

FIRST PART OF THE SECOND PART, QUESTION 38

Of the Remedies of Sorrow or Pain (In Five Articles)

We must now consider the remedies of pain or sorrow: under which head there are five points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether pain or sorrow is assuaged by every pleasure?
- (2) Whether it is assuaged by weeping?
- (3) Whether it is assuaged by the sympathy of friends?
- (4) Whether it is assuaged by contemplating the truth?
- (5) Whether it is assuaged by sleep and baths?

Whether pain or sorrow is assuaged by every pleasure?

Ia IIae q. 38 a. 1

Objection 1. It would seem that not every pleasure assuages every pain or sorrow. For pleasure does not assuage sorrow, save in so far as it is contrary to it: for “remedies work by contraries” (Ethic. ii, 3). But not every pleasure is contrary to every sorrow; as stated above (q. 35, a. 4). Therefore not every pleasure assuages every sorrow.

Objection 2. Further, that which causes sorrow does not assuage it. But some pleasures cause sorrow; since, as stated in Ethic. ix, 4, “the wicked man feels pain at having been pleased.” Therefore not every pleasure assuages sorrow.

Objection 3. Further, Augustine says (Confess. iv, 7) that he fled from his country, where he had been wont to associate with his friend, now dead: “for so should his eyes look for him less, where they were not wont to see him.” Hence we may gather that those things which united us to our dead or absent friends, become burdensome to us when we mourn their death or absence. But nothing united us more than the pleasures we enjoyed in common. Therefore these very pleasures become burdensome to us when we mourn. Therefore not every pleasure assuages every sorrow.

On the contrary, The Philosopher says (Ethic. vii, 14) that “sorrow is driven forth by pleasure, both by a contrary pleasure and by any other, provided it be intense.”

I answer that, As is evident from what has been said above (q. 23, a. 4), pleasure is a kind of repose of the appetite in a suitable good; while sorrow arises from something unsuited to the appetite. Consequently in movements of the appetite pleasure is to sorrow, what, in bodies, repose is to weariness, which is due to a non-

natural transmutation; for sorrow itself implies a certain weariness or ailing of the appetitive faculty. Therefore just as all repose of the body brings relief to any kind of weariness, ensuing from any non-natural cause; so every pleasure brings relief by assuaging any kind of sorrow, due to any cause whatever.

Reply to Objection 1. Although not every pleasure is specifically contrary to every sorrow, yet it is generically, as stated above (q. 35, a. 4). And consequently, on the part of the disposition of the subject, any sorrow can be assuaged by any pleasure.

Reply to Objection 2. The pleasures of wicked men are not a cause of sorrow while they are enjoyed, but afterwards: that is to say, in so far as wicked men repent of those things in which they took pleasure. This sorrow is healed by contrary pleasures.

Reply to Objection 3. When there are two causes inclining to contrary movements, each hinders the other; yet the one which is stronger and more persistent, prevails in the end. Now when a man is made sorrowful by those things in which he took pleasure in common with a deceased or absent friend, there are two causes producing contrary movements. For the thought of the friend’s death or absence, inclines him to sorrow: whereas the present good inclines him to pleasure. Consequently each is modified by the other. And yet, since the perception of the present moves more strongly than the memory of the past, and since love of self is more persistent than love of another; hence it is that, in the end, the pleasure drives out the sorrow. Wherefore a little further on (Confess. iv, 8) Augustine says that his “sorrow gave way to his former pleasures.”

Whether pain or sorrow is assuaged by tears?

Ia IIae q. 38 a. 2

Objection 1. It would seem that tears do not assuage sorrow. Because no effect diminishes its cause. But tears or groans are an effect of sorrow. Therefore they do not diminish sorrow.

Objection 2. Further, just as tears or groans are an effect of sorrow, so laughter is an effect of joy. But

laughter does not lessen joy. Therefore tears do not lessen sorrow.

Objection 3. Further, when we weep, the evil that saddens us is present to the imagination. But the image of that which saddens us increases sorrow, just as the image of a pleasant thing adds to joy. Therefore it

seems that tears do not assuage sorrow.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Confess. iv, 7) that when he mourned the death of his friend, “in groans and in tears alone did he find some little refreshment.”

I answer that, Tears and groans naturally assuage sorrow: and this for two reasons. First, because a hurtful thing hurts yet more if we keep it shut up, because the soul is more intent on it: whereas if it be allowed to escape, the soul’s intention is dispersed as it were on outward things, so that the inward sorrow is lessened. This is why men, burdened with sorrow, make outward show of their sorrow, by tears or groans or even by words, their sorrow is assuaged. Secondly, because an action, that befits a man according to his actual disposition, is always pleasant to him. Now tears and groans are actions befitting a man who is in sorrow or pain; and consequently they become pleasant to him. Since then, as stated above (a. 1), every pleasure assuages sorrow or pain somewhat, it follows that sorrow is assuaged by weeping and groans.

Reply to Objection 1. This relation of the cause to effect is opposed to the relation existing between the cause of sorrow and the sorrowing man. For every ef-

fect is suited to its cause, and consequently is pleasant to it; but the cause of sorrow is disagreeable to him that sorrows. Hence the effect of sorrow is not related to him that sorrows in the same way as the cause of sorrow is. For this reason sorrow is assuaged by its effect, on account of the aforesaid contrariety.

Reply to Objection 2. The relation of effect to cause is like the relation of the object of pleasure to him that takes pleasure in it: because in each case the one agrees with the other. Now every like thing increases its like. Therefore joy is increased by laughter and the other effects of joy: except they be excessive, in which case, accidentally, they lessen it.

Reply to Objection 3. The image of that which saddens us, considered in itself, has a natural tendency to increase sorrow: yet from the very fact that a man imagines himself to be doing that which is fitting according to his actual state, he feels a certain amount of pleasure. For the same reason if laughter escapes a man when he is so disposed that he thinks he ought to weep, he is sorry for it, as having done something unbecoming to him, as Cicero says (De Tusc. Quaest. iii, 27).

Whether pain or sorrow are assuaged by the sympathy of friends?

Ia IIae q. 38 a. 3

Objection 1. It would seem that the sorrow of sympathizing friends does not assuage our own sorrow. For contraries have contrary effects. Now as Augustine says (Confess. viii, 4), “when many rejoice together, each one has more exuberant joy, for they are kindled and inflamed one by the other.” Therefore, in like manner, when many are sorrowful, it seems that their sorrow is greater.

Objection 2. Further, friendship demands mutual love, as Augustine declares (Confess. iv, 9). But a sympathizing friend is pained at the sorrow of his friend with whom he sympathizes. Consequently the pain of a sympathizing friend becomes, to the friend in sorrow, a further cause of sorrow: so that, his pain being doubled his sorrow seems to increase.

Objection 3. Further, sorrow arises from every evil affecting a friend, as though it affected oneself: since “a friend is one’s other self” (Ethic. ix, 4,9). But sorrow is an evil. Therefore the sorrow of the sympathizing friend increases the sorrow of the friend with whom he sympathizes.

On the contrary, The Philosopher says (Ethic. ix, 11) that those who are in pain are consoled when their friends sympathize with them.

I answer that, When one is in pain, it is natural that the sympathy of a friend should afford consola-

tion: whereof the Philosopher indicates a twofold reason (Ethic. ix, 11). The first is because, since sorrow has a depressing effect, it is like a weight whereof we strive to unburden ourselves: so that when a man sees others saddened by his own sorrow, it seems as though others were bearing the burden with him, striving, as it were, to lessen its weight; wherefore the load of sorrow becomes lighter for him: something like what occurs in the carrying of bodily burdens. The second and better reason is because when a man’s friends condole with him, he sees that he is loved by them, and this affords him pleasure, as stated above (q. 32, a. 5). Consequently, since every pleasure assuages sorrow, as stated above (a. 1), it follows that sorrow is mitigated by a sympathizing friend.

Reply to Objection 1. In either case there is a proof of friendship, viz. when a man rejoices with the joyful, and when he sorrows with the sorrowful. Consequently each becomes an object of pleasure by reason of its cause.

Reply to Objection 2. The friend’s sorrow itself would be a cause of sorrow: but consideration of its cause, viz. his love, gives rise rather to pleasure.

And this suffices for the reply to the Third Objection.

Objection 1. It would seem that the contemplation of truth does not assuage sorrow. For it is written (Eccles. 1:18): “He that addeth knowledge addeth also sorrow” [Vulg.: ‘labor’]. But knowledge pertains to the contemplation of truth. Therefore the contemplation of truth does not assuage sorrow.

Objection 2. Further, the contemplation of truth belongs to the speculative intellect. But “the speculative intellect is not a principle of movement”; as stated in *De Anima* iii, 11. Therefore, since joy and sorrow are movements of the soul, it seems that the contemplation of truth does not help to assuage sorrow.

Objection 3. Further, the remedy for an ailment should be applied to the part which ails. But contemplation of truth is in the intellect. Therefore it does not assuage bodily pain, which is in the senses.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*Soliloq.* i, 12): “It seemed to me that if the light of that truth were to dawn on our minds, either I should not feel that pain, or at least that pain would seem nothing to me.”

I answer that, As stated above (q. 3, a. 5), the greatest of all pleasures consists in the contemplation of truth. Now every pleasure assuages pain as stated above (a. 1): hence the contemplation of truth assuages pain or sorrow, and the more so, the more perfectly

one is a lover of wisdom. And therefore in the midst of tribulations men rejoice in the contemplation of Divine things and of future Happiness, according to James 1:2: “My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations”: and, what is more, even in the midst of bodily tortures this joy is found; as the “martyr Tiburtius, when he was walking barefoot on the burning coals, said: Methinks, I walk on roses, in the name of Jesus Christ.”*

Reply to Objection 1. “He that addeth knowledge, addeth sorrow,” either on account of the difficulty and disappointment in the search for truth; or because knowledge makes man acquainted with many things that are contrary to his will. Accordingly, on the part of the things known, knowledge causes sorrow: but on the part of the contemplation of truth, it causes pleasure.

Reply to Objection 2. The speculative intellect does not move the mind on the part of the thing contemplated: but on the part of contemplation itself, which is man’s good and naturally pleasant to him.

Reply to Objection 3. In the powers of the soul there is an overflow from the higher to the lower powers: and accordingly, the pleasure of contemplation, which is in the higher part, overflows so as to mitigate even that pain which is in the senses.

Objection 1. It would seem that sleep and baths do not assuage sorrow. For sorrow is in the soul: whereas sleep and baths regard the body. Therefore they do not conduce to the assuaging of sorrow.

Objection 2. Further, the same effect does not seem to ensue from contrary causes. But these, being bodily things, are incompatible with the contemplation of truth which is a cause of the assuaging of sorrow, as stated above (a. 4). Therefore sorrow is not mitigated by the like.

Objection 3. Further, sorrow and pain, in so far as they affect the body, denote a certain transmutation of the heart. But such remedies as these seem to pertain to the outward senses and limbs, rather than to the interior disposition of the heart. Therefore they do not assuage sorrow.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*Confess.* ix, 12): “I had heard that the bath had its name[†] . . . from the fact of its driving sadness from the mind.” And further on, he says: “I slept, and woke up again, and found my grief not a little assuaged”: and quotes the words from the hymn of Ambrose[‡], in which it is said that “Sleep restores the tired limbs to labor, refreshes the weary mind, and banishes sorrow.”

I answer that, As stated above (q. 37, a. 4), sorrow, by reason of its specific nature, is repugnant to the vital movement of the body; and consequently whatever restores the bodily nature to its due state of vital movement, is opposed to sorrow and assuages it. Moreover such remedies, from the very fact that they bring nature back to its normal state, are causes of pleasure; for this is precisely in what pleasure consists, as stated above (q. 31, a. 1). Therefore, since every pleasure assuages sorrow, sorrow is assuaged by such like bodily remedies.

Reply to Objection 1. The normal disposition of the body, so far as it is felt, is itself a cause of pleasure, and consequently assuages sorrow.

Reply to Objection 2. As stated above (q. 31, a. 8), one pleasure hinders another; and yet every pleasure assuages sorrow. Consequently it is not unreasonable that sorrow should be assuaged by causes which hinder one another.

Reply to Objection 3. Every good disposition of the body reacts somewhat on the heart, which is the beginning and end of bodily movements, as stated in *De Causa Mot. Animal.* xi.

* Cf. Dominican Breviary, August 11th, commemoration of St. Tiburtius. † Balneum, from the Greek *balaneion* ‡ Cf. Sarum Breviary: First Sunday after the octave of the Epiphany, Hymn for first Vespers