

SUPPLEMENT TO THE THIRD PART, QUESTION 71

Of the Suffrages for the Dead (In Fourteen Articles)

We must now consider the suffrages for the dead. Under this head there are fourteen points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether suffrages performed by one person can profit others?
- (2) Whether the dead can be assisted by the works of the living?
- (3) Whether the suffrages of sinners profit the dead?
- (4) Whether suffrages for the dead profit those who perform them?
- (5) Whether suffrages profit those who are in hell?
- (6) Whether they profit those who are in purgatory?
- (7) Whether they avail the children in limbo?
- (8) Whether in any way they profit those who are heaven?
- (9) Whether the prayer of the Church, the Sacrament of the altar, and almsgiving profit the departed?
- (10) Whether indulgences granted by the Church profit them?
- (11) Whether the burial service profits the departed?
- (12) Whether suffrages for one dead person profit that person more than others?
- (13) Whether suffrages for many avail each one as much as if they were offered for each individual?
- (14) Whether general suffrages avail those for whom special suffrages are not offered, as much as special and general suffrages together avail those for whom they are offered?

Whether the suffrages of one person can profit others?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 1

Objection 1. It would seem that the suffrages of one person cannot profit others. For it is written (Gal. 6:8): “What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.” Now if one person reaped fruit from the suffrages of another, he would reap from another’s sowing. Therefore a person receives no fruit from the suffrages of others.

Objection 2. Further, it belongs to God’s justice, that each one should receive according to his merits, wherefore the psalm (Ps. 61:13) says: “Thou wilt render to every man according to his works.” Now it is impossible for God’s justice to fail. Therefore it is impossible for one man to be assisted by the works of another.

Objection 3. Further, a work is meritorious on the same count as it is praiseworthy, namely inasmuch as it is voluntary. Now one man is not praised for the work of another. Therefore neither can the work of one man be meritorious and fruitful for another.

Objection 4. Further, it belongs to Divine justice to repay good for good in the same way as evil for evil. But no man is punished for the evildoings of another; indeed, according to Ezech. 18:4, “the soul that sinneth, the same shall die.” Therefore neither does one person profit by another’s good.

On the contrary, It is written (Ps. 118:63): “I am a partaker with all them that fear Thee,” etc.

Further, all the faithful united together by charity are members of the one body of the Church. Now one member is assisted by another. Therefore one man can be as-

sisted by the merits of another.

I answer that, our actions can avail for two purposes. First, for acquiring a certain state; thus by a meritorious work a man obtains the state of bliss. Secondly, for something consequent upon a state; thus by some work a man merits an accidental reward, or a rebate of punishment. And for both these purposes our actions may avail in two ways: first, by way of merit; secondly, by way of prayer: the difference being that merit relies on justice, and prayer on mercy; since he who prays obtains his petition from the mere liberality of the one he prays. Accordingly we must say that the work of one person nowise can avail another for acquiring a state by way of merit, so that, to wit, a man be able to merit eternal life by the works which I do, because the share of glory is awarded according to the measure of the recipient, and each one is disposed by his own and not by another’s actions—disposed, that is to say, by being worthy of reward. By way of prayer, however, the work of one may profit another while he is a wayfarer, even for acquiring a state; for instance, one man may obtain the first grace for another*: and since the impetration of prayer depends on the liberality of God Whom we pray, it may extend to whatever is ordinately subject to the Divine power. On the other hand, as regards that which is consequent upon or accessory to a state, the work of one may avail another, not only by way of prayer but even by way of merit: and this happens in two ways. First, on account of their communion in the root of the work,

* Cf. Ia IIae, q. 114, a. 6

which root is charity in meritorious works. Wherefore all who are united together by charity acquire some benefit from one another's works, albeit according to the measure of each one's state, since even in heaven each one will rejoice in the goods of others. Hence it is that the communion of saints is laid down as an article of faith. Secondly, through the intention of the doer who does certain works specially for the purpose that they may profit such persons: so that those works become somewhat the works of those for whom they are done, as though they were bestowed on them by the doer. Wherefore they can avail them either for the fulfillment of satisfaction or for some similar purpose that does not change their state.

Reply to Objection 1. This reaping is the receiving of eternal life, as stated in Jn. 4:36, "And he that reapeth...gathereth fruit unto life everlasting." Now a share of eternal life is not given to a man save for his own works, for although we may impetrate for another that he obtain life, this never happens except by means of his own works, when namely, at the prayers of one, another is given the grace whereby he merits eternal life.

Reply to Objection 2. The work that is done for another becomes his for whom it is done: and in like manner the work done by a man who is one with me is somewhat mine. Hence it is not contrary to Divine justice if a man

receives the fruit of the works done by a man who is one with him in charity, or of works done for him. This also happens according to human justice, so that the satisfaction offered by one is accepted in lieu of another's.

Reply to Objection 3. Praise is not given to a person save according to his relation to an act, wherefore praise is "in relation to something" (Ethic. i, 12). And since no man is made or shown to be well- or ill-disposed to something by another's deed, it follows that no man is praised for another's deeds save accidentally in so far as he is somewhat the cause of those deeds, by giving counsel, assistance, inducement, or by any other means. on the other hand, a work is meritorious to a person, not only by reason of his disposition, but also in view of something consequent upon his disposition or state, as evidenced by what has been said.

Reply to Objection 4. It is directly contrary to justice to take away from a person that which is his due: but to give a person what is not his due is not contrary to justice, but surpasses the bounds of justice, for it is liberality. Now a person cannot be hurt by the ills of another, unless he be deprived of something of his own. Consequently it is not becoming that one should be punished for another's sins, as it is that one should acquire some advantage from deeds of another.

Whether the dead can be assisted by the works of the living?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 2

Objection 1. It would seem that the dead cannot be assisted by the works of the living. First, because the Apostle says (2 Cor. 5:10): "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done." Therefore nothing can accrue to a man from the works of others, which are done after his death and when he is no longer in the body.

Objection 2. Further, this also seems to follow from the words of Apoc. 14:13, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... for their works follow them."

Objection 3. Further, it belongs only to one who is on the way to advance on account of some deed. Now after death men are no longer wayfarers, because to them the words of Job 19:8, refer: "He hath hedged in my path round about, and I cannot pass." Therefore the dead cannot be assisted by a person's suffrages.

Objection 4. Further, no one is assisted by the deed of another, unless there be some community of life between them. Now there is no community between the dead and the living, as the Philosopher says (Ethic. i, 11). Therefore the suffrages of the living do not profit the dead.

On the contrary are the words of 2 Macc. 12:46: "It is... a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead

that they may be loosed from sins." But this would not be profitable unless it were a help to them. Therefore the suffrages of the living profit the dead.

Further, Augustine says (De Cure pro Mort. i): "Of no small weight is the authority of the Church whereby she clearly approves of the custom whereby a commendation of the dead has a place in the prayers which the priests pour forth to the Lord God at His altar." This custom was established by the apostles themselves according to the Damascene in a sermon on suffrages for the dead*, where he expresses himself thus: "Realizing the nature of the Mysteries the disciples of the Saviour and His holy apostles sanctioned a commemoration of those who had died in the faith, being made in the awe-inspiring and life-giving Mysteries." This is also confirmed by the authority of Dionysius (Hier. Eccl.), where he mentions the rite of the Early Church in praying for the dead, and, moreover, asserts that the suffrages of the living profit the dead. Therefore we must believe this without any doubt.

I answer that, Charity, which is the bond uniting the members of the Church, extends not only to the living, but also to the dead who die in charity. For charity which is the life of the soul, even as the soul is the life of the body, has no end: "Charity never falleth away" (1 Cor.

* De his qui in fide dormierunt, 3

13:8). Moreover, the dead live in the memory of the living: wherefore the intention of the living can be directed to them. Hence the suffrages of the living profit the dead in two ways even as they profit the living, both on account of the bond of charity and on account of the intention being directed to them. Nevertheless, we must not believe that the suffrages of the living profit them so as to change their state from unhappiness to happiness or “vice versa”; but they avail for the diminution of punishment or something of the kind that involves no change in the state of the dead.

Reply to Objection 1. Man while living in the body merited that such things should avail him after death. Wherefore if he is assisted thereby after this life, this is, nevertheless, the result of the things he has done in the body.

Or we may reply, according to John Damascene, in the sermon quoted above, that these words refer to the retribution which will be made at the final judgment, of eternal glory or eternal unhappiness: for then each one will receive only according as he himself has done in the body. Meanwhile, however, he can be assisted by the suffrages of the living.

Reply to Objection 2. The words quoted refer expressly to the sequel of eternal retribution as is clear from the opening words: “Blessed are the dead,” etc. Or we may reply that deeds done on their behalf are somewhat their own, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 3. Although, strictly speaking, after death souls are not in the state of the way, yet in a certain respect they are still on the way, in so far as they are delayed awhile in their advance towards their final award. Wherefore, strictly speaking, their way is hedged in round about, so that they can no more be changed by any works in respect of the state of happiness or unhappiness. Yet their way is not so hedged around that they cannot be helped by others in the matter of their being delayed from receiving their final award, because in this respect they are still wayfarers.

Reply to Objection 4. Although the communion of civic deeds whereof the Philosopher speaks, is impossible between the dead and the living, because the dead are outside civic life, the communication of the spiritual life is possible between them, for that life is founded on charity towards God, to Whom the spirits of the dead live.

Whether suffrages performed by sinners profit the dead?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 3

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages performed by sinners do not profit the dead. For, according to Jn. 9:31, “God doth not hear sinners.” Now if their prayers were to profit those for whom they pray, they would be heard by God. Therefore the suffrages performed by them do not profit the dead.

Objection 2. Further, Gregory says (Pastoral i, 11) that “when an offensive person is sent to intercede, the wrath of the angered party is provoked to harsher measures.” Now every sinner is offensive to God. Therefore God is not inclined to mercy by the suffrages of sinners, and consequently their suffrages are of no avail.

Objection 3. Further, a person’s deed would seem to be more fruitful to the doer than to another. But a sinner merits naught for himself by his deeds. Much less, therefore, can he merit for another.

Objection 4. Further, every meritorious work must be a living work, that is to say, informed by charity. Now works done by sinners are dead. Therefore the dead for whom they are done cannot be assisted thereby.

Objection 5. On the contrary, No man can know for certain about another man whether the latter be in a state of sin or of grace. If, therefore, only those suffrages were profitable that are done by those who are in a state of grace, a man could not know of whom to ask suffrages for his dead, and consequently many would be deterred from obtaining suffrages.

Objection 6. Further, according to Augustine (Enchiridion cix), as quoted in the text (Sent. iv, D, 45), the dead are assisted by suffrages according as while living they merited to be assisted after death. Therefore the worth of suffrages is measured according to the disposition of the person for whom they are performed. Therefore it would appear that it differs not whether they be performed by good or by wicked persons.

I answer that, Two things may be considered in the suffrages performed by the wicked. First, the deed done, for instance the sacrifice of the altar. And since our sacraments have their efficacy from themselves independently of the deed of the doer, and are equally efficacious by whomsoever they are performed, in this respect the suffrages of the wicked profit the departed. Secondly, we may consider the deed of the doer, and then we must draw a distinction; because the deed of a sinner who offers suffrage may be considered—in one way in so far as it is his own deed, and thus it can nowise be meritorious either to himself or to another; in another way in so far as it is another’s deed, and this happens in two ways. First, when the sinner, offering suffrages, represents the whole Church; for instance a priest when he performs the burial service in church. And since one in whose name or in whose stead a thing is done is understood to do it himself as Dionysius asserts (Coel. Hier. xiii), it follows that the suffrages of that priest, albeit a sinner, profit the departed.

Secondly, when he acts as the instrument of another: for the work of the instrument belongs more to the principal agent. Wherefore, although he who acts as the instrument of another be not in a state of merit, his act may be meritorious on account of the principal agent: for instance if a servant being in sin do any work of mercy at the command of his master who has charity. Hence, if a person dying in charity command suffrages to be offered for him, or if some other person having charity prescribe them, those suffrages avail for the departed, even though the persons by whom they are performed be in sin. Nevertheless they would avail more if those persons were in charity, because then those works would be meritorious on two counts.

Reply to Objection 1. The prayer offered by a sinner is sometimes not his but another's, and consequently in this respect is worthy to be heard by God. Nevertheless, God sometimes hears sinners, when, to wit, they ask for something acceptable to God. For God dispenses His goods not only to the righteous but also to sinners (Mat. 5:45), not indeed on account of their merits, but of His loving kindness. Hence a gloss on Jn. 9:31, "God doth not hear sinners," says that "he speaks as one unanointed and as not seeing clearly."

Reply to Objection 2. Although the sinner's prayer is not acceptable in so far as he is offensive, it may be acceptable to God on account of another in whose stead or at whose command he offers the prayer.

Reply to Objection 3. The reason why the sinner who performs these suffrages gains nothing thereby is because he is not capable of profiting by reason of his own indisposition. Nevertheless, as stated above, it may in some way profit another, who is disposed.

Reply to Objection 4. Although the sinner's deed is not living in so far as it is his own, it may be living in so far as it is another's, as stated above.

Since, however, the arguments in the contrary sense would seem to show that it matters not whether one obtain suffrages from good or from evil persons, we must reply to them also.

Reply to Objection 5. Although one cannot know for certain about another whether he be in the state of salvation, one may infer it with probability from what one sees outwardly of a man: for a tree is known by its fruit (Mat. 7:16).

Reply to Objection 6. In order that suffrage avail another, it is requisite that the one for whom it is performed be capable of availing by it: and a man has become capable of this by his own works which he did in his lifetime. This is what Augustine means to say. Nevertheless, those works must be such that they can profit him, and this depends not on the person for whom the suffrage is performed, but rather on the one who offers the suffrages whether by performing them or by commanding them.

Whether suffrages offered by the living for the dead profit those who offer them?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 4

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages offered by the living for the dead do not profit those who offer them. For according to human justice a man is not absolved from his own debt if he pay a debt for another man. Therefore a man is not absolved from his own debt for the reason that by offering suffrages he has paid the debt of the one for whom he offered them.

Objection 2. Further, whatever a man does, he should do it as best he can. Now it is better to assist two than one. Therefore if one who by suffrages has paid the debt of a dead person is freed from his own debt, it would seem that one ought never to satisfy for oneself, but always for another.

Objection 3. Further, if the satisfaction of one who satisfies for another profits him equally with the one for whom he satisfies, it will likewise equally profit a third person if he satisfy for him at the same time, and likewise a fourth and so on. Therefore he might satisfy for all by one work of satisfaction; which is absurd.

On the contrary, It is written (Ps. 34:13): "My prayer shall be turned into my bosom." Therefore, in like manner, suffrages that are offered for others profit those who satisfy.

Further, the Damascene says in the sermon "On those who fell asleep in the faith: Just as when about to anoint a sick man with the ointment or other holy oil, first of all he, " namely the anointer, "shares in the anointing and thus proceeds to anoint the patient, so whoever strives for his neighbor's salvation first of all profits himself and afterwards his neighbor." And thus the question at issue is answered.

I answer that, The work of suffrage that is done for another may be considered in two ways. First, as expiating punishment by way of compensation which is a condition of satisfaction: and in this way the work of suffrage that is counted as belonging to the person for whom it is done, while absolving him from the debt of punishment, does not absolve the performer from his own debt of punishment, because in this compensation we have to consider the equality of justice: and this work of satisfaction can be equal to the one debt without being equal to the other, for the debts of two sinners require a greater satisfaction than the debt of one. Secondly, it may be considered as meriting eternal life, and this it has as proceeding from its root, which is charity: and in this way it profits not only the person for whom it is done, but also and still

more the doer.

This suffices for the Replies to the Objections: for the

first considered the work of suffrage as a work of satisfaction, while the others consider it as meritorious.

Whether suffrages profit those who are in hell?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 5

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages profit those who are in hell. For it is written (2 Macc. 12:40): “They found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols. . . which the law forbiddeth to the Jews,” and yet we read further on (2 Macc. 12:43) that Judas “sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem. . . to be offered for the sins of the dead.” Now it is clear that they sinned mortally through acting against the Law, and consequently that they died in mortal sin, and were taken to hell. Therefore suffrages profit those who are in hell.

Objection 2. Further, the text (Sent. iv, D, 45) quotes the saying of Augustine (Enchiridion cx) that “those whom suffrages profit gain either entire forgiveness, or at least an abatement of their damnation.” Now only those who are in hell are said to be damned. Therefore suffrages profit even those who are in hell.

Objection 3. Further, Dionysius says (Eccl. Hier.): “If here the prayers of the righteous avail those who are alive, how much more do they, after death, profit those alone who are worthy of their holy prayers?” Hence we may gather that suffrages are more profitable to the dead than to the living. Now they profit the living even though they be in mortal sin, for the Church prays daily for sinners that they be converted to God. Therefore suffrages avail also for the dead who are in mortal sin.

Objection 4. Further, in the Lives of the Fathers (iii, 172; vi, 3) we read, and the Damascene relates in his sermon* that Macarius discovered the skull of a dead man on the road, and that after praying he asked whose head it was, and the head replied that it had belonged to a pagan priest who was condemned to hell; and yet he confessed that he and others were assisted by the prayers of Macarius. Therefore the suffrages of the Church profit even those who are in hell.

Objection 5. Further, the Damascene in the same sermon relates that Gregory, while praying for Trajan, heard a voice from heaven saying to him: “I have heard thy voice, and I pardon Trajan”: and of this fact the Damascene adds in the same sermon, “the whole East and West are witnesses.” Yet it is clear that Trajan was in hell, since “he put many martyrs to a cruel death”†. Therefore the suffrages of the Church avail even for those who are in hell.

On the contrary, Dionysius says (Eccl. Hier. vii): “The high priest prays not for the unclean, because by so doing he would act counter to the Divine order,” and con-

sequently he says (Eccl. Hier. vii) that “he prays not that sinners be forgiven, because his prayer for them would not be heard.” Therefore suffrages avail not those who are in hell.

Further, Gregory says (Moral. xxxiv, 19): “There is the same reason for not praying then” (namely after the judgment day) “for men condemned to the everlasting fire, as there is now for not praying for the devil and his angels who are sentenced to eternal punishment, and for this reason the saints pray not for dead unbelieving and wicked men, because, forsooth, knowing them to be already condemned to eternal punishment, they shrink from pleading for them by the merit of their prayers before they are summoned to the presence of the just Judge.”

Further, the text (Sent. iv, D, 45) quotes the words of Augustine (De Verb. A post. Serm. xxxii): “If a man depart this life without the faith that worketh by charity and its sacraments, in vain do his friends have recourse to such like acts of kindness.” Now all the damned come under that head. Therefore suffrages profit them not.

I answer that, There have been three opinions about the damned. For some have said that a twofold distinction must be made in this matter. First, as to time; for they said that after the judgment day no one in hell will be assisted by any suffrage, but that before the judgment day some are assisted by the suffrages of the Church. Secondly, they made a distinction among those who are detained in hell. Some of these, they said, are very bad, those namely who have died without faith and the sacraments, and these, since they were not of the Church, neither “by grace nor, by name”‡ can the suffrages of the Church avail; while others are not very bad, those namely who belonged to the Church as actual members, who had the faith, frequented the sacraments and performed works generically good, and for these the suffrages of the Church ought to avail. Yet they were confronted with a difficulty which troubled them, for it would seem to follow from this (since the punishment of hell is finite in intensity although infinite in duration) that a multiplicity of suffrages would take away that punishment altogether, which is the error of Origen (Peri Archon. i; cf. Gregory, Moral. xxxiv): and consequently endeavored in various ways to avoid this difficulty.

Praepositivus§ said that suffrages for the damned can be so multiplied that they are entirely freed from punishment, not absolutely as Origen maintained, but for a time,

* De his qui in fide dormierunt † De his qui fide dormierunt ‡ Cf. Oratio ad Vesperas, Fer. ii, post Dom. Pass. § Gilbert Prevostin, Chancellor of the See of Paris, A.D. 1205-9

namely till the judgment day: for their souls will be reunited to their bodies, and will be cast back into the punishments of hell without hope of pardon. But this opinion seems incompatible with Divine providence, which leaves nothing inordinate in the world. For guilt cannot be restored to order save by punishment: wherefore it is impossible for punishment to cease, unless first of all guilt be expiated: so that, as guilt remains for ever in the damned, their punishment will nowise be interrupted.

For this reason the followers of Gilbert de la Porree devised another explanation. These said that the process in the diminution of punishments by suffrages is as the process in dividing a line, which though finite, is indefinitely divisible, and is never destroyed by division, if it be diminished not by equal but by proportionate quantities, for instance if we begin by taking away a quarter of the whole, and secondly, a quarter of that quarter, and then a quarter of this second quarter, and so on indefinitely. In like manner, they say by the first suffrage a certain proportion of the punishment is taken away, and by the second an equally proportionate part of the remainder. But this explanation is in many ways defective. First, because it seems that indefinite division which is applicable to continuous quantity cannot be transferred to spiritual quantity: secondly, because there is no reason why the second suffrage, if it be of equal worth, should diminish the punishment less than the first: thirdly, because punishment cannot be diminished unless guilt be diminished, even as it cannot be done away unless the guilt be done away: fourthly, because in the division of a line we come at length to something which is not sensible, for a sensible body is not indefinitely divisible: and thus it would follow that after many suffrages the remaining punishment would be so little as not to be felt, and thus would no longer be a punishment.

Hence others found another explanation. For Antisiodorensis* (Sent. iv, Tract. 14) said that suffrages profit the damned not by diminishing or interrupting their punishment, but by fortifying the person punished: even as a man who is carrying a heavy load might bathe his face in water, for thus he would be enabled to carry it better, and yet his load would be none the lighter. But this again is impossible, because according to Gregory (Moral. ix) a man suffers more or less from the eternal fire according as his guilt deserves; and consequently some suffer more, some less, from the same fire. wherefore since the guilt of the damned remains unchanged, it cannot be that he suffers less punishment. Moreover, the aforesaid opinion is presumptuous, as being in opposition to the statements of holy men, and groundless as being based on no authority. It is also unreasonable. First, because the damned in hell are cut off from the bond of charity in virtue of which the departed are in touch with the works of the liv-

ing. Secondly, because they have entirely come to the end of life, and have received the final award for their merits, even as the saints who are in heaven. For the remaining punishment or glory of the body does not make them to be wayfarers, since glory essentially and radically resides in the soul. It is the same with the unhappiness of the damned, wherefore their punishment cannot be diminished as neither can the glory of the saints be increased as to the essential reward.

However, we may admit, in a certain measure, the manner in which, according to some, suffrages profit the damned, if it be said that they profit neither by diminishing nor interrupting their punishment, nor again by diminishing their sense of punishment, but by withdrawing from the damned some matter of grief, which matter they might have if they knew themselves to be so outcast as to be a care to no one; and this matter of grief is withdrawn from them when suffrages are offered for them. Yet even this is impossible according to the general law, because as Augustine says (De Cura pro Mort. xiii)—and this applies especially to the damned—“the spirits of the departed are where they see nothing of what men do or of what happens to them in this life,” and consequently they know not when suffrages are offered for them, unless this relief be granted from above to some of the damned in spite of the general law. This, however, is a matter of great uncertainty; wherefore it is safer to say simply that suffrages profit not the damned, nor does the Church intend to pray for them, as appears from the authors quoted above.

Reply to Objection 1. The donaries to the idols were not found on those dead so that they might be taken as a sign that they were carried off in reverence to the idols: but they took them as conquerors because they were due to them by right of war. They sinned, however, venially by covetousness: and consequently they were not damned in hell, and thus suffrages could profit them. or we may say, according to some, that in the midst of fighting, seeing they were in danger, they repented of their sin, according to Ps. 77:34, “When He slew them, then they sought Him”: and this is a probable opinion. Wherefore the offering was made for them.

Reply to Objection 2. In these words damnation is taken in a broad sense for any kind of punishment, so as to include also the punishment of purgatory which is sometimes entirely expiated by suffrages, and sometimes not entirely, but diminished.

Reply to Objection 3. Suffrage for a dead person is more acceptable than for a living person, as regards his being in greater want, since he cannot help himself as a living person can. But a living person is better off in that he can be taken from the state of mortal sin to the state of grace, which cannot be said of the dead. Hence there is not the same reason for praying for the dead as for the

* William of Auxerre, Archdeacon of Beauvais

living.

Reply to Objection 4. This assistance did not consist in a diminishment of their punishment, but in this alone (as stated in the same place) that when he prayed they were permitted to see one another, and in this they had a certain joy, not real but imaginary, in the fulfillment of their desire. Even so the demons are said to rejoice when they draw men into sin, although this nowise diminishes their punishment, as neither is the joy of the angels diminished by the fact that they take pity on our ills.

Reply to Objection 5. Concerning the incident of Trajan it may be supposed with probability that he was recalled to life at the prayers of blessed Gregory, and thus obtained the grace whereby he received the pardon of his sins and in consequence was freed from punishment. The same applies to all those who were miraculously raised from the dead, many of whom were evidently idolaters

and damned. For we must needs say likewise of all such persons that they were consigned to hell, not finally, but as was actually due to their own merits according to justice: and that according to higher causes, in view of which it was foreseen that they would be recalled to life, they were to be disposed of otherwise.

Or we may say with some that Trajan's soul was not simply freed from the debt of eternal punishment, but that his punishment was suspended for a time, that is, until the judgment day. Nor does it follow that this is the general result of suffrages, because things happen differently in accordance with the general law from that which is permitted in particular cases and by privilege. Even so the bounds of human affairs differ from those of the miracles of the Divine power as Augustine says (*De Cura pro Mort.* xvi).

Whether suffrages profit those who are in purgatory?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 6

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages do not profit even those who are in purgatory. For purgatory is a part of hell. Now "there is no redemption in hell"* and it is written (Ps. 6:6), "Who shall confess to Thee in hell?" Therefore suffrages do not profit those who are in purgatory.

Objection 2. Further, the punishment of purgatory is finite. Therefore if some of the punishment is abated by suffrages, it would be possible to have such a great number of suffrages, that the punishment would be entirely remitted, and consequently the sin entirely unpunished: and this would seem incompatible with Divine justice.

Objection 3. Further, souls are in purgatory in order that they may be purified there, and being pure may come to the kingdom. Now nothing can be purified, unless something be done to it. Therefore suffrages offered by the living do not diminish the punishment of purgatory.

Objection 4. Further, if suffrages availed those who are in purgatory, those especially would seem to avail them which are offered at their behest. Yet these do not always avail: for instance, if a person before dying were to provide for so many suffrages to be offered for him that if they were offered they would suffice for the remission of his entire punishment. Now supposing these suffrages to be delayed until he is released from punishment, they will profit him nothing. For it cannot be said that they profit him before they are discharged; and after they are fulfilled, he no longer needs them, since he is already released. Therefore suffrages do not avail those who are in purgatory.

On the contrary, As quoted in the text (*Sent.* iv, D, 45), Augustine says (*Enchiridion* cx): "Suffrages profit

those who are not very good or not very bad." Now such are those who are detained in purgatory. Therefore, etc.

Further, Dionysius says (*Eccl. Hier.* vii) that the "god-like priest in praying for the departed prays for those who lived a holy life, and yet contracted certain stains through human frailty." Now such persons are detained in purgatory. Therefore, etc.

I answer that, The punishment of purgatory is intended to supplement the satisfaction which was not fully completed in the body. Consequently, since, as stated above (*Aa.* 1,2; q. 13, a. 2), the works of one person can avail for another's satisfaction, whether the latter be living or dead, the suffrages of the living, without any doubt, profit those who are in purgatory.

Reply to Objection 1. The words quoted refer to those who are in the hell of the damned, where there is no redemption for those who are finally consigned to that punishment. We may also reply with Damascene (*Serm.*: *De his qui in fide dormierunt*) that such statements are to be explained with reference to the lower causes, that is according to the demands of the merits of those who are consigned to those punishments. But according to the Divine mercy which transcends human merits, it happens otherwise through the prayers of the righteous, than is implied by the expressions quoted in the aforesaid authorities. Now "God changes His sentence but not his counsel," as Gregory says (*Moral.* xx): wherefore the Damascene (*Serm.*: *De his qui in fide dormierunt*) quotes as instances of this the Ninevites, Achab and Ezechias, in whom it is apparent that the sentence pronounced against them by God was commuted by the Divine mercy†.

Reply to Objection 2. It is not unreasonable that the

* Office of the Dead, *Resp.* vii † Cf. *Ia.* q. 19, a. 7, ad 2

punishment of those who are in purgatory be entirely done away by the multiplicity of suffrages. But it does not follow that the sins remain unpunished, because the punishment of one undertaken in lieu of another is credited to that other.

Reply to Objection 3. The purifying of the soul by the punishment of purgatory is nothing else than the expiation of the guilt that hinders it from obtaining glory. And since, as stated above (q. 13, a. 2), the guilt of one person can be expiated by the punishment which another undergoes in his stead, it is not unreasonable that one person be purified by another satisfying for him.

Reply to Objection 4. Suffrages avail on two counts, namely the action of the agent* and the action done. By action done I mean not only the sacrament of the Church, but the effect incidental to that action—thus from the giving of alms there follow the relief of the poor and their prayer to God for the deceased. In like manner the ac-

tion of the agent may be considered in relation either to the principal agent or to the executor. I say, then, that the dying person, as soon as he provides for certain suffrages to be offered for him, receives the full meed of those suffrages, even before they are discharged, as regards the efficacy of the suffrages that results from the action as proceeding from the principal agent. But as regards the efficacy of the suffrages arising from the action done or from the action as proceeding from the executor, he does not receive the fruit before the suffrages are discharged. And if, before this, he happens to be released from his punishment, he will in this respect be deprived of the fruit of the suffrages, and this will fall back upon those by whose fault he was then defrauded. For it is not unreasonable that a person be defrauded in temporal matters by another's fault—and the punishment of purgatory is temporal—although as regards the eternal retribution none can be defrauded save by his own fault.

Whether suffrages avail the children who are in limbo?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 7

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages avail the children who are in limbo. For they are not detained there except for another's sin. Therefore it is most becoming that they should be assisted by the suffrages of others.

Objection 2. Further, in the text (Sent. iv, D, 45) the words of Augustine (Enchiridion cx) are quoted: "The suffrages of the Church obtain forgiveness for those who are not very bad." Now children are not reckoned among those who are very bad, since their punishment is very light. Therefore the suffrages of the Church avail them.

On the contrary, The text (Sent. iv, D, 45) quotes Augustine as saying (Serm. xxxii, De Verb Ap.) that "suffrages avail not those who have departed hence without the faith that works by love." Now the children departed thus. Therefore suffrages avail them not.

I answer that, Unbaptized children are not detained

in limbo save because they lack the state of grace. Hence, since the state of the dead cannot be changed by the works of the living, especially as regards the merit of the essential reward or punishment, the suffrages of the living cannot profit the children in limbo.

Reply to Objection 1. Although original sin is such that one person can be assisted by another on its account, nevertheless the souls of the children in limbo are in such a state that they cannot be assisted, because after this life there is no time for obtaining grace.

Reply to Objection 2. Augustine is speaking of those who are not very bad, but have been baptized. This is clear from what precedes: "Since these sacrifices, whether of the altar or of any alms whatsoever are offered for those who have been baptized," etc.

Whether suffrages profit the saints in heaven?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 8

Objection 1. It would seem that in some way suffrages profit the saints in heaven; on account of the words of the Collect in the Mass[†]: "Even as they" (i.e. the sacraments) "avail thy saints unto glory, so may they profit us unto healing." Now foremost among all suffrages is the sacrifice of the altar. Therefore suffrages profit the saints in heaven.

Objection 2. Further, the sacraments cause what they signify. Now the third part of the host, that namely which is dropped into the chalice, signifies those who lead a happy life in heaven. Therefore the suffrages of the

Church profit those who are in heaven.

Objection 3. Further, the saints rejoice in heaven not only in their own goods, but also in the goods of others: hence it is written (Lk. 15:10): "There is [Vulg.: 'shall be'] joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." Therefore the joy of the saints in heaven increases on account of the good works of the living: and consequently our suffrages also profit them.

Objection 4. Further, the Damascene says (Serm.: De his qui in fide dormierunt) quoting the words of Chrysostom: "For if the heathens," he says, "burn the dead to-

* "Ex opere operante" and "ex opere operato" † Postcommunion, Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle

gether with what has belonged to them, how much more shouldst thou, a believer, send forth a believer together with what has belonged to him, not that they also may be brought to ashes like him, but that thou mayest surround him with greater glory by so doing; and if he be a sinner who has died, that thou mayest loose him from his sins, and if he be righteous, that thou mayest add to his meed and reward!" And thus the same conclusion follows.

On the contrary, As quoted in the text (Sent. iv, D, 15), Augustine says (De Verb Ap., Serm. xvii): "It is insulting to pray for a martyr in church, since we ought to commend ourselves to his prayers."

Further, to be assisted belongs to one who is in need. But the saints in heaven are without any need whatever. Therefore they are not assisted by the suffrages of the Church.

I answer that, Suffrage by its very nature implies the giving of some assistance, which does not apply to one who suffers no default: since no one is competent to be assisted except he who is in need. Hence, as the saints in heaven are free from all need, being inebriated with the plenty of God's house (Ps. 35:10), they are not competent to be assisted by suffrages.

Reply to Objection 1. Such like expressions do not mean that the saints receive an increase of glory in themselves through our observing their feasts, but that we profit thereby in celebrating their glory with greater solemnity. Thus, through our knowing or praising God, and through His glory thus increasing some what in us, there accrues something, not to God, but to us.

Reply to Objection 2. Although the sacraments cause

what they signify, they do not produce this effect in respect of everything that they signify: else, since they signify Christ, they would produce something in Christ (which is absurd). But they produce their effect on the recipient of the sacrament in virtue of that which is signified by the sacrament. Thus it does not follow that the sacrifices offered for the faithful departed profit the saints, but that by the merits of the saints which we commemorate, or which are signified in the sacrament, they profit others for whom they are offered.

Reply to Objection 3. Although the saints in heaven rejoice in all our goods, it does not follow, that if our joys be increased their joy is also increased formally, but only materially, because every passion is increased formally in respect of the formal aspect of its object. Now the formal aspect of the saints' joy, no matter what they rejoice in, is God Himself, in Whom they cannot rejoice more and less, for otherwise their essential reward, consisting of their joy in God, would vary. Hence from the fact that the goods are multiplied, wherein they rejoice with God as the formal aspect of their joy, it does not follow that their joy is intensified, but that they rejoice in more things. Consequently it does not follow that they are assisted by our works.

Reply to Objection 4. The sense is not that an increase of meed or reward accrues to the saint from the suffrages offered by a person, but that this accrues to the offerer. Or we may reply that the blessed departed may derive a reward from suffrages through having, while living, provided for suffrage to be offered for himself, and this was meritorious for him.

Whether the prayers of the Church, the sacrifice of the altar and alms profit the departed?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 9

Objection 1. It would seem that the souls of the departed are not assisted only by the prayers of the Church, the sacrifice of the altar and alms, or that they are not assisted by them chiefly. For punishment should compensate for punishment. Now fasting is more penal than almsgiving or prayer. Therefore fasting profits more as suffrage than any of the above.

Objection 2. Further, Gregory reckons fasting together with these three, as stated in the Decretals (xiii, Q. ii, Cap. 22): "The souls of the departed are released in four ways, either by the offerings of priests, or the alms of their friends, or the prayers of the saints, or the fasting of their kinsfolk." Therefore the three mentioned above are insufficiently reckoned by Augustine (De Cura pro Mort. xviii).

Objection 3. Further, Baptism is the greatest of the sacraments, especially as regards its effect. Therefore Baptism and other sacraments ought to be offered for the

departed equally with or more than the Sacrament of the altar.

Objection 4. Further, this would seem to follow from the words of 1 Cor. 15:29, "If the dead rise not again at all, why are they then baptized for them?" Therefore Baptism avails as suffrage for the dead.

Objection 5. Further, in different Masses there is the same Sacrifice of the altar. If, therefore, sacrifice, and not the Mass, be reckoned among the suffrages, it would seem that the effect would be the same whatever Mass be said for a deceased person, whether in honor of the Blessed Virgin or of the Holy Ghost, or any other. Yet this seems contrary to the ordinance of the Church which has appointed a special Mass for the dead.

Objection 6. Further, the Damascene (Serm.: De his qui in fide dormierunt) teaches that candles and oil should be offered for the dead. Therefore not only the offering of the sacrifice of the altar, but also other offerings should be

reckoned among suffrages for the dead.

I answer that, The suffrages of the living profit the dead in so far as the latter are united to the living in charity, and in so far as the intention of the living is directed to the dead. Consequently those whose works are by nature best adapted to assist the dead, which pertain chiefly to the communication of charity, or to the directing of one's intention to another person. Now the sacrament of the Eucharist belongs chiefly to charity, since it is the sacrament of ecclesiastical unity, inasmuch as it contains Him in Whom the whole Church is united and incorporated, namely Christ: wherefore the Eucharist is as it were the origin and bond of charity. Again, chief among the effects of charity is the work of almsgiving: wherefore on the part of charity these two, namely the sacrifice of the Church and almsgiving are the chief suffrages for the dead. But on the part of the intention directed to the dead the chief suffrage is prayer, because prayer by its very nature implies relation not only to the person who prays, even as other works do, but more directly still to that which we pray for. Hence these three are reckoned the principal means of succoring the dead, although we must allow that any other goods whatsoever that are done out of charity for the dead are profitable to them.

Reply to Objection 1. When one person satisfies for another, the point to consider, in order that the effect of his satisfaction reach the other, is the thing whereby the satisfaction of one passes to another, rather than even the punishment undergone by way of satisfaction; although the punishment expiates more the guilt of the one who satisfies, in so far as it is a kind of medicine. And consequently the three aforesaid are more profitable to the departed than fasting.

Reply to Objection 2. It is true that fasting can profit the departed by reason of charity, and on account of the intention being directed to the departed. Nevertheless, fasting does not by its nature contain anything pertaining to charity or to the directing of the intention, and these things are extrinsic thereto as it were, and for this reason Augustine did not reckon, while Gregory did reckon, fasting among the suffrages for the dead.

Reply to Objection 3. Baptism is a spiritual regeneration, wherefore just as by generation being does not accrue save to the object generated, so Baptism produces its effect only in the person baptized, as regards the deed done: and yet as regards the deed of the doer whether of the baptizer or of the baptized, it may profit others even as other meritorious works. On the other hand, the Eucharist is the sign of ecclesiastical unity, wherefore by reason of the deed done its effect can pass to another, which is not the case with the other sacraments.

Reply to Objection 4. According to a gloss this passage may be expounded in two ways. First, thus: "If the dead rise not again, nor did Christ rise again, why are they baptized for them? i.e. for sins, since they are not pardoned if Christ rose not again, because in Baptism not only Christ's passion but also His resurrection operates, for the latter is in a sense the cause of our spiritual resurrection." Secondly, thus: There have been some misguided persons who were baptized for those who had departed this life without baptism, thinking that this would profit them: and according to this explanation the Apostle is speaking, in the above words, merely according to the opinion of certain persons.

Reply to Objection 5. In the office of the Mass there is not only a sacrifice but also prayers. Hence the suffrage of the Mass contains two of the things mentioned by Augustine (*De Cura pro Mort.* xviii), namely "prayer" and "sacrifice." As regards the sacrifice offered the Mass profits equally the departed, no matter in whose honor it be said: and this is the principal thing done in the Mass. But as regards the prayers, that Mass is most profitable in which the prayers are appointed for this purpose. Nevertheless, this defect may be supplied by the greater devotion, either of the one who says Mass, or of the one who orders the Mass to be said, or again, by the intercession of the saint whose suffrage is besought in the Mass.

Reply to Objection 6. This offering of candles or oil may profit the departed in so far as they are a kind of alms: for they are given for the worship of the Church or for the use of the faithful.

Whether the indulgences of the Church profit the dead?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 10

Objection 1. It would seem that the indulgences granted by the Church profit even the dead. First, on account of the custom of the Church, who orders the preaching of a crusade in order that some one may gain an indulgence for himself and for two or three and sometimes even ten souls, both of the living and of the dead. But this would amount to a deception unless they profited the dead. Therefore indulgences profit the dead.

Objection 2. Further, the merit of the whole Church

is more efficacious than that of one person. Now personal merit serves as a suffrage for the departed, for instance in the case of almsgiving. Much more therefore does the merit of the Church whereon indulgences are founded.

Objection 3. Further, the indulgences of the Church profit those who are members of the Church. Now those who are in purgatory are members of the Church, else the suffrages of the Church would not profit them. Therefore it would seem that indulgences profit the departed.

On the contrary, In order that indulgences may avail a person, there must be a fitting cause for granting the indulgence*. Now there can be no such cause on the part of the dead, since they can do nothing that is of profit to the Church, and it is for such a cause that indulgences are chiefly granted. Therefore, seemingly, indulgences profit not the dead.

Further, indulgences are regulated according to the decision of the party who grants them. If, therefore, indulgences could avail the dead, it would be in the power of the party granting them to release a deceased person entirely from punishment: which is apparently absurd.

I answer that, An indulgence may profit a person in two ways: in one way, principally; in another, secondarily. It profits principally the person who avails himself of an indulgence, who, namely, does that for which the indulgence is granted, for instance one who visits the shrine of some saint. Hence since the dead can do none of those things for which indulgences are granted, indulgences cannot avail them directly. However, they profit secondarily and indirectly the person for whom one does

that which is the cause of the indulgence. This is sometimes feasible and sometimes not, according to the different forms of indulgence. For if the form of indulgence be such as this: "Whosoever does this or that shall gain so much indulgence," he who does this cannot transfer the fruit of the indulgence to another, because it is not in his power to apply to a particular person the intention of the Church who dispenses the common suffrages whence indulgences derive their value, as stated above (q. 27, a. 3, ad 2). If, however, the indulgence be granted in this form: "Whosoever does this or that, he, his father, or any other person connected with him and detained in purgatory, will gain so much indulgence," an indulgence of this kind will avail not only a living but also a deceased person. For there is no reason why the Church is able to transfer the common merits, whereon indulgences are based, to the living and not to the dead. Nor does it follow that a prelate of the Church can release souls from purgatory just as he lists, since for indulgences to avail there must be a fitting cause for granting them, as stated above (q. 26, a. 3).

Whether the burial service profits the dead?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 11

Objection 1. It would seem that the burial service profits the dead. For Damascene (Serm.: De his qui in fide dormierunt) quotes Athanasius as saying: "Even though he who has departed in godliness be taken up to heaven, do not hesitate to call upon God and to burn oil and wax at his tomb; for such things are pleasing to God and receive a great reward from Him." Now the like pertain to the burial service. Therefore the burial service profits the dead.

Objection 2. Further, according to Augustine (De Cura pro mort. iii), "In olden times the funerals of just men were cared for with dutiful piety, their obsequies celebrated, their graves provided, and themselves while living charged their children touching the burial or even the translation of their bodies." But they would not have done this unless the tomb and things of this kind conferred something on the dead. Therefore the like profit the dead somewhat.

Objection 3. Further, no one does a work of mercy on some one's behalf unless it profit him. Now burying the dead is reckoned among the works of mercy, therefore Augustine says (De Cura pro Mort. iii): "Tobias, as attested by the angel, is declared to have found favor with God by burying the dead." Therefore such like burial observances profit the dead.

Objection 4. Further, it is unbecoming to assert that the devotion of the faithful is fruitless. Now some, out of devotion, arrange for their burial in some religious local-

ity. Therefore the burial service profits the dead.

Objection 5. Further, God is more inclined to pity than to condemn. Now burial in a sacred place is hurtful to some if they be unworthy: wherefore Gregory says (Dial. iv): "If those who are burdened with grievous sins are buried in the church this will lead to their more severe condemnation rather than to their release." Much more, therefore, should we say that the burial service profits the good.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Cura pro Mort. iii): "Whatever service is done the body is no aid to salvation, but an office of humanity."

Further, Augustine says (De Cura pro Mort. iii; De Civ. Dei i): "The funereal equipment, the disposition of the grace, the solemnity of the obsequies are a comfort to the living rather than a help to the dead."

Further, Our Lord said (Lk. 12:4): "Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Now after death the bodies of the saints can be hindered from being buried, as we read of having been done to certain martyrs at Lyons in Gaul (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. v, 1). Therefore the dead take no harm if their bodies remain unburied: and consequently the burial service does not profit them.

I answer that, We have recourse to burial for the sake of both the living and the dead. For the sake of the living, lest their eyes be revolted by the disfigurement of the corpse, and their bodies be infected by the stench, and this

* Cf. q. 25, a. 2

as regards the body. But it profits the living also spiritually inasmuch as our belief in the resurrection is confirmed thereby. It profits the dead in so far as one bears the dead in mind and prays for them through looking on their burial place, wherefore a “monument” takes its name from remembrance, for a monument is something that recalls the mind [monens mentem], as Augustine observes (De Civ. Dei i; De Cura pro Mort. iv). It was, however, a pagan error that burial was profitable to the dead by procuring rest for his soul: for they believed that the soul could not be at rest until the body was buried, which is altogether ridiculous and absurd.

That, moreover, burial in a sacred place profits the dead, does not result from the action done, but rather from the action itself of the doer: when, to wit, the dead person himself, or another, arranges for his body to be buried in a sacred place, and commends him to the patronage of some saint, by whose prayers we must believe that he is assisted, as well as to the suffrages of those who serve the holy place, and pray more frequently and more specially for those who are buried in their midst. But such things as are done for the display of the obsequies are profitable to the living, as being a consolation to them; and yet they can also profit the dead, not directly but indirectly, in so far as men are aroused to pity thereby and consequently to pray, or in so far as the outlay on the burial brings either assistance to the poor or adornment to the church: for it is in this sense that the burial of the dead is reckoned among the works of mercy.

Reply to Objection 1. By bringing oil and candles to the tombs of the dead we profit them indirectly, either as offering them to the Church and as giving them to the poor, or as doing this in reverence of God. Hence, after the words quoted we read: “For oil and candles are a holocaust.”

Reply to Objection 2. The fathers of old arranged for the burial of their bodies, so as to show that “the bodies of the dead” are the object of Divine providence, not that there is any feeling in a dead body, but in order to confirm the belief in the resurrection, as Augustine says (De Civ. Dei i, 13). Hence, also, they wished to be buried in the land of promise, where they believed Christ’s birth and death would take place, Whose resurrection is the cause of our rising again.

Reply to Objection 3. Since flesh is a part of man’s nature, man has a natural affection for his flesh, according to Eph. 5:29, “No man ever hated his own flesh.” Hence in accordance with this natural affection a man has during life a certain solicitude for what will become of his body after death: and he would grieve if he had a presentiment that something untoward would happen to his body. Consequently those who love a man, through being conformed to the one they love in his affection for himself, treat his body with loving care. For as Augustine says (De Civ. Dei i, 13): “If a father’s garment and ring, and whatever such like is the more dear to those whom they leave behind the greater their affection is towards their parents, in no wise are the bodies themselves to be spurned which truly we wear in more familiar and close conjunction than anything else we put on.”

Reply to Objection 4. As Augustine says (De Cura pro Mort. iv), the devotion of the faithful is not fruitless when they arrange for their friends to be buried in holy places, since by so doing they commend their dead to the suffrages of the saints, as stated above.

Reply to Objection 5. The wicked man dead takes no harm by being buried in a holy place, except in so far as he rendered such a burial place unfitting for him by reason of human glory.

Whether suffrages offered for one deceased person profit the person for whom they are offered more than others?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 12

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages offered for one deceased person are not more profitable to the one for whom they are offered, than to others. For spiritual light is more communicable than a material light. Now a material light, for instance of a candle, though kindled for one person only, avails equally all those who are gathered together, though the candle be not lit for them. Therefore, since suffrages are a kind of spiritual light, though they be offered for one person in particular, do not avail him any more than the others who are in purgatory.

Objection 2. Further, as stated in the text (Sent. iv, D, 45), suffrages avail the dead “in so far as during this life they merited that they might avail them afterwards”*. Now some merited that suffrages might avail them more

than those for whom they are offered. Therefore they profit more by those suffrages, else their merits would be rendered unavailing.

Objection 3. Further, the poor have not so many suffrages given them as the rich. Therefore if the suffrages offered for certain people profit them alone, or profit them more than others, the poor would be worse off: yet this is contrary to our Lord’s saying (Lk. 6:20): “Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

On the contrary, Human justice is copied from Divine justice. But if a person pay another’s debt human justice releases the latter alone. Therefore since he who offers suffrages for another pays the debt, in a sense, of the person for whom he offers them, they profit this per-

* St. Augustine, Enchiridion cx

son alone.

Further, just as a man by offering suffrages satisfies somewhat for a deceased person, so, too, sometimes a person can satisfy for a living person. Now where one satisfies for a living person the satisfaction counts only for the person for whom it is offered. Therefore one also who offers suffrages profits him alone for whom he offers them.

I answer that, There have been two opinions on this question. Some, like Praepositivus, have said that suffrages offered for one particular person do avail chiefly, not the person for whom they are offered, but those who are most worthy. And they instanced a candle which is lit for a rich man and profits those who are with him no less than the rich man himself, and perhaps even more, if they have keener sight. They also gave the instance of a lesson which profits the person to whom it is given no more than others who listen with him, but perhaps profits these others more, if they be more intelligent. And if it were pointed out to them that in this case the Church's ordinance in appointing certain special prayers for certain persons is futile, they said that the Church did this to excite the devotion of the faithful, who are more inclined to offer special than common suffrages, and pray more fervently for their kinsfolk than for strangers.

Others, on the contrary, said that suffrages avail more those for whom they are offered. Now both opinions have a certain amount of truth: for the value of suffrages may be gauged from two sources. For their value is derived in the first place from the virtue of charity, which makes all goods common, and in this respect they avail more the person who is more full of charity, although they are not offered specially for him. In this way the value of suffrages regards more a certain inward consolation by reason of which one who is in charity rejoices in the goods of another after death in respect of the diminution of punish-

ment; for after death there is no possibility of obtaining or increasing grace, whereas during life the works of others avail for this purpose by the virtue of charity. In the second place suffrages derive their value from being applied to another person by one's intention. In this way the satisfaction of one person counts for another, and there can be no doubt that thus they avail more the person for whom they are offered: in fact, they avail him alone in this way, because satisfaction, properly speaking, is directed to the remission of punishment. Consequently, as regards the remission of punishment, suffrages avail chiefly the person for whom they are offered, and accordingly there is more truth in the second opinion than in the first.

Reply to Objection 1. Suffrages avail, after the manner of a light, in so far as they reach the dead, who thereby receive a certain amount of consolation: and this is all the greater according as they are endowed with a greater charity. But in so far as suffrages are a satisfaction applied to another by the intention of the offerer, they do not resemble a light, but rather the payment of a debt: and it does not follow, if one person's debt be paid, that the debt of others is paid likewise.

Reply to Objection 2. Such a merit is conditional, for in this way they merited that suffrages would profit them if offered for them, and this was merely to render themselves fit recipients of those suffrages. It is therefore clear that they did not directly merit the assistance of those suffrages, but made themselves fit by their preceding merits to receive the fruit of suffrages. Hence it does not follow that their merit is rendered unavailing.

Reply to Objection 3. Nothing hinders the rich from being in some respects better off than the poor, for instance as regards the expiation of their punishment. But this is as nothing in comparison with the kingdom of heaven, where the poor are shown to be better off by the authority quoted.

Whether suffrages offered for several are of as much value to each one as if they had been offered for each in particular?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 13

Objection 1. It would seem that suffrages offered for several are of as much value to each one as if they had been offered for each in particular. For it is clear that if one person receives a lesson he loses nothing if others receive the lesson with him. Therefore in like manner a person for whom a suffrage is offered loses nothing if some one else is reckoned together with him: and consequently if it be offered for several, it is of as much value to each one as if it were offered for each in particular.

Objection 2. Further, it is to be observed that according to the common practice of the Church, when Mass is said for one deceased person, other prayers are added for other deceased persons. Now this would not be done, if

the dead person for whom the Mass is said were to lose something thereby. Therefore the same conclusion follows as above.

Objection 3. Further, suffrages, especially of prayers, rely on the Divine power. But with God, just as it makes no difference whether He helps by means of many or by means of a few, so it differs not whether He assists many or a few. Therefore if the one same prayer be said for many, each one of them will receive as much assistance as one person would if that same prayer were said for him alone.

On the contrary, It is better to assist many than one. If therefore a suffrage offered for several is of as much

value to each one as if it were offered for one alone, it would seem that the Church ought not to have appointed a Mass and prayer to be said for one person in particular, but that Mass ought always to be said for all the faithful departed: and this is evidently false.

Further, a suffrage has a finite efficiency. Therefore if it be divided among many it avails less for each one than if it were offered for one only.

I answer that, If the value of suffrages be considered according as it is derived from the virtue of charity uniting the members of the Church together, suffrages offered for several persons avail each one as much as if they were offered for one alone, because charity is not diminished if its effect be divided among many, in fact rather is it increased; and in like manner joy increases through being shared by many, as Augustine says (Confess. viii). Consequently many in purgatory rejoice in one good deed no less than one does. On the other hand, if we consider the value of suffrages, inasmuch as they are a kind of satisfaction applied to the dead by the intention of the person offering them, then the suffrage for some person in particular avails him more than that which is offered for him in common with many others; for in this case the effect of the suffrages is divided in virtue of Divine justice among those for whom the suffrages are offered. Hence it is evi-

dent that this question depends on the first; and, moreover, it is made clear why special suffrages are appointed to be offered in the Church.

Reply to Objection 1. Suffrages considered as works of satisfaction do not profit after the manner of an action as teaching does; for teaching, like any other action, produces its effect according to the disposition of the recipient. But they profit after the manner of the payment of a debt, as stated above (a. 12, ad 1); and so the comparison fails.

Reply to Objection 2. Since suffrages offered for one person avail others in a certain way, as stated (a. 1), it follows that when Mass is said for one person, it is not unfitting for prayers to be said for others also. For these prayers are said, not that the satisfaction offered by one suffrage be applied to those others chiefly, but that the prayer offered for them in particular may profit them also.

Reply to Objection 3. Prayer may be considered both on the part of the one who prays, and on the part of the person prayed: and its effect depends on both. Consequently though it is no more difficult to the Divine power to absolve many than to absolve one, nevertheless the prayer of one who prays thus is not as satisfactory for many as for one.

Whether general suffrages avail those for whom special suffrages are not offered, as much as special suffrages avail those for whom they are offered in addition to general suffrages?

Suppl. q. 71 a. 14

Objection 1. It would seem that general suffrages avail those for whom special suffrages are not offered, as much as special suffrages avail those for whom they are offered in addition to general suffrages. For in the life to come each one will be rewarded according to his merits. Now a person for whom no suffrages are offered merited to be assisted after death as much as one for whom special suffrages are offered. Therefore the former will be assisted by general suffrages as much as the latter by special and general suffrages.

Objection 3. Further, the Eucharist is the chief of the suffrages of the Church. Now the Eucharist, since it contains Christ whole, has infinite efficacy so to speak. Therefore one offering of the Eucharist for all in general is of sufficient value to release all who are in purgatory: and consequently general suffrages alone afford as much assistance as special and general suffrages together.

On the contrary, Two goods are more eligible than one. Therefore special suffrages, together with general suffrages, are more profitable to the person for whom they are offered than general suffrages alone.

I answer that, The reply to this question depends on that which is given to the twelfth inquiry (a. 12): for if the

suffrages offered for one person in particular avail indifferently for all, then all suffrages are common; and consequently one for whom the special suffrages are not offered will be assisted as much as the one for whom they are offered, if he be equally worthy. On the other hand, if the suffrages offered for a person do not profit all indifferently, but those chiefly for whom they are offered, then there is no doubt that general and special suffrages together avail a person more than general suffrages alone. Hence the Master, in the text (Sent. iv, D, 45), mentions two opinions: one, when he says that a rich man derives from general, together with special suffrages, an equal profit to that which a poor man derives from special suffrages alone; for although the one receives assistance from more sources than the other, he does not receive a greater assistance: the other opinion he mentions when he says that a person for whom special suffrages are offered obtains a more speedy but not a more complete release, because each will be finally released from all punishment.

Reply to Objection 1. As stated above (a. 12, ad 2) the assistance derived from suffrages is not directly and simply an object of merit, but conditionally as it were: hence the argument does not prove.

Reply to Objection 2. Although the power of Christ Who is contained in the Sacrament of the Eucharist is infinite, yet there is a definite effect to which that sacrament is directed. Hence it does not follow that the whole punishment of those who are in purgatory is expiated by one sacrifice of the altar: even so, by the one sacrifice which a man offers, he is not released from the whole satisfaction due for his sins, wherefore sometimes several Masses are enjoined in satisfaction for one sin. Nevertheless, if any thing from special suffrages be left over for those for

whom they are offered (for instance if they need them not) we may well believe that by God's mercy this is granted to others for whom those suffrages are not offered, if they need them: as affirmed by Damascene (Serm.: De his qui in fide dormierunt) who says: "Truly God, forasmuch as He is just will adapt ability to the disabled, and will arrange for an exchange of deficiencies": and this exchange is effected when what is lacking to one is supplied by another.