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## Aquinas on Virtue

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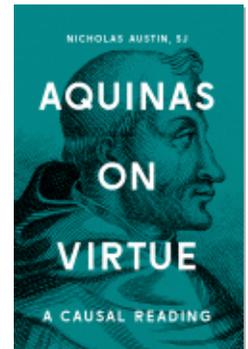
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## CHAPTER 3

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# Virtue as a Good Habit

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Suggested reading: *Summa Theologiae* I 5.1, 22.1; I.II 19.4, 49.2–3, 54.3, 55.3, 71.2, 71.6, 91.1; *On the Virtues* 1.13

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“**H**uman virtue, which is an operative habit, is a good habit, and operative of the good” (I.II 55.3).<sup>1</sup> A virtue is a habit. To say that it is a *good* habit may seem to border on the tautological. Yet Aquinas is aware that there is need for some account of what makes a habit good (in the constitutive or formal sense of “makes”). What distinguishes good habits from bad ones, or virtues from vices?

### WHAT MAKES A HABIT GOOD?

In answering this question, Aquinas lays down the basic principle as follows: “A good habit is said to be one that disposes to an act fitting to the nature of the agent, whereas a bad habit is said to be one that disposes to an act not fitting to nature” (I.II 54.3c).<sup>2</sup> Thus “nature” is what provides the basis to distinguish between virtue and vice. To see why, it is necessary to return to a question left hanging in the last chapter—namely, how exactly to define a habit.

### Poinsot versus Suárez

We have seen that a habit is a particular kind of quality or disposition: it is stable, operative, valent, and nature-directed. Yet Aquinas does not define an essence by listing a set of characteristics; rather, he identifies the core element from which the others follow as properties. To understand how Aquinas establishes that being *nature-directed* explains a habit’s other marks, especially the

one we are most interested in here (i.e., its *valence*, or it being either good or bad), it will help to refer to a disagreement between John Poinsett (1589–1644) and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617).

Suárez offers the following definition of habit: “A habit . . . is a certain permanent quality, and of itself stable in its subject, in itself and in the first place ordered to operation, not providing the first capacity for operation, but helping and facilitating it.”<sup>3</sup> “Suárezian habits,” then, are simply stable inclinations that perfect our capacities for operation. They add *facility* to a pure *capacity*. As Suárez says, a habit is “a certain species of quality proximately ordered to helping a power in its operation.”<sup>4</sup> The foundational characteristic of a habit, then, is that it is operation-directed. He conveys this by using the technical terminology of Aristotelian logic: habits are *primo* and *per se*, in the first place and of themselves, ordered toward operation. A predicate belongs to the subject *primo* and *per se* when it belongs to its essence or quiddity; it is not merely a property flowing from that essence. Suárez *defines* a habit as an operative quality.

John Poinsett recognizes that Suárez is close to Aquinas here. Yet he notices a difference: Aquinas would agree that habits are operative but, unlike Suárez, he declines to define habit as an operative quality.<sup>5</sup> Aquinas says, “Habit, in the first place and of itself, implies a relatedness to the nature of the thing” (49.3c).<sup>6</sup> For Aquinas, then, it is not order to operation but order to nature that *per se et primo*, of itself and in the first place, is what makes a quality or disposition to be a habit. Poinsett draws our attention to the fact that, whereas for Suárez the core essential element of habit is *being operative*, for Aquinas it is *being nature-directed*.<sup>7</sup> What is the significance of this subtle difference?

## Nature and Habit

“Nature” is a notoriously multifaceted concept in all of Aquinas’s work. For example, he recounts a list of six different senses of “nature” derived from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.<sup>8</sup> Without going into excessive exegetical detail, a central point for Aquinas is that nature is dynamic, not static. A thing’s nature is what that thing is: “Generally speaking, the essence of anything, what its definition signifies, is called a nature” (I.II 29.1 ad 4).<sup>9</sup> However, “essence” and “nature,” although the same in reference, differ in sense. “Essence” signifies what a thing is, as it can be defined and grasped by the human mind; “nature” adds a telic note: “Nature . . . seems to signify the essence of a thing insofar as it has an order to the proper operation of a thing, since no thing is without its characteristic operation.”<sup>10</sup> Aquinas holds a teleological concept of nature: created beings, because of their natures, are oriented to their own end (or *telos*, to use

the Greek word for “end”), which consists in nothing other than their proper activity or function.

Aquinas therefore adopts Aristotle’s teleological maxim, “Nature acts for an end.”<sup>11</sup> This is not meant to be an esoteric principle but something observable from everyday occurrence. Some of Aquinas’s examples: teeth are sharp, swallows build nests, plants grow roots that draw up nourishment from the earth, spiders spin webs, and ants coordinate in such a way that some have wondered whether they are intelligent (although, he adds, clearly they are not).<sup>12</sup> The simple inference is that all of these processes and realities must be for the sake of some end: teeth are sharp to cut food and nourish the body, swallows build nests to rear young and protect them from danger, and so on. (As will be argued later, despite claims that Darwinian evolution has eliminated teleology from the scientific worldview, biologists continue to employ such teleological language to describe plant and animal behavior.) What, then, explains this end-oriented activity? Aquinas recognizes that these beings do not direct themselves through rational deliberation or art. Nor, in his view, do their activities happen by chance. Aquinas also discounts the idea that God is the immediate cause of all these activities. Rather, in his view the principle of these final-causal processes is something intrinsic to these things and by which they are moved toward their intended operations and ends. This principle is called “nature.”

The teleological understanding of nature is significant for Aquinas’s ethics. Humans, like other natural beings, have their own proper operation and natural *finis* or end. Just as a flourishing oak tree is being and doing what an oak tree is “meant,” as it were, to be and do, so for us. As Aquinas puts it, “The nature of a thing, which is the end of generation, is also further ordered to some end, which is either an operation or some object of operation (to which someone attains through operation)” (49.3c).<sup>13</sup>

Aquinas’s conception of habit is embedded in this final-causal understanding of human nature. He states, “It is of the rationale of the habit that it implies a certain relation in order to the nature of the thing” (49.3).<sup>14</sup> How should we understand this?

Human nature, for Aquinas, entails certain rational powers or capacities oriented to act. Yet these powers in and of themselves are incomplete and indeterminate. Human nature alone is not an adequate principle of a human being’s characteristic operation and flourishing. Rather, these natural powers need to be completed by dispositions that complete and perfect them (55.2c). Just as a pianist cannot hope to fulfill the end of piano playing without acquiring certain musical habits and dispositions, so too a human being can reach the human end only through acquiring and exercising human habits. For that is what human habits are: realizations of a human’s incomplete natural powers. Habits are nature-directed dispositions.

## The Core Defining Feature of Habit

Why, then, does Aquinas take *being nature-directed* to be the core and essential feature of habits, the one that explains why habits are dispositions that are also stable, operative, and valent? Aquinas argues, first, that the nature-directedness of habits explains their stability: “We observe . . . *stability* in the first species of quality, inasmuch as a certain nature is the end of generation and motion” (49.3c).<sup>15</sup> Think of a young sapling that grows to become a flourishing oak tree: its maturity is the end and terminus of its development. Similarly, humans reach maturity and full development, the end point of growth, through their habits. Having acquired habits, we become less plastic and changeable. A habit, because it is directed toward nature as an end, is more or less fixed. Aquinas has explained one of the properties of habit—its *stability*—in terms of its nature-directedness.

What about the second property of habit, its being *operative*? Aquinas states: “Habits not only imply order to the very nature of a thing, but even, consequently, to operation, insofar as [operation] is the end of nature, or something leading to the end” (49.3c).<sup>16</sup> Habits are necessary for Aquinas because human nature, of itself, has an unfinished quality that can only find completion in two steps: the completion of its powers in habits and the realization of these perfected powers in action, like a computer that needs software to be installed and then to be run before it completes any tasks. Habit achieves the completion of human nature both by its formal causality (qualifying and completing the powers of the soul) and by its efficient causality, inclining a human being to operation (which further perfects and realizes human nature).<sup>17</sup>

It is because habits are nature-directed, therefore, that they are also *operative*—that is, principles of human action. All habits are operative, even a bodily habit such as health, since by conserving and perfecting a being’s bodily nature it thereby enables bodily activities to be performed well. However, some habits are especially operative in that they perfect the soul’s powers or capacities for operation (49.3c). Aquinas calls these “operative” habits and explains them as follows: “The nature and rationale of a power is that it be the principle of an act. And so every habit that belongs to some power as its subject *principally* implies order to act” (49.3c).<sup>18</sup> In these especially operative habits the two offices of a habit—of perfecting nature and its characteristic operation—are almost indistinguishable: nature is perfected precisely by its operative power being perfected.

Poinsot offers an image that helps us to understand what these operative habits are. Sharpness would be a good operative habit for a knife, if knives had habits, since sharpness directly disposes a knife to perform well its characteristic operation of cutting. Similarly, a virtue is a good operative habit because it

is the “sharpness or the cutting edge of a power.”<sup>19</sup> It is through good operative habits, or virtues, that this naked potential of a human person to act becomes, as it were, sharpened.

So it is because habits are nature-directed that they are both stable and operative. Finally, and most important of all, it is because habits are nature-directed that they are also valent—that is, either good or bad. Aquinas infers the valence of habits from their nature-directedness via the principle that nature is itself an end—that is, that for the sake of which something comes to be. “And because the form and nature of the thing is the end and that for the sake of which something comes to be, as Aristotle says (*Physics*, Bk II), therefore we find good and bad in the first species [of quality]” (49.2c).<sup>20</sup> A habit that helps to perfect a nature and its operation will be a good habit; a bad habit realizes nature in a distorted way and twists a being’s proper operation.

The valence of a habit, therefore, is grounded in the fact that habits are nature-directed. “It is of the rationale of *habit* that it implies a certain relation in order to a thing’s nature, to which it is either consonant or dissonant” (49.3c).<sup>21</sup> “When there is a modification consonant to the nature of the subject, then it has the rationale of good; but when it is not consonant, then it has the rationale of bad” (49.2c).<sup>22</sup> Habits, then, are either good or bad (54.3).

## Good Habits

John Poinsett was right to highlight for us the difference between Aquinas and Suárez in their respective definitions of habit. Suárezian habits, which prefigure modern conceptions of habit, do not have any essential connection to the nature of the subject in which they inhere. Suárez risks having to shoehorn goodness into habits we describe as virtues and badness into vices; there is nothing in his definition that provides a basis for the valence of habits. In contrast, Aquinas’s operative habits, *primo et per se*, in the first place and of themselves, are related to the nature of the powers in which they inhere, serving their full realization in operation. As J. M. Ramírez comments, the union between a habit and the subject or power in which it inheres is much more intimate in Aquinas than Suárez; it is like a branch growing from a root rather than an exterior piece of clothing.<sup>23</sup>

Nature as the fundamental criterion of the distinction between good and bad habits or virtues and vices is therefore written into the very concept of habit as Aquinas defines it. In Aristotelian terminology, the definition enables an “essential division” into the two species of good and bad habits. A habit either succeeds in realizing nature well through its proper operation, or it

doesn't; in the former case it will be a good habit, in the latter a bad one. The valence of habits, for Aquinas, is rooted in human nature.

### THE GOODNESS OF VIRTUE

If virtue is a “good” habit, what, then, is the content of this “good”? That is our question. The basic principle has been established: “A good habit is one that disposes to an act fitting to the nature of the agent” (54.3c).<sup>24</sup> But we still have more to explore before we get to the full riches of Aquinas’s account.

Drawing on his familiar premise that a human being is by nature a rational animal, Aquinas takes his account of virtue’s goodness one step further:

The virtue of anything consists in its being well fittingly disposed to its nature. . . . But we must consider that the nature of anything is especially the form from which it derives its species. Now a human being derives its species from its rational soul. Therefore, that which is against the order of reason is properly against the nature of a human being insofar as he is a human being; on the other hand, what is in accordance with reason is in accordance with the nature of a human being insofar as he is a human being. . . . So human virtue, which makes a human being good, and his work good, is in accordance with the nature of a human being, in as much as it agrees with reason, whereas vice is against the nature of a human being, insofar as it is against the order of reason. (54.3c)<sup>25</sup>

A virtue, a good habit, is one fitting to a being’s nature; a human’s nature is to be rational; so what ultimately makes a human habit to be a good habit, and therefore a virtue, is this: conformity to reason. As Aquinas puts it, “A moral habit has the rationale of human virtue, insofar as it is conformed to reason” (58.2).<sup>26</sup> This is the account of virtue’s goodness as conformity to “reason” that we need to explore.

#### Goodness as Conformity to a Rule

The standard approach of Thomists today is to attempt to ground Aquinas’s account of moral goodness, and hence virtue’s goodness, on a metaphysics of goodness. Eleonore Stump, for example, notes that Aquinas’s most important treatment of goodness comes early on in the *Summa Theologiae*, where he deals with “goodness in general.” Central to his account is the claim that “good and being are the same according to the thing, but differ only according to rationale” (I 5.1c).<sup>27</sup> “Goodness,” unlike “being,” connotes “desirability.”

Thus, in Stump's paraphrase, "being" and "goodness" are the same in reference but differ only in sense. For her, this is Aquinas's "central meta-ethical thesis."<sup>28</sup> When this thesis is combined with an account of human nature as rational, she claims, it generates an account of moral goodness, or the natural goodness specific to humans, as rational operation. For Stump, then, it is possible to go from meta-ethics (the metaphysics of goodness) to normative ethics via an understanding of human nature as rational: "Aquinas's central meta-ethical thesis, worked out in the context of his general metaphysics, provides a sophisticated metaphysical grounding for his virtue-based ethics."<sup>29</sup>

While this approach is not without value, one problem is that Aquinas often seems to distinguish between the good that is interchangeable with being and the moral good. For example, in the causal definition of virtue, Aquinas points out: "The 'good' that is placed in the definition of virtue is not the general good, which is interchangeable with being, and extends further than quality, but is the good of reason, which fits with what [Pseudo-]Dionysius says, 'the good of the soul is to be according to reason' (*Divine Names*, ch. 4)" (55.4 ad 2).<sup>30</sup> The moral or rational good, then, is not the metaphysical good.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Aquinas seems to distinguish the metaphysical and moral good of a human action (1.3 ad 3; 18.4c). The claim that "good" and "being" are interchangeable is not a "meta-ethical thesis"; it is a metaphysical one.

In defining virtue Aquinas says that "the good that is convertible with being is not posited here in virtue's definition, but the good that is determined to a moral act" (*On the Virtues* 1.2 ad 2).<sup>32</sup> What we need is a clearer understanding of how general or metaphysical good gets "determined" or specified to moral goodness, so as to define virtue's goodness. I suggest we turn to a second important claim in Aquinas's theory of goodness: its conformity to a rule or measure. "The good of anything having a rule and measure consists in this, that it is equalized to its rule or measure" (*On the Virtues* 1.13c; cf. I.II 64.1c).<sup>33</sup> The key to virtue's goodness, then, lies in the rule and measure of human actions and habits. What is this rule?

For Aquinas, it is "reason," or "the mode of reason," or "the order of reason" that is the rule of human action, and by implication the rule of human virtue: "Good in human passions and operations is that it attains the mode of reason, which is the measure and rule of all human passions and operations" (*On the Virtues* 1.13c).<sup>34</sup> Moral goodness, then, is the conformity of a human act to reason. What applies to human actions will apply to their principles—namely, good and bad habits: "A moral habit has the rationale of human virtue, insofar as it is conformed to reason" (I.II 58.2).<sup>35</sup> Human actions and human habits are good when they are rational.

It may seem that this definition of moral goodness in terms of rationality is confused. Being rational is not only a characteristic of morally good action; it

also is characteristic of morally bad action. Rationality, after all, is a *prerequisite* for any action being assessed in moral terms since if an action is performed without any attending thought, then this is an action of a human, not a human action. Aquinas seems to be making an illicit jump from “is” to “ought,” from the way human actions are to how they should be.

This objection misses an important distinction. Consider the following argument:

In regard to human acts, good and bad, is predicated by *a comparison to reason*. For, as [Pseudo-]Dionysius says [Div. Nom. IV], “The good of a human is being according to reason,” bad however is being “against reason.” For the good of each thing is what suits it according to its form, and the bad is what is outside the order of its form. [. . .] However, certain actions are called human, or moral, insofar as they are *from reason*. And so it is manifest that good and evil diversify species in moral acts. (18.5c, emphasis added)<sup>36</sup>

In Aquinas’s view, for a human act to be *from* reason (*a ratione*) and *according to* reason (*secundum rationem*) are two different things. For an action to be from reason it must be, as we might say, *originatively rational*, or deriving from a process of deliberation. For an action to be according to reason it must be *normatively rational*, or conforming to reason as to a rule or standard. Aquinas, then, does not make an illicit jump from “is” to “ought.” Rather, there is a valid argument: all originatively rational actions must be either normatively rational (morally good) or normatively irrational (morally bad). “The good of each thing is what suits it according to its form”: if an action derives from rational deliberation, it can be assessed according to the standards of rationality.

If moral goodness is a human action’s or habit’s conformity to reason, we need some account of what “reason” is in this normative sense, or the rule by conformity to which an action or habit is made morally good.

### Duplex Regula

Aquinas claims, “The rule of the human will is twofold: one [rule] is proximate and homogenous, namely, human reason itself; the other [rule], however, is the first rule, namely, the eternal law, which is as it were the reason of God” (I.II 71.6c).<sup>37</sup> This idea of the *duplex regula*, or the double-sided rule of the human will, is of singular importance in Aquinas’s ethics.

Aquinas asserts that the eternal law is the first rule (*prima regula*) of the human will, or the primary standard of all human action. It is by conformity

to this rule or measure that a human action is judged morally good or bad. As Aquinas puts it, “The goodness of the human will depends on the eternal law much more than on human reason” (19.4c).<sup>38</sup> Given this position, it is no surprise that when Aquinas comes to define a sin, he defines it, as Augustine did, as a human action *against* this rule: “a word or deed or desire against the eternal law”<sup>39</sup> (71.6). The eternal law is the primary standard for distinguishing morally good from sinful actions, or moral virtue from vice.

Why is the eternal law the first rule? Aquinas states that it must be the first rule because it is the basis for the entire moral order: “In all ordered causes, the effect depends more on the first cause than on the secondary cause, for the secondary cause does not act unless in virtue of the first cause” (19.4c).<sup>40</sup> Since morality concerns the ordering of all actions to the overall end of human life (21.2 ad 2), the first rule of this ordering will be the first rule of morality. As the Salamancans put it: “Morality in human acts is understood by order to the ultimate end of human life. Therefore, whatever turns out to be the first rationale of this order will be the first rule of morality. This cannot be other than reason existing in God, which is called his eternal law, just as no other than God himself can be the first one directing into this end.”<sup>41</sup> The first and indefectible “rule” or “standard” of morality—the directedness of all human things to the good—can be found only in God’s reason, which draws all things to their end in Him.

Aquinas claims that while the first rule of morality is the eternal law, human reason is the *proximate* and *homogenous* rule. Eternal law, which is divine reason, is not manifested to human creatures except through the mediation of the judgment and directives of human reason:

It is from the eternal law, which is the divine reason, that human reason is the rule of the human will, measuring its goodness. Hence it is written (Psalm 4), “Many say, who shows us good things? The light of your face, O Lord, is signed upon us,” as if to say, “the light of reason in us can show good things and regulate our will to the extent that it is the light of your face, that is, derived from your face.” (19.4c)<sup>42</sup>

By its participation in the first rule (divine reason), human reason is the proximate rule of the human will.

The idea that the goodness of virtue lies in its conformity to reason, and especially its conformity to the eternal law, is problematic to many. One of the advances of the renewal of virtue has been the recognition that virtue cannot be reduced to conformity to some set of rules or laws. Is Aquinas offering a law-based conception of virtue? Another concern might be the threat posed to human autonomy by divine heteronomy. Aquinas states: “In what is done

through will, the proximate rule is human reason, but the supreme rule is the eternal law” (21.1c).<sup>43</sup> Is the conception of morality that is being proposed an authoritarian one?

One danger here is to fall into modern dichotomies between law and virtue, or between divine and human freedom, oppositions that are not present in Aquinas’s holistic theological ethics. Some accounts of Aquinas’s ethics claim that propositional principles hold priority over the virtues.<sup>44</sup> Others assert the reverse and advocate the primacy of virtue over natural law.<sup>45</sup> The better approach is to find a balance between law and virtue, drawing out the connections and interrelations between them and reuniting what was never separate in Aquinas’s original account.<sup>46</sup>

Still, Thomists often tend in the direction of an excessively legal interpretation of his ethics. David M. Gallagher helpfully notes that when Aquinas talks of the rule of actions, “rule should not be understood only as something which is written or spoken, such as a law or a set of instructions, nor is it even necessarily something grasped intellectually.” However, Gallagher quickly follows this insight with the misleading statement, “In the case of rational beings the rule takes the form of law.”<sup>47</sup> Aquinas is more careful in his language: law is *quaedam regula*, a certain or particular kind of rule, and it is such because it is something pertaining to reason, which is “the rule and measure of human acts” (90.1c).<sup>48</sup> Law is one manifestation of practical reason. Even the eternal law, while certainly a “law,” should not be interpreted using a too-univocal comparison with human law. Doing so invites a mistaken reading of Aquinas’s ethics as relentlessly deontological.

We should avoid the use of unhelpful dichotomies between natural law ethics and virtue ethics. When Aquinas claims that a moral habit is a virtue insofar as it is conformed to reason, it is more helpful to understand “reason” here primarily in terms of a virtue, not of a law—namely, in terms of prudence.

### THE MEASURE OF HUMAN ACTS

It is worth briefly noting some central features of Aquinas’s idea of prudence.<sup>49</sup> Aquinas distinguishes *scientia*, *ars*, and *prudentia*: *scientia* consists in the scientific knowledge of what is necessarily true; *ars* is a more practical form of knowledge about how to attain particular ends according to set rules; *prudentia* is a practical knowledge that rectifies human action (57.4c). Prudence therefore differs from art in that it concerns living well overall (*bene vivere totum*) rather than in some particular sphere of life (II.II 47.2 ad 1). Prudence’s sphere of operation is the contingent and uncertain realm of the particular in which there is no fixed way of attaining the end (47.2 ad 3; 5c). There is therefore an

investigative process in prudential reasoning, from deliberation to judgment to “command”—that is, applying what has been considered to what is done (II.II 47.8). While prudence is a kind of rationality, it is not an elitist virtue: even a simple person can be prudent (I.II 58.4 ad 2). Finally, prudence is not a “cold” rationality. Rather, it depends radically on a kind of affective knowledge since it presupposes a correct perception of the ends of human action, which arises when the subject is well-disposed through the moral virtues (58.5). What are the prospects for reading the twofold rule of morality in terms of the virtue of prudence?

### Divine and Human Prudence

Crucially, Aquinas conceives of the role of prudence teleologically. As he puts it, “Prudence counsels us well about what pertains to the whole life of a human, and to the ultimate end of human life” (57.4 ad 3; cf. 21.2 ad 2).<sup>50</sup> Aquinas’s accounts of prudence and the eternal law therefore overlap. As he describes the latter’s office or function, “the eternal law primarily and principally ordains the human being to the end, but consequently makes the human being well disposed concerning what is towards the end” (71.6 ad 3).<sup>51</sup>

A similar teleology is evident in eternal law’s definition. The eternal law, Aquinas says, is “the rationale of the governance of things” (*ratio gubernationis rerum*) (91.1c). *Gubernatio* refers literally to the art of navigating or steering a ship to its destination, but it is used by extension to refer to governance of any kind.<sup>52</sup> “To govern is to move certain things to a due end, just as a sailor navigates a ship” (II.II 102.2c).<sup>53</sup> The eternal law, then, is the underlying rationale of the governance or navigation by which God steers each creature to its ultimate end. It is not a set of universal formulas or laws.

Does God, then, have the virtue of prudence? Aquinas considers this question himself (I 22.1). He distinguishes the self-regarding and the other-regarding roles of prudence: “It is proper to prudence, according to the Philosopher [*Nichomachean Ethics* VI.12], to order other things to the end, whether in respect of one’s own self, as a human is said to be prudent because he orders well his own acts to the end of his life, or in respect of others subject to him, in the family, or city, or kingdom” (ibid.).<sup>54</sup> God has no need to direct His own life to the ultimate end, since He is the ultimate end of all things; yet He can nevertheless be said to have the virtue of prudence in that He does so direct other creatures. The virtue of prudence as it exists in God provides for others and guides them to their good, and is therefore called “providence”: “Therefore the very rationale of the ordering of things into the end in God is named providence” (ibid.).<sup>55</sup>

It is clear, then, that there is very little difference between the eternal law, as Aquinas conceives it, and God's prudence, or providence, since both concern the guidance of the creature to its proper end. But there is a difference nevertheless: "The eternal law in God is not providence itself, but as it were the principle of providence."<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, the eternal law is not the very act of prudentially governing or directing things but the plan or idea on the basis of which God governs (I.II 91.1c).

If the first rule is best interpreted as the basis of divine prudence, how do we understand the proximate rule—namely, human reason? Aquinas states: "A human being attains to right reason by prudence, which is right reason about what is to be done" (*On the Virtues* 5.2c).<sup>57</sup> It is the virtue of prudence that is the proximate rule of human morality. The basic principles of natural law on their own are not, by themselves, a sufficient standard of moral goodness. As the Salamancans explain, "The universal principles of practical reason, of which *synderesis* is the judge, does not cause the goodness of operation, nor directs the operation itself, unless by the judgement of the prudent one attending to what is occurring here and now, and unless they are determined and applied to such an operation."<sup>58</sup> General principles of morality need to be applied wisely to a situation; by themselves they are not the rule. Only the virtue of prudence, which takes these general principles from *synderesis* and applies them here and now, can serve as the proximate rule of morality.<sup>59</sup>

### Prudential versus Legalistic Rationality

How does this prudential reading of the *duplex regula* help to reply to concerns about Aquinas's account of virtue as being legalistic and leaving little room for human freedom? The emphasis on prudence addresses the worry about rationalistic legalism. Aquinas believes that ethics should offer normative direction.<sup>60</sup> Yet he insists that ethics can never be a substitute for the morally virtuous and practically wise judgment of a particular person "in the field": "And since the discussion of morals even in general is uncertain and variable, it becomes yet more uncertain if someone were to want to descend [to particulars] further, offering teaching about singulars in particular. For this does not fall under art, nor under any narration, because cases of singular actions vary in infinite ways. And so the judgment about particular is left to the prudence of each" (*Comm. Ethic.*, lib. 2 l. 2 n.5).<sup>61</sup> Only the wise agent in situ can determine what is to be done here and now; there is no way of knowing this in advance, except in broad outlines. As Cajetan puts it, regarding what is to be done here and now "*non est scibile, quia contingens,*" there is no scientific knowledge about the concrete moral requirements of

the moment, because of its contingency (in I.II 58.5 n.9). Only a virtue, not a scientific application of a set of principles, can determine what is to be done here and now.

This is something recognized by contemporary virtue theorists, who question the modern assumption that an ethical theory should offer a “decision procedure”—that is, a set of instructions that tell us what to do and are applicable in the same way in all situations.<sup>62</sup> Rosalind Hursthouse points out, for example, that “knowledge of what one should do in a particular hard case is not knowledge that we expect adolescents, however clever, and however well-armed with a normative ethics they have been given in a book, to have.”<sup>63</sup> It would be unwise to seek moral advice from a clever teenager who has mastered a book on ethical theory since she would lack the experience necessary for prudence. There is no way of “short-circuiting” the need for personal, prudential judgment, no matter how good the normative theory.

At the same time, it would be wrong to reduce Aquinas to a “situationist” or a “particularist.” No act can be morally good if it is discordant with the dictates of *synderesis*, or the understanding of the basic principles of practical reason; *synderesis* “moves” prudence (II.II 47.6 ad 3). Rather, Aquinas’s account of prudence steers a happy medium between particularism and rationalism: prudence mediates between the general and the particular (47.3). As the Salamancans observe, “Since moral operations are singular, and depend upon singular circumstances, *universal knowledge*, even if it be practical, cannot influence them, or regulate them, unless as applied to the here and now by *particular knowledge*, which, having inspected everything, judges about the existence of such operations: which is the office of prudence.”<sup>64</sup> The formal, proximate rule of morality is therefore the concrete dictate of prudential reason, which nevertheless applies the general principles of morality in a situationally sensitive way. While this is not situationism, neither is it a legalistic, rationalistic conception of moral rationality.

### Divine Heteronomy and Human Autonomy

The second concern about Aquinas’s understanding of reason as the rule of morality is that it makes God’s command the ultimate standard of morality, thereby appearing to subvert human autonomy. Aquinas, however, does not assert divine heteronomy at the expense of human autonomy, nor vice versa.<sup>65</sup> There is not one rule for morality, nor are there two; rather, there is one two-fold rule, a *duplex regula*. Aquinas insists that morality consists in harmony or disharmony with human reason (its proximate rule) and *at the same time* consists in conformity or disconformity to divine reason, its first and indefectible

rule.<sup>66</sup> In this moral vision the eternal law is far from substituting for human autonomy; it is what guarantees it. Once again the metaphor of seafaring navigation is germane: “Just as a ship is entrusted to the captain to direct its course, so a human being is entrusted to his will and reason. As it is said, ‘God established the human being from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel’ (Ecclesiasticus 15:14)” (I.II 2.5c).<sup>67</sup> The word Aquinas uses, here translated as “captain,” is *gubernator*. So just as God is the Supreme Captain or Navigator directing all things to Himself, so has He made human beings captains or navigators of their own lives.

It is possible to understand Aquinas’s reconciliation of human autonomy and divine heteronomy only in the context of his overarching cosmological vision. God provides for the telic orientation of humans to their ultimate end differently than He does for nonrational creatures, whose participation in the eternal law is entirely passive since they have no choice whether or not to follow the natural inclinations instilled into their natures. It is different for humans: “Among other creatures, the rational creature is subject to providence in a more excellent way, insofar as he also becomes a participant of providence, provident for himself and for others” (I.II 91.2).<sup>68</sup> Humans participate in the eternal law both passively (in that they are directed to their end by natural and supernatural inclination toward the good) and actively (by the exercise of deliberation about how best to achieve their natural and supernatural end). This delegated autonomy is not an arbitrary liberty to do whatever one happens to want to do, nor is it merely a following of the diktats of a divine micromanager. Rather, human autonomy is self-rule through the virtue of prudence; it is a specifically human, active participation in the eminent practical reason or navigation by which God directs all beings to their ultimate ends.

### MEASURED GOODNESS

How does the idea of the *duplex regula* help to address the question with which we began—namely, how to understand virtue’s goodness? Aquinas gives the answer as follows: “Human acts have goodness insofar as they are regulated by a due rule and measure, and therefore human virtue, which is the principle of all a human’s good acts, consists in attaining the rule of human acts, which is twofold, as we have said, namely, human reason, and God himself” (II.II 23.3c).<sup>69</sup> The goodness of human virtue lies in its conformity to human and especially divine reason.

Note that this thesis has restricted application. The good of virtue is always conformity to some rule or measure, but it takes on different forms for the

three genera of virtue—intellectual, moral, and theological—since each of these has its own distinctive rule or measure. As we have seen, the measure and rule of *moral* or *human* virtue is prudential reason. Thus, “A moral habit has the rationale of human virtue, insofar as it is conformed to reason” (I.II 58.2; cf. 59.4).<sup>70</sup> The measure and rule of speculative intellectual virtue, in contrast, is in things themselves, “for by the fact that a thing is or is not, there is truth in what we think and say” (64.3c).<sup>71</sup> What about the theological virtues? The goodness of faith, hope, and love is something more than determining the best path to an end through conformity to reason (as with moral virtue); the three virtues are good through their conformity to the end itself—namely, God, in His truth, power, love, and goodness. As Aquinas puts it, “The measure and rule of theological virtue is God himself” (ibid.).<sup>72</sup>

Identifying the correct measure and rule is most difficult in regard to the virtue of prudence. Here we meet two problems at once. Prudence is itself the measure and rule of moral virtue. But Aquinas makes the puzzling claim that, whereas speculative truth lies in conformity to reality, practical truth lies in conformity to right appetite (58.5 ad 3). We seem to have a vicious circularity: prudence is the measure of moral virtue, and moral virtue, which consists in right appetite, is the measure of prudence.<sup>73</sup>

To add to the confusion, Aquinas says, “The true of practical intellectual virtue, related indeed to reality, has the rationale of something measured” (64.3c).<sup>74</sup> How consistent is this: the measure of prudence is both right appetite and reality itself?

The problems arise because Aquinas recognizes that the relation between intellect and will, and consequently between prudence and moral virtue, is one of mutual interdependence (65.1 ad 3). He says, “These two powers, namely, intellect and will, revolve around each other” (*On the Virtues* 1.7c).<sup>75</sup> One way in which prudence depends on moral virtue is that it starts from a right perception of the end, which happens only through moral virtue:

For a human to be rightly disposed concerning the particular principles of action, which are the ends, it is necessary that he be perfected by certain habits by which it becomes in some way connatural to judge rightly of the end. And this happens through moral virtue, for the virtuous one rightly judges of the end of virtue, because “such as each one is, so does the end seem to him” [*Nichomachean Ethics* II.5]. And so, right reason about what is to be done, which is prudence, requires that a human have moral virtue. (58.5)<sup>76</sup>

It is only the morally virtuous person who perceives what is truly good and which ends to pursue, and so is able to reason well about what is to be done here and now. Prudence needs moral virtue.

There is no self-defeating circularity in saying that prudence finds its measure in right appetite but right appetite finds its measure in reason. Aquinas explains: “Reason [*synderesis*] insofar as it apprehends the end, precedes the appetite for the end, but the appetite for the end precedes reason reasoning to choose what is for the end, which pertains to prudence” (I.II 58.5 ad 1).<sup>77</sup> Prudence finds its measure in right appetite for the end, and right appetite for the end finds its measure in *synderesis*, which is the habit containing the general understanding of moral principles (II.II 47.6 ad 1).

What about the idea that the measure of the practical intellect lies in reality itself? Cajetan notes that the practical intellect agrees with the speculative intellect in its act of understanding but differs in that it also directs action (in I.II 58.5 n.2). He infers that practical truth concerns both reality and desire, in different respects: “The true of the practical intellect in itself depends on reality, as regards understanding; on our part, however, [it depends] on right appetite, which makes the end appear to us according to the disposition of the appetite” (in 64.4 n.3). Prudential reasoning, as directive of action, is based on both a correct perception of the end (which happens through moral and indeed theological virtue) and a correct perception of the singulars that form the context for action (II.II 47.3c). Thus prudence finds its measure both in right appetite for the end and in reality itself. This helps to ward off the danger of infinite regress of virtues: the measure of moral virtue is intellectual virtue; the measure of intellectual virtue is reality. For, “It is not necessary to proceed into infinity in virtues, because the measure and rule of intellectual virtue is not some other genus of virtue, but reality itself” (I.II 64.3 ad 2).<sup>78</sup>

In general, a virtue’s goodness lies in its conformity to its rule, and the rule will vary according to the kind of virtue. Yet it remains that the *duplex regula* is the primary rule for virtue. Virtue, in the unqualified sense, which directs a person to the overall end of human life, can be said to find its measure in the twofold rule of the human will: divine and human reason. Aquinas terms conformity to this rule of reason “the moral good” (*bonum moris*). It is therefore either the rational good (*bonum rationis*) or the moral good (*bonum moris*) that is included in the definition of virtue as a good habit (*On the Virtues* 1.2 ad 2, ad 6; I.II 55.4 ad 2). Poinset, in his insightful summary of the *Summa Theologiae*, is correct to state, “‘Morally good’ is the difference ultimately constitutive of virtue.”<sup>79</sup>

## NOTES

1. I.II 55.3: “virtus humana, quae est habitus operativus, est bonus habitus, et boni operativus.”

2. I.II 54.3c: “habitus bonus dicitur qui disponit ad actum convenientem naturae agentis; habitus autem malus dicitur qui disponit ad actum non convenientem naturae.”

3. “Habitus . . . est enim qualitas quaedam permanens, et de se stabilis in subiecto, per se primo ordinata ad operationem, non tribuens primam facultatem operandi, sed adiuvens et facilitans illum.” Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, ed. Carolus Berton, Opera Omnia, vol. 26 (Paris: Vives, 1886), Disp.44:1, n.6 (664).

4. Ibid.

5. John Poinsoot, *Cursus Theologicus*, in I.II, Disp.13, *De Habitibus in Communi*, Art.1, 23.

6. 49.3c: “habitus primo et per se importat habitudinem ad naturam rei.”

7. Bernard Ryosuke Inagaki, who refers approvingly to Poinsoot, also states: “No other thinker [than Aquinas] has ever developed a theory of habit in connection with human nature in such a systematic manner.” “Habitus and Natura in Aquinas,” in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John F. Wippel (Baltimore, MD: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 159.

8. *Comm. Metaph.*, lib. 5 l. 5; and *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 5 q. 1 a. 2c.

9. I.II 29.1 ad 4: “communiter essentia uniuscuiusque rei, quam significat eius definitio, vocatur natura.”

10. De ente et essentia, cap. 1: “nomen naturae . . . videtur significare essentiam rei, secundum quod habet ordinem ad propriam operationem rei, cum nulla res propria operatione destituatur.”

11. *Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 15 n.1.

12. *Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 13–14.

13. 49.3c: “Sed natura rei, quae est finis generationis, ulterius etiam ordinatur ad alium finem, qui vel est operatio, vel aliquod operatum, ad quod quis pervenit per operationem.”

14. 49.3: “Est enim de ratione habitus ut importet habitudinem quandam in ordine ad naturam rei.”

15. 49.3c: “in prima specie consideratur . . . facile et difficile mobile, secundum quod aliqua natura est finis generationis et motus.”

16. 49.3c: “habitus non solum importat ordinem ad ipsam naturam rei, sed etiam consequenter ad operationem, in quantum est finis naturae, vel perducens ad finem.”

17. On the efficient causality of habits, see Michał Glowala, “What Kind of Power Is a Virtue? John of St. Thomas OP on Causality of Virtues and Vices,” *Studia Neoscholastica* 9, no. 1 (2012): 25–27.

18. 49.3c: “natura et ratio potentiae est ut sit principium actus. Unde omnis habitus qui est alicuius potentiae ut subiecti, principaliter importat ordinem ad actum.”

19. *Cursus Theologicus*, Disp.13, *De Habitibus in Communi*, Art. 4, 24.

20. 49.2c: “Et quia ipsa forma et natura rei est finis et cuius causa fit aliquid, ut dicitur in II Physic. ideo in prima specie consideratur et bonum et malum.”

21. 49.3c: “Est enim de ratione habitus ut importet habitudinem quandam in ordine ad naturam rei, secundum quod convenit vel non convenit.”

22. 49.2c: “Quando enim est modus conveniens naturae rei, tunc habet rationem boni, quando autem non convenit, tunc habet rationem mali.”

23. Jacobus M. Ramírez, *De Habitibus in Communi: In I–II Summae Theologiae Divi Thomae Expositio* (QQ. XLIX–LIV), ed. Victorinus Rodriguez (Madrid: Luis Vives, 1973), 1:106.

24. 54.3c: “habitus bonus dicitur qui disponit ad actum convenientem naturae agentis.”

25. 54.3c: “Virtus autem uniuscuiusque rei consistit in hoc quod sit bene disposita secundum convenientiam suae naturae. . . . Sed considerandum est quod natura uniuscuiusque rei potissime est forma secundum quam res speciem sortitur. Homo autem in specie constituitur per animam rationalem. Et ideo id quod est contra ordinem rationis, proprie est contra naturam hominis in quantum est homo; quod autem est secundum rationem, est secundum naturam hominis in quantum est homo. . . . Unde virtus humana, quae hominem facit bonum, et opus ipsius bonum reddit, intantum est secundum naturam hominis, in quantum convenit rationi, vitium autem intantum est contra naturam hominis, in quantum est contra ordinem rationis.”

26. 58.2: “habitus moralis habet rationem virtutis humanae, in quantum rationi conformatur.”

27. I 5.1c: “bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt secundum rationem tantum.”

28. Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 60–91.

29. *Ibid.*, 90.

30. 55.4 ad 2: “bonum quod ponitur in definitione virtutis, non est bonum commune, quod convertitur cum ente, et est in plus quam qualitas, sed est bonum rationis, secundum quod Dionysius dicit, in IV cap. de Div. Nom., quod bonum animae est secundum rationem esse.”

31. See also *On the Virtues* 1.2 ad 2, ad 6; I.II 54.3 ad 2.

32. *On the Virtues* 1.2 ad 2: “bonum quod convertitur cum ente, non ponitur hic in definitione virtutis; sed bonum quod determinatur ad actum morale.”

33. *On the Virtues* 1.13c: “cuiuslibet habentis regulam et mensuram bonum consistit in hoc quod est adaequari suae regulae vel mensurae.”

34. *On the Virtues* 1.13c: “bonum in passionibus et operationibus humanis est quod attingatur modus rationis, qui est mensura et regula omnium passionum et operationum humanarum.”

35. I.II 58.2: “habitus moralis habet rationem virtutis humanae, in quantum rationi conformatur.”

36. 18.5c: “In actibus autem humanis bonum et malum dicitur per comparationem ad rationem, quia, ut Dionysius dicit, IV cap. de Div. Nom. bonum hominis est secundum rationem esse, malum autem quod est praeterrationem. Unicuique enim rei est bonum quod convenit ei secundum suam formam; et malum quod est ei praeter ordinem suae formae. . . . Dicuntur autem aliqui actus humani, vel morales, secundum quod sunt a ratione. Unde manifestum est quod bonum et malum diversificant speciem in actibus moralibus.”

37. I.II 71.6c: “Regula autem voluntatis humanae est duplex, una propinqua et homogenea, scilicet ipsa humana ratio; alia vero est prima regula, scilicet lex aeterna, quae est quasi ratio Dei.”

38. 19.4c: “multo magis dependet bonitas voluntatis humanae a lege aeterna, quam a ratione humana.”

39. 71.6c: “*dictum vel factum vel concupitum contra legem aeternam.*”

40. 19.4c: “in omnibus causis ordinatis, effectus plus dependet a causa prima quam a causa secunda, quia causa secunda non agit nisi in virtute primae causae.”

41. *Cursus Theologicus*, Tract. 11, *De Bonitate et Malitia Humanorum Actuum*, Disp.1, Dub.5, n.66 (6:35).

42. 19.4c: “Quod autem ratio humana sit regula voluntatis humanae, ex qua eius bonitas mensuretur, habet ex lege aeterna, quae est ratio divina. Unde in Psalmo IV, dicitur, *multi dicunt, quis ostendit nobis bona? Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, domine*, quasi diceret, lumen rationis quod in nobis est, intantum potest nobis ostendere bona, et nostram voluntatem regulare, in quantum est lumen vultus tui, idest a vultu tuo derivatum.”

43. 21.1c: “In his vero quae aguntur per voluntatem, regula proxima est ratio humana; regula autem suprema est lex aeterna.”

44. The New Natural Law theorists emphasize natural law in both their interpretation of Aquinas and in their contemporary rethinking of his ethical theory. John Finnis concedes that Aquinas arranges his exposition of morals in terms of the virtues, but Finnis insists that “principles, propositional practical truths, are more fundamental than virtues.” Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 124.

45. Daniel Mark Nelson argues that the perception of Aquinas as a natural law ethicist is “mistaken”; natural law is an overall theological framework for understanding the universality of morality, but it is the virtues that are action-guiding. Nelson, *The Priority of Prudence* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

46. Thus Pamela Hall appreciates Nelson’s rejection of “conventional legalistic interpretations of Aquinas” but argues that Nelson unduly downplays natural law. Pamela M. Hall, *Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 19–22.

47. David M. Gallagher, “Aquinas on Goodness and Moral Goodness,” in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 51.

48. 90.1c: “Regula autem et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio.”

49. For a helpful account see W. Jay Wood, “Prudence,” in *Virtues and Their Vices*, ed. Kevin Timpe and Craig A. Boyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 37–58.

50. 57.4 ad 3: “prudentia est bene consiliativa de his quae pertinent ad totam vitam hominis, et ad ultimum finem vitae humanae.”

51. 71.6 ad 3: “lex aeterna primo et principaliter ordinat hominem ad finem, consequenter autem facit hominem bene se habere circa ea quae sunt ad finem.”

52. Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Baltimore, MD: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 482; T. C. O’Brien, *Summa Theologiae: Volume 14, (Ia.103–109) Divine Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2–3.

53. II.II 102.2c: “gubenare autem est movere aliquos in debitum finem; sicut nauta gubernat navem.”

54. II.II 102.2c: “Prudentiae autem proprium est, secundum philosophum in VI Ethic., ordinare alia in finem; sive respectu sui ipsius, sicut dicitur homo prudens, qui bene ordinat actus suos ad finem vitae suae; sive respectu aliorum sibi subiectorum in familia vel civitate vel regno.”

55. II.II 102.2c: “Ipsa igitur ratio ordinis rerum in finem, providentia in Deo nominatur.”

56. *De Veritate* 5.1 ad 6: “in Deo lex aeterna non est ipsa providentia, sed providentiae quasi principium.”

57. *On the Virtues* 5.2c: “Ad rationem autem rectam attingit homo per prudentiam, quae est recta ratio agibilium.”

58. *Cursus Theologicus*, Tract. 11, *De Bonitate et Malitia Humanorum Actuum*, Disp.1, Dub.4, n.69 (6:36).

59. On *synderesis* and virtue see Angela McKay Knobel, “Synderesis, Law, and Virtue,” in *The Normativity of the Natural: Human Goods, Human Virtues, and Human Flourishing*, ed. Mark J. Cherry (Austin, TX: Springer, 2009), 33–44.

60. *Comm. Ethic.*, lib. 2 l. 2 n.2: “Non enim in hac scientia scrutamur quid est virtus ad hoc solum ut sciamus huius rei veritatem; sed ad hoc, quod acquirentes virtutem, boni efficiamur”; see Super De Trinitate, pars 3 q. 5 a. 1 ad 3. On the “hybrid character of *scientia* or sacred doctrine, partly practical, partly speculative,” see I.1.4 and Rudi A. te Velde, *Aquinas on God* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 21–22.

61. *Comm. Ethic.*, lib. 2 l. 2 n.5: “Et cum sermo moralium etiam in universalibus sit incertus et variabilis, adhuc magis incertus est si quis velit ulterius descendere tradendo doctrinam de singulis in speciali. Hoc enim non cadit neque sub arte, neque sub aliqua narratione, quia casus singularium operabilium variantur infinitis modis. Unde iudicium de singulis relinquatur prudentiae uniuscuiusque.”

62. Julia Annas, “Being Virtuous and Doing the Right Thing,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78, no. 2 (November 1, 2004): 63.

63. Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 61.

64. *Cursus Theologicus*, Tract. 11, *De Bonitate et Malitia Humanorum Actuum*, Disp.1, Dub.5, n.69 (6:37).

65. Louis Roy, “Does Christian Faith Rule Out Human Autonomy?,” *Heythrop Journal* 53, no. 4 (2012): 606–23.

66. For example, I.II 19.4c, 23.6c, 71.6c 2 De Malo 4; *On the Virtues* 5.4; and Super Iob, cap. 23.

67. I.II 2.5c: “Sicut autem navis committitur gubernatori ad dirigendum, ita homo est suae voluntati et rationi commissus; secundum illud quod dicitur Eccli. XV, *Deus ab initio constituit hominem, et reliquit eum in manu consilii sui.*”

68. I.II 91.2: “Inter cetera autem rationalis creatura excellentiori quodam modo divinae providentiae subiacet, in quantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi et aliis providens.”

69. II.II 23.3c: “humani actus bonitatem habent secundum quod regulantur debita regula et mensura, et ideo humana virtus, quae est principium omnium bonorum actuum hominis, consistit in attingendo regulam humanorum actuum. Quae quidem est duplex, ut supra dictum est, scilicet humana ratio, et ipse Deus.”

70. I.II 58.2: “habitus moralis habet rationem virtutis humanae, in quantum rationi conformatur.”

71. 64.3c: “ex eo enim quod res est vel non est, veritas est in opinione et in oratione.”

72. 64.3c: “mensura et regula virtutis theologicae est ipse Deus, fides enim nostra regulatur secundum veritatem divinam, caritas autem secundum bonitatem eius, spes autem secundum magnitudinem omnipotentiae et pietatis eius.”

73. *Comm. Ethic.*, lib. 6 l. 2 n.8.

74. 64.3c: “Verum autem virtutis intellectualis practicae, comparatum quidem ad rem, habet rationem mensurati.”

75. *On the Virtues* 1.7c: “istae duae potentiae, scilicet intellectus et voluntas, se invicem circumeunt.”

76. 58.5: “ad hoc quod recte se habeat circa principia particularia agibilia, quae sunt fines, oportet quod perficiatur per aliquos habitus secundum quos fiat quodammodo homini connaturale recte iudicare de fine. Et hoc fit per virtutem moralem, virtuosus enim recte iudicat de fine virtutis, quia qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei, ut dicitur in III Ethic. Et ideo ad rectam rationem agibilia, quae est prudentia, requiritur quod homo habeat virtutem moralem.”

77. I.II 58.5 ad 1: “ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitum finis, sed appetitus finis praecedit rationem ratiocinantem ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam.”

78. 64.3 ad 2: “non est necesse in infinitum procedere in virtutibus, quia mensura et regula intellectualis virtutis non est aliquod aliud genus virtutis, sed ipsa res.”

79. *Isagogue ad D. Thomae Theologiam* (Solesmes 1:170).