have caused me to choose the good. In what way, asks the prosecutor, is my client's position any different from that of the careless helmsman who falls to steer the ship clear of the rocks? Is he not guilty of neglect in permitting me to sin?

Let me say just once more that there is no question of God having to permit me to sin in order to leave me with my freedom. That kind of argument belongs to a theory that freedom makes me independent of God. In fact God could have made a world in which nobody ever sinned at all and everyone was perfectly free. In such a world, if it were material and historical, there would certainly have to be suffering as the obverse of the good of material things, but there would be no need whatever for sin. Sin has no useful function in the world except by accident.

Is God, then, guilty by neglect? I think that he is not, for this reason. You can only be guilty by neglect if you have some kind of obligation to do something and you do not do it. It is the helmsman who is accused of neglect, and not the cabin-boy, because it is the helmsman's job to steer the ship. Now by no stretch of the imagination is it God's job to prevent me from sinning. In his mercy and kindness he frequently does so, and frequently he gives me the grace to repent of the sins I have committed, but this is not his job, his oissey. There can be no sense in the idea that God has any job or is under any obligation: if he were, there would be something greater than God which constrained him. God is not more under an obligation to prevent me from sinning than he was under an obligation to create the world in the first place. He cannot therefore be said to be guilty by neglect.

Chapter 57

God and human freedom

Thomas Aquinas

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the truth of the premises they can be false; they are matters of opinion and the mind doesn't have to assert them, although it may, for some motive or other, incline to one side or the other. Now in the same way there is also a certain good which is desirable for its own sake, namely, happiness, which has the nature of natural compulsion on everyone to want to be happy. But there are other goods which are desirable for the sake of the goal, and can be compared to the goal as conclusions are to premises, in the way Aristotle explains. If there were goods which were sine qua non of happiness, these too would compel desire, and most of all in a person that perceived the connection and existence, life, understanding, and the like are perhaps goods like these. But the particular goods to which human activity is directed are not like this, and are not seen as sine qua non of happiness: eating or not eating this food or that, for instance; but something in them attracts desire according to the good we see in them. And so our wills are not compelled to choose them. And it is worthy of notice for this reason that Aristotle identified the root of might or might not be in what we do with deliberation, which is concerned with as yet undetermined means to a goal. For as Aristotle says, when the means are already determined there is no rule for deliberation.

In the same way some people strive to uproot the other root of might or might not be—that which Aristotle here identifies with our ability to deliberate—wanting to show that will when it chooses is compelled to move by what it desires. For since the object of willing is what is good, it doesn't seem possible to turn away from desiring what seems to it good, just as reason can't be turned away from ascertaining to what seems to it true. And so it seems that any choice consequent on deliberation will always be made under compulsion; so that everything which takes its rise from our deliberation and choice will be done under compulsion. But the answer to this is that goods differ just as truths do. Certain truths like the first unprovable premises of all proofs are self-evident and compel the ascent of the mind. But certain truths are not self-evident but evident for other reasons. And there are two sorts of such truth. Some follow necessarily from the premises, and given the truth of the premises can't be false, and these are all provable conclusions; the mind must assert to such truths once it has perceived their relation to the premises, though not before. Other truths don't follow necessarily from the premises and even given