

**Objection 1.** It seems that vengeance should be taken on those who have sinned involuntarily. For the will of one man does not follow from the will of another. Yet one man is punished for another, according to Ex. 20:5, “I am. . . God. . . jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation.” Thus for the sin of Cham, his son Chanaan was curse (Gn. 9:25) and for the sin of Giezi, his descendants were struck with leprosy (4 Kings 5). Again the blood of Christ lays the descendants of the Jews under the ban of punishment, for they said (Mat. 27:25): “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Moreover we read (Josue 7) that the people of Israel were delivered into the hands of their enemies for the sin of Achan, and that the same people were overthrown by the Philistines on account of the sin of the sons of Heli (1 Kings 4). Therefore a person is to be punished without having deserved it voluntarily.

**Objection 2.** Further, nothing is voluntary except what is in a man’s power. But sometimes a man is punished for what is not in his power; thus a man is removed from the administration of the Church on account of being infected with leprosy; and a Church ceases to be an episcopal see on account of the depravity or evil of the people. Therefore vengeance is taken not only for voluntary sins.

**Objection 3.** Further, ignorance makes an act involuntary. Now vengeance is sometimes taken on the ignorant. Thus the children of the people of Sodom, though they were in invincible ignorance, perished with their parents (Gn. 19). Again, for the sin of Dathan and Abiron their children were swallowed up together with them (Num 16). Moreover, dumb animals, which are devoid of reason, were commanded to be slain on account of the sin of the Amalekites (1 Kings 15). Therefore vengeance is sometimes taken on those who have deserved it involuntarily.

**Objection 4.** Further, compulsion is most opposed to voluntariness. But a man does not escape the debt of punishment through being compelled by fear to commit a sin. Therefore vengeance is sometimes taken on those who have deserved it involuntarily.

**Objection 5.** Further Ambrose says on Lk. 5 that “the ship in which Judas was, was in distress”; wherefore “Peter, who was calm in the security of his own merits, was in distress about those of others.” But Peter did not will the sin of Judas. Therefore a person is sometimes punished without having voluntarily deserved it.

**On the contrary,** Punishment is due to sin. But every sin is voluntary according to Augustine (De Lib. Arb. iii; Retract. i). Therefore vengeance should be taken only on those who have deserved it voluntarily.

**I answer that,** Punishment may be considered in two ways. First, under the aspect of punishment, and in this

way punishment is not due save for sin, because by means of punishment the equality of justice is restored, in so far as he who by sinning has exceeded in following his own will suffers something that is contrary to this will. Wherefore, since every sin is voluntary, not excluding original sin, as stated above (Ia IIae, q. 81, a. 1), it follows that no one is punished in this way, except for something done voluntarily. Secondly, punishment may be considered as a medicine, not only healing the past sin, but also preserving from future sin, or conducing to some good, and in this way a person is sometimes punished without any fault of his own, yet not without cause.

It must, however, be observed that a medicine never removes a greater good in order to promote a lesser; thus the medicine of the body never blinds the eye, in order to repair the heel: yet sometimes it is harmful in lesser things that it may be helpful in things of greater consequence. And since spiritual goods are of the greatest consequence, while temporal goods are least important, sometimes a person is punished in his temporal goods without any fault of his own. Such are many of the punishments inflicted by God in this present life for our humiliation or probation. But no one is punished in spiritual goods without any fault on his part, neither in this nor in the future life, because in the latter punishment is not medicinal, but a result of spiritual condemnation.

**Reply to Objection 1.** A man is never condemned to a spiritual punishment for another man’s sin, because spiritual punishment affects the soul, in respect of which each man is master of himself. But sometimes a man is condemned to punishment in temporal matters for the sin of another, and this for three reasons. First, because one man may be the temporal goods of another, and so he may be punished in punishment of the latter: thus children, as to the body, are a belonging of their father, and slaves are a possession of their master. Secondly, when one person’s sin is transmitted to another, either by “imitation,” as children copy the sins of their parents, and slaves the sins of their masters, so as to sin with greater daring; or by way of “merit,” as the sinful subjects merit a sinful superior, according to Job 34:30, “Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people?” Hence the people of Israel were punished for David’s sin in numbering the people (2 Kings 24). This may also happen through some kind of “consent” or “connivance”: thus sometimes even the good are punished in temporal matters together with the wicked, for not having condemned their sins, as Augustine says (De Civ. Dei i, 9). Thirdly, in order to mark the unity of human fellowship, whereby one man is bound to be solicitous for another, lest he sin; and in order to inculcate horror of sin, seeing that the punishment of one affects all, as though all were one body, as August-

tine says in speaking of the sin of Achan (QQ. sup. Josue viii). The saying of the Lord, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," seems to belong to mercy rather than to severity, since He does not take vengeance forthwith, but waits for some future time, in order that the descendants at least may mend their ways; yet should the wickedness of the descendants increase, it becomes almost necessary to take vengeance on them.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As Augustine states (QQ. sup. Josue viii), human judgment should conform to the divine judgment, when this is manifest, and God condemns men spiritually for their own sins. But human judgment cannot be conformed to God's hidden judgments, whereby He punishes certain persons in temporal matters without any fault of theirs, since man is unable to grasp the reasons of these judgments so as to know what is expedient for each individual. Wherefore according to human judgment a man should never be condemned without fault of his own to an inflictive punishment, such as death, mutilation or flogging. But a man may be condemned, even according to human judgment, to a punishment of forfeiture, even without any fault on his part, but not without cause: and this in three ways.

First, through a person becoming, without any fault of his, disqualified for having or acquiring a certain good: thus for being infected with leprosy a man is removed

from the administration of the Church: and for bigamy, or through pronouncing a death sentence a man is hindered from receiving sacred orders.

Secondly, because the particular good that he forfeits is not his own but common property: thus that an episcopal see be attached to a certain church belongs to the good of the whole city, and not only to the good of the clerics.

Thirdly, because the good of one person may depend on the good of another: thus in the crime of high treason a son loses his inheritance through the sin of his parent.

**Reply to Objection 3.** By the judgment of God children are punished in temporal matters together with their parents, both because they are a possession of their parents, so that their parents are punished also in their person, and because this is for their good lest, should they be spared, they might imitate the sins of their parents, and thus deserve to be punished still more severely. Vengeance is wrought on dumb animals and any other irrational creatures, because in this way their owners are punished; and also in horror of sin.

**Reply to Objection 4.** An act done through compulsion of fear is not involuntary simply, but has an admixture of voluntariness, as stated above (Ia IIae, q. 6, Aa. 5,6).

**Reply to Objection 5.** The other apostles were distressed about the sin of Judas, in the same way as the multitude is punished for the sin of one, in commendation of unity, as stated above (Reply obj. 1,2).