Virtue In The Philosophy Of St. Thomas Aquinas As Contained In The Summa Theologica

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VIRTUE IN THE PHILOSOPHY
OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
AS CONTAINED
IN THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA

by

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submitted to the Department of Philosophy
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[Signature]

James R. DePauw
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Chapter I

THE CONCEPT OF VIRTUE

For a man to live means that he must act. His life is truly a complex pattern of actions, which may be grouped into two classes: first, those actions for which he is responsible, and secondly, those for which he is not responsible. Those actions for which he is the agent but for which he is not responsible are called non-voluntary acts. Man causes them, but he is not their rationally responsible cause. These acts are properly called acts of man. But the second class of acts, those actions which are performed under man's control and for which he can be rightly held responsible are called voluntary acts.\(^1\)

These two classes of acts are distinguished by the fact that when a man intelligently, freely and willingly performs an act, this act is called a human act. There are many ac-

tions about which man makes no rational choice, such as the processes of growth and respiration, and these therefore cannot be called human acts. But for a man to perform a human act, he must know what he is doing, be free to do it, and finally, will to do it. Now everything that acts acts in view of an end. Therefore, when a man performs an act, whether good or bad, he has to know what he wills. The will, although it is the faculty of desire, is in itself blind, and consequently a man cannot desire what he does not know. Thus we have the important ethical principle: "Nothing is willed that is not known."² The next requisite for a man to perform a human act is that he will to act. An example of this is afforded in the distinction made between winking and blinking, for when a man winks he wills to do so and thus performs a voluntary act, but when he blinks, this act is involuntary. Therefore when acts are not elicited from the will they are but acts of man and not human acts. For unless man's acts proceed in some way from his will, they are not truly human and he is not responsible for them.

In the course of our daily living we perform many thousands of human acts, and we become accustomed to doing the same things over and over again. In performing the same acts repeatedly, those that were at first difficult become easier and we acquire a facility for performing them. In this way

(2) Op. cit., P. 93
we acquire a new power or tendency for a certain pattern of behavior, which, whether good or bad, becomes comparatively easy. This acquired facility is called a habit.

According to St. Thomas, the word "habit" is derived from the word "habere" (to have). It is derived from this word either in so far as a man or a thing is said to have something, or when he or it has a relation either in reference to itself or to something else. When we take the word as having a relation in reference to itself or to something else, habit is a quality, and this is how St. Thomas speaks of it. Quality implies a certain mode of a substance, i.e., that which a measure determines, and therefore it implies a determination of a subject, in reference to the nature of a thing, is of the first species of quality. If the determination is suitable for the nature of a thing, it has the aspect of good, and when it is unsuitable, it has the aspect of evil. Therefore, since the first object we consider in anything is its nature, we say that habit belongs to the first species of quality.3

We also speak of habit as having a relation to an act, either in regard to the nature of the habit or to the subject of the habit. Habit must have a relation to act in reference to the nature of habit, because it is necessarily related to

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the nature of a thing in so far as it is suitable or unsuitable to it. But the nature of a thing is also ordained to another end which it attains either by an operation, or by the product of an operation. Therefore habit implies a relation to the nature of a thing and to operation in so far as this is the end of the nature or something conducive to that end. Therefore St. Thomas defines habit as "a disposition whereby that which is disposed, is well or ill disposed either in regard to itself, that is to its nature, or in regard to something else, that is to the end."4

From this we can see that since habit implies a relation to the nature of a thing, which in turn consists in its relation to act, habit principally implies relation to act. It is likewise clear that the very nature and notion of power implies that it should be a principle of act. So we can legitimately conclude that every habit which resides in a power implies principally relation to an act.5

For a thing to need to be disposed to another thing three conditions are necessary. First, it is necessary for the thing which is disposed to be distinct from that to which it is disposed, that it be related to it as potentiality is related to act. Therefore, since there is no composition of act and potency in God, it is impossible for there to be habit or dis-

(4) Op. cit., I-IIae, Q. 49, a. 3
(5) Ibid., I-IIae, Q. 49, a. 3
position in God. The second condition is that the thing in
potency be determined to more than one object and to different
things. It follows from this that a power which has only one
set and fixed way of working, such as gravity and electricity,
are not susceptible of habit. The third condition is that
the thing in potency be capable of being adjusted in various
ways, so as to make the subject well or ill disposed to its
form or to its operation.6

To those operations which come from its nature, the body
is not disposed by habit because the natural forces are de­
termined to one way of acting, and, as we have seen above,
the thing that is in potency must be capable of being adjusted
in various ways. But the operations which come from the soul
through the body belong principally to the soul, and therefore
dispositions to such operations are principally in the soul.
They are in the body only secondarily, in so far as the soul
helps the body in its operations. When we speak of habitual
dispositions in the body, such as health and beauty, we can
not call them habits. They are habitual dispositions and not
habits, since they do not have the nature of habit perfectly.
The reason for this is because their causes are easily change­
able. They may be difficult to change because they can not
be removed as long as the subject endures, or because they are
hard to change in comparison with other dispositions. The

(6) I-Iias, Q. 49, a. 4
The qualities of the soul, on the other hand, are simply
difficult to change because of the unchangeableness of the
subject.\(^7\)

When we consider, therefore, that habit is related chiefly
to operation, we find that in this manner habits are principally found in the soul. For as we have already seen, one of
the conditions for a habit is that a thing must not be determined to one operation; so the soul, which is inclined indifferently to many operations, can have habits in respect to its powers. This is because the soul is the principle of operations through its powers.\(^8\)

When we consider whether there are any habits in the sensitive part, we see that if the sensitive powers act from natural instinct, they are ordained to one thing. But when we consider them as obedient to the dictates of reason, they can be ordained to various things, and so they can have habits in them which dispose them ill or well to various things.\(^9\)

Our next problem is to determine whether there is any habit in the intellect. In this connection we see that when the mind reaches out to grasp the particular elements of an intelligible thing it is in act. Now if to act belongs to the intellect, it must also have the power to act. Therefore there can be habit in the intellect itself.

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\(^{(7)}\) I-IIae, Q. 50, a. 1
\(^{(8)}\) I-IIae, Q. 50, a. 2
\(^{(9)}\) I-IIae, Q. 50, a. 3
\(^{(10)}\) I-IIae, Q. 50, a. 3
There must likewise be habit in the will. Since every power which can act in various ways needs a habit to dispose it to act, the will, which is a rational power must have habit to dispose it to act. Habit must also be in the will because it is principally related to the will, habit being what we use when we will.\textsuperscript{11}

In man there are also certain natural habits which owe their existence partly to nature and partly to some extrinsic principle. In the apprehensive powers we may have a natural habit both in regard to the specific nature, and in regard to the individual nature. This is seen on the part of the specific nature of the soul itself, in the natural habit of the understanding of first principles. As regards the individual nature, the habit of knowledge is natural in respect to its beginning, since we need to use the sensitive powers in the operation of the intellect, and since one man, because of the disposition of his sense organs, is more apt to understand well. In the appetitive powers, on the contrary, no habit is natural because the inclination to a proper object does not belong to the habit but to the nature of the powers. On the part of the body, in respect to the individual nature, there are some appetitive habits that have natural beginnings since some men are inclined by bodily temperament to chastity or meekness or some such virtue.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} I-IIae, Q. 50, a. 5
\textsuperscript{12} ibid., Q. 51, a. 1
In human acts we see both the passive and active principles of the acts of the agent. In this respect we witness the acts of the appetitive power coming from the same power that is moved by the apprehensive power which presents the object; and likewise, the intellectual power has an active principle in the self-evident proposition. Here we see the principle that whatever is moved is moved by another. Examples of this are the habits of moral virtue which are caused in the appetitive powers through the direction of reason, and the habits of science in the intellect, as moved by first principles.\(^{13}\)

A habit of virtue cannot be caused by a single act. This is evident because the will is inclined in various ways and to many things, and the reason judges in a particular case. Therefore it is only by repeated acts of the intellect that habits of virtue can be caused. This will be found to be true of both the apprehensive and appetitive powers.\(^{14}\)

There are some habits that are infused into man by God. This is because man is disposed to an end which exceeds the limits of human nature, i.e., our ultimate and perfect happiness. So in order for us to attain this supreme end which is beyond our purely human powers to reach, we can not have such habits except through direct infusion by God. At times

\(^{13}\) I-IIae, Q. 51, a. 2
\(^{14}\) ibid., a. 3
He infuses these habits into man in order to manifest His Infinite Power.\textsuperscript{15}

It is repeated acts that cause habits to grow. However, these acts must be more intense than the habit itself, or it will not increase the habit but diminish it.\textsuperscript{16}

A habit which has a corruptible subject and a cause that has a contrary can be corrupted directly, i.e., by its contrary, and indirectly, i.e., through the corruption of its subject. Thus we see that bodily habits such as health and sickness can be corrupted. The habit of science, which resides chiefly in the possible intellect, an incorruptible subject, but secondarily in the sensitive powers of apprehension, a corruptible substance can be corrupted only indirectly, i.e., on the part of the sensitive powers. If a habit has a contrary, either of itself or of its cause, it can be corrupted directly. But the possible intellect and the active intellect have no contraries, and consequently they can not be corrupted either directly or indirectly. These habits are first principles. However, there is in the possible intellect the habit of conclusions, called science, whose cause may be contrary due to the falsity of the propositions from which the reasoning proceeds, or because of a faulty process of reasoning. Therefore we see that reason can corrupt the habit of

\textsuperscript{(15) I-IIae, Q. 51, a. 4}
\textsuperscript{(16) ibid., Q. 52, a. 3}
science. Likewise, it is also possible with the moral virtues that they may be corrupted by a judgment of reason contrary to a certain virtue. Habits can diminish in the same ways as we have said they could increase. ¹⁷

Habits of moral virtue and habits of the intellect may be corrupted or diminished through cessation of act. For if we have bad habits of moral virtue or of the intellect and fail to counteract them with acts that come from those habits, they will be diminished or destroyed altogether. ¹⁸

Specific habits differ in regard to the active principles of dispositions, in regard to nature, and in regard to their different objects. In regard to nature, they differ first in their suitableness or unsuitableness to nature. In this way they are judged as good or bad habits. Secondly, they are distinct in their relation to nature, e.g., as human virtue befits a lower nature than does heroic virtue. ¹⁹

Virtues are habits. The determination to act shows the perfection of a thing, and power is most perfect when it is determinate to one act. The active natural powers can rightly be called virtues since they are of themselves determined to one act. But the rational powers are determined to one act only by habits. So we can conclude that human virtues are habits. ²⁰

(17) I-IIae, q. 53, aa. 1–2
(18) ibid., a. 3
(19) ibid., q. 54, aa. 3, 4
(20) ibid., q. 55, a. 1
Power may be spoken of in two ways; in reference to being, and in reference to act. The former is on the part of matter, which in man is the body, and the latter is on the part of form, which in man is the soul, the principle of all human acts. Since habit belongs to the soul and since virtue is a habit, it implies reference to act and not to being. Therefore we conclude that human virtue is an operative habit.21

Since virtue denotes the perfection of a power, and since perfection implies good and excludes evil, we can say that virtue is a good operative habit.22

Accordingly, St. Thomas defines virtue as "a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us." This definition, except for the last part, which God works in us, without us, which applies to the infused virtues, is a definition of virtue in general.23

The subject of virtue is a power of the soul. This is proved first, from the fact that the essence of virtue implies the perfection of a power which must be in that which it perfects; secondly, virtue is an operative habit, and all operation comes from the soul; thirdly, virtue disposes a thing to what is its best, its end, and this comes either

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(21) I-IIae, Q. 55, a. 2
(22) ibid., a. 3
(23) ibid., a. 4
from a thing's operation or from something acquired through the operation which comes from a thing's power. Virtue can be chiefly only in one power, but it can exist in the other powers in so far as one power is moved by another or receives from it. The will or some power moved by the will can be the subject of a habit which is called a virtue simply, i.e., one that gives the aptness to perform a good act and also the right use of that aptness. The intellect therefore, since it is moved by the will, can be the subject of virtue absolutely so called. The irascible and concupiscible powers can be the subject of human virtue only in so far as they obey reason. There can be no virtues in the sensitive powers of apprehension since they only prepare the way for the acquisition of intellectual knowledge, and their action does not result in good, which is a necessary condition for a perfect habit or virtue. 24

Virtues are in us by nature, first, as regards specific nature, since there are by nature certain naturally known principles of knowledge and action in man's intellect, and since the will has a natural appetite for good in accordance with reason. Secondly, as regards individual nature, there are certain dispositions in the bodies of men whereby they are disposed well or ill to certain virtues. Both the intellectual and moral virtues are in us inchoatively, but not

(24) I-IIae, Q. 56, aa. 1-5
perfectly, since their perfection depends on various modes of action, in respect to various matters and according to various circumstances.\(^{25}\)

It is of the nature of the moral virtues to direct man toward good. This good is the mean between excess and deficiency, and is set by reason. The mean of all the moral virtues, except justice, which observes the real mean, is the rational mean.\(^{26}\)

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\(^{25}\) I-IIae, Q. 63, a. 1

\(^{26}\) ibid., Q. 64, aa. 1, 2
Chapter II

The Division of Virtue

In the first chapter we treated of the essential notion of virtue, which consists in the disposition to act in accord with the dictates of reason. This brings us to our next point, the division of virtue. Virtue is divided in many ways, but here we shall limit our division to the natural, which includes the intellectual and moral virtues, and the supernatural or theological virtues. Our main concern in this chapter will be to briefly treat of the natural virtues, leaving for the third chapter a more detailed consideration of the moral virtues in particular. We shall prescind from any consideration of the supernatural virtues.

We shall first consider briefly the distinction between the natural and the supernatural ways. They differ in the following ways:

1. In respect of the different kinds of good to which they dispose one. The natural virtues aim at rational good manifested by reason; the supernatural, at Christian conduct manifested by reason illuminated through faith, revealing more than rational good, namely, a supernatural good.

2. The natural moral virtues, if acquired, give facility in action and induce one to act rightly; the supernatural give the faculty of supernatural action, each in its proper sphere, but they do not give facility of action.

3. Natural virtues are strengthened by natural acts; supernatural virtues are strengthened by God on account of meritorious acts.

4. Natural virtues, if acquired, exclude their contrary vices; supernatural virtues exist and are exercised in spite of their contraries, for they are given in order that passion may be subdued.

We shall now consider the natural virtues in particular. In man there are two principles of human acts, the intellect or reason, and the will or rational appetite. Reason is the first principle of human actions, and whatever other principles of human actions there are, they obey reason in some way. For a man to perform a good deed, his reason must be well disposed through a habit of intellectual virtue, and his appetite must be well disposed through a habit of moral virtue. Consequently, even as the appetite is a principle of human actions in so far as it partakes of reason,
so are moral habits virtues in so far as they are in conformity with reason.\textsuperscript{28}

The intellect by nature has a speculative and a practical function. The function of the speculative intellect is not concerned with anything practical or active, and therefore it cannot be the seat of genuine virtue strictly speaking, since the virtues are dispositions for action.\textsuperscript{29} The habits of the speculative intellect do not perfect or affect the appetitive part of the soul in any way. Consequently they can be called virtues only in so far as they confer the aptness for doing good, considering truth, which is the good work of the intellect.\textsuperscript{30}

The virtues which reside in the intellect are understanding, wisdom and science. Understanding, which is the habit of first principles, perfects the intellect for the knowledge of truth. Wisdom is the virtue which attains to a knowledge of conclusions in their highest causes. Science perfects the intellect for the knowledge of conclusions which are last in one class or another of knowable matter. These three are speculative habits and give us the power of doing. However, since they do not impel us to do a thing they can only be called imperfect virtues.\textsuperscript{31}

Upon examining the practical intellect, we find that

\textsuperscript{28} I-IIae, Q. 58, a. 2
\textsuperscript{29} cf. Gilson-Ward, Moral Values and the Moral Life, St. Louis, B. Herder Book Company, 1931, 151
\textsuperscript{30} I-IIae, Q. 57, a. 1
\textsuperscript{31} Cronin, Science of Ethics, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1930, 596
there are two virtues which reside in it. The first of these is art, which is defined as the "right method with regard to external productions."32 The goodness of the works produced by art depends upon the very goodness of the works themselves, and not upon the appetitive faculty being affected in any way. The other virtue residing in the practical intellect is prudence. It is defined as "that virtue which directs one in the choice of means most apt, under existing circumstances, for the attainment of a due end."33 We shall treat of prudence more fully, later, when we consider the cardinal virtues.

The second group of virtues listed under the natural virtues are the moral virtues. The word "moral" is derived from the Latin word "mos" which means a natural or quasi-natural inclination to do something. This inclination to do something belongs properly to the appetitive powers, which move powers to their acts. Consequently only those virtues that reside in the appetite are moral virtues.34

Moral virtues perfect the appetitive part of the soul when they direct it to the good as set by reason. Therefore there must be moral virtues that have to do with all matters directed and moderated by reason. But since reason also directs the intellectual appetite or will, there must be virtues that have to do with operations. Consequently there

(33) ibid., 473
(34) I-IIae, Q. 58, a. 1
are virtues which have to do with operations, and others which have to do with the passions.35

In all moral matters reason is the commander and mover, and the appetitive powers are those which are commanded and moved. Moral habits differ specifically according to their specific differences of their objects. The appetite, therefore, which does not receive the direction of the will essentially, but by participation, receives objects from the reason, which belong to various species according to the ways in which they are related to reason. Therefore, we see that moral virtues are not one but are of various species.36

Operation and passion are related to virtue in two ways. First, as the effects of virtue, and in this way every moral virtue produces some good operations. Secondly, operation may be said to be the matter about which moral virtue is concerned. In this sense it is necessary for the virtue concerned about operations to be different from those concerned with the passions.37

The concupiscible passions do not need more than one moral virtue since they follow in a certain order, as if directed toward a certain thing, either the avoidance of some evil or the attainment of some good. But the irascible passions are not of one order and are directed toward different things. Therefore we have different virtues about the different passions.38

35) ibid., Q. 59, a. 4
36) ibid., Q. 60, a. 1
37) ibid., Q. 60, a. 2
38) ibid., Q. 60, a. 4
When discussing the differences of moral virtues as regards the various objects of the passions, St. Thomas points out that the good of man may be referred to a bodily sense or to an inner power of the mind. This latter good may also be directed toward the good of man in himself, either in his body or soul, or in relation to another man. Thus he concludes that

...according to Aristotle, there are ten moral virtues about the passions, viz., fortitude, temperance, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, philotimia, gentleness, friendship, truthfulness, and eutrapelia, all of which differ in respect of their diverse matter, passions, or objects: so that if we add justice, which is about operations, there will be eleven in all. 39

* philotimia—love of honour
* eutrapelia—pleasure of games
(39) IVIIae, q. 60, a. 5
Chapter III

The Cardinal Virtues

If we consider the formal principles or the subjects of the virtues, we shall find that there are four cardinal virtues. The formal principle of virtue, good as defined by reason, can be considered, first, as existing in the very act of reason, wherefore we have the virtue of Prudence. Secondly, if we consider reason as putting order into things, either into operations or into the passions, we have different virtues. In this first respect, we have the virtue of Justice. In the second instance, reason has to put order into the passions because there are those passions which incite us to act against reason, for which we have the virtue of Temperance; then there are those passions that keep us from following the dictates of reason, for which we need the virtue of Fortitude. When we consider the subjects of virtue, we likewise find that there are four cardinal virtues. First, we have the power of reason, which is perfected by prudence; Secondly, we have those powers which share reason, the will, the subject
of justice; the concupiscible passions, the subject of temperance, and the irascible passions, the subject of fortitude.\(^{40}\)

The enumeration of these virtues was not original with St. Thomas, but was made perhaps sixteen hundred years before his time. As Father Rickaby says:\(^{41}\)

The enumeration of the cardinal virtues is a piece of Greek philosophy that has found its way into the catechism. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance are mentioned by Plato as recognized heads of virtue. They are recognized, though less clearly, by Xenophon, reporting the conversations of Socrates. It does not look as though Socrates invented the division; he seems to have received it from an earlier source, possibly Pythagoras. They are mentioned in Holy Scripture (Wisdom viii., 7, which is however a Greek book), and Proverbs viii., 14. They make no figure in the philosophies of India and China.

The first cardinal virtue we shall consider is Prudence. Considered specifically, it is "that virtue which directs one in the choice of means most apt, under existing circumstances, for the attainment of a due end."\(^{42}\) It is the work of prudence to acquire a knowledge of the future from what is known about the present or the past. Accordingly, prudence is located in the reason, which is the faculty that does this work. Since it resides in the reason, and since it has to do with the choosing of means to an end, prudence is in the practical

\(^{40}\) I-IIae, Q. 61, a. 2
\(^{41}\) Joseph Rickaby, Moral Philosophy, Longmans, Green, & Co., New York, 1905, 34.
\(^{42}\) Augustine Waldron, "Virtue," Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XII, 1912, 473
reason, which deals with things that are done for an end. 43

Prudence differs from the virtues of the speculative intellect which are concerned with necessary things. It differs from art because art is concerned with things that are produced in external matter, while prudence is concerned with things that originate in the doer himself. It differs from the moral virtues also, in that it resides in the intellect, whereas the moral virtues reside in the appetite. Therefore it is called a special virtue. 44

It belongs to prudence to fix the mean in moral virtue. The attainment of the mean is the end of moral virtue, and it is found only when those things that are directed toward the end are rightly disposed. Therefore, since it is the work of prudence to point out the right means to the end, it is the task of prudence to fix the mean in moral virtue. 45

The proper act of prudence is command. The three principal acts of reason in reference to action are: taking counsel, judging what has been discovered, and commanding to do something. Since prudence is right reason applied to action, the chief act of reason with regard to action must also be the chief act of prudence. The command of reason is the chief action of reason in regard to action, so it must therefore be the chief act of prudence. 46

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(43) II-IIae, Q. 47, a. 2
(44) ibid., Q. 47, a. 5
(45) ibid., Q. 47, a. 8
(46) ibid., Q. 47, a. 9
It has often been said that prudence has to do only with the good of the individual, but this conception is false. There are many instances in which right reason demands that the common good take precedence over the good of the individual. On this account, therefore, prudence, which counsels, judges and commands about the taking of the right means to an end must consider the common good as well as the private good of the individual.47

Since there are many different species of goods, there must also be different types of prudence to correspond with these different ends. Therefore, prudence, simply speaking, is applied to the individual good, while domestic good is applied to the good of the home, and political good is applied to the common good of the state or kingdom.48

In all virtue there are three parts. The first are the integral parts, which are the things that must concur in order for one to perform a perfect act of virtue. There are eight integral parts of prudence—namely, memory, reasoning, understanding, docility and shrewdness, which belong to prudence as a cognitive virtue, while foresight, circumspection and caution belong to prudence as commanding and applying knowledge to action.

The second kind of parts of virtue, the subjective parts,

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(47) II-IIae, Q. 47, a. 10
(48) ibid., a. 11
are taken from the various species of virtue. In reference to prudence these parts are the prudence by which a man rules himself and the prudence by which he governs a multitude. The latter is of four kinds according to the purpose for which the group is organized. The prudence that rules an army gathered to fight is called military prudence. Then there are the groups gathered together for the whole of life; the family, which is ruled by domestic prudence; and the city or kingdom which is ruled by the reignative prudence in the ruler and the political prudence in the subjects.

The third kind of parts are the potential parts. These are virtues connected with a virtue, and they are directed toward certain secondary acts, since they do not have the whole power of the principal virtue. The potential parts of prudence are good counsel, which concerns counsel, synesis, which concerns judgment in things of ordinary occurrence, and gnome, which concerns judgment in things of exception to law.49

The most important vice opposed to prudence is imprudence. There are many different kinds of imprudence: by defect of counsel, precipitation or timidity, to which lack of docility, memory, or reason is referred, is a species of imprudence; by defect of judgment, thoughtlessness, in which are included incautiousness and circumspection; and also inconstancy and negligence, to which belong improvidence, lack of intelligence

(49) II-IIae, Q. 48
and shrewdness, correspond to command which is the proper act of prudence.\textsuperscript{50}

The vices opposed to prudence and bear some resemblance to it are prudence of the flesh, craftiness, guile and solicitude. All of these vices come from covetousness, which signifies the undue use of reason and is the chief vice opposed to justice.\textsuperscript{51}

We shall now consider the virtue of justice. Justice directs man in his relations to others, and its special object is right. Right is of two kinds; natural, which comes from the very nature of the thing, and positive, which is acquired by private agreement between individuals, or by public agreement.\textsuperscript{52}

Justice, which is defined as "the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right," resides in the will. It directs man in his relations with other men, either in reference to his relations with individuals, or with others in general, as those who go to make up a certain community. When justice directs man in his relations toward his fellow men it is called particular justice, and when it directs man to the common good in conformity with law it is called legal justice.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50} II-IIae, Q. 53, a. 1, 3
\textsuperscript{51} II-IIae, Q. 55, a. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
\textsuperscript{52} ibid., Q. 57, a. 2
\textsuperscript{53} ibid., Q. 58, a. 4, 5, 7
The mean of justice is not the same as the mean of the other moral virtues. For the mean of the other moral virtues is fixed by reason. But since justice is concerned with the operation of a thing as related to another person, its mean must have some proportion of equality between the external thing and the external person. This mean of justice is called the real mean.\(^5^4\)

Justice can be rightly considered the greatest of the moral virtues. If we speak of legal justice, it is the greatest since the common good surpasses the good of the individual. If we consider particular justice, it can be called the greatest for two reasons. First, its subject, the will, is superior to the sensitive appetite which is the subject of the other moral virtues. Secondly, its object is the good of the individual and of the person to whom justice is administered, while the object of the moral virtues is the good of the individual alone.\(^5^5\)

Injustice, which is opposed to justice, is of two kinds. First, illegal injustice which shows a disregard for the common good, and second, particular injustice which refers to an inequality between one person and another.\(^5^6\)

Judgment, the act of justice, is in its original meaning a statement of what is right or just. It is lawful when it is an act of justice. To be an act of justice it must come from

\(^{54}\) II-IIae, Q. 58, a. 10

\(^{55}\) ibid., a. 12

\(^{56}\) ibid., Q. 59, a. 1
an inclination to justice, from one who has authority, and it must be pronounced prudently. When a judgment is contrary to the rightness of justice, it is called perverted or unjust; when a man judges in matters about which he does not have authority, it is called judgment by usurpation; when a man's reason lacks certainty, it is called rash judgment or judgment by suspicion.\(^\text{(57)}\)

Laws are written in order to show both the natural and the positive rights of man. They do not establish natural law but they contain it. They contain positive law and establish it by giving it the force of authority. Therefore, in order to approximate the natural and positive rights, we should judge according to the written law.\(^\text{(58)}\)

Since public authority makes and interprets laws, it must also pronounce judgment in certain cases. It would be unlawful for a person to force another to observe a judgment that public authority has not approved, just as it would be unlawful for a man to force another to observe a law that public authority did not approve.\(^\text{(59)}\)

In reference to the relation of the individual to the community, and of the community to the individual, there are two species of justice. The first has to do with the mutual dealings between two persons, and is called commutative jus-

\(^{(57)}\) II-IIae, Q. 60, a. 2  
\(^{(58)}\) ibid., a. 5  
\(^{(59)}\) ibid., a. 6
tice. The second concerns the relations of the community to the individual and is called distributive justice, which distributes common goods in proportion.60

The mean in the exercise of these two species of justice is not the same. In distributive justice a person receives his share of the common goods in accordance with the prominence of his position in a community. This mean is not according to any equality between things but according to a proportion between things. In commutative justice, on the other hand, a thing is paid to an individual on account of something that has been received, as in buying or selling. One person must give back to another just as much as belongs to him. Therefore, it observes the arithmetical mean which is judged by equality in quantity.61

The proper act of commutative justice is restitution. It is occasioned when one person has what belongs to another, either with his consent, as by a loan, or against his will, as in robbery. Since restitution demands a certain equality, a thing that has been taken away unjustly must be returned. But when a thing has been taken away justly, there is no need for restitution since there is already equality.62

The essential rules of restitution are stated in the following quotation:62

(60) II-IIae, Q. 61, a. 1
(61) ibid., a. 2
(62) ibid., Q. 62, a. 2
...they are those which natural equity dictates. By restitution, that which another lacks or might lack unfairly is given to him or restored to him. That which is restored must be the thing itself or its exact equivalent, neither more nor less, in so far as the person possessed it previously, whether actually or virtually; further, one must take into account whatever change may have taken place in the thing restored and make proper restitution as the case may be; and further, one must take into account the consequences that are or were prejudicial to the owner of the object due to the detention thereof. An object to be restored must be given back to the owner and not to any other person unless the latter be acting for the owner. He, whosoever he may be, who is in possession of an object to be restored is the one who must make restitution thereof, or whosoever is the one who is responsible for the act which was an offence against justice. Restitution must be made without delay, except in the case when the immediate restoration of an object is impossible.

There are vices opposed to both distributive and commutative justice. The vice opposed to distributive justice is respect of persons. Those opposed to commutative justice are divided into two groups, the first of which contains those our neighbor where his will plays no part. The first sin in this regard is murder. Other sins committed against one's neighbor in regard to his person are mutilation, striking him, and imprisonment. Secondly, there are the sins that affect the possessions of another. These are theft and robbery.63

(63) II-IIae, Q. 63, a. 1; Q. 65, aa. 2, 3, 4; Q. 66, a. 1
There are vices opposed to commutative justice which consist in words that are harmful to our neighbor. The first class of these sins includes those that have to do with juridical proceedings. Those sins committed against justice in judging are unjust judgment and unjust accusation. Sins committed on the part of the defendant are refusal to tell the truth and lying. Those committed by the witness are refusal to give evidence and giving false evidence. Sins committed by counsel are refusal to defend a just cause when one is the only person who can defend it, defending an unjust cause in civil cases, and demanding exorbitant fees. The second class includes words uttered extrajuridically against a person. These sins are five in number. They are reviling, back-biting, tale bearing, derision and cursing.

Those sins which relate to voluntary commutations are cheating or fraud, which is committed in buying and selling, and usury which occurs in loans.

Our next consideration is of the quasi-integral parts of justice, to do good and to avoid evil, and of the vices which are opposed to them. To do good and to avoid evil belong to every virtue, but justice is a special virtue which regards the good as due to one’s neighbor. It belongs to special justice to do good when due to one’s neighbor, and to avoid

(64) II-IIae, Q. 67, aa. 1, 4; Q. 69, a. 2; Q. 70, aa. 1, 4; Q. 71, aa. 1, 3, 4
(65) ibid., QQ. 72-76
(66) ibid., QQ. 77, 78
that which would be harmful to him. It belongs to general justice to do good in relation to the community or in relation to God and to avoid evil. These are quasi-integral parts of justice since they are necessary to perform a perfect act of justice, to render what is due to one's neighbor, and to refrain from inflicting any injury upon him.67

The sins opposed to these elements of justice are omission and transgression.68

We come now to the potential parts of justice, or the virtues annexed to justice. We must observe two thing in considering the virtues that are enjoined to justice. The first thing is that they have something in common with justice, and the second is that they fall short of its perfection in some way. In this first regard any virtue that has anything to do with our relations with other persons pertains to justice. In the second respect, a virtue may fall short of the perfection of justice by falling short of the aspect of equality, or by falling short of the aspect of due. Now man can render to God what is His due, but he can not render to God as much as he owes Him. In this respect we have religion which is annexed to justice. Again, one can not make equal return to his parents of what he owes them; thus we have piety annexed to justice. In addition, man can not offer equal worth for vir-

(67) II-IIae, q. 79, a. 1
(68) Ibid., aa. 2, 3
tue, and therefore we have observance which inclines one to recognize benefits he has received. The remaining virtues annexed to justice are truth, gratitude, revenge, liberality, affability, and friendship.\(^6\)

Religion is the most important virtue annexed to justice. This is evident from the following quotation:\(^7\)

> The virtue of religion (so-called because it constitutes the bond par excellence which unites man to God, who is the source of all man's good) is a perfection of the will inclining man to acknowledge as it behoves his absolute dependence upon God, who is the first beginning and last end of all (LXXXI. 1-5).

The acts of religion are divided into internal and external. The internal acts are devotion and prayer. The external acts are grouped under three heads. The first is adoration, whereby one uses his body to reverence God. The second, those acts by which some external thing is offered to God—namely, sacrifices, oblations and first fruits, tithes, or promised to God, as vows. Third, those external acts of religion by which something Divine is taken by man, oaths, adjuration, praises and Sacraments.\(^7\)

The vices opposed to the virtue of religion are superstition, idolatry, irreligion, tempting God, perjury, sacrilege and simony.\(^7\)

\(^{(6)}\) II-IIae, Q. 80, a. 1  
\(^{(71)}\) II-IIae, Q. 82-91  
\(^{(72)}\) ibid., Q. 91-100
We shall now consider the virtue of fortitude. It is "the virtue by which one meets and sustains dangers and difficulties, even death itself, and is never through fear of these deterred from the pursuit of good which reason dictates." In so far as it denotes a firmness of the mind in bearing and withstanding certain grave dangers it is a special virtue. It belongs to fortitude to remove any obstacle that withdraws the will from following reason. Withdrawing a thing from something difficult belongs to fear, and since fortitude must not only try to restrain fear but to moderately withstand these difficulties, it is concerned both with fear and daring. It is also concerned with the fears of the dangers of death, and the dangers of death in battle.

Fortitude safeguards the good of reason, which consists in truth as its proper object and justice as its proper effect. Since it is of the essence of martyrdom to stand firmly to the truth and to justice against persecution, it must be an act of virtue. It is also an act of fortitude since a man clings to faith and justice even though not in danger of death.

When we consider a virtuous act in comparison with its first motive cause, the love of charity, it is in this way that an act approaches to perfection of life. Now martyrdom is the greatest perfection of charity because man loves his

(73) Augustine Waldron, "Virtue," Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XII, 1912, 473
(74) II-IIae, Q. 123, aa. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
(75) ibid., Q. 124, aa. 1, 2
life more than anything else, and he hates death more than anything. Therefore, when a man gives up something he loves very much for something he hates, it is certainly a perfect act of charity. This is an act of the greatest charity as St. John says (c. 15, v. 13), "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
The most perfect notion of martyrdom requires that a man give up his life for Christ's sake.76

The truth of faith is the cause of martyrdom. But any virtuous deed that is referred to God is a perfection of the faith by which we come to know that God requires the acts of us and rewards us for them. In this way they can be the cause of martyrdom.77

The vices opposed to fortitude are fear, fearlessness or the inability to fear, and daring.78

Our next consideration will be of the parts of fortitude. Since fortitude is a special virtue, being about very special matter and thus not divided into several specifically distinct virtues, it cannot have subjective parts. However, it does have quasi-integral and potential parts.

Magnanimity is the first of the quasi-integral parts of fortitude. In name it denotes the stretching forth of the mind to great things. A habit is considered virtuous chiefly

(76) II-IIae, q. 124, aa, 3, 4
(77) ibid., A, 5
(78) ibid., qq. 126-127
because of its act, and so we call a man a magnanimous man when he has a mind to do a great act. He is said to be mag-
nanimous in regard to things that are great simply and absol-
utely, the greatest of which, in external things is honor.
Thus magnanimity has to do with honors.\(^7^9\)

Of the vices opposed to magnanimity there are those that are opposed to it by defect. These are presumption, ambition and vainglory. In addition there is pusillanimity, which is opposed to it by way of deficiency.\(^8^0\)

Magnificence comes from the Latin words *Magna* and *Facere*, and as its very name implies, it must do great things. When it denotes the doing of something great in a strict sense, it is a special virtue. Since the doing of great work implies expenditure, the matter of magnificence may be said to be the expenditure itself and the money which a man uses in going to great expense.\(^8^1\)

The vice opposed to magnificence is meanness, by which a man intends to spend less than his work is worth. Meanness also has a vice opposed to it. It is called waste, or the spending of more than what is proportionate to one's work.\(^8^2\)

We shall now treat of patience which is a quasi-potential part of fortitude. It is the part of patience to suffer the evils inflicted by others, of which the most difficult and

\(^{79}\) II-IIae, Q. 129, a. 1
\(^{80}\) ibid., Q. 133
\(^{81}\) ibid., Q. 134, aa. 2, 3
\(^{82}\) ibid., Q. 135, aa. 1, 2
hard to endure are those connected with the dangers of death. Since fortitude is concerned with these, it has the place of the principal virtue, and patience holds a secondary place as annexed to it.\textsuperscript{83}

Perseverance is the next quasi-potential part of fortitude. To persist long in something good until it is accomplished requires a special virtue, just as a special virtue is required to moderate fear and daring in the dangers connected with death. Therefore we have the special virtue of perseverance which endures delays in these or other deeds in so far as necessity requires. Since fortitude is the principal virtue, it remains as secondary with perseverance to endure the delays encountered in the accomplishing of a good work.\textsuperscript{84}

The vices opposed to perseverance are effeminacy and obstinacy.\textsuperscript{85}

Since human virtue inclines man to a thing that is in accord with human reason, temperance, whose name implies moderation or temperateness, which is caused by reason, is a virtue. It is a special virtue because it Withholds the appetite from things which are most seductive to man. Its chief concern is with the passions that tend toward desire and pleasures, and consequently with the sorrow that arises when those pleasures are absent. Desire for pleasures results

\textsuperscript{(83) II-IIae, Q. 136, a. 4}
\textsuperscript{(84) Ibid., Q. 137, aa. 1, 2}
\textsuperscript{(85) Ibid., Q. 138, aa. 1, 2}
from natural operations and in animals these pleasures are those of meat and drink and the pleasures of sense. Since these pleasures arise from the sense of touch, temperance is chiefly concerned with the pleasures of touch. Secondarily, however, temperance is concerned with the pleasures of touch, smell and sight in so far as the objects of these senses make the use of the necessary things related to it more pleasurable. But since taste is more closely related to touch than these other senses, temperance is more concerned with it than with these other senses. Now all these pleasurable objects are necessary for our life in someway, and accordingly temperance uses them only in so far as they are needed for our life.

The vices which are opposed to temperance are insensibility and intemperance.

Of the integral parts of temperance, we shall first consider shamefacedness. It is a fear of something which is disgraceful. In a broad sense, since it is a praiseworthy passion, it is sometimes called a virtue. It prompts us to avoid those vices opposed to temperance, and to refrain from doing vicious acts because of a fear of reproach.

The next integral part of temperance is honesty. It is considered the same as virtue and spiritual beauty. Since it is a kind of a spiritual beauty, it belongs to temperance.

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(86) II-IIae, Q. 141, aa. 1-6
(87) ibid., Q. 142, aa. 1, 2
(88) ibid., Q. 144, aa. 1, 2
which repels what detracts from the beauty of man—namely,
animal lusts.\footnote{80}

We shall now consider the subjective parts of temperance,
the first of which is abstinence. Abstinence has to do with
the pleasures of food. Its name implies a reduction of food,
and when this is regulated by reason it is a virtuous act.
The pleasures of the table can withdraw man from the good of
reason because of their greatness and because of their necessity
to man, and consequently this special matter of abstinence
makes it a special virtue.\footnote{90}

Fasting is an act of abstinence since it is concerned
with foods, about which abstinence appoints the mean. Its
purposes are to enable one to control the lusts of the flesh,
to enable one’s mind to rise more freely to a contemplation
of heavenly things, or to satisfy for our sins. It is a mat­
ter of precept in so far as it is necessary to atone for or
prevent sins, or to aid the mind to rise to spiritual things.\footnote{91}

Gluttony is the vice opposed to fasting. It denotes a
desire of eating and drinking that is not in accord with
reason.\footnote{92}

Another subjective part of temperance is sobriety, which
deals specifically with drink. It lays claim to the matter

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{80} II-IIae, Q. 145, aa. 1, 2, 4
\item \footnote{90} ibid., Q. 146, aa. 1, 2
\item \footnote{91} ibid., Q. 147, aa. 1-3
\item \footnote{92} ibid., Q. 148, aa. 1, 2
\end{itemize}
in which the observance of measure is most deserving of praise, and this is the matter of drinking intoxicants. The measured use of these drinks is most praiseworthy, but immoderate use of them is most harmful since it hinders the use of reason even more than excessive eating. Because intoxicating drink hinders the brain, there must be a special virtue to remove this hindrance, and this virtue is sobriety.\(^9\)

Drunkenness is the vice which is opposed to sobriety.\(^9\)

The third subjective part of temperance is chastity. It gets its name from the fact that it chastizes concupiscence. Since the essence of moral virtue is something moderated by reason, chastity is considered a virtue. Its special matter, properly speaking, is the concupiscences related to venereal pleasures, and consequently it is a special virtue. It is distinct from abstinence because it is concerned with venereal pleasures, while abstinence is concerned with pleasures of the palate. It is often designated by purity, but purity is but a circumstance of chastity. Purity arouses shame for participating in impure looks, kisses and touches, while chastity, on the other hand, regards the sexual union.\(^9\)

Virginity, which implies the purpose of perpetually abstaining from the pleasures of sexual intercourse, is the fourth subjective part of temperance. It is in accord with

\(^{(93)}\) II-IIa. Q. 148, aa. 1, 2  
\(^{(94)}\) Ibid., Q. 150, a. 1  
\(^{(95)}\) Ibid., Q. 151, aa. 1-4
right reason because by it man abstains from bodily pleasures in order to more freely contemplate the truth. It is more excellent than marriage as Christ showed us when He chose a virgin as a mother and remained a virgin himself. St. Paul also teaches that it is greater than marriage. In addition, since virginity is directed toward the good of the soul in the contemplation of Divine things, it is more excellent than marriage, which is directed toward the good of the body. 96

The vice opposed to virginity is lust. It is concerned chiefly with venereal pleasures and desires, which exceed the order and mode of reason in venereal acts. 97

The first potential part of temperance we shall consider is continence. It properly refers to those passions that urge man to pursue something which reason should keep him from pursuing. Nature most strongly inclines a man to pursue things that are necessary for the maintenance of the individual, such as food, or for the maintenance of the species, such as venereal acts, and these pertain to the sense of touch. Therefore continence and incontinence refer to the sense of touch. In continent and incontinent persons the concupiscible appetite is disposed in the same way, so continence does not reside in the concupiscible appetite or in reason. But since a continent man chooses to follow these desires in accord with reason,

(96) II-IIae, Q. 151, aa. 1, 2, 4
(97) ibid., l. 155, aa. 1-3
we conclude that continence resides in the will, whose act is to choose.98

The vice opposed to continence is incontinence. It implies a voluntary indulgence in shameful pleasures.99

The next potential parts of temperance are clemency and meekness. They produce the same effect in so far as they restrain anger, but they differ in that clemency moderates external punishment, while meekness moderates anger, both acting in accord with reason.100

Anger is opposed to meekness. Its object is revenge, which when not in accord with reason, is sinful. Cruelty is opposed to clemency. One commits an act of cruelty when he inflicts excessive punishment on a person for a fault that does not deserve such punishment.101

The last potential part of temperance is modesty. As temperance moderates matters in which restraint is most difficult, modesty moderates those actions that are less difficult. It has reference to inward as well as to outward actions.102

Of the species of modesty, we have humility. It restrains a man from being born to that which is above him. It resides essentially in the appetite and, properly speaking, moderates the movement of the appetite.103

(98) II-IIae, Q. 155, aa. 2, 3
(99) ibid., Q. 156, aa. 1, 2
(100) ibid., Q. 157, aa. 1-3
(101) ibid., Q. 158, a. 2; Q. 159, a. 2
(102) ibid., Q. 160, a. 2
(103) ibid., Q. 161, a. 1
Pride is the contrary vice of humility. It is an inordinate desire for personal excellence and causes many other sins because by it man despises God and inordinately desires material things.\textsuperscript{104}

Studiousness is a potential part of temperance which is listed under modesty. It is properly concerned with knowledge, and is directed toward the moderation of the desire for knowledge.\textsuperscript{105}

The vice opposed to studiousness is curiosity.\textsuperscript{106}

Our last consideration will be modesty in regard to the outward movements of the body. Just as the body becomes weary through work, so does the soul become weary through work. Because they are both finite and have only a limited capacity for work, they have need of rest. The rest of the soul, therefore, is pleasure, and this is to be sought in games. It should not, however, be sought in indecent or injurious words or games. Neither must one lose the balance of his mind altogether. Lastly, one's pleasures in these actions should be regulated according to persons, time, place and circumstances. These things must be directed according to reason, any any habit that directs according to reason is a virtue. Therefore there can be a virtue about games.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} II-IIae, Q. 162, aa. 2, 4
\textsuperscript{105} ibid., Q. 166, aa. 1, 2
\textsuperscript{106} ibid., Q. 167, a. 1
\textsuperscript{107} ibid., Q. 168, a. 2
In conclusion, we will quote a few words from Father McAllister which give a fair summary of virtue in practice.

The pursuit of virtue has its difficulties but no one has ever claimed it to be easy. It needs intelligence and perseverance. Motivation must be stressed, a wholesome environment cultivated and the practical maxims followed. The good life means the elimination of vices; but more than that it must manifest the earnest pursuit of all the virtues....

(108) Joseph B. McAllister, Ethics, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1947, 144
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