

SAINT
THOMAS
AQUINAS

**SUMMA
CONTRA
GENTILES**

BOOK
THREE:
PROVIDENCE
Part II

University
of
Notre Dame Press
Notre Dame
London

Translated,
with an Introduction
and Notes,
by
VERNON J. BOURKE

1975 [1956]

Chapter 84.

THAT THE CELESTIAL BODIES MAKE NO IMPRESSION ON OUR INTELLECTS

[1] From the things set forth earlier it is immediately evident that celestial bodies cannot be causes of events which go on in the understanding. Indeed, we have already shown¹ that the order of divine providence requires the lower things to be ruled and moved by the higher ones. But the understanding surpasses all bodies in the order of nature, as is also clear from what we have said before.² So, it is impossible for celestial bodies to act directly on the intellect. Therefore, they cannot be the direct cause of things that pertain to understanding.

[2] Again, no body acts except through motion, as is proved in *Physics* viii.³ But things that are immovable are not caused by motion, for nothing is caused by the motion of an agent, unless the agent moves a passive subject during the motion. So, things that are utterly apart from motion cannot be caused by the celestial bodies. But things that are in the area of understanding are entirely apart from motion, properly speaking, as is evident from the Philosopher, in *Physics* vii.⁴ On the contrary, "through being undisturbed by motions, the soul becomes prudent and knowing," as is stated in the same place. Therefore, it is impossible for celestial bodies to be the direct cause of things that pertain to understanding.

[3] Besides, if nothing is caused by a body unless the body is moved while the motion is going on, it is necessary for

1. See above, ch. 78ff.

2. SCG, II, ch. 49ff.

3. Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, 6 (259b 7).

4. *Ibid.*, VII, 3 (247b 1).

everything that receives an impression from a body to be moved. Now, nothing is so moved except a body, as is proved in *Physics* vi.⁵ So, everything that receives an impression from a body must be a body, or some power of a body. Now, we showed in Book Two⁶ that the intellect is neither a body nor a bodily power. Therefore, it is impossible for the celestial bodies directly to make an impression on the intellect.

[4] Moreover, everything that is moved by another thing is reduced by it from potency to act. But nothing is reduced by a thing from potency to act unless that thing is actual. So, every agent and mover must be in some way actual, in regard to the effects to which the passive and movable subject is in potency. Now, the celestial bodies are not actually intelligible, for they are certain individual, sensible things. And so, since our intellect is not in potency to anything except actual intelligibles, it is impossible for celestial substances directly to act on the intellect.

[5] Furthermore, the proper operation of a thing depends on its nature, which, in things that are generated, is acquired, along with the proper operation, through the process of generation. This is clear in the case of heavy and light things, which immediately at the end of the process that generates them possess their proper motion unless there be some impediment. Because of this the generating agent is called a mover. So, that which in regard to the beginning of its nature is not subject to the actions of celestial bodies cannot be subject to them in regard to its operation. Now, man's intellectual nature is not caused by any corporeal principles, but is of completely extrinsic origin, as we proved above.⁷ Therefore, the operation of the intellect does not come directly under the celestial bodies.

[6] Again, effects caused by celestial motions are subject to time, which is "the measure of the first celestial mo-

5. *Ibid.*, VI, 4 (234b 10).

6. SCG, II, ch. 49ff.

7. SCG, II, ch. 86ff.

tion."⁸ And so, events that abstract from time entirely are not subject to celestial motions. But the intellect in its operation does abstract from time, as it does also from place; in fact, it considers the universal which is abstracted from the here and now. Therefore, intellectual operation is not subject to celestial motions.

[7] Besides, nothing acts beyond the capacity of its species. But the act of understanding transcends the species and form of every sort of bodily agent, since every corporeal form is material and individuated, whereas the act of understanding is specified by its object which is universal and immaterial. As a consequence, no body can understand through its corporeal form. Still less, then, can any body cause understanding in another being.

[8] Moreover, a being cannot be subject to its inferiors by the same part whereby it is united to its superiors. But our soul is united to the intellectual substances, which are superior to the celestial bodies in the order of nature, by virtue of the part which is the understanding. In fact, our soul cannot understand unless it receives intellectual light from those substances. Therefore, it is impossible for intellectual operation directly to be subject to the celestial motions.

[9] Furthermore, our confidence in this view will be increased if we consider the statements of the philosophers on the point. As a matter of fact, the ancient natural philosophers, like Democritus, Empedocles, and those of similar persuasion, claimed that understanding does not differ from sense perception, as is evident from *Metaphysics* iv⁹ and from Book III of *On the Soul*.¹⁰ And so, the conclusion was made that, since sensation is a bodily power depending on changes in bodies, the same thing is also true of understanding. For this reason, they said that intellectual operation results from the motion of the celestial bodies,

8. Aristotle, *Physics*, IV, 4 (223b 17).

9. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, 5 (1009b 13).

10. Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 3 (427a 21).

because change in lower bodies results from change in the higher bodies. According to a passage in Homer: "So understanding in gods and in earthly men is like the daylight which the father of men and gods brings down";¹¹ the reference is to the sun, or, better, to Jupiter, whom they called the highest god, understanding him to be the whole heavens, as is clear from Augustine in his *City of God*.¹²

[10] Next came the opinion of the Stoics, who said that intellectual knowledge is caused by the fact that the images of bodies are impressed on our minds, as a sort of mirror or as a page receives the letters imprinted on it without its doing anything; as Boethius reports in Book v of the *Consolation*.¹³ According to their view, it followed that intellectual notions are impressed on us chiefly by an impression from the celestial bodies. Hence, the Stoics were the ones who especially asserted that the life of man is directed by a fatal necessity.

However, this theory appeared false, as time went on, as Boethius says in the same place, for the understanding combines and separates, compares the highest things with the lowest, and knows universals and simple forms that are not found in bodies. So, it is obvious that the understanding is not simply receptive of bodily images, but has a power higher than bodies, since external sensation which is only receptive of bodily images does not encompass the actions mentioned above.

[11] Now, all the philosophers who followed distinguished understanding from sense perception and attributed the cause of our knowledge not to bodies, but to immaterial things. Thus, Plato claimed that the cause of our knowledge is the *Ideal Forms*; while Aristotle said that it is the *agent intellect*.

[12] From all these views we may gather that the assertion that the celestial bodies are the cause of our act of

11. Homer, *Odyssey*, XVIII, 136ff.

12. See St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, IV, 11 (PL, 41, col. 121).

13. Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, V, verse 4 (PL, 63, col. 850).

understanding is a consequence of the opinion of those who claimed that understanding does not differ from sensation, as is clear from Aristotle in his book *On the Soul*.¹⁴ Now, it has been shown that this opinion is false. So, it is also obvious that the opinion which asserts that celestial bodies are directly the cause of our act of understanding is false.

[13] Hence, Sacred Scripture also ascribes the cause of our understanding, not to any body but to God: "Where is God, Who made me, Who hath given songs in the night; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of the air?" (Job 35:10-11). Again, in the Psalm (93:10): "He that teacheth man knowledge."

[14] However, we should note that, though celestial bodies cannot be directly the causes of our understanding, they may do something indirectly in regard to it. For, although the understanding is not a corporeal power, the operation of understanding cannot be accomplished in us without the operation of corporeal powers: that is, the imagination, the power of memory, and the cogitative power, as is evident from preceding explanations.¹⁵ And as a result, if the operations of these powers are blocked by some indisposition of the body, the operation of the intellect is impeded, as is evident in demented and sleeping persons, and in others similarly affected. And that is why even the good disposition of the human body makes one able to understand well, for, as a result of this, the aforesaid powers are in a stronger condition. Thus it is stated in Book II of *On the Soul*¹⁶ that we observe that "men with soft flesh are well endowed mentally."

Now, the condition of the human body does come under the influence of celestial motions. In fact, Augustine says, in the *City of God* v, that "it is not utterly absurd to say that certain influences of the stars are able to produce dif-

14. Aristotle, *De anima*, loc. cit.

15. SCG, II, ch. 68.

16. Aristotle, *De anima*, II, 9 (421a 26).

ferences in bodies only.”¹⁷ And Damascene says, in Book II, that “different planets establish in us diverse temperaments, habits and dispositions.”¹⁸ So, the celestial bodies work indirectly on the good condition of understanding. Thus, just as physicians may judge the goodness of an intellect from the condition of its body, as from a proximate disposition, so also may an astronomer judge from the celestial motions, as the remote cause of such dispositions. In this way, then, it is possible that there is some truth in what Ptolemy says in his *Centiloquium*: “When, at the time of a man’s birth, Mercury is in conjunction with Saturn and is itself in a strong condition, it gives inwardly to things the goodness of understanding.”¹⁹

Chapter 85.

THAT THE CELESTIAL BODIES ARE NOT THE CAUSES OF OUR ACTS OF WILL AND CHOICE

[1] It further appears from this that the celestial bodies are not the causes of our acts of will or of our choices.

[2] Indeed, the will belongs in the intellectual part of the soul, as is evident from the Philosopher in Book III of *On the Soul*.¹ So, if celestial bodies cannot directly make an impression on our intellect, as we showed,² then neither will they be able to make an impression directly on the will.

[3] Again, every choice and act of will is caused immediately in us from an intelligible apprehension, for the intellectual good is the object of the will, as is clear from

17. St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, V, 6 (PL, 41, col. 146).

18. St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 7 (PG, 94, col. 893).

19. Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Liber quattuor tractatum cum Centiloquio* (Venetiis: 1484), verbum 38.

1. Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 9 (432b 6).

2. See above, ch. 84.

Book III of *On the Soul*.³ For this reason, perversity cannot result in the act of choice, unless the intellectual judgment is defective in regard to the particular object of choice, as is evident from the Philosopher in *Ethics* VII.⁴ But the celestial bodies are not the cause of our act of understanding. Therefore, they cannot be the cause of our act of choice.

[4] Besides, whatever events occur in these lower bodies as a result of the influence of celestial bodies happen naturally, because these lower bodies are naturally subordinated to them. So, if our choices do occur as a result of the impression of celestial bodies, they will have to occur naturally; that is to say, a man might choose naturally to have his operations go on, just as brutes are involved in operations by natural instinct, and as inanimate bodies are moved naturally. In that case, there would not be choice and nature, as two active principles, but only one, and that is nature. The contrary of this view is evident from Aristotle, in *Physics* II.⁵ Therefore, it is not true that our choices originate from the influence of the celestial bodies.

[5] Moreover, things that are done naturally are brought to their end by determinate means, and so they always happen in the same way, for nature is determined to one result. But human choices tend to their end in various ways, both in moral actions and in artistic productions. Therefore, human choices are not accomplished by nature.

[6] Furthermore, things that are done naturally are done rightly in most cases, for nature does not fail, except in rare cases. So, if man were to choose naturally, his choices would be right in most cases. Now, this is evidently false. Therefore, man does not choose naturally. But he would have to if he chose as a result of the impulsion of celestial bodies.

[7] Again, things that belong to the same species do not differ in their natural operations which result from the na-

3. Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 10 (433a 28).

4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 3 (1147a 1).

5. Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 5 (196b 19).

ture of their species. Thus, every swallow builds its nest in the same way, and every man understands naturally known first principles in the same way. Now, choice is an operation resulting from the species of man. So, if man were to choose naturally, then all men would have to choose in the same way. This is clearly false, both in moral and in artistic actions.

[8] Besides, virtues and vices are the proper principles for acts of choice, for virtues and vices differ in the fact that they choose contraries. Now, the political virtues and vices are not present in us from nature but come from custom, as the Philosopher proves, in *Ethics II*,⁶ from the fact that whatever kind of operations we have become accustomed to, and especially from boyhood, we acquire habits of the same kind. And so, our acts of choice are not in us from nature. Therefore, they are not caused from the influence of celestial bodies, according to which things occur naturally.

[9] Moreover, celestial bodies make no direct impression, except on bodies, as we showed.⁷ So, if they are the cause of our acts of choice, this will be either because they influence our bodies, or because they influence external things. But in neither way can they be an adequate cause of our act of choice. In fact, it is not an adequate cause of our choice, for some corporeal things to be externally presented to us; for it is clear that on encountering some pleasurable object, say an item of food or a woman, the temperate man is not moved to choose it, but the intemperate man is moved. Likewise, whatever change might take place in our body as a result of the influence of a celestial body, it would not suffice to cause our choice, because there are no other results from this in us than certain passions, more or less strong. But passions, whatever their strength, are not an adequate cause for choice, since by the same passions an incontinent man is led to follow them by choice, while a continent man is not so induced. Therefore, it cannot

6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 1 (1103a 19).

7. See above, ch. 84.

be said that celestial bodies are the causes of our acts of choice.

[10] Furthermore, no power is given anything unless it has a use. But man has the power of judging and deliberating on all the things that may be done by him, whether in the use of external things or in the entertaining or repelling of internal passions. Of course, this would be useless if our choice were caused by celestial bodies which do not come under our control. Therefore, celestial bodies are not the cause of our act of choice.

[11] Again, man is naturally a political animal, or a social one.⁸ This is apparent, indeed, from the fact that one man is not sufficient unto himself if he lives alone, because nature provides but few things that are sufficient for man. Instead, it gives him reason whereby he may make ready all the things needed for life, such as food, clothing, and the like; one man is not sufficient to do all these things. So, to live in society is naturally implanted in man. But the order of providence does not take away from a thing what is natural to it, but provides for each thing in accord with its nature, as is evident from what we have said.⁹ Therefore, man is not so ordered by the order of providence that his social life is taken away. Now, it would be removed if our acts of choice arose from impressions due to the celestial bodies, as do the natural instincts of other animals.

[12] Besides, it would be useless for laws and rules of living to be promulgated if man were not master of his own choices. Useless, too, would be the employment of punishments and rewards for good or evil deeds, in regard to which it is not in our power to choose one or the other. In fact, if these things disappear, social life is at once corrupted. Therefore, man is not so established by the order of providence that his choices originate from the motions of the celestial bodies.

8. See Aristotle, *Politics*, I, 2 (1253a 2); *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 7 (1097b 11).

9. See above, ch. 71.

[13] Moreover, men's choices are made in regard to goods and evils. So, if our choices originated from the motions of the stars, it would follow that the stars would be the direct cause of evil choices. But an evil thing has no cause in nature, since evil results from a defect of a cause and has no direct cause, as we showed above.¹⁰ Therefore, it is not possible for our choices to originate directly and of themselves from celestial bodies as causes.

[14] Now, someone might be able to oppose this argument by saying that every bad choice arises from a good that is desired, as we showed above.¹¹ For instance, the choice of an adulterer arises from the desire for a pleasurable good associated with sexual activity, and some star moves him toward this universal good. As a matter of fact, this is necessary for the accomplishment of the generating of animals, and this common good should not be set aside because of the particular evil of this person who makes a bad choice as a result of such prompting.

[15] But this argument is not adequate if celestial bodies are claimed to be the direct cause of our choices, in the sense that they make direct impressions on the intellect and will. For the impression of a universal cause is received in any being according to the mode of that being. So, the influence of a star, that impels toward the pleasure associated with the generative act will be received in any being according to its own mode. Thus we observe that different animals have different times and various ways of reproducing, according to what befits their nature, as Aristotle says in his treatise on the *History of Animals*.¹² So, intellect and will are going to receive the influence of this star according to their own mode. But, when an object is desired in accordance with the mode of intellect and reason, there is no sin in the choice; in fact, a choice is bad, always because it is not in accord with right reason. Therefore, if celestial

10. See above, ch. 4ff.

11. See above, ch. 5-6.

12. Aristotle, *De historia animalium*, V, 8 (542a 1).

bodies were the cause of our choices, there would never be a bad choice for us.

[16] Moreover, no active power extends to effects that are beyond the species and nature of the agent, for every agent acts by virtue of its form. But the act of willing surpasses every bodily species, as does the act of understanding. Indeed, just as we understand universals, so also is our will attracted to the universal object; for example, "we hate every kind of thief," as the Philosopher says in his *Rhetoric*.¹³ Therefore our will-act is not caused by a celestial body.

[17] Furthermore, things that are related to an end are proportioned to that end. But human choices are ordered to felicity as their ultimate end. Of course, it does not consist in any corporeal goods but in the union of the soul with divine things by way of understanding, as we showed above¹⁴ both according to the view of faith and according to the opinions of the philosophers. Therefore, celestial bodies cannot be the cause of our acts of choice.

[18] Hence it is said: "Be not afraid of the signs of heaven which the heathens fear; for the laws of people are vain" (Jer. 10:2-3).

[19] By this conclusion the theory of the Stoics is also refuted, for they claimed that all our acts, and even our choices, are ordered by the celestial bodies.¹⁵ This is also said to have been the position of the ancient Pharisees among the Jews.¹⁶ The Priscillianists, too, shared this error, as is stated in the book *On Heresies*.¹⁷

[20] It was also the opinion of the old natural philosophers who claimed that sensation and understanding did not

13. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, 4 (1382a 6).

14. See above, ch. 25ff.

15. See above, ch. 84, ¶10.

16. See Josephus, XIII, 5, 9 (trans. Thackeray and Marcus, VII, 310).

17. St. Augustine, *De haeresibus*, 70 (PL, 42, col. 44).

differ.¹⁸ Thus, Empedocles said that "the will is increased in men, as in other animals, in respect to what is present"; that is, according to the present instant resulting from the celestial motion that causes time, as Aristotle reports it in his book *On the Soul*.¹⁹

[21] Yet we should note that, though celestial bodies are not directly the cause of our choices, in the sense of directly making impressions on our wills, some occasion for our choices may be indirectly offered by them, because they do make an impression on bodies, and in a twofold sense. In one way, the impressions of the celestial bodies on external bodies are for us the occasion of a certain act of choice; for instance, when the atmosphere is disposed to severe cold by the celestial bodies, we choose to get warmed near a fire or to do other such acts which suit the weather. In a second way, they make an impression on our bodies; when a change occurs in them, certain movements of the passions arise in us; or we are made prone by their impressions to certain passions, as the bilious are prone to anger; or again, some bodily disposition that is an occasion for an act of choice may be caused in us by their impression, as when, resulting from our illness, we choose to take medicine. At times, too, a human act may be caused by the celestial bodies, in the sense that some people become demented as a result of a bodily indisposition and are deprived of the use of reason. Strictly speaking, there is no act of choice for such people, but they are moved by a natural instinct, as are brutes.

[22] Moreover, it is plain and well known by experience that such occasions, whether they are external or internal, are not the necessary cause of choice, since man is able, on the basis of reason, either to resist or obey them. But there are many who follow natural impulses, while but few, the wise only, do not take these occasions of acting badly and of following their natural impulses. This is why Ptolemy

18. See above, ch. 84, ¶9.

19. Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 3 (427a 22).

says, in his *Centiloquium*: "the wise soul assists the work of the stars"; and that "the astronomer could not give a judgment based on the stars, unless he knew well the power of the soul and the natural temperament"; and that "the astronomer should not speak in detail on a matter, but in general."²⁰ That is to say, the impression from the stars produces its result in most people who do not resist the tendency that comes from their body, but it is not always effective, for, in one case or another a man may resist, perhaps, the natural inclination by means of reason.

Chapter 86.

THAT THE CORPOREAL EFFECTS IN THINGS HERE BELOW DO NOT NECESSARILY RESULT FROM THE CELESTIAL BODIES

[1] Not only is it impossible for the celestial bodies to impose necessity on human choice; in fact, not even corporeal effects in things here below necessarily result from them.

[2] For the impressions of universal causes are received in their effects according to the mode of the recipients. Now, these lower things are fluctuating and do not always maintain the same condition: because of matter which is in potency to many forms and because of the contrariety of forms and powers. Therefore, the impressions of celestial bodies are not received in these lower things by way of necessity.

[3] Again, an effect does not result from a remote cause unless there be also a necessary intermediate cause; just as in syllogisms, from a necessary major and a contingent minor, a necessary conclusion does not follow. But celestial

20. Claudius Ptolemaeus, *op. cit.*; the quotations are, respectively, from *verbum* 8; 7; and 1; their location in the *incunabulum* is approximately from fol. 45v to 47r.

bodies are remote causes, whereas the proximate causes of lower effects are the active and passive powers in these lower things, which are not necessary causes, but contingent, for they may fail in a few instances. So, effects in these lower bodies do not follow of necessity from the motions of the celestial bodies.

[4] Besides, the motion of the celestial bodies always is in the same mode. So, if the effect of the celestial bodies on these lower ones came about from necessity, the events in lower bodies would always happen in the same way. Yet they do not always occur in the same way, but in most cases. So, they do not come about by necessity.

[5] Moreover, it is not possible for one necessary thing to come to be out of many contingent things, because, just as any contingent thing of itself can fall short of its effect, so, too, all of them may together. Now, it is obvious that the individual effects that are accomplished in these lower things, as a result of the impression of celestial bodies, are contingent. Therefore, the combination of these events that occur in lower things as a result of the impression of celestial bodies is not a necessary one, for it is plain that any one of them may be prevented from happening.

[6] Moreover, the celestial bodies are agents in the order of nature; they need matter on which to act. So, the need for matter is not removed as a result of the action of celestial bodies. Now, the matter on which the celestial bodies act consists of the lower bodies which, being corruptible in their nature, may be just as able to fail in their operations as they are able to fail in their being. Thus, their nature has this characteristic: they do not produce their effects by necessity. Therefore, the effects of the celestial bodies do not come about by necessity, even in the lower bodies.

[7] But someone will say, perhaps, that the effects of the celestial bodies must be accomplished. Yet, possibility is not removed from the lower bodies by this fact, because each effect is in potency before it comes about. So, it is then

called possible, but when it now becomes actual, it passes from possibility to necessity. All of this comes under the control of the celestial bodies; and so, the fact that the effect is at one time possible is not removed in this way, even though it is necessary that this effect be produced at another time. Indeed, this is the way that Albumasar, in his book, *Introduction to Astronomy*, tries to defend the possible.¹

[8] But one cannot defend this meaning of the *possible*. For there is a sort of possibility that depends on what is necessary. Indeed, what is necessary in regard to actual being must be possible in regard to being; and what is not possible in relation to being is impossible in regard to being; and what is impossible in regard to being is necessarily non-being. Therefore, what is necessary in relation to being is necessary in relation to non-being. But this is impossible. So, it is impossible for something to be necessary in relation to being, yet not possible in regard to this being. Therefore, possible being follows from necessary being.

[9] As a matter of fact, we do not have to defend this meaning of *possible* against the statement that effects are caused by necessity, but, rather, the *possible* that is *opposed to the necessary*, in the sense that the possible is called *that which can be, and also not be*. Now, a thing is not called possible, or contingent, in this way from the sole fact that it is at one time in potency and at another time in act, as the preceding answer takes it. In fact, in that preceding sense there is possibility and contingency even in celestial motions, for there is not always an actual conjunction or opposition of the sun or moon. Rather, it is sometimes actually so, sometimes potentially so; yet these events are necessary, for demonstrations of such events may be given. But the possible, or contingent, that is opposed to the necessary has this characteristic: it is not necessary for it to happen when it is not. This is indeed so, because it

1. Albumasar, *Introductorium ad artem astronomiae* (Augsburg: 1489); cited without folio ref. in the *Leonine Indices*; not seen by translator.

does not follow of necessity from its cause. Thus, we say that Socrates will sit is a contingent fact, but that he will die is necessary, because the second of these facts follows necessarily from its cause, whereas the first does not. So, if it follows necessarily from the celestial motions that their effects will occur at some time in the future, then the possible and contingent that is opposed to the necessary is thereby excluded.

[10] Moreover, we should note that, in order to prove that the effects of the celestial bodies come about by necessity, Avicenna uses an argument like this in his *Metaphysics*.² If any effect of the celestial bodies is blocked, this must be due to some voluntary or natural cause. But every voluntary or natural cause is reducible to some celestial source. Therefore, even the blocking of the effects of the celestial bodies results from some celestial sources. So, if the entire order of celestial things be taken together, it is impossible for its effect ever to fail to come about. Hence he concludes that the celestial bodies produce necessarily the effects which must occur in these lower bodies, both the voluntary and the natural ones.

[11] But this way of arguing, as Aristotle says in *Physics* II,³ was used by some of the ancients who denied chance and fortune on the basis of the view that there is a definite cause for every effect. If the cause be granted, then the effect must be granted. Thus, since everything occurs by necessity, there is nothing fortuitous or by chance.

[12] He answers this argument, in *Metaphysics* VI,⁴ by denying two propositions which the argument uses. One of these is: "if any cause be granted, it is necessary to grant its effect." Indeed, this is not necessary in the case of all causes, for a certain cause, though it may be the direct, proper and sufficient cause of a given effect, may be hin-

2. Avicenna, *Metaphysica*, X, 1 (ed. Venetiis: 1508, fol. 108r).

3. Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 4 (195b 36).

4. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI, 2-3 (1027a 5-b 16).

dered by the interference of another cause so that the effect does not result. The second proposition that he denies is: "not everything that exists in any way at all has a direct cause, but only those things that exist of themselves; on the other hand, things that exist accidentally have no cause." For instance, there is a cause within a man for the fact that he is musical, but there is no cause for the fact that he is at once white and musical. As a matter of fact, whenever plural things occur together because of some cause they are related to each other as a result of that cause, but whenever they occur by accident they are not so related to each other. So, they do not occur as a result of a cause acting directly; their occurrence is only accidental. For instance, it is an accident to the teacher of music that he teaches a white man; indeed, it is quite apart from his intention; rather, he intends to teach someone who is capable of learning the subject.

[13] And thus, given a certain effect, we will say that it had a cause from which it did not necessarily follow, since it could have been hindered by some other accidentally conflicting cause. And even though it be possible to trace this conflicting cause back to a higher cause, it is not possible to trace this conflict, which is a hindrance, back to any cause. Thus, it cannot be said that the hindrance of this or that effect proceeds from a celestial source. Hence, we should not say that the effects of celestial bodies come about in these lower bodies as a result of necessity.

[14] Hence, Damascene says, in Book II, that "the celestial bodies are not the cause of any process of generating things that come into being, or of the process of corrupting things that are corrupted";⁵ that is to say, these effects do not come about of necessity from them.

[15] Aristotle also says, in *On Sleep* II, that "of those signs which occur in bodies, and even of the celestial signs, such as movements of water and wind, many of their results do

5. St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 7 (PG, 94, col. 893).

not come about. For, if another movement occurs, stronger than the one which is a sign of the future, then the event does not happen; just as many of our well laid plans, which were suitable to be accomplished, come to no result, because of the interference of higher powers."⁶

[16] Ptolemy, too, in his *Fourfold Work*, says: "Again, we should not think that higher events proceed inevitably, like things that happen under divine control and which can in no way be avoided, nor as things which come about truly and of necessity."⁷ He also says in the *Centiloquium*: "These prognostications that I give you are midway between the necessary and the possible."⁸

Chapter 87.

THAT THE MOTION OF A CELESTIAL BODY IS NOT THE CAUSE OF OUR ACTS OF CHOICE BY THE POWER OF ITS SOUL MOVING US, AS SOME SAY

[1] However, we should note that Avicenna maintains¹ that the motions of the celestial bodies are also the causes of our acts of choice, not simply as occasions, as was said above,² but directly. For he claims that the celestial bodies are animated. Hence, since celestial motion is from a soul and is the motion of a body, therefore, just as it is a bodily motion with the power of causing change in bodies, so as a motion from the soul it must have the power to make an impression on our souls. And thus, the celestial motion is the cause of our acts of will and choice. On this point also

6. Aristotle, *De divinatione per somnum*, II (463b 23).

7. Claudius Ptolemaeus, *op. cit.*, I, 2, fol. 2r.

8. *Ibid*, verbum 1, fol. 45v.

1. Avicenna, *Metaphysica*, X, 1 (fol. 108r).

2. See above, ch. 85.

he seems to return to the theory of Albumasar, in his *Introduction* 1.³

[2] But this theory is not reasonable. Every effect proceeding through an instrument from an efficient cause must be proportionate to the instrument, as also to the agent, for we cannot use just any instrument for any effect. Hence, a result cannot be accomplished by means of an instrument if the action of the instrument in no way covers the result. Now, the action of a body in no way extends to the production of a change of understanding and will, as we showed,⁴ unless, perchance, by accident, through a change in the body, as we said before.⁵ So, it is impossible for the soul of a celestial body, if it be animated, to make an impression on the intellect and will by means of the motion of a celestial body.

[3] Again, a particular agent cause, when acting, bears a likeness to the universal agent cause and is patterned on it. But, if a human soul were to impress another human soul through a corporeal operation, as when it reveals its thought by means of meaningful speech, the bodily action initiated by one soul does not reach the other soul without the mediation of its body. In fact, the spoken word moves the auditory organ, and then, having been so perceived by the sense power, it extends its message to the understanding. So, if the celestial soul makes an impression on our souls through bodily movement, that action will not reach our soul without making a change in our body. Now, this is not a cause of our acts of choice, but simply an occasion, as is clear from the foregoing.⁶ Therefore, celestial motion will not be a cause of our act of choice, except as a mere occasion.

[4] Besides, since the mover and the thing moved must be simultaneous, as is proved in *Physics* VII,⁷ the motion must

3. See above, ch. 86, ¶7. See also P. Duhem, *Le système du monde* (Paris: 1913-17), II, pp. 374-376.

4. See above, ch. 84ff.

5. *Ibid*.

6. *Ibid*.

7. Aristotle, *Physics*, VII, 2 (243a 3).

extend in a definite order, from the first mover to the last thing that is moved; that is, such that the mover moves what is far away from it by means of what is near to it. Now, our body is nearer than our soul is to the celestial body which is asserted to be moved by a soul joined to it, for our soul has no relation to a celestial body except through our body. This is evident from the fact that separate intelligences have no relation to a celestial body, unless, perhaps, that of a mover to a thing moved. So, a change in a celestial body, initiated by its soul, does not reach our soul except through the mediation of our body. But our soul is not moved when our body is moved, except accidentally; nor does choice result from a change in our body, except by way of occasion, as we said. Therefore, celestial motion, by virtue of the fact that it is from a soul, cannot be the cause of our act of choice.

[5] Moreover, according to the theory of Avicenna and some other philosophers, the agent intellect is a separate substance that acts on our souls by making potentially understood things to be actually understood.⁸ Now, this is done by abstraction from all material conditions, as is evident from our explanations in Book Two.⁹ So, that which acts directly on the soul does not act on it through corporeal motion, but, rather, through abstraction from everything corporeal. Therefore, the soul of the heavens, if it be animated, cannot be the cause of our acts of choice or understanding through the motion of the heavens.

[6] It is also possible to prove by the same arguments that the motion of the heavens is not the cause of our acts of choice by means of separate substances, if someone claims that the heavens are not animated, but moved by a separate substance.

8. SCG, II, ch. 76.

9. SCG, II, ch. 50 and 59.

Chapter 88.

THAT SEPARATE CREATED SUBSTANCES CANNOT BE DIRECTLY THE CAUSE OF OUR ACTS OF CHOICE AND WILL, BUT ONLY GOD

[1] Now, we must not think that the souls of the heavens, if there be such,¹ or any other created, separate, intellectual substances can directly insert a will-act into us or cause our act of choice to occur.

[2] For the actions of all creatures are embraced under the order of divine providence, so they cannot operate outside its laws. But it is the law of providence that everything be moved immediately by its proximate cause. So, unless such an order were obeyed, a superior created cause could neither move nor do anything. Now, the proximate mover of the will is the good as apprehended, which is its object, and it is moved by it, just as sight is by color. So, no created substance can move the will except by means of a good which is understood. Now, this is done by showing it that something is a good thing to do: this is the act of *persuading*. Therefore, no created substance can act on the will, or be the cause of our act of choice, except in the way of a *persuading agent*.

[3] Again, a thing is by nature capable of being moved by, and of undergoing a passion from, an agent with a form by which the thing can be reduced to act, for every agent acts through its form. But the will is reduced to act by the desirable object which gives rest to its desire. Now, the will's desire finds rest in the divine good only, as in its ultimate end, as is evident from what we said above.² Therefore, God alone can move the will in the fashion of an agent.

1. SCG, II, ch. 70.

2. See above, ch. 37 and 50.

[4] Besides, as natural inclination in an inanimate thing, which is also called natural appetite, is related to its proper end, so also is the will, which is also called intellectual appetite, in an intellectual substance. Now, to give natural inclinations is the sole prerogative of Him Who has established the nature. So also, to incline the will to anything, is the sole prerogative of Him Who is the cause of the intellectual nature. Now, this is proper to God alone, as is evident from our earlier explanations.³ Therefore, He alone can incline our will to something.

[5] Moreover, the violent, as is said in *Ethics* III, is "that whose principle is outside; the patient making no contribution of force."⁴ So, if the will is moved by some external principle, the motion will be violent. Now, I am talking about being moved by some external principle which moves *in the way of an agent*, and not *in the way of an end*. But the violent is incompatible with the voluntary. So, it is impossible for the will to be moved by an extrinsic principle as by an agent; rather, every movement of the will must proceed from within. Now, no created substance is joined to the intellectual soul in regard to its inner parts, but only God, Who is alone the cause of its being and Who sustains it in being. Therefore, by God alone can voluntary movement be caused.

[6] Furthermore, violent movement is opposed to natural and voluntary movement, because both of the latter must arise from an intrinsic source. The only way in which an external agent moves a thing naturally is by causing an intrinsic principle of motion within the movable thing. Thus, a generating agent, which gives the form of weight to a heavy generated body, moves it downward in a natural way. No other extrinsic being can move a natural body without violence, except perhaps accidentally, by removing an impediment, and this uses a natural motion, or action, rather than causes it. So, the only agent that can cause a move-

3. SCG, II, ch. 87.

4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 1 (1110b 1).

ment of the will, without violence, is that which causes an intrinsic principle of this movement, and such a principle is the very power of the will. Now, this agent is God, Who alone creates a soul, as we showed in Book Two.⁵ Therefore, God alone can move the will in the fashion of an agent, without violence.

[7] Hence it is said in Proverbs (21:1): "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will, He shall turn it." And again in Philippians (2:13; Douay modified): "It is God Who worketh in us, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will."

Chapter 89.

THAT THE MOVEMENT OF THE WILL IS CAUSED BY GOD AND NOT ONLY THE POWER OF THE WILL

[1] Some people, as a matter of fact, not understanding how God could cause a movement of the will in us without prejudice to freedom of will, have tried to explain these texts¹ in a wrong way. That is, they would say that God causes *willing and accomplishing* within us in the sense that He causes in us the power of willing, but not in such a way that He makes us will this or that. Thus does Origen, in his *Principles*,² explain free choice, defending it against the texts above.

[2] So, it seems that there developed from this view the opinion of certain people who said that providence does not apply to things subject to free choice, that is, to acts of choice, but, instead, that providence is applied to external events. For he who chooses to attain or accomplish some-

5. SCG, II, ch. 87.

1. See above, ch. 88, ¶7.

2. Origen, *Peri Archon*, III, 1 (PG, 11, col. 293); on this theory see Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy*, pp. 41-43.

thing, such as to make a building or to become rich, is not always able to reach this end; thus, the results of our actions are not subject to free choice, but are controlled by providence.

[3] To these people, of course, opposition is offered quite plainly by the texts from Sacred Scripture. For it is stated in Isaias (26:2): "O Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works in us." So, we receive not only the power of willing from God, but also the operation.

[4] Again, this statement of Solomon, "whithersoever He will, He shall turn it,"³ shows that divine causality is not only extended to the power of the will but also to its act.

[5] Besides, God not only gives powers to things but, beyond that, no thing can act by its own power unless it acts through His power, as we showed above.⁴ So, man cannot use the power of will that has been given him except in so far as he acts through the power of God. Now, the being through whose power the agent acts is the cause not only of the power, but also of the act. This is apparent in the case of an artist through whose power an instrument works, even though it does not get its own form from this artist, but is merely applied to action by this man. Therefore, God is for us the cause not only of our will, but also of our act of willing.

[6] Moreover, a more perfect order is found in spiritual things than in corporeal ones. Among bodies, however, every motion is caused by the first motion. Therefore, among spiritual things, also, every movement of the will must be caused by the first will, which is the will of God.

[7] Furthermore, we showed somewhat earlier⁵ that God is the cause of every action and that He operates in every agent. Therefore, He is the cause of the movements of the will.

3. See above, ch. 88, ¶7.

4. See above, ch. 67 and 70.

5. *Ibid.*

[8] Besides, an argument that is pertinent is offered by Aristotle, in Book VIII of the *Eudemian Ethics*, as follows.⁶ There must be a cause for the fact that a person understands, deliberates, chooses, and wills, for every new event must have some cause. But, if its cause is another act of deliberation, and another act of will preceding it, then, since one cannot go on to infinity in these acts, one must reach something that is first. Now, a first of this type must be something that is better than reason. But nothing is better than intellect and reason except God. Therefore, God is the first principle of our acts of counsel and of will.

Chapter 90.

THAT HUMAN ACTS OF CHOICE AND OF WILL ARE SUBJECT TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE

[1] It is clear, next, that even acts of human willing and choosing must be subject to divine providence.

[2] For, everything that God does He does as a result of the order of His providence. So, since He is the cause of our act of choice and volition, our choices and will-acts are subject to divine providence.

[3] Again, all corporeal things are governed through spiritual beings, as we showed above.¹ But spiritual beings act on corporeal things through the will. Therefore, if choices and movements of the wills of intellectual substances do not belong to God's providence, it follows that even corporeal things are withdrawn from His providence. And thus, there will be no providence at all.

[4] Besides, the more noble things are in the universe, the more must they participate in the order in which the good of the universe consists. So, in *Physics* II,² Aristotle accuses

6. Aristotle, *Eudemicae Ethicae*, VII, 14 (1248a 18).

1. See above, ch. 78.

2. Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 4 (196a 25).

the ancient philosophers of putting chance and fortune in the make-up of the celestial bodies, but not in things below. Now, the intellectual substances are more noble than bodily substances. Therefore, if bodily substances, in their substances and actions, fall under the order of providence, so do intellectual substances, for a greater reason.

[5] Moreover, things that are nearer the end fall more definitely under the order which is for the end, for by their mediation other things also are ordered to the end. But the actions of intellectual substances are more closely ordered to God as end than are the actions of other things, as we showed above.³ So, the actions of intellectual substances, by which God orders all things to Himself, more definitely fall under the order of providence than the actions of other things.

[6] Furthermore, the governance of providence stems from the divine love whereby God loves the things created by Him; in fact, love consists especially in this, "that the lover wills the good for his loved one."⁴ So, the more that God loves things, the more do they fall under His providence. Moreover, Sacred Scripture also teaches this in the Psalm (144:20) when it states: "The Lord keepeth all them that love Him." And the Philosopher, also, supports this view, in *Ethics* x,⁵ when he says that God takes greatest care of those who love understanding, as He does of His friends. It may, then, be gathered from this, that He loves intellectual substances best. Therefore, their acts of will and choice fall under His providence.

[7] Again, man's internal goods, which are dependent on will and action, are more proper to man than things that are outside him, like the acquisition of wealth or anything else of that kind. Hence, man is deemed good by virtue of the former and not of the latter. So, if acts of human choice and movements of will do not fall under divine provi-

3. See above, ch. 25 and 78.

4. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, 4 (1380b 35).

5. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 8 (1179a 29).

dence, but only their external results, it will be truer that human affairs are outside providence than that they come under providence. But this view is suggested by the words of blasphemers: "He walketh about the poles of heaven, and He doth not consider our things" (Job 22:14); and again: "The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not" (Ezech. 9:9); and also: "Who is he that hath commanded a thing to be done, when the Lord commandeth it not?" (Lam. 3:37).

[8] However, certain passages in Sacred Scripture appear to be consonant with the aforementioned view. It is said in fact (Ecclus. 15:14): "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel"; and later: "He hath set water and fire before thee; stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him" (Ecclus. 15:14, 17-18). And also: "Consider that I have set before thee this day life and good, and on the other hand death and evil" (Deut. 30:15).—But these words are brought forward to show that man is possessed of free choice, not that his choices are placed outside divine providence.

[9] Likewise, Gregory of Nyssa states in his book *On Man*: "Providence is concerned with the things that are not in our power, but not with those that are in our power";⁶ and, following him, Damascene states in Book II, that "God foreknows the things that are within our power, but He does not predetermine them."⁷ These texts should be explained as meaning that things in our power are not subject to determination by divine providence in the sense that they receive necessity from it.

6. Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, 44 (PG, 40, col. 813).

7. St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 30 (PG, 94, col. 972).

Chapter 91.

HOW HUMAN EVENTS MAY BE TRACED
BACK TO HIGHER CAUSES

[1] From the things shown above we can gather how human actions may be traced back to higher causes and are not performed fortuitously.

[2] Of course, acts of choice and movements of the will are controlled immediately by God.¹ And human intellectual knowledge is ordered by God through the mediation of the angels.² Whereas matters pertinent to bodily things, whether they are internal or external, when they come within the use of man, are governed by God by means of the angels and the celestial bodies.³

[3] Now, in general, there is one reason for this. Everything that is multiform, mutable, and capable of defect must be reducible to a source in something that is uniform, immutable, and capable of no defect. But all things that are within our power are found to be multiple, variable, and defectible.

[4] It is clear that our acts of choice have the character of multiplicity, since choices are made of different things, by different people, in different ways. They are also mutable, both because of the instability of the mind, which is not firmly fixed on the ultimate end, and also because of the fluctuating character of the things which provide our circumstantial environment. That they are defectible, of course the sins of men testify. But the divine will is uniform, because by willing one object it wills all else, and it is immutable and without defect, as we showed in Book

1. See above, ch. 85ff.

2. See above, ch. 79.

3. See above, ch. 78 and 82.

One.⁴ So, the movement of all wills and choices must be traced back to the divine will, and not to any other cause, for God alone is the cause of our acts of will and choice.

[5] Likewise, our understanding has the quality of multiplicity, since we gather, as it were, intelligible truth from many sense objects. It is also mutable, for it advances by discursive movement from one thing to another, proceeding from known things to unknown ones. It is, moreover, defectible, because of the admixture of imagination with sensation, as the errors of mankind show. On the other hand, the cognitive acts of the angels are uniform: for they receive the knowledge of truth from one fount of truth; namely, God.⁵ Their cognition is also immutable, because they see directly the pure truth about things by a simple intuition, not by a discursive movement from effects to their causes or the reverse.⁶ It is even incapable of defect, since they directly intuit the very natures, or quiddities, of things, and understanding cannot err in regard to such objects, just as sense cannot err in regard to proper sensibles. We, however, make guesses as to the quiddities of things from their accidents and effects. Therefore, our intellectual knowledge must be regulated by means of the angels' knowledge.

[6] Again, in regard to human bodies and the external things that men use, it is obvious that there is in them a multiplicity of admixture and contrariety; and that they are not moved uniformly, since their motions cannot be continuous; and that they are defectible through alteration and corruption. In contrast, the celestial bodies are uniform, in the way of simple beings with no contrariety in their constitution. Their motions are also uniform, continuous, and always in the same condition. Nor can there be corruption or alteration in them. Hence, it is necessary for our bodies, and the others which come under our use, to be regulated by means of the motions of the celestial bodies.

4. SCG, I, ch. 13 and 75.

5. See above, ch. 80.

6. SCG, II, 96ff.

Chapter 92.

HOW A PERSON IS FAVORED BY FORTUNE
AND HOW MAN IS ASSISTED
BY HIGHER CAUSES

[1] Next, we can show how a person might be said to be *favored by fortune*.

[2] In fact, we say that some good fortune has befallen a man "when something good happens to him, without his having intended it."¹ For example, a man digging in a field may find a treasure for which he was not looking. Now, something may happen to a certain agent which is not intended by him as he is doing his job, but which is not unintended by the superior under whom he is working. Suppose, for instance, a master orders a servant to go to a certain place to which the master has already sent another servant, unknown to the first one; the encounter with his fellow servant is not intended by the servant who has been sent, but it is not unintended by the master who sent him. And so, though the meeting is fortuitous and a matter of chance to this servant, it is not so to the master, but has been a planned event. So, since man is ordered in regard to his body under the celestial bodies, in regard to his intellect under the angels, and in regard to his will under God—it is quite possible for something apart from man's intention to happen, which is, however, in accord with the ordering of the celestial bodies, or with the control of the angels, or even of God. For, though God alone directly works on the choice made by man, the action of an angel does have some effect on man's choice by way of persuasion, and the action of a celestial body by way of disposition, in the sense that the corporeal impressions of celestial bodies on our bodies give a disposition to certain choices. So, when as a result of the influence of higher

1. Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, II, 8 (1207a 28).

causes in the foregoing way a man is inclined toward certain choices that are beneficial to him, but whose benefit he does not know by his own reasoning, and when besides this his intellect is illuminated by the light of intellectual substances so that he may do these things, and when his will is inclined by divine working to choose something beneficial to him while he is ignorant of its nature, he is said to be *favored by fortune*. And, on the contrary, he is said to be subject to *misfortune* when his choice is inclined to contrary results by higher causes, as is said of a certain man: "Write this man barren, a man that shall not prosper in his days" (Jer. 22:30).

[3] But, on this point, a difference is to be noted. The impressions of celestial bodies on our bodies cause natural dispositions of our bodies within us. Thus, as a result of a disposition left by a celestial body in our body, a man is called not merely fortunate or unfortunate, but also well or ill favored by nature, and it is in this way that the Philosopher says, in his *Magna Moralia*,² that a man favored by fortune is also favored by nature. Indeed, this fact, that one man chooses things beneficial to him, whereas another man chooses things harmful to him, apart from their proper reasoning, cannot be understood as resulting from differences of intellectual nature, because the nature of intellect and will is one in all men. In fact, a formal diversity would lead to a difference according to species, whereas a material diversity leads to a numerical difference. Hence, in so far as man's intellect is enlightened for the performance of some action, or as his will is prompted by God, the man is not said to be favored by birth, but, rather, well guarded or well governed.

[4] Again, another difference on this matter is to be observed. As a matter of fact, the operation of an angel and of a celestial body is merely like something *disposing* toward choice; while God's operation is like something *perfecting*. Now, since a disposition which results from a quality of the

2. *Ibid.*, II, 9 (1207a 35).

body, or from an intellectual persuasion, does not bring necessity to the act of choice, a man does not always choose what his guardian angel intends, or that toward which a celestial body gives inclination. But a man does choose in all cases the object in accord with God's operation within his will. Consequently, the guardianship of the angels is sometimes frustrated, according to this text: "We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed" (Jer. 51:9); and still more is this true of the inclination of the celestial bodies, but divine providence is always steadfast.

[5] Moreover, there is still another difference to be considered. Since a celestial body does not dispose to a choice, unless it makes an impression on our body by which man is stimulated to choose in the way that passions induce one to choose, every disposition to choice which results from the celestial bodies works by means of some passion, as when a person is led to choose something by means of hatred, or love, or anger, or some similar passion. But a person is disposed to an act of choice by an angel, by means of an intellectual consideration, without passion. In fact, this happens in two ways. Sometimes, a man's understanding is enlightened by an angel to know only that something is a good thing to be done, but it is not instructed as to the reason why it is a good, since this reason is derived from the end. Thus, at times, a man thinks that something is a good thing to be done, "but, if he be asked why, he would answer that he does not know."³ Hence, when he reaches a beneficial end, to which he has given no thought before, it will be fortuitous for him. But sometimes he is instructed by angelic illumination, both that this act is good and as to the reason why it is good, which depends on the end. And if this be so, when he reaches the end which he has thought about before, it will not be fortuitous. We should also note that, just as the active power of a spiritual nature is higher than a corporeal one, so also is it more universal. Consequently, the disposition resulting from a celestial body does not extend to all the objects which human choice covers.

3. *Ibid.*, (1207b 1).

[6] Still another point: the power of the human soul, or also of an angel, is particularized in comparison with divine power which, in fact, is universal in regard to all beings. Thus, then, some good thing may happen to a man which is apart from his own intention, and apart from the inclination given by celestial bodies, and apart from the enlightenment coming from the angels—but not apart from divine providence, which is regulative, just as it is productive, of being as such, and, consequently, which must include all things under it. Thus, some good or evil may happen to man that is fortuitous in relation to himself, and in relation to the celestial bodies, and in relation to the angels, but not in relation to God. Indeed, in relation to Him, nothing can be a matter of chance and unforeseen, either in the sphere of human affairs or in any matter.

[7] But, since fortuitous events are those apart from intention, and since moral goods cannot be apart from intention, because they are based on choice, in their case no one can be called well or ill favored by fortune. However, in regard to them, a person can be called well or ill favored by *birth*; when, as a result of the natural disposition of his body, he is prone to virtuous, or vicious, acts of choice. But in regard to external goods, which can accrue to a man apart from his intention, a man may be said to be both favored by *birth* and by *fortune*, and also governed by God and guarded by the angels.

[8] Moreover, man may obtain from higher causes still another help in regard to the outcome of his actions. For, since a man has both the ability to choose and to carry out what he chooses, he may at times be assisted by higher causes in regard to both or he may also be hindered. In regard to choice, of course, as we said, man is either disposed by the celestial bodies to choose something, or he is enlightened by the guardianship of the angels, or even he is inclined by divine operation. But in regard to the carrying out of the choice man may obtain from a higher cause the strength and efficacy needed to accomplish what he has chosen. Now, this can come not only from God and the

angels, but also from the celestial bodies, to the extent that such efficacy is located in his body. For it is obvious that inanimate bodies also obtain certain powers and abilities from the celestial bodies, even beyond those which go along with the active and passive qualities of the elements, which, doubtless, are also subject to the celestial bodies. Thus, the fact that a magnet attracts iron is due to the power of a celestial body, and so have certain stones and herbs other hidden powers. So, nothing prevents a man, too, from getting, as a result of the influence of a celestial body, a certain special efficiency in doing some bodily actions, which another man does not possess: for instance, a physician in regard to healing, a farmer in regard to planting, and a soldier in regard to fighting.

[9] Now, in a much more perfect way, God lavishes on man this special efficiency in the carrying out of His works efficaciously. So, in regard to the first kind of help, which applies to the act of choosing, God is said to *direct* man, whereas in regard to the second kind of help He is said to *strengthen* man. And these two forms of help are touched on together in the Psalms (26:1), where it is said in regard to the first: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" and in regard to the second: "The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

[10] But there are two differences between these two helps. First, man is assisted by the first kind of help, both in regard to things subject to the power of man, and also in regard to other things. But the second sort of help extends only to things of which man's power is capable. Indeed, the fact that a man digging a grave discovers a treasure results from no power of man; so, in regard to such an outcome, man may be helped by the fact that he is prompted to look in the place where the treasure is, not, however, in the sense that he is given any power to find treasure. But, in the case of the physician healing, or the soldier winning a fight, he may be helped in regard to the end, and also in the sense that he may carry out the choice efficaciously, by means of a power acquired from a higher

cause. Hence, the first kind of help is more universal. The second difference is that the second help is given to carry out efficaciously what he intends. Consequently, since fortuitous events are apart from one's intention, man cannot, properly speaking, be called fortunate as a result of such help, as he can be from the first, as we showed above.

[11] Now, it is possible for a man to be well or ill favored by fortune, in some cases, when he is the sole agent, as for instance, when he is digging in the earth, he finds a treasure lying there. In other cases, it may result from the action of another concurrent cause, as when the man going to market to buy something encounters a debtor whom he did not think he would find. Now, in the first case, the man is helped so that something good happens to him, only in the fact that he is directed to the choosing of an object to which something advantageous is attached, and this comes about apart from his intention. But in the second case, both agents must be directed to choose the action, or movement, which is the occasion for their meeting.

[12] We must consider another thing in regard to what was said above. For we said that, in order for something favorable or unfavorable to happen to a man on the basis of fortune, the help can come from God, and it can also come from a celestial body: in so far as a man is inclined by God to choose something with which there is combined an advantageous, or disadvantageous, result which the chooser has not thought of before, and in so far as he is disposed by a celestial body to choose such an object. Now, this advantage, or disadvantage, is fortuitous in regard to man's choice; in regard to God, it loses the character of the fortuitous, but not in regard to the celestial body.

This becomes evident, as follows. In fact, an event does not lose its fortuitous character unless it may be referred back to a direct cause. But the power of a celestial body is an agent cause, not by way of understanding and choice, but as a nature. Now, it is proper for a nature to tend to one objective. So, if an effect is not simply one result, then its direct cause cannot be a natural power. But, when two

things are combined with each other accidentally, they are not truly one, but only accidentally so. Hence, there can be no direct, natural cause for this union. Let us suppose, then, that a certain man is prompted to dig a grave by the influence of a celestial body, working by way of a passion as we said. Now, the grave and the location of the treasure are one only accidentally, for they have no relation to each other. Hence, the power of the celestial body cannot directly give an inclination toward this entire result: that this man should dig this grave and that it should be done at the place where the treasure is. But an agent working through understanding can be the cause of an inclination to this entire result, for it is proper to an intelligent being to order many things into one. It is clear, indeed, that even a man who knew where the treasure was might send another man who did not know to dig a grave in that same place and thus to find a treasure unintentionally. So, in this way, fortuitous events of this kind, when referred to their divine cause, lose their fortuitous character, but when referred to a celestial cause, they do not.

[13] It is also apparent by the same reasoning that a man cannot be universally favored by fortune through the power of a celestial body, but only in regard to this or that incident. I say *universally*, meaning that a man might have the ability in his nature, resulting from the influence of a celestial body, to choose always, or in most cases, objects to which certain advantages or disadvantages are accidentally connected. For nature is ordered to one result only. But these factors, in terms of which good or bad fortune befalls a man, are not reducible to any one thing; rather, they are indeterminate and indefinite, as the Philosopher teaches in *Physics* II,⁴ and as is clear to our senses. So, it is not possible for a man to have the ability in his nature to choose always those objects from which advantageous results accidentally follow. But it is possible that, by celestial influence, he may be inclined to choose one thing to which an advantage is accidentally attached; then, from another

4. Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 5 (196b 28).

inclination to another advantage; and from a third to a third advantage; but not in such a way that all such advantages would follow from one inclination. However, from one divine disposition a man can be directed to all results.

Chapter 93.

ON FATE: WHETHER AND WHAT IT IS

[1] It is evident from the points set forth above what view we should take regarding fate.

[2] Indeed, men observe that many things happen by accident in this world if their particular causes be considered, and some men have maintained that they are not even ordered by higher causes. To these people it has appeared that there is no fate at all.

[3] But others have attempted to reduce these events to certain higher causes from which they result in an orderly way, in accord with a definite plan. These people have asserted that there is *fate* in the sense that things observed to happen by chance are "pre-fated," that is, foretold and pre-ordained to happen.

[4] Some of these people, then, have tried to reduce all contingent events which occur by chance, here below, to causes among the celestial bodies, and even human acts of choice to the controlling power of the stars; to which power all things are subject, they claimed, with a certain necessity which they called *fate*. Of course, this theory is impossible and foreign to the faith, as is clear from our preceding considerations.¹

[5] On the other hand, some men have desired to reduce to the control of divine providence all things whatsoever that appear to happen by chance in these lower beings. Hence, they said that all things are done by *fate*, meaning

1. See above, ch. 84ff.

by fate the ordering which is found in things as a result of divine providence. Thus, Boethius says: "fate is a disposition inherent in mutable things, whereby providence connects each thing with His orders."² In this description of fate, "disposition" is used for ordering; while the phrase "inherent in things" is used to distinguish fate from providence; since the ordering, as present in the divine mind and not yet impressed on things, is providence, but, as already unfolded in things, it is called fate. Moreover, he speaks of "mutable things" to show that the order of providence does not take away contingency and mobility from things, as some men have claimed.

[6] So, according to this meaning, to deny fate is to deny providence. But, since we should not even have names in common with unbelievers, lest occasion for error could be taken from the association of names, the name fate is not to be used by the faithful lest we appear to agree with those who have held a wrong opinion about fate, by subjecting all things to the necessitation of the stars. Consequently, Augustine says, in Book v of the *City of God*: "If any man calls the will, or power, of God by the name, fate, let him hold his view, but correct his way of speaking."³ And also Gregory, in accord with the same understanding of it, says: "Far be it from the minds of the faithful to say that there is any fate."⁴

Chapter 94.

ON THE CERTAINTY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

[1] Now, there is a difficulty that arises out of the foregoing. If all things that are done here below, even contingent events, are subject to divine providence, then, seem-

2. Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, IV, prose 6 (PL, 63, col. 815).

3. St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, V, 1 (PL, 41, col. 141).

4. St. Gregory, *In Evangelium*, homil. 10 (PL, 76, col. 1112).