



The Ultimate Happiness of Man Thomas Aquinas

SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES BOOK III

1. Foreword

We have shown in the preceding books that there is one First Being, possessing the full perfection of all being, whom we call God, and who of the abundance of His perfection, bestows being on all that exists, so that He is proved to be not only the first of beings, but also the beginning of all. Moreover He bestows being on others, not through natural necessity, but according to the decree of His will, as we have shown above. Hence it follows that He is the Lord of the things made by Him: since we dominate over those things that are subject to our will. And this is a perfect dominion that He exercises over things made by Him, forasmuch as in their making He needs neither the help of an extrinsic agent, nor matter as the foundation of His work: since He is the universal efficient cause of all being.

Now everything that is produced through the will of an agent is directed to an end by that agent: because the good and the end are the proper object of the will, wherefore whatever proceeds from a will must needs be directed to an end. And each thing attains its end by its own action, which action needs to be directed by him who endowed things with the principles whereby they act.

Consequently God, who in Himself is perfect in every way, and by His power endows all things with being, must needs be the Ruler of all, Himself ruled by none: nor is any thing to be excepted from His ruling, as neither is there any thing that does not owe its being to Him. Therefore as He is perfect in being and causing, so is He perfect in ruling.

The effect of this ruling is seen to differ in different things, according to the difference of natures. For some things are so produced by God that, being intelligent, they bear a resemblance to Him and reflect His image: wherefore not only are they directed, but they direct themselves to their appointed end by their own actions. And if in thus directing themselves they be subject to the divine ruling, they are admitted by that divine ruling to the attainment of their last end; but are excluded therefrom if they direct themselves otherwise.

Others there are, bereft of intelligence, which do not direct themselves to their end, but are directed by another. Of these some being incorruptible, even as they are not patient of defect in their natural being, so neither do they wander, in their own action, from the direction to their appointed end, but are subject, without fail, to the ruling of the supreme ruler; such are the heavenly bodies, whose movements are invariable. Others, however, being corruptible, are patient of defects in their natural being; yet this defect is supplied to the advantage of another: since when one thing is corrupted, another is generated. Likewise, they fail from their natural direction in their own actions, yet this failing is compensated by some resultant good. Whence it is clear that not even those things which are seen to wander from the direction of the supreme

ruling, escape from the power of the supreme ruler: because also these corruptible bodies, even as they are created by God, so too are they perfectly subject to Him. Wherefore, considering this, the Psalmist, filled with the divine spirit, in order to give us an illustration of the divine government, first describes to us the perfection of the supreme governor,--as to His nature when he says, God: as to His power, when he says, a great Lord, implying that He needs no one for His power to produce its effect: as to His authority, when he says, A great king above all gods, since, although there be many rulers, yet are all subject to His rule. Secondly, he describes to us the manner of this government. As regards intellectual beings, which, if they submit to His rule, receive from Him their last end which is Himself; wherefore he says, For the Lord will not reject His people. As regards things corruptible which, albeit at times they wander from their proper mode of action, never escape the power of the supreme ruler, he says, Because in His hands are all the ends of the earth. And as regards the heavenly bodies, which transcend the highest summits of the earth, that is of corruptible bodies, and always maintain the order of the divine government, he says, And the mountain heights are His. Thirdly, he assigns the reason of this universal government, for the things that God made must needs be governed by Him. To this he refers when he says, For the sea is His, etc.

Since then in the First Book we have treated of the perfection of the divine nature, and, in the Second, of the perfection of the divine power, inasmuch as He is the creator and lord of all: it remains for us in this Third Book to treat of His perfect authority or dignity, inasmuch as He is the end and governor of all. We must therefore proceed in this wise, so as first to treat of Him as the end of all things; secondly of His universal government, inasmuch as He governs every creature: thirdly, of that special government, whereby He governs creatures endowed with intelligence.

2. That Every Agent Acts for an End

Accordingly we must first show that every agent, by its action, intends an end.

For in those things which clearly act for an end, we declare the end to be that towards which the movement of the agent tends: for when this is reached, the end is said to be reached, and to fail in this is to fail in the end intended; as may be seen in the physician who aims at health, and in a man who runs towards an appointed goal. Nor does it matter, as to this, whether that which tends to an end be cognitive or not: for just as the target is the end of the archer, so is it the end of the arrow's flight. Now the movement of every agent tends to something determinate: since it is not from any force that any action proceeds, but heating proceeds from heat, and cooling from cold; wherefore actions are differentiated by their active principles. Action sometimes terminates in something made, for instance building terminates in a house, healing ends in health: while sometimes it does not so terminate, for instance, understanding and sensation. And if action terminate in something made, the movement of the agent tends by that action towards that thing made: while if it does not terminate in something made, the movement of the agent tends to the action itself. It follows therefore that every agent intends an end while acting, which end is sometimes the action itself, sometimes a thing made by the action.

Again. In all things that act for an end, that is said to be the last end, beyond which the agent seeks nothing further: thus the physician's action goes as far as health, and this being attained, his efforts cease. But in the action of every agent, a point can be reached beyond which the agent does not desire to go; else actions would tend to infinity, which is impossible; for since it is not possible to pass through an infinite medium, the agent would never begin to act, because nothing moves towards what it cannot reach. Therefore every agent acts for an end.

Moreover. If the actions of an agent proceed to infinity, these actions must needs result

either in something made, or not. If the result is something made, the being of that thing made will follow after an infinity of actions. But that which presupposes an infinity of things, cannot possibly be, since an infinite medium cannot be passed through. Now impossibility of being argues impossibility of becoming: and that which cannot become, it is impossible to make. Therefore it is impossible for an agent to begin to make a thing for the making of which an infinity of actions are presupposed. If, however, the result of such actions be not something made, the order of these actions must be either according to the order of active forces, (for instance if a man feel that he may imagine, and imagine that he may understand, and understand that he may will): or according to the order of objects, (for instance I consider the body that I may consider the soul, which I consider in order to consider a separate substance, which again I consider so that I may consider God). Now it is not possible to proceed to infinity, either in active forces, as neither is this possible in the forms of things, as proved in 2 Metaph., since the form is the principle of activity: or in objects, as neither is this possible in beings, since there is one first being, as we have proved above. Therefore it is not possible for agents to proceed to infinity: and consequently there must be something, which being attained, the efforts of the agent cease. Therefore every agent acts for an end.

Further. In things that act for an end, whatsoever comes between the first agent and the last end, is an end in respect to what precedes, and an active principle in respect of what follows. Hence if the effort of the agent does not tend to something determinate, and if its action, as stated, proceeds to infinity, the active principles must needs proceed to infinity: which is impossible, as we have shown above. Therefore the effort of the agent must of necessity tend to something determinate.

Again. Every agent acts either by nature or by intelligence. Now there can be no doubt that those which act by intelligence act for an end; since they act with an intellectual preconception of what they attain by their action, and act through such preconception, for this is to act by intelligence. Now just as in the preconceiving intellect there exists the entire likeness of the effect that is attained by the action of the intellectual being, so in the natural agent there pre-exists the similitude of the natural effect, by virtue of which similitude its action is determined to the appointed effect: for fire begets fire, and an olive produces an olive. Wherefore even as that which acts by intelligence tends by its action to a definite end, so also does that which acts by nature. Therefore every agent acts for an end.

Moreover. Fault is not found save in those things which are for an end: for we do not find fault with one who fails in that to which he is not appointed; thus we find fault with a physician if he fail to heal, but not with a builder or a grammarian. But we find fault in things done according to art, as when a grammarian fails to speak correctly; and in things that are ruled by nature, as in the case of monstrosities. Therefore every agent, whether according to nature, or according to art, or acting of set purpose, acts for an end.

Again. Were an agent not to act for a definite effect, all effects would be indifferent to it. Now that which is indifferent to many effects does not produce one rather than another: wherefore from that which is indifferent to either of two effects, no effect results, unless it be determined by something to one of them. Hence it would be impossible for it to act. Therefore every agent tends to some definite effect, which is called its end.

There are, however, certain actions which would seem not to be for an end, such as playful and contemplative actions, and those which are done without attention, such as scratching one's beard, and the like: whence some might be led to think that there is an agent that acts not for an end. But we must observe that contemplative actions are not for another end, but are themselves an end. Playful actions are sometimes an end, when one plays for the mere pleasure of play; and sometimes they are for an end, as when we play that afterwards we may

study better. Actions done without attention do not proceed from the intellect, but from some sudden act of the imagination, or some natural principle: thus a disordered humour produces an itching sensation and is the cause of a man scratching his beard, which he does without his mind attending to it. Such actions do tend to an end, although outside the order of the intellect. Hereby is excluded the error of certain natural philosophers of old, who maintained that all things happen by natural necessity, thus utterly banishing the final cause from things.

3. That Every Agent Acts for a Good

Hence we must go on to prove that every agent acts for a good.

For that every agent acts for an end clearly follows from the fact that every agent tends to something definite. Now that to which an agent tends definitely must needs be befitting to that agent: since the latter would not tend to it save on account of some fittingness thereto. But that which is befitting to a thing is good for it. Therefore every agent acts for a good.

Further. The end is that wherein the appetite of the agent or mover is at rest, as also the appetite of that which is moved. Now it is the very notion of good to be the term of appetite, since good is the object of every appetite. Therefore all action and movement is for a good.

Again. All action and movement would seem to be directed in some way to being: either for the preservation of being in the species or in the individual; or for the acquisition of being. Now this itself, being to wit, is a good: and for this reason all things desire being. Therefore all action and movement is for a good.

Furthermore. All action and movement is for some perfection. For if the action itself be the end, it is clearly a second perfection of the agent. And if the action consist in the transformation of external matter, clearly the mover intends to induce some perfection into the thing moved: towards which perfection the movable tends, if the movement be natural. Now when we say a thing is perfect, we mean that it is good. Therefore every action and movement is for a good.

Also. Every agent acts according as it is actual. Now by acting it tends to something similar to itself. Therefore it tends to an act. But an act has the ratio of good: since evil is not found save in a potentiality lacking act. Therefore every action is for a good.

Moreover. The intellectual agent acts for an end, as determining on its end: whereas the natural agent, though it acts for an end, as proved above, does not determine on its end, since it knows not the ratio of end, but is moved to the end determined for it by another. Now an intellectual agent does not determine the end for itself except under the aspect of good; for the intelligible object does not move except it be considered as a good, which is the object of the will. Therefore also the natural agent is not moved, nor does it act for an end, except in so far as this end is a good, since the end is determined for the natural agent by an appetite. Therefore every agent acts for a good.

Again. To shun evil and to seek good are in the same ratio: even as movement from below and upward movement are in the same ratio. Now we observe that all things shun evil: for intellectual agents shun a thing for the reason that they apprehend it as an evil: and all natural agents, in proportion to their strength, resist corruption which is the evil of everything. Therefore all things act for a good.

Again. That which results from the agent's action beside his intention, is said to happen by chance or luck. Now we observe in the works of nature that either always or more often that happens which is best: thus in plants the leaves are so placed as to protect the fruit; and the parts of an animal are so disposed as to conduce to the animal's safety. Wherefore, if this happens beside the intention of the natural agent, it will be the result of chance or luck. But that is impossible: because things that happen always or frequently, are not casual or fortuitous, but

those which occur seldom. Therefore the natural agent tends to that which is best: and much more evidently is this so with the intellectual agent. Therefore every agent intends a good in acting.

Moreover. Whatever is moved is brought to the term of movement by the mover and agent. Therefore mover and moved tend to the same term. Now that which is moved, since it is in potentiality, tends to an act, and consequently to perfection and goodness: for by its movement it passes from potentiality to act. Therefore mover and agent by moving and acting always intend a good....

Hence the philosophers in defining the good said: The good is the object of every appetite; and Dionysius (De Div. Nom. iv.) says that all things desire the good and the best....

17. That All Things Are Directed to One End, Which is God

From the foregoing it is clear that all things are directed to one good as their last end.

For if nothing tends to something as its end, except in so far as this is good, it follows that good, as such, is an end. Consequently that which is the supreme good is supremely the end of all. Now there is but one Supreme good, namely God, as we have shown in the First Book. Therefore all things are directed to the Supreme good, namely God, as their end.

Again. That which is supreme in any genus, is the cause of everything in that genus: thus fire which is supremely hot is the cause of heat in other bodies. Therefore the supreme good, namely God, is the cause of goodness in all things good. Therefore He is the cause of every end being an end: since whatever is an end, is such, in so far as it is good. Now the cause of a thing being such, is yet more so. Therefore God is supremely the end of all things.

Further. In every series of causes, the first cause is more a cause than the second causes: since the second cause is not a cause save through the first. Therefore that which is the first cause in the series of final causes, must needs be more the final cause of each thing, than the proximate final cause. Now God is the first cause in the series of final causes: for He is supreme in the order of good things. Therefore He is the end of each thing more even than any proximate end.

Moreover. In all mutually subordinate ends the last must needs be the end of each preceding end: thus if a potion be mixed to be given to a sick man; and is given to him that he may be purged; and he be purged that he may be lowered, and lowered that he may be healed, it follows that health is the end of the lowering, and of the purging, and of those that precede. Now all things are subordinate in various degrees of goodness to the one supreme good, that is the cause of all goodness: and so, since good has the aspect of an end, all things are subordinate to God as preceding ends under the last end. Therefore God must be the end of all.

Furthermore. The particular good is directed to the common good as its end: for the being of the part is on account of the whole: wherefore the good of the nation is more godlike than the good of one man. Now the supreme good, namely God, is the common good, since the good of all things depends on him: and the good whereby each thing is good, is the particular good of that thing, and of those that depend thereon. Therefore all things are directed to one good, God to wit, as their end.

Again. Order among ends is consequent to the order among agents: for just as the supreme agent moves all second agents, so must all the ends of second agents be directed to the end of the supreme agent: since whatever the supreme agent does, it does for its own end. Now the supreme agent is the active principle of the actions of all inferior agents, by moving all to their actions, and consequently to their ends. Hence it follows that all the ends of second agents are directed by the first agent to its proper end. Now the first agent in all things is God, as we

proved in the Second Book. And His will has no other end but His own goodness, which is Himself, as we showed in the First Book. Therefore all things whether they were made by Him immediately, or by means of secondary causes, are directed to God as their end. But this applies to all things: for as we proved in the Second Book, there can be nothing that has not its being from Him. Therefore all things are directed to God as their end.

Moreover. The last end of every maker, as such, is himself: for what we make we use for our own sake: and if at any time a man make a thing for the sake of something else, it is referred to his own good, whether his use, his pleasure, or his virtue. Now God is the cause of all things being made; of some immediately, of others by means of other causes, as we have explained above. Therefore He is the end of all things.

And again. The end holds the highest place among causes, and it is from it that all other causes derive their actual causality: since the agent acts not except for the end, as was proved. And it is due to the agent that the matter is brought to the actuality of the form: wherefore the matter is made actually the matter, and the form is made the form, of this particular thing, through the agent's action, and consequently through the end. The later end also, is the cause of the preceding end being intended as an end: for a thing is not moved towards a proximate end, except for the sake of the last end. Therefore the last end is the first cause of all. Now it must needs befit the First Being, namely God, to be the first cause of all, as we proved above. Therefore God is the last end of all.

Hence it is written (Prov. xvi. 13): The Lord hath made all things for himself: and (Apoc. xxii. 13), I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

30. That Man's Happiness Does Not Consist in Wealth

Hence it is evident that neither is wealth man's supreme good. For wealth is not sought except for the sake of something else: because of itself it brings us no good, but only when we use it, whether for the support of the body, or for some similar purpose. Now the supreme good is sought for its own, and not for another's sake. Therefore wealth is not man's supreme good.

Again. Man's supreme good cannot consist in the possession or preservation of things whose chief advantage for man consists in their being spent. Now the chief advantage of wealth is in its being spent; for this is its use. Therefore the possession of wealth cannot be man's supreme good.

Moreover. Acts of virtue deserve praise according as they lead to happiness. Now acts of liberality and magnificence which are concerned with money, are deserving of praise, on account of money being spent, rather than on account of its being kept: and it is from this that these virtues derive their name. Therefore man's happiness does not consist in the possession of wealth.

Besides. Man's supreme good must consist in obtaining something better than man. But man is better than wealth: since it is something directed to man's use. Therefore not in wealth does man's supreme good consist.

Further. Man's supreme good is not subject to chance. For things that happen by chance, escape the forethought of reason: whereas man has to attain his own end by means of his reason. But chance occupies the greater place in the attaining of wealth. Therefore human happiness consists not in wealth.

Moreover. This is evident from the fact that wealth is lost unwillingly. Also because wealth can come into the possession of evil persons, who, of necessity, must lack the sovereign good. Again because wealth is unstable. Other similar reasons can be gathered from the arguments given above.

31. That Happiness Does Not Consist in Worldly Power

In like manner neither can worldly power be man's supreme happiness: since in the achievement

thereof chance can effect much. Again it is unstable; and is not subject to man's will; and is often obtained by evil men. These are incompatible with the supreme good, as already stated.

Again. Man is said to be good especially according as he approaches the supreme good. But in respect to his having power, he is not said to be either good or evil: since not everyone who can do good deeds is good, nor is a person evil because he can do evil deeds. Therefore the supreme good does not consist in being powerful.

Besides. Every power implies reference to something else. But the supreme good is not referred to anything further. Therefore power is not man's supreme good.

Moreover. Man's supreme good cannot be a thing that one can use both well and ill: for the better things are those that we cannot abuse. But one can use one's power both well and ill: for rational powers can be directed to contrary objects. Therefore human power is not man's supreme good.

Further. If any power be man's supreme good, it must be most perfect. Now human power is most imperfect: for it is based on human will and opinion, which are full of inconsistencies. Also the greater a power is reputed to be, the greater number of people does it depend on: which again conduces to its weakness, since what depends on many, is in many ways destructible. Therefore man's supreme good does not consist in worldly power. Consequently man's happiness consists in no external good: for all external goods, which are known as goods of chance, are contained under those we have mentioned.

32. That Happiness Consists Not in Goods of the Body

Like arguments avail to prove that man's supreme good does not consist in goods of the body, such as health, beauty and strength. For they are common to good and evil: and are unstable: and are not subject to the will.

Besides. The soul is better than the body, which neither lives, nor possesses these goods, without the soul. Wherefore the soul's good, such as understanding and the like, is better than the body's good. Therefore the body's good is not man's supreme good.

Again. These goods are common to man and other animals: whereas happiness is a good proper to man. Therefore man's happiness does not consist in the things mentioned.

Moreover. Many animals surpass man in goods of the body: for some are fleeter than he, some more sturdy, and so on. Accordingly, if man's supreme good consisted in these things, man would not excel all animals: which is clearly untrue. Therefore human happiness does not consist in goods of the body.

33. That Human Happiness is Not Seated in the Senses

By the same arguments it is evident that neither does man's supreme good consist in goods of his sensitive faculty. For these goods again, are common to man and other animals.

Again. Intellect is superior to sense. Therefore the intellect's good is better than the sense's. Consequently man's supreme good is not seated in the senses.

Besides. The greatest sensual pleasures are those of the table and of sex, wherein the supreme good must needs be, if seated in the senses. But it does not consist in them. Therefore man's supreme good is not in the senses.

Moreover. The senses are appreciated for their utility and for knowledge. Now the entire utility of the senses is referred to the goods of the body. Again, sensitive knowledge is directed to intellectual: wherefore animals devoid of intelligence take no pleasure in sensation except in reference to some bodily utility, in so far as by sensitive knowledge they obtain food or sexual

intercourse. Therefore man's supreme good which is happiness is not seated in the sensitive faculty.

37. That Man's Ultimate Happiness Consists in Contemplating God

Accordingly if man's ultimate happiness consists not in external things, which are called goods of chance; nor in goods of the body; nor in goods of the soul, as regards the sensitive faculty; nor as regards the intellective faculty, in the practice of moral virtue; nor as regards intellectual virtue in those which are concerned about action, namely art and prudence; it remains for us to conclude that man's ultimate happiness consists in the contemplation of the truth.

For this operation alone is proper to man, and none of the other animals communicates with him therein.

Again. This is not directed to anything further as its end: since the contemplation of the truth is sought for its own sake.

Again. By this operation man is united to things above him, by becoming like them: because of all human actions this alone is both in God and in separate substances. Also, by this operation man comes into contact with those higher beings, through knowing them in any way whatever.

Besides, man is more self-sufficing for this operation, seeing that he stands in little need of the help of external things in order to perform it.

Further. All other human operations seem to be directed to this as their end. Because perfect contemplation requires that the body should be disencumbered, and to this effect are directed all the products of art that are necessary for life. Moreover, it requires freedom from the disturbance caused by the passions, which is achieved by means of the moral virtues and prudence; and freedom from external disturbance, to which all the regulations of the civil life are directed. So that, if we consider the matter rightly, we shall see that all human occupations are brought into the service of those who contemplate the truth. Now, it is not possible that man's ultimate happiness consist in contemplation based on the understanding of first principles: for this is most imperfect, as being universal and containing potential knowledge of things. Moreover, it is the beginning and not the end of human study, and comes to us from nature, and not through the study of the truth. Nor does it consist in contemplation based on the sciences that have the lowest things for their object: since happiness must consist in an operation of the intellect in relation to the highest objects of intelligence. It follows then that man's ultimate happiness consists in wisdom, based on the consideration of divine things. It is therefore evident by way of induction that man's ultimate happiness consists solely in the contemplation of God, which conclusion was proved above by arguments.

48. That Man's Ultimate Happiness is Not in This Life

Seeing then that man's ultimate happiness does not consist in that knowledge of God whereby he is known by all or many in a vague kind of opinion, nor again in that knowledge of God whereby he is known in science through demonstration, nor in that knowledge whereby he is known through faith, as we have proved above: and seeing that it is not possible in this life to arrive at a higher knowledge of God in His essence, or at least so that we understand other separate substances, and thus know God through that which is nearest to Him, so to say, as we have proved; and since we must place our ultimate happiness in some kind of knowledge of God, as we have shown; it is impossible for man's happiness to be in this life.

Again. Man's last end is the term of his natural appetite, so that when he has obtained it, he desires nothing more: because if he still has a movement towards something, he has not yet

reached an end wherein to be at rest. Now, this cannot happen in this life: since the more man understands, the more is the desire to understand increased in him,--this being natural to man,--unless perhaps someone there be who understands all things: and in this life this never did nor can happen to anyone that was a mere man; seeing that in this life we are unable to know separate substances which in themselves are most intelligible, as we have proved. Therefore man's ultimate happiness cannot possibly be in this life.

Besides. Whatever is in motion towards an end, has a natural desire to be established and at rest therein: hence a body does not move away from the place towards which it has a natural movement, except by a violent movement which is contrary to that appetite. Now happiness is the last end which man desires naturally. Therefore it is his natural desire to be established in happiness. Consequently unless together with happiness he acquires a state of immobility, he is not yet happy, since his natural desire is not yet at rest. When therefore a man acquires happiness, he also acquires stability and rest; so that all agree in conceiving stability as a necessary condition of happiness: hence the Philosopher says (1 Ethic. x.): We do not look upon the happy man as a kind of chameleon. Now, in this life there is no sure stability; since, however happy a man may be, sickness and misfortune may come upon him, so that he is hindered in the operation, whatever it be, in which his happiness consists. Therefore man's ultimate happiness cannot be in this life.

Moreover. It would seem unfitting and unreasonable for a thing to take a long time in becoming, and to have but a short time in being: for it would follow that for a longer duration of time nature would be deprived of its end; hence we see that animals which live but a short time, are perfected in a short time. But, if happiness consists in a perfect operation according to perfect virtue,^[5] whether intellectual or moral, it cannot possibly come to man except after a long time. This is most evident in speculative matters, wherein man's ultimate happiness consists, as we have proved:^[6] for hardly is man able to arrive at perfection in the speculations of science, even though he reach the last stage of life: and then in the majority of cases, but a short space of life remains to him. Therefore man's ultimate happiness cannot be in this life.

Further. All admit that happiness is a perfect good: else it would not bring rest to the appetite. Now perfect good is that which is wholly free from any admixture of evil: just as that which is perfectly white is that which is entirely free from any admixture of black. But man cannot be wholly free from evils in this state of life; not only from evils of the body, such as hunger, thirst, heat, cold and the like, but also from evils of the soul. For no one is there who at times is not disturbed by inordinate passions; who sometimes does not go beyond the mean, wherein virtue consists, either in excess or in deficiency; who is not deceived in some thing or another; or at least ignores what he would wish to know, or feels doubtful about an opinion of which he would like to be certain. Therefore no man is happy in this life.

Again. Man naturally shuns death, and is sad about it: not only shunning it now when he feels its presence, but also when he thinks about it. But man, in this life, cannot obtain not to die. Therefore it is not possible for man to be happy in this life.

Besides. Ultimate happiness consists not in a habit but in an operation: since habits are for the sake of actions. But in this life it is impossible to perform any action continuously. Therefore man cannot be entirely happy in this life.

Further. The more a thing is desired and loved, the more does its loss bring sorrow and pain. Now happiness is most desired and loved. Therefore its loss brings the greatest sorrow. But if there be ultimate happiness in this life, it will certainly be lost, at least by death. Nor is it certain that it will last till death: since it is possible for every man in this life to encounter sickness, whereby he is wholly hindered from the operation of virtue; such as madness and the like which hinder the use of reason. Such happiness therefore always has sorrow naturally connected with

it: and consequently it will not be perfect happiness.

But someone might say that, since happiness is a good of the intellectual nature, perfect and true happiness is for those in whom the intellectual nature is perfect, namely in separate substances: and that it is imperfect in man, by way of a kind of participation. Because he can arrive at a full understanding of the truth, only by a sort of movement of inquiry; and fails entirely to understand things that are by nature most intelligible, as we have proved. Wherefore neither is happiness, in its perfect form, possible to man: yet he has a certain participation thereof, even in this life. This seems to have been Aristotle's opinion about happiness. Wherefore (1 Ethic. x.) inquiring whether misfortunes destroy happiness, he shows that happiness seems especially to consist in deeds of virtue, which seem to be most stable in this life, and concludes that those who in this life attain to this perfection, are happy as men, as though not attaining to happiness simply, but in a human way.

We must now show that this explanation does not avoid the foregoing arguments. For although man is below the separate substances in the natural order, he is above irrational creatures: wherefore he attains his ultimate end in a more perfect way than they. Now these attain their last end so perfectly that they seek nothing further: thus a heavy body rests when it is in its own proper place; and when an animal enjoys sensible pleasure, its natural desire is at rest. Much more therefore when man has obtained his last end, must his natural desire be at rest. But this cannot happen in this life. Therefore in this life man does not obtain happiness considered as his proper end, as we have proved. Therefore he must obtain it after this life.

Again. The natural desire cannot be void; since nature does nothing in vain.^[8] But nature's desire would be void if it could never be fulfilled. Therefore man's natural desire can be fulfilled. But not in this life, as we have shown. Therefore it must be fulfilled after this life. Therefore man's ultimate happiness is after this life.

Besides. As long as a thing is in motion towards perfection it has not reached its last end. Now in the knowledge of truth all men are ever in motion and tending towards perfection: because those who follow, make discoveries in addition to those made by their predecessors, as stated in 2 Metaph.^[9] Therefore in the knowledge of truth man is not situated as though he had arrived at his last end. Since then as Aristotle himself shows (10 Ethic. vii.) man's ultimate happiness in this life consists apparently in speculation, whereby he seeks the knowledge of truth, we cannot possibly allow that man obtains his last end in this life.

Moreover. Whatever is in potentiality tends to become actual: so that as long as it is not wholly actual, it has not reached its last end. Now our intellect is in potentiality to the knowledge of the forms of all things: and it becomes actual when it knows any one of them. Consequently it will not be wholly actual, nor in possession of its last end, except when it knows all, at least these material things. But man cannot obtain this through speculative sciences, by which in this life we know truth. Therefore man's ultimate happiness cannot be in this life.

For these and like reasons Alexander and Averroes held that man's ultimate happiness does not consist in human knowledge obtained through speculative sciences, but in that which results from conjunction with a separate substance, which conjunction they deemed possible to man in this life. But as Aristotle realized that man has no knowledge in this life other than that which he obtains through speculative sciences, he maintained that man attains to happiness, not perfect, but proportionate to his capacity.

Hence it becomes sufficiently clear how these great minds suffered from being so straitened on every side. We, however, will avoid these straits if we suppose, in accordance with the foregoing arguments, that man is able to reach perfect happiness after this life, since man has an immortal soul; and that in that state his soul will understand in the same way as separate substances understand, as we proved in the Second Book.

Therefore man's ultimate happiness will consist in that knowledge of God which he possesses after this life; a knowledge similar to that by which separate substances know him. Hence our Lord promises us a reward . . . in heaven (Matt. v. 12) and (Matt. xxii. 30) states that the saints shall be as the angels: who always see God in heaven (Matt. xviii. 10).

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Contra Gentiles*. London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1924.

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