

Question 32: Whether First Motions Are Sins

1. Concerning the second argument, it is argued that first motions are sins because in the Second Book of Sentences, 25th distinction, it is said that "temptation from the flesh is not without sin". But such temptation occurs in first motions. Therefore etc.

However, they are not voluntary, and "there is no sin unless it is voluntary" according to Augustine.

Solution:

1. In this question, as always in all others determined, given those things that are of faith, one must always look to nature, what right reason might investigate concerning it about the question asked. Therefore, it must be understood according to the previous touch on original justice, that original sin or original injustice establishes two things, namely the lack of original justice, whether it was a natural or supernatural gift, and the disposition contrary to it, that is, a certain obliquity in the will itself, because of which, in punishment for sin, the lower powers have a rebellion against the will, even if it is completely repelling, and this, that "the freedom of human will might blush, having by scorning the commanding God, also lost its own dominion over its own members," as Augustine says in "On Marriage and Concupiscence." And not only in punishment for sin do the lower powers have rebellion against the will, but the flesh is also inflicted with a sickly disposition, which is called the tinder or weakness of nature, from which in the flesh first sprouts a pleasurable motion, which the sense apprehends secondly, and by this, thirdly, the organically existing sensible appetitive power in the flesh is titillated by pleasure to desire the pleasurable to which that motion in the flesh tends. And these three degrees altogether precede any motion of the will, and consist in these two motions, which are called the first of the first, one of which is called the suggestion from the flesh into the sensitive appetite, the other pleasure or desire in the sensitive appetite itself.

When dealing with these, Augustine in Book 1 "On the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount," assumes the consent of the will for the third and distinguishes three stages in the progression to sin saying, "There are three things by which sin is completed: suggestion, either through memory or through bodily senses, which, if delighting in it pleases, illicit pleasure must be restrained; if, however, there is consent, it will be full sin. Thus from the

flesh as from a serpent comes the suggestion and a certain persuasion, in the carnal appetite as in Eve comes pleasure, in reason as in the man comes consent."

And because the entire motion existing in the flesh and in the sensitive appetite is nothing else with respect to the will but a certain suggestion and titillation in the will to delight together, therefore Augustine counts the entire motion which in the flesh and sensitive appetite precedes the motion of the will, for one, numbering with it the three degrees by which one proceeds to mortal sin by the act of the will, distinguishes four degrees by which mortal sin is perfected in Book "On the Words of the Lord," sermon 44, saying: "The soul reaches habituation by a certain fourth process. The first is as if a titillation of pleasure in the heart, the second consent, the third deed, the fourth habit."

And here it should be noted that after that titillation in which consist the first motions, as said, before the consent of the will in which consists mortal sin, there is some motion of pleasure in the will, in which consists venial sin, according to what he continuously expresses saying, "There are those who outright reject illicit thoughts that come their way, such that they do not delight in them. There are those who delight, but do not consent; death is not yet perfect, but is somehow begun. To delight is added consent, and now there is that condemnation. After consent comes the deed, the deed turns into habit, and a kind of despair ensues."

Note that what is said here, "consent is added and now there is full condemnation", is the same as what he said in "On the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount": "If there is consent, it will be full sin." And he calls "full sin" mortal sin, which merits condemnation. And this consent in which consists mortal sin should be such that it is deliberate, not surreptitious. Then it is deliberate when after reason perceives the delight and turns away judging it to be illicit, the will still holds onto it and does not restrain it, because, as Augustine says in "On the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount," "we do not consent to this, if we restrain it by the right of governing reason." And he calls "governing reason" the rational appetite or the will, because the knowing and judging reason is not governing, but serving. In such therefore deliberate consent consists first mortal sin. And whatever precedes in the act of the will, or the sensitive appetite or the flesh, is either not sin or only venial sin. Hence also surreptitious consent in the will, which precedes the aforesaid judgment of reason, because it is a motion of the will as it is by nature, not as it is by free or deliberate choice, is counted only among venial sins, and this whether it be surreptitious consent in delight or in deed. And thus before the consent of the will by the preceding judgment of reason, at least two motions precede in the will tending towards sin, namely of delight and surreptitious consent, and are called secondarily first motions: "first" with respect to all motions that

occur in the will; "secondarily first" with respect to those that are primarily first in the flesh and sensuality.

After these first and secondarily first motions which precede the judgment of reason, when by the judgment of reason the will, as it is by free choice, then consents either in delight, to hold itself therein, then is the first grade of mortal sin existing in consent alone, or in deed, to proceed further therein, then is the second grade of sin existing in consent, saying Augustine in Book 1 "On the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount" and explaining that Matthew IV: "Indeed, it must be considered that he did not say 'everyone who desires a woman', but 'whoever sees a woman to desire', that is with this end and this intention he attends, to desire her, which is not now merely to tingle with the pleasure of the flesh, but plainly to consent to lust, so that the illicit appetite is not restrained, but if the opportunity is given, it is satiated." Note that he says "It is not now to delight", that is in the will, "in the pleasure of the flesh" with the flesh, that is delighting in the will, whether with surreptitious consent or without it, in which there is only venial sin: "but plainly to consent", because after the judgment of reason has preceded, or at least should have preceded, then it is clear that there is consent, because there was not plainly to consent in surreptitious consent.

I say "or at least should have preceded", because plainly to consent occurs in delight either truly or interpretatively. Truly, when truly the judgment of reason has preceded.

Interpretatively, when interpretatively the judgment of reason has preceded, which occurs when from the delight of the will reason is so absorbed that it cannot attend to judgment, and the will neglects to move reason to judge, and permits the time to pass when it could deliberate, which, when it has passed, even if it does not truly consent from an election of free choice, which does not occur without preceding discretion of judgment, consents nevertheless interpretatively, that is reputively, because not so much is the mortal contempt from electing to delight, and not restraining the appetite of the flesh, but also for the delight neglecting to move reason to judge, so that it might choose, | repel the delight, restrain the sensible appetite.

1. The progress in sin is therefore such, if someone wishes to consider what has already been said. First, from the tinder comes a certain motion of titillation in the flesh toward lust, that is toward carnal concupiscence, which the sense existing in the flesh apprehends. Through whose apprehension first the sensitive appetite conjoined to the sense is moved by a motion of pleasure about that to which the flesh tingles. And thirdly it is moved by a motion of desire to pursue that into action, which motion in the sensitive appetite mediated by the sense is apprehended by the reason of simple intelligence. Through whose apprehension fourthly the will is moved by a motion of delight in delighting in the sensitive appetite, and in the fifth way by a motion into delight, and sixth by

surreptitious desire for consent to pursue that into action, and here is the boundary and term of venial sin. Seventh is interpretative consent in delight, and it is the first and lowest grade of mortal sin, which is called mortal from morose delight. Eighth is true consent in delight.

Ninth is consent in deed and according to Augustine in "On the Sermon of the Lord on the Mount," "full sin known to God in our heart, and< now > if by deed | it does not become known to men". And then tenth, if the opportunity is present, follows the execution of the deed. Eleventh from frequent execution custom, | and twelfth from custom despair, and thirteenth, from despair obstinacy, saying AUGUSTINE in the sermon on Pharaoh's hardening: "From a multitude of sins despair is born, and from despair hardness is generated according to that which is written:

'The sinner, when he has come into the depths of sins, despises''. And then fourteenth and last follows final impenitence, of which says

AUGUSTINE in the sermon on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: "Impenitence, as long as one lives in this flesh, cannot be judged as we understand persistent hardness of heart".

Having seen | and clarified | the understanding of the question, responding to it by distinguishing we say, that according to what has been determined the first motions are of a dual kind, since some are primarily first, some secondarily. If we speak of secondarily first ones, about these no one thinks there is any doubt but that at least they are venial sins, because the reason, although perhaps not able to completely repress such motions so that they do not arise, can nevertheless completely repel them so that it does not delight in them or consent to them, according to what is clear from what has been | said according to Augustine, and therefore to delight or consent is necessarily a sin for it, because of which in them, who delight or consent, death is not perfect, but somewhat begun.

Concerning the motions that are primarily first, there are opinions, some saying that they are venial sins, because they are in themselves deformed and against the rule of right reason, from which they should have been restrained and were not restrained.

I But I ask those, whether the motions are sins of omission or commission?

Not of commission directly, because they do not seem to be commanded by the will: there is no doubt, if they were committed voluntarily directly, that they would be sins; | rather they could also be mortal out of contempt. Not of omission, because that omission is not imputed to the will as a sin, which is not in its power to act: otherwise it would not be voluntary, because the will is the mistress of voluntary acts. But sin according to AUGUSTINE is so voluntary, that if it were not voluntary, it would not be sin. But it is not in

the power of the will to restrain those motions, because according to Augustine, they occur entirely against one's will, saying APOSTLE, < Ad > Romans, VII: "Not what I will, I do, but what I do not want, this I do".

1 But perhaps someone will say that, although it is not in the power of man | to universally prohibit all, it is however in his power to individually restrain each one.

But then I ask: is it in the power of man to determinately restrain each one individually, or indeterminately?

Not in the first way, because it is impossible that the will for one hour at the same time determinately attend to different things, which however can arise simultaneously for one hour according to different appetibles of one or of different senses, which simultaneously can be moved by their sensibles, and simultaneously incite the sensitive appetite and through it the rational appetite. If however it is only in the power of the will to prohibit them individually indeterminately, so that it is not in its power in one hour more than one, whichever that may be, then for others he does not sin, because they are not in his power for that | hour, and if he restrains that which is in his power, for the hour, in no way is it a sin. If indeed he does not | prohibit, it is a venial sin by his own act, and should be imputed to him as sin, nor does preceding baptism avail for the expiation of its guilt in erasing original as regards guilt.

Concerning the other motions which were not in the power of the will to determinately restrain, < he would say > that, | although they are not sins to the will by its act of commission or omission, yet they would be sins to it from its defect, namely from the tinder remaining from original sin. But contra. When the principal is indulged, which is greater, and the accessory, which is less.

But every deformity which remains in the tinder from original sin, is indulged in baptism. Therefore similarly is indulged every deformity | which exists in these motions from the preexisting deformity in the tinder. And by the same it is concluded that they cannot be sins of commission, because neither the substance of the act nor its | deformity is elicited by the will, but the substance of the act is elicited from the sole substance of the flesh and the sensitive appetite. Deformity is a defect in the act not having an efficient cause but a deficient one, namely the defect which is called the tinder or concupiscence in the flesh.

Therefore it is the opinion of others, that the motions that are primarily first — whichever they may be — are not at all sins, thus also that in the regenerate they are not venial sins. Which plainly seems to be sensed by AUGUSTINus when he says in

book.^o II^o "On Marriage and Concupiscence": "This is, I say, concupiscence, which is expiated by the sole sacrament of regeneration. Indeed, the bond of sin passes on to posterity by generation, unless from it they too are released by regeneration, for even concupiscence itself is no longer sin, when there is no consent to illicit deeds, and as to commit them, the ruling mind does not grant the members, so that, if what is written, 'Do not covet', is not done, at least what is read elsewhere 'Do not go after your lusts'".

Note that he says "is expiated", which I understand "and in the root of the tinder", so that it is not imputed as sin, because by expiation | the guilt is remitted, although its deformity remains, similarly also in its effect, namely in the defect arising therefrom in first motions, as has been said. Which explains Augustine by what he adds: "for | concupiscence is not sin, when there is no consent to illicit deeds". Which I understand: | "nor even by delighting in the will as regards the first motion thereof into sin", and it is the first grade of venial sin, so that in no preceding motion

is there to put sin, nor even venial, which truly seems to me

to be posable.

| To whose understanding it should be known that, since in original sin in the unregenerate there are two things, one of which is the curvation, which consists in the obliquity of the will, about which enough has been had above, the second however is guilt for the penalty for the lack of original justice, which man | should have kept, according to these expiated by the sacrament of regeneration, lest the regenerate remain further oblique to the payment of the penalty for the debt of guilt, the first however remains, because of which the lower powers disobedient remain to the higher, and similarly the tinder in the flesh for moving first motions of carnal concupiscence. To which two in original sin correspond two in the | first motions of carnal concupiscence, namely the deformity of the motion itself and the penal guilt, which is owed to it. Of which the first remains for punishment in the regenerate, just as the said obliquity remains in the will, and the tinder in the flesh, the second however passes and is expiated, because the guilt is expiated around its root, which is the said obliquity in the will and the tinder in the flesh, so that, as neither of these in the reborn has the reason of sin on the part of guilt, but only on the part of obliquity, so the motions that are primarily first, although they have the reason | of sin on the part of shameful deformity, have none however on the part of guilt.

And from this can be formed two distinctions by which one responds to the proposed question, saying that first motions can be considered in two ways, just as any act of virtue and vice: one way according to themselves and absolutely as regards disposition and form

of the act; another way in respect to the end as regards reward and due recompense for the act.

First indeed in this way undoubtedly | first motions are sins, both in the regenerate and in the unregenerate, because they have deformity in themselves against the rules of prudence and right reason, which deformity has the reason of vice, just as its contrary information has the reason of virtue. In this way also the said obliquity in the reason has the reason of vice, and similarly the tinder in the flesh, and this according to the manner in which virtues and vices are granted to be in the sensitive powers not by essence, but by a certain participation, as we determined in a preceding Quolibet, so that it is not necessary here to distinguish or to introduce any prolixity.

Secondly however the first motions (I say the primarily first) are not sins in the regenerate, | because due to the expiation of the sacrament they are covered from divine eyes, so that henceforth they are not imputed for punishment, neither the due for mortal, nor the due for venial. Thus also the said obliquity in the will or the tinder in the flesh has no reason of sin in the regenerate, but in the unregenerate, where over guilt no | expiation was made, it has altogether the reason of sin, even as regards those which are not in the determined power of the will to restrain, and as regards the blemish or deformity, and as regards the guilt. | And this mortal, if mortal sin be called that to which is due | eternal punishment, because with sin as it is sin, eternal punishment is due, unless there be some association with grace, from whose consortium it merits pardon, so that it be called venial and be punished with temporal punishment, and not unless venial, calling venial that which by reason of contempt in it is apt , that it remain with charity, and obtain pardon, whereby the punishment due to it is changed into temporal. But about this a discourse was held elsewhere in part. And this sin in the unregenerate should be called not original sin, but actual, and this because it is perpetrated not by an act of its own will, but by an act proper to its own flesh.

To this however that such a first motion has the reason of sin, it is necessary that it be reduced to the act of some will.

And some say that it is reduced to the act of properly its own will, in that namely someone unregenerate does not care to receive | the regenerative sacrament.

But others, with whom AUGUSTINE seems more to agree, say that it is reduced to the act of the will of the first parent, and by this | the apparent contrariety of almost infinite authorities of AUGUSTINE and other saints is dissolved, who sometimes seem to say that first motions | are sins, sometimes however that they are not sins. | Which distinction has

no place around acts of one's own will, which can only be at least venial sins and as regards deformity and as regards guilt, which remains with some obliquity in the will while the act passes, until by penitence it is expiated in the regenerate; motions however that are primarily first entirely pass, and as regards the act and as regards the guilt.

Otherwise however AUGUSTINE dissolves said contrariety: one namely way that first motions are said to be sins, not because they are sins in themselves, but because they proceeded from the sin of the first parent, namely as from the original principle which remains in the reason of sin in the unregenerate and | as regards blemish and as regards guilt, | in the regenerate however as regards curvation only, as was said; another however way, as he says, they are called sins, because, if they conquer, they make guilty of sin. And this is what AUGUSTINE says, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*: "Because in a certain way of speaking 'sin' is called, which both was made by sin, and makes guilty of sin, if it conquers, and its guilt avails in the begotten, which guilt Christ's grace through the remission of all sins in the regenerate, if it does not obey in some way commanding to evil deeds, does not allow to avail. Thus however it is called 'sin', because sin made it, since now in the regenerate it is not sin itself, thus however it is called 'tongue' speech, which the tongue makes, and 'hand' is called writing, which the hand makes. | Again thus it is called 'sin', because sin, if it conquers, makes, as 'lazy' is called cold, | not that it is made by the lazy, but that it makes lazy". It however makes that sin not but in the will, according to the already determined manner.

< TO THE ARGUMENTS >

I By what has already been said the response to the objections is clear.

What therefore the MASTER says in the *Sentences*, that "temptation from the flesh is sin", must be said that it is not true in the regenerate as regards guilt, but only as regards curvation, either because it is from sin or because it is cause of sin, as has been said.

To the second that "first motions are not voluntary", it must be said that, although not voluntary as regards the will of him in whom they are, so that therefore | they do not have the reason of sin as regards guilt when they are expiated, they are however voluntary as regards the will | of the first parent, as determines AUGUSTINE book.º IIIº "On Free Choice", from whose | will proceeded his own proper actual sin and henceforth all other original sins of others, either medially or immediately, and from them first motions, from whose will they have that they are sins both as regards blemish and as regards guilt, unless they are expiated as also the original sin itself, as has been said.