned undergoes punishment voluntarily in place of someone else (*poenam voluntarius pro alio portat*)—in the same way that, in human affairs, we likewise see one individual transferring someone else’s financial debt to himself.

However, if we are talking about *punishment absolutely speaking* insofar as it has the character of punishment, then it is always ordered to one’s own sin. Sometimes it is ordered to one’s own *actual sin*, when someone is punished by God or by man for a sin that he has committed. And sometimes it is ordered to *original sin*, either *principally* or *as a consequence*. The punishment for original sin is *principally* that human nature is left to itself, having lost the assistance of original justice, whereas the *consequences* of this are all the penalties that stem from the defectiveness of the nature in men.

However, notice that sometimes something seems to be a punishment which nonetheless does not have the character of punishment absolutely speaking. For as was explained in the First Part (*ST* 1, q. 48, a. 5), punishment is a species of evil. But evil is the privation of a good. And since there are many goods that belong to man, viz., goods of the soul, goods of the body, and goods consisting in exterior things, it sometimes happens that a man suffers a loss in some lesser good in order to gain an increase in some greater good—as when someone suffers the loss of money for the sake of bodily health, or suffers the loss of both money and bodily health for the sake of the salvation of his soul and the glory of God. In cases like this, the relevant loss is bad for the man in a certain respect, but not absolutely speaking. Hence, it has the character of a *medicine* and not the character of *punishment absolutely speaking*; for physicians likewise prescribe bitter potions for the sick in order to bring them to health. And because these losses do not properly have the character of punishment, they are not traced back to sin as their

cause, except in the sense that the very fact that human nature has to use painful medicines stems from the corruption of the nature, which is the punishment for original sin. For in the state of innocence it would not have been necessary for anyone to make progress in virtue through painful exercises (*per poenalia exercitia*). Hence, the very fact that there is pain in such cases is traced back to original sin as its cause.

**Reply to objection 1:** As has been explained, the defects that belong to those who are born with them or to children are the effects of, and punishments for, original sin. And they likewise remain after Baptism, for the reason explained above (q. 85, a. 5). And, as was also explained above (q. 85, a. 5), the fact that these effects and punishments are not equal in everyone stems from the diversity of the nature when the nature is left to itself.

Still, in accord with God's providence, defects of this sort are ordered toward (a) the salvation of men, either the salvation of those who suffer from them or the salvation of the others who are forewarned by the punishments, and also toward (b) the glory of God.

**Reply to objection 2:** Temporal and corporeal goods are, to be sure, human goods, but they are small ones, whereas spiritual goods are great goods for a man. Therefore, it belongs to God's justice to give spiritual goods to the virtuous and, as regards temporal goods and evils, to give them as much as suffices for virtue. For as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 8, "God's justice does not weaken the fortitude of the best men with material gifts." In the case of others, by contrast, the very fact that they are given temporal goods turns out badly as far as spiritual goods are concerned (*in malum spiritualium cedit*). Hence, Psalm 72:6 concludes with, "Therefore pride has held them fast."

**Reply to objection 3:** Christ sustained satisfactory punishments not for His own sins, but for our sins.

## Article 8

### Is anyone punished for someone else's sin?

It seems that there are some who are punished for someone else's sin:

**Objection 1:** Exodus 20:5 says, "I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me." And Matthew 23:35 says, "That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth."

**Objection 2:** Man's justice is derived from God's justice. But according to man's justice, sometimes the children are punished for their parents, as is clear in the case of high treason. Therefore, it is likewise the case according to God's justice that one is punished for someone else's sin.

**Objection 3:** Someone might reply that the child is punished not for the father's sin, but for his own sin, insofar as he imitates his father's wickedness. But in that case [Sacred Scripture] would not talk about the children more than about strangers, who are punished by a punishment similar to the punishment of those whose sins they imitate. Therefore, it seems that the children are punished not for their own sins, but for the sins of their parents.

**But contrary to this:** Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father."

**I respond:** As has already been explained (a. 7), if we are speaking about *satisfactory punishment*, then it is possible for one individual to take someone else's punishment upon himself insofar as they are united (*inquantum sunt quodammodo unum*).

However, if we are speaking about a punishment, inflicted for a sin, *insofar as it has the character of punishment*, then each one is punished only for his own sin, since a sinful act is something personal.

On the other hand, if we are speaking about the sort of punishment that has the character of *medicine*, then it is possible for one individual to be punished for the sin of another. For it has been

explained (a. 7) that losses of corporeal things, or even of the body itself, are penal medicines ordered toward the health of the soul. Hence, nothing prevents someone from being punished with such punishments, either by God or by man, for someone else's sins—for instance, children on behalf of their fathers or servants on behalf of their masters, insofar as they in some sense belong to their fathers or masters. Yet this occurs in such a way that if the child or servant participates in the sin, then the relevant penal loss (*huiusmodi poenalis defectus*) has the character of punishment with respect to both parties, viz., the one who is being punished and the one for whom he is being punished. However, if the child or servant does not participate in the sin, then the penal loss has the character of punishment with respect to the one on whose behalf the child or servant is being punished, whereas with respect to the one who is being punished it has the character only of medicine (except *per accidens*, if the child or servant consented to the other's sin). For the loss is ordered toward the good of his soul if he suffers it patiently.

On the other hand, spiritual punishments are not just medicinal, since a good of the soul is not ordered toward any better good. Hence, in the case of goods of the soul, no one suffers a loss without his own proper guilt. And because of this it is likewise the case, as Augustine points out in *Epistola ad Avitum*, that one is not punished by this sort of punishment on behalf of another; for with respect to his soul, the child is not something that belongs to his father. Hence, the Lord, in giving the reason for this, says in Ezechiel 18:4, "All souls are mine."

**Reply to objection 1:** Both passages must, it seems, be referring to temporal or corporeal punishments, insofar as the children are something that in a sense belongs to the parents, and insofar as successors belong to their predecessors.

Alternatively, if what is being referred to are spiritual punishments, then this is said because of the imitation of the sin. This is why the passage in Exodus adds, "... to those who hate me," and why the passage in Matthew adds, "... fill up the measure of your fathers." For He says that the sins of the fathers are punished in the sons, because the sons, nourished by the sins of their parents, are more inclined to sin, both out of habit and also because of example, following, as it were, the authority of their fathers. The children deserve an even greater punishment if, seeing the sins of their fathers, they do not correct themselves. This is why He adds, "... to the third and fourth generation." For men are accustomed to living long enough to see the third and fourth generation, and so they are mutually able to see one another: The children are able to see the sins of their fathers so as to imitate them, and the fathers are able to see the punishments of their children so as to grieve over them.

**Reply to objection 2:** The punishments that human justice inflicts on one individual for someone else's sin are corporeal and temporal punishments. And they are remedies or medicines against subsequent sins, in order that either the very ones who are punished or others might be held back from similar sins.

**Reply to objection 3:** Close relatives, rather than strangers, are said to be punished for the sins of others both because (a) as has been explained, the punishments of close relatives in some sense redound upon those who have sinned, insofar as the child is something that belongs to the father, and also because (b) domestic examples and domestic punishments are more moving. Hence, when someone has been nurtured by the sins of his parents, he seems to follow them with more vigor, and if he has not been deterred by their punishments, he seems to become more obstinate and, hence, deserving of a greater punishment.