

## Summa of the Summa Summary on Vices

### Question 73

#### Of the Comparison of One Sin with Another

##### Article One: Whether All Sins Are Connected with One Another?

I answer that: According to TA sins are not connected to one another. (PM) "For sin does not consist in passing from the many to the one, as is the case with virtues, which are connected, but rather in forsaking the one for the many." According to PK the sinner does not sin simply because he wants to disobey reason, but because he wants some forbidden or inordinate good.

##### Article Three: Whether the Gravity of Sins Varies according to Their Objects?

I answer that: Yes, as one sickness is worse than another so it is with sin. A sin must be so much the graver as the disorder occurs in a principle which is higher in the order of reason. The higher the end which is attached to sins in human acts, the graver the sin. The difference in gravity depends upon their objects. Each sin is graver than another according as it is about a higher or lower principle. (TA) (PM)

##### Article Five: Whether Carnal Sins Are of Less Guilt Than Spiritual Sins?

Obj. one: Carnal sins are of greater gravity than spiritual sins. The example given is that adultery comes from lust which is a carnal sin and theft comes from covetousness which is a spiritual sin. This objection refers to Prov. 6:30, 32 which says "The fault is not so great when a man has stolen, ...but he that is an adulterer, for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul."

Obj. Two: Even Augustine says in his commentary on Leviticus [De Civ. Dei ii. 4 and lv. 32] that the devil rejoices chiefly in lust and idolatry. But he rejoices more in the greater sin. Therefore, since lust is a carnal sin, it seems that the carnal sins are of most guilt.

Obj. Three: The Philosopher proves in (*Ethic.* vii. 6) that lust is more shameful than anger. Anger is rooted in a spiritual sin and lust is rooted in a carnal sin. Therefore carnal sin is more grievous than spiritual sin.

On the contrary: Gregory says that carnal sins are of less guilt, but of more shame than spiritual sins. (*Moral*, xxxiii. II) According to PK guilt is before God, and individual; shame is before man, and social.

I answer that: "Spiritual sins are of greater guilt than carnal sins: yet this does not mean that each spiritual sin is of greater guilt than each carnal sin; but that, considering the sole

Question 73 cont. I answer that cont.

difference between spiritual and carnal, spiritual sins are more grievous than carnal sins, other things being equal.” TA proposes three reasons for this: 1. Spiritual sins belong to the spirit, to which it is proper to turn to God, and to turn away from Him; whereas carnal sins are consummated in the carnal pleasure of the appetite, to which it mostly belongs to turn to goods of the body; so that carnal sin, is usually a turning toward something and for that reason, implies a closer cleaving. Whereas spiritual sin pertains fore to a turning from something and the notion of guilt arises. As a result it involves greater guilt. 2. The second reason may be upon the part of the person against whom sin is committed: because carnal sin is against the sinner’s personal body which should be sacrificial in giving toward another in the order of charity, than God and his neighbor, against whom he commits spiritual sins, and as a result spiritual sins are greater guilt. 3. The third reason has to do with the idea that carnal sins have a stronger impulse such as of the flesh in concupiscence. Therefore, spiritual sins are of greater guilt. (PM)

Reply to obj. one: Adultery also carries the weight of injustice. It has the same effect of lust and covetousness. Adultery is so much more grievous than theft. (PM)

Reply to obj. two: The devil loves the sin of lust because of the greater adhesion to a personal soul and the greater difficulty it is to rid oneself of that adhesion. The Philosopher states in Ethic. iii.12 that the desire of pleasure is insatiable.

Reply to obj. three: “As the Philosopher himself says (*ibid.*), the reason why it is more shameful to be incontinent in lust than in anger, is that lust partakes less of reason; and the same sense he says (Ethic. iii. 10) that *sins of intemperance are most worthy of reproach, because they are about those pleasures which are common to us and irrational animals* and thus for the same reason Gregory says (loc. Cit.) that they are more shameful...” (TA) (PM)

Q & A Questions on Question 73

1. Are all sins connected with one another? According to TA sins are not connected to one another. (PM) “For sin does not consist in passing from the many to the one, as is the case with virtues, which are connected, but rather in forsaking the one for the many.” According to PK the sinner does not sin simply because he wants to disobey reason, but because he wants some forbidden or inordinate good.

2. Does the gravity of sins vary according to their objects? Yes, as one sickness is worse than another so it is with sin. A sin must be so much the graver as the disorder occurs in a principle which is higher in the order of reason. The higher the end which is attaches to sins in human acts,, the graver the sin. The difference in gravity depends upon their objects. Each sin is graver than another according as it is about a higher or lower principle. (TA) (PM)

### Q & A Questions on Question 73 cont. question 3

3. Are carnal sins of less guilt than spiritual sins? “Spiritual sins are of greater guilt than carnal sins: yet this does not mean that each spiritual sin is of greater guilt than each carnal sin; but that, considering the sole difference between spiritual and carnal, spiritual sins are more grievous than carnal sins, other things being equal.” “Spiritual sins are of greater guilt than carnal sins: yet this does not mean that each spiritual sin is of greater guilt than each carnal sin; but that, considering the sole difference between spiritual and carnal, spiritual sins are more grievous than carnal sins, other things being equal.” TA proposes three reasons for this: 1. Spiritual sins belong to the spirit, to which it is proper to turn to God, and to turn away from Him; whereas carnal sins are consummated in the carnal pleasure of the appetite, to which it mostly belongs to turn to goods of the body; so that carnal sin, is usually a turning toward something and for that reason, implies a closer cleaving. Whereas spiritual sin pertains fore to a turning from something and the notion of guilt arises. As a result it involves greater guilt. 2. The second reason may be upon the part of the person against whom sin is committed: because carnal sin is against the sinner’s personal body which should be sacrificial in giving toward another in the order of charity, than God and his neighbor, against whom he commits spiritual sins, and as a result spiritual sins are greater guilt. 3. The third reason has to do with the idea that carnal sins have a stronger impulse such as of the flesh in concupiscence. Therefore, spiritual sins are of greater guilt. (PM)

### Question 76 Of the Causes of Sin

Article four: Whether Ignorance Diminishes a Sin?

Obj. 2: Ignorance is itself a sin. Further, one sin added to another makes a greater sin. Therefore sin cannot diminish a sin for it only makes it more convoluted and problematic.

On the contrary: Reasons for sin to be forgiven can diminish sin. 1 Tim. 1:13 states: *I obtained...mercy...because I did it ignorantly.* Therefore ignorance diminishes or alleviates sin.

I answer that: Every sin is voluntary, but if one is ignorant of what they did or said is out of ignorance it removes the impact of responsibility of the potential or actual hurt that arises from it. It does not remove the sin and does need to be dealt with as sin, but the degree of guilt taken for the ignorant sin is weighed into the matter and the responsibility of committing that sin is reduced. A murder which is committed as a first degree murder has a greater degree of penalty than one who commits a manslaughter crime. Both are still sin, but one has a more stringent sentence to impose by the court. TA reminds us that when a thing is not known to be a sin, the will cannot be said to consent to the sin directly, but only accidentally...”

Reply Obj. 2: “One sin added to another makes more sins, but it does not always make a sin greater, since perchance, the two sins do not coincide, but are separate.”

## Q & A on Question 76

1. Does ignorance diminish a sin? Every sin is voluntary, but if one is ignorant of what they did or said is out of ignorance it removes the impact of responsibility of the potential or actual hurt that arises from it. It does not remove the sin and does need to be dealt with as sin, but the degree of guilt taken for the ignorant sin is weighed into the matter and the responsibility of committing that sin is reduced. A murder which is committed as a first degree murder has a greater degree of penalty than one who commits a manslaughter crime. Both are still sin, but one has a more stringent sentence to impose by the court. TA reminds us that when a thing is not known to be a sin, the will cannot be said to consent to the sin directly, but only accidentally...”

## Question 74 Of the Subject of Sin

Article One: Whether the Will Is a Subject of Sin?

On the contrary: Augustine says (*Retract. i. 9*) that *it is by the will that we sin, and live righteously.*

I answer that: Yes, sin is in the will as its subject for the proper subject of sin must be the power which is the principle of the act. “Now since it is proper to moral acts that they are voluntary, as stated above (Q. 1, A, 1; Q. 18, A. 6), it follows that the will, which is the principle of voluntary acts, both of good acts , and of evil acts or sins, is the principle of sins. Some effect of destructive nature of an action is to leave a mark in the matter of its object. However, some effects are not physical but remain in the agent such as to desire and to know and such are all moral acts, whether virtuous or sinful.” (TA) (PM)

## Q & A for Question 74

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