

Objection 1. It would seem that the particular punishments of our first parents are unsuitably appointed in Scripture. For that which would have occurred even without sin should not be described as a punishment for sin. Now seemingly there would have been “pain in child-bearing,” even had there been no sin: for the disposition of the female sex is such that offspring cannot be born without pain to the bearer. Likewise the “subjection of woman to man” results from the perfection of the male, and the imperfection of the female sex. Again it belongs to the nature of the earth “to bring forth thorns and thistles,” and this would have occurred even had there been no sin. Therefore these are unsuitable punishments of the first sin.

Objection 2. Further, that which pertains to a person’s dignity does not, seemingly, pertain to his punishment. But the “multiplying of conceptions” pertains to a woman’s dignity. Therefore it should not be described as the woman’s punishment.

Objection 3. Further, the punishment of our first parents’ sin is transmitted to all, as we have stated with regard to death (a. 1). But all “women’s conceptions” are not “multiplied,” nor does “every man eat bread in the sweat of his face.” Therefore these are not suitable punishments of the first sin.

Objection 4. Further, the place of paradise was made for man. Now nothing in the order of things should be without purpose. Therefore it would seem that the exclusion of man from paradise was not a suitable punishment of man.

Objection 5. Further, this place of the earthly paradise is said to be naturally inaccessible. Therefore it was useless to put other obstacles in the way lest man should return thither, to wit the cherubim, and the “flaming sword turning every way.”

Objection 6. Further, immediately after his sin man was subject to the necessity of dying, so that he could not be restored to immortality by the beneficial tree of life. Therefore it was useless to forbid him to eat of the tree of life, as instanced by the words of Gn. 3:22: “See, lest perhaps he . . . take . . . of the tree of life . . . and live for ever.”

Objection 7. Further, to mock the unhappy seems inconsistent with mercy and clemency, which are most of all ascribed to God in Scripture, according to Ps. 144:9, “His tender mercies are over all His works.” Therefore God is unbecomingly described as mocking our first parents, already reduced through sin to unhappy straits, in the words of Gn. 3:22, “Behold Adam is become as one of Us, knowing good and evil.”

Objection 8. Further, clothes are necessary to man, like food, according to 1 Tim. 6:8, “Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content.” Therefore just as food was appointed to our first parents before their sin, so also should clothing have been ascribed to them. Therefore after their sin it was unsuitable to say that God made for them garments of skin.

Objection 9. Further, the punishment inflicted for a sin should outweigh in evil the gain realized through the sin: else the punishment would not deter one from sinning. Now through sin our first parents gained in this, that their eyes were opened, according to Gn. 3:7. But this outweighs in good all the penal evils which are stated to have resulted from sin. Therefore the punishments resulting from our first parents’ sin are unsuitably described.

On the contrary, These punishments were appointed by God, Who does all things, “in number, weight, and measure*” (Wis. 11:21).

I answer that, As stated in the foregoing Article, on account of their sin, our first parents were deprived of the Divine favor, whereby the integrity of human nature was maintained in them, and by the withdrawal of this favor human nature incurred penal defects. Hence they were punished in two ways. In the first place by being deprived of that which was befitting the state of integrity, namely the place of the earthly paradise: and this is indicated (Gn. 3:23) where it is stated that “God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure.” And since he was unable, of himself, to return to that state of original innocence, it was fitting that obstacles should be placed against his recovering those things that were befitting his original state, namely food (lest he should take of the tree of life) and place; for “God placed before . . . paradise . . . Cherubim, and a flaming sword.” Secondly, they were punished by having appointed to them things befitting a nature bereft of the aforesaid favor: and this as regards both the body and the soul. With regard to the body, to which pertains the distinction of sex, one punishment was appointed to the woman and another to the man. To the woman punishment was appointed in respect of two things on account of which she is united to the man; and these are the begetting of children, and community of works pertaining to family life. As regards the begetting of children, she was punished in two ways: first in the weariness to which she is subject while carrying the child after conception, and this is indicated in the words (Gn. 3:16), “I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions”; secondly, in the pain which she suffers in giving birth, and this is indicated by the words (Gn. 3:16), “In sorrow shalt thou bring forth.”

* Vulg.: ‘Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight.’

As regards family life she was punished by being subjected to her husband's authority, and this is conveyed in the words (Gn. 3:16), "Thou shalt be under thy husband's power."

Now, just as it belongs to the woman to be subject to her husband in matters relating to the family life, so it belongs to the husband to provide the necessaries of that life. In this respect he was punished in three ways. First, by the barrenness of the earth, in the words (Gn. 3:17), "Cursed is the earth in thy work." Secondly, by the cares of his toil, without which he does not win the fruits of the earth; hence the words (Gn. 3:17), "With labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life." Thirdly, by the obstacles encountered by the tillers of the soil, wherefore it is written (Gn. 3:18), "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."

Likewise a triple punishment is ascribed to them on the part of the soul. First, by reason of the confusion they experienced at the rebellion of the flesh against the spirit; hence it is written (Gn. 3:7): "The eyes of them both were opened; and . . . they perceived themselves to be naked." Secondly, by the reproach for their sin, indicated by the words (Gn. 3:22), "Behold Adam is become as one of Us." Thirdly, by the reminder of their coming death, when it was said to him (Gn. 3:19): "Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return." To this also pertains that God made them garments of skin, as a sign of their mortality.

Reply to Objection 1. In the state of innocence child-bearing would have been painless: for Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xiv, 26): "Just as, in giving birth, the mother would then be relieved not by groans of pain, but by the instigations of maturity, so in bearing and conceiving the union of both sexes would be one not of lustful desire but of deliberate action"*.

The subjection of the woman to her husband is to be understood as inflicted in punishment of the woman, not as to his headship (since even before sin the man was the "head" and governor "of the woman"), but as to her having now to obey her husband's will even against her own.

If man had not sinned, the earth would have brought forth thorns and thistles to be the food of animals, but not to punish man, because their growth would bring no labor or punishment for the tiller of the soil, as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. iii, 18). Alcuin[†], however, holds that, before sin, the earth brought forth no thorns and thistles, whatever: but the former opinion is the better.

Reply to Objection 2. The multiplying of her conceptions was appointed as a punishment to the woman, not on account of the begetting of children, for this would have been the same even before sin, but on account of the numerous sufferings to which the woman is subject, through carrying her offspring after conception. Hence it

is expressly stated: "I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions."

Reply to Objection 3. These punishments affect all somewhat. For any woman who conceives must needs suffer sorrows and bring forth her child with pain: except the Blessed Virgin, who "conceived without corruption, and bore without pain"[‡], because her conceiving was not according to the law of nature, transmitted from our first parents. And if a woman neither conceives nor bears, she suffers from the defect of barrenness, which outweighs the aforesaid punishments. Likewise whoever tills the soil must needs eat his bread in the sweat of his brow: while those who do not themselves work on the land, are busied with other labors, for "man is born to labor" (Job 5:7): and thus they eat the bread for which others have labored in the sweat of their brow.

Reply to Objection 4. Although the place of the earthly paradise avails not man for his use, it avails him for a lesson; because he knows himself deprived of that place on account of sin, and because by the things that have a bodily existence in that paradise, he is instructed in things pertaining to the heavenly paradise, the way to which is prepared for man by Christ.

Reply to Objection 5. Apart from the mysteries of the spiritual interpretation, this place would seem to be inaccessible, chiefly on account of the extreme heat in the middle zone by reason of the nighness of the sun. This is denoted by the "flaming sword," which is described as "turning every way," as being appropriate to the circular movement that causes this heat. And since the movements of corporal creatures are set in order through the ministry of the angels, according to Augustine (De Trin. iii, 4), it was fitting that, besides the sword turning every way, there should be cherubim "to keep the way of the tree of life." Hence Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xi, 40): "It is to be believed that even in the visible paradise this was done by heavenly powers indeed, so that there was a fiery guard set there by the ministry of angels."

Reply to Objection 6. After sin, if man had ate of the tree of life, he would not thereby have recovered immortality, but by means of that beneficial food he might have prolonged his life. Hence in the words "And live for ever," "for ever" signifies "for a long time." For it was not expedient for man to remain longer in the unhappiness of this life.

Reply to Objection 7. According to Augustine (Gen. ad lit. xi, 39), "these words of God are not so much a mockery of our first parents as a deterrent to others, for whose benefit these things are written, lest they be proud likewise, because Adam not only failed to become that which he coveted to be, but did not keep that to which he was made."

* Cf. Ia, q. 98, a. 2 † Interrog. et Resp. in Gen. lxxix ‡ St. Bernard, Serm. in Dom. inf. oct. Assum. B. V. M.

Reply to Objection 8. Clothing is necessary to man in his present state of unhappiness for two reasons. First, to supply a deficiency in respect of external harm caused by, for instance, extreme heat or cold. Secondly, to hide his ignominy and to cover the shame of those members wherein the rebellion of the flesh against the spirit is most manifest. Now these two motives do not apply to the primitive state. because then man's body could not be hurt by any outward thing, as stated in the Ia, q. 97, a. 2, nor was there in man's body anything shameful that would bring confusion on him. Hence it is written (Gn. 2:23): "And they were both naked, to wit Adam and his wife,

and were not ashamed." The same cannot be said of food, which is necessary to entertain the natural heat, and to sustain the body.

Reply to Objection 9. As Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xi, 31), "We must not imagine that our first parents were created with their eyes closed, especially since it is stated that the woman saw that the tree was fair, and good to eat. Accordingly the eyes of both were opened so that they saw and thought on things which had not occurred to their minds before, this was a mutual concupiscence such as they had not hitherto."