THE VICE OF ACEDIA

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Who Can Understand Sins?

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Introduction

A. Reason for the study

The importance of a study of the vice of acedia is hardly self-evident. For one thing, it would seem that the vices have long received more than due attention on the theological stage, and that the spotlight might more profitably be placed on the virtues. More particularly, acedia seems to be a somewhat esoteric vice, entirely removed from the experience of confessors. Many will genially confess to sloth, but feel that "spiritual sloth," as acedia is frequently called, is something that need concern only those more perfect souls who have already reached the higher peaks of spirituality.

Yet while the casuists have treated abundantly of all manner of vice, the speculative moralists, as can be seen from even a casual perusal of the Thomistic Bibliography, have concentrated their efforts on the virtues to such an extent that the vices have been if not overlooked at least neglected. St. Thomas himself, however, never neglected a careful study of a vice in order that the virtue might be seen even more clearly from its opposite. He did not consider acedia to be some exotic growth, but one of the capital sins, that is, one of those sins which have such a primary attraction for the human appetite that they cause many other sins. And while confessors may not hear their penitents formally accuse themselves of such a sin, there is no assurance that acedia is not an important and potent force in many lives.

St. Thomas More cautioned others against making light of what he called sloth. "Sloth" is a sin so common...that of (it)

no man is ashamed, but we take it for a laughing matter and a sport. But surely, since it is a great capital sin indeed, the less we set thereby the more perilous it is, for the less we go about to amend it. Now to the intent that we do not deadly deceive ourselves, it is necessary that we consider well the weight. Which if we do, we shall find it far greater than we would before have weened." (1) The English martyr, while not avoiding the common confusion of acedia with one of its effects, goes on to point out that salvation depends not only on declining from evil, with which the other six capital vices are concerned, but on doing good, which the vice of acedia alone is able to destroy. (2)

Spiritual writers advise a frequent examination of conscience using the capital vices as the points of examination. (3) St. Bernard notes that acedia is a common occurrence among beginners. (4) And St. John of the Cross notes not only that beginners are not free from many defects in the matter of what he terms spiritual sloth, but that under its influence many turn away from the Way of Perfection. (5) Acedia may well be one of the barriers to perfection for those retarded souls, unfortunately all too numerous, of whom Père Garrigou Lagrange writes: "In the spiritual life, they are like abnormal children, who do not happily pass through the crisis of adolescence and who, though they do not remain children, never reach the full development of maturity."(6)

Likewise spiritual writers insist on the importance of the discovery and eradication of the predominant fault. Acedia should not be overlooked as a possible predominent fault not only in those of melancholy temperament who are naturally prone

to sadness, of which acedia is a species, but even in those sanguine persons who engage in much aimless activity, which is one of the results of acedia. Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Hamlet some striking observations on this predominant fault.

> So oft it chances in particular men,
> That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
> As, in their birth -- wherein they are not guilty,
> Since nature cannot choose his origin --
> By their o'ergrowth of some complexion
> Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
> Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
> The form of plausive manners, that these men,
> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
> Being nature's livery or fortune's star, --
> His virtues else -- be they as pure as grace,
> As infinite as man may undergo--
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault: the dram of e'il
> Doth all the noble substance often dout
> To his own scandal.
>
> (7)

This poetic rendition of the doctrine of the predominant fault has an especial interest in that it introduces the dramatic action of the tragedy which eventuates because of a fatal defect in the protagonist, a defect which some commentators take to be acedia. (8)

Nor is there any indication that acedia is a fault of past ages alone. Indeed, the very feverish activity of contemporary civilization might well be a sympton of this moral disease. Père Janvier, Lenten Preacher in Notre Dame during the first World War, declared: "In our times this mistaken disposition to melancholy is the cause of many falls; it quickly becomes a positive vice, and for those who abandon themselves to it, the beginning of numberless miseries." (9) Aldous Huxley, the modern prophet of despair, traces the history of acedia

(as he sees it) from the sin of the Desert Fathers through the humorological disease of the Renaissance down to the modern ennui which is the fruitful principle of all scientific and artistic activity. Then, with typical fatalism he concludes: "With us it (acedia) is not a sin or a disease of the hypochondries; it is a state of mind which fate has forced upon us." (10)

For those who still recognize acedia as a sin -- the casting off of the sweet yoke of Christ -- a remedy must be sought. The one remedy which St. Thomas suggests is frank recognition and resistance. For unlike temptations to unchastity which are to be fled, temptations to acedia must be squarely faced and evaluated for what they are -- the substitution of worthless values for those which are supremely worthwhile, the selling of one's birthright for a mess of pottage. (11)

Yet there is an absolute dearth of thorough and adequate treatment of this dangerous vice. There is an abundance of homiletic description, but it is not nor does it pretend to be precise and scientific. Thomists in particular seem impressed with the plan of the Summa which is to treat the virtues as ways to God, and the vices only in relation to the virtues. Acedia in the Summa is a sin against the joy which should flow from charity, and while the treatment is more than adequate, the proper perspective can be better gained from the more extensive treatment of the capital vices in the De Malo. Thus speculative study of acedia has been neglected, and other works, at least by emphasis, have fallen into one or other of two extremes. Those who have written ascetic works are interested in acedia's object, which is spiritual good, and have made

acedia very "spiritual," a special pitfall of souls somewhat advanced. In so doing, they tend to forget that acedia is a capital sin, and as such, a very common affliction of mankind, and at its very roots very physical indeed. Those who have avoided this Scylla by insisting on acedia's nature as a capital vice have fallen into the Charybdis of identifying acedia, which is an interior sadness, with one of its results, which is inactivity, or what is commonly called sloth.

It is for these reasons then -- for speculation on St. Thomas' theology of a vice, and for practical use in the direction of souls -- that the study of acedia is believed to be worth the effort.

B. Difficulty of the study

One of the reasons alleged for this study was the lack of thorough and adequate treatment. This lack is in itself a difficulty, a difficulty which is not alleviated but aggravated by the abundance of random treatment. Acedia has a long history--Greek, Patristic, Scholastic and Modern -- and the multitude of references make impossible a complete investigation in a study of this size and kind. The great bulk of the material is, however, homiletic rather than speculative. This means that while the material is valuable for description, it complicates the discussion by being unwieldly and vague.

This difficulty is not entirely extrinsic to the subject itself. After all, the question is a moral one, and therefore does not admit the same degree of certitude that one expects and demands in a dogmatic, metaphysical or mathematical treatise.

Aristotle obviates any misunderstanding of his ethic by placing the following warning:

> Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all products of the crafts. Now fine and just actions, which political science investigates, admits of much variety and fluctuation of opinion, so that they may be thought to exist only by convention and not by nature. And goods also give rise to a similar fluctuation because they bring harm to many people; for before now men have been undone by reason of their wealth, and others by reason of their courage. We must be content then, in speaking of such subjects and with such premisses to indicate the truth roughly and in outline, and in speaking about things which are only for the most part true and with premisses of the same kind to reach conclusions that are no better. In the same spirit, therefore, should each type of statement be received; for it is the work of the educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits; it is evidently equally foolish to accept probable reasoning from a mathematician and to demand from a rhetorician scientific proof. (12)

St. Thomas is similarly clear in seeking only that degree of certitude which moral science permits. The subject of our study is human vice, and the very humanity brings with it the element of contingency. A true and necessary universal must not be sought; the laws governing human virtue and vice are not inexorable necessities, but rather general patterns which concern themselves not with what happens in every case (in omnibus) but with what happens in most cases (in pluribus). This by no means signifies that, because metaphysical certitude is impossible, that the moral theologian or ethician can rest content with the descriptive generalities of sermon writers. Moral Theology and Ethics are sciences and, as such, have a certain precision and exactitude. Science is of universalsm and there can be no science of singulars. Human conduct follows

certain general lines, not exactly the same because of the individuality of men, but nonetheless a certain pattern can be discerned because humanity is the same and the goods possible to humanity are somewhat the same.

If this is true of all human conduct, it is especially true of vice. Vice by its very nature tends away from unity to a multiplicity of goods even as virtue tends towards unity by directing everything to one supreme good.

> The love of God is unitive, inasmuch as it draws man's affections from the many to the one; so that the virtues, which flow from the love of God, are connected together. But self-love disunites man's affections among many things, insofar as man loves himself, by desiring for himself temporal goods, which are various and of many kinds: hence vices and sins which arise from self-love, are not connected together.
>
> (13)

No wonder the Pythagoreans placed the number of evil to be infinite, and the Psalmist exclaimed: "Who can understand sins?"

In regard to acedia itself, it has been pointed out by one of the authorities on the matter that St. Thomas writes on acedia with a precision and thoroughness that cannot be found elsewhere. (14) The same historian of acedia adds that St. Thomas has so crystallized the concept of acedia that it has remained unchanged in Catholic Theology ever since. (15) The Common Doctor then will be our Vergil in the descent to the Inferno of acedia, and it will be our sole effort to examine the teaching of St. Thomas as it is found in Question II of the De Malo, in Question 35 of the Secunda-Secundae and in apposite places in his works. His commentators and others will explain and

illustrate his teachings so that there will be an approach to something in the nature of a thorough treatment of the vice of acedia.

The etymology of the word acedia has a history, one more properly discussed in connection with the problem of definitions. Whatever the evolution of its name, the reality so designated has itself a more important history in its role as a capital vice.

What is acedia? What is its role as a capital vice? The problem is not new and its long history can afford a penetrating insight of its meaning, clues to its solution. Discerning students of morals have long perceived the reality. They have not always agreed in their presentation of its nature and function.

The intellectual history of acedia may be logically divided into a period of formation in which two definite traditions were formulated, a period of choice in which writers select one or another of the traditions and, finally, a period of definition in which the concept is crystallized. From this hstory it will be possible to conclude that in practically every list of the principal vices which beset mankind, moral teachers have included acedia or something closely akin to it. It will also be evident from this history that there has been some confusion of acedia with what is commonly called sloth, largely because certain writers have placed a special emphasis on a particular and peculiar manifestation of acedia in spiritual men.

Into this framework of intellectual history, we may fit several other considerations which will be of value in its total estimation. First, we will include some brief indications of the repercussions this intellectual history of acedia has had on the liberal and fine arts. And secondly, we will allude to the existence of the reality for certain conditions in a temporal period are especially productive

of certain vices.

A. Period of Formation

Most histories of the capital vices, including acedia, begin with the Fathers of the Church, referring but briefly to the catalogues of sin found in the Sacred Scriptures. However, even the pagan philosophers of Greece and Rome noted the primary attraction certain vices has for human appetites. Zeno, the Stoic, included among his "Four Passions and Four Evils" sadness which, as will later be evident, is the genus of acedia. (16) Cicero rests content with but four evils, one of which is grief of mind (aegritudo). (17) Horace in a list which corresponds quite closely to the catalogues of later Christian theology names inactivity which, while really an effect of acedia, is often confused with acedia itself. (18)

The Sacred Scriptures, while stigmatizing each of the sins which later came to be called capital, offers no complete classification. St. Augustine saw a reference to acedia in the Psalms: "Their soul abhorred all manner of meat: and they drew nigh even unto the gates of death." (19) St. Thomas even find the word acedia in the Vulgate: "Bow down the shoulder and bear her (namely, spiritual wisdom): and be not grieved (acedieris) with her bands." (20) St. Thomas also identified acedia with the "sadness of the world" which St. Paul says "worketh death." (21) Acedia, however, is not mentioned among those sins which Sacred Scripture lists as the causes of other sins. The Book of Ecclesiasticus points out, for instance, that pride is the beginning of every sin. (22) St. Thomas explains this by saying that inasmuch as pride is the inordinate desire for one's own excellence, it is found in every sin. However, even if pride is taken as a special sin, St. Thomas adds, it is the beginning of every sin because this desire for excellence is the first in intention, while

individual sins of other species are means towards the execution of this intention. (23) In much the same manner does St. Thomas explain the text of St. Paul: "The root of all evils is the desire for money." (24) Money is the root of evil, for like the root money provides nourishment, that is, the power of perpetrating every kind of evil. (25) The final text which mentions sins which are the causes of other sins is that of St. John: "For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life which is not of the Father, but is of the world." (26) These are, in fact, the three great manifestations of the selfish spirit in regard to three different orders: the goods of the body, exterior goods, and the goods of the spirit. (27) These three categories provide general classifications to which acedia with the other capital sins were later reduced.

The Patristic period is the proper period for the formation of the theology of the capital vices. In its early portion, certain sins were called capital in the same sense in which we speak of capital crimes, that is, certain crimes which by their heinousness deserved capital punishment. With the Fathers, however, capital punishment was not the penalty but protracted and public penance. Sins such as blasphemy, rape, apostasy and homicide were then not capital sins in the sense in which capital later came to be understood, that is, certain sins which had a primary attraction to the human appetite and which, in their turn, were the cause of most, if not all other human vices.

It was Cassian who first formulated the theology of the capital vices in this sense. He was not, however, without predecessors such as Evagirus Ponticus, Nilus of Constantinople, and Abbot Serapion whom he mentions by name. (28) The character of Cassian's work, the

Conferences or Institute of Cenobites, has an important bearing on his treatment of the capital vices. The Desert Fathers had fled from a corrupt pagan world into the wilderness of Egypt to enter the lists of the spiritual combat. Cassian's book was intended as a manual of arms for the soldier of Christ whether hermit or cenobite; it was read with interest and enthusiasm not only by those for whom it was written but by many later valiant souls who left the world to consecrate themselves to Christ. Among these were Saint Dominic, who found in this book with the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Epistles of St. Paul his favorite spiritual reading. His illustrious son, St. Thomas, was also a reader of Cassian, although for scientific precision and authority, he preferred not this Father of Eastern Monasticism, but a spiritual son of the Founder of Western Monasticism, the Holy Pontiff St. Gregory the Great. Cassian's book then, devoted as it was to those souls striving for perfection away from the world, dwelt on the perils of the capital vices which were more or less peculiar to them. Cassian had an important influence on the development of acedia for he distinguished, as had Evagirus, acedia from sadness, thus making eight capital sins. (29) Although Cassian listed separate effects for acedia and sadness, (30) he saw them as closely connected; indeed, he has all the vices arranged in order of the soul's attack against them. Sadness, he says, gives rise to acedia. (31) Acedia he obviously conceives as something like what is now called sloth (pigritia) and there he is quite in harmony with later theology which placed sloth (pigritia) as one of the principal effects of acedia. (32)

This sadness and this acedia he distinguishes from the other capital vices as being at once less corporeal than lust and gluttony which are sins committed with the assistance of the body, and at the same time as less spiritual than pride and vainglory which are sins of the mind. (33) They occupy rather a middle position with anger and envy, but unlike envy and anger they are not caused by external stimuli but are "interior agitations of the mind." (34) What Cassian meant by "interior" will be better understood if we recall what has just been said about the class of readers for whom the book was intended. While envy and anger would not be found in solitaries, to whom other humans gave no occasion for these sins, acedia and sadness could be found even in them. In that respect, they needed no external cause.

In the same chronological period is the Stairway to Paradise of St. John Climacus. (35) Although he relies heavily on Cassian, he changed certain points in conformity with the teaching of St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. John Damascene, and others whom he does not name. However, in respect to acedia he is in agreement with Cassian so that, for our purposes, he may be said to belong rather to the subsequent period of choice rather than this present period of formation.

The last name in this period of formation is that of one of the four great Doctors of the West, and it is his doctrine on the capital sins which has become the triumphant one. St. Gregory the Great, oddly enough, gives practically no detail beyond the simple cataloguing, no reason for his classification, no description of his categories (36); yet through St. Thomas

his has become the predominant teaching. Where Cassian made two vices, sadness and acedia, St. Gregory simply substitutes one which he calls sadness (tristitia). Cassian had enumerated many effects of each vice: rancour, pusillanimity, bitterness and despair as effects of sadness; idleness, supineness, importunity, disquietude, a roving disposition, inconstancy of mind, much speaking and curiosity as effects of what he called acedia. (37) Gregory, on the other hand, is almost parsimonious with his list of effects; there are simply six "daughters": despair, rancor, malice, torpor about precepts, pusillanimity, and a wandering after illicit things.

B. PERIOD OF CHOICE

This next period which is characterized by a following of one or other of the two traditions, may be called that of choice. It roughly corresponds to the early medieval period as opposed to the Patristic period which we have just treated. We have already mentioned St. John Climacus as logically, although not chronologically, belonging to this period of little development.

St. John Climacus, we have said, followed the tradition of Cassian. St. Isidore of Seville, on the other hand, follows the Gregorian tradition (38); he used, however, a different order. Alcuin prefers the classification and order of Cassian. (39) Peter Lombard, who was for St. Thomas the "Master," follows St. Gregory (40), and St. Thomas himself in his early work, the Commentary on the Sentences, follows his Master with but brief comment on the general character of capital vices. (41)

Before proceeding to a discussion of the definitive

work of St. Thomas on the capital vice of acedia, it will be interesting to note something of the homiletic and artistic tradition which was beginning to flourish even as the definitive theology of the vices was in the process of becoming. This tradition, while extending far beyond St. Thomas, seems to have profited very little from his or any scientific theology of the vices. Perhaps its very character excluded any discussion of essences or careful divisions. The homiletic purpose was at first the most evident. Preachers found an easily remembered framework for sermons in the opposition they made between the seven virtues and seven vices. St. Gregory had opposed seven vices, quite distinct from the capital vices, to the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost (42). This opposition had been largely passed over in theology itself, but the idea of a struggle between vices and virtues or the Psychomachia became a vogue, probably because of the allegorical character of much medieval preaching. Caesarius of Heisterbach, William of Auvergne, and Robert of Flamesbury offered manuals for preaching which devoted large sections to the "Saliga", a memory device for the capital sins originated by Henry of Ostia in 1271. (43)

The Dominicans, however, seem soon to have preempted the field, and later literary and artistic tradition is in heavy debt to Vincent of Beauvais. (44) William Perrault (45) and Lorens of Orleans. (46) The last named was probably St. Thomas' Prior at the Parisian convent of Saint-Jacques, but neither seems to have derived much from the other. For a long time,

Lorens was thought to be the source of the Parson's Tale in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, a tale which is not a tale at all, but a longish sermon on penance. (47) Later scholarship, however, has demonstrated that the part of the sermon dealing directly with penance is indebted to St. Raymond of Pennafort, while the treatise on the capital vices is taken from the work of William {Perrault}. (48)

These works were very diffuse in division and description; they were none the less popular. Peckham, the Franciscan Archbishop of Canterbury who was the vigorous opponent of St. Thomas, insisted that a treatise on the seven capital vices be part of the catechetical instruction given to the faithful at least once a year, (49) and while this injunction may not have been carried out to the letter, there was doubtlessly a majority of conscientious priests who used one or other of the available manuals towards this end. Thus the seven vices secured a grip on the medieval imagination, and the influence on art, drama and literature is nothing short of astonishing.

The most notable influence was on the drama which, before the Renaissance, dealt entirely with religious themes. The morality play was allegorical and, since it usually concerned man's struggle for salvation, the seven deadly sins played a prominent part as allies of the enemy. Fra Angelico's "Last Judgment" has hell divided into seven sections, one of which is prominently labelled "acedia". It is said, however, that this section of the painting was not done by the gentle Friar who applied his brush only to celestial beauty.

We have already mentioned Chaucer's "Parson's Tale."

A more allegorical work is William Langland's "Vision of Piera Plowman" which has a noteworthy section on "Acedia" personified. (50) Dante's seven-storied mountain of Purgatorio consists in a progressive purification of seven "p's" (for peccata) written on the earthly pilgrim's brow. In one canto Dante is startled by a throng of spirits running at full speed to atone for acedia. They shout this advice over their shoulder: (51)

"Through faint love O let not a moment lapse"

which seems to indicate that "Aquinas in verse" knew something about the opposition of acedia to charity.

The threads of the allegory of the seven-fold misery of man reaches down through Spenser even to Milton. As the Renaissance progressed, however, interest in the literary form of the allegory as well as preoccupation with moral problems which related to the sacrament of penance waned, for a Protestant theology and a secularist culture had no use for such things. The phenomenon, however, was still present and one of the predominant themes of Renaissance writing was melancholy. Melancholy however, even when it was called acedia, was no longer a moral fault, but a disease attributable to the lack of harmony in the bodily humors. (52)

C. Period of Definition

To return to the scientific theology of acedia as it is expressed in St. Thomas, we find that he is not at all unfaithful to the traditional patristic theology of the capital vices; he simply chooses the tradition of Gregory and harmonizes some of the other views on the question. He does this by a scholastic analysis of the special ends of these sins, and rigidly defines

not only acedia itself, but its effects. His classical treatment of the capital vices in general and particular is found in the De Malo; however, practically everything he writes there is found in condensed form in the Second Part of the Summa Theologica. There is no question of any revision of doctrine, since the De Malo was probably written between 1269 and 1272, and the Summa (that is, the part containing the capital vices in particular) either simultaneously or immediately after. (53)

Since the object of the entire dissertation is the explanation of the Thomistic doctrine on acedia, we need only point out its main features in this historical synopsis. St. Thomas substitutes the word acedia or accidia for St. Gregory's sadness (tristitia) and this he explains by a rigorous scientific definition. While any inordinate sadness is sinful, acedia which is a sadness about the Divine good as it is in us has a special malice, since that Divine good is indeed a true good which should elicit joy rather than sadness. Acedia is by its very nature a mortal sin, since it is directly opposed to the joy which is an effect of charity, which in turn is the life of the soul. Acedia is a capital sin because it causes many other sins, the principal ones being enumerated by St. Thomas. St. Thomas disapproves of Cassian's catalogue of capital sins which made acedia and sadness separate vices. He prefers the authority of St. Gregory, from whom he also derives the "daughters" of acedia, which he goes on to explain in themselves and in relation to acedia. The analysis of St. Thomas is generally repeated by all subsequent theologians who have written of acedia. (54)

This repetition of St. Thomas, however, has not in every

case helped to clarify the notion of acedia. Indeed, changes of terminology and the emphasis of some particular aspects of acedia have generated more than a little confusion. For one thing, Thomists were more influenced by the treatment of acedia in the Summa rather than in the De Malo, for the Summa became the text of Thomism, and most of the commentaries were written on it. This worked to the disadvantage of the theology of the capital vices, for the very plan of the Summa affords them a subsidiary place. The Second Part of the Summa treats of God as the final end of man, the virtues as means to this end, and the vices only as defections from the virtues. Thus those who commented on the Summa were prone to see in acedia only another sin against charity, and to minimize its role as a capital vice which, while clearly maintained in the Summa, is better seen in the context of the De Malo. Ordinarily, the commentators wasted few words on the subject.

However, when these commentators did spend some time on the subject, they were very faithful to the doctrine of St. Thomas and indeed enriched that doctrine by their explanation of some of its elements. Thus Cajetan (55) followed by Bannes (56) and De Valentia (57) did great service by their determination of the precise formal object of acedia. St. Antoninus (58), Natalis Alexander (59)and Melchior Cano (60)by insisting on the spiritual character of that object let the emphasis remain there so that the unwary student may be led to forget that acedia has its basis in a passion, and that its raison d'être is physical. These eminent commentators, however, did not deny this and they themselves point out the close relationship between acedia itself and its most notable effect, sloth (pigritia).

St. John of the Cross, probably quite unintentionally, added a new element to the concept of acedia, at least in terminology. He addressed his work to approximately the same audience as Cassian did and, while using scholastic terminology, is not overly concerned with the scholastic niceties if he can drive his point home. St. John of the Cross, then, writes of acedia as it appears in more subtle form in spiritual folk. This is not against the doctrine of St. Thomas in any way; it ~~does not~~ simply omits the very pertinent facts that acedia is by its very nature a mortal sin, and that, as a capital sin, it has a special attraction to all men, whether or not they were trying to lead a spiritual life. There has been some controversy as to whom St. John of the Cross referred when he spoke of the beginners. Whatever class he meant, he certainly did not mean people living in mortal sin, for such are not even beginning to love God. He writes of these beginners: "To show how weak are beginners in virtue...I proceed to explain with reference to the capital sins, pointing out some of the imperfections into which beginners fall in each of them." (61) These imperfections are particular manifestations of the capital vices; they do not signify the capital sin in its gross form, especially when that capital sin is mortal. In this context he writes of spiritual pride which disguises itself as a holy occupation with self, of spiritual avarice or the collection of objects of devotion, of spiritual gluttony which hungers after sensible consolations, of spiritual lust which cultivates spiritual friendships which are a disguise for sentimentality. Finally comes spiritual sloth or acedia which avoids spiritual occupations as irksome and as repugnant to the beginner's desire for sensible sweetness. (62)

Thus the terminology of spiritual sloth was introduced. As applied to the concept of acedia, it was alien to St. Thomas and, as we shall see, strictly speaking incorrect, or at least liable to inaccurate interpretation. Recent theology has identified acedia with "spiritual sadness" to such an extent that its causal nexus with sloth (pigritia) is confused, and for all practical purposes the tradition of Cassian making two capital sins of sadness and sloth has returned, with the exception that acedia has been omitted from the list of capital sins with the substitution of sloth. (pigritia)

While it is true that most modern commentators on the question of acedia follow St. Thomas, there are various degrees in their adherence to his doctrine. Billuart and Merkelbach follow St. Thomas very literally. Billuart offers no comment or explanation; (63) Merkelbach's sole original contribution is the suggestion of some remedies. (64) Janvier likewise follows the literal doctrine of St. Thomas but with an abundance of explanation and illustration. (65) He writes of acedia as disgust for divine things, but is very careful to give the reasons for his terminology, and its original source. While a literal follower of St. Thomas, Janvier does not hesitate to bring out new ramifications of the doctrine; he is especially concerned, for instance, to show that sensuality is at once the cause and effect of acedia.

There are other commentators who, while rendering St. Thomas with equal literalness have changed the terminology. Pegues (66) and Canon Lyons (67) term acedia "laziness" (paresse), although Canon Lyons entitles the entire section "Spiritual Disgust". Father Garrigou-Lagrange in a general way falls into this class since he sometimes uses acedia synonomously with laziness. (68)

Still other commentators have not only changed the terminology; they have more or less changed the distinctions of St. Thomas. Noldin, while retaining the notion of acedia as sadness sees this sadness only in regard to work. This sadness is either natural, that is, of the body, or spiritual, that is, moral. He is thus led by his division to remark that special acedia, that is spiritual acedia, is not committed very frequently. (69) Vasteenberghe follows approximately the same division, speaking of laziness (paresse or pigritia) in a wide sense in every domain of activity; acedia he restricts to the spiritual or supernatural sphere. (70) Fanfani similarly says that acedia in general is"a propensity to fulfill remissly and negligently any obligation," and this acedia or laziness (pigritia) is a venial sin; acedia in a special sense is opposed to the love of God, and is a mortal sin. Acedia, whether taken in the general or special sense, is the capital sin.(71)

As we have mentioned, Father Garrigou-Lagrange follows St. Thomas and reproduces his entire doctrine. On the other hand, he seems to have been influenced by St. John of the Cross in speaking of acedia as "a spiritual sloth". Moreover at times he identifies acedia with laziness (pigritia). (72)

It will be the work of subsequent chapters to determine in what sense acedia may be said to be spiritual, and what its relation is with laziness and sloth.

While the precise notion of acedia may be somewhat confused, the actuality is none the less a vigorous reality. The Romantics of the fin de siecle deliberately cultivated it under the name of ennui. (73) We have already mentioned Huxley's praise of acedia as the fruitful principle of all literary and artistic activity.(74) On the other hand, Huxley himself regards acedia as an inevitable

result of modern urbanization. (75) Whatever the cause, contemporary civilization has come to regard the practice of the spiritual life as a private matter, a hobby to be pursued as long as it does not interfere with those who take a more "realistic" attitude toward life. It would not seem too strong to indict many scientists in particular, since they are universally regarded as the outstanding representatives of our century, of the sin of acedia. Very often the scientist has nothing but contempt for anything which is not subject to laboratory investigation, and perhaps rising from this interior desolation comes the frenzied pursuit of science as its own end as a new form of that daughter of acedia which is called wandering after illicit things. Certainly the restless activity and hurried business of modern life may be taken as a symptom of presence rather than a guarantee of the absence of acedia.

CHAPTER 11

THE DEFINITION OF ACEDIA: THE PASSION

In this chapter we begin the hunt for the definition of acedia. Before proceeding to an investigation of the real definition, it will be useful to see something of the nominal definition, which includes common notions about the reality involved as well as the etymology of the word used to express that reality. This nominal definition, with the preceding historical conspectus, will help to set the stage for the investigation of the real definition by providing certain general notions about the realities involved and the various things that have been said about them. Ordinarily the real definition cannot be demonstrated but must proceed from the nominal or common definition, which determines only of what subject the question is asked, through a progressive division of the supreme genus even to the lowest genus, and through the ascending induction of the specific difference, from the comparison of things which are like and unlike. (77) While this process will, in general, be followed it must be realized that we are not starting out *de novo* to evolve a definition. St. Thomas has already defined with a precision that we believe eminently satisfactory; it will be our task only to explain the elements of the definition.

St. Thomas begins his treatment of the vice of acedia by distinguishing acedia as an act of the sensitive appetite and as an act of the intellective appetite. (78) Since the act of the sensitive appetite in this instance is the occasion for the act of the intellective appetite, the first element of the definition of acedia will be a discussion of the particular act of the sensitive appetite which is the basis for the vice of acedia. To

obtain a comprehensive view of this act of the sensitive appetite or passion, it will be necessary to proceed from a general consideration of the sensitive appetite itself and its acts, the passions, to a particular consideration of that passion which is the root of acedia -- the passion of sadness. In this particular discussion the essence of sadness itself and its various divisions will be treated. The chapter will conclude with a statement of the uniqueness of the passion of acedia, leaving for further discussion and complete definition its relation with the vice of acedia.

A. Nominal Definitions.

Any definition is an expression of the nature of a thing or term. A nominal definition concentrates on the significance of the term itself, and embraces both the etymological consideration, which shows the origin of a word by its analysis into elements and its primitive root, and also the common notions of men on the meaning of the word.

1. Common Notions

Acedia is not a common term; it has technical overtones which keep it out of common speech. Indeed we have deliberately chosen this rather esoteric word, not only because it is used by St. Thomas, but because the various synonyms given it in common parlance arouse prejudices which render its explanation more difficult. An ordinary dictionary for college students with no pretensions to strictly scientific accuracy defines acedia briefly as "sloth - one of the seven deadly sins; spiritual torpor or apathy." (79) Now sloth itself is such a common human phenomenon that there would seem to be no special difficulty in understanding it. On

examination, however, it becomes apparent that there is more than a little vagueness in the minds of those who are asked for a determination of its precise meaning. The same dictionary, which has no pretensions to psychological subtlety, says that sloth is a "disinclination to action or labor." (80) Obviously that is what sloth is, and no true definition, no matter how far that definition plumbs the essence of acedia or sloth, will be able to deny that. The immediate difficulty with such a definition is that by being so all-inclusive, it really tells us very little.

Under the word "idle," however, the same dictionary (81) pauses to give the various shades of meaning in words almost synonymous. "Idle" itself is said to "emphasize the fact of inactivity; it may or may not imply disparagement." When we say a machine is idle, we are not being uncharitable; we are simply stating a fact which has no necessary moral censure involved. The question: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" was answered as if no moral blame were imputed: "Because no man hath hired us." However had the question been put: "Why stand ye here all the day lazy?" there might have been some indignation in the reply, for laziness goes beyond the simple fact of inactivity to suggest a positive disinclination to work, such disinclination commonly being regarded as imputable. But while anyone may be conceded an occasional fit of laziness, indolence is quite another matter. For indolence (again following our guiding lexicographer) goes a step beyond a morally censurable act to connote a settled dislike of activity with a habitual love of ease. Sloth seems to involve all the elements of this progression, with the further note of being excessive, for it

is the temper of one who is inactive when he knows he should be active, or acts with slowness when speed is essential. To act with slowness when speed is essential, or to act without fervor when fervor is required seems to be the closely related essence of torpor.

Such are the common ideas about words closely related to acedia. Acedia itself has been variously rendered as sloth, spiritual sloth, disgust, ennui, melancholy, tediousness, evil sadness, spiritual sadness until several commentators have thrown up their hands in despair and simply stated that there was no exact equivalent. (82) In this, they were probably wiser than those who tried to fit it into another word, since practically no two words are exactly alike; otherwise one word would suffice.

2. Etymology

What then is the meaning of acedia itself? We can answer this only when we have evolved a satisfactory definition. However, we can, at this point, offer something in the way of the notion of the word acedia. St. Thomas obviously attaches some importance to the etymology of acedia, for while he does not give a thoroughly scientific etymology, he gives a popular one which is satisfactory for his purpose. In his first positive words on acedia in the Summa, the Holy Doctor uses a text of Ecclesiasticus: "Bow down thy shoulder and bear her (viz. spiritual wisdom), and be not grieved (acedieris) with her bonds." (83) The English text perforce introduces the Latin word, lest the allusion be lost. It is interesting to note that this use of the deponent verb acedior is unique in the works of St. Thomas.(83a)

The word means "to grieve" and the Greek word from which it is derived has the same sense of abhorrence or destation. St. Thomas then begins from this very etymology to identify acedia with sadness.

The second etymological consideration is found in the same article where, after defining acedia as sadness, the author writes: "thus acid things (acida) are also cold." (84) This example has caused some confusion as is evident in the diverse readings given cold (frigida) in the various codices. (84a) The confusion was probably engendered by the fact that if acids are to be identified with any temperature, it would be that of heat rather than cold. Although the Libellus de Alchimia of St. Albert does not mention acids at all, the liquids used to dissolve seem to predominate in the quality of heat. The source of confusion is most likely a misunderstanding of acids, since the word acida is better rendered &sour things" from the verb acere from which is derived the word acetum or vinegar. Moreover the whole context, describing as it does the effects of sadness, is physiological rather than chemical. Now sour things such as vinegar (weak acids in modern Chemistry) cause an organ to shrivel up, which is approximately the same physiological effect which is produced by cold. For instance, some people shiver or experience a prickly feeling on the skin when they taste a particularly sour pickle. Moreover, we still speak of the fervor and warmth of charity, and the opposite sourness and coldness of sadness, probably as a relic of Galenic humorology.

Nevertheless, modern etymologists would accuse St. Thomas of relying too heavily on the Latin, when the word acedia is

actually derived from the Greek ἀ κηδία , which signifies "not care". This would not perturb St. Thomas since he held that -

> In the significance of names, that from which the name is derived is different sometimes from what it is intended to signify, as for instance this stone (lapis) is imposed from the fact that it hurts the foot (laedit pedem), but it is not imposed to signify that which hurts the foot, but rather to signify a certain kind of body; otherwise everything that hurts the foot would be a stone. (85)

St. Thomas used the etymological allusion as an illustration of his contention that acedia was a kind of sadness. Had he had the advantage of tbe Greek etymology, he could equally well have used the "not-care" signification as a point of departure. For not to care about that which should be cared for is the same as sadness about a real good.

B. ACEDIA AS AN ACT OF THE SENSITIVE APPETITE

With this section we begin the investigation of the real definition of the sin of acedia. Now in all creation there are only two classes of beings which are capable of sin: men and angels. The sin of acedia, however, St. Thomas says is impossible to the angels (86). Therefore the human sinner is the subject of the sin of acedia. It will be of considerable help to look into this sinner himself before entering on a discussion of the sin. However we need not write a treatise on the nature of man, for sin consists in a desire for some commutable good which is inordinately desired, and it will suffice for our purposes to investigate the faculty of desire which is the appetite.

Nevertheless the nature of an appetite can be understood only by reference to the faculty of which it is the appetite. Careful consideration of the human soul shows two different regions: one of the sensible order, the other of the supra-sensible or intellectual order. The sensitive part man possesses in common with the animals; it comprises the five external senses and the internal senses of imagination, estimative power (vis estimativa), sensitive memory and the sensitive appetite from which spring the various passions. This sensitive appetite follows the knowledge of sense which is of particular, material things. It is frequently called sensuality which St. Thomas, following Peter Lombard, defines as "the appetite of things pertaining to the body." (87) It is the inclination or motion toward a thing following some cognition of the five external senses or of the imagination. When we say motion towards a thing, however,

we mean it in the larger sense which includes motion away from an object.

Above this sensitive part, human nature possesses another part which is intellectual. This he has in common with the angels, although the angels have it in greater perfection. From this intellectual part spring the faculties of intellect and will. Whereas sense knowledge was of the particular and corporeal order, intellectual knowledge is of the universal and spiritual order. The will is the appetite of the intellect, desiring and willing the things which the intellect presents to it.

It must not be imagined, however, that these two appetities -- sensitive and intellectual -- work in two spheres so distant that there is no intercommunication. They are in fact most intimately related one to the other, for man is not a dichotomy of two worlds, but a composite of both. That is not to say that harmony always reigns between the two appetites. They are frequently at odds. Everyone has heard of the famous struggle between the flesh and the spirit, which is simply another way of saying that the sensitive appetite does not always desire what the intellectual appetite does and vice versa. The sensitive appetite, however, is born by its very nature to be subject to the intellective appetite which is in the superior, nobler part of man. When man was in the state of justice, he had certain preternatural gifts from God which enabled him to keep that sensitive appetite under the domination of the intellectual appetite. After the fatal mistake of original sin, man lost those preternatural gifts in such a way that his will retained only political control of his sensuality. In other words, the will was no longer a ruler possessing his

kingdom in peace, but a leader who must use strategy and arguments to induce his subjects to follow.

Acedia can be considered either as an act of the sensitive appetite, or as an act of the intellective appetite. (88) The purpose of this thesis, it is true, is to set forth the doctrine on the sin of acedia. Although sin is most properly an act of the will (89), there is also sin in the sensitive appetite. (90) The sin of acedia, moreover, is always accompanied by some act of the sensitive appetite. (91) For these reasons - because they have no sensitive appetite which implies a body - St. Thomas excludes acedia from the angels. (92) The whole tone of St. Thomas' writing on acedia maintains its sensitive basis. In the first objections he proposes, wherein he is accustomed to give the setting for the discussion, St. Thomas sets forth the character of acedia as an act of the sensitive appetite, as having something to do with corporal effects occuring at certain times under certain conditions. For these reasons we wish first to write of acedia as an act of the sensitive appetite.

To understand that acedia which is an act of the sensitive appetite, we will first of all speak of acts of the sensitive appetite in general, and then of that act of the sensitive appetite which is sadness. Our special interest in sadness is occasioned by the fact that one of the modes of sadness is acedia. Furthermore, the proof of the sinfulness of acedia rests on the fact that acedia is itself a wicked sadness. Having treated of the nature and various divisions of sadness, with special emphasis on the sadness which is acedia, we shall conclude this chapter with a comparison with another act of the sensitive appetite which is

frequently confused with acedia.

1. The Passions In General

We have been speaking of the acts of the sensitive appetites. These acts or motions of the sensitive appetites are ordinarily called passions. Since we intend to hold that acedia is, at least under one aspect, a passion, we shall first of all determine what a passion is.

a. The definition of passion

Passion, St. Thomas defines, following St. John Damascene, (who is the great authority on this question) as "an act of the sensitive appetite proceeding from the imagination of good or evil, which is accompanied by corporeal change." (93) It might be better in modern times to use the word emotions instead of passions, for the latter word has suffered a particularization to one passion, concupiscence, and a pejoration to one species of concupiscence, sexual desire. Yet such a substitution in terminology loses something of the psychological covertones of the original term. Passion implies suffering, being acted upon rather than acting. In this ontological rather than moral sense, a passion is something evil. St. Thomas says that "something is received with the casting off of another thing." (94) A rather significant example is appended: "as when one grows sick with the consequent casting off of health." (95) Another example, more particular and pertinent to our problem is the description of acedia which Cassian gives and St. Thomas notes: "an intermittent fever (which)...inflicts the soul of the one it lays low with burning fires at regular and fixed intervals." (96) In this last example all the elements of passion can be found: a corporeal change which is the fever, and the spiritual reaction of the sensitive appetite which is he- soul.

b. Reasons for divisions of the passions

The first and most obvious reason for the division of the acts of the sensitive appetite or passions is the difference of the appetite in which they reside. The sensitive appetite or sensuality is one generic potency, but it is divided into two powers which are species of the sensitive appetite. This difference is based on the principle that act specifies potency, and object specifies act. There is a striking difference in the particular objects of sense appetite. For there are not only good things which the appetite seeks and enjoys and bad things which the appetite flees and hates; there are also things which are a hindrance to the acquisition and enjoyment of good things and things which are productive of harm. The appetite which has for its object those things which are simply good and evil is called concupiscible; the appetite which has for its object the difficult good or evil is called the irascible. The irascible appetite is the champion in attack and resistance for the concupiscible appetite which is sometimes called the mild appetite. It is important to note that the action of the sensitive appetite always begins and ends in the concupiscible part. For there would be no need of a battle if the appetite did not simply want or not want something, and after the battle is over the work of the champion irascible appetite is over; it remains only for the concupiscible appetite to rejoice in victory or lament in defeat. The passions which are acts of the sensitive appetite will be divided then according as they are acts of the concupiscible or irascible appetites, that is, according as their object is simply good or evil, or the difficult good or evil. (97)

The second reason for the division of the passions we have already hinted at in the first division. It was said that a passion might have a good object or an evil object. Obviously the sense appetite will react in an entirely different manner according as its object is good or evil, Then certain passions will be concerned about goods, and certain others about evil.(98)

A third division may be made according as the object is actually present, or is absent, or indifferent to presence and absence. It is evident that some objects, because of the hold they have on us, react on us whether they be present or absent. Certain others, or even the same ones under a different aspect, move us only when they are actually present, actually joined to the appetite. And finally certain objects move us by their absence, sometimes to acquire them, other times to prevent their actual presence. (99)

The final division is peculiar to the irascible passion: motion to and from. There is of course motion to and from in the concupiscible appetite, according as the objects are good or evil, for every concupiscible passion in respect to good tends away from that evil. But this present division according to the diversity of motion belongs in a special way to the irascible passions, for there can be different irascible passions about the same difficult object according as the appetite seems to be winning or losing its battle. (100)

c. The division of the passions

Accordingly the passions may be divided. With reference to the difference in appetite, there are six passions of the concupiscible appetite: love, hatred, concupiscence, horror, delight and sorrow. (101) There are five passions of the irascible appetite: hope and despair, fear and daring, and finally anger. (102)

These same eleven passions may likewise be divided according as their object is good or evil. Love, concupiscence and delight are the concupiscible passions which are concerned about a good subject. Hope and despair are the irascible passions concerned with a good object. Something which is simply evil, that is without the added notion of difficulty, causes hatred, horror and sorrow in the concupiscible appetite. If the evil has the added note of arduousness, it may cause the irascible passions of boldness, fear or anger.

Dividing again according as the object is absent, present or indifferent to absence and presence the same eleven passions appear in a different array. The passions of the concupiscible appetite about a good object are love, concupiscence and delight. If the good object is absent, the passion is concupiscence. If it is present, the passion is delight. However if the appetite be indifferent to absence or presence, the object still being the simple good, we have the most basic of all the passions -- love. The three concupiscible passions about evil are hatred which is indifferent to absence or presence, horror which is about an absent evil, and sorrow about a present evil.

To divide the irascible passions according to good and evil, we will use simultaneously the division of motion, which is access

and recess. Hope is the irascible passion which moves toward an arduous absent good. Despair on the other hand moves away from the arduous absent good. Boldness moves towards the arduous absent evil to attack; fear moves away from the arduous absent evil. Finally the irascible passion of anger is concerned with an arduous evil which is present.

2. The Passion of Sorrow

According to the division just made, the passion of sorrow is a concupiscible passion which is concerned with a present evil. Of the eleven passions mentioned, this passion will be of the greatest interest for us. For acedia is a species of sorrow. Nothing in the entire treatment of acedia is as evident as this point in the doctrine of St. Thomas. St. Thomas begins his formal treatment of acedia with these words: "Acedia, according to the Damascene, is an oppressive sorrow." (103) And the entire development rests on the identification of acedia with this sorrow. It will be recalled that in the historical conspectus, acedia was first identified with sadness (which is a species of sorrow, as we shall presently see) by St. John Damascene, the Master of the Passions. St. Gregory later omitted the word "acedia" altogether and wrote simply sadness. (tristitia) Cassian, on the other hand had made of acedia and sadness two distinct capital vices. The two traditions had been carried down side by side, and used according to the preferences of different authors. St. Thomas knew both traditions, but preferred St. Gregory: "Gregory more conveniently names acedia sadness." (104) Thus the nature of sorrow or sadness has a most important bearing on the nature of acedia. If acedia is a species of sadness (105), any discussion of the essence of

acedia must proceed from the nature of the genus to which it belongs. St. Thomas obviously intended the student to refer back to his discussion of sadness both because it is the nature of the Summa to build on previous conclusions, and because he himself explicitly refers back to his former tract. (106)

What then is sorrow or sadness? According to our division of the passions, it was that concupiscible passion which has for an object the present evil. St. Thomas first of all, establishes the right of sorrow to be a passion. "Two things are requisite for pain (or sorrow); namely, conjunction with some evil (which is in so far evil as it deprives someone of good), and perception of this conjunction." (107) In other words, for sorrow there must not only be an evil present but we must also know of its presence. It is contrary to the passion of pleasure, for pleasure results from the presence and knowledge of a good object. (108) These two passions of sorrow and pleasure are the terminal passions, for at the end of all the activity of the sensitive appetite, there is either the possession of the good desired, or the possession of the evil one was fleeing. (109) This presence of evil may also be the absence of good, since evil itself is a privation. Whatever the reality be that is causing the sorrow, the cause is always considered as an evil, not just any evil, but an evil that is relative to the one who is saddened. (110)

That is what causes sorrow. But what does sorrow do to us? What effect does sorrow itself have? Its first result is the desire to get away, to flee. (111) In fact sometimes men shun sorrow more eagerly than they seek pleasure. Sorrow has a way of spoiling not just one pleasure, but all our pleasures. (112)

The pleasure we had anticipated in devouring a juicy steak is quickly dissipated by the news that the baby's fever is rising rapidly. Indeed, some sorrow need not be absolutely overwhelming to make all our joys turn to ashes. When confronted with sorrow, then, we are anxious for one thing -- escape, and that as quickly as possible.

However escape is not always possible. What happens then? The soul is weighed down, completely depressed. For if we burn with love, expand with pleasure, we are depressed by sorrow. A man is depressed, that is, pushed down, when he is hindered by some weight. How often the expression "that's a tremendous weight off my mind" is heard when someone has finally rid himself of the burden of sorrow. The reason behind this remark is clear. Sorrow we have said is caused by a present evil, and this evil, from the very fact that it is repugnant to the will, depresses the soul, because it prevents the soul from enjoying what it wants. Sometimes this sorrow is not so strong that one does not retain the hope of escape. But at other times the evil seems so strong that even that hope is lost, and the soul remains sunk in apathy. This apathy may be only that of torpor or sluggishness so that the soul feels as if it were dragging a great weight. Or it may become so heavy that the external movement of the body is paralyzed, and the man so afflicted remains stupefied by sorrow. (113) Sorrow then more or less hinders activity; the man who whistles with joy while he works, and the man who is free from the burden of sorrow are better workers than the man whose will is weakened by sorrow. (114) Sorrow in fact is more harmful to the health of the body than any other passion because it weakens the vital principle of activity. (115)

That does not mean, of course, that all activity is stopped or hindered. In fact, the sorrowful man will be most busily engaged in one kind of activity, that which he thinks will help him to get away from the crushing burden of sorrow in his heart.

3. The divisions of sorrow

In order to discover the precise kind of sorrow we are talking about, it will be necessary to divide it into its various species. The first and most obvious division of sorrow St. Thomas gives at the outset of his treatment, and this is a proper division. Further divisions into quasi-species are not so easy to grasp since they involve concepts foreign to sadness itself.

a. Pain and sadness.

This first division, and only proper one, is founded on the difference of perception, that is, whether the passion be physical or psychological (**animalis**). For purposes of convenience, since the terminology is a bit confusing, we will call the generic passion sorrow which we have already defined as the conjunction of the sensitive appetite with some evil and the perception of this conjunction. This conjunction of the appetite with evil and its perception may be in the exterior apprehension of the sense, and then the passion is physical pain (dolor). Sorrow however may also be perceived by the imagination or ~~intellect~~ intellect, and when the sorrow is imaginary or mental (in spite of the terms it may be none the less real), this sorrow is called sadness (tristitia). This interior sorrow or sadness extends to more objects than the exterior sorrow or pain, because it includes all that can be found in physical pain and at the same time has troubles of its own from evils perceived by the intellect and imagination to which physical pain does not extend. Of course mental suffering can become so acute that, because of the intimate relationship of body and soul, the suffering passes on to the body. So too may physical suffering become so intense that it causes a great mental grief. Nevertheless mental

suffering is far more extensive and more generally disturbing as any one who has had the opportunity to compare the physical pain of a toothache with any mental anguish can testify. Indeed, our very willingness to submit to the tender mercies of a dentist when our teeth do not particularly bother us is a sign that we prefer the present physical pain to worry about future pain or even the loss of the full benefit of our smile. (116)

b. Pity and envy

The next two classifications are divisions not of sorrow in general (dolor in genere) but of the mental sorrow or sadness (tristitia) which we have just divided against physical suffering or pain (dolor). These divisions, however, are not proper at all, in the sense in which we say that a division is proper when it ~~is~~ divides a genus into species. Thus we divide animal into rational and irrational, since the difference between the two species is virtually contained in the genus. However, there are other improper divisions which use something entirely foreign or extraneous to the genus to make differences. For instance, fire may be divided according as it is found in a live coal or a licking flame. The difference is not formal, as it was with the division of animal into rational and irrational, but material, that is, according as the thing divided was applied to different matter. Another example of these so-called "quasi-species" may make it clearer. One hears of the sciences of astronomy and perspective as species of mathematics. Actually they are not so, but simply mathematics itself applied to different matter.

Thus the notion of sorrow as applied to different matter may give us certain "quasi-species" of sorrow. We may make one

division on the part of the cause. The cause of any sorrow is the proper evil. If another's evil is considered as one's own in such an identification of the other with self that their evil becomes one's own proper evil, then the passion of pity or mercy results. If, on the contrary, another's good be considered our evil, so that we consider their good an obstacle to ours, then the passion of envy results. (117)

C. Anxiety and acedia...

Keeping in mind what has just been said about improper divisions into "quasi-species" we may further divide sadness (tristitia) not on the part of cause as we did for envy and pity, but on the part of effect. When we say effect we mean to signify the intensity of the passion caused. The cause is of course the proper evil, exactly what it is for the passion of sorrow in general. The passion itself is that of sadness (tristitia) not physical pain, because the perception is interior, whether it be by the intellect or imagination. The effect of sadness, as of all sorrow, is that of flight. It is this effect we now wish to divide into different modes.

If flight becomes impossible, either because sadness has so upset the mind that it cannot think of a way out of the sadness, or because there is no way out in point of fact, the passion of anxiety results. It will be noted that this absence of refuge or escape is extraneous to sadness itself just as the special nature of the cause of sadness was extraneous to sadness itself when we spoke of those modes of sadness which are pity and envy.

We have said that anxiety so weighed down the soul that no refuge seemed possible, and thus escape which is the proper effect

of sadness, was made impossible. Anxiety makes a man like a penned-up dog furiously barking and running in circles to find some escape. But if the sadness should progress in intensity even farther, weighing down the soul so much that not only does no escape seem possible, but even the desire for escape dies out, there is present the mode of sadness called acedia. (118) Cajetan points out that when we say desire is taken away, we mean that the act of desiring flight is taken away, not however the act of sadness itself. (119)

Now we are in a position to describe that mode of sadness which is acedia. Acedia is a sadness so intense that even the limbs feel weighed down. "Acedia", St. Thomas says, is "an intensity of sadness in so far as it renders a man immovable." (120) We need not conceive this in the ultimate intensity of absolute paralysis. Of course this is possible in those cases of melancholic apathy which modern psychiatrists describe as maniac-depressive states. (121) However, St. Thomas is writing about degrees of intensity, and in order that the more severe degree be put in contrast with the lesser degree, he uses the extreme. In one place, however, he immediately adds that it "retards the action of man" which indicates that the degree need not progress to absolute paralysis before it may be called acedia. (122) (123). This was the "noonday devil" of which the Desert Fathers wrote, the fatigue which the monks were accustomed to feel between eleven and two. (123a) This is the tediousness of life, the boredom that makes a person suffering it wonder if indeed his life is worthwhile. There is hardly anyone who has not experienced at one time or another, this ennui which makes the cares of life, and especially those cares which involve physical exertion, seem beyond his strength and in-

climation. This is that "burdensome sadness which so weighs down the heart that it wants to do nothing." (124)

d. The Uniqueness of Acedia

There is another passion which has a close resemblance to acedia; in fact, it comes much closer to the common understanding of sloth than acedia itself. It is the passion of laziness (segnities)which is a species of fear. Since this passion is likely to be confused with acedia itself, and since it can in reality have a close relationship with acedia, we will conclude this chapter by a brief analysis of the passion of laziness and its relation to the passion of acedia.

When we divided the passions, we spoke of fear as that irascible passion which retreated from the arduous absent evil. This arduous absent evil which is the cause and object of fear is imminent, that is, actually threatening (125) According as there are different evils, there are different fears. The evils that afflict a man may beconsidered not only in external things but in his own actions. The first evil a man has to fear in his own action is the toil that burdens his nature. "Hence arises laziness," says St. Thomas, "as when a man shrinks from work for fear of too much toil." (126) This toil is that of external work, for two other species of fear, amazement and stupor, stand in relation to the act of the intellect, as laziness does to external work. (127)

What then is the difference between these two passions? It should be clear from their definitions that they are distinct. Acedia is a mode of sadness which is a concupiscible passion. It is characterized by the intensity of its effect which is to so weigh down the soul that it wants to do nothing. Laziness (segnities)

on the other hand is a species of fear which is an irascible passion. Its cause or object is work perceived as excessive. However the cause of laziness is a future difficult evil, while the cause of acedia, which is not restricted to work, is a present evil. Laziness like all fear is said to constrict the soul; acedia like all sadness is said to depress it.

Is there then a relation between these two passions? It may be said that while a relation is possible and indeed often exists, it is not a necessary relation. Either passion may be had without the other. Moreover, in attempting to show a relation, it must be remembered that in actual human performance the passions are swift and subtly interconnected so that it is often impossible to distinguish where one leaves off and another begins. However in analysis it is legitimate to label the different motions according to their character and object.

The first thing that may be noted about the relation of acedia and laziness is that the first is a concupiscible passion, the second irascible. This is important because all irascible passions arise from the passions of the concupiscible appetite and terminate therein. (128) More particularly, it may be said that every irascible passion terminates in a concupiscible passion denoting rest, namely either joy or sadness of which acedia is a mode.

First of all, the principle that irascible passions begin with concupiscible passions may be applied to our problem. If acedia takes possession of the soul, it weighs the soul down so that operation is distasteful to it. Then the soul may be confronted with some work which must be done, and precisely because

the soul does not want to work, and is saddened at the thought of work, the very idea of any future work causes a fear of work which is laziness.

Secondly, the other half of the principle may be used -- namely, that irascible passions terminate in the concupiscible passions, especially those of joy and sadness. Laziness like all fear begins with some idea of the future arduous evil. But, as Aristotle says, fear cannot exist where there is not some hope of avoiding the evil. If there is no hope of avoiding it, either absolutely speaking or because the evil cannot be avoided without sacrificing some good with which it is connected and which the appetite desires, then there is no longer fear, but only sadness. In other words, the lazy person is fearful under one aspect - that of possibly avoiding work - and when the work simply cannot be avoided or cannot be avoided without losing something the lazy person wants, sadness or acedia sets in. The lazy person is aptly disposed for acedia, for fear adds to aversion a lowness of spirits, on account of the difficulty of shunning the evil. Rest may be first in the order of intention, but it is last in the order of execution. Thus the concupiscible passion which denotes rest in evil, sadness, follows fear, since we become sad when we are confronted with the evil we feared.(129) Thus laziness, the fear of effort may be prior to acedia, because the coward does not rise to fight the evil he fears but succumbs to it.

CHAPTER 111

THE DEFINITION OF ACEDIA: THE SIN

The word acedia signifies a special degree of the passion of sadness. There is also a sin which is called acedia. Are the passion of acedia and the sin of acedia the same so that the use of the word is convertible? Or is there a distinct sin of acedia, capable of definition in its own right, and yet somehow related to the passion of the same name? If it is related to the passion of acedia, what is the nature of that relationship? In other words, what is the precise nature of the sin of acedia?

A. Sin and the Sensitive Appetite

Sin, generally speaking, is a deviation from the true ultimate end. That true ultimate end is God so sin may be accurately described as an aversion from God and a conversion to some creature. The conversion to this created, transient good is the material element, which pertains to the substance of the human act which is sin; the implied aversion from God, since motion towards something implies motion away from something else, is the formal element of sin. (130)

Since the true good of man is God, a spiritual good, and since man by nature has intelligence and will which alone can know and love this spiritual good, the sin of man has a fundamental relation to his will. It is by the will that man tends to his end; it is by the act of his will that he tends to something which is not his true destiny. Praise and blame, good and evil, acts of virtue and acts of vice must be finally resolved to the dominion man exercises by his reasoned willing. (131)

Men, however, are not pure spirits. Men are, after all, animals; the rational nature qualifies the animal. Therefore,

the appetite of man, following his ability to know, does not find its sole source in the rational nature. The appetites which are rooted in the part of man which is sensitive account for a great deal of his activity. This activity, however, cannot in the final analysis be attributed only to the sense appetite. For while there is indeed a conflict between flesh and spirit, between the appetite of sense and the appetite of reason, man is not two beings but one. And that one, that composite which is man, is rational. And because man is rational, his sensitive appetites are, by nature, ordered in subordination to the intellective appetite. Human sensitive appetites are just that, human, and man is accountable for their activity in precisely the degree in which they are human. (132)

The Thomistic doctrine on the morality of the passions is based on the relation of the sensuality to the will. The familiar distinction of antecedent and consequent passion, as preceding or following upon the action of the will, recognizes the moral indifference of the passions as such, together with their tremendous impact upon human living and the attainment of human destiny.

The scope of the passions, their proportion to sensible reality, make their regulation by reason a primary necessity to a truly reasonable life. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the potentialities of unregulated passion to cause human unhappiness, both in the present life and in eternity. (133)

Sin, of whatever kind, as involving privation and hence lack of being, presents difficulties in the order of intelligibility. There is a troublesome lack of comprehensibility as well

as unreasonableness about what has been well called the mystery of inquity, especially in regard to the formal element of sin which is aversion from God. The mind seeking to understand finds some satisfaction in conceptualizing sin in its moral aspect, in terms of the substituted "good" to which it tends. Some sins, however, appear deficient even in this element of positive being. They turn, not to a false good, but inordinately from a true good so that even the element of moral species is in terms of aversion. (134) In this, they appear not only more unreasonable but even more elusive of the grasp of the questing mind.

B. The Passion of Acedia and the Sin of Acedia

The passion of acedia we have said was a sadness of the concupiscible appetite aroused to the extent of weighing down the subject to some degree of paralysis. To be sinful such a passion, or any passion, must have some relation to the will, which is the proper subject of sin. To be a special and distinct sin it must have an object proper to itself.

1. Acedia in its general aspect.

Very familiar to students of moral theology is the sin of morose delectation. The delectation in question is a sin, not because Catholic theology has any Puritan aversion to delectation, but because the object of the delectation which is apparently good is not genuinely so, but in reality an evil. (135) The same is true of the contrary passion, sorrow, and its species, sadness. The very first possibility of a sinful sadness is that

its cause or object which appears to be evil is in reality not so, but a true good. Acedia, moreover, designates an intensity of sadness so that the second possibility of sin in acedia would be excessive sorrow about a true evil. St. Thomas considers both of these possibilities. (136)

The latter is possible whenever any evil besets man. Exaggerated penitence affords St. Thomas an example. Penance is about a true evil, sin, but if the sadness should so weigh down the penitent that he is incapable of good works, it is excessive and sinful. Thus St. Paul wrote that he did not wish his penitents to be "swallowed up with overmuch sadness." (137) It is obvious that such excess defeats its own purpose by turning man from his last end. And so would it be with any misfortune, any evil if a man allowed himself to be so overcome with melancholy that he neglects his duties. The former possibility, that of sadness about an apparent evil, which is truly good, may be found, in the broadest sense, in every sin insofar as every sin averts the sinner from the good of virtue. For it belongs to every virtue to rejoice over the good of that virtue; when man turns away from the good of virtue by sin, he no longer rejoices but is rather saddened by that good.

This double consideration leads St. Thomas to the conclusion that: "This sadness is always evil, sometimes in itself, sometimes in its effect."(138) The passion of sadness characterized by acedia contains by definition an element which inhibits man from due activity. Insofar as the will elects or consents to it, sin is committed.

De Valentia offers the following comment:

> Acedia we have said is a sadness of the will or of the appetite, that we might indicate that we are now speaking not only of Acedia, which is a passion of the sensitive appetite, but acedia according to a more common notion; which according to a certain similitude and analogy is common to a sadness both of the will and of the sensitive appetite, according to what we have already taught concerning the order of the passions to the act of the will. Whence Master Thomas here commonly considers acedia, as it is also in the sensitive appetite, which appears from articles 1 and 3. 139

Is Acedia a special sin? As a factor in all sin, it is rather a general condition of sin than a special sin itself. (140) As an extreme of sorrow over true evil; departing thereby from the balanced mean of reason, acedia designates a difference of degree rather than in kind or species. That acedia be a special sin it must have a distinct and proper object. (141)

2. Acedia in its special aspect

St. Thomas seems to have taken the first step towards defining acedia as a special sin by saying: "Acedia, as we understand it here, denotes sadness for spiritual good." (142) When he says "sadness" rather than the generic "sorrow" the object seems restricted to something intellectual or at least intellectualized, for sadness as a psychological passion which concerns not only what is perceived by the senses and imagination, but that which is perceived by the intellect, and which overflows into the sensitive nature. (143) This however is not sufficiently specific to be of any value in determining the nature of the special sin. But he also says that this sadness is about a "spiritual good". Therefore, a restricted object or cause is posited so that not any evil, but the spiritual good (considered

of course, as evil) is posited.

Nevertheless, St. Thomas does not find in the description of the spiritual good as the object of acedia a sufficiently restricted object to constitute a special sin. It would not, for one thing, differentiate acedia from the general concomitant of sorrow over the good of virtue which is present in all sin. Moreover, neither is acedia a special vice "insofar as it shuns spiritual good, as toilsome, or troublesome to the body, or as a hindrance to the body's pleasure, for this again would not sever acedia from carnal sin whereby man seeks bodily comfort." (144)

The only possibility is that the sadness concern a spiritual good according to a special aspect of spiritual good, that is, that the spiritual good be a special and particular one. There is a joy of virtue proportionate to the good of every virtue. Just as the good of every virtue other than charity is a participant good, so the proportionate joy is also a participant joy. The good of charity alone is goodness itself and the joy of charity the source and measure of all joy.

There is an end to every virtue towards which each virtue tends. There is but one ultimate end - that of charity. There is sadness in every vice over the good of the virtue it violates. There is but one sadness which regards Goodness itself, and that is acedia. (145)

This will be more easily seen if we look for a moment at the acts of charity. Charity has for its principle act love. Following on this are three interior effects or acts: Joy, Peace and Mercy; and three exterior effects or acts: Beneficence, Almsdeeds

which are a part of beneficence, and Fraternal Correction which is a kind of alms. The very first effect of Charity then is Joy, by which the one loving rejoices over the presence of the thing loved, that is, the Divine Good, and over the proper good of the thing loved which exists and endures in itself. (146) To this special act of charity which is joy, there can be opposed a vice which is a wicked sadness about the good of Charity which is the Divine Good. That wicked sadness is called acedia. (147)

C. The Definition of Acedia

We are now in a position to define the sin of acedia. The definition will be simply a recapitulation of what we have already said about the special sin of acedia, expressing in a compact formula the elements which go to make up its nature. First, we will inquire into the subject of acedia, then into its various objects.

1. Genus as derived from the subject.

Since we are inquiring into the nature of a sin, which is a human act, we have to consider first of all what kind of human act. What particular motion of the human being are we considering? Is it the motion of love or hate or by its very nature a mode of sadness, that is, a rest in something the appetite considers evil.

However, there are two appetites in man: the sensitive and the rational appetite, sensuality and will. Is acedia a sadness of the sensitive appetite, or a sadness of the will, or of both? It has been maintained that there is a passion of acedia, and as a passion, acedia is an act of the sensitive appetite. That passion can be a sin, whether it is excessive or whether it is about a truly good object, if the will either commands it or consents to it by not prohibiting the passion when it can. Therefore, the sin of acedia can be in the sensitive appetite, at least as eliciting the sin. Can then acedia be exclusively in the will without an antecedent or consequent motion of the sensitive appetite? The virtue of penance which is also a kind of sadness, can be in the will without an accompanying motion of the sensitive appetite. (148) Likewise envy, another kind of sadness, can be

purely spiritual, as it is in the angels. (149) Nevertheless, St. Thomas denies that the sin of acedia is possible to the angels because "acedia is a certain sadness by which a man is rendered tardy in spiritual acts on account of corporal labor, which does not belong to the demons." (150) Since acedia, therefore, cannot be absolutely spiritual, it involves necessarily some cooperation on the part of the sensitive appetite. It is quite proper, therefore, to speak of acedia as a sadness of the will if the will be understood as consenting or imperating the act, while the sensitive appetite elicits the act.

2. Specific Nature of Acedia

Man's will and sensitive appetite (more particularly the concupiscible part) are then the efficient cause of acedia. The formal causality must be sought from the object or end, because in moral matters the object and end are the same. What is the particular object about which the sadness of acedia is concerned?

a. The division of object in general

The one principle which rules the whole Thomistic treatment of the theological virtues, and indeed of any virtues or vices, is that a potency is specified by its act, and the act by its object. (151) The object has been distinguished for purposes of clarity into the material object, and the formal object which is subdistinguished into motive and terminative object. The material object of a potency or habit is everything about which the potency or habit is concerned. The classical example is that of the potency or act of sight which has for a material object everything which is visible. Sciences have material objects; the

object of metaphysics, for instance, is every being. The virtues have likewise material objects; the material object of charity is everything which is loved in God.

The formal object which is terminative (objectum formale quod) is that object in which the potency rests, or that aspect of the material object with which the potency is concerned. In the classical example of sight, the formal terminative object is the thing colored; in metaphysics it is not being, but being as such. In charity, it is primarily God Himself, and secondarily the neighbor who is loved for God's sake.

The formal object which is motive (objectum formale quo) is not mentioned as such by St. Thomas himself; he does however use equivalent expressions such as "the formal notion (ratio) of the object" or "that through which the object is known" which provided the basis for the distinction made by Thomists. The formal motive object is the object which moves or motivates the potency to act in this particular way. The formal motive object of sight is that through which the visible object is seen, namely, light. The metaphysician sees being as such through the medium of reason in the third degree of abstraction. Charity not only loves God, but it loves Him for His own sake, for His goodness.(122)

b. The objects of acedia

Before stating the objects of the sin of acedia, it will not be without point to state the objects of joy, the act of charity to which acedia is directly opposed. Joy has for its material object God Himself and all the good things which proceed from Him. Its formal object is primarily God Himself, or more properly His beatitude. The soul rejoices by the love of benevolence that the

Beloved is all good, and conserves that good in Himself. Secondarily, however, it rejoices in the Divine Good as it participates in that Divine Good. From the very fact that God is loved He is present in the lover through His most noble effect. (153) As St. John says: "He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him." (154) It will be noted then that as in charity itself the formal motive and formal terminative objects of joy are the same, since we rejoice in God for God.

What then of acedia which is directly opposed to God? It has for its material object spiritual goods, both as ends in themselves, and as means towards that end. (155) The end is the spiritual good which is God; the means are all those things which must be done for God. Those things which must be done for God are all those things which are absolutely necessary to attain the ultimate end which is God, whether the necessity be that of means or precept. Acedia can concern itself about the works of any virtue since all the goods of the virtues are ordered to the good of charity, which is God. Some idea of the spiritual goods which acedia is saddened or bored with can be gained from the list of duties which St. Antoninus appends to his discussion of acedia. (156) He is first concerned with the duties of prelates and preachers. But even those who have not the official care of souls can be through acedia negligent about the spiritual almsgiving which is fraternal correction. The observance of feast days, attendance at Mass, reception of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, the recitation of Divine Office for those bound to it -- all these are apt matter for the boredom of acedia. This is one aspect of acedia which seems generally understood.

Preachers frequently and rightly maintain that activity is no guarantee of freedom from acedia; activity must be ordered, and he who neglects the activities of God and religion for his own pursuits is probably guilty of this sin.

The formal terminative object of acedia, that aspect of these spiritual goods which makes them objects of acedia is the Divine Good to which all the goods of the other virtues are ordered. (157) One question has arisen, however, about the nature of that Divine good. Which Divine Good? There are three possibilities. There is the Divine Good in itself which is the primary object of joy. There is the Divine Good as our neighbor participates in it. And finally there is the Divine Good as we ourselves participate in it. Cajetan followed by Banez clears up the entire matter. (158) Repugnance to the Divine Good is the sin of the Hatred of God, which is opposed to charity's love of God. And since it pertains to a vice to be saddened about the opposite virtue's good, it pertains to Hatred of God to be saddened over the good which God has in Himself. Repugnance to the Divine Good in our neighbor is the sin of Envy by which a person is saddened over the good of the neighbor because he perceives that good as an obstacle to his own goodness. Repugnance to the Divine Good as it is participated in the one saddened, whether actually or potentially is the sin of acedia. De Valentia therefore adds to his definition: "The sadness of the will or appetite" the words "about a good which is in some way both divine and ours" to designate the formal terminative object. (159)

The last question in regard to object, that of formal motive object, is the most difficult. Under what aspect can this Divine

Good be regarded as evil? Indeed, it must in some way be regarded as evil, for sadness is by definition the result of a present evil. "The motive for sadness," says St. Thomas, "is evil." (160) But surely there can be no evil in God Himself nor even in the participation of God we have in charity. That there can be no evil in God is true absolutely speaking, but relative to the human will, even God can seem to be evil. The will in its present state depends on a limited apprehension; it is not necessitated by any good except good in general so that it must will a thing under the aspect of good. Beyond willing that very generic good, it is free. It has a limited view of every particular good so that it sees even the Divine Good as not unmixed with evil for itself. (161) This evil may be generically stated as "the difficulty of obtaining or retaining it." De Valentia says that acedia considers the Divine Good as its own evil "on account of the accompanying difficulty of obtaining it." (162) St. Thomas reminds us of this difficulty in speaking of the incomplete character of Spiritual Joy in this life. "Although in this unhappy abode we participate, after a fashion, in the Divine Good, by knowledge and love, yet the unhappiness of this life is an obstacle to a perfect participation in the Divine good." (163) A certain amount of unhappiness in this life is necessary for the ultimate possession of complete happiness. The way to eternal happiness is the Christian life, and a Christian must be conformed to Christ, and Him crucified. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (164) A daily way of the cross is something toilsome and troublesome; the sensitive appetite groans under such treatment. And here especially is felt

the age-old contrariety between flesh and spirit. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (165) All the reasons St. Thomas rejected as not sufficient to constitute acedia as a special sin are the very reasons under which acedia views the Divine Good which makes acedia a special sin. "...it shuns spiritual good, as toilsome, or troublesome to the body, or as a hindrance to the body's pleasure." (166) St. Thomas had likewise succinctly denied the possibility of acedia to the angelic sinners because it was "on account of corporal labor." (167) And this is a further reason why acedia necessarily involves some act of the sensitive appetite which is concerned more proximately with corporal affairs. Then it would seem possible to limit De Valentia's difficulty to corporal or sensitive difficulty as the motive object of acedia.

In conclusion, we can sum up the definition which has been formulated. Acedia is a sadness, of the will imperating and the sensitive appetite eliciting, concerning the Divine good as we participate in it, considered as an evil for us on account of the corporal difficulty involved. De Valentia's definition, however, is more extensive in that it includes the material object and gives the principal effect: "acedia is a sadness of the will or appetite, about a good in some way Divine and yet ours, considered as evil to oneself, on account of the difficulty involved in obtaining it, thence producing a lack of care and a neglect of actions which are pious and availing to salvation." [168]

This effect of lack of care (incuria) recalls the Greek Etymology of acedia which signified "not-caring". Negligence, however, we will consider with sloth (pigritia) since they

are intimately connected. Since it would be possible to withdraw from acedia in the next human act, and perform the "pious and salutary actions" which were the matter of acedia, it seems that we have now sufficiently discussed the nature of acedia, and are able to consider its precise morality.

D. The Morality of Acedia

Once the nature of acedia has been grasped, its morality should fall readily and easily into place. It has only to be seen in the context of moral life, that is, of reason guiding all of man's activities to his true ultimate end. Can acedia find its place in rational life so that one may be virtuous even under the influence of acedia? Or is it a sin turning man away from his true ultimate end and converting him to created good in an inordinate fashion? If it is a sin, is it always and everywhere a sin so that it may never be excused? And if it is a sin, is it a grave sin or a light one?

1. The Sinfulness of Acedia

Acedia is basically a motion of the sensitive appetite, a passion. Its morality then will be that of the passions, which considers the passions insofar as they are subject to the command of reason and will. The Stoics had held that all passions were vicious, but that was because they defined passion as a motion which proceeded beyond the limits of reason. The Peripapetics, whom St. Thomas follows, had observed that passions were all motions of the sensitive appetite, and were in themselves morally indifferent. (169) But to say that the passions are indifferent, while obviously true, is not to tell the whole truth. There are human acts which are in the abstract order indifferent but, in the concrete order, no human act is different. (170) So it is for the passions. They do not exist outside of man, but in the composite of sense and reason which is man. By the very nature of that composite, the sense is ordained to be subject to the higher power of reason. Therefore, if sadness, or any other passion, proceeds beyond the limits that right reason marks out for it, that passion is morally bad. For man, by the very nature God gave him, must use his reason to direct all his actions to his true ultimate end.

When men look at their passions, they are naturally inclined to approve some of them and disapprove of others. And this approval or disapproval, this award of praise and blame, since praise and blame are testimonies to excellence or lack of excellence, is some indication of the goodness and evil of the passions themselves. Now men in general, at least those uncorrupted by the Puritan heresy which inclined men to approve only what was

difficult and repugnant to the appetite, regard those passions which are about good as good. All the world loves a lover. Desire is seen as one of the mainsprings of human activity. And joy and delight usually gladden the heart of everyone, even one who has in himself no occasion for joy. On the other hand, those passions which regard evil are seen as evil. Hatred is an ugly word in anyone's vocabulary. Fear and flight seem to mark the coward. And pain and sorrow are to be banished from the banquet halls of men. This last passion seems to merit a special disapproval; even hatred itself is seen as bad because it results in misery. Most of the songs of men are exhortations to gladness, and if there is an occasional mournful ballad, even this is a sentimental use of past sadness to provoke present joy.

Men are so opposed to these bad passions that they demand a special justification for them. The young man who seeks his pleasure in wine, women and song seems to need no justification; he is smilingly said to be sowing his wild oats. If he goes too far, his more serious elders will rebuke him, not because he is seeking joy, but because such joys, they know from sad experience, terminate in bitter sadness. It is sadness, the bad passion, which must be avoided. If it is permitted, there must be solid grounds for it, and it must not last too long or be too deep. Men offer their sympathy on the occasion of a great misfortune, but they do not expect or desire us to mourn very long or very loudly. They are very pleased with us when we again pick up our pursuit of joy, and greet them with a happy smile. Sometimes it is necessary to use a bad passion. Everyone is very busy hating the common enemy during war, and the enemy of soceity who is

a criminal. But it soon passes. The war is over, and everyone wants to forget the past and rejoice in the present. The criminal is executed, and those black days when he stood before the bar of justice and society shrieked for his punishment are quickly and happily forgotten.

Sadness, then, as one of the bad passions needs some special justification. The Christian is quite willing to admit the need of sadness over past sin; he cautions the penitent however against dwelling in this sadness too long lest he fall into despair, an even greater evil. The Christian admits the need of mortification, which will cause some discomfort and pain if not a little sadness too, but he wants it noted that this mortification is only the means for a greater joy in glory. Our Lord Himself in prophesying to His disciples the terrible pain and trouble of His Passion and their trial, first raised up the hearts of the chosen ones by the joy of His transfiguration, and always did He accompany His warning of sad days to come with the reminder that this must needs be as the way to future glory.

Then what can be said in approval of a sadness which is not ever a true evil, but ever a good, and indeed the most perfect good? Nothing can be said in its defense. It is perverse and monstrous that a man should be saddened over his true good. It is not as horrible as active hatred of that good, but it is well on its way even to that ultimate perversity, which is the hatred of deepest and blackest hell.

The argument of St. Thomas reduces the terms to their simplest philosophical terms. Acedia as it is here taken means sadness over spiritual good. But sadness over spiritual good

is an evil motion of the appetite. Therefore acedia as it is here taken is an evil motion of the appetite. But an evil motion of the appetite is a sin. The conclusion is inevitable, absolutely inescapable. Acedia, as long as it is subject to control, is perverse. (171)

2. The gravity of acedia

Not all sins, however, are of equal seriousness. Some sins completely avert man from his true goal in life, and destroy the principle of supernatural life within him. Mortal sin is that fatal sin which by its very commission destroys the life of the soul, and leaves the stain of guilt which makes a man liable to eternal punishment. It most completely fulfills the conditions required for sin because it is the primary analogue in an analogy of attribution. It has serious matter, and it has the full deliberateness of a completely human act which with full knowledge of its own perversity nevertheless proceeds in its career of self-destruction. That self-destruction is in itself permanent; no intrinsic repair is possible for it is like an error in the principle which renders subsequent speculation erroneous. (172)

There is however another kind of sin which fulfills less perfectly the complete definition. In one or other respect, it lacks the gross maliciousness of mortal sin. And because it is not mortal or fatal, but in itself capable of pardon it is called venial. (FROM venia) Whatever condition it lacks for the full essence of mortal sin -- serious matter, deliberate consent, or full knowledge -- it is not a sin against the end, but against

the means towards that end. It does not destroy the life of the soul which is still habitually ordained to the true ultimate goal; the actual intention for the moment is not ordained to God. (173)

Certain sins moreover tend to objects which cannot be reconciled with man's destiny in God. They are mortal sins by their very nature (ex genere suo). Only their imperfect actualization can render them venial and pardonable. Other sins are by their very nature venial, for by themselves they do not turn a man away from his ultimate end. They can however become mortal if a man should place his ultimate end in them or use them as an occasion for mortal sin. (174)

Acedia is concerned not only with the last end to be obtained but with God as He is here and now dwelling in the soul. Charity by which we adhere to God, charity which is the life of the soul has for its proper act and effect a joy about God. It is impossible to love God and at the same time not rejoice in that love, rejoice in God as He is in Himself and as He is in us. The lover always rejoices in the presence of the beloved. If he is saddened, it is either because of some extrinsic circumstance which has nothing to do with his love, or because he really is not a lover at all. Acedia is saddened at the presence of the beloved, Who is God dwelling in the soul. It therefore destroys joy and it destroys love. By its very nature it is opposed to the love of God which is charity, that charity which is the life of the soul. It is therefore by its very nature a fatal, deadly mortal sin. (175)

We have been speaking as if the person now committing acedia were already living in charity. In so doing we do not wish to exclude the possibility of a person living in sin committing acedia. In this instance, the difference is that the act of acedia is not directed against the actual presence of God in the soul, since He does not at this time dwell there, but against his potential presence by grace and charity.

Is every sin of acedia then a mortal sin because it is the nature of acedia to be mortal? St. Thomas does not think so, and with very good reason. For while acedia in its full perfection is a mortal sin, it is nevertheless a sin rooted in the sensitive appetite. If the motion of acedia, or any disordered motion of the sensuality, begins only in the sensitive appetite and does not attain to the full consent of the reason so that it is not only an act of the sensitive but of the rational appetite, then it cannot be a mortal sin. The rule for sadness is the same as the rule for its contrary, delectation. If delectation or concupiscence about a bad object, say adultery, remains in the sensuality without becoming an act of the will, it remains a venial sin. Experience shows that there are motions of acedia in the sensuality, some of them almost unavoidable by reason of the natural repugnance of the flesh to the spirit. Very holy men, Cassian testifies, experience these motions, probably by reason of their prolonged fasts and protracted vigils. (176) The "noonday devil" is especially active about the sixth hour so that the solitary or monk seems to be weary of the spiritual life. (177) Such a wearying of the spiritual life without absolute abandonment could hardly be a mortal sin. It can only be

come mortal, says St. Thomas, when the reason deliberately consents to it, substituting undue rest for the rest one should have in God. And when this happens, the sinner consents to "flight and horror and detestation of the Divine good." (178) The flesh then not only rebels against the spirit, not only captures a few members in a brief skirmish; it routs the spirit in complete triumph for itself.

The flesh however does not conceive a repugnance to the spirit as if it were in a vacuum. The flesh, as far as acedia is concerned, wants only to be let alone, to enjoy its dolce far niente. It is the spirit which causes the troublemby commanding certain works to the flesh. Acedia,it is true, is a sin against the general precept of the third command^ment by which man is commanded to rest in the Lord. (179) However, this rest in the Lord involves an active doing. St. Gregory in a well-known homily on the text "Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands" (180) points out that "because it is less not to do evil deeds, unless also each one tries to perform good deeds, there is added 'and lamps burning in your hands.'" (181) Only half of the Christian life is accomplished by the avoiding of bad deeds; the more important half is those actions which are pious and availing to salvation. These actions are often distasteful to the sensitive appetite since they impede its pleasures. No matter under what particular precept these actions fall, no matter of what virtue these are the acts, acedia can find in them apt matter. If the person tempted by acedia is saddened at them in so far as they are necessary to retain the Divine good within him, the

sadness of which he is guilty is opposed not only to that particular precept or virtue of which they are the acts, but to the joy of charity.

One daughter or effect of acedia, which we shall see in greater detail later, emphasizes the necessity of precepted matter for acedia, torpor about precepts. The precepts are obvious. It would be no sin for a cloistered nun to be quite dismayed over the hardships of missionary life; she is not held to the works of such a life. Nor would there by any point to - not to say any wrong FOR TO - a missionary being grieved over the austerity of Trappist silence. It would however be matter for the sin of acedia if the nun were guilty of inward groaning over the thought of the chilly midnight in her choir. So likewise would the devil of acedia find an opening in the missionary's repugnance to the disease-ridden bodies of his prospective converts.

The counsels however are quite another matter. A counsel by its very nature is not binding. A counsel obliges only when one would offend against a precept by not obeying it. (182) Thus the rich young man of the Gospel sinned rather by his inordinate attachment to earthly goods rather than by his refusal of the counsel to perfection. It seems quite probable that the sadness with which he went away was indeed the wicked sadness of acedia, a disdain for the Divine good because of the difficulties the acquisition of that Divine Good entailed.

E. Acedia and Sloth

In speaking of prescribed actions as the matter of acedia, one must be careful not to identify acedia with the omission of the prescribed actions. When we considered De Valentia's definition of acedia, we pointed out that after describing acedia itself, the eminent commentator of St. Thomas spoke of the effect of acedia as "producing a lack of care and a neglect of actions which are pious and availing to salvation." (183) However since acedia is an interior sin, it would be possible for a sinner to be wickedly sad over some "action which is pious and availing to salvation" in such a way that he spurned the Divine good because of the difficulty of this action, and yet in the very next act retract his sadness and perform the action. The usual effect of acedia however is the complete omission of the action which is the matter for acedia, or at least a reluctant performance. This last mentioned effect, a reluctant and sluggish performance is the sin of sloth.(pigritia) Since the omission of the act is so intimately connected with acedia, and since the slowness of execution which is sloth is frequently identified with acedia, it will be necessary to say a few words about these effects.

One of thexe vices which is an effect or daughter of acedia , which we shall treat when we speak of acedia's role as a capital vice, is what is called sluggishness about precepts. Negligence is a vice which pertains to this sluggishness about precepts. This vice can be defined as a sin by which the will is remiss to elect a due act or circumstance

about that act. It is opposed to the virtue of prudence which through solicitude is diligent in operation. "Negligence", St. Thomas says, "is a defect in the internal act to which choice also belongs." (184) Its very etymology expresses its essence for it means "not electing." (nec-eligens). And therefore as the right election of things to the end pertains to prudence, so negligence of the will not rightly selecting those means to the end, pertains to imprudence. Although negligence is a sin against prudence, it may proceed from acedia. Acedia is, as we have said, a sadness about the spiritual or divine good, and it therefore generates a negligence in selecting means towards the end about which it is sad. It is obvious that we do things diligently which we enjoy, for joy is part of our work, and that conversely we do things negligently and halfheartedly when we do not enjoy doing them. One of the effects of sadness is the paralysis of strength, and it is not therefore surprising that we neglect the means towards an end about which we are bored and saddened.

Closely connected with negligence are several other vices. Acedia itself is an interior sin which is ordinarily accompanied by an exterior effect. Negligence is likewise an interior sin, a failure in the election of the intellect. Obviously it too has an exterior effect. Since omission itself is farily obvious, we will consider only two of those exterior effect which are about the execution of the work itself: the sins of sloth and torpor.

Sloth (pigritia) implies, says St. Thomas, "a tardiness in execution." (185) Our English word sloth comes from an Anglo-

Saxon adjective signifying slow. (186) A man is said to be slothful when he tardily and slowly does a work which requires immediate and rapid execution. Oddly enough, this definition of St. Thomas more closely corresponds to the modern definition of torpor.

St. Thomas's concept of torpor, however, is different from sloth and from the daughter of acedia which is called sluggishness (torpor) about the preceipts. This torpor he defines as a "certain remissness in the execution itself." (187) He immediately adds that this torpor "is conveniently born of acedia, because acedia is a burdensome sadness, i. e. one impeding the soul from work." (188) In other words, torpor is a certain tepidity in work. To charity is attributed a heat which is burning or fervent, but this remissness is tepid, neither hot nor cold. It has not yet proceeded to an active, cold hatred against God, but neither is it warm in His love. Such tepidity was rebuked by Our Lord: "Because thou art neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, I shall begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." (189)

Whatever the nuances of difference between these exterior defects in operation, it is obvious that they are effects of acedia and not acedia itself. (190) And thus it is evident that there is a certain impropriety in identifying the sin of acedia with one of its effects, by calling acedia itself sloth.

F. Acedia and Spiritual Sloth

If it is inaccurate to speak of acedia as sloth so that it is confused with its effect, what can be said for the usual modern designation of acedia as spiritual sloth? (191) The advantages and disadvantages of such a nomenclature can be best weighed by a careful analysis of the adjective "spiritual". To what does "spiritual" refer?

It can be taken, first of all, to refer to the subject in which it resides. Is then acedia a sin of the spiritual part, of the rational appetite alone? We have seen that a purely spiritual sadness is possible in the instance of penance and the angelic sin of envy. May acedia too be a purely spiritual sadness? St. Thomas denies it to the angels. (192) What the sin of acedia is saddened about is the corporal labor involved in the acquisition and retention of the Divine Good. But corporal labor is not distasteful to the intellectual appetite, especially when a spiritual good is involved. It is precisely by reason of his sensitive appetite that man can be saddened about the corporal labor involved. The whole context of St. Thomas's treatment of acedia indicates that while the will must be involved for the perfection of the sin of acedia, the sin has its rise in and is elicited by the sensitive appetite.

However, the sensitive appetite gives rise to two kinds of passion: corporal or physical and psychological. Sadness is a psychological passion, i. e., it pertains to the soul. (animalis) May these psychological passions be called spiritual to distinguish them from the physical passions? It seems

hardly proper to say so, since the ordinary meaning of spiritual is independence of matter. The intellect and will are independent of matter, and can exist without matter. But a psychological passion such as sadness is a movement of the sensitive appetite which is directly dependent on matter. It would seem therefore that acedia cannot be called spiritual on the part of the subject.

However, the subject is a less profitable field of investigation than the object. The formal object and cause of acedia we have said to be the spiritual good. Cannot then "spiritual sloth" or "Spiritual sadness" refer to that object? This seems however a violation of the rules of predication, since it transfers a quality of the object back to the subject when the subject and object are not identified. If it were said that "acedia <u>is</u> spiritual good" the transfer would be valid. However what is actually said is that "Acedia is <u>about</u> spiritual good" which is entirely different. Moreover the special formal object of acedia is not spiritual good but divine good. The transferal of the qualifier of the object would then make acedia "Divine sloth" which is certainly improper.

Again, spiritual good or Divine good is only the formal terminative object; it is not the whole formal object of acedia. Acedia is not sadness about the Divine good, but sadness about the Divine good considered as one's own evil. Sadness about a good without explaining how that good can be an evil is unintelligible. The evil which the mind considers in the Divine good is nothing spiritual but physical and corporal -- namely bodily labor. Therefore acedia cannot be called spiritual by reason of its formal object.

The only solution seems to lie in the material object -- those actions which are pious and availing to salvation. These actions can certainly be considered spiritual in the same way that we say an act, however material, if done out of charity is supernaturalized. Since acedia concerns itself not with any work, but with that work which should be supernaturalized or spiritualized in being ordained to eternal salvation, it may be called spiritual sadness. This terminology however does not escape the hazard which was encountered when the possibility of calling acedia spiritual by reason of its formal object was considered. It violates the laws of predication, because acedia is not identified with the spiritual works, but is about or concerned with the spiritual goods. Nevertheless, if this terminology in regard to material object is properly understood, it would be carping to criticize it.

As was pointed out in the first chapter - that on the historical background - this terminology had its inception in the work of St. John of the Cross, who used it to design the return of sloth with the other capital vices in a more subtle form in those on their way to perfection in the spiritual life. The "spiritual sloth" of which the Carmelite Doctor wrote concerned the pious exercises which the initiate in the spiritual way begins to find tiresome as their sensible sweetness is withdrawn from him.

While there is no difficulty in understanding what the Mystical Doctor meant when he used the term "spiritual sloth" it seems that its transference to all sins of acedia is con-

fusing. The impression is given that acedia is entirely spiritual, when actually it has a physical basis and motive. Then its reason for appearing in the list of capital sins is less evident, since it seems a rather esoteric sin which could have no connection with those very common sins, those primary attractions to the human appetite which go to make up the capital sins.

CHAPTER IV

ACEDIA'S ROLE AS A CAPITAL VICE

The rôle of sin in the drama of human life is unfortunately not confined to a few lines and a passing moment on the stage. The past is always in some way part of the present. The lines have been spoken, the fatal moment has been played, and not even God Himself will make the past not to have been, because that would imply a contradiction in terms. But thanks to the free nature God has given us, thanks to the new grace His mercy send us, we can, as long as the breath of life is in us, make new beginnings. However, even when the new beginning has been made, even when God Himself mercifully assured us that the past is forgiven, lingering ghosts haunt the memory and throw their shadows in the light of the new day.

The shadows, nevertheless, grow less and less as the sun of grace rises higher and higher in the heavens of a human life. For grace leads to grace, virtue to virtue in a wonderful unity which is a source of strength and a means of forming the energies of man unto the attainment of true happiness. Sin cannot unify; it disorganizes and dissipates human energies on a multitude of created goods, even as the love of God draws all things to itself in one great effort to one supreme Good. "For those who love God, all things work together unto good." (193)

We need not think, however, that there is no connection among sins. It is true that sin is a disintegrating force; yet patterns can be discerned in the very process of disintegra-

tion. As with the diseases of the body, the sickness of the soul that is sin exhibits a variety of manifestations, a diversity of causes, a relationship among the elements of progressive deficiency that not only permit but necessitate classification for diagnosis and remedy. Virtue leads to virtue, grace to grace but so, also, although in a different fashion, does sin lead to sin, vice to vice along defined grooves to predictable termination.

A. The Nature of Capital Sin

These patterns of disintegration have traditionally been called the capital sins. They are not called capital in the same sense in which we speak of capital crimes, those delicts so injurious to society that they demand the supreme penalty which is capital punishment. They are called capital in the way we speak of a general as the head (caput) of his army, or of the chief executive as the head of the state. Certain sins are capital or principal, not only because they are common to many, but because they are the principles from which other sins arise. (194)

How does one sin rise from another? Everyone is familiar from its all too frequent and publicized occurrence with the way one drink leads to another until a chronic alcholism is induced. This is the old story of bad habits which, like other habits, are produced from repeated acts. (195) Less familiar but more fundamental to our difficulties with sin is the way the primeval sin of Adam was and is the cause of all other sin.

Although justice was restored to the human race by the redemptive death of Christ, that justice is not immediately applied so that all men are still conceived in iniquity and born in sin. Even our actual sins, if they be mortal, deprive us of sanctifying grace and the protection of the supernatural virtues, leaving us unarmed for the onslaught of fresh temptations. (196) Again other sins provide the matter for future sin. The wealth piled up by avarice is material for dissension and the means of other sins which money provides opportunity. The sin of gluttony, by overnourishing and overstimulating the body, makes the glutton apt prey for the demon of lust. (197)

In each of these ways one sin exercises a causal influence upon the commission of another. Yet none of them provides material apt to the ordering and discussion of moral sciences; they are either particular rather than universal causes, or accidental rather than essential. Overindulgence in drink may effect in the drunkard a disposition to other sins but one that will differ from man to man and in the same person from time to time. The study of the inter-causality of sins with regard to the resultant dispositions in the sinner lacks the universality requisite for science; it issues only in an enumeration of case histories. A similar result is attained in detailing how one sin leads to another of the same kind; account is thus made of particular acts of sin rather than of diverse vicious tendencies. Yet such causality is essential and is the explanation of acquired habits. The ability of one sin to provide the wherewithal for the commission of another, or to deprive of the grace that would prevent its per-

petration illustrates accidental and occasional causality rather than any essential connection between sins. The insights afforded are profound and sobering, of forceful application in the understanding of any human disintegration yet inept to further scientific development. (198)

There is another possibility. The formal essence of sin itself is taken from the end of the sin, and certain ends have an intimate connection with each other. These ends display a definite order in their causative subordination to one another. The causality is sufficiently universal and essential so that a genuine pattern can be traced and a true moral science established. The ends are mutually related in a sufficient number of instances; they are still different ends in themselves, and their relation is essential.

However, there are several ways in which one end is used as the means to an other. Aristotle is fond of the example of the man who commits theft in order to have the financial wherewithal to dazzle some woman into adultery. Theft is obviously not seen as an end in itself, but as a means to the accomplishment of the seduction. But all this is on the part of the mind of the adulterer; there is no essential connection between theft and adultery. And since there is no essential connection, there can be no science on the part of such final causality. (199)

The final causality concerning which science is possible is that in which the ends themselves, the goods desired, have some essential connection. It is the end of the deed itself (finis operis) rather than the end of the doer (finis operantis)

which must be examined. The end of avarice, for instance, is the acquisition of money. The end of fraud, on the other hand, is deception. Deception then, and especially deception in commerce, has quite naturally a relation with avarice, and avarice with it. Thus the avaricious man is especially susceptible to the sin of fraud, and we may predict with reasonable certainty that a truly avaricious man will sooner or later resort to fraud to achieve the financial empire he so ardently desires. The pattern of such related ends is the proper subject for the student of the capital vices. (200)

The theology of the capital vices has been somewhat neglected, although its subject matter is given ample treatment by preachers. The reason for the neglect is not hard to grasp. The casuist is interested in the application of universal principles to a particular situation with its individuating circumstances. The theologian of the speculative variety, especially the one with metaphysical tendencies, is very forcibly impressed with the negative aspect of evil. Because he knows that evil is not a nature, and that nature is the principle of operations, he is somewhat skeptical about the causality of evil. And while he is quite right in opposing the setting up of a Manichean kingdom of evil against the kingdom of God, he sometimes neglects a consideration of the other side of the question. Sin itself is indeed a lack of due entity, but in relation to the sinner, it is a very positive pursuit of some good, a good which is usually very concrete. In fact, to most men it must seem that sins are far more real, and have far more causality than good acts and virtues.

Vicious men do indeed pursue ends which seem good to them.

Still, in speaking of the final causality of sin, it must not be thought that men always consciously consider other ends to which this sin may lead them. The occasional drunkard keeps furthest from his mind the possibility of the harm that may result from his freedom of speech while he is inebriated. And the avaracious man does not want the hungry cries of orphans and widows to disturb his sleep; he thinks rather of the gold he has acquired than the fraud he has perpetrated to acquire the gold. But in desiring certain goods, one desires all the means necessary to attain those goods. In willing certain ends, one must tend towards all that is connected with that end. Man need not act on account of an end (agere propter finem) to tend toward that end (tendere in finem). (201)

The importance of the end in the moral, as in every practical order, can hardly be overstressed. For the end is the measure of the order of doing and making. When an end other than God is chosen, then created things are measured by other created things. There is such a measuring in the true order of subordination established by God. In sin the fundamental inordinateness derives from the fact that the central factor, the will, cannot be measured by any created thing as an end, but solely the uncreated God as the true end.

Furthermore, the created object established as the measure of the human will in sin, since it is by that very fact called upon to exercise a function beyond the limits of its true capacity, demands not only a new order of reality but the creation of this order, since such an order does not actually exist. It is a world God never made; the creature man tries to make of

himself a creator. This would-be creator tries to produce something not out of his power but out of his weakness.

The sinner is trying to establish a new world by violation. He tells himself that in this way alone can he be truly free; it is not the first time liberty has been used as the bait for slavery. For that is precisely what happens -- slavery. The real freedom of man, the real strength of man flows from his subordination in a real hierarchy of being, for man is not God. Man is however the image of God, though his tempters tell him that he may become God. Man achieves his true destiny, realizes the image of God within him, becomes truly free by the attainment of a God Who already exists, not by the creation of false gods.

This is only saying that in sin man makes himself the measure of things. Yet, he is doomed to frustration in so doing, for his will has a universality of potentiality not actuality. The universality can be actualized only by something of itself truly universal. The will as potential cannot confer actual universality upon anything. In seeking to endow what is in itself a limited good with the qualities of universality, it is acting not out of its fulness but out of its wants of fulness.

Again, in constituting himself the measure, man acts not as a unity achieved in himself seeking to bring unity to everything else; but rather as himself in conflict capable of communicating only conflict to everything else. Man in seeking to become the measure of things rather than to submit to an already existent measure becomes the measure of dissension rather than

the measure of harmony. The music of the spheres is exchanged for a horrible cacophony, like the deliberate discords of Prokofieff.

How that cacophony is achieved in a certain ordered disorder is the problem of the capital sins. These sins reflect the principle of final causality -- that the end is first in intention, but last in execution. The intention of the vain man is the undue manifestation of his own excellence. Others are not sufficiently aware of this excellence; he will use boasting to inform them. Words are not enough; he will do something new, since novelty is what men usually most admire. If he cannot do something new, he will pretend that he is excellent anyhow, and so he becomes a hypocrite. If he thinks that these things do not sufficiently manifest his importance, he will at least see that no one else is more important. In an argument he is pertinacious to show that his intellect bows to none. In a plan of action, he generates discord to show his strength of will. Always contentious with his equals, he is disobedient to his superiors. And the conclusion of the sad story is that it is not his excellence which is manifested but his petty vanity, his stupid boasting, his stubbornness, his error and his disobedience. Frustration is again the end of sin, and the honor the man might have obtained by a true effort for excellence is ruined. (202)

B. The Division of the Capital Sins

Those sins whose progeny can be predicted we have called capital sins. Traditionally the capital sins have been listed as vainglory, gluttony, lust, avarice, acedia, envy and anger.

These sins have a certain primacy in human life, an attractiveness that makes them doubly dangerous, for besides being bad in themselves, they are prolific in the generation of other evils.

1. The Roots of the Capital Sins.

The capital sins themselves however are begotten by other sins. These other sins are not so proximate to the evils they generate and are, therefore, less useful for scientific analysis of the paths of sin. They are the ultimate ends of sin, and because ultimate, more remote. Every sin by definition is an aversion from God, and in this sense pride is the beginning of every sin. Every sin partakes in some measure of the proud boast of Lucifer: "I will not obey." Lucifer still uses the shibboleth of liberty, and we poor humans are still gullible enough to believe the slippery tempter. But this is but one half, albeit the formal half, of sin. Sin is also a conversion to the created good in an undue order, and it is by reason of this conversion that self-love is said to be the root of every sin. In turning aside from the true God, man makes his own false gods, but all these false gods are but images of his self, so that sin is in the last analysis a worship of self.

These ultimate and common ends of all sin find their expression in the triple concupiscence of which St. John wrote: "For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but of the world." (203) These are the three great manifestations of self-love in regard to the plea-

sures of the body, exterior goods, and the goods of the spirit. Self-love is, in the main, love of the false self, or the self of the sensitive nature. The disordered irascible passions find their expression in pride of life. The concupiscible passions similarly disordered seek exterior goods by the concupiscence of the eyes, and bodily pleasures by the concupiscence of the flesh. (204)

Pride and self-love and the threefold concupiscence are general classifications. They are not special sins, that is, particular conversions to certain created goods, or special aversions from God where there is a particular reason for aversion. The capital sins, however, are special sins, and sins which cause other sins not in a general fashion but by a special and proximate relation of ends. These sins involve certain goods which have a primary attraction to the human appetite, and whose ends tend quite naturally to other inordinate ends.

2. Foundation For The Distinction of Capital Sins (205)

Those objects which have a primary attraction to the human appetite are distinguished among themselves according as they move the appetite. Some of these created things move the appetite directly. The goods move the appetite to pursuit; the evils to flight. The evils need not confuse us since it is for the same reason that a man pursues a good, and flees the opposite evil. The glutton, for instance, not only seeks the delights of food and drink; he has quite naturally an abhorrence for hunger and thirst. Other created goods move the appetite indirectly and by reason of something else. Thus someone pursues an evil because of an accompanying good, or flies a good because of an accompanying evil. An angry man willingly sustains the perils of battle, because he finds the accompanying revenge very sweet. Likewise an envious man has a positive abhorrence over the success of his neighbor because he thinks this success is accompanied by a slight to himself.

3. The Distinction Of The Capital Sins According To The Goods Pursued.

Human created goods are threefold according as man himself has a soul, a body, and certain exterior goods, Man pursues in an inordinate fashion those goods of the soul which are the excellence of praise and honor by the capital sin of Vain Glory. There are two specific classes of goods or pleasures of the body: those which pertain to the conservation of the individual, and those which pertain to the conservation of the race. Food and drink are for the conservation of the individual; their inordinate pursuit involves the sin of Gluttony. Venereal plea-

sures are connected with the generation of new individuals, and the use of these pleasures without their proper order is the sin of Lust. Finally, God has given man certain external goods which can be expressed by the simple term, riches. An excessive or inordinate seeking after riches involves the sin of Avarice or Covetousness.

4. The Distinction of the Capital Sins According to Evils Fled.

While the goods which form the various objects of self-love are sufficiently obvious, the evils which are a special reason of aversion require some consideration. However, if we recall that even children not only reach out for goods and enjoy them, but are quite capable of putting on a nasty little tantrum about something they don't like, or even of making dastardly attempts on the life and limb of little brother or sister who is a rival for affections they consider their exclusive right, we have a clue to the sins which concern evils rather than goods. The vices which pursue goods are really pursuing evils since their pursuit was disordered. The vices which flee evils are really fleeing goods, since these apparent evils are in reality not so. But at the basis of every vice about evil is a good that is sought, and which the evil is seen as impeding.

Envy, first of all, sees the neighbor's good as hindering its own good, or at least the recognition of that good. Because envy considers the neighbor's good its own evil, it is saddened. If that sadness remains without insurrection, it remains envy. If, however, there is insurrection against that good now seen as evil, there is the vice of Anger. Lastly there is a certain

sadness over one's own true good which is seen as evil. The man guilty of this vice is seeking rest, whether that rest be that of sleep or in some activity of his own, and thus he sees his own good as evil because it threatens to impede the undue rest. And this we have said is the vice of acedia.

C. The Capital Vice of Acedia

Every sin seems to involve the commission of other sins. If one lie is told, it seems twenty more must be told to cover up the first. A sin is called capital because of its preeminence in this disagreeable trait. To show that acedia is a capital sin it will be necessary to show that it has a fundamental attraction for mankind, (205a) and that once having won over the hapless victim, it guides him along well-worn paths to further sins.

1. Acedia's Role as a Capital Vice (206)

Acedia seems to have a twofold claim to the doubtful distinction of being a capital vice. First of all, it is one of the vices about an apparent evil. Men do many things, commit all manner of evil to obtain a good they seek. So also will man do many things and commit all manner of evil to escape an evil. They will run away from the evil, they will turn and fight it if it pursues, and they will seek remedies for the evil. Actually, however the evil which acedia is running away from is a very real good, in fact, the greatest good man can have on this earth, because it is at once a source of the only real earthly happiness and the pledge of eternal happiness -- the Divine good within man himself. Secondly, acedia at least in cause is inordinately pursuing a good. It is saddened at the Divine Good presisely because the Divine good threatens to interfere with an other good they inordinately seek. That good

is rest, and it is almost as fundamental a good for men as food, drink, riches, and sexual pleasure. A soft bed oftentimes has the power to conjure up almost as blissful reveries as a good dinner. Many a man has endured the drudgery of daily toil at the thought of the sweet goal of vacation. And sometimes rest takes the form of activity, a form of activity man has chosen for himself. The man who cannot drag himself away from the golf links or the bowling alley to take care of his family is fundamentally in the same position as the child who insists on playing with his mud pies while his Mother strains her lungs in an effort to get him in to dinner. All are seeking undue rest and are willing to do many things to get it.

2. The Daughters of Acedia (207)

The daughters of any capital sin are those effects which are intrinsically connected with the capital sin, and which are in themselves further sins. The daughters of acedia are not scouts out looking for the best ways to track down the good the parent vice seeks; they are hunted criminals engaged in a headlong flight through forest and valley, city and country -- anywhere to escape the relentless pursuit of the hunter. Of course it is all very foolish, for the hunter is the Hound of Heaven and wants happiness not misery for the fleeing criminal. And the worst of it is that the whole attempt at escape winds up in an even worse frustration. The end of acedia is the escape of a good it considers evil; in flying from this good, it encounters real evil, and the last state is worse than the first.

As in any flight, there is a twofold motion. There cannot

be a running away without a running towards something. Some of the daughters of acedia are busy running in one vain effort not to be caught; one, however, has enough of her wits to look for a place of refuge, althoug she too is going to be deceived. Five of the effects of acedia, then, according to St. Gregory, try to flee the cause of acedia's misery; one tries to find other substitute joys. Despair flees the end of spiritual joys which is Divine Beatitude. Pusillanimity flees the means to that end as those means imply the Counsels of Perfection. Torpor on the other hand flees those means to the end which are prescribed. Rancor turns to flight those men who would induce the sinner to return to the spiritual joy which he sees as the cause of his sadness. Spite fights not men but the spiritual goods themselves and those things connected with them. Finally, there is a composite vice called Wandering after Illicit Things by which the sinner transfers himself to exterior things to escape the sadness it feels about interior goods. This last effect is the one to which St. Thomas reduces some further effects which St. Isidore suggests. This restless pursuit of some anodyne for sadness when it is in the cognitive order is called Importunity of the Mind. If it is in the imagination it is called Curiosity. Loquacity affects the speech; Restlessness of the Body affects the limbs so that there is no composure but a continual nervous motion. If the pursuit of illicit things involves a constant change of locality, a sort of wanderlust, it is called Instability, which may also denote inconstancy of purpose.

a. Despair

The sin of despair is mentioned as the first effect of acedia not according to the actual progress of the vice, but according to its logical proximity to the vice of acedia itself. In fact, despair, like hatred of God, is one of the last things that happen in the destruction of the spiritual life of man. It is as natural for man to hope in his ultimate beatitude as it is for him to love God. It is only by the gradual corruption of nature by the unnatural life of sin that one arrives at such a perverse state.

Despair is based on a false opinion about God; it is the sin committed by those who think God cannot or will not save them. Like acedia itself, it is a sin against a theological virtue and consists principally in an aversion from God rather than in a conversion to a created good. Like acedia itself, it is concerned not with the goodness of God in Himself, but according as we participate in that good. It is true that the virtue of hope, to which despair is opposed, relies principally on the help of God for the attainment of eternal beatitude, which is its object. However, one can commit the sin of despair when he deems that this arduous good is impossible to attain, either by himself or through God. This condition closely approximates the position of acedia itself which is saddened at the difficulty involved in that spiritual good he possesses in himself.

Deppair can proceed from lust, because the man given over to the sins of the flesh is so infected with the love of physical delight that he has only disdain for possible spiritual joys.

More especially, however, the cause of despair is acedia because the man weighed down with sadness is so dejected that he thinks he can never rise to any good, much less a difficult one.

b. Pusillanimity (209)

Despair involves the avoidance of the end of spiritual goods which rise in a beautiful hierarchy to the possession of God. Despair resulted in the ultimate sadness in trying to escape sadness. But acedia can also cause sadness about the means to the end. The means to the end of the spiritual life are good works, some of which fall under the counsels, still others under the commandments. Pusillanimity is concerned with the former.

The Christian life is proposed to man as involving certain things which must be done and certain things which, while they are not commanded, are offered as better means towards the end of the Christian life which is the perfection of charity. By definition these evangelical counsels are good works, better than their opposite, which Christ declared, proposed and persuaded as useful to gain salvation. (210) The spirit of these counsels obliges all Christians so that they must have a certain preparation of the soul should they be called upon under precept to perform a work of the counsels. While the rejection of the counsels in itself does not involve a sin, it may do so if the reason for the rejection is some inordinate attachment. Then the inordinate attachment is the sin, as we havementioned in the instances of the rich young man of the Gospel.

Acedia itself is saddened about things that must be done to retain the love of God. It is not surprising that it should

generate a faintheartedness at the very thought of doing great things. For pusillanimity is opposed to magnanimity which tends to great things. Aristotle says the faint-hearted seem slothful (211) and Our Lord Himself called the servant wicked and slothful (pigrum) (212), who, through pusillanimity, refused to make use of the talents given to him.

c. Torpor

The Christian life, however, is not a mere set of counsels, a collection of recommendations on how to lead a beautiful life. Christ Our Lord was not a philosopher pointing the way to a better life; He was a Master who will one day be a Judge, and He gave to all certain commandments that must be fulfilled. Pusillanimity we said was the daughter of acedia which hurried away from any suggestion of a better life; torpor flies away even from a good life. Pusillanimity concerned the counsels of Christian life; torpor is concerned with the precepts of the same life.

The man afflicted with the vice of acedia is saddened at the thought of the corporal labor involved in his adherence to the Divine Good. If he has sufficient daring and is not forced to perform the works which disgust him, he will simply omit them. He will at any rate be negligent in selecting the means necessary to achieve an end for which he has only a profound distaste. Quite naturally his interior reluctance for the commands of God will find its reflection in the work he does perform. The young man who finds the softness of his bed on Sunday morning such a delight that the idea of hearing Mass afflicts him with a positive disrelish may be moved by the in-

sistence of parents or the fear of community censure to abandon his bed for Mass. But he does not set out joyously, his steps are weighed down by the burden in his heart, as he sets out with a surly groan. This is the vice of sloth (pigritia) which implies a slowness in setting about the execution of the exterior work. On arriving at the church, probably late, the sluggish recalcitrant may well strike an irreverent posture and a bored countenance which reflect his abhorrence for the whole business. This sluggishness is the vice of torpor which implies a certain remissness in the execution of the work. This vice of torpor is said to proceed most properly from acedia, because acedia is a burdensome sadness, that is, something impeding the soul from operation, whether the impediment be such that the abstention is complete or only rendering performance languid.

The seriousness of these related vices is taken not from any virtue, except perhaps prudence which directs actions to their end, but from the particular precept which is altogether omitted, neglected or performed tardily and sluggishly. To determine the gravity of the sin, one must know to what extent the precept obliges in justice. It is obviously less a sin to miss morning and evening prayers than it is to miss Sunday Mass.

For all these vices, and several others of the same character, St. Thomas uses the one general effect of acedia which he calls torpor about the precepts. That he intended no narrowing of this effect of acedia to the particular vice of torpor is evident from the ease with which he reduces to this general torpor certain other effects of acedia proposed by St. Isidore.

Idleness (Otiositas) St. Thomas takes to mean the absolute omission of the prescribed work, and drowsiness (Somnolentia) as their negligent fulfillment. St. Thomas suggests that that effect of acedia which St. Isidore called instability may be taken in a twofold sense. In one sense it may be reduced to the effect of acedia which is called wandering after illicit things; in this sense it implies a species of wanderlust. Or else it may be taken to mean an inconstancy of purpose. To return to the sluggish young man at Mass, we may find him changing his mind about the fulfillment of his duty, and since he finds that fulfillment distasteful taking himself off before the end of Mass to the local cigar store to peruse the magazines.

We may for purposes of clarity sum up the possible effects of acedia which fall under the general effect called torpor about the precepts. In itself, acedia produces a certain heaviness and, like all sadness, a flight from the cause of sadness. This heaviness may produce only a certain slowness or reluctance in the accomplishment of the commanded task. Or it may go so far as absolute abstention, through the internal sins of negligence, in regard to the beginning of the work and the work itself, or the sin of inconstancy which is a change of mind after the work has once begun. In the external order, the heaviness of this melancholy sin may produce a slowness in setting about the execution or a remissness in the accomplishment of the work. The slowness in beginning is called sloth; the remissness in execution is called torpor or

sluggishness. This last torpor, however, is a special kind of the general torpor which acedia causes.

d. Spite

Left to himself the melancholy sinner who is the victim of acedia would not bother those who prefer the spiritual goods he disdains; he would simply ignore them. Very often however those who do prefer spiritual goods will not be ignored. The parents of the young man who lies abed close to Sunday noon are very positive in their insistence on their son's performance of his duty. Such insistence, especially when good people have the means to enforce their demands, becomes a positive danger to the settled tranquility of the man who has no intention of bothering about spiritual matters. And because these people are dangerous to his love of ease, this man hates them and struggles against them. The hunted criminal who has committed the sin of acedia is running away, but if the hounds get uncomfortably close, he will turn to give battle. Thus in countries where the Church has great power and influence, anticlericals seem more rabid and numerous than in places where those who have no use for spiritual goods can ignore the weak efforts of the ministers of Christ.

This transition from passive sadness to active anger is quite in keeping with the psychology of the passions. For sadness is a middle passion between fear and anger. Acedia which is sadness may at times be caused by laziness which is the fear of effort. In its turn, acedia causes a species of anger which is spite, since it rises to attack those who would induce a return to the spiritual goods which sadden. Whether or not the counter attack is successful the sinner is left with a bitter-

ness (amaritudo) for his enemies. This bitterness, which St. Isidore placed as an effect of sinful sadness, St. Thomas says is an effect of rancor. The sinner has only sought refuge from the things that saddened him and, instead of finding refuge, he finds more and more occasion for sadness.

e. Malice

What has just been said about the relation of the sad sinner to spiritual men is also true of his relation to spiritual goods. When his sadness about the Divine good proceeds far enough, the poor wretch can no longer ignore that good; he finds himself actively hating it. Since the spiritual good which is the object of acedia is the Divine Good as it is participated by us, that distaste can go so far as to produce the worst sin that a man can commit, hatred of God Himself. (213) However before things have gone so far that the pursued finds himself hating the Hound of Heaven Himself, he may be hating the advance agents of the real Pursuer, and he may be hating the very objects which remind him of the chase. This hatred is called malice. The spiritual good about which acedia is saddened embraces the end and the means of spiritual good. (214) Therefore the malicious person begins to hate the Church as an instrument of grace, grace itself, the sacraments and sacramentals, anything pertaining to the Divine Good he has abandoned. Spiritual things trouble the malicious man. If he is surrounded by objects of devotion like crucifixes and statues, he may be driven to destroy them because they remind him of something he does not want to remember. And perhaps spiritual things, the very things he spurned because of their difficulty, constantly

trouble him mentally, seem to call him back, and in an effort to rid himself of these bothersome relics of the past, he performs some act of hatred against them, as against God Himself.

f. Wandering After Illicit Things

So far in this enumeration of the ugly daughters of acedia, we have been observing the frenzied flight of the sinner from the sweet yoke and the light burden of Christ. Like a frightened horse terrified of the harness, the man who allowed himself the sadness of acedia has run off in every direction with but one thought --- escape. We have seen the frustration of that escape --- the betrayal of the one who betrayed. But an escape must be made in some direction; a refuge must be sought. Some cure for the terrible melancholy of acedia must be discovered. And in this last daughter of acedia, we consider the refuges the outlaw seeks, the remedies the melancholy man seeks for the melancholy he himself induced.

Aristotle says that no man can tarry for very long without any delight. (215) The motion of acedia is away from God, but as every motion that tends away from a starting point must move inevitably to a terminal point, the motion of acedia must tend to something else. A man must seek happiness; it is his nature to do so. If he cannot or will not find it in spiritual delights, he can and will look for it somewhere else -- in corporal delights. (216) Insofar as a man transfers himself from spiritual joys because of the sadness he finds in them to exterior delights, he commits not only the sin of acedia but that effect of acedia which is called wandering after illicit things.

What are these illicit things which the man guilty of acedia wanders about looking for? When a man will not find his rest in God, in whom alone there is true rest, where will he try to find his rest? Obviously in some created goods. But these created goods are in a sense as infinite as sin itself. We may narrow down the field somewhat if we take only those primary created goods which the capital sins inordinately desire. For there is no reason one capital sin may not be the cause of another. (217)

Perhaps the man who finds the Divine Good boring and tedious will look for other goods of the soul, such as the honor and praise which are paid to excellence. Perhaps some men do reject the joys of God, and then look for their joy in some excellence in a science or an art, and since these goods are not ordered by them to God but rather to themselves, become guilty of pride as well as acedia. Perhaps others seek the bubble of reputation, and since this quest is likewise ill-ordered, become vain. Yet St. Thomas spoke of a transferal to external goods as proper to acedia. So perhaps even more seek after wealth, the means to self-sufficiency, and become avaricious.

But St. Thomas also quoted Aristotle who said that a man who cannot find his joy in spiritual delights will transfer himself to corporal delights. The fundamental reason behind the sin of acedia was the opposition of the flesh to the spirit. The trouble of bodily labor and the joy of spiritual goods were weighed in the wind, and it was the spiritual goods which were

found wanting. The love of undue rest was the cause of acedia. Is it not likely then that a person in love with the body's rest will also be in love with other pleasures of the body? Spiritual and intellectual pleasures are more delightful in themselves, but very often corporal and sensible pleasures are more delightful in their relation to us, because they are more known, and because they are desired as a remedy for sadness. (218) And that isprecisely what is sought -- a remedy for sadness.

It all may begin with a simple desire for rest, for freedom from the harassing cares of the spiritual life, One may wish to find his pleasures in a more passive existence, in a placid nonchalance. This man does not care to take an active part in the arena of life; he takes a seat on the sideline, and watches the crowd go by. But this cannot go on forever. Even the most sluggish temperament is at last sated with sleep. The body itself makes certain demands -- for nourishment at least. Such a man can easily become a glutton since he is naturally inclined to give the body the food it asks just as he gave it the rest it asked. And since God Himself has implanted in the body certain desires for venereal pleasure so that the race might not perish, these desires too eventually arise, and the man who gave the body undue rest and undue food will not refuse this last request.

Pere Janvier sees in this a truly vicious circle. (219) Like many a preacher, he points out on sound theological grounds that lust in all its forms tends to inspire in us a distaste for spiritual delights, for God and the things of God. In other words, lust itself can be the cause of acedia.

But so likewise does acedia inspire lust, since when one is resolved no longer to look after spiritual goods, one must content oneself with other compensations, compensations which very frequently are the pleasures of the flesh. There is a great deal of wisdom in the old proverb that the devil finds work for idle hands. Since acedia is a grevious sadness, a vehement pleasure may be sought as its remedy. Thus voluptuous sensualism is all too frequently the final result. In its turn it inspires more and more disgust for spiritual things, even a blindness of mind (220) which no longer sees the beauty of the spiritual life, for as St. Paul wrote: "The carnal man no longer receives the realities that the Spirit of God offers him; for him, they are folly, he cannot know them, for it is by the Spirit that their value is judged." (221)

Thus the downward path once begun opens more broadly and more precipitously until at last with a terrible inevitability come those last fearful mileposts: despair and hatred of God. If it were not for the loving mercy of God which may bend the most perverse will, as long as it retains the flexibility of life, nothing could stop the descent into hell from being as unavoidable as the law of gravity.

Thus part of the terrible tragedy, part of the awful pity of the thing is that acedia never escapes the sadness it fled. There is an old legend that the forbidden apple turned into ashes in the mouths of the first human sinners. The pleasures which the sinfully sad man seeks do the same

thing, leaving a greater sadness. And all the wretched flight ends only in a misery incomparably greater than that little trouble which was the beginning.

CHAPTER V

REMEDIES FOR ACEDIA

Before a physician can suggest a cure, he must be reasonably certain that his diagnosis is correct. There are certain physical diseases and certain spiritual trials which closely resemble acedia, but are not to be confused with it. Melancholy and a reluctance to perform one's obligations can proceed from a badly disposed physiological condition; insufficient assimilation, troubles in the circulation like anemia, nervous exhaustion naturally render a person sad at the thought of tiring physical performance for which they have not the strength. If the spiritual director has reason to believe that some such cause is operating in greater or lesser degree, he should refer his penitent to a doctor. (222) On the other hand, the complaint may be spiritual without being morally imputable. In the purifying nights of the soul, there is a withdrawal of sensible joy and consolation, and a consequent sadness. However, there is a great difference between a person undergoing these trials and a person suffering from acedia. The former still has a strong desire to do God's will in all things; he has no inclination to return to creatures for joy. The latter, however, worries little enough about his obligations to God, and is quite readynto take his joy wherever it may be found. Nevertheless, there may be certain elements of

acedia even in these purifying nights, and some of the remedies for acedia, with due caution and proportion, may be applied. (223)

It should be obvious, then, that we are here dealing with a person who, through repeated acts, has a disgust for Divine things. In other words, this person has acquired a vicious operative habit, and the cures suggested must follow the rules for the diminution and destruction of habits. (224) An operative habit of sin is acquired by repeated acts. That is not to say that certain temperaments do not have a natural affinity for habits of this kind. In this connection, it will be useful to point out that practically any temperament can acquire the vice of acedia. The field has been restricted entirely too much. When acedia is seen as sloth, the phlegmatic temperament is seen to have a natural predisposition to it, since the phlegmatic naturally shirks work. On the other hand, if acedia be seen more correctly as a species of sadness, some will be prompt to assert that the melancholic, with their natural inclination to sadness, will easily develop acedia. These observations are not incorrect; they are incomplete. For the choleric person who sets for himself some goal which is not Divine will easily tend to acedia, when there is a question of religious obligations interfering with his plans for other objectives. And so too the sanguine temperament which finds sustained effort a bore, and is the first to escape the tediousness of the way of the cross by a flight to sensual pleasures, is not innocent of a tendency to acedia.

Whatever the underlying temperament, the character afflict-

ed with acedia has acquired his present miserable condition, and the destruction of the vice must proceed in the same way as the acquisition but in reverse order. However, rendering future acts of acedia less vigorous or simply disusing the habit, are not sufficient. A more radical remedy must be applied, acts of contrary habits. (225)

A. General Remedies for Sadness

Since Acedia has a physical origin, we may speak first of legitimate physical remedies. While more spiritual remedies may have greater ontological value as directly opposing the vice, we must remember that this vice has its roots in a psychological situation which requires great tact and delicacy. St. Thomas tells us that "when a man is influenced by a certain passion he considers chiefly the the things that pertain to that passion: so that a man who is full of sorrow does not easily think of great and joyful things, but only of sad things, unless by a great effort he turns his thoughts away from sadness." (226) There is a secret in dealing with passions which frequently proves of great value. The person so troubled should be exhorted to consider not the cause and object of the passion, which consideration only increases the intensity of the passion, but to consider the passion itself and its inordinateness.

Once the person has recognized the condition under which he labors, certain general remedies can be proposed. The physical remedies proposed by St. Thomas for all kinds of sadness can be prudently recommended, provided that their subsidiary role be pointed out and that their use be moderate. Thus if the person could be induced to have a good healthy cry, or at

least a few sighs over his miserable condition, the air might be cleared. (227) In such a way, the person is acting according to his present condition, which always brings pleasure, which in turn mitigates its contrary, sadness. St. Thomas suggests likewise a bath and a sleep. (228) We would not be proceeding against the mind of St. Thomas if we added further suggestions such as good music, which still has charms to soothe the troubled heart, and a glass of wine which warms the blood. Indeed any contrary delectation is a remedy for sadness. (229) While it would be legitimate to desert a supernatural obligation for rest or play, it is not only legitimate but virtuous to relax the high pressure of attention to work. This is the virtue of recreation or eutrapelia. (230) "The remedy for weariness of the soul," says our guide, "must needs consist in the application of some pleasure by slackening the tension of the reason's study." (231) In this connection, Dean Inge's remark quoted by Father Gerald Vann has application. (232) His proposal is the use of some faculty which has been neglected. Thus a studious man troubled with the weariness of acedia might legitimately rest by turning for a while to the development of some artistic or athletic skill. Play and mirth are necessary to human life, and they should not be overlooked. From them as from sleep comes rest and a new eagerness to take up the work which continuous application has made wearisome.

High on the list of natural remedies of sadness is the compassion of friends. (233) When the sadness is that of acedia, this compassion and companionship can have supernatural overtones. For in the supernatural order, spiritual friendships

have produced abundant fruit. The solace that a spiritual father or brother can offer to one weighed down with sadness is immense. This solace may not only be that of compassion, but of advice and encouragement and, it may, by providing fresh motives for joy in God, release the troubled soul from its burden.

B. The Moral Virtues

We have spoken of the general remedies for sadness, but these remedies are not always possible to the one saddened, nor are they of infallible efficacy. There are difficulties in any human life, and the Christian life is not only not an exception to the general rule, but must even embrace certain sadnesses. Our Lord Himself told all who would be his followers: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (234) Undoubtedly the very tediousness one experiences in the daily carrying of the cross is part of the cross itself. To mortify in oneself the results of original sin and our own personal sins, to suffer in union with Christ crucified naturally entails suffering for our sensitive nature. These sufferings may be cast off at the peril of our soul's salvation; they must be embraced. And while the spiritual part of man rejoices in these sufferings, his physical and sensitive nature still feels them.

How then are these causes of sadness to be sustained? How is the soul to bear up under the torrent of sadness that often seems to overwhelm it? In the order of the moral virtues, there is one virtue which is especially designed to enable us to bear the contradictions and trials we meet. This is the virtue of patience which hinders a man from departing from right reason illumined by faith by yielding to difficulties and sadness. (235)

Patience does not flee from sorrow; it meets it, bears it, and yet does not allow the soul to give way to undue sorrow. Whether sorrow be caused by the great crises of life, the death of loved ones, a great misfortune, or by simple daily boredom, patience gives us the strength to endure. St. Augustine says: "A man's patience it is whereby he bears evil with an equal mind (i. e. without being disturbed by sorrow) lest he abandon with an unequal mind the goods whereby he may advance to better things." (236) This virtue of patience is annexed to fortitude; indeed in some ways it has more of virtue than the splendid courage of heroes. Many great deeds are done in an instant, but the constant sustaining of the trials of life with a sweet and patient soul rises above such temporary greatness.

It is not enough to extol patience to the one suffering from acedia; some means must be given whereby he can acquire such a help against the sadness that casts him down. Of course, the very first help may be obtained from God in prayer, for it is obvious that the only motive for real patience is charity, since that is the only real good for which it is worthwhile to suffer pain and sorrow. Charity can be had only through God's grace, and that can be obtained only through prayer. (237) . One may, however, increase his patience by voluntarily undertaking little mortifications, so that the will may be trained to bear sadness. The soul practising patience always has for an Exemplar Our Lord Who suffered the greatest pains out of love for us. Patience becomes easier when our sufferings are borne in union with those tremendous sufferings.

Acedia, however, is concerned more often not with great external difficulties, but with the tediousness of the daily Christian life. A man may find it comparatively easy to be virtuous for an hour or even for a day; it is the constant wearing down that burdens him. The very length of time which is required for a virtuous life adds a special difficulty. For this difficulty, the virtue of perseverance is the remedy. (238) Perseverance is "a habit of the mind whereby a man stands steadfastly, lest he be moved by the assault of sadness from what is virtuous. And thus perseverance is to sadness as continence is to concupiscence and pleasure. (239) Like patience, perseverance is an infused virtue (240) and, therefore, may be obtained by prayer. Like patience also, it may be deepened by the practice of mortification. However, while patience needs individual acts of suffering, perseverance requires a more comprehensive program. The person troubled with acedia should be advised to draw up a rule of life, a daily program to which he should adhere as closely as possible. Above all, he must not depart from this rule because of the motions of acedia.

In all these proposed remedies, it should be rembered that acedia is not simply sadness about any good, but about the Divine good. It is a reluctance in performing what pertains to the service of God and, under this aspect, it is the cause of sins against the act of the virtue of religion which is called devotion. Devotion implies a promptness and willingness in the service of God. (241) The principal effect of devotion is the spiritual joy of the mind, a comfort which enables us to per-

form our duties without the tediousness of acedia. (242) Devotion is caused by God and is, therefore, obtained by prayer. Devotion, however, is caused especially by a certain kind of prayer -- contemplation or meditation of which we shall speak in the next section. (243)

C. Contemplation

In the whole course of St. Thomas' treatment of acedia, there is no mention of a remedy. And this is natural and understandable, since St. Thomas is writing a speculative moral, not an ascetical tract. However, there is one hint as to treatment, and this hint flows from the very nature of acedia. The objector says quite rightly that all sin is to be avoided. Then he subsumes the advice of Cassian: "Experience shows that the onslaught of sloth is not to be evaded by flight but conquered by resistance." (244) And, of course, the conclusion is that acedia is not sinful. The solution to the difficulty is quite simple, but its value to us is that it elaborates on Cassian's advice, and provides a clue to the treatment of this spiritual malady. St. Thomas distinguishes sins which are to be overcome by flight, such as lust, when the continued thought increases the incentive to sin, and sins which are to be fought by resistance when perseverance in the thought diminishes the incentive to sin, which incentive arises from trivial consideration. Acedia is to be conquered by resistance rather than by flight. (245) All sin is the substitution of false for true values, but sins which consist more in aversion from the unchangeable good than in conversion to a creat-

ed good have the special note of not sufficiently considering the true value of that from which they flee. Sins which proceed from ignorance are especially to be attributed to acedia, because they imply a neglect in studying the things which should be studied. (246)

There is a common confusion on the natures of both acedia and contemplation which makes it difficult to see how contemplation could be a remedy for acedia. Acedia is commonly understood as sluggishness, a suspension of activity, and contemplation is frequently regarded as almost the same thing. Quite the contrary is true. Contemplation is the highest activity, that most proper to man as he is rational. And acedia very frequently if not most often takes the form of a ceaseless round of activity, an activity, however, which is ill-ordered. Even when such activity does not take the form of the daughter of acedia which is known as the wandering after illicit things, it is an activity which is aimless. The perfect man has for his object God and the beatitude which is God. As he progresses in charity, he orders more and more of his activity to that one end. He has a singleness of purpose which makes for very fruitful activity. On the other hand, the man who does not consider his last end and wanders about after many intermediate ends, ends which he sees as ultimate. Even when this activity is in itself morally good or morally indifferent such as the advance of science or technology, the building of a commercial empire, when it is not ordered to that true ultimate end which is God, it is evil. Thus there is among modern men who know not God the anodyne of work for the unhappiness which gnaws at the heart.

Contemplation is a remedy for acedia, because acedia, as we have seen, is basically sadness. Sadness comes from that which is repugnant to the appetite; it implies a certain fatigue or bitterness of the appetite. (247) Its opposite is delectation which is the rest of the appetite in a good convenient to the appetite. Obviously then sadness is mitigated by delectation of any kind. But contemplation is in itself delightful to men; in fact the very greatest delight of men is in contemplation. (248) Study of any kind of truth, therefore, would in some way mitigate the sadness of acedia. But as we have suggested in the previous paragraphs, certain studies would not cure the sadness of acedia; they might alleviate its pain, and yet aggravate the moral disease. Acedia is not any kind of sadness, and any kind of contemplation will not cure it. Acedia is a very particular kind of sadness; it is a sadness about the Divine Good as it is participated in us, and it is only contemplation of the Divine Good which will cure sadness about the Divine Good. The Divine Good is in itselfmentirely without evil; it is therefore something which should give the greatest joy. The error is on the human side; it is precisely because the sinner has not sufficiently considered the Divine Good that he can weigh it in the balance with the toil it demands, and find the Divine Good wanting. Of course there is no comparison between the Divine Good and human suffering, as St. Paul wrote long ago "I reckon the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come."(249) But this is in the objective order, and it is in the subjective order that the mistake, the mistake of acedia has been made. The mistake can

be rectified only by a further consideration of the Divine Good so that it may be seen if not in all its goodness and delectability, since that is not possible in this life, at least in a greater goodness and delectability so that its difficulties may be borne and its obligations not shirked.

Nor should it be forgotten that acedia is a sin opposed to the joy which is an act and effect of charity. While it is true that any increase in charity results in a decrease of a vice (taking the vice as habitually venial since charity cannot co-exist with mortal sin), it is especially true that as one grows in the love of God, he learns to rejoice more in the presence of the Beloved, and to count less and less the cost of that love. Therefore the contemplation which is proposed as a remedy for acedia should be affective. It begins, first of all, from love, since it is the love of God which incites man to contemplate Him. (250) This contemplation, imperfect as it is in this life, is greater than any other human delight both because of the goodness of the object and because it is an activity in full accord with the nature of man. (251)

Since we have said that acedia is a substitution of values, it will be well for the contemplation which is proposed as a remedy for acedia to attempt to see not only the value of the Divine Good, but to look at earthly goods, especially the troubles and bodily labor entailed in loving and enjoying God, in the light of that Divine Good. St. Paul (252) as we have said tells us that we should account these things as nothing to gain the incorruptible crown. And while it is more common to speak of

eternal beatitude which is the final term of earthly endeavor, it is also true that by grace which is the seed of glory, and by charity whereby the Holy Trinity already dwells within us, we have the pledge, i. e. the first payment of our eternal happiness. It was said before that the particular Divine Good with which acedia was concerned was the Divine Good as it is participated by us. This does not necessarily mean either present or future participation; it is all the same. Therefore St. Paul's admonition that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come." (253)

It should be remarked that while considerations of eternal punishment, shame and so on are useful to certain souls troubled with acedia, they are by no means as ontologically useful as the contemplation of the Divine Goodness which has just been proposed. In this thesis, we have deliberately eschewed particular considerations in order to arrive as far as possible at the general natures of things. Acedia is a sorrow, and sorrow is not mitigated by sorrow. St. Thomas tells us that contraries are cured by contraries. (254) Therefore, it would seem that the medicine for sadness should always be joy and not sadness. And while this statement has a great deal of truth, we will have to distinguish it. It is quite true, as Father Aelred Graham writes: "We should need no moral exhortations to lead us to love God. We have only to realize what He is ..... Things spiritual and intangible leave us unmoved only because we do not give them sufficient thought. In fact, they are more satisfying, have greater ontological stability than anything we can see or touch." (255) However, this consideration is "ontological" and Father Graham's first statement should underline "should need". As a

matter of fact, what may be best ontologically or absolutely is not always what is best relative to us or psychologically. Consequently, it may often be useful to make some persons suffering with acedia sad in a different way. The pain of, or sometimes even the threat of, a good slap can silence a child howling over the loss of a toy. The prospect of the yawning abyss of hell has more possibilities for sadness than the boredom of the daily round of religious obligations. And the consequences of acedia even in this life can be far more devastating to the human spirit than any monotony of service.

The spiritual physician faced with a genuine instance of acedia, however, has more to do than simply to point out that the sinner is concentrating on the thorns to the forgetfulness of the rose. Indeed he has more to do than prophesy even more grievous thorns if the sinner persists. He must try to induce some penance for the mistake that has already been made. Therefore, he must induce another sorrow. St. Thomas points out that in the act of acedia the will's choice falls on sadness, whether it be in the will or senses and that, for cure, there must be another sorrow, that of contrition, against the will's former choice.

In so doing, a contemplation of the real state of affairs is most useful. This contemplation should be especially brought to bear on the details of Our Lord's Passion, in which He is not only the Exemplar of patient suffering from all manner of human pains, but the great Atoner for our sins, whether they be those of inordinate pleasure or inordinate sadness. His prayer in the garden, "Not My will but Thine be done" manifests at once His love for the Father and for us, even at the price of

the maximum of suffering.

In all these remedies, the true physician of souls is only pointing out to the penitent that, since the Lord has made us for Himself, as St. Augustine says, the heart will always be restless until it rests in God. In other words, he is inviting the soul which perversely seeks rest in itself to taste and see that the Lord, and He alone, is truly sweet.

"Take up My yoke upon you

...

and you shall find

rest

to your souls.

For My yoke is sweet

and My burden light."

Mt. 12, 29

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(Introduction)

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(52) Ruth Anderson, Elizabethan Psychology (University of Iowa: 1927), p. 162. Which is to name only one outstanding work on a Renaissance commonplace.

(53) The chronology of St. Thomas's works has been disputed by many, especially Grabmann and Mandonnet. I propose the most recent which is that of Angelus Walz, O.P. It is found in his San Tomasco (an English version by Sebastian Bullough, O.P. is not yet published) and in the Dictionnaire de Theplogie Catholique in the article "Saint Thomas d' Aquin." It may also be found in the most recent edition of the Quaestiones Disputatae by Raymond Spiazzi, O.P. (Turin: 1949), I, xvi.

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(64) B. Merkelbach, O.P., Quaestiones de Variis Peccatis, (Liege: 1935), p. 142-145, Cf. by the same author Summa Theologiae Moralis (Paris: 1938), 1, 724-5.

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(78) Q.D. De Malo, q. 11, a. 1.

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(81) Ibid., p. 477.

(82) Acedia is not only called acedy and accidie, but sloth, spiritual sloth, spiritual disgust, laziness, torpor, ennui, melancholy, tediousness and so on. Several authors have maintained the word is untranslatable. Cf. Juvenal Lalor, O.F.M., "The Passions" in Summa Theologica tr. by English Dominicans (Benziger, 1948), III, 3233. Also T. Pegues, op. cit., p. 734.

(83) Summa Theol., II-II, q. 35, a. I., s. c.

(83a) Thomistic Lexicon, Sister M. Inviolata Barry et al. (Washington: 1948), acedior.

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(84a) Cf. Editionem Leoninam. II-II, q.35, a.1.

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(88) Q. D. de Malo, q. 11, a. 1, c.

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(94) Ibid., a. 1.

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(99) Ibid. a. 4

(100) Ibid., a. 2

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(102) Ibid., a. 3

(103) Ibid., 11-11, q. 35, a. 1, c.

(104) Ibid., a. 4, ad 3um.

(105) "Sed acedia est quaedam passio: est enim species tristitias, ut Damascenus dicit et supra habitua est." Ibid., a. 1 obj. 1. Cf. ibid., 1-11, q. 35, a. 6.

(106) Ibid.

(107) Ibid., 1-11, q. 35, a. 1. St Thomas uses the word dolor for the generic passion and also for that species of dolor which is caused by exterior apprehension. Tristitia however is that which is caused by an interior apprehension. Cf. ibid. a. 2. The English Dominicans translate the generic passion as "pain", and use, as St. Thomas did, the same word for the species which is caused by exterior apprehension. They render tristitia as sorrow, and in so doing have to change the Douay text of the Bible to fit the translation. The terminology may be a bit confusing, but the definitions of each term are clear.

(108) Ibid., a. 3.

(109) Ibid., q. 25, a. 4.

(110) Ibid., q. 36, a. 1.

(111) Ibid., q. 35, a.8.

(112) Ibid., q. 37, a. 2.

(113) Ibid.

(114) Ibid., a. 3.

(115) Ibid., a. 4.

(116) Ibid., q. 35, a. 2.

(117) Ibid., q. 35, a. 8.

(118) Ibid.

(119) Cajetanus, op. cit., q. 35, a.8.

(120) Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 35, a. 8.

(121) Cf. ibid., q. 37, a. 4, ad 3um.

(122) In Sent.., d. xxvi, q. 1, a. 3

(123) Summa Theol. 1-11, q. 35, a. 8. There are several difficulties involved in reconciling this text with the parallel texts in the Sentences and the De Veritate, and with the authority cited.

St. John Damascene (PG XCIV, 931) lists four species of sadness: ἄχος, ἀχθος, φθόνος, ἔλεος. With the last two, envy and pity, there is no difficulty. However it is easy to see that achos and achthos could be easily confused. The present Latin translation (Migne) has achos as "moeror" i. e. grief or mourning, which is "a sadness taking away the voice." Achthos, however, is "molestia" i. e., something burdensome or vexatious ἄχος an ache, pain, distress of the mind which is a "sadness which weighs down." ἄχθος a weight, burden, load. Lexicon abridged from Liddel & Scott, Oxford: 1872.

The other citation, according to the Ottowa Summa, should be to Bishop Nemesius rather than to St. Gregory of Nyssa. In the place cited (PG XL, 688) there is approximately the same enumeration. Achos is a species of sickness (aegritude) which suppresses the use of the voice. Achthos is again a "molestia" which is a burdensome sickness (aegritudo gravans). Nemesius adds that these difficulties do not ordinarily occur to perfect men except by some accident. The important things, however, is that in neither enumeration of the four modes of sadness is there anything corresponding to Saint Thomas' anxiety (anxietas or angustia).

In the Sentences (111, Dist. xxvi, q. 1, a. 3) St. Thomas follows the Patristic texts as we have them now: "accidia autem intensonem tristitiae, in tantum ut immobilitet homiem, actionem retardans; unde dicitur a Damasceno, quod est tristitia aggravans, idest immobilitans, vel achos inquantum prohibet locutionem: quia ut dicit Damascenus l. ll, c. xiv, col. 931 t. 1 est vocem auferens."

Similarly in the De Veritate (q.26, a.4, ad 6um) St. Thomas writes: "..secundum quod ista intensio consistit in interiori dispositione, dicitur accidia, quae est tristitia aggravans, scilicet cor, ne aliquid agere libeat; vel secundum quod progreditur ad exteriorem dispositonem: et sic est ἄχος (achos) quae est tristitia vocem auferens."

From this it seems valid to conclude with St. John Damascene and Nemesius that achos is a sadness taking away the voice, and with St. Thomas in the Sentences and De Veritate that it is closely related to acedia.

In the Summa, however, St. Thomas using the same authority says that there are four species of sadness: "acedia, achthos (vel anxietas secundum Gregorium Nyssenum) misericordia, et invidia." (1-11, q. 35, a.8) If we have been right in identifying acedia with acthos in the other passages, this listing would simply be repetition. "Acedia which is acthos, acthos, invidia et misericordia." We have already said that there cannot be found in the texts we now have any mention of anxiety except, of course, in St. Thomas.

(123 contd.)
It would seem a valid principle of interpretation to say that when St. Thomas is citing an authority, he wishes us to rely on that authority. If he correctly cites that authority in two places, what shall we say of the discrepancy in the third place? It certainly seems possible to forget the "th" in one word and thus confuse the very similar acthos and achos. There is no question, however, of the accuracy of St. Thomas' teaching on anxiety; that is quite clear. Then it is perhaps not foreign to the mind of the Holy Doctor to say that achos or the deprivation of speech is a degree of acedia itself.

(124) Q. D. De Ver., q. 26, a. 4, ad 6um.

(125) Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 42, a. 2.

(126) Ibid., q. 41, a. 4, c.

(127) Ibid., ad 4um.

(128) Ibid., q. 41, a. 2, ad 3um. Cf. Ibid., q. 25, a. 1

(129) Ibid., ad 4um.

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(130) Cf. Ibid., q. 71, a. 6.

(131) Ibid., q.74, aa. 1 & 2.

(132) Ibid., a. 3.

(133) Ibid., q. 24, a. 1.

(134) Cf. Ibid., 11-11, q. 2[illegible], a. 1. "In quolibet peccato mortali est quoddamodo aversio a bono incommutabili et conversio ad bonum commutabilem sed aliter et aliter. Nam principaliter consistunt in aversione a bono incommutabili peccata quae opponuntur virtutibus theologicis (acedia, as we shall see, is a sin against a theological virtue) quia virtutes theologicae habent Deum pro objecto: ex consequenti autem important conversionem ad bonum commutabile, inquantum anima deserens Deum consequenter necesse est qupd ad alia convertatur."

(135) Cf. ibid., 1-11, q. 74, a. 6 & a. 8.

(136) Ibid., 11-11, q. 35, a. 1. Also Q.D. De Malo, q. 11, a. 1.

(137) 11 Cor., iv, 7.

(138) Huiusmodi autem tristitia semper est mala: quandoque quidem etiam secundum seipsam; quandoque vero secundum effectum. (Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 35, a. 1, c.).

(139) Primo diximus, Acediam hanc esse tristitiam voluntatis vel appetitus, ut indicemus sermonem hic esse non tantum de

(139 contd.) Acedia, quae est passio appetitus sensitivi, sed de Acedia secundum communiorem quandam rationem; quae scilicet secundum analogiam & quandam similitudinem est communis tristitiae tum voluntatis, tum appetitus sensitivi, iuxta ea, quae de ordine passionum ad actus voluntatis docuimus tomo 2. quaest. ult. de passionibus puncto 3. Unde D. Thomas hic communiter etiam agit de Acedia, ut est quoque in appetitu sensitivo sicut apparet ex art. 1 & 3. (De Valentia, op. cit., q. 12, punctum, p. 733.).

(140) Cf. Summa Theol., II-II, q. 35, a. 2. "cum acedia sit tristitia de spiritual bono, si accipiatur spirituale bonum communiter, non habebit acedia rationem specialis vitii: quia sicut doctum est, omne vitium refugit spirituale bonum virtutis oppositae."

(141) Cf. ibid., I-II, q. 72, a. 1. "Peccata proprie distinguantur specie secundum objecta."

(142) ...acedia secundum quod hic sumitur, nominat tristitiam spiritualis boni. (Ibid., II-II, q. 35, al., c.)

(143) Cf. ibid., I-II, q. 35, a. 2.

(144) Similter etiam non potest dici quod sit speciale peccatum inquantum refugit spirituale bonum prout est laboriosum vel molestum corpori, aut delectationis ejus impeditivum: quia hoc etiam non separaret acediam a vitiis carbalibus, quibus aliquis quietem et delectationem corporis quaerit. (Ibid.) Note, however, that St.THomas does not say that these may not be reasons for acedia, but rather reasons why acedia in this sense may not be a special vice. (Ibid., II-II, q. 35, a. 2).

(145) Cf. ibid. "Et ideo dicendum est quod in spiritualibus bonis est quidam ordo: nam omnia spiritualia bona quae sunt in actibus singularum virtutuum ordinantur ad ad unum spirituale bonum quod est bonum divinum, circa quod est specialis virtus, quae est caritas. Unde quamlibet virtutem pertinet gaudere de proprio bono spirituali, quod consistit in proprio actu: sed ad caritatem pertinet specialiter illud gaudium spirituale quo quis gaudet de bono divino. Et similiter illa tristitia qua quis tristatur de bono spirituali quod est in actibus singularum virtutum non pertinet ad aliquod vitium speciale, sed ad omnia vitia. Sed tristari de bono divino, de quo caritas gaudet, pertinet ad speciale vitium, quod acedia vocatur."

(146) Cf. ibid., q. 27, introductio; q. 27, introductio; a. 1, ad 3um.

(147) Cf. ibid., q. 35, a. 3, c.

(148) Cf. ibid., III, q. 85, a. 1, c.; a. 4, ad 4um.

(149) Cf. ibid., I, q. 63, a. 2.

(150) Acedia vero est quaedam tristitia, qua homo redditur tardus ad spirituales actus propter corporales laborem: qui daemonibus non competit. (Ibid., ad 2um)

(151) Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. De Virtutibus Theologicis (Turin, 1948), p. 4. Cf. Summa Theologica, I-II, q. 54, a. 2.

(152) Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, De Virtutibus Theologicis, p. 40-42.

(153) Cf. Summa Theol., II-II, q. 27, a. 1.

(154) 1 John. iv, 16.

(155) Cf. Summa Theol., II-II, q. 35, a. 4, ad 2um. "Spiritualia autem bona de quibus tristatur acedia, sunt et finis et id quod est ad finem."

(156) Sancti Antonini, op. cit., II, titulus IX, caput V ad caput XIV, 954-1027.

(157) Cf. Summa Theol., II-II, q. 35, a. 2. "Sed Tristari de bono divino, de quo caritas gaudet, pertinet ad speciale vitium, quae vocatur acedia." Cf. Q.D. de Malo, q. 11, a. 2. "Talis ergo tristitia et abominatio seu taedium boni spiritualis et divini, accidia est, quod est speciale peccatum."

(158) Cajetan, op. cit. in II-II, q. 35, a. 4; Banez, op. cit. q. 35, a. 2. 948-949.

(159) Acedia est tristitia voluntatis seu appetitus, de bono aliqualiter divino et nostro, existimato ut malo proprio, propter adiunctam difficultatem illud obtinendi, adserens proinde incuriam et negligentiam actionum piarum et salutarium.
(De Valentia, op. cit., III, disp. III, q. XII, punct. 1, 733).

(160) ... Motivum ad tristitiam est malum. (Summa Theol., II-II, q. 30, a. 1, s. c.)

(161) Cf. ibid., q. 28, a. 2.

(162) De Valentia, loc. cit.

(163) Quamvis in incolatu huius miseriae aliquo modo participemus divinum bonum per cognitionem et amorem, tamen huius vitae miseria impedit a perfecta participatione divinis boni, qualis erit in patria. (Summa Theol., loc. cit., ad 3um).

(164) Mt., xvi, 24.

(165) Mt., xxvi, 41.

(166) ...refugit spirituale bonum prout est laboriosum vel molestum corpori aut impeditivum delectationis ejus... (Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 35, a. 2).

(167) ...propter corporalem laborem; qui daemonibus non competit. (Ibid., 1, q. 63, a. 2, ad 2um).

(168) De Valentia, loc. cit. cf. note 159.

(169) Cf. Summa Theol. 1-11, q. 24, a. 2.

(170) Cf. ibid., q. 18, a. 1.

(171) Cf. ibid. 11-11, q. 35, a. 1. "Quia igitur acedia, secundum quod hic sumitur, nominat tristitiam spiritualis boni, est dupliciter mala, secundum se et secundum effectum. Et ideo acedia est peccatum: malum enim in motibus appetitivis dicimus esse peccatum, ut ex supradictus patet." cf. also Q. D. de Malo, q. 11, a. 1. The words "as long as it is subject to control" are used to indicate the possibility of an indeliberate act, as might happen when the passion is so strong that it takes away all knowledge. Cf. Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 6 a.7, ad 3um. This is especially true when acedia is a physical sickness which does not touch the will which continues to rejoice in God. Such an occurrence is a matter of common experience; it can be found under that very name in a medieval chronicle of a cure worked by St. Catherine. Cf. St. Catherine of Sienna by Joannes Jorgensen, (New York: Longmanns), p. 436. "Cum quidam frater Bartholomeus de Senis ... ipsi virgini referret qualiter erat totus accidia plenus et caput esset sibi grave et fumositatibus plenum, illa sibi compatiens... dixit: Ego nolo quod hic amplius sit aliquid.....Et statim taliter se sensit mente et corpore expeditum, ac si numquam scivisset ac probasset quid esset accidia ut capitis dolor."

(172) Cf. Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 88, aa. 1 & 2.

(173) Cf. ibid.

(174) Cf. ibid.

(175) Cf. ibid., 11-11, q. 35, a. 3. ".... peccatum mortale dicitur quod tollit spirituale vitam, quae est per caritatem, secundum quam Deus nos inhabitat: unde illus peccatum ex so genere est mortale quod de se, secundum propriam rationem, contrariatur caritati. Hujusmodi est acedia. Nam proprius effectus caritatis est gaudium de Deo, ut supra dictum est: acedia autem est tristitia de bono spirituali in quantum est bonum divinum. Unde secundum suum genus acedia est peccatum mortale."

(176) Cf. ibid., a. 1, obj. 2.

(177) Cf. ibid.

(178) "Sed considerandum est in omnibus peccatis quae sunt secundum suum genus mortalia quod non sunt mortalia nisi quando suam perfectionem consequuntur. Est autem consummatio peccati in consensu rationis: loquimur enim nunc de peccato humano, quod in actu humano consistit, cuius principium est ratio. Unde si sit inchoatio peccati in sola sensualitate, et non pertingit useque ad consensum rationis, propter imperfectionem actus est peccatum veniale. Sicut in genere adulteriis concupiscentia quae consistit in sola sensualitate est peccatum veniale; si tamen pervenitur usque ad consensum rationis, est peccatum mortale. Ita etiam et motus acedia in sola sensualitate quandoque est, propter repugnantiam carnis ad spiritum: et tunc est peccatum veniale. Quandoque vero pertingit usque ad rationem, quae consentit in fugam et horrorem et destationem boni divini, carne omnino contra spiritum praevalente. Et tunc manifestum est quod acedia est peccatum mortale. (Ibid., a. 3, c.)

(179) Cf. ibid., ad 3um. ".. acedia contrariatur praecepto de sanctificatione sabbati, in quo, secundum quod est praeceptum morale, praecipitur quies mentis in Deo, cui contrariatur tristitia mentis de bono divino.

(180) Lc., xii, 35.

(181) Breviarium S.O.P., Commune Confessorum non Pontificum, lectio viii.

(182) Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life tr. Bernard J. Kelly, C.S.Sp. (Dublin: 1949), p. 75.

(183) De Valentia, loc. cit.

(184) Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 54, a. 2, ad lum.

(185) Ibid.

(186) Murray, James et al. Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: 1933) "Sloth".

(187) Summa Theol., 11-11 q. 54, a. 2, ad lum.

(188) Ibid.

(189) Apoc. iii, 16.

(190) For a complete discussion of these related vices, cf. St. Antoninus, op. cit., 11, 945-948.

(191) Garrigou-Lagrange, The Three Ages of The Interior Life, 1, 389. Vasteenberghe, op. cit., p. 2023. A. Tanquerey, S.S., The Spiritual Life (Tournai: 1930), p.420.

(192) Summa Theol., 1, q. 63, a. 2, ad 2um.

(Chapter IV)

(193) Rom. viii, 28.

(194) Cf. Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 74, aa. 3 and 4. cf. also Q.D. de Malo, q. 8, a. 1. "Dicendum quod capitale vitium a capite dicitur .....Dicitur enim primo caput, quoddam animalis membrum...Et quia caput est quoddan principium animalis, inde derivatum est nomen capitis ad significandum secundo omne principium....Tertio modo caput significat principem et rectorem populi; nam et alia membra corporis quoddamodo a capite reguntur...Et secundum has tres significationes capitis potest dici vitium capitale. Dicitur enim quandoque capitale vitium a capite, secundum quod est membrum corporis; et secundum hoc dicitur peccatum capitale quod punitur poena capitis. Sic autem non loquimur hic de vitiis capitalibus, sed secundum quod capitale dicitur a capite prout significat principium; unde Gregorius vitia capitalis principalis nominat.

(195) Cf. ibid., "unum peccatum causat aliud per modum inclinationis, in quantum scilicet ex praecedenti peccato causatur dispositio vel habitus inclinand as peccandum; et secundum istum modum originis, omne peccatum causat sibi simile in specie."

(196) Cf. ibid., "...ex parte gratiae subtractae, per quam homo retrahitur a peccato...et secundum hoc, primum peccatum, quod gratia privat, est causa peccatorum subsequentium gratiae privationes."

(197) Cf. ibid., "Tertio modo unum peccatum causat aliud ex parte materiae, in quantum scilicet unum peccatum ministrat materiam alterius, sicut gula ministrat materiam luxuriae, et avaritia dissensioni."

(198) Cf., ibid.

(199) Cf., ibid. "Quod unum peccatum ordinetur ad finem alterius, potest dupliciter contingere. Uno modo ex parte ipsius peccantis, cuius voluntas est pronior ad finem unius peccati quam alterius; sed hoc accidit peccatis."

(200) Cf., ibid. "Alio vero modo dicuntur ex ipse habitudine finium quorum unus habet quandam convententiam cum alio, ita quod ut in pluribus ad unum ordinetur...et secundum hoc oportet capitalia vitia assumere."

(201) Cf. Cajetanus, op. cit., in 1-11, q. 1, a. 1.

(202) Cf. Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 133, a. 1.

(203) 1 Jn. ii, 16.

(204) Cf. Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 77, a. 5.

(205) Cf. ibid., q. 84, aa. 3 and 4. Also Q.D. de Malo loc. cit.

(205a) Cf. ibid., q. 36, a. 4, ad 1um; q. 148, a. 5; q. 118, a. 7 ad 1um; q. 158, a. 6.

(206) Cf. Summa Theol., q. 35, a. 4; Q.D. de Malo, q. 11, a. 4.

(207) Cf. ibid.

(208) Cf. ibid., q. 20, a. 1, a. 3, a. 4.

(209) Cf. ibid., q. 133, 1.

(210) Cf. Passerini, Petri, O.P. De Hominum Statibus et Officiis (Lucae: 1732), p. 40.

(211) Pussillanimi videntur pigri. (111 Ethicorum, 35:1125a24).

(212) Serve male et piger. (Matt., xxv, 26).

(213) Cf. Summa Theol., q. 34, a. 2.

(214) Cf. ibid., q. 35, a. 4, ad 2um.

(215) Aristotle, V111 Ethicorum, V, 2 (1157b 15).

(216) Ibid., X Ethicorum, VI, 4 (1176b 19); cf. VII, xiv, 5 (1154b2).

(217) Cf. Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 36, a. 4, ad 1um.

(218) Cf. Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 31, a. 5, c.

(219) Janvier, op. cit. p. 45.

(220) Ibid., p. 46.

(221) 1 Cor. ii, 14.

(Chapter V)

(222) Vasteenberghe, op.cit., p.2025.

(223) Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, The Three Ages of the Interior Life, 11, 55, 56. Father Lagrange cites the four rules of St. John of the Cross, the second of which is a remedy for acedia -- courage and perseverance in patience. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange adds that this person "must have a keen desire for the goal to be obtained." This desire must also be fostered in those suffering the blight of acedia.

(224) Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 52, a. 2.

(225) Cf. ibid., a. 3.

(226) Ibid., 11-11, q. 20, a. 4, ad 3um.

(227) Cf. ibid., 1-11, q. 38, a. 2.

(228) Ibid., a. 5.

(229) Cf. ibid., a. 1.

(230) Cf. ibid., 11-11, q. 168, a. 2.

(231) Ibid.

(232) Gerald Vann., O.P. Of His Fulness (London: 1939) p. 57.

(233) Cf. Summa Theol., 1-11, q. 38, a. 3.

(234) Lc., ix, 23.

(235) Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 136, a. 1.

(236) St. Augustine, De Patientia, PL, XL, 611.

(237) Summa Theol., 11-11, q.136, a. 3.

(238) Cf., ibid., q. 138, a. 1.

(239) Ibid., 1-11, q. 109, a. 10.

(240) Ibid., 11-11, q. 137, a. 4.

(241) Cf. ibid., q. 82, aa. 1 and 2.

(242) Cf. ibid., a. 4.

(243) Cf. ibid., a. 3.

(244) Ibid., q. 35, a. 1, obj. 4.

(245) Ibid., ad 4 um.

(246) Cf. ibid., q. 20, a. 4, ad 3um.

(247) Cf. ibid., 1-11, q. 38, a. 1.

(248) Cf. ibid., q. 3, a. 5.

(249) Rom. xviii, 8.

(250) Cf. Summa Theol., 11-11, q. 180, a. 1.

(251) Cf. ibid., a. 7.

(252) Rom. xviii, 8.

(253) Ibid.

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