There are certain things which can exist but do not, and others which do exist. Those which can be are said to exist in potency, whereas those which are, are said to exist in act. Now there are two ways of existing in act: to exist essentially or substantially (as when a man exists), and to exist accidentally (as when a man exists as white). The former is to exist without qualification, whereas the latter is to exist in a qualified way.

Something is in potency to both the ways of existing in act. Sperm . . . , for example, are in potency to being man, whereas a man is in potency to being white. Both that which is in potency to exist substantially, and that which is in potency to exist accidently, can, like the sperm and the man, respectively, be called matter. They differ, however, in this: the matter that is in potency to exist substantially is called matter from which, whereas the matter that is in potency to exist accidentally is called matter in which. Likewise, properly speaking, what is in potency to exist substantially is called prime matter, whereas what is in potency to exist accidentally is called a subject. Accordingly, accidents are said to be in a subject, but substantial form is not spoken of in this way. . . . [F]orm makes matter exist, whereas an accident does not make a subject exist. The subject, however, makes an accident exist. . . .

Moreover, just as everything in potency can be called matter, so anything from which something exists, either substantially or accidentally, can be called a form, as man, since he is potentially white, becomes actually
white through whiteness, and the sperm, since it is potentially man, becomes actually man through the soul. Because form makes something exist actually, it is said to be an act. . . .

[A]s generation is a kind of passage from not-existing to existing, and, conversely, corruption a passage from existing to not-existing, generation does not arise from any nonentity but from a nonentity which is a being in potency. For example, a statue comes from bronze, which is a statue in potency, not in act.

Therefore, three things are required for generation: namely, a being in potency, which is matter; a state of not existing in act, which is privation; and that through which something comes to be actually, which is form. Thus when a statue is made from bronze, the bronze, which is in potency to the form statue, is the matter. The lack of configuration or arrangement is the privation.

The shape from which it gets the name statue is the form. This is, however, not a substantial form because the bronze, before the advent of that form, had an act of existing, and its act of existing does not depend upon that shape. It is an accidental form, as are all artificial forms; for art works only on what is already constituted as existing by nature.

Therefore, there are three principles of nature: matter, form, and privation. One of these, form, is that toward which generation moves, whereas the other two lie on the side of that from which generation proceeds. . . .

Now accidents are of two kinds: necessary, which are not separated from a certain kind of thing, like risibility from man, and non-necessary, which are so separated, as is whiteness from man. Accordingly, although privation is an accidental principle, it does not follow that it is unnecessary for generation. For matter is never lacking privation: inasmuch as it is under one form, it is deprived of another and vice versa. For example, in fire there is the privation of air; in air there is the privation of fire.

. . . .

From what has been said it is evident that matter differs by definition from form and privation. . . .

We should realize, however, that some matter includes a form, like the bronze which is the matter of a statue. Bronze itself is a composite of matter and form. Accordingly, since it possesses matter, bronze cannot be called prime matter. Only that matter which is understood without any form or privation, but which is subject to form and privation, is called prime matter, inasmuch as there is no other matter prior to it. . . .
Since all cognition and every definition are through form, it follows that prime matter can be known or defined, not of itself, but through the composite. Accordingly, we know prime matter as that which is related to all forms and privations, as bronze is related to the form of a statue and to the privation of some shape. . . .

We should note that prime matter, and even form, are neither generated nor corrupted, inasmuch as every generation is from something to something. That from which generation arises is matter; that to which it proceeds is form. If, therefore, matter and form were generated, there would have to be a matter of matter and a form of form ad infinitum. Hence, properly speaking, only composites are generated.

We should note also that prime matter is said to be numerically one in all things. . . .

Although prime matter does not in itself have any form or privation, as in the nature of bronze there is neither shape nor the lack of shape, nevertheless prime matter never exists without form and privation. Sometimes it is under one form, sometimes it is under another. But matter cannot exist of itself, since of itself it possesses no form. It does not exist in act, since existing in act occurs only through a form, but exists only in potency. Hence whatever exists in act cannot be called prime matter.

From what has been said, it is evident that there are three principles of nature: matter, form, and privation. These alone, however, are not sufficient for generation. For what is in potency cannot reduce itself to act. Bronze, which is in potency to being a statue, does not make itself be a statue, but needs an agent which draws out the form of statue from potency to act. For form cannot draw itself out from potency to act. . . . There is required, therefore, besides form and matter, another principle which acts. This is called the efficient or moving cause, or agent, or that from which the motion begins.

Because, as Aristotle states in Book Two of the *Metaphysics*, everything that acts, acts only when intending something, a fourth principle is required—that is, what is intended by the agent. This is called the end. And although every agent, be it natural or voluntary, intends an end, we should realize nevertheless that it does not follow that every agent knows or deliberates about the end. Knowing the end is necessary for those whose actions are not determined, but for whom opposed goals are possible, as is the case for voluntary agents. These, therefore, must know the end, through which knowledge they determine their actions. However, the actions of natural agents are determined; hence, there is no necessity for their choosing the means to their end. . . .
From what has been said it is evident that there are four causes, namely, material, efficient, formal, and final.

Having seen that there are four kinds of cause, it is also necessary to see that it is not impossible for the same thing to have several causes, like a statue, which has both bronze and an artisan as causes. The artisan is the efficient cause, and the bronze the material one. Nor is it impossible for the same thing to be the cause of contraries, as the pilot is the cause of both the safety and the sinking of his ship. He is the cause of the latter by his absence, and of the former by his presence.

It should be understood also that it is possible for the same thing to be a cause and to be caused, with respect to the same thing but in different ways. For example, taking a walk is the efficient cause of health, while health is the final cause of taking a walk, inasmuch as taking a walk is sometimes done for the sake of health. Likewise, the body is the matter of the soul, and the soul is the form of the body. The efficient cause is said to be a cause with respect to the end, since the end does not exist in act unless the agent acts; but the end is said to be the cause of the efficient cause, since the latter does not operate except through the intention of an end. Hence, an efficient cause is the cause of that which is the end, as in the example of taking a walk for one’s health. It does not, however, make the end be an end, and therefore it is not the cause of the causality of the end—that is, it does not make the end be a final cause. A physician, for example, produces actual health, but he does not establish health as an end. Moreover, the end does not cause that which is the efficient cause, rather, it is a cause of the efficient cause’s being an efficient cause. For health—and I mean the health resulting from the physician’s ministrations—does not make a physician be a physician; it causes him to be an efficient cause. Hence, the end is the cause of the causality of the efficient cause, for it makes the efficient cause be an efficient cause. Similarly, it makes the matter be matter, and form be form, since matter receives a form only for some end, and a form perfects matter only for an end. Wherefore the end is said to be the cause of causes, inasmuch as it is the cause of the causality of all the causes. Matter is also said to be the cause of a form, inasmuch as a form does not exist except in matter. Similarly, form is the cause of matter, inasmuch as matter does not actually exist except through form. Matter and form are mutually related. . . . to the composite, as parts are to the whole and as the simple is to the complex.
Every cause, insofar as it is a cause, is naturally prior to what is caused. We should realize, however, that priority can have two forms. . . . For one thing can be called prior to another in generation and time, or in substance and completeness. Therefore, since the operation of nature proceeds from the imperfect to the perfect and from the incomplete to the complete, the imperfect is prior to the perfect in generation and time, but the perfect is prior to the imperfect in substance. For example, a man can be said to be prior to a boy in substance and completeness, whereas a boy is prior to a man in generation and time. . . . Matter, indeed, is prior to form in generation and time, inasmuch as that to which something is added is prior to that which is added. But form is prior to matter in substance and in fully constituted being, because matter has complete existence only through form. Similarly, the efficient cause is prior to the end in generation and time, since the motion to the end comes about by the efficient cause; but the end is prior to the efficient cause as such in substance and completeness, since the action of the efficient cause is completed only through the end. Therefore, the material and the efficient causes are prior by way of generation, whereas form and end are prior by way of perfection.

It should be noted that necessity is of two kinds: absolute and conditional. Necessity is indeed absolute when it proceeds from causes which are prior by way of generation, that is, from the material and efficient causes. For example, the necessity of death stems from matter—that is, from the disposition of composing contraries; therefore it is said to be absolute because there is no impediment to it. This is also called the necessity of matter. However, conditional necessity proceeds from causes posterior in generation, that is, from form and end. Accordingly, we say that conception must take place if a man is to be generated. This necessity is said to be conditional, because it is not necessary without qualification for some particular woman to conceive. However, conception is necessary under this condition, namely, if a man is to be generated. This is called the necessity of the end.

It should be understood that in speaking of the intrinsic principles matter and form, there are a similarity and a difference of principles, according to the similarity and the difference of things resulting from the principles. Certain things are the same numerically, like Socrates (when Socrates is being pointed at) and this man. Others are diverse numerically but the same specifically, like Socrates and Plato, who, although they are the same in...
human species, nevertheless differ numerically. Further, certain things are
different specifically, but the same generically, like a man and an ass, which
are the same in the genus animal. Still others are diverse generically but the
same only according to an analogy, like substance and quantity, which do not
agree in any genus but are similar only analogously; for they are alike only
in being. Being is not a genus, however, since it is predicated, not univocally,
but analogously.

To grasp this one should understand that something can be predicated of
many things in three ways: univocally, equivocally, and analogously. A uni-
vocal predication occurs when something is predicated according to the same
name and the same nature; that is, definition, as animal is predicated both of
man and of ass. Each is called an animal and each is an animated substance
capable of sensation, which is the definition of an animal. Equivocal predi-
cation occurs when something is predicated of several things according to
the same name but diverse natures, like dog, said of a barking animal and of
a stellar constellation. These agree in name only, not in definition or signifi-
cation. . . . An analogous predication occurs when something is predicated of
several things which have diverse natures, but which are related to some one
thing, as healthy is predicated of an animal body, of urine, and of medicine,
although it does not wholly signify the same thing in all. For healthy is predi-
cated of urine as of a sign of health; of a body, as of its subject; of medicine,
as of its cause. Nevertheless, each of these is related to the one end, health.

Sometimes things which are similar analogously—that is, through a pro-
portion, a comparison, or an agreement—are such by being related to one
end. The example above is an instance of this. At other times things are anal-
ogous by being related to one agent. For example, physician is predicated of
one who heals through his training; of one who heals without training, like a
midwife. . . . At still other times many things are similar analogously by attri-
bution to one subject, as being, is said of substance, quantity, quality, and the
other predicaments. Quantity and the others are called being, but not for the
same reason that substance is. All the others are called being inasmuch as
they are related to substance, which indeed is their subject. Therefore, being
is said first of substance and only secondarily of the others. Consequently,
being is not the genus of substance and quantity, because no genus is predi-
cated of some of its species first, and of others secondarily. Being is predi-
cated analogously; and this is what we meant when we claimed that
substance and quantity differ generically but are analogously the same.

Therefore, of those things which are numerically the same, both the mat-
ter and the form are numerically the same, as [both matter and form] of Tullius
and of Cicero. Of those which are specifically the same but numerically diverse, the matter and the form are not numerically the same, but are specifically the same, as [those] of Socrates and of Plato. Similarly, of those things which are generically the same, their principles are generically the same, like the soul and the body of an ass and of a horse, which differ specifically but are the same generically. Likewise, of those things which are similar only in an analogous way, their principles are only analogously or proportionately similar.

**ON BEING AND ESSENCE**

As [Aristotle] states in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*, it must be understood that *being through itself* is used in two ways. In one way it is divided into the ten genera. In another way it signifies the truth of propositions. . . . *Essence*, however, is derived from being said in the first way, because *being* used in this way is divided into ten genera, *essence* must signify something common to all natures, through which natures diverse beings are placed in diverse genera and species. Thus, for example, humanity is the essence of man, and so with others.

Moreover, that through which something is constituted in its proper genus or species is what is signified by the definition that declares what a thing is. Hence, philosophers have substituted the name “quiddity” for that of “essence.” It is what [Aristotle] frequently calls “the what a thing was to be,” that is, that through which something is a certain kind of being. It is called *form*, moreover, inasmuch as “form” signifies the certitude of anything. . . . It is also called by the name “nature,” . . . when *nature* is said of anything that can be grasped intellectually in some way. For a thing is intelligible only through its definition and essence. . . .

But because being is asserted absolutely and primarily of substances, and secondarily and in a relative sense of accidents, it follows also that essence is truly and properly in substances, but is in accidents only in a certain way and in a qualified sense. Some substances indeed are simple, and some are composite. Essence is present in both, but it exists more truly and in a nobler way in simple substances, inasmuch as they have their acts of existing in a nobler way. For simple substances are the cause of composite ones—at least the first substance, God, is. However, because the essences of simple substances are more hidden from us, we must therefore begin with essences of composite ones, so that our study might proceed more suitably from easier things.
In composite substances both the matter and the form are known, as soul and body are known in man. Moreover, neither one of them alone can be called essence. For it is clear that the matter alone of a thing is not its essence, because through its essence a thing both is knowable, and is established in a species and a genus. But matter is neither a principle of knowledge nor that by which something is determined in a genus or species. On the contrary, a thing is so determined by that by which it is in act. Nor can it be said that form alone is the essence of a composite substance, although some try to assert this.

From what we have said, it is evident that essence is that which is signifies by the definition of a thing. Moreover, the definition of natural substances contains not only form, but also matter; otherwise there would be no difference between definitions in physics and in mathematics. . . .

Clearly, then, essence includes matter and form. One cannot, however, say that essence signifies a relationship between matter and form, or something superadded to them, since this would necessarily be an accident or something extraneous to the thing; nor would the thing be known through it. . . .

Consequently, in the case of composite substances, the term “essence” signifies the composite of matter and form. . . . Hence it is necessary that an essence, by which a thing is denominated a being, be neither the form alone nor the matter alone but both, although the form in its own way is the cause of this act of existing. . . .

But, since the principle of individuation is matter, it might seem to follow that essence, which embraces in itself both matter and form simultaneously, is particular only and not universal. From this it would follow that universals would not have a definition, if essence is that which is signified by a definition. Accordingly, it should be known that matter in just any way is not held to be the principle of individuation. Only designated matter is. By designated matter I mean matter considered under determinate dimensions. This matter, however, is not included in the definition of a man insofar as he is a man, but would be included in the definition of Socrates, if Socrates had a definition. Undesignated matter, however, is included in the definition of man. We do not include in man’s definition this bone or this flesh, but bone and flesh absolutely, which are the undesignated matter of man. Thus, it is evident that the essence of Socrates and the essence of man differ only in that one is designated and the other is not. . . . So also the essence of a genus and of a species differ according as one is designated and the other not.
Moreover, it happens in things that what has one perfection may also possess a further perfection. This is evident in man, since he has both a sensitive nature and, beyond that, an intellectual nature. Similarly, to this perfection of having a form such that three dimensions can be designated in it, can be added another perfection, such as life or the like. . . . In this way body is an integral and material part of an animal, because in this way soul will be extrinsic to what is signified by the term “body” and will be an addition to body itself, so that an animal will be constituted from these two, body and soul, as from parts.

On the basis of what we have just said, it is clear why genus, species, and difference are related proportionately to matter, form, and the composite in nature, although the former are not the same as the latter. The genus is not matter, but is taken from matter and signifies the whole; and the difference is not the form, but is taken from form as signifying the whole. Accordingly we say that a man is a rational animal, but not that he is composed of animal and rational, as we say that a man is composed of body and soul. For man is said to be composed of body and soul after the manner of a third thing that is constituted of two things, and identical with neither of them. For a man is neither a soul nor a body. However, if man is said to be composed in some way of animal and rational, it is not as a third thing from two other things, but as a third notion from two other notions.

Now because the nature of the species is, as we have stated, indeterminate with respect to the individual, as is the nature of a genus with respect to the species, it therefore follows that just as a genus, insofar as it is predicated of a species, implies (although indistinctly) in its signification everything determinate in the species, so also the species, as predicated of an individual, must signify (although indistinctly) all that is essentially in the individual. In this way the essence of Socrates is signified by the name “man.” Accordingly, man is predicated of Socrates. But if the nature of a species is signified in precision from designated matter, which is the principle of individuation, then it will be related to the individual after the manner of a part. In this way the essence of Socrates is signified by the term “humanity.” For humanity signifies that whereby man is a man. But designated matter is not that whereby man is a man. Therefore, in no way is designated matter included among those things by which a man is a man. Hence, since humanity
includes in its conception only those things by which a man is man, it is clear that designated matter is excluded or precluded from its signification.

As has been said, the designation of a species with respect to the genus is through the form, and the designation of an individual with respect to the species is through the matter.

Therefore, humanity is signified as a certain form, and is said to be the form of the whole—not, however, as something superadded to the essential parts, namely form and matter, as the form house is superadded to its integral parts, but rather as a form which is a whole, that is, a form embracing matter.

Having seen, therefore, what is signified in composite substances by the term “essence,” we should see how this term is related to the notions of genus, species, and difference. Inasmuch as what belongs to the character genus, species, or difference is predicated of this designated singular, it is impossible for the character universal, namely of a genus or species, to belong to an essence according as it is signified after the manner of a part, as by the term “humanity” or “animality.” Similarly, it is not possible to say that the character genus and species is proper to the essence, where essence is a certain thing existing outside of the singulars, as the Platonists proposed; for then the genus and the species would not be predicated of this individual. One cannot say that Socrates is something separated from himself, nor can one say that what is separated aids in the cognition of this singular. Therefore, we are left with saying that the character genus or species belongs to an essence according as it is signified as the whole, as by the terms “man” or “animal,” insofar as it implicitly and indistinctly contains all that is in the individual.

It now remains for us to see the way in which essence is found in separated substances, namely, the soul, the intelligences, and the First Cause.

Although all hold that the first cause is simple, nevertheless certain men try to introduce a composition of form and matter into intelligences and the soul. This is contrary to the common views of the philosophers, for they call them substances separated from matter, and prove that they exist without any matter. The strongest argument for this position is from the power of understanding present in these substances. For we see that forms are actually intelligible only insofar as they are separated from matter and material conditions. It is, therefore, necessary that every substance capable of intellec-
tual understanding be completely free of matter such that it have no matter as part of itself, nor be like a form impressed on matter, as material forms are. . . .

How this can be so is plain enough. Whatever things are related to each other in such a way that one causes the other to be, that thing which has the nature cause can have the act of existing without the other thing, but not vice versa. Such is the relation between matter and form, because form gives existence to matter. It is, therefore, impossible for matter to exist without some form, but it is not impossible for some form to exist without matter. For the form, as form, is not dependent upon matter. However, if some forms are found which can exist only in matter, this happens to them because of their distance from the first principle, which is first and pure act. Accordingly, those forms which are nearest to the first principle are forms subsisting of themselves without matter. As has just been said, form, according to every genus of form, may not need matter; and the intelligences are forms of this kind. Hence, it is not necessary that the essences or quiddities of these substances be other than the form itself. In this, therefore, the essences of composite substances and of simple substances differ, since the essence of a composite substance is not the form alone but includes both form and matter whereas the essence of a simple substance is the form alone.

Although substances of this kind are simply forms without matter, nonetheless they are not in every way simple, as pure acts are. They do have an admixture of potency, which is evident in the following way. Whatever is extraneous to the concept of an essence or quiddity is adventitious, and forms a composition with the essence, since no essence can be understood without those things which are its parts. On the other hand, every essence or quiddity can be understood without its act of existing being understood. I can understand what a man or phoenix is, and yet not know whether or not it exists in the nature of things. Therefore, it is evident that the act of existing is other than essence or quiddity. This is true, unless, perhaps, there is something whose quiddity is its very act of existing. This thing would have to be unique and primary. . . . Hence, there remains only one such thing that is its own act of existing. Accordingly, in anything other than it, the act of existing must necessarily be other than its quiddity or nature or form. Hence, among the intelligences, their acts of existing must be other than their forms. Therefore, it is said that intelligences are forms and acts of existing.
Whatever belongs to something is either caused by the principles of its nature, like risibility in man, or accrués to it from some extrinsic principle, like the light in the air, which is caused by the sun. It is impossible that the act of existing itself be caused by the form or quiddity—and by “caused” I mean as by an efficient cause—for then something would be the cause of itself and produce itself in existence, which is impossible. It is therefore necessary that everything whose act of existing is other than its nature have its act of existing from another. And because everything which exists through another is reduced to that which exists through itself, as to a first cause, there must be something which causes all things to exist, inasmuch as it is subsistent existence alone. Otherwise we would proceed to infinity in causes, since everything which is not a subsistent act of existing has a cause for its act of existing, as we have just said. It is evident, therefore, that an intelligence is a form and an act of existing, and that it has its act of existing from the First Being which is existence only; and this is the First Cause, God.

Everything that receives something from another is in potency with respect to what is received, and what is received in it is its act. Therefore, that quiddity or form which an intelligence is must be in potency with respect to the act of existing, which it receives from God. And that act of existing is received as an act. Thus potency and act are found in intelligences, but not (except equivocally) matter and form. Hence, even to suffer, to receive, to be subject to, and all other things of this kind which seem proper to things in virtue of their matter, belong equivocally to intellectual and corporeal substances. . . . Likewise, because the quiddity of an intelligence is as has been said, the intelligence itself, its quiddity or essence, therefore, is itself that which is; and its act of existing, received from God, is that by which it subsists in the nature of things. . . .

Inasmuch as potency and act are found in intelligences, there will be no difficulty in discovering multitude among the intelligences. This would be impossible if there were no potency in them. . . . The distinction between them, therefore, is in accordance with the degree of potency and act, such that a superior intelligence which is nearer to the first being would have more act and less potency; and so on with the others. This terminates in the human soul, which holds the lowest grade among intellectual substances. Hence, its possible intellect is related to intelligible forms as prime matter, which holds the lowest grade among sensible beings, is related to sensible forms. . . . Accordingly, [Aristotle] compares it to a writing tablet on which nothing is written, because it has a greater degree of potency than the other intelligible substances. The human soul, then, is so near to material things that the mate-
rial thing is drawn to participate in its act of existing; thus from body and soul there results one act of existing in one composite, although that act of existing, insofar as it is the soul’s, does not depend upon the body. Then, after that form which is the soul, there are other forms having more potency and having a greater propinquity to matter, to the extent that their acts of existing are not without matter. Among these, too, order and grade are found, all the way down to the primary forms of the elements, which are closest to matter.

There is something, God, Whose essence is its very act of existing. Accordingly, some philosophers argue that God does not have a quiddity or essence because His essence is nothing other than His act of existing. From this it follows that He is not in any genus, since everything that is in a genus necessarily has a quiddity distinct from its act of existing. This, in turn, follows from the fact that the quiddity or nature of a genus or species is not distinguished according to the character nature in those things of which there is a genus or species, but according to the act of existing which is diverse in diverse things. . . . The act of existing which God is is such that no addition can be made to it. Hence, by its very purity, His act of existing is distinct from every other act of existing.

Even though He is only an act of existing, this does not necessitate that He be deficient in other perfections and excellences. Indeed, God possesses the perfections which are in all genera, because of which He is said to be perfect without qualification. . . . He has these perfections, however, in a more excellent way than other things, because in Him they are one, while in other things they are diverse. This is so because all these perfections belong to Him according to His simple act of existing, just as, if someone were able to perform the operations of all the qualities in virtue of one quality, He would, in that one quality, have all qualities; so God possesses all perfections in His very act of existing.

Essence is found in a second way in created intellectual substances in which their essence is other than their acts of existing, although their essence is without matter. Hence, their acts of existing are not absolute, but received, and, therefore, limited and restricted to the capacity of the receiving nature. Nonetheless, their nature or quiddity is absolute and not received in any matter.

...
It must be said that virtue, according to the meaning of the name, designates the complement of a potency. Wherefore it is also called power, according as a certain thing, through the completed potency it has, can follow its impetus or motion. The name “virtue” indicates the perfection of power. . . . Because a potency is spoken about in reference to act, the complement of a potency refers to what accounts for perfect operation. Because operation is the end of the one who acts—since everything . . . exists for the sake of its operation as for its proximate end—each thing is good according as it has a complete ordination to its end. It is in accordance with this that virtue makes its possessor good and his work good. . . .

All these things are proper to the virtue of anything. For the virtue of a horse is what makes it and its work good. A similar situation holds for the virtue of a rock, or a man, or any other thing.

The mode of a virtue’s combination with a potency is diverse, according to the diverse condition of potencies. For some potencies are active only, whereas others are passive only, and still others are both active and passive. . . .

Those potencies are active and passive which are so moved by their movers that they are not, however, determined by them to one kind of activity. Rather, it belongs to these potencies to act, as, for example, powers that are in some way rational. These powers are completed with respect to their action by something superadded which is not in them in the manner of a passion only, but by way of a form which remains and continues in the subject. The potency, however, is not necessarily determined to one act by the form, for then the potency would not have dominion over its act. The virtues of these potencies are not the potencies themselves, nor are they the passions, as is the case in sense powers, nor are they qualities acting of necessity, as are the qualities of natural things. Rather, they are habits according to which someone can act when he wills. . . .

It is evident, therefore, that virtues are habits. . . .

From what has been said it is possible to show that three things are needed for habits to be virtues. First, there must be a uniformity in their operation. For those things which are dependent on operation alone are easily changed, unless they are rendered stable by some habitual inclination. Second, perfect operation must be performed readily. For, unless a rational potency be in some way inclined to one by a habit, it will always be necessary, when action is demanded, to inquire about the operation. This is evident in him who wishes to speculate but does not yet have the habit of science. It is also evident in him who wishes to act virtuously but who lacks a virtuous
habit. . . . Third, the perfect operation must be completed pleasurable. This indeed occurs through a habit. Since a habit is in the manner of a certain nature, it renders the operation proper to itself almost natural and, consequently, delectable. For agreeableness is the cause of pleasure. . . .

It must be said that this definition of virtue is complete . . . and, moreover, proper to every human virtue.

As has been said, a virtue perfects a potency with respect to perfect act. For perfect act is the end of a potency or of the one who acts. Hence, a virtue makes both the potency and the one who acts good, as has been said previously. . . .

Two things, however, are required for the perfection of an act. The act must be right, and the habit cannot be the principle of a contrary act. For that which is the principle of both good and evil action cannot, as such, be the perfect principle of a good act, since a habit is the perfection of a potency. Such a principle of a good act cannot in any way be the principle of an evil act. . . .

The first of the requirements is designated by the words “by which one lives rightly”; the second, by the words “which no one uses in an evil way.”

Three things must be considered when we talk about virtue making a subject good. One is the subject itself, and this is indicated by the word “mind,” for a virtue cannot be human except in what belongs to man as man. The perfection of the intellect is indicated by the word “good,” for good is said according to an order to an end. Finally, the mode of inherence is indicated by the word “quality,” for virtue cannot inhere as a passion, but as a habit, as has been said above.

All these things belong to both moral and intellectual virtue, to theological virtue, to acquired virtue, and to infused virtue.

. . . .

Since a virtue, as stated above, names a certain complement of a potency, and since a potency, moreover, is related to an act, human virtue must be posited in that potency which is the principle of human acts. But not every act exercised in or by a man is called “human,” since there are certain actions which plants, brutes, and men all have in common. A human act is an act which is proper to man. Among other things, moreover, this is proper to man in his act, namely, that he has dominion over it. Any act over which man is master is properly a human act. Those, however, over which man does not have dominion, like digesting or growing, and the like, although they occur
in man, are not human acts. Therefore, human virtue can be posited in that which is the principle of that act over which man does have dominion.

Nevertheless, it must be understood that a threefold principle is involved in an act of this sort. The first is the primary moving and ordering force through which man has dominion over his act: his reason or will. The second is a moved mover, the sensible appetite, which is moved by the superior appetite, inasmuch as it is obedient to it, and in turn moves the exterior members by its own command. The third is that which is moved only, namely, an exterior member.

Although both exterior member and inferior appetite are moved by the superior part of the soul, one is moved in one way and the other in another. An exterior member unresistingly obeys the command of the superior without any repugnance according to the order of nature—if, of course, there is no impediment. This is evident in the movement of our hands and feet. However, an inferior appetite has a proper inclination from its nature. Hence, it does not unresistingly obey the command of the superior appetite, but occasionally offers resistance. . . . Reason, however, rules the inferior parts of the soul with regal and political dominion, that is, as kings and leaders of states rule free men who have the right and the faculty of resisting some precepts of the king or leader.

Therefore, nothing perfective of the human act is needed in the exterior member except its natural disposition through which it is apt to be moved by reason.

But in the inferior appetite, which can resist reason, something is needed by which the operation that reason commands will be executed without resistance. For if the immediate principle of an operation is imperfect, the operation necessarily will be imperfect, no matter how perfect the superior principle is. Therefore, if the inferior appetite is not perfectly disposed to follow the command of reason, the operation which is from the inferior appetite as from a proximate principle will not be perfect in goodness. For the operation will involve a certain resistance on the part of the sensible appetite; from this a certain sadness will follow in the inferior appetite, moved with a kind of violence by the superior appetite. This happens in a man who has strong movements of concupiscence which, nevertheless, are not followed because of the prohibition of reason.

Therefore, whenever a man’s operation is concerned with the objects of the sensible appetite, the goodness of the operation requires that a certain disposition or perfection be present in that appetite, through which it might obey reason with facility. We call this disposition a virtue.
When, therefore, a certain virtue concerns those things which properly pertain to the irascible power, like fortitude with respect to fears and bold acts, or optimism with respect to things which are difficult to hope for, or gentleness with respect to annoying things, such a virtue is said to be in the irascible appetite as in a subject. When, on the other hand, a certain virtue concerns itself with those things which are proper to the concupiscible appetite, this virtue is said to be in the concupiscible appetite as in a subject: for example, chastity, which concerns itself with sexual pleasures, and sobriety and abstinence, which concern themselves with the pleasures of food and drink.

It must be said that through a habit of virtue, a potency subjected to it acquires a complement with respect to its act. Hence, the habit of virtue is not necessary for that to which a potency extends itself by its very nature. Virtue orders potencies to the good, for by it the one having the virtue is made good, as is his operation.

The will, by the very nature of its potency, has that which virtue produces in other potencies, for its object is the good. Hence, tending to the good is related to the will, as tending to something pleasurable is related to the concupiscible appetite, and being ordered to sound is related to the sense of hearing. Hence the will needs no habit of virtue to incline it to the good proportioned to it, because it tends to this by the very nature of its potency. But it does need a habit of virtue to tend to that good which transcends the capacity of its potency.

Since anyone’s appetite tends to a good proper to the one who tends, a good can exceed the capacity of the will in two ways: in one way by reason of species, in another by reason of the individual. A good is excessive by reason of species when the will is elevated to some good which exceeds the limits of human good. By “human” I mean that of which man is capable by his natural powers. But the divine good is beyond the human good. Man’s will is elevated to the divine good by charity, and also by hope.

A good is excessive by reason of the individual when someone seeks the good of another, although in this case the will is not borne beyond the limits of human good. Thus justice perfects the will, as do all virtues involving a tendency to something other, like liberality and others of the same kind. For justice concerns the good of another . . .

Therefore, two virtues, namely charity and justice, exist in the will as in a subject. And a sign of this is that these virtues, although they pertain to the appetitive, nevertheless do not depend on the passions, as do temperance and fortitude. Accordingly, it is evident that they are not in the sensitive appetite.
where passions are found, but in the rational appetite—the will—where there are no passions. For every passion is in the sensitive part of the soul. . . . Those virtues which depend on the passions, like fortitude in relation to fears and movements of boldness, and temperance in relation to the movements of concupiscence, must for the same reason be in the sensitive appetite. Nor is it necessary, by reason of these passions, for the will to possess any virtue, since the good involved in these passions is according to reason. And the will, by reason of its very potency, is naturally related to this good, since it is the proper object of the will.

[A] natural appetite for the good would not be sufficient for man to act rightly; nor would a natural judgment, unless it were more fully determined and perfected.

Indeed, man is inclined to seek his proper good through a natural appetite, but since this varies in many ways and the good of man consists in many things, a natural appetite in man for this determinate good is impossible because of all the conditions which are required for this to be good for him, for this varies in many ways according to diverse conditions of persons, times, places, and the like.

The same reasoning holds for natural judgment, which is uniform. It would not suffice for the pursuit of a good of this sort. Accordingly, through the use of his reason, which is capable of comparing diverse things, man must find and judge his proper good, determined according to all the conditions insofar as his proper good must be sought here and now. For reason to do this without a perfecting habit would be like reason in the speculative order trying to judge a conclusion of some science without having the habit of that science. This, of course, could only be done imperfectly and with a good deal of difficulty.

Therefore, just as it is necessary for the speculative reason to be perfected by the habit of science in order to make correct judgments about knowable things pertaining to some science, so it is necessary for the practical reason to be perfected by some habit in order to judge rightly about the human good in singular actions. This virtue is called “prudence” and its subject is the practical reason. It perfects all the moral virtues in the appetitive part, each one of which inclines the appetite to some kind of human good. Thus, justice inclines one to the good of equality among those things conducive to human well-being; temperance inclines one to the good of restraining the movements of concupiscence, and so on with each virtue.
It must be understood . . . that the speculative, as well as the practical, intellect is capable of being perfected by some habit in two ways. In one way the intellect can be perfected absolutely and of itself, insofar as it precedes the will and, as it were, moves it. It can be perfected in another way, insofar as it follows the will, as it were, eliciting its action under the command of the will. As has been said, both of these potencies, intellect and will, act in concert with each other.

Those habits, therefore, which are in the practical or speculative intellect according to the first way can in some sense be called virtues, although they are not so in the perfect sense. In this way understanding, science, and wisdom are in the speculative intellect, and art is in the practical intellect. Moreover, someone is said to possess understanding or science to the extent that his intellect is perfected for knowing truth, which, indeed, is the good of the intellect. But although this truth can be willed, inasmuch as a man might will to understand a truth, nevertheless the aforementioned habits do not perfect the man to do this. For a man is not made desirous of considering truth through the habit of science, but only made capable of such consideration. Hence, the consideration itself of truth is not science inasmuch as this consideration is willed, but according as science tends directly to its object. The case is similar for art with respect to the practical intellect. Art does not perfect a man so that he wills to operate well according to that art, but only so that he knows how, and is able, to do something well.

Habits of the speculative or practical intellect, insofar as it follows the will, have the character virtue more truly because by them a man not only has the ability or know-how to act rightly, but he wills to act rightly. This is evident in both faith and prudence, but in different ways.

Faith perfects the speculative intellect according as it is commanded to believe by the will. This is evident from the act of faith. A man assents intellectually to those things which surpass human reason only because he wills to do so . . . Faith will be in the speculative intellect according as it submits to the command of the will, as temperance is in the concupiscible appetite according as it submits to the command of reason. Hence, the will commands the intellect in believing, not only as to the execution of the act, but even as to the determination of the object, inasmuch as the intellect assents through the command of the will to a determinate credible object, just as the concupiscible appetite tends through temperance to an object determined by reason as a mean.
An aptitude for a perfection and a form can exist in a subject in two ways: in one way according to passive potency only, like the aptitude in the matter of air for the form of fire; in another way according to passive and active potency at once, like the aptitude in a diseased body for health, inasmuch as the body is receptive to health. It is in this latter fashion that man has a natural aptitude for virtue—partly because of the nature of his species, insofar as the aptitude for virtue is common to all men, and partly because of the makeup of an individual, insofar as certain men are more apt for virtue than others.

As evidence for this it must be known that there can be a threefold subject of virtue in man, as is evident above, namely, the intellect, the will, and the inferior appetite, which is divided into the concupiscible and the irascible.

All the aforementioned beginnings of virtues are consequent upon the nature of the human species and, hence, are common to all men.

There is, however, a certain beginning of virtue which is consequent upon the nature of the individual, according as a man, from his natural makeup or from a celestial impression, is inclined to the act of some virtue. This inclination is indeed a certain beginning of virtue. It is not, however, perfect virtue, because perfect virtue requires the moderation of reason. Hence, the definition of virtue includes the choice of a means according to right reason. For if someone follows an inclination of this sort without the discretion of reason, he frequently sins. And just as the beginning of virtue without the operation of reason lacks the character of perfect virtue, so also do some of the things which precede virtue.

For one proceeds through the investigation of reason from universal principles to special cases. Through the function of reason, man is led from the desire for the ultimate end to those things which are conducive to that end. Reason itself in directing the irascible and concupiscible appetites makes them subject to itself. Accordingly it is evident that complete virtue requires the work of reason, whether the virtue be in the intellect, in the will, or in the concupiscible or the irascible appetite.

The good of man, as a man, is different from his good as a citizen. The good of a man as man consists in the perfection of his reason in the cogni-
tion of truth and in the regulation of his inferior appetites according to the rules of reason, for a man is man by his rationality. However, the good of man as a citizen lies in his being ordered to the good of all within a commonwealth. . . . Man, however, is not only a terrestrial citizen but a participant in the heavenly city, Jerusalem, whose governor is the Lord and whose citizens comprise the angels and all the saints, whether they reign in glory and are at peace in Heaven, or are travelers on earth. . . . To be a participant in this city, man’s nature does not suffice. It must be elevated to this by the grace of God. For it is evident that those virtues which are in man as a participant in this city cannot be acquired by him by his own natural powers. Hence, they are not caused by our actions, but are infused in us by divine favor. The virtues . . . which are in a man as man, or in him as a citizen of an earthly commonwealth, do not exceed the faculty of human nature. Hence, man can acquire them by actions proper to him through his natural powers.

[S]ince the appetitive power is related to a number of objects, it does not tend to one of them unless it is determined to it by reason. Therefore, when reason repeatedly inclines the appetitive power to some one object, a certain firm disposition becomes established in the appetitive power, through which it is inclined to the one thing to which it is accustomed. This disposition thus established is a habit of virtue.

Therefore, if it be rightly considered, a virtue of the appetitive part is nothing other than a certain disposition or form marked and impressed upon the appetitive power by reason. Because of this, however strong the disposition to something be in the appetitive power, it cannot have the character of virtue unless reason is involved.

[T]he good of both the intellective part and the appetitive part is twofold: namely, the good that is the ultimate end, and the good that is the means to that end. Each has a different character. Therefore, in addition to all the aforementioned virtues according to which man pursues the good among means to the end, there must be other virtues whereby man rightly relates himself to his ultimate end, which is God. These virtues are called theological, because they have God not only as their end, but as their object.

Moreover, in order for us to be moved rightly to the end, that end must be known and desired. Desire for the end requires two things: a confidence
in obtaining the end, inasmuch as no wise man is moved to what cannot be attained; and a love of the end, inasmuch as nothing is desired unless it is loved. Therefore, there are three theological virtues, namely: faith, by which we know God; hope, by which we trust that we will attain Him; and charity, by which we love Him. In this way it is evident that there are three genera of virtues—theological, intellectual, and moral—and that each genus has many species under it.

It must be said that both the intellectual and the moral virtues lie in a mean, although in different ways. The theological virtues, however, do not lie in a mean.

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The theological virtues . . . are ordered to their matter or object, which is God, through the will. What is clear as regards charity and hope is maintained with respect to faith also. For, although faith is in the intellect, it is nevertheless in it as commanded by the will. For no one believes unless he wills to do so. Hence, since God is the rule and measure of the human will, it is clear that the theological virtues do not, strictly speaking, consist in a mean.

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**ON FREE CHOICE**

Without doubt it must be said that man has free choice. Faith demands that we hold this position, since without free choice one could not merit or demerit, or be justly rewarded or punished. There are clear indications of this if one considers the occasions when man appears to choose one thing freely and reject another. Finally, reason, too, demands that we hold this position, and following its dictates we examine the origin of free choice, proceeding in the following manner.

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Men act and are moved by a judgment of reason, for they deliberate about courses of action. All brute animals, however, act and are moved by a natural judgment. This is evident when you consider that all the members of a species act in a similar way, as, for example, swallows all build their nests in the same way. It is also evident from the fact that their judgment is determined to one course of action and not open to all, as bees are skilled in producing nothing but honeycombs. The case is similar for other animals.

Hence, it is clear to anyone who considers the matter rightly that the way in which motion and action are attributed to inanimate things of nature is the
same as the way in which the judging of actions is attributed to brute animals. Just as heavy and light things do not move themselves such that they would be the causes of their own motion, so too brutes do not judge of their own judgments, but follow the judgment imprinted upon them by God. And since they do not cause their choice, they do not have freedom of choice.

Man, however, judging about his actions through his power of reason, can judge concerning his choice insofar as he can know the nature of the end and of the means to the end, and, likewise, the relation and order of the one to the other. Man, therefore, is his own cause, not only in moving but also in judging. Hence he has free choice, as one is speaking of the free judgments as to whether to act or not.

That God has free choice is evident from the fact that He has for His will an end which He naturally wills, that is, His own goodness. He wills all other things as ordered to this end, but, speaking absolutely, He does not will them necessarily. As was shown in the preceding question, His goodness needs these other things which are ordered to it only as a manifestation of it, which manifestation can be suitably made in many ways. Hence, the free judgment to will this or that is open to Him, as it is to us; because of this we must say that free choice is found in God, and similarly in angels. For whatever they will they do not will necessarily, but rather, they will it according to a free judgment, as we do.

Nevertheless, free choice as found in us, in angels, and in God is different, since what is posterior must be diversified if what is prior is diversified.

Now the faculty of free choice presupposes two things, namely, a nature and a cognitive power. The way nature is found in God is different from the way it is in men and angels. For divine nature is uncreated, and is its own act of existing and its own goodness. Hence, there cannot be any deficiency in it as regards the act of existing or goodness. Human and angelic nature, however, is created and arises out of nothing. Hence, considered in itself, it can be defective. Accordingly God’s free choice can in no way be turned to evil, whereas the free choice of men and angels, considered in what is natural to it, can be turned to evil. Cognition as found in man is different from cognition as found in God and in angels. For man’s cognition is obscure, arriving at a knowledge of truth in a discursive way. Hence, he is subject to doubt and to difficulties of discerning and judging. . . . But in God, and in angels in their own way, there is a simple vision of truth without any discursiveness or
inquiry; neither doubt nor difficulty in discerning or in judging occurs in
them. Therefore, both God and angels choose readily, but man suffers diffi-
culty in choosing because of his uncertainty and doubt.

In this way it is evident how the free choice of angels holds a middle
place between that of God and man, and participates equally in both extremes.

One must say that there is no creature, nor can there be any, whose free
choice is naturally confirmed in good in the sense that this creature, through
what is purely natural to it, could not sin.

The reason is as follows. From a defect in the principle of action fol-
lows a defect in the action itself. Therefore, if there is anything in which the
principles of action could not be defective of themselves or be impeded by
some extrinsic source, it would be impossible for the action of that thing to
be deficient. This is evident in the motion of the celestial bodies. But a defi-
ciency in action is possible in those things in which the principles of action
can be deficient or impeded. This is evident in generable and corruptible
things, whose active principles suffer a defect by reason of their mutability.
Hence, their actions are also subject to deficiency. It is for this reason that
sin frequently occurs in the operations of nature, as is evident in the birth of
monsters. For sin, whether in natural, artificial, or voluntary things, is noth-
ing other than a defect or lack of ordination in a proper action, that is, when
something is done in a way in which it ought not be done.

A rational nature endowed with free choice . . . acts differently from
every other nature. Every other nature is ordered to some particular good,
and its actions are determined with respect to that good. A rational nature,
however, is ordered to the good simply. Just as truth taken absolutely is the
object of the intellect, so good taken absolutely is the object of the will.
Hence, the will extends itself to the universal principle itself of goods which
no other appetite can attain. Because of this a rational creature is not deter-
mined in its actions, but is related to material actions in a certain indifferent
manner.

Consequently, rational nature, which is ordered to the good absolutely
through various actions, cannot possibly perform actions which are naturally
lacking a defect in goodness, unless the character of the universal and per-
fekt good is present to it naturally and immutably. This, however, is possible
only for the divine nature. For God alone is pure act, having no mixture of
potency. Consequently, He is pure and absolute goodness. Any creature is a
particular good, since its nature contains a mixture of potency. This mixture
of potency occurs inasmuch as the creature is *ex nihilo*. Consequently, God alone among those having rational natures has free choice that is naturally impeccable and confirmed in goodness. This is indeed impossible for a creature since it is *ex nihilo*. . . .

The free choice of a creature cannot be naturally confirmed in goodness because its nature does not possess the character of the perfect and absolutely good, but of a certain particular good. Through grace, however, free choice is united to the absolute and perfect good, namely, God. Hence, if the union is perfect so that God Himself is the total cause of the action of free choice, a defection to evil is not possible. This indeed happens to some creatures, especially the blessed. This is evident as follows.

The will naturally tends to good as its object. That it sometimes tends to evil happens only because the evil is proposed to it under the aspect of goodness. For evil is involuntary. . . . Hence, there can be no sin in a movement of the will, that is, the will cannot desire evil, unless there pre-exists a defect in the cognitive power, through which the evil is proposed to the will as a good.

This defect in reason can occur in two ways: either by reason itself or through something extrinsic to reason.

It can occur in reason itself because, although it naturally and immutably possesses a faultless knowledge of good in general, both the good which is an end and the good which is a means, it does not possess such knowledge of the good in particular. Concerning this it can err, as when it judges something to be an end which is not an end, or something to be useful for an end which indeed is not useful thus. Because of this the will naturally desires the good that is an end—namely, happiness in general—and similarly the good that is a means, for everyone naturally desires what is useful to him. The will sins, however, in seeking this or that end, or in choosing this or that useful thing.

On the other hand, reason is deficient through something extrinsic to it, when an act of reason is hampered by inferior powers which are moved intensely to something. Consequently reason does not clearly and firmly propose its judgment about the good to the will. For example, when someone has judged rightly about preserving chastity, he might very well choose contrary to chastity through an ardent desire for the pleasurable. On account of this, reason’s judgment is fettered in a certain way by concupiscence. . . .
Now both of these defects are totally lacking in the blessed, because of their union with God. . . . Hence, in no way could they fall into sin; hence they will be confirmed through grace.

A man, however, can be so united to good through the grace of this life that he is able to sin only with the greatest difficulty inasmuch as the inferior powers are restrained by the infused virtues, the will is very strongly inclined to God, and reason is perfected in the contemplation of divine truth, the continuation of which, arising from the fervor of love, removes man from sin. But among those said to be confirmed, everything lacking for confirmation is supplied by the protection of divine providence, so that whenever an occasion of sin arises, their minds would be divinely inspired to resist.