

Objection 1. It would seem that death will not be the term “wherefrom” of the resurrection in all cases. Because some shall not die but shall be clothed with immortality: for it is said in the creed that our Lord “will come to judge the living and the dead.” Now this cannot refer to the time of judgment, because then all will be alive; therefore this distinction must refer to the previous time, and consequently all will not die before the judgment.

Objection 2. Further, a natural and common desire cannot be empty and vain, but is fulfilled in some cases. Now according to the Apostle (2 Cor. 5:4) it is a common desire that “we would not be unclothed but clothed upon.” Therefore there will be some who will never be stripped of the body by death, but will be arrayed in the glory of the resurrection.

Objection 3. Further, Augustine says (Enchiridion cxv) that the four last petitions of the Lord’s prayer refer to the present life: and one of them is: “Forgive us our debts [Douay: ‘trespasses’].” Therefore the Church prays that all debts may be forgiven her in this life. Now the Church’s prayer cannot be void and not granted: “If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you” (Jn. 16:23). Therefore at some time of this life the Church will receive the remission of all debts: and one of the debts to which we are bound by the sin of our first parent is that we be born in original sin. Therefore at some time God will grant to the Church that men be born without original sin. But death is the punishment of original sin. Therefore at the end of the world there will be some men who will not die: and so the same conclusion follows.

Objection 4. Further, the wise man should always choose the shortest way. Now the shortest way is for the men who shall be found living to be transferred to the impassibility of the resurrection, than for them to die first, and afterwards rise again from death to immortality. Therefore God Who is supremely wise will choose this way for those who shall be found living.

On the contrary, It is written (1 Cor. 15:36): “That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die first,” and he is speaking of the resurrection of the body as compared to the seed.

Further, it is written (1 Cor. 15:22): “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” Now all shall be made alive in Christ. Therefore all shall die in Adam: and so all shall rise again from death.

I answer that, The saints differ in speaking on this question, as may be seen in the text (Sent. iv, D, 43). However, the safer and more common opinion is that all shall die and rise again from death: and this for three reasons. First, because it is more in accord with Divine justice, which condemned human nature for the sin of its first parent, that all who by the act of nature derive their origin from him should contract the stain of

original sin, and consequently be the debtors of death. Secondly, because it is more in agreement with Divine Scripture which foretells the resurrection of all; and resurrection is not predicted properly except of that “which has fallen and perished,” as the Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iv). Thirdly, because it is more in harmony with the order of nature where we find that what is corrupted and decayed is not renewed except by means of corruption: thus vinegar does not become wine unless the vinegar be corrupted and pass into the juice of the grape. Wherefore since human nature has incurred the defect of the necessity of death, it cannot return to immortality save by means of death. It is also in keeping with the order of nature for another reason, because, as it is stated in Phys. viii, 1, “the movement of heaven is as a kind of life to all existing in nature,” just as the movement of the heart is a kind of life of the whole body: wherefore even as all the members become dead on the heart ceasing to move, so when the heavenly movement ceases nothing can remain living with that life which was sustained by the influence of that movement. Now such is the life by which we live now: and therefore it follows that those who shall live after the movement of the heaven comes to a standstill must depart from this life.

Reply to Objection 1. This distinction of the dead and the living does not apply to the time itself of the judgment, nor to the whole preceding time, since all who are to be judged were living at some time, and dead at some time: but it applies to that particular time which shall precede the judgment immediately, when, to wit, the signs of the judgment shall begin to appear.

Reply to Objection 2. The perfect desire of the saints cannot be void; but nothing prevents their conditional desire being void. Such is the desire whereby we would not be “unclothed,” but “clothed upon,” namely if that be possible: and this desire is called by some a “velleity.”

Reply to Objection 3. It is erroneous to say that any one except Christ is conceived without original sin, because those who would be conceived without original sin would not need the redemption which was wrought by Christ, and thus Christ would not be the Redeemer of all men*. Nor can it be said that they needed not this redemption, because it was granted to them that they should be conceived without sin. For, this grace was vouchsafed—either to their parents, that the sin of nature might be healed in them (because so long as that sin remained they were unable to beget without communicating original sin)—or to nature itself which was healed. Now we must allow that every one needs the redemption of Christ personally, and not only by reason of nature, and one cannot be delivered from an evil or absolved from a debt unless one incur the debt or incur the evil: and consequently all could not reap in

* See Editor’s note which follows IIIa, q. 26

themselves the fruit of the Lord's prayer, unless all were born debtors and subject to evil. Hence the forgiveness of debts or delivery from evil cannot be applied to one who is born without a debt or free from evil, but only to one who is born with a debt and is afterwards delivered by the grace of Christ. Nor does it follow, if it can be asserted without error that some die not, that they are born without original sin, although death is a punishment of original sin; because God can of His mercy remit the punishment which one has incurred by a past fault, as

He forgave the adulterous woman without punishment (Jn. 8): and in like manner He can deliver from death those who have contracted the debt of death by being born in original sin. And thus it does not follow that if they die not, therefore they were born without original sin.

Reply to Objection 4. The shortest way is not always the one to be chosen, but only when it is more or equally adapted for attaining the end. It is not so here, as is clear from what we have said.