Articulus 4

Iª-IIae q. 71 a. 4 arg. 1 Ad quartum sic proceditur. Videtur quod actus vitiosus, sive peccatum, non pos- sit simul esse cum virtute. Contraria enim non pos- sunt esse simul in eodem. Sed peccatum quodammo- do contrariatur virtutii, ut dictum est. Ergo peccatum non potest simul esse cum virtute.

arg. 2 Praeterea, peccatum est peius quam vitium, idest actus malus quam habitus malus. Sed vitium non potest simul esse in eodem cum virtute. Ergo neque peccatum.

arg. 3 Praeterea, sicut peccatum accidit in rebus voluntariis, ita et in rebus naturalibus, ut dicitur in II Physic. Sed nunquam in rebus naturalibus accidit peccatum nisi per aliquam corruptionem virtutis naturalis, sicut monstra accidunt corrupto aliquo principio in semine, ut dicitur in II Physic. Ergo etiam in rebus voluntariis non accidit peccatum nisi corrupta aliqua virtute animae. Et sic peccatum et virtus non possunt esse in eodem.


Corpus. Respondeo dicendum quod peccatum comparatur ad virtutem sicut actus malus ad habitum bonum. Aliter autem se habet habitus in anima, et forma in re naturali. Forma enim naturalis ex ne- cessitate producit operationem sibi convenientem, unde non potest esse simul cum forma naturali actus formae contrariae; sicut non potest esse cum ca- lore actus infrigidationis, neque simul cum levitate motus descensionis, nisi forte ex violentia exterioris moventis. Sed habitus in anima non ex necessitate producit suam operationem, sed homo utitur eo cum voluerit. Unde simul habitu in homine existente, potest non uti habitu, aut agere contrarium actum. Et sic potest habens virtutem procedere ad actum peccati. Actus autem peccati, si comparetur ad ipsam virtutem prout est habitus quidam, non potest

Whether sin is compatible with virtue?

Objection 1: It would seem that a vicious act, i.e. sin, is incompatible with virtue. For contraries cannot be together in the same subject. Now sin is, in some way, contrary to virtue, as stated above (Article [1]). Therefore sin is incompatible with virtue.

Objection 2: Further, sin is worse than vice, i.e. evil act than evil habit. But vice cannot be in the same subject with virtue: neither, therefore, can sin.

Objection 3: Further, sin occurs in natural things, even as in voluntary matters (Phys. ii, text. 82). Now sin never happens in natural things, except through some corruption of the natural power; thus monsters are due to corruption of some elemental force in the seed, as stated in Phys. ii. Therefore no sin occurs in voluntary matters, except through the corruption of some virtue in the soul: so that sin and virtue cannot be together in the same subject.

On the contrary, The Philosopher says (Ethic. ii, 2,3) that “virtue is engendered and corrupted by contrary causes.” Now one virtuous act does not cause a virtue, as stated above (Question [51], Article [3]): and, consequently, one sinful act does not corrupt virtue. Therefore they can be together in the same subject.

I answer that, Sin is compared to virtue, as evil act to good habit. Now the position of a habit in the soul is not the same as that of a form in a natural thing. For the form of a natural thing produces, of necessity, an operation befitting itself; wherefore a natural form is incompatible with the act of a contrary form: thus heat is incompatible with the act of cooling, and lightness with downward movement (except perhaps violence be used by some extrinsic mover): whereas the habit that resides in the soul, does not, of ne- cessity, produce its operation, but is used by man when he wills. Consequently man, while possessing a habit, may either fail to use the habit, or produce a contrary act; and so a man having a virtue may produce an act of sin. And this sinful act, so long as there is but one, cannot corrupt virtue, if we compare the act to the virtue itself as a habit: since, just
ipsam corrumpere, si sit unus tantum, sicut enim non generatur habitus per unum actum, ita nec per unum actum corrumpitur, ut supra dictum est. Sed si comparetur actus peccati ad causam virtutum, sic possibile est quod per unum actum peccati aliquae virtutes corrumpantur. Quodlibet enim peccatum mortale contrariatur caritati, quae est radix omnium virtutum infusarum, inquantum sunt virtutes, et ideo per unum actum peccati mortalis, excluda caritate, excluduntur per consequens omnes virtutes infussae, quantum ad hoc quod sunt virtutes. Et hoc dico propter fidem et spem, quarum habitus remanent informes post peccatum mortale, et sic non sunt virtutes. Sed peccatum veniale, quod non contrariatur caritate nec excludit ipsum, per consequens etiam non excludit alias virtutes. Virtutem vero acquisita non tolluntur per unum actum cuiuscumque peccati. Sicut igitur peccatum mortale non potest simul esse cum virtutibus infusis, potest tamen simul esse cum virtutibus acquisitis. Peccatum vero veniale potest simul esse et cum virtutibus infusis, et cum acquisitis.

ad 1 Ad primum ergo dicendum quod peccatum non contrariatur virtutii secundum se, sed secundum suum actum. Et ideo peccatum non potest simul esse cum virtutibus infusis, potest tamen simul esse cum virtutibus acquisitis. Peccatum vero veniale potest simul esse et cum virtutibus infusis, et cum acquisitis.

ad 2 Ad secundum dicendum quod vitium directe contrariatur virtutii, sicut et peccatum actui virtuoso. Et ideo vitium excludit virtutem, sicut peccatum excludit actum virtutis.

ad 3 Ad tertium dicendum quod virtutes naturales agunt ex necessitate, et ideo, integra existente virtute, nunquam peccatum potest in actu inveniri. Sed virtutes animae non producunt actus ex necessitate, unde non est similis ratio.

Articulus 5

arg. 1 Ad quintum sic proceditur. Videtur quod in quolibet peccato sit aliquis actus. Sicut enim meritum comparatur ad virtutem, ita peccatum ad vitium comparatur. Sed meritum non potest esse absque aliquo actu. Ergo nec peccatum potest esse absque aliquo actu.

arg. 2 Praeterea, Augustinus dicit, in libro de Lib.
Arb., quod omne peccatum adeo est voluntarium, quod si non sit voluntarium, non est peccatum. Sed non potest esse aliquis voluntarium nisi per actum voluntatis. Ergo omne peccatum habet aliquem actum.

arg. 3 Praeterea, si peccatum esset absque aliquo actu, sequeretur quod ex hoc ipso quod aliquis cessat ab actu debito, peccaret. Sed continue aliquis cessat ab actu debito, ille scilicet qui nunquam actum debitum operatur. Ergo sequeretur quod continue peccaret, quod est falsum. Non ergo est aliquis peccatum absque actu.

Sed contra est quod dicitur lac. IV, scienti bonum facere et non facienti, peccatum est illi. Sed non facere non importat aliquem actum. Ergo peccatum potest esse absque actu.

Corpus. Respondeo dicendum quod quaestio ista principaliter movetur propter peccatum omissionis, de quo aliqui diversimode opinantur. Quidam enim dicunt quod in omni peccato omissionis est aliquis actus vel interior vel exterior. Interior quidem, sicut cum aliquis vult non ire ad Ecclesiam quando ire tenetur. Exterior autem, sicut cum aliquis illa hora qua ad Ecclesiam ire tenetur, vel etiam ante, occupat se talibus quibus ab eundo ad Ecclesiam impeditur. Et hoc quodammodo videtur in primum redire, qui enim vult aliquid cum quo alius simil esse non potest, ex consequenti vult illo carere; nisi forte non perpendat quod per hoc quod vult facere, impeditur ab eo quod facere tenetur; in quo casu posset per negligentiam culpabilis iudicari. Alli vero dicunt quod in peccato omissionis non requiritur aliquis actus, ipsum enim non facere quod quis facere tenetur, peccatum est. Utraque autem opinio secundum aliquid veritatem habet. Si enim intelligatur in peccato omissionis illud solum quod per se pertinet ad rationem peccati, sic quandoque omissionis peccatum est cum actu interiori, ut cum aliquis vult non ire ad Ecclesiam, quandoque vero absque omni actu vel interiori vel exteriori, sicut cum aliquis hora qua target ire ad Ecclesiam, nihil cogit at de eundo vel non eundo ad Ecclesiam. Si vero in peccato omissionis intelligantur etiam causae vel occasiones omissendi, sic necesse est in peccato omissionis aliquem actum esse. Non enim est peccatum omissionis nisi cum aliquis praetermittit quod potest facere et non facere. Quod autem aliquis declinet ad non faciendum illud quod potest facere implies an act.

Objection 3: Further, if sin could be without act, it would follow that a man sins as soon as he ceases doing what he ought. Now he who never does something that he ought to do, ceases continually doing what he ought. Therefore it would follow that he sins continually; and this is untrue. Therefore there is no sin without an act.

On the contrary, It is written (James 4:17): “To him . . . who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is a sin.” Now “not to do” does not imply an act. Therefore sin can be without act.

I answer that, The reason for urging this question has reference to the sin of omission, about which there have been various opinions. For some say that in every sin of omission there is some act, either interior or exterior---interior, as when a man wills “not to go to church,” when he is bound to go---exterior, as when a man, at the very hour that he is bound to go to church (or even before), occupies himself in such a way that he is hindered from going. This seems, in a way, to amount to the same as the first, for whoever wills one thing that is incompatible with this other, wills, consequently, to go without this other: unless, perchance, it does not occur to him, that what he wishes to do, will hinder him from that which he is bound to do, in which case he might be deemed guilty of negligence. On the other hand, others say, that a sin of omission does not necessarily suppose an act: for the mere fact of not doing what one is bound to do is a sin.

Now each of these opinions has some truth in it. For if in the sin of omission we look merely at that in which the essence of the sin consists, the sin of omission will be sometimes with an interior act, as when a man wills “not to go to church”; while sometimes it will be without any act at all, whether interior or exterior, as when a man, at the time that he is bound to go to church, does not think of going or not going to church.

If, however, in the sin of omission, we consider also the causes, or occasions of the omission, then the sin of omission must of necessity include some act. For there is no sin of omission, unless we omit what we can do or not do: and that we turn aside so as not to do what we can do or not do, must needs
et non facere, non est nisi ex aliqua causa vel occasione coniuncta vel praecedente. Et si quidem causa illa non sit in potestate hominis, omissionis non habet rationem peccati, sicut cum aliquis propter infirmitatem praetermittit ad Ecclesiam ire. Si vero causa vel occasio omittendi subiaceat voluntati, omissionis habet rationem peccati, et tunc semper oportet quod ista causa, inquantum est voluntaria, habeat aliquem actum, ad minus interiorem voluntatis. Qui quidem actus quandoque directe fertur in ipsum omissionem, puta cum aliquis vult non ire ad Ecclesiam, vitans laborem. Et tunc talis actus per se pertinent ad omissionem, voluntas enim cuiuscumque peccati per se pertinent ad peccatum illud, eo quod voluntarium est de ratione peccati. Quandoqueque actus voluntatis directe fertur in aliud, quod quidem est ad ipsum actum, ex quo sequitur quod non vadat hora matutinali ad Ecclesiam. Unde manifestum est quod tunc peccatum omissionis habet quidem aliquem actum coniunctum vel praecedentem, qui tamen per accidens se habet ad peccatum omissionis. Iudicium autem de omissione coniuncta vel praecedente, qui tamen per accidens se habet ad omissionem, voluntas enim cuiuscumque peccati per se pertinent ad omissionem, voluntas enim cuiuscumque peccati per se pertinent ad peccatum illud, eo quod voluntarium est de ratione peccati. Quandoqueque actus voluntatis directe fertur in aliud, qui tamen per accidens esse, quod est praeter intentionem, hodie dicimus per accidens se habere ad omissionem, qui tamen per accidens se habet ad peccatum omissionis. Iudicium autem de rebus dandum est secundum illud quod est per se, et non secundum illud quod est per accidens. Unde verius dici potest quod aliquod peccatum possit esse absque omni actu. Alioquin etiam ad essentiam aliorum peccatorum actualium pertinerent actus et occasiones circumstantes.

ad 1 Ad primum ergo dicendum quod plura requiruntur ad bonum quam ad malum, eo quod bonum contingit ex tota integra causa, malum autem ex singularibus defectibus; ut Dionysius dicit, IV cap. de Div. Nom. Et ideo peccatum potest contingere sive aliquis faciat quod non debet, sive non faciendo quod debet, sed meritum non potest esse nisi aliquis faciat voluntarie quod debet. Et ideo meritum non potest esse sine actu, sed peccatum potest esse sine actu.

ad 2 Ad secundum dicendum quod aliquid dicitur voluntarium non solum quia cadit super ipsum actus voluntatis, sed quia in potestate nostra est ut fiat vel non fiat, ut dicitur in III Ethic. Unde etiam ipsum

be due to some cause or occasion, either united with the omission or preceding it. Now if this cause be not in man’s power, the omission will not be sinful, as when anyone omits going to church on account of sickness: but if the cause or occasion be subject to the will, the omission is sinful; and such cause, in so far as it is voluntary, must needs always include some act, at least the interior act of the will: which act sometimes bears directly on the omission, as when a man wills «not to go to church,» because it is too much trouble; and in this case this act, of its very nature, belongs to the omission, because the volition of any sin whatever, pertains, of itself, to that sin, since voluntariness is essential to sin. Sometimes, however, the act of the will bears directly on something else which hinders man from doing what he ought, whether this something else be united with the omission, as when a man wills to play at the time he ought to go to church---or, precede the omission, as when a man wills to sit up late at night, the result being that he does not go to church in the morning. In this case the act, interior or exterior, is accidental to the omission, since the omission follows outside the intention, and that which is outside the intention is said to be accidental (Phys. ii, text. 49,50). Wherefore it is evident that then the sin of omission has indeed an act united with, or preceding the omission, but that this act is accidental to the sin of omission.

Now in judging about things, we must be guided by that which is proper to them, and not by that which is accidental: and consequently it is truer to say that a sin can be without any act; else the circumstantial acts and occasions would be essential to other actual sins.

Reply to Objection 1: More things are required for good than for evil, since “good results from a whole and entire cause, whereas evil results from each single defect,” as Dionysius states (Div. Nom. iv): so that sin may arise from a man doing what he ought not, or by his not doing what he ought; while there can be no merit, unless a man do willingly what he ought to do: wherefore there can be no merit without act, whereas there can be sin without act.

Reply to Objection 2: The term “voluntary” is applied not only to that on which the act of the will is brought to bear, but also to that which we have the power to do or not to do, as stated in Ethic. iii, 5.
non velle potest dici voluntarium, inquantum in
potestate hominis est velle et non velle.

ad 3 Ad tertium dicendum quod peccatum omissi-
nis contrariatur praecepto affirmativo, quod obligat
semper, sed non ad semper. Et ideo solum pro
tempore illo aliquis cessando ab actu peccat, pro quo
praeceptum affirmativum obligat.

Articulus 6

arg. 1 Ad sextum sic proceditur. Videtur quod
inconvenienter definatur peccatum, cum dicitur,
peccatum est dictum vel factum vel concupitum con-
tra legem aeternam. Dictum enim, vel factum, vel
concupitum, importat aliquem actum. Sed non omne
peccatum importat aliquem actum, ut dictum est.
Ergo haec definitio non includit omne peccatum.

arg. 2 Praeterea, Augustinus dicit, in libro de dua-
bus animabus, peccatum est voluntas retinendi vel
consequendi quod iustitia vetat. Sed voluntas sub
concupiscencit contemplat, secundum quod
concupiscit larga modo sumitur, pro omni appeti-
tu. Ergo suffecisset dicere, peccatum est concupitum
contra legem aeternam; nec oportuit addere, dictum
vel factum.

arg. 3 Praeterea, peccatum proprie consistere vi-
detur in aversione a fine, nam bonum et malum
principaliter consideratur secundum finem, ut ex
supradictis patet. Unde et Augustinus, in I de Lib.
Arb., per comparisonem ad finem definit peccatum,
dicens quod peccare nihil est aliud quam, neglec-
tis rebus aeternis, temporalis sectari, et in libro
octoginta trium quaest., dicit quod omnis humana
perversitas est uti fruendis et frui utendis. Sed in
praemissa definitione nulla fit mentio de aversione a
debito fine. Ergo insufficiernter definitur peccatum.

arg. 4 Praeterea, ex hoc dicitur aliquid esse prohibi-
tum, quia legi contrariatur. Sed non omnia pecca-
cuta sunt mala quia prohibita, sed quaedam sunt prohibita
quia mala. Non ergo in communi definitione peccati
debeat ponit quod sit contra legem Dei.

arg. 5 Praeterea, peccatum significat malum hominis
actum, ut ex dictis patet. Sed malum hominis est
contra rationem esse, ut Dionysius dicit, IV cap. de
Div. Nom. Ergo potius debuit dici quod peccatum

Arg. 1: It would seem that sin is unfittingly
defined by saying: “sin is a word, deed, or desire,
contrary to the eternal law.” Because “word,”
deed,” and “desire” imply an act; whereas not ev-
er sin implies an act, as stated above (Article [5]).
Therefore this definition does not include every sin.

Objection 1: Further, Augustine says (De Duab.
Anim. xii): “sin is the will to retain or obtain what
justice forbids.” Now will is comprised under desire,
in so far as desire denotes any act of the appetite.
Therefore it was enough to say: “sin is a desire con-
trary to the eternal law,” nor was there need to add
“word” or “deed.”

Objection 3: Further, sin apparently consists
properly in aversion from the end: because good and
evil are measured chiefly with regard to the end as
explained above (Question [1], Article [3]; Question
[18], Articles [4], 6; Question [20], Articles [2], 3):
wherefore Augustine (De Lib. Arb. i) defines sin in
reference to the end, by saying that “sin is nothing
else than to neglect eternal things, and seek after
temporal things”: and again he says (Qq. lxxxii, qu.
30) that “all human wickedness consists in using
what we should enjoy, and in enjoying what we
should use.” Now the definition is question contains
no mention of aversion from our due end: therefore
it is an insufficient definition of sin.

Objection 4: Further, a thing is said to be forbid-
den, because it is contrary to the law. Now not all
sins are evil through being forbidden, but some are
forbidden because they are evil. Therefore sin in
general should not be defined as being against the
law of God.

Hence even not to will may be called voluntary, in
so far as man has it in his power to will, and not to
will.

Reply to Objection 3: The sin of omission is con-
trary to an affirmative precept which binds always,
but not for always. Hence, by omitting to act, a man
sins only for the time at which the affirmative pre-
cept binds him to act.
sit contra rationem, quam quod peccatum sit contra legem aeternam.

Sed Contra. In contrarium sufficit auctoritas Augustini.

Corpus. Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut ex dictis patet, peccatum nihil aliud est quam actus humanus malus. Quod autem aliquid actus sit humanus, habet ex hoc quod est voluntarius, sicut ex supradictis patet, sive sit voluntarius quasi a voluntate elicitus, ut ipsum velle et eligere; sive quasi a voluntate impropertus, ut exteriores actus vel locutionis vel operationis. Habet autem actus humanus quod sit malus, ex eo quod caret debita commensuratione. Omnis autem commensuratio cuiuscumque rei attenditur per comparationem ad aliquam regulam, a qua si diversitat, incommensurata erit. Regula autem voluntatis humanae est duplex, una propinqua et homogenea, scilicet ipsa humana ratio; alia vero est prima regula, scilicet lex aeterna, quae est quasi ratio Dei. Et ideo Augustinus in definitione peccati posuit duo, unum quod pertinet ad substantiam actus humani, quod est quasi materiale in peccato, cum dixit, dictum vel factum vel concupitum; aliud autem quod pertinet ad rationem mali, quod est quasi formale in peccato, cum dixit, contra legem aeternam.

ad 1 Ad primum ergo dicendum quod affirmatio et negatio reducuntur ad idem genus, sicut in divinis genitum et ingenitum ad relationem, ut Augustinus dicit, in V de Trin. Et ideo pro codem est accipienda dictum et non dictum, factum et non factum.

ad 2 Ad secundum dicendum quod prima causa peccati est in voluntate, quae imperat omnes actus voluntarios, in quibus solus invenitur peccatum, et ideo Augustinus quandoque per solam voluntatem definit peccatum. Sed quia etiam ipsi exteriores actus pertinent ad substantiam peccati, cum sint secundum se mali, ut dictum est, necesse fuit quod in definitione peccati poneretur etiam aliquid pertinentis ad exteriores actus.

ad 3 Ad tertium dicendum quod lex aeterna primo et principaliter ordinat hominem ad finem, consequenter autem facit hominem bene se habere circa ea quae sunt ad finem. Et ideo in hoc quod dicit contra legem aeternam, tangit aversionem a fine, et omnes alias inordinationes.

ad 4 Ad quartum dicendum quod, cum dicitur quod

Objection 5: Further, a sin denotes a bad human act, as was explained above (Article [1]). Now man’s evil is to be against reason, as Dionysius states (Div. Nom. iv). Therefore it would have been better to say that sin is against reason than to say that it is contrary to the eternal law.

On the contrary, the authority of Augustine suffices (Contra Faust. xxii, 27).

I answer that, As was shown above (Article [1]), sin is nothing else than a bad human act. Now that an act is a human act is due to its being voluntary, as stated above (Question [1], Article [1]), whether it be voluntary, as being elicited by the will, e.g. to will or to choose, or as being commanded by the will, e.g. the exterior actions of speech or operation. Again, a human act is evil through lacking conformity with its due measure: and conformity of measure in a thing depends on a rule, from which if that thing depart, it is incommensurate. Now there are two rules of the human will: one is proximate and homogeneous, viz. the human reason; the other is the first rule, viz. the eternal law, which is God’s reason, so to speak. Accordingly Augustine (Contra Faust. xxii, 27) includes 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.”

Reply to Objection 1: Affirmation and negation are reduced to one same genus: e.g. in Divine things, begotten and unbegotten are reduced to the genus “relation,” as Augustine states (De Trin. v, 6,7): and so “word” and “deed” denote equally what is said and what is not said, what is done and what is not done.

Reply to Objection 2: The first cause of sin is in the will, which commands all voluntary acts, in which alone is sin to be found: and hence it is that Augustine sometimes defines sin in reference to the will alone. But since external acts also pertain to the substance of sin, through being evil of themselves, as stated, it was necessary in defining sin to include something referring to external action.

Reply to Objection 3: The eternal law first and foremost directs man to his end, and in consequence,
non omne peccatum ideo est malum quia est prohibitum, intelligitur de prohibitione facta per ius positivum. Si autem referatur ad ius naturale, quod continetur primo quidem in lege aeterna, secundario vero in naturali iudicatorio rationis humanae, tunc omne peccatum est malum quia prohibitum, ex hoc enim ipso quod est inordinatum, iuri naturali repugnat.

ad 5 Ad quintum dicendum quod a theologis consideratur peccatum praecipue secundum quod est offensa contra Deum, a philosopho autem morali, secundum quod contrariatur rationi. Et ideo Augustinus convenientius definit peccatum ex hoc quod est contra legem aeternam, quam ex hoc quod est contra rationem, praecipue cum per legem aeternam regulamur in multis quae excedunt rationem humanam, sicut in his quae sunt fidei.

makes man to be well disposed in regard to things which are directed to the end: hence when he says, “contrary to the eternal law,” he includes aversion from the end and all other forms of inordinateness.

Reply to Objection 4: When it is said that not every sin is evil through being forbidden, this must be understood of prohibition by positive law. If, however, the prohibition be referred to the natural law, which is contained primarily in the eternal law, but secondarily in the natural code of the human reason, then every sin is evil through being prohibited: since it is contrary to natural law, precisely because it is inordinate.

Reply to Objection 5: The theologian considers sin chiefly as an offense against God; and the moral philosopher, as something contrary to reason. Hence Augustine defines sin with reference to its being “contrary to the eternal law,” more fittingly than with reference to its being contrary to reason; the more so, as the eternal law directs us in many things that surpass human reason, e.g. in matters of faith.