LITTLE SUMMARY OF METAPHYSICS, OR SUMMULA METAPHYSICAE

by
ALLAN B. WOLTER OFM,
BRUCE PUBLISHING COMPANY, MILWAUKEE, 1958.

Allan Wolter is best known for his work on the text and translation of Blessed John Duns Scotus. But he was an accomplished thinker in his own right. This little book was published in Latin (at a time when trained Catholics were more comfortable reading and writing Latin – and when seminarians in Rome were still taught in Latin). It deserves to be better known, for it is a fine introduction to key concepts, ideas, and questions in metaphysics. The preface neatly explains Wolter's purpose and procedure in writing the book. Worth noting, though, is how remarkably ecumenical it is in its use of Scholastic and non-Scholastic materials. For while it tends to follow the Scotist position, it does not ignore, or entirely eschew, the positions of St. Thomas Aquinas or other great Scholastics, past and present, nor does it ignore, though it hardly endorses, later and non-Scholastic thinkers and theories. Distinctive of it is the way it lays out and defends in direct and pleasingly summative ways such doctrines (marginalized or opposed by others in the Scholastic tradition) as the disjunctive attributes of being, the univocity of the concept of being, multiple proofs based on the disjunctive attributes for the existence of God (running at a tangent to the famous five ways of St. Thomas), among others.

The work is historically as well as metaphysically informed and informative, and may well serve as a suitable textbook in metaphysics courses, at least for those who do not wish students to know only what modern philosophers, or modern Thomists, are up to.

At all events, for diversion if not also for instruction, the following translation (still in need of revision) is offered here to the indulgent reader.

Peter Simpson
New York
May 2017

Preface

Since neo-Scholastic metaphysics has come to separate ontology from natural theology and so responds less to the traditional Aristotelico-Scholastic concept, authors have not seldom obtained deficient or less acceptable solutions. Therefore I have tried to reduce summarily to one whole all the things that belong essentially to 'first philosophy' and that cannot, without danger of grave loss, be separated. For the contribution that the golden age of the Scholastics contributed to the development of metaphysics should be considered a common patrimony, and merits to be preserved by all.

The noted professor, Fr. Pacificus Bormann OFM, has recently summoned back to the scales the efforts of neo-Scholastics, who in separating the diverse parts of special metaphysics from each other and from ontology have so far progressed that the essential nexus of natural theology with ontology is no longer apparent. For these sorts of efforts have developed the theory of Christian Wolff about the radical separation of ontology (the science of being qua being) from natural theology (the science of God) and the other parts of special metaphysics. Further, the same Fr. Pacificus has given a clear exposition (*Franziskanische Studien* 21, 1934, p.80ff.) of the principles and method that serve to build a genuine metaphysics on the foundations of a synthesis of the Scholastics. Lastly Fr. Philotheus Boehner OFM, of pious memory, has found this theory of perennial metaphysics (*Franciscan Studies* 5, 1945, p.366ff.) adumbrated in the philosophico-theological synthesis that, at the beginnings of the Franciscan School, is contained in that excellent work, the *Summa* of Brother Alexander of Hales.

In the dissertation that I myself more recently completed on the transcendentals according to the mind of John Duns Scotus, I did not omit to point out clearly how powerful a possibility the theory of the Subtle Doctor provides for integrating into a complete system the heterogeneous elements that are found in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. As is well known, according to Aristotle 'first philosophy' or 'divine science' treats of three things: of causes or principles, of God and the Intelligences, and of being and its properties.

As St. Albert the Great notes (*On Metaphysics* 1 tract.1 ch.2) the philosophers were already in dispute about the first subject of metaphysics; but while some, following Plato (the Neo-Platonists) placed the first subject in causes, others of greater moment are followers of Avicenna and Averroes. And while Averroes contended that God was the first subject of metaphysics, even though the existence of God be proved only by physical arguments, Avicenna and after him the Scholastics commonly, in order to avoid Averroes' equivocation, take being and its properties as the first subject. "Therefore, along with all the Peripatetics who state the truth," says St. Albert (*ibid*.), "it seems one should say that the subject is being insofar as it is being, and the things that follow on being insofar as it is being are its properties, as are cause merely substantive and accident, the separate and not separate, potency and act, and the like." St. Thomas Aquinas agrees with the same opinion, for he says, "although this science considers the three aforesaid things, yet it does not consider each of them as the subject but only common being itself. For this is the subject in the science, whose causes and features we seek for" (*On the*

Metaphysics, preface). But according to this common doctrine, although common being is the subject of first philosophy, the existence of God as he is cause of all things is proved in the science. Hence the knowledge of God is as it were "the end which the consideration of the science attains" (Thomas, *op.cit.*), because "metaphysics is finally about the highest causes, at whose knowledge metaphysical science ends" (Scotus, *Rep*. *Par*., prol. q.3 a.1).

Now in our time not a few neo-Scholastic philosophers, panicked by exaggerated critique from the existentialist movement in Germany, France, and Italy, abandon or neglect the idea of a metaphysical science as understood by the Scholastics. Still, one has to say that this old ideal is more pleasing to the Anglo-American mentality than is modern existentialism, which saps of Cartesian and modernist mustiness. It seems healthier to me, therefore, to return above all to the mind of the Scholastics, so that the foundation of the whole of metaphysics may be solidly laid down.

The rest, especially about the idea and division of this dissertation, will be stated in the Introduction. I would like to point out that in this work I do not plan to offer a solution to all and each of the questions about the nature and extent of metaphysics that are still now disputed; however I do offer the simple effort to consider metaphysics more correctly.

For this reason we do earnestly insist that metaphysics has a rational character to the extent it is a body of demonstrated or proved conclusions.

Finally, according to the directive norms of Pope Pius XII, which say that "it is integral to each professor, within assigned limits (which should not be transgressed), to adhere to some school that has obtained the right of domicile in the Church on the basis of the law that it thoroughly distinguish truths to be held by all from those that are the features and elements of a particular school, and that it note these distinctions in its teaching, as befits a judicious master" (*AAS* 45, 1953, 686, Letter on the Fourth Centenary of the Founding of the Gregorian University in Rome) — in accord with these words we have tried to isolate the common doctrine of traditional true metaphysics, while, on the other hand, carefully avoiding the secondary and discrepant characters of each particular school, and we have relegated matters of controversy to a lower place.

Again, for the sake of clarity, we have set aside accidental questions and a long bibliography, which can cause confusion.

Further, we have not referred to many modern treatises, because they do not properly belong to our study, which is necessarily restricted to elementary metaphysics, although they are good and useful, as for example the Austrian philosophy of values, the philosophy of the beautiful, etc. For we did not wish to exceed the limits of a summary manual that will be expanded at the pleasure of the professor.

Select notes at the foot of the page are for two reasons: 1) books or articles illustrating the question are referred to before others; 2) works published in English are preferred to other equal ones.

Finally I especially give thanks and retain gratitude, for the advice they gave me, to OFM Frs. Menges, Mohan, Montalverna, Daam, Buytaert.

Allan Wolter OFM, Feast of St. Peter in Chains, 1956, St. Bonaventure, NY.

Introduction: On the Nature and Method of Metaphysical Science

Article 1. On the nature of metaphysics

On the Name 'Metaphysics': The name 'metaphysics' etymologically signifies 'after- or trans-physics'. Andronicus of Rhodes (c. 70 BC), when collecting the works of Aristotle, seems to be the first to use this name to designate the books of the Master that deal with metaphysical things, and he placed them in his collection immediately after the books on physics. So in Andronicus the title signifies simply 'the things that follow physics'. The Scholastics however understood this term in the sense of trans-physics, because in this science we pass beyond bodily and changeable things (the consideration of which belongs properly to the physical or natural philosopher) to transcendent things that are common to non-bodily and bodily things, to changeable and unchangeable things, or even to things that are proper to God.

On the Definition of Metaphysics: Metaphysics is defined as the science of being qua being. Its material object is any being or thing, whether immaterial (as God, angel, soul) or material (as atom, plant, animal), whether substance or accident, actually existent or capable of existing. Its formal object, or the aspect under which the material object is considered, is being qua being. For the highest and most abstract grade of reality, namely the idea of being itself, is what the metaphysician considers in all beings, and he demonstrates of its properties that they do inhere in it.

On the Description of this Science and its Relation to other Disciplines: Metaphysics can, therefore, be described as the first real speculative science.

It is a science because it is a body of demonstrated truths about a single formal object. The things that are chiefly demonstrated about being are its properties or transcendental attributes, whether these are simply convertible with being, as 'one', 'true', 'good', or are disjunctively convertible, as 'act' and 'potency, 'dependent' and 'independent' etc. Insofar as it is a science, metaphysics differs from sacred theology because the latter is not a science in the strict Aristotelian sense for its principles are not evident but revealed.

Metaphysics is a real science, as is plain from its definition. For being signifies the same as thing or what actually exists or is at least capable of such existence. Therefore metaphysical notions are first intentions, or concepts that are predicated immediately of things themselves. So metaphysics differs from the logical sciences which deal with second intentions, that is, with concepts that are predicated immediately of other concepts or of beings of reason.

Metaphysics indeed is the first or supreme real science, and so differs from other less universal real things, as physics, cosmology, psychology; for it does not just consider one or other part of reality, as these sciences do, but with the totality of things. Therefore, by reason of its material object, metaphysics is equivalent to all the real sciences taken together. Further, it is first by reason of its formal object; for the other sciences consider real things in some narrower respect, as physics considers things as changeable, cosmology things as bodily, etc. But metaphysics considers them precisely as they are real. Hence other real sciences, as cosmology, philosophy of man, presuppose metaphysics and use its conclusions as their

principles. But metaphysics does not use the conclusions of any other real science, physics or natural philosophy, as principles.

Metaphysics is a speculative and not practical science, because it does not tend toward any other operation but speculation. Hence it differs from ethics, which is practical.

Other Names of this Science: Aristotle, the author of this science, designated it with two names (*Metaphysics* 6.1.1026a19, 24): theology or divine science, for by its investigating the ultimate causes of beings it reaches the contemplation of God and angels; first philosophy, for it considers the first causes of things and because other real sciences follow metaphysics by taking their principles from it.

After Christian Wolff (1679-1754) many neo-Scholastics divide metaphysics into general (ontology) and special (cosmology, psychology, natural theology), but badly, because neither ontology (the science of being qua being) nor natural theology (natural science about God) can be construed as sciences by us in this life independently of each other; for when we prove the disjunctive properties of being we by that fact demonstrate the existence and nature of the first being, namely God. Nor does it seem that we can easily prove all the simply convertible properties, namely true and good, unless we first have knowledge of God as infinitely or perfectly intelligent and loving. Hence metaphysics as the science of being qua being must include as an integral part the treatment of infinite being as it is the ultimate cause and reason of the universe of beings.

Of the Division of this Science: Having, therefore, rejected the division of Wolff, we will try in the following pages to construct a metaphysical science where, in true Scholastic tradition, the science of being qua being and natural theological science are united. So the following division is proposed:

The first part treats of the notion of transcendental being and its attributes considered in general. Included as well is the treatment of the attribute 'one', which is the first among the attributes of being.

The second part treats of the disjunctively convertible attributes, namely transient and permanent, act and potency, caused and uncaused, substantial and accidental, absolute and relative etc. Together these attributes are shown to be in fact the primary divisions of real beings.

The third part treats of the existence and nature of the first being, namely God, in whom indeed is verified the perfect member of each disjunction, namely permanent, pure act, uncaused, substance, absolute etc. Dealt with here is also the intellectual life of God, namely his understanding and volition, and of his relation to the finite world.

The fourth and last part treats of certain of the simply convertible attributes, namely true and good, or of the universal intelligibility and loveliness of being.

By way of introduction we will, in the following part of the introduction, deal with the method of metaphysics, where we will treat of: 1) the methodological starting point, namely the experience of finite being; 2) Aristotle's famous division of the being we experience, namely the ten categories; 3) certain transcendental

properties of the being of experience; the scientific method of metaphysics and its certitude and value.

Article 2: On the Method of Metaphysics

Although metaphysics is first among real sciences, it is not altogether first, for it presupposes both epistemology and logic. Systematically indeed epistemology precedes metaphysics, for the latter presupposes the possibility of knowledge, which epistemology examines. Further, insofar as metaphysics uses the rules of logic and the theory of relations, logic precedes it. But no other science, as physics, chemistry, biology, cosmology, psychology, mathematics, needs to be presupposed by the metaphysician. So no metaphysical conclusion depends on things established by the natural philosopher or the physicist, as some recent authors falsely suppose.

The Starting Point: Every science takes its beginning from some principle or principles that are both evident and necessarily true (Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora* 1.2). The given datum from which such principles are drawn by the metaphysician is the fact or experience of something real. Such experience is inseparable from the conscious life of man, for whether we think or will or feel or experience some motion of spirit, we are always conscious that our experience is a fact or something real. This fact of experience is expressed in this proposition: 'Something is'.

This very evident proposition, although it is in itself a necessary one (as will be shown later), is yet a proposition that for us is purely contingent. Hence, in order to preserve the condition of Aristotelian science that the principles be necessary, we can infer something necessary from the contingent proposition 'something is', namely the proposition that 'the existence of something is possible' or that 'there is no repugnance between something and existence'. For as Scotus well observes (*Lectura* 1), "I say that although things other than God are in fact contingent in respect of actual being, they are not so in respect of potential being. So things that are contingent with respect to actual existence are necessary with respect to possible existence, as that although it is contingent that man exists yet that his existence is possible is necessary." Likewise from the other givens of experience we can infer conclusions that are both evident (evident, that is, from principles about their inherence) and necessary, and we can use these givens as principles in constructing our metaphysical science, as for example the principles that 'something that is not eternal is possible', 'something that is contingent, transient, changeable etc. is possible'.

The name 'being' (like the name 'thing' and 'something' which, unless otherwise noted, signify the same as 'being') is used by use to designate everything and anything that is not repugnant to existence, whether it exists actually here and now or not actually but already exists in its causes.

On the Ten Categories or on the Classification of Experienced Being: Since we experience not just one being or real something but several and diverse things, it belongs to the metaphysician also to describe and reduce to general classes the reality we experience. Famous is the division of Aristotle into ten categories or

predicaments. These ten categories are substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, when, where, position, and possession.

Note. On the name 'category': Etymologically the Greek word 'category' signifies a public accusation or charge and derives from the verb 'to accuse'. So it is a forensic word that Aristotle uses in a special sense to designate logical attribution and predication, for he sees a likeness between the mind and a judge. Therefore the act of the predicating mind is said to be a 'judgment' and that which is predicated of a subject is said to be an 'accusation'. Now since every accusation or predication pronounced of a subject falls under one of the ten ultimate kinds, these supreme kinds are called 'categories'. But insofar as the predicaments are first intentions predicated of the nature of things, they belong, according to many neo-Scholastics, not only to logic but also to metaphysics as the supreme kinds of limited real being. Hence they say, let the categories be defined as the supreme kinds or ways in which things can exist in nature, or more briefly as the kinds of real being.

What sort of reality can be put into the categories? Scholastics distinguish between those that directly fall under the categories and those that only indirectly or reductively do so. Nothing can be directly placed in a category save a being real, finite, and essentially one: 1) 'Real' to exclude all beings of reason and Scotistic formalities, which are not things but aspects of things. So it is vain to ask whether animality, rationality etc. are substances or accidents, for animality is not a thing but a perfection whereby a thing (an animal) is an animal. 2) 'Finite' being because, in order for a thing to be properly reduced to some kind, it must be a metaphysical composite, that is, composed of genus and differentia. But God is not metaphysically composite and so is not properly reducible to a category or a supreme kind. Although the notion of substance is predicated of God and creatures, and indeed univocally according to Scotists and many non-Thomists, such a notion of substance is not predicamental but transcendental (on which see below). 3) Being 'essentially one', that is, a being that has a single natural essence, whether simple or composite, because what is not essentially one can exist in several categories. Hereby are excluded beings per accidens, for example moral unities (family, flock, army), artificial unities (panels, table, house etc.), or unities of mere aggregates (as mixed composites). Also excluded are the integral parts that lose their essential unity if separated from the thing of which they are parts, as hand, head, etc. Parts as such and constitutive metaphysical principles, as completive modes, are said to be reductively contained in the category of the thing they belong to, and thus the rationality and animality of man can be reduced to substance. Artificial things are reduced partly to substance (the matter they are made of) and partly to quality (their accidental forms). A moral unity, as a family etc., is reduced to substance (by reason of the persons) and relation (by reason of paternity, sonship, etc.). Beings of reason too can be reduced in some way by an analogous extrinsic reduction, e.g. point is reduced to the category of quantity, ignorance to the category of quality (knowledge falls under quality), etc.

Various problems have been raised about Aristotle's categories. Is the classification adequate or sufficiently comprehensive? For some say that motion perhaps is a distinct kind. Others say that the categories go beyond what is sufficient, for the last six categories can be reduced to the category of relation. Others dispute whether relation is really distinct from the related things. And indeed we can ask if all the predicaments are things in the strict sense, as Scotus and

> Thomas reckon them to be, or if, as Ockham says, only some are, namely substance and quality. These questions seem to me of little moment, so let him dispute of them who will.
>
> The categories that a neo-Scholastic metaphysician is accustomed to treat of specifically are substance, quality, and relation. But these notions will be sufficiently expounded by us in the diverse treatments of the disjunctive attributes of transcendental being.

On Some Transcendental Properties of the Beings we Experience: Besides these categories many other things about the reality of experience need to be taken note of. Among such things are, for example, certain transcendental attributes, namely those that do not fall under any category properly speaking and so, in Scotistic terminology, are transcendents. For we experience beings as many, composite, changeable, contingent, caused, relative etc. Two facts among these are very important as principles for the metaphysician in his speculations, namely the fact of the plurality and changeableness of reality.

The plurality of things: no one can rationally doubt that several things exist. This question is not the question whether there is anything outside ourselves, for when the metaphysician begins his speculations he is indifferent whether anything exists outside himself. It is sufficient for him to admit that he has many thoughts, sensations, etc., for these are indeed real things.

The changeableness of things: the changeableness or change of things, taken here to be a primary and indubitable fact, is not understood strictly as importing a subject distinct from the change which the subject loses or acquires. We only wish to say that the facts we immediately experience as real begin to be and cease to be, or in other words that they are in a state of becoming. This fact is expressed in the assertoric proposition 'something is transient' or in the modal proposition 'something transient can exist'.

On the Method of Metaphysics: The method of metaphysics is not strictly deductive or inductive, if by deduction and induction are meant demonstrative or a priori proofs and scientific inductions respectively. The method is not deductive because the metaphysician does not have as principles things that are simply prior but things that are simply posterior, namely 'that which is or can be changeable, caused, transient etc.' Nor is it inductive because the scientific induction of the natural sciences is per se unable to give anything but probability.

Hence, although the method of proceeding in metaphysics, as it is first philosophy, ought to be "to demonstrate through essential causes simply prior and more known and especially through the highest causes…, nevertheless we do not thus know it, nor is it thus found treated of by Aristotle. Ask if you find in the whole of his book one demonstrative metaphysical proof. For, because of the weakness of our intellect, it is from sensible things and things less known in themselves that we get to knowledge of immaterial things, and these are more known in themselves and should, in metaphysics, be taken as principles of knowing other things" (Scotus, *Pologue to Metaphysics*).

This way of proceeding from what is simply posterior, namely from real being as we experience it, namely as contingent, caused, transient, etc. to things that are necessarily required as conditions sine qua non of its existence, can be called a sort of metaphysical reduction. It is called 'reduction' because the mind is as it were led back from the data of immediate experience to the conditions and hidden causes on which they depend. 'Metaphysical' is added because this reduction seems to differ from the reduction that the natural sciences use. For a reduction is found in these too, namely to theories and hypotheses from which, as from conjectured conditions and causes, the effects that are empirically observed can follow. This method of the natural sciences, which is called hypothetico-deductive insofar as it regards the verification of theories, is also called 'inventive induction' insofar as the cultivators of the sciences create a certain theoretical law or explanation from their own mental fertility. But none of their theories is so certain that no other theory or hypothesis can be thought up, and so all such theories, although they are often not far distant from at least a practical certainty, do not go beyond probability. In metaphysics, on the contrary, when once it is conceded, for example, that some finite being is not sufficient to itself for its existence but requires some explanation outside itself, then it follows that no other theoretical explanation can be found save in something non-finite. Likewise, a caused being can be explained only by an uncaused being, a transient being by something permanent, a contingent being by something necessary, and so on through the other disjunctive attributes that are contradictorily opposed with respect to being. For although 'caused being' and 'uncaused being' are not contradictories (for there could be a third between them, namely 'non-being'), nevertheless 'caused' and 'uncaused' are mutually contradictory in respect of the same subject, just as 'white' and 'non-white' are mutually contradictory in respect of the same man. Hence to deny that all beings are caused is the same as to assert that some being is uncaused. And in this sense there is given by metaphysical reduction not just one theory among many possible explanations, as is the case with the natural sciences, but rather, once the necessity is conceded for some explanation of the existence of observed things in something other than themselves, metaphysical reduction gives, by virtue of the law of contradiction and excluded middle, only one possible theoretical solution. And in this sense metaphysical conclusions exceed the probability found in the theories of the natural sciences. So the certitude that the metaphysician can have seems to be the highest that the human intellect can naturally achieve in any theoretical science about real things.

Part One: On Transcendental Being and its Attributes Considered in General, and Specifically on the Attribute 'One'

Chapter 1: On Transcendental Being

Article 1. On the Transcendentals in General

Etymologically the word 'transcendental' is derived from the words 'trans' or 'beyond' and 'scandere' or 'to rise'. Among moderns 'transcendent' signifies, for the greater part, what is above experience (e.g. Kant) or what exceeds the human mind. Among Scholastics, however, 'transcendent' or 'transcendental' is customarily applied to those abstract but real concepts (or first intentions) that, because of their extent or universality, cannot be reduced to the categories, namely being, thing, something, one etc.

In Aquinas and neo-Scholastics generally the name is customarily limited to the six notions that are common to every being, namely being, thing, something, one, true, good. But in Scotus transcendent and transcendental have a wider meaning. "To the idea of the transcendent," he says, "belongs not having a predicate superior to it save being, but accidental to it is that it is common to many things below it" (Scotus, *Oxon.* 1 d.8 q.3 n.19). This question is perhaps merely about words, but the Scotistic designation seems to me a happier one. For among all the Scholastics metaphysics was a transcendental science, as is plain from the way they explained the etymology of the word. For metaphysics transcends all the other real sciences by reason of its subject (namely being) and this subject's attributes. Among these attributes, which are properly consequent to being qua being, all the Scholastics were accustomed, following Avicenna, Algazel etc., to count not only one, true, and good but also the disjunctive attributes that "divide every being and every kind of being," namely act and potency, contingent and necessary, and the like. Now all things of this sort fall under the Scotistic definition of transcendental. Hence metaphysics can be both happily and accurately described as a transcendental science in the sense that the metaphysician deals with reality in its transcendental aspects.

<u>Definition of Transcendental</u>

So, following the lead of Scotus, a transcendental can be defined negatively as whatever cannot be contained under any kind, or positively as whatever belongs to being as being is indifferent to infinite and finite, or as being is proper to infinite being. The formal idea of the transcendent, then, lies not in that it is commonly predicated of every being, but in that it is beyond every kind (Scotus, *Oxon*. 1 d.8 q.3 nn.18-19).

<u>Division of Transcendentals</u>

The transcendentals can be divided into four classes. 1) Being, which is the first among the transcendentals. That being is a transcendental notion is plain from the definitions adduced above, for being is common to all the categories and so can be confined to none of them. Being also belongs with itself before it is divided into

infinite and finite, and so as it is indifferent to both. Being is first because the other transcendentals are attributed to being as subject, and something has to be presupposed as the subject to which they are attributed. 2) Properties or attributes simply convertible with being, namely one, true, good. 3) Properties disjunctively convertible with being, namely infinite or finite, transient or permanent, actual or potential etc. For these properties, like the others, belong to being before it is divided into kinds. 4) Other pure perfections, or those that can be predicated of God. For although these perfections are neither simply nor disjunctively convertible with being, they are true transcendental notions because they are predicable of God, who is beyond every kind and category belonging only to finite and limited beings.

> Note. On the notion of perfection: the term 'perfect' (from a verb meaning to carry through or bring to finished state) signifies 'complete' or 'fully made'. So perfection is everything that is required for a thing to be called complete or whole. The complex of all such, whether distinct really or formally or in reason, is called the total perfection of the thing, but singly they are called partial perfections or, simply, perfections of the thing. Therefore whatever it is better to have than not to have is a perfection in whatever has it. Perfections can be divided into: 1) Positive and negative insofar as what is conceived as perfecting a thing is an entity or being, or a lack of entity or being. So, for example, humanity, capacity for laughter, head, hand, eye, thoughts, affections of soul are positive perfections in man. A hollowed finger (pincers) in an earwig, absence of superfluous weight in a man, and the like are negative perfections. 2) Essential and existential perfections insofar as the perfection is conceived as perfecting the thing in what the thing is, for example simplicity, unity, matter, form etc., or as perfecting it in the way it is, for example independence, actuality, necessity, contingency. 3) Pure or mixed perfections insofar as the perfection, in its precise idea, does not or does include some imperfection. So life, intelligence, freedom include no imperfection while, on the contrary, matter, composition, reasoning do include imperfection.

Article 2. On Being as a Transcendental

There are some who distinguish between predicamental beings and transcendental being. For the beings we experience are changeable, limited, determinate. Hence, insofar as any being of this sort under its proper idea as such and such a being, as dog, thought, sensation etc., falls under one or other predicament and so is called a predicamental being. But if being is considered precisely as being, that is, as that to which existence is not repugnant, it is conceived as indifferent to changeability and unchangeability, determinability and indeterminability, limitation and unlimitation, etc., and, as such, the notion of being belongs to no kind or predicament, but is transcendent.

Definition of Transcendental Being

Hence transcendental being can be descriptively defined as that to which existence is not repugnant. The phrase 'that to which existence is not repugnant' expresses logical possibility, that is, the non-repugnance of something with respect to

existence. Such an idea is thus verified both of that which here and now actually exists and of that which, although it does not here and now exist, can exist.

Note. The properties of the notion of transcendental being.

To clarify the signification of the word 'being' the following need to be noted.

1. Being or thing is a quidditative notion, for it is primarily a response to the question 'what is this?'

For two questions can be asked about anything, namely 'what is it?' and 'is it?' The first question is about quiddity, the second about existence. Whatness is also called essence, for essence is that by which a thing is what it is. In intuitive cognition, which we have at least in the case of our own internal acts, we know something as existing. We can indeed abstract from this existence, which is contingent, and ask 'what is it that exists?' The first distinct essential mark that we can affirm of this real existent is being, for since essence expresses that by which a thing is what it is, it expresses the ideas that are necessarily associated with the thing as the thing itself, such that, without them, it cannot be conceived. But the first necessary idea of this sort is that which signifies the subject to which existence is not repugnant, and this idea indeed is 'being' or 'thing', by force of which the thing is simply a thing and a something, and by force of which a thing differs from everything that is not a true thing, as a being of reason, or a fiction, or nothing, or the impossible.

2. Being is the first distinctly conceivable idea of any thing, for it is the first determinable conceivable element.

Distinct or determinative knowledge is had when that is conceived which is included in its essential idea. So, for example, man is distinctly conceived as rational animal, that is, as a substantial being, bodily, organic, sentient, and rational. To the extent that we can, by such knowledge, distinguish something from everything else that is precisely not it, the knowledge is said to be distinct. Distinct knowledge is opposed to confused knowledge, namely when we do not properly conceive the distinguishing elements so that we cannot say precisely why an animal, for instance, is precisely an animal and not a plant, although we could, say, distinguish a bull from an oak tree by reason of their non-essential marks. Hence Scotus says, "something is said to be confusedly conceived when it is conceived the way it is expressed by its name, but it is said to be distinctly conceived when it is conceived as it is expressed by its definition." But "distinct knowing is had by the definition, which is investigated by way of division, beginning from 'being' until the concept is reached of the defined thing." So all our distinct knowledge presupposes the notion of being, but being does not presuppose any other distinct real notion.

3. Thus being, among all real concepts, is the least in comprehension or intension, and so is simply simple.

A concept is simply simple if it cannot be resolved into two distinct concepts, one of which is determinable and the other determining; and, on the contrary, it is not simply simple if it can be so resolved. So, for example, animal can be reduced to living (a determinable concept) and sensitive (a determining concept). Likewise living can be resolved into body and organic, and body again into substance and corporeal, and substance into being and 'in itself'. One must note that even determining concepts can be simply simple, for although all qualitative concepts cannot be conceived without any subject that they modify, this subject is not an

essential part of the modification itself but the subject falls into its definition as something added on or supplemental (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 7.4-5).

4. Being, as Scholastics say, is a concept known per se or through itself, and indeed known most, for something simply simple cannot be explained through anything more known.

A concept is said to be known through itself if it cannot be explained by resolution into other simpler and more known concepts. As St. Thomas says, "Just as reduction in the case of things demonstrable must be made to principles known through themselves to the intellect, so too in the case of investigating what each thing is. For otherwise there would be an infinite regress, and so all science and knowledge of things would perish. But that which the intellect first conceives as most known, and to which it resolves all concepts, is being, as Avicenna says" (*De Veritate* 1.1). Being, then, is not known through itself in the sense that it does not presuppose some other knowledge, for the concept of transcendental being is abstractive knowledge, and presupposes some intuitive cognition of something as existent. So the sense is as follows: when the mind forms a concept of being qua being, it knows totally what being is; for this notion, insofar as it is simply simple, cannot be only partially known, but if it is not conceived in its totality it is altogether not-known.

5. Being is predicated of the whatness in the case of everything, and so it is the most common concept or the one greatest in extension. This result follows from the fact it is the first determinable element in any definitive or distinctive knowledge of anything real.

Predication of the whatness of a thing contrasts with predication of a quality of the thing. A predicate in every predication of whatness should be a concept of the whole quiddity of the thing, as a concept of the species, or a concept of that feature which is conceived as a determinable part of the essence, as a concept of the genus. Thus being, substance, living, animal are predicated of the whatness of man. On the other hand, to predicate a quality, or to state a qualifying predicate, is to predicate of a thing either some accidental modification or some intrinsic or essential determination. So, for example, finite, corporeal, organic, sensitive, rational, white, created or the like are qualifying predicates of man, or predicates said of man as to his qualities. Grammatically speaking, whatever is predicated of whatness is a noun, while whatever is predicated as a quality is an adjective. To the extent that every adjective is derived from a noun, whatever is predicated as a quality is predicated denominatively or by way of denomination [note: 'de-nomination' means as it were 'from a noun'].

6. Transcendental being is not truly a genus with respect to its subordinates, such as the ten categories, substance and accident, God and creatures; nor is it narrowed down to them by true specific differences.

According to Scholastics, whatever falls under some genus is in some way a real composite, namely a composite of generic perfection and differentiating perfection, and so, as they say, it is something finite and imperfect. Since God is altogether perfect, and yet nevertheless transcendental being can in some way be predicated of him, Scholastics commonly deny that being is a genus. But others prove the same point in another way. Since a genus is predicated univocally of its subordinate species, those who have taught that being was a purely analogical name, to which

diverse but similar concepts corresponded, seek to find a fundamental reason that being cannot be a genus. Scotus too, however, and his followers, who think the same simply simple concept of being (common to all created substances) is predicable univocally both of God and of accidents (provided it is predicated of them as to their whatness), have equally denied that being is the concept of a genus. They have argued in the following way: genus and difference, according to Aristotle, are correlative terms, for genus is defined as "that which is predicated of several things differing in species by reason of their whatness" (*Topics* 1.5.102a31). Therefore, if a concept common to many is not narrowed down by true differences to the things of which it is univocally said, then it is not a true genus. Now a true specific difference is only found if the perfection from which the difference is taken or denominated is not included in the formal idea of the determinable part (that is, of the genus) and vice versa. In other words, the perfections from which difference and genus are taken are ideas formally diverse. So, for example, animal is truly a genus and rational is truly a difference, for rationality, from which rational is derived, is outside the formal idea of animal, and vice versa. The like must be said of substance and immaterial, or of body and living, etc. By contrast, if that which narrows down a highest common idea to its subordinates cannot be conceived (even if considered in respect of the perfection from which it is denominated) without some notion of that which is narrowed down, then it is not truly a specific difference but rather an intrinsic mode. Thus, for example, 'in itself' (in-itself-ness) cannot be conceived without the idea of being, but being can be conceived without its modes. Insofar as no being is found in reality without some intrinsic mode, for example no being exists that does not exist either in itself or in another, then when being is conceived without its modes, namely as being that is indifferent to substance and accident, an imperfect concept of being-ness is had of any real individual whatever; and such, the Scotists say, is the concept of transcendental being. But when a being is conceived according to the intrinsic modes proper to it, then a perfect concept is had of it, and this concept is not transcendental being as above described. Hence if the name 'being' signifies God and creatures, substance and accident, etc. according to their proper ideas, then we do not yet have one concept but several, and so the name 'being' thus taken is not univocally predicated of everything but rather analogically or equivocally.

But this whole question why being cannot be a genus seems to me of little moment. For it is commonly conceded today that a composition in concepts does not argue to a real composition in the thing. For if the formal notion of one perfection (for example knowing, even if the knowing is omniscient) does not include the formal notion of another perfection (for example loving, even if the loving is altogether perfect), then to be sure this fact does not necessarily imply that both perfections have, in respect of the thing (e.g. God), the idea of parts and so the idea of being mutually perfectible. But this condition would be required for having composition on the part of the thing. If we were able to conclude anything from the conceptual separability of one perfection from another, then some non-identity on the part of the thing would be proved (as a virtual or so-called formal non-identity, which we will deal with in the treatment of the formal distinction???). But such a non-identity implies neither composition nor imperfection in the being that has those perfections. At most, indeed, a reason is to be sought why one such perfection is found in the same thing along with another perfection not included in the formal concept of the first, but I do not know why the only adequate assignable reason for explaining it must be found in a mutual perfectability (a perfectibility after the

manner of parts) that those perfections have on the side of the thing. But if anyone wishes to dispute this question, let him do so.

Article 3. On Nothing and on Being of Reason

Since something is not perfectly known unless its opposite is known, we will speak of two notions that are in some way opposed to being.

On Nothing

'Nothing' is here understood in respect of existence and not in respect of understanding. So nothing, absolutely speaking, is defined as that to which existence in reality is repugnant. Therefore it is simply lack of the idea of being, whether being is understood as actual or potential, and is thus the same as the impossible. Of this sort, for example, would be chimaera, irrational man.

Generally speaking, however, everything that does not actually exist, whether it can exist or not, is called nothing. The nothing in this sense (which is also called 'relative nothing' by some) is merely the lack of actual existence. So, for example, a golden mountain, not yet conceived offspring, and the like are nothing.

The Scholastics say that nothing has only the whatness of the name and lacks all true or real whatness, because an existence of this sort in reality is always and everywhere impossible. On the other hand, if anything were a merely relative nothing, in that it could exist if God wanted to create it, this sort of thing is said to have a real essence or whatness.

Note. On the opposition between being and nothing: Insofar as nothing is understood as non-being, being and nothing seem to be mutually contradictory, such that it can be said of anything 'if this is not being it is nothing'. But being is an equivocal name or, if you wish, an analogical name, and although it is understood in the same sense (namely as transcendental being in the way explained above), it can be predicated of any subject in diverse ways, namely of the whatness, denominatively, really, formally, per se, per accident etc. So the above conclusion does indeed follows if being is denied in the same sense as nothing is said to be simply non-being and if, further, being is denied of the same subject as nothing is affirmed of. For example, it is plain that nothing does not contradict being as that to which existence is not repugnant unless nothing is understood absolutely and not just relatively. Further if transcendental being is taken formally it opposes, as is evident, not only nothing absolutely but its own proper attributes and intrinsic modes as well, for being is referred to these formally as something potential and determinable to something actual and determining, or as something modified to its modification. Nevertheless, these notions are not formally nothing, because they express some perfection on the part of the thing that the notion of being does not formally express. Logically speaking (Aristotle *Metaphysics* 7.4-5), a subject enters in some way into the definition of its attributes or features but not in their whatness, and so a subject cannot be predicated of its features in the first mode of per se predication in the way that animal, for example, can be predicated in the first per se mode of man or being of substance or of God. For the notion of animal enters into the notion of man as to his whatness, that is, as a determinable part in his essential concept, to wit as his genus, and similarly the notion of being enters into

the notion of God or substance, not indeed as genus but as ultimate determinable element into which the essential notion of God or substance can be resolved. Now the reason that a subject cannot be predicated in the whatness of its essential attributes and differences is as follows: an attribute cannot properly be defined, as Aristotle shows in the passage just cited. For although an attribute cannot be conceived save as related to some subject to which it is attributed, nevertheless this relation is a relation of opposition, namely the relation between a determinable and a determinant and so involves a certain mutual exclusion if opposite notions are formally considered. Hence the subject, as Scholastics say, enters into the definition of attributes as something added, that is, as something extrinsic and so outside their formal whatness considered in itself. Briefly then, the notion of transcendental being can be quidditatively predicated, and even predicated univocally according to Scotists, of any real concept that is not simply simple, namely of the concept of God, of individuals, of species, of genera, and the like (which we will deal with more fully below). But it cannot be predicated quidditatively of the ultimate differences and proper features of being but, on the contrary, they can be predicated of transcendental being either in the second per se mode if they are attributes (namely true, good, or finite-infinite disjunctively) or per accidens, logically speaking, if they are an ultimate difference of any being, for example infinite, substantial, finite etc. But as far as the notion of being enters into this sort of definition, at least as something extrinsically added, being can be predicated of them, namely of infinite, substantial, etc., to the extent these notions are taken denominatively, that is, insofar as these concepts directly supposit for their subject, namely being, and indirectly connote infinity or in-itself-ness respectively – just as we can say that the masculine, denominatively taken, is animal or that the odd is number. Being as a name, then, can equivocally signify both something of which being can be quidditatively predicated (and indeed univocally according to Scotists), and everything that it can predicate of transcendental being, for example an attribute or ultimate difference or intrinsic mode. Indeed, of any intelligible real perfection it can be simply said that it is a being or not a being, and so either that it is a being or that it is nothing. But it cannot be said that everything is either quidditatively a being or is nothing, nor that everything is either formally a being or nothing, because there is here a fallacy of simply and in a certain respect. We can, however, say that everything that is in no way a being, whether quidditatively or denominatively, is nothing. In like manner we cannot say that every real perfection, on the part of a thing, that is not expressed formally by the name of being transcendentally taken is nothing. We can, however, concede that all things are nothing if being, when so taken, either cannot be predicated of them quidditatively or cannot be predicated of some subject that includes them at least qualitatively.

<u>On Being of Reason</u>

Etymologically a being of reason (or a thing of the mind) signifies that whose being-ness depends in some way on the intellect. In this rather broad sense, being of reason can be understood in three ways.

1. As effect, namely insofar as it depends on the intellect as an effect on its cause. Hence, whatever is elaborated by reason is called a being of reason, as are, for example, ideas in the mind of the artist, abstraction, judgment, attention etc.

2. In subject, namely insofar as it depends on the intellect as an accident or modification inhering in its proper subject. Hence, whatever inheres in man's mind as in its subject, namely the habit of science, wisdom, etc. is a being of reason.

3. As object, namely insofar as the intellect gives it 'diminished being' as the content of a concept. Such 'existence' is nothing other than being actually known, and so being of reason signifies the known object as it exists in the knower. Such 'existence' is called 'object-being' or 'intelligible being' in opposition to real being or being simply.

Only in this last sense is real being or being simply opposed to being of reason. And just as the former is defined as that to which existence is not repugnant, so being of reason can be defined as that to which existing as known is not repugnant. Such existence is also called 'mental presence', 'intentional existence', 'to be known', 'to exist as a content of thought', 'to be a thought object' etc.
As will be shown later, every real being can be understood and as such can have known being. Hence, in this sense every real being as known can be a being of reason. But not every being of reason can exist also in reality. The sorts of beings of reason, indeed, that neither have nor can have any other existence besides as objects in the mind, and are nevertheless conceived as if they were things, are called, by some authors, beings of reason in the strict sense. So Hickey (*Summation of Scholastic Philosophy*, Dublin 1942, 9th ed. 1.309) says, "A being of reason, taken strictly, can be defined as that which the intellect conceives after the manner of being although it has no being-ness in itself." Beings of reason strictly speaking, they say, are divided into founded and non-founded, insofar as some foundation of understanding for forming them is found in things or insofar as they are fashioned without such foundation by the mind. Time and space, they say, are beings of reason with a foundation in reality; but a chimaera lacks such a foundation in reality.

Chapter 2: On the Attributes in General and on 'One'

Article 1. On the Attributes of Being

> *"Now the subject of divine science is that which is common to everything, namely existence simply and absolutely. But what is investigated in this science is what follows existence itself insofar as it is existence simply, and these are substance and accident, universal and singular, one and many, cause and caused, in potency and in fact, suitable and unsuitable, what ought or has to be and what is possible, and the like. For all these follow existence from the fact that it is being; but not as triangulation and quadration do, which are consequent to being only after measure has come to be; nor as even and odd do, which are consequent to being after there is a subject of one of these two arts, namely mathematics and physics; these things, to be sure, do not belong to the consideration of this divine science. But there falls into this science the consideration of the cause of universal existence. For being is divided into cause and caused, and there is consideration of the unity of the cause and that it necessarily exists, and consideration of its properties and that other beings depend on it and how they have flowed from it." Algazel,* Metaphysics*, preface.*

On the Notion of Attribute

Feature or attribute is here understood as any perfection that, in our way of conceiving, does not belong precisely to the essence of the subject but is necessarily connected with the subject. An attribute, then, is the same as the property of a thing and is predicated of its proper subject in the second per se mode; an essence, on the contrary, is predicated of its subject in the first per se mode.

On the Attributes of Being

There are many sorts of attributes, as one, true, good, substantial or accidental, etc., that hold true of any being. They are said to be attributes of being qua being, for they follow being not as such and such a specific being but are consequent to being precisely as it is being (so Algazel above).

On the Classification of the Attributes of Being

As we said above, the attributes of being can be divided into two chief classes: 1) those that are simply convertible with being, and they are three: one, true, and good; 2) those that are disjunctively convertible with being. Among the latter (which are almost unlimited in number) we will consider the following specifically: transient or permanent, temporal or eternal, caused or uncaused, contingent or necessary, potential or actual, substantial or accidental, simple or composite, relative or absolute, finite or infinite. Now any disjunctive attribute whatever also expresses, as will become clear, some primary division of real beings.

On the Deduction of the Attributes of Being

On this matter note what Scotus says (*Oxon*. 1.39 q.unica n.13):

> I say that the disjunctive pair, necessary or possible, is a feature of being (speaking loosely of convertible feature), just as are many other such features unlimited in beings. Now, as is more commonly said, the convertible features of being are asserted immediately of being, for being has a simply simple concept and so there cannot be a middle term between it and its features, for there is no definition of either that could be the middle. Also, if there is some feature of being that is not first, it is difficult to see by what prior term, as by a middle, it could be proved of being; for it is not easy to see an order to the features of being, nor, if this order were known, would the propositions taken as premises from the features be seen to be much more evident than the conclusions. But in the case of disjunctive features, although the whole disjunctive cannot be demonstrated of being, yet generally, when the extreme that is less noble is posited of some being, the extreme that is more noble can be proved of some being – just as it follows that if some being is finite then some being is infinite, and if some being is contingent then some being is necessary. For in these cases the more imperfect extreme could not be present in some being in particular unless the more perfect extreme were present in some being on which the former would depend.
>
> Yet not even in this way does the more imperfect extreme of the disjunction seem capable of being proved; for if the more perfect extreme is in some being, it does not follow that the more imperfect extreme is necessarily in some being (unless the disjunct extremes be correlatives, as caused and uncaused). So the disjunctive 'necessary or contingent' cannot be proved of being by any prior middle

> term; nor can the part of the disjunctive that is contingent be proved of something when necessary is supposed of something. And so it seems that the proposition 'some being is contingent' is a primary truth, and not provable by a demonstration stating the 'why'.

From these points we can infer the following:

1. Although at least in a demonstrative science, according to Aristotle, a feature must ordinarily be proved of its subject by means of something simpler and more known (*Posterior Analytics* 1), yet this does not happen in metaphysics. For since being is simply simple and most known, we cannot deduce some feature of being through something more known or simpler, as through a middle syllogistic term, that would be common to both being and the feature. In other words, the proposition 'every being is either A or not-A, or is either B or not-B etc.' is a proposition evident through itself (the law of excluded middle), and indeed is the first principle of metaphysics, as Francis of Meyronnes well notes (*Sentences* 1 Prologue q.1).

2. It is however possible to prove the inference 'If something is, A is' when A is the more perfect member and not-A the less perfect member of the disjunction 'A or not-A'. So, for example, in the disjunction 'necessary or contingent (i.e. not-necessary)', the perfect member, namely 'necessary being', can be proved thus: 'if something is, necessary being is'. And so on of the others.

3. This inference, indeed, is proved by means of some other inference, namely 'if not-A then A'. So, for example, in the example above adduced 'if there is contingent being, there is also necessary being'.

4. But this further inference is not valid, 'if something is, not-A is', nor is this inference, 'if A then not-A'. So, for example, the inference 'if something is, contingent being is' does not hold, nor the inference 'if necessary being is, contingent being is'.

5. Hence, in order to affirm the existence of not-A (for example the contingent, the caused, the accidental etc.) some other way of knowing other than deduction from the notion of being, namely experience.

To the extent, then, that metaphysics is conceived as a science in the strict sense, that is, as a body of truths demonstrated or proved of being and its features, the conclusions to be demonstrated are restricted, for the most part, to the forms in notes 2 and 3 above, or to whatever we can infer about the less perfect member from facts of immediate experience and to whatever can be inferred from the aforesaid conclusions.

Article 2. On Unity and One

On the Notion of One and Unity

'One', in the common way of speaking, is an undivided being and unity is the non-division of being. Hence Scotus says, following Aristotle, 'One is undivided in itself and divided from another' (*Oxon*. 4 d.6 q.1 n.4).

Unity, therefore, asserts two things: a) non-division of being in itself, and b) division of being from every other being. In the first part of the definition being is

taken *entitatively* or as entity, and signifies that being has the whole of its entity at once or as not divided and separated into parts. In the second part of the division being is taken numerically, and signifies that being is not multiple. Being is first and foremost one thing (not a loose collection of parts); secondarily being is one thing and not two things, or three or more things.

<u>On the Kinds of Unity</u>
Unity is either real or logical insofar as it belongs to things independent of or dependent on the mind. Logical unity, which is what one has if, for example, several individuals are conceived under the unity of genus or species etc., belongs not to metaphysics but logic. So we are speaking here only of real unity, which we can suitably divide as follows:

I. *Physical unity*, which involves non-division as to physical parts. (NB. A physical part is here understood to be a true thing, such that a being composed of such parts could be separated out into them or really divided up into them. Hence that being is physically one that either lacks physical parts or has physical parts but undivided ones.) Such physical unit is:

A. *Unity of simplicity*, namely which belongs to a being that does not have physical parts, as for example God or the human soul or an angel in respect of their essence.

B. *Unity of composition*, which belongs to a being actually composed of part that are physically or really distinct. Such unity is:

1. *Unity of substantial composition* (oneness per se), when the substantial parts are, of their nature, so united that a single substance or nature is brought about. As in the case of being that is one by unity of simplicity, so also composite being is per se one by unity of substantial composition.

2. *Accidental unity* (one per accidens), when the parts (whether they are substances or accidents) do not, when united, form a substantial whole. Accidental unity is:

a. *intrinsic unity*, when there is a natural inclination or necessity (physical or moral) for accidental unity. This unity is double as it arises from:

i. *physical* inclination, that is, if the accidental part has a physical requirement for being united, as two accidents among themselves, or substance and accident

ii. *moral* inclination, which is when there is a union of natural society, as family, civil society

b. *extrinsic unity*, when the idea of the union is not found in the nature itself of the parts but in some extrinsic cause. It is threefold, namely

i. *artificial*, if it is explained by extrinsic finality and by rules of art, for example a watch, a house, a bird's nest.

ii. *by aggregation*, which consists in the mere contiguity of things, for example a heap of grain, a multitude of

men; a casual unity, as the delta of a river, falls under this division.
iii. *moral*, which is the union of a free society, for example the Order of Friars Minor, the Society of the Most Sacred Name of Jesus, Knights of Columbus etc.

II. *Metaphysical unity*, which involves non-division in metaphysical parts. This unity is:

A. *Unity of metaphysical simplicity*, which belongs to a being that in its physical essence has several formalities, of which, however, one is not disposed as determinable part and another as determining part. An example of such unity is God, according to Scotists.
B. *Unity of metaphysical composition*, which belongs to a being that in its physical essence has several formalities that are disposed to each other as determinable and determining, that is as metaphysical parts; for example every creature, as concerns it in itself, has a generic formality and a difference, as the human soul which in its physical essence has animality and rationality. This unity is:

1. *Essential*, if the formalities are constitutive, as in the example of the human soul just given, or
2. *Non-essential*, if a formality is not essential but is a property, as the human soul with respect to ability to laugh

<u>Some Principles of Unity</u>

1. *One and being are convertible terms*, or every being is a unity. The sense is as follows: Everything that is a being is also a one, or everything that has being said of it quidditatively can have one said of it qualitatively. Convertibility, therefore, concerns the extension of 'one' and 'being', but not their formal idea or definition. This principle can be proved thus: every being is either simple or composite; but a simple being lacks parts and do cannot be divided into parts; a composite being, on the other hand, does have parts, but it does not, qua composite being, exist as long as its parts are divided and separated; therefore both simple being and complex being are one, and so every being is one.
2. *Unity is opposed to multitude*, for multitude consists formally of division in itself and lack of division from another.
3. *But multitude involves unities*, for insofar as a multitude is a division of beings it is an aggregated of unities.
4. *Real division involves imperfection, but unity on the contrary involves perfection.* As is plain, an actual separation of parts destroys a being as it is a whole, so for no being as such a being is it better to be divided than to be one.

Article 3. On Individual and Universal

<u>On the Principle of Individuation</u>

By reason of its unity a being is not only undivided in itself but also divided from all other beings; in other words, it is an undivided something. The question raised here

is what the formal idea is by which a common and specific nature becomes altogether incommunicable and individual. Various solutions have been proposed, but first one must note that the controversy is confined to created beings only. For the divine nature, according to all authors, is essentially individual by reason of its infinity. Created natures, on the contrary, since they are finite or limited in being, do not exhaust by reason of their specific essences the possibility for manyness within the species; in other words, they do not become altogether incommunicable or individual by reason of their specific essence. Every created thing, therefore, needs some other reason outside its specific nature in order to become altogether incommunicable to another. Actual existence, accidents, designated matter, haecceity, etc. are some of the ideas proposed as the formal reason or principle that individuates. Best known among these are the following:

1. The opinion of the Thomists

The reason why the individual is numerically one is diverse in diverse kinds of beings.

a) In *material substances* the principle both of individuation and of multiplicity within the same species is quantitatively designated matter. For two things, they say, are found in an individual: incommunicability as to itself and communicability or multiplication as to species. Matter, communicable in itself as receptacle of form, renders the form incommunicable to some other matter and so individualizes it. Matter insofar as it is quantitatively designated (that is, insofar as it has a transcendental relation to this quantity rather than to that) is the principle of multiplying individuals in one and the same species, or the reason for one individual being really distinguished from others in the same species. Hence St. Thomas says, "Since two things belong to the idea of an individual, namely incommunicability and material distinction from other things, the principle of one of these is matter and the principle of the other is quantity; and thus the complete principle of individuation is designated matter, that is, matter under the quantity that is said to be a sign of it because by it matter becomes perceptible and determined to here and now" (Sentences 4 d.12 q.1 n.1). Now matter is said to be designated not insofar as it is actually informed with quantity (actual extension), nor insofar as it has the potential for quantity (potential extension), but insofar as it possesses an essential or transcendental relation and order to quantity (essential extension).

b) But *complete immaterial substances* (angels) are individuated of their specific being-ness; in other words, they are individuated by the fact that their essence (pure form) receives existence and so cannot receive another existence. Since they lack matter (namely a principle of material multiplication in the same species) there cannot be several angels unless they are specifically diverse.

c) *Incomplete immaterial substance* (the human soul) is not individuated of itself (that is, of its specific nature), but by a transcendental relation or order to the matter that it has to inform. Hence it is multiplied according to the number of bodies to be informed.

d) *Accidents* are individuated by the fact they inhere in individuated substance.

Many things can be urged against this opinion, and among others that it does not seem to explain why matter itself is individual. Thomists do say indeed that matter has a transcendental relation to this quantity rather than to that, but if one asks why this quantity is this quantity and not that, the reply they give is that it is in this individual substance. Further, if the intrinsic reason why a form is individual is to be looked for in something really distinct from it, namely in matter or its transcendental relation to matter, an unacceptable consequence seems to arise: either the form in its real order would be formally in itself something universal, for form is really distinct but not separate from matter; or the form would be formally individuated in the sense that it would have in itself (though not from itself but from matter) some perfection over and above its specific perfection, namely the perfection of individuality. If the former then something formally universal would seem to exist on the side of the thing, which is impossible and never admitted by Aquinas. If the latter, then form would receive its ultimate degree of actuality and perfection (in the order of essence) from a material principle; but a material principle is said to be pure potency and much more imperfect than form (for matter has its actuality given it by form) .

2. The opinion of the Scotists and Suarezians

The formal principle of individuation consists in some positive, intrinsic perfection, that is what ultimately determines the common nature to this individual. This perfection is conceived as superadded to the specific nature and is of itself indifferent both to singularity and formal universality. It is called hecceity, because it makes a thing a determinate this, or numerical difference, because things that are different precisely because of it are different in number, or individuation, because it makes a thing into something individual.

If it is asked how hecceity differs from the nature itself, various responses are given: a) according to Scotists, hecceity is a positive reality that is formally distinct from the common or specific nature but is identical in reality with it; b) according to Suarez and his followers, this positive reality is neither really nor formally distinct on the part of the thing from the common nature, but distinct only in reason. The distinction does however have a foundation in the thing.

3. The opinion of William of Ockham

Ockham denies that there is a real problem here. Whatever exists or can exist is as such something individual; in other words the individual and not a common nature is the primary datum both in the order of being and in the order of knowing. So he says, “Anything outside the soul will be itself a this, and no cause of its individuation is to be looked for save perhaps the extrinsic and intrinsic causes when the individual is composed; but rather a cause must be looked for as to how something common and universal is possible” (Ord. 1 d.2 q.6).

4. Personal Opinion

What then should be said about this controversy? We can reply first that the solution of this problem must be looked for in the particular way that the human mind knows conceptually or definitively. For the intellectual investigation of any

individual object is always done through ideas that can be predicated of this and any other individual in common. For the unknown is to be defined through the known, the new through the old, the present through the known past. One should not be surprised, then, if we are unable to exhaust the intelligibility of an individual through ideas that are not individuating but common, for in such an analysis something is always left remaining that Scholastics call the individuating formal reason. So this reason is only known confusedly (that is, as a part of the intelligible whole that the individual is), and never distinctly in a strict sense; for distinct knowledge is what arises through a process of division and definition, and hence is always done through common notions, namely genus and specific difference. To the extent that a distinct definition or knowledge is to be looked through the question 'what is it?', it is vain to ask, for instance, 'what is the idea that precisely individuates this man as Peter?' For this question is such that an answer is precluded. In this sense, therefore, let us say with Ockham that "anything outside the soul will itself be a this and no cause of its individuation is to be looked for…but rather a cause must be looked for as to how something common and universal is possible."

But on the other hand, the way of proceeding of St. Thomas, Scotus, Suarez (beginning not from the thing outside the soul but rather from the distinct concept of the thing) is intelligible enough. Since such distinct knowledge contains only what is common and since common ideas never exhaust an individual, the question what will remain if the common or specific nature is subtracted from the individual is legitimately asked. For since what remains from such abstraction will always be something extra or something over and above the essence or common nature, one should not be surprised that existence, matter, accidents, hecceity have been proposed by different philosophers as the principle of individuation; for these are all conceived as something beyond and outside the essence or Aristotelian form or substance or common nature. Nor is it surprising that, if understanding is of universals, Aquinas, Scotus, Suarez said that the proper idea that individuates Peter, say, cannot be known in this life. For, according to Thomas, matter as it is pure potency is not intelligible, and likewise for Scotus the proper hecceity of something cannot, at least in this life, be known to us.

This intrinsic defect in our conceptual faculty causes very many other philosophical difficulties, as, for instance, the reason why existence cannot be completely explained through essential ideas, why free will cannot be understood through notions taken from the causality of other causes that do not act freely, or why generally any original experience cannot be totally explained through anything other than itself. From this consideration too we see why the unity of God is something to be proved, for since in this life we lack a direct intuition of God, all the concepts we can have of God (even those most proper to him, as infinite being, supreme good etc.) are concepts made up of universals (see part 3, chapter 1, article 3). And because the parts or positive conceptual elements from which such concepts are composed (for example 'being', 'good', 'supreme' etc.) are common to God and creatures, it is also not surprising that the very composed concept is conceived as indifferent to one and many. So we have to prove that God is one even though this unity is in fact a necessary and immediate property of infinite being.

I reply therefore to the question (the principle of individuation) that although perhaps none of the opinions proposed by Scholastics lacks its own proper difficulties, nevertheless certain common points in this controversy can be found; and the following indeed are to be held as certain:

1. Only individual beings really exist
2. Two things, precisely because they are two beings and not one, differ from each other in their positive being-ness
3. No two such things are so diverse that the human mind cannot perceive some likeness between them and thus be able to form common ideas or concepts, as being, thing, something, etc., which can be predicated of them.
4. Although we can in some way, through such common ideas, reply to the question 'What is this?' (pointing to some singular, e.g. Socrates) by giving a definition (e.g. rational animal) or a description through properties or accidents (e.g. a famous Greek philosopher, who was teacher of Plato etc.), we cannot in this way exhaust the knowability of the total positive being-ness of Socrates; and so we cannot conceive or say what the precise reason is that Socrates in himself, and as a unique individual, differs from Plato or other men.

If, after all these concessions, anyone wishes to adopt one or other of the very celebrated opinions adduced above, let him choose and defend it.

<u>On Universal Concepts</u>

About universals two things need to be noted, 1) that as a matter of fact the human intellect forms, and forms naturally, universal concepts of natural signs that can supposit for several individuals, as man, house, horse, etc., and 2) that such concepts are never formed save because of something found or perceived in things themselves. Hence the question arises about what is required on the part of the thing as foundation of this universal. There are four main opinions.

1. *Absolute realism* is the view that says that something truly universal exists outside the mind. Plato, for instance, postulated a special place or world of ideas where are found the ideal man, the ideal horse, ideal virtue, prudence etc. When once the human soul had come to dwell in this world, but perhaps because of some original sin, it was thrown out and united to a body endowed with senses. And now, when we perceive an individual man, for instance, who is some participation in the ideal man, we are reminded of this universal man (*Phaedo* 76ff.). According to others, however, this universal outside the mind is in some way found in individual singulars, so that there is a complete correspondence between the thing and the understanding.

2. *Moderate* or *mitigated realism* is the view according to which, although the formal universal is only in the mind, there is nevertheless found in the things themselves, e.g. singular horses, some perfection or quality, e.g. horse-ness, which as such, or considered in itself, is neither universal (that is, not predicable of many) nor singular (that is, not communicable to many). So Avicenna (*Metaphysics* 5.1) says that horse-ness is just horse-ness, not of itself being either single or many or universal or particular; and so similarly Thomas (*On Being and Essence* 4) and Scotus (*Oxon*. 2 d.3 q.1 n.7). To the extent that this nature or essence or quiddity

really exists in singular things it is indeed an individuated nature, but individuation occurs because of something that is precisely not the nature, for example hecceity according to Scotus, quantitatively designated matter according to Aquinas, existence according to others. But as to how this individuating element differs from the nature itself different people think differently, as we saw above. This common nature or the like is called, to the extent it exists in things, the universal in the thing (or according to others the material universal), but to the extent it is conceived by the mind, though absolutely and without express adverting to the fact the nature so abstracted is predicable of many, it is called the direct universal (or according to others the fundamental universal, that is, the proximate foundation of the formal universal), and to the extent that, by reflecting on the direct universal, we expressly perceive that this nature is predicable of many, it is called the reflex or formal universal. The upholders of this view are the Scholastics in general.

3. *Conceptualism* teaches that the universal exists only in the mind and not at all in the thing as some nature in any way distinct from the principle of individuation, whether this distinction is real or formal, or a distinction of reason with a foundation in the thing etc. Among Scholastics the most famous defender of this opinion is Ockham (*Ord*. 1 d.2 qq.4-8), and those generally who are called nominalists. But one must note that these nominalists are in fact conceptualists, because according to them the word 'name (*nomen*)' signifies also the concept or term in a mental proposition.

4. *Nominalism* in the strict sense states that the universal is neither in the thing nor in the mind but is only a name, where 'name' means some vocal or written sign. Not a few modern positivists are supporters of this view.

The solution of this question pertains rather to the discipline that investigates the validity of human knowledge in general than to metaphysics. It is sufficient for us to note that any existing thing is individual.

Article 4. On Identity and Distinction

<u>On Identity</u>

Identity means the same entity, so that those things are said to be the same if they have the same entity. Logically speaking identity is the affirmation of one thing of another.

It is impossible in fact to distinguish various kinds or degrees of identity, but for our purposes it is enough if we remember that identity is reciprocally related to distinction, so that the greater the identity the less the distinction and vice versa.

<u>On Distinction</u>

Distinction means lack of identity between several things. Those things too are said to be distinct one of which is not the other. But be careful not to confuse identity with unity. For unity is lack of division and not lack of distinction.

<u>On the Kinds of Distinction</u>

To distinguish is an operation of the mind more or less dependent on the judgment

of the distinguisher, and so various distinctions are enumerated by various Scholastics. But for our purposes the following division will suffice:

1. Distinction before a work of the mind (actual distinction from the nature of the thing) is a lack of identity that does not arise from an operation of the mind but is found in things by the mind. It is:

A. A distinction is *real* (simply real) if it exists between thing and thing, for example between body and soul, between the members of he body, between cause and effect, between a faculty and its operation, between substance and accidents. A thing, at least according to Scotists, is whatever exists or can exist per se (i.e. through its own existence), and hence, if it is created, it can be directly and immediately produced by physical causality. The sign of a real distinction is separability or actual separation. Thomists, on the contrary, deny that separability is required for having a real distinction. So they say, for example, that faculties are really distinct from the soul though they cannot be separated from it. One must say the like of their real distinction between essence and existence.[1]

B. A distinction is *formal* (real in a certain respect) according to Scotists and others, if it exists between realities and formalities, for example between the soul and its faculties, between the faculties themselves, between the metaphysical essence and its properties, between the various perfections or metaphysical degrees, between the attributes of God, between the divine nature and the divine Persons, between the principle of individuation and the specific essence. A formality (or reality) is something positive included in a real being which, although it does not and cannot exist by itself, can be conceived in a clear and distinct concept in abstraction from any other formality of the same thing that it belongs to. The sign of a formal distinction includes three things: a) ability to be conceived in a concept that is not only distinct but also complete and exclusive; b) such that what is conceived is not a thing but something of a thing; c) inseparability from the thing it belongs to. A formal distinction is fully defined as "a distinction in the nature of the thing that comes between several formalities identified in reality, one of which can be conceived without the other before any work of the intellect, although it cannot exist without the other even by divine power."

2. A distinction *after some work* of the mind (distinction of reason, logical distinction, mental distinction) is a lack of identity that arises from an operation of the mind, whether with or without a foundation in the thing. Such a distinction flourishes between several concepts of one and the same reality and it is acquired insofar as the mind conceives the same thing according to diverse and distinct concepts each one of which represents the whole reality, but partially and not totally. The concepts are distinct and diverse but incomplete and inclusive. This distinction is either:

---

[1] Many things that Scotists reckon to be formally distinct Thomists, because to their diverse norms of judging, number under real distinction or under distinction of reason with a foundation in the thing.

A. with a foundation in the thing (a distinction of reasoned reason, intentional or virtual distinction), if from the real diversity of the effect that arises from one and the same formal cause the intellect has a reason or a foundation for distinguishing diverse respects in the cause itself. So in the light of the sun, for instance, there is a distinction between the powers of heating, illumining, and liquefying; in the human intellect there is a distinction between the faculties of conceiving, judging, and reasoning.
B. without a foundation in the thing (distinction purely mental, distinction of reasoning reason) if the reason for distinguishing is not found in the thing but in some being of reason, for instance the distinction between man and humanity, or between 'man' and 'man's'.

<u>On the Formal Distinction Specifically</u>

This distinction is not admitted by everyone, especially among Thomists. Although it is often called a 'Scotistic' distinction, such a distinction was not an innovation on the part of Scotus. It is found in the whole Augustinian tradition. It is contained implicitly in the distinction 'of attribution' of St. Bonaventure, and explicitly in Olivi, William of Ware, Matthew of Aquasparta, William of Macclesfield, Roger Marston, Alexander of Alexandria, etc.[2] Scotus himself merely reduced the distinction to a scientific system, and used it as a powerful instrument of metaphysical explication.

What are the arguments commonly adduced in favor of the formal distinction? The more powerful arguments are drawn from theology. Among philosophical arguments the following can be numbered: 1. Man, on the part of the thing, formally agrees in animality with the brute; the same man, again on the part of the thing, does not agree in rationality with the same brute. Therefore animality and rationality in man, on the part of the thing, is not one and the same undistinguished perfection; otherwise man would, on the part of the thing, agree and not agree with the brute at the same time and according to altogether the same idea, which is absurd. The same argument holds if the comparison is made between man and angel or pure spirit. 2. If animality and rationality, on the part of the thing and intrinsically, were one and the same perfection, they would be absolutely inseparable; for nothing can be separated from itself; hence one would never be found without the other. But in fact they are found separated, for animality is found in the true without rationality; in an angel rationality is found without animality; and in each case formally and on the part of the thing. Therefore even in man they cannot be formally and on the part of the thing one and the same perfection. 3. Animality can be conceived and defined not only distinctly but also completely and exclusively without rationality; the same has to be said of rationality. But if our knowledge is valid and real definitions are possible, that which is conceived, even on the part of the thing, in one concept cannot be identical with what is conceived in another concept; therefore etc.

<u>On Inadequate Distinction</u>

---

[2] B. Jansen, "Beiträge zür geschichtlichen Entwicklung der Distinctio formalis," Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, LIII (1929) 317ff. M. Grajewski, op. cit. ch.6.

We can distinguish between adequate and inadequate distinction. The first is if the things said to be distinct are as it were equal or equivalent, as is the case with all the distinctions above adduced. A distinction is inadequate if the distinct things are not equal, so that one includes the other but not conversely. Such inadequate distinctions flourish, for example, between the whole and its part, or between a subject and its mode, for a mode includes the subject it modifies and the whole includes its parts. These sort of inadequate distinctions, as is plain, can be real (for example between the human body and an arm), or formal (for example between soul and intellect, between animality and sense feeling, between formality and its mode, as between divine wisdom and the same thing's infinity), or logical (for instance between the rays of the sun and their power of heating). Also here can be added real negative distinctions, which flourish not between thing and thing but between a thing and a negation of it (for example between man and blindness).

Part Two: On the Disjunctively Convertible Attributes of Being

Chapter 3: On Transient, Permanent, Temporal, and Eternal Being

As we noted above, the existence or fact of something transient is so manifest and evident that no one can rationally doubt of it. Today indeed we have outside the schools of the Neo-Scholastics very many philosophers who are in the camp of the modern sectaries of Heraclitus. They deny, or at least call in question, the existence of any thing truly permanent. Such, for example, are the supporters of pan-phenomenalism, or radical empiricism, of actualism, of creative evolution, etc. Although these systems are gravely in error, they have nevertheless recognized very well the existence and reality of the transient and of its primacy in the order of time as to our knowledge. Hence our theorizing about the disjunctive attributes of being beings from the notion and reality of transient being. Intimately connected with this notion is another, namely that of temporal being. In this third chapter, then, are two articles: one about the transient and permanent, and another about the temporal and eternal.

Article 1. On the Transient and Permanent

<u>On the Notion of Transient and Permanent Being</u>

Transient and permanent can be understood either with respect to existence or existing, or with respect to essence. The notion of permanence as regards essence was already explained in cosmology, and we will again speak of it later in the chapter on substance and accident. Here the transient is understood only in respect of existing.

The transient is understood here as everything that either begins to exist after not existing, or that exists thus after not existing thus, or ceases to exist after existing or does not exist thus after existing thus. In this definition 'after' is

understood in a temporal sense. The permanent, on the contrary, is understood here as everything that is unchanged from one moment of time to another, such that it can be said to remain in existence or to remain in existing thus.

The permanent can be understood either a) relatively, namely what lasts for a time unchanged in itself, or b) absolutely, namely what lasts such that there never was a time when it did not have existence and indeed existence thus. So it neither begins nor ceases to exist.

It is plain that only the absolutely permanent and transient divide the whole of being such that the transient and the absolutely permanent are disjunctive attributes of being; for the relatively permanent does not exclude a beginning in time and hence can be simultaneously something transient.

Next, the likeness and difference between the changeable and transient are clear. Everything that changes in itself, whether accidentally or substantially, is transient, but not everything changeable is necessarily transient. For that something be changeable it is sufficient that it could change; but it is not necessarily actually changing. And indeed according to some philosophers God can, by his absolute power, create something changeable from all eternity and conserve it endlessly unchanged. Such a changeable thing would be permanent and indeed absolutely so. But, on the other side, what is in itself changeable formally involves composition; for change involves the loss or gain of something and, in addition, a subject of change. The transient, by contrast, can be either simple or composite; indeed as such it says nothing about whether some substrate or subject lasts or not.

<u>On the Reality of the Relatively Permanent</u>

Our own personal experience teaches us the reality of transient being; for experience the fact that many things that once did not exist now exist, as, for example, our present thoughts, sensations, and their objects. Further, we have experience of continuity from one moment of time to another, for our conscious life is not a mere succession of discrete instants but is something flowing and truly continuous, so that the last part of the past coincides with the first part of the future.

However, this fact of continuity that we experience cannot be explained unless something from prior experience remains or endures in present experience. In other words our conscious life, although it is a whole that is continually changing and flowing, nevertheless contains within the whole certain elements or parts that are constant. But such constant things, even if their endurance is brief, have a true relative permanence.

It also seems that the reality of the relatively permanent can be directly inferred from the essence itself of the transient. For if the transient were not also relatively permanent, it ought to begin and cease to be without any interval of duration. That which begins to be and that which ceases to be are simply opposed as to existence, so that a contradiction would be involved if they existed simultaneously. Therefore, in order to have something truly transient, there must be at least two instants of time one after the other. But these two instants are either separated by an interval or are so immediate to each other that there is no interval between them. But no instants of time are so united that one exists after the other without interval, and if there is some interval of time between the beginning to be of

some being and its ceasing to be, then we have got something relatively permanent. Now whatever may be said about this argument, it certainly seems that a being which begins to be from nothing and then immediately afterwards altogether ceases to be, without any interval at all of duration, if it does not simply involve a contradiction, cannot exist in time at any rate and cannot naturally be known by us. Moreover, if such instants of immediate annihilation after production be multiplied even endlessly, they can never explain the experience of continuity that we in fact have. For just as a line is not the mere addition of points infinite in number, so neither is a continuous period of time the mere addition or sum of instants that lack, in themselves, all duration in time.

This reasoning is confirmed by the fact that existence or being, namely the being we experience and which is the starting point for our metaphysical speculations cannot be conceived without duration. On the basis of this concession I argue as follows: although beginning to be or ceasing to be are said to happen in an instant or a moment, one may not argue that therefore we can have creation followed immediately afterwards without any duration by annihilation, just as neither may one argue: a point is the end of a line and as such lacks all dimension, so there can be two points so close together that no distance intervenes between them. Accordingly we can say that beginning to be cannot be had without duration, not precisely because a beginning directly includes duration (for it happens in an instant), but because beginning to be is impossible without existence and because existence involves duration. The like must be said of ceasing to be, or ceasing to be thus.

<u>On the Existence of the Absolutely Permanent</u>

Whatever can begin to be or cease to be is in itself indifferent to existing and not existing, otherwise it would either always exist or never exist. Everything thus indifferent does not, as such, have in itself the total reason for its existence or for its permanence. Therefore if such thing really is and persists, the reason not only for its beginning to be after not being but also for its persisting or continuing to be must be looked for in something else. Such a reason for the existence of another thing is by definition called the cause, whether it is an intrinsic part of the caused thing, as matter, or whether it is an extrinsic thing, as the efficient cause. (On this question see the following chapter about caused and uncaused.) But just as the cause which gives being to something must exist in the moment when the the transient thing begins to exist, so too the reason that the transient thing persists in being must co-exist as long as the transient thing continues to exist.

But what of the reason that a being persists? Either it is something that depends on another with respect to its existence and permanence or it is not. If it is independent with respect to existence and permanence it has in itself the reason of both and so cannot not exist. If it is not independent then either a) there is a regress to infinity, or b) there is a circle in dependent things, or c) there will be a stand at some being that is simply first, namely first in being independent both as to existence and as to permanence in existence.

a) An infinite series of things existing simultaneously is impossible, because such a series would be simultaneously dependent and independent: dependent

because it would be indifferent to existing and would not have in itself a reason for existing; independent because nothing would exist outside the series for it to depend on, otherwise it would not be an infinite series since limited and brought to an end in the being on which it depends.[3] By such a series then cannot be explained why something exists. This argument is confirmed by an example. Who would say that a sufficient reason for the suspension of the whole of a chain could be found in the length itself of the chain even though it could not be found in any ring of the chain?

b) Similarly a circle of mutually dependent things involves a contradiction unless we suppose a sufficient cause outside the circle as such. Otherwise every individual cause would be the total cause of itself and so would be dependent and independent, caused and uncaused, at the same time, which is manifestly absurd.

c) If a) and b) are excluded c) is what is left. So in every case there must be a being altogether independent as to its existence and its permanence.

This argument can be formulated scientifically in Aristotle's sense, or through necessary principles, as follows:

If something can exist then it must be either transient or absolutely permanent. If it can be transient it can be relatively permanent. If something relatively permanent can exist, something altogether independent as to its being and persisting, and so absolutely independent, can exist. But if a being independent as to its existing does not in fact exist then such a being cannot exist, because it does not get its existence from another. Therefore if something can exist, an absolutely permanent being in fact exists.

Summary of Conclusions of Article 1

1. If the transient exists the relatively permanent exists.
2. If the relatively permanent exists the absolutely permanent exists.
3. If the transient exists the absolutely permanent exists.

---

[3] The fundamental reason that an infinite series of simultaneously existing dependent or conditioned beings is impossible is not found precisely in the fact that such a supposition supposes an infinite number of simultaneously existing real things (which Scholastics commonly reckon to be a contradiction), but rather because it denies there is a first or unconditioned and independent being on which the other beings in the series depend. Since each member of the series would be indifferent to existing and would require something outside itself from which to receive existence, every such member would not only be unable to sustain the members below it but would also make addition of its own dependence and increase the weight, as it were, or the tendency to return to nothing. Hence, by extending the series even to infinity, no one can explain why the series itself exists, but rather the difficulty is made greater by increase of the number of dependent things, and so too of the power of the cause to which the members of the series would owe their existence. Briefly then, if an infinite series of dependent things were possible, then a fortiori there would be required an infinitely powerful cause for sustaining such a series in existence. But a cause of this sort would be a being of itself, for no cause that would owe its existence and power of causing to something else could be infinitely powerful. In other words if, per impossibile, there were such an infinite series of simultaneously existing things, an infinitely powerful being would still be required on which all the members below it would depend. Since such a being would be outside the series (insofar as it would be infinitely powerful and so dependent on no higher member) and nevertheless not outside the series (because all the members below it would depend on it), the notion of such an infinite series seems to contain a virtual contradiction.

4. An actually infinite series of simultaneously existing dependent things is impossible.

5. A circle of mutual dependent things cannot be independent in itself

6. If the transient exists, it is caused, imperfect, and dependent. It is caused because the transient does not have in itself a reason for its existence and permanence; it is dependent because it is caused; it is imperfect because it does not have its total perfection from itself but receives its perfection from another.

7. A permanent being actually exists, or there is among beings actually existing something absolutely permanent.

8. Being is therefore divided into the transient and permanent. That the transient exists is continuously verified by experience; that the permanent exists follows from conclusion 7.

Article 2. On the Temporal and Eternal

<u>On Eternity and Time</u>

According to Boethius "eternity is the total and perfect possession of unending life simultaneously" (*Consolation of Philosophy* 5.6). He expounds this definition as follows: "Whatever lives in time, proceeds in the present from the past to the future; for nothing is constituted in time that can embrace the whole extent of its life, but it does not yet grasp tomorrow and has already lost yesterday. That then which comprehends and as equally possesses the total fullness of unending life, and for which nothing of the future is absent and nothing of the past slipped away, is rightly held to be eternal." In this definition are found the terms: a) 'unending', so that not only are beginning and ending excluded but their possibility too; b) 'life', so that the most perfect way of existing, namely as living, is expressed; c) 'total and perfect possession simultaneously', so that all succession and change are excluded and so that an eternal being is should to possess simultaneously the fullness of life. Such enduring existence, as will be seen later, belongs to God alone.

For time is defined by Aristotle as "the number of motion according to before and after" (*Physics* 4.2.219b1). So it is motion as measured or numbered. To the extent that what is measured is the enduring of a changeable being, time can be defined as the duration of that which is simply changeable.[4]

<u>On Temporal and Eternal Being</u>

[4] Many Scholastics, who deny Aristotle's doctrine about the eternity and uncreatability of the angels and the intelligences, made room for a duration intermediate between eternity and time, namely 'aevum' and 'aeviternity'. Alexander of Hales, for example, says, "The aevum is the duration of a thing that has existence after non-existence but that, like things perpetual, is irreversible to non-existence" (*Summa* 1.1 tract.2). It is the duration of that which is unchangeable substantially but changeable accidentally as to its acting. Some philosophers, Ockham for example, do well to deny that there is any essential difference between time and this 'created eternity' or 'aevum', for whatever has existence after non-existence is reversible into non-existence, and so does not possess its existence all at once but successively. Further, mere change in action is sufficient for measuring duration according to before and after. Hence it is better to say that things essentially and things accidentally changeable are in time.

A temporal being is a thing to which time or temporal duration belongs. An eternal being, on the contrary, is a being to which eternity or eternal duration belongs. Temporal duration is understood to be what belongs to a thing that is changeable in itself whether essentially or accidentally. Changeable here is better taken in a broad sense, namely as including being that is creatable and being that is annihilable, and in this sense everything transient is in itself changeable. Eternal duration is here understood as what belongs to a being that, in itself, is unchangeable in a broad sense, namely as excluding both the creatable and the annihilable. Nothing is here being said about whether unending duration, which we call eternal duration, is formally life or not. As a matter of fact only a living being can have such unending duration, but this will be proved later.

'Temporal or eternal' is a true disjunctive, for every being is either in itself changeable or is not in itself changeable.

<u>On the Reality of the Temporal and Eternal</u>

If the transient exists, the temporal also exists, for the transient is in itself changeable in a broad sense. But the transient does exist (from conclusion 8 of the preceding article 1); therefore etc.

That the eternal exists I prove as follows: whatever has in itself the total reason for its being and remaining such (as a being altogether independent and absolutely permanent, whose existence was proved in the preceding article) is also in itself unchangeable, for the changeable, whether taken in a broad sense or a strict sense, is indifferent as between existing and not existing. But what is the total reason for its existing and remaining is not thus indifferent; therefore it is not changeable. But if it is a being in itself unchangeable it is also an eternal being.

We can also infer the following: if a changeable being exists, then an unchangeable being also exists, and this if changeable is taken in the broad and in the strict sense. If the changeable is taken strictly, there must be a subject of the change that is relatively permanent; therefore there is something else that is absolutely and independently permanent (from conclusion 2, article 1); therefore there is something that is in itself unchangeable. If the changeable is taken in a broad sense then either it always existed thus or it did not; if it did not it is transient, and then too the unchangeable must exist. If the changeable always existed thus in fact, nevertheless it could not be altogether independent with respect to its persistence, for otherwise it would not be changeable in the broad sense. Therefore it would be dependent as to its persisting; therefore it would, like the relatively persistent, require a first independent thing existing simultaneously that is unchangeable also in the broad sense.

<u>Summary of Conclusions of Article 2</u>

9. If there is something transient there is something temporal.
10. If there is something temporal something is something eternal.
11. If there is something changeable there is something unchangeable.[5]

[5] St. Thomas' First way, even if it is not perhaps valid for proving the existence of God, does prove that there is an unmoved mover. But see below on this matter.

12. An eternal being actually exists, or something actually existing is eternal.

13. An unchangeable being actually exists, or something actually existing is unchangeable.

14. Therefore being is divided into temporal and eternal (from conclusions 8, 9, and 10).

15. Therefore being is divided into unchangeable and changeable. If changeable is taken broadly, this conclusion follows from conclusions 8, 9, and 13. If it is taken strictly the existence of the unchangeable follows from what was said above about constant elements of our experience. The existence of the unchangeable follows from conclusion 13.

Chapter 4: On the Caused and Uncaused

Article 1: On the Notion of Causality

On 'Principle'

Every cause is a principle of some sort. So one must first explain the notion of principle so that the notion of cause may be understood. A principle is defined as that from which something in some way proceeds. That which proceeds is called the 'principiate', or what has been 'principled'.

Between principle and principled there must be some connection. If this connection is merely external and without any inflowing of the principle to the principled, the principle is better referred to as a 'beginning'. If, on the other hand, the connection is internal and consists in a positive inflowing of one to the other, the first is properly called a principle. Dawn is the principle of a day in the sense of beginning, and likewise the point in respect of a line. Parents with respect to their children, on the contrary, are properly called principles.

The positive inflowing between principle and principled can be either logical or real. An inflowing is logical if the principle is the reason that the principled is known. OI this way the premises of a syllogism are principles with respect to the conclusion (of science). The inflowing is real or ontological if the principle gives being to the principled.[6]

On the Notion of Cause

A cause is defined as a principle that, by its positive inflowing, determines the existence of something else.[7] That which is produced by such inflowing is called the thing caused or the effect. The inflowing itself is called causality.

---

[6] Among philosophers an ontological principle is the same as a cause. Theologians however distinguish between a principle that is a cause and one that is not a cause. A principle that is not a cause communicates its own proper being such that the nature of the giver and of the receiver is numerically the same. Thus in the Sacred Trinity the Father is the principle of the Son but is not the cause of the Son. A principle is called a cause only if it communicates an existence or being-ness that is numerically distinct from itself.

[7] 'Of something else' because every cause, even a material or formal cause, is really distinct from its effect, at least by a real inadequate distinction.

> The cause precedes the caused by a priority of nature. For priority is multiple: a) There is priority of time if one thing precedes another in duration, as a father in respect of his children. b) There is priority of nature if one thing is from another, whether this other precedes in time or not, as substance in respect of its simultaneously existing accidents. c) There is priority of origin if one thing proceeds from another or others, as in the procession of the Divine Persons where the Father precedes the Son without causality or dependence. d) There is priority of ontological reason if one thing is conceived so to precede another that the prior either is precisely the reason that the posterior exists or is at any rather a necessary condition of the existence of the posterior, as thinking precedes willing. That these kinds of priority do not mutually exclude each other is plain.
>
> A cause is sometimes distinguished both form a condition and from an occasion. Now condition can be taken broadly as everything because of whose absence something else cannot be, and in this sense condition includes cause. But condition can be taken in opposition to cause, namely as that which disposes or applies a cause or removes an obstacle so that the cause may have its influence though it itself has no influence. So, for example, knowing is said to be a condition for an act of will, and vision is a condition for driving a vehicle, etc. If a condition is absolutely necessary it is called a condition sine qua non. An occasion, on the other hand, is that by whose presence something comes to be, as night or a large crowd of men is an occasion for theft. To the extent that an occasion provides a motive for acting, to that extent it is said to have the idea of a moral cause stimulating the will to act. We speak in this sense of an occasion of sin. But a motive is not truly a cause with respect to the will; it moves in a very metaphorical sense.

<u>Division of Causes</u>

According to Aristotle causes fall into four kinds, namely efficient, final, material, formal.

An efficient cause is defined as the principle that determines by its action the existence of something else. An artisan, for instance, is the efficient cause of a table. A final cause is that because of which the efficient cause acts. Thus the artisan acts perhaps for glory, money etc. But note that a final cause is not called a cause with respect to the efficient cause but with respect to the effect that the efficient cause produces. A final cause only metaphorically moves the efficient cause.[8] The material cause is the presupposed subject out of which the efficient cause produces the effect, for example the marble or wood out of which the artisan produces a table. 'Presupposed' here is understood not in the sense of priority in time but priority in

---

[8] *Translator's note: the final cause is more properly described as the specification of the efficiency of the efficient cause. It states what the efficient cause, qua efficient cause, is efficient of. A carpenter may make a table for honor or money but in the making itself he makes it according to the plan of the table he has in mind, and it is this plan that determines his efficient causality. So, as a maker of the table, the carpenter is a 'table-making' efficient cause. The same applies to inanimate efficient causes like fire and water. For fire, as an efficient cause of heating, is a 'heat-inducing' cause, and water, as an efficient cause of cooling, is a 'cold-inducing' cause. Without such specification of the causality of the efficient cause, no efficient cause can be described or understood as efficient. For an efficient cause is efficient precisely because it is efficient of something, and to state what, qua efficient, it is efficient of (table, heat, cold) is to state the final cause. Thus efficient, final, and formal cause are, as Aristotle remarked, in a sense the same: the final cause is what the efficient cause is efficient of, and the formal cause is the final cause as realized by the efficient cause in the matter.*

nature. The formal cause is that which intrinsically constitutes the effect in some class of things, as for example the shape of a table brought about in a piece of wood.

The efficient and final causes are external or extrinsic causes; the material and formal causes are intrinsic or internal causes. The causality of the matter and form are nothing other than the mutual and immediate sharing of their proper being-ness so that a third composite being-ness may arise. Matter is the determinable subject; form is the determining reality.

Alongside these four kinds of causes others number a fifth cause, namely the exemplar cause. The exemplar is said to be the idea that the efficient cause gazes at so as to produce an effect after its own likeness. However, according to most Scholastics the exemplar cause is reduced to the efficient or final or formal cause: to the efficient insofar as the exemplar is nothing other than the idea in the mind of the artisan, who is the efficient cause;[9] to the formal insofar as the exemplar as reproduced in the effect is nothing other than the form that is educed by the agent from the potency of the matter; to the final insofar as the educing of this form is what the agent immediately intends by his action.

<u>On the Relation of Cause and Caused</u>

Considered as to its being-ness a cause can and must precede the effect in time, but considered as to its form, namely insofar as it is precisely the cause, it is prior to the effect in nature but not in time; for a cause is formally a cause insofar as it has 'pours' being into something else, but there cannot be an actual pouring or inflowing without a term of the inflow, which is the effect itself.

Between the cause and what it causes there is always a real distinction, at least an inadequate one. For they are contradictory opposites with respect to the same real existing and so cannot be one and the same thing. The addition of 'inadequate' here is because otherwise the internal cause would be excluded.

<u>On the Principles of Causality and of Sufficient Reason</u>

The rationality or intelligibility of reality is expressed by neo-Scholastics in two principles, namely of causality and sufficient reason.

Whatever be the fount of their evidence, whether they are analytic principles, or axioms or postulates (at least logically speaking), or conclusions deduced from things more known,[10] our intellect naturally seeks for the causes and reasons of things, and only rests when it finds something that seems to it to be a sufficient

---

[9] *Translator's note: an artisan has a mind to conceive the effect he wishes to produce, but fire and water and other efficient causes clearly do not. For the latter the exemplar or final cause is their own nature as hot or cold which, by acting on something else, they communicate to that something else. In another (and more Platonic) sense the exemplar cause may be considered as the complete or perfect idea of something, which need not be realized as such anywhere in fact (it would exist, nevertheless, as an idea in God's mind which contains, at least virtually, all possible perfections).*

[10] Although neo-Scholastics generally admit causality to be a necessary truth, and to be indeed, as they say, metaphysically certain, yet they dispute both about the best way to formulate this causal proposition and about the origin and evidence of the principle. For the history of the problem see L. de Raeymacker, *The Philosophy of Being* (St. Louis, Herder, 1954) 257ff, and J. Owens 'The Causal Proposition — Principle or Conclusion?" Modern Schoolman 32 (1955) 159ff.

reason or an adequate response to the question why something is.[11] If a thing so exists that its quiddity seem sufficient for explaining why it exists, as would be true of God where the infinite perfection of his existence is reckoned an adequate and sufficient explanation of his existence, we say, "Such a being has a sufficient reason in itself." But where the nature of thing is such that its 'what it is' is not sufficient to explain 'why it is' (e.g. if the thing is a transient, changeable, or contingent being etc.), we seek for some explanation or reason outside it, namely in something else, which by definition is called the cause.

Hence a general principle is laid down, namely that whatever exists has a sufficient reason for its existence, whether in itself or in another (the principle of sufficient reason).

But note that sufficient reason can be understood in two ways: first, in the strict sense as found in Leibniz,[12] a sufficient reason is understood as something that, at least formally, is other than volition, and is related to volition such that without this reason a determinate volition could not be present, and such that, with this reason, the volition could not be absent. This 'system of sufficient reason'[13]

---

[11] "Explanation is an inveterate human tendency. Even philosophers who think we cannot attain to knowledge of causes get involved in explaining why that is so. Nor will their disputes about the theory of causes ever remove the word 'because' from the vocabulary of common speech. It is as unavoidable as the words 'is'." Tolstoy. *The Great Ideas*, ed. Adler, vol.1 p.155 (Chicago, 1952)

[12] Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, 2-3, 23, *Monadology* nn. 31-37, 53-54.

[13] Although the principle of sufficient reason, as we explain it below, is implicitly contained in the teaching of the Scholastics, the way of speaking of it as a special principle arose at the time of Leibniz and Wolff (18th century), who introduced the famous system of sufficient reason. Their principles destroy true freedom of both God and man and lead logically to absolute optimism. These principles are thus expressed by an author of the same 18th century: "First, a free and rational will cannot in any way determine itself to anything without a motive or reason; for the will of a free agent is ruled by reason, by reason is it removed from indifference, by reason is it determined to acting. A reason or motive of this sort can be both intrinsic and extrinsic, but distinct from the exercise and determination of the will in the way that the mover is distinct from the what is moved. Second, hence without an intrinsic or extrinsic motive distinct from the exercise and determination of the will, a rational free will cannot in any way determine itself and act; and if it did so by chance, it would not determine itself or act by reason. Third, when there are two equal and opposite reasons or motives, free will must remain undecided, unmoved, in suspense, since its indifference is not taken away by either of them. For if in this case it were to determine itself, it would do so without any motive for determining itself rather than not, which is repugnant to the nature of a free agent and to its essence. Fourth, in order for a free agent to be able to determine itself to action rather than non-action or to choice of one thing over another, some motive is necessarily required that would move the will to action rather than not, or to choice of this rather than that; for just as it cannot be conceived to be or become something unless it be granted that it is or comes to be rather than does not, so it cannot be conceived to act without a motive. Fifth, such a motive because of which a free agent wills or acts rather than not is said to be the sufficient reason. Sixth, this sufficient reason is said to be the prevailing reason because, by prevailing over the other things that are offered, it moves the free agent to will rather than not, or to will in this way rather than another. Seventh, this prevailing reason is said to be infallible, or to be infallibly connected to action, because, once this reason is in place, there is action rather than not, and it is impossible that, once it is in place, there should not be rather than be action, just as it is impossible for the same thing to be and not be. Eighth, this sufficient, prevailing, and infallible reason exists antecedently and independently of the actual free volition or determination of the will, so that it is not prevalent and infallible because the will wills, but rather the will wills because it is prevalent and infallible. Ninth, hence actual free volition is dependent on a reason or motive, and it is inferior, in nature and causality, to the reason or motive, since what moves the agent to will is prior in nature and causality to volition itself, as is plain from

seems to destroy freedom in God the Creator, for this sufficient reason cannot be found in anything extrinsic to God, otherwise the divine willing would be caused; nor can it be found in anything intrinsic to God besides the willing itself, such as in God's essential goodness or in the goodness of the divine exemplar ideas etc., otherwise creation would not be free but necessary, for God possesses necessarily his essential goodness or exemplar ideas. Everything indeed formally other than God's very volition that is required for that volition to be present, such as divine knowledge, God's goodness etc. can be called necessary reasons or conditions but they are not properly sufficient reasons in Leibniz's sense, because a sufficient reason is such that, if it is present, the existence of something necessarily follows; otherwise the reason would not be sufficient.

Second, sufficient reason can be understood broadly, namely as including the very will of God (as his will of creating in time), such that we can say that this volition to create suffices to explain creation, for if God wants to create, this is sufficient for creation to be, and if he does not will to create, or wants to create another world different from this world that he has in fact created, the creation which we now have would not exist. In this broader sense the principle of sufficient reason is found at least implicitly among Scholastics, and should be included among "the unshakeable metaphysical principles" of the philosophy that "has existed now for a long time as a patrimony handed down from earlier Christian ages, and possesses too an authority of so much higher an order because the Magisterium itself of the Church has weighed the principles and chief assertions of it, gradually made plain and defined by men of great genius, on the scales of divine revelation itself" (Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, AAS 42, Sept.2, 1950, 571-2).

With this proposition about sufficient reason admitted as a principle, the proposition about causality can be considered as a special application of the principle, for *if anything lacks in itself a complete reason for its existence then it has it in another,* namely in a cause. But there are other formulations of the principle of causality, as for example that there is no effect without a cause. Indeed this proposition is analytic because it is tautological, for the definitions of cause and effect include each other; but it seems useless because it lacks any norm for judging whether an effect and so a cause is really present. There are other formulations that avoid this difficulty, namely *whatever begins to exist has an efficient cause of itself* or *whatever is limited or contingent has an efficient cause of itself.* The former lacks the universality of other formulations because it does not include 'eternal creature', which other philosophers, as Aquinas, think is possible or at least not absurd. Nevertheless the necessity of having a cause in the case of something that begins to

---

the notion of mover and moved. Tenth, such infallibility or infallible connection of sufficient reason with the action comes from the character, nature, and essence of a free agent insofar as he is free; for the proper mode of his acting is determined from the character of a free agent insofar as he is free. Eleventh, hence is a free agent defined, because he determines himself to action by an objectively indifferent judgment. Twelfth, freedom is called a faculty of choosing from several possibilities the one that is more pleasing agreeably to the motives proposed by an indifferent judgment of reason. Or as Wolff has it, the faculty whereby the mind chooses of its own accord from several possibilities the one that most pleases it, since it is determined by essence to none of them." Mansuetus of St. Felix OSA, *On the Conflict between the System of Sufficient Reason and Human Freedom and…* Cremona 1755.

be is more easily conceded than in the case of something limited or contingent. Although this proposition is not analytic in the strict sense, namely that the idea of the predicate is included in the idea of the subject (per se predication in the first mode), it is analytic in a broader sense, namely because the necessary inherence of the predicate in the subject can be shown by using the principles of contradiction, identity, etc. in the following or similar way. Whatever begins to exist either receives something or does not (principle of contradiction). If it were not to receive anything it would remain equal to itself (principle of identity), so that if it were ever non-existent it would remain always nothing. But where the consequent is false, as happens in the case of what begins to be, the antecedent is false, namely that such a being does not receive anything. Therefore whatever begins to exist receives something, namely its existing being-ness. This being-ness or existence is received either from something other than itself or not (principle of contradiction). If existence is not received from another it is received either from nothing or from itself, which would amount to the same thing because this being is nothing before it comes to be. In each case then it would remain equal to itself or be nothing unless it received being from another (principle of identity). Therefore in every case it needs another being from which to receive being, which other being would be the efficient cause (by definition). Therefore whatever begins to exist has an efficient cause of itself.

Now this argument seems to me not even logically valid, for by the force of the principle of identity we can only conclude that 'everything is what it is' or 'if anything is, it is; if anything is not, it is not'. But from purely logical laws it does not follow that 'whatever is not now was not in the past nor will be in the future'. In other words, both the principle of identity and the other logical principles, as those of contradiction, excluded middle etc., must be taken in an atemporal or simultaneous sense. But in the argument above adduced the principle of identity is taken in a temporal sense, for these two propositions are set on an equality 'it is equal to itself' and 'it will remain equal to itself'. Everywhere and always is it true that everything is equal to itself, and this is also valid of a being that grows or changes. But from this we cannot infer, on purely logical grounds, that such a thing will remain equal to itself while time endures.

Still, the aforesaid argument, if it does not prove causality to be an analytic principle in a logical sense, does not altogether lack merit, for the contrary assumptions, which are necessarily required if anyone wishes to deny the principle of causality, clearly prove it to us. For someone who stubbornly denies the validity of this principle of causality has to concede contradictory opposites, namely that something that was once non-existent can come to be without any causal inflow from beings already existent. But to the human intellect, in which the necessity for seeking causes seems innate, this is the greatest absurdity.[14] Accordingly, in the eyes

[14] *Translator's note: An odd comment by Wolter since it seems to reduce the principle of causality to a psychological fact about the human mind rather than to something ontological. But the argument earlier from sufficient reason shows it to be an ontological principle, so perhaps Wolter thinks only this argument really works and not also the argument from contradiction and identity. Still it seems odd to say that the logical principles, if understood atemporally, do not apply to all things in all time, so that if something*

of all rational men, the burden of proving this assumption rests on the sort of stubborn person who, without positive reason and dismissing all indications to the contrary, postulates that the existence of what begins to be altogether lacks intelligibility. Let him who can embrace this absurdity embrace it; but such a one is not a philosopher but a lover rather of obscurity.

Article 2: On the Relation of Causes among Themselves

On Essentially and Accidentally Ordered Causes

Causes are said to be essentially ordered if one depends on another in the actual causing. Thus, for example, unless the material cause behaves as matter the formal cause cannot form it; and an efficient cause, composed of matter and form, cannot effect anything unless both the intrinsic causes actually exercise their own proper causality. Likewise a knife cannot act instrumentally unless the man causes principally. From the definition itself it is then plain that such causes must exist together.

Causes are said to be accidentally ordered among themselves if one depends on the other in being but not in actually causing; hence if the first cause of such a series ceases to exist, the others can still exist and still cause. Thus a father, when grandfather and great-grandfather are dead, can generate a son.

Some Conclusions

16. In the same class of essentially ordered causes the series cannot be infinite, for otherwise there would be an actually infinite series of simultaneously existing dependent things, which is impossible (from conclusion 4). Hence there cannot be an infinite series of essentially ordered efficient causes. The like must be said of final causes, or of material or formal causes.

17. A circle of essentially ordered causes cannot exist as independent or uncaused in itself (conclusion 5). Since a circle of causes must always be understood of things simultaneously existing, this conclusion extends to every circle of causes.

18. A material cause does not behave as matter unless the formal cause forms it and vice versa. The point is plain from the definitions of these causes, for unless that which is composed of both exists, matter and form cannot have an inflow on the thing caused. Herefrom follows another conclusion, namely:

19. If something has behaved as mater, something else has behaved as form, and vice versa.

20. What is not effected is not caused by a final cause. The point is plain from the definitions of each, for the final cause is that for the sake of which the efficient cause produces the effect; therefore it causes only by mediation of the efficient

---

becomes different later it either ceases to be equal to itself or ceases to be either from another or from itself or from nothing. But in fact the principles of identity and contradiction do seem sufficient to prove the principle of causality in the way Wolter summarizes: a thing is what it is and if it becomes more than it is, and this becoming more is not an operating of one part of it on another part of it (as walking is a working of legs on the rest of the body and a working itself worked on by desire), then this becoming more comes from another and not from itself. Otherwise the same identical thing would be both more and not more, contrary to the principles of identity and contradiction. This other will then be the cause (by definition).

cause. This conclusion can thus be formulated in another way, namely that if something depends on a final cause it also depends on an efficient cause.

21. What is not effected is not mattered or formed, or, if something is caused by a material and formal cause, it is also caused by an efficient cause. For matter and form are parts; therefore they are in themselves indifferently disposed to forming one thing. Therefore something in the order of efficient cause is required to effect this one thing. Here nothing is said about whether the efficient cause is the same really as matter (as seems to be the case with atoms) or not.

Article 3: On the Existence of Causes

We will speak mainly about efficient causes, for unless these sort of causes are capable of existing neither are formal, material, and final causes possible.

<u>On the Existence of the Efficient Cause in General</u>

22. If something is transient or changeable or temporal, something is effectible or able to be effected. For nothing of this sort has in itself the total reason for its existence; therefore it is from another, namely from an efficient cause; therefore it is something that can be an effect or is effectible.

23. If something is effectible, something can effect. Cause and effect are correlatives so that the possibility of one involves the possibility of the other.

24. If some efficient cause can exist, some first efficient and uncausable thing can exist. The proof is as follows: If there is an efficient cause it is either a first efficient cause (that is, not itself effectible) or not. If it is not the first in-effectible efficient cause there is either a) a circle of efficient causes such that the circle as a whole is altogether independent of anything outside it, but its individual members are effected by each other, or b) there is an infinite series of efficient causes that are either i) essentially ordered or ii) accidentally ordered. But a) is impossible (from conclusion 17) and so is b) i) (from conclusion 16). But b) ii) would also be impossible unless there existed something outside the series on which the whole series depends. The proof is twofold:

First, that from the fact that the individual members are dependent the series consists, as a totality, of dependent things, and so the series as a whole is dependent and thus requires some cause outside itself.

Second, from the fact that if the individual causes are not simultaneously existent, they begin to be and cease to be; therefore they are transient. But if something is transient, something else there is also something absolutely permanent and independent both as to its existence and as to its permanence (from conclusion 3). Such a being, to the extent it keeps the series in being, is also an efficient cause, otherwise it would not be altogether independent as to its permanence in being. For if it were merely a material or formal cause, it would depend on some other efficient cause so that it be formally a cause (from conclusions 18 and 21). If it were merely a final cause, it would also require an efficient cause in order to exercise its final causality (from conclusion 20).

There is a confirmation from the fact that to persist in being is formally an effect, at least in its beginning. Therefore if it is an efficient cause, it is in every case the first in effectible efficient cause.

That this first efficient cause is simply uncausable is plan from conclusions 20 and 21.

25. What is ineffectible cannot be caused by a final or material or formal cause; therefore it is simply uncausable.

26. If an ineffectible being can exist, it must exist; for if it did not actually exist, it could not receive existence from a cause. So it could not in fact exist but would be simply impossible.

27. A first uncausable efficient cause actually exists. The point is plain from the fact that there is something transient, changeable, and temporal (from conclusions 8, 14, 15); therefore there is an uncausable first efficient cause (from conclusions 24 to 26).

It follows next that there exists at least one efficient cause. Hence if something can be transient, changeable, etc. some ineffectible efficient cause must exist as the condition sine qua non of the possibility of something else.

<u>On the Existence of Secondary Efficient Causes</u>

Rigid occasionalists teach that God is the only efficient cause, and that creatures do not truly act but merely give God occasion for acting. Everything, they say, that seems to be produced by creatures is in reality effected by God alone. Other less rigid occasionalists say that only spirits (whether God or angels or the human soul) can truly cause.

Against the rigid occasionalists we can urge the testimony of conscience, for we at least experience our will being a true cause of other actions, namely willing, attending, trying etc. The certitude we have of these acts is of the highest degree. Of lesser degree is the certitude we have of our causality as to our commanded bodily acts, but even this certitude, namely moral certitude, is so persuasive as to make it impossible to doubt of such causality. The resistance we experience in attaining our aims can only rationally be interpreted as evidence not just of the existence of the external world but also for its causality with respect to us. The other things that we precisely experience as obstacles to our action are certainly caused, because they are transient, changeable, and temporal; but that such things are caused by secondary efficient causes is a conclusion so very probable indeed that it cannot prudently be doubted of, although it is not indubitably evident.

After the existence of a wise and truthful God has been proved, other persuasive arguments can be adduced against the occasionalists.

<u>On the Existence of Finality</u>

That some final causality exists can be proved from our experience, for we certainly act for the sake of some end, and once the existence of a true order in the world has been admitted we can also conclude to the existence of some finality even beyond ourselves.

Article 4: On Dependent and Independent

A being dependent on another as to its existence is the same as a conditioned being in a broad sense. A being independent of another as to its existence is the same as an unconditioned being. But insofar as acting is a mode of being, all dependence can be reduced to one or other of these three kinds, namely: a) to one or other kind of causality (e.g. efficient or final), or b) to some interdependence of diverse kinds of causes in actually causing (e.g. material and formal cause depend on each other in causing), or c) to mere conditionality, namely where condition is not the same as cause.

Now a condition that is not the same as a cause cannot condition something by itself alone but only by a cause. What is conditioned by some non-efficient cause is also caused by an efficient cause. Therefore what is not an effect or effectible is in no way conditioned by any other being. So the consequence follows: if anything is ineffectible it is altogether independent and unconditioned by any other thing. These truths can be expressly stated in the following conclusions:

28. If something is caused it is also conditioned or dependent. The point is plain from the definition of condition in the broad sense and the definition of caused.

29. If something is ineffectible it is also unconditioned or independent.

30. If something is conditioned or dependent, something is unconditioned and independent.

31. Being is divided into caused and uncaused, dependent and independent, conditioned and unconditioned. This point follows from conclusions 8, 22 and 28 as to conditioned, and from conclusions 27 and 29 as to unconditioned.

Chapter 5: On the Contingent and Necessary

Article 1: On the Notion of the Contingent and Necessary

In general contingent and necessary are understood with respect to the possibility or impossibility of something being otherwise than in fact it is. Nevertheless there seems to be some discrepancy among authors about the notion of contingent being, and indeed in accord with this broad definition we can ask whether contingent being is opposed disjunctively to necessary being, as is plain from the teaching of Avicenna, who taught that creatures are simultaneously necessary and non-necessary or contingent. For a creature, he says, is contingent (or 'possible to be') insofar as its essence is indifferent to existing or not existing. Hence if such a creature does in truth exist, it receives existence from another being or cause. On the other side, however, since everything (according to Avicenna) proceeds from God in a necessary way, even beings possible in themselves would be necessary in their cause such that, when some creature, say a fetus, begins to be, the conclusion could be drawn that it is impossible for this fetus not to have been created in this moment when in fact it was created, and this because of the coming together of necessarily acting causes.

To avoid this ambiguity, therefore, we can distinguish between contingency by reason of essence and contingency by reason of existence or being.

On Being that is from Itself and from Another

The contingent by reason of essence (or the improperly contingent) is nothing other than being from another, that is, being that lacks in itself a reason for being from itself or for existing necessarily. The existence of a contingent being in this sense is easily proved from the existence or reality of things transient, changeable, caused. If, on the other hand, a necessary being is equivalent to being from itself, it is the same as uncaused and independent being and its existence follows from conclusion 27 or 31. These truths can be stated explicitly in the following conclusions:

32. If there is a being from another there is also a being from itself; or, in another way, if something from another exists, its complete dependence should end or rest, either mediately or immediately, in a being that is completely independent or is from itself.

33. A being from itself actually exists.

34. Being is divided into being from itself and being from another.

Definitions of the Contingent and Necessary

The contingent, on the other side, can be understood properly or by reason of its existence as follows:

Contingent being, or being that contingently exists, is a thing that exists such that its opposite (namely, not existing or existing otherwise than it in fact does) could be happening when it is happening. As such it is opposed to necessary being, which is defined thus:

Necessary being, or being that necessarily exists, is a thing that exists such that it could not at that time not exist. The sense therefore is: its opposite (namely, not existing or existing otherwise at the moment when it actually exists) would be simply impossible.

If the definition just given is alone considered, necessary being can be double: a) uncausable being, because whatever has in itself a reason for its existence must exist cannot not exist; b) caused being that receives existence from something that causes necessarily, such as the determinists (e.g. Avicenna et al.) falsely suppose about created beings. In fact, of course, no caused being is simply or absolutely necessary.[15] Nevertheless, we must here allow at least the possibility of a

[15] This opinion is the common one among Christian philosophers, according to whom only one single being is necessary, namely God. Other beings are contingent, so that all creatures, by the fact they are from another, namely from God causing freely, are contingent. We indeed share this opinion and it is the opinion, among Scholastics of the Middle Ages, of Scotus, Ockham, and many others, thought not of St. Thomas, for he understood contingency in respect to substantial changeability so that, if any being lacked matter (which is thought to be the root of contingency to the extent it is in potency to another form), such a being would have necessary existence (Thomas *De Potentia* q.5 a.3, *Contra Gentes* 2.25). Hence he says that not only is God a necessary being but also the angels, for example, or the created intelligences to which are in some attributed the motions of the heavenly spheres. This opinion seems to be a mean between the straight Christian doctrine of creationism and the the straight position of the pagan philosophers who postulated a plurality of eternal and created beings, namely matter and the secondary intelligences. This

necessary caused being until the opposite is proved. For many philosophers have taught that the first uncaused being produced other things necessarily. In which case not only would the first being be necessary but so would the beings produced by it be necessary.

Article 2: On the Existence of the Contingent and of its Ultimate Cause

Scotus has well observed that the ultimate root of contingency is free will, for, in the system of absolute determinism, whatever happened would be necessary in its causes. It is plain that the opposite of something could only be when that something in fact comes to be if it depends immediately or at least mediately on a free cause, name on a cause that, when everything is given for acting that must be given, has it in its own power to act or not to act, or to act in this way or in some other way.

Hence let a free cause be defined as a cause that in acting is undetermined either by anything outside itself and by its own nature as a being. Therefore, when all conditions outside it for acting are given, it has within it the power to act rather than not to act (liberty of contradictories), or to act in one rather than in another (liberty of contraries). So for us free cause is by definition the same as free will.

A cause, therefore, that contingently causes is either such a free cause or is a non-free cause that truly depends for its existing or its causing on a free cause. So we can distinguish between a free cause and a contingently causing cause.[16] For even if a cause depends on a free first cause and thus is a contingent causer, it can be a non-free cause. Such a cause is even called by Scotus a natural cause or a cause that acts by way of nature; for any cause is a natural one that is determined by its nature to one way of acting when all necessary givens are given. It is also called a cause that is hypothetically or in a certain respect necessary.

<u>On the Existence of Contingent Being</u>

We are immediately conscious that we are free agents. The validity of this witness as regard our volitions themselves seems to be of the same weight and certitude that we have of our own cognition. Hence we are certain that something at least is contingent, namely our willing. To the extent that we can prove other actions or effects of this sort to be truly under the command or our will, to that extent is the existence of other contingent beings proved.

It seems to me that we can prove the existence of contingent things from the fact that there are changeable and finite things (but about this elsewhere). But that everything outside God is contingent we can truly prove after the existence of God and the nature of his causality are proved. But on this matter see Part Three below.

---

mediate position is intimately connected with the opinion about the aevum or 'created eternity', of which mention was made above. Whatever one should say about this opinion and its dubious foundation (namely the theory of Thomistic hylomorphism), the following seems at least certain: If anything is creatable and annihilable, even if it not be changeable in substance, yet it would be true to say that such a being, by God's will, could have not existed in the moment when in fact it does exist. Hence our definition holds true of contingent being in the strict sense.

[16] A cause is a contingently causing cause if it be able not to cause in the moment when it does in fact cause. As such it is opposed to a cause that causes necessarily

Here however it is enough if at least one contingent thing is admitted to be actual or possible.

Some Conclusions

35. Whatever exists from itself (is either in-effectible or independent) is a necessary being. This point follows from the definitions.

36. Whatever exists contingently not only has in another the reason for its existence but receives existence from a cause that causes contingently and not necessarily.

37. Everything caused either immediately or mediately by a free cause is contingent, and conversely every contingent being is caused immediately or mediately by a free cause.

38. Every cause that causes contingently is either itself a free will or depends for its existence or its causing on a free cause.

39. If there is some contingent being, there is some necessary being. This conclusion is proved as follows: If there is something contingent such a thing is caused (from conclusion 36), and consequently is dependent (from conclusion 38). But a dependent being implies a being from itself (from conclusion 32), and therefore a being from itself necessarily exists (from conclusion 35).

Chapter 6: On Act and Potency

Article 1: On Act and Potency in General

The passage is easy from the consideration of transient or changeable being to the notions of act and potency, for act (*energeia*) took its origin, according to Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 9.3.1047a30), mainly from motion, and potency primarily signifies the force or ability or power of changing another qua another (9.1.1046a10).[17]

On Logical Possibility

Two notions are said to be logically compatible if the affirmation of one does not involve the denial of the other. This idea of logical possibility can be applied to the real order or to the order of existence. Hence several marks that are relative to existence are said to be logically compossible if affirming one of some real being

[17] The word 'act' (to act, action) is taken in many ways. Primarily it signifies the term of motion as what is complete or made fully to be. So it is extended to the being that perfects another (that is, form), whether this perfecting is an operation (for example of thinking) or an action (for example walking) of the agent, or is something received by the patient (for example shape in the marble). It is also applied to a being that is simply existent (actual or simply existing being), or even to existence itself

Potency is conceived in general as capacity for act. So it is extended from the notion of ability (active potency) to what can receive change (passive potency) or even to the producible form itself or to the whole producible but not yet produced being (the possible, the potency for existing, objective potency). All these significations agree in the fact that they are in some opposed to act. To these is added the potency that is not necessarily opposed to act but to the impossible, namely logical possibility. In this sense potency, or more accurately the possible, signifies what is not impossible, whether it actually exists or not.

does not involve denying the other of the same thing. Something that is possible in this sense is opposed logically to the impossible.

The impossible can then be defined as something that cannot exist. A thing can be incapable of existing on two grounds: either a) because its essential marks are simply incompatible with each other, for example spherical cube, irrational man, a non actually existing incausible thing; this impossibility is properly called logical or intrinsic impossibility; or b) because it lacks in itself a reason for its existence and no adequate cause exists in the universe that would be capable, whether mediately or immediately, of producing it; this impossibility is called extrinsic or virtual impossibility, but logical repugnance arises in this case if we consider the whole order of existent things; for if something includes the mark of being from-another, or of causability in its formal essence, it would be incompatible with existing unless something that can cause it does actually exist; for what can be caused and what can cause are correlatives.

The possible, on the other hand, can be defined as that to which existence is not repugnant. So it is the same as the notion of being or of thing, and it includes both actually existing things and things that do not actually exist but can exist. For something to be possible in this sense, both extrinsic and intrinsic impossibility must be excluded. Logical possibility in the broad sense therefore includes both internal non-repugnance to existing (logical possibility properly speaking) and, if the being is causable, virtual existence in its cause (virtual possibility).

> Note: On Intrinsic Possibility
>
> 1. Intrinsic possibility with respect to a being-from-itself or to an incausible being involves actual existence; for no incausible perfection or combination of incausible perfections can exist if they did not actually exist; a being that is possible and incausible but not actually existent is simply a contradiction or is intrinsically repugnant to itself.
>
> 2. Intrinsic possibility, or non-internal repugnance to existence, can sometimes be proved a priori, namely from the simple analysis of the marks or features; or it can always be proved a posteriori, namely if such intrinsic existence of a possible being were the condition sine qua non of the existence of some other being that
> exists either here and now or did once exist. For the inference from the actual to the possible is a valid one. And indeed in this case not only does intrinsic possibility follow but also logical possibility in a broad sense. So, for example, from some past event we can argue to the intrinsic possibility or logical possibility broadly taken of all causes required for that event to have then existed.

On Subjective and Objective Potency

The Scholastics distinguish between objective and subjective potency. Objective potency or possibility is the capacity or aptitude of a being not yet existent for receiving existence. This potency is even called logical potency by some, but be careful not to confuse this potency with the logical possibility adduced above or logical possibility in the broad and proper sense. The act corresponding to this potency is called existence or actuality simply.

Subjective or real potency is the aptitude of something already existent for receiving a further actuality. It is called 'subjective' because a being that has such potency undertakes actuality or is subject to it; it is called 'real' because a subject in potency is a real thing. This subjective potency can be active or operative (a principle of acting) or it can be passive (a principle of undergoing), about which more later.

The act corresponding to this potency generally is called ordinarily 'form', whether this form is essential or accidental. The act of active potency specifically is called operation or action; the act of a passive potency can be form (for example, prime matter is said to be in passive potency for receiving other substantial forms), or some accident, as quality etc.

On Active and Passive Potency

Active potency is defined by Aristotle as the principle of changing another insofar as it is other (*Metaphysics* 9.1). This definition is understood by more recent authors as follows: 'principle' is taken as the efficient cause; although 'change' seems to have been taken in a strict sense by Aristotle, it is understood by us in a broad sense for any operation at all, whether involving real change or not (for example if the operation is creation); 'another insofar as it is other', that is, active potency exercises its activity in a subject diverse from it, or in the same subject (as in the case of vital or immanent action), save not in the same subject as agent but in it as patient.

Active potency thus understood does not involve imperfection and is indeed attributed to God. Therefore active potency in this sense signifies simply 'power' and is not necessarily subjective potency, save in an analogous and improper sense.

Passive potency, on the other hand, is defined by Aristotle as a principle of passive change by another insofar as it is other, or in short as a principle of receiving some perfection. This potency consists in the determinability or perfectibility of the subject, and a better name for it is potentiality.

Passive potency is divided into passive substantial potency (for example organism with respect to soul) and into passive accidental potency (for example soul with respect to intellection), according as the perfection to be received is substantial (essential) or accidental. In the former case the thing in potency is called the subject of formation, in the latter case it is called the subject of inherence. In each case the perfection is called form (whether substantial or accidental), or act.

On Act and Potency as Constitutive Principles of Beings

Act and potency can be taken as in some way the principle for constituting anything that is one, such that one principle is called potential and the other actual. The former is called potential because it is capable of further determination, as a genus in respect of difference, matter in respect of form, finite substance in respect of modifying accidents. The latter is called act insofar as it actuates this potentiality to a further determination. Hence substantial form is called (first) act of matter, difference the actuality of genus; accidents second acts.

On Obediential Potency

Theologians in particular speak of another potency, namely obediential potency which regards being elevated to the supernatural order. Obediential potency, they say, can be defined as an essential or transcendental relation to elevation as to existence and operation from God himself.

For every creature needs in the natural order a special divine inflow for existing and acting. It needs to be conserved in existence by God and it needs further the concurrence of cooperation of God for any action. But since every creature qua creature is in absolute dependence on God as its supreme lord, God can elevate it both in existence (for instance by inflow of sanctifying grace, of higher knowledge, etc., if the creature is rational), and in action (for instance by concurrence at a higher level for performing miracles).

Now a creature as related to such elevation is said to be in obediential potency. This potency is called obediential because the creature can and should obey God when he decrees such elevation in the creature. It is not, however, anything other than the essence of the creature but is the essence itself of the creature insofar as it is always, as creature, subject to a higher divine inflow. Hence obediential potency is natural, though the act that in any given case corresponds to this potency, namely the higher divine inflow, is supernatural, that is, above what the creature can naturally attain. (See what I wrote elsewhere about the 'naturality' of the supernatural, 'Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural', *New Scholasticism* vol. 23, 1949: 281-317).

<u>Distinction between the Essence and Existence of an Actual Being</u>

About any being two questions, as above noted, can be asked, namely 'what is it?' and 'is it?'. The first asks about essence or quiddity, and the other about existence. Quiddity or essence abstracts from actual existence in the sense that we can speak of the quiddity of some thing and of its relation to other things without adverting to whether such a being in fact exists or not here and now. So insofar as the essence of some actual being that is not from-itself can be conceived without the notion of its existence, the question arises about what sort of distinction there is between the essence of an actual being and its existence.

St. Thomas, following Alfarabi and Avicenna, seems to teach that essence and existence are altogether really identified in God, but that in creatures they are really distinct from each other. Scotus, Ockham, Suarez and others in common deny a real distinction between the existence of every actual being and its essence. Suarez indeed along with his followers hold for a distinction of reason with a foundation in the thing, and likewise do many Scotists. But other Scotists posit a formal distinction such that essence and existence are two formalities of the same actual thing. Both labor assiduously to bring Scotus over to their side. This theory of a formal distinction is almost the same as the opinion of Thomists who understand by the term 'thing' something other than Scotists do. Existence and essence, they say, are distinctly conceivable in the actual being but cannot be separated from each other. Now such things, in Scotistic language, are nothing other than formalities.

What then should one think? Briefly we can say that the distinction between the essence and existence of some actual thing is neither real nor formal but one of reason only. For it is impossible to conceive actual existence without its subject,

which is the very quiddity or essence. Further, it is difficult to conceive of essence as it is outside its causes without existence. This distinction seems to be merely conception or a distinction of reason or perhaps, in Scotistic language, a formal mode.

Aristotle 2: On Act and Potency as Disjunctive Attributes

On Actual and Possible Being

From what was said above, the logically possible in a broad sense is the same as being, namely as that to which being is not repugnant. This non-repugnance holds true both of a thing that exists here and now and of a thing that does not exist here and now but can exist. The former is properly called actual being, or being that in fact is; the latter, namely what is not but can be, is called potential being, or the possible in a broad sense or the real. So be careful not to confuse this possible with the possible above adduced in the discussion of logical possibility.

These attributes are truly disjunctive, for one of them affirms actual existence of that to which existence is not repugnant, and the other denies actual existence of it.

Three things in fact are required for the possible real, namely: 1) that existence is not intrinsically repugnant to it; 2) that having necessary existence is repugnant to it; 3) that existence is not extrinsically repugnant to it. The last requirement involves the existence of a cause having the capacity to bring the possible into actual existence. For this reason the possible is said to have virtual existence in its cause, that is, a cause exists that has the virtue or power of producing it. The possible is also said to have 'existence in a certain respect' in itself, that is, existence in something intelligent as a known object (intelligible being).

On the Origin of Possibles

The possible is known by us in some way through the actual; and the possible reality of a thing is not found in itself but in something actual. Here the question concerns precisely this ultimate actual in which the possibility of a possible thing is founded.

Passing over several less probable opinions, we note that Scholastics indeed agree in that they posit an ultimate root of possibility in some way in God. But different people explain differently how precisely possibles can be said to be in God. The chief opinions are the following:

1. The opinion of the Thomists which teaches that the intrinsic possibility of possible beings depends formally on the divine intellect, but fundamentally on the divine essence, namely insofar as the divine essence is imitable externally. Although this opinion is founded in some way in the opinion of St. Thomas about the divine ideas (*ST* Ia q15 a2), a criticism of which you will find in Scotus (*Oxon*. 1 d.35), nevertheless the evolution of the doctrine seems to be later under the influence of Scottish (see what I wrote elsewhere on this matter, 'Ockham and the Textbooks: On the Origin of Possibility,' *Franziskanische Studien* xxxii 1950, 90ff.).

2. The opinion of the Scotists, namely that creatures have possible existence from the divine intellect as principle, from themselves formally, completely and

adequately from the respect to omnipotence that they state (see Scotus, *Oxon*. 1 d.43. A criticism of this opinion is found in Ockham, *Sentences* 1 d.43 q.2).

3. The opinion of William of Ockham, to whom is commonly but falsely ascribed the doctrine of divine omnipotence as the ultimate source of intrinsic possibility (see what I wrote elsewhere, *op.cit*. supra 70-96). It suffices here to note that this opinion seems in fact to be that of Henry of Ghent and fiercely attacked by Ockham. The true doctrine of Ockham seems to be substantially the same as the original position of Thomas, for both, as true followers of Aristotle, treated the question of the possibility of things in a logical rather than metaphysical way. The metaphysical interpretation of the problem is found in Scotus and after him among Thomists (*op.cit*. 91).

Article 3: Some Axioms and Conclusions about Act and Potency

40. Act and potency divide being and every kind of being. This Scholastic axiom must be understood of act and potency as disjunctive attributes of being, where its truth is sufficiently plain. The sense is: everything of which the definition of being holds (namely, what existence is not repugnant to) either actually exists or does not actually exist. This disjunctive is valid not only of being as a transcendental but also of categorical being, so that everything of which the definition of substance or any of the accidents is true either actually exists or is in objective potency to existing.

As to the axiom that act and potency are in the same genus, see what I wrote elsewhere.[18]

41. Potency involves some imperfection if it is understood in the sense of subjective or objective potency (potential being) or of passive or obediential potency; but not if it is understood as the possible is opposed to the impossible. The point is plain from the definitions of these potencies; for all these potencies adduced before agree in that they express the capacity of receiving some real perfection, and so that which is said to be in this sort of potency is in itself perfectible and hence in some way imperfect. Actual being on the contrary does not involve imperfection. The same must be said of the logically possible and of active potency.

42. Act and potency as constitutive principles involve imperfection insofar as they are mutually perfectible in themselves; for only the imperfect is perfectible.

43. Potential being considered in itself is not simply real, that is, does not really exist save virtually in its causes. But it differs conceptually from the absolutely

---

[18] *Transcendentals and their Function* p.148: "Act and potency, as primary differences of being, are clearly existential modes, and differ from act and potency as essential or constitutive elements of things. What actually exists is called a being in act; what does not actually exist but can exist a being in potency. The latter still verifies the notion of being, namely 'that to which existence is not repugnant'… Since actual existence does not enter into the formal notion of being as a quiddity, it cannot change the quiddity or kind of being. Hence 'act and potency are in the same genus'; and, as Scotus points out further, not only are the actual being and its corresponding potential being in the same genus but they are numerically identical. In other words the particular or individual object which is now said to be actual was, prior to its existence, potential."

nothing and from being of reason; for the idea of a possible quiddity involves the relation of non-repugnance to existence, while the others do not.

44. Therefore that which is a potential being cannot have the reason for its existence in itself but in its cause; so the potential is the causable.

45. If something is a potential being, something else is actual. The point is plain thus: Potential being does not in fact exist; therefore if it can in fact exist some being is required that can effect it; therefore (from conclusions 24 and 26) something actually exists, namely at least the first in-effectible efficient cause.

46. If something is in subjective, passive, objective, or obediential potency it is causable. The point is plain from the definitions, at least as concerns the real perfection to which something is in potency.

47. Therefore if something is uncausable it is not in this sort of potency but is pure act (from negation of the previous conclusion).

Chapter 7: On Substantial and Accidental Being

Article 1: On Substance

Negative clarification: Substance in this treatise is not understood as a) something solid and impenetrable. James Jeans, for example, poorly remarked, "Substantiality is a purely mental concept measuring the direct effect of objects on our sense of touch. We say that a stone or a motor-car is substantial, while an echo or a rainbow is not. This is the ordinary definition of the word" (*Mysterious Universe*, 148). Nor is substance understood as b) some static substrate of accidents, or c) in a merely chemical sense, namely as a substance is said to be distinguished from a mixture etc. For in this third sense substances are "materials of invariable composition and definite properties" (Deming, *General Chemistry*, 4th ed., 22). For substance in the philosophical sense is broader, even though chemical substances, as is seen in cosmology, are substances too in the philosophical sense.

Positive Clarification: Substance as understood by us includes three things, namely: a) something real that is per se one; b) permanence as to essence; c) independence, at least relative, and existence in itself.

a) 'per se one' because a distinction must be made between what is one per se and what what is one per accidens. A per se one is either something physically simple or something composite the parts of which are disposed to each other such that they form a natural one. So, for example, soul and body constitute a per se one, namely man, and similarly atoms in a molecule. Angel and God are per se ones that are substantially simple. The term 'per se' indicates that the idea of unity is in some way found in the thing itself. In a simple being, for example, the idea of unity arises from the nature of the entity of the thing, namely that it is incapable of division. But in a being composed of parts the idea of union is found in the nature of the parts that have some requirement or positive inclination to form such a specific union. Something per accidens one, on the contrary, is present if the 'parts' of what is called one are indifferent to forming or not forming such a one. Examples: stones in a heap constitute a mere one per accidens or an aggregate; likewise a mere mechanical one,

even if the parts have a reason in themselves for coming together (as the forces of the mass, namely of gravitation), lack a reason for this precise system or this specific union. Within a one per accidens we can distinguish an artificial one and a merely accidental or casual one. An artificial one is a work of an artisan and does not arise accidentally by chance. Such things are a house, a table, a vehicle etc. In an artificial one the parts are per se indifferent as to union or non-union, for example wood, iron, lead, copper, which are the matter from which the house is made; for the reason of their unity is found in an extrinsic intelligent cause, namely in the artisan himself. A merely casual one is understood as that which arises by chance, that is, tangential to the intention of a rational cause, whether foreseen or not, as the delta of a river etc.

b) 'permanence as to essence' because substance cannot be something transient as to essence. We spoke above about the transient as to existence; the transient as to essence, on the contrary, is present if the quiddity or essence of the thing is a process or something flowing and becoming, for example time, a melody, organic life, the action of solving a mathematical problem. The permanent, by contrast, has its whole essence at once and not successively, as Peter, a tree, a table, the human soul. Indeed a being is said to be permanent as to essence even if it is continually changing accidentally, or if it only lasts for a moment; for it is enough and required that the permanent, in the moment when it exists, has its whole essence at once.

c) 'relative independence and existence in itself' because a dependent being is that which requires some other being at the same time so as to be able to exist, as we said above. An independent being, by contrast, does not require something else at the same time so as to be able to exist. This independence can be absolute, namely if what is said to be independent needs no other being whatever in order to exist, or it can be relative, namely in relation to some specific being (for example, something effective is relatively independent, namely as regard its effect, but the effect is dependent on what is effective) or in respect of some specific mode of dependence. In other words, relative independence does not exclude all dependence whatever in any order, in which case relative independence involves only existence in itself, namely the possibility of existing in itself such that it is not s mere modification of some other being. Hence house, man, atom, molecule, earth are said to be relatively independent. Shape, whiteness, position, location, configuration etc. are neither relatively nor absolutely independent things, because they always require the simultaneous existence of some subject that they modify. To such things belongs being-in-another and not existence-in-itself. 'Existence-in-itself' here merely signifies that a substance does not inhere in something else as a modification of such something else. But substance can exist in another as a part of the whole, for such 'existence-in-another' would not exist as a modification of some other thing. Thus, for example, does the soul exist in man or atoms in molecules, for the soul is a true substance, whether it exists without a body or with a body; and one must say the same of atoms. 'Existence-in-itself' therefore involves both relative independence and permanence as to essence.

<u>Definition of Substance</u>

Substance can be defined as some real per se one thing to which belongs existence in itself or relative independence and permanence as to essence. The classic definition of Scholastics expresses almost the same, namely substance is a thing to which belongs existence in itself and not in another as in a subject of inherence.

It is called: a) 'a thing', that is some real per se one thing. Thing here is understood strictly, that is not as opposed to reality or formality in Scotus' sense; for both substance and accident belong to the order of things. In one and the same thing we can, according to Scotus, distinguish several realities or perfections distinct on the part of the thing. Principal among these is metaphysical essence, to which is added hecceitas; but the rest are called properties, namely what flow from the metaphysical essence; b) a thing 'to which belongs (existence in itself etc.)' rather than 'which is (existence in itself etc.)', because existence is not necessarily of the quiddity of any being unless the being is a being-from-itself. Only non-repugnance to existence is of the essence of substance just as it is of the essence of being in general. But we can say that if substance does exist, the mode of existence that properly belongs to it would be existence-in-itself. This point is expressed by the term 'belongs to', or 'corresponds to', 'agrees with', 'is suited to' etc.; c) 'existence in itself', or 'in-itselfness', which involves at least relative independence and permanence as to essence; d) 'not in another as in a subject of inherence', that is, not in another as a modification of it. For the subject that is modified is called 'subject of inherence' because the modification inheres in it.[19]

Substance as to its name (sub-stans or 'standing under') signifies precisely that which stands under or is subject of other things. In this sense God cannot be called a substance since no accident can exist in him. But the constitutive idea of substance is not precisely a) 'standing under', that is, it does not consist in what does stand under another. This idea does exclude all accidents but does not include all substances, namely it does not include the substance that is both in-itself and from-itself, or an altogether independent being. Nor is the constitutive idea of substance precisely 'permanence', that is aptitude to persist under successive changes. Accidents can also be permanent as to changes, for example habits etc. Rather the essence of substance consists precisely in in-itselfness, for only this notion includes every substance and excludes every accident.

<u>On the Division of Substance</u>

From analysis of the notion of substance, and of the data of both the moral and philosophical sciences, the following kinds of substances can perhaps be distinguished:

---

[19] The notion of substance does not exclude every way of being in another, but only the way of being in another as a mere accidental modification. We can indeed distinguish several ways of being, for example substantial form in prime matter or the soul in the body. Prime matter, according to hylomorphists, or body si called the subject of formation; for the soul and material forms do not inhere in their subject as accidental forms do, but are said to in-form the subject so that it becomes a new nature or substance. But according to hylosystemism particular subatomic particles, insofar as they are united in some natural system, are the subjects of substantial union. The notion of subject of inhesion, however, is restricted to that (namely substance) which is modified accidentally, as the soul with respect to volition or intellection.

1. Complete substance, namely that which does not need another substance so as to constitute a substantial whole along with it. For it has the sort of completeness as to acting and existing that it can exist and does indeed exist in the order of nature as a whole something. It is:

a) simply complete, if it not only does not need another substance in order to be a substantial whole but also lacks the natural aptitude for uniting with other substances in order to become a per se one, as man, brute animal, plant, God, angel.
b) complete in a certain respect, if it is indeed a substantial whole in itself but possesses a natural aptitude for uniting with other substances in one natural or substantial system, as a positron, negatron, meson, neutron etc.[20] with respect to atoms, atoms with respect to the living body, etc.

2. Incomplete substance, namely a substance that does in fact need another substance in order to constitute along with it a substantial whole. Such a substance needs another substance as constitutive part, not because it lacks in-itselfness as to inherence but because it is in itself imperfect as a nature. It is incomplete in such a way that it cannot be said to exist naturally without its substantial complement. Such a substance is not partially a substance, as if it were partly substance and partly accident, but is a part of a substance. It is:

a) simply incomplete, if it depends intrinsically on another substance as to all its operations, as the soul of a brute, or prime matter and material substantial forms according to hylomorphism.
b) incomplete in a certain respect, if it does not intrinsically depend on another substance as to its total operation, as the rational soul

Whether such substances really exist in the real order, however, is to be settled empirically. Likewise, what things are new substances and what merely a one by aggregation and per accidens must be determined by the natural philosopher after investigation of the scientific data.

<u>On the Notion of Essence in General and on its Comparison with Substance</u>

In the common way of speaking 'essentially' and 'substantially' signify almost the same thing. We must clarify, therefore, what essence is according to philosophers and how it is distinguished from substance.

Essence is defined as: 'that by which a thing is what it is' (the 'what it was to be' or 'the being what it was') according to Aristotle. It is everything in the thing that corresponds to the question 'what is it?', and for this reason is called the quiddity or 'whatness' of the thing. Plainly the notion of essence is not necessarily restricted to beings in the strict sense, for we can inquire about the quiddity or essence of beings of reason or of logical beings or formalities etc.

---

[20] We can of course ask whether all these particles exist formally or merely virtually in the atomic nucleus, for scientists themselves distinguish between nucleons (that is between protons and neutrons) which as such seem to exist in the nucleus, and other particles which, as they say, are 'created' in nuclear changes (namely positrons, negatrons, mesons). (On this matter see what I wrote elsewhere, 'The Atomic Nucleus', Franciscan Studies XV 1955, 350-383.) A fortiori, therefore, natural philosophers can dispute about their reality and relations with each other.

We commonly distinguish the following divisions:

1) Essence is either metaphysical or physical. Physical essence is the total reality without which a thing cannot exist in the natural and concrete order. So it includes constitutive elements in the physical order, namely the essential physical parts. Thus, for example, atoms consist of the substantial system of subatomic particles; man consists of the composite of body and soul. Metaphysical essence, by contrast, is the complex of marks by which a thing is conceived as constituted in its specific order and as distinguished from everything else. Or it is the formality (or formalities) which is conceived as the first constitutive and root of all other formalities or perfections. Thus, for example, the essence of man is rational animal. The metaphysical essence is expressed by a definition (namely by genus and specific difference).

2) Essence is either specific or of an individual. Specific essence, which is what is properly called essence, is the same as the common nature of an individual. So it excludes not only the properties and accidents but also the hecceity of the individual. Thus rational animal is the specific essence of Peter. On the other hand, insofar as hecceity is not anything accidental to Peter nor a property of human nature as such, it is said to pertain to the quiddity of Peter as Peter, namely insofar as he is this man. The essence of an individual, then, includes both the essence or common nature and hecceity.

3) Essence is either actual or merely possible, according as it exists actually or not.

How is essence distinguished from substance and nature? According to the common way of speaking these three names signify the same thing. But philosophically speaking we can distinguish between them. For *essence* is in some way opposed both to properties and accidentals. So when we ask, 'What is this?', namely something composed of substance and accidents, the physical essence is the same as the substance of the thing. *Substance* is the physical essence insofar as it is conceived as something subsistent or as the substrate of accidents. But we can speak of the essence or quiddity of accidents. Thus, for example, we can give a metaphysical definition of wisdom or science as a habit in the mind. *Nature* (from a word meaning 'to be born') is the essence insofar as it is conceived as the ultimate principle by which a substance operates; or, according to Aristotle, as the principle and cause of motion and rest in that in which it is first and per se, and not accidentally (*Physics* 2.1.192b15-22). Nature, then, is the same as the metaphysical essence conceived as the root of all the passive and active potencies. For an active potency is the principle most proximate to operations. But substance (or physical essence) can include both the nature (or the metaphysical essence) and the active potencies (faculties or metaphysical properties). Thus, for example, the substance of the soul, according to the Franciscan School at least, includes the faculties (which are proper to the soul).

Article 2: On Supposit and Person

Formally 'in-itselfness' excludes existing in another only by way of inherence. But in a broader sense in-itselfness can be understood as excluding any existing in another

whatever, namely as part in a whole, specific nature in individuals, the assumed as in a person assuming etc. A way of existing that excludes all essential existing in another is called subsistence. Such full and perfect in-itselfness is found only in supposit and person.

On Supposit

A supposit is defined as a substance singular, complete, in its own right. It is called: a) substance, to exclude both every accident and every being of reason. b) Singular, to exclude the way in which the common nature is in particulars, as human nature in Peter, Paul. Only an individual can be a supposit. c) Complete, to exclude the way in which a part is in a whole, so foot, hand, corpse, separate soul are not supposits. Only a complete substance, namely one that does not need another substance to constitute a substantial whole, is capable of perfectly subsisting. d) In its own right, to exclude existing per se in another in any other way, namely by hypostatic union or by union of substances that are complete in a certain respect. So single subatomic particles cease to be supposits insofar as they are in fact united in atoms, and single atoms insofar as they form a body etc. Likewise if a complete substance, as a stone, an individual human nature, an angel were assumed by a divine person or nature, the assumed substance would by that very fact cease to be a supposit. Note that 'being in its own right' does include, or at least presupposes, the other perfections, namely singular and complete substantiality, and so 'being in its own right' is a fundamental and perfection whereby a supposit (or person) becomes such. For a thing is said to be in its own right if all actions or affections (passions) are attributed to it. It is, metaphorically speaking, quasi-lord of its passions and actions.

On Person

A person is a substance singular, complete, in its own right, endowed with reason, or more briefly a rational supposit. For person differs from a simple supposit in that it is by nature rational or intellective. Men and angels are persons; plants, animals, or inanimate things are merely supposits. So a person is more perfect than a simple supposit in that a) it can know that it exists in it its own right, b) it exists in its own right not only as to existence but also as to acting (because of its liberty), c) it is a subject of rights and obligations.

On the Formal Idea of Person

The whole question about personhood in this metaphysical sense pertains rather to theological than philosophical speculation. "This problem was introduced in metaphysics under the manifest influence of theology and with the goal of devising in advance a satisfying explanation of the mystery of the Incarnation. It is a question of knowing how and why the human nature of Jesus Christ does not constitute a human person. This problem is and remains foreign to philosophy. From the metaphysical point of view there is no reason to distinguish individual nature and individual (or person)" (Steenberghen, *Ontology*, Louvain 1946, p.212). Nevertheless, because our philosophy course is in some way ordered toward theology, let us deal with the question by way of digression.

The question then is what the perfection is whereby complete intellectual nature precisely becomes a person or subsistent. This perfection is called 'personhood'. Two questions arise, namely a) whether this perfection consists formally in some positive reality superadded to complete nature or in something negative (in the negation of some further perfection to which complete nature is as such indifferent), and b) how this perfection of personhood is distinguished from the complete nature.

What is said of personhood in relation to complete intellectual nature is valid, mutatis mutandis, of a supposit-hood relative to complete irrational nature. For supposit-hood is understood as that precise perfection whereby a complete irrational nature becomes a supposit.

The questions only concern created person-hood (or supposit-hood). For there is no natural example in our experience where an intellectual substance is given that does not has nonnatural personhood. But we know from faith that in Christ Our Lord there are two natures, one divine and the other human, but a single person and that a divine one. In other words, there is a perfect human nature present that, however, lacks its own nonnatural personhood.

To the first question, namely whether personhood consists in some positive reality superadded to complete nature, two responses are given:

First opinion: Some, especially among Thomists, say that personhood is something positive superadded to complete nature so that it becomes a person. It is not something accidental but substantial. For it perfects complete nature in the order of a further substantiality or in-itselfness. But it does not perfect in the order of nature or essence, otherwise nature would not be complete qua nature. But authors do not agree in explaining the nature of this positive perfection. The best opinion among them is that which affirms personhood to be not something absolute but something merely modal. It is nothing other than a substantial positive mode whereby nature is completed in idea of subsistence and is rendered formally incommunicable to another.

Second opinion: Others, especially Scotists, say that personhood is formally the nature itself insofar as it is the subject of a double negation, namely of required and of actual communication. 'Negation of required communication', because nature, insofar as it is complete, does not require to be communicated to another in order to become a complete substance. The reason that an incomplete substance, for example a separate soul, is not perfectly subsistent and so not a person is found in its aptitude and indeed requirement to be united with a body. 'Negation of actual communication' is added, because the nature's being complete is not enough for there to be a person, otherwise the humanity of Christ would be a human person and then there would be two persons in Christ. Although person is not something negative but altogether positive, nevertheless in response to the question whether personhood, insofar as it is conceived as perfecting a nature already complete, is something positive superadded to the essence, the supporters of this opinion say no. It is in fact something negative, namely a mode of existing without further communication.

What should be said then? Those who favor the first opinion allows that the second opinion contains much that favors it. Nevertheless it seems impossible in

this opinion to explain the substantial union of the Word with humanity, namely how a per se one is found in Christ. For if the idea of person consists in mere negation, human nature is as complete and perfect in substance when it is united with the Word as it would be if it were not united. But between two substances actually complete there can be no substantial union or a per se one. For the precise reason that an incomplete substance (or a substance complete in a certain respect) is capable of uniting substantially with other substances is founded in the fact that it would be incomplete or that its substantial potencies would not be fully used up. When, by contrast, such a substance is in fact united, these potencies are actualized, the substance is perfected substantially (that is, in the order of substance), and a per se one exists.

The response to this argument given by those who favor the second opinion is as follows: the Hypostatic Union is called substantial in opposition to accidental union. Nevertheless it is very different from any other per se union, for example between prime matter and substantial form, between the body informed with inferior forms and the rational soul, between the subatomic particles etc. For in all these others the potency for uniting is found in the essence itself of the substances to be compounded, and indeed in both members of the union. Further, a new substance and nature results from the union. But in the Hypostatic Union there is no fusion between the divine and human natures and no new substance or nature arises.

In what, indeed, does the Hypostatic Union consist? It seems to consist in the fact that the actions and passions are now to be attributed not to the human nature itself but to the Divine Person as its lord. For the human nature ceases to have dominion over its actions and ceases to exist as in its own right. On the contrary it exist in another's right, namely the Word's. The question is asked whether anything positive is taken away by the personed nature so as to be able to unite hypostatically. It seems not. For any nature or substance at all, even one that is complete and in its own right, is in obediential potency. This potency is of course substantial and essential. It is a fundamental and radical incompleteness in the order of subsistence and in-itselfness, and so suffices for explaining union per se on the part of a created nature.

Indeed, not only is the hypothesis of a positive addition superfluous for explaining union per se, but there is difficulty in seeing how a nature could come to be in its own right and incommunicable through anything positive. For this something positive makes the nature so incommunicable that not even God can assume it unless this impediment is removed. For this positive something is something created and, precisely qua created, it is totally dependent in its existence on the lordship of the Creator. How then could it have a quasi-independence as to this lordship by reason of its essence when this essence is formally and radically dependent?

It is no help to say that personhood is not an absolute but a modal thing, that is, a thing that does not add a proper new being-ness but merely modifies the being-ness of its subject. For whatever should be said about the very flimsy being-ness of a mode, it is not nothing and so has some existence, at least when it modifies a subject. But this being-ness is also created and so totally dependent on and under the

lordship of the Creator in its existing. Whence then does it have the capacity of conferring independence or the feature of being in its own right by reason of the same essence?

Therefore it seems that it is not by anything positive, whether absolute or modal, whether accidental or substantial, that a complete nature exists in its own right. For a creature has quasi-dominion or the feature of existing in its own right only insofar as God gives up something of his own right in favor of the creature. But God cannot so abandon his right to any created entity so that this entity could be formally and essentially incommunicable with a Divine Person or so that it could render another nature incommunicable; and so every creature, even a complete one, remains essentially, as to all its positive being-ness, in obediential potency to assumption by another hypostasis or person. Hence the arguments that now follow seem to be valid for any positive being-ness, whether absolute or modal.

First: any positive being-ness in human nature can be assumed by the Divine Word, because it is in obediential potency to God; but it is metaphysically repugnant to human personhood that it be assumable, for the same formal thing would exist formally in its own right (as personhood) and yet not exist in its own right (as assumed); therefore it cannot be something positive superadded to human nature.

Second: in a human nature let go by the Divine Word and not yet personed (which is not repugnant if personhood be something positive) there would be a complete substance actually incommunicable and not actually incommunicable, existing in its own right and not in its own right; but the consequent is self-conflicting, therefore the antecedent is too.

So the second opinion is perhaps more probable. It is enough for there to be an intellectual nature that neither needs to be assumed nor is in fact assumed, for through the very fact of the double negation there is a complete nature in its own right and so a person. Beings are not to be multiplied beyond necessity.

To the second question, namely how personhood is distinguished from complete nature itself, one should say the following: A real distinction must be without doubt admitted, because separation is possible and in Christ is in fact the case. Further, the supporters of the second opinion admit a real distinction, but it is a less perfect real distinction, namely not between thing and thing but between thing and its negation. Such a distinction, they say, is a negative real distinction.

> Note: On the Axiom 'Actions belong to Supposits'
> All actions that are brought about by men proceed from human nature as from their cause and principle. For nature is nothing other than the human essence according as it is the root of several powers, by which powers various actions can be elicited. But human nature (man) attributes these actions to itself as its own. The sense of the axiom above stated then is that actions belong to supposits (persons) attributively but not elicitively. Hence person or supposit is called the 'principle which' in respect of operations; but the nature is the 'remote principle by which', and the faculty or active power the 'proximate principle by which' of the same operations.
>
> This distinction is of the greatest importance in relation to Christ's actions. All the actions of Christ are truly elicited by the human nature and belong therefore elicitively to the human nature. But the human nature of Christ cannot

> ascribe these actions to itself as its own, because it itself is not its own but belongs to the Son of God, who assumed it and united it to himself as his own. The Son of God performs all these actions through his human nature. Elicitively, therefore, they belong to the human nature, but attributively to the Son of God, that is, they belong not to the human nature but to the Son of God.
>
> Herefrom it seems to follow that all the human actions of Christ are elicitively (intrinsically) finite, and under this aspect they have perhaps, as Scotus says, only finite value; but attributively (extrinsically) they are infinite and have a morally infinite value. For they are actions of the Son of God. The same must perhaps be said of the merit of these actions.

Article 3: On Accident

<u>On the Nature of Accident</u>

Accident, the opposite of substance, is something dependent, whether it is permanent or transient, to which it belongs to inhere in another. The classic definition describes accident as 'a thing to which it belongs to exist in another as in a subject of inherence'.

a) 'Thing' because it belongs, like substance, to the order of things, and so it is not a mere formality, nor a being of reason, nor a logical relation, but something real, namely a modification. b) 'To which it belongs to exist in another', for such a mode of existing naturally belongs to accident. Whether any accidents can exist supernaturally without their connatural subject, as almost all Scholastics admit, is another question. But even if this is possible (on which see below), the mode of existing in itself does not naturally belong to accident. c) 'As in a subject of inherence', so as to express the special way in which accident is in a subject, namely as a modification that modifies the substance itself indeed but not substantially.

Hence two things are excluded. First, substantial modification, as the union of soul and body in man, or any other per se union by which a new substance arises, as seems to be the case in the union of subatomic particles in atoms or molecules. For the union or state of being one is indeed a modification or mode. It is not, however, an accidental mode but a substantial mode. An accident, by contrast, or an accidental modification does not belong to substance per se but per accidens. Second, there is excluded a mere extrinsic adherence or juxtaposition of that which is predicated per accident. For a true accident modifies the substance of which it is the accident. Shape, for example, is a modification of the marble itself; it is not in it as water in a vessel, color on a wall, or white or red makeup on a woman; for all these things are merely extrinsic modifications, since water does not intrinsically affect and determine the vessel. Nevertheless there is present in this case too a mutual relation in the vessel with respect to the water, and in the water with respect to the vessel, which relation is a real accident for those who say that relation is a true thing really distinct from the terms and from the foundation absolutely considered.

<u>Some Problems</u>

From the notion of accident as elaborated by Scholastics there are indeed many problems that arise, the chief of which concern the number, kinds, and reality of accidents, and their possibility of existing independently of substance. So a few things about them are here noted.

I. On the division or classification of accidents

1. There is the famous division of Aristotle, namely into the last nine categories, which are quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, when, where, position, possession. About these the following needs to be noted:

A. Besides the question of the distinct reality of the individual categories, there are quite a few difficulties (see Suarez *Metaphysical Disputations* d.39). One of them has regard to the reason for dividing the categories. The reason for distinction of the categories that has found favor among many Scotists is the following (e.g. Suarez, *ibid*. sect.2)

Accident is:	Absolute, according to:	
	matter	Quantity
	form	Quality
	Relative, according to relation:	
	arising intrinsically	Relation
	arising extrinsically:	
	as to causality	Action, Passion
	as to measure	Where, When
	as to order	Position, Possession

Others following St. Thomas deny that the last six categories are relations as such.

Another question arises about the reality of real relation, namely whether there is a real distinction between the relation itself and its absolute foundation, on which see chapter 8 below. Quantity too gives some difficulty, namely whether it is merely a mode or modal accident of substance or not. For Scholastics, in order to explain how the sensible species of the Eucharist can be sustained miraculously in the absence of the substance of bread and wine, seem to have changed, and perhaps not a little, the original Aristotelian opinion. But this question seems rather to belong to theology than to philosophy.

B. More famous than useful seems to be the Aristotelian division of quality, namely into four species. The first of these is habit or disposition, the second potency and impotency, the third passion and passible quality,[21] the fourth form and figure (*Categories* 8.8b25ff.)

[21] To understand the mind of Scotus note that: a) All spiritual acts, namely intellection or volition, or also sense acts as seeing, hearing, etc. belong to the first division of quality. For Scotus distinguished between intellection or knowledge or idea themselves and the act of eliciting knowledge. The former are absolute accidents belonging to quality; the latter is a true relation arising extrinsically and belonging to the category of action. Besides these, there is between the intellect and its knowledge another relation arising

C. About action at a distance see what Coffey has well written (Ontology pp.392-396). Note further that Scotus maintains the possibility of action at a distance, *Oxon*. 2 d.9 q.2 n.17.

2. Other divisions of accidents found among authors are:

A. Insofar as accident regards the subject in itself or in its existence toward another, accidents are divided into absolute and relative. Absolute is an accident that brings a real perfection to the subject considered in itself, of which sort are quantity and quality. Relative is an accident whose existence consists in a relation of the subject to something else; such are the remaining categories of accidents.

B. By reason of their being-ness, accidents are divided into modal and non-modal. The modal, the say, is when the accident does not add its own proper being-ness but its whole reality consists in the modification itself or in the disposition of another being-ness that is in itself indifferent as to such and such a modification, as form, being where, being when etc. The non-modal (which is also called absolute by Suarez) is when, besides the mere modification of the proper subject, the accident has its own formal being-ness, as virtue, knowledge.

C. By reason of reality, accidents are divided into real and non-real. This distinction is drawn by those who deny that any of the Aristotelian accidents are true distinct things, namely really distinct from the reality of substance. According to Ockham, for example, only substance and qualities are truly things or beings.

II. Question about the separability of accidents

The question about the possibility of accidents existing in the absence of their connatural subject gets its origin from a theological fact, namely from the mystery of the sacred Eucharist. It does nevertheless seem to be more of a philosophical question than the questions about personhood. But he who can prove sufficiently

---

intrinsically that belongs to the category of relation, namely causality, because the intellect is a cause of its knowledge, and knowledge itself is an effect (at least partially) of the intellect. b) Powers or potencies, as those of the soul, namely the intellect, the will etc., are, for Scotus, not truly things but only 'realities' or formalities formally distinct among themselves and from the metaphysical essence of the soul. Therefore, properly speaking, powers do not fall as such under the category of quality. c) As concerns action, a distinction must be drawn between action as a category, or an action properly speaking, and an action done or produced, which is a true quality. An example of the former is eliciting an act of the intellect; an example of the latter is understanding itself or the concept as an offspring of the mind. The axiom 'action is in the acted-on thing' is not valid for action as a category, because this is an extrinsic relation arising in the agent with respect to the patient in which it actually causes its effect. The axiom is only valid of action as a produced quality. This quality is the effect in the patient, if the action is transient; otherwise it is in the agent, but in it not as the agent is agent but as it is patient and receptive of its own immanent action. On the validity of the other doubtful principle, namely 'nothing acts on itself' or of this one 'whatever is moved is moved by another', see Scotus *Oxon*. 1 d.3 q.7 n.27; 2 d.2 q.10; 2 d.25 q.un. nn.12-13.

and indeed positively the possibility of a true accident existing, in a metaphysical sense, in the absence of its proper connatural substance, let him do so.[22]

Some Conclusions

48. If something accidental exists, something substantial exists. Proof: An accident depends essentially on its substrate. This dependence is of the same order as that which is found between formal cause and material cause. For substance is as it were the matter of accidents. Hence for any accident that actually exists there is required the simultaneous existence of another being, namely that in which the accident is. If this other is not something substantial but on the contrary an accident, then some third being is required. But there cannot be a regress to infinity, both because there would be at the same time an infinite number and because dependence in any essential order ends in some independent being in the same order. Hence every effect demands an ultimate being that is not an effect; a thing in matter requires eventually a being not in matter, namely prime matter. Likewise a being in another or to which existing in another belongs, involves a being not in another, or to which existing in itself belongs.

If you object that some accident, namely quantity, can exist in itself, that is, supernaturally, the objection is not valid; for even in this case God, as first efficient cause, would be making up for the natural, material, secondary causality of the substance. And so, even on this supposition, at least one substance would exist, namely God himself.

49. If there is anything, substance exists. If there is anything, it is either accident or substance. But if it is accident, substance too exists (from conclusion 48). Therefore in either case, if there is anything, there is substance.

50. Being is divided into substance and accident. The existence of accidents must be proved from experience. And on this point one must note that, on the evidence of experience, many things exist that are not only beings but beings in another, as color, shape etc. It does not matter whether these are formally objective or subjective, for in either case they are real modifications of something. One must say the same about our internal acts, as thoughts, affections, volitions; for we experience these beings as empirical modifications of the 'ego'. — From the fact of actual accident follows the fact of actual substance (from conclusion 48). Thus both accident and substance exist; therefore being is divided into substance and accident.

About knowledge of the formal idea of accident one must note that 'in another' or 'in-anotherness' is correlative, for it involves something in which it is. But to perceive some relation, there is need of knowledge of the terms of the relation in themselves. Our first knowledge of reality, therefore, seems to be knowledge of things as absolute objects and not in their relation to other beings. But when we say that accidents are immediately experienced as beings in another the

[22] On this question, see Hickey p.410, whose thesis, "It is not repugnant that an accident, considered in its general idea, may exist by divine power in the absence of its connatural subject," can easily be proved. But as this author well adds, "however, to determine what accidents in an individual can be thus separated and preserved in their proper existence is rather difficult, and perhaps plainly impossible by the light of reason alone."

sense is: this knowledge is not by way of reasoning out but, from phenomenological analysis of the givens of experience, we perceive through simple apprehension this relation of 'in-anotherness'. Shape, for instance, is not only perceived in itself and as something absolute but also in its relation to extension and color, namely as the limit of a colored expanse. But in other cases it seems we do not immediately perceive the idea of 'in-anotherness', but rather we infer it by reasoning out. This happens, for example, with quantity. No wonder then that some, as Descartes, identified extension with material substance as such.

51. If something is altogether independent, it must be substance and not accident. Hence the uncausable, for instance, is substance. This conclusion is sufficiently clear from what was said above in proof of conclusion 48.

Chapter 8: On Some Other Disjunctive Attributes

Article 1: On Relative and Absolute Being

<u>On Relation in General</u>

Relation in general is the respect of one thing to another. Therefore it does not consist in anything absolute or in existing for itself but in 'existing to' something. Hence the essential idea of relation is called 'to-otherness'.

So three elements are found in any relation: namely a subject (that which is referred to another), a term (that to which the subject is referred), and a foundation (the reason because of which the subject is referred to the term). In the relation of likeness, for instance, between a white body A and a white body B, one, namely A, is the subject; the other, namely B, is the term; and whiteness is the foundation. Such a relation is expressed by the formula aRb, which signifies that *a* has relation *R* to *b*. Since this relation of likeness is symmetrical, there is also the relation bRa. According to Scotus and most moderns, the foundation of relation must be found in the subject.

<u>Divisions of Relations</u>

1. Relation is divided into logical and real. Real relation is that which is said to exist, in some way at least, independently of the mind. 'In some way' is added because, according to most moderns, every relation, so far as it is a union or connection between related terms, is created or produced in the knower himself. For such a relation four things are required, namely that the subject, term, and foundation be real (i.e. things or at least formalities), and in addition that between subject and term there be a real distinction. Of this sort are the relations of paternity, fraternity, likeness, etc. Nothing is said about whether relation adds some positive being-ness over and above the being-ness of subject, term, and foundation. This relation is called real because the intellect does not generate the subject, term, or foundation, or the distinction between subject and term. — Logical relation, on the contrary, depends rather on the consideration of the mind, for it is a relation that lacks one or other of the four requisites of real relation. Such a relation is found if one or both terms are beings of reason, for example the relation of likeness of the

known object to the knower. For a thing does not acquire a new reality insofar as it is known. Such a relation is found if both terms are really identical, or if the foundation is not something real (a thing or at least a formality), as is true of the relation between subject and predicate in a judgment, for example that Saturn is a planet of the sun. For the subject and predicate are one and the same thing, but the mind conceives them as two. It is also true of the relation between olive branches and peace, for the foundation is a purely arbitrary connection.

2. Relation is divided into essential and accidental. Essential or transcendental relation is that which exists between things by reason of their natures. The foundation of the relation is not really distinct from the essence itself; for example a creature is essentially from-another, and hence has a transcendental relation of dependence on God; and likewise for transcendental relations of being, as true and good. — Accidental or categorial relation is what does not belong to the essence of the subject of which it is predicated or in which it inheres. For the subject remains the same in essence whether it is present or not, whether the relation changes or not, as the relation of equality etc. Accidental relation is subdivided into relation arising intrinsically and relation arising extrinsically (Scotus, *Oxon* 3 d.1 q.1 n.15, *Quodlibet* q.11 n.13).

3. Intrinsically and extrinsically arising relation: A relation arising intrinsically is one that necessarily follows the foundation, once the term and subject are given. It is not intrinsically present in the sense of absolute necessity, but when the term is posited to which it is a relation, it arises at once and indeed necessarily from the foundation itself. For example, a tower is 20 feet high; the foundation is quantity (height), but the relations of equality or inequality do not necessarily arise unless other terms are posited. — A relation arise extrinsically is one that does not necessarily follow the foundation but follows contingently without addition of anything absolute in that in which it is, or in the term, for example where or location; for when the terms (Socrates, a house) and the foundation (their external quantity) are posited, Socrates' being somewhere in the house does not immediately follow. The like must be said of the remaining six categories.

4. Relation is divided into mutual and non-mutual. Mutual or symmetrical relation is that which holds equally between the relata a and b so that if aRb then also bRa, as the relation of likeness between two white things. Non-mutual or asymmetric relation, on the contrary, is such that if aRb then not bRa, as if a is father of b, b cannot be father of a. A special case of non-mutual relation holds, they say, between the creature and God, for the creature really and truly depends on God but God is not really referred to the creature by any real accident that newly comes to him. So, for example, Scotus says: "Now every relation of creature to God is non-mutual, but God is said to be in relation to the creature because the creature is in relation to him" (*Oxon*. 1 d.3 q.5 n.4). This non-mutual relation is called non-equal by St. Thomas, or mixed by more recent writers.

Other divisions are given by different authors, but these are enough for our purpose.

<u>On Relation as it is a Distinct Category</u>

The category that is called relation simply is nothing other than an intrinsically arising categorial relation, namely one that, once given the foundation and the related term, arises of necessity. This is also called intrinsic relation in contrast to the last six categories that are relatives by extrinsic denomination.[23]

The foundation of the category of relation according to Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 5.15) is threefold. Hence there are three modes of relations, namely: 1) those that are founded on quantity (namely on unity and number), as double to half, triple to third part, or in general all relations of equality and inequality and of proportion; 2) those that are founded on action and passion, or better, according to Scholastics, on the power of acting and undergoing, of which sort are the relations of causality; 3) those that are founded on measure and measurable, insofar as one relative is disposed to the other after the manner of measure; for the knowable object is the measure of our knowledge etc.

<u>On the Reality of the Being-ness of Real Relation</u>

The reality of 'real relation' is understood differently by different authors. The four conditions adduced above are at least necessary, but the further question is raised whether the relation as such, insofar as the subject of the relation is referred to something else, is something really distinct from the subject and its foundation. The question, they say, regards only categorial relation, for essential or transcendental relation, like its foundation, is not really distinct from the essence of the related thing. Following the lead of Albert the Great and because of the authority especially of Boethius, several Scholastics, as Richard of Middleton, Giles of Rome, William of Ockham, some early Thomists, deny a real distinction. Scotus, on the contrary, like St. Thomas and the more eminent Thomists, as Capreolus, Cajetan, and Sylvester of Ferrara, defend such a distinction. Nevertheless almost all modern neo-Scholastics deny a real distinction, and try to draw St. Thomas over to their side, even though as Cajetan says, "But St. Thomas without doubt does altogether say that every real relation is really distinct from the foundation, although many Thomists have not understood it." But whatever may be the case about the mind of St. Thomas and about the possibility of saving the reality of categorial relation in the Scholastic sense, the opinion seems to me better that denies that the 'existing-to' is formally a thing simply.

Being related or relation as such does not formally involve either imperfection or perfection on the part of the thing. 'As such', because although in specific cases, for example because of an accidental foundation (as quantity etc.), being related implies some imperfection, nevertheless nothing is found in the idea itself of 'being related' that necessarily states any imperfection. If therefore the subject and foundation of relation, as something absolute, does not involve any defect, such a subject does not become imperfect precisely and solely from the fact that the mind refers it to something else. Hence if relation, insofar as it is real, is understood to be nothing other than the absolute thing that is related, then the

[23] From the nature of the thing, intrinsic relation is not restricted only to accidental categories, for the relations constitutive of the Divine Persons are of this sort. Given that there is in fact active and passive generation, both paternity and filiation, relations constitutive of the Persons, necessarily follow.

relation itself, when it does not add anything to the absolute entity, involves neither imperfection nor a new perfection. On the contrary, if someone wants to distinguish such a real relation from the subject itself that is related and to attribute to the relation in itself some being-ness really other than the being-ness of the subject and of the foundation (as those authors seem to do who think that categorial relation is really distinct from the foundation), then indeed such a relation formally as such involves imperfection, for it would depend in its existence on something really other, namely on the subject, the term, and the foundation, as we will say below.

On Relative and Absolute as Disjunctive Attributes of Being

The opinion which holds that categorial relation is a true thing, and not a mere being of reason with a foundation in the thing, must also divide beings into relative and absolute. The relative would then be those whose whole reality consists formally in 'existing to'. The absolute, by contrast, are those that have some being-ness which does not consist precisely and formally in 'to-anotherness'. Something absolute in this sense can indeed be referred to another and so can have a relation to another, but it is not totally and formally the relation.

Some Conclusions

52. If there is relative being, absolute being must exist. For once the existence of a purely relative being has been admitted, some other beings must exist, namely subject, term, and foundation. But all these are as it were the matter of relation and so are not formally the relation nor formally 'existing-to'; therefore they are absolute beings. But even on the other opinion, this proposition can in some way be saved. For if relative being is formally a being of reason with a foundation in the thing, something truly real and therefore absolute is required, namely the foundation itself.

53. From the nature of relation it is plain that relation cannot be found nor be known unless subject, term, and foundation are present and known respectively at the same time. And in this sense can the Aristotelian-Scholastic dictum be understood: 'relatives are simultaneous in nature and in understanding'.

Article 2: On Simple and Composite Being

On Simple and Composite

Simple being is that which lacks parts. Composite being, on the other hand, is that which consists of parts united with each other. There is a physical composite if the thing consists of parts really distinct. There is a metaphysical composite if the thing consists of formalities that are united in such a way with each other that they have the idea of parts, as genus and difference. Formalities that do not have the idea of parts do not impede simplicity in a being, as science and will in God.

Some Conclusions

54. Every composite depends on its parts as on a material cause; for the parts are the principles of which the composite consists. Hence parts are the material principle of a composite.

55. Every composite is an effect. This point follows from conclusion 21, because a composite is something that is matter-ed (see the preceding conclusion).

56. Every composite is composed ultimately of simple elements. From conclusion 16, we cannot proceed infinitely with respect to material causes essentially ordered. Therefore we must reach some matter-ing that is not matter-ed, that is, to a material cause that is not materially caused. But this non-matter-ed material cause is nothing other than a part that is not composed in its turn of other parts, which is the conclusion proposed.

57. An independent or uncausable being, because it is not an effect, is not composite; therefore such a being is simple. This follows from conclusion 55.

58. If there is something composite, there is something simple. This follows from conclusion 56 with respect to a first being in the order of material causality. But from the existence of the composite we can also infer the existence of a first being in the order of efficient causality. For if something is composite it is also an effect (from conclusion 55), and dependent (from conclusion 28). Therefore some ineffectible efficient cause is required (from conclusions 23 to 27). But every ineffectible being is simple (from conclusion 57).

59. Every composite consists of act and potency. For parts have in their formal concept the idea of mutual perfectibility, and so are in potency to the whole.

60. Hence composition is a mixed perfection. This follows from the preceding conclusion and also from the fact that a composite is caused and dependent on another; for being a dependent being involves some imperfection in the dependent being. Simplicity, on the contrary, involves no such imperfection.

Article 3: On Infinite and Finite

<u>On the Notion of Finite and Infinite</u>

Finite being is that which has boundaries or limits, or is that which has a being-ness circumscribed by limits. For a limit is a lack of some further reality.

The infinite in general is that which does not have limits. A distinction must be drawn between the infinite in act and the infinite in potency. The infinite in potency is the same as the indefinite, namely it is a being that is actually finite but can be increased without end.

The infinite in act, by contrast, or an infinite being simply, is that which has an unlimited being-ness. Such a being involves a double infinity, namely extensive and intensive. Extensive infinite excludes all limitation as to number of perfections, so that a being extensively infinite lacks no pure perfection; but nothing is said about whether any perfection exists in a finite or an infinite degree. Intensive infinity, by contrast, excludes all limitation within perfection itself, so that a being having a perfection intensively infinite possesses it in the highest degree possible, that is, in infinite degree. A being simply infinite, therefore, must have every pure perfection in the highest degree.

On the Priority of the Concept of the Infinite

Ontologists, illuminationists, and other innatists say that the notion of the finite must in some way be founded on the prior notion of the infinite, or at least that we have some positive notion of the infinite that is not derived from the notion of the finite. So the question arises as to which concept is prior, the finite or the infinite? I reply: ontologically or by nature infinite being is prior to the finite. But psychologically or in the temporal order of acquisition, the concept of the finite is prior for us. For experience teaches that: a) we know the finite through comparison of finite things with each other, both as to comprehension and as to extension. For one man is compared to another in strength, wisdom, size etc. Hence we see that one man lacks the perfection of another and so we know him to be imperfect or more imperfect than others without first conceiving infinite perfection; b) the mind reaches the notion of the infinite through a positive (not merely precise) removal of limits; 'through a positive removal', for if the mind merely prescinds from limits a notion of infinite being is not got but of being in general. This argument is confirmed by the fact that our intellect, at least in this life, cannot conceive the infinite in a positive way; hence the Greeks, as Aristotle (*Physics* 3.6), believed that the perfect is finite and that the infinite, by contrast, is necessarily imperfect, because the infinite as infinite is not intelligible.

From this is plain that the notion of the infinite, although it expresses some positive reality, namely a being having every perfection in the highest degree, is formed by a double negation, namely by negation of limits and by a negation of some lack of being-ness.

The infinite is not made by addition of finites, and therefore the difference between the finite and the infinite cannot be something finite. The reason is that finite things always have ends or limits; the infinite, by contrast, lacks limits. The finite and the infinite, therefore, are opposed as contradictories with respect to being. But between contradictories there is neither degree nor distance.

Some Conclusions

61. Every mixed perfection can be reduced to one or several pure perfections that exist concretely in a limited degree. The reason is that the imperfection by virtue of which some perfection is said to mixed is nothing other than the lack of being-ness. Therefore in itself formally imperfection is something negative and not positive; for it is the negation of some positive perfection. Therefore it always involves something else, namely a positive being-ness of which there is a limitation. This positive being-ness in its formal concept either includes imperfection and hence is a mixed perfection, or does not include imperfection and hence is a pure perfection. If it is a pure perfection the conclusion is gained. If it is mixed, the same question will return: Is the positive perfection in which the imperfection of this mixed perfection inheres a pure perfection or a mixed one? So either there would be an infinite regress and so there would be no perfection, or a stand would be made in some pure perfection, which is the conclusion intended. So, for example, reasoning, which is formally a mixed perfection, can be reduced to understanding, which is a

pure perfection. Likewise, the extension of parts beyond parts can be reduced to simples that have a definitive presence in space etc.

62. No pure perfection is incompatible with another pure perfection. This is plain from the definition of pure perfection; for a pure perfection or a perfection simply is that whose formal idea does not involve limitation or imperfection. Therefore of itself such a perfection cannot limit the being-ness of the subject in which it is, and so neither can it exclude from its subject other perfections simply.

63. Everything finite, therefore, is a caused being or a being from-another. This follows from the two previous conclusions. For a being is finite because it is constituted either from mixed perfections or from pure perfections finite in number or degree. But from conclusion 61, all mixed perfections can be reduced to pure perfections in finite degree. But, from its own definition, no pure perfection contains in itself a reason for limiting itself intensively, nor does it have a reason for excluding other pure perfections from the being in which this perfection is (from conclusion 62). Therefore if a full and sufficient reason for the actual limitation of a finite being cannot be found in the positive being-ness of the finite being itself, it must be in some other being, namely in the cause that gives the finite being its positive being-ness. In other words, no finite thing qua finite is from-itself, but everything of this sort is from-another.

64. Conversely, no being that is altogether independent and uncausable can be finite, either intensively or extensively.

65. If there is something finite, there is something infinite. I prove it as follows: a finite being, because it is also a caused being, involves the existence of another being, namely an uncaused being (from conclusion 23 and following). But from conclusion 64, an uncaused being is both intensively and extensively infinite.

66. An infinite being actually exists. This follows from the fact that there exists an uncausable being (conclusion 27) or a being from-itself (conclusion 33). But it can be proved immediately as follows: There is or can be something. Such a thing is either finite or infinite. But the finite involves another infinite being (from conclusion 65). Therefore in either case, if something can be, an infinite being can be. But if an infinite being can be it must be, both because it is uncausable and because, if it lacked actual existence, it would not be infinite.

67. Being is divided into finite and infinite. The existence of finite being is plain from experience. But it can be inferred from other things already proved, for example from the fact that being is causable. For a caused being lacks the perfection of from-itselfness. The existence of the infinite follows from conclusions 65 and 66.

<u>On the other Disjunctive Attributes and on the Law of Disjunction</u>

Besides the disjunctive attributes we have already noted, “there are an unlimited number of others in beings” (Scotus, *Oxon*. 1 d.39 q.un n.13). By way of conclusion, therefore, we can lay down some general principles that are valid for every true disjunctive where two contradictory attributes, just like necessary and contingent, caused and uncaused etc., are opposed with respect to being such that we can say ‘every being is either A or not-A, B or not-B, C or not-C’ etc., where A, B, C are any perfections of being.

68. When being is divided through contradictory attributes opposite to each other with respect to being, one of the dividing attributes belongs to a perfection in being and the other to imperfection. The reason is that one extreme of the disjunction formally involves the negation of the other. But both perfections cannot formally be perfections simply or pure perfections because, from conclusion 62, pure perfections cannot formally exclude each other. Likewise, both extremes cannot formally be imperfections or mixed perfections, otherwise no being could be infinite (against conclusion 65). But a true disjunctive should include under one or other extreme every actual or potential being. Therefore one extreme is a perfection (a pure perfection) and the other an imperfection (a mixed perfection).

69. From this follows a general law of disjunction, namely that in disjunct properties of being, when the extreme that is less noble is posited of any being, the other more noble extreme can be deduced about some other being (see Scotus *ibid*.). The reason is that the one extreme involves imperfection and is therefore finite, while the other involves perfection simply or pure perfection. But from conclusion 65, if something is finite, something else is infinite and has all pure perfections in the highest degree.

Part Three: On Simply Infinite Being

> All creatures are deficient and reduced to God himself, who is the beginning and end of everything, below whom there is neither perfect rest nor perfect condition (St. Bonaventure, *Sentences* 2 d.14 p.1 a.3 q.1 ad 3).
>
> Let everyone say: Lord, I came from you are highest, I come to you who are highest, and through you who are highest (id. *In Hexaemeron* 1.17).

The preceding treatment of the disjunctive attributes of being was brought to completion through a consideration in particular of Infinite Being itself, in which the perfect member of every disjunction is found. So this third part embraces three chapters, namely a first about the existence and nature of a single Infinite Being, a second about this Being's intellectual life internally, a third about this Being's operation externally.

Chapter 1: On the Existence and Nature of the One Infinite Being

Article 1: On the Existence of a Single God

Principal Argument

We have already proved the existence of at least one being that is absolutely permanent (conclusion 7 of part two), immutable (conclusion 13), uncaused, independent, unconditioned (conclusion 28), a being from-itself (conclusion 33), necessarily existent (conclusion 35), pure act (conclusion 47), substantial (conclusion 51), simple (conclusion 57), possessed of every pure perfection in the highest degree and so simply infinite (conclusion 66). Now it is also necessary to prove that only one such thing exists and that there is and can be no other in addition to it. Such a being by definition we call God.

We can briefly recapitulate the essentials of the preceding proofs and complete them in the following demonstration of the existence of one God.

Beginning from the necessary and evident proposition that 'it is possible that something exists', we lay down three conclusions: first, that some being from-itself actually exists; second, that such a being is infinitely perfect; third, that only a single being infinitely perfect can exist.

Conclusion 1: Some being from-itself actually exists.

I prove this conclusion summarily as follows: if something can exist, this something is either a being from-itself altogether independent or a being from-another and so dependent with respect to its continued existence. If it is from-another there is required at the same time a cause conserving it in existence. If this cause is not a being from-itself there is either a) an infinite regress in conserving causes, or b) a circle in such causes, or c) there is an ultimate stand in some being simply first, namely in a first conserver that is not conserved by anything because it

is a being from-itself. But an infinite regress in conserving causes is impossible, for such causes must be simultaneous. The like must be said of a circle in conserving causes. Therefore in either case, in order that something be able to exist, there is required as a condition sine qua non some other being that exists from-itself. But if a being from-itself did not actually exist, it could not exist. Hence in brief, if it is possible that something exist, a being from-itself must exist. But it is possible that something exist, as is plain from experience. Therefore some being from-itself actually exists.

Conclusion 2: Every being from-itself must have every pure perfection in the highest degree and hence is both intensively and extensively perfect.

Every finite being is from-another, because no such thing has in its positive being-ness any sufficient reason as to why it lacks any pure perfection and indeed in the highest degree. Therefore the reason for its limitation must be found in something else, namely in its cause. Conversely, no being from-itself can be finite either intensively or extensively.

Conclusion 3: Only one infinite being can exist.

This conclusion involves two things: a) that existing-from-itself belongs to only one nature, because such a being is infinite; b) that a plurality of such from-itself natures is excluded. For Scholastics admit a double unity, namely essential or quidditative unity and the unity of singularity. The first excludes a multiplicity of species within the same genus, or the sort of multiplicity found, for example, in the genus of animal, which includes several species, as man, dog, horse, insect, amoeba, etc. The second excludes a multiplicity of individuals within the same species, or the sort of multiplicity found, for example, in Peter and Paul, who differ as individuals within the same species of man.

Proof of the two parts: By the first is excluded the possibility of there being several infinite beings diverse in species in this way. To only one nature does it belong to be infinite, for if several essentially diverse natures can exist they would have to differ by reason of some essential perfection that was pure. The independence of a being from-itself or infinite being would exclude all reason for limitation. But on this supposition one or other nature would lack some pure perfection, namely the perfection by which it would differ from another. But the consequent is false; therefore the antecedent is too.

Secondly, one must note that this infinite nature is also of itself individual and singular. The sense is that this nature qua nature is such as to be unable to be multiplied in several individuals, and so no difference contracting this nature to this individual is required. But it is not to be wondered at that this is not immediately or directly perceived in this life. For, as we said above in the chapter on individuation, all our concepts proper to God are derived from creatures, namely by affirming or denying the perfections found in creatures; and so nothing is found in such concepts, constructed or composed of common notions, that is prima facie repugnant to existing in several individuals. Hence the human mind can indeed ask: why cannot there be several infinite beings that differ only numerically? Nevertheless the same reason that excludes a multiplicity of infinite species in the

same genus also prohibits a plurality of infinitely perfect individuals, for if there were two beings completely identical in positive being-ness, they would not be two but one being. But if anything does differ from a completely perfect or infinite being, it would be because it lacks some perfection that is found in the infinite being. Hence there can be a plurality of beings precisely because all beings beside the infinite being are finite. We can therefore prove this infinite nature to be of itself individual and singular as follows:

Now it is an empty question to ask: what is the positive perfection whereby the infinite differs from the finite and why it cannot be found in several individuals? For as long as we have to form our distinct concepts by comparison with likenesses in other things, so that such concepts, precisely as distinct, are universal or composed of universal features (as, for example, an infinite being is composed positively of the feature of being and negatively of the feature of the finite), we cannot express the ultimate positive difference of a thing distinctly and in a positive way, but only indirectly and in a negative way, for example when we say that one individual must differ from another by something positive that the other lacks. So as long as we conceive the individuating reason that is ultimate in the order of singularity, properness, and unicity, it is in vain that through concepts universal, improper, and common alone we seek for a response in some individuating reason why this reason cannot multiply in many things. That this question is indeed vain ("a meaningless question") surely appears from consideration of this fact. Many individuals exist and are known, as is positively clear from immediate and intuitive experience. Hence individuals are really known in some way. Not indeed distinctly,[24] as is plain from the notion of distinct knowledge (namely through definition or common concepts), along with the fact at the same time that no individual is perfectly known, because our perfect or distinct knowledge of any individual does not point out or explain why it is precisely this and not something else. Hence the strength of the argument of ours adduced above must not be judged by the difficulty or rather impossibility of distinctly conceiving that by virtue of which an individual is precisely this and not something else like it, but must rather be judged by the light of this whole fundamental principle, namely that no individual is conceived in its individuality perfectly and distinctly (that is, by common or universal notions). Hence besides what it has in common with other things, one being differs from another being by something positive such that one has what the other lacks.

---

[24] See what we said above about the principle of individuation. If we are able to know distinctly what the essential individuating difference is, we can distinguish, for example, two identical twin brothers, even if they were miraculously in the same place such that they were alike not only as to essentials but also as to all accidentals. Likewise, if the same individual, say Peter, were miraculously bilocated, we would certainly know that Peter is one bilocated man and not identical twins. *[Translator's note: an odd remark by Wolter, which might hold of Scotus' hecceity but not of St. Thomas' designated matter or of Ockham's primacy of individuals. There is presumably no essential difference in the last two cases, because there is then either no difference in the designated matter or no real universal to be individuated. An individual is known by his being as individual, and if an individual is in the same place etc. as another, everything about it is about this individual and there is no other; and if an individual is bilocated his bilocation hides recognition of his individuality unless made known, not by his being as one individual, but by his somehow indicating that in this case, despite difference of location, he is one individual.]*

We can therefore prove this infinite nature to be of itself individual and singular as follows:

1) Principal argument: if this nature were not of itself a this and hence were able to exist in several individuals, these individuals would have to differ by something positive, which can be called hecceity. Now this hecceity would be a pure perfection.[25] Therefore if several individuals existed, they could not be infinitely perfect, because each would lack the hecceity of the other. The consequent is false, therefore also the antecedent.

2) Confirmation from Scotus (*On the First Principle* ch.4 concl.11): A multiplicable species is of itself multiplicable infinitely; therefore if an infinite being could be multiplied, an infinite multitude of infinite beings would actually exist; for if an infinite being can exist it must and does actually exist. The consequent is unacceptable and is admitted by no philosopher.

Some Corollaries

1. Whatever besides God actually exists or can exist is a) dependent on God as on the first cause, and b) a finite or limited being. For these conclusions follow from the unicity of a being altogether independent and infinitely perfect; for if anything besides God were a being from-itself, it too would have to be infinitely perfect. But there cannot be two infinite beings.

2. No being that we now experience can be God, because everything we experience is transient, finite, etc., and so lacks the perfection that belongs to God.

3. Therefore the falsity of pantheism, whether material or idea, is manifestly plain; for God cannot be the world as such, since the world is changeable, composite, in potency, dependent etc. Nor can the world be part of God, for God, because of his simplicity, excludes all such composition.

4. Likewise the absurdity of divine evolution is plain. For every system that holds God to be in the process of evolution in the course of time must deny both the simplicity and unchangeableness of God. Hence 'emergent evolution' and many other like systems of modern thinkers are in error.

5. If all mixed perfections are reducible to a plurality of pure perfections existing in limited degree, and if an infinite being possesses all pure perfections, the consequent is that God in some way possesses every positive perfection that is found or can be found in creatures, and indeed possesses it in unlimited degree. Accordingly God seems to differ from creatures by something positive not possessed by creatures. Creatures, by contrast, do *not*[26] seem, in the ultimate analysis, to differ from God by any positive perfection precisely but rather because they lack some perfection that God has. This notion is also expressed in the theory of participation, according to which creatures are finite or imperfect likenesses of God insofar as any

[25] Such positive element that perfects an individual in its individuality would certainly be a perfection, but not a mixed perfection because everything such can be reduced to a pure perfection in limited degree while the infinity of such an individual would exclude all limitation in pure perfections.

[26] *Translator's note: the 'not' is missing in the Latin text but its omission seems to be a typographical error and not intended.*

perfection possessed by them is found in God either formally or virtually or eminently.

Article 2: Other Arguments for the Existence of God

Many other arguments for the existence of God have been worked out in the course of time, among which the following come to mind: Aristotle's argument from motion (*Physics* 8.5), St. Augustine's proof from truth (*On Free Choice* 2.12-15), the famous argument of St. Anselm, the triple way of St. Bonaventure (*Disputed Question on the Mystery of the Trinity* q.1 a.1), the five ways of St. Thomas, the very fine demonstration of Scotus, Ockham's proof from conservation (see Boehner, 'Zu Ockhams Beweis der Existenz Gottes', *Franz*. *Stud*. 32, 1950, 50ff), and the argument of Peter Auriol (see Schmücker, 'Propositio per se nota, Gottesbeweis und ihr Verhältnis nach Petrus Aureoli, *Franz*. *Forsch*., Heft 8, Werl i., Westf., 1941). We cannot, of course, deal with all of these in this little summary of metaphysics. About the more famous of these proofs the following few remarks should be noted.

1. <u>On the argument of St. Anselm.</u> This famous argument is expressed by St. Anselm thus:

> Therefore, O Lord, who gives understanding to faith, give to me, so that I may, as much as you know is expedient, to understand that you are as we believe, and that you are that which we believe. And indeed we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be conceived. Is there not then any such nature, because the fool has said in his heart 'there is no God'? But certainly this same fool, when he hears the very thing I say 'something than which nothing greater can be conceived', understands what he hears, and that which he understands is in his intellect, even if he does not understand that it exists. For it is one thing for a thing to be in the intellect and another to understand that it exists. For when a painter thinks first of what he is going to make, he has it indeed in his intellect but does not yet understand that what he has not yet made exists. So when he has now painted it, he both has it in his intellect and understands that what he has made exists. So the fool too is convinced that that than which nothing greater can be conceived is indeed in his intellect, because when he hears this he understands it, and whatever is understood is in the intellect. And certainly that than which nothing greater can be conceived cannot be in the intellect alone. For if it is indeed in the intellect alone, it can be thought to be in reality, which is greater. So if that than which nothing greater can be conceived is in the intellect alone, the very thing than which nothing greater can be conceived is that than which something greater can be conceived. But this certainly impossible. So there without doubt exists something than which nothing greater can be conceived both in the intellect and in reality (*Proslogion* ch.2).

<u>Criticism</u>. This argument, which is also called 'ontological' and 'a priori', has found favor with many Scholastics, among whom are Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Matthew of Aquasparta, etc., and among moderns such as Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza. Nevertheless it does not seem to be a valid argument, unless it be proved that such a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is

possible or capable of existing. Such a concept, like all others proper to God, is a composite one. But whether something corresponds to this concept in the real order needs also to be proved. That such a being is possible can easily be shown a posteriori beginning from creatures as caused. But if the argument is thus strengthened, it ceases to be a priori and a per se nota proposition.

2. The Argument from Motion. This Aristotelian argument is the first way of St. Thomas, who argues as follows:

> Now the first and more manifest way is the one taken from the side of motion. For it is certain and clear to sense that some things are in motion in this world. But everything that is moved is moved by another. For nothing is moved save as it is in potency to that to which it is moved; but a thing moves according as it is in act. For to move is nothing other than to lead something from potency to act; but nothing can be reduced from potency to act save through some being that is in act; just as the hot in act, as fire, makes the wood, which is hot in potency, to be hot in act, and thus does it move and alter the wood. But it is not possible for the same thing to be in potency and act at the same time in the same respect, but only diverse things can be; for what is hot in act cannot be hot in potency at the same time, but it is cold in potency. Therefore it is impossible that something be in the same respect and in the same way both mover and moved, or be mover of itself. So everything that is moved must be moved by another. If that, then, by which something is moved is itself moved, it too must be moved by another, and that by another. But this process cannot go on to infinity because thus there would be no first mover and consequently nothing else would move either, because second movers do not move save because they are moved by a first mover, just as a stick does not move save because it is moved by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to come to some first mover that is moved by nothing, and this all understand to be God (*ST* Ia q.2 a.3).

Criticism: This argument, reckoned by St. Thomas to be the first and more manifest way, is commonly today, because of the criticism of Scotus, reckoned to be the weakest of the five ways of the Angelic Doctor. About the argument the following need to be noted: a) The principle 'whatever is moved is moved by another' is not a per se nota proposition nor does it seem to be universally valid (Scotus, *Oxon*. 1 d.3 q.7, 2 d.2 q.10, 2 d.25 q.un, *Questions on Metaphysics* 9 q.14). b) The argument that is founded on the impossibility of passing from potency to act save as by a being in act does not seem to be valid, because an agent, insofar as an agent has an active power, virtually contains its own action even before it actually acts. This is plain certainly about the will and probably about the intellect and other principles of motion. Insofar, then, as the argument is restricted precisely to the physical order, namely to motion considered in the strict sense (neither creation nor conservation is strictly speaking change), it only proves, as Cajetan admits, that there is a first mover but not necessarily to a unique first mover nor, a fortiori, to a first being that 'all understand to be God'. But this argument, which is certainly a physical one according to Aristotle and probably also according to Thomas, is called metaphysical by many Thomists. If it is reduced to other arguments, as to the argument of causality or of contingency, it can in some way be upheld.

3. The Argument from Efficient Causality. This argument is stated by St. Thomas as follows:

> The second way is from the idea of efficient causality. For we find that in sensible things there is an order of efficient causes; but it is not found to be the case nor is it possible that something be the efficient cause of itself, for then it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. And neither is it possible to have an infinite regress in efficient causes. For in all ordered efficient causes the first is the cause of what is intermediate and the intermediate the cause of the last, whether the intermediate is many or only one; but when the cause is removed the effect is removed; so if there is no first in efficient causes there will be no intermediate and no last. But if there is an infinite regress in efficient causes there will be no first efficient cause, and so there will be neither an ultimate effect nor intermediate efficient causes, which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to posit some first efficient cause, which everyone names God (*ibid*.).

Criticism: The argument is per se valid but incomplete. For it is necessary to show that the first efficient cause is the same as God. Averroes and Aristotle himself hold that the first efficient cause and the first final cause are not one and the same thing. The ancients admit generally there are many beings existing from eternity and by necessity, as prime matter, first movers, the highest God. The Manichaeans agree there are many first efficient causes, namely causes of bad and of good.

4. The Argument from Contingency. The argument is thus set out by St. Thomas:

> The third way is taken from the possible and necessary and is of this sort. For we find in things some that are possibles for being and for not being, since some things are found to be generated and corrupted, and consequently possible for being and for not being. But it is impossible for all such things to exist for ever, because what is possible for not being is at some time not. So if everything is possible for not being, there was at some time nothing in fact. But if this is true, then even now there would be nothing; for what is not does not begin to be save through something that is; so if there was no being, it was impossible that anything would come to be, and thus nothing would now exist, which is plainly false. Therefore not all beings are possible beings, but there must be something necessary in things. But everything necessary either has a cause of its necessity from somewhere else or does not. But there cannot be an infinite regress in necessary things that have a cause of their necessity, just as neither is this possible in efficient causes, as has been proved. Therefore it is necessary to posit something that is per se necessary, not having a cause of its necessity from elsewhere but being cause of necessity for other things, which everyone says is God (*ibid*.).

Criticism: Among the five ways of St. Thomas this argument is the strongest and certainly valid, though, as it is ordinarily formulated, it seems incomplete; for as was said of the preceding proof, almost all the ancients admitted, either explicitly or implicitly, a plurality of principles existing necessarily from themselves. However, if it is taken in a universal sense the major premise is difficult to prove directly, namely that the things of the world are not radically necessary. At most we can say that whatever we experience is possible. But as is plain from our own earlier

argument, a single case alone of dependence suffices for demonstrating the existence of a being altogether independent and necessary. When the unicity of this same thing has been proved, it follows that all other beings are possibles, or from another.

5. Argument from the Degrees of Perfection of Things in the World: This argument is called 'henological' and is thus given by St. Thomas.

> The fourth way is taken from the degrees that are found in things. For in things is found something more and something less good, and true, and noble, and so of other things of the sort. But more and less are said of diverse things according as they diversely approach something that is greatest, as the more hot is that which approaches the most hot. So there is something that is truest, and best, and noblest, and consequently greatest being; for things that are most true are most beings, as said by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 2.1. But what is said to be the greatest of the sort in any genus is cause of all that is in that genus, as fire, which is most hot, is cause of all hot things (as said in the same book). So there is something that is for all beings cause of existence and of goodness and of any perfection whatever, and this we call God (*ibid*.)

Criticism: This argument does perhaps prove a first being in the order of perfection or eminence. But that such a being is unique or the cause of all other beings needs to be proved. Hence Scotus in his own demonstration of the triple primacy of God, namely the order of efficiency, of finality, and of eminence, has a special proof that these three primacies must be found in one and the same nature. But it seems that this argument could be otherwise and better formulated thus: it is clear that there exist in things of the world diverse degrees of diverse pure perfections. A sufficient reason for this limitation is not in the perfection itself but from outside; therefore the limitation of pure perfections in things of the world is from outside or from a being that narrows them down. A regress to infinity is impossible; therefore a stand is made at an unlimited and infinite being.

6. Argument from the Finality of the World: This argument is commonly resolved into two, namely into a teleological argument or an argument of finality in a proper sense and into an argument of order in the world. It is found in St. Thomas as follows:

> The fifth way is taken from the governance of things. For we see that some things which lack knowledge, namely natural bodies, act for an end; the fact appears from this, that they act always or more frequently in the same way so as to attain what is best; hence it is plain that they reach their end not by chance but by intention. But things that lack knowledge do not tend to an end unless directed by something that knows and understands, as an arrow shot by an archer. Therefore this is some intelligent thing by which all natural things are ordered to the end, and this we say is God (*ibid*.).

Criticism: Although the notion of finality in the world was most vehemently attacked in the past century as anthropomorphism by natural philosophers, today an agreement about the existence of some finality in the nature of things is

continually growing. But even with finality admitted, this argument does not immediately prove God. The cause of order and finality in the world can be some inferior being, as the Intelligence (see Avicenna etc.) or the world soul. Once the existence of God has been proved as first cause of all other beings, the order and finality in the world can be used to prove the intelligence or wisdom of God. Nevertheless it does not per se prove the infinite wisdom of God, and presupposes the refutation of idealism. This argument, like that from motion, is physical and not metaphysical. But if it is considered scientifically one must say that it lacks metaphysical certainly and enjoys at most physical certitude.

7. Moral Arguments: a) From the desire for happiness (eudaimonological). Man has a natural desire for happiness; it is plain from common and scientific experience that nature has done nothing in vain; so there must exist an object in which this desire can be fulfilled; but it can never be fulfilled save by an infinite good; therefore an infinite good, that is, God, exists. The minor is proved in two ways. First: the more that finite goods are given to man, the more and greater goods do they desire; human appetite therefore cannot be made happy by finite goods. Second: neither goods of the body, nor goods of the soul, nor external goods, nor all created goods taken together can make man blessed.

b) From moral obligation (deontological). Necessity or moral obligation cannot be imposed on the will save by a proportionate good; but moral obligation is absolute; therefore it can only be imposed by an absolute or infinite good. The major is plain from the nature of the will; the minor is plain from internal experience, for we feel intimately that no finite good, with transgression of the moral law perhaps conjoined, no evil, which could be avoided by violating the law, are of so great weight as to render the action licit or excusable.

c) From the consensus of the human race (ethnological). Among all men there exists ineradicable conviction about the existence of some supreme divinity; but this conviction cannot come save from rational nature, and so is infallibly true.

Criticism: moral arguments in general are confirmations rather than true demonstrations. For the presuppose a principle of causality and are more of less modifications of the argument of causality. From some specific effect, as the existence of moral obligation, inference is made to God as the sole adequate cause of the effect. These arguments attract the uneducated and simple of heart, and so per se are not to be spurned. About the argument from universal consensus in particular it is noted that the consensus is not universal absolutely speaking. But it is so general that it demands an explanation in rational nature itself. Although, when the existence of God is not yet supposed, the infallibility of the human intellect under certain conditions can be sustained with great probability, we are certain about the matter only when the existence of God has been proved.

8. On the Argument of Duns Scotus (*Oxon*. 1 d.2 part 1; *On the First Principle*): Form the proposition 'something is able to be effected or effectible', which is immediately inferred from experience, Scotus proves a triple primacy of the first being, namely: I. In the order of efficiency he demonstrates that 1) something able to

effect or effective is simply first; 2) an effective simply first is uncausable; 3) some first effective thing is actually existent. II. In the order of finality he likewise proves from the same proposition 'something is effectible' three conclusions, that 1) some finalizing being, that is, which cannot be ordered to anything else and is not of a nature to finalize other things in virtue of something else, is simply first; 2) a first finalizer is uncausable; 3) a first finalizer actually exists. III. In the order of eminence he shows that 1) some eminent nature is simply first in perfection; 2) a supreme nature is uncausable; 3) a supreme nature actually exists.

Next Scotus shows that this triple primacy, namely of efficiency, finality, and eminence, belongs to the same quiddity or nature. Having proved these relative properties of the first being, he proceeds further to prove the infinity of the first being. Having proved infinity, he demonstrates that God is unique in nature, using six (or seven) arguments: namely first from infinite intellect, second from infinite will, third from infinite goodness, fourth from the idea of infinite power, fifth from the idea of the infinite absolutely, sixth from the idea of necessary existence, seventh from the idea of omnipotence.

Criticism: This argument is a very fine example of the art of demonstration in the Middle Ages, and is perhaps the best of all the proofs put forward by the Scholastics. It can indeed be brought forward as an example of a scientific argument for the existence of God, and this for the following reasons: 1) it begins from the lowest level of actual data; 2) then it proceeds through a series of dependent logical conclusions, none omitted; 3) it exhibits all the requirements of the most strict Aristotelian demonstration, because it takes its origin from premises both necessary and evident; 4) it never presupposes the notion of the existence of God as already proved but evolves it with the greatest care. But notwithstanding these most excellent qualities, the argument does present me with some difficulties, namely as to the method of proving God's infinity and of proving his primacy in the order of finality. The former difficulty is of greater moment, but the latter can be avoided by rejection of the axiom 'every agent acts for an end', if we begin directly from our own internal experience, namely that at least one agent acts for an end.

Article 3: On the Knowability of God

By way of conclusion we can add on some things about the knowability of God in general. Philosophers indeed have in the course of time proposed the following questions: 1) Can God be known with certainty by the natural light of reason? 2) How can we know the existence and nature of God? 3) What, in our mode of conceiving, seems to be the essence of God? We will deal with these questions one by one in this article

Q.1. On the Natural Knowability of God

There are some who say that we have no knowledge at all of the existence and nature of God (atheists, agnostics), or at least no certain knowledge (probabilists), or if we are certain subjectively our certitude is not founded on any evidence

naturally perceptible by our intellect but arises from faith, or the religious sense, or in some non-rational way (fideists, sentimentalists, etc.).

In brief it must be said that the falsity of all such opinions follows from what was said above. For from our argument for the existence of God as an infinite and unique being, which we reckon to be demonstrative and metaphysically certain, we can says that God is in some way knowable to us by the light of natural reason through the things that are made and that we experience of ourselves.

Q.2. On the Way that we Know God

Positively we can say, following the lead of Scotus (*Oxon*. 1 d.3 part one q.1) that our knowledge of God is: 1) Positive and not merely negative, because a purely negative knowledge is no knowledge. 2) Quidditative or essential and not merely knowledge of his existence or attributes, for in understanding existence or property we must pre-understand some quasi-subject in which we understand that quasi-property to be present in; therefore we do not merely understand whether God is but to some extent and imperfectly what God is. 3) Not merely in a concept analogous to the concept of a creature which, concept is altogether other than the one said of a creature, but in some concept univocal to God and creatures. This is plain directly from experience and indirectly follows once innatism, illuminationism, and ontologism have been rejected (see below). 4) Proper, but through concepts composed of common concepts. We can attain to many concepts proper to God that do not belong to creatures, for example, supreme being, infinite good, pure act, supreme legislator, etc. But concepts of this sort are not proper notions from proper notions but from transcendental notions, as first, supreme, being, good, which are predicated in common of God and creatures. 5) Notions abstracted from creatures, for as Scotus says, "All metaphysical investigation of God proceeds as follows: a) by considering the formal idea of something, and b) by taking away from that formal idea the imperfection that it has in creatures, and c) by keeping that formal idea and attributing to it altogether supreme perfection, and by thus attributing it to God" (*Oxon*. ibid.). Note the triple way, namely of affirmation, of negation, and of eminence.

Negatively we can reject some other ways either as simply false and contrary to experience or at least as insufficiently proved. The chief of this sort are: 1) the way of innatism, which teaches that our idea of God is innate; 2) the way of ontologism, which holds that the existence of God can be immediately and intuitively perceived; 3) the way of illuminationism, which postulates that no certain truth can be naturally known by us without a special illumination of uncreated light, and which teaches in particular that the transcendental notions that are predicated per se and properly of God and only by participation and improperly of creatures, as being, one, true, good, necessary existence, are impressed in some way on the soul by God; 4) the way of traditionalism, which teaches that no truth, or at least no religious and moral truths, can be known, but that the first parents received by revelation from God ideas and knowledge of such truths in general and especially knowledge of God in particular, and handed it on by oral tradition to their posterity. Some, like Bonald, Lamennais, and Bautain deny to the human intellect all possibility of demonstrating the existence of God; but others (Bonetty, Ventura)

concede that we can prove it but once revelation has been given; 5) the way of modernism. Under this name we understand any system holding on the hand the impossibility of demonstrating or proving the existence of God by reason, and on the other hand affirming that God can be known by some appetitive faculty or blind instinct or emotional apprehension. This faculty is named differently by different people, for example practical reason (Kant), religions sense (sentimentalists, as Schleiermacher, Graty, etc.), common sense (Reid, Oswald, Dugald Stewart etc.), principle of vital immanence or vital experience (modernism in the strict sense, as Tyrrell and others). Look for what should be said about these opinions in psychology or elsewhere.

On the Univocity and Analogy of Transcendental Being

Closely connected with the theory of knowledge and the possibility of knowing God is the question whether the notion of transcendental being, insofar as it is predicated in the 'what' of everything, is univocal or analogous. The question is not whether there is something in reality common to God and creatures (which Scholastics generally deny), but whether we do in truth have some concept that can be predicated in common of God and creatures; or whether all our concepts predicable of God are only analogous to concepts predicable of creatures. The controversy seems to be more between Thomists and Scotists than between the mind of Thomas, which Cajetan perhaps wrongly understood, and Scotus when he says there is "no reality common to God and creatures, and neither is the intellect false that has about them a univocal concept" (*Collationes* q.4). In order better to understand the controversy, the following few remarks should be noted:

Notes on the Question:

Transcendental being is said univocally in the 'what', or quidditatively, of everything that, beginning from the reality itself of experience, we can know by natural reason in this life.

A. We speak indeed of the concept or idea of transcendental being as a simply simple, fully indeterminate, and determinable idea. So we do not speak merely of the name of being. Names are said to be predicated univocally or equivocally, insofar as they are predicated according to the same idea or not according to the same idea. We can distinguish, according to Boethius, between names equivocal by happenstance and those equivocal by design: "Of equivocals some are by happenstance, some by design. By happenstance as Alexander son of Priam and Alexander the Great. For happenstance has brought it about that the same name is imposed on both. By design, however, are all those that have been imposed by the will of men. Now some of these are according to likeness, as a man in a painting and a true man, which is the example Aristotle uses. Others are according to proportion, as unity is the principle in number and point the principle in lines; and this equivocation is said to be by proportion. Others again are derived from one thing, as medical tool, medical complexion, for this equivocation derives from the one thing of medicine. Others are related to the one thing, as when someone says that a journey is healthy, the food is healthy, namely those that are equivocal because they

are referred to the same word 'health' (*On the Categories*, PL 64, 166b). Around the thirteenth century equivocation by design is called analogy and described as a sort of mean between purely equivocal and purely univocal words. But three things must be noted on this matter:

1. Analogous names are denominative names, and the idea that is predicated analogically of several things is said in the 'what sort', or qualitatively, of at least one of them. So, for example, both man and medicine are denominated healthy from the same health that man has and that medicine causes. And the term 'health' is predicated in the 'what', or quidditatively, only of the quality by which a man is healthy. It is predicated in the 'what sort', or qualitatively, both of man and medicine, namely 'man is healthy' and 'medicine is healthy'. Likewise, the name 'being' is predicated analogously of the substance and accident insofar as it signifies that only substance is a being simply and quidditatively, while accident is only a being in a certain respect and denominatively, for it is not a being simply but 'of a being'.

2. By contrast, one and the same simple idea can be predicated in the 'what', or quidditatively, of several things only univocally; for either it is predicated as the whole essence, or as a determinable part of the essence and as something absolute assertable of individuals per se and not merely insofar as they share an attribution with each other.

3. Names that are predicated quidditatively and qualitatively do not have altogether the same signification, for example 'health' and 'healthy', 'being' and 'of a being', 'existence' and 'possessing existence'. But their signification is not altogether diverse. So they are called denominatives that are, as it were, between the equivocal and the univocal. For where the signification of terms does not stay totally the same, the names are simply equivocal, because such names cannot be used in a syllogism without formal equivocation. And this holds for all analogous names insofar as they are analogous. Hence it is not to be wondered at that St. Thomas said, "The Philosopher (Aristotle) takes equivocals in a broad sense, insofar as they include the analogous, for even being, which is said analogically, is sometimes said to be predicated equivocally of diverse categories" (*ST* Ia q.13 a.10 ad 4)

When we speak of a concept that is predicated univocally, we say, with Scotus, that that concept is univocal "which is one in such a way that its unity suffices for contradiction, by affirming and denying it of the same thing. It suffices too for a middle term in syllogisms, so that extremes united in a middle term that is thus one are shown, without the fallacy of equivocation, to be united with each other" (*Oxon*. 1 d.3 q.2 n.5).

Our assertion is clear from both experience and reason. For we experience that nothing is called a true thing unless it is that to which existing is not repugnant, or in other words that nothing is named a thing unless its own proper concept contains the idea of being as the ultimate determinable idea to which that concept could be reduced. But in this case we are predicating a simply simple idea, and indeed predicating it quidditatively.

Our assertion is clear too from reason in respect of things whose existence we prove by reasoning, for example God or the substantial soul whose existence is proved from the (accidental) phenomena of experience. For we can demonstrate

nothing that cannot be conceived. Nothing that we actually experience can be conceived save through concepts composed of ideas abstracted from the things we experience. One at least of these ideas has to be positive, namely what is conceived as the first determinable subject and which can be determined through other and denominative ideas whether negative or positive. But this first or ultimate determinable is nothing other than the notion of transcendental being, which is abstracted from things of experience and is conceived as the subject ('being') of the further difference ('first', 'in itself' etc.) of any proper but composite concept either of God, as 'first being', 'infinite being', 'supreme being' etc., or of substance, as 'being in itself', 'being not in another'.

B. Is being univocally predicable of God and creatures?

Another disputed assertion is the one about the univocal predication of transcendental being of all things, especially of God and creatures, of substance and accident. For almost all Scholastics and net-scholastics outside the Scotistic school hold that transcendental being is not predicated either univocally or equivocally but is predicated analogically according to the analogy of proper proportionality or intrinsic attribution.

One must distinguish, they say, between analogy of proper proportionality and analogy of extrinsic attribution.

Analogy of extrinsic attribution (which is sometimes also called simply analogy of attribution) is when the idea that is said to be predicated analogically belongs *only extrinsically* to one or both of the items it is predicated of. So, for example, health is said of medicine, urine, and man by analogy of extrinsic attribution; for only a healthy man has the perfection of health intrinsically, while health is only extrinsically attributed to medicine and urine insofar as they are cause and sign of health in a man. Similarly, divinity is attributed only extrinsically to divine law and divine scripture. Again, the office and vestments of a priest are called priestly by extrinsic attribution.

Analogy of proper proportionality, or of intrinsic attribution, is when the idea that is predicated of two things (or of several things) in common belongs intrinsically to each member but in diverse ways; for example being, they say, is really in God but independently and primarily, while it is in creatures dependently and secondarily. The like must be said of substance, which is being simply, and accident, which is a being *of* being.

About the analogy of being the following need to be noted:

1. We do not deny that the noun 'being' can be predicated analogically of God and creatures, or of substance and accident, namely when by the noun 'being' we wish to signify God and creatures according to their total being-ness and so according to their proper idea. Thus if, for example, by the noun 'being' we mean to signify a being finite, dependent, secondary etc. in respect of creatures, then we concede that being is predicated analogically or, speaking logically, equivocally. But in this case we do not have one idea or concept simply but two ideas, namely being at least implicitly infinite etc. and being as finite, etc. Now this concept is not the concept of transcendental being we spoke of above, for being is a simply simple idea, maximally indefinite etc., and so indifferent as to finite and infinite. But no idea that

implicitly includes another idea actually in itself is indifferent to that included idea. And if you say, for example, that infinite is implicitly included in potency but not in act, I reply: potential inclusion does not impede univocity, otherwise a generic concept cannot be predicated univocally of its species, for a genus implicitly includes its species in potency. Hence Gredt O.S.B. well observes, "Things analogous by analogy of proper proportion have a concept that is one in a certain respect, imperfectly prescinded from its inferiors. For just as a concept univocal to its inferiors perfectly leaves out the differences with a perfect precision, so an analogous concept imperfectly leaves them out by confusing them together in some idea proportionally one that it alone explains. Therefore a univocal concept only contains potentially the differences of its inferiors, but an analogous concept contains the differences implicitly and confusedly" (*Elementa Philosophiae Arist.-Thomisticae,* Herder, 1937, I.133).

2. Now all analogical knowledge is relative knowledge, that is, it arises from comparison of two objects already in some way known, and consists precisely in the fact that a perfection perceived in one of the analogates is attributed to the other analogate because of some likeness, proportionality, etc. (among other things), or because one analogate is the cause or effect or sign of the perfection that the other has. Hence all analogical knowledge presupposes some previous knowledge of the analogates. If someone, therefore, wishes to say that no idea abstractable from the things we experience can be predicated of God save analogically, such a person should show how we know God. For, along with Scotus, we call that idea or that concept univocal which is one in such a way that it suffices for creating a contradiction if is affirmed and denied of the same thing, and that suffices for avoiding equivocation if it is used as the middle term of a syllogism. Therefore either God is totally unknown or some way of knowing God exists other than by way of the things we experience. But in either case our thesis stands, namely that being can be predicated univocally of things that can be naturally known by way of the things we experience. Similarly, the same must be said of substance, which is known by inference from the accidental things we experience (for Scotus' opinion here see Wolter, 'Duns Scotus on the Nature of Man's Knowledge of God', *Review of Metaphysics* 1 n.2, 1947).

C. Is the concept of being simply one or one in a certain respect?

The question about the unity of the notion of being is intimately connected with the dispute about the univocal or analogical predication of being with respect to God and creatures, substance and accidents. The very few who affirm that being is univocally predicated concede, as is plain from their definition of a univocal concept, that we have a concept of being truly and simply one. But others, who hold that being is neither equivocally nor univocally but analogically predicated of all beings, have very great difficulty in preserving the unity of the concept of being.

About the history of this problem the following may briefly be noted. Scholastics before the time of Scotus seem commonly to affirm that all names predicable of God and creatures are said of them neither univocally nor purely equivocally but analogically. But some think one way and others another about the unity of the concept of being.

First, there are the followers of Augustinian-Avicennism, who say that being, thing, etc. are the first impressions of the intellect, received either from God himself or from some intermediate and inferior subsisting intelligence (namely the agent intellect). According to them, indeed, being is truly one idea and one concept, but such concept is primarily and properly predicated of God alone and only secondarily and improperly and by analogy of creatures. Now these authors concede that this notion proper to God cannot really be derived from creatures, but there is required some infusion of illumination or some action of God or a superior being, for example angels or subsistent intelligences. This opinion seems to be that of Alexander of Hales, Roger Marston, Bonaventure, Avicenna, etc.

Second, there are those who deny true unity to the concept of being. Thus, for example, Henry of Ghent (d.1293) holds that we have two simply simple concepts, one of which is proper to God and the other common to creatures, but because of their very great likeness our intellect is unable to distinguish between them but is deceived in believing that the two are one. And if it is asked whence comes this notion or this concept that is proper to God and has nothing positive in common with the notions of creatures, Henry replies as follows: "Just as the estimative power of brutes by digging beneath perceived intentions knows non-perceived intentions, as the harmful and beneficial, so the intellect digs under the species of creatures, which only represents creatures, to come to know, through the alien species of creatures, the things that are and are said of God" (cited by Scotus, Oxon. 1 d.2 q.1).

Third, what St. Thomas thinks on this matter cannot easily be determined, for when speaking of the predicating of analogous names of God (*ST* Ia q.13) he certainly admits that names analogically predicated do not possess a single signification and idea. Therefore if being can only be predicated analogically of God and creatures, a concept simply one cannot be had but rather a concept one in a certain respect. On the other hand, in his disputed question *On Truth* 1 q.1, the Angelic Doctor is said to affirm the unity of the concept of being (see, for example, Cajetan, *Response to Two Questions on the Concept of Being to Franciscus de Ferraria*). He who wants to determine the true opinion of the Angelic Doctor, let him do so. But it is to be noted that St. Thomas denies the illuminationism of St. Augustine and holds that everything that the intellect knows it abstracts from sensible things. Hence whatever we know about God we know from creatures. If, then, it is said that the Angelic Doctor admits a double idea of being, and indeed simply simple ideas, one of which is proper to God and the other proper to creatures, I ask whence comes the notion proper to God? If it is said that the Angelic Doctor admits a true unity to the idea of being, I ask how the analogy of predication can be saved if some univocity is not admitted. It seems to me that St. Thomas does not perceive everything that follows from his negation of the theory of Augustine's illuminationism. This was the job of Scotus.

Fourth, Scotus clearly proves the impossibility of knowing God from creatures if a common and therefore univocal concept of being is denied. So cogent was his argumentation that even Thomists yielded much to him, especially about the unity of the concept of being. Hence Cajetan, Suarez, John of St. Thomas admit that being is an idea truly one and most simple. But how this doctrine about the unity of the concept can be reconciled with their negation of all univocal predication, I do not

know. For their distinctions do not seem to me to serve for the problem to be explained, but the more they are multiplied the more do things seem to be confused and obscured. Hence Gredt's judgment seems right, "Therefore the doctrine of Suarez is false when he teaches that one can save in analogies of attribution the fact that the idea signified is not only intrinsically in the principal analogate but also in the others, though in dependence on the first analogate" (*op.cit*.). So in no analogy can we have one concept simply but we always have several concepts with only the unity of connotation or unity in a certain respect, namely to the extent the ideas that are said to be one have some proportionality between them.

Among recent thinkers, however, some affirm and some deny the true unity of the concept of transcendental being. But let him understand their doctrine who can. The following points nevertheless seem to me need to be held.

1. The true and simple unity of the concept of transcendental being is sufficiently plain from experience. For a concept is predicated univocally of several things by definition if it is said of them according to the same idea and signification. But on the evidence of experience a common concept of being is thus predicated of God and creatures, of substance and accident. For we say exactly the same thing and mean the same thing when it is said 'God is a being' and 'a creature is a being' etc. Even many Thomists admit that we advert to an order of dependence when we say, 'God is a being', 'substance is a being' etc.

And specifically against those who deny perfect prescinding from inferiors in the concept of being, we urge the argument of Scotus. The notion of being that is conceived as common to all things and predicable of them is a concept distinct from the concept that expresses the idea of infinity, in-itselfness etc. For we can be certain that God is a being, or light is a being, and be doubtful at the same time whether God is infinite or finite, whether light is something accidental or substantial. But this cannot happen if the common concept of being only imperfectly and inadequately excluded these modes.

2. Since the only reason for denying the unity of the transcendental concept arises from the doctrine of the analogy of predication, it must be well noted what Suarez observes on the matter, "Everything we have said of the unity of the concept of being seems far clearer and more certain than that being is analogous, and therefore it is not right, for defending analogy, to deny the unity of the concept, but if one of the two must be denied, analogy, which is uncertain, should be denied rather than the unity of the concept, which seems to be demonstrated by sure reasons" (*Disp*. *Metaph*. disp.2 n.34).

3. The onus of proving their own opinion belongs to those who affirm that being is said only analogically and in no way univocally. For every analogy (especially that of intrinsic attribution) either presupposes or implicitly contains some univocal idea predicable of the analogates.

Q.3. On the Essence of God

Although God is "an infinite and limitless ocean of substance" in which all pure perfections are unitedly and most simply contained, some of these perfections, according to our way of conceiving, are more essential, others existential, others

attributal. So a question is proposed by philosophers, especially neo-Scholastics, namely about what the essence of God is, or what in God must be conceived after the likeness of essence.

They draw a distinction between physical and metaphysical essence. The physical essence of God, they commonly say, is nothing other than the complex of all the divine perfections really identical with each other and with the divine essence. But they dispute about the metaphysical essence of God, or about the perfection that, according to our imperfect way of conceiving, a) constitutes God, b) distinguishes him from other things, c) is as it were the root from which the rest of the perfections flow.

Some Thomists (as Gonet, Billuart, etc.), following St. Thomas and Aristotle, place the metaphysical essence in subsistent intellection. They argue as follows: The intellect is the supreme degree of perfection. Further, God qua intelligent is distinct from corporeal things, and qua subsistent intellection is distinct from other intelligences. Finally, subsistent intellection contains the ideas of many other perfections, as life, existence, etc.

Other neo-Scholastics (and this opinion seems the more common even among those who commonly call themselves Thomists) say that the metaphysical essence is from-itselfness or necessary existence, which seems to be the opinion of Avicenna. They say that the chief perfection by which God is constituted consists in the fact that he simply is ("I am who am," *Exodus* 3.14), or in other words in the fact that he is subsistent existence, or a being from-itself. Further, by this perfection God is distinct from every other being, and from it arises an infinity of perfections.

Of the Scotistic opinion there are various interpretations. Some (Kazenberger, Herincx, Coen, etc.) hold the metaphysical essence of God to consist in essential existence; others in God's sanctity. The more common opinion, however, among Scotists places the metaphysical essence of God in radical infinity or in the fact that God is infinite being. Radical infinity in God consists in the fact that he is the sort of being that requires every pure perfection and that in infinite degree.

Although this opinion seems to me a purely speculative one and of lesser moment, if you want arguments for this opinion that the fundamental perfection of God seems to consist in the fact that he is infinite being rather than in the fact that he is a being from-itself, note the words of Scotus himself:

> The most perfect concept in which, as in some description, we most perfectly know God is by conceiving all perfections simply and at their highest. However the more perfect and simpler concept that is possible for us is the concept of a being simply infinite. For it is simpler than the concept of a good being, or of a true being, or of anything similar; because the infinite is not a quasi attribute or property of being or of what it is said of, but it states an intrinsic mode of the being-ness, such that when I say 'infinite being' I do not have a concept as it were per accident from a subject and a property, but a concept per se of the subject in a certain degree of perfection, namely an infinite degree; just as intense whiteness does not state a concept per accidens as does visible whiteness, but rather the intenseness states an intrinsic degree of whiteness in itself. And thus the simplicity of this concept, namely infinite being, is clear. Now the perfection of this concept can be proved in many ways: first because this concept, among all others conceivable by us, virtually includes several concepts; for just as being virtually includes good and true in itself, so infinite being

> includes infinite true and infinite good and every perfection simply under the idea of infinite; second because the last conclusion proved by a demonstration-that is existence of an infinite being, or infinite existence of some being, as is plain from 1 d.2 q.1. But those things are more perfect which are known from creatures last by a demonstration-that, for, on account of their distance from creatures, they are most difficult to prove from creatures (*Oxon*. 1 d.3 q.1 n.17).

The most perfect concept (namely the concept of all perfections simply at the highest level), which Scotus is speaking of, seems to express what is commonly called the physical essence of God. But a simpler and more perfect concept (because it does not seem to be merely a description by accumulation of perfections) is that of infinite being. This notion expresses essential or quidditative perfection rather than existential perfection; but from-itselfness or necessary existence, like from-anotherness or possible existence, express existential modes. Further, this notion of infinite being satisfies perfectly the three requisites of metaphysical essence, namely that: 1) It constitutes the thing in its specific order; but God is singular in his own genus, and this unicity of God is founded and proved, according to our mode of conceiving, only by the fact that it is infinite being (see the statements of Scotus, Ockham, etc.). 2) It distinguishes the thing from everything else. Although God has many perfections by which he can be distinguished from creatures, as, for example, being from-itself, subsistent intellection, etc., the one that seems more distinctive and more removed from creatures is the one known last by a demonstration-that from creatures. But among all quidditative concepts of God the most difficult to prove from creatures is infinite existence. (See how Ockham, after conceding demonstration of the from-itselfness of God, blames the reasonings brought forward by philosophers for the infinity of God.[27]) So do not wonder that the infinity of God is proved, according to our way of proceeding, from his from-itselfness. For from this does not follow that from-itselfness is more fundamental and essential, but only that from-itselfness is instead a relative perfection and more easily capable of proof from creatures. 3) It is as it were the root from which the rest of the perfections flow. But, as Scotus well said, "of all the concepts conceivable by us, this one (of infinite being) includes virtually more things," namely "every perfection simply under the idea of the infinite." It is more difficult or impossible to prove immediately from any other perfection, as the perfection of from-itselfness, all other attributes or perfections, as unicity, intelligence, life etc.

Chapter 2: On the Divine Life Internally

All pure perfections belong indeed to God, and from these are investigated the perfections that, according to our mode of conceiving, seem to constitute the internal life of God, namely his intellection and love. (In the subsequent chapter we will treat of divine operations concerning the world.)

---

[27] I. Brady, 'Comment on Dr. Wolter's Paper', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 27 (1954): 127-130.

Article 1: On Intellectual Life

On the Existence of Divine Intellection

Conclusion 4: God is intelligent.

The proof is threefold: 1) Intellection is a pure perfection, therefore it belongs to God and does so in supreme degree (from conclusion 2 of the preceding chapter). Proof of the antecedent: a) Every mixed perfection can be reduced to a pure perfection (from conclusion 61 of part two); intellection cannot be reduced to any perfection that is not intellection but is ignorance or irrationality. b) A pure perfection is better than anything incompossible with it (from the definition of pure perfection); every being that lacks intellection is irrational, and being intelligent is better than being irrational or ignorant; therefore being intelligent is a pure perfection. c) A confirmation is found in Aristotle, who taught that God, as pure act, is subsistent intellection.

2) Intellection can exist (as is plain from our own inner experience); but God, as supreme cause of everything outside himself, must have the perfection of his effects either formally or at least virtually. He does not have intellection merely virtually, because a being that is formally unknowing cannot be the sufficient reason of anything formally knowing, otherwise the effect would be more perfect than its cause; therefore he has intellection formally, which is proposed conclusion.

3) The two preceding arguments are confirmed by this persuasive reason: once the existence of the external world and the validity of our spatial perceptions has been conceded, we must admit that there is some order and finality in the nature of things.

On the Properties of Divine Intellection or Knowledge

Divine knowledge can be considered in three ways: first on the part of the objects known; second formally; third in relation to the divine essence.

1. On the part of the object:

Conclusion 5: God knows everything knowable. This conclusion follows from God's infinite perfection (conclusion 2). Therefore he knows everything actual, whether himself or outside himself, and everything possible, whether it actually exist in the course of time or never exist.

Conclusion 6: God does not know individuals through universal notions but knows everything perfectly and as individual. This conclusion too is plain from the infinite perfection of God's knowledge. He does indeed know universals but precisely as they are concepts in finite intellects.

Conclusion 7: God knows all individuals not only as absolute beings and in themselves, but also knows them according to all the relations that one has to all the others. This conclusion too is plain from the perfection of God's knowledge.

Conclusion 8: God's knowledge of other things outside himself depends neither on their existence nor on their causality. This conclusion is plain from the fact that God in no way depends on his creatures (from the principal argument), and

also because God knows creatures before he produces them; for this both belongs to the perfection of knowledge as well as to human artifice, and the order and finality in the world demand that God is a knowing creator.

Conclusion 9: From the preceding conclusion other things follow, namely that God knows in a way different from creatures; for creatures depend for their knowing in some way on an existing object, but God does not.

2. Formally

Conclusion 10: God's knowledge of everything is certain and infallible; it cannot be deceived. This conclusion also is plain from the infinite perfection of divine knowledge (conclusion 2).

3. In Relation to Essence

Conclusion 11: God's knowledge is really the same as the divine essence. Plain both from the physical simplicity of God and from the infinite perfection of the divine essence, which is perfectible neither accidentally nor substantially (conclusion 2).

Conclusion 12: God's knowledge does not consist in many acts as knowledge does in us. Plain from the preceding. Hence a multiplicity of known objects does not destroy the simplicity of divine knowledge.

Conclusion 13: In God, therefore, intellect and intellection are not really distinct. For divine knowledge is not caused by the intellect as by a principle really distinct from its effect. This fact follows from the divine independence and simplicity (conclusion 2 of this part, or conclusions 28 and 57 of the second part).

Conclusion 14: What God can know he does actually know. For God is pure act (conclusion 47 of the second part); therefore he cannot have any knowledge in potency and not yet in act.

Conclusion 15: God's knowledge is unchangeable and eternal. This conclusion follows from conclusion 14 or conclusion 11 just above. For if his essence is unchangeable the knowledge really identical with it is unchangeable.

Corollary: On a Personal God

We show, against those who conceive God to be an impersonal cosmic force, that God is a rational being and hence personal. For a personal God is here understood as a rational supposit, that is, a singular substance simply complete, in its own right, and endowed with reason. God's simply complete substantiality and singularity and being in his own right follow from our principal argument. In the present chapter God's rationality is proved. Hence everything requisite for a personal being is verified of God.

Conclusion 16: Therefore God is personal

On the Way in which God Knows Everything

As was said above, the following is certain, namely: God actually knows all knowable perfectly and from eternity; and the way in which he knows differs from the mode of our knowledge. But beyond these things a philosopher can perhaps say nothing with certainty. Nevertheless philosophers have proposed various theories about the way

in which God knows other things, whether actual or possible, outside himself. They find a special difficulty with respect to the divine knowledge of future contingents, about which we can say a little below.

God's knowledge is commonly divided, because of diversity of objects, into knowledge of simple intelligence, knowledge of vision, and also, according to some, into middle knowledge. a) The knowledge of simple intelligence is said to be that by which God knows things as possibles. b) The knowledge of visions, by contrast, is that by which God knows things as existing. c) Middle knowledge (which not all admit as a distinct third member in this division) is that by which God knows 'futurables'. Futurables are things that would be future if some contingent condition were met. The futurable is divided into: i) the merely futurable, namely that which would at some time be if some condition were met but which will never be because the condition would never be met; and ii) the futurable and future, namely that which will in fact be because the condition will be. You may find an example of the former in Sacred Scripture (*Matthew* 11.21): "Woe to you, Corazain, woe to you Bethsaida, because if the works that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented at once in dust and ashes."

Theories about the Way in which God Knows the Future Free Acts of Creatures

There is a famous controversy between the Banesians and Monists about the way in which God knows the future free acts of creatures. Although the opinion of Ockham appears to me better, namely that the way in which God knows all future contingents is impossible for any created intellect in this life to spell out, these few notes are added here for historical purposes.

1. The Opinion of Banesians or Thomists:[28] The objective reason that future free acts are knowable by the divine intellect is commonly located by Thomists in divine decrees that predetermine the human will to one thing.

Explanation: Those who hold this opinion are Thomists generally speaking. The system was proposed chiefly by Dominico Banez (d.1604), and so supporters of the system are called Banesians. The chief defenders, with some variation of doctrine, are Alvarez (d.1635), Gonet (d.1681), Billuart (d.1757), and among the more recent Cardinal Zilara (d.1893); they are all from the Order of Preachers.

The doctrine can be reduced to the following:

a) To every free action of man God, by his own decree, gives the impulse: i) the impulse cannot be given by the will itself and when given by God it cannot be refused by the will; ii) the impulse is bound with so intrinsic a tie to the action of the will that it is contradictory for the will to act without such impulse;

b) This impulse is called: i) physical promotion: 'premotion' because it is a motion impelling creatures to act and preceding indeed the act of the creature's will;

[28] A distinction must be made between the doctrine of Thomas himself and that of Thomists, for according to Aquinas God knows the future by reason of his eternity, for by virtue of his eternity God is present to every moment of time, whether that moment is present, past, or future (*ST* Ia q.14 a.13). By contrast, Scotus rather than Thomas was of the opinion that God knows creatures that are actual by decrees of his will. The opinion of the Banesians is founded on this opinion of Scotus, to which they add the principle rejected by Scotus that 'whatever is moved is moved by another'.

'physical' because it occurs not by moral suasion but by physical application of power; ii) physical predetermination, because the power of the creature is, by some previous impulse, determined from indifference to act, and this determination is effected not by a moral but by a physical inflow from God; iii) previous concurrence, because God cooperates in the human act itself by supplying it with previous or antecedent motion;

c) Therefore, according to the Banesians, divine knowledge about the free future proceeds as it were after this manner: God decides from eternity to pre-move creatures to certain acts either absolutely or under a condition, if in certain circumstances the condition is met. So God, seeing his decrees, sees at the same time what the future will be.

Criticism: In this opinion the efficacious will of God in acting along with creatures is preserved, and also, in its own way, God's knowledge of the future previously to the acts of the creature. However the difficulties present in it are great: a) The human freedom neither of contradiction nor of specification is preserved; not that of contradiction, because the will does not have the power of doing or not doing the act but is predetermined by divine decree to doing or not doing it; not that of specification, because the will cannot choose between one or another act but must do the one to which the divine decree determines it. b) It would be difficult to show how God was not the author of sin; for God, by intending the free act of the creature, would also intend all the circumstances of the act, and would truly and really will that man do a prohibited act.

2. The Opinion of Molinists: The objective reason that future free acts of creatures are knowable to the divine intellect is located by Molinists in the fact that for them acts have a determinate truth founded on the second act itself.

Explanation: The holders of this doctrine are the Molinists, who follow Luis de Molina (d. 1600). He started a very considerable controversy with the Thomists when he expounded his doctrine in his book *Agreement of Free Choice with Gifts of Grace* (1588). After Molina's death the question was fiercely debated for almost four years in the presence of the Pope and the Roman Congregations (1602-1606), but without definite resolution.

The doctrine proposes the following theses:

a) The question turns on God's knowability of future free actions, especially conditioned ones.

b) These acts, when done or when in second act, have some truth, that is, they are done or not done.

c) This truth of the acts is not the cause that specifies God's knowledge but an absolute condition for God to have knowledge of acts.

d) Acts, to the extent they are free, depend on the will as second cause, but they also depend on God as first cause, in that God cooperates with the act by his simultaneous and not preceding concurrence with it. Thus the whole act depends at the same time on both the creature and God. About this simultaneous concurrence one must note: i) that it is conferred on the acting faculty in the second act in time although it is offered by God by his eternal faculty prepared, in first act, for acting; ii)

that the concurrence is indifferent and so is to be specified by the creature, that is, it is to be brought into effect by the creature.

e) So, from all these points, the process of divine knowledge and cooperation as to free future acts, according to our way of conceiving, is construed thus: God first sees by middle knowledge the truth of man's free action when the action is placed in certain circumstances; then from eternity he determines himself to offer his concurrence with man's free action; and then in time he bestows his concurrence simultaneously with man freely acting.

Criticism: It is certain that human freedom is preserved on this opinion more than on the Thomistic opinion. However God's cooperation with man, as it is stated, is too restricted. For it seems that God must await what a free man would be going to do. The truth of a future action is considered as nothing other than the truth of a possible action, since the action, when foreseen, seems only to exist as possible. Perhaps this difficulty would be solved if God's eternity were now understood better by us.

What must one hold in practice? It is certain that God knows all free future acts whether absolute or conditioned; otherwise he would not be infinitely knowing and providential. It is equally certain that man is free in his act, but this freedom does not exclude God's concurrence in free acts without destruction of the freedom. The rest is a mystery.[29]

Article 2: On the Divine Life of Love

It is rather difficult to prove the inner life of love in God if we hold that love belongs to the will and that the will differs from every other agent in that it does not act by way of nature but freely. Nevertheless the following points seem at least more probable philosophically than their opposites, and to me indeed certain enough.

The Exisence of God's Love toward Himself

A conclusion certain enough: God loves himself.

Proof: 1) A perfect being's love seems to be a pure perfection; therefore it belongs to God and indeed in supreme degree. The proof of the antecedent is: a) if love of this sort were not a pure perfection formally, it could be reduced to one or other pure perfections that were not formally love. But I do not see how such love could be reduced to something that was formally love. b) To love seems to be better than not to love; therefore love seems to be a pure perfection, because it is better

[29] *Translator's note: The problem of God's knowledge of future free acts needs to be considered along with the relation of God's knowledge to creation in general. This relation is real on the part of creation but not real on the part of God. Whatever happens or can happen in creation makes no difference in God or in God's knowledge (he knows all actuals and possibles, whether the possibles ever become actual or not, for every being, however it has being, receives its being from God and with the concurrence of God). So whether this free action happens or some other, God remains the same. It hardly seems to matter then, from the side of God's own existence, what free action is done. He can leave such actions to be as freely determined by created free agents as he wishes (he can 'take risks' as it were), and his own life and knowledge are unaffected. He persists as pure act just as much afterwards as before. Thus viewed, the question about his knowledge of free future acts seems unproblematic. But I speak under correction.*

than what is incompatible with it (namely not to love). The proof of the antecedent here is: a distinction must be drawn between love of friendship (benevolence) and love of concupiscence. The former is love of an object for its own sake, that is, because of the object's intrinsic perfection, and this love does not seem to involve imperfection in the lover. Love of concupiscence is love of an object and not for the object's sake finally but because the object perfects the lover or is a good for the lover. But this love does involve imperfection because the object is wanted precisely because it perfects a lover that is in itself capable of perfection.

2) Blessedness seems to be a pure perfection, and therefore it belongs to God in supreme degree. But love seems to be either the principal element in blessedness or at any rate intimately connected with the blessedness of an intellectual being. That blessedness is a pure perfection is clear from the notion of it; for blessedness is nothing other than an intellectual being pleased that follows upon possession of one's proper perfection. But God knows himself as infinitely perfect; he seems, therefore, to be blessed; therefore blessedness seems to be a pure perfection. That this blessedness is not simply intellection, but includes an act of will or love, seems to follow from the fact that there is in God some operation besides what is formally called intellection, for God is formally willing, at least in respect of creatures. (See the next chapter about the proof of free volition in God.) For if God freely creates things outside himself and so has volition, it seems that he also has some act of volition, namely love, toward himself.

3) God is the first cause of all love in us. Hence he has this perfection either formally or virtually. If you concede that the love is better than not to love, God cannot have love only virtually, because the more imperfect does not include the more perfect virtually. Therefore God has love formally.

<u>On the Properties of Divine Love</u>

As was said above about divine intellection, this divine love is not something really distinct from God's essence. It extends, therefore, to everything that is really identified with the same essence. Hence it can be said that God loves his essence, his decrees, his knowledge, etc. This love is also eternal, unchangeable, non-contingent.

A dispute arises whether freedom is compatible with necessity (that is, unchangeableness and sempiternity) of this act in which God loves himself. According to Scotus, the act is spontaneous and proceeds not by way of nature but freely, that is, after intellection cognition. But if anyone can grasp this, let him do so.

Chapter 3: On God's Operation Externally

Article 1: On the Power of God in General

The divine attribute by force of which God is said to act externally is called active power, or power simply. For it is a power of changing or producing another as it is other. To the extent change or production formally occurs in the thing itself that

undergoes it, namely in the being that is changed or produced, power does not in this sense involve imperfection in the agent that changes or produces the other.

On the Existence of Divine Intellection

Conclusion 17: God is omnipotent.

Explanation: An active power that extends to everything that can be brought into being after not being is said by definition to be omnipotent. Arabic and Scholastic philosophers distinguish between immediate and mediate omnipotence. God is said to be immediately or intensively omnipotent if he can directly or immediately produce everything possible; by contrast he is said to be omnipotent mediately or extensively if he can produce everything possible at least indirectly, or through the creatures he has produced. So, for example, Avicenna says that God immediately produced only the first intelligence and produced through that intelligence all the other things outside himself. Proof: that God is omnipotent follows from his infinite perfection, and from the fact that he is the first cause of every other secondary producer, whose existence and power of causing are received from God.

Conclusion 18: Whatever a finite cause can produce, God can directly produce. This conclusion seems to be a corollary of the preceding one for the reason there stated. Hence Scotus and Ockham did not rightly say that the immediate omnipotence of God cannot be demonstrated by a philosopher but omnipotence either mediate or immediate. On this opinion of Scotus' see what I wrote on this matter elsewhere (Wolter, 'Theologism of Duns Scotus', *Franciscan Studies*, 1947, 375-77).

On the Free Will of God

Conclusion 19: God contingently acts externally, or whatever God produces externally he produces contingently. The sense is that the active power of God is either formally his free will itself or a power under the command of his free will. Hence this conclusion 19 establishes the existence of free will in God.

Proof: 1) Among beings there are some bad things or imperfect beings, as is plain from experience. Therefore God, who is cause of all other things outside himself, contingently causes. The consequence is plain from the fact that what acts by necessity of nature acts according to the limit of its power and so as to every perfection that can be produced by it. Therefore if God, who is an infinitely perfect cause, were to cause necessarily, all secondary causes caused by him would be perfect in their kind and would cause perfectly. Therefore the whole order of causes would cause perfectly, or as much as it can. Therefore no being would lack any perfection that it is capable of having. The consequent is false, therefore the antecedent is too, namely that God causes necessarily. If he does not cause necessarily, he causes contingently.

2) Proof from the perfect independence of God. Every being that is altogether independent and in no way conditioned is such that it requires no other being in order to exist. But if God were necessarily to produce beings outside himself, he would require other beings as conditions sine qua non. Therefore he would not be altogether independent, which is false. The major is plain from the definition of a

being altogether independent; the minor is proved as follows: A term or thing produced is required for an act that is externally productive. But if production necessarily follows the essence of God, the essence of God cannot be without a productive act or without a produced thing. Hence a produced thing is a sine qua non of the essence of God.

3) From the existence of contingency. I God were necessarily to act externally when creating and conserving secondary causes and giving concurrence to them, these causes would be necessary both in existing and in operating. For operating is nothing other than a mode of existing. But the consequent is false, for there is something that contingently or freely causes, as is plain from our own inner experience; for we are conscious that we act freely or contingently. Therefore the antecedent is false too.

4) To cause freely is a pure perfection; therefore it belongs to God and in supreme degree. If it were not a pure perfection it could be reduced to some perfection that was pure. But both causing and freedom in action are positive ideas and irreducible to anything that is not formally freedom or causing. Hence to cause freely is formally a pure perfection.

Corollaries

The following conclusions therefore follow by way of corollary:

Conclusion 20: If God contingently acts externally, all beings produced by him as he is first cause are simply contingent. Plain from conclusion 37, part two.

Conclusion 21: Since all secondary causes are produced by God, they are simply contingent both as to their existence and as to their operating. Therefore all physical laws are simply and radically contingent.

Conclusion 22: God can therefore act miraculously; for the possibility of miracles is plain from the preceding conclusion. A miracle, according to philosophers, is understood as 'a perceptible work, done by God, unaccustomed, supernatural'.[30] A treatment of God as the final cause of everything else outside himself, and of God's end in creating, I will give in natural philosophy. Look there.

Article 2: On the Power of God Considered as to its Term

By reason of its effect, the power of God externally is distinguished into creation, conservation, concurrence, and providence.

On Creation

Creation is the production of something from nothing both as to itself and as to its subject. It differs from formation, which is production from nothing as to itself but not as to its subject.

Conclusion 23: The first external production of God must be creation. This conclusion is against the philosophers who reckoned that God was only the former

[30] The treatment of miracles belongs rather to cosmology or natural philosophy than to metaphysics. Look for it there. Or see what I wrote elsewhere about the knowledge of miracles, *Philosophical Studies in Honor of Fr. Ignatius Smith OP*, ed. Ryan, Westminster MD, Newman 1952, ch.12, pp.233ff.

of the world but not its creator. The conclusion is proved from the fact that all beings outside God are effects. Therefore if you say the matter from which God made things was present beforehand I ask: what about the matter? It cannot exist from-itself because it lacks the properties of a being from-itself (from conclusion 2 of this part 3); therefore from another, and therefore ultimately from God (from corollary 1 of conclusion 3 of this part).

On Divine Conservation

Conservation, as it is here understood, is defined as the action by which a being from-another remains in the existence it has received. It is double, namely: a) Negative, or the action by which what can destroy the existence of the thing is removed or impeded. Penicillin, for example, which destroys bacteria, conserves the health of the body; b) Positive is the act that consists in the positive inflow by which a thing is continually given existence. Hence it is a sort of continued creation.

Conclusion 24: All created things are positively conserved in existence by God.

Whatever does not have in itself a reason for its existence positively requires, if it remains in existence, a cause of its remaining in existence. But there cannot be an infinite regress in conserving causes, because such causes need to exist simultaneously; therefore the thing is conserved positively by God as first cause.

On Divine Concurrence

Concurrence in general is the cooperation of one cause with another for producing a common effect. Divine concurrence is the operation whereby God's inflow is present in the actions of creatures.

God's concurrence can be either natural or supernatural. That concurrence is called natural that a created agent needs so as to be able to do the operations that naturally belong to it. Supernatural, on the other hand, is the concurrence needed for actions that exceed the powers of nature.

Concurrence is also divided into moral and physical. There is moral concurrence if God acts as moral cause, namely by persuasion, etc. Physical concurrence, by contrast, is if God's concurrence is as an efficient cause simply.

Some philosophers, indeed, distinguish between mediate and immediate concurrence. The former consists in the fact that God gives and conserves the powers of an event in acting and also gives and conserves the effect produced insofar as it has an absolute being-ness; the latter is when God assists the powers of a creature in eliciting actions in some other way. Immediate concurrence is explained differently by different people. The supports of the dictum 'whatever is moved is moved by another' postulate a preceding physical concurrence by which a cause is predetermined to acting. Others however require a concomitant concurrence such that God accompanies the action of a creature in its coming to be, and the action thus proceeds both from God as first cause and from the creature as second cause.

Conclusion 25: God concurs with all the operations of creatures.

Proof: A creature is totally from-another both in existing and in operating; therefore it requires a cause that conserves both its operative powers and the term

or effect of its operation, which cause is ultimately God. But this is nothing other than to admit at least a mediate concurrence.[31]

On the Providence of God

Providence is the divine attribute by which God directs all things to the end. Now providence can be considered in two ways, namely as it is in the divine mind or as God is actually governing. The former is defined by Boethius as "the divine reason in the supreme prince of all things, which disposes everything" (*Consolation of Philosophy* 4 pros.6). The latter is God's will by which all things that come to be are fitly governed, and this is providence commonly speaking.

There were not lacking philosophers who denied this divine attribute, for example Aristotle,[32] deists, fatalists,, materialists etc., and the Stoics restricted God's providence to the nobler beings. Against them two conclusions need to be established, namely

Conclusion 26: In God there is providence.

Proof: 1) Wisdom is a pure perfection, as is plain from analysis of its notion; therefore it belongs to God in supreme degree. Now it belongs to the wise man to order all things to the proper end.

2) That God does not govern what he has created is the same as to say that God does not care for, implicitly spurns, what he has made. But this is repugnant to an intelligent creator and conserver.

3) These arguments are persuasively confirmed from analysis of the world (see the argument from finality); for the elements are directed by physical laws, living things by biological laws, men according to reason and the moral law. The author of these laws is ultimately none other than God himself, the creator and conserve of all things outside himself.[33]

Conclusion 27: God's providence extends to all creatures.

Proof: If there were a reason for including only the nobler beings and for excluding the lower ones, it would be from some improperness on the part of God or from some lack on the part of things. Not from the first because, just as it was not unfitting for God to create inferior beings, neither is it unfitting for him to govern them; not from the second either, because the more things are inferior the less they have of activity, and so the less too they can provide for themselves.

---

[31] If the action in the category of action has any real being-ness distinct from the agent and the produced term (supposing the action is transient, or passes over to something outside the agent), or distinct from the action in the category of quality, namely intellection or volition (supposing the action is immanent, or stays within the agent), then too God is required as conserving this being-ness. But this seems the same as to admit what is commonly called immediate concurrence.

[32] *Translator's note: Aristotle is generally supposed to have denied providence*, *but his discussion of chance in* Eudemian Ethics *8.2-3 seems to require some belief in providence.*

[33] Besides this general providence by which all things are ruled according to their proper nature, there is a special and indeed supernatural providence by which God provides for all men according to their merits, present or future and hidden from us but present to him; for his judgments are always just, though hidden, such that sometimes adversity profits more than prosperity. This is God's special providence for men, which Scotus says cannot be naturally demonstrated.

Part Four: On the Remaining Attributes Convertible with Being

After having proved the existence of God, we can establish the universal intelligibility and will-ability or lovability of things.

Chapter 1: On Ontological Truth

Definition

On the various ways in which ontological or metaphysical truth can be understood, see what I wrote elsewhere (*Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus, pp.111ff.;* Scotus *Questions on Metaphysics*, 6 q.3 n.5). Omitting a rather long discussion, we can define ontological truth thus: It is the property or feature of a real being qua being whereby it is made intelligible; or, more briefly, it is the intelligibility of a thing.

On Some False Notions

Although, according to everyone, ontological truth is what is convertible with being, neo-Scholastics do not agree with each other about the precise nature of ontological truth. Some of their assertions seem less apt. So we say against them:

Thesis 1: Ontological truth does not consist in conformity of things with exemplar ideas in the divine intellect.

State of the question. Many moderns, following St. Thomas, say that all created things are true, before they existed, with ontological truth relative to the divine intellect by which primarily they are understood, and they are created according to the idea-archetypes.

Proof: 1) On this supposition the divine essence would not have ontological truth. For to an exemplar idea belongs the directing of an efficient cause in the production of something. But the divine essence, as not having been made, does not have an efficient cause and so no exemplar idea and no conformity with any exemplar idea.

2) We would have to have intuition of the ideas in the divine intellect, otherwise we could not know the truth of things. For conformity is a relation, but the knowledge of a relation presupposes knowledge of the terms of the relation. In this case, however, one term of the relation is a divine idea in God's intellect. Cognitive intuition, that is, immediate and direct knowledge of the divine intellect, is impossible for us in this life. Others indeed do posit some illuminationism for knowing divine exemplars, but this theory too is not sufficiently proved.

It is not being denied here that exemplar ideas are found in the divine intellect (although precisely what is an exemplar idea is very much disputed among Scholastics), nor is it being said that things are not in conformity with those ideas. All that is being denied is that the ontological truth of things consists in this conformity when ontological truth is understood as a property or feature of being.

Thesis 2: Ontological truth does not consist in the relation of a thing to an actually knowing intellect.

State of the question. This thesis seems to be against St. Thomas who says, "Now the primary idea of truth is comparison with the divine intellect before it is with the human; hence even if the human intellect did not yet exist things could be said to be true in their order to the divine intellect. But if, per impossibile, both intellects were understood to be removed, the idea of truth would in no way remain" (*On Truth* q.1 a.2). Scotus, by contrast, says "If there were no intellect, each being would still be of a nature, according to the degree of its being-ness, to make itself manifest; and this 'notice' is that by which a thing is said to be noted to nature, not because nature knows it but because through a greater or less manifestation it would be of a nature, as concerns itself, to be more perfectly or less perfectly known" (*Quaest. Metaph*. 6 1.3 n.5). Hence ontological truth is not well defined as conformity of thing with intellect.

Proof: Such conformity, being a relation, naturally follows the knowledge of a thing; but ontological truth is naturally prior, for it is the property by which a being is made knowable. Such a relation of conformity seems indeed to be a logical truth rather than an ontological truth, for one of the terms is a being of reason.

On Ontological Falsity

What then must be said of ontological falsity? If there were ontological falsity it would consist in positive deformity between the being-ness of a thing and its intelligibility. But ontological truth is really identical with the being-ness of things. Hence is got supreme conformity and so ontological falsity cannot strictly speaking be had. Therefore if beings seem to lack indelibility the defect is not on the part of the thing but on the part of the knower.

As it is, things are said to be false insofar as they give occasion for false judgment about them, namely because of too great a likeness to some other thing, for example false gold, false silver etc. Now this falsity is not in the things but in words and the judgment of the mind. For things themselves are not false; so false gold is not ontologically false gold but polished brass or fool's gold; false silver is polished tin. Often too the artificial imitation of a true thing is called false, as false teeth, false hair, false money.

On the Convertibility of Ontological Truth

Conclusion 28: Every being is true, or being and true are convertible.

The sense of this convertibility is that, although being and true do not signify the same thing, they do have the same extension, for whatever is a being is also one, and vice versa. The conclusion is plain from the fact that God de facto knows every being and does so comprehensively; but the inference from 'is' to 'possible' is a valid one; therefore every being is intelligible. Some want to prove the conclusion from the nature of the human intellect, whose proper and adequate object is being. But I doubt whether it can naturally be proved that being is the object of the intellect.

Chapter 2: On Ontological Goodness

Definition

Just as ontological truth states the relation of being to the cognitive faculty, so goodness involves a relation to the appetitive faculty or the will. Just as the former consists in the knowability of being, so the latter consists in being's appetibility. Hence it is defined as the property of being whereby it is made appetible or willable or, more briefly, it is appetibility or willability.

On other interpretations of ontological goodness see what I wrote elsewhere (Wolter, Transcendentals, p.199ff.)

On the Convertibility of Ontological Goodness

Conclusion 29: Every being is good, or being and good convert.

The appetite or will tends to its object either because the object is perfect for it, namely insofar as it has the being-ness and perfection due to it (love of benevolence), or because the object confers perfection on another (love of concupiscence). As far as God is concerned, it is plain that he is altogether perfect and so supremely appetible both to himself and to another. As far as creatures are concerned, one must say that they are truly loved or willed by God himself, otherwise they would not exist; therefore they are lovable or willable. Further, creatures are also good for other creatures; for example substance upholds accidents, accidents give further perfection to substance, etc.

On Evil

Since every being, insofar as it is being, is good, it is plain that evil cannot be anything real or positive, nor can it exist in itself. For it is the lack of good in something good. Insofar as it is opposed to the good for oneself it is lack of due perfection, as blindness in a man or animal. Insofar as it is opposed to the good for another it is the lack of relative appetibility, namely with respect to a certain appetite, as unripe fruit, poisonous plants.

Evil cannot have a material or formal cause, namely constitutive principles. If material cause is taken in the sense of the subject-in-which, good is this cause. Evil cannot exist in itself but in some good. But can it have a final cause? Physical evil can be intended as a means to some end and licitly so, provided the end is good or indifferent or proportionate to the evil. Moral evil can be intended only illicitly and only by a finite will. But no evil can be desired for its own sake or as an end save under the appearance of good. For evil as such has no appetibility in itself or because of itself. But every evil can be permitted, that is, not impeded either by God or by man, given what needs to be given. Evil does have an efficient cause but only indirectly, namely in the producing of some good when the production is, for some reason, imperfect or defective whether on the part of the efficient cause or on the part of the matter, or even when a good is badly done, for example blindness from destruction of an eye.

Some Corollaries about Evil

Conclusion 30: Evil involves good, or evil exists in a good, for from what was said evil is privation of good in something good.

Conclusion 31: Evil corrupts the good that it harms. Insofar as evil is a privation of goodness in a good, it corrupts the good. And when evil is measured according to the good of which it is the lack, the greater the good that is missed the greater the corresponding evil. Hence the phrase: 'corruptio optimi pessima' or 'the best is worst when corrupted'.

On the Beautiful

According to some authors the beautiful should be numbered in some way among the attributes convertible with being. But it seems to be a species of goodness.[34]

It is difficult however to define the beautiful. According to St. Thomas "those things are called beautiful that please when seen" (*ST* Ia q.5 a.3). The objective elements, they say, are integrity or perfection, due proportion or harmony, and clarity.

Another definition: Beauty is perfection of being shining out clearly so far as to be fit to delight intuition. 'Perfection of being', that is, the goodness of the thing. The requirement is that the thing be whole and complete, normally formed, perfectly ordered in itself (its parts). 'Shining out clearly' for this perfection should be hidden but stand out and be prominent so that it can easily be perceived. Hence the beautiful can also be defined as the resplendent perfection of a thing. 'Delight' is the effect of beauty. It is a taking pleasure in the rational appetite: enjoyment and rest of appetite in the good perceived or contemplated. 'As far as it is fit to etc.', delight arises from contemplation alone of the object. Hence it differs altogether from the delight that comes from real possession of a beautiful object or from recovery of a beautiful object that was lost. A beautiful thing as such delights whether it is possessed or not. What is required and sufficient is that it be perceived. Delight from real possession of a beautiful object does not come from the beauty of the object but from the utility that it confers on the possessor.

There is dispute as to whether the aesthetic faculty is the intellect or the will, or both acting after the manner of a one. It is certain from the definition that beauty regards both the cognitive and the appetitive faculty. For a) it regards the will insofar as taking pleasure and delight are in this faculty. This appetite per se is the will, which, namely, follows the intellect as it perceives the beauty of the object; sometimes a like delight arises also in the sensitive appetite because of an overflow. b) Beauty regards the knowing faculty whose intellective contemplation is required, at least by way of condition. The intellect can perceive by itself the beauty of an object; but it has the assistance of the senses in perceiving and contemplating the beauty of a material thing.

[34] Alexander of Hales, *Summa* 1 n.3, "the good is said in two ways, the noble and the useful… I call the noble intelligible beauty."