

The Summa of the Summa Summary of Vices Questions 71 and 72

Question 71 Of Vice and Sin Considered in Themselves

Article Two: Whether Vice Is Contrary to Nature?

Obj. 3: Anything in nature that is contrary to it is not found in the greater number of individuals possessed of that nature. The Scripture reminds us in Mt. 7:13 that narrow is the gate that leads to life and broad is the gate that leads to destruction, which interpreted means that there are many to travel the road leading to evil and sin. So it appears that what is contrary to the designed human nature it wouldn't be that way if there are a greater number possessed of that nature. One would expect few going the narrow way since the Scripture seem to indicate that. Therefore, the wide gate would not seem to be contrary to nature. (PM)

On the contrary: "Augustine says (*De Lib, Arb*, iii. 13): *Every vice simply because it is a vice, is contrary to nature.*" (TA)

I answer that: Yes, TA is asserting that it is human nature to avoid sin and vice. This because vice of anything consists in its being disposed in a manner not befitting its nature, and for this reason is that thing *vituperated*, which word is derived from *vice* according to Augustine (*De Lib, Arb*, iii, 14). "Therefore human virtue, which makes a man good, and his work good, is in accord with man's nature, for as much as it accords with his reason: while vice is contrary to man's nature, in so far as it is contrary to the order of reason."

Reply Obj 3: "There is a twofold nature in man, ration nature, and the sensitive nature. The sensitive appetite is often sought after to make decisions in life rather than by a rational process. (PM) "Now the presence of vices and sins in man is owing to the fact that he follows the inclination of his sensitive nature against the order of his reason." (TA)

Article Three: Whether Vice Is Worse than a Vicious Act?

On the contrary: "A man is justly punished for a vicious act; but not for a vicious habit, just so long it has no joining act and on this basis the action is worse than the habit.

I answer that: No, for it stands between act and ability. (PM) TA says: "A habit stands midway between power and act. Now, it is evident that both in good and in evil, act precedes power, as stated in *Metaph. ix. 19*. To do well is better than to be able to do well, and in like manner, it is more blameworthy to do evil, than to be able to do evil: whence it also follows that both in goodness and in badness, habit stands midway between power and act...This is also made clear

Question 71 on Vices Article Six cont.

from the fact that a habit is not called good or bad, save in so far as it induces to a good or bad act..." (TA)

Article Six: Whether Sin is Fittingly Defined As a Word, Deed, or Desire Contrary to the Eternal Law?

I answer that: Yes, sin in any form whether in direct relation to God or anyone or anything for that matter is a bad human act as shown in (A.I). The will is involved by choice as being commanded deliberately by a voluntary action or of speech or any form of operation. There are two rules of the human will and one is directly from human reason and the other is in regards to the eternal law, which is God's reason. To shed further light on this TA refers to Augustine indicating two things in the definition of sin; one, pertaining to the substance of a human act, and which is the matter, so to speak, of sin, when he says, word, deed, or desire; the other, pertaining to the nature of evil, and which is the form, as it were, of sin, when he says, contrary to the eternal law... (PM) (TA)

Questions and Answers for Question 71

1. Is vice contrary to nature? Yes, TA is asserting that it is human nature to avoid sin and vice. This because vice of anything consists in its being disposed in a manner not befitting its nature, and for this reason is that thing vituperated, which word is derived from vice according to Augustine (De Lib, Arb, iii, 14). "Therefore human virtue, which makes a man good, and his work good, is in accord with man's nature, for as much as it accords with his reason: while vice is contrary to man's nature, in so far as it is contrary to the order of reason."

2. Is vice worse than a vicious act? No, for it stands between act and ability. (PM) TA says: "A habit stands midway between power and act. Now, it is evident that both in good and in evil, act precedes power, as stated in Metaph. ix. 19. To do well is better than to be able to do well, and in like manner, it is more blameworthy to do evil, than to be able to do evil: whence it also follows that both in goodness and in badness, habit stands midway between power and act...This is also made clear from the fact that a habit is not called good or bad, save in so far as it induces to a good or bad act..." (TA)

3. Is Sin fittingly Defined As a Word, Deed, or Desire Contrary to the Eternal Law? Yes, sin in any form whether in direct relation to God or anyone or anything for that matter is a bad human act as shown in (A.I). The will is involved by choice as being commanded deliberately by a voluntary action or of speech or any form of operation. There are two rules of the human will and one is directly from human reason and the other is in regards to the eternal law, which is God's reason. To shed further light on this TA refers to Augustine indicating two things in the

Q & A cont. Question 71 cont. 3

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Question 72 Of the Distinction of Sins

Article Two: Whether Spiritual Sins Are Fittingly Distinguished from Carnal Sins?

On the contrary: Gregory (*Moral*, xxxi, 17) says that *of the seven capital sins five are spiritual, and two carnal.*

I answer that: Yes, there are distinctions between spiritual and carnal sins per TA. There are two kinds of pleasure. The two kinds of pleasure are of the soul and pleasure of the body. The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Cor 7:1 that we are to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit....Sins of the soul are spiritual and sins of the body are carnal.

Article Four: Whether Sin Is Fittingly Divided into Sin against God, against Oneself, and against One's Neighbor?

On the contrary: There are three directions in which sin is headed. They are against oneself, against God and against one's neighbor. (PM)

I answer that: Typically sins are directed at one's reasoning, toward one's neighbor when doing harm to a neighbor by stealing or physically harming one's neighbor and toward God when committing a sacrilege. (PM) For it is evident from what has been said (Q62. 62, AA. I, 2, 3), that by the theological virtues man is directed to God; by temperance and fortitude, to himself; and by justice to his neighbor.

Article Six: Whether Sins of Commission and Omission Differ Specifically?

On the contrary: Sins of commission and omission do not differ specifically because a sin of commission involves taking something from another that does not belong to him and then the sin of omission is refusing to give to others what is due them. Specifically these two sins are two sides of the same coin. (PM)

Article Seven: Whether Sins Are Fittingly Divided into Sins of Thought, Word, and Deed?

On the contrary: Jerome in commenting on Ezekiel 43:23 says: *The human race is subject to three kinds of sin, for when we sin, it is either by thought, or word, or deed.*

Article Seven of Question 72 cont. I answer that

I answer that: "Sins are divided into these three, viz., sins of thought, word, and deed, not as into various complete species; for the consummation of sin is in the deed, wherefore sins of deed have the complete species; but the first beginning of sin is its foundation, as it were, in the sin of thought, the second degree is the sin of word, in so far as man is ready to break out into a declaration of his thought; while the third degree consists in the consummation of the deed." (TA) There are varying degrees sin. These three proceed from the same motive. The person who is angry and desires vengeance, is at first bothered in thought, then the deliberate act verbally abusing another moves into the picture and then follows wrongful deeds. This also applies to lust or and other sin. (PM)

Q & A for Question 72

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2. Is sin fittingly divided into sin against God, against oneself, and against one's neighbor?

There are three directions in which sin is headed. They are against oneself, against God and against one's neighbor. (PM) Typically sins are directed at one's reasoning, toward one's neighbor when doing harm to a neighbor by stealing or physically harming one's neighbor and toward God when committing a sacrilege. (PM) For it is evident from what has been said (Q62. 62, AA. 1, 2, 3), that by the theological virtues man is directed to God; by temperance and fortitude, to himself; and by justice to his neighbor. (TA) (PM)

3. Do sins of commission and sins of omission differ specifically? Sins of commission and omission do not differ specifically because a sin of commission involves taking something from another that does not belong to him and then the sin of omission is refusing to give to others what is due them. Specifically these two sins are two sides of the same coin. (PM)

4. Are sins fittingly divided into sins of thought, word, and deed? : "Sins are divided into these three, viz., sins of thought, word, and deed, not as into various complete species; for the consummation of sin is in the deed, wherefore sins of deed have the complete species; but the first beginning of sin is its foundation, as it were, in the sin of thought, the second degree is the sin of word, in so far as man is ready to break out into a declaration of his thought; while the third degree consists in the consummation of the deed." (TA) There are varying degrees sin. These three proceed from the same motive. The person who is angry and desires vengeance, is

Q & A for Question 72 cont. with question 4

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