

SUPPLEMENT TO THE THIRD PART, QUESTION 14

Of the Quality of Satisfaction (In Five Articles)

We must now consider the quality of satisfaction, under which head there are five points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether a man can satisfy for one sin without satisfying for another?
- (2) Whether if a man fall into sin after being contrite for all his sins, he can, now that he has lost charity, satisfy for his other sins which were pardoned him through his contrition?
- (3) Whether a man's previous satisfaction begins to avail when he recovers charity?
- (4) Whether works done without charity merit any good?
- (5) Whether such works avail for the mitigation of the pains of hell?

Whether a man can satisfy for one sin without satisfying for another?

Suppl. q. 14 a. 1

Objection 1. It would seem that a man can satisfy for one sin without satisfying for another. Because when several things are not connected together one can be taken away without another. Now sins are not connected together, else whoever had one would have them all. Therefore one sin can be expiated by satisfaction, without another.

Objection 2. Further, God is more merciful than man. But man accepts the payment of one debt without the payment of another. Therefore God accepts satisfaction for one sin without the other.

Objection 3. Further, as stated in the text (Sent. iv, D, 15), "satisfaction is to uproot the causes of sin, and give no opening to the suggestions thereof." Now this can be done with regard to one sin and not another, as when a man curbs his lust and perseveres in covetousness. Therefore we can make satisfaction for one sin without satisfying for another.

On the contrary, The fast of those who fasted "for debates and strifes" (Is. 58:4,5) was not acceptable to God, though fasting be a work of satisfaction. Now satisfaction cannot be made save by works that are acceptable to God. Therefore he that has a sin on his conscience cannot make satisfaction to God.

Further, satisfaction is a remedy for the healing of past sins, and for preserving from future sins, as stated above (q. 12, a. 3). But without grace it is impossible to avoid sins. Therefore, since each sin excludes grace, it is not possible to make satisfaction for one sin and not for another.

I answer that, Some have held that it is possible to make satisfaction for one sin and not for another, as the Master states (Sent. iv, D, 15). But this cannot be. For since the previous offense has to be removed by satis-

faction, the mode of satisfaction must needs be consistent with the removal of the offense. Now removal of offense is renewal of friendship: wherefore if there be anything to hinder the renewal of friendship there can be no satisfaction. Since, therefore, every sin is a hindrance to the friendship of charity, which is the friendship of man for God, it is impossible for man to make satisfaction for one sin while holding to another: even as neither would a man make satisfaction to another for a blow, if while throwing himself at his feet he were to give him another.

Reply to Objection 1. As sins are not connected together in some single one, a man can incur one without incurring another; whereas all sins are remitted by reason of one same thing, so that the remissions of various sins are connected together. Consequently satisfaction cannot be made for one and not for another.

Reply to Objection 2. When a man is under obligation to another by reason of a debt, the only inequality between them is that which is opposed to justice, so that for restitution nothing further is required than that the equality of justice should be reinstated, and this can be done in respect of one debt without another. But when the obligation is based on an offense, there is inequality not only of justice but also of friendship, so that for the offense to be removed by satisfaction, not only must the equality of justice be restored by the payment of a punishment equal to the offense, but also the equality of friendship must be reinstated, which is impossible so long as an obstacle to friendship remains.

Reply to Objection 3. By its weight, one sin drags us down to another, as Gregory says (Moral. xxv): so that when a man holds to one sin, he does not sufficiently cut himself off from the causes of further sin.

Whether, when deprived of charity, a man can make satisfaction for sins for which he was previously contrite?

Suppl. q. 14 a. 2

Objection 1. It would seem that if a man fall into sin after being contrite for all his sins, he can, now that he has lost charity, satisfy for his other sins which were

already pardoned him through his contrition. For Daniel said to Nabuchodonosor (Dan. 4:24): "Redeem thou thy sins with alms." Yet he was still a sinner, as is shown by

his subsequent punishment. Therefore a man can make satisfaction while in a state of sin.

Objection 2. Further, “Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred” (Eccles. 9:1). If therefore one cannot make satisfaction unless one be in a state of charity, it would be impossible to know whether one had made satisfaction, which would be unseemly.

Objection 3. Further, a man’s entire action takes its form from the intention which he had at the beginning. But a penitent is in a state of charity when he begins to repent. Therefore his whole subsequent satisfaction will derive its efficacy from the charity which quickens his intention.

Objection 4. Further, satisfaction consists in a certain equalization of guilt to punishment. But these things can be equalized even in one who is devoid of charity. Therefore, etc.

On the contrary, “Charity covereth all sins” (Prov. 10:12). But satisfaction has the power of blotting out sins. Therefore it is powerless without charity.

Further, the chief work of satisfaction is almsdeeds. But alms given by one who is devoid of charity avail nothing, as is clearly stated 1 Cor. 13:3, “If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor. . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” Therefore there can be no satisfaction with mortal sin.

I answer that, Some have said that if, when all a man’s sins have been pardoned through contrition, and before he has made satisfaction for them, he falls into sin, and then makes satisfaction, such satisfaction will be valid, so that if he die in that sin, he will not be punished in hell for the other sins.

But this cannot be, because satisfaction requires

the reinstatement of friendship and the restoration of the equality of justice, the contrary of which destroys friendship, as the Philosopher states (Ethic. ix, 1,3). Now in satisfaction made to God, the equality is based, not on equivalence but rather on God’s acceptance: so that, although the offense be already removed by previous contrition, the works of satisfaction must be acceptable to God, and for this they are dependent on charity. Consequently works done without charity are not satisfactory.

Reply to Objection 1. Daniel’s advice meant that he should give up sin and repent, and so make satisfaction by giving alms.

Reply to Objection 2. Even as man knows not for certain whether he had charity when making satisfaction, or whether he has it now, so too he knows not for certain whether he made full satisfaction: wherefore it is written (Ecclus. 5:5): “Be not without fear about sin forgiven.” And yet man need not, on account of that fear, repeat the satisfaction made, if he is not conscious of a mortal sin. For although he may not have expiated his punishment by that satisfaction, he does not incur the guilt of omission through neglecting to make satisfaction; even as he who receives the Eucharist without being conscious of a mortal sin of which he is guilty, does not incur the guilt of receiving unworthily.

Reply to Objection 3. His intention was interrupted by his subsequent sin, so that it gives no virtue to the works done after that sin.

Reply to Objection 4. Sufficient equalization is impossible both as to the Divine acceptance and as to equivalence: so that the argument proves nothing.

Whether previous satisfaction begins to avail after man is restored to charity?

Suppl. q. 14 a. 3

Objection 1. It would seem that when a man has recovered charity his previous satisfaction begins to avail, because a gloss on Lev. 25:25, “If thy brother being impoverished,” etc., says that “the fruit of a man’s good works should be counted from the time when he sinned.” But they would not be counted, unless they derived some efficacy from his subsequent charity. Therefore they begin to avail after he recovers charity.

Objection 2. Further, as the efficacy of satisfaction is hindered by sin, so the efficacy of Baptism is hindered by insincerity. Now Baptism begins to avail when insincerity ceases. Therefore satisfaction begins to avail when sin is taken away.

Objection 3. Further, if a man is given as a penance for the sins he has committed, to fast for several days, and then, after falling again into sin, he completes his penance, he is not told, when he goes to confession a second time, to fast once again. But he would be told to do so, if he did not fulfill his duty of satisfaction by them. Therefore his previous works become valid unto satisfaction, through his subsequent repentance.

On the contrary, Works done without charity were not satisfactory, through being dead works. But they are not quickened by penance. Therefore they do not begin to be satisfactory.

Further, charity does not quicken a work, unless in some way that work proceeds therefrom. But works cannot be acceptable to God, and therefore cannot be satisfactory, unless they be quickened by charity. Since then the works done without charity, in no way proceeded from charity, nor ever can proceed therefrom, they can by no means count towards satisfaction.

I answer that, Some have said that works done while in a state of charity, which are called living works, are meritorious in respect of eternal life, and satisfactory in respect of paying off the debt of punishment; and that by subsequent charity, works done without charity are quickened so as to be satisfactory, but not so as to be meritorious of eternal life. But this is impossible, because works done in charity produce both these effects for the same reason, viz. because they are pleasing to God: wherefore just as charity by its advent cannot

make works done without charity to be pleasing in one respect, so neither can it make them pleasing in the other respect.

Reply to Objection 1. This means that the fruits are reckoned, not from the time when he was first in sin, but from the time when he ceased to sin, when, to wit, he was last in sin; unless he was contrite as soon as he had sinned, and did many good actions before he confessed. Or we may say that the greater the contrition the more it alleviates the punishment, and the more good actions a man does while in sin, the more he disposes himself to the grace of contrition, so that it is probable that he owes a smaller debt of punishment. For this reason the priest should use discretion in taking them into account, so as to give him a lighter penance, according as he finds him better disposed.

Reply to Objection 2. Baptism imprints a character on the soul, whereas satisfaction does not. Hence on the advent of charity, which removes both insincer-

ity and sin, it causes Baptism to have its effect, whereas it does not do this for satisfaction. Moreover Baptism confers justification in virtue of the deed [ex opere operato] which is not man's deed but God's, wherefore it does not become a lifeless deed as satisfaction does, which is a deed of man.

Reply to Objection 3. Sometimes satisfaction is such as to leave an effect in the person who makes satisfaction, even after the act of satisfaction has been done; thus fasting leaves the body weak, and almsdeeds result in a diminution of a person's substance, and so on. In such cases there is no need to repeat the works of satisfaction if they have been done while in a state of sin, because through penance they are acceptable to God in the result they leave behind. But when a work of satisfaction leaves behind no effect in the person that does satisfaction, it needs to be repeated, as in the case of prayer and so forth. Interior works, since they pass away altogether, are nowise quickened, and must be repeated.

Whether works done without charity merit any, at least temporal, good?

Suppl. q. 14 a. 4

Objection 1. It would seem that works done without charity merit some, at least a temporal, good. For as punishment is to the evil act, so is reward to a good act. Now no evil deed is unpunished by God the just judge. Therefore no good deed is unrewarded, and so every good deed merits some good.

Objection 2. Further, reward is not given except for merit. Now some reward is given for works done without charity, wherefore it is written (Mat. 6:2,5,16) of those who do good actions for the sake of human glory, that "they have received their reward." Therefore those works merit some good.

Objection 3. Further, if there be two men both in sin, one of whom does many deeds that are good in themselves and in their circumstances, while the other does none, they are not equally near to the reception of good things from Gods else the latter need not be advised to do any good deeds. Now he that is nearer to God receives more of His good things. Therefore the former, on account of his good works, merits some good from God.

On the contrary, Augustine says that "the sinner is not worthy of the bread he eats." Therefore he cannot merit anything from God.

Further, he that is nothing, can merit nothing. But a sinner, through not having charity, is nothing in respect of spiritual being, according to 1 Cor. 13:2. Therefore he can merit nothing.

I answer that, Properly speaking a merit is an action on account of which it is just that the agent should be given something. Now justice is twofold: first, there is justice properly so called, which regards something due on the part of the recipient. Secondly, there is metaphorical justice, so to speak, which regards something due on the part of the giver, for it may be right

for the giver to give something to which the receiver has no claim. In this sense the "fitness of the Divine goodness" is justice; thus Anselm says (Proslog. x) that "God is just when He spares the sinner, because this is befitting." And in this way merit is also twofold. The first is an act in respect of which the agent himself has a claim to receive something, and this is called merit of "condignity." The second is an act the result of which is that there is a duty of giving in the giver by reason of fittingness, wherefore it is called merit of "congruity." Now since in all gratuitous givings, the primary reason of the giving is love, it is impossible for anyone, properly speaking, to lay claim to a gift, if he lack friendship. Wherefore, as all things, whether temporal or eternal, are bestowed on us by the bounty of God, no one can acquire a claim to any of them, save through charity towards God: so that works done without charity are not condignly meritorious of any good from God either eternal or temporal. But since it is befitting the goodness of God, that wherever He finds a disposition He should grant the perfection, a man is said to merit congruously some good by means of good works done without charity. Accordingly suchlike works avail for a threefold good, acquisition of temporal goods, disposition to grace, habituation to good works. Since, however, this is not merit properly so called, we should grant that such works are not meritorious of any good, rather than that they are.

Reply to Objection 1. As the Philosopher states (Ethic. viii, 14), since no matter what a son may do, he can never give back to his father the equal of what he has received from him a father can never become his son's debtor: and much less can man make God his debtor on account of equivalence of work. Consequently no work of ours can merit a reward by reason of its measure of

goodness, but it can by reason of charity, which makes friends hold their possessions in common. Therefore, no matter how good a work may be, if it be done without charity, it does not give man a claim to receive anything from God. On the other hand, an evil deed deserves an equivalent punishment according to the measure of its malice, because no evil has been done to us

on the part of God, like the good which He has done. Therefore, although an evil deed deserves condign punishment, nevertheless a good deed without charity does not merit condign reward.

Reply obj. 2 and 3: These arguments consider merit of congruity; while the other arguments consider merit of condignity.

Whether the aforesaid works avail for the mitigation of the pains of hell?

Suppl. q. 14 a. 5

Objection 1. It would seem that the aforesaid works do not avail for the mitigation of the pains of hell. For the measure of punishment in hell will answer to the measure of guilt. But works done without charity do not diminish the measure of guilt. Neither, therefore, do they lessen the pains of hell.

Objection 2. Further, the pain of hell, though infinite in duration, is nevertheless finite in intensity. Now anything finite is done away with by finite subtraction. If therefore works done without charity canceled any of the punishment due for sins, those works might be so numerous, that the pain of hell would be done away with altogether: which is false.

Objection 3. Further, the suffrages of the Church are more efficacious than works done without charity. But, according to Augustine (Enchiridion cx), “the suffrages of the Church do not profit the damned in hell.” Much less therefore are those pains mitigated by works done without charity.

On the contrary, Augustine also says (Enchiridion cx): “Whomsoever they profit, either receive a full pardon, or at least find damnation itself more tolerable.”

Further, it is a greater thing to do a good deed than to omit an evil deed. But the omission of an evil deed always avoids a punishment, even in one who lacks charity. Much more, therefore, do good deeds void punishment.

I answer that, Mitigation of the pains of hell can be understood in two ways: first, as though one were delivered from the punishment which he already deserved, and thus, since no one is delivered from punishment un-

less he be absolved from guilt, (for an effect is not diminished or taken away unless its cause be diminished or taken away), the pain of hell cannot be mitigated by works done without charity, since they are unable to remove or diminish guilt. Secondly, so that the demerit of punishment is hindered; and thus the aforesaid works diminish the pain of hell—first because he who does such works escapes being guilty of omitting them—secondly, because such works dispose one somewhat to good, so that a man sins from less contempt, and indeed is drawn away from many sins thereby.

These works do, however merit a diminution or postponement of temporal punishment, as in the case of Achab (3 Kings 21:27, seqq.), as also the acquisition of temporal goods.

Some, however, say that they mitigate the pains of hell, not by subtracting any of their substance, but by strengthening the subject, so that he is more able to bear them. But this is impossible, because there is no strengthening without a diminution of passibility. Now passibility is according to the measure of guilt, wherefore if guilt is not removed, neither can the subject be strengthened.

Some again say that the punishment is mitigated as to the remorse of conscience, though not as to the pain of fire. But neither will this stand, because as the pain of fire is equal to the guilt, so also is the pain of the remorse of conscience: so that what applies to one applies to the other.

This suffices for the Replies to the Objections.