

SUMMA THEOLOGIÆ, 122æ. 86, 1

Quaestio 86. de macula peccati

Deinde considerandum est de macula peccati.

Et circa hoc quæruntur duo:

- 1. utrum macula animæ sit effectus peccati;
- 2. utrum remaneat in anima post actum peccati.

articulus I. utrum peccatum causet aliquam maculam in anima

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur: 1 1. Videtur quod peccatum non causet aliquam maculam in anima. Natura enim superior non potest inquinari ex contactu naturæ inferioris; unde radius solaris non inquinatur per tactum corporum fœtidorum, ut Augustinus dicit. 2 Sed anima humana est multo superioris naturæ quam res commutabiles ad quas peccando convertitur. Ergo ex eis maculam non contrahit peccando.

- 2. Præterea, peccatum est principaliter in voluntate, ut supra dictum est.³ Voluntas autem est in ratione, ut dicitur in 3 De Anima.⁴ Sed ratio sive intellectus non maculatur ex consideratione quarumcumque rerum, sed magis perficitur. Ergo nec voluntas ex peccato maculatur.
- 3. Præterea, si peccatum maculam causat, aut macula illa est aliquid positive aut est privatio pura. Si sit aliquid positive, non potest esse nisi dispositio vel habitus; nihil enim aliud videtur ex actu causari. Dispositio autem et habitus non est; contingit enim, remota dispositione vel habitu, adhuc remanere maculam, ut patet in eo qui peccavit mortaliter prodigalitate et postea transmutatur mortaliter peccando in habitum vitii oppositi. Non ergo macula ponit aliquid positive in anima. Similiter etiam nec est privatio pura, quia omnia peccata conveniunt* ex parte

^{*}Piana: eveniunt, happen: all sins happen because of . . .

¹cf IV Sent. 18, 1, 2, i.; 1a2æ. 89, 1

²Contra quinque hæreses 5. PL 42, 1107. A pseudo-Augustinian work

³¹a2æ. 74, 1 & 2

⁴Aristotle, De Anima III, 9. 432b5

^aSee Introduction, p. xiii, on the order of Questions in the treatise on sin.
^bBiblical metaphors, e.g. *Jeremiah* 3, 22, *Thou are stained in thy iniquity before me, saith the Lord God*; other texts, *Ecclesiasticus* 31; *Isaiah* 4, 4; *Ezekiel* 14, *Ephesians, Titus* 1, 15 are the reason the idea of stain (*macula*) was developed in theological

Ittus 1, 15 are the reason the idea of stain (macuta) was developed in theological literature. Doubtless the point is incorporated here because of the tradition from Peter Lombard, IV Sent. 18, 5 (Quaracchi II, 866); the stain is the soul's unlikeness to God who is its life and purity (cf II Sent. 35, 5; Quaracchi I, 497; Augustine, De div. quæst. LXXXIII, 20. PL 40, 16). See the commentary of St Thomas, IV Sent. 18, I, 2, i-iii, for the several connotations he sees in the term 'stain', e.g. ugliness, darkness, contagion—all contrasted with traditional metaphorical language



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Question 86. the stain of sin

Next a we must discuss the stain of sin.

There are two points of inquiry:

- 1. whether one effect of sin is a stain of soul;
- 2. and one that lingers in the soul after the sinful act is over.

article I. whether sin brings about any stain in the soul

THE FIRST POINT: 1 I. It seems that sin does not cause any stain in the soul. A higher kind of being is not defiled by coming into contact with a lower; in Augustine's example a sunbeam is not contaminated when it shines on rotting bodies. Now the human soul is of a much higher nature than the transitory goods to which it turns in sinning. Therefore in sinning the soul does not contract a stain from them.

- 2. Further, that sin resides chiefly in the will has already been determined.³ As Aristotle puts it, the will is in the reason,⁴ and reason or intellect is not stained but bettered no matter what sort of things it thinks of. Therefore neither is the will defiled by sinning.
- 3. Further, if sin causes a stain, this stain is either something existing positively or it is a sheer privation. If something existing positively, it can only be either a disposition or a habit, since it seems that nothing else is caused by an act. But a stain of sin is neither one, the proof being that a disposition or habit may be removed and yet a stain remains; for

about grace. For the use made of the concept in the *Summa*, see 1a2æ. 100, 11; 105, 2; 109, 7; 112, 5. 2a2æ. 3, 10 & 12; 33, 2; 186, 3; 3a. 8, 3; 22, 3; 27, 1, 2, 3; 52, 7; 64, 5; 66, 7; 68, 4; 69, 2; 71, 3; 87, 2; 88, 1; 89, 5.

c'turning to (conversio) the changeable good', 'turning away (aversio) from the changeless good' are the double movement in the sinful act; see 1a2æ. 71, 6; 72, 1 & 5; 73, 2; 75, 1; 78, 1 & 3. CG III, 9. De Malo 1 & 2. As with other descriptions of sin, the terms apply strictly to mortal sin; see 89, 1. 3a. 86, 2 & 4; 87, 1. Note this expression of the double movement: 'The will of man is turned away (aversa) from God by its turning toward the transient good' (3a. 86, 2).

dSee 3a. 14, 3, for *contrahit*, as meaning that the privative effects of sin are consequences that follow necessarily in justice (necessitate justitiæ).

ePrivation in St Thomas's usage (from Aristotle, Categories 10-11. 11b15-14a25) is not simply an absence or a negation, but the lack in a subject of what should be possessed or present (see In Meta. v, lect. 20). Since sin is 'an act lacking due order' (actus debito ordine privatus), privation is a primary concept in this treatise; see 1a2æ. 71, 6; 72, 1 & ad 2.

¹As used here, disposition and habit are qualities, and are produced by repeated acts; disposition is a less deeply induced quality than is a habit; see 1a2æ. 49, 1, 2 & ad 3; 50, 2; 51, 2 and Vol. 22 ed. A. Kenny.



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aversionis et privationis gratiæ. Sequeretur ergo quod omnium peccatorum esset una macula. Ergo macula non est effectus peccati.

SED CONTRA est quod dicitur Eccl. Salomini, Dedisti maculam in gloria tua;⁵ et Ephes., Ut exhiberet sibi gloriosam Ecclesiam, non habentem maculam aut rugam.⁶ Et utrobique loquitur de macula peccati. Ergo macula est effectus peccati.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod macula proprie dicitur in corporalibus, quando aliquod corpus nitidum perdit suum nitorem ex contactu alterius corporis, sicut vestis et aurum et argentum aut aliud hujusmodi. In rebus autem spiritualibus ad similitudinem hujus oportet maculam dici. Habet autem anima hominis duplicem nitorem: unum quidem ex refulgentia luminis naturalis rationis, per quam dirigitur in suis actibus; alium vero ex refulgentia divini luminis, scilicet sapientiæ et gratiæ, per quam etiam homo perficitur ad bene et decenter agendum. Est autem quasi quidam animæ tactus, quando inhæret aliquibus rebus per amorem. Cum autem peccat, adhæret aliquibus rebus contra lumen rationis et divinæ legis, ut ex supra dictis patet. Unde ipsum detrimentum nitoris tali contactu proveniens macula animæ metaphorice vocatur.

- 1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod anima non inquinatur ex rebus inferioribus virtute earum, quasi agentibus eis in animam. Sed magis e converso anima sua actione se inquinat, inordinate eis inhærendo contra lumen rationis et divinæ legis.
- 2. Ad secundum dicendum quod actio intellectus perficitur secundum quod res intelligibiles sunt in intellectu per modum ipsius intellectus, et ideo intellectus ex eis non inficitur sed magis perficitur. Sed actus voluntatis consistit in motu ad ipsas res, ita quod amor rei amatæ animam

⁵Ecclesiasticus 47, 22

Ephesians 5, 27

⁷¹a2æ. 71, 6

⁸See 1a2æ. 79, 3 on God's withdrawal of grace.

hRefer to the term macula in the Latin text.

¹See also 89, 1 & 3a. 87, 2 ad 3 for elaborations of the metaphor.

The stain as a lasting lack of spiritual beauty belongs to the properly theological data on sin. Sin here means primarily mortal sin (see 89, 1), the proper subject matter of the whole treatise. The opposition, the privative quality of the stain, is in reference to lost grace (see 1a2æ. 109, 7). The light of reason and the light of divine wisdom and grace or of the eternal law are to be understood in this context, not as expressing a stain in the 'natural order' as distinct from a stain related to the order of grace. Grace brings with it the enhancement of man's moral powers, 'infused virtues', both with regard to supernatural objectives and even with respect to properly human objectives (see 1a2æ. 109, 2; 110, 2-4). A sin that cuts off grace also deprives the sinner of these resources. The concept of stain as an



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example, a person who has committed a mortal sin of prodigality, by a subsequent act of mortal sin of another kind acquires the habit of that opposite vice. Thus a stain is nothing positive in the soul. Nor is the stain a sheer privation. Since all sins are alike in regard to the turning away from God and the deprival of grace,^g it would follow that the one stain belongs to all sins. Therefore a stain is not an effect of sin.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Ecclesiasticus (speaking to Solomon) says, Thou hast stained thy glory; and Ephesians, That he might present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle. Both texts refer to the stain of sin. Therefore one effect of sin is a stain on the soul.

REPLY: In its literal sense the word 'stain' refers to physical objects, as in the case where one bright object—e.g. a garment or some gold or silver item—loses its lustre by rubbing against another object. It is by simile with this use that the term should be applied to spiritual realities.¹ The human soul has a twofold radiance: one from the refulgence of the natural light of reason, by which its acts are guided; the other, from the refulgence of the divine light of wisdom and grace, which also empower man to act well and nobly. When through love the soul cleaves to certain things it is as though it were touching them; where sin is involved, the soul as it were rubs against certain things that go against the light of reason and of divine law. The impairment of the soul's radiance resulting from such a contact is described metaphorically as a stain of soul.¹

Hence: I. The soul is not tarnished by things lower than itself in the sense that by their own power these act on the soul. On the contrary the soul soils itself by its own action, attaching itself to such things inordinately, i.e. in a way contrary to the light of reason and of divine law.

2 An intellectual act comes to completion in so far as intelligible objects exist in the intellect in a way fitting the intellect's own kind of existence, this is why the intelligence is not infected but bettered by them. For its part, the act of the will is essentially a tendency towards things in their own existence, so that love fastens the soul upon the object loved.^k This is why there is a stain when the soul's choice is a disordered one; as it

abiding defect resulting from a sinful act has meaning only in reference to the abiding beauty brought by grace. The point is of some significance, since it is the permanance of the stain that functions in the theology of punishment and penitence (see art. 2; 89, 1; 109, 7; 3a. 22, 3; 87, 3 ad 3; 88, 1).

A distinction between knowing and loving frequently expressed and precisely applied; see, e.g., 1a. 14, 5 ad 2 & ad 3; 19, 3 ad 6; 57, 1 & ad 1; 82, 3; 1a2æ. 57, 1; 74, 8, etc.



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conglutinat. Et ex hoc anima maculatur quando inordinate inhæret, secundum illud Osee, Facti sunt abominabiles, sicut ea quæ dilexerunt.8

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod macula non est aliquid positive in anima, nec significat privationem solam. Sed significat privationem quamdam nitoris animæ in ordine ad suam causam, quæ est peccatum. Et ideo diversa peccata diversas maculas inducunt. Et est simile de umbra, quæ est privatio luminis ex objecto alicujus corporis et secundum diversitatem corporum objectorum diversificantur umbræ.

articulus 2. utrum macula maneat in anima post actum peccati

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur: 1 I. Videtur quod macula non maneat in anima post actum peccati. Nihil enim manet in anima post actum nisi habitus vel dispositio. Sed macula non est habitus vel dispositio, ut supra habitum est. 2 Ergo macula non manet in anima post actum peccati.

- 2. Præterea, hoc modo se habet macula ad peccatum sicut umbra ad corpus, ut supra dictum est.³ Sed transeunte corpore non manet umbra. Ergo et transeunte actu peccati non manet macula.
- 3. Præterea, omnis effectus dependet ex sua causa. Causa autem maculæ est actus peccati. Ergo, remoto actu peccati, non remanet macula in anima.

SED CONTRA est quod dicitur Jos., An parum est vobis, quia peccastis in Beelphegor, et usque in præsentem diem macula hujus sceleris in vobis permanet?⁴

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod macula peccati remanet in anima etiam transeunte actu peccati. Cujus ratio est quia macula, sicut dictum est,⁵ importat quemdam defectum nitoris propter recessum a lumine rationis vel divinæ legis. Et ideo quamdiu homo manet extra hujusmodi lumen, manet in eo macula peccati; sed postquam redit ad lumen rationis et ad lumen divinum, quod fit per gratiam, tunc macula cessat. Licet autem cesset actus peccati,

⁸Hosea 9, 10

¹1a2æ. 87, 6 ad 1

²art. 1 obj. 3

⁸art. 1 ad 3

⁴Joshua 22, 17

⁵art. I

¹Ia2æ. 73, 2, arguing against the Stoic position that all sins are equally evil, makes a distinction between a simple or pure privation and one in which something of its opposite remains. The thought is present here, too, and its implications are brought



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says in Hosea, They became abominable as those things were which they loved.8

3. The stain of sin is nothing existing positively in the soul, yet neither is it a simple privation. Rather it connotes that sort of privation of the soul's splendour which bears a relation to its cause, namely a sinful act. Thus different sins bring about different stains. We can take a shadow as an example: it is an absence of light caused by the interposition of some body, and shadows have different shapes corresponding to the bodies interposed.

article 2. whether the stain continues in the soul after the sinful act is over

THE SECOND POINT: 1. A stain, it seems, does not linger in the soul after the act of sinning. Nothing is left in the soul subsequent to an act except a habit or disposition. As already mentioned, 2 the stain of sin is neither of these. Therefore it is not left in the soul after an act of sin.

- 2. Further, as noted,³ the stain is related to sin as a shadow to a body. Once the body passes on, the shadow no longer remains. Neither, then, does a stain remain once the sinful act is past.
- 3. Further, every effect depends on its cause. The cause of a stain is a sinful act. Therefore, this ceasing to exist, a stain no longer continues in the soul.

ON THE OTHER HAND, there is the text of Joshua, Is it a small thing to you that you sinned with Beelphegor, and the stain of that crime remaineth in us to this day?⁴

REPLY: The stain of sin continues in the soul even after the passing of the sinful act. The reason is that the stain, as already shown,⁵ denotes a certain lack of radiance caused by drawing away from the light of reason or of divine law. Therefore as long as a person stays outside this light, the stain of sin remains; upon his return to the divine light and the light of

out in 3a. 88, 1: Since the turning away from God in mortal sin originates somehow in the turning towards a creaturely good, whatever is connected with the turning away will be diversified by the different ways of turning to as by different causes. Thus there is a different debt of eternal punishment as these result from different mortally sinful acts. The good of grace and of the virtues is thought of as hierarchic, the priorities being measured by the nearness to God each brings about. The deformities of different sins are measured by reference to the goods they oppose. Another side of the kind of privation in question is that none of the privative effects of sin can totally wipe out the capacity for grace and virtue; see 122x. 73, 2; 85, 1 & 2; Vol. 26, ed. T. C. O'Brien, Appendix 9.



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quo homo discessit a lumine rationis vel legis divinæ, non tamen statim homo ad illud redit in quo fuerat, sed requiritur aliquis motus voluntatis contrarius primo motui. Sicut si aliquis sit distans alicui per aliquem motum, non statim cessante motu fit ei propinquus, sed oportet quod appropinquet rediens per motum contrarium.

- 1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod post actum peccati nihil positive remanet in anima nisi dispositio vel habitus; remanet tamen aliquid privative, scilicet privatio conjunctionis ad divinum lumen.
- 2. Ad secundum dicendum quod transeunte obstaculo corporis, remanet corpus diaphanum in æquali propinquitate et habitudine ad corpus illuminans, et ideo statim umbra transit. Sed remoto actu peccati, non remanet anima in eadem habitudine ad Deum. Unde non est similis ratio.
- 3. Ad tertium dicendum quod actus peccati facit distantiam a Deo; quam quidem distantiam sequitur defectus nitoris hoc modo, sicut motus localis facit localem distantiam. Unde, sicut cessante motu locali non tollitur distantia localis, ita nec cessante actu peccati tollitur macula.

"Human evil is divided by St Thomas into evil of fault (malum culpæ) and evil of punishment (malum pænæ); cf 1a. 48, 5. This Reply and the ad 1 show that the stain of sin is related to the evil of fault (on the terms sin and fault, see 1a2æ. 21, 2); the point brought out is, in fact, how after a sinful act a person remains in a state of sin, remains blameworthy. Thus the metaphor of stain becomes the way of explaining the culpable alienation from God that the Christian concept of sin means. One can speak of the reatus culpæ and mean the stain of sin, and see how it is coupled with the reatus pænæ, as both are abiding conditions of the sinner after sin (cf 87, 6). As to the macula, just as sin is called fault because the sinner is responsible for his evil action (1a2æ. 21, 2), so the stain is his state of culpability; it is the privation of the grace he should have, but has lost by his sinful act. The stain is his state of sin. Some theologians identify the stain of sin with 'habitual sin', not in the sense in which vice is a habitual disposition to sin (see ad 1), but in



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reason, which is accomplished through grace, the stain passes away.^a While it is true that the sinful act stops, that act, namely, by which one wanders away from the light of reason and of divine law, still a person does not thereby return to his former state. There must be an act of will in a direction away from the sinful act.^b An example: if someone puts himself at a distance from a given point by moving away, he is not automatically near it again once he stops moving; he has to draw near through a return movement in the opposite direction.

Hence: 1. The sinful act being over, it is true that nothing in any positive sense is left in the soul except a disposition or habit; in a privative sense, however, something else does remain, namely lack of contact with the divine light.

- 2. When the obstacle blocking the light has passed, a luminous body remains in its original proximity and relationship to the source of its illumination; this is the reason the shadow disappears. But when a sinful act has passed, the soul no longer stands in its former relationship to God. Thus the comparison argued does not hold.
- 3. As local movement brings about distance from a place, the act of sin brings about as it were distance from God; the sequel of this is loss of the soul's radiance. Thus even as a halt in movement does not cancel out spatial distance, neither does cessation of the sinful act obliterate the stain of sin.

the sense that it is the abiding culpability corresponding to the kind of sin committed. In 89, I St Thomas will refer to the stain as a habitual condition or state; in Ia2æ. 109, 7 he points to the need of a habitual gift of grace to overcome the stain of sin. A helpful commentary on the point is to be found in the way original sin is described as a culpable, habitual condition, in Ia2æ. 82, I & ad 2 & ad 3; see also 3a. 68, 4.

bSee 1a2æ. 113, 1, 4, 5 & 8, on the process of justification.



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DEINDE CONSIDERANDUM EST de reatu pœnæ:

et primo, de ipso reatu;

secundo, de mortali et veniali peccato, quæ distinguuntur secundum reatum.

Quaestio 87. de reatu pœnæ

Circa primum quæruntur octo:

- 1. utrum reatus pœnæ sit effectus peccati;
- 2. utrum peccatum possit esse pæna alterius peccati;
- 3. utrum aliquod peccatum faciat reum æterna pæna;
- 4. utrum faciat reum pæna infinita secundum quantitatem;
- 5. utrum omne peccatum faciat reum æterna et infinita pæna;
- 6. utrum reatus pœnæ possit remanere post peccatum;
- 7. utrum omnis pœna inferatur pro aliquo peccato;
- 8. utrum unus sit reus pœnæ pro peccato alterius.

articulus 1. utrum reatus pænæ sit effectus peccati

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur: 1 I. Videtur quod reatus pœnæ non sit effectus peccati. Quod enim per accidens se habet ad aliquid, non videtur esse proprius effectus ejus. Sed reatus pœnæ per accidens se habet ad peccatum, cum sit præter intentionem peccantis. Ergo reatus pœnæ non est effectus peccati.

- 2. Præterea, malum non est causa boni. Sed pæna bona est, cum sit justa et a Deo. Ergo non est effectus peccati, quod est malum.
 - 3. Præterea, Augustinus dicit, quod omnis inordinatus animus sibi ipsi

¹cf II Sent. 32, 1, 1; IV, 14, 2, 1, ii. CG III, 140. De Malo VII, 10
ªreatus pænæ. The Question maintains the objective force of reatus in its original, legal sense: the state of one accused or guilty (reus) in a legal action (res). The state of being justly under liability, debt or obligation to undergo punishment is seen as a real and necessary consequence in the one who has sinned. In English usage 'guilt' has acquired a strongly psychological and subjective sense; used objectively it indicates more the fact of culpability than the state of meriting punishment. 'Liability', 'debt' or 'obligation' are used in the translation to keep the objective sense of reatus. Note the following, II Sent. 42, 1, 2: '... guilt (reatus) is nothing else but the obligation to punishment; because this obligation is in a sense a mean between fault and punishment, for through fault one is obliged to punishment, the name of the mean (reatus) is transferred to the extremes and thus sometimes the fault or the punishment may be called "guilt" (reatus).' See also II Sent. 32, 1, 1;



GUILT

THE GUILT OF PUNISHMENT^a is the next effect of sin to be discussed:

first, guilt itself; (87);

secondly, mortal and venial sins, which are distinguished from each other on the basis of guilt (88-89).

Question 87. the guilt of punishment

On this subject there are eight points of inquiry:

- 1. whether a debt of punishment is an effect of sin;
- 2. whether a sin can be the punishment for another sin;
- 3. whether any sin makes a person liable to an everlasting punishment;
- 4. or a punishment that is of infinite quantity;
- whether every sin makes a sinner guilty of an everlasting and an unlimited punishment;
- 6. whether a debt of punishment still remains after the sinful act;
- 7. whether every penalty is inflicted for some sin;
- 8. whether one person may be answerable for another's sin.

article 1. whether guilt is an effect of sin

THE FIRST POINT: 1 I. A debt of punishment, it seems, is not an effect of sin. Should B have only an incidental reference to A, B would not seem to be A's proper effect. Obligation to punishment has only an incidental connection with sin, because it is outside the intention of the sinner. b It is, then, not an effect of sin.

- 2. Further, an evil is not the cause of a good. Punishment is good, being just and from God, and is therefore not the effect of an evil, namely sin.
 - 3. Further, Augustine writes that every disordered spirit is its own

III, 36, I, 5 ad 2; De Malo II, 2 ad 14. In pointing out remorse of conscience as a punishment, art. I touches on the psychological sense of guilt, yet even here the emphasis is on remorse as following in justice upon sin. The indispensable background to the concept of the debt of punishment is Iazæ. 2I, 3 & 4; there reatus is expressed as 'demerit', the opposite then of 'merit' in the general sense it has as a consequence of every human act; see Iazæ. 72, 5; 109, 7; 3a. 49, 6. Human evil is exhaustively divided into the evil of fault (malum culpæ) and the evil of punishment (malum pænæ); see Ia. 48, 5 & 6; the present Question devotes equal attention to the meaning of punishment; see also 2a2æ. 108, 3 & 4.

Description