

## Divine Understanding as Willing in Aquinas<sup>1</sup>

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Since God’s being is defined by its being an act of being or an act of existence which, as an act or operation, brings everything else into its condition of existence and being, and since this same act of being is an intrinsically reasonable, rational act which functions as the source of all intelligibility and rationality in the life of all existing things, God, as pure act, is not only the cause or source of truth and being but He is also the cause and source of all goodness (God accordingly existing as pure goodness) or, in other words, God exists as the subject or as the center of that which exists in act or activity as “goodness itself”<sup>2</sup> in the reality of its being. What is intelligible and rational is good and what is good is intelligible and rational. God causes all goodness as this goodness manifests itself in the concrete actuality of all existing things and in how, in their intelligibility, these things should happen to exist.<sup>3</sup> God’s will or God’s willing is always entirely effective and efficacious since, in God, desiring, willing, and doing cannot be properly distinguished from each other in a way which could possibly refer to the truth or the reality of any real differences (the appropriateness of some kind of real distinction).<sup>4</sup> God’s desiring and willing causes and effects things,<sup>5</sup> and God’s acting causes and effects all things which are initially possible *as intelligibly possible* (because the further or the added existence of a thing, in its existence, does not violate the principle of non-contradiction if we should first attend to the intelligibility of a given thing instead of with the existence of a given thing).<sup>6</sup> Intelligibility implies

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<sup>1</sup>Please note that this text has not been read by an external reader for proofreading purposes. Hence, any criticisms and concerns are welcome received if omissions and errors are to be noted.

<sup>2</sup>Aquinas, *Quaestiones de quodlibet*, 2, q. 2, a. 1.

<sup>3</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 8, a. 3; q. 13, a. 2.

<sup>4</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 21, 7. See also Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas Volume 2 Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 167, n. 40.

<sup>5</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 4. Citing Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 4; q. 32, a. 1, ad 3, and q. 45, a. 6, in his *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran & H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 181-183, n. 25, Bernard Lonergan quotes Aquinas’s argument in q. 19, a. 4 as follows:

For effects proceed from the agent that causes them according to the way in which they preexist in the agent: because every agent brings about what is similar to itself. Further, effects preexist in their cause in accord with the mode of the cause. Therefore, since the divine act of existence is the divine act of understanding, effects preexist in the divine act of existence in accordance with the intellectual mode. Hence, they proceed from the divine act of existence through an intellectual mode of proceeding. Consequently, they proceed through the mode of will: for the inclination to put in act what has been conceived by the intellect pertains to the will. The will of God, therefore, is the cause of things.

<sup>6</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 25, a. 3. As Bernard Lonergan states the point in *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), p. 337: “God can do

being and existence without necessitating being or entailing any kind of real being or existence. If something is intelligibly or intelligently possible, the intelligibility intimates or suggests the truth or the reality of something which could indeed possibly exist (or which could probably exist) even as we must admit to ourselves that the intelligibility of a thing is not to be identified with the truth or the reality of a given thing's existence. Being or existence exists as something which is quite other and distinct. It exists as something more; it is other than the being or the actuality of intelligibility. The meaning of a thing is transcended by its instantiation or its actuality (by its real existence).

However, in God, no such transcendence exists if we move from intelligibility to existence. As we try to think about God in terms of meaning or intelligibility and as we find that we cannot fathom or grasp this unrestricted meaning, nothing more can be possibly other, greater, or more transcendent than that which exists as God's unrestricted intelligibility. In this case, the unrestricted intelligibility implies or entails the unrestricted being of existence. So unrestricted is God's act of understanding in its intelligibility that, as a result, in its wake, everything exists in the immediacy or in the wake of this unrestricted understanding. As simultaneously a self-subsistent act of understanding and a self-subsisting act of being and existence which effects and causes things without being itself caused and effected, at the same time too, in or through this understanding and being or as perfectly united to this understanding and being, God also exists as a self-subsisting act of willing, doing, and loving which, even if it is inadequately understood by us (or we say that it cannot be understood), at the same time however, it reveals the meaning and the power of goodness in this exists and emerges in its fullest, most concrete sense.<sup>7</sup> If intellectual life exists in an agent or subject, it is inconceivable that no willing exists.<sup>8</sup> It is inconceivable that an understanding, knowing subject cannot then act of the basis of what is being understood and known.

With respect then to the attributes of God's goodness as this is manifested to us in our understanding and as it is displayed by a willing in God or the willing of God which in itself can be referred to and conceptualized as a "will of good pleasure" (as opposed to a delimited, conceptualized "will of expression" which refers only to precepts or prohibitions as these are already found here and there within the data of scripture and the deposit of God's self-revelation),<sup>9</sup> a number of points can be

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whatever has the intelligibility of being; that is, whatever involves no internal contradiction."

<sup>7</sup>*De caritate*, a. 1, ad 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 1.

<sup>8</sup>As Francis Selman argues in his *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 41, "will always goes with intellect" since "there is no being that has intellect but not will."

<sup>9</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 11. See also Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 98-99. A given precept or a given prohibition that has come down to us through the mediation of scripture and revelation is not to be identified with God's willing (though it comes from the divine willing) since God's willing or God as willing exists as a greater, more fundamental, simple kind of thing. The willing of God can be specified to some extent in this or that precept or commandment that we have come to know about through apprehended words and phrases that have been given to us but, as willing, the divine willing exists as a more simple, basic, kind of thing. If, with Aquinas, we begin from simply the willing of God as the "will of good pleasure" as a conceptualization of it, from it, we can then begin to speak about a derivative which refers to the "will of expression" as, through a received tradition of communication, reception, conceptualization, and formulation, the willing of God has emerged for us in a way which is but partially revealed and known through determinations which have been specified in terms of this or that moral or religious precept (or this or

possibly listed and considered in ways which point to how we can try and speak about God's willing (according to how it exists as some kind of higher, transcendent reality). The “will of good pleasure” conditions the “will of expression” as we go from one to the other. The “will of expression” only partially reveals how we can possibly speak about the willing of God in terms which would prefer to speak about the “will of good pleasure” as a specification of willing which, as willing, can be conceived to exist, however, as a larger, greater thing if that which exists as the “will of expression” is seen to exist as a subset of that which exists as the “will of good pleasure.”

First (for us) then, God’s goodness or God's virtue exists as an absolute<sup>10</sup> (it exists as an absolute kind of thing) since, alone, as pure act, as the “actuality of all acts [or as the actuality of all operations],”<sup>11</sup> God possesses every conceivable good and also all goods that we cannot possibly conceive of, know, or think about. In other words, God possesses every perfection, the perfection of every kind of good.<sup>12</sup> Only God is truly and really perfect because only God is truly and really active (existing within an unrestricted condition of act). Nothing needs to be improved upon, added to, or amended. God exists as the fullness of perfection itself and so, as a consequence of this, it can be properly argued that only God is truly and fully good.<sup>13</sup> The perfection or the completion implies the goodness. As Aquinas had averred as a general principle which can be used to understand the goodness of God’s nature or, alternatively, the goodness of God's being: “everything is good insofar as it is perfect.”<sup>14</sup> The perfection of a good implies that, in the perfection of a given good, it cannot be greater or more good than what, in fact, it is or already happens to be.

Second, whenever God acts within an order or context which is transcendent of temporal, spatial categories (or temporal, spatial limitations), the end, objective, purpose, or goal is always the obvious goodness of God if we should refer to how God exists as a perfect act or as a complete act of self-understanding which immediately points to the supreme goodness of God's self-understanding and the supreme goodness of God's self-knowledge which is then to be equated with the fullness or the absoluteness of God's own worth and goodness: God’s goodness or God's worth as this is constitutive of God's being and reality (God as God exists in Himself).<sup>15</sup> God's self-understanding, in revealing

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that prohibition). These determinations aside however or apart from these many determinations, the willing of God or God as willing exists as a greater, more comprehensive, transcendent kind of thing: as an act of being which is not to be equated with any forms or any intelligibilities that can or which have been put into words and concepts that we can remember, recall, teach, convey, and obey. One leads to the other: the divine willing, the divine revealing. The revealing presupposes the willing but not the willing, the revealing.

<sup>10</sup>*Super Librum De causis*, prop. 9; *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 5.

<sup>11</sup>*De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9, cited by Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Change? The World's Becoming in the Incarnation* (Still River, Massachusetts: St. Bede's Publications, 1985), p. 78; *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 123.

<sup>12</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 4, a. 1; q. 6, a. 3.

<sup>13</sup>See Mark 10:18 (“Only God is good”); Luke 18:19 (“No one is good except God alone”).

<sup>14</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 5, my translation.

<sup>15</sup>*In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 1, cited by Philip J. Donnelly, “Saint Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation,” *Theological Studies* 2 (1941): 58. If the ultimate end or purpose is the principle reason which explains why any action is done and why intermediate goals or ends are sought, and if the primary, ultimate object which is intended is to be understood as itself the cause of volition (as Aquinas argues in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 74, 4: “the principle object of

how God exists in Himself (in His divinity), reveals the goodness of God's being and the goodness of God's own willing in a way which can be used to argue, on the basis of a mental or a conceptual distinction, that God's understanding exists for the sake of the divine willing. If, as a first principle, God principally understands things by understanding and knowing Himself (in contrast with how, in our humanity, we understand and know things since, initially, we understand other things before we can begin to move toward a possible understanding of ourselves who, as objects of inquiry, exist as subjects of inquiry), similarly, God wills by willing and loving Himself as a term, end, purpose, or goal which, as an end, finality, or vector, is also grasped and understood by God within a completeness of self-understanding which grasps all the actual and possible reasons for the being of all things as these things exist within God as the term of an unrestricted act of understanding). What does God not understand? What does God not will? What does God not love? What does God not seek the good thereof?

As, on the one hand, God understands nothing but Himself (where, within God's divine self-understanding, everything is grasped and known in terms of anything which could possibly come from how God exists), similarly thus, God wills nothing except Himself which exists, in fact, as the unrestricted reality of God's own goodness<sup>16</sup> or, more positively, as the “the *summum bonum* [the highest good]” which exists in God and which also exists as God.<sup>17</sup> God wills only by reason or for the sake of His own reality or, in other words, for the sake of His own love and goodness if no higher reason can possibly exist in terms which can refer to the goodness of love or the goodness of goodness. Hence, God wills for no motives or reasons which could be possibly regarded as somehow other, higher, greater, or ulterior; hence, in some way, as existing beyond or outside of who or what or that which exists as the factuality of God's existence),<sup>18</sup> God acting for no other end other than the goodness or the reality which exists in terms of how, in fact, God exists.<sup>19</sup> Quoting Aquinas here, “the end which God intends is God Himself,”<sup>20</sup> there being no real distinction between God as intending or desiring and God as existing in Himself. And so, God's goodness exists as the ultimate end and sake of all things which should happen to exist. Nothing more good or more worthy exists. Hence, ultimately, all things exist for the sake of God's own goodness and worth,<sup>21</sup> God's goodness being reiteratively the reason and the cause of all existing things:<sup>22</sup> hence, as the means or channel for the being of all existing things.

In God's unending, eternal willing of Himself as an unimaginable type of ultimate, sufficient end or purpose, all other things are accordingly willed within this same willing to the degree that they are then

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the will...is through itself the cause of willing”), then God's own goodness is the ultimate purpose or object of His actions. No other goodness exists outside or beyond the reality of God's divine goodness. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 2, ad 2.

<sup>16</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 17, 7; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 15, ad 14.

<sup>17</sup>*De Malo*, q. 1, a. 5, quoted by Donnelly, “Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation,” *Theological Studies*: 82.

<sup>18</sup>*Expositio et Lectura Super Epistolas Pauli Apostoli, In Eph*, c. 1, lect 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>19</sup>Donnelly, “Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation,” *Theological Studies*: 65.

<sup>20</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 115, 2.

<sup>21</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 4.

<sup>22</sup>*De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 15, ad 5.

ordered or created for the sake of participating in God as their final end and ultimate objective.<sup>23</sup> Hence, as we have been suggesting, intimating, and saying, when God communicates or manifests His goodness in any way, this willing is not to be understood as something that is directed to some other kind of goal or end that is to be somehow reached or acquired by God since, in God, both the means and the end or goal of any action is always the completeness of God's own reality, the completeness of God's own goodness, the completeness of God's own worth: the goodness which exists as God's own love, care, and solicitude for anything which could possibly arise and exist.<sup>24</sup> No other cause can be identified which could then account for why God acts in the way that God acts since God's own goodness or God's own love is itself entirely complete and sufficient. It fully accounts for everything that God does and the order within which God acts and exists. As we have been noting, God exists always fully within an unrestricted condition of act. In manifesting His perfection and goodness, in communicating His love, God communicates something that God already possesses to the fullest possible degree: something which exists ultimately as God's love of self that, by means of God's self-communication, we are meant to participate and to share in.<sup>25</sup> From an unrestricted love of self that is unrestrictedly wise and rational and which does not conflict or jar with the goodness of the kind of transcendence which always belongs to a life of self-giving, care, and sacrifice, so many good things can possibly arise and emerge and so exist in ways which would otherwise not be acceptable nor possible.

In its essential or radical selflessness, as God acts not in order to add anything to Himself (given the already given absoluteness of God's own good and perfection), we can then understand why God's love can be seen to exist as something which is both essentially causal and, at the same time, causal in an entirely dynamic, healthy, wholesome, free kind of way. God's loving accounts for the existence of every good which comes or which can come to us as God's creatures.<sup>26</sup> Our own creatureliness (our reliance and dependency) exists in itself as an unmitigated blessing and as an unmerited good. In contrast with all forms of creaturely, created love which are elicited and drawn from us as they or as we respond to the being of other things that are somehow acting upon us, touching and influencing us in some way (they, we are affected and we are moved by pre-existing actuations of love and goodness), God's love creates the very possibility and the condition of every form of goodness and love that can possibly exist within or among the being of dependent, created things.<sup>27</sup> In the selflessness of God's love (which we can acknowledge but, of course, not entirely grasp or understand since it transcends our experience of how selflessness exists in all actuations of love), no contradiction can possibly exist between God's willing the good of created creatures and God's willing the reality of His own goodness (if we should find and discover through our limited acts of self-understanding that, in willing our own

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<sup>23</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 2.

<sup>24</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 5.

<sup>25</sup>*De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 15, ad 14; also cited by Donnelly, "Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation," *Theological Studies*: 68.

<sup>26</sup>Aquinas, Exposition, *St. John*, iii, lect. 3, as cited by Thomas Gilby, *Theological Texts* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 281, n. 503.

<sup>27</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 110, a. 1; Matthew L. Lamb, O.C.S.O., n. 14, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* by St. Thomas Aquinas (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, Inc., 1966), p. 272. See also Jeremy D. Wilkins, "Trinity, Mission, and Grace in Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Bernard Lonergan: The Reception and Transformation of a Tradition," (paper presented at the Third International Lonergan Workshop, Erbacher Hof, Mainz, Germany, January 2-7, 2007), p. 7, citing the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 110, a. 1 & ad 1.

goodness and virtue, we necessarily will the good of others while also willing the goodness of everything which we can possibly do or possibly use and employ).<sup>28</sup> No contradiction has to exist between willing the good of another and a willing which works with means or instruments. The goodness of an end is best served by the goodness of any means or instruments that are being used or which could be used. A connatural relation exists between them. The good of creatures exists within the willing of God's own goodness while, at the same time too, the good of creatures reflects the goodness or the willing of God's own goodness. Both goods are being willed: the good of all creatures by the being or the existence which God gives to them and God's own goodness which functions as the objective, purpose, end, goal, orientation, or justification of all of God's understanding and acting as we think about the order of God's divine willing and doing. God's own goodness, as a fundamental point of departure, sets the stage for any willing of goods to creatures which transcends the good of merely the factuality of their being or the factuality of their existence.

Third, since God's goodness does not exist as an exterior end toward which God moves or acts, God's goodness is to be understood as a complete type of activity which exists also as a species of unrestricted repose, complacency, or rest:<sup>29</sup> it loves or simply enjoys or delights in everything which God is, has, and possesses in the self-understanding and self-giveness or possession which exists as the proper, unrestricted object of God's unrestricted act of understanding.<sup>30</sup> As we have been suggesting and noting, God perfectly loves what He perfectly understands and knows.<sup>31</sup> In other words, in necessarily willing God's self in terms of God's own worth and goodness,<sup>32</sup> in paradoxically willing a goodness which God already fully enjoys and possesses,<sup>33</sup> God exists as a being who is necessarily and always supremely pleased and happy with Himself.<sup>34</sup> The happiness of God exists as an unrestricted kind of enjoyable thing (as is also the reach and the depth of God's self-understanding). God's intrinsic goodness is fully informed by a love and a solicitude which, in its selflessness and munificence,<sup>35</sup> is to be understood as both necessarily and appropriately the best first principle that we can use and have as an explanatory point of departure for our possibly understanding the being of all existing things which happen to exist within our currently existing world (in the context of our own time and place).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>*De Potentia*, q. 5, a. 4. From God's love for His creatures and since God perfectly fulfills all of our human desires, it accordingly follows that love for God exists as the greatest love of self which anyone can possibly have. The most selfish form of love which exists is paradoxically the most selfless form of love which exists. Cf. Lamb, *Commentary*, p. 291, n. 102, citing the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 26, a. 13, ad 3.

<sup>29</sup>See Frederick E. Crowe, "Complacency and Beatitude" in "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2000), pp. 109-112.

<sup>30</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 90, 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>31</sup>Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 189, citing the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 36, a. 2 in n. 83.

<sup>32</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3; a. 10.

<sup>33</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 26, a. 4.

<sup>34</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 90, 4; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4; 3a, q. 23, a. 1.

<sup>35</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 2, ad 1, quoting Pseudo-Dionysius. Cf. Torrell, *Aquinas*, Vol. 2, p. 91 & n. 26.

<sup>36</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 2; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 15, ad 14.

In other words thus: goodness leads to goodness. It radiates goodness or it fosters the goodness of all other existing things. The goodness can never exist as a self-regarding, acquisitive, internally directed, selfish kind of thing. And so, it can be said that, from the pleasure or the happiness that God takes in Himself in the unrestrictedness of His goodness and loving, God embraces all things or God gathers and directs all things toward the best or the greatest goodness which can possibly exist for them and which can only exist if we should refer to the being of God's own being: how, in God's transcendence, within God's own order, God exists in Himself.<sup>37</sup> To reiterate a bit: God's love, with respect to the condition or the manner of its existence, is never elicited or drawn; it cannot be caused or effected as some type of affective response or effect which could be somehow produced or triggered by something else that is other because of a goodness which could somehow already exist within this something else. As we have been noting and repeatedly saying, God's pure, benevolent, willing goodness is fully and simply united to His unrestricted understanding in a way which precludes any kind of incremental, step by step, temporal succession of things where, allegedly, it could then be said that God's divine willing exists as an operation which comes after the divine understanding or in the wake of God's divine understanding,<sup>38</sup> or where God's willing is something which could possibly change in terms of its willing and in that which it wants and wills.<sup>39</sup> Reiteratively again, God's willing, God's goodness, God's loving is God's act of being and existence which exists also as God's own essence, God's own intelligibility, or God's own nature.<sup>40</sup>

In the context of an understanding and wisdom that is forever constant and unchanging (lacking all incompleteness or potency), God's loving and willing is similarly and accordingly forever constant and invariant (even as this love acts in different ways, as it is found to act and to add in different, differentiated ways in order to bring better things into a condition of greater existence from the being

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<sup>37</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 1, ad 11.

<sup>38</sup>In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1; q. 1, a. 4; q. 18, a. 7, ad 2; q. 25, a. 2; q. 84, a. 2, in his analysis of the human psyche, Aquinas distinguishes between the order of intention and the order of execution. One respectively comes after the other in a temporal sequence which properly belongs to created things and created operations (which distinguishes between that which is first and that which is last) although this distinction cannot be ascribed to divine understanding and divine willing which exists outside of time and whose unity is such that each perfectly exists within the other. To the extent that an analogy does exist between our human knowing and willing and God's divine knowing and willing, we can speak of two perfections in God that refer to an unlimited knowing and an unlimited loving that exist within each other. Cf. Michael A. Hoonhout, *The Systematic Understanding of Divine Providence in the 'Summa Theologiae'* (Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 1998), p. 8, n. 16.

<sup>39</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 1; a. 5; a. 7. As Lonergan expresses it in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 365, citing the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 23-25; 3, 97 and the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 25, a. 3 & a. 5:

All things, even the least, are reducible in every detail to divine wisdom and will: to divine wisdom, in so far as they are fittingly ordered, both with each other and towards an end; to divine will, which as a matter of fact has chosen this ordering in preference to all other possible orders.

<sup>40</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 38, 4; 1, 74, 4.

and condition of other things that are somehow initially less good, less meaningful, or less intelligible).<sup>41</sup> Absence of change in God's understanding implies or it entails absence of change in God's willing; the completeness of the understanding, the completeness of the willing. God cannot will anything “but what His wisdom approves.”<sup>42</sup> In the conformity which accordingly exists between the divine understanding and the divine willing of God (“God’s will exists as God’s essence”),<sup>43</sup> a basis exists thus from which we can attend to the kind of understanding which exists within God’s divine willing or volition where, from possibly within the willing or as we move from the willing toward the understanding, we encounter or we can begin to think about the presence and the existence of that which exists as the understanding within the willing. If willing exists in understanding, understanding also exists in the willing. Since, in our human understanding of things, theoretical and practical reasoning both exist, operate, and function in each their own way (even as a complementary or positive connection exists between them), no reason can be adduced which precludes why some form of theoretical and practical understanding does not also exist within God even as we must speak about how God’s understanding exists in a way which must avoid attributing any kind of plurality in the one act of understanding that is self-constitutive and evidential of who, in fact, God is and what God happens to be. Again, real distinctions are not to be distinguished as we attend to the reality of that which exists as the good and as we more fully enjoy the good which exists whenever we come to know more about the being of other kinds of distinction.

Where God’s theoretical knowledge in God’s knowledge of self is essentially cognitive, and as it grasps a divine order or scheme of things which exists within the apprehensiveness of God's self-understanding, this same knowledge (when it is understood from the viewpoint of God’s implementable, practical understanding as this is also grounded in God's divine self-knowledge) – this same knowledge now exists as a knowledge that is properly formative and constitutive. The cognition is not so much cognitive as, analogically, it is constructive and constitutive. In understanding this difference as it exists not as a real distinction but as an intellectual or mental distinction, a number of points can be accordingly listed and made within an order of apprehensions which exists as a flowering or as an ordering of a number of different conceptual, mental distinctions which, together, expand our apprehensions of meaning in a way which can cause us to change in certain ways as we move into a new, larger world of things which presents itself to us as soon as we encounter apprehensions of meaning that are suggestive of unsuspected, unknown aspects of reality that, in some way, we have been ignoring, neglecting, or overlooking. We can be changed by our experiences of meaning, apart or before we can be changed by meanings which we would know to be true or which we know are true. Something which exists in its own way as a completely simple, single thing touches us more thoroughly or more deeply if we can take this reality and if, into it or in the light of it, we can bring it

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41*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 3. See also Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 126. In his *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History* (New York, N.Y./Ramsey, N.J./Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 91, Frederick E. Crowe cites a number of scriptural passages which speak about the long term, unchanging stability of God’s word. “The word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25). “It is impossible that the word of God should have proved false” (Romans 9:6). In Mark’s gospel (13:31), Jesus is quoted as saying that “heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” In the letter of James 1:17, it is said about God (“the Father of lights”) that, in Him, “there is no variation, no play of passing shadows.”

42*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 1, ad 2. See also *De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 6.

43*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 1, ad 3, my translation. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 19, 5: “the will of God is His very substance.”



into ourselves by introducing a manifold or an order of many different dimensions and variables which are reflective of who we are as human beings: how, in our complexity and in our duality, we happen to exist, on the one hand, as human beings and how we happen to exist, on the other hand, as conscious human subjects.<sup>44</sup> The objectivity of our being should point to the subjectivity of our being and, conversely, the subjectivity, to the objectivity the more fully that each is being grasped and understood.

Simply put and in a way which also points to a conclusion, if we should try to think about God according to how we can possibly picture or imagine God and how we can possibly then speak about God in ways that can encompass a large number of many different variables that we can find within ourselves (and possibly relate to) where each has its own specificity and concreteness, to the extent then that God is somehow proximate or close to us (or closer to us more now than at some other time in the context of our human story and history); or, in other words, to the extent that God has been experienced in a way which belongs to the historicalness of our human existence or which is to be identified with the run of our human history, not only can we understand how we can more easily speak about God in ways which work with a plethora of many different kinds of distinctions but, in addition too, we can begin to understand why our reflections and elaborations are assisted and encouraged if it should so happen to be the case that our religious faith and belief is grounded in stories and narratives which have come down to us in ways which have managed to speak about how, in various ways, God has come to us and has lived among us through forms of indwelling that have mysteriously and eventually led to a specific or to a concrete incarnation of God which has existed and which exists within the data and the course of our human history<sup>45</sup> (within parameters which belong to the order of the space and time that is distinctively constitutive of us in our human history).<sup>46</sup> The more easily we can begin to speak about

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<sup>44</sup>On the importance of meaning, see Viktor Frankl's reflections and reminiscences as these exist in his *Man's Search for Meaning* which probably best introduces us to how meaning functions as *the* fundamental principle or *the* fundamental determinant which we need in the context of our human lives if we are fully to live our humanity as human beings and not as some other kind of creature or thing. The salience of meaning refers to the demands and the urgency of a psychological requirement and condition which somehow needs to be met and satisfied.

<sup>45</sup>See Andrew Willard Jones, *The Two Cities: A History of Christian Politics* (Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2021), pp. 21-27, for an account which speaks about temples and the role of temples in our human history. A temple exists as a species of residence or home. In a temple, some kind of deity lives or dwells: a god or goddess can be said to be present in this or that place in the company of this or that specification of people, tribe, or community. But, unfortunately, some deities have existed as idols or as false gods. In the context of idol worship, no clear distinction or, more specifically, no real distinction has been distinguishing between a human being who has been deified and turned into a divine being who is to be worshipped and followed and, on the other hand, a divine being who has entered into our human condition and lot in order to commune with us and to beckon and call us into some kind of higher form of life through means which are grounded and related to a humanity which now also belongs to that which exists as a divinely existing, transcendent being. The humanity (the sacred humanity here) now points both to a nature or an intelligibility and also to acts, deeds, or behaviors which point to how our humanity can exist in some kind of better, more perfect, perfected state.

<sup>46</sup>See, for instance, Brant Pitre's *The Case for Jesus: The Biblical and Historical Evidence*

a sacred or a divine type of humanity which somehow belongs to God as God has been reaching out to us and living among us in His purported humanity, the more easily can we relate to God through an adumbrated philosophy or a conceptualized theology of God which has been able to humanize God in ways which have not detracted from the greatness or the splendor of God's transcendent being. Our analysis and our synthesis (as these two movements of thought interact with each other) attempt to appropriate or to bring something of God into ourselves in order that we can be more fully joined to God: to who God is and what God happens to be and what God does and acts. More easily can we relate to God in the wake of how God has been attempting to relate to us.

With respect then to the constructive aspects of God's knowledge and an order of distinctions that can spoken about: first, since, as noted, God cannot will or do anything “but what His wisdom approves,”<sup>47</sup> God's willing cannot be understood as if it exists as some kind of arbitrary thing. In the conformity which obtains between God's divine understanding and God's divine willing or doing, God's justice or God's righteousness, as the rightness, goodness, and propriety of His willing, is to be understood or it is revealed to us which points to how it exists as a normative, directive, exacting, demanding law and precept. As a norming, normative principle, it presents itself to us as the exigency or as the necessity of God's own intelligible law (where this law exists as God's eternal law) because of how, necessarily, it eternally and unchangingly exists as a true knowledge of all things and of the order which exists among and between many different things.<sup>48</sup> This law, as it exists as a kind of grasped, understood term or form, is always to be equated with God's eternal willing and being;<sup>49</sup> and so, as a union of knowing and willing, it seeks to achieve a divinely understood, universal, common good that all things are somehow to participate in and to share in.<sup>50</sup> Since this law exists within God as an inner, intrinsic, constitutive principle (resembling or suggesting how it exists as an indemonstrable first principle which is so basic or fundamental that it cannot be proved through arguments which would try to work from any kind of external, extrinsic, third person point of view) - God's eternal law exists as the same thing as God or it exists as the same thing as God's reason or as God's rationality<sup>51</sup> - from it, all else proceeds in a government of created things that expresses God's care and solicitude for the good which already exists in all the different things that God has created and for the good of things that have yet to be brought into their own condition of being and existence.<sup>52</sup> From the context of a larger, greater, wider

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for *Christ* (New York: Image, 2016) for arguments and documentation which point to the intelligibility of a divine form of human incarnation within the data of our human history which, if grasped and understood, should effect a change in our sense and consciousness of things that can add to the quality or to the possibility of the kind of commitment which can exist for us in our having some type of religious faith which would differ from our having some other kind of faith and knowledge.

47*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 1, ad 2. See also q. 21, a. 4. See also *De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 6 and *Summa Contra Gentiles* 2, 24, 1: “God produces His effects according to His wisdom.” The wisdom accounts for the rightness or propriety of God's government or God's authority (2, 24, 6) in a correlation which can be used to argue that legitimate authority only exists if it is grounded in wisdom.

48*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 2.

49Eugene F. Rodgers, Jr., “The Narrative of Natural Law in Aquinas's Commentary on Romans 1,” *Theological Studies* 59 (1998): 266.

50Joseph Collins, “God's Eternal Law,” *The Thomist* 23 no. 4 (October 1960): 503-504.

51*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 71, a. 6. See also 2a2ae, q. 17, a. 1.

52*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 6, i; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 10; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 4. In paraphrasing Aquinas's argument in the *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 6 on why God's

perspective of things (as we move from questions about being toward questions about the good of being as this refers to the goods of caring, healing, cleansing, saving, and redeeming): like it or not, some goods can only be achieved by movements and operations which transcend our individual acts and actions, or the specific causality which exists within or among different created things;<sup>53</sup> or, in other words, by operations which are specified by an order of foreknowledge, government, and predestination that is already fully known by God from within the depths of God's eternal law and understanding and which is also ruled or joined to an order of redemption that is also already fully known by God in the context of God's own understanding and knowledge. From our side or relative to ourselves, we refer to an order of many prior motions or movements (prior juxtapositions and connections) or, in other words, in one term, to a predisposing order of *premotions* which connect and direct all created beings toward ends and goals which exceed the power or the competence of the limited, created, individual kind of causality which belongs to the created kind of being which belongs to the reality of each of God's creatures. The assembling and the directing occurs both within the context of our present life and time and also with respect to a life which can be possibly given to us (if, here, we should refer to a kind of life which has yet to come to us and to emerge in a life that we are not able, ever, to give to ourselves or to others).<sup>54</sup>

With respect then to a question which asks about premissions (as initially a digression

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eternal law can be compared to the meaning and function of an indemonstrable first principle, in his "God's Eternal Law," *The Thomist* 23 no. 4 (October 1960): 499, Joseph Collins alleges that Aquinas argues as follows: "it is the function of providence...to draw conclusions from this principle, much as prudence in the individual draws conclusions from the first principles of morals for the guidance of his personal actions." The prudence of an individual, as an individual governs him or herself, is to be compared to the prudence which belongs to God in the divine exercise of God's providential government. Cf. Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 144. God acts providentially when God follows "the rules that He has laid down in his wisdom for the government of the world" (Collins, p. 501). In providentially governing and ruling others, God rules and governs Himself in exercising His divine providence. The eternal law, on the other hand (whose object, as cited by Collins, is to be identified with "the common good of society," p. 500) – this law already exists in God as something which is more fundamental. It governs everything else which is other than God. God does not need to be regulated and ordered by it since God does not need to be ordered toward anything from anything which would exist as a principle of order. To argue that "what is attributed to providence may also be attributed to the eternal law" is to argue in a way which must point to how the eternal law exists as a more fundamental thing. Cf. Collins, p. 514. Hence, if God's providence is something which exists in lieu of God's eternal law, if God's providence exists in order to implement the common good of all things that only God understands and knows, then, in this restricted sense, we can argue that "what is attributed to providence may also be attributed to the eternal law." We avoid saying that God's providence is to be identified with God's eternal law. As Collins cites Aquinas in the *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 6, p. 514, "the art of providence is fittingly attributed to the eternal law, just as every result of a demonstration is attributed to its indemonstrable principles." As an indemonstrable thing, the eternal law exists as a more basic kind of thing in a context which, for us, refers to the goodness or the aptness of a mental distinction that we must make. We know that, with respect to how God exists in the reality which exists as God alone, no real distinction can be drawn between God's eternal law and God's providence.

<sup>53</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 23, a. 1.

<sup>54</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 23, a. 3, ad 2.

and yet also as an ingression which adds to the comprehensiveness of our understanding when we think about the extensiveness of God's willing and government), with respect to the being of promotions and to understand what is meant by promotions and how an order of promotions exists within our world (which, as an idea, comes to us initially from Aristotle's physics and which, as an implementable idea, comes to us as an application which is taken from the theology of Aquinas)<sup>55</sup> in order to express and to communicate an insight, an apprehension, or an understanding of things that can now be applied to how God exists and works as a first, primary principle of order and direction with respect to the being of all things which exist within our world, let us first begin with the world of physical nature which we have before us and which we directly experience and know, a world which has been somehow created by God, God existing logically or conceptually first as our Creator and only then later as our Redeemer and Savior on the basis of how God first exists for us as our Maker and Creator. The order and good of our redemption (where redemption exists) supposes the order and good of our creation if it is to bring it toward an order or a degree of goodness and perfection that, otherwise, it would not have by how it happens to exist in its own right. Hence, what is this world of nature if we should attend and allude to the distinctive kind of movement which allegedly exists within nature? We first pose this question before we can ask about our own human world and the kind of movement which allegedly exists within this other world of existing things.

If we attend then to the world which exists about us and as we work with the kind of given that is given to us through our different acts of sense perception, we notice two different, contrasting, related things. First, within this outer world of nature (in its physics, chemistry, and biology), recurrent patterns or recurrent motions commonly present themselves to us. Macroscopically, we can advert to the recurring seasons of the calendar year. Each seems to follow from the other and everything begins to return to how things had existed before. More specifically, however, and as but one example that we can borrow and which we choose as a pregnant, telling example:<sup>56</sup> if paper is brought to a burning flame and if it is joined to a burning flame, it immediately catches fire. If we take paper and we bring it toward a burning flame, the closer it gets, the sooner will the paper burst into flame. The paper will always alight. If the paper is wet and soggy and if we put the paper close to a burning fire for a long enough time, the same thing will also eventually happen. Combustion will occur and, in this burning activity of combustion, a regularity or a constancy is to be noticed. The paper will always catch fire. The burning, as a motion or as a movement, intellectually exists both within our understanding and knowledge of it and also but differently, from without, as a distinct species of change which exists as a species of chemical transformation. The burning is explained by an oxidation which is said to occur. As a technical designation, oxidation

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<sup>55</sup>See Bernard Lonergan, "Causation in Time," *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 73-75. Lonergan notes that, in his Latin, Aquinas does not speak about "promotion" or "promotions" as a word or concept that he employs in order to speak, in fact, about the meaning of promotion that he is talking about. Cf. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 74. The meaning exists apart from the worded concept.

<sup>56</sup>*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 9, 4, 1818.

points to the nature or to the intelligibility of how burning exists as a specific type of motion or movement. The burning fire has its own peculiar nature or intelligibility (its proper nature or its proper intelligibility) while, on the other hand, the paper (which is about to be burned) has its own proper nature or proper intelligibility. A positive connection exists between them since the intelligibility of the paper points to a potency which belongs to it or which exists within its intelligibility: a potency which points to the possibilities and likelihood of oxidation if other, apt conditions are somehow also given and met. What are these apt conditions? What other thing is needed?

Hence, in addition to our perception of recurrent patterns or cycles, a second element (a second datum) also catches our attention and notice and we can refer to it as the fortuitousness of chance, the fortuitousness of chance variations: random occurrences or events which exist as examples and instances of chance. "Chance," as a technical designation, refers to some kind of incidental or statistical determination of things with respect to the possible or the probable being of this or that thing, cause, event, or conjunction. A frequency, to the degree that it can be determined and known, exists as a calculable, material, statistical determination. For some reason which is other and different (we have yet to grasp and to know it), at some given time and in a given place, a piece of paper will find that it is adjacent or near to a burning flame. A circumstantial nearness or a circumstantial proximity (an immediacy of proximity) exists as a condition which must somehow exist as a prior, fulfilling condition if a new but recurrent, proper motion is now also to exist. Why does a fortuitous event occur at this time and not at some other time? Why, now, in its closeness, is this paper catching fire? Hence, in referring to chance and to incidences of chance, we are distinguishing or we must distinguish between changes, movements, or motions which exist as chance or random variations and other changes which exist as regularities or as constants. In order to grow toward a greater understanding of things which exist within our world, necessarily, we need to look beyond the kind of change which only exists as a regularity or constant. We need to look for some other, further kind of variable or explanation (an additional explanation or reason) since for instance, as in the case of oxidation, with respect to the intelligibility or the nature of oxidation, no explanation is given or included within it which can account for why a given adjacency exists: why a given instantiation is now occurring or why a given instantiation could be occurring as a given "x" is approaching or is near to a given "y." Nothing in the "x" exists as a sufficient reason or explanation and, similarly, nothing *per se* in the "y." The reason lies elsewhere: in a way that we cannot too well understand if our focus, or if our intellectual object, is preferably focused on finding where regularities exist: determining how different things are combined with each other in ways which point to constants which exist as recurrent patterns or cycles that, perhaps, we are trying to understand for the first time. Our human acts of understanding, through their acts of abstraction, move or they try to distance themselves from irregularities and determinations which belong to chance in order to move toward a possible awareness of universals which would exist as constants that supposedly never alter or change.

If, however, there is to be some kind of further or fuller explanation of things as these things exist within our world of nature (however approximate, proleptic, heuristic, or initial could be our understanding of these same things); if a later, consequent motion is

to exist as an instantiated, proper motion (for instance here, the kind of motion which exists as the change of oxidation); if two or more things are to come together so that a new, proper motion can begin to arise and exist in a new way, the explanation must be something which exists as a different kind of “x” where, here, we are referring to a species or an instance of prior motion or prior movement; hence, a kind of motion which we must speak about when, with Aristotle, we speak about pre-motions and the being of pre-motions. Every proper motion, in its realization or in its actualization, is explained or it requires a pre-motion of some kind or different kinds of pre-motion though we may not know what exactly are these different pre-motions and how they all act together in concert in any given, particular case or instance.

On the basis thus of how prior, conditioning motions exist as pre-motions and given the necessity of these conditioning pre-motions because of how, in fact, our world happens to exist and function (like it or not), on the basis then of consequent, later developments within the order of our thought, understanding, and science, we now often speak about how measurable, statistical correlations exist within our naturally existing physical, chemical, biological world: correlations which exist not as fixed, determinate natures or patterns but as frequencies (having their own distinct kind of reality in having their own distinct kind of significance). Our physical, chemical, biological world or, in other words, our naturally existing world consists of regularities or of patterns which are all linked to each other through chance determinations of one kind or another (where some of these determinations exist with perhaps high degrees of probability and others, with low degrees of probability): hence, in other words, through an ordering of prior, conditioning motions or movements which exist in their own right as transcendent realities, as a transcendent, higher order of operative pre-motions (if we should continue to use the conceptuality which has come down to us from the physics of Aristotle). Motions (where these exist as proper motions) are conditioned by motions which exist as pre-motions. No pre-motions, no motion. Without operative pre-motions of some kind, no proper motions will exist or emerge within our world in any given context (whether we refer to physical, chemical, or biological world, or a world that is constituted by our human decisions and actions). Pre-motions enjoy a primacy which trumps the kind of primacy which had been belonging to the kind of reality which belongs to an order of proper motions.

If we should now move into our human world and if we import or apply these two notions of regularity and chance, we find that, here too, they both obviously exist. Pre-motions exist in conjunction with proper motions and they condition or they make for the being of our proper human motions. Chance encounters, for instance, can lead to husbands meeting their future spouses and wives, their spouses. While a certain amount of personal control is possible with respect to how we can each relate to each other, at the same time however, we notice that total control is something which constantly eludes us and escapes us. Many incredible things that are beyond our control can unexpectedly happen because of how, for unknown reasons, chance exists as an irreducible type of determination and variable.<sup>57</sup> In terms of regularities and patterns,

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<sup>57</sup>See how Christopher Dawson speaks about the imponderables of chance in his paper, “The Outlook for Christian Culture,” *Christianity and European Culture: Selections from the Work of*

yes, in our lives, we have birth, life, reproduction, death, and an ongoing emergence of new generations. Repetitive cycles exist and they constantly recur. They need to exist if ordered kinds of growth are to follow and to exist. Because we exist as human beings, we can behave and we do behave in many predictable ways that others will notice and which we can notice about ourselves. Each of us is free (to some extent) if we can each fully live out our individual humanity where this humanity refers to the reason, the goodness, or to the intelligibility of our communicated, inherited, human nature.

But, on the other hand however, our human freedom can also grow, prosper, and deepen if, for some strange reason, we find that we are meeting and encountering persons who we have not planned to meet and know (while either doing this or that activity) and that, between us and among us, we find that we are entering into new associations and friendships and, in various ways, engaging in new commitments and agreements. Most especially does our freedom grow and expand if our lives can become more focused and purposive; if, to repeat a refrain, they can become richer or more meaningful: if we can persevere and live by our choices and commitments, if we can know that, ultimately, we do not exist as lonely, isolated, solitary human subjects (since, in fact, we all have responsibilities and tasks to meet and do; we are joined to other persons though we might not know who some of these persons could be or who they might be). No inherent or intrinsic opposition necessarily exists between what problems, challenges, and trials could possibly come our way and how, through our acceptance and endurance of pains and suffering, new loves, appreciations, and attachments can begin to emerge for us which, before, we had not thought possible, feasible, or even probable (through specifications and experiences of love which can exist in a very personal way through our sacrifices of self and which are most noble and good if they can exist in us through our willing sacrifices of self and person).

The existence of chance accordingly points to how, for some reason, God has created our world in a way which is not to be compared to the workings of some kind of mechanical device, machine, or robot. Variety and change exist as some kind of more fundamental thing and this openness, variety, and change cannot be identified entirely in terms of chaos if, readily or eventually, they combine with recurrent regularities which, as joined with incidences of variety and chance, make for a world that can either grow, expand, and develop or, on the other hand, decline, contract, fission, and dissolve. An ascending, expanding order of newly emergent patterns can exist in a way which points to new, varying degrees of stability and endurance. Some things will last for a very long time, or they should last for a long time, and, at the same time too, we cannot know if or when something will emerge in a way which will change everything about us in the course of our human lives. In the context of our individual, personal stories and also within the gamut of our human history in general, so often and indeed always we are

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*Christopher Dawson*, ed. Gerald J. Russello (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), p. 8, where, as Dawson quotes from Edmund Burke, “a common soldier, a child, a girl at the door of an inn have changed the face of the future and almost of Nature” since, as Dawson affirms and argues: in our living “there always remains an irreducible element of mystery” in how our world exists and how, despite our desires, plans, and expectations, it carries on and proceeds. Extraneous, unexpected events can often happen in unforeseen, unexpected ways.

finding that we have been intending purposes and goals which are soon upended and superseded: they have been challenged, supplanted, and, in some way, put to the side. New conditions have unexpectedly arisen and, necessarily, they have led to new determinations and realizations and, at times, to disappointments and distortions that we have not been desiring, wanting, or truly intending.

Hence, in our human history, in our historicity, as consciously active subjects and agents, we find that we cannot pretend to a lordship or to a stewardship of history that is truly total or absolute: a lordship that we would probably prefer to have and to exercise if we could but have it but which, in fact, we can never have or ever exercise. Our limitations are too obvious to us. To try and give an example that we can take from a history of philosophical reflection in the context of western European thought, we find, among philosophers in general, that each has something perceptive and intelligent to say to us. Each has something to offer to us: some understanding about ourselves and the being of other things, understandings that we can each grasp and appreciate and perhaps begin to turn toward some good, possible use. But, the pluralism at the same time points to our human limitations and to failures which exist within our understanding of different things. As much as we might and must try and think about the possibility and the reality of many different things and how they all exist together, and as often as we must and should raise questions and come to new understandings about this or that different thing and how, possibly, it could relate to something else, the experience of our inquiry and understanding points to collisions and conflicts although, also, to chance meetings and encounters which can create or lead to the emergence of a new dialectic which begins to exist as a new species or instance of conditioning promotion (a promotion which exists in fact as a new active, fertile potency) if, now, something better or if something proper is to occur in a way that escapes our prior, deliberate, conscious type of control. In words that we can quote in support of our thesis here: no one philosophy can “include the philosophies of Aristotle and Averroes, of Plato, Plotinus, and Avicenna, of Augustine, Boethius, and others” although, oddly enough, they “can be summoned to appear together.”<sup>58</sup> They can all be confronted and each can be asked “to say its last word, its ultimate truth.” The pluralism emerges as a quandary and problem for us and yet too as a provocation and stimulus, as a new restive, active potency, that can become increasingly open and possibly more receptive toward apprehending and receiving new determinations of meaning which can belong to a different order of significance and meaning: meanings that can possibly unite different philosophic truths or different realities in a way that can only happen if we should move into or be open to some kind of higher order of thinking and reason which would exist for us as a transcendent order of meaning and being. It would exist as more than the being of any given philosophy (or any given unit) when, now, we begin to ask questions about things that cannot be known through any of our direct acts of understanding but, instead, through acts of understanding which would exist as suggestive or as indirect acts of understanding.

If we should then try to move into this higher order of meaning and significance (and as

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<sup>58</sup>Etienne Gilson, *The Philosopher and Theology*, trans. Cécile Gilson (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 103.



an example that we can propose and postulate), the promotions which exist in general within our world exist in two different ways if our point of departure should initially be the first principle who exists as God as our Creator and Maker and, then later, if our point of departure should be God as our Savior and Redeemer. Within the larger context or the higher viewpoint which initially exists as the coordinating order of meaning which exists as natural theology (apart, initially, from the input and data of the kind of religious truth and phenomena which belongs to the acceptance and reception of revelation), promotions exist as a way for how we can speak about a kind of governing and coordinating activity which already and solely belongs to the effectuality of God's knowing and willing in a knowing and willing which exists as the administration of God's care and providence. In general, within the world which exists about us and within the kind of world which exists as our human world, God works through the kind of mediation which exists if we should refer to how, mysteriously, different things do come together without any kind of plan or intention that we can devise and administer with complete confidence in how we can manage and control many different things. God (or, in other words, an unfathomable higher, divine, transcendent power which exists in its own way as a transcendent immediacy of power) – this power mysteriously brings things together in ways for which no other explanation exists (if we should want to think about some kind of final or ultimate kind of explanation) although, admittedly, as we try to refer to how God exists as a known unknown, we can refer to how God exists as an unrestricted act of understanding, willing, and doing (although, again, this unrestrictedness is something which exists in a way that we can never adequately grasp or understand through any of our direct acts of understanding). Yes, some kind of reason does exist if we should want to believe that an intimate connection exists between the being of things and the rationality or the intelligibility of things. However, this higher rationality (as a transcendent specification of rationality) can never exist as the term of any of our own acts of understanding which must always exist as limited determinations if we should refer to how our human acts of understanding exist (how they emerge). An understood object is never to be identified with the obviousness of a brute fact, a brute fact that is simply experienced and given to us (apart from our desiring or our wanting of it) since, instead, we must refer to how an understood object exists as an elicited, desired object. Act goes with object and object, with act where, here, an inner form or a structure which exists within things *as an object* can only be grasped and understood if, as our point of departure, we can somehow possibly imagine or picture this object through any inquires which we could be asking and making. What inevitably we cannot first picture or imagine, we cannot then grasp or understand it as an understood. Apt images, or images which exist as phantasms, only exist in their goodness and reality if they can somehow trigger a specific act of understanding that is being desired and not some other act of understanding. An inhering, abiding form that somehow exists within things if something exists as a certain type of thing. Hence, it exists with a regularity or with a form of recurrence which always belongs to given types: whenever a given thing or event is encountered in all possible instances of it. Absent the inner structure, the inner form, the inner intelligibility, absent the reality, the being, or the givenness of a particular thing. Absent too the possibility of a given thing's existence.

However, the absence of constancy and regularity in chance incidences of one kind or

another explains why chance can only be understood in an adequate understanding of it if indeed, as possibly and potentially an intelligible thing, it exists not as the term or as the understood of an incarnate human act of understanding but, instead, as the term or as the understood of an unimaginable, unrestricted, disincarnate act of understanding. According to the principle of intelligibility which points to the reasonableness of our acts of inquiry, nothing exists or happens within our world without its having some kind of meaning as much as we might not know what this meaning is or what it could be. The unsatisfied anticipation of meaning which exists within the order of our human inquiry points to how this anticipation exists as some kind of primitive belief or as some kind of basic, fundamental assumption. Is it perhaps a species of indemonstrable that we cannot prove from any kind of external point of view, or does it exist as an act of faith which, performatively, we must always suppose and make? To block or to try to impede our desires for increases in our understanding, our comprehensions, our attachments, and our commitments - these immediately involve or they would have to suppose that we would be acting against ourselves (acting against the intelligibility and the order of our own humanity) and so, if we are to experience the fullness of our human condition, our thirst for understanding exists within us as but, subordinately, another species or instance of operative premotion if new, proper motions are ever to emerge and to exist within us as new actuations that are entirely proper to the life and the being of our human spirit. Proper motions also exist as premotions if we notice that, as occurrent givens, they create conditions that can add to the probability of some other events happening.

In moving then from God as our Creator to God as our Redeemer, our point of departure (within the ordering of understanding which exists as natural theology) is initially how God has created us as human beings and how, by mysteriously bringing different persons and events together, God has been not only supporting and assisting our human freedom but, at the same time also, by acting through our freedom, God has been enhancing our freedom: adding to it in some way. At one and the same time, we are all individually free to some extent (each of us initially) and yet, through expansions and growth in the exercise of our human freedom, something more intelligible or something more intelligent can possibly exist for us as, through us and the agency of other causes, God accomplishes ends and purposes which transcend the effectuality of our intellectual causality as this is joined to the effectuality of our affective, passionate causality (our reason and will). Wondrously, our freedom can keep growing and, by means of it, the wisdom and power of God can become more apparent and manifest to us. No necessary or essential conflict exists between the givenness of our human freedom and the freedom that alone belongs to God as both a conclusion that we can come to and yet as a premiss that we can work from which contextualizes how we can think about God as also our Redeemer and Savior and how this redemption best works for us (how it can be then best appreciated and understood) if our initial point of departure is enhanced: if, now, we should turn to how, more fully or more concretely, God has come to us as this reality is given to us through teachings and a way of life that is grounded in a radical form of communication which exists most fully as a divine form of incarnation. God enters our human world if we should refer to the uniqueness of Christ's incarnation and if we should refer to a radical form of divine solidarity and participation which exists as a consequence as God incarnate enters into our human condition and as God assumes

our human nature in a way which introduces both a new form of preemption and a new act of preemption which is specifically salvific: existing now within the swirl and the events of our human world and history. A new context now exists for us and it reveals new purposes, ends, and means that can bring persons and events together in new, unexpected ways because of preemption or preoperative divine actions and causes that are joined to our human actions and causes in a way which effects a change in the likely occurrence or the probability of other, different things possibly happening to us within the context of a changed world. An order of redemption emerges from within a prior order of created, moving things and, through developments and enlargements in our human freedom that Christ's coming nourishes and assists, our redemption can be said to be caused by God through ways and means which transcend how our world has been existing if we limit our focus to the conjugates and properties which distinctively belong to all the various determinations which have been existing for us within this or that specification of space and time.

As God's law or as God's order of preemptions accordingly merges and exists as God's administration and government of things (even if, in God, the two are essentially one and not two: the law, the order, the government, the dispositions), the result is a species of government which is to be understood as God's effective, divine foresight, or, in other words, as God's ordaining divine foreknowledge or, more simply, as the creative workings of God's divine providence.<sup>59</sup> God's government is always guided or it is to be understood if we should refer to the rational requirements of God's eternal law in a manner which displays a form of fundamental unity which exists between the two (the government and the law) although in a manner which also shows how, logically, from our perspective, one immediately follows and depends upon the other; the government, the law.<sup>60</sup> Nothing accordingly escapes this form of government which is known and which exists as God's all embracing, informed, providential administration of all existing things even as we encounter events or incidents which seem to occur (from our viewpoint and perspective) in a purely coincidental or random fashion.<sup>61</sup> Simply put, most succinctly: "by one simple act, God administers both great and little things."<sup>62</sup> Changes are effected in

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<sup>59</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 3. While God's providence includes the foreknowledge which exists in predestination, it also includes the foreknowledge which exists in God's reprobation whereby God allows created rational beings to misuse the freedom which He has given them through the moral evil which they effect through their acts of sin. Please note, however, that, in moving to understand how, in Aquinas, God's government functions within the created order of things to realize divine objectives, to relate and think many things together, a very precise understanding is needed of certain notions that are used by Aquinas as his set of basic heuristic tools. As Lonergan summarizes the matter in his *Grace and Freedom*, p. 66, very clear ideas are needed about "the nature of operation, preemption, application, the certitude of providence, universal instrumentality, and the analogy of operation." Metaphysical realities need to be known if theological realities are to be known in a way which can know about the appropriateness of distinctions in a way which avoids confusions that can occur unless certain distinctions are properly made.

<sup>60</sup>Collins, "God's Eternal Law," p. 504.

<sup>61</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 1, 3; 3, 64, 1-13; 3, 94, 3; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14, 15-16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2 & ad 1; q. 103, a. 5 & ad 1; q. 103, a. 7, ad 2; q. 105, a. 5; q. 116, a. 1; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 137.

<sup>62</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 112, a. 4, ad 1, my translation.

all the things that God governs (whether great or small).<sup>63</sup> God's providence determines not only what effects will come about but also how they will arise and come about,<sup>64</sup> albeit, through the ordering and the execution of an unrestricted, universal, providential good of order which, from our perspective, mysteriously combines contingent and necessary causes in the relations which can possibly exist between them, employing these two kinds of causes together in ways that escape our grasping and comprehension, given the kind of restricted competence and adequacy which belongs to us in our direct acts of human understanding.<sup>65</sup>

God's eternal law, which is to be identified with God's nature or essence as its own freestanding, originating act of being or existence,<sup>66</sup> while, on the one hand, it orders all things toward an ultimate end which is to be identified with God's own being,<sup>67</sup> or God's own goodness<sup>68</sup> (since nothing else is more real, nothing more ultimate, nor is anything more good than God as He exists in Himself), on the other hand however, from our human perspective, this eternal law presents itself to us as a species of prudence or as a species of practical wisdom whose manifestation in the ordering of lower to higher causes, or of parts to greater wholes, is to be identified with the specific type of causality which belongs to the mediated, mediating, coordinating order of promotions which belong to the working of God's providential government which, in turn, exists as the effecting and the communication of God's

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63*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 5, ad 2.

64*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 83, a. 2. As Aquinas expresses this point, respectively, in the *Super Librum Dionysii De divinis nominibus*, Book 10, Lecture 1 and in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a., q. 87, a. 4 (as cited and quoted by Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary [New York: Fordham University Press, 2000], p. 150, n. 21):

For the law of God is the natural inclination fixed in each creature [*cuilibet creaturae infixae*] for the purpose of each creature's doing what is suitable for it in accordance with its nature [*id quod convenit ei secundum naturam*]; and therefore, just as all things are held by the divine will, [*desiderio divino*], so are they held by His laws....and because of this it is said of the divine wisdom [see *Sapientia*, 8], that it gently sets all in order [*suaviter omnia disponit*].

Now the inclination of each thing is in each thing according to the mode of the thing [*per modum eius*]. And so the natural inclination is in a natural thing in a natural way [*naturaliter in re naturali*]; and the inclination that is the sensitive appetite is in a sentient creature in a sensitive way [*sensibiliter in sentiente*]; and in the same way, an intelligent inclination, which is the act of the will, exists in an intellectual creature in an intelligible way [*intelligibiliter in intelligente*] as in its principal and proper subject.

65*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 4.

66*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 1, ad 3; q. 93, a. 4. Simply put, God's eternal law is a synonym for God himself. Cf. Lamb, *Commentary*, p. 297, n. 124.

67*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 115, 2.

68*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 1; cf. q. 103, a. 2; *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 9, i.

care and concern as this exists with respect to how all existing things are joined to each other.<sup>69</sup> Again, simply put: “divine government is the ongoing realization of the relation creation has to God its end.”<sup>70</sup> If, as creatures, we come from something that is more intelligible, meaningful, and rational than how we ourselves happen to exist (relative to effects, causes possess more in terms of their reality and goodness), then any growth in our experience of meaning, reason, and being must be both caused and oriented, or it must move toward an order of meaning, reason, and being which is somehow greater than ourselves given how, in us, we find that so many restrictions and limitations exist. Our own good exists as a somewhat limited thing and we sense and find that, yes, in light of our desires and expectations, the good that we have exists as too limited and restricted a thing. We are not entirely happy with it as we find that we are prone to acts of sensing, feeling, or anticipating that, in some mysterious way, are pointing to some kind of greater good or some kind of greater goodness which exists though we are bereft of it (somehow missing out on it),<sup>71</sup> though it is something which we feel that we should ought to have.

In the combination then with many different things, every part or element in our world is always ordered to other parts or elements in the forming and constitution of a universal order or a universal ordination of means and ends which is only fully known and created by God,<sup>72</sup> and which is fully directed only toward God as their final purpose or end,<sup>73</sup> and which occurs according to how certain parts help and assist other parts<sup>74</sup> (according also, however, to an inner nature or law which also properly belongs to each unit or part and which specifies how each unit or part should properly behave in the activities that properly belong to it).<sup>75</sup> Outside this order and combination, nothing other exists.<sup>76</sup> Nothing else exists. There is no other order to affirm and think about and so nothing other which could be possibly ordered or governed. The one universal order of things exists in an entirely unique, final, unrepeatable way if, as an indemonstrable first principle (among other indemonstrable first principles), we accede to the belief and the fact that nothing is not in some way related to something else.

The eternal law, as a species of prudence which is peculiar and unique to God, accordingly presents itself to us as an invariant “dictate of the practical reason,”<sup>77</sup> albeit, as a practical reason which belongs

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<sup>69</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 1; a. 3. See also Michael A. Hoonhout, “Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator: The Exemplarity of Thomas Aquinas,” *Heythrop Journal: A Quarterly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 43 no. 1 (January 2002): 5, n. 15.

<sup>70</sup>Hoonhout, “Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator,” p. 9.

<sup>71</sup>See John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Newman for Everyone 101 Questions Answered Imaginatively by Newman*, “Knowing God in This Life: Can a child of five or six years old, when reason is at length fully awake, know there is a God?,” ed. Jules M. Brady (New York: Alba House, 1996), pp. 1-2.

<sup>72</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5, ad 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 1.

<sup>73</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 44, a. 4.

<sup>74</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 42, 7.

<sup>75</sup>Hoonhout, “Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator,” p. 10. As Hoonhout argues, “providence advances through the ordered activity of creatures, not by constant divine interventions.” No special divine intervention is required for each and every act of a given creature. Cf. n. 30.

<sup>76</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 6.

<sup>77</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 1. See also 1a, q. 22, a. 1; a. 2; 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 5.

to God or which is to be identified with God. Hence, it exists as a command, precept, or *imperium*,<sup>78</sup> from which proceeds the actuality of God's government as this government works to realize a divinely conceived universal order and overall general scheme of things. As the simple effect of a simple act of divine understanding, and so as the radiated, emanated, proceeding term of an unrestricted act of understanding which is being eternally communicated and present if we should now distinguish it and so refer to it, in conceptual terms, as the reality of God's Word (or as the reality of God's Divine Word),<sup>79</sup> this eternal law which expresses the meaning of this universal order accordingly always fully exists inwardly in God through a divine understanding and knowing of God's divine self in God's own act of self-understanding which grasps and understands all things not in terms *per se* of any contingent past, present, or future but in terms of an eternally existing "now," or an eternally existing "present," or an eternally existing form of self-giveness. It exists outside and beyond considerations of time and space and it grasps all things in a way which transcends the temporality of any notions and beliefs which would want to think about things in terms of some kind of past, present, and future.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 10. As Michael Hoonhout argues in his "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 9 & n. 27, and as is strongly suggested by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 1 and in q. 93, the best analogy which helps us to understand the kind of understanding which is operative in God as the source of eternal law is the virtuous practical prudence of human governors and legislators who must "make good, effective laws which order well all the citizens to the common good of the society." It is always possible to create bad laws which can be well intended but which ignore other requirements and conditions which must be respected if a good ordering is to be created in a way which creates a viable human society.

<sup>79</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 1, ad 2. In his "God's Eternal Law," p. 526, Collins distinguishes between active and passive promulgation in order to talk about how it is possible to talk about the promulgation or the communication of God's eternal law. Passive promulgation is not possible since nothing which is created and which is contingent is able to receive any kind of law in any kind of eternal way. The contingency excludes the reception. But, on the contrary, we can speak about active promulgation on God's part since, in such a context, God functions as a lawgiver: as an eternal subject who promulgates or communicates His eternal law as an inner act (which is interior to God). The term of this act of promulgation is a Divine Word which proceeds from God's self-understanding in a single, unrestricted act that, in turn, immediately suggests why the proceeding of God the Son from God the Father in the Trinity can be regarded as a theological analogy for understanding the same proceeding as this occurs and exists within the inner life of God when, in other words or in philosophic terms, God's eternal law as both idea and conceptualized word is understood to exist as the term of God's self-understanding.

<sup>80</sup>*In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, cited by Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 106, n. 69. Cf. *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 13, 7-8; 1, 14, 19-20 & 22; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 13. As Lonergan explains in *Grace and Freedom* (p. 107) why, for Aquinas, God's foreknowledge of things does not impose any absolute necessity or determination in what happens in the run of future events (that future events should happen in certain ways), he notes that, for Aquinas, while the equation of intellect and reality with respect to a certain knowledge of future things does impose a strict necessity if one has a sure and certain knowledge of future events ("if the future is known with certainty, then necessarily it must come to be"), this type of knowledge which excludes any real contingency or freedom in the happening of future events does not exist in the knowledge which God has of future contingent events since, as Lonergan argues, citing from one of Aquinas's texts in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (*In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1), "St. Thomas denies that God knows events *as future*." My italics. "Nothing is future

God knows all things from within a transcendent, eternal perspective as God relates to Himself within this transcendent type of context and not from within a circumstantial, contingent type of perspective and context which would have to assume that God's knowledge of contingent things is influenced in some way by the inconstant being of contingently existing things, or that it comes from the being of contingent things *as these things exist within time* and not from God's knowledge of Himself as God already fully and eternally exists and as God fully and eternally knows Himself.<sup>81</sup> To know anything within a condition of time is only to know it in the wake of its emergence and existence. First it must exist if it is then to be given to us and known at all (if it is to be fully known in its individuality and its concreteness) since, otherwise, how can something be known if its lack of being points to its absence and nothingness and so to the fact that there is nothing to be understood and known? But, because God knows things apart from their temporality or apart from their individual instantiation (whether they, in fact, exist or do not exist), at no time does God have to begin to understand anything which, in some way, needs to be known.

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to God" (quoting J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995], p. 265). Because God, as the creator of time, exists outside of time, God's knowing (and doing) also exists outside of time, and so this knowing does not know things within time in terms of how they will be in a future which, as future, is to be distinguished from any present or past. In other words, the "now" of God's knowing and doing refers to an "eternal now" or an "eternal present." It is a "now" which is not the "now" or "present" of a mutable being and it therefore transcends any experiences of time which can distinguish past, present, and future. The manner of God's transcendent knowing reveals its infinity where what is future for us in our knowing is not future for God to whom everything is known as if it were fully and entirely present. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 12; *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 171, a. 6, ad 1; 4, p. 1889; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, pp. 281-283. Hence, God's knowledge of an "eternal now" does not exclude the contingency of future events which are not known within time as future. Quoting Lonergan's syllogistic argument where, in the form of its reasoning, the truth of a conclusion entirely relies on the truth of its premiss or condition (p. 107):

...when you say, 'If God knows this, this must be,' the 'this' of the apodosis must be taken in the same sense as the 'this' of the protasis. But the 'this' of the protasis is present; therefore the 'this' of the apodosis is present; it follows that 'this must be' is not absolute but hypothetical necessity...

With respect then to the question of time, as one attends to the conditions that are postulated in speaking about God's knowledge and the contingency of events as they occur within time, and as one adverts to the difference between time and eternity, in the conjunction that is postulated which relates God's knowing with the accomplishment of God's will in terms of what must be, no present is joined to a future nor is a past joined to a present or to a future. No transition is postulated that moves toward something in the future from something either in the past or present. Neither clause directly refers to an actually existing event within time and, because this is so, the accomplishment or the finality of God's knowing and doing is a causality which is achieved in an eternal or transcendent manner. Events within time and history are used as instruments but in a way which transcends temporal categories.

<sup>81</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 34, a. 3, ad 3.

However, in the ordering which follows or which comes from God's providential government of things where "God governs creation through ordering all creatures to their good,"<sup>82</sup> as this ordering moves into created conditions of space and time, this eternal law is mediated to us and to the world through operations which can be said to occur in two different ways (on the basis of a distinction which initially comes to us from the analysis and teaching of St. Augustine about how, in fact, God acts in relating to us in our moral lives as human beings and subjects).<sup>83</sup> God first acts immediately or *operatively*, and then, in the wake of being or creation, derivatively, conjointly, or *cooperatively*. Initially, operatively, a created nature or a created intelligibility which is other than God comes from God as an intelligent, intelligible effect since God exists as their primary source and point of origin (God existing as an unrestricted act of understanding). These natures or intelligibilities *as possibilities* can be said to be not

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<sup>82</sup>Stephen J. Pope, *Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), p. 35, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

<sup>83</sup>For origins or roots that can allow us to speak about how God acts operatively and yet also cooperatively, see how, reflectively, St. Augustine distinguishes between two kinds of grace in the context of his theology of grace in his work, *On Grace and Free Will* [*De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*], 17. The most important type of grace, which exists as a fundamental species of premotion, refers to how grace exists as initiating, operative grace [as *gratia operans*]. In the context of our human moral life, for reasons that are best known only by God, God takes the initiative. God moves into us and within us to replace, say, a heart of stone with a heart of flesh. Something beautiful happens inside us (it could be an act of understanding or an act of forgiveness) apart from our consciously seeking or wanting anything from God (although, always, we can possibly reject that which God is now giving to us or seeking to change from within us). Hence, if we are to *respond* in a positive way in a good act of willing or a good act of assenting understanding, we need God's divine help which can be conceptualized in a way which refers to God's prevenient, cooperative grace [as *gratia cooperans*]. In its own way (or relatively), this grace exists as also a species of premotion (as prevenient grace [as *gratia praeveniens*]) although as a form of prevenient grace which differs from the more radical kind of prevenient grace which belongs to the initiative and the premotion of God's operative grace. In cooperative grace, God assists us in our acts of willing to help us make good, intelligent acts of willing where, in fact, we only act entirely on our own (independently) if, in our willing, we choose to do evil and to engage in evil actions of one kind or another. On the basis then of this distinction between operative and cooperative grace, and as we apply it in a more general fashion to the larger kind of order which exists between ourselves and God (where God exists as both our Maker and our Redeemer), we can distinguish between how God acts in a way which can create many different kinds of capacities in our world which can then exist as an ordering of active and passive potencies, and how also God can then work with these same capacities in ways that can add to them in ways that make for additional realizations which would otherwise not exist or emerge in any kind of way. An act of willing which exists as a species of arbitrary choice can change and become an act of willing which exists as a species of wise and thoughtful choice. An initial kind of freedom which belongs to all of us can become a fuller or a richer, more true kind of freedom which can also exist for us if we can be open and receptive: open to whatever helps and gifts could be coming to us from God in ways that we have not been anticipating or expecting.

For an initial introduction on how and why certain distinctions began to emerge in how, as Christians, we are to think about how God relates to us in ways which refer to the abundance of grace and a multitude of effects which are to be associated with a multiplicity which can be said to belong to the order of God's divine grace, see Stebbins's *Divine Initiative*, pp. 127-128. The more sophisticated



created within conditions which refer to determinations of time and space since, within the unrestricted act of understanding which exists as God, all things in their unrestrictedness are immediately understood: hence, all things which could possibly be in terms of their meaning, their form, or their intelligibility. However, as we move from the unrestricted order of possibility toward the delimited or the restricted order of being or actuality, that which exists as the principle of form or intelligibility can be placed and it is sometimes creatively placed within the being or the existence of a created, existing thing by God who also exists as an unrestricted, imparting act of existence and being. The givenness and the rationality of an instantiated, created nature highlights or it points toward a set of characteristic activities which should naturally and spontaneously follow if, in fact, this nature exists as the form or as the intelligibility of a concretely existing thing and if, also, apt conditions have also been met and fulfilled in some way since nothing exists in a vacuum as if exists as solely or entirely an individually existing thing (without the need or the good of being related and joined to the being of other things that can exercise some kind of influence, temper, or effect).<sup>84</sup> The goodness of individuality and the goodness of the flourishing of any individually existing thing supposes the goodness of an encouraging, facilitating, effective context: coordinations, relations, and unions among persons and things which make for the possibility of happy individuals, this coordination among persons and things existing as some kind of formative community or society and not as some kind of collection or conglomeration of individuals who find that they happen to belong to a particular group. A substantive notion of community is to be distinguished from a nominalist notion of community.

Then, *cooperatively*,<sup>85</sup> from rational agents (from human beings and angels), a positive response is at times elicited from them or it can be elicited from them in terms of thought, word, and deeds since, as secondary instrumental causes or as secondary subjects (who, as effects, reflect something of their cause and point of origin), they have been given and they possess a degree of rational awareness (a degree of rational consciousness) which is able to acknowledge and to know that, amid so many different things which exist in our world, amid all the possible changes and options which exist, some kind of mysterious, external, internal, eternal, connecting law exists (even if this law is not fully understood and known and even if it is not conceptualized in a way which can so easily point to how it exists as an eternally existing law which exists within a form or an apprehension of divine consciousness, or which comes from God, or which, in fact, exists as God).<sup>86</sup> In some way however (through inchoate means), this law (or this order) is attracting or it is eliciting our human attention and interest and, from us possibly, some kind of reasonable, good response. While admittedly, by God's knowing or through God's knowing as a cognitive act, God immediately relates Himself to everything that He understands, knows, and creates and so, too, to an ordering form which encompasses and brings all things into a relation that is suited to achieve the ultimate and proper goal of each thing; on the other hand however, by God's doing or through God's administrative, providential government of different things, God's knowing concretizes or it effects this ordering through a combining and an ordering of many particulars that belong to the kind of ordering which is brought to exist within the coordinates of

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or the more nuanced is our understanding of human things, the more sophisticated and nuanced will be our understanding of divine things. The different kinds of help that we need from God point to the different kinds of help that we receive from God.

<sup>84</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>85</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5.

<sup>86</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, aa. 5- 6. In Aquinas's *De Substantiis separatis*, c. 14, 79, as quoted by Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 79, it is said that "the angels are the universal executors of divine providence."

space and time through a mediated use of everything which God has made and created in a way which respects how and why different things exist in the way that they happen to exist.<sup>87</sup> In so doing, by this means, through an ordering of secondary causes, to the goodness of things which have been created, God is constantly adding qualities and realities to the goodness and the being of each created thing in a way and in a manner which then gives to them a completion or a wholeness that, otherwise, they would not have (nor ever possibly have).

This ordering can then be more fully understood (or be more fully specified and elaborated) however if we should now work with another species of related distinction which prefers to speak from a perspective which is less about God and more about the kinds of causes which God has created in terms of their being two distinct types of causes. Some causes are capable of self-determination (they are free in this way) and some are not. God's government works differently thus as, on the one hand, it works through an order of contingent, secondary causes which, in themselves, lack any kind of self-determination and movement and as, on the other hand, it also works through an order of contingent, secondary causes which possess varying degrees of self-determination and movement because of a different kind of participation which exists in these causes. Each of these two orders of causes is differently joined to the rational kind of ordering which solely belongs to the general order of God's providential government as this general ordering attends to the being of many different things.<sup>88</sup> One kind of participation belongs to non-self-determining, secondary causes since, with respect to self-determining, secondary cause, if we should attend to the reality of intellectual beings who happen to exist as conscious, thinking, knowing subjects and to the kind of orientation which belongs in general to all of our acts of thinking and understanding, we should notice, as a general principle and conclusion, that "every intellectual being is, in a sense, all things because its intelligence embraces all of being."<sup>89</sup> A given kind of act points to a different kind of potency. In terms then of our expectations and anticipations, our understanding is already joined to the being of all existing things and even to the being of things which could in fact be possible. The orientation or the intentionality of our understanding (the intentionality of our inquiring cognition) is normally turned or it is normally directed toward the being of all things in an immediately given form and act of self-transcendence which initially exists within us through our desires for understanding and knowledge and which is then superseded through later actuations of understanding which immediately join us to experiences of intelligibility, form, and meaning that, perhaps, others do not have and which, perhaps, they do not know that they do not have. Then, from there, we are ready or we have been prepared and conditioned to move into a third kind of self-transcendence which will arise through any realizations which could be possible, probable, or incremental. Changes which we effect in our internal and external behavior and changes that we effect in the being of other things cannot be reconciled with absences of self-determination as these exist with respect to the being of other things. We can become more human (we find that we grow in our humanity) as, through our cooperative acts and activities, we are increasingly joined to the being of other realities and to the being of other things who are more than who we happen to be as human beings and subjects.

On the one hand, we find that we are akin or like to God the more that we find that it is possible for us

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<sup>87</sup>Hoonhout, "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 6, n. 20.

<sup>88</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 112, 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 2 & ad 3. Cf. John Finnis, "Nature, Reason and God in Aquinas," *St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics*, trans. & ed. Paul E Sigmund (New York: Norton & Company, 1987), p. 192.

<sup>89</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 112, 5, my translation; Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 312.

to be with God, to be somehow close to God, and so to cooperate and to work with God. Our limited, created intelligence resembles God's uncreated intelligence if we attend to the actuality or the performance of our cognitive desires and orientation since, inherently (although as a potency, as an active potency), we want to understand and to know everything about everything which could possibly be and exist. We find, upon reflection, that an accidental order of things is not to be regarded as some kind of ultimate thing. The intelligibility of an order instead points to why, if fact, it can be said that a providential order of things exists. God has been exercising a special kind of providence toward us since, as secondary causes, we find or we should be noticing that we have not created ourselves and that we have been created to exist as feeling, loving, inquiring, thinking, conscious, human subjects and since, also, in addition, we are finding that, for reasons that we do not entirely grasp or understand, “‘God has placed [us, or God has placed] man in the hands of his own counsel’ [quoting Sirach 15:14] in the sense that God [also] gives him [or us] providence [and care] over [the being of] his own acts [our own acts].”<sup>90</sup> God not only provides for us as human beings if, initially, we are to exist, live, and flourish but, in addition too, as human beings, we find that we can also provide, manage, and direct things in a manner that participates and belongs to God’s providence as a conscious cause or element within a general ordering of things that ultimately comes from God and which is directed toward God and all the things of God.<sup>91</sup> Those causes which are not able to care or to provide for themselves are cared for in a manner which points to how they exist as instruments or as means for the possible use of self-determining causes who can employ them as fit means or tools for advancing and growing in the kind of freedom which self-determining causes already have and possess (to some degree) if we should think about how, in a way, their natures exist as explanations or as justifications for why they behave in the manner that they do. They point to a range of self-determining acts which are being suggested, encouraged, and implied.<sup>92</sup> Growth in our self-understanding should point us toward a larger number of options that can properly and possibly exist for us and also to wiser choices that can also be made about what we are or should do (about how we are to live and to exist). The invariance of our human nature as a norming, normative structure points to the form or the order of our human historicity with respect to all the different acts and actions which happen to belong to us and which are properly constitutive of who we are as active, passive, human subjects. Variance and invariance exist together as each, in its own way, points to the other: the form, the acts; the acts, the form.

The lack of subordination which seems to belong to self-determining causes (relatively, in comparison with the kind of subordination which belongs to non-self-determining causes) accordingly reveals or, in fact, it points to another kind of arrangement: another kind of ordination or, in other words, a purposefulness, a final causality, or a directedness which belongs to self-determining causes that, in turn, points to a more intelligible or to a more rational order of combination and subordination which differs from the combination and ordination of non-self-determining causes since, consciously, with a degree of self-awareness which exists as an implicit kind of self-knowledge, self-directing causes exist in order to realize ends and goals that knowingly belong to them although ends and goals which have been somehow given to them from sources and causes which are quite other than themselves and which cannot be lesser than themselves. As we have been noting, these ends or goals are commensurate with the desires and wants which exist within us (within ourselves) although, because of their transcendence or their unrestrictedness, in another way, they are not commensurate: they can only exist in a way

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<sup>90</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5, ad 4; cf. *Compendium theologiae*, 2, c. 4.

<sup>91</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 113, 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 4; Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 242.

<sup>92</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 65, a. 2.

where the means of attaining and reaching requires ways and means that participate or which belong to this greater transcendence and to the unrestrictedness which belongs to this transcendence: hence, ways and means which must belong or which must come from an ordering of transcendent, unrestricted acts: acts which must exist as divine acts (acts which must exist as acts of God's divine knowing and willing). An awareness of transcendental objectives implies or it points to an awareness and the good of possibly working with transcendental means in a way which, in turn, points to why “the rational creature relates to Divine Providence as [it is] governed [by Divine Providence] and [as it] worthy of attention for itself [with respect to how and why a rational creature exists as a participation in the understanding and being which is proper only to God].”<sup>93</sup> The initial awareness which we have within us points to a greater awareness that we can possibly have if and as our awareness goes in both of two directions: if and as it enters into our sensitivity and our sensibility, and if and as it also enters into any acts of willing that can ensue in the wake of that which we have come to understand and know.

As we have already noted, in their potency, in their active potency, in their desires and intentionality, as intellectual beings (as intellectual subjects), we (and others like us if we can possibly refer to the being of angels) – we are all relating to the totality of being, to the totality of reality, however primitively we are experiencing or, in some way, sensing this relation as a kind of *a priori* apprehension. The act of it or its actuality points to the rationality of its possibility, its potency (the irrationality of a possibility pointing to the impossibility of an imaged possibility): hence, to a potency which cannot be reconciled with anything which exists as simply an impossibility. The intentionality which exists within us already exists as an initial, proleptic form of connection and bond which, in fact, happens to exist (whether we should like it or not). In our freedom and responsibility, in our finding and experience of different options, different possible choices (whether these are physical, intellectual, or affective), we are finding that, in fact, we possess a greater degree of contingency in terms that refer to that which we are able to do or that which we might want to do. Everything else which exists within the created order of things exists with a status which points to why, increasingly, it exists for the sake of some kind of higher cause or some kind of effective understanding which happens to exist and belong to us (in our understanding as rational, willing agents) in a relation of subjection, coordination, and subordination which shows how God provides for the good of all self-determining, rational causes (who exist as subjects and as secondary centers of activity) in an appropriate, special way by providing, for them, a suitable constellation of materials and conditions which serve to encourage the self-determining causality of rational creatures in a way which can possibly lead them toward better decisions and choices about what should be done if a self-determining, rational being is to realize and to achieve goods which, in fact, lead to the greater goodness of a being's existence with respect to the manner of its subjectively active, receptive life. In this way, through a larger order of promotions which creates a context for our acts of human decision making and which also operates within the structure of our human acts of willing,<sup>94</sup> God's providence works with self-determining causes (as these exist in us and

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<sup>93</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 113, 1, quoted by Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 312. See also Lonergan, “Bernard Lonergan's Draft Pages for Chapter 3 of His Doctoral Dissertation, “*Gratia Operans*: A Study of the Speculative Writings of St. Thomas of Aquin,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 22 (2004): 138.

<sup>94</sup>See how Aquinas speaks about promotions in the *Sententia super Physicam*, 8, 2, 976 & 978: all forms of causation or movement within the created order of things in the activity of secondary causes require a relation of some kind between secondary causes which would have to exist as a promotion if, between a potential mover and what can be potentially moved or between a cause and what can be potentially acted on by a potential cause, an effect of some kind is to follow. It is not

others as intellectually conscious creatures and subjects) in a way which achieves a divinely known, intended order of things but in a way which fully respects and even adds to the freedom of each cause, each passive active subject (the integrity of each cause, the integrity of each subject) while striving, at the same time, to employ the freedom of each cause and subject in a way which can realize goods and ends that are often not fully grasped and understood and known by any of us to the degree that we exist as created, participating, self-determining causes<sup>95</sup> (or to the degree that we exist as created, participating, self-determining, conscious subjects). By means that are increasingly coordinate and cooperative (and they can only be increasingly cooperative if receptive, accepting, understanding love exists as the primary, fundamental principle within the course of our lives), much more is achieved than what any of us should directly want, intend, or know. In general, with respect to both non-self-

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sufficient that a mover or a potential cause exists and that which can be moved or be acted upon also exists. An immediacy of proximity needs also to exist if secondary causes are to produce effects through a form of immediacy which differs from a transcendent immediacy of power which refers to God and how a first or primary cause uses or applies (*applicat*) secondary causes in a hierarchic ordering of these causes to realize ends and purposes which transcend the causality of any given secondary cause. Cf. *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 255, n. 20. See also *De Veritate*, q. 5, aa. 8-9; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 77-79, 82, 91-92; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 3; q. 103, a. 6; q. 110, a. 1; q. 115, a. 3. Quoting Aquinas's own words in the *Sententia super Physicam*, 8, 2, 978 which speak about the need for some kind of premotion or prior set of conditions which must be given or fulfilled, if some kind of action, event, or motion is to occur in the operation of secondary causes:

If, therefore, there has not always been motion, then it is clear that they did not exist in such a relation that one moves and the other is moved. Rather they existed in such a way that it was not possible for them to move and be moved. Afterwards, however, they do exist in such a relation that one moves and the other is moved. Therefore, one of them must have been changed.

Through an instrumental application of efficient causes whose movement can be traced back to the primary causality of an uncreated, divine cause or mover (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 67, 4; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 5; 3a, q. 13, a. 3), either a mover or cause is moved toward what can be acted upon, or what is acted upon is moved toward a potential mover or cause. Citing Stebbins's discussion in the *Divine Initiative*, p. 236, in the context of a providential order of government which relates secondary causes to each other to achieve higher ends and purposes, as an explanatory theorem, "premotions" account for "why causes that act in time act when they do rather than sooner or later." All coincidences of mover and moved, and all conjunctions which exist between causes, and all combinations which link effects with each other are caused by God as the universal cause of being, and because this is so, God can be regarded as the "*causa per se* of every single event that occurs in the finite universe." Cf. Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 241; Aquinas, *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 255, n. 20; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 65, a. 3.

<sup>95</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 68, 8. As Aquinas argues in the *Compendium Theologiae ad Fratrem Reginaldum*, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 243:

Although the divine government of things takes place by means of

determining causes and to self-determining causes, every given effect will totally proceed from two operative causes: from that which exists as a created, natural cause and that which also exists as an uncreated, divine cause.<sup>96</sup> Total dependence on one type of cause does not exclude total dependence on the other.<sup>97</sup> The causality of one species of cause does not take from the importance and the causality of the other species of cause.

With respect to the order of God's providential government and to explain a bit more about how God works with pre-motions or how, through pre-motions, God causes things within our world, we recall and we advert to how pre-motions exist in conjunction with constancies and regularities which exist within our world and with how these are joined to incidences of chance or to the being of varying, external, contingent conditions which, for some reason, come and go. If we attend to contingent conditions that we associate with uncontrollable incidences of chance, it is to be noted that, yes, if a particular cause fails to be operative and to do what it should do, this is because its proper action or its proper motion has been somehow precluded or impeded by the action and motion of some other, interfering cause that is engaging in its own proper motion and that, as an act and simply or solely as an act (apart from any other characterization), in some way, this other, extraneous cause and act can be ultimately reduced through a possible chain or order of acts to the actuality of God's government of things where nothing occurs outside of the order and rule of God's providential government.<sup>98</sup> In a teaching that comes to us originally from St. Augustine: in their intelligibility, certain things are directly willed by God, certain things are indirectly willed by God, and certain other things are only permitted or allowed to occur. All these things are willed. Before, say, any human being can begin to exercise any kind of willing which can lead to any kind of reasoning and the possible reception of any acts of understanding, a person must begin from a context that he or she has not created; a context that he or she does not directly control, govern, or order. God, as a higher and highest power, accordingly conditions our human decision making by directly and ultimately controlling the external circumstances of our daily lives (through means which, instrumentally, exist as an effective or as a communicating order of mediation).<sup>99</sup> A person is born into a certain society at a certain time within the order of our human history. Certain experiences make for more likely emergences of questions and

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second causes in regard to *execution*, the foregoing discussion should make it clear that the *plan* [*ordinatio*] of divine providence is in immediate relationship to all things. This is because God does not order what is first and last in importance in the way men do, by entrusting certain other people with the arrangement of the final details. It must be this way with human beings because of the limited scope of their knowledge.

<sup>96</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 70, 8.

<sup>97</sup>For further reading and understanding, look at "the relation between God and His Creatures as Causes," as this question is discussed by Charles Morerod in his *Ecumenism & Philosophy: Philosophical Questions for a Renewal of Dialogue*, trans. Therese C. Scarpelli (Ann Arbor, MI: Sapientia Press, 2006), pp. 67-73.

<sup>98</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 8-11 & 16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 7.

<sup>99</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 91, 2.

problems. In addition too, the impact of our external experiences and data conditions us in our individual human temperament. Our attitudes can change and shift (sometimes rapidly or slowly) and so result is a different kind of response than would otherwise be the case. According to one summary that we can quote: “these [aforementioned] factors all function as pre-motions with respect to the will’s choices: they determine the range of objects available for choice, and they make it more or less likely that any of these objects will actually be chosen.”<sup>100</sup> An initial context of things is brought into being (it exists) prior to how any of us exists and it is also maintained in a condition of being prior to how any of us happens to exist.

However, with respect to the actual willing which occurs within our acts of moral decision making, God exercises a bifurcated or a complex, differentiated form of direct control over our human decision making (in a way which does not detract from our human freedom but which, in fact, adds to our human freedom) by first prescribing and setting or creating the proper *ends* of our human behavior that can be identified in terms which ultimately refer to a universal good that cannot be explained by any particular cause or any particular good or end but which can only be explained by how we have been made in a way which points to a general orientation or to a normative specification of our intentionality which, in turn, points to the being and the reality of a very general, universal type of cause, end, or objective which, in turn, points to another universality which would have to exist as the unrestricted wisdom and the unrestricted goodness of God’s understanding and willing. Universals accompany each other as one points to another, God willing not only the good of single individuals but also the good of all rational beings in general as a species or group which exists in its own right as a species of universal. Hence, without requiring or having to use any means or fit instrument, in an unmediated way, this divine willing acts within us. It immediately moves us (as rational beings) in our acts of human willing towards ends which would ultimately have to lead us toward the end which exists as God’s ultimate goodness, and this willing, in turn, conditions how we engage in our subsequent and subordinate acts of human willing as now, in a mediated way, as we work with ourselves and other secondary causes, we move from prescribed ends toward possible or probable choices about which means, methods, or instruments are to be rightly used. We can deliberate about our choice of means but not ultimately about our ends: possibly finding a new way or means and then choosing to use and to implement it. Through a dialectic form of self-inquiry and self-questioning, we can begin to know about the final or ultimate ends which constitutively belongs to us as human beings.

However, secondly, since all of our acts of willing in seeking advice and counsel in our acts of human deliberation are movements which require some kind of actor or mover (if this willing is to move from a condition of potency to a condition of act), and since the chain of causation ultimately leads us toward an external, unmoved mover of some kind (hence, to an “extrinsic mover of the human will”) who is always willing the reflection which occurs within us within our acts of human deliberation and which terminates in our acts of understanding and choosing, in this other way, God also directly controls our human acts of willing by moving us as human subjects toward our deliberations of

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<sup>100</sup>Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 245.

reason and choice (our *concordia rationis*) which determine which means we will employ if we are to realize a given, desired, wanted end.<sup>101</sup> Citing Aquinas on this: if our human choices and decisions were not somehow subject to the order of God's providential government, if these choices and decisions are not governed by God in some way, it would not be possible for God to order and govern what subsequently happens within the spiritual and material order of created things.<sup>102</sup> We again refer to how God wills in ways which are both direct and indirect (without mediation and with mediation, operatively and cooperatively) and why also God wills a form of willing which exists for us as a divine form of permitting if we can act in ways which resist God because they would seem, most obviously, to frustrate and to act against the intelligibility, the goodness, and the rationality of our human causality in ways that impede us with respect to our moving toward the good of making right and proper choices and engaging in actions that we should be making and undertaking as responsible, intelligent, loving human subjects.

As self-determining causes accordingly work through their inclinations for the sake of ends or purposes that realize the reality or the good of their own goodness, they accordingly function in ways which point to how they already exist, initially, in some way as the instruments of God's providential causality and how this striving, in turn, prepares them for a later kind of conversion or elevation as, more fully and completely, self-determining causes can begin to exist as, devotedly, God's faithful companions.<sup>103</sup> God's goodness more fully reveals itself when we, as creatures, through what we think, say, and do, are able to communicate or to pass on whatever perfection and goodness that we might have to the being of other persons and realities: to the being of other creatures and subjects.<sup>104</sup> Through an order of cause and effect (as we have been already noting), lesser causes serve higher causes. However, if the cooperation of self-determining causes can be elicited in a way which enhances the freedom of these causes, lesser causes will soon exist with greater degrees of goodness as they achieve higher, more refined, difficult objectives within the context of a general coordination of many, different things which manifests the life and existence of a divinely favored, general, universal order of things. And so, as things develop and change over time, the more a created rational being exists and lives as God's instrument and means for achieving divine ends and purposes, the more it soon discovers and realizes the wealth of its own nature or self which would refer to the greater goodness and the greater value of its own being and existence. By partaking more fully in the providential ordering which belongs to the ordering of God's eternal government, created rational beings come to possess their own providence and freedom to a greater degree than would otherwise be the case: a degree of providence and freedom which turns them into better secondary causes and which allows them to care for themselves and for others in a better fashion than would otherwise be possible.<sup>105</sup> As every given creature acts to cause another's good (another's goodness), the more fully it must exist and participate in the meaning and the reality of God's own existence and goodness which acts, in a primordial way, to

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101 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 4; *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 5; q. 6, a. 1; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 246, n. 110.

102 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 90, 3.

103 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 3; q. 103, a. 6.

104 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 69, 15-16.

105 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 2. Cf. Patrick Hannon, "Aquinas, Morality and Law," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 56 (1990): 281.



effect the being and goodness of all existing, created things.<sup>106</sup> As participation in God's goodness, to ever greater degrees, leads and adds to the goodness of all created things, through this same participation, God's own goodness and love for the created order becomes increasingly more apparent and obvious to us. It is more fully displayed. It more fully reveals itself to us and to others.<sup>107</sup>

To state the matter a bit differently, God's providence exists for the purpose of an ordering that can help created rational beings more fully realize ends and purposes for which they had been specifically created: ends and purposes which are proleptically or heuristically specified by that which exists within them as a "natural inclination to act according to reason."<sup>108</sup> God orders all things so that self-determining beings can realize themselves by how they respond to external conditions and in a way which always fully respects and works with the created inner norms or laws which specify who and what they are as reasonable, rational beings who have been created by God. The object of God's providential government as this proceeds from the unrestrictedness of God's knowing and loving is a cooperative form of self-constitution in us which is both free and lawful in the activities that must be performed by us if any form of self-constitution is to properly exist and occur.<sup>109</sup>

Moving on: as God's government of the universe thus works through secondary or intermediate causes toward ends that ultimately exist in God,<sup>110</sup> it constructs a meaning for fate (*fatum* in Latin) which is more adequate than what would otherwise be the case if fate were to be defined by primary causes alone which exist either within God or within a higher order of created things which determines all else in the events which are constitutive of the kind of history that exists within the created order of different things.<sup>111</sup> A determinist or a conventional notion of fate is to be distinguished from a conditional or a circumstantial notion of it which respects and employs the freedom and the contingency of conscious, created causes and which also acknowledges the truth of a conclusion which says that the principal causality of God's foreknowledge, as it applies to the government of all created things, is to be understood as a species of hypothetical necessity and not as a species or instance of absolute, natural necessity.<sup>112</sup> As Aquinas quotes Boethius about how, for us, we can possibly speak

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106 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. q. 103, a. 4.

107 Hoonhout, "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 10.

108 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 3.

109 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 114, 3-6.

110 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 5, ad 2; q. 19, a. 6.

111 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 3; q. 116, aa. 1-2. In the first article here in q. 116,

Aquinas argues against the claims of astrology which ascribe a meaning for fate that is based on the alleged influence which is supposed to be exerted by the movement of heavenly bodies. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 84-7; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14, 14; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 138. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 116, a. 4, Aquinas gives a meaning for fate which is to be clearly distinguished from any form of divine causality that only employs primary causes. Fate only has a meaning only in terms of secondary causes. It cannot be used to speak about God's primary causality. As William A. Mathews distinguishes the difference in Lonergan's *Quest: A Study in the Authoring of Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 102, "the divine plan has a twofold existence: it exists in the mind of God and there it is termed 'providence'; it exists in the created universe and there it is termed 'fate.'"

112 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3 & ad 1; q. 116, a. 3. See also Lonergan, *Grace and*

about the place and the relevance of some kind of hypothetical necessity, “if God foreknew that this would happen, it will happen.”<sup>113</sup> The necessity exists. Yet, in a way which escapes our direct understanding of it, it allegedly or it purportedly exists as some kind of conditioned. It is not arbitrary or willful (since rationality excludes every kind of willful, arbitrary act) where now, within this higher, transcendent context of existing things (and as we have been noting), God’s knowledge of an eternal “now” differs from any knowledge of future events *within the condition and circumstances of time and temporality*. A conditional or a hypothetical necessity which exists within time differs from a conditional or a hypothetical necessity which allegedly excludes time (or which prescind from the relevance of having to attend to the impact of any temporal conditions). This difference, in turn, raises questions about how we are to think and speak about this type of hypothetical necessity as we apply it to God. To what degree does it have, for us, any meaning or significance? How real is this type of necessity?

If we should ask questions about how, in God, absolute necessity exists in conjunction also with hypothetical necessity (or if we should begin to ask questions about the sense or the meaning of attributing contingent predications to God if we should say, for instance, that, in fact, God does not have to create or make anything; God could have done otherwise), it is to be noted that, in speaking about absolute or natural necessity as this applies to God who necessarily exists (without any conditions) and hence absolutely, examples of absolute or natural necessity refer to the necessity of God’s own existence as the first cause of all existing things and also, concomitantly, to the necessity of God’s own consciousness as God’s self-awareness exists in terms of God knowing, willing, and loving Himself.<sup>114</sup> Our consciousness, in its reality, supposes that God, as our creator, cannot be without the good which exists as conscious self-awareness; hence, the good of God’s divine consciousness. God’s eternal being implies God’s eternal consciousness and, conversely, the consciousness, the being. In other words, whether we should speak about being as an ontological determination or consciousness as a subjective determination, or about how being ultimately exists as consciousness, God’s necessity is such that, within God’s divine being and consciousness, in the identity which exists between them, nothing which is contingent or fleeting can be possibly said to belong to this being or this consciousness.<sup>115</sup> It is not possible for things either to be or not to be; it is not possible that the consciousness should either ebb or flow: to lessen

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*Freedom*, pp. 106-108. While it is true to say that “God’s knowledge is the cause of things” (*In I Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 1, cited by Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 108, n. 72), if this causality is to be properly understood, it must begin with initially clearly understanding how absolute necessity is to be distinguished from any kind of conditional or conditioned necessity (which is sometimes known as “temporal necessity,” or as the “necessity of the present,” a species of necessity which had been known by Boethius and which he had discussed in the context of his commentary on Aristotle’s *On Interpretation*). Cf. Simo Knuuttila, “Anselm on Modality,” *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, eds. Brian Davies & Brian Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 112, citing Boethius, *Commentarium in librum Aristotelis Perihermeneias*, I, 121.20; 2, 241.7-243.27.

<sup>113</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 116, a. 1.

<sup>114</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 15, 5; 1, 86, 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3.

<sup>115</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 95.

or to increase. Lack of potency in being implies lack of potency in the consciousness.

As we attend to God, to the willing or the doing of God as an actor or conscious subject (in a condition of pure act), God necessarily wills or relishes his own being and goodness since, in terms of simply having it as a living being or as a consummate actor and subject, God is supremely happy with Himself: with His own being and thus with the goodness or the worth of His being and consciousness. The willing is bereft of any kind of incompleteness or potency (hence, the willing exists much more in terms of how it exists as a constant, supreme form of enjoying and possessing; much less than any kind of desiring, wanting, or willing according to the ordinary meaning of these linguistic determinations). God's everlasting goodness, God's rightness, God's appropriateness, or God's contentment and happiness accordingly exists *as some kind of proper, analogical correlative*: as the converse or as the reverse side of how we would want to think about God as more than the absoluteness of God's understanding and knowing if, in addition, we want to speak about the goodness or the morality of God's understanding and knowing: hence, about God's worth or the basis of God's happiness as the justification and reason, as the reflection, or as the foundation, the perfection, or the manifestation of the unique doing as being and consciousness which belongs to the purity of God's eternal, divine willing. Beyond a perfect union which exists between God's knowing and God's willing, a perfect union also always exists between the divine willing and whatever could conceivably exist as the concomitant object, goal, purpose, or sense of the divine willing; in other words, the willing, the deed, the realization, or the accomplishment that, paradoxically, is always bereft of any kind of incompleteness or potency since, within the order of God's divine willing, nothing moves from a condition of potency toward a condition of act. The willing exists always in conformity with the fullness of God's divine understanding and knowing: hence, the fullness and the completeness of the willing. The fullness of self which God understands is God as an unrestricted act of understanding or how God exists as an unrestricted act of understanding, and the fullness of this understanding points to the fullness of the worth or the fullness of the goodness which uniquely belongs to God's own being who, as a subject, doer, or center of activity, enjoys a form of consciousness which transcends the consciousness which can be said to belong to any other agent or to any other conscious subject.<sup>116</sup>

Reiteratively thus, or in other words, because God does not exist or because God cannot exist as a contingent being, God does not function or live as a contingent being in lacking the consciousness of a contingent being since, about God, the being and the consciousness both transcendently exist (together): beyond or outside of that which can exist in terms of any kind of spatial, temporal determination. Absence of any kind of contingency necessarily points to a necessary form of existence and to operations that necessarily belong to God as a unique, divine subject although, from within the context of our partial, our discursive type of understanding which alone belongs to us as human subjects, the divine willing can only be known by us if, in some way, we can appropriate it by this or that partial degree or measure: by postulating distinctions that can speak about different operations which somehow all belong to God as part of an all

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<sup>116</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 25, a. 5, ad 2.

encompassing, undifferentiated, unrestricted type of willing which exists as God *per se* or God *simpliciter*. Necessarily, the absoluteness of God in its simplicity points to the absoluteness of necessity by and through a unique form of simple, stark simplicity which must exist and belong to God alone: a necessity that is also completely natural and right for who and what God is and happens to be.<sup>117</sup> To think about real differences and distinctions is to realize at some point that, necessarily, these distinctions must always lessen and they will eventually disappear as we move from ourselves and our world to that which exists as the unconditionedness or the unrestrictedness of God's divine being and consciousness.

Other examples of absolute necessity can be explicitly alluded to, however, if we should purposefully refer to the cognition or the consciousness of God and so to the basic laws of thought or reason which must exist in God since no intellect, or no knowing understanding thinking subject, can operate, exist, or be rational in any of its operations if it, he, or she is not guided or normed by that which exists as the condition, the goodness, or the substance of rationality (the nature or the intelligibility of rationality) which would have to exist as a qualification or, in other words, as a basic set of principles which, in their unity or their density, exist as an inwardly, governing, operative form; to conceive of them as realities or as acts is to say that they impart a form, a meaning, or a basic structure to all of our acts of thinking and reasoning, our acts of understanding and knowing, specifying and pointing to the rationality of our cognitive acts in a way which allows us to distinguish between rational and irrational acts.<sup>118</sup> As we have been alluding to, the rationality which exists in us must exist most fully and most completely in the rationality which supremely belongs to God or which uniquely exists as God.

As is the case, for example, with the principle of non-contradiction: nothing can be true and false at the same time in exactly the same manner. To suppose otherwise is to suppose the rightness or the goodness of irrationality. It is to move into a world that has ceased to be rational as it is replaced by conditions of caprice and willfulness which exclude anything which would exist as a rationally concluded reason or as a rationally concluded determination that is known to be true and right. And so, it is properly said about God that "God cannot make contradictories to be true at the same time."<sup>119</sup> God's actions can never be inappropriate or irrational. They are never irrational as much as, among ourselves, we find and know that our ways are not God's ways and that our apprehensions of rationality are to be understood in a way which knows that they exist as limited things.

The absoluteness of God (as we think about it) accordingly extends into God's necessity (the absoluteness of God's necessity) since it is something which exists as a completely reasonable, rational type of qualification since, from the context of our own experience and self-knowledge, our experience of the principle of intelligibility (in its unrestrictedness) and our experience of a second principle of unrestrictedness which

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117 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 41, a. 2.

118 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 1.

119 *De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 5.

exists in the intentionality of love or care in turn (together) both point to the likelihood and then to a necessity<sup>120</sup> which explains why God must exist as an unrestricted act of understanding that is perfectly joined to God's unrestricted, caring willing and hence to the aptness of why, in its goodness, this unrestricted willing should be understood or, it is best understood, if we should refer to it as an imparting, giving, extending, providential kind of governing and willing. Acts of willing which are unrestrictedly intelligent and wise cannot be separated from compassionate, caring acts of willing which, in the unrestrictedness of their compassion or in the unrestrictedness of their self-giving or their self-donation, would exist as a form of giving and sacrifice of self that mysteriously alone belongs to God without, however, incurring any kind of loss which can be said to belong to God if, in our own human context, it is known that, amongst ourselves as secondary causes or as effects, no greater love exists than to give of ourselves to another for the sake of the good of the other in a love which is somehow greater than ourselves and which does not detract from ourselves as much as it transcends the kind of being which we happen to have as contingent human subjects.<sup>121</sup>

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120To understand how it is possible to move inwardly from an experience of probability to an experience of certainty and certitude, beyond attending to forms of self-experience which should point to the rationality and so to the legitimacy of this type of cognitive transition, for language, terms, and arguments which point to the rationality of this type of transition, see how John Henry Cardinal Newman discusses this question in his *A Grammar of Assent*. The immediate context is a discussion about the nature of our informal human inferences (which are non-syllogistic) and a contrast which Newman draws between the truth of his own position and the kind of discussion that we can find in the thought of John Locke when Locke speaks about our human cognition and about how, allegedly, our rationality is limited or how it is defined with respect to the requirements of certitude if we associate certitude with the kind of experience which we have when we speak about the nature and the practice of formal inference as this exists in syllogistic forms of thinking and reasoning. As Newman argues his case: if we attend to the data of our self-experience (as this is given to us in our cognitive performance), our experience of certitude is in fact grounded in an experience of probabilities (*à la*, “converging and convincing arguments”) in a way which points not to why we should think that our acts of cognition should work in a particular way (or why they must exist in a particular way) but to why, in fact, they happen to exist and function in the way that typically belongs to them. To try to delineate or to extrapolate norms that are not grounded in the factuality, or in the appropriateness, or in the goodness of our human cognitional performance encourages a mistaken form of self-understanding and hence, on our part, a skeptical understanding of ourselves and of the kind of cognition which properly belongs to us as human subjects with respect to the truth or the good of our human cognition. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), p. 15, n. 31.

121See George Weigel, *The Truth of Catholicism: Ten Controversies Explored* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2001), pp. 30-31, on how we can move from the highest kind of good which exists in terms of the goodness of our human solidarity as human beings (despite all the fractures which can often exist within it) to a notion of solidarity which must exist at a higher, more profound, intense level if a highest kind of good which exists amongst us as human beings requires an explanation which must point to some other, higher kind of solidarity which must somehow exist and be though we cannot directly understand and know it although, on the other hand however, we can try to use our powers of imagination to picture it and then begin to put our images into communicable words that we can use both to talk within ourselves to ourselves and to talk to other human persons and subjects who could be receptive to the kind of meaning that we are finding when we think about how

What is mysteriously good in the love which exists in us points to the reasonableness and the goodness of a greater mysteriousness which alone belongs to God as the unrestrictedness of God's self-giving knowing and willing.

Hence: in order the better to understand the actuality of our own limited acts of understanding (and so too our conjoined limited acts of willing), it is necessary to understand and know that, necessarily, as an effect that cannot cause itself (no effect can cause itself), their cause or their context is ultimately not a potency but an unrestricted act of understanding which, as grounding divine acts of willing, must exist in a *providential manner* if, necessarily, it must actuate or it needs to actuate the kind of understanding which properly exists in us initially as a species of absence or potency: an understanding which we need to have if, beyond the understanding which we somehow already have as a given species of awareness, we are to move forward and to live and exist as human beings through transitions which would move us from act to act or, more finely, from an act which exists as a potency, relative to another species of act which has yet to exist or emerge in any way. Absence of potency in an act, in indicating a fullness of act that (within itself) knows no potency, necessarily points us toward absences of any kind of limit or restriction; hence, toward experiences of unrestrictedness that we can come to know and talk about as the condition of unrestrictedness points us and leads us into experiences that are endowed with an awareness of absolutes that cognitively and intentionally exist within us in a way that is bereft of any limits or conditions.

Moving on then from a reflection about absolute necessities as these relate to God to a reflection about conditional or hypothetical necessities and how it can be argued that these exist in relation to God, from the nature of metaphysical principles (once or if we have understood them), we can similarly or *apparently* conclude that, in our world, certain things must be or they must exist in an absolutely necessary way. Given A, we must have B. The form of an act, as a determination, implies acts that would be proper or connatural. The introduction of qualifications, however (as in why do we have A in the first place?), immediately points to a contingent type of necessity in a shift which occurs in our thinking that we must make (as itself an instance of contingent necessity) if and as we move from any talk about the existence of absolutes and absolute necessities which exist without any kind of condition or qualification (is rationality a qualification or is it itself the being and the existence of things?) to any talk that would have us now speak about the being of conditional necessities which exist with conditions but with conditions that have been met or they have been fulfilled in a way in which detracts from their prior condition of possibility and potency. To know about absolutes in some way points us toward the necessity of our having a knowledge about the being of contingencies and, conversely, to know about contingencies in some way points us toward the necessity of our having a knowledge about the being of things that are absolute.

If we should turn to the order of our human cognition and to the order of transcendence which belongs to the orientation, the intentionality, and the direction of this cognition,<sup>122</sup>

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and why our solidarity exists as a kind of consequence or effect.

122Saturnino Muratore, "Bernard Lonergan and Intellectual Conversion," *Divyadaan:*

unconditioned realities or unconditioned truths exist as absolute necessities and conditioned realities or conditioned truths exist as contingent necessities. Whatever exists as a virtually unconditioned necessity exists with qualifications or conditions but, if the conditions have all been met, something is necessarily true. It necessarily exists. For examples that we can point to: a material thing, as given, or if it is given to us, or if it happens to exist, it is such that, always, it is subject to corruption, decay, and destruction. Necessarily, the formality of materiality or the nature of materiality points to this species of potency. In mathematics (given an alleged flatness which is supposed to belong to all extensions of space), the sum of the three angles of every triangle must always be equal to two right angles. The human will is such (given how it has been made or its form) that it always desires its own happiness.<sup>123</sup> Nourishment is necessary for the sustenance of all organic life.<sup>124</sup> Certain truths are always true by definition if, in a given truth, a predicate is included or it is always contained within a given subject (the meaning of a subject in terms of what it is and does) or, in another sense, a subject, given its nature or what it is - it is something which participates in the reality of a particular predicate.<sup>125</sup>

In the existence of things within and outside the created order of things, if we speak about created things in terms of how they participate in the being of divine transcendent things, then it is possible that we can say about them that certain things are absolutely necessary because of the forms or the natures that certain things happen to have.<sup>126</sup> The form of a thing exists or it is expressed immanently within the being of a given, instantiated thing without its losing its transcendence in a way which points to why we can speak about a form in two different, related, complementary ways: in terms of its absolute necessity as this exists within the eternity of God's consciousness and understanding and in terms also of its contingent necessity as this refers to how or why, now, it is being communicated and it is joined to a manner of appearing or to a form of expressiveness which happens to belong to it in any given, instantiated instance of it.<sup>127</sup>

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123Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 105.

124*De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 5.

125*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3.

126*De Malo*, q. 16, a. 5.

127For further understanding here, please consult the kind of exegesis and analysis that comes to us from Eric D. Perl's "The Presence of the Paradigm: Immanence and Transcendence in Plato's Theory of Forms," *Review of Metaphysics* 63 (December 1999): 339-362, in a reading of Plato which narrows and which would seem to abolish the difference between how Plato understands the transcendence and immanence of forms and how Aristotle understands the same question. From a transcendental perspective, everything exists in an absolute kind of way (as a species of unconditioned) but, from a non-transcendental perspective or from an immanent type of perspective, things exist amid conditions which need to be fulfilled before it can be said that, in fact, something exists in a certain way; something is given in a certain way; or something is to be known and acknowledged within a context which exists as our initial point of departure in our human acts of recognition and cognition. While the eternity of forms points to their absoluteness (their eternity, their invariance), on the other hand however, when eternally existing forms are joined to incarnating, instantiating acts of existence and being which come and go of their own accord (according to conditions which point to some other

The transcendence of a form differs from the immanence of a form but not in a way which would have to point to the necessity of their being some kind of contradiction or some kind of mutual exclusion. As, in one place, in the language which he uses, Aquinas proffers a general conclusion which tends to elicit questions from us about how absolute necessity is related to contingent necessity and how, perhaps, one points to the other (if we cannot know anything about absoluteness, can we know anything about contingency?): in Aquinas's choice of words, it is said that "absolute necessity belongs to a thing by reason of something that is intimately and closely connected with it, whether it be the form, or the matter, or the very essence of a thing."<sup>128</sup> For instance, let us take the materiality of matter *as a form*. As a form, materiality is something which is intrinsic to the notion or the idea of matter. It belongs to all instances of matter and, yet, because of its transcendence and on the basis of its transcendence, we can then understand why it can be then said to exist with a kind of necessity which is unrestricted and absolute. The immanence of a form, as we encounter it in its contingency, cannot be used to argue against the reality of its transcendence in terms of its absoluteness.

A perusal of examples which point to instances of absolute necessity, upon further thought and reflection, accordingly points us to how or why some absolute or natural necessities can be understood in a way which must point to why it can be argued that, for us at times, they would seem more properly to exist as hypothetical or as conditional necessities. If, for instance, we work with an Euclidean notion of space which assumes and which does not prove that space exists in a way that is devoid of any kind of curvature, then, for us, the sum of the three angles of every triangle must always be equal to the sum of two right angles. Absolute necessity is said to exist for us in this case. However, our later understanding of things (or later growth in our understanding of things) in turn necessarily explains why an experience of absolute necessity can be understood in a way which suggests that it is best understood (it is understood in a better way) if we should now refer to how it exists as a conditional or as a hypothetical form of

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kind of cause which differs from the causality of a form and which is extrinsic to the reality of a form), that which exists in an absolute, independent kind of way finds that it now enjoys a conditioned or a conditional form of existence since, apart from the givenness of this or that material condition (or a given set of material conditions), no form is given or present to us; nothing can be said about the being or the reality of a given form. It can never be known (as but only, in fact, as a possibility although, if we think about the nature of possibilities and how we can know about the being of possibilities, our point of departure is what we know about how things currently exist and then, from there, we can speak about possible alternatives which exist as possibilities). By a train of analysis that we can detect in the manner of our thinking and reasoning, we move toward absolutes and an apprehension of them by first beginning with contingently existing absolutes and an apprehension of them that wants to know about reasons that can be said to be apt and sufficient: hence, reasons which would be ultimate or final in a way which would have to point toward an absolutely sufficient, unrestricted, transcendent grounding point of origin. Once this is achieved, it is then possible that we can move in an opposite, converse, reverse direction: moving from absolutes toward contingencies as contingent necessities are understood in the light of absolutely existing necessities or absolutely existing causes which would have to exist if it happens to be the case that no contingent type of necessity is able to account for the reality of its own being and existence.

<sup>128</sup>*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 6, 833.



necessity. The givenness of conditions (hence, a lack of absoluteness) always points to the necessity of real distinctions which would have to exist in a given case. If A, then B, but A is not B. A differs from B. Hence, in the absence of real distinctions or if we must allude to an absence of any real distinctions in a given case, then to continue to try to speak or to think about the being of conditional necessities is to speak and think about distinctions which can only exist within the discriminations of our conceptualizing, postulating understanding. Yes, we can say that the absoluteness of God's willing is conditioned by the absoluteness of God's understanding although, in fact, in God, no real difference distinguishes or separates the ongoingness of God's divine understanding from the ongoingness of God's divine willing. In our understanding of the absoluteness of God's divine willing, in wanting correctly to understand this absoluteness, so much depends on our assumptions and on our point of departure (what we would choose to use as an explanatory first principle), and if we are willing, or if we are able, to move into a world which knows about how different elements and unifying relations exist within the apprehensions of our understanding but which might not be too well known or too well understood within an inchoate or an ambiguous understanding of things which tends to exist for us as always our initial point of departure.

To speak now more accurately or more finely about how conditional or hypothetical necessities can exist with respect to God, as an initial observation that can serve as our initial point of departure: yes, in situations where certain conditions must be fulfilled or given before certain ends can be achieved or reached; or, in other words, as we think about what can be best brought into being if an appropriate, prior set of conditions is first brought into being (as preconditions which lead to an order of other, later, subsequent acts), conditional, relative, or hypothetical necessities differ from absolute or natural necessities in a way which acknowledges how, for reasons that are only known by God, God operates with both sets: with absolute necessities with regard to God *per se* (how God exists with respect to God's own being, self-understanding, self-knowing, and self-loving),<sup>129</sup> and, in addition, conditional necessities with regard to everything else that is somehow other than God where real distinctions necessarily obtain and exist.<sup>130</sup> Between God and what is other than God, real distinctions always exist and, necessarily, they are basic; they are foundational. The everything else which is other necessarily refers to contingent predications which are made about God or which can be made about God (relative to God), but which add nothing to God nor detract from the simplicity or the absoluteness of God's own self-subsistent being and reality.<sup>131</sup> It is not absolutely or unconditionally necessary, for instance, that God should create anything at all that could be other than how God exists. It is not absolutely necessary that God should will things apart from Himself *ad extra* although if, in fact, God wills anything apart from Himself in the wake of a freedom which ensues or which belongs and comes from the unrestrictedness of God's divine understanding and knowledge,<sup>132</sup> *by a conditional or a*

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129 *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 184, a. 2,

130 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3; q. 25, a. 5 & ad 1; 3a, q. 1, a. 2.

131 Lonergan, *Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, p. 95; *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran & H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 707-709.

132 To understand why we can argue that, together, God's freedom and God's understanding

*suppositional necessity*, God cannot not will what God thus wills. In this context, yes, a term or result is necessarily willed. It is to be understood as a necessity even though, within the context of our understanding, it exists as a contingent necessity (even if, within God, no contingencies exist).<sup>133</sup> No changes can be thought about or imagined with respect to what God is willing, or no changes exist within the willing of God if, in our understanding of change as we experience this change in our world, we should try to import distinctions and contradictions, or if we must think about change as change exists within an order of temporal determinations. The created order of things thus presents itself as an external, contingent term with respect to a contingent, conditioned predication that is made (that we make) with reference to God and to God's activity although, since God does not exist or create in time, it can only be concluded that the creating of God is something which exists in God within an entirely different order of meaning and being: within something which would have to exist as the meaning and being of eternally existing things. On the one hand, no contingent or relative predications about God (referring to *ad extra*, extrinsic denominations) can be made without an appropriate *ad extra*, external, contingent term (as this refers to the being of an extrinsic denomination),<sup>134</sup> and, on the other hand, God's creating totally differs from any kind of making or creating which exists within God's created world of things. Hence, it is said that we make and only God creates when, for reasons that only God

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can be understood as the cause or the explanation of God's creating of things which exist *ad extra*, please attend to how, within ourselves, we find that freedom exists in a way which is not restricted to a species of freedom in our different acts of willing where we are free if we can do this or we can do that. It is to be admitted that, yes, we find that we are free in our ability to make this choice or that choice. We can choose to do this or we can choose to do that. We can even decide to adopt this attitude or some other attitude. However, on the basis of further reflection, in company with, for instance, the kind of understanding which we can find in Aquinas (and in others), is freedom not also experienced when it exists as an effect or as a result of our experience of understanding? We grow in freedom when we grow in our understanding of things because, when we begin to understand something, a kind of tension is relieved and dissipated. A burden is lifted. We now know how to think about certain things; how to feel about certain things; and what, maybe, we can do in some little, minor way in the midst perhaps of many physical restrictions. We know that our acts of understanding tend to occur less frequently than our acts of willing (as we do this or as we do that) but, whenever we have understanding and increases in the extent of our understanding, our freedom becomes something that is less subject to the caprice of pending, external conditions. Our freedom is somehow greater than what we had had before. Hence, if we think about the positive relation which exists between understanding and freedom and how we move toward more freedom or a greater depth or quality of freedom through our understanding and our experience of understanding, on the basis of this type of self-understanding and knowledge, we can begin to understand that, if some kind of explanation is needed, or if we want some kind of explanation about why God should create or why God has created, then the best explanation is a unique kind of freedom which belongs to God alone and which exists as a consequential effect or as a quality which is penetrated or which is perfectly joined to the depth and to the extent of God's being as an act of understanding.

<sup>133</sup>*De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 5; Leo Serroul in "*Sapientis est ordinare*": an interpretation of the *Pars Systematica of Bernard Lonergan's De Deo Trino from the viewpoint of order*, (an unpublished dissertation presented at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 2004), p. 186.

<sup>134</sup>Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 278; *Grace and Freedom*, p. 105; Serroul, p. 185.

understands and knows, God attaches spatial and temporal conditions to that which already exists within the depths of his grasp and understanding. The utter dependence of all things that are not God on the unrestrictedness of God would seem to suggest how our talk about God as the Creator of spatial, temporal, external things can be reconciled with the eternity which alone belongs to God and to the eternity of God's actions.<sup>135</sup>

Hence or however, in addition *per se* to God's creating or God's acts of creating, if we should turn instead to the existence of possibilities, we will find that these exist not because they have been created but because they are known or they are grasped as God unrestrictedly understands the unrestrictedness which belongs to how God exists as an unrestricted act of understanding. The unrestrictedness includes every thinkable or conceivable kind of possibility, every thinkable, conceivable kind of form, every thinkable, conceivable kind of thing. Hence, given God's omnipotence and omniscience, we can say about God that God could have created things with different natures (as in creatures who cannot sin). So too, God could have also created a different world order which operates with respect to a different set of ends other than the ones which God has in fact created for us. In both cases however, the context is a speculation, an hypothesis, or a conditional which we postulate and grasp in our acts of supposition and understanding. Whatever is the choice or the selection, if God in fact exists as an unrestricted act of understanding, then, for reasons that we cannot entirely or directly know and fathom, God has been selecting an order and God is currently selecting an order on the basis of what God is judging to be most wise and prudent. That which exists as the good (the good of things) is somehow larger or greater if a created order exists than if it were not to exist in any kind of way.

In such a context as this has been created (and as it, in fact, conditionally exists as we refer to a created order of secondary causes): if certain ends are to be achieved or reached, or if a certain scheme of things is to work and exist, then such and such a thing or first cause should first exist or occur within or through some kind of prior, secondary cause.<sup>136</sup> If a certain means is not used, a certain end cannot be reached or a certain, possible end is not achieved in a better or in the best possible way. In the same vein thus, with respect to the order of our salvation and redemption, God could have created an order where it was not necessary, for instance, that Christ should have been incarnated or have suffered death as a fit means (as a secondary cause) for effecting the good of our divinely intended, human salvation.<sup>137</sup> Citing the wording here of Aquinas's argument:<sup>138</sup>

....absolutely speaking [as a hypothesis], God could have freed man otherwise than by Christ's passion...But once a certain hypothesis is granted, there was no other way. For...granted that Christ's passion was known and willed in advance by God, it was not at the same time

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135 Saturnino Muratore, "Transformations in the Fundamental Category Nature/Natural: The Contribution of Bernard Lonergan," *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy & Education* 31/3 (2020): 262.

136 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 86, 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, aa. 1-2.

137 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, a. 1.

138 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, a. 2, as quoted by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 370.

possible for Christ not to suffer, or for man to be freed otherwise than through his passion. This same reason holds for everything foreknown and foreordained by God, as the *Prima pars* [of Aquinas] has shown.

In the order of things which God has accordingly created with a conditional or a hypothetical necessity which exists within it, certain things happen with one type of necessity and other things, with another type of necessity. One kind of necessity is conditional and unconscious: if, for instance, plants cannot live without water and if, for instance, this or that physical, chemical, or biological event occurs only if some other physical, chemical, or biological event has occurred. Another kind of contingent, conditional necessity is reflectively or self-directively conscious when we refer to a deliberation and freedom which is creatively willed by God and which has been implanted in the operations of secondary causes which happen to exist as thinking, reflective agents and subjects. In these cases, an undetermined, free type of causality is willed and caused by God as the term of a contingent predication which refers to God's undetermined, free acts of creating and governing. If God wills a non-necessitated, free act on the part of any of his creatures, the term of this willing is necessarily a free act which a given creature must possess and exercise as a deliberating, choosing, active, passive subject (and not as a thing or substance which would exist as some kind of "it"). In the same way, if God wills a necessary act, the same is effected or it must be effected within the created order that God has in fact made and created.<sup>139</sup>

God's creative and salvific activity evinces and it points to a relativity and a contingency which does not belong to God *as God exists in himself*, but to a relativity and a contingency that is exhibited by the contingency of things which God has somehow created and the contingency of the means which God has somehow chosen to effect our being and our salvation<sup>140</sup> although, from our human point of view, acts and operations existing within the created order of things evince an absolute or a natural type of necessity to the degree that they are limited and determined by the forms, natures, and essences which God knows and has within the understanding which only God has and is. From our human viewpoint, for example, food and drink are both necessary in an absolute sense for the being of our organic human life but, from a divine point of view, these same things are only necessary in a conditional or hypothetical way since, admittedly, God could have created the world in a different way by employing a different set of forms instead of some other set of forms. God could have used; God could have instantiated other forms and, in the same vein, he could have constructed a different order in the relations which would exist between different things in a general order which would specify a certain type of cosmos which God could have possibly brought into existence with a certain kind of government which God could have exercised or would be exercising with respect to the being of this other created order.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 25, a. 3, ad 4; Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 106, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 13, ad 2; *In I Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, ad 4; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14, 22; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, pp. 279-281.

<sup>140</sup>Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, pp. 283-284.

<sup>141</sup>See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 15, 3 and *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, a. 1 where Aquinas notes that conditional necessities are explained by factors or elements which operate

If something is happening, it is always happening with some degree of necessity where it would not be incorrect to say that, as things are happening, in some way God's will is being accomplished although this willing of God does not operate in a way which would have to counter or to negate the freedom or the leeway that, in fact, belongs to the life of a given created cause.

As things happen within time and as they occur, we can always argue that, in some way or in some aspect, they are being willed by God: by a God whose understanding is able to accomplish goals and objectives through causes which are free and which can yet fail in their immediacy and in the efficacy of their proximate operations. As difficult as it is for us at times to use a cause that is not able to move itself to accomplish some great and noble work that we desire and intend, far greater understanding and wisdom is needed (something which is more mighty and powerful) if defective, self-moving causes are to be used in a manner which achieves goals and ends which transcend the immediacy of their causality. From absence of being as nothing we cannot get something which is or which exists although, on the other hand however, nothing prevents the intervention of an unsuspected, externally operative cause or act that can somehow draw or elicit being or which can convert a condition of nothingness into a condition of being and reality from something that is lacking in being and reality though the manner of conversion appears or emerges in a way that we cannot too well understand or foresee on the basis of existing trends and determinisms where our awareness of trends and determinisms that are known speak against the probability that a given kind of good or a given kind of outcome will somehow arise and emerge in ways which will lead to a new pattern of things which will exist as the new determinism of a new trend.<sup>142</sup>

The conditionedness of conditional, hypothetical necessity as things happen in time accordingly explains why this necessity is fully compatible with the contingency and freedom of secondary, created causes.<sup>143</sup> As Aquinas distinguishes between absolute necessity and conditioned necessity: a conditioned necessity always possesses a provisional or tentative character.<sup>144</sup> Something will happen or something is true if, in fact, something happens or if something else is true. The truth of a conclusion, in its necessity, entirely derives and depends on what conditions obtain and are being claimed if the truth of a consequence is to be understood in all of its significance. Truths are real and events occur if certain conditions are met. As a classic example of a hypothetical necessity it is thus said, for instance, that if Socrates is sitting, then we cannot deny, without violating the principle of non-contradiction, that Socrates is sitting. It is

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externally with respect to the natures of created things. Hence, with respect to the order of God's providence, the divine direct willing of the good, the divine indirect willing of physical evil and the evil of punishment, and the divine permitting of moral evil all together manifest the operation of a divinely ordained, conditional necessity which is experienced by human beings within their history as "a necessity of the present." Cf. Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 47.

142See Dawson, "The Christian View of History," *Christianity and European Culture*, pp. 230-231, as in another paper, he speaks about the unpredictability of our world, especially as this applies to us as human beings and to the kind of history that we have as human beings.

143Lamb, *Commentary*, p. 288, n. 80.

144*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 4 and q. 116, a. 3.

necessarily true that Socrates is sitting. “Socrates, when he is sitting, necessarily sits.”<sup>145</sup> *Socrates, dum sedet, necessario sedet.* Our knowing about Socrates’s sitting is certain and indisputable when it is derived from the being or actuality of a currently existing event (in this case, the sitting of Socrates which presents itself not as a future contingent event but as an operative, current contingent event).<sup>146</sup> Our knowing imposes no absolute or logical necessity on Socrates that he should be sitting at any given place at any given time<sup>147</sup> since the sitting of Socrates exists as a conditional or as a hypothetical necessity.<sup>148</sup> From the existence of contingent events or from the truth of contingent facts, we can always speak about a necessity that joins necessity with contingency. No contradiction exists. Necessities exist within contingencies and these contingencies exist within necessities that can never be contingent.

If fate then is to be clearly distinguished from providence from the viewpoint of our having a better, more nuanced understanding of it, on the one hand, while providence refers to an ordering of things as this exists within God’s understanding and willing of things through an unimaginable, prudential kind of comprehensive foresight or, more accurately, an unrestricted act of understanding which divinely accomplishes how things are to be related and joined to each other in a way that achieves ultimate purposes and ends (where reasons unknown to us explain why a spatial temporal order of things exists),<sup>149</sup> on the other hand, fate exists for us as but an effect or a consequence of this general ordering.<sup>150</sup> It refers to the intelligence, the rationality, or the conscious, intended ordering (the *intentio*) of God’s providence *as this is expressed* within and through the created order of things which God has brought about and which God effectively brings about through a government of things that is expressed through properties and determinations which, in our world, exist as a factual ordering of spatial and temporal conjugates.<sup>151</sup> More precisely, fate exists within secondary causes in terms of how, in fact,

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145Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 278.

146*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 13.

147*De rationibus fidei contra Saracenos, Graecos et armenos ad Cantorem Antiochenum*, 10, as cited by *St. Thomas Aquinas Philosophical Texts*, trans. by Thomas Gilby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 109, n. 310; Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 123.

148*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3. Similarly, in the *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, ad 4 (cited by Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 107, n. 70), Aquinas says that “it is necessary that Socrates be running when he is running” (although it is not necessary that he should be, in fact, running). The sitting of Socrates is not to be understood as an absolute necessity which must be if something else is to happen in the existence of the order of things which God has created.

149*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 49, a. 6, ad 1. Cf. John H. Wright, S. J., “The Eternal Plan of Divine Providence,” *Theological Studies* 27 (March, 1966): 28.

150*Compendium theologiae*, c. 138.

151*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 6; q. 116, a. 2; cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 93, 5. In his *Grace and Freedom*, p. 85, n. 87, Lonergan cites Aquinas, *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 5m and d. 38, q. 1, a. 1 where it is said that providence refers to the divine plan which exists in God’s understanding, and which is known as providence, and this same divine plan, as it exists in the created order of things, which is to be known as fate. Through a divine form of mediate causality which employs secondary causes as instrumental causes (through an instrumental power or virtue which created things possess as instruments of divine self- understanding and willing), by means of fate, created things participate in a divine providential care of things which accomplishes ends and

they are found to be joined and aligned with each other. It exists within secondary causes insofar as they are all divinely ordered toward producing their many effects as these are intended by God in a way that encompasses every kind of act, acts of permission existing in their own right also as acts that are intended and willed by God.<sup>152</sup> And so, through an ordering that is subordinate or which exists in light of God's self-understanding and God's providence, it can be said about fate that it is not subject to change, variation, or alteration despite what will be or whatever could be the passage of time and the flux of circumstance.<sup>153</sup> God's eternal law, as a kind of plan or blueprint (as an "ordering of reason") which already exists as an intelligible, intelligent ordering of things towards their ultimate ends, already fully exists within God's understanding as a right, just, and wise ordering of things which is constitutive and directive of the order of all things (as this is found) within the general order of the created universe of things.<sup>154</sup> In terms of its being an exemplar or idea, it can be said to exist as the term of God's divine self-understanding.<sup>155</sup> Providence exists in terms of its being an effective, effecting act; fate, as the term or the idea of this act if we work with a conceptual distinction which we experience within ourselves whenever we distinguish between an act of understanding and that which is grasped by an act of understanding as an apprehended, understood idea (neither act nor idea existing independently or apart from each other). If fate, in its meaning, exists as a function of God's divine intending and the intelligibility or the finality which belongs to this divine intending, then this meaning exists as a function of God's ends or purposes as these are understood and known by God in the context of God's unrestricted self-understanding.<sup>156</sup> God cannot not know about the "why" or the rationality of His reasons. While it might not be easy for us to understand why we happen to exist in the way that we do and why things happen in the way that they do, God's unrestricted understanding does not suffer

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purposes that cannot be accomplished purely by the actuation or perfection of created forms in terms of their corresponding acts or operations (which have been specified by the forms or essences which things happen to have). In the context of mediate causality and its operations, purely natural movements simultaneously exist as instrumental movements even as we distinguish between a movement that comes from God as the pure act of existence or being and movements which are defined by the forms of created things, and as we also distinguish between a divine and a created perspective where a created cause can have little or no understanding about how its movements could be serving divine ends and objectives which are being achieved through actions and motions which, at times, in their own way, can be defective in their mode of operation.

152 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 116, a. 2; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9, ad 3: "God neither wills evils to exist nor wills evils not to exist but wills to allow them to happen; and this is a good."

153 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 116, a. 3.

154 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 1; q. 22, a. 1, ad 2; 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 1; q. 93, a. 1. As Rhonheimer in his *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 245, translates a pertinent text from 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 1 (*lex aeterna nihil aliud est quam ratio divinae sapientiae, secundum quod est directiva omnium actionum et motionum*): the eternal law is to be understood as nothing other than "the plan of the divine wisdom, in its aspect of directing all actions and movements." See also Collins, "God's Eternal Law," p. 499. Collins summarizes Aquinas's argument as follows:

...the order and harmony in the world around us demand God's governing hand; the divine government of the world, which takes place in time, demands as its counterpart eternal providence; eternal providence in its turn demands the eternal law.

155 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 1 & ad 3.

156 Collins, "God's Eternal Law," p. 502.

from this kind of limitation. To quote words that we can cite: most radically, unlike ourselves and the kind of understanding which we have, God “knows what He is about.”<sup>157</sup> Only sometimes, at times, do we know what we are about.

By a providential imposition or manifestation which occurs through an instrumental ordering of created, secondary causes that apply (*applicat*) means to ends through the mediation of created finalities which internally belong to means as their inner intelligibility or their inner principles,<sup>158</sup> the end result is a grand ordering of secondary causes which, supposedly from a chaos or in contrast with any kind of chaos, produces a cosmos or a world-order that is directed or which is explained by some kind of self-transcending, transcendental, ultimate end which does not exist as either a genus or a species.<sup>159</sup> The secondary forms of things which exist in the wake or in the train of God's unrestricted self-understanding differ both as forms and, in their way too, as acts (as formal acts) from any activities or movements which can be said to belong to them properly (as these activities are defined or as they are delimited by how these forms exist in their actuality as inner, immanent causes), and so, as we move from their indwelling and immanence, relative to ourselves (their immediate proximity to us), we can begin to understand why they also exist as secondary causes or why their natural activities exist as

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157John Henry Cardinal Newman, “A Meditation,”

[https://birkblog.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/2011/05/my-favorite-prayer-the-meditation-by-cardinal-newman-followed-by-a-sufi-twist-a-quantum-leap-a-pirou.html](https://birkblog.typepad.com/my_weblog/2011/05/my-favorite-prayer-the-meditation-by-cardinal-newman-followed-by-a-sufi-twist-a-quantum-leap-a-pirou.html) (accessed December 7, 2021).

158*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 67, 4; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 5. To avoid confusion or to avoid a mistaken, naïve understanding of these things, please distinguish between a nominalist understanding of God's providence and the kind of fate which belongs to God's providence if we think about this kind of divine government as some kind of rule or determination that is simply or somehow “imposed on the world from without and reflecting the mandates of an omnipotent creator God,” and an understanding of God's providence and the kind of fate which belongs to this providence which differs from this conception if we should try to speak about an order of created cooperation which has been created to exist within our world. On the one hand, God does more or God is more fully God if God can create and if God creates and orchestrates a very large number of secondary causes to achieve objectives that cannot be achieved in any other way (according to ways and means that would not otherwise exist). Can we possibly say that, in a way, God “depends” on these causes in ways that escape our understanding? Then, on the other hand also, secondary causes cannot be fully operative; they cannot fully be or exist; they cannot fully accomplish any goods that can ensue or which can be possibly given to them without the kind of help that constantly comes to them from God (if anything in a condition of potency is to move into a condition of act) and without the kind of help that God can be possibly added and received if these same causes are unable to consciously, cooperatively, and deliberately turn themselves toward God in ways which can only happen if these turnings and conversions are somehow being elicited and effected by God (we say “encouraged by God”). A law which is externally imposed from without differs from a law which has been already implanted within things and which exists within things as an internally constitutive variable. See here how D. C. Schindler, *The Politics of the Real: The Church Between Liberalism and Integralism* (Steubenville, Ohio: New Polity Press, 2021), p. 120; p. 122, cites and adapts insights that are taken from Francis Oakley, *Natural Law, Laws of Nature, Natural Rights: Continuity and Discontinuity in the History of Ideas* (New York: Continuum, 2005), pp. 43-44.

159*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 116, a. 2, ad 2. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 73, a. 1, where the ultimate end is identified as the “perfect beatitude of the Saints at the consummation of the world.” The same point is reiterated by Aquinas in the *De Potentia*, q. 5, a. 5, ad 13.



instrumental, secondary causes when and if we refer to tasks, deeds, and accomplishments that cannot be achieved or accomplished (or which cannot be explained) by the intelligibility of any purely local movements which are occurring and which are being received in some way from the action or the initiative of a proximate, adjacent, external mover and cause.<sup>160</sup> The intelligibility of a purely local motion that we immediately encounter and experience differs from the intelligibility of larger motions which are occurring but which we are not too readily or easily perceiving and the higher form of intelligibility that would have to belong to the being of motions that are more comprehensive as they coordinate a larger number of many different things which includes motions which exist, from our perspective, as local or proximate motions.

To proffer an example and instance,<sup>161</sup> a keyboard belonging to an organ or piano can be struck by anyone or anything to produce sound. This is one type of local motion and this motion is not lacking in an intelligibility which can be found to belong to it. But, when this striking or sounding is done through *an intelligible ordering of notes* that produces sound which differs from noise, music ensues and not simply or merely the datum of any sound. The music transcends the sound (as much as the sound exists within the music) in a way which points to a higher coordination of things which reveals how all created things, in their relations, are governed and joined by an ordering of laws which points to a hierarchical arrangement of parts to each other. The existence of one kind of good makes the existence of other types of good more likely and probable and the existence of these higher goods in turn acts upon lesser goods in ways that can lead to new configurations that involve acts of realignment that, in turn, suppose acts of multiplication and subtraction. To each part or element in a relation of many parts and elements, different goods are distributed through an economy of created causes whose point of origin functions in a manner which points to a form of justice or to a form of right behavior that is proper to God alone as a supreme being and which is distributive in all of its consequences and effects (as opposed to a commutative notion and order of justice which regulates relations amongst equals within, say, the civil order of a given society).<sup>162</sup>

In the workings of distributive justice (*iustitia distributiva*), elements or parts are ordered and related to each other in a manner which acknowledges the value of an absence of equality in things if certain,

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<sup>160</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1 (1ae ser.); *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 7, ad 7 and Lonergan's interpretation of this text in *Grace and Freedom*, p. 85. On the one hand, the movements of all created things have an explanation which refers to some sort of external cause or external mover. And so, it can be said that the movements of all created things should be understood as effects or receptions which ultimately rely on an unmoved mover who initiates the actions or activities of all things as they occur within the created order of things. However, as we begin to look at how created things function as secondary causes in their relation to the primary causality of God's activity (God as an unrestricted act of understanding), created causes also function as instrumental causes through the same motion or movement which they receive from external movers which ultimately derive their movement or motion from a primary unmoved mover. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 70, 8: "the same effect is not attributed to a natural cause or to God as if each were responsible for a part since the entire effect proceeds from each although in different ways." These secondary causes all participate in movements and operations which, in the last analysis, they cannot effect by themselves and, by this participation, they become subordinate co-creators of an unconditioned supreme being who, as God, is the act of being or existence.

<sup>161</sup>Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 244.

<sup>162</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 1; 2a2ae, q. 61, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 103, a. 1.

other, new, good things are to emerge and to exist, and this intelligible ordering (in its intelligibility as the term of an act of understanding) – this intelligibility reveals a comprehensive divine understanding of many things which knows how all things are to be related to each other if all things are to be brought into a communion with God as both the origin and the end of all good, existing things. As we have been noting and suggesting: no greater good exists which could be other than the unrestricted goodness of God and, thus, no greater goodness exists which could be other than being fully joined to the unrestricted goodness of God. To seek any greater experiences of goodness in the being of subordinate, created things is to seek experiences of goodness which, as good, must ultimately lead us toward God if our desire for goodness exists as a real thing within ourselves. Our discovery of intelligibility (as it already exists for us through *receptions* which exist as acts of understanding, all of our acts of understanding existing as *receptions* and not as productions) – this discovery necessarily points to how it must come from an act of understanding which, as a cause, is necessarily other and greater than anything which could exist within ourselves.

God's eternal law, as it immediately expresses the meaning of who God is in His self-understanding and knowledge, accordingly functions as the first principle of every other kind and type of intelligibility which exists as an ordering of law. All laws, all other laws, as constitutive normative intelligibilities, are created by God (distributively and hierarchically: whether within the order of a divinely revealed received religion, an order of contingently existing created nature, or an order that is constitutive of our human society as a distinct species of organized good), and all are created to achieve the good of this or the good of that for whom or for which these laws are all intended as directives or, more accurately, as inwardly existing constitutive principles: encouraging, guiding, and shaping us in the humanity of our actions and relations<sup>163</sup> as, through our reactions and responses, we find that we move toward goods which can be later specified, known, and determined through a form of mediation which belongs to different kinds of affinity, bond, connection, alliance, or friendship which come to exist among us: between this or that person (whether we should speak about a bond or a friendship that can initially exist amongst us as human beings, or a bond or friendship that can only exist between ourselves and God).<sup>164</sup>

These created laws are all ordered in different ways to achieve a growth or a perfection which exists as the good of an improvement which, in its qualified absoluteness, would exist as the good of an excellence (or as the good of a virtue) which belongs or which can belong to those of us who can accept these aforementioned laws and who can live according to the intelligibility of these laws through acts and actions which can exist together in a way which transcends our experience of tensions and contradictions: In a way which brings contradictions which would seem to exist for us at a lower level into a form of higher unity that would now be bereft of tensions and contradictions that we had formerly experiencing. Hence, as we have been noting, the different goods which exist and which are to be correlated in an ordering of many different, created laws are all ultimately ordained toward the

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163*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 92, a. 1.

164*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 99, a. 1, ad 2. Please note, however, that, in fact, Aquinas speaks about goodness and friendship in a reciprocal way since, if we advert to what Aquinas has to say later in q. 99, a. 2, it is there said that friendship only develops if persons grow in a personal kind of goodness since this goodness leads to friendships in terms of how persons can relate to each other although, at the same time too, it has to be admitted that friendships exist as a dynamic which is needed if growth in personal goodness is to exist among persons. Growth in goodness is both a prerequisite for friendship and also a consequence of friendship. Their causality is mutual.

proper end of God's eternal law which exists as God exists *per se*, in and through Himself. In some way, or participatively, to the degree that all these laws "partake of right reason,"<sup>165</sup> and so are right and just,<sup>166</sup> they all come from God's eternal law and so they all exist as particular specifications of God's eternal law. Something which is divine comes to exist in things which are not themselves divine. An uncreated kind of light comes to exist in a created kind of way.

With respect, for instance, to natural law, this type of law is to be understood as a specification of eternal law as this law is communicated to God's creatures within the created order of things; hence, for us, as human beings (and also in the case of angels), through the created, rational nature of how we all exist as rational creatures (having a form of rational subjectivity that belongs to us, whether as human beings or as angels).<sup>167</sup> God's eternal law, to the degree that it is participated in by any rational creature through the ordering of their created acts of cognition, is accordingly to be understood and spoken about in ways which would have to refer to how, in these creatures, with qualifications, it differently exists as their natural and proper law.<sup>168</sup> This natural law exists primarily within the divine reason of God (in God's eternal law) although, through God's acts of creating or through an unrestricted act of creating, this natural law comes to exist in a secondary way within the created order of existing things: or, in other words, in a way which is to some degree graspable or which is apprehensible within the kind of orbit or ambit which belongs to us within the "natural judgment of [our] human reason"<sup>169</sup> as the finality of this judgment moves us through an ordering which belongs to the discursiveness of our human cognition and knowledge (beginning initially with our sense experience and ultimately ending in apprehensions of understanding, truth, and reality). The order or the teleology of our created judgment *as an intending, intended act* points to a gathering and an arrangement of constitutive forms and attendant acts which exist, together, as an incarnate specification of natural law (the natural law of our human cognition existing as our formal point of departure to the degree that we can abstract it and discover it in a way that moves from the data of our cognitive self-experience and which returns to this

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165 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 3; cf. q. 93, a. 3, ad 2. While Aquinas admits in q. 93, a. 2 that the eternal law cannot be directly known by us as human beings in the context of our present life as this exists in the created world of things (such a knowledge coming to us as human beings only through an experience of the Beatific Vision which refers to a beatific knowing that somehow beholds, sees, or knows God's essence), this law of God is known to some extent as we work from effects to causes (cf. Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 160; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 3). It is known whenever a truth is grasped by us in an act of judgment since every judgment occurs through a reduction to first principles which reveals the presence of eternal reasons or eternal principles which exist in God and which can never change or vary. Knowledge of any kind of truth implies some kind of implicit familiarity with the precepts and requirements of a transcendent, eternal law which exists in God even if such a law is not explicitly known as an eternal law which exists within God. Any sense of a difference between right and wrong points to an ontological difference which acknowledges that right and wrong are to be always distinguished from each other as contrary moral principles.

166 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 96, a. 4.

167 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 2 & ad 1. As Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 64, cites from q. 91, a. 2: "natural law is a 'participation in the eternal law by the rational creature' (*participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura*)."

168 Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 340; Finnis, "Nature, Reason and God in Aquinas," p. 193.

169 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 71, a. 6, ad 4, my translation. Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 66; p. 260: "the natural criterion for judging human action is already present in the *lex aeterna*, and is participated in by the human reason."

data for a grounding that exists as verification) and so, by this same ordering and through our understanding of it (the more we grow in the extent of our self-knowledge, the more we should grow in our understanding of other things), other created, natural laws can be known and distinguished more easily and carefully. The augmentation that is grounded in the good of our self-understanding reveals a larger, more general order of things which we can possibly approach through our acts of inquiry, understanding, and knowledge and so, from there, move toward a better understanding about the goodness or the intelligibility of the many constitutive, different parts that belong to this greater, larger whole. Whole reveals parts and parts, whole.

We work from a premiss which states that, as an act of understanding within us grasps causes and effects in one act, in the same act of understanding or in the same generic act of understanding as this exists within and as God's self-understanding, ends and means are also understood in the relations which they have with each other and in the relations which they should have in their relations with each other if greater goods are to be brought into being and existence.<sup>170</sup> The reasonableness of our human understanding, through its reasonableness, participates in the reasonableness of God's own divine wisdom.<sup>171</sup> Hence, the reasonableness of every law whether within religion, or physical chemical biological nature, or our human society (in its intrinsic good or reasonableness) – this reasonableness determines whether or not it should be properly understood as a specification of God's eternal law which, admittedly, only properly exists within God or as God. As we attend then to the meaning of our manmade human laws, if our conventional, human laws sanction and prohibit activities which are also condemned or foresworn by eternal laws which exist in God or eternal laws which exist as God, they should be understood to exist as if they are prolongations or extensions of how God exists in terms of God's eternal law.<sup>172</sup> Human laws, in their intelligibility or by their intelligibility, always exist as limited, refracted prolongations of eternal law through a form of specification and determination which works from an inchoate sense of eternal law as this exists within the first stirrings of our human understanding: in understanding *qua* understanding or understanding *as* understanding. As divine understanding knows all things in a way which includes all specifications and all particulars and details, by our beginning with an inchoate, primitive sense of the meaning of different things which also exists in a heightened way in God's understanding and as God's understanding (its evident mysteriousness, its transcendence), through our subsequent acts of human inquiry and effort, that which is already known by God can become something which can be known by us as human beings in the context of this or that particular case and then eventually from this, by this knowing or through this knowing, an implementable human law can be possibly grasped and put into effect in a way which points to how we all participate in a creative species of act that is proper to us because of how we have been made. A legislated, conventional law can be understood and it can be promulgated in a way which turns it into an instantiated specification of God's eternal law and hence as a manifestation of God's eternal law within conditions which belong to conjugates of space and time.<sup>173</sup> A given culture, a given society, can increasingly live within a sense and an order of divinely existing things: within a transcendence that, in time, can become increasingly accessible to us because, through elliptical, metaphorical, or sacramental means (in a sacramental manner and fashion), it is being communicated to us through ways, forms, and means of mediation that can encompass an order of many particulars that, perhaps, can be known with greater degrees of precision and exactness if other acts of understanding

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<sup>170</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 5; cf. q. 19, a. 6, ad 1.

<sup>171</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 3, ad 1.

<sup>172</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 3, ad 3.

<sup>173</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 3, ad 1.

should emerge: if they can be elicited in ways that are encouraged by our asking of different kinds of question.<sup>174</sup>

In addition however or moving on as we attend more to the kind of willing which uniquely belongs to God's understanding: while, on the one hand, the primary object of divine understanding is always the reality of God's own being, in addition however, the loving and willing which inseparably belongs to the reality of God's existence *as pure act of being* (which conceptually differs from God as *pure act of understanding*) manifests a rightness or a goodness which, if it is truly good, it must somehow need to be communicated through a sharing and distribution that occurs through acts which exist as God's acts of creating.<sup>175</sup> In other words, God is supremely good and loving not merely because, as God, God enjoys every perfection by completely and fully existing in Himself *per se* without requiring the existence of any other thing,<sup>176</sup> but, more importantly for us in the contingency of our created existence, because God freely chooses to communicate His goodness to others in terms of the reality of being or the reality of existence *through acts of creation*:<sup>177</sup> bestowing the goodness of existence on all other things (as these move from a condition of possibility to a condition of actuality) so that these other things might possess a goodness of being or a goodness of reality which they have *in a created way* by necessarily participating in the ultimate goodness of God's own being and existence.<sup>178</sup> We are impelled toward the truth of this conclusion as we find that both the intelligibility and the goodness of the created order is something that cannot be explained entirely by itself.<sup>179</sup> As a conclusion that we can draw on the basis of this other, larger, most general argument: if any argument can demonstrate the insufficiency of the universe in terms of how it can account for its existence, the same argument points

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174For some help in understanding this point, consult Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992). Most of the work investigates and details what kind of sacramental and quasi-sacramental life existed in England prior to the onset of the Protestant Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: how it was centered and drawn from a set of primary actions which refer to the Church's seven sacraments and how the sacramentality of these sacraments was extended and applied through the elaboration and observance of subsidiary acts and rituals which arose in time where, from within this all encompassing, expanding order, "lay Christians found the paradigms and the stories which shaped their perception of the world and their place in it." Cf. p. 11. Grounding this type of analysis and perspective is a overarching, general assumption or, more accurately, an acknowledgement and apprehension which believes and argues that, for all of us, a symbolic order of meaning governs our perceptions of life far more than what we might initially know and realize and that this inculcated order governs our subsequent acts of inquiry and the kinds of understanding which we would want to receive and be open to. The overthrow of a given symbolic order or, in other words, the creation of a new symbolic order leads to consequences and repercussions that can be either feared or appreciated although in ways that cannot too well know about the course of future events that have yet to emerge in the fullness of their concrete being and significance.

175*De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 4; 3, p. 111: God "makes things on account of His own goodness...in order that His goodness, which cannot be multiplied in its essence, may at least by a certain participation through likeness be poured out upon many recipients"; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 4, cited by Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 40.

176*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3, ad 2.

177*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 3; q. 21, a. 1, ad 3; q. 25, a. 5.

178*Quaestiones de quodlibet*, 2, q. 2, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 2.

179Hoonhout, "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 10, n. 31.

to the intelligibility and so a lack of contradiction and then, from there, to the probability and the reasonableness of our believing in the truth of God's existence.<sup>180</sup> And so, for us, all things exist and all things are good in their existence only to the degree that they can be said to participate and to benefit from the goodness of God's being and existence. Simply put, God creates all created acts of existence in the being of other things. God communicates existence in a way which escapes our understanding although in a way which simultaneously includes whatever is brought into being either purely as spirit or as whatever is brought into being as a union or as an amalgamation of matter and form, matter and spirit.<sup>181</sup> God, as uncreated existence, is necessarily the author of all created existence.<sup>182</sup> Created existence can only be explained if we should refer to something which exists as uncreated existence.

### God as Creator

In speaking about how we are to understand how God is engaged in creation, a number of points can be made to help us understand the particular character of God's creative activity. Firstly, as we have been already noting, only God creates.<sup>183</sup> Unlike matter which functions as a purely passive principle and

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<sup>180</sup>Alban McCoy, *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Catholicism* (Continuum: London and New York, n.d.), p. 8.

<sup>181</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 65, a. 3; *De Substantiis Separatis*, c. 10, 57, cited by Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 37; and *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 17, cited by Selman, p. 37. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 4, Aquinas speaks about the simultaneous concreation of things by means of which certain things are brought into existence through a kind of union or combination of parts or elements. Everything which exists in the created order of things possesses an immaterial nature or form, and so in the creating of every created thing, forms or natures (as secondary forms or natures that come from God as a primary, unrestricted act of understanding) are created at the same time (in their own way) as an act of being or existence is also given to the being of a created form which has a reality of its own (call it an ideal reality). In the material order of created things, matter and form are both concreated as an instance of informed matter that is also now given the gift of reality or the gift of existence. Potencies, forms, and acts of being all exist as created things even as we must stay that, in the world which is about us, a created thing consists of a potency, a form, and an act of being and a unity of these with each other.

<sup>182</sup>*De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 16, cited by Selman, p. 37. Cf. *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 1.

<sup>183</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 17, 1; 2, 21, 1-12; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, aa. 5-6. As Weinandy translates a text from q. 45, a. 5 in the context of an explanation which emphasizes the priority of creating beings instead of creating forms or essences (*Does God Suffer?*, p. 131, n. 55): "For Aquinas, to create is 'to produce being absolutely, [and] not as this or that being.'" Only God can effect an absolute transition from non-being to being through a creation of things that is to be sharply distinguished from any genesis of things which works from things that already exist. Cf. Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 35. While human beings might share in some way in God's creative activity, they cannot bring something to exist out of nothing where nothingness here is understood in a complete and total sense. In the making or cooperating which belongs to our human creativity, human beings work with things that already exist, and as changes occur in things in a sequence of before and after, a consciousness of these changes in their succession engenders a sense or a meaning for time or temporality. As Aquinas argues in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 2, ad 2 and a. 3, change or the motion or movement of change cannot be said to properly occur in the creation of things by God. Cf. Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 239. When changes occur within the created order of things and as these changes are experienced by us, creation is presupposed as another kind of act. It occurs

which, as potency, is thus not able to bring itself or anything else into being, God, as an existing purely active principle, is the only being who has the power to create (who can create something out of nothing, as in creation *ex nihilo*)<sup>184</sup> since, in God's being identical with the very act of being or existence, only God is able to move and to act and so create in a way which can bring something out of nothing (God creating not through some kind of emanation from something which is divine but from a condition which exists as an entirety of absence). Between nothingness and beingness, a mutually exclusive opposition exists which, in its radicalness, can only be bridged through a radicality which would have to belong to an immaterial, spiritual, effective, intellectual power that, in its depth or its radicalness, knows no limit or restriction in what it can understand, decide, and do (save anything which is lacking in reasonableness and rationality). Hence, no creature can possess the kind of infinite, absolute being or power that is needed in order to create or to bring something out of the void of nothingness.<sup>185</sup> Immediately from non-being (or from the void of nothingness), or in a manner that escapes or which transcends any kind of succession which belongs to the meaning and order of a temporal determination, being or existence emerges as the proper effect or term of God's transitive creative activity which, as activity, primarily refers to the being or the act of existing which is to be identified with the nature or the intelligibility of God's being.<sup>186</sup> Being or existence emerges as the first thing which is created and effected since, if something exists in whatever kind of way, through the act of creating or existing, everything else emerges in all that it is in its various, multiple determinations and specifications and in all that it can also later be and do.<sup>187</sup> We cannot speak about the being of any particular thing without supposing, in some way, that the condition of being exists and that it is to be admitted in some way: as if it exists as some kind of prior condition or prior determination. As much as we commonly move from the being of individual things that we know about and can individually experience and then, from there, toward an awareness of the being or the reality of all existing things in general (being as a universal determination), from an explanatory metaphysical viewpoint, we can begin from an apprehension of the being of all things in general as a universal determination and then move toward the being or the reality of individually existing things. The comprehensiveness or the universality of God's creative causality immediately points to the reality of a universal term or effect which exists as the attribution or the reality of being. Instead of nothing, we have being. Something exists.

Secondly, as a consequence of creation, all creatures necessarily *depend* on God (as their creator) but not vice versa. The presupposition for there being any kind of change or motion in the world (if change or motion exists as an imperfect or incomplete act which is to be understood as a transition from potentiality to actuality) is not another motion (as if creation were to be viewed as a motion)<sup>188</sup> but an entirely distinct act which is the emergence or the creation of being out of nothing; and since being, as a most general effect, necessarily depends upon God as its universal cause,<sup>189</sup> for this reason, creation,

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without motion or change. In God, no movement or motion or change exists. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 41, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>184</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 2; Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>185</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 5, ad 3. Cf. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 133, n. 63; Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, pp. 39-49.

<sup>186</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 8, a. 1; q. 45, a. 4, ad 1.

<sup>187</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 1.

<sup>188</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 21, 5.

<sup>189</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 21, 3-4; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 65, a. 3.

in its act, not only produces being but, at the same time, it also provides for the continuation or the perpetuation of being in existing things as the proper effect of creation as an ongoing, atemporal species of act.<sup>190</sup> The continuation of being exists in terms of how creation exists in an ongoing, constant kind of way. Can we not notice that, in the context of our own lives, so many conditions need to be met if we are to continue in our individual life and existence and that we are not able to exercise any kind of control which would be entirely complete or adequate? Since the existence of any kind of movement or change *as an incomplete, imperfect act* presupposes the actuality of some kind of act which does not need to be moved but which is complete in itself and which is not lacking in anything (an act which is to be identified with God's creative activity), God's divine creativity is to be identified with an ongoing, enduring act of being which communicates being by establishing and maintaining relations of direct, total dependence.<sup>191</sup> Creatures inescapably exist as creatures because they totally depend and rely on God for their created existence and the acts or operations which they are able to do and maintain in the context of their individual living. Accordingly, it is only by being continually related to God that creatures exist and live.<sup>192</sup> *Sublata causa tollitur effectus*: [hence], when the cause is taken away, the effect is taken away.<sup>193</sup> The lack of potentiality in God's creative activity necessarily accounts for the immediacy of all dependent relations which exist between God as Creator and all creatures which have been created. God does not change or become something or do something that has not yet been done in order to create or to keep things in being since instead, in God's full actuality,<sup>194</sup> as an unmoved mover who is itself unmoved or motionless in exercising its motion or

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190 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 8, a. 1; q. 9, a. 2; q. 104, a. 1; 3a, q. 13, a. 2; *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 4, cited by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 131, n. 59.

191 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 3.

192 Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 131.

193 Bernard Lonergan, "Bernard Lonergan's Draft Pages for Chapter 3 of His Doctoral Dissertation, "*Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Writings of St. Thomas of Aquin*," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 22 (2004): 137. In an accompanying footnote, Lonergan refers to *In I Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 104, a. 1; and *passim*.

194 In a long footnote in *Does God Suffer?*, p. 132, n. 61, Weinandy argues that, in the context of our present life, we cannot understand the nature of how God acts to create anything. As pure act, God does not act by any other act and so the act of creation is to be identified with the pure actuality of God as it exists as pure act. We cannot know in any positive way how this pure act operates since we know that it does not go through any stages that we can identify. God's simplicity as a pure act of self-understanding necessarily precludes any form of analysis which would try to identify any order of constitutive parts or elements. Since divine understanding transcends human understanding in its functioning, we can only speak about divine understanding in a way which recognizes that it lacks any limitations which are found in the structure of human and angelic understanding. From a context that acknowledges God's pure actuality, divine intervention in human affairs is not to be understood as implying any change in God but a change in how created things are related to God as the First Cause of all things. When God acts within the created order in a special way, in a supernatural way, God does not act as if He were another created cause (since God is the author and source of all created causes). Nor does God act through a set of secondary causes through which He has normally or traditionally acted. Instead, God freely acts in another way, in a transcendent way for reasons known only to God and by means of the same act which is God's pure act of being that is itself not understood by us and which cannot be understood by us in the context of a cognitional structure that can only move toward an understanding of things by means of reciprocal relations between things of sense and things of intellect or spirit. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 3, ad 2: "human reason is the rule and



activity,<sup>195</sup> God makes the existence and the life of all other things totally rely on Himself and so the existence and life of any given thing which is not God Himself is an existence and a life that participates in the act of being or the act of existing which is God's being or actuality.<sup>196</sup>

As creatures depend on God however, on the other hand and in a contrary way, it has to be noted that God is related to the created order in a totally different way: as the one who does not belong to the created order and who cannot exist in the same way as anything else.<sup>197</sup> Hence, God is not a being like other beings and in no way can God be understood to exist in this kind of way. In the context of the radical transition which occurs as being comes out of non-being, God and creature immediately relate to each other and they continue to relate to each other in an immediate way but only according to how

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measure of things that are related to human conduct through those principles which naturally belong to our human reason and have been implanted in it, but it is not itself the rule and measure of things which simply exist," my translation. As Aquinas argues his case in different texts, what God does in any context, from a divine viewpoint, is entirely natural and reasonable to God. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2. As Aquinas had argued earlier in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1: "since the order of nature is given to things by God; if God does anything outside this order, it is not against nature." And then, similarly, as we attend to the human order of things (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 6, ad 2), it should be noted that "the order of justice arises by relation to the First Cause [God], Who is the rule of all justice; and therefore God can do nothing against such an order."

<sup>195</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 13, 3-7; *Sententia super Physicam*, 8, 9, 1037-1049; *Super Librum De causis*, prop. 18; *Compendium Theologiae*, cc. 3-4; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3. As Roland Krismer explains how the unmoved or fully actual activity of God's causality accounts for the total dependence of all created things on the primacy of God's governance (in his unpublished paper, "Causality and Grace: Introduction to a Philosophical Understanding of the Non-Contradiction Operative in Cooperative Grace"), a commonsense understanding of motion is to be distinguished from a theoretical or an explanatory understanding of motion which speaks of motion as something which occurs more in an object that is moved than in a mover who initiates any kind of motion or movement. In our ordinary or commonsense understanding of things, a movement occurs as a mover initiates a movement in another. When we roll a ball, it is obvious to us that motion occurs in both the ball that is moved and in ourselves as we move ourselves in a transitive way to effect a change or motion in a ball which now moves from a stationary position, or from a trajectory that had been established by some kind of previous motion. However, as we seek to explain the movement of any proximate agent who has initiated the movement of an object, for an explanation of change or movement, we must postulate a first or *unmoved mover* who initiates movement or change in another without undergoing any kind of change or movement in itself in a shift which transitions from a potential movement to an actual movement. As Aquinas notes in his *Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 4, 303 and in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 110, a. 2, the act of movement or motion exists in the moved. *Actus motus est in mobili*. Or, as Aquinas argues in the *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 2, 592, "the act of an active mover comes to full existence in what is passive to it, not in the agent as such" and so we can begin to understand "why it is not necessary that every mover be itself moved." Cf. Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 545. As Krismer argues, "movement is performed in what is moved." It is not performed in what moves. And so, "the reality of an effect is completely found in the realm of contingent reality." Hence, as the principle of cause and effect is applied to the relation which obtains between contingent, conditioned beings and an unconditioned being which exists in an absolute and total way (which refers to God), while in the relations which obtain among contingent beings, these beings influence each other through instrumental causes that share in the reality of a mover and in the reality of what is also moved

each happens to be and to exist.<sup>198</sup> The relations which exist between them are not mutually reciprocal and never can they be mutually reciprocal. While God, as the “Wholly Other” belongs to a distinct ontological order, the immanence or the createdness of all creatures explains why they must belong to an entirely different ontological order.

Thirdly, since God creates on the basis of no other act other than His own act of existence (from Himself), God’s creative, timeless activity cannot help but be directed toward what is intelligible, true, and good *as accomplishments or ends*.<sup>199</sup> The activity reflects or it mirrors the being. Consequently: all created things should be regarded as inherently, intrinsically good since the goodness of every created thing in their causes and effects always derives from no other origin than God’s own, prior, first

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(*Sententia super Physicam*, 8, 9, 1044), in the relation which exists however between contingent being, on the one hand, and necessary being, on the other hand (which refers to the relation which obtains between created beings and God), instrumental causes cannot be postulated as intermediaries. No principle of mediation can be invoked and identified, and so this principle is replaced by another which speaks about a relation of direct, total dependence. For their life and existence, created reality immediately and directly depends on the life and existence of uncreated reality.

196See Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 136, n. 69; Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, pp. 231-232; and Wright, “Divine Knowledge,” p. 456, for a thorough discussion on why it can be argued that all creatures depend on God for their existence in a real relation which they have with God, a relation which changes them as creatures although, at the same time, this relation effects no changes of any kind in God. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 7; *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 10. The real relation of creatures who must depend on God for their existence does not imply that God depends on creatures for anything because God, as pure act, is not a being who changes or who can be affected in a way which can turn Him into a different kind of being. God needs nothing from anything other than Himself. However, the absence of a mutual real relation or reliance in the relation between God and creatures does not imply that God is related to creatures in a way which is not real in some other, qualified way. On the one hand, and at the opposite extreme, it can be argued that the relation between God and creatures is not a mutually reciprocal, purely logical, notional relationship. It is not a purely logical or notional relation which exists as it is because its terms and relations do not exist purely as products of our human thought as terms of speculative analysis and hypothesis. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 28, a. 1; Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 513-514 on the different classes of distinctions and relations. Purely logical or mental relations (relations of reason) exist only in the mind and in the comparisons which a mind makes between one thing and another; and the terms of such relations, as they are postulated and defined by us in our minds, tend to exist only as abstractions or as theoretical entities. Their meaning does not change unless there is a change of mind or definition which engages in new acts of meaning and definition. A relation, as it exists only in the mind, does not produce changes in the meaning of terms in any kind of ongoing way. Hence, the relation which exists between terms is not real. But, this is not the case in the relation which exists between God and creatures *from the viewpoint of creatures*. God is not a hypothesis nor the creature of a hypothesis. And so, instead of a purely real relation or a purely notional or logical relation, we have a species of relation which is a hybrid or mixed relation. It is not entirely real nor entirely logical or mental. God’s relation to the creation does not exist simply as an idea or hypothesis since divine causality presents itself as an undoubted fact. It is a reality, a reality which is explained by the fact that God, as Creator, is actually related to what He creates but not because of any change which can occur in Him because of any relation but because all created things are “really related to him as he

goodness in a manner which points to a radical meaning for the quality of goodness: the intelligibility of goodness as its fit determination and specification and how goodness exists in a way which is geared to a communicability which essentially belongs to goodness in the fullness of its being and reality (a fullness of being which points to an absence of scarcity and a lack of any kind of meanness). For reasons known only to God (God existing as His own reason),<sup>200</sup> goodness or the being of goodness (as a universal determination) wants to communicate itself to other beings and things in a communicability which transcends any boundaries and limitations.<sup>201</sup> Since the complete goodness of any given, particular thing is always found in its corresponding act of existence and in any commensurate, concomitant activities and receptions which would diffuse and spread the goodness of its being to the being of other beings, God's goodness is such that, similarly, it is not unintelligible to think, imagine, and believe that God's perfect being and goodness should want to communicate itself to as many other things as possible through as many finite acts of creation that are possible which can diffuse something of the being and goodness that properly belongs only to God. And so, as each thing receives its goodness or its perfection from God, its creator, and as each thing (if conscious) desires the perfection of its own being and goodness (understood as its completion or fulfillment), its desires and activities are all ultimately orientated toward God as a pre-existing final end and cause<sup>202</sup> since God's

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exists in himself as *ipsum esse* [being itself]" (quoting Weinandy). Citing Aquinas's own words in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 7, ad 5:

Since God is related to the creature for the reason that the creature is related to Him: and since the relation of subjection is real in the creature, it follows that God is Lord not in idea only, but in reality; for He is called Lord according to the manner in which the creature is subject to Him.

As Lonergan speaks about it his *Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, p. 95, the difference between a real and a notional relation allows us to distinguish between two different kinds of ordination: two different kinds of ordering. An order of things exists from a human viewpoint and an order of things exists from a divine viewpoint. Hence, in Lonergan's own words:

A father, for example, is really related to his son, while the Creator [God] is only conceived [in the mind] as being ordered [and therefore related] to a creature.

A father cannot exist without having a child nor can God as Creator exist without a creation (although God can exist without having to be a Creator). However, in the relation between God and the creatures which God has created, while mutable being relies on immutable being, the converse does not hold.

197 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 7; Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 153.

198 Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 140.

199 Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, pp. 132-133.

200 McCoy, *Intelligent Person's Guide to Catholicism*, p. 27.

201 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 37, 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 2; q. 6, a. 4; 3a, q. 1, a.

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202 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 20, 8; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 44, a. 4, ad 3. As Lonergan explains Aquinas's position in the *Triune God: Systematics*, pp. 671-673, if God is the universal principle and fount of all good which comes to exist and be, and if the good of every individual thing is

attractiveness is such that it draws all things toward Himself as an unrestricted act of goodness and love who can move all other things to Himself by being supremely desirable in Himself in containing, entirely within Himself, the wholeness of all perfection and goodness.<sup>203</sup> If some things are good because of what they can do, some things are good simply because they exist. As the forms of different beings specify different activities which are proper to each of them, every being is united to God through a differing order of participation which depends on the kinds of being which they each properly have and the kind of activities which they can each properly engage in, now at one time and now at another.<sup>204</sup> A created, finite means specifies how a given thing is to be joined to God as the infinite, ultimate, uncreated end of all things. In a way that can be conceptually differentiated through the words that we can use, in God, as both a transcendent source and a transcendent goal, the meaning or nature of goodness and the meaning or nature of every specific form of goodness are both related and grounded in the mystery of an unrestricted act of understanding which is God's own prior act of being and existence in a priority which logically or metaphysically exists apart from any kind of priority which can be said to exist if we should work with the kind of ordering and gradation which belongs to the specificity of temporal determinations.<sup>205</sup>

Fourthly, it has to be also said that God is not compelled to create.<sup>206</sup> God's causality is of a kind that it is absolutely transcendent. It transcends time, the existence of all finite things, and the existence of any kind of causality which thinks in terms whether of necessity or of contingency.<sup>207</sup> If we happen to exist, then, necessarily, we have been created by God but, from a divine perspective, we must speak about an absence of necessity. Or, to state the matter in a different way, God freely creates since, if God were not free as a creator, God would be lacking in every kind of perfection (which cannot be properly said to apply to God).<sup>208</sup> If a human being freely controls his or her own actions (and we say this with a degree of relativity and circumspection), how much more must God be the master and governor of His own actions?<sup>209</sup> God's perfect goodness and love accordingly explains why, for reasons best known to Himself (if we should think about what could be the rationality of goodness and love), God chooses to work through creating causes that are external to Himself: causes which function in a number of different ways. Some are not bound by a kind of fixity or compulsion which allegedly belongs to necessity if we should think about the requirements of an absolute or a strict notion of

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good only to the degree that it participates in God's unrestricted universal goodness, it accordingly follows "that all things desire God by the very fact that they desire any thing in any way." Within all desires for created goodness there exists some kind of unrestricted desire for experiences of uncreated, unrestricted goodness. Cf. Aquinas, Commentary, *II Sentences*, 1, ii, 3, (cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 252, n. 669), where Aquinas apparently notes that all desires for lesser goods implicitly contain a desire which is a longing for something that is a supreme good.

203 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 4, ad 2; q. 6, a. 1, ad 2.

204 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 8; q. 16, a. 3. Aquinas distinguishes between an end which is to be understood as the object itself and an end which is the means used to attain a desired end: the end *for which* versus the end *by which*, *finis-qui* versus *finis-quo*. Cf. Donnelly, "Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation," *Theological Studies*: 76.

205 *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 2.

206 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 23, 1-13; 3, 1, 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 104, a. 3.

207 *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14, 20 & 22; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 281.

208 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 4.

209 Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 41.

necessity.<sup>210</sup> Amidst secondary causes, beyond the operation and the requirements of some causes which exist with a measure of necessity (contingent necessity being other and different than absolute instances of necessity), some causes exist with a greater measure of contingency (more or less). The contingency outweighs the necessity as these causes incorporate an element or a degree of indeterminism (or, in other words, a degree of voluntarism) which exists as the freedom of a given cause since, within the order of their functioning, a given power exists as an active type of potency. It is able to determine alternatives for action and then it can choose between different alternatives, deciding to put this or that into effect. The freedom which is already enjoyed by God exists thus as a freedom which can be also enjoyed and participated in *to some degree* by some of us as God's creatures who, in our understanding and self-reflection, can become aware of the legitimate, limited kind of freedom which properly belongs to us: a freedom which we rightly and lawfully have and possess and which we have been made to exercise according to the kind of form or nature which belongs to us and which, in itself, points to a realization which already belongs to us in a way which, in turn, points to the manner and the quality of our potency (its active and passive aspects). We are receptive in certain ways and active in other ways.

Lastly, fifthly, as God's creative activity is then understood as a function of who God is *as a relation or trinity of differing, distinct persons* (if goodness can only fully exist within the context of some kind of expansive giving or sharing of one's self to another: an unselfish, sacrificial, self-transcendent type of sharing which surpasses and transcends any kind of sharing which could be limited to the sharing between two distinct persons and which, in fact, would best exist if the sharing between two persons can grow in depth and intensity as, together in the solidarity and mutuality of their sharing, they mutually extend themselves in their bonded oneness to a third person or a third party through a heightening of interactive relations which can cause us to question some of our biases and expectations about the nature and meaning of sharing), God's essence as act of being or existence being the same thing as God's inner trinitarian oneness,<sup>211</sup> the result of all this is a fuller understanding of creation which is now able to see how our created order exists in a way which is good and which can become better if and as it reflects the kind of internal, inner dynamic which primordially exists within God. In its own way, in its better and best goodness, our human order is endowed with like traces and signs (with like potencies): with a like form of tripartite relatedness that can be possibly enhanced and encouraged if, more consciously and deliberately, we attend to the kind of good which can only come

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<sup>210</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 11; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14, 22; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 8; cf. q. 22, a. 3. As Aquinas speaks of it in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3, God moves both natural and voluntary causes. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 4, ad 2 & ad 3 which both speak about our acts of human willing as something that is moved by God, God serving as an external agent although God's moving from without does not necessarily conflict with any movement that occurs from within us in our acts of human willing. If a voluntary cause has been created by another cause *as a voluntary cause*, this does not deny the fact that it can freely make decisions on what it should be doing in a given situation. In the same way, the cause of a voluntary cause does not have to be a proximate first or proximate primary cause since other secondary causes can be used to bring other voluntary agents or causes into the order of their existence. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 11, Aquinas notes that, in God's providential government of things, God wills that certain things happen contingently and that, in willing that certain things happen in a contingent way, God's willing does not fail nor can it fail. The freedom and contingency of voluntary causes does not limit what God can do. The opposite is in fact the case.

<sup>211</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 39, a. 1.

from tripartite kinds of interactive sharing. Our human friendships best exist (they best flourish; they are more real and true) if they can be outwardly turned toward others: towards actualizations of good deeds and acts that are extended to third persons or third parties. The extent of our self-giving grows and it deepens through cooperative forms of self-giving and self-donation that, for us, can become more well known and encouraged if, as our supplementary or further, more advanced point of departure, on the basis of a religious ground and perspective, we should attend to a trinitarian understanding of God as this type of self-donation is best found within God's divine inner life: God as the ultimate and paradigmatic point of origin for the being of all later goods as these descend from God and as they enter into the being of all other things.

The inner reality of an interrelating, trinitarian God points to a normative fullness of life and being which, in turn, points to a different notion or to a different kind of self-sufficiency that we can import into the context of our self-considerations and reflections: a sufficiency which rejects a self-regarding, individualistic interpretation of it since, now, it exists as something which is much more communal or which exists on the basis of communal ground which jars with anything that could be conceived to exist in purely individualistic terms.<sup>212</sup> The higher, transcendent context of God exists as a communion which belongs to a triad of three distinct persons as, interiorly, God exists as an unrestricted community of mutual co-presence in a loving and happy sharing that is lacking in nothing, wanting nothing that could be anything other or extraneous.<sup>213</sup> Simply put, God exists as an essentially social being or, in other words, God is known to exist most fully in terms of His reality if He is *conceived* in a way which recognizes how He exists as an essentially communal being. More fully incredible or more fully wondrous then becomes the being of our own created order if it exists as an effect or as a consequence of this grounding communion: if, in fact, it is endowed or it is informed with both a currently functioning order and a potential order which reflects the kind of order which most prominently exists in God: having a dynamic which reflects or which is attuned to the kind of dynamic which happens to exist within God for reasons that we cannot sufficiently grasp or fathom because of how, in fact, we have been made as a conjunction of potency, form, and act: having a limited kind of understanding and a limited kind of willing and in a way which sets us apart from other beings who experience their own

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<sup>212</sup>For purposes of attending to how individualism can be mated with a corporate sense of life, there being no necessary opposition between a sense of individualism with respect to its being and reality and a sense of the primacy of our community bonds and obligations, see Brian Tierney's *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law 1150-1625* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 55-56. It is no easy task to determine how we can come to an understanding of things that begins to think about how some form of necessary complementarity must exist. No individual exists as a naturally given unit. We are born into society as social beings; we are born as needy, dependent beings. Individuality emerges later, within a given social context, and it can flower and grow if a given social context exists in an appropriate way (having a ripe set of conditions). We exist in both kinds of way. Hence, our individuality can become a lesser or a truncated kind of thing and even a self-destructive kind of thing if we are lacking in an appropriate social context and environment: if we find that we are bereft of the love and help of family and friends as those who are closest to us can possibly respond to us in ways that can provoke us toward greater degrees of self-knowledge which, in turn, can add to the greatness or to the personality of our human individuality as this individuality moves from some form of initial self-centeredness toward how it can exist, for others, as an emanating source of wisdom, goodness, and love.

<sup>213</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 32, a. 1, ad 3; q. 44, a. 4 & ad 1. Cf. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, pp. 142-143.

acts of knowing and willing.

Plumbing the depths of the wonder of God's creation accordingly more fully manifests itself to us when the relations that are constitutive of God's inner life are attended to in terms of how they can be understood to exist as an ordering of *distinct causes* (though we work with an array of conceptual distinctions and not with an ordering of real distinctions since the causality of any given divine person is to be equated with the kind of causality which simply belongs to God where, here, our point of departure would be the oneness or the substantial unity of God's unique being). In some way, thus, the order of God's inner relations is reflected in the ordering of God's creative causal manifestations, present in God's creation (as these manifestations move into the created order of things which exist in space and time): in all the different operations that are constitutive of God's creative, creating acts (as, from our side, we experience these different acts), and as these acts can be found to exist within the common structure, order, or form that belongs to the intelligibility of all existing, created things (if, for instance, we advert to how all created things exist with a lack of simplicity, a complexity, that can itself vary although, for us as human beings, we exist in terms of potency, form, and act where each component is joined to the other, each having an orientation that is turned and directed toward the other).<sup>214</sup> The processions of the divine persons within the Trinity can be distinguished as an order of implication, attraction, and derivation as, in turn, they bring the created order of things into the fullness of their own participative existence with and through the agency of created, secondary acts of cooperation that, in turn, add to the being and the life of each created thing.<sup>215</sup> A created thing exists in a more splendid way if it exists as both a passive and active thing. It is able to receive and it is also able to do and make. And so, as we move from a transcendent kind of flow and origin which exists within God (within God's being), it can be rightly argued (with a greater degree of perceptive understanding) that, surely, the coming, the emergence, or the "procession of creatures depends upon the processions of the divine persons."<sup>216</sup> Created processions resemble uncreated processions. They reflect uncreated processions since something of God as God and God as creator exists in what God has created and in what God is currently now creating and effecting. Temporal processions existing within the created order of things are to be understood or they are best understood from a viewpoint which can and which must also speak about how eternal processions are to be adverted to in terms of how they exist within God.<sup>217</sup> On the one hand, a differentiated understanding of these distinctions, as these exist within God, is approached by us (it is known and formulated by us) as, within our created world, we work with our experience of material, conceptual, and real distinctions. Then, on the other hand, our analogical understanding of distinctions, as these exist within God, in turn points to differences and distinctions within the created order of things that can become more well known and understood and so, as they are understood and known, more fully appreciated. They can be cooperatively loved or perhaps, by us, they can be loved for the first time.

Hence, with respect *per se* to God's divine decision and God's divine willing to create and make things

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214 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 6 & ad 2. Cf. Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. pp. 59-60; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 169.

215 *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 6, ad 1. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 20, 4. Citing one example taken from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 13, 3494, as Torrell cites it in his *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 67 [cf. 4, 13, 10 in the O'Neil translation]: "things are pre-existent in God according to the mode of the Word himself."

216 Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 228.

217 *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 1.

from a condition of nothingness: at one level admittedly, creation presents itself to us as something which is unnecessary and superfluous. God does not need to do anything by realizing anything that could be more or greater than Himself, or to become something more than how God already is and exists. However, at another level, if the created order of things comes from God, it should not be understood to exist as if it were entirely superfluous since, somehow, it proceeds and it comes from a knowledge and love which God already has fully in abundance within Himself but which, for transcendent reasons of love that necessarily transcend our understanding of them, He nonetheless wishes to share with as many other beings as possible: beings all lesser than Himself that God freely brings into being.<sup>218</sup> As we have already been suggesting and indicating, inherent goodness (as we think about it as a quality and as we seem to find it in other beings and persons) – this inherent, indwelling quality of goodness possesses a mysterious, radiating, self-diffusive kind of self-communicating nature and act.<sup>219</sup> Goodness is goodness. It exists as an ultimate. If in the wording of an argument we try to speak about it as if it were a conditional necessity: hence, if goodness is goodness, its self-diffusiveness is such that it must express itself through the care and the solicitude of a loving kind of attention and concern and through a set of fulfilling, enabling acts. These, as love, initiate or they point to a certain type of outward, self-transcending shift and movement within the consciousness of loving subjects (whether they be divine, angelic, or human)<sup>220</sup> and so we can say that this dynamic (or this momentum) accounts for the expressive goodness of God's operations which, from our side (or according to one conceptualized order of it), initially begins with God's free acts of creation,<sup>221</sup> and which then ends or which culminates with an order of other divine, free acts that intend a mysterious kind of bettering and improvement which exists as our human sanctification in a perfecting of created things which, from within their potency or because of their potency, these created things are not able to effect by themselves (through their own means and by solely relying on an alleged sufficiency which would seem to belong to us in our acts of inquiry and understanding, willing and doing).<sup>222</sup>

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218 *De Divinis Nominibus*, IV, lect. 9, para. 409, as cited by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 143, n. 84.

219 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 37, 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 4, obj. 2; 3a, q. 1, a. 1.

220 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 20, 3.

221 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 20, 2.

222 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 2. In order to speak about how the inner life of God serves as an efficient cause to bring the created order into being and about how this same inner life serves as a final or redemptive cause which brings this same created order into a full, eternal union with God, Torrell in his *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 60, quotes a passage from an earlier work by Aquinas, from the *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2, which had noted as follows:

Just as we have been created by the Son and the Holy Spirit, so are we united by them to our final end. This was already Augustine's thinking when he evoked *the Beginning to which we return*, which is to say the Father; *the Model which we follow*, namely the Son; and *the Grace that reconciles us* [the Holy Spirit]. In the same fashion, Saint Hilary speaks of the *unique non-beginning and the beginning of everything to which all things are linked through the Son*.

Later, in the same text, in the *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 2, Aquinas argues that God manifests or communicates his presence within the created order of things in



In purely human terms, as we work with an analogy that we can exploit with respect to the goodness of created things (however limited is this goodness), and when we notice that, when any kind of goodness exists within a given thing, it naturally and normally wants to communicate itself freely to other beings in a way which is itself good: in order to move toward a better understanding of things, a Trinitarian causality needs to be postulated if we are to think not only about God's free creation of things but also about the ongoing sustenance and aid that God supplies and gives for keeping the created order of things in a condition of being in a way which points to how, within conditions of space and time and the limitations of space and time, something can always endure and become better. Something can

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three ways: through a similarity to Him that is effected by means of acts of being or existence when living and non-living beings are simply brought into being; then, through spiritual acts or operations which are given to created rational beings (to angels and men) who can receive the gifts of God's grace that are bestowed on them and which enable them to be united to the reality of God's being (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 25-63; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 2; q. 12, aa. 4-5; q. 62, aa. 1-2; Lonergan, *Incarinate Word*, p. 221; p. 364); and then, through the creation or emergence of a being who, as an incarnate being, unites a divine nature with a human nature to produce a God-man who is also a creature and who is able to live within human history in a way which had not been done before by God. Through a form of personal intervention, God exists in Christ's incarnation and more fully than through any other created means. Cf. Lonergan, *Incarinate Word*, p. 290.

God's creation of things, as it moves toward the creation of more complex beings, thus employs created means as a way to effect a perfection of things which the created order is not able to give to itself. Cf. Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, pp. 69-72; citing also the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 8, a. 3, ad 4; p. 71, n. 48. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 6, a. 1, ad 1, this point is reiterated where Aquinas speaks about a double connection or relation between God and creatures. As creatures come from God, on the one hand, "God touches all things immediately in causing and preserving them." However, as creatures are moved to return to God and as they begin to return to God in a way which respects their freedom, they are led to God through a differing set of mediating causes which serve as intermediaries, causes which God has created and which He employs although the most important cause is Christ's incarnation as Christ enters into the human order of things in order to effect changes within the same order that the created order is not able to effect by its own means which, because they are created, are always finite, partial, and limited. However, through gifts of grace which only God can bestow, the understanding of created intellects is able to receive forms or meanings which normally belong only to God as God's own species, nature, or essence. A form is immediately received by human beings without the necessity of having to use any intermediary because of a proffered form of knowing which is supernatural, and which refers to a beatific vision in a seeing, an understanding, or a knowing that supernaturally elevates the actuation of understanding within the understanding of created beings and which thus communicates to them a happy, infinite meaningfulness (that properly only belongs to God's own being or essence) which, in turn, casts a new light on the meaning of all things that are encountered in the ambit of our experience and knowledge.

A light of glory transcends a strictly created, natural light which refers to the light of our human understanding and whose form is strictly proportionate to our acts of understanding as these are elicited by created acts of meaning that are revealed to us through the many different acts of consciousness which are constitutive of our human inquiry and the varied processes of our acts of

improve. Something new can possibly emerge and exist.<sup>223</sup> Unexpectedly, change occur. Something can be given to us in ways that transcend any kind of personal immanent control that we could be exercising or wanting to exercise.<sup>224</sup> We already know that a sharing, communicating goodness already exists within God as, in an ongoing ever constant way, God the Son proceeds from God the Father as a Word which exists as the intelligible term of God's self-transcending act of understanding (cited also as God's emanating "conception of God" or as the emanating "intended intention of God"<sup>225</sup>). Goodness always exists in understanding whether we refer to God in terms of understanding or how we exist as understanding subjects. We are changed from our potencies through our acts of understanding and the reception which exists in our acts of understanding. However, God's goodness exists as an even greater thing and it is known to exist as a far greater, larger thing as we attend to how God the Holy Spirit proceeds from a love that is grounded in the knowledge and familiarity which Father and Son each have of each other and in the love which God has of Himself.<sup>226</sup> The created order can then be understood in a way which points to how, in its own way, it emerges as a structured communication of this self-diffusing understanding and this self-diffusing loving as this exists in God. From the proceeding of God's Word in understanding comes the form or the intelligibility of all created things which are all known by God through the understanding and knowledge which God the Father

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human reasoning (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, aa. 4-6; 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 8; q. 5, a. 5). Later, and more fully, through an incarnation which occurs in Christ which leads to a sacrificial, saving death and which ends in a glorious, bodily resurrection, a perfection is communicated to human beings which can now include both the perfection of our souls and the perfection of our bodies *joined together*. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 15, a. 10; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 239. The resurrection of Christ's body, as a union of form and matter (as a union of soul and body), adds a completeness to the salvation that is being offered to human beings that it would not otherwise have. As Christ's passion effects a forgiveness of sins which leads to a justification of sinners before God (the beginnings of a new life with God), similarly, as a primary efficient cause, Christ's resurrection effects a new way of living by means of a life of grace that brings our justification to a happy completion. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 79, 2; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 239; *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 53, a. 1; q. 56, a. 1; q. 56, a. 2, ad 4; q. 62, a. 5, ad 3; *Super Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos Lectura*, c. 4 lect. 6 (380), cited by Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 177, n. 15. The redemption of the human race (in the kind that is offered by Christ) cannot be separated from the resurrection of Christ's body nor from the possible resurrection of our own bodies and the resurrection of our souls since Christ's resurrection, as a forerunner, prepares the way for our individual, personal resurrections. It acts as both an efficient cause and an exemplary cause. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 56, a. 2; q. 53, a. 1, ad 3. It leads to the resurrection of other human beings, and it reveals the glory which awaits any of us who try to pattern our lives on the basis and model of Christ's own life: an example that is given through a form of loving self-sacrifice which is the best kind of response that can be possibly given as we encounter the mystery of sin and evil. Cf. *Compendium theologiae*, c. 239; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, pp. 311-312.

223 *Lectura super Ioannem* 5, 17, lect. 2, n. 740, quoted by Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 76, n. 61.

224 For an example of this kind of thing, see how in Fr. Henryk Maria Malak's *Shavelings in Death Camps: A Polish Priest's Memoir of Imprisonment by the Nazis, 1939-1945*, trans. Bozena J. Tucker and Thomas R. Tucker (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012), pp. 235-241, an unexpected visitor comes to see him and to talk to him in ways that change his life, giving it a new direction.

225 Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 57.

226 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 93, a. 8.

perpetually has of God the Son (who can therefore be understood as metaphorically the “firstborn,”<sup>227</sup> or as the first principle of every creature); and then from the mutual knowing and loving of Father and Son comes an eternal proceeding of the Holy Spirit whose selfless love accounts, among other things, for the gratuity and the freedom of God’s creative activity (why things exist instead of nothing at all).<sup>228</sup> Like the Son, but in His own way, the Holy Spirit also functions as a first principle for the creation of all existing things.<sup>229</sup> In the created order, all things possess constituent forms and they engage in activities which, ideally, best suit their forms, striving toward ends that are being loved and desired,<sup>230</sup> and so, in this way, all created beings finitely reflect, whether faintly or not so faintly, attributes and properties that only fully and properly exist within a life which God already has entirely within Himself.<sup>231</sup> God’s acts of creating reflect the freedom of God’s loving which is expressed outwardly through a prior creating which founds the existence of time and history. The processions of knowing and loving which already exist within the Trinity reveal like processions in the created order of things as meaning and goodness are both implanted in a related way in the life of all created things through the knowing and loving which already exists within God’s trinitarian self.<sup>232</sup>

To conclude: as God creates in a trinitarian way, in a manner which reflects a trinitarian order of divine persons, in terms of response and the proper order of their responses, God’s creatures are in turn related

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227Thomas Aquinas, *In ad Colossenses* I, 15, lect. 4, n. 35, cited by Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, pp. 148-149, n. 79.

228*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 32, a. 1, ad 3; cf. Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 62.

229*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 20, 2, cited by Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 162, n. 29.

230*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 6.

231*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3; q. 4, aa. 2-3; q. 3, a. 8 & ad 1; q. 45, a. 7; q. 93, a. 2; q. 93, a. 6; Lamb, *Commentary*, pp. 288-289, n. 82. In his *Aquinas*, vol. 2, pp. 65-66, nn. 28-32, Torrell cites many different texts by Aquinas which refer to “vestiges” of the Trinity in the created order of things (“vestiges” as distinct from “images” of the Blessed Trinity which cannot be found within the created order of things). While, admittedly, we do not move from a knowledge of created things toward belief in God as Trinity, belief in the Trinity becomes a basis for finding signs and features in the created order of things which suggest the reasonableness of our belief in the truth and the reality of a Trinitarian God. Quoting one passage that is cited by Torrell from Aquinas’s *Lectura super Ioannem* 1, 10, lect. 5, n. 136: “the whole world is nothing other than a vast representation of the divine Wisdom in the mind of the Father.” On the other hand and in addition, as we also attend to the life of rational creatures and the processions of intellect and will which we uniquely find in them (as we speak about *rational processions* which exist within the created order of things), we no longer speak about “vestiges” but about “images” and the fact that each of us is created in a way which reflects a divine image within our human nature. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 93, aa. 2-4. Man is made in God’s image. In the created processions of intellect and will which exist within our human experience, we can begin to find an image within our human nature which points to uncreated processions of intellect and will which are constitutive of God as a Trinity of divine persons. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 7; q. 93, a. 6; q. 93, a. 8 & ad 1; Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 133. Certain acts of understanding and willing more readily reveal a created divine image within us than the experience of other acts of understanding and willing.

232*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 37, a. 2, ad 3.

to God in a like trinitarian way.<sup>233</sup> Each creature, and every human being most especially,<sup>234</sup> through the life of the human spirit or the life of the human soul,<sup>235</sup> we can each relate to God in a way which observes that, in some special way, the life or the procession of each divine person (within God) is correlated or it is to be correlated to the life of each human person in the activities which are proper to each of us in our human living: through our human acts of understanding and willing. Human persons can relate to each person in the Trinity in a manner which is appropriate to our being and God's divine being and to the operations which properly belong to each and as we remember that God's divine being is to be correlated with God's divine activity. The initial dependence of human beings on God for reasons of existence can grow in meaning and amplitude when, as human persons, through growth in our knowledge and love,<sup>236</sup> and through the practice of our religion, we can be assumed into the inner life of the Trinity, and as we begin to participate in the understanding and loving which already exists in the Trinity in the relations that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit enjoy in the context of their blessed communion.<sup>237</sup> From the love which God freely gives through a manifold and an ordering of different gifts, a context is created for a loving kind of response that can freely proceed from all the rational creatures which God has created.<sup>238</sup> From God as Creator only good things exist.

#### God and Evil: How does Evil Fit in or How do God and Evil Relate?

Let us move through an order of derivative implications. First, as our initial premiss as we move into God's willing from the context of God's understanding: if, from God, only good things exist and nothing which is evil can participate or belong to God as God exists in Himself, how can we now speak

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<sup>233</sup>Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, pp. 140-2, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 34, a. 3; q. 37, a. 2, ad 3.

<sup>234</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 93, a. 4 & ad 1. As Aquinas simply states in a. 4: "man is said to be to the image of God by reason of his intellectual nature."

<sup>235</sup>Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 87.

<sup>236</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 43, a. 3:

For God is in all things by His essence, power, and presence, according to His one common mode, as the cause existing in the effects which participate in His goodness. Above and beyond this common mode, however, there is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover. And since the rational creature by its operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode God is said not only to exist in the rational creature, but also to dwell therein as in His own temple.

<sup>237</sup>Aquinas, *In II ad Cor. III*, 18, lect. 3, nn. 114-5, quoted by Torrell, *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 89, n. 22. As what is understood exists in an act of understanding (*intellectum in intelligente*), by this means, as human beings, we can participate in the procession of God the Word within the Trinity (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 27, a. 1 & a. 3; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 37), and as what is loved exists in our acts of loving (*amatum in amante*), by this means, as human beings, we can also participate in the procession of the Holy Spirit as this also exists within the Trinity (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 27, a. 3; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 45); Wilkins, p. 9.

<sup>238</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 38, a. 1.

about God and the mysteriousness of evil as this relates to God? How to speak about God as the Creator of all things and, yet, the being or the existence of evil even as we know that, with respect to the existence of all evil things, an absence of being is to be alluded to? We commonly say in encountering evil that something unreal exists. Hence, as our starting point, if we have concluded (and rightly) that the being of things is to be correlated with the intelligibility of things (and not with the sensibility of things), and if we have concluded that God's divine knowing is to be correlated with apprehensions of intelligibility and with the being of intelligible things (unrestricted intelligibility exists as the term of God as an unrestricted act of understanding), then God's knowledge of evil (or God's knowledge of anything which could be lacking any meaning or intelligibility) can only occur indirectly: through a knowing which first knows things through apprehensions of meaning and intelligibility before it can know anything which could be lacking in any degree of meaning or intelligibility.<sup>239</sup> A purely logical or an ideational distinction is to be drawn within God's knowledge between a knowledge of one and a knowledge of the other<sup>240</sup> (given the absence of any temporality within God, or the absence within God of a relation between cause and effect) since the basis of this distinction is a knowing which directly experiences meaning and intelligibility versus a knowing which can never exist *as a knowing* since no form of knowing is able to directly experience a meaning or an intelligibility which is itself the absence or the privation of any meaning or intelligibility. Reiteratively, as we have been finding and knowing, an intrinsic link exists between understanding and intelligibility (knowledge and truth) and, because this is so, God's knowledge of evil can only exist in an oblique fashion, as a consequential derivative: through a knowledge of the being of good things within which a privative evil can exist because of a deprivation or a privation of some kind which exists within the operation and functioning of a given thing (a privation which can exist within the goodness of an existing reality) which, as an existing thing, cannot be regarded as itself bad or evil. It exists, in fact, as a good.<sup>241</sup> The absence of intelligibility in the existence of a good thing exists as a kind of potency: albeit, a material potency. God's causal knowing necessarily relies or it exists as a direct kind of knowing which belongs to the immediacy of an unrestricted act of understanding which is necessarily fully joined and united with everything that is entirely intelligible, reasonable, and good. The indirectness of God's knowledge of evil accordingly explains why the unrestrictedness of divine understanding is a facility, act, or quality that cannot be applied to anything which cannot be understood since what cannot be understood lacks all inherent meaning or intelligibility. Evil, as it exists in itself as an absence or privation of intelligibility,<sup>242</sup> accordingly and necessarily exists as an

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<sup>239</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 71, 16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 10.

<sup>240</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 7. See also q. 28, a. 1. Aquinas distinguishes here between relations which exist only in the mind and relations which also exist in reality (beyond or outside our minds). In real relations, a change in one term normally affects a change in the other and so the relation itself changes (although, sometimes, a change in one makes no change in the other although the relation between the two is still changed; see Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 130, n. 52: in a "Cambridge change," one man can become shorter because another man has grown taller but the man who is now shorter has not himself changed). However, in an ideational or in a notional relation, a relation is grasped by the mind between two or more things but the grasping effects no change in whatever is being understood. In such a situation, no term is changed by a relation which only exists within a mind. Cf. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 130 & p. 136, n. 69.

<sup>241</sup>*De Malo*, q. 1, a. 1; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 71, 15; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 117; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9.

<sup>242</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 7, 1-12: "privation is not an essence."

unknowable, unfathomable thing.<sup>243</sup> Hence, as an absence or privation of goodness,<sup>244</sup> it only fully manifests itself in finite acts or operations which occur in secondary causes, or in secondary acts, or in secondary operations<sup>245</sup> but which should not be performed because they cannot be reconciled with the intelligibility of a thing's proper form which specifies a thing's proper operations (its proper acts: activities and receptions).<sup>246</sup> Hence, in this sense, as sin or evil is understood to exist as an absence of intelligibility which implies an absence of being or reality,<sup>247</sup> it is possible to speak in only a loose and an indirect fashion about restrictions or limitations (of a kind) in the range of God's divine understanding despite the unrestrictedness of God who exists *per se* as an unrestricted act of understanding.

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243*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 10, ad 4. If knowledge is understood in a purely metaphorical way (in a specifically non-technical, inexact way), we can speak about possibly moving toward an understanding or knowledge of evil if we move toward such an understanding through an understanding of things that are good and not evil. Evil is to be understood as the opposite or contrary of good in a context which acknowledges the fact that “the meaning of evil depends on the meaning of good” (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1, as cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 164, n. 462; also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 11, 1-7). Here “the good” refers not specifically to any fully actualized concrete goods but to goods which exist within our minds in the order of understanding and judgment. If evil is the privation or absence of some kind of good which a given thing should have but which, in fact, it does not have because of a missing or deficient operation (a thing's perfection is given in its operations), it can be understood through apprehensions of mind which directly experience the meaning and truth of things through understanding the forms and actualities of things. As Aquinas had spoken of it (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 17, a. 4, ad 2), “every evil is founded in some good, and every falsity in some truth.” In the same vein, in the *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 117, Aquinas had noted that good exists as a greater or more real thing than evil since not every good can be corrupted and destroyed by evil operations. The possible reception of a meaning or form on the part of anything is itself a good and so also is a form which can be received by any given thing since form denotes a principle of intelligibility which can exist only as a meaning or an intelligibility. A thing's form specifies its proper operations (its perfections) and so it indirectly specifies what operations should be regarded as evil because they are operations which cannot lead to a thing's perfection. They violate a thing's form which indicate what a thing should be in terms of its acts or realizations. A thing's existence is always itself a good but what a thing does is not always good. Good thus exists as a first principle. It exists *per se* and so it cannot be totally destroyed or obliterated by evil (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 4) which exists as a secondary principle because it is a perversion or a distortion of what is already a good. Evil exists *per accidens*. It is necessarily a “by-product” (*De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 6, ad 3, as cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 168, n. 470) of the human desire for good things. More specifically, it is an attachment to an improper end (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1, ad 2) which is an activity of some kind which is introduced into the structure of our human willing as an intermediate or instrumental end which then acts to disorder our human acts of willing (ad 3) in a way which destroys the goodness of our human acts of willing since what is being desired as an intermediate end is something which should not be desired although it is desired because of an intimate connection which is believed or seen to exist between its attainment and the attainment of a related desired good which, in its own right, is a good (even if it is desired and sought through actions which are not good but evil). In the evil of moral fault which acts from within us as human persons, sin presents itself as a form of evil with a less broad significance.

244*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1 & ad 1; a. 3. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 6, 1.

Secondly or conversely, since God cannot know anything which is evil, it cannot be said that God is directly responsible for the existence of any evil which exists in the world, nor for the existence of any kind of suffering which exists as a particular specification of evil: as this is initially experienced (by us as human beings) through a consciousness of shame or guilt (as we and others realize that we are liable to receive justly deserved punishments that we properly merit as a consequence of our wrongdoing, our sin)<sup>248</sup> and which, as a punishment or penalty that is justly inflicted,<sup>249</sup> is to be understood as both a loss,<sup>250</sup> a deprivation, or a contradiction,<sup>251</sup> and yet too as a good because of the intelligibility which exists in the meting and reception of just punishments although always admittedly, in punishment, a good is taken unwillingly from us as culpable subjects because of some sort of prior evil which has

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Please note that in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 7, 2 and the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 3, Aquinas refers to absences of good which are not privations but negations where, for instance, a being is not evil or it does not suffer from an evil because it does not possess a good that belongs to something else. An absence of good which specifically refers to an evil refers to an operation which a given thing should properly have but which, in fact, it does not have. In this general sense only, “privation [evil] is negation in a subject (ad 2).” Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 6, 1-20; 7, 6; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 117. When a subject is not able to engage in an operation or in an activity that normally belongs to it, it suffers from a physical or psychological evil, a defect in its constitution as a doer or agent which, for some reason, in some manner, has been inflicted on it from without. But, when a subject is able to engage in an operation or activity which normally belongs to it and when it deliberately and willingly directs its operations or activities towards ends or purposes which cannot be said to rightly order the operations that are directed toward them, a subject engages in a culpable act. The evil of fault (*malum culpae* or *peccatum*) emerges as a moral problem, as a transgression which occurs within a person and, in this evil, sin exists. Cf. *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 119.

245 *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 141

246 *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 117.

247 *De Aeternitate Mundi contra Murmurantes*, 3. As Gregory M. Reichberg refers to Aquinas in his “Beyond Privation: Moral Evil in Aquinas's *De Malo*,” pp. 758-759, as cited by Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 95, n. 72, Reichberg claims that Aquinas simply reiterates an insight of St. Augustine who had postulated that “sin is a non-being.” *Peccatum est nihil*.

248 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 5, ad 2.

249 *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 4.

250 *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 174.

251 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 6; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, cc. 121-2. Cf. Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 332. If we try to distinguish suffering as an evil from the existence of any other kind of evil, while, in an active or proactive sense, it is true that persons can and do frequently bring suffering onto themselves whenever they do wrong or commit sin (a suffering which presents itself as some form of due punishment and which is often experienced as a guilt that burdens the soul and that lingers as a weight on the human conscience until adequate expiation is rendered (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 23, a. 3, ad 2), since suffering is to be understood as essentially a consequence of evil whenever evil things happen or occur, suffering is to be understood as something which is somehow received or brought upon or into ourselves. Suffering, as a species of evil, is more a reception or a passion that is undergone by a person who suffers than it is something which a person directly does. Persons suffer because of the evil which others do; or they bring suffering on themselves whenever they themselves sin; or they suffer when disruptions occur in the natural order of things either through accidents or

come to pass in the conduct of our lives.<sup>252</sup> We undergo experiences of hurt that are felt, either through the reception of bodily pain or through an experience of grief and sorrow that is received into our souls [in our subjectivity and consciousness of self],<sup>253</sup> even if we can also properly and rightly argue that the deprivation which exists in our suffering does not necessarily destroy us as persons as we experience our experiencing,<sup>254</sup> whether the suffering is justly or unjustly merited.

As a general principle thus that we can affirm, of God's understanding cannot turn in the direction of evil, God's "will cannot turn in the direction of evil."<sup>255</sup> Since God, as fully in act, is perfectly good and since, as the source of all goodness and order, God is totally lacking in any evil or disorder, it is not

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through the occurrence of natural disasters.

In the *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 4 and the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 5, Aquinas distinguishes between the evil of pain, penalty, or punishment and the evil of moral evil or sin, by noting that sin comes with deficiencies, defects, or faults in the operations of self-determining agents (sin as it can exist in the spiritual or moral life of human beings and angels) while the pain or penalty of suffering as a punishment (which obstructs and frustrates the will of free agents with respect to their desires and inclinations) is explained by a deficiency or the subtraction of a form which derogates from the meaning of our existence as we have traditionally understood it. Our life, for some strange reason, has lost its intelligibility. Cf. Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 366. The evil which is proper to men and angels as free creatures (not governed by instinct) divides into the evil of sin and the evil of punishment. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 4. The experience of pain as a contrariety can be distinguished either as a form of physical suffering or as a form of mental or psychological anguish which can be experienced through experiences of sorrow or guilt that can directly afflict a soul (in contrast with the kind of pain that directly afflicts a body). Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 35, a. 2; q. 39, a. 4, ad 3; 3a, q. 18, a. 6, ad 3. Where physical pain as *dolor* refers to external, bodily hurts which are experienced in bodily perceptions of injury that are consciously experienced and which detract from any experiences of pleasure, sorrow or sadness as *tristitia* refers to the being of inner, psychological hurts (*De Veritate*, q. 26, a. 3; q. 26, a. 9; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 35, a. 2; q. 37, a. 1, ad 3) which detract from a sense of well being that is experienced in joy and which, in turn, act within our personal lives to lower the level of our bodily activities as a troubled soul stifles initiatives which can employ different bodily functions and operations (q. 37, a. 2; a. 4; q. 38, a. 1). Where sorrow is experienced as the privation of a spiritual good which is experienced as a deprivation (q. 36, a. 1), guilt emerges as a special kind of sorrow because it is the experience of a culpable awareness: an awareness of certain actions which could have been properly avoided. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 81, a. 1. Guilt suggests which actions come under our human control, and in order to avoid harming the life of our souls in ways which could lead us to fresh experiences of justly merited guilt, we best serve our highest good by willingly undergoing physical pain and suffering rather than endure lack of peace within the depths of our inner, conscious lives (in the life of our souls). Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 35, a. 7 & ad 2. In contrast to the pains of sense, the sorrows that are experienced within our understanding and knowledge threaten always to remain and to endure and relief from this kind of suffering is less easily arrived at.

<sup>252</sup>*De Malo*, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>253</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 26, a. 3, ad 9; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 39, a. 1. As Aquinas argues in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 89, 6-9 and in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 2, ad 2, pain and sorrow are to be understood as passions which properly belong to beings that are lacking in some kind



possible to argue that God can create or sustain anything that, in itself, is evil, bad, or disordered.<sup>256</sup> Hence, “God cannot be directly the cause of sin [the kind of evil which exists where moral faults or moral defects exist].”<sup>257</sup> At best, God can only be regarded as the cause of sin to the degree that a sin is reduced or it exists as just an act or an operation which simply happens to exist.<sup>258</sup> *Deus operatur in omni operante...* God operates in everything that operates.<sup>259</sup> Acts of murder suppose acts of killing and not all acts of killing exist as acts of murder. Hence, to the degree that an act or an operation is defective or lacking in some kind of way as it fails to fully function as a right and proper cause of things (sin as the absence or the “privation of order in an act”<sup>260</sup>), God cannot be properly regarded as directly responsible for committing a sinful act or engaging in some kind of sinful deed.<sup>261</sup>

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of way: beings who can experience pain, beings who can become sorrowful. When evil exists within beings as a privation or when they experience evil as the *privation* of a desired good which frustrates one or more of our inclinations, the suffering of pain or sorrow which exists within the consciousness of such beings emerges as a consequent *deprivation*. But, since no evil or privation exists within God, it cannot be said that any kind of suffering or passion exists within God even if this lack of suffering or passion does not mean that God is lacking in compassion [*miseratio*] and concern for the suffering of any of His creatures that God has brought into being. As Aquinas later notes in the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 30, a. 2, ad 1: “God takes pity on us through love alone.” He does not take pity on us because of any defect which exists within God but for reasons of pure love, the pure actuality of God’s love, which manifests itself in certain effects that indicate how, in God, we can properly find mercy and compassion (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 91, 16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 1, ad 2; q. 21, a. 3). Or, to speak of God’s compassion in another way which attends to God not as a pure act of goodness and love but as a pure act of understanding, God’s compassion for human suffering exists “through understanding alone”... and so “God, without any passion, understands our misery” (Aquinas, *Super ad Heb.* II, lect. 4, para. 153, quoted by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 204, n. 60). In the same way, God’s anger and ire does not exist as a passion or reception but as a repugnance and aversion which God in some way knows and possesses through His understanding of things and which is made known to us through certain effects for which God alone is responsible and which is to be understood as a function of God’s fully complete, actualizing love. Anger in God exists as a purely rational antipathy since the actuality of God’s understanding and love for all good things is such that it implies a divine dislike of anything that could harm anything that God has made and which God loves in desiring every good thing for every good thing that He has made. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 47, a. 1, ad 1; Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, pp. 79-80; *Does God Suffer?*, pp. 165-166. As Aquinas writes when speaking about God’s mercy in his commentary on the Psalms (*In Psalmos*, xxiv, 8, quoted by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 167, n. 46):

Compassion is in God when he repels the distress of any particular being.

A proper meaning for God’s compassion, mercy, and anger is to be always distinguished from a proper meaning of these things as this applies to us as human beings. Since the only attributes which can be properly applied to God are those which imply no imperfection in God, and since attributes such as love and joy imply no imperfections of any kind (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 1, ad 2), divine compassion, mercy, and anger are to be understood as strict functions of a love and joy that knows no bounds. Although no human action or sin is able to hurt or harm God (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 47, a. 1, ad 1; q. 73, a. 8, ad 2), when divine anger or vengeance is spoken about in relation to sin, it is

Thirdly, to account for the existence of evil within the divine scheme of things (as this falls within the order of God's governing providence), some other kind of explanation needs to be invoked and this explanation appears to be a judgment which should acknowledge the fact that, in the context of an unrestricted understanding and knowledge which alone belongs to God (an understanding which is mysterious because it cannot be comprehended by us through our finite, human acts of understanding),<sup>262</sup> and which is conceptually expressed through the mediation of an uncreated eternally existing law, God has judged it best in His wisdom, justice, and love that it would be best to allow evil to exist in all of its mysteriousness and deficiencies (often and typically as a consequence of the evil of sin) rather than not to allow it at all,<sup>263</sup> since, as a result, the effect would be a world where it is somehow possible to convert evil into good or to draw good out of evil in a way which is admittedly

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to be understood as something which exists in an entirely different way from what anger or vengeance is as it commonly pertains to us as human beings (*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 15, a. 9). Only a metaphorical meaning is to be understood or, better still, God's hatred and dislike of sin is to be understood as a function of God's love for every good thing. God always acts out of love and not from any basis that is grounded in love's negation. When a metaphorical meaning for anger is lodged with respect to God, the explanation is a parallel with the consequences of our human anger. When men are angry, they punish and "so when God punishes he is said to be angered." Cf. Lamb, *Commentary*, p. 299, n. 131, citing the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2; q. 59, a. 4, ad 1.

254 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, aa. 5-6. Cf. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 160.

255 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 3, ad 3.

256 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 1; Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 153.

257 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 1.

258 *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 49, a. 2, ad 2. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 8.

Hence, for Aquinas, the "first cause of evil is good, not evil." Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 5. Whenever an evil act possesses any goodness in it, it is because there is something of being or reality which exists in a given act. Adultery is wrong but there is nothing wrong *per se* about the union of male and female in the act of sex and so this union can lead to another reality or good which is the good of our subsequent human generation (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 1, ad 3). As Aquinas so beautifully states it in q. 49, a. 2, ad 2:

...whatever there is of being and action in a bad action, is reduced to God as the cause; whereas whatever defect is in it is not caused by God, but by the deficient secondary cause.

See what Aquinas says in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 for how this question can be perhaps discussed from another perspective. Here, Aquinas distinguishes between the natural existence of an act or operation (which is itself a good) and the moral qualification which a given act can receive. The same act can be virtuous or evil depending on whether or not certain virtues are present or absent in the lives of responsible human agents. Hence, if an act is done in a context that is lacking in reasonableness and goodness, it cannot be said that God is responsible for it. God cannot bear any moral responsibility. But, if an act is done in a context which evidences virtue in human agents, the good that occurs both naturally and morally is ultimately traceable to God as the first cause of all things.

259 Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 304-305; p. 379.

260 Aquinas, as cited by Reichberg, "Beyond Privation," pp. 758-759, as cited by Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 95, n. 72.

baffling for us and yet, at the same time, it is surprisingly effective and efficacious; truly wonderful and good.<sup>264</sup> Otherwise, some goods would not exist at all. More good can thus arise and be present to us and others than would otherwise be the case if certain evils were not allowed to exist in some way as potencies, as accidental events, or as material causes that, in their unintelligibility, are not and cannot be directly intended or willed by God. Hence, they can be willed or intended or they must be willed in some other kind of way.<sup>265</sup> Hence, if, in the context of our present human life, God were to act only to reward all of our good deeds and to punish all of our evil deeds (and nothing more than this), the ultimate good and happiness of our life would exist only in the context of this restricted type of good of order as this would exist within the context of our created being.<sup>266</sup> But, on the other hand however, if our ultimate human happiness exists elsewhere or if this happiness exists as some other kind of

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261 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 2 & ad 2. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3; q. 3, a. 3, ad 11. In his *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 339-342, see Lonergan's detailed analysis on how we can regard God and a sinner as both causes of sin (*causae actus peccati*) but that the cause of defect or deformity (*causa defectus, causa deformitatis*) is in fact not God but, instead, it is the created will of a rational creature who does what he or she should not do. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3. As Aquinas argues in the *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2 (and as quoted above by Lonergan, p. 341, n. 48): "the deformity of sin does not follow the species of the act as it exists in the genus of nature, in that way it is caused by God; but it follows the species of the act as being moral, the way it is caused by free will." Earlier, in q. 2, a. 2 of the *De Malo*, Aquinas had noted that "sin is a deformed act." It is not a deformity in terms of its possibly being an external event but, rather, it is something which exists internally within the will, the willing of an evil doer. As Aquinas immediately goes on to explain, "deformity in an act consists in its being against the rule of reason, or the law of God." In the same vein, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 10, 11, Aquinas had noted that "moral fault is noticed in action only, and not in any effect that is produced." Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 347, n. 40 & n. 41. As a first approximation, evil in human beings is caused by a disobedience which pits a life of sense against a life that respects the claims and promptings of our human reason. But, then, as a second approximation and through a more sophisticated and a more insidious form of disobedience, additional evils are caused when persons use their minds to engage in activities which bring about more evil than what would otherwise be caused if we were only to live a life of sense. A sensible form of disobedience is followed by an intellectual form disobedience which ignores the laws which God has created for an ordering of created things which can lead to the perfection of this created order and all the different things within it. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 2; q. 1, a. 3.

262 Quoting from Lonergan's analysis in the *De Deo Trino*, p. 213, as cited by Serroul, "*Sapientis est ordinare*," p. 48: "Under its formal aspect the perfection of divine order must be said to be so great that no greater order can be thought, especially since this perfection cannot be naturally understood by the created intellect."

263 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 5; q. 19, a. 9, ad 3; q. 23, a. 3. Cf. q. 20, a. 1; Bernard Lonergan, "The Redemption," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 12. As Aquinas notes in q. 23, a. 3, the divine knowing and willing that allows for the moral evil of sin (through permission) and the consequent experience of retributive punishment which can end in damnation as an everlasting punishment of sin is technically known as reprobation. Reprobation belongs to providence as a specification of it.

264 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3, ad 1; q. 48, a. 2, ad 3; 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 1; q. 79, a. 4 & ad 1; *De Divinis Nominibus*, 4, 23, cited by Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 60. Cf. Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 136. In support of the wisdom which lies behind the form of ordering which God has chosen

realizable good, if its parameters and context transcends the created order of existing things, the permitting of evil and the suffering which comes with this permission creates conditions that can lead to new apprehensions and objectives which, in turn, transcend the created order of our existence as, possibly, we can move toward other forms and actuations of human happiness which (1) cannot be measured by the intelligibility of any created standards that we can know about within our currently existing world (they already exist within our world), or any standards that we can possibly create and make, and (2) cannot be fully known in the context of our present life if we are to view and to understand our present life within terms that are confined to determinations which belong to the materiality of spatial and temporal conjugates.<sup>267</sup>

In addition too, at the same time it has to be also said that greater evils can be avoided than would otherwise be the case if certain other, lesser evils were not allowed to exist.<sup>268</sup> Hence, the permitting of evil can be properly regarded as a good in its own right which, as a permitting, God directly wills because of an intrinsic goodness which it possesses as a specification of the goodness of our freedom,<sup>269</sup> and which is correspondingly related to the good of freedom as this exists in a created way

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to structure the form of God's providence, in *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 86, Levering notes that Aquinas cites texts from both the Old and the New Testament: from the *Book of Job* and St. Paul's *Letter to the Romans*. Quoting Levering:

Job, in the midst of “arguing his case” with God about the terrible mystery of his suffering, states, “With Him is wisdom and strength, He hath counsel and understanding” (Job 12:13). Similarly, anguished by the failure of much of Israel to recognize her Messiah, St. Paul holds nonetheless that God's plan is such that he has ordered events so that “he may have mercy upon all” and concludes passionately, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God” (Romans 11:33). As Aquinas reads these passages, both Job and St. Paul are granting, without fathoming, the truth that God knows all.

265 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9, ad 1 & ad 2; q. 23, a. 5, ad 3. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3.

266 Aquinas, *Expositio super Job ad litteram* 7.1-4, cited by Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 6.

267 *Expositio super Job* 9.16, cited by Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 7.

268 *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 10, a. 11.

269 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9, ad 3. According to the *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 47, q. 1, a. 2 (as cited by Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 340, n. 47), permission refers to the power of a cause which can relate to either of two possible courses of action. We can, for instance, do the opposite of what is permitted or we can do what is, in fact, permitted where, in both cases, what is done is done according to permission. As is obvious, in permission, there is no willing of one course of action nor the willing of another, the willing of one course of action which is good and the willing of another course of action which is not good but evil. Citing Aquinas's words in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9, ad 3: “God neither wills evils to exist nor wills evils not to exist but wills to allow them to happen; and this is a good.” As Aquinas argues in q. 19, a. 9, ad 3, it is true that a statement which says that “evil exists” is opposed, as a contradictory, to a statement which says that “evil does not exist.” In the same way, we say that ordering and not ordering, willing and not willing, and doing and not doing are to be understood as contradictories. However, there is not the same kind of contradiction at all between a statement which says that “someone wills evil to exist” and one saying

in the created, self-determination of angels and human beings who, admittedly, in their created freedom as this freedom is misused in sin, by their disobedience,<sup>270</sup> would “have it in their power to withdraw themselves from the decree of the divine intellect [and will],”<sup>271</sup> in a partial manner and to a certain extent.<sup>272</sup> As a defect, moral evil is explained by the misuse of our created freedom: “Your downfall, O Israel, is all your own doing.”<sup>273</sup> If God has created certain beings who are blessed with the gift of self-determination and freedom, God would not respect what He has made (God would also not respect Himself and so be true to Himself) if He were not to allow or to permit of these same creatures that they should exercise the freedom which has been duly given to them. In the ordering of all things thus toward God’s own goodness, every evil, and even the worst of evils, plays a role of some kind as every evil lends itself to a series or to a sequence of subsequent actions and transformations which, in some

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that “someone wills it not to exist.” No contradiction exists with respect to “reducing something to willing and reducing it to not willing.” Cf. Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 391. By talking about willing in this way, we would be presuming that everything can be reduced to an intelligible cause of some kind: a rational principle or reason. However, sin cannot be reduced to any intelligible or rational principle. Sin lacks a proper cause and, because this is so, we cannot engage in any form of analytic reduction which tries to identify any cause or reason for the existence of any evil. If we want to talk about contradictories with respect to willing evil to exist and willing evil not to exist, we best oppose reduction with non-reduction. An exclusive disjunction exists between these terms. As Lonergan summarizes the matter in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 391, “what is opposed as contradictory to reduction is non-reduction; and where intelligibility is absent so, necessarily, reduction is absent as well.”

270 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 1, ad 3; a. 2, ad 2.

271 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 17, a. 1, quoted by Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 330, n. 36. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 2, ad 1.

272 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 8, ad 1. Cf. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 113-114. As Lonergan explains it, no creature can totally escape from the range and scope of God’s providential government since God remains as the First Cause of all things and so every human act, in its movement, can be traced to a divine origin in the motion of God as First Mover. As Frederick E. Crowe illustrates how divine causality fits in acts when sin is being committed (see “On Ultimate Reality and Meaning,” *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989], p. 75):

...God operates in and governs the rise of human passion in the murderer, the aiming of the gun, the propulsion of the bullet, and its penetration of the victim’s body. But sin is not located in any of these; it is located in the failure of the murderer to use reason, grace, and freedom to control his passion.

Hence, as God’s intellect and will is ultimately orientated to God’s own goodness, and as divine goodness functions as the ultimate good of all things which God has created in the world, the human desire for any kind of good is a dynamic which must always place human life and desire in a context that has been created by God and which is always being sustained by God. However, as this basic human orientation for good always relates a person to God in a positive way, through bad choices, created rational beings can still rebel against God in a way which accounts for sin. Hence, where in the doing of good deeds, God’s help is always needed, in doing bad deeds, man always acts alone. Sin is something that only a human being or an angel is able to take sole responsibility for because of a defect which exists solely within a human being or an angel (the willing of a human being

way, effect salutary changes that fulfill divine expectations in a way which brings all things back toward God in an eventual, possible union with God.<sup>274</sup> A divine plan that encompasses all things is operative in some way. In our suffering, our self-understanding is put into question in ways that can lead us toward new possible realizations and insights that we would otherwise not have. We are brought to our knees.

To cite a perhaps apt example which helps to demonstrate this point within the kind of good which exists within the order of religion,<sup>275</sup> with respect to Christ's suffering and death, on the one hand, it can be said that God directly wills Christ's obedience and charity for redemptive reasons: in order to

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or the willing of an angel). In sin, an act or operation falls short of its proper finality and, in this failing, the responsible agent (the sinner) harms him or herself. Cf. Reichberg, "Beyond Privation," pp. 758-759, as cited by Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 95, n. 72.

273 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 23, a. 3, ad 2, quoted by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 390.

274 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1; 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 4, ad 1.

275 Peter Beer, "The Redemptive Vicarious Suffering of Christ: An Inquiry," *Australian Lonergan Workshop II*, pp. 137-140.

effect our human salvation.<sup>276</sup> The obedience and charity possess an identical nature.<sup>277</sup> Through an act of love for what the Father wills and commands, by patiently and freely accepting unmerited, unjust sufferings and trials through a redemptive offering of self in Christ's incarnation, passion, and death,<sup>278</sup> as an incarnate divine mediator who reconciles God with us as man and us as men and women with God through the medium of a sacred humanity (a divine person having assumed a human nature),<sup>279</sup> Christ wills both the same end and also the same means for effecting this end for the same reasons that are also being willed and known by God the Father.<sup>280</sup> A conformity, an identity in understanding and willing, exists between the two. In a context that is informed by acts of prayerful deliberation and acts of painful self-examination, in the end, Christ wills or "Christ [has] willed nothing but what He knew

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276*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 55, 17-19; *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, a. 5; q. 47, a. 2 & ad 2 & 3. As Matthew Levering summarizes Aquinas (in his *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: salvation according to Thomas Aquinas*, p. 60), Christ's charitable human will obediently serves as an instrument of God's divine will (even if this human will is properly viewed as a created, contingent cause which freely and properly exercises a causality of its own since, as noted, through contingent or extrinsic predications, God can freely will free human actions as external, contingent terms). As a man who is entirely lacking in any form of sin, as Lonergan argues in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 70, it is to be noted that, as true man, Christ "prayed (Mk 1:35; 6:46; 14:35, 39; Mt 14:23; 26:42, 44; Lk 22:44); he grew in wisdom and stature and favor (Lk 2:52; compare 2:40); he was obedient (Phil 2:8; Rom 5:19); he learned obedience from what he suffered (Heb 5:8); he offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, and he was heard (Heb 5:7)." In Mk 14:36, it is said that, in his prayer, Christ distinguished between his will and that of his Father and that he was prepared to forsake his own will in preferring instead to do the Father's will. A choice of some kind is pending and is then made (a choice which manifests a degree of freedom and an initial lack of determination) and, in choosing to obey another's will, Jesus manifests his obedience and his goodness as a human being in a way which also manifests a perfect freedom that he exercises. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 1; ad 2. The obedience is freely given as the term of careful thought and reflection even as Christ acts against the wishes and demands of his sensible nature and the instinctive wishes and demands of his non-deliberative human nature. Cf. *In I Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 48, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3, as cited by Gilby, *Theological Texts*, p. 320, n. 536; *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, a. 5; q. 18, a. 6 & ad 3; q. 21, a. 4; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, pp. 128-129; p. 295, p. 308. The wisdom of Christ's actions informs a freedom and an obedience which possess a common nature. Citing Lonergan's summary of it in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 131:

....it was in accord with his sensual will that Jesus "began to be greatly distressed and troubled" (Mk 14:33); it was in accord with his will as nature that it belonged to Christ to say, "what I will"; and it was in accord with his will as reason that Christ freely chose "not what I will, but what you will."

Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, aa. 2-3.

277*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 55, 17. As Aquinas relates obedience and charity with each other in the *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 47, a. 2, ad 3 as cited by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 311: "He [Christ] fulfilled the commandments of charity out of obedience, and was obedient out of his love for the Father who had given him the command." The obedience explains the charity and the charity, the obedience.

God to will.”<sup>281</sup> A greater good is accordingly achieved and communicated than that which could have been communicated or realized through the already existing natural law of talion, retribution, or retaliation (as in “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”)<sup>282</sup> that, in its intelligibility, had not recognized the good of forgiveness and learning to love our enemies in a way that communicates, to them (and to other persons), a variety and series of unmerited goods through acts of charity which, in their transcendence, are to be regarded as supernatural acts of charity.<sup>283</sup> For these reasons, it can be said that Christ’s satisfaction was directly willed by God as indeed a very great, unmerited good (as, in fact, an excellent, supernatural type of good).<sup>284</sup> Supernatural acts necessarily account for supernatural goods in ways that, otherwise, would not be possible or tenable.

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278 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 14, a. 1; 3a, q. 14, a. 2, ad 1; q. 14, a. 3 & ad 1; ad 2; q. 15, a. 4, ad 1; q. 15, a. 6, ad 4; q. 18, a. 5; q. 22, a. 2, ad 1; ad 2; q. 26, a. 2.

279 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 26, a. 1 & ad 3; q. 26, a. 2; q. 48, a. 5.

280 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, a. 5.

281 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 21, a. 4. As Aquinas notes in the *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, a. 6, Christ’s divine will unconditionally wills the salvation of the human race and then, in order to achieve this objective within our human history, Christ’s deliberative human willing freely wills to undergo a suffering and death that best effects the salvation that is desired by God, by a divine willing that is commonly shared by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Because Christ’s deliberative human willing chooses the best means for implementing this divinely intended objective, it can be said that Christ’s human decisions express an obedience that is given by him to God whether we refer simply to God or whether we refer to God as God the Father. In this way, by Christ’s rational human obedience, it can be said that, by Christ’s free acceptance of suffering and death, God’s eternal law is being fulfilled by Christ incarnate: by Christ, a divine being, who acts both passively and actively in a human way *as a human being*. No better means could be found for effecting the salvation of the human race since, by dying (and later by rising), Christ destroys our death and the finality of death and, by undergoing all the pains which he endured, in the same way, we are freed from our own pains and the apparent finality and futility of our suffering. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 35, a. 6, ad 2; q. 50, a. 6. Life does not end simply with experiences of pain and death. By the love which Christ evinces and shows in his offering of self, more is achieved than would otherwise be the case if Christ had not lovingly offered himself in suffering and death. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 46, a. 3. God’s love prompts us toward our own acts of charity and love; Christ’s example instills in us a love of obedience, humility, constancy, and justice; the greater good of Christ’s free and loving acceptance of unmerited suffering on our behalf obtains a form of reconciliation between ourselves and God which is communicated to us as justifying grace; the expiation which Christ does on our behalf creates a greater hatred of sin among us than what would otherwise be the case if we did not know about the sacrifice which Christ makes of himself; and, lastly, as a consequence of Christ’s victory over evil and death which is achieved by Christ as a man (through a human offering of self which Christ makes), the self-transcendence of the human spirit presents itself in a stronger light. Our human dignity is enhanced. Despite whatever trials and difficulties should come into our human experience of life, we can never be totally defeated or destroyed by them.

282 Exodus 21:23–27.

283 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 14, a. 1. As Lonergan argues this case citing scriptural texts in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 295:

That God directly willed the obedience and love of Christ has



In Christ's self-sacrificing love, a principle of redemption is introduced into our human order of things and it is actuated in a way which transforms our understanding of the meaning of life and death, inviting us as would-be believers into a form of imitation that is modeled on the great good of Christ's personal example. By this means, all persons can be possibly reconciled with each other and also with God. But, at the same time too, in the same event, God also permits the moral evil of those who cruelly put Jesus to death.<sup>285</sup> As is noted by Luke 22:53: "Now is your hour, and the power of darkness."<sup>286</sup> Judas Iscariot, the Temple priests, Pontius Pilate, and the soldiers all participate in actions which result in Christ's flogging, torture, and subsequent death. The same can be said too about the crowd that was stirred up by the chief priests and those who also approved of Christ's suffering and death and who mocked him as He hung from the Cross.<sup>287</sup> In the same physical act exists the passivity of Christ's suffering and the actions of those which inflict Christ with His suffering.<sup>288</sup> And then too, in addition, beyond the permitting of God, God also indirectly wills what happens as a consequence of what happens when these different persons engage in their different acts of evil omission and direct sin. A punishing, inward distortion comes to emerge within their conscious souls, within the order of their self-consciousness. In inner sin dampens inner spirits in a way that is communicated to participants and onlookers as, directly or vicariously, and in a physical way, they effect Christ's flogging and crucifixion in a way which Christ experiences in the context and the receptivity of His incarnate body. God "did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all."<sup>289</sup> In the same event but now in a larger, moral context, a criminal act occurs whose evil surpasses all other evils and yet, also, a willing or a doing is accomplished through Christ's act of submissive willing which achieves more good than any other kind of good:<sup>290</sup> a free acceptance of suffering as a punishment and penalty for the evil of sin,<sup>291</sup> which, in turn, introduces a new law or new principle into the possible conduct of our human life; an acceptance of suffering which God justly rewards through imparting a form of new life to us in a life that can no longer know the possibility of sorrow and death nor the inevitability of any sorrow and death. Christ's obedience, through the obedience of His human willing, serves as an effective, instrumental cause (as an efficient cause) of our human salvation,<sup>292</sup> and so, by this obedience that is given freely, Christ merits a salvation which belongs not only to Himself as a creature but to all who believe in Him and who seek to live by His precepts and holy example.<sup>293</sup> In a providential ordering of

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grounds both in the specific doctrine of the Father's charge and in the general doctrine of the New Testament, which preaches love for one's enemies as against the 'law of retaliation' (Mt 5:38-48), praises in highest terms the endurance of evils for the sake of righteousness (Mt 5:10ff), and sets forth the Lord's sufferings, in that they were unjustly inflicted and patiently borne, as an example for us to follow (1Pt 2:19-24).

284Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 357.

285*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 47, a. 3.

286Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 295.

287Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 293.

288*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 20, a. 6; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 356.

289Rom 8:32 (NAB); Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 295.

290*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 20, a. 6 & ad 2; 3a, q. 47, aa. 1- 2, & 4.

291*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 5, a. 2, ad 2. Christ suffered in both body and soul both as an incarnate being and as someone who is unjustly put to death (*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, qq. 14-15).

292*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 48, a. 6. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 4.

293*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 48, a. 1. Cf. q. 49, a. 6.

intentions, wills, and deeds, human sin is combined with Christ's sufferings and Christ's patience in an ordering which manifests the wisdom of a divine understanding of things that is signified by a redemptive, saving, eternal law which would also have to exist as the correlative of an unrestricted act of divine understanding.<sup>294</sup>

With respect then to the role of evil as evil plays a role within the divine scheme of things and God's eternal law, its potential value was the great insight of St. Augustine.<sup>295</sup> It is more wonderful and wondrous that good can come out from evil than to not allow that any evil should exist at all.<sup>296</sup> As privations which apparently exist in the intelligible order are accordingly translated into privations which can exist either in the moral or in the physical order, events which are viewed in one perspective

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<sup>294</sup>Loneran, *Incarnate Word*, p. 295. Lonergan cites the following scriptural texts by way of evidence: 1 Cor 1:23-24: "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Greeks, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the Wisdom of God"; 1:30: "Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom"; and 2:7: "We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God."

<sup>295</sup>Augustine, *Enchiridion*, c. 11, as cited by Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 29, n. 10. As Lonergan quotes this text in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 386 (a text which is also cited by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2):

For the almighty God who...has supreme power over all things, being himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil among his works, if he were not so omnipotent and so good that he can bring good out of evil.

Evil does not exist outside a providential order of things that God has established with respect to the created order of things which God has brought into being (as Augustine had already noted earlier in his *Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 2, 7, 23: "God permitted evil not to exist beyond the limits of order; he has brought it back and confined it to an order that suits it"). The same point is also made in the *De Trinitate*, 3, 1, 9 where Augustine argues that nothing eludes God's providential will either as command or as permission. In the *Enchiridion*, c. 27 (as cited by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 386), Augustine goes on to add with respect to God that "he judged it better to bring good out of evil, than not to permit evil to exist." God could have set things up differently as Augustine elsewhere admits (*De Agone Christiano*, 11, 12; *ML*, 40: 297, cited by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 366; and *De Trinitate*, 13, 13, cited by Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 1, a. 2 and as Aquinas also himself admits (in the *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 1, a. 2; q. 46, aa. 1-2), but, as Augustine says to his listeners and readers, "if he had done otherwise, your foolishness would be just as unhappy with that." As Aquinas argues in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2 and in q. 46, a. 1, God has ends and purposes of His own which know the good which He wishes to accomplish and as this good is present to Him in His unrestricted self-understanding. This good, admittedly, is not known by us in any direct way because it is a transcendent reality which surpasses the proportionality of what can be known by our incarnate human acts of understanding. An apprehension of some meaning can only come from an inquiry which acknowledges the fact that no human agent is able to create a system of living whereby, as a consequence of failure, good can come about.

<sup>296</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 2, ad 3.

as lacking in merit or goodness become events which can serve higher purposes and goals as they lead to instances of good than otherwise would not exist if certain events had not occurred.<sup>297</sup> Lack of adequate human understanding accordingly explains why evils are often falsely diagnosed and misjudged when they are attributed to events that are perhaps more good than evil (in spite of appearances to the contrary) as we attend to unforeseen long term consequences and the intervention of other causes.<sup>298</sup> A defect from a human point of view may not be a defect from a divine point of view especially as we attend to God's providential ordering of things which occurs through a divinely created good of order which is applied to the entire universe and which coordinates very many, different events in a way that reveals a created diversity which, in turn, reveals a richness and a fullness of being which exists because of the many inequalities and contraries that are included in the existence of many different things.<sup>299</sup> In God's all encompassing, wise ordering of many things, God does not will something because of something else that he has understood and wills but, rather, in one act or simultaneously, He wills something to be the means that leads toward an end that He is also intending.<sup>300</sup> In the order which God has willed for the universe that He has created, "he wills *that* to be because of *this*, but it is not because of *this* that he wills *that*."<sup>301</sup> A subtle difference is to be alluded to. Hence, the diversities and contraries which exist in actions or movement work for the perfection of the whole created order and all this "is essential to the perfection of the universe."<sup>302</sup> Defects which

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297*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 11; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; q. 65, a. 1, ad 2.

298*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5, ad 6. As Hoonhout argues in his "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 11, n. 33, secondary causes can fail in their operation. But, these failures are not to be interpreted as a sign of failure in God since, by means of a providential, universal order of things, the sum of successes and failures among secondary causes serves a greater good which is the perfection of the whole, a perfection which transcends the perfection of any single individual or part.

For whenever any particular cause fails, it is only because another, contrary cause, has succeeded. God's providence is not thwarted by the failure of any created secondary agent, since in his wisdom he has arranged that that failure occur because of the success of an interfering cause, whose effect God also wills (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 7 [& ad 3]).

As Aquinas argues in q. 103, a. 7, nothing evades the order of God's providential government. Through a unity of order or by a perfection of order that is effected by a divine ordering of things, a multitude or many is perfected *as a multitude or many*. Cf. Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 425. "The entire universe comes to participate more fully in God's goodness than any single creature," *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 47, a. 3, ad 2, my translation.

299Hoonhout, "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 10, n. 29, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 4 and q. 44, aa. 1-2.

300*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 5: "as God by one act understands all things in His essence, so by one act He wills all things in His goodness." As Torrell quotes Aquinas in his *Aquinas*, vol. 2, p. 15: "God does not will that because of this, but he does will this to be because of that." No causality exists in God. No relation between cause and effect is to be postulated. Cf. Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 481, n. 44 which refers to the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa Theologiae*.

301*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 5, as quoted by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 347.

302*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 3, ad 1.

exist in created things as contraries serve higher purposes and goals in terms of the possible realization of higher, greater goods. In such a context, we can thus understand why, for Aquinas, sin exists as a human act whose nature is such that it exists as a thought, word, or deed which is contrary to God's eternal law: *contra legem aeternam*.<sup>303</sup> As a contrariety (and not as a contradiction), sin conflicts with God's government and the intelligibility of God's eternal law, but yet in a way which cannot evade the meaning and application of God's eternal law in the government of the universe. In the end, from a divine perspective, agents and effects which are at odds with one another complement each other with respect to the "one common good and ultimate goodness of the universe."<sup>304</sup> God's drawing of good from evil allows us to engage in like actions and to think about our world in a way which avoids falling into simplistic forms of understanding which would try to argue that this or that good or value is caused through the action of a specific agent or person instead of how, more properly and truthfully, it is caused through an interaction or a conflict between differing agencies and persons in ways which realize goods that had not been intended by any of the active agents who had been acting to achieve a different set of purposes.<sup>305</sup>

Aquinas cites a number of examples which show that a hierarchal order exists in the ordering of God's love,<sup>306</sup> as this love is communicated in a providential way through persons and events within the

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303 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 71, a. 6.

304 Hoonhout, "Grounding Providence in the Theology of the Creator," p. 10, n. 29.

305 Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931), pp. 99-100. Butterfield's account, throughout, argues that we get into fallacies and misjudgments if, for instance, we try to claim or to assume that Luther and his work is to be credited with laying the foundations which eventually led to our modern notions of political and cultural freedom and the kind of good which is alleged to exist if we think about the origins of a modern secular state. Instead of focusing on the effectiveness of a single cause, we best attend to the workings of many causes and how these have interacted with each other in ways that have led to unexpected results.

306 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, aa. 3-4. Aquinas argues here that God loves better things with greater love. God's love is not equally parceled out since some things enjoy a greater degree of perfection than other things although the greater love of God for the perfection of the entire universe explains the inequality of created perfection which exists in things and which, in turn, leads to the subordination of lesser goods to higher goods in a way which perfects the whole and the goodness of each part that exists as a constitutive element within the whole. A universe which consists of a wide variety of different species more fully manifests God's wisdom, power, and goodness than a universe which would consist of only one species of being despite its possible high perfection (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 44, 16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 47, a. 2). While, on the one hand, those things which are more perfect participate more fully in the absoluteness of God's goodness and perfection and so participate more fully in the goodness of God's love, at the same time, and paradoxically, as Aquinas argues it in the *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3, those things which possess a greater degree of perfection and goodness have powers that, as deficient or defective in their operation, produce greater amounts of harm and evil. In other words, the gravity of wrong that is done is to be correlated with the level of perfection which exists in the existence of things. More evil is to be correlated with more good. The greater the goodness of things in terms of nature, acts, and operations, the greater can be the evil in these things in terms of what they do or do not do if any factor works within any of these things to hinder the proper functioning of any act or operation. A correlation of like proportion which thus exists between good and evil accordingly implies that a similar proportion and correlation should exist for any solution that can possibly reconcile the conflict between good and evil in a way which can turn

created order of things which exist within our world.<sup>307</sup> God indirectly wills physical and penal evils out of a love, respectively, for the maintenance of order in the created existence of the universe and out of a love for justice which is needed to provide for order in how human beings relate to each other.<sup>308</sup> With respect, for instance, to the existence of physical evils, a lion kills a deer to obtain food<sup>309</sup> and so, the demise or the sacrifice of a lesser good serves a higher good to make its existence more likely and possible.<sup>310</sup> Disruptions or omissions, as they occur in the physical order of things, serve a higher law as this refers to the eternal law of God's self-understanding.<sup>311</sup>

With respect to the existence of penal evils (or the evils of punishment), in examples which relate to the human order of things and the good that can come from the suffering which is experienced from the evil of just punishments (in a context that can be defined in a minimal way by a basic need for some form of retributive or retaliative justice), as Aquinas argues in the *De Veritate*, "when a man sins, God orders the sin to the sinner's good, so that after his fall [in punishment], upon rising again, he may be a more humble person; or it is ordered at least to a good which is brought about in him by divine justice when he is punished for his sin."<sup>312</sup> God's just punishments are all intelligibly and rightly occasioned by the wrongness of our sinful deeds.<sup>313</sup> The object here is a form of retribution which is just and

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everything into good. A solution is only adequate if, in some way, it possesses a greater goodness which can measure the goodness of any created thing and if it can also absorb the dysfunction of every evil in a way which can turn every evil into a source of goodness and virtue. In this context, an anticipatory heuristic emerges as a key for moving toward a better understanding of how Christ's Incarnation and saving death can be viewed as a wise and adequate solution for the problems and difficulties that are posed by the strange correlation which exists between the extent and depth of goodness in things and the evil that these same things are enabled to do.

307 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 2, ad 3. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 11.

308 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 94, 11; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9; q. 48, a. 2, ad 3.

309 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9; q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; q. 48, a. 2, ad 3.

310 *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5.

311 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 5, ad 3.

312 *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5; 1, p. 223; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 4; Collins, "God's Eternal Law," pp. 521-522. The same point is reiterated in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 6 where Aquinas argues that, in the wake of man's sin which exists in original sin, when human beings are justly inflicted with concupiscence (as this is known to us by means of our "sensual impulses"), they justly reap a form of punishment for the wrong which they have done. In the intelligibility, or the rationality of this experience of suffering, a law is revealed which shows how the evil of punishment is used by God in a way which brings it under law. Penalties are exacted in order to effect a greater, larger good and so, in such a context, our sufferings come to have a meaning that they would otherwise not have. Citing Aquinas's words (as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 345, n. 34):

But insofar as man, by divine justice, has been deprived of the original justice and strength of reason [*vigore rationis*], the very impulse of sensuality that drives him has the nature of a law, insofar as it is penal and a consequence of the divine law, which has deprived man of his proper dignity [*lege divina...hominem destituente propria dignitate*].

313 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 8, ad 3; 2a2ae, q. 21, a. 2. In the *Summa Theologiae*,

lawful since the object is some species of good which somehow can be achieved by inflicting penalties in a manner which corresponds with the degree of wrongness that exists in the misdeeds which persons have decided to engage in,<sup>314</sup> and in conjunction too with a sense or experience of wrong doing which is manifested through a sense or experience of sorrow and guilt which is to be always associated with punishment, there being no punishment properly speaking unless, in the consciousness of a wrong doer, a sense or experience of wrong also exists which is to be identified with a sense or an experience of sorrow and guilt.<sup>315</sup> As Aquinas argues, “it is not God’s way, who is judge of all the earth, *to slay the righteous with the wicked.*”<sup>316</sup> Hence, as correctives for sin, the evil of suffering through the experience of guilt and punishment is to be always regarded as a lesser evil than the evil of any fault or sin since evils of fault or sin destroy the goodness of a person who sins which, on the other hand, does not occur if a person only suffers by experiencing punishments of one kind or another.<sup>317</sup> As Socrates had realized in his own time and day, it is better to suffer evil than to do evil and, if one does evil, it is better to be punished for it than to escape one’s punishment so that a person can be encouraged to avoid future wrongs in the deeds that one does.<sup>318</sup> In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas cites an example to show how, through a sinful misuse of means to attain a good and appropriate end, by our wrongdoing, we justly bring evil upon ourselves as a fit punishment for the wrong that we have done. Eating sustains bodily life as a good but, in overindulgence and gluttony, bodily health is forfeited in a way which can reveal the wrongness of our acts of overeating.<sup>319</sup> When any good is misused in a moral context, the misuse reaps a penalty of its own which can be referred to as the reward of vice or the reward of malice.<sup>320</sup> In sin, by way of its effects, “a man is hurt by the shortcomings of the things he has chosen to give him pleasure.”<sup>321</sup>

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1a2ae, q. 87, a. 7, Aquinas notes that the punishment which principally results from original sin is the corruption of our human nature or, in other words, our fallen nature: “primarily, the punishment for original sin is that human nature is left to itself [*sibi relinquitur*], destitute of the help of original justice; and from this follow all the punishments that happen to human beings *by a defect of nature* [*ex defectu naturae*],” as cited [sic] by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 343, n. 29.

314 *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 1; q. 159, a. 2; 3a, q. 86, a. 4; cf. *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 5, 8, 970. Cf. Martin Rhonheimer, “Sins Against Justice (2a2ae, qq. 59-79),” trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 293.

315 Rhonheimer, “Sins Against Justice,” *Ethics of Aquinas*, pp. 293-4; also citing *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 4; cf. 3a, q. 15, a. 6, ad 3.

316 Commentary, *IV Sentences*, 18, ii, 3, ii, cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 362, n. 1062.

317 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 6.

318 Plato, *Gorgias*, 468e-473e; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 6, ad 1.

319 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 145, 3.

320 *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 173.

321 *Compendium theologiae*, c. 226, as quoted by Gilby, *Theological Texts*, pp. 310-311, n. 526. In the context here of Aquinas’s discussion in the *Compendium theologiae*, while in Aquinas’s understanding of things, punishment is spoken about within two contexts (one is defined by God’s retributive justice and one is defined by satisfaction and pardon), punishment can be differentiated in a second manner when one adverts to the difference between nature and supernature. Within the created order of things which God has established, the misuse of any created good simultaneously invokes two penalties or two kinds of suffering: a natural or immanent penalty and a supernatural or transcendent penalty. As every person hurts him or herself by misusing any given good, the same person also hurts him or herself through an action that turns one away from God. A person is less united to God and this

In a third example that is given in the *Summa Theologiae*, on the one hand, while it can be argued that a man's death is evil since this destroys the existence of a living being which is itself a good, on the other hand however, the death of a man who is a murderer who threatens the life of a whole community can emerge as a greater good than the good which had belonged to the mere existence of a man as a conscious, living being.<sup>322</sup> Evils of punishment, as correctional evils, accordingly serve higher goods through a restoration of order in justice and equity as wrongdoing is redressed by administering just penalties which discourage any future wrongdoing by instilling fear of punishment in persons who could be tempted to do evil deeds.<sup>323</sup> As Aquinas quotes from scripture, *smite a scorner, and the simple will beware*.<sup>324</sup> Evils experienced in punishments can serve to cure an individual or they can restore the order and security of a given human community.<sup>325</sup> While some punishments serve a purely medicinal function, others restore a balance or an equity in relations which had been harmed by acts of wrongs perpetrated through sin.<sup>326</sup> If some punishments are incurred as a result of personal, actual sin, others can be explained by the kind of fault which lies in original sin, the sin of our first parents.<sup>327</sup>

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loss of friendship or union presents itself as a form of punishment or suffering which afflicts all human beings as a result of their original sin and which also afflicts individuals when individuals engage in their personal or actual acts of sinning. In the *De Malo*, q. 4, a. 2, the distinction which pertains to nature and supernature can also be used to distinguish between material and formal components in an analysis of sin. In the sinful misuse of created goods, a material aspect can be identified, but in the turning away from God which also occurs in sin, a formal or intelligible element can be distinguished as a principle which defines the meaning of every sin *as a turning away from God* (even as we admit that, in every sin, no intrinsic intelligibility is to be found). In sinful thoughts, words, and deeds that knowingly reject the love of God and the love and obedience which is properly owed to God by us, willful, culpable wrongdoing is to be acknowledged. In the misuse of created goods which occurs in original sin, the consequent weakening of our human powers which is incurred as a natural or immanent punishment is to be known as concupiscence. It is an effect or a consequence of original sin. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 1, 1. In the "sin of nature" or moral fault which exists in original sin as this applies to our human nature come corresponding "wounds of nature" which refer to the ill effects of sin as this is found in our ignorance, malice, and concupiscence. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 11; q. 4, a. 2, ad 4. On the one hand, the human condition (as we have it) is such that the human will is not *habitually* oriented toward God and the good of one's neighbor although, at the same time, it has to be admitted that the human will and our sensitive appetites are "by nature set up to strive *according to reason*." Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 325. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 6, this same point is reiterated when it is said that man becomes unlike himself when he does not "act in accordance with reason" but is instead "carried away by the impulse of sensuality" which "happens to each person, the more any of us departs from reason, so that in a certain way one becomes likened to the beasts who are led by the impulse of sensuality." Cf. Rhonheimer, p. 344, n. 32 [sic].

<sup>322</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1.

<sup>323</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 145, 2; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 2, ad 3; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 319.

<sup>324</sup>Proverbs 19: 25, quoted by Aquinas, Opusc. xiii, *de Regimine Judaeorum ad ducissam Brabantiae*, cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 388, n. 1105.

<sup>325</sup>*Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 121; c. 172; *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 68, a. 1.

<sup>326</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 87, aa. 7-8; 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 4; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 333; p. 344.

<sup>327</sup>*Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 226.

When persons suffer the loss of any material advantages for sins which they have not committed, the ultimate explanation is a providential act of God's love which inflicts these forms of punishments on us for medicinal purposes: in order to encourage a higher development in goods that possess an essentially spiritual nature: goods which are to be understood as goods of the soul as opposed to goods which possess a purely temporal or material nature.<sup>328</sup> A person is only deprived of spiritual goods when the occasion is a person's sin and the kind of moral evil which exists as sin.

With respect to the existence of moral evils, to the degree that any kind of understanding is given to us, God permits moral evils to exist for more than one reason. In the case of someone who commits sins, the wrong which a person does to him or herself frequently lowers a person's sense of self and from this humbling experience a person can grow in self-knowledge and so, from his or her self-knowledge, the possibility of contrition and remorse.<sup>329</sup> On the other hand however, from another viewpoint, when persons willingly accept inequities and injustices which may come their way, a greater good can manifest itself in the patience and forbearance which is shown.<sup>330</sup> Virtues can be cultivated and developed in ways which would not occur if it were not for trials and difficulties that come in the course of our daily life. The example of Job exists as a case in point.<sup>331</sup> In coping with trials and with the opportunities for sin which are encouraged by the bad behavior of other persons,<sup>332</sup> persons realize or we can each realize that, if we are to endure our trials and difficulties, we must undergo changes in attitude which can change us from within, creating within us a different disposition. Through conversions and changes in our subjectivity, our lives can be bettered in a way which can also communicate a measure of goodness to others that, relative to themselves, would be unexpected and unmerited if, in their own way, these same persons have been inflicting wrongs on us (and others) as we try to overcome the evil that is done to us not by responding with acts of vengeance but with acts of charity that reject any kind of action which seeks to hurt or to harm another in any way that could be lacking in love and which, thus, would be inappropriate and wrong.<sup>333</sup> As Aquinas cites St. Paul's words, "be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."<sup>334</sup> Hence, since the divine order of things is something that is only fully understood by God, the requirements of prudence on our side suggest the need for a measure of reserve and caution in any judgments which we might want to make about how the order of the world is presenting itself to us within the concreteness of its unfolding

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328*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 4. Recall the conclusion of a meditation by John Henry Cardinal Newman while illustrates this point:

Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends, He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me - still He knows what He is about.

329*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 98, a. 2, ad 3.

330*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; q. 48, a. 2, ad 3; 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 4, ad 1.

331Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 60. See Aquinas's commentary on the *Book of Job*, the *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*.

332*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 3, ad. 1.

333*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 1.

334Romans 12:21, cited by Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 1.



events. Better to focus on our need for understanding and our finding of variables and relations than to move too quickly from a context that is shaped by a kind of righteous mission which is grounded in the kind of absoluteness that always belongs to the decisiveness of our moral judgments or which is implied in any determination which wants to say that something is good and this other, bad, wrong, and evil.<sup>335</sup>

### God's Transcendent Willing

Since God as pure act does not act in order to acquire or obtain anything, God's acting is essentially unselfish and, in its unselfishness, it exudes a form of self-transcendence which is peculiar only to God. Is it akin to the shining forth or, in this way, the self-transcendence of light? However we try to imagine or to picture it (though we know that we cannot adequately imagine it): God's acting as pure act emerges as the basis for a further kind of solicitude and government which belongs to how God intervenes and rules in our human history in a way that is constitutive of a higher order of things which presents itself to us now as a history of our healing and raising which, in other words, exists as our saving redemption and salvation. God acts within our history to employ its matter and events to communicate additional meanings and realities which would otherwise not be communicated and known.<sup>336</sup> As Aquinas had noted, as pure act, as an invariant principle of beneficent activity, God acts or God intends "only to communicate His perfection, which is His [own] goodness."<sup>337</sup> Nothing better exists where, simply speaking, God communicates Himself. As the created order comes from God's goodness and as it communicates this goodness *qua* creation, its goodness only fully exists in the wake of how God's intrinsic goodness draws it back toward itself in a movement which effects its fuller realization and completion, God's goodness always serving as the final end, object, or justification of God's activity as pure act. The goodness of God, in its liberality or in its extensiveness, in turn presents itself or it communicates itself to us through divine acts in terms of an innumerable number of

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<sup>335</sup>See Butterfield, *Whig Interpretation of History*, p. 130.

<sup>336</sup>Frederick E. Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History* (New York, N.Y./Ramsey, N.J./Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 111. As Crowe explains (pp. 111-112) how Aquinas's understanding of universal causality can be combined with a theory of history which speaks about history, and not scripture, as the primary carrier of God's Word (bringing God's Word into our human language and culture), for Aquinas, we move initially from a sense and understanding of scripture toward a sense and understanding of human history and the created order that is the context of our human history. We begin with scripture for good cognitional reasons since the religious meaning of scripture presents itself to us first in the Church's prayer and liturgy as the medium through which we are then grasp how certain events are to be interpreted and understood. Events are revealed to us through the words of scripture. Hence, how can we understand the events spoken about by scripture if we do not begin with an exegesis of textual meaning as this meaning is presented by scripture? However, if we were to begin from a metaphysical or ontological perspective, we would begin with events as they occur within our history since it is this history which is brought into fuller meaning through the self-interpretation which occurs in scripture. No essential contradiction between these two approaches and, for this reason, it is possible to develop a theology of history that dovetails with Aquinas's understanding of how God's Word is made known in scripture. The context of this Word is God's providential care of both our human and our natural history since the coming into being of scripture is a divinely intended event that is meant to serve divine ends and goals.

<sup>337</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 44, a. 4; 1, p. 232; cf. q. 21, a. 3.

many different effects<sup>338</sup> which, as effects, exist as differentiations of the pure act of being which is God's being or God's existence as pure activity. No contradiction exists if we postulate an act which can have many different consequences and effects, unrestricted consequences coming from an unrestricted act.

God (in Christ) acts thus not only in creation to communicate a goodness of existence which moves from a condition of non-being to a condition of being (witness Col. 1:16: "In Him everything in heaven and on earth was created"<sup>339</sup>) and which seeks to bring everything back to God (as this is perhaps suggested by Proverbs 16, 4: "The Lord has made all things for Himself"<sup>340</sup>) but in addition too, in and through the complete goodness and steadfast love which already fully exists within the unrestricted life of self-giving and self-donation which is constitutive of the Christian Trinity,<sup>341</sup> if the goodness of created things is to exist with qualities and characteristics that are increasingly akin to who God is and to how God exists in the transcendence or the divinity which alone belongs to God, then, for the sake of the greater goodness of all created things (a goodness which is not to be equated with the createdness of these created things: the natures of created things and the acts of created things), God also acts redemptively within and into the history of created things in an entirely free and unselfish way. Goodness is added to goodness or goodness can be added to the goodness that God has already freely created. Admit the unrestricted goodness of God and we turn our attention to the probability of the good of a saving type of divine revelation and a heightening of intimacy which would exist between ourselves and God which would have to point to the genuineness of a proffered divine revelation and hence to the truth or to the reality of this type of revelation.

In coping then with our defects (in working with our defects, overcoming them), if our acts of willing are to be elicited in a way which engenders or which points to acts of cooperation that can proceed from us and which are lovingly given and supplied, wisely (most wisely), God acts compassionately and mercifully if, through conditions that best meet our needs and requirements, God is to move toward

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338 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 91, 16; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 3. As Crowe explains it in his *Theology of the Christian Word*, p. 109, God speaks to us through historical events "as really and truly" as he does when he speaks through the words of prophets or the pages of scripture. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 10, Aquinas argues that God communicates his meaning in two ways: either through words (as in the words of Holy Writ or the words of prophets spoken about in scripture), or through events as these occur in human history and which are spoken about in scripture. Words communicate meaning in speaking about events but, once these events have been made known by words, they function as carriers of meaning in their own right, independently of the signification which occurs strictly by means of words. Crowe refers to a fuller discussion of these matters by Aquinas in his *Quodlibet VII*, q. 6, aa. 1-3 and in his commentary on Paul's use of allegory in Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*.

339 Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word*, pp. 106-107.

340 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 44, a. 4.

341 Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, pp. 161-2; Marie T. Farrell, R.S.M., "Thomas Aquinas and Friendship with God," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 61 3/4 (1995): 216. As Farrell summarizes Thomas's teaching on the role that is played by the life of friendship which exists within God:

...divine friendship for the human person and for the whole of humanity springs from the very life of mutual love and knowledge, which is to say eternal friendship, existing within the godhead.

us in order to help us: to alleviate our sufferings and trials (the sufferings, the deprivations, of anything that God has brought into an initial condition of being).<sup>342</sup> In actualizing or in displaying God's own compassion and mercy as this is mediated to us through conditions of time and space, God manifests not only the extent of His divine power and omnipotence,<sup>343</sup> but, more importantly *or more significantly*, the depth and the freedom of His care and loving through a further ordering of effects which exist as an added ordering of goods, a first good within this order leading to a second good as, also, a later second good requires a first good as its preliminary basis or foundation. Initially then, as we attend to Christian claims about God and the sense or the reality (or the rationality) of these claims, God acts through effects as these principally exist first through a form of Christ's act of being as an act of solidarity (we refer to Christ's companionship and presence as this is given to us through the agency of Christ's Incarnation)<sup>344</sup> and then, later and more fully, through the mediation of His saving life and death,<sup>345</sup> in a series of events, actions, and deeds which are entirely compatible and which fully resonate with the conditions of our freedom in the kind which specifically belongs to us as human beings: a freedom which already exists as a flawed or imperfect created reality and whose goodness is to be added to and corrected in a way which does not detract from the goodness which already exists and belongs to us (both with regard to the manner of our existence and to the freedom and choice which we happen to have as living, conscious subjects).<sup>346</sup>

As, through Christ's Incarnation, God's actuality enters the created order of things in ways which move toward a more radical kind of presence and relation, the potency of our human freedom accordingly grows in power and fertility as we in our potencies are moved (both our active potencies in terms of what we do and our passive potencies in terms of what we receive), or as they are more fully revealed to us for perhaps the first time by actualities that are themselves more real and substantial (we speak about substances or things rather than about accidents, qualities, and characteristics): through means which are also actual in an unlimited way. The larger or greater object, throughout, is a form of help which can attend to the underlying causes of our suffering and loss (as these causes exist within the created order of things) but in a way which can neutralize and undercut the corrosive consequences of sin which commonly follow from the irrationality (or the evil) of our sin and which exist as temptations to induce new evils and wrongs and additional experiences of suffering. How best to realize the goodness of our human virtues and the possibility of virtue which exists in us? And so, if God's goodness is to be fully communicated and brought into the complexity or the kind of differentiation which belongs to us in our incarnate human life, it relies on forms of self-giving or self-donation which

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342 *In 4 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 46, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1, cited by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 161, n. 28; *In Psalmos*, xxiv, 8, cited by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 167, n. 46; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 47, a. 1, ad 1.

343 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 25, a. 3, ad 3; 2a2ae, q. 30, a. 4.

344 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 6, a. 6.

345 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 48, a. 6, ad 3.

346 See Lonergan's *Insight*, p. 718, for his discussion on the necessity of a type of solution for the problem of evil that must not be discontinuous with a "harmonious continuation of the actual order of this universe." As Lonergan summarizes it, "there are no divine afterthoughts." God does not retract or go back on the order that He has created. Elsewhere, in "The Redemption," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, p. 10, Lonergan makes the same point when he argues, with respect to the significance of Christ's redeeming, saving death, that "conditions in this world continue despite the advent of the Messiah, but their very continuance becomes the means by which we proceed to eternal life."

manifest themselves through specific divine interventions that come to exist within and in conjunction with the history of created things to introduce new orderings of divine law which fall within the scope and the ambit of God's eternal law. Within the order of God's eternal law, divine laws cannot be distinguished in terms of what is old and what is new. However, from our perspective or from the kind of order which belongs to the being of spatial, temporal things, these divine laws (as differing, distinguishable specifications of God's eternal law) indicate how God is revealing Himself to us in a way which can draw us toward Himself in a way which increasingly points to the good and the reality of cooperation and obedience that can belong to us and in a way which also enjoys a greater degree of transcendence (a greater degree of perfection) than the kind of transcendence which already belongs to us if, as but creatures, we only think about how our acts of inquiry exist and about how they move beyond the given which already exists for us if we should think about the data and the experience of our human corporeality and the acts of sensing which exist for us in a way that is intimately bonded to how we exist in our individual, material corporeality. As we attend to these divine interventions as an extrinsic principle or as we, unexpectedly, are affected by these divine interventions as they come to us in ways that we do not control or cause, we find that a basis exists for determining different sets of divine laws and how these different, divine laws differ from each other and how, yet, they complement each other.

In conclusion then, as we stand back and reflectively look at the whole question of God in the context of the question of willing and doing (God's divine willing and doing), we find a context that cannot be isolated from the question of God as the subject or as the doer of understanding and knowing if, in God, additional or new understandings of things have not to be received in any kind of way. No augmentation. The simplicity of God precludes focusing on an understanding of willing that excludes the place and role of understanding as if it were truly something else. Our effort and desire to seek understanding (to grow in our own understanding), in its own way, supposes that, in the divine willing and doing of God, intelligibility and rationality exists. The intelligibility or the goodness of the willing excludes a notion of willing which would have to be described as in any way arbitrary or willful. For us, we know about dualities and contradictions which exist within ourselves. To know the good is not necessarily to do the good (as much as we would like it to be the case that, in always knowing the good, we invariably do the good). To attend to the willing of God in a way that tries to appreciate the goodness of the willing becomes a way that only develops to the degree that it can point to its reason or, in other words, to a reason that goodness implies if the goodness is itself truly good. By increasingly moving into or toward the intelligibility of the goodness, we move from the order of willing toward the order of knowing instead of from the knowing to the willing. Encountering something of the love of God that mysteriously comes to us leads us toward the intelligibility or the reason and rationality of God and, naturally, if we move more into this aura of understanding, we come to know more about the willing. Our words (in their meaning) are so self-evident here that their use immediately suggests their redundancy. They have not to be said at all although, on the other hand, they point to two sides or to two points of departure where each moves and intersects with the other. Our knowing is moved by our willing and our willing, by our understanding. The kind of order which exists in us, if it is to be explained, accordingly requires an explanation that is somehow more perfect: an actuality that is more intelligible or an actuality that is more intelligent and a willing that is more or greater in its effectiveness, its goodness, and its love. Increasingly, with a degree of circumspection, we begin to speak about divine things and maybe in a way which increasingly induces a kind of awe that leads us toward more radical forms of self-reflection and self-questioning. More fully we live if, increasingly, in our own way, we become more like the higher creatures which exist as angels: perpetually lost and joyful in their attentiveness and worship, constantly praising God, happy to be alive and to exist and to

be able simply to be with God, knowing and loving what God knows and loves to the degree that these things can be given to us as creatures.