
THEODICY

A Class Manual
in the Philosophy of Deity

By

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PREFACE

This textbook in Natural Theology,—one of the most notable and the more neglected parts of philosophy,—is meant to supply to the modern college student some readily intelligible account of fundamental truths. It is not meant, and does not presume, to present a complete study of deeply involved points of doctrine. Like the other manuals of the present series, this book tries to rear a sturdy framework or scaffolding upon which the young student may take confident stand for the long and difficult task of building up his edifice of philosophical knowledge. It does not seek recognition as the finished building, nor even as a finished portion of the building. But the building cannot be raised at all unless the builder have a proper place and a sure position for the work he has to do. Thus, it may, without boastfulness, be claimed that the service of such a book as this is an indispensable one.

Some readers may be disappointed to find in these pages little of the interesting (and sometimes profitable) discussion which is ardently aroused by the mention of such terms as, *Thomism*, *Molinism*, *Scientia Media*, *Premotion*, *Supercomprehension*,

Future Contingencies, Futuribilia. It has seemed best to deal briefly and calmly with these matters instead of recognizing in them the call to glorious encounter. If our Rolands and our Olivers seem too frequently to leave the field arm-in-arm after a short exchange of compliments, it is only because we have generally held them to the mere statement of their terms of meeting, so that the youthful student may have a clear notion of what their differences are all about. We stress the point that this book is not for the specialist.

The first portion of this manual,—in which we prove the existence of God,—is shaped upon the traditional model of St. Thomas. No better plan has been devised than this, and it would be sheer folly to attempt another in the name of modernity. These arguments will be found modern enough, in the sense of new, by any adversary upon whom the student may employ them. For our age has many notable gaps in its culture, and none greater nor more lamentable than the great open space which should be occupied by the recognition of God and His place of supremacy and control. Arnold Lunn writes that, when he expounded these ancient proofs before a group of modern university students, his audience was astounded to learn that such fresh and cogent arguments exist.

It is hoped that this manual will render good service to college classes, to studious individuals out

of college, and even to those who have never been in. Certainly, the matter with which it deals is its most eloquent recommendation to the attention of serious minds. If that matter has not been treated with seemingly skill and thoroughness, the book has still its value. For gold, though imperfectly refined, is always precious, always a treasure worthy of quest and possession.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Name 2. Definition 3. Object 4. Importance 5. Division

I. NAME

The term *theodicy* (from the Greek *theos* "God" and *dike* "right; custom; usage; manner") was coined by the famous philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716) who used it in his *Essays on Theodicy* to express the justice or the righteous manner of God's dealings with man-kind, which he defended against those who felt that the evils of life are an argument for atheism. The term *theodicy* thus literally means "God's justice" or "God's righteous way." But this original meaning was quickly expanded to include not only the beneficent providence of God, but the whole of God,—nature, attributes, and operations. In a word, *theodicy* became a synonym for *natural theology*. Theology had long been distinguished as (a) *natural theology* which is a part of philosophy, and which is the science of God as knowable by unaided human reason; and (b) *supernatural theology* or *divine theology* which is the science of God as manifested by Divine Revelation. The term *theodicy* came in handily to replace the more cumbersome *natural theology* (although it is

not an accurate name for that science) and to allow the simple name *theology* to be used for the supernatural science. Convenience and long usage have established the term *theodicy* in its present meaning. *Theodicy* means *natural theology*. And *natural theology* means the philosophical science which sets forth all that human reason can discover by its unaided efforts about God, His existence, His nature, His attributes, and His operations. The term *theology*, by the way, comes from the Greek *theos* "God," and *logos* "science," and literally means *the science of God*.

2. DEFINITION

Theodicy is the philosophical science of God.

a) *Theodicy is a science.* The term *science* (from Latin *scire* "to know") means not only knowledge, but a special kind of knowledge. It means knowledge that is *evidenced* and therefore *certain*. And the evidence or proof of any point of knowledge lies in the fact that we recognize its *reasons* or its *causes* or both. Therefore *science* has often been defined as "knowledge through causes or reasons." Such is the fundamental meaning of the term *science* without the article. Now, a science is any defined branch of knowledge which sets forth the truths that belong to its domain in a clear and orderly fashion and with all possible completeness, and which adds to these truths the *reasons* (or *causes*) which make the truths *known*-

able with certitude to the thinking mind. *Theodicy* meets the requirements here mentioned; it sets forth the truths that the unaided human mind can discover about God; it presents these truths in a manner that is clear, orderly, logical, and complete; it offers, at every step of its development, the evidence, the proofs, which the mind requires to make it give its full and unwavering assent to the doctrines proposed. Therefore, *theodicy* is justly called *a science*.

b) *Theodicy is a philosophical science.* A philosophical science is one of the branches of philosophy. Such a science has two distinctive features. First of all, it is a *human* science, that is, it is built up by reason unenlightened by Revelation. Thus it is distinguished from the *divine* science of theology. Among human sciences, a philosophical science is distinguished as one that seeks the very last discoverable causes and reasons for its data; its quest is an *ultimate* investigation; it is not content with *proximate* causes and reasons such as the other human sciences find adequate for their respective purposes. Every science asks and answers the questions "Why?" and "How do we know that?"; a philosophical science keeps on asking "Why?" and "How?" until it has pushed back the inquiry as far as it is humanly possible to go with it. A philosophical science deals with knowledge that is root-deep, and it digs out the deepest roots. These, then, are the two marks of a philosophical science: it is a *human* science, and it is an *ultimate* science. The-

odicy has these two marks, and is, in consequence, a philosophical science.

c) Theodicy is the science of *God*. The phrase "of God" means, as is evident, "about God." The preposition "of" is not possessive, but objective. It does not indicate the knowledge that belongs to God, but the knowledge which man can gain about God in Himself and in all the phases under which He is viewed by the limited human mind.

3. OBJECT

The *object* of a science is its scope, its field of investigation, its subject-matter. Further, it is *the special way* in which it does its work in its field, or it is *the special purpose* which guides it in its work. Thus the object of any science is twofold. The subject-matter, the field of inquiry, is *the material object* of the science. The special way, or purpose, or end-in-view, which a science has in dealing with its subject-matter or material object is *the formal object* of that science. Many sciences may have the same *material object*, for many more or less independent inquiries may be prosecuted in the same general field. But each science has its own distinct and distinctive *formal object* which it shares completely with no other science. That is why this object is called *formal*; it gives formal character to the science; it makes the science just what it is *formally* or *as such*.

To illustrate all this. Many sciences deal with the

earth under one aspect or another. Such, for example, are geology, geodisy, geography, geonomy, geogony, and even geometry. All these sciences study the earth; they have therefore the same material object. But no two of these sciences study the earth in the same special way or with the same special purpose. Geology studies the earth in its rock formations; geodisy studies the earth in its contours; geography studies the earth in its natural or artificial partitions; geonomy studies the earth as subject to certain physical laws; geogeny studies the earth to discover its origins; geometry in its first form was a study of the earth in its measurable bulk and its measurable movements. Thus, while all these sciences have the same material object, each of them has its own formal object. If two sciences were to have the one identical formal object, they would not really be two sciences at all, but one science. It is manifest that a science is formally constituted in its special character by its formal object; it is equally manifest that a science is distinguished from all other sciences by its formal object.

Theodicy studies God. God is, therefore, the material object of this science. But theology (the divine science) also studies God as its material object. The distinction between theodicy and theology lies in their respective formal objects. For theodicy studies God by the unaided light of reason, and theology studies God by the light of reason aided by Revelation.

The material object of theodicy is *God*. The formal object of theodicy is *God as knowable by unaided human reason*.

4. IMPORTANCE

Regarded absolutely, or in itself and independently of its relationships with other sciences, theodicy is far and away the most important of all human sciences. For it deals with the most sublime subject that can engage the mind of man. And when theodicy is viewed in its relations to other sciences, it still maintains its place of preëminence. For every other science rests ultimately upon certain assumptions which theodicy does not assume, but proves; every other science is based upon notions of primal causality, of an ordered universe (and hence an Orderer), of an arrangement and balance, of a consistency and constancy in nature. Let scientists ignore this fact as they may, it remains a fact beyond dispute. St. Augustine was voicing no pious sentiment but expressing the clearest of reasoned conclusions when he said that those who try to philosophize, or to play the scientist, while ignoring or denying God, only succeed in entangling themselves in a net of contradictions. It is manifest, therefore, that theodicy, in view of its supreme object and of its fundamental relations to other sciences, is a most important study.

Not only is theodicy the most important of philo-

sophical sciences in its object and in its relationships with other sciences; it is important because it meets the highest and strongest tendencies of the human mind; because its certain conclusions are a satisfaction to the noblest emotional yearnings; because it gives meaning to the bewildering universe of sentient experience; because it makes intelligible the resistless human bent and bias for moral conduct. Theodicy is the best that the human mind can do for man, for that strange being whose life is a blending of the most curious and even opposite elements; for man, the creature of penetrating reason and unseeing passion; for man, who moves among the hard and gross things of sense with the deepest spiritual longings in his soul; for man, whose tendency to be wilful and perverse is inextricably bound up with an insatiable appetite for what is moral and good. So great is the essential service of theodicy that those who scorn its ministry and ignore God who is its object are compelled by their human constitution to make up a theodicy of their own, a theodicy which suffers only from the fact that it is wholly false. It is of first importance, then, that we bring reason to a calm, clear, penetrating view of facts, and follow its course through all complexities to inevitable conclusions about the First Reality. It is important that we build up the true theodicy of which our mind and our whole being have need. Man is, of course, a philosopher by

nature. The most uncultured and untrained has some sort of natural theology at the back of his view of all things. But for persons of education such a vague theodicy will not suffice, even if it happens to be a true theodicy as far as it goes. We need the discipline of philosophical theodicy for our minds, and we need its conclusions for our lives. Not that it is all-sufficing. It is the best that natural powers can do for us, but man needs more than nature; man needs supernature. Nor, for us who have the divine gift of faith, is theodicy meant to supplant faith or to rationalize it into a cold and mathematical formula. Theodicy supplements faith, rendering service by showing how reasonable and even inescapable are the first truths of faith; and it equips us for the task of showing others, who have not the faith, the first inviting reaches of the straight path that leads through reason to certainty and security of life in the one Institution on earth where men can really be at home.

5. DIVISION

Three questions define the plan we are to follow in this present study. They are the following: 1. *Is there a God?* 2. *What is God?* 3. *What does God do?* The first question inquires about the *existence* of God; the second, about *His nature*; the third, about *His operations*. These three topics,—the existence, the nature, and the operations of God,—will be discussed in three Books with Chapters as follows:

INTRODUCTION

BOOK FIRST	BOOK SECOND
The Existence of God	The Nature of God
Chap. I. God's Existence a Demonstrable Truth	Chap. I. The Essence of God
Chap. II. Demonstration of the Existence of God	Chap. II. The Attributes of God
	BOOK THIRD
	The Operations of God
	Chap. I. The Immanent Operations of God
	Chap. II. The Transient Operations of God

BOOK FIRST

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

This Book discusses, first of all, the demonstrability of the Existence of God: it asks whether there is any *need* for proving a truth which some have called self-evident; then it inquires whether—granted a proof is required—it is *possible* to establish such a proof. To both queries an affirmative answer is given: we need proof for God's existence, and such proof is actually available. The Book goes on to set forth the traditional proofs for the existence of God, and answers the objections that are brought against their validity. These points are discussed in two Chapters:

Chapter I. God's Existence a Demonstrable Truth
Chapter II. Demonstration of the Existence of God

CHAPTER I

GOD'S EXISTENCE, A DEMONSTRABLE
TRUTH

This Chapter discusses the *need* and the *possibility* of proving that God exists. It answers the questions: Is there any need of going to the trouble of thinking out rational proofs for the existence of God; is not His existence a self-evident fact? Or, if it be not self-evident to the mind, is it not a manifest requirement of the finer feelings or emotions; does not a man experience the "value" called God as something intuitively certain and requiring no process of proof? On the other hand, the Chapter answers the mistaken charge of the Kantian, the agnostic, and the skeptic, that any rational proof for the existence of God is based upon a causal relation among *phenomena* (that is, the merely apparent or sensible qualities of things) and has no power to evidence the nature of that supposed Being from which causal action proceeds. Thus the Chapter deals with two schools of thought, the one declaring that no proof for God's existence is *needed*, the other maintaining that no valid proof is *possible*. These mistaken assertions are investigated in two Articles, as follows:

Article 1. The Question of God's Existence

Article 2. The Need and Possibility of Demonstrating God's Existence

ARTICLE I. THE QUESTION OF GOD'S
EXISTENCE

a) Meaning of Terms b) Urgency of the Question
c) Theories on the Point

a) MEANING OF TERMS

We take the term *existence* in its first and obvious

meaning. When we ask whether a thing exists, we ask whether it is *actual*, whether it is present among those realities which are not merely possible (or *potential*, as philosophers say) but which are *here*.

In ontology,—the science of fundamental metaphysics, which is the very core of philosophy,—we learn that *a being is a reality*, and that a reality is anything that exists or can be thought of as actually existing. A reality is therefore an *existent* thing. And realities are classed as *potential* and *actual* realities. A potential reality is one that *can* exist because (*a*) the thought of it as existing involves no contradiction; thus, for example, a glass mountain is a potential reality while a square circle is not, since the latter is self-contradictory and self-canceling; and (*b*) there is already in existence a being, a power, which is able to draw the potential thing out of its state of possibility and confer actuality upon it; in short, there is a being which can *cause* it to exist. An actual reality, on the other hand, is one that is really here. It is here either (*a*) because it has been produced by its causes, and is no longer a mere possibility but an actualized being; it is a *caused* being; it is an *effect*; it is a *contingent* being, that is, a being contingent upon or dependent upon its causes; or (*b*) because it is so completely perfect and self-sufficing that it involves in itself the perfection called existence, and it therefore *must* exist and cannot be non-existent; it is an *uncaused* being; it is *not* an effect; it is a *necessary*

being; it is *pure actuality* since it has about it no potentiality which *has been* or *is to be* actualized by the action of causes.

Now, when we come to discuss the existence of God, we speak not of *potential* or possible existence but of *actual* existence. Further, we speak not of *caused* existence but of *uncaused* existence; not of *contingent* existence but of *necessary* existence; not of *effected* existence but of *pure actuality*.

So much for the term *existence*. Now what of the term *God*? We must give at least a general explanation of the meaning of this latter term before we can begin to discuss the question of God's existence. For the limited human mind cannot even start to investigate the existence (potential or actual) of a reality until it has somehow conceived, at least in a general way, just what the reality in question is. There have been philosophers, and not the least in ability or the least esteemed or the least influential, who made the perfectly inane statement, "Even if you can know *that* God is, you cannot know *what* He is." How can anyone know that a thing exists unless he knows what thing? It is as though a person should say, "There's *something*," and then stop short. And when the excusably curious auditor of that somewhat inconclusive and airy statement asked (as infallibly he would ask), "What?" the answer would be, "I don't know." Surely, the explanation of such a remark would necessarily be either aberration or alcohol. It

is not the statement one would expect, delivered with smug complacency as the conclusion of a profound process of reasoning, by revered men of mind. And if the philosopher hastened to explain by adding, "Oh, I mean there's something that started all this mess," or, "There's something back of this obvious universe, we don't know what," then it is bare charity to point out to him that he does know what, or he pretends to know what, for he states that there is an Originator or a Hidden Supporting Force that accounts for the world we live in and look upon. The moment you assign to your "something" an intelligible role in the origin or management of things, you so far define your "something" and make it *this special kind of thing*. If you know what a thing does, you have at least a partial grasp of what that thing is. Even Matthew Arnold professed some knowledge (granted a very sketchy knowledge) of *what* God is when he described Him as "The enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." How the somber Matthew must have rolled that sounding statement from his tongue. How pleased he must have felt, and with what satisfaction he must have stroked his mutton-chop whiskers; across the lengthening decades one can almost hear him purr.

There is no position so intolerable as the agnostic position, the position which declares God to be the Great Unknowable, the Being *that* exists, we don't

know *what*. The atheistic position is far more human and reasonable, absurd as it proves to be under investigation. For the atheist knows what the term *God* means, and he denies the actuality or the existence of what it means. He denies not signification, but significance. But the agnostic makes the word meaningless, and then denies its meaning. The agnostic is a man who hears a phrase in an unfamiliar tongue, and promptly declares it mere gibberish which can have no meaning for anybody. The point we have here so labored is a most important one and it must not be overlooked or forgotten for a moment in all that follows. You cannot know *that* a thing exists without knowing, in some dim measure, *what* it is that exists. Nor can you deny existence to a thing without being able, with some degree of exactness, to describe the conceivable thing at which your denial is directed.

What, then, is meant by the term *God*? Most people of any period in the world's history would answer the question promptly by saying that God (whether He really exists or not) is conceived of as an actual Being who is the supreme Originator and Ruler of the world and all things in it. A few people in any age, and a great many people in some ages, would say that the term *God* is a sort of blanket-name for a number of super-human beings, or even invisible "forces" viewed collectively as "Nature," which together manage the universe; such people would be *polytheists*,

(from the Greek *poly* "many" and *theos* "God") or believers in a plurality of gods. The first group, to whom God is one actuality, would be *monotheists* (from *monos* "single" and *theos*). Yet back of all the gods of the polytheists would be the single idea of *deity*, of *Godhead*, of *divinity*, so that, as Mr. Chesterton declares, the idea of one supreme Power and one supreme Being is behind all the gods of all the mythologies "like the sky behind the clouds." For Godhead is necessarily conceived as *first* and as *supreme* in both Power and Being. And to say that a Being is first and supreme is to say that It is without peer, that It stands alone in its awful place, that It is a single Being, not a plurality of Beings. Even polytheism in its crudest form looks back to monotheism from which it is a lapse and a retrogression.

The points we have made give us a fair description of what the term *God* means to the generality of men. It means a Being (whatever be true of His existence or non-existence) that is thought of as actual, one, first, supreme, the originator and the ruler of the universe. It is of such a Being that we speak when we take up the momentous question of the existence of God. It is of such a Being,—conceived by the man-in-the-street as the Almighty Ruler, and by the philosopher as the Necessary Being and the Pure Actuality,—that we ask, "Does He exist? Have we need to prove His existence? If we have this need, can the need be met by valid demonstration?"

b) URGENCY OF THE QUESTION

Anyone who entertains ethereal academic doubts about the existence of original sin will have them blown to shreds like a fog in a gale if he can be induced to take one really attentive glance at the world about him, particularly at the funny two-legged creatures known as human beings that one sees everywhere. Let him look at men, and listen to what they are saying, and follow their thoughts and fancies, and weigh the meaning of their conduct. He will find that his inevitable theory of mechanical evolution and progress with its gospel of "onward, upward, holding steady to the goal" turns to the silliest sort of detached doctrinizing when it is brought into the light of human facts; it will never explain the wide diversity and the tumultuous clashes of human aims, ambitions, hopes, employments. If the evolutionist with his tender doubts about the tragedy of Eden were to come upon a flock of chickens or a herd of horses rushing about in wild disorder, he would instantly conclude that something had disturbed them. If he were to see a lake or pond frothed by churning waves, he would understand at once that wind or some eruptive inner force must account for the commotion. Yet the evolutionist walks daily through crowds of his fellow-men whose aims, ideals, and conduct are more furiously in conflict than warring waves or milling cattle, and he does not notice that something must have disturbed *them*. He does not notice that *they* are in any

state of confusion and commotion. Or if he does, he calls the commotion difference of opinion, and thinks it a good thing; whereas, of course, it is nothing of the sort. If he found three men staring at a brick and explaining it violently in totally different ways; if he found one man calling it delicious cheese, and a second man declaring it a trick of the capitalists, and the third man praising it as an attractive bunch of violets, he would know that something had gone wrong with the minds of these men. He would not say that they were progressive fellows showing the world the worth of a healthy difference of opinion; for once, even an evolutionist with doubts about the Fall would understand that the question in the case is not one of opinion at all, but of a fundamental fact which has first to be recognized before opinions about it are valuable or even sane. But the evolutionist finds every day, and every hour if he chooses, men who differ on really important things, such as the meaning of life, in a fashion quite as wild as that of the three madmen with their brick, and he does not notice anything odd in the fact. He finds men with fantastic notions about a brick, and he knows that something is wrong with their minds; he finds men with equally fantastic notions about life, and he does not acknowledge that something must be wrong with their souls. He finds one man to whom life is a plodding business of getting bread and cheese; he finds another to whom life is a mere war against plots, against the whips and scorns

of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely; he finds a third man to whom life is as trifling as a boutonnierre. And, with glazed evolutionary eye in fixed imbecility staring, he takes in the situation and calls it Difference of Opinion and Progress; or, with eyes tightly closed, he calls it Enlightenment; or, in a frenzy of delight, he flourishes a calendar and calls it the Modern Mind. At all events, the evolutionist fails to see that the situation calls for an explanation. And there is an explanation. It is an explanation made to us by word from Heaven, but, had that message never come, the explanation might have been made by any plain man with sight enough to tell a hawk from handsaw and mind enough to know that two and two make four. The explanation lies in the fact that something has upset man, has got him off balance, has twisted his viewpoint and set askew his scale of values. We call that something original sin. It has not made men mad, but it has disorientated men, and it is the one really urgent need of men to get orientated aright. And to be orientated aright men must fairly face and come to grips with the first and fundamental question of the existence of God. For on the right settlement of that question, everything else depends.

And yet, to the ordinary average man of the world, and more particularly to the ordinary average philosopher and teacher and moulder of the public mind, nothing seems more remote from the needs of life,

nothing seems less practically important, than the settlement of the question of the existence of God. Discussion of it is brushed aside as of no consequence when there are pressing matters at hand, like a raise in rents, or a flutter in the stock-market, or rumors of war-clouds over the Orient, or Doctor Dewey's views on the substantive mind, or the details of a match at tennis or golf. God's existence is regarded as a thing of academic interest merely, a subject for idle discussion in those few drab hours of life that draw no illumination from politics, business, or sport. And even such discussion is frankly regarded as a sort of time-killer, for it is tacitly assumed from the start that no conclusion can ever be drawn from it. Chesterton remarks, "We are more and more to discuss details in art, politics, literature. A man's opinion on tramcars matters; his opinion on Botticelli matters; his opinion on all things does not matter. He may turn over and explore a million objects, but he must not find that strange object, the universe; for if he does he will have a religion, and be lost. Everything matters—except everything."

Now, if the average man of the world or the average leader of thought and of talk would pause long enough in his worldly career, and in his talk, to face plain facts, he would not only be amazed, but his knees would knock together in terror, at the smashingly practical character of this question which he had regarded as detached and academic. Upon the exist-

ence or non-existence of God depends the whole nature of the business of life, and the business of life in surely practical. If there is a God, and I am His creature, made to serve His purposes; and if I am doing nothing of the sort, and am not even trying to know His purposes, then assuredly I am in a bad way and there is occasion for terror and quaking knees. For, quite apart from threatening punishment, I face the terrifying fact that my whole existence,—my views, my aims, my thoughts and ideals, my work and my amusement, my attitudes, my dreams, my dealings with my fellows,—comes to a sum-total of futility and failure, of disaster and defeat. I who have prated of practical things, have been running a race towards a wrong goal. I who have talked of the needs of life, have missed them all. I who have demanded plain facts, have failed to see the plainest fact. I who have gloried to lead others, have led them all astray. Surely, there is no imbecility so monstrous, no insanity so vile and inexcusable, as the bland assumption that the question of God's existence is of no practical urgency. For fundamentally it is the *only* urgent question, and the *only* practical question, that a man needs to face. Once that question is rightly answered, the whole pattern of life and of conduct takes form and lies with meaning before the eyes, and the one path that it is essential to discover opens clear before the feet.

c) THEORIES ON THE POINT

Here we shall merely list some of the doctrines that have been propounded in answer to the question, "Does God exist; and, if so, can He be known; and, if He can be known, how is this knowledge obtained?" We shall not pause to explain these doctrines in detail, nor shall we here answer those that are false and to be refuted. Explanation and refutation will both come in their places in a later part of our study. But it is necessary for us to have at the outset a knowledge of these names and a notion of what they mean.

1. *Theism* is a general name for any belief in God. It is not to be confused with *deism*, which has a special meaning, although both terms come from words that mean *God*, the one Greek (*Theos*) and the other Latin (*Deus*).

2. *Atheism* is the opposite of theism. The letter *a* prefixed to a Greek derivative is usually equivalent to a *non* prefixed to an English word. Atheism declares that God does not exist. Of course, there is no such thing as atheism in a pure form; it is never a simple denial, but is always a replacement. Your atheist finds himself compelled to substitute for God some such sterile notion as *force*, or *energy*, or *nature*, or even that latest pet of the faddists, "*value*."

3. *Agnosticism*,—a term derived from the Greek *agnostikos* "not knowing; ignorant,"—is the theory that God cannot be known, that men must be content

to remain in ignorance about His Being and Essence. It is not the denial of God's existence, it is denial of His knowability. It is the theory *that* God is, but no man can know *what* He is. It is not the Christian doctrine that man cannot know God exhaustively; it is the anti-Christian doctrine that man cannot know God at all, beyond the wholly illogical recognition of His existence. We have spoken in some detail of the silliness of the agnostic position, and we shall have occasion to speak of it again.

4. *Pantheism*,—from the Greek *pan* "everything; all" and *theos* "God,"—identifies, in one way or another, God and the universe. The cruder sort of pantheism makes the bodily world part and parcel of the substance of God; it teaches that God has poured Himself out, like a lake into little inlets about the shore, or like a fire in leaping flames and flying sparks, and thus it makes all things outpourings or emanations of God. This type of pantheism is called *emanationism*. Another form of pantheism makes the world and all things in it the manifestations of God, not His physical parts. And since a manifestation is not itself a substantial thing (think, for instance, of the manifestation of happiness which is a smile, or the manifestation of anger which is a frown), this type of pantheism tends to become *idealistic*, that is, to declare the visible universe only a projection of ideas or fancies, to deny its solid actuality, and to fall back on one invisible divine substance as the only thing that

truly exists. Such an idealistic pantheism is latent in the doctrines of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the most influential of philosophers in the modern period of history, and it was openly developed from his principles by his immediate followers, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.

5. *Monotheism*, as we have seen, means the doctrine that there is only one God.

6. *Polytheism* is the doctrine that there exists a plurality of gods or at least of world-controlling forces.

7. *Deism*,—from Latin *Deus* "God,"—is the theory which admits the existence of God, and even His knowability, but which denies His providence and His governance of creatures. Deism holds that God has made the world, but has since ceased to care for it, and has tossed it aside to fend for itself.

8. *Ontologism*,—from Greek *on* (*onto*-) "being" and *logos* "science; knowledge,"—is the doctrine that the order of science or knowledge reflects the order of reality or being, and that, in consequence, the *First Actuality* is the *first thing known* by the mind. Therefore, says ontologism, the very first act of the mind is a vague but fundamental conception of deity.

9. *Traditionalism* is the doctrine which holds that the human mind is not able to demonstrate God's existence, but that it gets its knowledge of God by way of faith in a primitive revelation made to the

first men by Almighty God Himself, and handed down through all the generations of men by oral tradition.

10. To the foregoing types of theory we may add a few others that are not specifically concerned with the existence of God or man's knowledge of God, but which bear more or less directly upon these points. *Skepticism* is a theory of doubt or denial about man's ability to know anything for certain, and thus it includes doubt or denial of his ability to know God. *Rationalism* is the doctrine that human reason can fully cope with all the truths that exist or are existible, and that anything involving a reach into mystery or an acknowledgment of infinity is,—since reason cannot cope with it fully,—to be rejected as something untrue, fictional. *Pragmatism* holds that the workableness of any thought, scheme, action, or its suitableness in its circumstances, determines its character as *true* or as *good*; thus pragmatism denies or at least ignores the eternal standard of morality and the eternal source of truth which,—considered objectively and fundamentally,—is God, the Divine Essence. *Relativism* (of which pragmatism is one form or variety) is the general theory that every truth depends for its being upon the aspect in which it is seen or the circumstances to which it is referred; and thus relativism involves a denial of the absolute, the non-relative, truth of the existence of God.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have defined the terms of the question of God's existence. We have seen that the existence here in question is an *actual, uncaused, necessary* existence. We have declared what is generally meant to any mind by the term *God*, and, in passing, we have shown the inanity of the agnostic statement that man can know *that* God exists but does not know *what* God is. We have stressed the importance of the inquiry into God's existence as the most pressing and practical of questions. Finally, we have listed many theories which have to deal, more or less directly, with this important question.

ARTICLE 2. THE NEED AND POSSIBILITY OF DEMONSTRATING GOD'S EXISTENCE

a) Need of the Demonstration b) Possibility of the Demonstration

a) NEED OF THE DEMONSTRATION

A *demonstration* is not a simple synonym for *proof*. For a proof may be compelling, or convincing, or merely persuading. But a demonstration is always a compelling proof. It is a proof "to the eyes" as an eloquent Latin expression has it,—not, of course, that it is limited to the universe of things visible to bodily eyes. When the teacher of history informs the school-boy that Columbus discovered America in 1492, there is, if the lad be skeptical, a wealth of proof avail-

able, but there is no *demonstrating* the truth in question. Of its nature, it is something that depends on statements and documents and the word of man. It is not something that, given objective data to examine, the mind sees to be inevitable, as, for example, the mind sees that the sum of two and two is inevitable. But the teacher of geometry has no need to call witnesses and to adduce the testimony of reliable documents for the purpose of convincing the doubting pupil that the angles of a triangle come to 180°. This is a truth that can be reasoned out so thoroughly and completely that the person who understands every step of the process is *compelled* to recognize it. And only such a compelling proof is entitled in strict justice to the name *demonstration*.

Now, do we require a demonstration for the truth of God's existence? We do unless that truth is *self-evident*. For there are two sorts of truths that do not require demonstration. One is the sort of truth already considered in reference to the history lesson, in which demonstration is not required because it does not apply and indeed is not available. The other sort of truth that does not need demonstration is the truth that is inevitably recognized at first glance (or *intuitively*, by immediate or direct grasp, as philosophers say). You cannot, for example, demonstrate your own existence and so compel yourself to recognize the fact that you are here. For demonstration is always a process of analyzing the subject to be proved,

of getting it down to terms of its simple elements, and of seeing how these inevitably fit together. But your own existence is itself a simple and an elemental thing, not subject to further analysis. You have a direct and an intuitive grasp of it; it obtrudes itself upon your acceptance so inescapably that even if you deny it you affirm it. Try to deny your own existence, and to express the denial in intelligible terms. You may say, "I do not exist." But why then do you say "I"? What you have said amounts to this, "I'm here to say I'm not here." If you really doubt your own existence (or any self-evident truth) you must lapse into complete and endless silence, and, in the dark despair of your non-existent mind, you must forever admit that even your doubts are non-existent. Thus there are truths so simple and inescapable that the moment we understand the terms in which they are expressed (whether these be mental terms or speech-terms) we understand the necessary connection of the terms and are forced to acknowledge, and to *understand*, that what they express is necessarily true. Such truths are called *self-evident*. Now, manifestly, the existence of God is not a thing to be proved to us by historical documents. Indirectly, of course, all human history is a proof of an existing and provident God. But directly, and considered absolutely or in itself, the existence of God cannot be a mere historical truth like the discovery of America in 1492. Is it, then, a self-evident truth? If so, it needs no demonstration.

If we consult our own experience, each of us will doubtless say at once, "I learned the truth of God's existence, first from my mother's teaching, and later by noticing that the world and all things in it require an accounting First Cause." We may all truly say (omitting consideration of the divine gift of faith) that our natural or human knowledge of God has its origin in human reason dealing with the objective world about us. Reason approved the acceptance of early instruction from those whose constant care and love made us certain that they would not mislead or deceive us in a matter of the utmost importance. Reason later recognized the more direct evidence for God's existence, presented by the existence of creatures and an ordered universe. Hence, so experience testifies, the truth of God's existence is not something obtruded upon senses or mind as self-evident. It is something that has to be *learned*. It is a truth to be *reasoned out*, directly or indirectly. Therefore, we say, the truth of God's existence is not self-evident, but requires demonstration.

Yet there is a subtle consideration to be made before we declare with finality that the truth of God's existence is not a self-evident truth. It is this: God exists necessarily, for He is all-perfect, and involves in Himself the perfection called existence. Existence is of His very essence and nature. Therefore, to a mind that thoroughly understands the whole meaning of the idea *God*, the note of existence is evidently con-

tained in it; the proposition "God is an Existent Being" is one in which the subject *demands* the predicate, for it contains it; and a mind capable of instantly analyzing the subject would know the predicate too; thus the proposition, *to such a mind*, would be self-evident. But the human mind is not *such a mind*. As we shall presently see, we build up our idea of God by the laborious process of mental abstraction, and while the building is wholly justified by fact, and is in no sense the figment or fictional creation of the mind, it is, none the less, a process that involves *attention, abstraction, analysis, synthesis, reasoning*. It is an idea that is *worked out* by the mind from the data of experience, and is not *intuitively grasped*. And even when the idea has been formed, it is not necessarily present to the mind with that degree of distinctness and detail which would make every thought of God a keen realization of His necessary existence. A man may have the clear idea of God, and may fully acknowledge God as actual, and may make God, as indeed he should, the whole goal of his activity and his life, and yet not advert directly to the fact that God, who exists, *has got to exist*. The note of God's *necessity* may be entirely overlooked even by the mind that has a clear and fully usable idea of God. Therefore we say that while the proposition, "God is an Existent Being" is *self-evident in itself*, and would be known with absolute certitude, not needing or admitting demonstration, by a mind adequate to understand its

subject in the fullest and completest and most instantaneous manner, yet this proposition is not self-evident to the limited human mind, and, for that mind, it is a proposition which both admits and requires demonstration. In other words, we say that the proposition in question is *self-evident in itself*, but *not self-evident to the human mind*. To use the old Latin formula, the proposition is *per se nota quoad se* but not *per se nota quoad nos*, "self-evident in itself, but not self-evident to us."

Out of the fact that the truth of God's existence is self-evident in itself a certain confusion can arise in the mind that is not acutely attentive, and a mistaken conviction may be evoked that God's existence can actually be proved by the fact that we have the idea of God. St. Anselm (1033-1109), a philosopher and theologian of wondrous mentality, was not prevented by his great natural gifts from making this mistake. He elaborated the so-called *ontological argument* for God's existence, and he was followed in it by Descartes (1596-1650), Leibnitz (1646-1716), and Spinoza (1632-1677), each of whom gave the argument a special phrasing and shading of his own. St. Anselm, however, may be regarded as the originator of the famous argument, and it has intrigued many since his time. He was fully aware of the compelling nature of the usual demonstration of God's existence, a demonstration which proceeds from the created and contingent universe to the increate and necessary

First Cause. But he believed that another true argument could be developed, which would proceed from the concept or idea of God in the human mind to the actual existence of God. His argument may be stated thus: Everyone understands by *God* the most perfect Being that the human mind can think of; but, if God does not really exist, then He is *not* the most perfect Being thinkable, for He lacks the perfection called existence: therefore, God must exist. The argument is not valid. Its conclusion is not justified by its premises. Let us restate it, drawing the only allowable conclusion, and we shall see the fallacy of the original form:

God is the most perfect Being we can think of;

But the most perfect Being we can think of *must be thought of as existing*;

Therefore, God *must be thought of as existing*.

Manifestly, we can grant this conclusion and still have no valid proof that God, who must be *thought of as existing* is, in fact, *actually existing* outside thought. The argument as proposed by St. Anselm involves a "jump" from the order of *thinking* to the order of *actual being*, and Logic condemns as fallacious any argument with such a gap or jump in its structure. Still, we must not think that St. Anselm or any of the notable defenders of this intriguing *ontological argument* were so childish as to suppose that the mere thought of *anything* is valid proof for its existence. One of St. Anselm's early critics had this

silly notion, and he sought to upset the ontological argument by reducing it to an absurdity. He proposed the following argument as paralleling the ontological argument, which, of course, it does not do at all:

I have an idea of a most beautiful and perfect island;

But it is not the idea of a most beautiful and perfect island unless the island actually exists;

Therefore, the island of which I have an idea actually exists.

St. Anselm treated this argument with the contempt it deserves. For he was speaking of the *infinite* Being, of that one and only Being which has *existence* as one of the phases or notes or component elements of its idea in the mind. Of no *finite* being, such as an island, can necessary existence be predicated, since the perfection of such a being is always limited and relative (despite the fact that one calls it "most beautiful" and "most perfect"), and *existence* does not enter into its adequate idea or concept. But, as we have seen, the human mind is not capable of an intuitive and adequate concept of God as the necessary Being (but *derives* its idea of God from the intuitively formed ideas of finite things in the sense-world around us) and so, even in the case of the infinite Being, the ontological argument, based on human knowledge, is not valid. Our idea of God as the necessary Being, that is, the Being which necessarily exists, is *reasoned* knowledge, and the *idea itself* is not evidence of the existence of its object; this evidence is found in the objective reason-

ing that justified us in forming the idea. Hence it appears that reasoning, the working out of demonstration, is still required for the truth of God's existence to which the human mind assents; nor is *the ontological argument* a valid demonstration.

Thomas Reid (1710-1796) and his followers in the so-called "Scottish School of Common Sense" declared that no demonstration of God's existence is needed because we have a certain equipment of intellectual judgments that are *instinctively* formed, and these neither require nor admit demonstration; and among such necessitated judgments is the judgment, "God exists." Something of the same sort is the doctrine of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who taught that *practical* reason makes us acknowledge the existence of God as an inevitable fact, although the thinking mind (or *theorizing* reason) cannot work out a true proof for it. Then there is the sentimentalist doctrine of Friedrich Jacobi (1743-1819) which holds that man has a natural longing for God and a natural affection for virtuous living, and by force of this *feeling* he is inescapably aware of religious and moral truths and needs no rational demonstration to support the certainty with which he holds them. To Reid and Kant we may say that a *blind instinct* cannot be one and the same as the intellect or reason which struggles ever for light and for evidence; the *instinct* theory (or the *practical reason* theory, which is the same thing) cuts straight against our whole con-

cept of reasoning and of intellectual knowledge. Reid and Kant merely contradict themselves when they try to explain intellectual or rational conviction on the basis of that which is wholly different from intellect or reason. As for the doctrine of Jacobi, it is sufficient to remark that we can have no longings, yearnings, or affections without previous knowledge; we must know a thing, at least in some measure, before we can intellectually realize it as desirable. Back of the sentiment of Jacobi must be knowledge, and manifestly it must be knowledge of mind, of intellect, of reason, for God is in no wise the object of any of the senses. But the object of intellectual knowledge, unless it be self-evident, is capable of rational discussion, or reasoned argument, and of demonstration. And in as far as an important intellectual object admits demonstration it also requires it.

The most notable of all the theories which declare that the existence of God needs no demonstration to our minds is the theory called *ontologism*. The theory itself is very old, but the only famous proponent of it belongs to the modern era of history. He is Nicole Malebranche (1638-1715), a learned, a pious, but a much mistaken man. The theory of ontologism lays down, without offering proof for it, the following principle as fundamental: the order of thought (called *the logical order*) must parallel the order of existence (called *the ontological order*). Therefore, since God is the first Being in the order of existence, He must be

the first also in the order of thought. In other words, God is not only the first Being, but He is the first Being we know. Our very first idea, formed when we come to use our infant minds, is the idea of God. Ontologism goes on to say that, since God contains in Himself, as identical with His essence, the archetypal ideas or "exemplars" of all things creatable, the more we know God, the more we know His creation. Indeed, says ontologism, our knowledge of creatures is explicable only by the fact that it is acquired in and through our knowledge of God. The theory does not maintain that we are *aware* of the first-formed idea of God, nor that we advert to this idea early in life as we gather knowledge of creatures through its ministration. Ontologism sets forth its doctrine as a somewhat defiant fact, and not as something that a man can check by his own memory or his own experience; indeed, as we have seen, experience is all against it. But it is not experience alone that makes ontologism an inadmissible doctrine; there are other very definite and destructive objections to it. For example, ontologism would make the finite human mind naturally adequate for the grasp of an infinite object. In other words, it would make the human mind naturally finite and naturally infinite at the same time, which is a manifest contradiction in thought and in terms. Only when the finite mind is raised and enlarged, so to speak, and furnished supernaturally with a medium called the Light of Glory, is it enabled to see God as

He is, and, even then, its grasp, while intuitive, is not exhaustive, but will be eternally enriched in the contemplation of the Ever Ancient Ever New. But never can the Infinite be the immediate natural and proportionate object of the finite mind. Hence, ontologism is wholly inadmissible as involving a self-evident contradiction. Further, ontologism renders inexplicable the fact that imagination (a sentient and material faculty) constantly co-operates with the human intellect in the forming and using of ideas; imagination goes along, so to speak, with intellect, and keeps pace with it in its own way and in the measure of its limitations, even when intellect is engaged in the most abstruse reasoning. Now, if we behold the essences of things directly in our intuitive idea of God, this known service of imagination is not only useless but it is a thing impossible to explain; it flies straight in the face of the axiomatic truth that nature does nothing in vain. Again, ontologism overlooks the fact that when a man has a direct and intuitive knowledge of God he is instantly constituted thereby in the state of heavenly happiness, which is obviously not the case with human beings here on earth. For all these reasons, any one of which would suffice, we reject ontologism as a wholly fallacious doctrine. And with ontologism, we reject its thesis that God's existence needs no demonstration to the human mind.

Reason and experience, then, assure us that our knowledge of God's existence is not self-evident

knowledge for our minds. It is a truth that admits demonstration and, in that same measure, requires it. We have need for the demonstration of the truth of God's existence. We must now inquire whether this need can be met. We are to investigate the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God.

b) POSSIBILITY OF THE DEMONSTRATION

Against the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God stand the theories of (a) *atheism* which denies that there is a God to prove existent; (b) *agnosticism* which declares God existent (or admits that He may exist) but declares Him unknowable; (c) *traditionalism* which teaches that the human mind is powerless to formulate a true demonstration in this case, but has its certitude of God's existence from a primitive revelation made to the first men and handed down to us by tradition.

Now, we need not here make any direct attack on the atheistic position, for our whole study confutes it, and we shall have the pleasure of pointing out the fact in brief detail on a later page. Here we are to deal with the agnostic and the traditionalist positions. But before we take up the rather simple matter of their refutation, we must mention certain types of demonstration listed by logicians, and decide which of these may be used for our present purpose.

A demonstration is, first of all, either direct or indirect. A *direct* demonstration deals with reasons or

causes which affect the thing demonstrated. An *indirect* demonstration shows that something is true because its opposite is false, groundless, self-contradictory, or that it leads, if accepted, to absurdities. In other words, a direct demonstration proves a point itself; an indirect demonstration proves the contradictory point unacceptable. When you meet the skeptic's claim that the human mind is incapable of achieving true certitude, you may demonstrate the existence of certitude by showing the character of objective evidence and its inevitable effect upon the mind; then your demonstration is direct. But you may also confute the skeptic by taking his own word that no certainty is achievable, and asking him how he became certain of *that*. In a word, a direct demonstration establishes a position as right in itself; an indirect demonstration establishes a position as right by showing that its contradictory is wrong. An indirect demonstration is valid because, as we learned in Logic, two contradictories cannot be simultaneously true nor simultaneously false; one must be true, one false; for contradictories exhaust the possibilities and cover the whole ground: the proof that one is true is proof positive and complete that the other is false; the proof that one is false is complete proof that the other is true. Our present concern is the possibility of a *direct* demonstration of the truth of God's existence.

Now, a direct demonstration deals with causes

and reasons, and the plan of its formulation is always either "cause to effect" or "effect to cause." The "cause to effect" type of demonstration is called *a priori* demonstration. *A priori* means "from beforehand"; it indicates the forehanded view, so to say, which one takes from the consideration of a cause looking towards the effect that must come from that cause. If, for example, you argue thus: "Spherical bodies throw spherical shadows. The earth is a spherical body. Therefore, the earth will throw a spherical shadow," you are arguing *a priori*. You do not take the shadow as a known effect to begin with; you take the cause of the shadow, and from the consideration of the cause you look forward, so to speak (or *a priori*) to the inevitable effect.—If demonstration argues from "effect to cause," it is called *a posteriori* demonstration. *A posteriori* means "from afterwards"; it indicates the backward view from an effect to its accounting cause. The *a priori* view knows the effect *before* it is there by studying the cause and learning what the effect, when it comes, must be. The *a posteriori* view knows the effect *after* it is there, and learns from studying it what sort of cause is required to explain it. If, for instance, you argue thus: "All bodies which throw spherical shadows are themselves spherical. The earth throws a spherical shadow. Therefore, the earth itself is spherical," you are arguing *a posteriori*. You are taking an effect (i. e., the shadow) and arguing from it to its accounting cause.

We need not pause here to explain or illustrate further than we have done the type of demonstration called indirect. For, while we shall not hesitate to employ it when it offers its service, our present concern is the *possibility of direct demonstration* of the existence of God. We ask: Is direct demonstration in this case possible; and, if so, are both the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* types of it available to us; or, if but one type can serve us, which of the two is it?

We answer: Direct demonstration of the existence of God is possible, for any naturally knowable truth that is not self-evident is capable of direct or indirect demonstration; and when the truth to be demonstrated stands in a causal relation to known effects, then direct demonstration is possible. Now the existence of God is a naturally knowable truth as the whole history of mankind attests, and God is, by very concept and definition, a Being that stands in causal relation to known effects, that is, to the visible universe. Therefore, direct demonstration of the existence of God is possible.

But it is manifest that the type of direct demonstration called *a priori* or *cause-to-effect* demonstration will not serve us here. For God cannot be approached *a priori*. We cannot, so to speak, get back of God, for the very concept of God is a concept of the absolutely *first* Being. We cannot study God in His causes, for He has no causes; the first and necessary Being is inevitably *causeless*. Nor can we study the essence of

God in an *a priori* fashion, seeking to know from this essence what the attributes or perfections of God must be, even though, by a special view of our minds, we make a distinction in the absolutely simple (i. e., undivided and indivisible) God, and regard the Divine Essence in the light of a cause, and the Divine Perfections in the light of effects. For to do this we should have to possess an immediate and intuitive knowledge of the Divine Essence to begin with, and that, as a fact, we do not possess. The progress of our knowledge is all the other way about. We advance from the knowledge of creatures, and of creatureal perfections, to the knowledge of the Divine Perfections, and thus our detailed knowledge of the Divine Essence Itself is built up in the *effect-to-cause* or *a posteriori* fashion, and not *a priori*.

We form our knowledge of God *a posteriori*, and in four steps: we first recognize God as the First Cause of all things; secondly, we attribute to God all that we recognize in creatures as perfection; thirdly, we attribute this perfection to God in a manner eminently superior to that in which individual perfections are found in creatures; fourthly, we remove from our idea of divine perfection every limitation or imperfection, attributing to God all possible perfections in an absolutely infinite or boundless degree and in perfect unity and simplicity, identifying them all in the undivided Divine Essence. Thus our knowledge of God is the result of the convergence of four

"ways": the way of *causality*; the way of *attribution*; the way of *excellence or transcendence*; the way of *removal or denial of limitation*. And clear reason justifies the approach to the sure knowledge of God by these four converging paths. Thus we possess a distinct idea of God, the Infinite Being, although we cannot have a perfectly comprehensive idea of Him in our finite minds. But, for the matter of that, none of our ideas is perfectly comprehensive; none of them exhausts the knowability of its object. Our idea of God is clear, distinct, usable, sufficient. It is a genuine idea, not a figment of the mind, for it is formed by the mind working on solid reality and advancing along the solid paths of abstractive reasoning.

The ontological argument of St. Anselm, which we have discussed in detail, is an attempt to prove God's existence in a somewhat *a priori* fashion. It is not a purely *a priori* argument. Rather, it is an argument *a simultaneo*, that is, an argument which proceeds from the existence of *the idea of God* in our minds to the simultaneous *actual existence of God* outside our minds. The argument does not pretend to deal with the *cause* of God, for the very notion of such a cause is an absurdity; it would be the notion of "a cause of the causeless" which is a manifest contradiction. But, as we have amply seen, even the *a simultaneo* type of demonstration fails to afford us a valid proof for the existence of God.

By exclusion, then, we know that the only type

of direct demonstration available in this case,—and we have seen that direct demonstration is possible,—is the *a posteriori* or *effect-to-cause* type. By this type of thinking we build up our knowledge of God; by this type of proof we establish the actual existence of God. And it is this type of thinking that serves us, fundamentally, in all our reasoning. For, granted that there can be such a thing as an *a priori* argument, there is ever back of it a truth that was learned *a posteriori*. Thus, though you begin your argument about the shadow of the earth in this fashion: "Spherical bodies throw spherical shadows," and go on to conclude that the earth, being spherical, will throw a spherical shadow, you have learned *a posteriori* your original facts that the shadows of bodies conform to the shapes of bodies, and that the earth is spherical. To deny value to *a posteriori* reasoning is to bankrupt all human knowledge and to relapse into the evil silence of complete skepticism.

But, it is objected, the *a posteriori* type of demonstration is an *effect-to-cause* demonstration; it involves the dread thing called *causality*, and there are philosophers in the world who have no stomach for causality, and turn sick at the very mention of it. Since Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) threw his cloud of prideful doubt across the lightsome land of human intelligence, the doctrine of causality has been suspect in many minds. The positivists, for instance, who are one of the many companies in the motley

regiment of agnostics, will have none of it, for they cannot put pure causality into a test-tube or on a scale or cut it in sections on a microtome, and so they deny it. They fall back upon a theory of *succession* or *constant sequence*, and say that what we call effect follows what we call cause, but we cannot say more about it nor connect the two essentially. This, of course, is explaining something by explaining it away; it is solving a problem by blotting the problem out, a strange procedure for a scientific mind. Further, it is a denial of fundamental and universal human experience, and, in consequence, it is the denial of the basis of all knowledge and certitude. Besides, the thing called succession, and the theory which proposes it, are not objects that can be sensed or handled in a laboratory. The positivist neatly contradicts himself when he essays to attack causality. For the rest, his argument that only the data of sense can be positively or scientifically known involves a quite evident absurdity. For what are the data of sense? They are not things the senses know. The senses do not know anything. The *man* who has the senses knows something by their use. The *man* who has a mind also knows something by its use. It is the *man* that knows in either case, not the senses nor the mind. Therefore, to say that only what a man knows by the conscious use of his senses is reliably known, and what he knows (as he knows causality) by his mind is not reliably known, is just as foolish as to say that what a man

learns by the sense of touch is reliably known, but what he learns by the sense of sight is not reliably known.

But there are many who see the absurdity of the extreme positivistic position and these do a neat maneuver and come up smiling on a new tack. They say that causality can indeed be known, but that we cannot carry it "beyond the realm of the phenomenal." In other words, you can know what causes stomach-ache, and you can know what causes this to cause stomach-ache, but you cannot ultimately know what causes the stomach. You can know cause and effect within the borders of the bodily world, but your reason, which carries you successfully through causality in this world, cannot take wing and bear you aloft into the world of the ultimate and primal causality. Why? It seems that these peculiar people who limit causality to the phenomenal world (that is, the world of sense, of bodily appearances) have themselves explored the outer and invisible realm; *they* have been there; *they* know all about it; and they tell ordinary stupid people like you and me that we cannot go there. If we are not very stupid, we shall resent this intolerable impertinence. These scientific people declare that only the realm of sense-reality can be dealt with scientifically; only in this realm can causality be known. Does that doctrine belong to the realm of sense? By what sense does one acquire that knowledge? Again we come back to the fundamental fallacy involved

in all this nice assignment of fields and areas in which sound knowledge can be garnered. Not that we should not make clean distinctions between the field of sensation and that of intellection; indeed, it is the failure to notice the fence between these fields that is characteristic of all the muddle of even the finest minds since Descartes (1596-1650). And it is the very failure of the positivists and of the positivistic to notice the distinction, that mixes them all up, and enables them to propose with serious faces a wholly intellectual and reasoned conclusion (though their reason be twisted) as the fundamental principle of an entirely sensistic system! Once more we insist that in the case of human knowledge, whether it be knowledge of cows or of causality, it is the *man* who knows, not his senses and not his mind. And there is certainly no scientific or philosophical ground for admitting value to one sort of awareness and denying it to the other. You may indeed follow with critical care any complex line of intellectual procedure; but so you must do in any penetrating use of the senses. And you cannot be critical of either sentient or intellectual procedure without the use of the very mind whose reliability is questioned or denied with the question or denial of man's knowledge of causality, even of primal causality. For the rest, *any* causality belongs to the supra-phenomenal world. There are phenomena which mark effects, and show the presence and the action of causes, but causality itself is no phenome-

non; and what it produces by way of phenomena is regularly only secondary to an underlying and non-phenomenal effect upon the very essences of things.

To sum up: the knowledge which we possess of causality is a direct intuition of the mind working with the findings of sense. It is a fundamental certitude that makes us connect cause and effect, and upon it not only all human knowledge but all human practice is built up. Even those who twist their minds into an acceptance of a bizarre theory which denies causality or limits it to the realm of phenomena (where, strictly speaking, it does not even apply, except in a secondary way) are forced in their practice to recognize causality as true and as validly known. Even if we allow the positivistic and scientific people to play about with names, and to call causality by the name of *succession*, or *constant sequence*, we recognize clearly from their whole procedure, and even from their terminology in unguarded moments, that they mean by these names neither more nor less than genuine causality. Causality is simply inescapable in the whole experience of man, and it affords to philosopher, theologian, and scientist, as to the man in the street, the ground of argument and of demonstration. Therefore, with clear minds and spirits unburdened with the intolerable positivistic error, we take up the proofs for God's existence, basing them on causality, proceeding in a true and valid *a posteriori* manner to make clear the most important truth of all. And to the stubborn

positivistic person who refuses to accompany us on this interesting and all-important journey, we say, "While you're waiting, you might try to account for the succession and constant sequence of things in this world, and for what these things scream at you about the non-phenomenal world. For even a positivist can't deny that succession and constant sequence are things that demand a bit of explaining."

The *agnostic*, then, is wrong when he insists that God cannot be known. For a cause can be known, and the effects from which we proceed to the knowledge of the cause, are, in the present case, all about us. Our whole procedure in setting forth the demonstration of God's existence will be a sufficient refutation of agnosticism, if any further refutation be needed than that already given. The *traditionalist* also is wrong. His theory of a primitive revelation is so far true; there doubtless was a primitive revelation. But to say that there had to be such a revelation, by physical necessity, so that man could never have had a knowledge of God without it; and to say that our knowledge of God is a blind acceptance of the human tradition, is to make wild assertions that do not square with the facts; the fact of the human mind is against it; the fact of the human experience is against it; and nothing really is for it. We have seen in the present study that God's existence can be proved, and that there is a valid way for developing this proof. To the traditionalist then we say, "What! Are you answered?" And

if he is not answered, we may say, losing reverence momentarily for his solemn stupidity, "We can't prove God's existence? Just watch us do it."

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have explained the meaning of *demonstration*, and have discovered that the truth of God's existence is *not self-evident to our minds*, and therefore admits and requires demonstration. We have noticed the defects of the demonstration attempted by St. Anselm and others (called *the ontological argument*) and have rejected this as an inept proof, and one that does not dispense us from the necessity of finding other and valuable evidence for God's existence. We have seen that the true demonstration of God's existence is not furnished by the *instinct* theory of Reid and the Scottish School, by Kant and his theory of *practical reason*, or by Jacobi and his theory of *religious and moral sentiment*. Viewing all these theories, we find that the need still exists for valid demonstration of God's existence. Further, we have seen that this need can be met by a proof that is direct and *a posteriori*, a proof necessarily involving causality. Against the doctrines that deny value to the argument from causality, and against the whole agnostic, and traditionalistic position, we have established our right to use this argument in building up a true demonstration.

CHAPTER II

DEMONSTRATION OF THE EXISTENCE
OF GOD

This Chapter sets forth the traditional *a posteriori* proofs for the existence of God. All of these proofs are applications of the *principle of causality*, that is, of the fundamental truth which may be fully expressed as follows: "Every effect requires, to explain its existence, the existence of an adequate cause or sum of causes, and it ultimately requires the existence of an uncaused and necessarily existing First Cause which is Subsistent Being Itself." But, although all the proofs here offered are expressions of causality, all do not exhibit the same type of causality. Therefore, as a kind of preface to our demonstration, we offer a short introductory Article on the chief types of causes. In the succeeding Articles we present the proofs for God's existence. The Chapter is divided into these Articles:

Article 1. The Chief Types of Causes

Article 2. The Proof from Efficient Causality

Article 3. The Proof from Formal and Final Causality

Article 4. Certain Supplementary Proofs

ARTICLE I. THE CHIEF TYPES OF CAUSES

- a) Meaning of *Cause*
- b) Intrinsic Causes
- c) Extrinsic Causes

a) MEANING OF CAUSE

A *cause* is anything that contributes, in any way and measure whatever, to the *producing* of a thing.

The thing produced by causes is called an *effect*. Between cause and effect there is a constant relation which, viewed from the standpoint of the cause, is *causality*, and viewed from the standpoint of the effect is *dependency* or *contingency*. That which is the effect of one cause may be the cause of a further effect. Indeed the world around us is a tissue of causes and effects.

We distinguish *cause* and *principle*. A principle is that which gives rise to anything, or is its point of origin. Thus *a cause is always a principle*, for it is the point of origin of the effect and it gives rise to the effect. But some points of origin are merely starting-points, and not effecting or producing sources. Thus, the dawn is the starting point, or *principle*, of the day, but dawn is not the cause of day. Thus a man's convictions are the true source of his free conduct, but they are not the cause of his free conduct; this cause is his will; the convictions are *principles* but not causes. Therefore, *every cause is a principle, but not every principle is a cause*.

We distinguish *cause* and *reason*. A reason is that which contributes in any way to the understanding of a thing; it *explains*, whereas a cause *produces*. Everything that exists has reasons which explain it and account for it; but not everything that exists has its cause or causes. God has reasons, and we are to investigate them in our present study. But God has no causes, for He is the *first* Being, and not a Being

consequent upon causes. Now, every cause is a reason; that is, when you know the cause of an effect, you have an explanation of the effect. But there are explanations other than causes; we explain and even demonstrate the existence of God but we do not assign causes to God. Therefore, *every cause is a reason but not every reason is a cause*. Fire is a reason for heat and is the cause of heat; heat is a reason for fire (that is, it manifests or *explains* the presence of fire) but heat is not the cause of fire; it is its effect.

We distinguish *cause* and *occasion*. An occasion is some extrinsic circumstance or set of circumstances which may induce a cause to act. The sight of a priest or of a rosary in the hands of a little sodalist may lead an anti-clerical to curse and swear; what he sees is not the cause of the evil language, but its occasion. There is never an essential and intrinsic connection between *the occasion* and *the cause which acts on occasion*, but there is frequently a powerful, if extrinsic, influence exercised by occasion. For this reason we have the practical truisms: "He that loves danger shall perish in it"; "He who wills not to avoid occasions of sin, does not will to avoid sin"; "Tell me the company you keep, and I'll tell you what you are," and so on.

b) INTRINSIC CAUSES

An *intrinsic* cause is one that is *right in the effect*, not external to it, but part and parcel with it.

There are two types of intrinsic cause, *material cause* and *formal cause*.

1. A *material cause* is the bodily matter out of which an object is made. Thus the material cause of a statue is wood or plaster or marble. It is manifest that spiritual things have no material cause, for they are not composed of matter. The material out of which a bodily thing is made is a true cause, for without it the effect would not be there. Without wood, plaster, marble, silver, or some other bodily substance, there could be no statue. And the production of the statue truly depended upon some suitable substance existing that could be carved or moulded into a statue. Indeed, this statue which I here look upon would not be *this* statue if any other matter but that precise matter which is in it were used in the making. Thus the matter, the material make-up, of any bodily substance has the nature of a true cause. Remember the definition of cause: that which contributes, in any manner or measure whatever, to the producing of a thing. Notice that the material of which a bodily object is made is *right in that object*; it is *intrinsic* to that object; thus a material cause is an *intrinsic cause*.

2. A *formal cause* is that which constitutes an effect as the precise kind of thing it is, constitutes it *formally* or *as such*. Now, the *precise kind* of thing which the effect is, may mean the *precise kind of substance* or the *precise kind of accidental being*. Thus, in a silver statue, I distinguish that which makes this

bodily substance the precise kind of substance it is, that is, *silver*, and I call this the *substantial form* or the *substantial formal cause* of the statue. Further, I distinguish in the statue that which makes this silver object the precise kind of thing it is in its accidental being, that is, in its shape and size and image-value, and so on; and each point of this kind is an *accidental form* of the statue, and its *accidental formal cause*. Notice that the statue would not be this precise thing (substantially) if any other substance than silver were used to make it; nor would it be precisely this identical thing if any accidental determinant or form were different, if, for instance, it were made of some other quantity of silver, or were smaller or larger or represented some other person than it now does. Thus, every single one of the determinants or forms (the one substantial form and the several accidental forms) makes its contribution to the effect I call *this statue*. Each of these forms is therefore a true cause. And notice that the forms or formal causes are *right in the effect itself*: the *statue* is silver; the *statue* is marked and determined by this weight, this size, this location, this shape, and so on. Therefore, a formal cause, whether substantial or accidental, is an *intrinsic cause*.

To sum up. Intrinsic causes are thus distinguished:

Cause.	{	Material
	{	substantial
	{	accidental

c) EXTRINSIC CAUSES

An *extrinsic* cause is outside the effect, not part and parcel with it.

There are two chief types of extrinsic cause, *efficient cause* and *final cause*.

1. An *efficient cause* is a cause which by its own activity produces an effect. The sculptor who carved the statue is its efficient cause. Now the efficient cause is frequently subserved by *instrumental causes*, as the sculptor was served by the tools he used, and by the natural instruments of hands, fingers, muscles, sinews. The efficient cause is often also served by an *exemplar-cause*, that is, the model or pattern after which the work of the efficient cause is fashioned. Thus the sculptor (the *efficient cause* of the statue) was subserved not only by instruments (that is, *instrumental causes*) but by some model, image, or pattern, which he had physically before him as he worked, or at least pictured in his imagination (that is, an *exemplar-cause*), and which served as his plan and his guide. Notice that both instruments and exemplar have their influence on the effect and make a distinct contribution to it; without these causes the finished statue would not exist, or it would not exist as the precise thing it is in every detail. Therefore, instruments and exemplar deserve the name of true *causes*. Notice further that the efficient cause, the instrumental causes, and the exemplar-cause, are things external to, or extrinsic to, the effect; they are not *right in*

the effect itself; hence they are called *extrinsic causes*.

2. A *final cause* is the goal or end towards which the work of the efficient cause is directed in the active producing of the effect. Wherever we find efficient causation, we find some goal, some term, something aimed at, whether consciously or unconsciously. The lifeless forces of nature, such as wind and erosion, tend towards their effect by a natural drive or energy. In living things, in plants and animals, we notice an obvious tendency towards development, maturity, and fruitfulness. But only an intelligent or understanding being (that is, only a *rational being*) is capable of setting a goal, proposing an end to itself, and working to attain it. And every rational *creature* does so set its goal in every free act, but always sets it (of necessity) in the direction of *good* to be attained; for towards the Supreme Good every creature is directed by the inmost requirements of its being. The *ultimate* goal, absolutely speaking, sought by *man* in every free act, is the supreme or highest good, and supreme happiness in the attainment of that good. But any *proximate* or *remote* goal which is not absolutely ultimate (and which is conceived of as a *means* to carry one in the direction of the ultimate goal) is freely chosen by man (that is, by the only bodily *rational creature*) in his deliberate activity. So we say, to illustrate our definition of final cause, that the sculptor must have had some reason for making the statue, something that drew him to the work of making it, something that

made its making appear a *good* thing and led him to choose it freely. Perhaps it was money, perhaps love of art, perhaps a mere pleasant way to spend the time; but *some* purpose there must have been, else the statue never would have been produced. This purpose is *the final cause* of the statue. For man, a final cause is also a *motive*; it moves the human efficient cause to the free work of producing the effect. But for God, the final cause is not a motive, since God is in no wise influenced or moved, but chooses with supreme and wholly unswayed free choice. God has, in all His transient operations, a *purpose*, but no *motive*; for man, *purpose* is usually a pretty accurate synonym for *motive*. The final cause is manifestly *extrinsic* to the effect; it is something outside the effect itself, and something at which the effect is, so to speak, aimed and directed.

To sum up. Extrinsic causes are distinguished thus:

Cause.	{	Efficient	subservied by	{	instrumental
		Final			exemplar

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

This brief Article has taught us the meaning of *cause*. We have defined cause, and have noticed how it is distinguished from *principle*, *reason*, and *occasion*. We have classified the chief types of causes as *intrinsic* to the effect (*material* and *formal cause*)

and as *extrinsic* to the effect (*efficient* and *final cause*). In the subsequent study we shall find that God is the supreme Efficient and the last Final Cause of all creation.

ARTICLE 2. THE PROOF FROM EFFICIENT CAUSALITY

a) Proof from Motion b) Proof from the Order of Efficient Causes c) Proof from Contingency

a) PROOF FROM MOTION

By *motion* or *movement* is meant any transit, any change, from one state of being to another. Motion is most readily illustrated by *local* movement, that is, by the movement of bodily things in space. Such movement is all about us all the time; it goes on within us; it obtrudes itself upon our notice constantly. We find such motion or movement in the sunrise and sunset, in the rustling leaves, in the darting fly, in the beating of our hearts, in the twitching of our fingers, in the steps we take, in the creeping clouds, in the heaving ocean. But this movement of bodily things in space is not the only movement or motion in the world. There is motion in the transit from ignorance to knowledge, in the making up of our minds, in the change from the state of sin to the state of grace. *Any* transit, any going-over, from one state of being (substantial or accidental) to another is motion.

Now, *the principle of motion*, that is, the self-

evident truth which is the first source of sound reasoning about motion, is this: *Whatever is moved is moved by something other than itself*, or, in the familiar Latin formula which we should know, *Quidquid movetur ab alio movetur*. For motion requires a *mover* as well as a *thing moved*. And a little attention will make clear the fact that *mover* and *thing moved* cannot possibly be one and the same thing. As far as bodily or local movement is concerned the point is expressed in the physical law of inertia which tells us that bodies at rest tend to remain at rest; they never originate movement in themselves and of themselves; the thought is as self-contradictory as that of a man lifting himself by his own boot-straps. To moving bodies, motion has been *communicated*; it has been bestowed and given; it has come from some external source. And what is true of local motion in bodies is true of change of quality or quantity and of any motion at all.

Living bodies are said to *move themselves*, and life is sometimes defined as the power of self-movement. But living bodies do not move themselves into existence; nor do they dower themselves with the power called life. Life-movements depend upon the existence of an inner substantial principle (which did not move itself into existence) called the *life-principle* or *soul* or *psyche* or *entelechy*; and in the execution of life-movements in bodies, part moves part. A living body has been (marvellously and mysteriously) assembled

or "moved together"; it did not assemble its own parts in the first place for it was not there to do so even if it could. And so its subsequent movements are not self-movements in the full sense; these depend upon the balance of parts, the assembly, the *organism* or *vital unity*, which is not self-originating. It still remains true that whatever is moved is moved by something other than itself.

To put the matter in the more stately philosophical terminology: Anything movable is in the state of *potentiality* with respect to the movement which it may undergo. When the movement takes place, the potentiality is *actualized*. Now, it is a principle of metaphysics that nothing is actualized except under the activity of something which is already actual; no potentiality is self-actualizing. St. Thomas Aquinas puts the point thus: "Motion takes place inasmuch as things are changed from the potential to the actual, and this demands some actual agent to move them from the potential state." Now, it cannot be that anything is both potential and actual under the same aspect or in precisely the same way; therefore the *mover* and the *thing moved* cannot be identical. Whatever is moved is moved by something other than itself.

That, then, is the first point to remember. Motion is not self-originating, and wherever motion exists, there exists a mover which is something other than the thing moved. The second point is this: you cannot go on forever with a *series of movers* and *things*

moved. If Z is moved by Y, and Y is moved by X, and X is moved by W, and W is moved by V, this sort of thing may go on through a long chain or series, but it does not go on endlessly. Somewhere you must come to an *absolute A* which is not moved by anything else, which, in fact, is not moved at all. For it is one of the chief of self-evident principles that a "process unto actual infinity" is impossible. The agnostic may object that we go too far in demanding a *first* mover itself unmoved. He may say, "It's all very well to follow the chain of mover-and-moved, but where it slips out of the realm of bodily reality it slips entirely out of sight." Yes, but we can know, and that with full certitude, that it does not slip out of existence when it slips out of sight. The chain that hangs a few visible links before our eyes, one duly supporting the next below it according to honored custom, may be lost in cloudy heights, but this fact does not make us less aware that the invisible portion of it is *there*, and that somewhere in the higher reaches there is a link hooked over a solid peg, and the peg supports the whole suspended chain, visible and invisible. To acknowledge the links we see and then to deny that there is anything knowable about the links we do not see, and especially the first link, is actually to take away the only reason there is for believing what our eyes behold. If, out there "beyond," there is no knowable first link solidly moored on something that supports the whole chain, then the thing we see is something

at once more and less than a miracle; it is something monstrous, and all our talk and reasoning about it become gibberish. To refuse to see an argument, or a chain, to the end, though it be a bitter end or a bitterly disliked end, is not to acknowledge, with humility, the powerlessness of the human mind to investigate invisible reality; it is to assert the powerlessness of the human mind to recognize visible reality.

It is manifest that this *argument from motion* is a phase or aspect of the requirements of efficient causality. For the mover is the efficient cause of the movement. Hence, with St. Thomas who puts this argument first, we list it, with the two that follow, under the general heading of Proof from Efficient Causality.

We may sum up our argument thus:

If there is motion in the world, there exists a mover,
and ultimately a First Mover Itself Unmoved.
Now, manifestly, there is motion in the world.
Therefore, there exists a mover, and ultimately a First
Mover Itself Unmoved. This First Mover we call
God. Therefore God exists.

b) **PROOF FROM THE ORDER OF EFFICIENT CAUSES**
An efficient cause is, as we have learned, a cause that by its own action produces an effect. Now, this effect may, in turn, be the efficient cause of another effect, and this of another, and so on. In a machine, one part moves another, and this another, the whole movement of all the parts depending upon the steam

or electricity or water or other force which moves the first of these parts. We sometimes see a large factory full of moving machines and travelling belts, and all movement is communicated from one master engine or one enormous fly-wheel; efficient causality is communicated from point to point and from part to part, each movement being first an effect of an efficient cause, and then an efficient cause of a further effect. In nature about us we may observe examples of the same "subordination or order of efficient causes." Thus the sun acts as an efficient cause in shedding its light and warmth upon the plant; the plant, availing itself of the sun's contribution, grows and flourishes and puts forth fruit. Again, the golfer, surely one of nature's noblest sights, moves his arms; the arms move the club; the club (perhaps) moves the ball; and here is a neat chain of connected efficient causes. It is needless to multiply examples, for there are such chains of efficient causation (or such "an order of efficient causes") to be observed on all sides.

Now, just as motion cannot arise of itself; just as a thing moved cannot be its own mover, so a thing efficiently caused cannot be its own cause. As St. Thomas says, "It cannot be that anything is its own efficient cause; if it were, it would exist before itself, which is impossible." Therefore, where we find a thing efficiently produced or effected, we must look for its cause in something other than itself.

To quote St. Thomas once more, "In every connected series of efficient causes, the first is the cause of the intermediate (one or many), and the intermediate is the cause of the last. Remove the cause and the effect is gone; remove the first cause and there remains neither intermediate nor last." Therefore, he concludes, one cannot say a chain of efficient causality reaches back unto infinity, for to say that is to deny actuality to the first cause, and so to deny it to all the rest of the chain. One must come to the first cause in any series or chain of efficient causes, and one must come to the First Cause to account for all the chains, and this First Cause must be itself uncaused. For it is *first*, no cause is prior to it, nothing produces it; it is causeless, unproduced. Reason demands that such a Being must exist to account for the efficient causation we behold all about us in the world, and for the universe itself which is demonstrably an *effect*, that is, the product of efficient causality. We call this Uncaused First Cause, *God*. Therefore, God exists.

We may sum up the argument in this way:

If there exists a true order or connection of efficient causes, there must exist a First Cause, Itself Uncaused.

Now, there does exist, as is manifest all about us, a true order or connection of efficient causes.

Therefore, there must exist a First Cause, Itself Uncaused. This we call God. Therefore, God exists.

c) PROOF FROM CONTINGENCY

Contingence or contingency means dependency; it is the converse of causality. If causality is "heads," contingency is "tails." A thing caused is said to be contingent upon, or dependent upon, the action of the efficient cause (or causes) that produced it. A thing uncaused (and such a Being is only one, namely, God) is said to be *necessary*; it is not dependent upon causes; it is not contingent; for it is causeless and unproduced and exists of necessity, that is, it cannot be non-existent. Thus there is a fundamental classification of reality into *necessary* and *contingent* reality. All creatural reality, all worldly reality, is finite and hence contingent.

Now, a contingent thing may exist, but, if it does exist, it exists by grace of the causes that gave it existence. In itself it involves no necessity for existence; it didn't *have* to exist, and it does not contain *in itself* the explanation of its existence. In itself, it is *possible*, and that is the most that can be said for it. That finite or contingent things exist is proof positive that they *can* exist, but it is equally proof positive that they *might not* have existed. Well, if *everything* is of this character; if *everything* is contingent; if *everything* is something that *might not* exist, there must have been a time when absolutely nothing existed. And, by that token, it must still be true that absolutely nothing exists. For in the blank of absolute nothingness there is no actuality that could draw pos-

sible things into existence; absolute nothingness is simply nothing, and nothing it must remain. Hence, the very existence of contingent things (and all creatures are contingent) is indisputable proof that there exists a Being that is *not* contingent, but *necessary*. And, as necessary; it must be prior to all the contingent things that ultimately depend upon it for their existence; it must be *first*. Therefore, there exists a First and a Necessary Being, and this we call God. Therefore, God exists.

When we say that a thing is *contingent* or *dependent* we label it as a thing subject to change, to motion, to efficient causality. It has been *changed* from its state of possibility or potentiality to actuality; it has been *moved* from non-being into being; it has been *efficiently caused*. Ponder these words of the great G. K. C., applying them to the three arguments we have thus far considered: "Mr. Wells must surely realize the first and simplest of the paradoxes that sit by the springs of truth. He must surely see that the fact of two things being different implies that they are similar. The hare and the tortoise may differ in the quality of swiftness, but they must agree in the quality of motion. The swiftest hare cannot be swifter than an isosceles triangle or the idea of pinkness. When we say the hare moves faster, we say the tortoise moves. And when we say of a thing that it moves, we say, without need of other words, that there are things that do not move. And even in the

act of saying that things change, we say that there is something unchangeable."

We may put our argument from contingency in this brief form:

If contingent things exist, they demand as their ultimate explanation (that is, as their sufficient reason for existing) the existence of a Being which is necessary and non-contingent, a First Being which does not depend on causes.

Now, it is undeniable that contingent things exist. Therefore, there exists a Being which is necessary and non-contingent, a First Being which does not depend on causes. This Being we call God. Therefore, God exists.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have presented the first three arguments for the existence of God in the order in which they are set forth by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is manifest that these three arguments, or *proofs*, as we are fully justified in calling them, are all applications of the principle of efficient causality. This principle may be succinctly stated in these words: *No effect is efficiently produced without an adequate producing or efficient cause*. We have considered efficient causality as it is manifested in motion, in the subordination or *order of causes*, and in *contingency*. Any one of these proofs is conclusive. Their cumulative force is absolutely compelling to sound reason. Reason therefore demands the existence of a Prime Mover, a First Ef-

ficient Cause Itself Uncaused, a First and Necessary Being. This Being we call God.

ARTICLE 3. THE PROOF FROM FORMAL AND FINAL CAUSALITY

- a) Proof from Grades of Perfection b) Proof from Government of the World c) Proof from Man's Ultimate Goal

Things bear the impress of their efficient cause in two notable ways. They manifest its power and skill and, in a sense, its character, in their formal structure, their being considered formally or as such. And they manifest its purpose in the way they work. In the first of the three arguments here to be presented we view creatures in the light of what may, at least analogously, be called their formal cause. Many authors prefer to see in this argument a further application of efficient causality (and indeed this is not to be denied) with a tinge of exemplar-causality. In the second and third arguments we view creatures in the light of the end or goal for which they are made and to which they tend; in a word we see them in the light of their final causality.

a) PROOF FROM GRADES OF PERFECTION

By the *perfection* of a thing we mean its *thorough making*. The word *perfection* comes from the Latin *per* and *factum* which, freely rendered, means "made

through and through." A thing is *perfect* or *has perfection* when it is all that it ought to be, when no item or element that should be present in it is lacking. Of course, there is a pedantic quibble about the propriety of speaking of grades or degrees of perfection; it is sometimes asserted that a thing is perfect or it is not perfect, and that nothing more may be said of it. In other words, it is said that *perfect* is an absolute term, not admitting comparison; it is a positive without comparative or superlative. Now, this is true enough when one considers a single thing, or a single essence in the abstract. A reality either measures up to the full stature of what it should be, or it falls short. But when we contrast things essentially different, it is manifest that one fulness may be less than another fulness; as the stone, for instance, is less in the order of fulness of being and activity than the plant, and in that sense is less perfect than the plant. The same is true of contrasted qualities like wisdom and goodness and virtue and beauty. Outside all the individuals and the classes of which such qualities may be predicated there is some absolute standard, which the mind perceive conceives, and with which it compares the individuals and classes and rates them as *lesser* and *greater* in perfection as they share less fully or more fully the impress of the absolute standard. Thus the argument about the terms *perfect* and *perfection* appears to be one for grammarians and purists rather than for philosophers; for, whatever the requirements of

diction and pure style, the thought or idea that is expressed by the phrase *degrees of perfection* is quite clear and quite valuable. Perhaps, however, it would be wiser (and certainly it would silence the grumbling of the pedants and pundits) if we were to leave the words *perfect* and *perfection* and use some such words as *good* and *goodness*; there can surely be no quibble about the meaning of *good* and *better*. And indeed St. Thomas Aquinas uses this very set of terms (with others) in his presentation of the argument under discussion.

"We find in things," he says, "degrees of *more* and *less*, and they are called more or less good, more or less true, more or less noble, and so on. But *more* or *less* is predicated of things inasmuch as they bear reference to a *most*." In other words, there must be a supreme standard, which is not itself subject to measurement by comparison with a further standard (for it is *supreme*). Things are *more* or *less* (good, noble, true, etc.) by a kind of measurement; a measure is applied to them in a manner analogous to that in which a yardstick is applied to a piece of cloth and which is found to be more or less than a yard. But the *first* source and standard of measurement cannot conceivably be measurable itself. The things that have *more* or *less* may be said to share or participate in a limited measure what the ultimate standard possesses simply and unshared in a measureless and absolute way. Things, therefore, which have degrees of *good*

and *better*; *more* noble, *less* noble, etc., require the existence of that which is measurelessly *most*, *best*, *truest*, *noblest*, as the ultimate source and standard of their *shared* goodness, truth, nobility.

We may set the argument in this form:

If there are real degrees of *more* and *less* in things about us in this world, there must exist a most, a maximum, a greatest, not only in a relative sense as the greatest in a certain order, but in an absolute sense as boundlessly greatest.

Now, as is manifest, there are real degrees of *more* and *less* in things about us in this world.

Therefore, there exists a most, a maximum, a greatest, not only in a relative sense, but in an absolute sense. This Greatest we call God. Therefore, God exists.

b) PROOF FROM GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD

This proof is sometimes called *the teleological argument*, the term deriving from the Greek *telos* which means "end," that is, in the present use, "goal, aim, purpose." Sometimes the proof is called *the argument from design*, since things in the world are manifestly made and designed, planned and built, to do a certain thing, that is, to achieve a certain end. Now, when we speak of the teleological tendency of things, or of their design in structure and function, we are necessarily speaking of how things are *governed* in their being and their operations, and of how they are *guided* to their end or goal. For this reason we keep the older name for this argument and call it *the proof from the government of the world*. The proof

is an appeal to *final causality*; it calls attention to the fact that things are made *for an end*; it points to their *final cause*.

The world as a whole, and all things in the world taken in groups or classes, and all members of all classes, manifest the most amazing arrangement and design, harmony and balance. Be they lifeless or living, great or small, bodily creatures are structurally and functionally fitted for certain definite activities, and these they tend, by a resistless bent of nature, to exercise and fulfill. They are subjected to definite laws of being and activity, laws which they could not have imposed upon themselves. Their manifest arrangement, balance, harmony of parts, direction of effort, mark them as *suitcd* for an end (that is, for the doing of a definite thing), as *made* for an end, *designed* for an end; and their activities or operations show them steadily *tending* to the end for which they are fitted and designed, and so show them as *governed* to their end.

Consider the structure and the operations of the simplest plant. Notice that it is made of various parts, yet its life is one force which holds the different parts in a compact and active unity; it feeds them all, drawing sustenance from alien substances and turning this into the very substance of the plant itself; it directs and unifies, it builds up and maintains the interrelation and interdependence and the *sympathy* of all the parts. Surely here is order, balance, government.

Surely here is an object built and arranged for a purpose. And the plant manifests and achieves its purpose by growing to full stature and maturity and becoming fruitful. Or consider the pebble by the roadside; its activities are not vital, but they are none the less real; it holds its elements (even its accidental elements of quantity) in unity by the law of cohesion; it obeys the laws of inertia and gravitation. Or look out into the vast reaches of the firmament where the countless heavenly bodies move in their ordered procession with almost unimaginable speed and with split-second precision. Ask the sciences of chemistry, botany, biology, physics, mechanics, to reveal to you their secrets, and they will show you a litany of "laws," all of which are man's recording of order, harmony, direction, purpose, government, observed in the universe. Read these words with the marvellous human eye, and as you read, consider the delicate balance and structure of the organ of sight, and ask yourself whether this most complicated and delicate structure is made and designed for a particular service or not so designed. There can be no doubt about the answer. Now, where there is design, there is an end to be served by the thing designed; there is a thing for it to do. And where there is an end, there is a direction to the end. And where there is direction to an end there is government. Government is manifest in the world.

Deny the government of the world, deny design and purpose in things, deny structural and functional

direction and tendency, and you assert a theory of chance. Now, chance is, by definition, an unforeseen or incalculable circumstance observed in an effect; chance is never, even conceivably, a cause. To posit chance as cause is, therefore, to be guilty of an absurdity. Besides, the more of complexity and detail, together with harmony and balance, we find in a thing, the more we know that the thing had not only a cause (which is manifest of all creatures) but that its ultimate or supreme cause *foresees* and *planned* this effect, and meant it to do the thing which its involved and delicate structure fits it to do. A man might throw scraps of metal from the window of his workshop, and, after the lapse of weeks, be astonished to find that the heap of refuse had grown to such unexpected proportions. But a man could not conceivably throw bits of metal into a case and presently be astonished to find that he had a splendid time-piece ticking merrily away. And the design of the finest chronometer is, in comparison with that of a cell or of the universe, like the pencil-drawing of a three-year-old compared with a most intricate and detailed piece of expert draughtmanship.

Plan, design, direction to an end, government—these are *facts* in the world, and the sane mind accepts them. More: the sane mind must and does realize that where there is a plan, there is or has been a planner; where there is a design, there has been a designer; where there is direction, there is one who di-

rects; where there is government, there is a governor. And ultimately there is, and must be, a First Designer, a First Planner, a First and Almighty Director; a First Lawgiver and Governor.

Let us read the simple, direct, and unanswerable language of the great Aquinas, speaking on this point: "Some things have no knowledge yet they work towards an end, and usually work in a way that is suited to obtain what is best for them. Hence is it clear that they reach their end, not by chance, but by intention. Since, however, the things here in question are without knowledge, it cannot be their own conscious intention which directs them but the conscious intention (that is, the knowledge) of some other being. They reach their end because they are directed to it by a knowing and intelligent Being, even as the arrow is sent to the mark by the knowing activity of the archer. There must be, therefore, an Intelligent Being who directs all natural things (that is, creatures that lack knowledge) to their end. This Being we call God."

In the face of the wondrous order, the government to an end, which we find in the world, the objection that some have found in apparent irregularities, and in things which appear to be out of line with the general management of the universe, fades into utter insignificance. Were it here our province, we might offer abundant evidence for the original Fall, that is, for the fact that man has made a wreck out of his

earthly residence; and yet, in spite of the evil man has wrought, the ruins are still so noble and beautiful, that the original design is manifest; and even the harsh details of the wreckage have their place and purpose in the present adjusted design. Father Koch (translated by Dr. Charles Bruchl) remarks in his *A Manual of Apologetics*, "Much that seems to disturb the course of nature serves to warn man against pride and recklessness, to sharpen his intellect, to strengthen his will, and to give him an opportunity to practise patience, mercy, and charity." Thus the very irregularities, the so-called "imperfections" of the world, are a revelation of purpose and design and government.

We may present our argument in this essential outline:

If the world exhibits a most wonderful and constant order and design, and is directed, in itself and in its parts, to an end, it has an intelligent designer and governor, and, ultimately, a First Designer and First Governor who can be no other than the First Necessary Being or God.

Now, the world does exhibit a most wonderful and constant order and design, and is directed, in itself and in its parts, to an end.

Therefore, the world has an intelligent designer and governor, and, ultimately, a First Designer and First Governor who can be no other than the First Necessary Being or God. Therefore, God exists.

c) PROOF FROM MAN'S ULTIMATE GOAL

The sciences of Ethics and Psychology set forth,

with full panoply of proof, the fact that man tends, by the whole force of his rational nature, to lay hold of and endlessly possess the Supreme and Infinite Good, and to find therein his supreme happiness. We cannot pause to offer proofs for this truth here, but we may justly take it as a postulate, that is, as a truth definitely established and certainly known and demonstrated in another department of philosophy than that in which we are now engaged.

It is one of the most striking and depressing facts about this age of sentimentalism in which we live that it believes itself an age of stern realism and unsentimentality. We hear the crisp dogmas that business is business and has no place for sentiment; we hear of go-getters go-getting after hard facts; we hear of machine-like precision of methods in everything from medicine to education; we are surrounded neck-deep with deep-green filing-cabinets which, presumably, contain "the facts." No time is wasted, no moment is allowed for emotion to expend its force. The business letter comes to a sharp point, even when it is a point-less point. The executive says that time is money, even when he wants money only to make more money, and not, as might be expected, to enable him to have a time, not to say a high old time. And yet this age and this country, in the most poignantly realistic moment of its recent history, solemnly pondered the propriety of calling its soldiers "Sam-mies"! Is there any need to go further in proof of

the incurable and even maudlin sentimentality of the age? If there is, we need not look into the learned writings of wise men; we may find all the evidence we require in advertising columns, or catch it by air from our radios. Was ever an age so apt to grow lyrical over such trivial things, such as brands of mayonnaise or of toilet soaps? Was ever an age so determinedly set upon calling things by sentimental names, one might even say pet names? We no longer content ourselves with saying a simple word like "food"; we must say "breakfast food" or "luncheon menu" or "items for the dinner." Nor may we even speak of breakfast food (that abysmal mystery in a world that wants the facts) without caressing it with some sort of baby-talk like "Mush-Mushies" or "Tweet-Tweeties." Yet this is the age, and this the land, in which it is considered soft and sentimental to speak of *happiness*, and to say that man has a natural desire to be happy. A popular lady author who has achieved a degree of "publicity" (saddest and maddest of sentimental things) that claims for her lightest word,—and some of these are extremely light,—a reverent attention, has recently inveighed against the common custom of wishing a newly married couple happiness. She doesn't like it. She says the young man and his bride are in for hard work and possibly hard knocks, and,—such is the sentimental muddle of her mind,—she cannot see how these things are compatible with happiness.

She does not see because she does not know what happiness is; she thinks it is the same as pleasure, which is sometimes something like it, and sometimes quite unlike it, and never identical with it. But it is the lady author, and not the kindly wish, that is soft and sentimental. Now, we are far from feeling or saying that sentiment is never a good thing. We are merely elaborating the fact that, when we use a plain word in its plain meaning, we ought, in all fairness, to be free from the charge of sentimentalism brought by an age and by people that are simply sodden and soggy with sentiment. We shall dare, therefore, to speak of man's incurable desire to be happy. We shall, all unafraid, proceed to speak of happiness as the supreme subjective end of human activity. And if our critics will not concede us the right; if they find this sort of thing soft and babyish, we shall leave them to hover tenderly over the morning bowl of Wootsie-Tootsies (They Are Vibrant With Vivacious Vitamines) and so fortify themselves for a stern day of unemotional data and unsentimental facts.

Man, in every deliberate act, in every free and knowing thought, word, and deed, tends by a natural bent of his rational being towards something that is conceived as *good*. And man's desire or appetite for *good* knows no limit, he wants all possible good and wants it endlessly. And, as we have seen, a thing is good, or is conceived as good, only when

it is the *best* or has reference towards the best. In a word, man tends, in every human act, towards a *Summum Bonum*, a Supreme Good. And why does man tend towards good, and towards the Supreme Good? To possess it. And what will its possession mean to man? It will mean *happiness*. It will mean the satisfaction of all rational desire, the filling up of all rational appetite, the crowning in endless and boundless measure of man's finest capacities. The *objective* end desired is the Good; the *subjective* end, the end inasmuch as it affects the subject attaining it, is happiness in the possession of the Good.

Now, does the fact that man is, by nature, a seeker of the Supreme and Boundless Good, and a seeker of endless and perfect happiness in the possession of that Good,—does this fact prove that such a Good actually exists? Yes, it does, if we accept the universe as an *ordered* universe, as a product of a Wise Designer and Governor. For it would not be a wise design that should create a resistless tendency towards a non-existent object. Just so, to cite a parallel instance, it would not be a wise design that should create the wondrous power and the complicated organ of vision, and then leave the world wrapped in impenetrable darkness in which both the power of sight and the delicate structure of the eye would be meaningless. If the world is an ordered world, a planned and a governed world, there is conclusive force in the present argument that the human

tendency towards the Supreme Good is proof that the Supreme Good exists. And we have already shown that the world is ordered, planned, governed. Therefore, the Supreme Good exists. But the Supreme Good cannot be a shared or communicated good; it must be the First and the Necessary Good. In a word, it must be God.

We may present the argument in this form:

If man, by a resistless tendency of his rational nature, appetizes a Supreme and Infinite Good as his ultimate goal or final cause, such a Good actually exists. Now, man, by a resistless tendency of his rational nature, does appetite a Supreme and Infinite Good as his ultimate goal or final cause.

Therefore, such a Good actually exists. And a Supreme and Infinite Good is the one Infinite Being or God. Therefore, God exists.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have presented three proofs for the existence of God, drawing them from the principle of formal and final causality. We have shown that the grades of perfection in the world prove the existence of an Absolutely Perfect Being; we have seen that the design and government of the universe demands a supremely wise and intelligent Designer and Governor; we have proved that, in an ordered universe, the existence in man of a connatural bent for the Supreme Good, and for happiness, is conclusive evidence of the existence of such a Good. From

the arguments developed in this and in the preceding Article, it is clear that God is the First Efficient and Last Final cause of all things in the world, and notably of man.

ARTICLE 4. CERTAIN SUPPLEMENTARY PROOFS

- a) The Moral Proof
- b) The Historical Proof
- c) Indirect Proofs

a) THE MORAL PROOF

The word *moral* is a derivative from the Latin *mos* (stem *mor-*) which literally means "custom" or "characteristic way of acting." Now, the characteristic way of acting which distinguishes man from all other creatures is found in the fact that he acts *with responsibility*; in other words, he acts in a characteristically *human* way when he *exercises his free-will*. Free-will acts are therefore *moral* acts.

And, since these acts are free, and man is their author and their responsible agent, it is of first importance to know of them whether they *measure up to what they ought to be* or *fall short and fail* of what they ought to be. For, while man is *free* to choose, he is not *independent* in his choice; he is under obligation and law; he has a goal to achieve and he himself has not set the ultimate goal; he is free in the physical choice of this or that act which is meant to carry him towards the goal, and he may choose wisely and advance, or perversely and fall

away. But the ultimate goal is there, and the deepest forces of man's rational nature incline him towards that goal (the *Summum Bonum*), nor is he free to set another goal; he is free in his choice of *means*, not of the ultimate end. Man *necessarily* tends towards the Supreme Good and supreme happiness in the possession of that Good, even when he perversely seeks these ends in the wrong places or by the use of wrong means, as he does when he sins. Sin is a perversity; it is an abuse, not a use, of free-will. Necessitated in the tendency towards the Ultimate Goal, man is not necessitated in the choice of things he elects to bear him to that Goal. In his characteristic action, his freely chosen and knowing conduct, man needs a guide so that his choice will be a wise one and really advance him towards his ultimate end. He needs law, objectively existent and subjectively realized and applied. And the *law* is there and is recognized by right reason (called, in this service, *conscience*), and so a man's characteristic or moral activity is always to be judged in the light of law and conscience, and, by that light or standard, it will be found *good* or *bad*, *right* or *wrong*. And so the word *moral* has come to suggest that quality of human conduct by which it is good or bad, right or wrong. And *moral*ity is the relation which exists between free human conduct (that is, moral conduct) and the norm or standard of what that conduct ought to be; this standard is *law* (ultimately, the Eternal

Law or God Himself) as applied by *conscience* (that is, by human reason pronouncing on the right or wrong, the lawfulness or unlawfulness, of something here and now to be decided upon as a thing to be done, permitted, avoided).

The *moral proof* for the existence of God is a proof drawn from the fact of man's responsibility, of his subjection to moral law, of his realization of the rule of conscience. For man, however bad and perverse, is aware of obligation, of duty, of moral requirements. These things he may ignore, to a great extent, in his practical life, but while he may ignore them he cannot be ignorant of them. The idea of *right* and *wrong*, of moral *good* and *evil*, is acquired so early and so clearly in life, that it amounts to one of the most evident facts of human existence and experience. No theory of custom, or of tyrannous ruling classes, or of racial or tribal evolution in things of the mind, will ever suffice to explain it. The dawning reason grips, and henceforth holds fast forever, the fundamental moral truth, "There is such a thing as right, such a thing as wrong; I must do the one, I must avoid the other." It is vain for the mechanist, and the anti-moralist, and the materialist of any description, to try to explain the human consciousness of this truth by pointing out the fact that different objective things have been called good and bad, or right and wrong, in different ages and among different peoples. Of some objective facts and prac-

tices, this is true; it is not true of certain very obvious and important matters, like the authority of parents over the young, the respect due to the life and property of one's fellows, the duty of telling truth. And even if it were, the question of a changeless moral law would be untouched in its essential nature; for the essence of the question lies in this fact that every normal human being, once he has advanced out of infancy and crossed the threshold of earliest adolescence, is naturally adjudged *responsible*, that is, *answerable* at the bar of a requirement and a law which says irrefutably, "There is such a thing as right; there is such a thing as wrong; I must do right; I must avoid wrong." To say that morality is a changing thing because the ancient Kanakas thought it a great evil (which they punished with death) to step on the shadow of the king, while modern man does not think it evil to step on the shadow of the king,—or even, sometimes, to step on the king,—is as silly an argument as to say that the sense of smell is not a constant human faculty because some people, such as the Eskimos, like the odor of oil and grease, and some people find it repulsive. The point is that all normal men can smell; the point is that all normal men recognize the *fact* that there is such a thing as right and such a thing as wrong. Perversity, custom, education, and other influences can, in certain cases, account for mistaken judgment about what particular thing is right or

wrong; but about the essential human recognition of right and wrong *as such* there can never be any serious question, nor can there be any sense in the cant phrase about "changing morality." Morality is as eternal as the relation of thirty-six inches of cloth to a yardstick. And that relation will not change, even if the more cultured and evolutionary merchants succeed in convincing large numbers of customers that thirty-five inches is a much more stylish kind of yard. Man is aware of right and wrong; he is aware of obligation or law requiring him to do right and to avoid wrong; this awareness is an awareness of natural reason; it is therefore something as natural to normal man as his eyesight, and is manifestly given to man for as practical a purpose as eyesight. But if it is given to man (and certainly man did not make it or give it to himself, for in many instances man would find it a great convenience to change the law if he could) it is given by man's Designer and Author; it is given as a rule and direction by One who would guide man's life to its goal. In a word, it is a law incumbent upon man, and where there is an unmistakable law, there is unmistakably a lawgiver. And where there is a lawgiver, there is ultimately a First and Supreme Lawgiver. And the First Lawgiver must be identical with the First Being and the First Necessary Cause. In a word, the First and Supreme Lawgiver is God.

We may put the argument briefly in this form:

If all normal men are inevitably aware of an absolute law which requires free-will (but does not *force* it) to do good and avoid evil, then there exists a law-giver who is ultimately identified with the First and Necessary Being called God.

Now, all normal men are inevitably aware of an absolute law which requires free-will to do good and avoid evil.

Therefore, there exists a lawgiver who is ultimately identified with the First Necessary Being called God. Therefore, God exists.

b) THE HISTORICAL PROOF

The argument *from history* is often called the argument *from universal human consent*, that is, universal human agreement or consensus. Briefly, it amounts to this: that history assures us that all men of all past times, and indeed of present times, have been thoroughly convinced of the existence of Deity, however oddly some of them may have given expression to the conviction in their imaginative and practical religious life; and that, in consequence, the thing must be fundamentally true. In other words, it is the witness of history that all men believe in God; therefore, God exists. The point of the argument may be put, somewhat flippantly, in the well known phrase, "You can't fool all of the people all the time." Now, what is the value of this argument?

First, it may be objected that *not* all of the people have a belief in God. For there are a few emphatic persons in every age who make a very excitable business of rushing about denying God, or, to take

them at their own word, making much ado about Nothing. In our own cultured period of history the energetic atheist seems to have made a specialty of appearing on public platforms, watch in hand, and allotting the non-existent Almighty two or three minutes in which to hurl a destructive thunderbolt or forever hold His peace. In some districts this practice has been considered very daring, and its logical force has been admitted as conclusive. Of course, it is obvious that, if the atheist is sincere, there is no daring in his action of inviting Nothing to do something; and the logical force of the little prank is, in any case, manifestly nil. There can be question as to whether the atheist has really any religion; there can be none as to whether such an atheist has any logic or even common sense. But of the vagaries and contradictions of atheism we shall speak in another place. Here we wish merely to point out the fact that the comparatively few individuals who, in any age, profess belief in No-God rather than belief in God, does not come in conflict with our present argument. For the argument from history is an argument from the general, the normal, and the usual, conviction of mankind about the existence of God. In this case, it is literally true that exceptions prove the rule; and it is of the rule alone that we make use in our argument.

Another objection may at once arise in the mind, and it may be put in something of this form, "You

can fool all of the people. The whole human race, barring exceptional individuals here and there, believed for centuries that the earth is a relatively flat expanse of land, and that the sun actually travels around the earth every twenty-four hours." It might be quickly retorted that this objection falls before the fact that the human race didn't stay fooled, and that men now know better. But such an answer would be short-sighted. The true answer, like so many true answers, is to be discovered by making a very plain and necessary distinction. We must distinguish the different kinds of thing that men may know. They may recognize physical facts by their senses, and recognize them truly, and they may make snap-judgments on mere appearances about these facts and be wrong. Their senses do not deceive them; for what their senses report is *there*; only when, without sufficient evidence, they judge about the *nature*, the hidden and non-sensible character, of what is there, may they go wrong. Thus men judged wrongly about the *nature* of the movement called the daily travel of the sun; they were truly aware of the movement, but in judging the sun, instead of the earth, as the moving body, they made a mistake. Therefore, in judgments based upon mere appearances of physical facts, men may go wrong, and even most men may go wrong for a long time. But there is the other side of our distinction to consider. Men may draw *reasoned conclusions* by legitimate



deduction from certainly known data, and in this they cannot be wrong. All men can be wrong in judging the motion of the sun or the shape of the unexplored earth; they cannot be wrong in their conclusion that every movement requires a mover and ultimately a First Mover. All men may be wrong in judging that a certain figure is perfectly circular, basing their judgment on its appearance. They cannot be wrong in their reasoned judgment about the ratio of radius to circumference in any true circle. That men may be wrong in snap-judgments on physical appearances is due to a certain carelessness and inattention. But when reason is brought to bear accurately upon known data which involve some latent truth, then care and attention will insure a certainly known result, at least in direct and simply reasoned conclusions. If all men could be wrong in their reasoned conclusions from certainly known data, then all human knowledge is bankrupt and there is no use talking of certitude about anything. Of course, our whole discussion is about the things men may know by mediate evidence. There are self-evident truths, like the truth of one's existence, or that of other people, that require no medium to recognize, but are luminous with inevitable truth in themselves. But, if the power and trustworthiness of human reason is called in question, even these inescapable self-evident truths would lose force. However, that is not our present concern. For the truth

of God's existence is a mediately known truth; it is a truth that is simply and quickly reasoned out; it is recognized by sound human reason working from the data of immediate experience, arguing from manifest effect to adequate first cause, from obvious motion to a first mover, from contingent being to necessary being, and so on. In such a truth, so reasoned out, it is impossible that all men of all times should go wrong, or that the generality of men should be in error. About such a truth, you *can't* fool all of the people all the time. On this point the witness of history is of incontestable value.

There used to be an opinion,—and certain explorers went to a great deal of trouble to find evidence for it,—that here and there whole tribes or races of men were without any notion of a supreme Being more or less in charge of the universe. It was thought that certain peoples had no notion of God. But the opinion has ceased to be even entertaining, and no evidence for it was ever established. *Some* notion,—however dim, and indeed however monstrous,—of divinity and of God or gods, exists and manifestly has existed everywhere; *some* idea of religious duty appears to be absolutely connatural to normal man. The reasoned conclusion which men make about the existence of Deity is a very direct and simple inference, suggested by the commonest experience. When anything happens in casual daily life,—such as a sudden pain, or the ar-

rival of a letter, or the disappearance of the teaspoons,—it does not take the brightest of minds to discover the fact that "something caused it," "somebody wrote it," "someone took the spoons." And when the simplest of men comes face to face with the universe about him, it does not require a great effort of his mind to recognize the truth that "Something or somebody made it." To carry the thought further, to reason clearly in the more complex domain of the character and attributes of that "Somebody or something" may be a tricky business for an untutored mind and may lead to strange and even grotesque conclusions. But about the first, direct, and cleanly reasoned truth, there can be no doubt or question. Here the voice of human reason speaks in simplest and plainest language, and if this language be deceiving, then no truth is knowable to man.

We may present the historical argument for God's existence in the following way:

If all men of all times agree, by a judgment of reason working simply and directly from the manifest facts of commonest experience, that Deity exists, then the real existence of Deity must be admitted or one must lapse into the utterly self-contradictory and impossible condition of absolute skepticism.

Now, history attests the fact that all men of all times do agree, by a judgment of reason working simply and directly from the manifest facts of commonest experience, that Deity exists. Therefore, the real existence of Deity must be admitted or one must lapse into the utterly self-contradictory

and impossible condition of absolute skepticism. The alternative is unacceptable. Therefore, God exists.

c) INDIRECT PROOFS

As we have seen, an *indirect* proof is one that establishes the truth of a position by showing the impossible character of its contradictory. Now, the contradictory of the theistic position (expressed in the terms, "God exists") is the atheistic position (expressed in the terms, "God does not exist"). It is our present purpose, therefore, to show the impossible character of the atheistic position, thus *indirectly* proving the truth of the theistic position. We shall establish two points: first, that atheism in a pure form cannot be formulated as a doctrine or held as a philosophy; secondly, that atheism, in whatever qualified form it is professed, is a theory in flat conflict with reason, it takes the meaning from man's finest tendencies, and it leads to absurd and impossible consequences.



1. Atheism in pure form cannot be formulated as a doctrine or held as a philosophy. For, as Karl Adam rightly observes, "Man cannot live by mere negation." When a man has denied God, he has nothing further to say; his remarks on ultimate things and his deep explanations have all been made; they are all in that one little statement of denial, and he has come to a full stop. Of course, as a fact, the atheist does not come to a stop; he goes on almost

endlessly making gods to take the place of the God he has denied. For the denial of God leads inevitably to the answering of a lot of questions; take away God and you knock all sorts of gaps into any consistent theory which seeks to interpret the universe or to assign place and character and function to man. And so the statement of the atheist is never a simple denial; it is always a substitution. It is so with the denial of any fundamental truth in theology, philosophy, or science. Those, for instance, who deny the existence of real substances in the world, always end by substantizing accidentals. And those who deny the existence of a life-principle in a living thing, end by assigning a separate life-principle to every cell of every living thing. And those who deny God end by multiplying gods. The universe, after all, is here before our eyes, and even if it be regarded as an unreal universe, a dream-universe or a ghost-universe, it still calls imperatively for some explanation, and for ultimate explanation. Even to deny the favorite explanation of the ghost is to assert that there is some other explanation for the ghost; the need of explaining the ghost is not in the least ghostly but a solid and real necessity. And whether or no the atheist professes to have the answer when he denies what the generality of mankind have always reasonably considered the right (and indeed the inescapable) answer, he professes at least to know that there is a right answer, and in so far he is not a pure

atheist but a qualified atheist, that is, an atheist who is also a vague theist.

Sometimes the atheist denies God and makes mankind divine, and then he is called a humanitarian, a terrible fate for any son of Adam. Sometimes the atheist wipes the image of God out of the cosmos, and then finds it at once in the mirror. Sometimes he denies God, and mumbles something half-witted about a superman and the universe tending to build up its god in the man of the future. Sometimes he worships the clock and the calendar and spends his time going about crying, "But this is the twentieth century." Often he makes gods of vague names and labels, and speaks piously of forces, and energies, and impulses, and elans, and of Nature with the capital initial. It is absolutely impossible to frame a theory or doctrine in terms of simple denial, that is, of simple negation. Such is the structure of the human mind that it requires affirmation, thesis, positive statement of fact or theory. It is impossible to go on forever saying what a thing is *not*, and the mind has no use for such a process, even for a limited time, except in so far as it is a process of gradually weeding out error for the purpose of clarifying some central and obscured positive truth. And for this reason it is manifest that atheism in pure form is not to be formulated as a theory and cannot exist as a philosophy.

2. Atheism conflicts with reason; it balks man's finest tendencies; it leads to impossible consequences.

First, atheism conflicts with reason. Reason demands an explanation of things, and it wants an explanation that really goes back to beginnings. In outlining our direct demonstration for the existence of God, we have presented the careful and incontrovertible findings of reason, and with these atheism is in open conflict. No normal man who has the use of reason can be in ignorance of the fact that the visible world around him, and he himself as part of that world, are contingent things, things that do not *have* to be here; but, as a fact, they *are* here, and their presence requires an accounting. And the moment an accounting is made, a god is set up. And when the careful and strictly reasoned accounting is made, the one True God is recognized. This is the status of reason on the point, whether one regards reason in its own nature or takes the record of what it does from history. And with this status of reason atheism is in conflict. Therefore, atheism conflicts with reason.

Secondly, atheism balks man's finest tendencies. The tendency of man towards happiness, which, as we have seen, is an elemental and essential and necessary human tendency, is made illusory and cruel if the atheistic denial have any value. Man tends, by heart and will, towards goodness and happiness, and

out of this tendency rightly and reasonably controlled, come all the acts of devotion and of heroism, all the lives of nobility, all that approaches to what normal and decent men acknowledge as ideal. But the tendency is meaningless if its ultimate Object is taken away, as it is taken away by atheism. Atheism in its chill denial, and in its dead substitutions, has nothing of lasting value to offer to human hearts and wills. Therefore, atheism balks man's finest tendencies.

Thirdly, atheism leads to impossible consequences. For atheism takes away the only foundation for decency and good moral conduct. If man is not responsible to a Supreme Judge, his morality amounts to little more than a set of rules of etiquette and to what Bill Nye calls "a rugged fear of the police." Atheism makes pure tyranny of all human governments, since "all authority is from God," and a human government is always based upon the concept of some higher and invisible authority which will back it up; this is true even of bad governments and of such caricature-governments as we find today in Russia and Red Spain. Now, if the moral law and human law are only conveniences that bind externally, their force cannot long endure, and the human race is doomed to early destruction. Towards this unthinkable end atheism clearly points. For this reason we assert that atheism leads to impossible consequences.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have explained and set forth *the moral proof* for the existence of God, showing how man's awareness of a moral law binding upon him points unmistakably to a First Lawgiver. We have considered *the historical proof*, and have found that the reasoned conviction of all men of all ages cannot be fallacious in its indication of the existence of God. We have presented an indirect proof for our position by showing that the contradictory position (that is, *atheism*) is *impossible in theory*, for it cannot even be formulated in pure form and it is in conflict with man's reason and finest tendencies; and that it is *impossible in practice*, for it would turn the world into chaos and destroy the human race if its practical consequences were allowed to develop.

BOOK SECOND

THE NATURE OF GOD

In the First Book we established the truth of God's existence; here, in the Second Book, we are to discuss God's nature and attributes. We have learned and demonstrated the truth *that* God is; we turn now to the study of *what* God is, in a far more detailed way than was requisite for the establishing of His existence. The present Book is divided into two Chapters:

- Chapter I. The Essence of God
- Chapter II. The Attributes of God

CHAPTER I

THE ESSENCE OF GOD

This Chapter presents a study of *what God is* in His inmost Being, His actual and infinite Self. It also studies what special note in the concept of God is the root in which are contained all the perfections predicable of the Divine Being. In a word, the Chapter studies *the physical essence* and *the metaphysical essence* of God. The Chapter is accordingly divided into two Articles:

- Article 1. The Physical Essence of God
- Article 2. The Metaphysical Essence of God

ARTICLE I. THE PHYSICAL ESSENCE OF GOD

- a) Meaning of Terms
- b) The Perfections of God
- c) The Physical Essence of God

a) MEANING OF TERMS

By the *essence* of a thing we mean that which the thing *is* in its fundamental being or constitution. *Essence* is a term derived from the Latin *esse* which means "to be." The term and the idea which it expresses are simple things; they are elemental; they defy analysis into simpler forms or elements, and hence they defy definition. For a definition is always the explanation of a thing, made by analyzing the thing and presenting its elements in their clear and

manifest relationships. Hence, if a thing is itself elemental and not composed of constituents, there is no analyzing it and no defining it. Of course, such a thing may be more or less satisfactorily *described*. If we cannot explain it by analyzing it and stating the results of analysis (that is, *by definition*), we can at least make a close scrutiny and study of it; we can "walk around it," so to speak, and see it in various lights and phases, and end by telling what we have so discovered about it (that is, *by description*). Sometimes description does not appear to give much information or to be very meaningful; but it is best to weigh description carefully, and not toss it aside as a mere mumbling of words. Thus we must show no puerile impatience when we hear *essence* described by very learned and solemn philosophers as "that whereby a thing is what it is," *id quo res est id quod est*. Turn the description over carefully in mind, and presently it will be found to be at least dimly illuminating. Perhaps an illustration will help to bring out its value. We may ask: what is the essence of a man? The answer must tell us what man *is* in his necessary constitution as man; it must name the items or elements that constitute man and only man; it must name *all* and *only* the elements required by man to be man at all. We learned the answer to this particular question long ago when, as little children, we recited our first lessons from the catechism, and said, "Man is a creature *composed of body and*

soul . . ." There is the definition of man, and a strict definition expresses the essence of the thing defined; and there, in consequence, you have the *essence* of man. Body and soul, not merely side by side, but in composition; that is the essence of man. That it is by which "man is what he is."

Our illustration has indicated,—clearly, it is hoped,—the meaning of what is called the *physical* essence of man. The term *physical* is really Greek for *natural*, for the Greek noun *physis* means "nature." And the term *nature* itself comes to English from the Latin *natus* "born," and literally means that *which a thing is born,—or comes into being,—to be and to do*. For this reason, we often hear *nature* defined as *essence considered as the root-source or principle of operation*, or, somewhat priggishly, as *essence in its dynamic aspects*. But this is by the way. The physical or natural essence of a thing is the essence of the thing in itself as it exists (or is existible) among other things. Now, the *metaphysical* essence of a thing,—and the term *metaphysical* means *after or beyond the physical*, and suggests *in another realm than the physical*,—is the essence of the thing inasmuch as it is conceivable in the mind. Carefully notice that the metaphysical essence is the essence of a thing; it is no mere viewpoint of the mind, nor is it a logical entity, like an idea considered *as such* without reference to what it represents. The metaphysical essence is the essence

of a thing inasmuch as this thing has, or can have, cognitional existence in the mind that rightly knows it. The physical essence of a reality is capable of expression in terms that point to actual elements or ingredients or parts (if it be a bodily being); and thus the elements *body* and *soul* which define the physical essence of man are actual parts of a man. These elements of a man constitute him in his rounded being as a thing "in nature," that is, as a thing among things. But consider the reality called man, not in his natural existence or existibility as a thing among things, but as a thing known or knowable to the mind. By analyzing the idea *man* (for in this idea is man *known* to the mind; by this idea man has cognitional existence in the mind) we find what the idea *means*; we find that the idea in question represents in the mind a reality that is at once *animal* and *rational*. It represents a reality that is *animal*, for *man* means all that *animal* means; *man* means a bodily substantial being that is alive and has sentience. The idea represents a reality that is *rational*, for man, in addition to having all that makes an animal an animal, has that which makes a rational being rational, namely, understanding and will. Therefore, the idea *man* represents in the mind a reality that is (and notice that it is not merely so regarded, or viewed) both animal and rational. Therefore, the mind sums up the intelligible essence of man as *animality plus rationality*. But you cannot

distinguish animality and rationality as parts or elements of John Jones, as you can distinguish body and soul as parts of that interesting individual. John Jones has animality and rationality as truly as he has body and soul. But he has *not* these abstractly named items as *physical parts*, as he has body and soul as physical parts. Thus we see that,—at least in bodily creatures which most readily serve us for illustration,—the physical elements of a thing, the items or parts or actual constituents or ingredients of its being, are things that exist as *such*, and distinctly, in the thing itself, independently of the mind that knows the thing. But the metaphysical elements of a thing, the items of its metaphysical essence, are distinct elements or analogical "parts" of the thing as it has cognitional existence in the mind that correctly knows it. When you define man as, "A creature composed of body and soul," you define man's *physical essence*, and your definition is a *physical definition*. When you define man as, "A rational animal," you define man's *metaphysical essence*, and your definition is a *metaphysical definition*. In giving the physical definition of a thing, you define it by listing its necessary elements or parts; you tell how it is *made up*. In giving the metaphysical definition of a thing, you define it by listing the essential notes of the idea in which it is known; you tell what it *means*.

We may close this investigation by two heavy

definitions: (a) A physical essence is an essence as is exists or is existible in the order of things outside the mind (or, as philosophers say, *in rerum natura*, that is, "in order of nature"); such an essence is the sum-total of constituent parts or portions which make the thing the reality that it is. (b) A metaphysical essence is the essence of a thing rightly conceived or known, and consists in the knowable points of reality about the thing which mark it off in his own character, and mark it as basically distinct from everything else; and, further, these knowable points constitute the root-reason for all other points that belong to the idea of the thing.

Our immediate purpose here is to determine the physical essence of God. Now, it is clear at the outset that God is not like the sun in the sky or like a man in the street; it is clear that God is not *bodily*. Therefore, let us eradicate sternly from our minds the too common error which identifies in meaning the terms *physical* and *bodily*, or the terms *physical* and *material*. It is true that we often use the phrase "the physical order" to indicate the realm of bodily things. But the term *physical* strictly means "natural" or "pertaining to nature," and a spiritual being has its nature as truly as a bodily being. The custom of speaking of "the physical order" when we mean the bodily universe and all that pertains to it, is easily explained. For the most obvious *natures* are

those that lie all around us demanding our attention and obtruding themselves on our notice. Hence, the phrase, "the physical order," is really an elliptical phrase, a handy substitute for the more cumbersome expression, "the order of bodily *physes* or *natures*." We may use this phrase as we like, but let us keep clear minds the while and refuse to take *physical* as a synonym for *bodily* or *material*. As a convenient check and reminder, we may frequently recall the fact that the *physical* parts of a man (that is, his *essential* physical parts) are his body and his soul, and the soul is spiritual, not material or bodily. And so, when we come to discuss the physical essence of God, we are not to be nonplussed by the term *physical* used in this connection, and to feel that there must be some mistake about the whole business.

b) THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD

The term *perfection* (as well as its adjective *perfect*) is sublimated to its present use. Literally, it means something *thoroughly and completely made*. Of course, God is not *made*. God is, as we have proved, the First Cause and the Necessary Being, and anything that is made can be neither first nor necessary. For it is consequent upon and therefore "second to" its maker; and it is contingent upon and "second to" its producing cause. So we lift the words *perfect* and *perfection* above their literal meaning, and understand them to mean the full and

complete being which is hampered by no limitations, boundaries, drawbacks, hindrances; which is absolutely free from dependencies and influences; which is boundless and infinite. And by a perfection of God, we mean one of the special phases in which the indivisible Divine Essence is viewed by the human mind.

In the next Chapter we shall discuss certain *perfections* of God, which, for lack of a better term, we call *His properties* or *attributes*. But here we must consider what may be called the *fundamental* perfections of God, and in these we discern His physical essence. We may limit these fundamental perfections to four. These indicate that God is one in Himself and one in His kind, that is, that God is *one* and that God is the *only* God; that God is without parts or divisions or divisibility; that God is limitless or boundlessly perfect; that God is a spirit. In a word, the *fundamental* perfections of God are *unity, simplicity, infinity, spirituality*. We must speak briefly of each of these perfections:

1. *The Unity of God.* By the *unity* of God we indicate the one single Essence of God. By faith we know that God who is One in Essence, is Three in Person, but this fact does not touch our present inquiry in any way. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity cannot be handled by philosophy; human reason unaided by revelation cannot prove or dis-

prove it; all that can be certainly known by reason is that the mystery does not come into contradiction and conflict with rationally known truths. Therefore, the question of the Trinity is strictly theological, and has no place in the discussions of theodicy. But faith and reason are at one in their unqualified assertion that God is one Essence, one Nature, one Substance. This is what we mean by the *unity* of God. And the term *unity* also involves in itself (in the present instance) the perfection called *unicity* or *uniqueness*, that is, the perfection whereby the *one* God is the *only* God. It is a basic truth of metaphysics that every being is *one*; inasmuch as a thing is a thing, it is that one thing. But limited things can have others of their *kind*. No being can be a plurality of itself; but it can admit an equality of other things with itself. Thus Socrates is one man; there cannot be a plurality of Socrates, even if a million men are called by the same name. This one man is this one man; he has unity. But he has not unicity, for there are many other men, many other beings of the *same essential kind* as himself. With the First and Necessary Being this is not so. Not only is this Being *one in itself* with perfect unity, but it is *the only thing of its kind*. It has unity and unicity. It is not only *one*; it is also *unique*. These points we are now to prove.

There have been people in the world's history (and there are still some today) who thought that

many gods exist; these people are *polytheists*, and their doctrine is polytheism. Polytheism is sometimes a belief in, and worship of, a host of invisible beings, good or bad; this variety of polytheism is *demonolatry* or *demon worship*, using the term *demon* in its Greek sense as a kind of angel or a kind of devil; thus the term *demonolatry* does not necessarily mean devil-worship. Sometimes polytheism finds expression in the worship of ancestors (this is *religious animism*, also *anthropolatry*). Sometimes it is the worship of animals (this is *zoolatry*); sometimes, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars (*Sabeism*); sometimes, the worship of natural or artificial objects in the bodily world (*feticichism*). A special form of polytheism limits the deities to two, a supreme Good Being and an equally or almost equally supreme Evil Being; this doctrine (called *religious dualism*) was professed by the ancient Manichaeans and, somewhat later, by the Gnostics. Against all these, stands our doctrine that God is *one* and *the only* God. Against *polytheism* we assert the truth of *monotheism*.

That God is one and the only God is, first of all, manifest in the *unity* and *order* of the world around us; in the *harmony of the universe*. We find such unity and harmony in the smallest creature as well as in the whole complexity of the cosmos. Now, where there is a great and most complex design, and where this design exhibits, in the large and in its

most minute details, an amazing harmony, balance, unity, it is manifest that the design is not the product of a plurality of beings but of one. Even in the little works of art and of practical utility (of art and of artisanship) that are designed and executed by men, we find one controlling plan; one architect designs a building, and though many may confer about the plans, the finished product is a unified *decision* which comes from, or is adopted by, one controlling or master mind. The most clever artist cannot finish a picture left incomplete, in such a manner as to deceive experts about the points or parts where the one artist left off and the other began. A lover of Dickens would instantly detect the fact that a completed Edwin Drood was not all the work of his beloved novelist, even if he had never read the part that Dickens wrote, before taking up the completed story. Now, the unity of the world, in its smallest and largest aspects, is such a unity as no human work of art or craftsmanship could ever remotely approach. It is surely manifest to the fair mind that the universe has a single Author. This is not a compelling argument; but it is a fully legitimate argument, and an extremely strong one. Even John Stuart Mill admits its force and value. He is quoted by Father Boedder, S.J. (in *Natural Theology* of the famed Stonyhurst Series; pp. 69-70), and from the quotation we select a sentence or two: "When once the double conviction has found entry

into the mind—that every event depends on antecedents; and at the same time that to bring it about many antecedents must concur, perhaps all the antecedents in Nature, inasmuch that a slight difference in any one of them might have prevented the phenomenon, or materially altered its character—the conviction follows that no one event, certainly no one kind of events, can be absolutely pre-ordained or governed by any Being but one who holds in his hand the reins of all Nature and not of some department only. . . . The reason, then, why monotheism may be accepted as the representative of theism in the abstract, is not so much because it is the theism of all the more improved portions of the human race, as because it is the only theism which can claim for itself any footing on scientific ground" (Mill, *Three Essays on Religion*, pp. 132ff.).

We have proved, by compelling argument, that God is the First and the Necessary Being. Now, there cannot conceivably be a plurality of such Beings. How can a plurality of beings all be *first*? And, if they could, how could they be distinguished one from another, not in our minds but *among themselves*? For a being which exists of necessity is Self-existent Being. If two or more such Beings could exist, how could they be distinct Beings, that is, really a plurality and not one single Essence? Could they be distinguished by self-existence itself? No; for in this they are at one. Could they be dis-

tinguished by something necessarily connected with self-existence? No; for what is necessarily connected with self-existence belongs to all self-existent things and is not conceivably a mark of distinction among them. Could they be distinguished by some characteristic which does not necessarily belong to self-existence? No; for such a characteristic would be an accidental thing (or *an accident*, as philosophers say), and there cannot be anything accidental in a being which is not subject to causes; and no self-existent being is conceivably subject to causes; it cannot be affected by accidents at all. We are driven to conclude that the apparent plurality of self-existent Beings is only apparent; that in reality there can be but one Self-existent Being. This must be the First and the Necessary Being, or God. Therefore, God is *one*. Therefore, God is *unique*.

St. Thomas Aquinas puts the argument in this way, "If Socrates were *this* man by the same thing that makes him *a* man, there could not be a plurality of men any more than there can be a plurality of Socrates. But God is His nature. That whereby God is *God*, is that whereby God is *this* God. And hence it is impossible that there should be more than one God."

The unity of God is quite simply and directly proved by the fact that He is *infinite* and by the fact that He is absolutely *simple*. We do not offer these proofs here for we have not yet established

the infinity and simplicity of God. But we shall presently set forth these truths, and then we shall hark back to the present consideration, noticing how the unity of God is inescapably proved in the perfections mentioned.

The Simplicity of God. By the term *simple* we mean *indivisible*. A simple thing has no parts, and hence it cannot be divided into parts. Contrasted with a simple thing is a *composite* or *compound* thing; such a thing has parts, and can be distinguished, and often physically divided, into its parts. Some creatures are *physically* simple; such, for instance, is the human soul; such also is any substantial form of any substance. But creatures all admit a *metaphysical* composition, inasmuch as they are essences which have received existence, they are subsistent things in certain respective orders of nature, and so we say they are compounded of *essence and existence* and of *subsistence and nature*. Moreover, all creatures are compounds of *potentiality and actuality*, for they are actualizations of what *could be*, and they are subject to (substantial or accidental) change, and thus they are (actually) what they are, and they are (potentially) what they can become. Further, there is in creatures a logical composition inasmuch as they can be classified by the mind in groups, classes, kinds, marked by generic and specific differences; in this sense the essence *man* is seen by

the mind to be "composed" or "compounded" of the genus *animal* and the specific difference *rational*. Now, when we say that God is *simple* we mean that there is in God no *composition*, no compounding, no putting together of elements or parts; and we assert that from God *all* composition is excluded, physical, metaphysical, logical. Although, as we shall see, the mind does make distinctions in God, and we speak of different and distinct attributes and perfections of God; and, although the mind has some ground and justification for such distinction, the mind, nevertheless, does not consider God in any sense as a *composite* of all these perfections, but always regards itself of the fact that in God all perfections are identified in the absolutely simple unity of the one and indivisible Divine Essence.

God is the First and the Necessary Being. Now, such a Being cannot conceivably be compounded or composed. The First Being cannot be a composite being, for any compounding requires a *cause that is prior to the being compounded*, that is, a cause which brings the elements into union. And the Necessary Being cannot be a composite being, for a composite being is *contingent* upon the union of its parts or elements; and contingency is the flat contradictory of necessity. So much for a general proof. We may profitably say a brief word to show that the various types of composition are necessarily excluded from God.

(a) In God there is no physical composition. For physical composition means the putting together of literal parts, that is to say, of parts of which some at least are bodily parts, and the whole composite resulting is a body. But God is not bodily. For a body is always a thing that is subject to movement by something not itself, whereas, as we have distinctly proved, God is the First Mover Himself Unmoved.

(b) In God there is no metaphysical composition. God is the First and Necessary Being, and is therefore self-existent, that is, He exists by His essence; existence and essence in such a Being must be absolutely identified. Further, God is Pure Actuality, for the First Being owes nothing to causes and cannot be affected by causes, that is, cannot *become* or *be actualized*, in a word, such a Being has no potentiality in Itself, but is purely Actuality. Hence, God is not a compound of essence and existence, of actuality and potentiality. In a word God is not metaphysically compounded.

(c) In God there is no logical composition. For we have seen that God is one God and the *only* God. He is not, therefore, classified by the mind as a certain *kind* or a certain *genus* of reality, marked off by special difference from other realities of the same general kind. For the Divine Essence is *the only thing of its kind*; it is absolutely *unique*, and so is

not subject to a literal classification by the mind. In God, therefore, there is no logical composition.

God is thus seen by reason as a Being that is necessarily simple with complete and absolute (i. e., unqualified, unconditional) simplicity. But how does it happen, then, that we speak of God's perfections as distinct realities? We speak of God's unity, His simplicity, His infinity, His spirituality. Presently we shall speak of His power, His immensity, His ubiquity, His knowledge, His will. In a word, we make *distinctions* in God, and we ask how we may do so if God is wholly one and simple in Himself. The answer lies in the fact that the limited human mind cannot deal with the unlimited Divine Essence except by taking aspects and views suited to its own limited nature. The mind *can* obtain knowledge of God, granted that this knowledge is never adequate; and it must do this in its own way according to the old axiom, *quidquid accipitur ad modum accipientis accipitur*, "Whatever is taken in, is accepted according to the capacities of the receiver." Well, then, are the distinctions we make in God *purely rational* or *purely logical* distinctions? That is, are they distinctions which have no foundation outside the mind, but are invented, so to speak, by the mind itself to enable it to deal in some fashion with the object considered? No; the distinctions we make in God are indeed *rational* or *logical*; they are not *real* distinctions, that is, they are not distinctions on the

part of the divine *Reality* considered; we have just seen that there are no real distinctions in God (except, of course, that one real distinction of *Persons*, with which theodicy has no concern). But the mind has some basis in reality for its distinctions in God. For, granted that all the perfections of God are one with His undivided Essence in the most perfect identity, the human mind which apprehends these perfections and this Essence has its direct and proper experience with limited things which, in point of power, knowledge, will, and so on, present *really* distinct aspects to its view. In a creature, power is really distinct from knowledge, mercy is really distinct from justice; unity is really distinct from will. And, while the perfections of creatures are referred to God, partly in a figurative or analogical way, and partly in a formal but transcendent way, it is these perfections of creatures that give the mind its basis for making distinctions in God. Therefore, the mind has not a literal and perfect foundation for such distinctions, nor is it without foundation altogether; it is said to have *an imperfect foundation in reality* for the distinctions it draws in the one indivisible God.

From the simplicity of God it follows that God is perfectly complete in Himself. Not having parts, He is not conceivably the part of something else. For God, the First Cause of all things cannot be iden-

tified with the effects which He produces; the efficient cause is always essentially distinct from its effect, and God is the Efficient Cause of all positive reality. Further, if God were to enter into composition with any creature *as its part*, He would have to do this as its *matter* or its *form*. But God is not matter, for matter is potential and God is Pure Actuality. Nor can God be the form of anything, for such a form is shared or participated unto the in-formed and completed reality of which it is a part, and as such, that is, *as a part*, it is subsequent to what it is in its own distinct essence. But God is not subsequent to anything; He is absolutely and perfectly the First Being. Further, the form of anything, coming into union with matter to constitute the thing, actualizes its own potentiality; but God is in no sense potential, but is Pure Actuality. Hence God cannot be part of anything else. He cannot be the "soul of the world" as the Stoics thought; He cannot be spread out or manifested "in parts" as the pantheists think; He cannot be identified with the creatureal world *as a whole* (for the world is not simple) nor *as its part*.

The simplicity of God is a cogent proof of His unity. For that which is simple is manifestly one in itself. And if the simple being is also the First and the Necessary Being, it follows that it cannot be a plurality, but is *one* and *unique*:

3. *The Infinity of God.* The term *infinity*, with its adjective *infinite*, comes from the Latin *in*, a negative particle, and *finis* "end," "boundary," "limit." Thus the literal meaning of *infinity* is "boundlessness," "unlimitedness." When we say that God is infinite, we mean that there is, and can be, no limit or boundary to His being or His perfections. And, since God is simple, His infinite perfections are not parts or elements of His Divine Essence, or qualities which that Essence enjoys, but they are identified, in measureless degree, with the Divine Essence Itself.

The First and Necessary Being *must* be infinite. For limitation always involves a cause of limitation, and there is no cause that can exercise causal limiting action upon that which is absolutely *first* and therefore prior to every cause of every kind. One might be tempted to say, "A limitation means a lack, and a lack does not require a truly efficient cause, but is a deficiency." But such a limitation as we here consider is not a mere lack, but a positive imposition of boundaries. And such a limitation certainly does require a true efficient cause.

Consider the point from this angle: When anything is *given*, it is given in a certain measure, for that which is capable of transference by gift is not infinite or, at least, cannot be infinitely imparted. If a man gives his boy ten dollars he gives *so much*; but he also, quite as definitely, gives *no more*. What is given is necessarily finite. But the truth goes

farther than this. What is *not* given,—and we mean, of course, *actuality* which is not given,—is necessarily infinite. For perfection (i. e., actuality) which is un-received, ungiven, has about it nothing that could limit it. An un-mixed perfection contains *in itself* no requirement for limitation, and indeed no possibility of being limited except under the action of limiting external causes. Now, the perfection of God is un-given and un-received; it is perfection in the highest, purest, un-mixed sense; it is perfection not subject to causal action since it is identified in the *simple* and *first* Actuality with the Divine Essence of that Actuality. Nothing conceivable, then, could limit it; it *must*, of necessity, be infinite.

There is ever a tendency on the part of proud and impatient minds to dismiss as impossible what is found to be unimaginable. The imagination cannot adequately picture infinity, and hence there is a temptation in certain minds to say that infinity is either impossible or unknowable. But, it may justly be retorted, the mind *can* understand infinity, can know what it *means*, even though the imagination is powerless to picture it adequately. The imagination cannot picture the object of *any* idea adequately, even the object of the most finite or least universal of ideas. But this does not hinder the mind from knowing that object. The imagination is ever a great help to the mind, offering its images in illustration and analogy when they are not available as more

direct expressions of the meaning of the mind's ideas and thoughts; and indeed the mind arises to its concepts from the images of the imagination which reflect the findings of the other senses. The imagination is tireless in its presentation of images; it furnishes endless illustrations. And, as a man, studying the copious printed pictures which accompany a scientific treatise, may learn from them something of the nature and trend of the treatise itself, though he be unable to understand its terms, so may the mind (even more surely and powerfully) come to the knowledge of the realities which imagination most imperfectly suggests. For the rest, if imagination cannot adequately picture infinity, neither can it adequately picture an actuality which is first and yet *not* infinite. The mind inevitably reaches out and infers infinity; it *affirms* infinity; and this is true of the mind of the doubter and the atheist as surely as it is true of the mind that stands open to fact and to faith. To the one, infinity is doubtful, but the region of the dubious stretches away endlessly unto the very infinity that is doubted; to the second, infinity is denied, but an infinite nothingness remains. Those that complain of the limitations of the imagination, and base their doubts or denials of infinity upon that limitation, are most unreasonably trying to make the imagination something other than it is; they are trying to make it in all respects the equal of the mind or intellect itself, whereas it is, by its nature,

on a lower plane, and is meant as a means by which a man mounts upward to the region of intellectual knowledge. No man complains that his eyes cannot take in all the world at one glance, nor does he declare world-travel impossible because he does not clearly see at the outset all possible paths that his eager feet may follow. In his own way, man certainly can know, and indeed must know, what infinity means; man can know, and inevitably does know, that the absolutely *first* actuality must be infinite. Human knowledge of infinity, like human knowledge of anything, is necessarily finite and not fully comprehensive; but it may be true knowledge as far as it goes. Therefore, it is a foolish and futile objection to infinity that finds it inadmissible on the grounds of limitations in a necessarily limited human faculty.

The infinity of the First and Necessary Being is a compelling proof of the unity of that Being. Perhaps the most forceful way of setting out that proof is that called the *demonstratio per absurdum* which is the indirect but inescapable evidence of the truth by reason of the impossible character of its contradictory. Let us suppose then that there can be a plurality of infinite beings, at least two. We shall call these A and B. Both are infinite. How, then, will you distinguish one from the other? The minute you draw a line of distinction or of demarcation between them, you put a limit on both, and neither is

infinite. Here you have the absurdity (which you cannot escape if infinity is pluralized) of two beings which are infinite and not infinite at one and the same time! Look at the same thing in a slightly different way: The infinity called A has its own perfections in measureless degree, identified with its essence. It is infinite, remember, and therefore no conceivable perfection is absent from it. Now, the infinity called B also has its own perfections in measureless degree, identified with its essence. B is infinite, and no conceivable perfection is absent from it. But if A's perfection is its very own, it is absent from B, and B is *not* infinite. So too, B's perfection belongs to B (not to A) and therefore A is not infinite. Again we come to the absurd and impossible conclusion that A and B are both infinite and not infinite. Manifestly, this cannot be. We can only conclude that a plurality of infinities is impossible. The infinite Being is necessarily *one and only*; It has unity and unicity.

Further, the infinity of God is absolute proof of the simplicity of God. For no separate and distinct perfection can be infinite in its own sphere, since a plurality of infinite perfections is a plurality of infinities, which we have just shown to be impossible. God's perfections are therefore identified; they are one. But God cannot be one in Being with one infinite perfection distinct from His Being, for here again would be a plurality of infinities. Therefore,

God, in *Being* (essence, existence, nature, substance) and in *perfections* must be absolutely one and indivisible, and all perfections must be one identical thing with the Divine Essence Itself. In a word, God must be absolutely simple.

Thus we see how the fundamental perfections of God (called distinct perfections to suit our mode of understanding and of study, and distinct, in consequence, by a rational or logical distinction, granted such distinction has a basis in reality) are proof one of the other. Here again, we see suggested the truth that any serious consideration of the human mind leads to and indicates God, if carried far enough. Take up what subject you will in the wide circle of human experience and you take up a point on a definite radius that inevitably leads direct to the Infinite Centre of all.

4. *The Spirituality of God.* That God is a Spirit is already proved in the foregoing arguments. For God is simple, and no bodily actuality is simple. God is one and unique, and no bodily being is necessarily so. God is infinite, and a bodily being is, by definition, measurable (at least *internally*, as philosophers put it) and is so limited. Therefore, God is not bodily. But, you may say, granted that He is not bodily, it need not follow that He is a Spirit. There are creatures (like any minor substantial form; say, for example, a plant-soul) that are simple but not

spiritual. True, but such simple creatures are not also unique and infinite; they are ever dependent for existence and operation upon other and, indeed, bodily things. But God is Pure Actuality, completely self-sufficing, completely self-existent, entirely necessary. Such a Being has no dependencies, but must exist in a supersubstantial way in Its own right. And a being that exists in its own right is either a body or a spirit. But, as we have seen, God is not a body. God, therefore, is a Spirit.

c) THE PHYSICAL ESSENCE OF GOD

The physical essence of any actuality is, as we have seen, the sum-total of the perfections that constitute it. Now, the sum-total of the perfections that, so to speak, constitute God in His own proper Being independently of the view of the mind, are the perfections we have just considered: *unity, uniqueness, simplicity, infinity, spirituality*. These perfections, in boundless and essential identity, constitute the physical essence of God. We may put them all briefly in the little formula we once learned from our catechism, and declare that, "God is a Spirit infinitely perfect." This is a physical definition of God; it expresses God's physical essence. That God is a Spirit, we have amply proved. And the phrase "infinitely perfect" necessarily includes boundless simplicity and unity; for the phrase means *infinite* and *all-perfect*.

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SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have learned the meaning of the terms *essence; physical essence; metaphysical essence*. We have found that the physical essence of a thing is the sum of elements or perfections that constitute it in its proper being, independently of the view of the mind that knows it. We have defined metaphysical essence as that item or element in the reality under examination (radically present to the reality but not necessarily a formal part in the reality) which evokes in the mind which knows the reality a true and penetrating knowledge of it, and which serves the mind as the basis of all that is essentially referable to the known reality. We have discussed the fundamental objective perfections of the First and Necessary Being, that is, of God, and we have found these to be *unity* (with *uniqueness* or *unicity*), *simplicity, infinity, spirituality*. We have summed up these perfections in a physical definition of God, that is, in a definition which expresses the physical essence of God. Such a definition may be formulated as, "God is the one, simple, infinite, Spirit," or, "God is a Spirit, infinitely perfect."

ARTICLE 2. THE METAPHYSICAL ESSENCE OF GOD

- a) Theories on the Point of Essence of God b) The True Metaphysical Essence of God

radical simplicity

a) THEORIES ON THE POINT

We have mentioned more than once that the metaphysical essence of any reality is the fundamental and objective *meaning* which the thing has to the mind which knows it. Such an essence is not a *mental* viewpoint; on the contrary it is *objective* and *real*. It is that *reality* in an essence which is the first and foremost point by which the mind recognizes the essence; and which is the root of all that must be predicted of that essence. We keep this description of metaphysical essence clearly in mind in the study we are now to undertake. We ask, "What point or note in the idea of God represents Him (*as Actuality*, not merely as idea or concept) most fundamentally?" We know that God is one, is simple, is infinite, is spiritual; we know that He exists necessarily and of Himself; we know that all these perfections are actually one with the Divine Essence. But we know too that one of these perfections must be, in our mind, regarded as the radical principle of all the others; some perfection that really belongs to God and is identified with His Being *is first* in its appeal to the mind which seeks the most thorough and penetrating knowledge of God, and this perfection is, so to speak, the point from which all the other perfections (conceived as distinct) radiate out and form the rounded representation of what God actually is. Which of the perfections is it? In which perfection consists *the metaphysical essence of God?*

Remember another point. God is simple. We do not make divisions in God, despite the fact that we discuss an objective and real Divine Perfection which is basic to an understanding of God, and is the root of all the other understandable perfections which must be attributed to God. *We do make distinction* between and among the Divine Perfections; *we do not make division*, for God is indivisible. Our distinction, to repeat, is a logical distinction, a mental distinction, a rational distinction; it is a distinction of ideas and not of the indivisible Thing which the ideas come together to represent. But it is not a *purely* mental distinction, since the mind has grounds for it in reality outside the mind. All this we have learned; we must remember always, and especially in the present study, that we have learned it.

The most notable theories which have been proposed as the expression of the metaphysical essence of God are the following:

1. The Nominalists (who deny objective or trans-subjective value to all ideas and reduce them to mental *names* handily invented by man to indicate unknowable essences) say that God's metaphysical essence is neither more nor less than the collection of all the perfections (so called, so named) which we attribute to God. Of course, the Nominalists do not mean what we mean when we say that such a

sum-total of perfections constitutes the physical essence of God, not the metaphysical essence. They, by their principles, can allow no real value to ideas beyond names, and hence they are logical enough in saying that the collection of names (i. e., mental names) which are applied to God is all that is knowable about God, and that it is futile to pick and choose among names,—none of which has any true trans-subjective value,—to find one that is a radical source of all the others.

2. *The Scotists* (followers of the great Duns Scotus—died 1308—one of the most brilliant of Scholastic philosophers, and the pride of the Franciscan Order as St. Thomas Aquinas is of the Dominican Order) hold that the metaphysical essence of God is what may be called *root-infinity* or *radical infinity*; in other words, the metaphysical essence of God (which the mind grasps as the basic note in the idea of God) is discerned in the fact that God's Being requires all perfections in infinite degree.

3. *Some Thomists* (followers of St. Thomas Aquinas—1225–1274) make the fact of God's *understanding* His metaphysical essence; in other words, they say that the root-grasp of God is a grasp of the *all-beholding*, of the *all-comprehending* God. Some of these Thomists assert that this does not mean God's *actual* understanding of all things

knowable, but His *radical* or fundamental understanding. In a word, they say that the mind need not advert reflexly to the actual infinite extent of God's existing knowledge, but finds its idea of God first and foremost in His infinite understanding considered-as-such and not necessarily in exercise. Others declare that the *actual* understanding of God is His metaphysical essence.

4. *Other Thomists* declare that God's metaphysical essence is discerned in the fact that He exists necessarily of *Himself*. The phrase "of Himself" is, in Latin, *a se*, and the doctrine here mentioned is expressed in the coined term *aseity*, which might be literally, if awkwardly, translated into "of Himselfness." In a word, the fact that God exists of Himself, without cause, necessarily, independently, self-sufficiently, is the fact that the mind lays hold of in getting a root-grasp of what the term "God" means.

5. *Most Thomists* (and these insist that their doctrine is that of St. Thomas himself) declare that the metaphysical essence of God consists in the fact that He is *Subsistent Being Itself*. A being is subsistent when it is complete and substantial and existing and autonomous. All finite substances which subsist do so in virtue of their constituting and supporting causes. But God has no such causes. He sub-



sists *Himself*, causelessly, necessarily; and since He does not *have* subsistence, but His subsistence (like every perfection predicable of Him) is one with His essence, He is Subsistent Being Itself, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. In this, it is claimed, consists the root-point of realizing what God really is.

Omitting the Nominalist theory (for it is inadmissible on epistemological grounds) we may sum up the other doctrines thus: God's metaphysical essence is found in one of these four perfections: radical infinity, radical or actual comprehension of all knowables, aseity, self-subsistence.

b) THE TRUE METAPHYSICAL ESSENCE OF GOD

1. It seems that *radical infinity* is ineptly proposed as the metaphysical essence of God. For to our minds *infinity* first suggests the *way* in which God exists rather than God Himself. Of course, we realize upon reflection that God's infinity is absolutely identified with Himself. But the present quest is for that note in the idea of God which, first and foremost, puts the Divine Essence before the view of our understanding in so far as this may be done at all. And, we repeat, to say that a thing is *infinite* seems to be saying something about a thing already *there*, already *grasped*. Such a note or predication of the mind is made in the second place after the grasp of the essence is made in the first place. For we conceive of a thing as *existing* (or, more accurately

in the present case, as *subsisting*, that is, existing as a complete, autonomous, substance) before we conceive it as *existing in infinity*; we conceive it *to be* before we conceive it *to be infinite*. For this reason we do not favor the view of those who declare that God's metaphysical essence is discerned in His radical infinity.

2. For the same reason we find unacceptable the doctrine that God's metaphysical essence is found in His infinite understanding or boundless comprehension of all knowables. If this means the *actual* comprehension of all things by Almighty God, it suggests an *operation* of the Divine Essence; and, of course, an operation presupposes an operator; the idea of an operation is not the first or fundamental note, but the secondary note, in our knowledge of an existing and operating being. And if the doctrine means the *radical* comprehension or understanding of God (that is, the understanding considered, not as an *operation exercised*, but in itself, so to speak, as a *capacity*) then it suggests a *power* or a *faculty*, which, to our way of understanding, presupposes the existence of one that *has* the power or faculty. Again, the idea of God as the all-comprehending (whether as *actually* or *radically* comprehending) is not the first and fundamental note in our knowledge of God, but is secondary to, and consequent upon, our knowledge of God as subsisting.

3. Is God's metaphysical essence discerned in the fact that He is *Ens a se*, that is, a Being who is of Himself? In other words, is God's metaphysical essence found in His *aseity*? Well, to give an unqualified "Yes" as the answer, might be misleading. For the implication of the phrase "of Himself" is "not of another." That is, to declare that God exists or subsists of Himself stresses the truth that He is not dependent upon any cause, but is self-sufficient and self-explanatory because He is Necessary Being. But the implication that God is not *ens ab alio* (that is, a being dependent on its causes) is not pertinent to the first and basic grasp of the Divine Essence by our minds. That God is grasped first, and then comes the realization that He is independently of causes. To put the point in another way: if you say the fact that God exists of Himself is the first and basic fact our minds grasp in knowing God, it may be asked, "Why does the mind so grasp Him?" In other words, a question is possible which delves below, or back of, what you propose as the *first* and *deepest* note in the knowledge we have of God. The answer to the question seems to disclose bed-rock. For the answer is, "We know God is *Ens a se*, we know He exists of Himself, because *He is Self-subsistent Being Itself*."

4. We therefore favor as the most adequate expression of the true metaphysical essence of God,

the doctrine which reposes this essence in the fact that *God is Self-subsistent Being Itself*. If it be said by the defenders of the *aseity*-doctrine, "Well, that's what our doctrine means; we assert *radical aseity*," we can only reply with much happiness that then we are in perfect agreement with them. The fact of God's *self-subsistence*, therefore, or, if you prefer, the fact of God's *radical aseity*, is the first and the fundamental note in our mind's grasp of the Divine Essence. It is the metaphysical essence of God. And God Himself gave to Moses His true and most penetratingly expressive name when He said, "*I am Who am* . . . thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: *He Who is hath sent me to you*" (*Exodus iii, 14*).

By way of positive argument for the doctrine here proposed as true, we may consider the following points:

The metaphysical essence of anything is that reality in the thing which, first and foremost, makes it understandable to the mind, and explains to the mind the properties that must be attributed to it. Now, the fact that God is Subsistent Being Itself (*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*) is that reality in God which makes God understandable and explains the properties or perfections that must be attributed to God. For the *actuality* of God, the fact that God is Himself *there*, is our answer to the most penetrat-

ing questions about Him, such as why He is the First Cause, why He is the Necessary Being, why He is infinitely perfect, why He is simple or uncompounded, why He is necessarily one. And the implications of that boundless and independent *actuality* of God are brought out by the questions, and thus that *actuality* explains the Divine Perfections. But this actuality of God is neither more nor less than His *subsistence* and His *self-subsistence*. Therefore, the metaphysical essence of God consists in His self-subsistence, that is, in the fact that He is *Self-subsistent Being Itself*.

God is Pure Actuality. The phrase *Pure Actuality* or *Actus Purus* is recognized among philosophers as the true metaphysical definition of God. Now, a true metaphysical definition expresses the true metaphysical essence of the thing defined. But *Pure Actuality* means *Self-subsistence*. A thing is actual when it *exists*; it is *purely* actual when it has no potentialities or dependencies about it, but is *self-existent*; and its self-existence must be more than the existence of some accidental thing, it must be the existence of that which is a substance in the completest and most perfect sense; in other words, this self-existence must be *self-subsistence*. Hence, God's metaphysical essence consists in the fact that He is *Self-subsistent Being Itself*. The concept of *Pure Actuality* is the concept of *Self-subsistent Actuality*, and the latter phrase is more clear to the

mind than the former. Hence, once more we assert, that the true metaphysical essence of God is found in His Self-subsistence.

That which first distinguishes God from all other things is the fact that His existence is not an *imparted* existence; it is not something given and received, as it always is with things other than God. Now, the mind may not advert, and does not advert, first and foremost to the distinguishing features of a reality, but first sees the reality and then notes its background or distinctions more carefully. But the metaphysical essence of a thing must serve the mind in both these functions: it must present the reality in its root being, and it must serve to explain the distinction of that reality from other things. Merely to distinguish it would not be enough; that is why we reject the theory of *actual aseity* as the metaphysical essence of God. But we accept, as synonymous with our own doctrine, the theory of *radical aseity*. For this grasp of God in *radical aseity* or in the fact that He is *Self-subsistent Being Itself* is at once the direct and primal grasp of the Divine Essence by the human mind, and the fundamental root of the distinction of God from all other things. Again we declare that the true metaphysical essence of God consists in the fact that He is *Ipsum Esse Subsistans*.

That God's Self-subsistence is the root of all the other Divine Perfections is manifest. St. Thomas

Aquinas says, "*Being* taken simply as including every existible perfection, is preëminent above all the individual perfections, such as *life*, which belong to and follow from it." And our doctrine ascribes to God "*Being* taken simply as including every existible perfection," for that is what is meant by Subsistent Being Itself.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have reviewed our definition (or description) of *metaphysical essence*. We have set forth very briefly the five most notable doctrines about the metaphysical essence of God. We have investigated these doctrines thoroughly, and have found that the most acceptable of them is the more common Thomistic doctrine that the metaphysical essence of God is found in the fact that He is *Subsistent Being Itself*.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

This Chapter studies the perfections of God which we know must be present in Him, and of Him, by reason of His metaphysical essence. These are the perfections that belong to God by natural necessity. Now, what belongs to a reality by natural necessity is an *attribute* or a *property* of that reality. And so we speak here of the proper perfections or *the attributes* of God. Still, the term *attribute* is used here in an analogous, and not in a literal, sense. For the literal meaning of *attribute* is a perfection that belongs to an essence, but is not one with that essence; it is not a substantial thing, but an accidental one in its being, however necessary be its connection with the essence or the substance to which it is ascribed. In God, however, the perfections called *attributes* are really one with the Divine Essence Itself and wholly inseparable from it; they are in identical supersubstance that God Himself is; they are in no wise accidents in God (there can be nothing accidental in Pure Actuality); they are God Himself. Keeping this in mind,—and realizing that, while we have good grounds in creatures for making a distinction in God between Himself and His perfections, and among the several perfections themselves, the distinction is, after all, a mental or logical one, and not a real distinction,—we discuss the Divine Attributes in two Articles, as follows:

Article 1. The Divine Attributes in General

Article 2. The Divine Attributes in Special

ARTICLE I. THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN

GENERAL

- a) Meaning of Divine Attributes
 b) Classification of Divine Attributes

a) MEANING OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

By the *Divine Attributes* we mean those perfections that, in our limited understanding, must be predicated of God as though they were distinct qualities which, by natural necessity, follow from and characterize the Divine Essence Itself.

An *attribute* is something that *must be attributed* to a nature because that nature demands it. For example, the attribute of infallibility follows from the nature of the Church. For the Church is a *divine* institution, a work of God Himself, and, in its founding He declared that it was to speak in His name and to lead men to God. Now, such being its nature, how can it conceivably lead men astray? In other words, how can it be denied that this divinely founded and dowered institution is infallible? The fact of infallibility follows from and attends upon the nature of the Church. Precisely because the Church is the essential thing that it is, it *must* be infallible. Therefore, by a necessity of its nature (i. e., by natural necessity) the Church must be infallible. And so we say that infallibility is an *attribute* of the Church. Take another example. We say that the actual exercise of reason (that is, the

function of thinking things out, of drawing conclusions, of recognizing that two and two make four) is an attribute of man. For, when man's nature is fully constituted, and when no element of it is lacking, and when its operations are unthwarted by immaturity, unconsciousness, disease, man will,—because he is of the nature that he is,—inevitably use his reasoning power. Such a use follows by *natural necessity* upon the fully constituted and operative essence (i. e., the *nature*) of man. The act of reasoning, or the ability to exercise that act, is therefore an *attribute* of man. The examples show us plainly that in creatures an *attribute* is something that follows from, and attends upon, the rounded and operative essence of a reality, but is, in itself, an accidental thing, not to be identified with the essence to which it *belongs*. The Church, for example, is not its infallibility; the Church *has* infallibility. Nor is man his power to reason; man *has* the power to reason. That man be rational (i. e., radically equipped to come to the use of reason) is of his essence, and man is defined as a rational animal; but man is not necessarily a *reasoning* animal; he may not come to the use of that for which he is radically or fundamentally equipped. The actual *use* of reason is something that a man *has*, not something that a man *is*. But it is something that he has by natural necessity, that is, it is something that necessarily follows, attends upon, and characterizes man's

nature, when this nature is fully developed and unthwarted in any way. Thus we see that an *attribute*, in proper sense, is something that is really distinct from the essence, nature, substance, to which it is ascribed. And here we notice again that *attributes* cannot be predicated of God in strict sense, but only in an analogical sense, for all that God *has* He is, since He is Pure and Simple Actuality. There is in God no real distinction except the real distinction of the Three Persons of which we have no right to speak in philosophy beyond the mention of the fact that philosophy finds in such distinction no contradiction of its own facts and principles.

Now, an attribute is not only something that belongs to, and attends upon, a rounded and fully constituted essence. It is also something that *characterizes* that essence. It marks the essence as this essence and no other. It is *proper to* this essence, and to this essence alone. Therefore, an attribute is often called a *property*. The term *property* derives from the Latin *proprius* which means "one's own." Hence, the attribute of infallibility belongs to the Church alone among all institutions found on the earth; it marks it; it points it out; it is its sign and seal and "trade mark" and stamp of identification. So too the ability to use reason is a true property of man. There are other rational beings than man, for every spirit is rational, be it angel or devil, and God is

rationality itself. But the term *rational* means possessed of (or, in case of God, identified with) understanding and will. It does not necessarily mean the power, and the limitation, involved in the process of thinking things out. God knows all things perfectly and eternally in His own essence; angels (and devils, who are fallen angels) know all they can know in an instantaneous grasp of mind, and have no need for the laborious mental process of working out an understandable truth by successive steps. No, man alone among rational beings has the need and the ability to use reason so, and this use is therefore an index of man, a characteristic and mark of identification; it belongs to man and to no other; it is a *property* of man. *Attribute* and *property* are synonymous terms, yet there is this shade of distinction between them: the term *attribute* suggests what must be attributed to a reality by natural necessity; the term *property* indicates the ground for this necessity of attribution inasmuch as that which must be attributed to a reality belongs to this reality as *its very own* and is ascribable, in the exact and strict sense of the attribution, to this one reality and to no other. From all this we learn that the *properties* (or *attributes*) of an essence are revealing things; they are the source of our accurate knowledge of essences. For "Handsome is as handsome does"; "Actions speak"; "as a thing is so it acts,—

that is, so it shows itself in its operative properties"; "*Agere sequitur esse*—function follows essence"; "By their fruits you shall know them."

To sum up. An attribute or a property is a perfection which necessarily belongs to an essence when that essence is fully constituted and unhampered; it is a mark and an indicator of that essence. In finite things, attributes or properties are, in themselves, non-substantial; they are of the order of accidents or accidentals; they mark and qualify substances. But in the one Pure and Simple Actuality attributes are phases of an undivided Infinite Essence, phases which the limited human mind must take to apprehend the Divine Essence at all, and phases which indicate no *real* distinction in God, but only a rational or logical distinction grounded upon the nature of the finite mind and upon its experience with creatural reality; a distinction, in short, which is logical with a *foundation* (an *imperfect* one) *in reality*.

We have already studied some of the Divine Attributes. In our investigation of the Divine Essence we had to approach the subject by way of certain fundamental *perfections*, and all perfections, in purest sense, are *attributes* of God, and *properties* of God too, since they are ascribable to Him *infinitely* and of His Essence and are not so ascribable to any other reality than God. So we learned about God's unity and unicity, His simplicity, His infinity, His

spirituality. These are attributes of God. These are properties of God. These are Divine Perfections. To our minds, these (though identified among themselves, and identified with all the other perfections we are yet to consider, and identified with the one Divine Essence Itself) are basic or fundamental perfections; in a figurative sense, they are *constitutive* of the Divine Essence. In our present study we are to consider certain other perfections which follow from the constitution of the one, simple, infinite Spirit.

b) CLASSIFICATION OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The Divine Attributes are classified as *absolute* and *relative*; the absolute attributes are further classified as *positive* and *negative*.

1. *Absolute* Divine Attributes are those which we consider in studying God in Himself, without bringing into our consideration any reference to creatures that depend on God. The term *absolute* is from the Latin *absolutus* which means "loosed from," "freed from," "unconditioned." So when we consider God as "loosed from" all relations which creatures have to Him, and study Him in Himself alone, we are investigating the *absolute* perfections of God, that is, the absolute attributes. Such attributes are, for example, the infinity of God, His immutability or

changelessness, His knowledge or wisdom. Absolute Divine Attributes are *positive* or *negative*.

(a) *Positive* Divine Attributes are those which affirm a perfection as belonging by necessity to God, and identified with His Being and Essence. Such, for example, are the divine life, the divine will, the divine understanding.

(b) *Negative* Divine Attributes are those which deny imperfections in God. Such, for example, are the divine infinity which denies limitation, the divine simplicity which denies composition, the divine immutability which denies in God the slightest change or shadow of alteration.

2. *Relative* Divine Attributes are those which involve the *relation* of creatures to God. Thus the perfection called providence,—that is, the perfection whereby God looks out for His creatures, and notably His rational creatures on earth, seeing that all things work together for good,—is an attribute of God. Manifestly, this attribute implies creatures; it brings creatures "into the picture"; it is a *relative* attribute. It is to be noticed that relative attributes in God are those that bring creatures into relation with Him; it is inaccurate to say that these attributes bring God into relation to creatures. There is no *real* relation in God to creatures, but complete and perfect independence; but there is a *real* and *essential* relation to God on the part of creatures.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

This brief Article has given us an accurate understanding of what is meant by the terms *attribute* and *property* in their strict and literal meaning as applicable to creatures, and in their analogical meaning as predicable of the Pure Actuality and Infinite Simple Essence of God. We have shown that attributes and properties are revealing things, and that their study leads to a knowledge of essences. Therefore, in our present study about God, we approach to Him by way of His perfections or attributes. We have classified the Divine Attributes as *absolute* and *relative*, and have seen that the absolute attributes are either *positive* or *negative*.

ARTICLE 2. THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN SPECIAL

- a) Goodness b) Immensity c) Immutability d) Eternity
- a) GOODNESS

It is a truth manifested in ontology that every being is *good*. For *good* means desirable or appetizable, and every being, inasmuch as it is a being, can be the object of appetite or desire. Hence the measure of being is the measure of goodness, and, viewing the terms in their most abstract meaning, *good* and *being* are strict synonyms. It follows at once that the Infinite Being is the Infinite Good.

In our proof for the existence of God, taken from the grades or degrees of perfection observable in the world, we developed the truth that the existence of *good* and *better* (that is, of a lesser or greater fulness of being) points inevitably to the existence of that which is absolutely *best*. For there is need of an absolute standard before there can be any degrees resulting from a closer or more remote approach to that standard. And we concluded our argument by establishing the existence of the supremely perfect and absolutely boundless *Good*, the *Summum Bonum* called God. God, therefore, is infinitely good; and, since His attributes are one with His essence, God is *Infinite Goodness*.

When we speak of creatures, we make a distinction between *goodness* and *perfection*. Every being, as such, is good; but every being is not perfect. A being may lack some element, some essential or integral item, and in so far it is imperfect; but even an imperfect being is good as far as it goes, that is, as far as it has being. So the case stands with finite things. To prove a finite thing good is not to prove it perfect. Contrariwise, however, to prove a thing perfect is to prove it good. Hence, to prove God All Perfect is to prove Him the Infinite Good. But, indeed, the terms *good* and *perfect* are synonymous when used with reference to the Infinite Being, and whether we take up the point of goodness to establish the Divine Perfection, or take up the point of

perfection to prove the Divine Goodness, we are following a fully justified mode of procedure. Here we choose to establish the Divine Goodness by showing that God is the All Perfect.

God is Pure Actuality. This point we have mentioned repeatedly and have demonstrated more than once. Recall here, that the *first* actuality can have nothing whatever about it that has been *received*; for no receiver is *first*; the giver is prior to the receiver. All, therefore, that the first being has belongs to its own essence and is not ascribable to any causes. In other words, the first being stands self-sufficient and self-explaining and self-justifying to reason. It is a *necessary* being. Now, a necessary being is not conceivably subject to development or change, for such processes always result from the action of causes upon the being affected by development or change; and the first being, the necessary being, is in no wise subject to causes. Hence there is in the first being no *potentiality*, no possibilities to be realized, no capacities to be filled up or filled out, no limitations to be extended. But that which is not potential is actual. In our concept of the first being there can be no note except *the actual*. Such a being is purely and entirely and unmixedly actual. And, since such a being is also, and necessarily, *simple*, its actuality is identified with its essence. Therefore, God, the First and the Necessary, and the Simple Being, is *Pure Actuality*. Now, the word

potentiality is synonymous with *imperfection*. A thing is said to have potentiality inasmuch as it has about it some capacity not yet filled out, some possibility not yet actualized; in a word, it *lacks* something, and is in so far *imperfect*. But God has about Him absolutely no potentiality; therefore, He has no lack; therefore, He has no imperfection whatever; He is the Pure Actuality and by that token He is Pure Perfection. God therefore is purely or boundlessly perfect; He is *All Perfect*. And this is saying that He is *Infinite Goodness*.

In casual speech the term *good* often suggests kindness, consideration, devotion, thoughtfulness for others. Thus we say that a devoted mother is a "good mother," or that a kind person is "very good to everybody." Now, when we speak of the absolute goodness of God, all that is fine and perfect about this common colloquial meaning of *good* is included in our use of the term, but this is not the special point of the present consideration. This rather belongs to the study which we shall make later in its proper place, the study of the perfection of the Divine Will and, in special, of that Will as expressed in Divine Providence. Here we take a more abstract view of the matter, considering *goodness* rather as an absolute perfection than a relative perfection in God, that is, as a perfection which reveals God in His own Being rather than one which reveals Him in His dealings with creatures.

Let us take just one more compelling argument to show that God is the All Perfect or the All Good in Himself.

God is the first cause of all things. Now, whatever of perfection is found in any *effect* must be found in the cause that produced that effect, either in the same way (if the cause be *univocal*, that is, if the cause be of the same nature as the effect, as it is, for example, in the case of living creatures regarded as the causes of their offspring) or in a superior way (if the cause be *analogical*, as it is, for example, in the case of the sculptor causing the statue to exist as an image). Hence, all the perfections of creatures must be found in the cause of all creatures, that is, in God. And, since God is not the univocal but the analogical cause of creatures, these perfections must be found in Him in a way superior to that in which they are found in creatures. St. Thomas Aquinas puts the point thus, "It is evident that an effect preexists in the power of the cause that can produce it; and such preexistence is not of a lower but of a more perfect order as a mode of existence. Since, then, God is the first cause of all things, it follows that in Him the perfections of all things (existent) are present in an eminent way." Now, "the perfections of all things existent" is a phrase that might be formulated as "all possible perfections." But if all possible perfections are present in the First Cause, and in an eminently superior

manner, then the First Cause is simply All Perfect. Therefore, God is the All Perfect. Therefore, God is the All Good. In a word, God is Infinite Goodness.

b) IMMENSITY —

The term *immensity* is from Latin, and literally means *measurelessness*. A thing is immense when it cannot be measured, confined, estimated, quantified. As a Divine Attribute *immensity* may be defined as "A perfection whereby the Divine Substance is enabled to be present in all things and in all places without being limited or measured by them." Immensity is not the attribute whereby God is in all things and everywhere. This is His *ubiquity* or *actual omnipresence*. Immensity is rather God's *radical omnipresence*. It is viewed by our minds as God's *power* to be everywhere, whereas *ubiquity* is the *fact* of God's being everywhere.

We notice here the marked inadequacy of human speech to deal with the Infinite. We speak of the attribute of *immensity* as that by which God is "enabled" to be present everywhere, and we are forced by reason to make a mental apology for the term even as we use it. We know, of course, what is meant, yet words do not adequately serve to express what is meant. That is why we say that God is *ineffable* or "inexpressible in speech." Our language only *approaches* accuracy when dealing with the Infinite Being; it is what priggish people like to

call "asymptotic," meaning that it comes near what is meant but never quite reaches perfect expression. Well, we do what we can, and keep reminding ourselves of the limitations of speech, and indeed of thought, and ever and anon we say to ourselves, "Do not forget that all that God *has* He is; the Divine Attributes are one with the Divine Essence."

If a person asks, "Where is God?" we have our answer ready, for we know our little catechism, and we say, "God is everywhere." If the inquirer says, "Is God in this room?" we answer, "Yes." If he says, "Is God in *me*?" or "Is God in that tree?" we answer, "Yes." But God is not in things in such wise that the things limit, or measure or confine Him. And this suggests that we review our knowledge of how a thing may be in a place.

A thing is said to be in a place *circumscriptively* when its own dimensions are co-dimensional with those of a surrounding body. A baseball flying through the air is, at any given moment, completely surrounded by a perfectly fitting pocket of atmosphere, the inner concave surface of which meets at all points the outer convex surface of the ball, and determines its *proper external place* in the air. This is *circumscriptive* presence, location, or ubication. The term comes from the Latin *circumscripturn* "written around," for the containing body (in our example, the air) is drawn around the located body somewhat as a line is drawn or *written around* a

coin laid flat on a piece of paper. Circumscriptive presence or location depends upon the external measures or dimensions of a body perfectly meeting the enveloping surface of a containing body. We say *external* dimensions, for a body has also its *internal* extension, and this may best be viewed as the body-mass contained within its own dimensions as within a film or skin. Wherever the body is, as long as it remains the same body with the same quantity, its internal extension is the same, and its "location" in this internal sense is immovable. Thus the internal extension and location of the baseball is ever the same, though its outer or external location is changing at each successive moment of its flight. Now, God is not in things *circumscriptively*. Such a presence is manifestly a *bodily* presence, a presence by outer material dimensions, and God is, as we have seen, the Infinite Spirit. Besides, circumscriptive presence is a limiting and determining thing, and God is not limited nor determined by His creatures. For any determination is an actualization of potentiality and God is Pure Actuality.

Now, a thing may be placed or located or present *informatively*. This mode of presence is verified when the located reality is a determining factor, a determinant, a *form*. Thus the substantial form of any body is *in* the body. Thus the human soul (which is the substantial form of the living human body) is *in* a man. Thus beauty of feature is *in* the

beautiful face. Thus the hardness of marble is *in* the marble. These *forms* (substantial or accidental) are said to be *in* the bodies which they determine, establish, or characterize, but it is manifest that they are not present according to measurements and dimensions. A man's soul, or his strength, or his appearance, is not in the man in the sense in which the ball is in the air, or a boat is in the water, or a root is in the ground. This is not circumscriptive presence, but *informatively* presence, and the reality so present is said to in-form the thing that it determines, marks, qualifies, limits, characterizes. Our casual use of the terms "inform" and "information" illustrate the root-meaning of the words; for our knowledge of things in-forms the mind; it gives "shape," so to speak, to our understanding; it is *present in* (or "located in") our minds, not circumscriptively, which is absurd to say in the present case, but *informatively*. In a word, a thing is present or is located *informatively* when it is a determinant or form (substantial or accidental) affecting that in which it is said to be present or located. Manifestly, God is not in the world informatively. He is not the substantial form of the universe. The old Greek Stoics thought He was, and called God the soul of the world. Nor is God the accidental form or determinant of the world,—the shape of the world or its temperature or its appearance or any other item of its accidental determinate being.

For God is the supersubstance, the All Perfect and Self-subsistent Being; He is not the *accident* (i. e., accidental form) of anything.

Thirdly, a thing may be placed or located or present in another thing *operatively*, and it is so present when it exercises activity there. This may happen in such wise that the operating or active power (the thing located) is limited to one single substance, and then it is present *operatively and definitively*; thus the soul is present in a man; thus the life-principle is present in a tree. Or the operating or active thing may be present to a plurality of things, spreading its power among them, and then it is present *operatively and extensively*; thus the sun is said to be present in all the places on earth that enjoy its light and its warming rays. Or a power may be present unlimitedly to all things, and then it is present *operatively and incircumscriptively*. In this last named manner, God is present in the world and in every creature; He is present *operatively*, for all things depend upon Him as their producing and sustaining cause (their cause *in being* as well as their cause *in becoming*) and they discharge their connatural functions only in virtue of their God-given equipment and by reason of God's preserving and concurring action. God is present in all things *operatively* but *incircumscriptively*, for He is in no wise measured, limited, or contained, by the universe or any item of it, while He sustains it in being and operation.

Thus God's *immensity* means His radical *operative and incircumscriptive* presence everywhere and in all things. His actual operative and incircumscriptive presence everywhere and in all things is His *omnipresence* or *ubiquity*.

The proof of God's immensity is drawn from His infinity and from His boundless power.

1. God possesses in an eminent degree, as an actuality which is truly identified with His own Divine Essence, every pure perfection. Now, immensity is a pure perfection. For the definition of a pure perfection is that it involves in itself no limitation or lack or imperfection, and immensity is just such a perfection, consisting as it does, in the absence of all limitation. Therefore, God possesses this perfection in an eminent degree, as an actuality which is truly identified with His own Divine Essence.

2. God must be present wherever He exercises His power. But God exercises His power everywhere, giving to all things their being, and con-serving them in existence. Hence God is present everywhere and in all things. For wherever God's power is, there also is the Divine Essence, since the power of God is identified with His essence. Nor is the power of God in any way limited,—for God is infinite,—and therefore God is not bounded or measured by actually existing realities in the world.

Hence, it cannot be said that God is merely coextensive with the universe. God is not only *omnipresent* in the sense that He is in every actual place and in every actual reality; He has true *immanency* which knows no limit or measure by reason of the creatureal realities to which and in which God is present.

There is, of course, a deep mystery in the omnipresence of God. Our imagination is wholly incapable of picturing it, and for this reason it presents some difficulty to our grasp. But the *fact* of God's omnipresence is inevitable; reason not only allows it, but demands it. The limitations of imagination cannot dim the clarity of that outstanding truth. Nor can the imperfections of mind or the character of our human experience allege anything that avails in the least to weaken the certitude with which the truth is known. We know the truth, and we know *why* it is truth; to explain in last detail *how* the truth finds actual expression is beyond our best efforts. Nor is this to be wondered at, since the finite mind cannot fully and adequately comprehend the Infinite. The point to remember is that the mind can and does *apprehend* the Infinite, that is, *knows* It with certitude as a fact, and knows *about* It much that lies within the capacity of the human grasp. Just as the eye cannot take in the whole earth at a glance, but sees that it is *there*, and takes in much that lies within the immediate range of vision; just

as the cup cannot take up the entire ocean, but is dipped into a sea that is unquestionably *there*, and takes up what its little capacity allows, so does the mind view Infinity, so does it take up of Infinity, always sure of Infinity Itself as an actual and an inevitable fact. And the immensity and omnipresence of God are phases of Infinity that the mind acknowledges, and indeed is forced to acknowledge, as factual; but to picture the immensity of God in imagination, or even to have a complete and adequate comprehension of it in intellect, is manifestly not to be expected of a creature of strictly and narrowly limited capacities.

A thought has sometimes found expression in the form of an objection to God's immensity, an objection which appeals to the Infinite Dignity as its grounds, and, like most specious objections which have a pious cast, it is very shallow. It amounts to this. There are things in the universe that the human mind and taste find unclean, foul, nasty. Can God be present in these things? If He is present *everywhere* He is certainly in *everything*, even in things that are repulsive to the sense of sight and of smell. But is there not some *indignity* in the thought of God's presence in such things? Not in the least. St. Augustine remarks that the sunlight is not soiled because it sheds its glory upon fetid refuse. Nor is the Infinite soiled or tainted by His presence in

such things. Remember God is not contained, confined, restricted, limited, measured, by circumscriptive presence in any reality. For the rest, remember that all being, inasmuch as it is positive being or reality, is *good*, that is, transcendently or metaphysically good, regardless of what effect it may have upon human palates and noses. Because of our own limitations, nay, because of our own original defilement, we have certain trials of sense and of taste to bear in this world; but we must not ascribe our limitations to the Almighty, nor think that what affects bodily things in their *circumscriptive* location can affect in like manner that Infinite who is present to them and in them *incircumscriptively*.

Since God is present in all things and everywhere in an incircumscriptive manner, we must banish from our understanding of His immensity and omnipresence all notions of *extended parts*. God is not partly here and partly there. He is not to be conceived in a bodily manner as a being of immense *size*. God has neither parts nor size. Such things are the mixed perfections of bodies, and God is Pure Perfection entirely unmixed. Wherever God is, He is *wholly* present; by His *essence*, by His *power*. St. Thomas says, "God is in all things by *power* inasmuch as all things are subject to His will and control; He is present in all things by a *true presence*, inasmuch as all things are open and naked to His

knowledge; He is present in all things by *essence*, inasmuch as He is the cause of their being."

c) IMMUTABILITY

The literal meaning of the Latin derivative *immutability* is *changelessness*. It is a *negative term*, for it denies something; it denies change or movement or alteration in God. But the term indicates a *positive perfection*, for its denial is directed against imperfection or potentiality and hence amounts to an affirmation of perfection or actuality.

Here we see illustrated the manner of our progress towards a detailed knowledge of God. We learned long since that our procedure in acquiring such knowledge goes by three steps (after recognizing *Primal Causality*, as a preliminary step) called *affirmation*, *denial*, and *excellence*, or, to vary the expression, *attribution*, *elimination*, and *transcendence*. We affirm of God, or attribute to Him, all perfection; we deny of God, or eliminate from our concept of Deity, all imperfection; we predicate pure perfection of God in a manner more excellent, more transcendent, than that which we employ in predicating perfection of creatures. In the present instance, when we declare God *immutable*, we discern the need of attributing to God a complete identity of Being and Activity; the need of eliminating from our concept of God all change or movement; the need of predicating changelessness of God in a truly transcendent

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way so that it does not convey the idea of mere fixity, which is a limitation, but suggests perfect freedom and boundless eternal action.

Therefore, when we say that God is *immutable*, that is, when we assert Divine Immutability as identified with the Divine Essence Itself, we mean that God is in no wise subject to change; that He is indeed the Being "with Whom there is no change or shadow of alteration"; that God is not thereby set in a frozen fixedness but is changelessly free and eternally active.

Now, when a *creature* is called changeless, the predication indicates a mixed perfection, that is, a perfection mingled with imperfection. For, while there is perfection in endurance or duration, there is limitation and imperfection in a merely unvaried duration or fixity in being and activity. Of course, no creature is changeless in any absolute sense; but in a limited and relative sense some creatures are called so. Thus, the human soul is a changeless spiritual substance. Thus, the unvaried opinion of a stubborn man is a changeless accident. Thus, the more lasting bodily materials are metaphorically changeless in the sense that change in them occurs very gradually, and that they last a long time. But, whether we speak of substances or accidents, creatures are never changeless in the full and perfect sense of that term. And, when we come to consider

the Divine Changelessness, we are all too likely to bring to our study the notion of the limitations that associate necessarily with what is called changelessness among creatures. By reason of our whole human experience, our first mental reaction to the thought of changelessness in God is very likely to be a mistaken one; we are apt to think of His changelessness as a thing that freezes and fixes God, as a thing that limits Him. Yet we know, upon a moment's reflection, that this cannot be, since God is infinite and subject to no limitation at all. But first we shall look at the compelling proofs for Divine Immutability; then we shall notice certain mistaken thoughts about it which we must avoid for ourselves and correct in others. We shall see that God must be immutable because of His *actuality*, His *simplicity*, His *infinity*.

1. Where there is change or movement (and *movement* is synonymous with *change*) there is manifestly the actualization of a potentiality. The thing changed is, to begin with, *changeable*. It has a capacity for change; and when the change occurs, this capacity is filled out, realized, actualized. Now, God is Pure Actuality. There is no conceivable capacity in God; nothing in God can be regarded as not yet filled out. Hence, there is in God no possibility of change. God is *immutable*.

2. Where there is change, there is always something that *undergoes* the change; something which remains the same while the change takes place in it and transforms it in substance or in accidentals. But this means that a changeable reality is a compound of elements, namely, of the underlying thing that supports the change and of the shifting thing that is lost or gained in the change. In a word, a changeable thing is not simple, but composite. But God is absolutely simple, as we have amply proved in another place. Therefore God is not changeable. God is *immutable*.

3. Every change means both a loss and a gain. It means the loss of one state or condition and the gain or acquisition of a new state or condition. But there can be neither loss nor gain in God. For God is infinite; and an infinite Being has all perfection in boundless degree, and there is no perfection still to be gained; and an infinite Being cannot lose anything or it would cease instantly to be infinite, since the loss would mark a lack and a limitation. Therefore, there can be no change in God. God is *immutable*.

When we say that God is immutable, we mean that He is entirely so. He is immutable in *substance*, for He is the Infinite Spirit and a spirit is not substantially changeable but is *incorruptible*; be-

sides, God is the Necessary Being, and cannot conceivably fade, diminish, fall away, corrupt. God is immutable in *nature*, that is, specifically, in understanding and in will. For God's understanding embraces all truth changelessly and eternally; and God's will is changeless, since a change of will is always consequent upon a change of substance or of knowledge, and we have just seen that neither substance nor understanding is changeable in God.

Now, it is here that a difficulty may arise in our imperfect minds. We are apt to think that if God's will does not and cannot change, we are all the helpless victims of an iron destiny and free-will is an illusion. Or, even if we brush aside this basic difficulty, we are likely to think that our prayers of petition to God are valueless, since nothing can lead to a change in the Divine Will. Of course, these difficulties are mere seeming. They occur to us because, unconsciously, we attribute to God our own human limitations, and misunderstand His eternal immutability, making of it a mere fixity. We must remember that God is eternal and infinite. All things knowable are present to God's knowledge, in fullest detail, from eternity. Hence, every circumstance that comes to our knowledge and bears upon our free-choice is fully known to God from eternity, and from eternity He decrees to concur with our free-will and, indeed, from eternity He moves it to its free choice. Therefore free-will is not thwarted

nor made illusory by God's changelessness. Further, God from eternity knows every possible petition that can ever be offered to Him, and, for those that are actually made, He has, from eternity, prepared the answer. Hence our petitions can and do have their effect. And the petitions must be made, since the answer to them is prepared from eternity as contingent upon our making them. When God grants our requests there is no change in God. From eternity He decrees the answer that comes to us in time. Thus our prayers make all the difference in the world. But they make no change in God. We must avoid the mistake of attributing to God a manner of dealing with us that resembles our dealing with others. For we must take things one after another; we must live and act in a *succession* of moments, hours, days, years. It is not so with God. *All* things, past, present, and to come, are perfectly *present* to God from eternity. Hence, an event that looks to us like an exceptional thing,—such as the answer to a special prayer, or the intervention of God in a miraculous happening,—is just as much a matter of eternal and changeless decree as that which appears to us as the fixed course of nature continuously sustained. The raising of Lazarus was as much a matter of eternal Will as the universal law that all men must die. The healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law was just as much a matter of eternal Will as the constant "law" of nature which requires

the cooperation of much time in the curing of a fever, and produces no instantaneous cures.

It is interesting to notice that the persons who find difficulty in the thought of God's immutability are usually the same persons who talk pityingly of the Christian's "anthropomorphic concept" of God. The overwhelming term *anthropomorphic* is a simple combination of two Greek words, *anthropos* "man," and *morphe* "form," and means, when applied to our knowledge or concept of God, that we think of Him as a kind of superman. That there is danger of such a concept (or of such an imagination-image) of God occurring to the mind, is manifest. All mythology is proof of it, and there may be some in our own enlightened age who think of God as a gigantic human figure with flowing beard and piercing eye. Perhaps we might dare to say that one of the reasons,—or, at all events, one of the effects,—of the Incarnation, was to give weak man the true God in human form, so that henceforth the concept of God as man shall be a true concept. But the point we wish specially to make is this: the persons who take a superior attitude and offer criticism of the "anthropomorphic concept" of God, are themselves hopelessly and falsely anthropomorphic in their own conception of Deity. For they limit God as they would limit a creature; His immutability is a puzzle to them; His eternity baffles them; His infinity and immensity suggest only largeness to them.

And in all this, they manifest an idea of God that is only an enlarged idea of a creature. They are doing the one thing that they particularly profess to avoid and to censure in others: they are evidencing anthropomorphic limitations in their notion of God.

d) ETERNITY

The term *eternity* means not only *endlessness* but it means also an absence of *beginning* and an absence of *successive duration*. Only that Being which has had no beginning and will have no end, and whose existence is not a matter of successive days and years but is *all present at once*, meets the requirements of the term *eternal* in the strictest sense. And it is in this sense that the terms *eternity* and *eternal* are applied to God.

Ponder this definition of eternity, made by Boethius about fifteen hundred years ago: "Eternity is the possession, at once, complete and perfect, of boundless life." Notice the force of every word in the definition. It is the *complete* possession of endless life, and of beginningless life, that is, "of boundless life." There is nothing lacking in this possession; there is not some of the life yet to come, not any of it that has slipped away. And it is the *perfect* possession of boundless life; it is not held vaguely, as a man might hold great riches without knowing their exact extent or how every penny is stored or invested; no, it is a *perfect* possession, a fully real-

ized possession, with nothing vague about it, with nothing running off into the region of misty details. Further, this complete and perfect possession of boundless life is *simultaneously* complete and perfect; it is not a matter of a clearly remembered past and a clearly envisioned future; it is the perfect possession of boundless life which is *all there at once*; and that "once" is a changeless eternal *now*. Consider, too, why Boethius speaks of eternity as the possession of boundless *life*. He does so because existence or duration has no perfect form but that called life, and the perfect form of existence or duration must be attributed to the infinite Being.

There are three conceivable sorts of duration, and these we call *time*, *aeviternity*, and *eternity*. Time is a *measure*,—at least, it is ever conceived as such, and in this phase of its concept it is a logical entity,—of existence in bodily things; it measures and marks existence and operations, happenings and events, in a bodily universe. Time has been pretty well described as, "the measure of movements (or events) considered with reference to before and after." Of the nature of time, and of what modern philosophers are trying to do with it, a full account is given in both Ontology and Cosmology, but we have no need to say more of it here. The second type of duration, *aeviternity*, is the measure of duration in things that are substantially unchangeable, once they are created, but which are changeable in operation. This term,

aeviternity (and the adjective *aeviternal*), is applied to beings that have had a beginning but will never have an end. Human souls, and angels, are *aeviternal* beings. And, as we have seen, *eternity* and *eternal* are terms that find just application only to that Being which is wholly changeless; which admits no variation in substance or nature or operation; which has neither beginning, end, nor *succession* in existence.

Now, it is manifest that eternity, like all the Divine Attributes, is not a thing that our imagination can depict. Imagination *tries* to depict it; it does its best; but it falls far short of success; indeed, it falls short of making even a proper beginning of what would have to be an infinite image. But our mind can know what is *meant* by eternity, and our reason can, and must, recognize the compelling need for attributing it to God. And thus, though we be finite in all our powers, we can and do realize the eternity of God as a fact, although we acknowledge its appreciation as utterly beyond us. When fancy tries to picture eternity, or even *aeviternity*, it merely presents an image of tremendously lengthened time. Of course, such imaginative efforts are often of great practical value. A man may dwell upon the picture of staggering reaches of time, and find in it a strong motive for working to gain an endless heaven and to avoid an endless hell. But the picture is ever

an image of greatly protracted *time*, and never of endlessness. We have all heard the story of the negro preacher with his graphic description of eternity, the story which describes a little bird taking a drop of water from the Atlantic Ocean, and carrying it, not through the air, but hop by hop across our continent, to deposit it in the Pacific; then going back, hop by hop, for another drop. The conclusion of the story is that when the little bird has completely emptied the Atlantic into the Pacific by this unbelievably slow process, then *eternity shall just have made a start*. Or we may have heard and pondered the other graphic description of eternity, or rather, of *aeviternity*, which is sometimes proposed in some such form as this: "Suppose the earth were a ball of the hardest steel. Now suppose that once in every hundred thousands years a tiny insect were to crawl a few feet on the surface of this enormous steel ball. When the ball is entirely worn away by the crawling insect, then eternity will have just begun." These descriptions are amusing; and they are not without a certain element of terror for the mind; and they may serve, as we have said, a very necessary practical purpose. But even such staggering descriptions as these cannot enable imagination to picture eternity or *aeviternity*. All they can do is to overwhelm one with enormous reaches of imaginary *time*. They stress the point of *successive* duration and of change.

Yet all succession is excluded from the concept of eternity; and substantial change is excluded from the concept of acvitermity.

That God is necessarily *eternal*, or that *eternity* is but one phase of the indivisible Divine Essence, is easily proved. It may be proved by appealing to God's infinity, to His simplicity, to His immutability, to His necessity. We choose to present two short proofs, taken from the fact that God is Necessary Being and from the fact that He is immutable.

1. God is Necessary Being. He is Pure Actuality. He is wholly independent of causes. Now, such a Being cannot conceivably have a beginning (else It would be caused; It would be actualized; It would be contingent). Nor can such a Being have an ending (else It would suffer the action of a cause which would bring It to an end; It would be contingent upon such cause; It would be in potentiality towards the action of such cause). Nor can such a Being have any succession of times or moments in duration (else It would be continuously actualized and would not be Pure Actuality to begin with; It would be contingent upon the coming of moments not yet lived; It would be affected by the causal action of such moments). Hence, the Necessary Being, the Pure Actuality, the Causeless Being, cannot

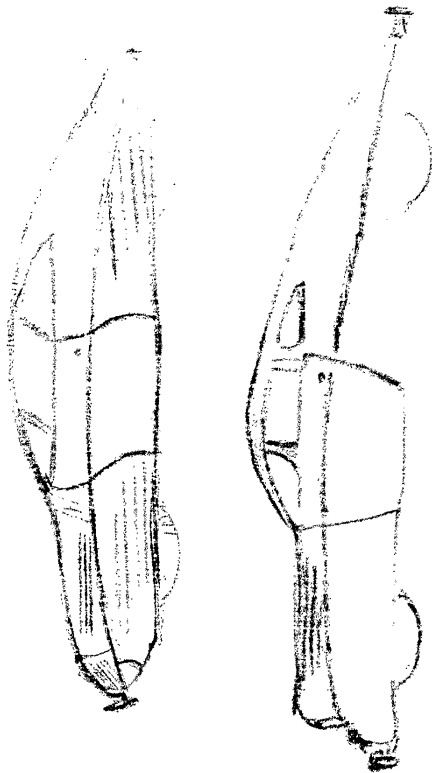
be subject to beginning, ending, or succession in existence. Therefore, God is *eternal*.

2. We have proved that God is immutable. But what is immutable is necessarily eternal. A being that comes into existence is not immutable, for it *comes*. A being that has an ending is not immutable, for it *goes*. A being that suffers succession in its existence is not immutable, for it *progresses* from moment to moment. Therefore God does not come into existence; He does not pass out of existence; He does not undergo the passing of successive periods, stages, or moments. Therefore, God is *eternal*.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have considered certain Divine Attributes, namely, God's Goodness or Perfection, His Immensity, His Immutability, His Eternity. In a former Chapter we established the fundamental Divine Attributes of Unity, Simplicity, Infinity, Spirituality. We have based our proof of God's goodness on the fact that He is Pure Actuality. We have proved the immensity of God, and His ubiquity or omnipresence, from His infinity, and from the fact that He is the necessary First Cause which gives and supports the existence of all things. We have found that God is present everywhere and in all

things *operatively and incircumscriptively*. We have proved the immutability of God from His actuality, simplicity, and infinity. We have shown the true meaning of eternity, and have seen that God must be eternal since He is the Necessary Being and is immutable.



BOOK THIRD

THE OPERATIONS OF GOD

This Book discusses the operations of God in so far as unaided human reason may apprehend them. It makes no study of the divine activity which theologians call the eternal *generation* of the Son of God and the eternal *procession* of the Holy Ghost: this is a matter of Revelation, not of philosophy. This Book studies the activity of God's intellect and will, wherein God is the Creator, Conservator, and Governor of creatures and the Concurring Principle in their activities. In a word, this Book studies the internal or *immanent* operations of the Divine Intellect and the Divine Will, and the *transient* effects (or, less accurately, the transient operations of God) whereby all creatures stand in an essential and real relation to their Creator, Conservator, Governor, and Concurring Principle. The Book has two Chapters:

- Chapter I. The Immanent Operations of God
- Chapter II. The Transient Operations of God

CHAPTER I

THE IMMANENT OPERATIONS OF GOD

This Chapter studies the operations of understanding and willing which are identified with the Divine Essence, and which, so to speak, constitute that Essence as a Personal Nature. An *immanent* operation is one that remains, in itself and in its main effect, within the principle that gives rise to it. It is a vital operation, a life-operation. Now, the life of God is not an organic life; there can be no question of vegetal or sentient operations in God; but there can and must be the perfect, the infinite, operations of intellect and will. These operations are not accidents in God, as understanding and willing are in man. For in God there are no accidents; all that God has He is; all perfections are identified in God with the simple Divine Essence. The Chapter is divided into three Articles, as follows:

Article 1. The Operations of God's Intellect

Article 2. The Operations of God's Will

Article 3. The Personal Nature of God

ARTICLE I. THE OPERATIONS OF GOD'S

INTELLECT

- a) The Divine Knowledge
- b) Classification of the Divine Knowledge
- c) The Divine Ideas

a) THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

We have seen that God is the All Perfect. Every pure perfection is found in God in infinite degree.

Now, knowledge is a pure perfection. Therefore, we see how right and reasonable is the statement of our little catechism, "God knows all things."

God's knowledge not only *extends* to all things, but it *exhausts* the knowability of things. Such knowledge is called *comprehensive knowledge*. Truly comprehensive knowledge is beyond the capacity of any creature; all creatural knowledge is *apprehensive* merely. For to comprehend a thing is to know it thoroughly in itself and in *all its actual and possible relations* with other things. To comprehend a thing is not merely to know what the thing is, and how it stands with reference to other things; it is also to know all that the thing *could be* and how it *could stand* with reference to all other things actual and possible. Manifestly, such complete knowledge is not within the grasp of a finite understanding. Yet such knowledge must be predicated of the Infinite Understanding.

Truly *comprehensive*, and hence *infinite*, knowledge is called *perfect science*. It is our purpose to prove that this perfect science exists in God and is one with the Divine Essence Itself. The proof is direct and compelling.

The infinitely perfect Being must possess, in a transcendent or eminent way, all pure perfections. Now, knowledge is a pure perfection, for it involves *in itself* (omitting consideration of *the manner* in which some creatures must laboriously acquire it)

no imperfection. Hence knowledge must exist in the infinitely perfect Being in a transcendent or eminent way. But knowledge cannot exist in the infinitely perfect Being in a transcendent way except it be comprehensive knowledge, that is, perfect science. Therefore, perfect science exists in the infinitely perfect Being, that is, in God. But, since God is absolutely simple, His knowledge is not something added to His essence, or compounded with His essence; it is something *identified* with His essence. Hence, God not only has perfect science; He *is* perfect science; He *is* infinite understanding.

In Criteriology we learn that non-materiality is the root of knowledge and of knowing. A thing that is wholly material, such as a stone, has no amplitude of function, no power of taking in the "forms" of other things as such (that is, *as of other things*), but is limited to its own form; and any accidental form which it receives it makes its own. But a knowing-creature (animal or man) can receive or take in other things cognitively; it can *know* them; it can take in their forms without making them its own; it can possess the forms of other things (that is, can know other things) as *other* things. In a word, a knowing-creature is less limited than a non-knowing creature because it has less of the limitation imposed by sheer materiality or bodiliness. And the less of materiality about a knowing-creature, the wider and deeper its range of knowledge, and the

more pure, universal, and abstract are the items or elements of its knowledge. Thus the intellectual knowledge of man is of wide and deep range, is universal and abstract, while the sentient knowledge of man or beast is limited to concrete and singular things. In a word, the more a thing is removed from materiality and the limitations that come with materiality, the more perfect is its operation of knowing and the more embracing and complete is its knowledge. Now, God is the Infinite Spirit. In God there is no materiality whatever. Therefore, in God there is nothing to limit and qualify knowledge. It follows that God's knowledge must be the most perfect possible. In God there is perfect science. God is perfect science; God is infinite understanding.

Now, it may be asked, "What is the object of God's knowledge?" The simple answer is, "All things knowable." But there is need to make a distinction here, and to discern what is the *primary*, and what the *secondary*, object of the Divine Intellect.

The primary object of a knowing-power (or simply the primary object of knowledge in any knower) is that which is attained by the knower directly, immediately, and in itself. The secondary object of a knowing-power is that which it can know *through* or *by reason of* the primary object.

The primary object of the Divine Intellect is the Divine Essence Itself. For, in any knowing-being,

there is a proportion, an equality, between the thing it is framed to know and its power to know it. But between the Infinite Understanding and what it can know there can be a proportion or equality only if the object known be itself infinite. And the only infinite object is the Infinite Being, that is, the Divine Essence Itself. Therefore, God knows Himself, first and foremost (that is, as primary object). Nor is there any force in the objection that if God knows Himself perfectly He is, so to speak, defined and limited by that knowledge, and, since God is in no wise limited, this involves a contradiction and cannot be; therefore, says the objection, God does not perfectly know Himself. The objection is shortsighted. For if there is *anything* that God's knowledge does not include, it is imperfect knowledge, and is therefore a lack and a limit in the perfect and limitless God. In a word, the objection seeks to avoid a difficulty which is merely apparent by diving full force into a difficulty which is real and unanswerable. Of course, if God's knowledge were a thing which God merely *has*; if it were an acquisition of God; if it were something superadded to the Divine Essence, it *would* be a limiting thing, and for God to know Himself would be for God to know the boundaries of the Boundless and to recognize limits in the Limitless. But, as we have seen, God's knowledge is one with Himself. It is not something acquired by God as creatureal knowledge is acquired

by a knowing-creature. What we call God's knowledge is only one phase of God's infinite essence. And to say that God knows Himself perfectly, and that the Divine Essence is the primary object of the Divine Understanding, is merely to say that God is Himself. Hence the objection is manifestly founded upon a seeming difficulty merely, and not upon a real one.

In knowing Himself perfectly (that is, comprehensively) God knows the full extent of all His powers. He therefore knows all things creatable, all things sustainable, all things with which He can concur in being and in action. In a word, in and through His knowledge of Himself, God knows all other things. Now, what is known in and through the primary object of knowledge is the secondary object of knowledge. Therefore, all things other than God, all creatures and all their actual and possible relations, constitute the secondary object of God's knowledge or of the Divine Intellect.

St. Thomas Aquinas puts the matter thus, "It is clear that God knows Himself perfectly, else He would not be perfect in being, for His very being is to *know*. Now, if anything is known perfectly, its *power* is known. And if a power is perfectly known, there are known also the realities to which the power extends and in which it produces its effects. Therefore, since the Divine Power extends to all things as their First Efficient Cause, it follows that God

in knowing Himself knows all things other than Himself."

God's knowledge of all things other than Himself, that is, His knowledge of all creatural reality, is not a mere general knowledge, but is perfect in all details. It is truly comprehensive knowledge, since it is knowledge in and of the Infinite Being. Therefore, God knows every single thing that now exists, has existed, will exist, or could exist. *All* things, actual and possible, necessary and free, substantial and accidental, are perfectly comprehended by the Divine Intellect.

God knows Himself perfectly, and He knows all other things *in Himself*. In this the Divine Knowledge is different from creatural knowledge, say human knowledge. For a man knows things *in themselves* by reason of a *species* or cognitional image which the realities known impress upon his knowing-powers or faculties. A man receives his knowledge; it is something over and above his essence and not part and parcel with his essence itself. A man gathers his knowledge, beginning with the sense-grasp of bodily things which he finds about him in this world. From this he rises to intellectual concepts, and to the knowledge of things bodily and non-bodily *in their essences*. Thus we say that a man knows realities *in themselves* and not *in himself*. But God's knowledge is not acquired, not gathered, not built up, not reasoned out or abstracted. God's knowledge

does not result in God from the impression upon the Divine Mind of the images or *species* of creatures. God's knowledge is necessarily one with the Divine Essence, and is therefore changeless and eternal. God's knowledge of creatures does not depend upon the creatures being here to impress themselves upon His notice; God needs no experience of creatures to form in Himself the ideas by which they are known; His knowledge of creatures is full and perfect *from eternity* and was thus full and perfect before any creature existed. Nor is God's knowledge improved or in any wise altered by the fact that certain creatures come into existence at a moment and in a manner eternally decreed by the Divine Will. From eternity God knows all possible creatures, in all their possible relations, *in Himself*, and not *in themselves*. In the single and simple and eternal grasp of His unchanging essence, God perfectly and eternally knows all creaturely realities.

A special question which has been the subject of a prolonged and still unsettled controversy must here be presented. It may be expressed in these terms, "In what manner does God know future free events (called 'future contingencies'), that is, things that are actually going to happen, but are not in themselves things that *need* to happen since they depend upon the free choice of rational creatures?" A future contingency or future free event depends upon,

or is contingent upon, the operation of causes that are not truly predictable, since these causes are not necessitated but free. That John, who is three, will marry Jane, newly born, twenty years hence on a certain day and at a certain hour, may be a fact, but, at this moment, it is a future contingency. That James will quarrel with his employer next year and throw up his job, may come to pass in actual fact, but right now it is a future contingency or future free event. God knows that these future contingencies will come to pass; there is no doubt or question on that point. But the controversy focusses upon the *manner* or the *mode* of God's knowledge of future contingencies. *How* does God know these future free events? The following opinions are offered in answer to this question:

1. *The Doctrine of Molina.* Molina, a famous Spanish Jesuit of the sixteenth century, notable both as a theologian and a philosopher, held that God knows future free events in his "supercomprehension of causes," independently of any decree of the Divine Will. This opinion seems inadequate. For to know a *contingent* or *free* event in its causes, is to have only a more or less perfect *conjectural* knowledge of the event; it is to be in position to make a more or less perfectly accurate *guess* about the event. But God's knowledge is in all ways most perfect and most certain, with no guesswork about it.

2. *The Doctrine of Bañez*. Bañez, famous Dominican contemporary and countryman of Molina, held that God knows future free events in the eternal decrees of His will. This doctrine, baldly stated, seems misleading. For the divine decrees are not blindly issued laws, nor are they decrees which destroy the real freedom of free causes. Yet, in itself, the blunt doctrine of Bañez seems to suggest both of these impossibilities.

3. *The Doctrine of Cajetan*. Cajetan, sixteenth century Italian theologian and philosopher, holds the opinion commonly accepted as the *Thomistic* doctrine (that is, as the true interpretation of the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas). He teaches that God knows all future events, including future free events, in His own essence, as *present*, and in the light of His eternal determining decrees. This doctrine appears to be the most acceptable of all. We pause upon its several points for a brief word of explanation and proof.

a) God knows future contingencies as present. For the process of time has no limiting effect upon the Infinite Mind; to God there is no future and no past; all things are *present* to His knowledge. And, granted that future free events are *future* to finite minds, and hence are but a matter of conjecture or uncertain knowledge, they are present to the Infinite Mind and are thus the object of *certain* knowledge.

Again, the future free events that are actually going to happen, have, *when* they happen, the necessity of fact. In themselves, considered abstractly, they do not need to happen; they depend upon free choice; but when the choice is once made and the events actually come to pass, then they have to be what they are. Now, the Infinite Mind actually beholds these events, as present, and hence as having the necessity of fact, which does not in the least affect their essentially free character, but which renders them objects of certain knowledge in the Infinite Mind.

b) God knows future contingencies in His own essence. For the Divine Essence, viewed as the Divine Knowledge, embraces completely all possibilities, and so embraces all future realities. Thus the Divine Essence Itself is sufficient reason to account for God's knowledge of future free events.

c) God knows future contingencies in the light of His eternal determining decrees. For all things have their being in the will and power of God to bestow it, and in the will and power of God to concur in creatural activities and operations. Hence, while the free wills of rational creatures are truly free, and they truly choose their proximate objects, such freedom and such choice is dependent upon God's eternal decrees to create the free wills, to sustain them in freedom, and to move them and to concur in their free choice. Ontology teaches us that the root-principle of sheer possibility is the Divine Intellect;



things possible have their possibility, in last analysis, because they are known as possible in the Divine Mind. And their extrinsic possibility (that is, their possibility as things existible, not merely as things thinkable) depends upon the Divine Will, and hence on the eternal decrees of God. Now, future free events are more than merely possible, since they are, as a fact, going to take place. But if the Divine Will and its decrees are requisite for extrinsic possibility, it is still more evident that the Divine Will and its decrees are required for future actuality; for if even the lesser mode of being requires the Divine Will, certainly the greater or more perfect mode of being requires It.

b) CLASSIFICATION OF THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

We may distinguish in God (by a distinction of reason based on reality) knowledge that is: 1. Speculative or Practical; 2. Necessary or Free; 3. Approving or Non-approving; 4. Knowledge of Simple Intelligence or Knowledge of Vision. The last classification is, far and away, the most important we have here to consider. But we shall say a word of the other types too.

1. Speculative knowledge means knowledge that contemplates truth but has no direct concern with action. When a man studies ancient history for the sake of information, he does not propose to *do* any-

thing with the knowledge acquired. His aim is speculative. He wants knowledge for the enlightenment and enrichment of mind it gives him; he wants truth to know it, to contemplate it. Such, in general, is *speculative* knowledge. The term *speculativè* comes from the Latin verb *speculari* "to look at." But when a man studies carpentry, or engineering, he intends to use his knowledge in doing things. His aim is *practical*. He wants to know that he may do something in consequence. Such is *practical* knowledge. The word *practical* has its roots in the Greek *prattin* "to make, to do." Now, God's knowledge of Himself is manifestly *speculative knowledge*. His knowledge of things other than Himself is at once *speculative and practical*. Of things sheerly possible, not considered as to be made or not made but seen merely in themselves as what *could* be made, God has speculative knowledge, and, inasmuch as possibility involves something practical (namely, what could actually be made or done) His knowledge is also practical. Of things that are not but are going to be, it is manifest that the Divine Knowledge is both speculative and practical; speculative inasmuch as it knows them as things, practical inasmuch as it knows them as things to be made. Of existing things, God's knowledge is speculative inasmuch as these things are knowable objects and, indeed, are perfectly known in the Divine Essence; and practical inasmuch as God knows how to sustain these things

in being and operation. God's knowledge of evil is mainly speculative, yet it is also practical inasmuch as it is knowledge of what God permits, impedes, or draws into place in His providence.

2. God's knowledge of Himself is *necessary* knowledge, that is, He knows Himself perfectly and cannot be ignorant of Himself; as He is Necessary Being, and as His knowledge is one with His Essence, so He is Necessary Knowledge. God's knowledge of things that depend for being upon His perfectly free and infinite Will is called *free* knowledge. God cannot be ignorant of these things, but they are not one with Himself as Necessary Knowledge, even though they be known in His eternal Essence.

3. God's knowledge of creatures in their positive being, that is, in their essential and transcendental goodness, is knowledge which involves *approval*. So the Creator, looking upon and knowing the works of His hands, "saw that they were very good." God's knowledge of things in their positive being or goodness is not something aloof and detached; it is not knowledge merely, but it is *causal* knowledge, since God, whose essence and knowledge are really identified, is the cause of these things; hence, necessarily, He approves them. God's knowledge of evils, of deficiencies, is *non-approving*, since God is only

the accidental cause of physical evil, and is in no sense the cause of sin or moral evil.

4. The most important distinction of the Divine Knowledge is that which classifies it as (a) The Knowledge of Simple Intelligence or Simple Understanding, and (b) The Knowledge of Vision.

(a) The Knowledge of Simple Intelligence is that Divine Knowledge which has as its object (that is, as the thing known) *all things possible* but not things that are ever to be. All that *could* be, but have not been, are not, nor will be,—these things are the object of the Divine Knowledge of Simple Intelligence.

(b) The Knowledge of Vision is that Divine Knowledge which has as its object all that has been, is, or will be *actual*. Things that have existed in the past, or exist now, or will exist in time to come,—these are the object of the Knowledge of Vision; these things lie within the direct view, so to speak, of God, which beholds them as *present*, no matter what be their position in the time-limited view of finite minds.

Now, Molina and many other philosophers have taught that a third classification is to be made in the Divine Knowledge, and that this holds a middle place between the two types just mentioned, and is to be called, in consequence, *scientia media* or "Middle Knowledge." The Latin term, *scientia media*,

is universally used when this classification of Divine Knowledge is in question; one never hears or reads the English translation of it. The Molinist doctrine amounts to this: God knows *things merely possible* by His Knowledge of Simple Intelligence; He knows all actual things, including those *truly future*, by His Knowledge of Vision. But there is a special class of things not included among the objects of these two types of knowledge. There are the things which a man *would do* if certain conditions were to be fulfilled, but which, as a fact, he will *not do* because those conditions will not be fulfilled. These things are called "conditionally future events" or, in the commonly used Latin term, *futuribilia*. The *futuribilia* (things that are not truly future, since they will never come to pass, but things conditionally future because under certain conditions, that will not be realized, they *would* come to pass by the free choice of man) are the objects of the *scientia media*.

We do not find acceptable the doctrine of Molina, nor are we prepared to recognize the *scientia media* as a necessary classification of the Divine Knowledge. We do not agree that the *futuribilia* constitute a special class of knowables, distinct from the respective objects of the Knowledge of Simple Intelligence and the Knowledge of Vision. And where we find no truly and *definitely distinct object* of

knowledge, we must not assert the existence of a *definitely distinct type* of knowing.

Certainly, we admit, and emphatically assert, that God knows all things knowable, including the *futuribilia*. Our Lord gave expression to His knowledge of such conditionally future events when He said (*Luke x, 13*): "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida. For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." God knows the *futuribilia*. But we assert that this knowledge is Knowledge of Simple Intelligence. We find no need for declaring the existence of a *scientia media*. We do not find acceptable the Molinist argument that the *futuribilia* are an object distinct from the respective objects of the other two types of Divine Knowledge, and that *futuribilia* are something more than things sheerly possible (which fall under Simple Intelligence) and something less than things to be actual in future (which fall under Vision).

God's knowledge of things to come is Knowledge of Vision, for the time element does not affect the Infinite Mind, and things to come are seen as present. God's knowledge of things that *would* come under certain conditions is either knowledge of what will be when conditions are fulfilled (and this is Knowledge of Vision); or it is knowledge of

what would be, but actually will not be, since the conditions are not to be fulfilled, and this amounts to knowledge of things possible, and comes under the Knowledge of Simple Intelligence.

Father Boedder, S.J., in his *Natural Theology* (p.289), says, "We ourselves hold strongly to what is meant by the term *scientia media*, without insisting upon the necessity of retaining this term as such." Well, certainly we all hold strongly to the manifest truth that God knows all knowables, including the *futuribilia*, and that appears to be the essence of "what is meant by the term *scientia media*." If we reject the term itself, and the *special and distinct type* of Divine Knowledge which the term suggests, we have solidly scientific grounds for our action. For the axiom, "Things are not to be multiplied without necessity" forbids the forming of distinctions in the Divine Knowledge without definitely distinct objects of knowledge which demand them.

We may conclude our brief discussion of this question by defining the *scientia media* in terms acceptable to the Molinists: "The *scientia media* is that Divine Knowledge whereby God, antecedently to His decrees of fulfilling or not fulfilling conditions for action, knows for certain what a man (i. e., a free creature) would do if such conditions were actually fulfilled."

The discussion of *scientia media* is rather academic than practical. But there is another, and a most practical, question which we must mention here. It is the question of God's foreknowledge and man's free-will.

God knows all things, future as well as past and present, and even things conditionally future. But things are necessarily as God knows them to be. Therefore, it appears that human freedom is illusory. For if God knows what I am going to do at every moment of my future, that is what I am surely going to do. How, then, am I free? We answer that knowledge does not necessarily create or cause its object. God knows what I will choose and that I will freely choose it. His knowledge does not impose necessity upon my choice. A man knows that excessive drinking will produce intoxication, but his knowledge does not make him drunk. A sportsman knows that the race will start at a given signal, but his knowledge does not cause the horses to run. The college chef knows that when he rings the dinner-gongs, there will be a prompt assembling of students in the dining-hall, but his knowledge does not take away the freedom of the students. There is no *real* difficulty in this matter of Divine Foreknowledge and human free-will. The difficulty is mere seeming. There is a more intriguing, yet not a more real, difficulty in the question of God's requisite support

and movement in man's actual free choice. This difficulty we shall consider in the next Chapter.

c) THE DIVINE IDEAS

When we speak of *ideas* or *concepts* we mean, first and foremost, those mental representations of essences which are formed by the human mind acting upon the findings of the senses. Here, when we speak of the ideas in the Divine Mind, our language is analogical. For God knows the essences of all things without having to form the representations of them within Himself; He does not require that things exist to be known, nor does He need to be impressed by the *species* or *images* of things to have them cognitively present in His essence. Since God is the First Being, He exists before all creatures, and His perfect knowledge of creatures is not gained or acquired from them, but is present in and of His essence from eternity before any creatures exist. Further, the cognitional presence (that is, the idea or concept) of any reality is not in God, as it is in man, an *accidental* thing; it is really identified with the Divine Essence Itself, as we know from the perfect and pure simplicity of the Infinite Being. We must keep all this in mind as we discuss, in human and therefore in metaphorical terms, the ideas in the Divine Intellect.

It is manifest from the order and beauty of the universe that its Efficient Cause is a most intelligent

cause. The Designer and Governor of the world knows what He is about. Now, where there is design and governance, there is antecedent *knowledge*, and in accordance with this knowledge the plan is formed and executed. God, therefore, antecedently to the existence of any creature, knows the universe in general and in every smallest detail. We say that the "elements" of this knowledge are the Divine Ideas.

God is an *intelligent agent*, that is, one who acts with understanding of what is being done and with the will to do it. We find around us here in the world, and indeed we find within ourselves,—in the body-processes of digestion and nervous reaction, for instance,—forces or agencies at work which are not themselves intelligent. The stone manifests the action of cohesion and gravitation; the plant grows and matures and reproduces its kind; the animal sees, hears, experiences appetite or tendency; and in all these *agents* (that is, actors or doers or performers) we find no understanding and no conscious free direction of the activities mentioned. Such agents are called *natural agents* (*agentia per naturam*) to distinguish them from *intelligent agents* (*agentia per intellectum*). Man, dowered as he is with understanding and free-will, is, in his human or free acts, an *agens per intellectum*; he is an intelligent agent. And, since intelligent activity is of its nature a finer and purer perfection than natural

activity; since, indeed, intelligent activity is, in itself, a pure perfection, it must be attributed in a transcendent or eminent manner to the First Being. God must be the *agens per intellectum* par excellence. And this means that the ideas of all creatable things, of all things possible, must be perfectly present in and of the Divine Essence from eternity.

Now, the ideas according to which, and in the light of which, free intelligent activity is exercised, are the *exemplar-causes* of the effects which such activity produces. The stately building which wins the admiration of the beholder, was envisioned in the mind and imagination of the architect before a stone of it was actually laid. It was known by the architect *before* it was given actuality or existence, and the knowledge was the light and guide of the work that produced the building. The knowledge of the architect, which was first expressed in plans and blue-prints and afterwards in steel and stone, was the exemplar-cause of the activity of building and of the finished edifice itself. In a similar manner, God's perfect knowledge (or the Divine Ideas) of all things created is the exemplar-cause of all creatures. We say that in God there are *archetypal ideas* of all that He has made, and indeed there are in God archetypal ideas of all things that are possible, of all that *can* be made. The word *archetype* literally means the "first model," or the "first or earliest pattern," or the "first exemplar-cause." The Divine

Ideas, therefore, are exemplary ideas; they are exemplar-causes; they are archetypal ideas of all creatable reality.

A seeming difficulty here arises. God is one, but the world is manifold, that is, creatures are many and various. How can the ideas of all these various creatures exist in the Divine Mind without inducing *plurality* there, and thus creating a conflict and contradiction in the Divine Simplicity? We answer that it is not the knowledge of a plurality of things that induces plurality in the understanding mind, but the fact that the mind requires, for each item of the several things known, a distinct *species* or cognitive image. But it is only the finite mind that requires a plurality of *species* for the understanding of a plurality of objects. The knowledge of God is one with God's very essence, and if we use the terminology of human knowing when we speak of God, we must say that the only *species* in God's knowledge is the Divine Essence Itself. In man, the *species* is the *medium* of knowledge; it is that *whereby* the object is known. But God, the Infinite Being, does not require a medium for knowing; He does not require any *means* by which knowledge may be acquired, for He does not *acquire* any knowledge; He has perfect knowledge in and of His essence from eternity. Hence, the Divine Essence, as the *species* of all knowables, is not that *whereby* God knows; it is that *which* God knows. God, knowing

Himself, knows necessarily all His powers and all that His powers can produce. Therefore, in the *simple* understanding of Himself, God understands the whole manifold universe of possibilities. It is, therefore, not true to say that the plurality of Divine Ideas (called so analogically) means a plurality in what is essentially non-plural or simple. No plurality is induced in God by His perfect comprehension of all things in the one indivisible and infinitely simple *species* which is His own essence.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have learned, by strict reasoning, that in God there is the most perfect knowledge, *perfect science*, infinite understanding, and that this knowledge is really one with the Divine Essence Itself. We have seen that God's own essence is the *primary object* of the Divine Mind, and that the realities other than God (that is, all creatureal possibilities) constitute the *secondary object* of God's knowledge. We have learned that God, in knowing Himself, knows all other things perfectly and eternally, and thus *He knows creatures in Himself*, and not *in themselves*. We have studied the question of God's *knowledge of future contingencies* or future free events, and have found the doctrines of Molina and Bañez less acceptable than that of Cajetan, who, following St. Thomas Aquinas, holds that God knows all future events, including future

contingencies, in *His own essence*, as *present*, and *consequent upon His eternal determining decrees*. We have classified the Divine Knowledge as *speculative* and *practical*, as *necessary* and *free*, as *approving* and *non-approving*, as *Knowledge of Simple Intelligence* and *Knowledge of Vision*. We have rejected the *scientia media* theory as unnecessary to explain God's knowledge of *futuribilia*, that is, of events that depend upon human choice, and which will not take place actually, but *would* take place were certain conditions to be fulfilled. We have seen that there is no real conflict between God's foreknowledge and man's free-will. We have studied the Divine Ideas or *exemplars* or *archetypes of all creatable things*, which exist in the mind of God; we have found that these ideas are not *formed* severally by any knowing-process or knowing-effort of the Divine Intellect, but exist perfectly in and of the Divine Essence from eternity. We have learned that God's essence is the single and simple and infinite *species* in which He eternally knows all things.

ARTICLE 2. THE OPERATIONS OF GOD'S WILL

a) The Divine Will b) Classification of Will-acts in God
c) Object of the Divine Will d) The Divine Will and Evil

a) THE DIVINE WILL

The *will* is the tendency to follow intellectual knowledge by appropriate action. It is the intellectual

appetency. It is the power or faculty to choose a course of action which is intellectually manifested as good to follow. All these descriptions of will are, of course, literally applicable to the *faculty* of willing in a *rational creature*, that is, in a creature endowed with understanding and the ability to act with conscious purpose in consequence of its findings. When we speak of God, we must remove from our concept of will all that makes it a limited and imperfect thing, all that makes it a faculty or accidental power, all that makes it something really distinct from understanding and from the essence of the being which understands. For in God *there is no real distinction* save that of the distinction of Persons in the Trinity, a distinction which we have no right to discuss in a purely human or rational science. God's will must exist, for will is a perfection and God is identified with the infinity of all perfections subsisting in simple and eternal unity. But God's will is not, as our wills are, a power which God *has*; no, God's will is a perfection which God *is*; it is one with the essence of God. Therefore, just as it is correct to say that God *is* infinite mind or infinite understanding or infinite knowledge, so it is correct to say that God *is* infinite will. Still, we are limited by the inadequacies of creaturely understanding and of human speech, and, if we are to discuss the Divine Will at all, we must perforce discuss It in terms that express It as something akin to the

creatural faculty of will that we know and experience within our limited selves. Our language is necessarily analogical in this discussion, as it is in the discussion of all the Divine Perfections.

Now, can God be truly and factually regarded as Will? Is God infinite will? In more understandable, but less accurate speech, is there a will in God?

1. In God there is, formally or *as such*, and in an eminent or transcendent way, all that our knowledge of creatures discloses to us as pure and unmixed perfection. Now, will *in itself* (and not in its halting and limited creatural exercise) is unquestionably a pure and unmixed perfection. For there is nothing of imperfection in the tendency to follow knowledge with appropriate action; on the contrary, knowledge without tendency or ability to act upon it would be itself imperfect, since knowledge finds its fulfillment and rounded meaning in being carried out; and hence this capacity or faculty for carrying out knowledge is itself a perfection. In creatures, the will is subject to influences that hamper and thwart it; it is capable of an abuse that turns it against the very purpose of its existence; it is possible to employ it in a fashion that is morally evil and to make it the directive force behind movements that are both physically and morally bad. We say that every human will is weak; we say that many a human will is a bad will (not in itself indeed but



in its use); and these declarations point to deficiencies, limits, evils. But none of these limitations, deficiencies, and defections is an evil in the willing-power itself. In will, considered purely in itself, there is nothing that the mind can discover but pure perfection. Therefore, this perfection is a pure and unmingled perfection, and it must be attributed formally to the Infinite Being. Hence we must attribute will to God. God is Infinite Will.

2. Wherever there is understanding there must be will. For wherever there is knowledge there is tendency to follow knowledge. This truth is evident, almost self-evident, and it receives full confirmation in the check-up of our own experience. For knowledge is seldom purely and entirely speculative; very frequently,—and in some measure *always*,—it points on to something-to-be-done. Knowledge is a light that frequently reveals a path that may be followed; it discovers not only facts, but *ways* and *means*; it illumines no meaningless universe with a merely entertaining light, but shows *ends* to be attained. And this truth which is predicable, in due measure, of all knowledge, even sentient knowledge, is manifestly most truly and inevitably predicable of intellectual knowledge. Rightly do we declare that where there is understanding there is a drive and tendency to use understanding practically, to act on it, to carry out its plans for good, to achieve the

objects it shows to be desirable or necessary. In a word, rightly do we say that where there is an understanding there is a will. Now, as we have seen, God is Infinite Understanding; therefore (since God is simple and all perfections are identified with His essence) God is also Infinite Will.

b) CLASSIFICATION OF WILL-ACTS IN GOD

We distinguish in God will-acts that are *antecedent* and those that are *consequent*, and so we speak of God's *antecedent will* and His *consequent will*.

God's *antecedent will* is the Divine Will inasmuch as it wills good and rejects evil *simply*, without taking into account (hence *antecedently to*) any conditions or circumstances that might make what is simply or generally good a *non-good* or evil in certain cases. Thus, by His antecedent will, God wills all men to be saved. For salvation is the highest good of man, and God wills it simply or antecedently for all, without consideration of the circumstances which, in individual cases, might make it unjust.

God's *consequent will* is the Divine Will inasmuch as it wills what is good and rejects evil, not absolutely, simply, unconditionally, and in a general way, but in the special circumstances and conditions of each complex situation. Taking into account (and hence *consequent upon* but not *dependently on*) these

special circumstances and conditions, God's consequent will decrees the punishment, and not the salvation, of the unrepentant sinner, even though, by His antecedent will, God wills the salvation of all men. Of course, the consequent will decrees what is good, and this in a more special way than the antecedent will. It is good, in general, that all men be saved, and the salvation of all is willed or wished by the antecedent will of God. It is good, in each special case, that full justice should be done, and it is evil for justice to be traversed or offended; the consequent will of God wills that the unrepentant sinner should have justice. In the case of the unrepentant sinner, punishment is good, as being required by justice.

c) OBJECT OF THE DIVINE WILL

The *object* of any faculty is what that faculty obtains or achieves in its normal function, and that which it is connaturally *fitted* to attain and towards the attainment of which it *tends*. Now, while the Divine Will is not a faculty, but is identified with the Divine Essence, we speak of It in human terms as though It were a faculty.

The object of any faculty is twofold, namely, *primary* and *secondary*. The primary object, as we have seen in discussing the Divine Intellect, is that which the faculty tends to attain by its direct and immediate and first-and-foremost action; it is that which the faculty tends *per se primo* (of itself and

primarily) to attain. The secondary object is that which the faculty tends to attain *in, through, or by reason of* its primary object. Thus, for instance, the faculty of sight in man tends to attain, that is, to *perceive*, colored surface. This is the primary object of sight. But because sight perceives colored surface, it perceives also where such surface terminates, and thus perceives the shape or figure of visible objects. This is a secondary object of sight. We have already learned that the primary object of the Divine Mind or Intellect is the Divine Essence Itself. And we have also seen that, in comprehending the Divine Essence, the mind of God comprehends all the Divine Powers and all that these can accomplish, and hence comprehends all creatures. In and through and by reason of the perfectly comprehended Divine Essence (primary object), the mind of God comprehends all creatable things (secondary object). Now, as it is with the Divine Mind, so is it also with the Divine Will. The primary object of the Divine Will is the Divine Essence Itself, and the secondary object is all that is in line with the primary, and may be viewed as related to it as means to end. But, before discussing and proving this point, we must say a word about the nature of will-acts in general.

The intellect tends to embrace and understand all truth. The will tends to attain and possess and enjoy all good. Now, the tendency towards good is at

the same time a tendency away from evil. And this tendency may, in all cases, be truly regarded as *love*. The acts proper to the will itself are often listed as these six: *wish; intention; consent* to the requisite means of carrying out intention; *choice* of suitable means; *use* of such means; *enjoyment* of the good attained. Every one of these six will-acts is an aspect or expression of *love*. To have a *wish* is to entertain a simple love of the thing wished for; to *intend* a thing is to like or love it enough to have the purpose of attaining it; to *consent* to the means required to achieve an end is to like or love that end enough to undertake or undergo what is necessary to attain it; to *choose* means is to like the end enough to take pains in the election of ways to come by it; to *use* the means chosen is a further expression of this love; and to *enjoy* the beloved object when attained, is to rest in it complacently or lovingly. And where there is love there is hatred, where there is choice there is rejection; just as a step towards the north is inevitably a step away from the south. Hence, to wish an end or object is to reject what is opposed to that object and its attainment; to intend an end is to turn away from its opposite; and so with all the will-acts. Thus rejection or hatred is, so to speak, the under-side of love; it is part and parcel with love itself. Therefore, we repeat, all will-acts may be considered in terms of *love*. And when we come to the study of the object

of the Divine Will, primary and secondary, we seek to learn what the Divine Will *loves*.

We have two points to establish. First, God loves Himself necessarily, as the primary object of the Divine will. Secondly, God loves things other than Himself freely, as the secondary object of the Divine Will.

1. *God loves Himself necessarily as the primary object of the Divine Will.* This truth has two distinct parts; God loves Himself as the primary object of the Divine Will; and this love is not free but necessary. (a) The primary object of any will is that which is the *ultimate* and *full* answer to the will-tendency. Now, the Divine Will is an infinite tendency or appetite for good, and Its ultimate and full answer must be Infinite Good Itself, that is to say, the ultimate and full answer to the tendency called the will of God must be the Divine Essence Itself. For only the Divine Essence is an Infinite Good. Again, as we have already seen, will is consequent upon intellect. Will is a tendency to follow understanding, and to lay hold of and possess (that is, to love) what the understanding knows as good and desirable (that is, as lovable). Now, the Divine Intellect or Understanding knows the Divine Essence as supremely perfect and lovable, and hence the Divine Will tends primarily towards the Divine Essence as Its end. God, therefore, loves Himself; the Divine

Essence is the primary object of the Divine Will. (b) The tendency of any faculty towards its primary object is a necessary tendency; it is what the faculty is *for*; it is that which defines the faculty and gives it meaning. But, as we have seen, the primary object of the Divine Will is the Divine Essence. Hence, the Divine Will tends towards (that is, *loves*) the Divine Essence necessarily. This does not involve any limitation in God; it does not mean that God is necessitated by anything extrinsic to Himself. In creatures, it is true, the perfect object of a faculty necessitates that faculty and, by the same token, limits the faculty and indicates its finite character. This is because the determining or necessitating factor in the case is extrinsic to the creatural faculty itself. But in God, the necessary object is *Himself*; it is not something extrinsic to the Divine Essence which forces, directs, or limits It; it is the Divine Essence Itself. Therefore, to say that God necessarily loves the Divine Essence is merely to say that God is God; it is not to say that God is necessitated by anything that bears upon Him, so to speak, from without, for this (as is manifest, since God is the First Being and the only Necessary Being) is wholly impossible.

2. *God freely loves things other than Himself, as the secondary object of the Divine Will.* Three special points are to be distinguished in the declara-

tion. (a) God loves or wills things other than Himself. The fact that creatures exist is ample proof that God wills them to exist; otherwise their existence is inexplicable. And, even abstracting from the actual existence of creatures, we may prove that God loves or wills things other than Himself, for God is Infinite Goodness and goodness is, of its nature, a thing that tends to communicate itself and to spread itself abroad (*bonum est diffusivum sui*). Now, the only way in which Infinite Goodness can communicate Itself is by the sharing out, so to speak, of Itself in finite beings. "All creatures," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "are but the participations of the Divine Goodness." This does not mean that God *must* create, or that His goodness *forces* Him to bring creatures into being; we shall see in a moment that God's love or will towards creatures is perfectly free and not necessitated. It means only that the tendency of the perfect love, that is, the Divine Will, is to *give* of its goodness; it means that God wills or loves things other than Himself, yet *in* Himself, and not as though creatures could be (which they cannot) independent of Himself or endowed with any excellence of their very own. (b) God wills things other than Himself as the secondary object of the Divine Will. For God, in His perfect comprehension of the Divine Essence, which is the primary object of the Divine Will, perfectly comprehends all that is within His power to create, and wills the

precise items of this infinite knowledge which shall have actual existence as creatures. Now, the knowledge of creatables in the Divine Mind, and, since will secondary object of the Divine Will. In a word, God follows understanding, in mode as in fact, the actual choice of what creatables are to be creatures is the secondary object of the Divine Will. He is to create as the wills or loves the creatures He is to create as the secondary object of the Divine Will. Take up the point in another way: All creatures are *means* to manifest the perfections of God. But *means* are never the primary object of the will; they are secondary to the *end* towards which they are directed by the will. Hence, creatures (that is, things other than God) are loved or willed as the secondary object of the Divine Will. (c) God loves things other than Himself in a manner that is not necessary but free. For the will, even of a creature (man or angel) is not necessitated to any means without which its end can be achieved. But God is Himself the end of the Divine Will, and this end is perfectly possessed, perfectly achieved, without creatures. While creatures serve to manifest the Divine Perfections, nothing is added to God Himself by such manifestation; it does not supply any lack in God; it is something extrinsic to Him without which He is infinitely perfect. The manifestation of the Divine Perfections effected by the creation, conservation, and governance of creatures, is no more an addition to God

Himself than a picture of a man is an addition to the man himself. It is an *external* manifestation. The end or primary object of the Divine Will (which is God Himself, or, in other words, the Divine Essence) is perfectly and eternally and necessarily attained, without reference to creatures, and would be so attained if no creature ever existed. Hence, if creatures are loved or willed (as we have seen that they are) this must happen in a way that is not *requisite*, not *needed*, not *necessary*, to fill up or fill out any perfection in God Himself. But that which is not requisite, nor needed, nor necessary, is *free*. Therefore, God wills (or loves) things other than Himself *freely*. It is wholly wrong, therefore, to assert, as some learned but mistaken men have done in times past, that God is forced by His goodness to create. God freely chooses to create. And His choice is an expression of the Divine Will (or the Divine Love) *freely* attaining a *secondary object*. It is plain that God is not forced by any of His perfections to any activity affecting things other than Himself, for every one of His perfections is infinitely identified with every other and with the Divine Essence Itself, and the Divine Essence, which is the only Necessary Being, is wholly self-sufficing and requires nothing beyond Itself for Its infinite being and existence. The point is manifest, but it may be effectively proved to the most stubborn or stupid of minds by a brief *reductio ad absurdum*, that is, by an argu-

ment which shows the impossible and silly and self-contradicting consequences of the assertion that God is forced to create. For, were God compelled by His goodness, or by any other of His perfections, to create, He would be forced to create all creatable things, since Infinite Perfection is not to be satisfied by any limited expression. Further, all creatable things would necessarily be created from eternity, for the inner force (or perfection) compelling God to create would exist as long as God is God. Hence, all creatable things would of necessity exist from eternity; none would come into existence in time; none would suffer change or dissolution. Here we have a twofold absurdity, namely, the eternal existence of an infinity of finite things, and the eternal necessity of what is itself a contingent world. The conclusion is inevitable: God's will is not forced with reference to its secondary object, but chooses this object freely.

A seeming difficulty may here be considered. God is absolutely simple, uncompounded, uncomposed. But we have just seen that the one identical and simple Divine Will embraces Its primary end by a necessary action, and Its secondary end by a free action. Is there not a conflict here? How can one simple activity of one simple Infinite Will be at once necessary and free? And, with reference to creatures, how can the one Divine Will, which is simple and

changeless, choose *freely* to create certain finite beings; does not Its changelessness involve the necessity of creating just those things which are created or to be created, and so destroy the Divine free-choice? The difficulty here arises from the imperfection of our human concepts, and from our too-great readiness to attribute (unconsciously) human limitations to the unlimited God. To solve the difficulty, remember that God's necessary will (or love) towards Himself is merely a phase or expression of the truth that God is God. And freedom (which marks God's choice of the secondary object of the Divine Will) does not formally consist in a plurality of various acts, or in an ability to "change one's mind"; indeed such plurality and such changeableness or hesitation indicate limitation and imperfection. Freedom consists fundamentally in an independence from outside influences. Now, God is wholly independent of creatures, and therefore His relation towards them is wholly and perfectly free.

But how shall we compose the apparent difficulty which arises from the fact of God's changelessness when seen in conjunction with God's free choice of creatures? Is not a choice a kind of change? And creatures are essentially changeable things, contingent and non-necessary; it would seem that they must be the fruit of a will that has come to a decision about them, and so has changed. We must recall that the will of God is identified with the essence

of God, and that this essence is eternal. What God wills may be itself contingent and changeable without inducing change and mutability in the Divine Will Itself. God, from eternity, knows all things by perfect comprehension; from eternity His will exercises Its eternal and changeless, yet free and independent, choice of creatures. By one simple act God knows all things; by one simple eternal act God wills all that He wills; by one simple act, nay, by the One Simple Divine Essence, God stands in changeless relation towards Himself *necessarily*, while He *freely* brings all things other than Himself into their relations towards Him.

d) THE DIVINE WILL AND EVIL.

Evil or badness is the absence of good. It is not a positive thing but a negative thing. It is not the presence of something that has its own formal constitution as a thing or being; it is the absence of something that ought to be present. Evil is a defec-tion, a falling away, a failing, a lack, an absence. It is impossible to conceive of evil or to define it except in terms of *absent good*.

Every being is good inasmuch as it is being at all. This is one of the basic truths of fundamental metaphysics or ontology, and is fully explained in that science. This goodness of *being as being* is called transcendental or metaphysical goodness, and such goodness is *identified* with actual being. *Being* and

goodness are synonymous terms when understood in their abstract and metaphysical sense. Hence there is no being which *as such* is evil. In other words, there is no such thing as *metaphysical evil*.

But there is such a thing as *physical* evil, and there is such a thing as *moral* evil. When a thing has all that its nature demands for normal being and function, it is *physically* perfect and physically good; any lack of natural item or element or ingredient renders the thing physically evil or bad. Thus when we say that bread is good bread, we mean that it has physical goodness; that it is properly made and baked; that no item or ingredient or element that it should have is lacking to it. And when we say that bread is bad bread, or that it is "no good," we mean that some item, ingredient, or element, is *lacking*. Here we see that physical evil is a lack and an absence of something that should be present. So sickness is a physical evil, for it is the lack of normal function in an organic nature. So death is a physical evil, for it is the absence of life in what was once an organism supporting life. Other physical evils are wounds, hunger, plagues, harsh climate, inasmuch as these things afflict men or animals, and hence induce a lack, an absence of natural and normal condition and function. But we must make careful distinctions. Poison is a physically bad or evil thing when used as food or medicine; in itself, as poison, it may be physically good: it is good poison, but not good food

for man. As with physical evil, so with *moral evil* or *sin*; it is an absence and a lack. It is the absence and lack of the agreement and conformity that should be present between free human conduct (thought, word, deed, desire, omission) and the rule or norm of what that conduct ought to be. It is the lack of conformity between free human activity on the one hand, and the Eternal Law (which is proximately applied by conscience, that is, by human reason) on the other.

Now, it is manifest that physical evils, and moral evils or sins, exist in the world. The question that here arises is: how far are such evils ascribable to the Divine Will? Is God in any sense the cause of any evil? Before answering this question, we recall the fact that, since evil is always a deficiency and a lack, it requires not so much an effecting cause as a deficiency of cause, a cause that fails to function. With this consideration in mind, we give a direct answer to our question.

I. *God is in no sense the cause of moral evil or sin.* The statement means that God does not will sin either *per se* (that is, in itself) or *per accidens* (that is, as accidentally and contingently involved in something that He does will). If God could will moral evil *per se* or in itself, we should be confronted with the absurdity of Infinite Good contradicting Itself, and showing an intrinsic tendency, so

to speak, towards all that conflicts with It. God would be a contradiction in Himself, and hence would be, not only imperfect, but impossible. We should have the Perfect Being as imperfect; the Necessary Being as impossible. Reason cannot accept such absurdities and contradictions, but is forced to acknowledge that God cannot will *per se* the existence of moral evil or sin. The sinner, therefore, is the sole author of sin; to him alone it is ascribable; his will is its cause. This does not mean that the sinner is a self-sufficient being, and the creator of his acts; it means that the sinner is wholly responsible for his *failures*, his *lack* of due action, the *absence* of good which should mark his moral conduct. Remember the truth that sin, like every evil, is a lack and a failure, and in itself requires as cause a defecting, a failing, rather than an efficient or effecting agent.

Neither does God will moral evil *per accidens*. To will evil *per accidens* is to will it as involved in something willed in itself, directly or *per se*; it is to will it on account of a good greater than that to which the evil in question stands opposed. Thus, to borrow an illustration from the physical order, a man wills the pain and inconvenience and expense of a surgical operation (evils which stand opposed to comfort of body and peace of mind) on account of a good that is greater than comfort or freedom from money-worries, namely, life itself and solidly established

normal health. Now, God cannot will moral evil on account of a greater good than that to which the evil in question stands opposed. For the evil in question (that is, moral evil or sin) stands opposed, directly and inevitably, to God Himself; for moral evil is evil of human conduct inasmuch as this is out of line with the Eternal Law and is thus opposed to the Divine Essence. And there can be no greater good than God who is the Infinite Good. Therefore, God cannot will moral evil *per accidens*.

Now, evil that cannot be divinely willed *per se* or *per accidens* cannot be divinely willed at all. For there are no other ways of willing moral evil but these two. Therefore, we are forced to the conclusion that God does not will moral evil at all. God is in no sense the cause of moral evil or sin.

God is the author of human nature, which is understanding and free. Now, human freedom consists essentially in the capacity of a man to choose this or that lawful thing, to act or to refrain from acting when either course is in line with reason; it does not consist in man's capacity to obey or disobey, to do good or do evil. To disobey, to do evil, is always an *abuse* and not a true *use* of freedom. God, the Creator is the author of human freedom and of its true use, but not of its abuse or sin. If you give a poor man clothing to cover and warm him, you are the true cause of his comfort and warmth; but if the man uses the clothing to make a rope with which to hang himself, you are

in no sense the cause of his crime. Your gift involves the *possibility of an abuse* which is entirely outside your will and intention, and even opposed to your will. So the gift of freedom involves the possibility of abuse, that is, of sin, though sin is entirely opposed to the will of God who bestows the gift. God gives freedom, and He does not take it away again from normally functioning man, even when the gift is used for a purpose directly opposite to that for which it was given. To give anything to an unperfected being for proper use is to face the possibility of an improper use, and this fact is particularly evident in the case of the gift of freedom. But to give a thing for use, is not to *cause* or to *will* its abuse; on the contrary, it is to will and to make possible its proper use. Therefore, though God has given man the freedom which man abuses when he sins or commits moral evil, God does not will, even *per accidens*, this abuse of what was given, and willed, to be properly used.

2. *God does not will physical evil per se, but only per accidens.* Physical evil is not merely a limitation; it is a limitation or falling short of a due perfection, that is, of something that should be present. The natural limitations of any finite thing, each in its own order, are not physical evils; normal limits are not imperfections in the creature which they mark and determine, but, rightly seen, they are perfections. If mere finiteness were a physical evil, the universe and

all things in it would necessarily suffer this evil, and there would be no such thing as physical perfection; further, the Creator would be the cause *per se* of the universal physical evil, even as He is the cause of the existence and nature of creatures. What we mean by physical evil is a lack of normal and finite perfection that should be present in a creature. Sight is a perfection in man, even though its range be strictly limited; and lack of sight is an imperfection in man, that is, it is the absence of a natural perfection that ought to be present, and hence it is a physical evil.

God the Creator wills the existence of creatures as the secondary object of the Divine Will. And God wills that creatures should have their being according to the eternal ideas, archetypes, or exemplars in the Divine Mind; these ideas are objectively perfect, each in its kind. Now, we cannot envision an artist or architect turning out broken and incomplete work *for its own sake*. Nor can reason accept the suggestion that the Divine Architect should will broken and incomplete creatures for the mere sake of brokenness and incompleteness. Hence we declare that God does not will physical evil *per se*, that is, in or of itself, and for its own sake.

Nevertheless physical evils do exist in the world, and they cannot be wholly ascribed to rebellious and defecting human wills as moral evil must be ascribed. Physical evils must, in some manner, be ascribed to God. But we have seen that they cannot be ascribed

to Him *per se*. It remains that physical evils are ascribed to God *per accidens*.

To say that God wills physical evils *per accidens* is to say that God does not will such evils in themselves and for themselves but inasmuch as they are involved in the accomplishment of a greater good than that to which the evils stand opposed. In other words, God wills this greater good, and the physical evils that accompany its accomplishment are permitted and endured. Now, the great, the controlling, and the all-important good in the world, in view of which physical evils must be endured (and thus are divinely willed *per accidens*) is the *right order of the universe*, that is, the proper arrangement of fact and function that keeps all things harmoniously tending towards their Last End. The world and all that is in it are to manifest the external glory of the Creator, and man, who holds the highest place among worldly beings, is to know and serve God, by intellect and will, to practise virtue, and so to attain God and happiness for eternity. This is the Last End of visible creation—the manifestation of God's glory and the service and attainment of God by human beings. This is the great good in view of which or by reason of which order must be conserved even when it involves the enduring of physical evils. Of course, most physical evils would not exist had man not upset the universe by his original sin. But since he has done so, physical evils have come upon the world, not by way of punishment

merely, but as out of a rearrangement and an accommodation without which man would surely fail the purpose of his being. For it is a truth capable of clear proof, if not of strict demonstration, that, were the world still the original paradise, no man would save his soul.

A homely and very imperfect analogy may help us understand the place of physical evils in the maintenance of order in the universe. If a family is to have the happiness and the comfort of seemly home-life, right order must be preserved in the home. And this order must be a *moral* order, touching the relations of the members of the family in point of obedience, mutual respect, affection, deference, consideration, and sacrifice; and it must be a *material* order touching all the physical details of homemaking and housekeeping. There can be no peace and joy in the home that is torn with dissensions, marred by disobedience and want of respect, spoiled by selfishness. Nor can there be happiness in the home that is carelessly managed, unclean, needlessly disordered. If the family is to have peace and happiness, there are sacrifices to be endured; if it is to have decent comfort, there are inconveniences to be undergone. Peace is purchased by much self-sacrifice; rest is purchased by labor; cleanliness is bought at the price of continual care and effort. Now, if the right order of the home is bound up with the hardships of self-sacrifice, self-denial, wage-earning, washing, sweeping, cooking, endless

putting to rights, so the right order in the universe is bound up with the enduring of physical evils. And, as the homemaker wills *per se* the peace and happiness of family life, and thus wills *per accidens* all the inconveniences, sacrifices, and discomforts that are involved in maintaining that life, so the Divine Ruler of the world wills *per se* the eternal peace and happiness of men, and thus wills *per accidens* all the hardships (called physical evils) which are involved in the ordering of the world in view of that great end.

The order of the universe, like that of the home, is both a *moral* and a *material* order. Towards the maintenance, and the continual restoration, of this order, physical evils are divinely willed *per accidens*. The destruction of vegetal life is a physical evil for the plants involved, but it is necessary for the maintaining of the material order: without it animal life could not endure, nor could man be properly housed and clothed. So also the destruction of animal life for the support of human life is a physical evil for the animals concerned; yet it is necessary to preserve the order of a world which is for man before all other creatures. And the suffering that man must endure in his body during life, and the hardship of death which must come to all, are stern reminders of moral duty; they keep a man aware of the fact that his lasting good is not here, and that he has a great task to perform and small time in which to accomplish its proper performance. Further, these physical evils are

means of penance by which a man may remedy the faults of the past, and they are apt exercises by which he may strengthen himself for meeting the trials of the future. Even the suffering of animals, their pains, their diseases, and their death, are, to a thoughtful man, strong incentives to eternal human weal; they show man what havoc the original sin has wrought upon earth; they impress upon man a better understanding of the awful evil of sin; they stir man to penance and reparation.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have studied the meaning of the Divine Will, and we have learned that God is truly Infinite Will just as He is Infinite Intellect. We have discussed the *antecedent will* and the *consequent will* of God. We have learned that the *primary object* of the Divine Will is the essence of God, or God Himself, so that God necessarily loves Himself by infinite and eternal Love which is identified with His own Being. We have seen that the *secondary object* of the Divine Will are creatures, that is, things other than God, which He wills freely. We have considered the existence of evil (moral and physical) in the world, and have found that God's will has no part whatever in moral evil, so that He wills it neither *per se* nor *per accidens*; and that He wills physical evils only *per accidens*, that is, inasmuch as these are involved in the good which He wills *per se*.

ARTICLE 3. THE PERSONAL NATURE OF GOD

- a) Meaning of *Person* b) The Personality of God
c) Mistaken Notions on the Point

a) MEANING OF PERSON

Philosophers define *person* as "a complete individual and autonomous substance of the rational order." It will be well for us to examine this definition carefully, weighing the meaning of every phrase.

1. *A person is a substance.* The world of creatures is classified as *substances* and *accidents*. A substance is a being that is fitted to exist *itself*, and not merely as the mark, modification, or qualification of something else. An *accident* is a reality that is fitted to exist, not in itself or by itself, but as the mark, modification, or qualification of something else. A man is a substance; the man's weight, his height, his name, his abilities, are accidents. An apple is a substance; its size, color, flavor, hardness or softness, roughness or smoothness, are accidents. Now, it is manifest that the substantial mode of existence (that is, existence of a thing as a substance) is more perfect than the accidental mode. When, therefore, we apply to God the terminology which belongs, in strictest sense, to creatures only, it is inevitable that we should attribute to the Infinite Being the more perfect, and not the less perfect, mode of existence. We say that God is a *substance*. For, while God is not merely fitted to

exist Himself, but is the Necessary Being which exists Itself and of Itself (hence, *causellessly*), we use the term *substance* as the best we have, and the nearest in meaning, to express the Divine mode of existence. God is a substance; nay, He is a super-substance; He is the substance *par excellence*. And God is purest substance, for there is about Him nothing accidental. All that God *has*, God *is*; God is not qualified, marked, or modified by anything attached to or added to His essence. When, therefore, we call God *a personal God*, we mean, first of all, that God is substantial; He is a substance; He is no mere abstraction, no vaguely conceived Energy or Power or hovering Atmosphere which men assume in any effort to interpret the universe. We have already proved that God is the Infinite Spirit. And a spirit is a substance. God is Infinite Spiritual Substance.

2. *A person is a complete substance*. Among creatures, a complete substance requires no co-substance with which to join in producing a rounded substantial existence. A man, for example, is a complete substance. But a man's body, considered alone, is not a complete substance. A man's body cannot exist *as a human body* unless the soul in-form it and make it a human body; it is a substance, but not a complete one, since it requires the existence and co-operation of another substance (the soul) to give it completeness and its being and operation as *human*. Now, a person

is not a substantial element of something else; it is a *complete* substance. It is manifest that God, the Divine Substance, is a complete substance, for God is simple, and there cannot conceivably be any co-substance added to Him to round out His essence. God is a complete substance. When we say that God has a personal nature, or that God is a personal God, we mean, first of all, that God is a complete and perfect substance.

3. *A person is an individual substance*. An individual is a being that is not distinguished as a plurality; it is just that one thing; and it is distinguished or marked off from everything else. "An individual," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "is that which is undivided in itself, and is divided off from everything not itself." Of course, the first suggestion in the idea of individuality is that of a plurality or group of things which are of the same essential kind (as, for example, a group of human beings), each member of which is *individuated* or marked off from each other member. When we use the term *individual* with reference to God, we do not accept this first suggestion of the idea of individuality. We do not mean that God is one God among several Gods all of whom have the same kind of nature or essence. For God is *one*, and the *only* God, as we have elsewhere proved. We mean, when we call God an individual substance, that He is not plural but *one* in His essence and nature. We

cannot employ unaided reason in the discussion of the Trinity of Persons in the One Divine Essence and Nature. But we may say that reason can discover no disproof, no difficulty, in the concept of the Trinity. For a rational essence or nature *subsists* inasmuch as it has personality; and there is nothing in the concept of nature and essence, or in the concept of personality, to manifest a contradiction and an impossibility in the thought of *one essence, one nature, subsisting in a plurality of persons*. This subject, however, is not for our present discussion. We are concerned here with the individuality of God, which means the individuality, the oneness, completeness, undividedness, of His Divine Essence. Individuality of essence is requisite for personality, whether that personality be singular or plural.

4. *A person is an autonomous substance*. The word *autonomous* mean "operating by its own law." The ancient Latin phrase for this term is *sui juris* "operating by its own right." Not every substance is autonomous. A man's hand, for example, is a substance; but its operations are not its own; its operations are operations of the man who has the hand. Another way of putting the matter is this: a man's hand is a substance; it has substantiality; but it is not *subsistent*, it lacks *subsistence* of its own. That which constitutes a substance as *sui juris* or *autonomous* is the crowning perfection of an individual complete substance, and

the name of this perfection is *subsistence*. Every complete individual substance *has subsistence* or is *autonomous*. God is, as we have seen, a perfect, complete, individual substance; He is, therefore, a subsistent substance, an autonomous substance.

5. *A person is a substance of the rational order*. A being is said to be "of the rational order" when it is endowed with understanding and will. Now, we have seen that God is Infinite Understanding and Infinite Will. He is therefore, perfectly and infinitely, "of the rational order." The crowning perfection which sets up a substance as autonomous in its own order is its *subsistence*, and that special subsistence which constitutes a substance as a being of the rational order is called *personality*. Any complete individual autonomous substance of the rational order *has personality* or is *a person*. God, therefore, has personality or is a person. That His personality is not single but trinal, is not of present concern. The only point here to be established is that God is truly *personal*.

b) THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

When we speak of God as "a personal God" we mean that God is a true person. Faith informs us that God subsists in *three* Persons. But that point does not touch our present discussion at all. For we mean, when we call God "a personal God," that He is truly a substantial Being, complete and perfect and auto-



mous, and that He knows all things and rules all by His will.

Those who deny the personality of God, or profess to believe in "a God but not in a personal God," have some dim notion of a world-force or world-energy directing things blindly, or unfolding itself unconsciously in what we call the development of the world and the progress of events. It is strange that men should be content with such a doctrine, for it conflicts with plain reason and it defeats all the finest tendencies of human nature. Yet it is a sad fact that many men, who are very keen on matters of business or sport or pleasure or sin, are very dull on the one matter of overwhelming importance which the human mind has to face, in some manner, and the human will, directly or indirectly, to embrace or reject. Sometimes one hears from unexpected sources a remark which presents in concentrated form all the proud smugness, all the deep stupidity, all the imbecility of which the twisted mind of fallen man is capable. It is the remark that "an intelligent person cannot admit the need or the existence of a personal God." Precisely the opposite, exactly the contradictory of this statement is true. An intelligent person,—that is, a truly thoughtful and reasonable person, not one who has been labeled intelligent by a college or university, for such labels are cheap and often meaningless,—is inevitably aware of the existence of God; and the measure of intelligence in such a person is the measure

with which he recognizes the fact that God is all-wise and all-provident; in a word, that God is infinitely personal. All the world's best minds have recognized the personal character of God, almost without exception. And if the man of importance in college or club, in business or profession, is found to be a scoffer, he may be marked down as a man of no lasting consequence; the whole of human history will back that judgment. Make the rounds of the modern secular (and *sectarian!*) universities, and look for the faculty-members who profess atheism, agnosticism, or disbelief in a personal God. You will find them, nine times out of ten, in the ranks of the callow instructors, and not among the seasoned professors and heads of departments. For the rest, the gloss of what we have come to call "education" is not a proof of wisdom or of intelligence. Mr. Dooley did not say a contradictory thing, but rather a thing to provoke thought, when he declared, "Hogan is the best read and most ignorant man I know."

It is a demonstrable truth that man cannot come to the full and practised use of his faculties without recognizing the existence of God. If a normal and mature man could be ignorant of God's existence, his ignorance would certainly be his own fault; it would be culpable ignorance; it would be what philosophers call *vincible* ignorance, that is, ignorance that can be dispelled by ordinary effort and attention. And as a matter of fact (which we have elsewhere considered),

a man who fails to know, or who ignores, the true God, inevitably sets up false gods. But the truly intelligent man cannot be satisfied with false gods. Nor can such a man dwell long upon the facts presented to his consideration by the world around him, without coming to some understanding of the *personality* of the true God, the one and infinite First Being.

Personality is a pure perfection. But, as we have repeatedly noticed, all pure perfection, in transcendent degree, must be attributed formally to the First and the Necessary Being. Therefore, personality must be attributed to God. God is a personal God.

c) MISTAKEN NOTIONS ON THE POINT

The reason which leads many men to reject the terminology of "a personal God" lies in their own mistaken concept of *person*. To them, a person is a *human* person. The term *person* suggests not only a substance of the rational order, but a being with body as well as mind (not to utter the terrible word *soul*). To them a person is a being with eyes and ears and hands and feet. And, of course, a person need be no such thing. An angel is a person, but it has no body. A human soul is personal, and indeed a person, although not the whole of the human person, and a soul has no bodily members. It is a sad mistake on the part of the "intelligent" men who find it hard to accept "a personal God" that they misconceive *person* to begin

with, and then attribute their own misconception to others and find fault with these for accepting it. In brief, these "intelligent" men set up a wholly anthropomorphic idea of God, which is false on the face of it, and then declare that this idea is what other men mean by a personal God.

It is a mistake to conceive of a personal God as a kind of benign human giant who has great forces under his control, a penetrating mind, a keen eye, a watchful concern for the affairs of men. It is a mistake to think that religion consists in a kind of friendly feeling for this gigantic and powerful being. It is a mistake to conceive of morality as the effort to please this mighty giant and to avoid what offends him. These notions are all false because they all limit God and reduce Him to the horrid status of a mere superman. The idea of personality in God really involves no such belittling absurdities. Of course, we use human and analogical terms in speaking of the true God, but no truly intelligent man is misled by the limitations of human speech. We do say that God hears our prayers, that His eye is ever upon us, that He is concerned for our welfare, that He leads us by His mighty hand. But we recognize, in all these expressions, the material and figurative expression of what is strictly inexpressible in the essentially limited terms of language, and even of thought. God is incomprehensible and ineffable; He is not to be *ade-*

quately known or *adequately* expressed by human (that is, by finite or limited) means. But what cannot be exhaustively understood and expressed can be understood and expressed in some measure; and it is futile to find fault with human minds and human tongues for their conatural limitations; it is unreasonable, too, to belittle human thought because language does not adequately express it. Indeed, we use many expressions, even with reference to worldly and material things, which are, upon strict analysis, faulty and even untrue; yet these expressions do not mean that the things which they inadequately express are untrue. We speak of a sunrise or of a sunset, and, of course, there is no such thing. But we do not accuse the man who tells us that he saw a fine sunrise, of a lack of intelligence. We know what he means; we understand that the handy term "sunrise" expresses what would otherwise have to be expressed in a roundabout and lengthy description of the movement of the earth on its axis and its relation to a relatively stationary sun. So when we hear a man speaking of God as hearing our prayers, or seeing our actions, we know what he means; we do not accuse him of lack of intelligence; we do not (unless we are of the stupid intelligentsia) imagine that his concept of God is that of a giant with immense ears and with eyes that pierce the clouds above our heads. We know that the man is merely expressing in human and understandable terms the fact that God knows

all things and infinitely provides from eternity for all human needs. In a word, we know that the man is speaking of the Infinite Personal Being in the limited terms of a human and finite personal being, but we are not deceived into thinking that these limited terms mean a similarly limited concept of God in the mind of the speaker.

The mistake we have been considering comes, in last analysis, to this: the objectors to "a personal God" always understand by the phrase a being that can be pictured in the imagination. Now, the imagination is a sentient faculty, and its images are all limited and material. God, on the other hand, is non-limited and non-material. It is manifest that there can be no imagination-image, no fancy-picture of God. Nor indeed can there be a picture in imagination of any spiritual, that is, non-material, being. Still, imagination is always trying to serve mind; it does its best, however little that best may be; and the result of its efforts lies before us in symbolism and art. Of course, this effort of imagination may be very beautiful and very serviceable, but one must never forget that its character is symbolic and not literal. There is no harm, and there may be much good, in picturing an angel as a princely figure, clothed in flowing robes, beautiful of feature, equipped with manifestly inadequate wings which seem rooted in the shoulder-blades. There is no harm even in the added details of such a picture, details with which we are all familiar, such as

the obese violin, the foreshortened bow, the ecstatic turn of the angelic eye, the fetching curl of the angelic hair. But it would be a stupid blunder to suppose that this pictured figure is a portrait of an angel, that this material image is a literal likeness of a being that is not material at all. We can take emotional inspiration from a pictured angel; we can allow the high emotion to influence will and conduct; but we are never for a moment deceived about the image itself. We know that it is a material symbol of a spiritual substance. So too we may find much that is helpful in the art which seeks to express the Infinite Being in sensible terms. We may be reminded of the Divine Knowledge and of the Holy Trinity by the picture of a great human eye, enclosed in a triangle which suggests the Trinity. But we are not thereby deceived into thinking that God is an eye or that the Trinity is a plane figure of three straight lines and three angles. If we have imagination to serve us in the evolving of symbolism, we have mind which makes us understand symbolism as symbolism and not as literal fact.

The educated Catholic has no apologies to make to the objector who finds the idea of "a personal God" unacceptable. The Catholic need not side-step, need not offer the least compromise. What he needs to do for the objector in question is to exercise one of those splendid social virtues called the spiritual works of mercy; he needs "to instruct the ignorant."

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have learned, by careful analysis of the definition, the true meaning of *person*, and we have seen that God is a person, that He is a *personal God*, and not some vague world-force or some unconscious energy evolving itself in what we call the visible universe. We have not dared to overstep the boundaries of philosophical science and to discuss the threefold personality of God in the Blessed Trinity. We have merely mentioned in passing that human reason is inadequate to deal with this surpassing mystery, either to prove it or to disprove it, either to find it manifested to reason or to find it in conflict with reason. But our point of discussion has been found unaffected by the Trinity of Persons in God, since God is a *personal God* regardless of the singularity or the plurality of persons in which the one undivided Divine Essence subsists. It is the Divine Essence, the Divine Nature, that we find a *personal Nature*. It is of the Divine Nature that reason is forced to predicate personality and to declare that God is a true person. We have discussed the common errors about the personality of God which lead unthinking men to dislike and even to reject the idea of God as a person.

tualization in temporal and changeable creatures. Thus the term *transient operations* is not to be taken in literal, but in analogical, meaning when it is applied to God. The so-called transient operations of God may be listed as four: *creation, consecration, concurrence, governance* (with *providence*). These operations we discuss in four Articles, as follows.

- Article 1. The Divine Operation of Creation
- Article 2. The Divine Operation of Conservation
- Article 3. The Divine Operation of Concurrence
- Article 4. The Divine Operation of Governance and Providence

ARTICLE I. THE DIVINE OPERATION OF CREATION

- a) The Power of God
- b) Meaning of *Creation*
- c) The Fact of Creation

A) THE POWER OF GOD

Before discussing the exercise of God's power in the transient divine operations it may be well to say a word on this power itself. We have already seen that God is infinite in all perfection, and power, that is, *the ability to make and to do and to accomplish*, is in itself a pure perfection. Therefore God must have power. Further, since God is infinitely simple, all that God *has*, He *is*. God's power is, therefore, really identified with the Divine Essence Itself; God is Infinite Power. We express this truth about God when we say that He is *omnipotent* or *almighty*. Our catechism expresses the same truth when it declares that "God can do all things, and nothing is hard or impossible to Him."

CHAPTER II

THE TRANSIENT OPERATIONS OF GOD

This Chapter discusses what are inaccurately called God's *transient operations*, that is, the operations which make a *transit* or *go across* from God to things other than God; in a word, the operations that proceed from God to the universe to produce, preserve, control and govern it, and to concur with it in its connatural and dependent activities. Now, while there is a *real relation* to God on the part of creatures, there is no real relation to creatures on the part of God; God would be God in eternal and infinite completeness were there no creatures; nothing is added to God by the existence or function of creatures; nothing can be taken from God by the being or activity of creatures, nor by the non-existence of creatures. But creatures depend for their whole being and operation upon God. Creatures are affected and affected essentially by God; God is not affected at all by creatures. This is the reason for our statement that there is no real relation to creatures on the part of God, while there is an essential and real relation to God on the part of creatures. Further, what we call God's *transient operations* involve no transiency, no change or mutability, in God Himself. Among finite things, transient activity proceeds from an *agent* (or actor or doer) and primarily affects something other than the agent; yet there is always some change or passing movement in the agent itself as the transient activity is accomplished. But when God is the agent, this is not so. There is no change, no transiency in God, as His eternal and changeless decrees find their ac-

There are several points to be noticed about the power of God. First, it is not a power that is exercised by *effort*. Effort suggests imperfection; it means the expenditure of power to overcome obstacles; but there can be no obstacles (or limits) in the way of illimitable power. God's power is exercised by the Divine Intellect and Will. God is the perfect *agens per intellectum et voluntatem* ("Agent or actor by intellect and will"). With God, to will is to accomplish.

Secondly, God's infinite power is humanly expressed as an ability to do all things. And "things" is a word that means what it says; it does not mean contradictions, that is, denials of things. That God cannot make a square circle, or that God cannot make a "two-year-old colt in a minute," is not a limitation of the unlimited Divine Power. For a square circle means a circle that is not a circle; in a word, it means *nothing*; it means not a thing but the cancellation and the denial of a thing. So a two-year-old colt that is only a minute old, is a two-year-old that is *not* a two-year-old, a manifest contradiction. Now, contradictions are intrinsic impossibilities; they are inconceivable as things because they are the opposite of things. This point we have already discussed and evidenced in the First Book of this manual.

Thirdly, God's power, looked at simply in itself is God's absolute power. And God's power, re-

garded as it stands aligned with the other Divine Perfections,—such as Goodness, Wisdom, Justice,—is God's *ordained* power. Of course, this distinction is one required by our limited minds; for in God Himself all these Perfections are identified with each other and with the Divine Essence Itself. We say that all things are possible to God's absolute power, but certain things are not possible to God's ordained power. For example, it is within the absolute power of God to take an unrepentant sinner into the glory of Heaven. But, since such an act on God's part would conflict with the freedom of the human will on the one hand, and with Divine Justice on the other, we say that it is not within God's ordained power so to save a sinner against his will.

When, therefore, we say that God is almighty or omnipotent, we mean that God, by the effortless exercise of the Divine Will (eternally illuminated by the Divine Intellect) can bring into being anything that is not a conflict in itself (and hence a non-entity, a nothing) or in conflict with the Divine Perfections.

B) MEANING OF CREATION

Creation is a term often used in English in a two-fold meaning. It is used to indicate the act or operation of creating, and it is used to indicate the fruit or product of this act. Thus we speak of the *creation* of the world as the operation whereby God produces

the world. And we may, in emotional moments, sing "All up and down the whole *creation*," using the word *creation* to indicate the world itself which is the fruit or product of the operation of creating. In our present study we use the term *creation* in its active or dynamic sense; we use it to indicate the divine activity or operation whereby God produces things out of nothing. There is a third use of the term *creation* which we must notice and wholly reject for philosophical purposes; it is that use in which the term is taken as a synonym for product; arrangement; thing made of elements or materials. Thus the milliner may speak of a hat as a "Parisian creation"; thus the poet may speak of his newest sonnet as the creature of his fancy, that is, as a thing *created* by his mind and imagination. Our study of the definition of *creation* will show us that this extended meaning of the term *creation* is wholly alien to our understanding of it in philosophy.

Creation is the active producing of a thing in its entirety out of nothing. It is the producing of a thing, whole and entire, without using any materials of any sort. Philosophers say that the creation of a thing is the total production of the thing *ex nihil sui et subjecti*, that is, without any element or seedling of the thing being there to begin with (*ex nihil sui*), and without any materials or subject-matter (*ex nihil subjecti*) out of which the thing is to be formed. When we say that the Creator makes things out

of nothing, we do not mean that "nothing" is itself a kind of material which is divinely shaped into realities. We mean that, whereas there is nothing to begin with, now, by an act of the Divine Understanding and Will, there is something real. Hence, our idea of creation involves no conflict with the axiom *ex nihilo nihil fit* ("Out of nothing, nothing is made") since the axiom means that the production of things out of elements or materials requires that the elements or materials be there at the outset. But creation is not the production of things out of elements or materials, and hence the absence of these things is in no wise a difficulty to one who can create.

Some philosophers, like Victor Cousin (1792-1867) and Aloysius Ferri (1826-1895), have defined *creation* in a way that suggests that God draws all creatures out of Himself. This sort of definition is *pantheistic* in implication, and seems to make the world of creatures part and parcel with the Divine Essence. We cannot accept such a definition of *creation*, for it would involve us in hopeless contradictions, making the changeless God one with the changeable world, and the Infinite and Necessary Being one with the contingent universe. Of course, if the phrase "out of Himself" is interpreted to mean "by means of His own unaided power and irresistible will," it may stand unchallenged; but it is manifest that the phrase is not necessarily to be so interpreted; it is an indefinite phrase, capable of con-

ficting interpretations, and hence it is unsuitable for scientific expression.

When we say that God creates, we mean that God, by the power of His will, causes things to come into actuality without using any "materials" of any sort. We mean that God makes substances without requiring any source-substance out of which to make them. All bodily substances have their first origin in creation; thereafter,—since bodies are substantially changeable,—they normally produce other bodies by the process of substantial transformation called *generation and corruption*. All spiritual substances are directly created, nor can these generate further spiritual substances or undergo any corruption, for spiritual substances are not subject to substantial transformation.

It may be asked whether this thing called creation is possible; whether there is not in the idea of creation an involved conflict or contradiction; whether there is not something in creation that is in conflict with God's ordained power; whether, finally, there is not something on the part of finite things that resists the notion of sheer production by way of creation. We must consider this question in its three points.

1. Creation involves in itself, that is, in its very concept or idea, no contradiction or conflict. It is not an unthinkable thing like a square circle. Indeed, the concept or idea of creation is so far from being self-

contradictory that it imposes itself as *necessary* upon the mind that seeks to account for the existence of contingent realities. For such things do not *have* to exist; their existence is explicable only on the grounds that they have been *given* existence, that they have been *brought into* existence. And, in last analysis, their being brought into existence must mean their being brought out of nothingness, that is, *in their being created*; for there can be no endless process of one such thing coming from another, and this from another, and so on forever. There must have been a *first* production of contingent things; there must have been a *beginning*, and a truly first beginning, of things that have in themselves no necessity or absolute requirement for existence. But a truly *first* production of contingent things is inconceivable except as *creation*. Therefore, on the score of the very idea or concept of creation, we find no conflict, no self-contradiction, no impossibility. On this score, creation means something entirely *possible*.

2. Creation involves no contradiction or conflict among the perfections of God; it does not suggest something that is out of harmony with the ordained Divine Power. For it does not involve the notion of a filling-up or filling-out of the Infinite Being by the existence of finite beings. If creation were conceived of as a thing required by God, or as an activity imposed upon God by extrinsic force or even by His

own goodness, it would conflict with the Divine Perfections and so would be impossible to God's ordained power. But we have already seen that God is not affected by creatures; that there is no *real* relation on God's part towards them, even though there is an essential and real relation on the part of creatures towards Him; God is wholly and infinitely complete and perfect in Himself without creatures. For the rest, God's power would be incomplete, and not infinite, were creation impossible to Him. The idea of creation as truly possible is included in the very idea of the Divine Power. Nor is the idea of creation in any conceivable disagreement with the Divine Wisdom, the Divine Justice, the Divine Goodness, or any other of the perfections of God; on the contrary, it appears, both at first sight and upon penetrating study, to be in complete harmony with all the Divine Perfections and a worthy external expression and manifestation of them. Therefore, on the score of God's ordained power, we find no conflict or contradiction in the idea of creation. On this score, creation means something wholly *possible*.

3. Creation manifestly involves no conflict on the part of *things created*, that is, on the part of *creatures*. For such things are *existent*; they *can* exist, as is evident in the fact that they *do* exist; they can *receive* existence, and indeed *must* receive existence if they are to have it at all. But creation is *neither* more nor

less than the very first giving (and receiving) of existence; it is the giving of existence by the Creator, the receiving of existence by the creature. So far from being out of harmony with the notion of contingent things, creation is necessary to explain the first existence of such things.

The meaning of the term *creation* is, therefore, a consistent and an intelligible meaning. Creation as the fundamental production of contingent substances is conceivable as something entirely *possible*. We have, later on, to discuss it as something inescapably *actual*, as an incontrovertible *fact*. But first we must round out our study of the meaning of creation by inquiring whether it means an activity proper to God alone, or one communicable by God to creatures so that creatures in their turn may create.

We must assert at once that creation is so entirely proper to God alone that creatures cannot serve, even instrumentally, as creating agents. *Only God can create*; creatures cannot be creators either as *principal agents* or as *instrumental agents*. We pause upon the three points of this statement.

1. *Only God can create*. A being capable of creating, that is, of bringing substances into actual existence without using any pre-existing materials, is a being wholly independent of such materials; such a being has no dependency on substances outside itself.

This is manifestly true. For where there is nothing of finite substance to begin with, nothing by way of start or element or seedling, and nothing by way of materials out of which to construct a substance (*nilhil sui et subjecti*) there is no conceivable way of effecting the production except by sheer intellectual power, that is, by sheer will. And a will that can produce substances by its own simple exercise is manifestly an independent will, an effortless will, an unhampered or unlimited will. Now, the concept of such a will is the concept of an *infinite* will. And only God is infinite; only God is Infinite Will. Therefore, only God can create.

2. *Creatures cannot create as principal agents.* This truth is manifest from the foregoing argument, for no creature is possessed of infinite will, and infinite will is required in the principal agent or principal cause of the creative act.

3. *Creatures cannot create as instrumental agents.* The statement means that no creature can serve God in creating, as a tool or instrument or bodily member can serve man, for example, in his activities. In the act of writing, for instance, man uses the conjoined natural instruments of arm, hand, and fingers, and the artificial instrument of pen or pencil. The man is the *principal* agent or cause of the writing, but to effect the writing he uses the *instrumental* causes or

agencies of bodily members and writing-tool. Now we assert that God cannot use creatures as His instruments in creating, nor does this mean a lack of perfection in God; on the contrary, it indicates the Divine Sufficiency which requires no instruments for its activities. For the requiring of instruments is a mixed or non-pure perfection, involving imperfection. That a man can write with movements of hand and application of pen or pencil, is a perfection; that a man *must* employ these instruments to produce the writing, is a limiting thing and an imperfection. But in God there is no shadow of imperfection. Certainly, then, God could never *require* the service of instruments in creating. But neither is it limiting the power of God to say that He *cannot* use instruments in the creative activity. For an instrument must have some conatural fitness for the service in which it is employed, and no creature has the fitness, the infinite fulness, requisite to serve as the physical channel of creative power; hence, the impossibility of using creatures as instrumental agents in creating is the inadequacy of creatures and not the inadequacy of God. To convey infinite power physically by means of an instrument (were that even conceivable) would require infinity in the instrument as well as in the principal agent or cause. But the thought of an infinite instrument (that is, an infinite creature) is a self-contradictory thought; it indicates something sheerly and intrinsically impossible, as a square circle is im-

possible. Hence, since finite instruments are inadequate, and since infinite instruments are unthinkable, we say that no instrumental cause or agency can be used in creating. Further, the use of an instrument is always the employment of it upon some *subject*, upon something preëxisting which receives the instrumental action. But creation is an activity which deals with no subject, no preëxisting item, element, or material, for it is the production of a thing *in its entirety* out of nothing. Therefore, no instrument could render any conceivable service to the creating God.

By creation, then, we mean that activity,—which is so proper to God alone that creatures cannot serve even instrumentally in its exercise,—whereby the Divine Power produces realities in their entirety, using nothing preëxisting as the font or source of the production.

c) THE FACT OF CREATION

The world of finite realities challenges our attention and demands a sufficient accounting. We must face and answer the question of *the first origin* of contingent things. And our answer must be one of three: for 1. either the world,—that is, the universe of finite, changing things about us, and ourselves as part of that universe,—has had no beginning, or 2. the world is only a part or phase of God's own being and substance, or 3. the world has its origin in the

creative action of God. All theories on first origins in the universe are reducible to these three and to these only. Now, we find the first two of these theories wholly unacceptable as in open conflict with experience and with reason, and thus we are compelled to accept the third theory, the theory of creation, as the true and factual doctrine. The world had its first origin in *creation*; the world was *created*; the world is a world of *creatures*. Let us glance at some reasons which compel this conclusion.

1. The world cannot be, as the materialists say, an *eternal and unproduced universe*. For what is eternal and unproduced must have *in itself* the sufficient reason for its existence, the *ratio sufficientis existentiæ suæ*, which is required to account for every actuality. But an actuality that has in itself the sufficient reason for its existence is *pure actuality*; it is *necessary being*, and, by that fact, it is *infinite, absolutely simple* or uncomposed, and *changeless*. Now, it is manifest that the world is not necessary, but *contingent*; not purely actual, but also *potential*, not infinite, but *limited*; not simple, but a manifold or *compound*; not changeless, but *full of motion or change*. Therefore, the world is not *eternal and unproduced*. But if it is not eternal and unproduced, it has had a beginning, an *origin*. We cannot, therefore, accept the theory which declares that the world has had no origin, no producing cause.

2. The world cannot be, as the pantheists say, an outpouring of God, or a phase of God's being and substance. First of all, such an outpouring or phase would be a kind of evolution or development of the Divine Substance, and this would involve *potentiality* in God who is Pure Actuality; it would involve *change* in the Immutable Being; it would involve development or *improvement* in the All Perfect. These are manifest contradictions and are wholly impossible. Further, to identify God in any manner with the world is to impose upon God the properties and inseparable characteristics of the world. It is to make God *finite, compounded, contingent*, whereas, as we have already proved, God is *infinite, simple, necessary*. Reason forces us to reject the pantheistic theory of the first origin of the world.

3. If the world is neither *unproduced*, nor somehow *identified with the Divine Substance*, it is a world that has had its *origin as something other than God*. Now, there is no conceivable *first* origin of things other than God except an origin by way of *creation*. Therefore, the world has had its first origin in creation; the world was created; creation is an actual fact.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have discussed the Divine Power, and have seen that God is necessarily *almighty* or

omnipotent, and can do all things which involve no intrinsic contradiction (and hence are *nothings* or *not-things*). We have distinguished the power of God as *absolute* and *ordained*, according as it is considered in itself or in conjunction with the goodness, justice, wisdom, and other perfections of God. We have defined *creation* as the active producing of a thing in its entirety out of nothing. We have justified this definition and have rejected faulty ones, such as those proposed by Cousin and Ferrit. We have seen that creation is something wholly possible, since it is thinkable in itself, it does not conflict with the Divine Perfections, and it involves no conflict on the part of things to be produced by it. Further, we have found that creation is inevitably a direct exercise of infinite power, and is therefore an activity so proper to God alone that creatures cannot serve, even instrumentally, in its exercise. We have seen that creation is not only *possible* but that the first origin of things other than God must lie in God's creative action, and that, in consequence; *creation is a fact*.

ARTICLE 2. THE DIVINE OPERATION OF CONSERVATION

a) Meaning of Conservation b) The Fact of Divine Conservation

a) MEANING OF CONSERVATION

Conservation means preservation. As an activity

or operation, conservation is the preserving of an effect in existence.

There are causes *in fieri* and causes *in esse*. A cause *in fieri* (or "in becoming") is required to bring an effect into existence; a cause *in esse* (or "in being") is required to maintain an effect in existence. A cause *in fieri* is a *producing* cause; a cause *in esse* is a *conserving* cause. Conservation is the exercise of a cause *in esse*.

When an effect depends essentially for both production and permanence (for *fieri* and *esse*) upon a cause, that one identical cause must continue in activity or exercise as long as the effect exists. Thus fire is required both to make iron hot and to keep it hot; the sun is required to produce daylight and to maintain daylight. For there is an essential dependency, for both production and permanence, of heat upon fire and of daylight upon the sun. But when the dependency of effect upon cause is essential only in point of production and not of permanence, the effect may be *supported* in being by another cause than that which *gave* it being. In other words, the cause *in fieri* need not, in this case, continue on as the cause *in esse*. Thus, the sculptor is the cause *in fieri* of the statue which he carves, but he is not its cause *in esse*; the accidental form or being which the sculptor confers upon marble by shaping it in a certain way finds a sufficient supporting or conserving cause in the enduring stuff of which the statue is made; its cause

in esse is the marble itself, and the statue may continue in existence for centuries after the sculptor is in his grave. But, ultimately, as all things work back to first creation as their cause *in fieri*, so they work back to that same single creating cause as their radical cause *in esse*; the creating cause must continue on as a conserving cause, else creatures must fall to nothingness. Here we see what is meant by the statement that conservation is a continuation of creation. For creation does not *bestow* being upon something that is already there to receive and hold it; it *produces* being in entirety out of nothingness; the creature is, in consequence, dependent for both production and permanence upon its creating cause, and this one identical cause must continue in activity or exercise as long as the creature exists.

Conservation is the activity of a cause *in esse*. It means the preserving of an effect in being and existence.

Conservation is *direct* or *indirect*. Direct conservation is the positive preserving of an effect by an activity which supplies actual being to the effect or contributes what actively supports the effect in its being. Thus, fire *directly* conserves the heat in hot water; thus the sun *directly* conserves the daylight; thus the eating of food *directly* conserves life and strength. Indirect conservation is the negative preserving of an effect by the exercise of a cause which protects the effect, shields it, wards off or prevents

what would harm and destroy it. The placing of a manuscript in an air-tight case is an act of indirect conservation. The enclosing of a delicate vase in a cabinet where it is safe from the sweep of careless hands is also an act of indirect conservation. The nurse-maid who watches an infant so that it does not fall into the fire, or climb to perilous places, or eat what would harm it, is indirectly conserving the welfare of the child. Direct conservation may be called *promotive* conservation; indirect conservation is rather *preventive*.

It is our contention that Divine Conservation is a fact in the world, and that this is not merely *indirect*, but *direct* conservation.

b) THE FACT OF DIVINE CONSERVATION

1. Creatures are contingent realities. They have not in themselves any requirement for existence. They are not self-accounting, self-explanatory, self-sufficient. That they exist is a patent fact; that they do not *have* to exist is equally evident, for they come into being, they change, they are limited, and things subject to beginning, change, and limitation, are subject to *the action of causes*; such things are effects; they are dependent or contingent or non-necessary things. Now, manifestly, contingent things do not lose their contingency when they are created. They require positive production of their entire being in the first moment of their existence, and they require

a continuance of the producing power at every successive moment of their existence. No other or lesser power than their first-producing power (that is, their creating power) will account for their continued existence, since their entire being rests wholly and undividedly in that power. Therefore, contingent beings require for their existence the continuation of the creating power which is the power of God alone. And the continuation of this power is Divine Conservation. Hence, the contingent beings in the world around us, and the world itself, require and have the support of the activity called Divine Conservation. Divine Conservation is, therefore, a fact.

2. An effect which depends for production and permanence upon a certain cause requires the *direct* conserving activity of that cause. For such an effect has an essential and entire dependency upon its cause; it requires the cause to hold it in being. No mere protection from destructive forces will insure its existence, for it cannot, in itself, maintain existence. Hence, indirect conservation is not sufficient to account for such an effect in continued existence; direct conservation is required. Now, all creatures are, as we have seen, contingent upon their First Cause by an essential and entire dependency; creatures depend for production and permanence upon causes which are ultimately focussed and founded upon the First Cause, and which have their

own existence and activity by virtue of the operation of the First Cause. Only the First Cause has in itself the sufficiency of self-existence without dependency upon any other agency or force or factor. Therefore the First Cause, by Its positive exercise of causal activity, is required to account for the sustained existence of creatural reality. In other words, the exercise of direct Divine Conservation is required to explain the existence of the world and all things in it. Direct Divine Conservation is, therefore, a fact.

3. A creature depends for existence upon its Creator. It exists by reason of the positive will of the Creator to bring it into existence. It does not exist by reason of the Creator's mere willingness to leave it alone and not to destroy it. And a creature continues in existence by the sustained positive will of the Creator, not by His merely negative or indirect will. Now, the positive will of the Creator, which is thus manifested in the production and continuation of creatural existences, is neither more nor less than direct Divine Conservation. Therefore, direct Divine Conservation is a fact.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this very brief but important Article we have learned the meaning of *conservation* in general, and of *Divine Conservation* in special. We have seen that conservation is the exercise of a cause *in esse*, and

that it may be *direct* or *indirect*, that is, *promote* or *prevent*, according as it is a *positive* or a *negative* contribution to the continued existence of an effect. We have proved that Divine Conservation is a fact in the world, and that it is *direct* conservation. We have drawn our proof from the contingency of creatures, from their entire and essential dependency upon the First Cause and upon the positive choice of the Divine Will.

ARTICLE 3. THE DIVINE OPERATION OF CONCURRENCE

a) Meaning of Concurrence b) The Fact of Divine Concurrence c) The Mode or Manner of Divine Concurrence

a) MEANING OF CONCURRENCE

All actuality rests fundamentally upon God. Creatures cannot bring themselves into existence, nor can they conserve themselves in existence once the Divine Power has brought them there. In other words, creatures need God *the Creator*, and God *the Conserver*. This fact we have already seen to be inevitable. But we must go further and express a third need of creatures. Creatures are created and conserved not only as *essences* but as *natures*; not only as things of a certain type or kind, but as things with certain natural powers and functions; not only as things existible, but as things operable; not only as things

static, but as things dynamic. In a word, creatures have activities and operations, and these (in the radical equipment or power whence they flow, and in their actual exercise) require the action and cooperation of God to explain their existence. Here then is the third need of creatures: the cooperation or *concurrence* of God in their powers of action and in the exercise of these powers. Creatures therefore require God the Creator, God the Conservator, and God the Coöperator or Concurrer.

Now, the word *concurrence* is, in its literal force, a weak word in the present use. For *to concurr* means "to run alongside," "to go along with," and it suggests the working together of *partial causes* which conspire to produce an effect. But it is a demonstrable truth that in creatural actions, the creature is the *total cause* of the effect, and, in another way, God is the *total cause* of the effect. God and creature do not conspire together to produce the effect, each giving out a part of the efficacy which produces the effect. No, God the Primary Cause, and the creature which is a secondary cause (since God alone is Primary Cause) produce the effect, each *wholly*, in respectively different ways. When,—to employ a very crude example,—two horses pull one wagon, each horse contributes *part* of the power that is required to move the wagon; the horses are *partial causes* of the effect which is the moving of the wagon. But when a man uses a pen to write a letter, both the man and the pen, each in

its own way, is a *total cause* of the letter; the whole letter comes from the man, and the whole letter is written with the pen. Man and pen are not *partial causes* which stand on a plane, so to speak, and work together, each contributing a *part* of the effect. The man writes the *wholc* letter; so does the pen. But the man writes as the *principal cause*, the pen as the *instrumental cause*, and *from the principal cause through the instrumental cause* the finished effect emerges. In an analogous manner, the effects produced by creatures in action are *wholly* ascribed to creatures, and *wholly* ascribed to God; to the creatures as secondary causes, and to God as Primary Cause. For creatures are contingent beings; contingency extends to everything in fact or function in the realm of creatures; creatures have nothing of their own which can stand independent of the First Cause as the basis of their existence or of the existence of their smallest operation. Hence, creatures require the active influence,—the inpouring of power, force, direction, support,—of God in all that they *do* as well as in all that they *are*; they require the Divine Co-operation as well as the Divine Conservation. And, as we have said, the word *concurrence* (or even the word *coöperation*) is a weak word in this connection. St. Thomas Aquinas used the expressions, "the influence or inpouring of God," "the action of God," "the Divine Motion," "the operation of God" (*influxus Dei, actio Dei, motio divina, Dei operatio*) to

express the activity of God which we consider here. These terms are accurate, but usage seems to have established the term *concurrence* (or the Latin *coactus*) as the acceptable one. We may well use this word if we keep clear minds about its meaning and are not led by its etymological structure into misunderstanding its true force. Divine Concurrence means the Divine Power actively exercised upon the creature (that is, *secondary cause*) to elicit operations, to determine and direct them, and to support them in being, in such wise that these operations are wholly ascribable to the creature as their secondary cause, and wholly ascribable to God as the sole Primary Cause.

b) THE FACT OF DIVINE CONCURRENCE

1. It is a truth established in Ontology that nothing can act except in so far as itself is actual. A thing cannot operate unless it be *there* to operate, unless it be *equipped* to operate, unless it be *determined* in operation, unless it be stirred or *moved* to operate. Now, creatures depend entirely upon the First and Necessary Being (that is, upon God) and they have no actuality whatever *independently* of that Being. This does not mean that creatures are identified with God (for to say so would be to profess *paulianism* which is a debased and an absurd doctrine) but that creatures have an entire *dependence* upon God for their being and operation; it means that creatures in

themselves and in their operations are entirely *contingent* upon God. In other words, creatures can act only in so far as the Divine Power *concurs* in their action, that is, only in so far as they are *made*, are *made capable* of action, are *determined* in action, are *moved* to action, are *supported* in action, by the exercise of the Divine Power. For all these points (existence, equipment or nature, determination, movement, support) are points of *actuality*, and no actuality is wholly independent of the Pure and First Actuality which is God. Therefore, creatures cannot exist and function unless Divine Concurrence is a fact. But it is manifest that creatures do exist and do function. Therefore Divine Concurrence is a fact.

2. The order of effects manifests the order of causes whence these effects come. Now, in any effect which comes from a creature-cause (or *secondary cause*, to use the technical term) we discern an effect that is proper to the Creator-cause or God. For it is God's own proper Being to exist of Himself, and it is God's own proper operation to give existence where it is not to be found of itself. And in every effect that comes from a secondary cause we have something that really exists; every such effect is a real *existence*, and one that does not account for itself; it is an existence but not a self-existence; it is an existence that can be explained only as an existence *given*, and only God can give existence. The creature-cause, or secondary cause, truly produces the effect as this

or that sort of thing; but that it is an existing thing at all, and not self-existent, indicates the action of creative power, the power of God alone. The creature-cause produces the effect in such a way that it is the creature's work; it is wholly his operation and production; yet radically it is a thing, an existence, which is also wholly the production of God. Therefore, every effect produced by a creature-cause is also an effect produced by the Creator-cause. Every creatural effect has both God and creature as *total* cause, from respectively distinct viewpoints; it has God as total Primary Cause, and it has the creature as total secondary cause. Now, the effects produced by the operations of creatures actually do exist in the world. These effects manifest an order or alignment or a presence of causes, the Primary, and the secondary. And the manifestation of Primary Causality in the effects of secondary causes is neither more nor less than the manifestation of Divine Concurrence in the operations of creatures. Hence, as the existence and operation of secondary causes is a fact, so also is the existence and operation of Divine Concurrence a fact.

3. Nothing has being or perfection except in so far as it has reference to, and dependence on, Being and Perfection, that is, except in so far as it fundamentally rests in God. Now the capacity or equipment of a nature for operation is *being* and *perfection*; so also is the actual exercise of operation. Therefore,

the capacity of a creature for action, and the actual exercise of action, rests in God. In other words, such capacity and such action requires the Divine Concurrence. Therefore, Divine Concurrence is a fact.

c) THE MODE OR MANNER OF DIVINE CONCURRENCE

God acts or concurs in all the operations of creatures as First Efficient Cause, as Ultimate Final Cause, and as Radical Formal Cause. (a) God is the First Efficient (or "actively producing") Cause of creatural action because God alone gives to creatures their being, their existence, their power to act, and God alone applies the operating power of creatures to its connatural function. Nothing is moved, says the adage, except it be moved by something other than itself, and ultimately by the First Mover Himself Unmoved, that is, by God. Hence all movement, all operation, has its radical origin in God; God is truly the First Efficient Cause of all. (b) God is the Ultimate Final Cause (or "Last End") of all creatural action. For God is the Creator, the Framers of every nature; He sets all creatures in being and directs to Himself as to the ultimate Goal all the acts and operations of creatures. Hence God is the Ultimate Final Cause of creatural operation. (c) God is the Radical Formal Cause of all creatural action. A formal cause gives specific character to anything which proceeds from it as an effect; it makes the effect the precise kind of thing that it is. Now God is the Creator and

Determiner of creatures in their specific structure and powers, and hence He is the Determiner of what proceeds from such structures and powers. Therefore God is truly the fundamental Formal Cause of all creaturely operation. "God," says St. Thomas, "is the cause of every action inasmuch as He gives the power to act, conserves it, applies it to function; and inasmuch as by His power every other power operates."

There is no difficulty in understanding the mode of Divine Concurrence, that is, the causal activity of God in the actions and operations of creatures, until the special question is raised about those operations which proceed from the free-will of man. On this score there is a notable controversy among philosophers. All agree, of course, on the *fact* of Divine Concurrence in man's free activity, but there is no general agreement about the precise *manner* in which the Divine Concurrence is here exercised. The question is one that calls for clear minds and clean distinctions, for, if the doctrine be stated inadequately (and it can hardly be stated with full adequacy for it is not without depths of mystery) it may easily lead the unwary to false conclusions. If the Divine Concurrence in free-will acts be too lightly taken, it may seem to endow man with creative power and to make human freedom an independence of God, the sole Author of all actual being. On the other hand, if too rigidly conceived, Divine Concurrence may seem to make man but an inert instrument of God, and to ascribe

all man's acts and operations (including his sins!) to God as their true Author. We shall presently list the more notable opinions on this difficult point, but before coming to that we ask the student to keep steadily in mind the following inevitable truths about which there is not, nor can be, any controversy whatever: (a) God is the sole Creator; He is the only Author of being or perfection; nothing has positive actuality except from God the Pure Actuality; God is a true and total Cause in every actual operation of every creature. (b) Man is truly endowed with free-will, and by its exercise he is the responsible author of his moral acts. (c) God is in no sense the cause of sin, which is not being or perfection but the lack of perfection, the defection from being; man alone is responsible for that lack and defection which we call moral evil or sin. Keeping these truths clearly and fixedly in mind, we may indicate the doctrines offered by philosophers about God's concurrence in man's free acts. As a preliminary to that statement we offer a brief description of various possible types of concurrence:

(a) *Mediate concurrence* is that whereby God conveys creatures in existence as beings endowed with the power to act or operate. *Immediate concurrence* is that whereby God actually operates with the creature in exercising an action.

(b) *Physical concurrence* is the active and effective physical influence of the Primary Cause upon the

secondary. By this concurrence the creature (or secondary cause) is moved to action, applied to function, actually set in operation. *Moral concurrence* is a persuasion, exhortation, allurements, whereby the Primary Cause draws the secondary free cause to determinate action.

(c) *Previous concurrence* is the influence of the Primary Cause upon the secondary antecedently to the creatural operation. *Simultaneous concurrence* is the influence of the Primary Cause concomitantly producing the effect together with the secondary cause. The force of previous concurrence falls directly on the secondary cause; the force of simultaneous concurrence falls directly upon the effect, that is, on the operation exercised.

(d) *Efficacious concurrence* is that which, of its very nature, infallibly has its effect. *Indifferent concurrence* has its effect dependently on the cooperation of the secondary cause.

(e) *General (or indeterminate) concurrence* is a supporting causal influence which is not directed to one definite effect to be produced. *Special (or determinate) concurrence* is directed to one definite and determined effect.

(f) *Intrinsic concurrence* (or concurrence *ab intrinseco*) is entwined, so to speak, in the very being of the action of the secondary cause. *Extrinsic concurrence* (or concurrence *ab extrinseco*) is an influence which is, so to say, applied from without, or exter-

nally, and so supports, moves, and directs the secondary cause in operation.

The more notable philosophies of concurrence may be reduced to two, namely, that of the Molinists, and that of the Physical-Premotionists. Proponents of each of these theories claim harmony with the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, but the name *Thomists* is generally applied to the Premotionists only.

We shall merely outline the theories here.

1. *The Molinist Theory* (cf. *Book Third, Chap. I, Art 1, a and b*) holds that God gives to man's free will a concurrence that is *immediate, moral, indifferent* in itself, *simultaneous, extrinsic*. God, by His *scientia media*, clearly foresees how man will choose to act in given circumstances, and accordingly makes His concurrence (which is *in itself* indifferent and indeterminate) an efficacious and determinate concurrence which comes into actuality *simultaneously* with man's free-action, to support it and give it being. The Molinists admit that God "pre-moves" all creatures to their connatural operations by creating them with definite natures and conserving them in the exercise of their natural powers. In the realm of man's free-action, God's "premotion" consists in the fact that He has created the will of man for good in general, has impelled it infallibly in the direction of such good, and, in every exercise of human choice, He

allures it by moral influence towards the actual good. For the rest, man's individual will-acts (which are ever choices of *means* towards the general and predetermined end or universal good) are determined by man alone, God simultaneously concurring in man's choice. God is a true cause, and a total cause, of the human act of free-willing, for He is not only the Creator and Conserver of free-will, but actualizes, by His simultaneous concurrence (eternally decreed in accordance with His perfect knowledge through *scientia media* of what man will freely choose) the action of His human creature, and is the support and guarantee of true freedom in the action itself. Thus God's simultaneous concurrence in human free-acts is a true cause of such acts without making them, by the very force and nature of Divine Concurrence, *imperative* upon man as inevitably to be performed.—The opponents of this theory object that, while the doctrine is a manifestly agreeable explanation of human freedom, it slights the absolutely supreme and necessary operation of God in every creatural action. It even seems to suggest, say the objectors, that man, in the moment of free-choice, is either independent of God or is the actual determiner of God's own action, thus reversing the true order of things and putting man in God's place.

2. *The Physical-Premotionist Theory* holds that God moves every secondary cause (including human

free-wills) to connatural action by a concurrence aptly called *physical premotion* or even *physical pre-determination*. This concurrence is *physical, previous, immediate, special, intrinsic*. In the actual exercise of free-will acts, there is also a *simultaneous* concurrence of God which rounds out and brings to completeness the *previous* concurrence or *premotion* whereby God physically moves and applies the free-will to determinate action. Now, while the free-will is infallibly and inevitably moved (or pre-moved) to determinate action, its choice remains truly *free*, because *God moves every being in a manner consistent with its nature*, and therefore moves free-beings in such a way that they act freely. This doctrine, say the Premotionists, is so far from destroying human freedom that it is its only safeguard and sane explanation. For the human will is in itself a *potentiality* or power, and, like all creatural powers, it is incapable of absolute *self-determination*; all creatural movement must have its absolute source in the First Mover Himself Unmoved. God moves the free-will by an infallibly effective and immediate predetermination which does not take away the freedom of the will, but *moves the will to determine itself freely*, and thus renders free-choice both possible and actual. Nor is God thereby the Author of man's sinful acts; sin, like all evil, is a defection and a lack, and is ascribable to the bad dispositions of the will which is moved by God to good. The *matter* of evil, the

material element of action which is itself good, is indeed ascribable to the premotion of God; the *form*, or formal element of evil action (i. e., that which makes evil *such*) is ascribable solely to the bad will of man, so that God is not even its accidental cause (cf. *Book Third, Chap. I, Art. 2, d*). The same sunlight which makes damp earth *hard*, makes wax *soft*. The same object is reflected in a clear mirror as beautiful, and in a faulty mirror as distorted and ugly. In a somewhat analogous manner, the same Divine Movement, and the one action to which it infallibly moves the free-will, are morally good or evil according as the free-will is well or badly disposed, that is, according as the free-will which is moved to the action *measures up* or *falls short*. Inasmuch as the free-will measures up to the possibilities of reflecting and expressing the force of the Divine premotion, the result is good, and finds its true and total cause in God, even as it finds its true and total secondary cause in the will itself; inasmuch as the free-will freely falls short of reflecting and expressing the true force of Divine premotion, the result is moral evil, and its only cause is the bad disposition of the free will itself.

—The opponents of Premotionism declare that this doctrine makes the explanation of human freedom needlessly mysterious, while they admit that it admirably vindicates the necessary place of the First Mover Himself Unmoved in every creatural activity.

With this brief outline of the two chief theories on Divine Concurrence we are disposed to leave the matter. The point controverted is one for the specialist. Students who have the capacity for a penetrating study of the arguments offered by the proponents of the respective theories will find instructors glad to direct their further reading. For others, great elaboration of argument, a setting up of points and rebuttals, of claims and objections, would be but tedious and profitless labor. The thing to be remembered is this: all controversialists agree perfectly upon the *fact* and the *necessity* of Divine Concurrence in human free-acts; all admit the absolute sovereignty and requisite efficacy of God in every creatural operation; all unreservedly teach the true freedom of choice with which the human will is endowed. The question is not *whether* God concurs in the free operations of man, but *how* God concurs in these activities. We have here a question, not of fact, but of manner or mode. For the rest, if we dare to express an opinion in the face of most deep and learned argument on both sides of this controversy, we must say that reason seems strongly to favor the Premotionist position. For, despite its depths of difficulty and of mystery, this doctrine rests squarely on the metaphysical principle that only the movement, the premotion, of the Creator and First Mover can be assigned as the *absolute beginning* and the *absolute continuing sup-*

port and the *absolute determining direction* of any creatural movement whatsoever, even that of a will that is truly free. *Quidquid movetur ab alio movetur*: anything that is moved is moved by something other than itself, and ultimately by the First Mover Himself Unmoved.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In the Article we have learned the meaning of *concurrere* in general, and of *Divine Concurrere* in particular. We have noticed the etymological inadequacy of the term *concurrere* in this connection, and we have therefore learned to use it with caution lest its surface-meaning lead us astray. We have proved that Divine Concurrere is a fact in the world, basing our arguments upon the contingency of creatures, the order of causes reflected in creatural effects, and the reference of being to the All-Perfect. We have discussed the manner in which God and creatures are, each in respective order, *total* causes of creatural operations, and we have found that God operates in every activity of creatures as First Efficient Cause, as Ultimate Final Cause, and as Radical Formal Cause. We have briefly explained the controversy which exists among philosophers on the manner in which God concurs with human free-will activities, and we have outlined the doctrine of the most important of the controversialists, the Molinists and the Premotionists.

ARTICLE 4. THE DIVINE OPERATION OF GOVERNANCE AND PROVIDENCE

- a) Meaning of Terms b) The Fact of Divine Providence
c) Certain Difficulties

a) MEANING OF TERMS

Providence is a term derived from the Latin *pro* "for; before," and *videns* "seeing." Thus it means "a looking before," "a looking out for." It means seeing beforehand what is required and planning to meet the requirement. We call a man *provident* if he carefully manages his affairs, looking to the future, estimating his income and computing necessary expenditures; we call a man *improvident* if he lives for the moment, without plan or policy for the future. It thus appears that the term *providence* is aptly used to designate a plan of action, a way (that has been worked out before being put into execution) of directing things to a goal or end. Now, Divine Providence is God's Understanding and Will (that is, the Divine Reason) inasmuch as It eternally and infallibly directs things towards their last end or purpose, meeting with boundless wisdom every situation in its every detail. The result of Divine Providence in the world is the fact that creatures are *governed*, each in accordance with its nature, towards their ultimate end, which is God Himself, that is, the manifestation of God's glory. Thus *governance* and *providence* go together. The one operation of God is *Divine Provi-*

dence when we consider it in God, and it is the *Divine Governance* of creatures when we consider it in its application and workings in the world of finite things. St. Thomas Aquinas puts the point thus: "Two things belong to the domain of providence: the knowing how to direct and arrange things, and this is *providence* properly speaking; and, secondly, the actual directing and arranging of things in accordance with this knowledge, and this is called *government*. The first is eternal; the second, temporal." In a word, providence in God becomes government in creatures.

b) THE FACT OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

We assert that there is a Divine Providence which effectively extends its governing influence to everything in the world, not only in a general way, but in particular, so that it touches all reality in its minutest details. That this must be so is evident from the following arguments:

1. *In God there is a Providence.* Providence, as we have seen, is the understanding of how to manage and direct things to their due ends. Now, as we have elsewhere proved, God is Infinite Understanding; in God there is the most perfect knowledge of how to manage and direct things to their ends. Therefore, it is manifest that in God there is a Providence, or, more exactly, that God is Infinite Providence.

2. *In God there is all First Causality and Infinite Wisdom.* Creatures are wholly dependent or contingent upon God for their existence and for their operations; hence, they are dependent upon God for the achievement of their goal or end, for this is to be attained by the exercise of their operations. Now, it would not be wise for God to create without a purpose, nor to create beings in themselves helpless to achieve their purpose and leave them so. It follows that, since God is the sole Creator infinite in Wisdom, He has made creatures for a purpose and directs them in its achievement. Therefore God is Provider and Governor; there is Providence in God and providential Divine Government in creatures.

3. Things different in nature are not drawn into one harmonious force except under the direction of one master-director and master-plan. Now, the universe is made up of a staggering multitude and variety of objects that not only differ in nature but are frequently contrary, one to the other. Yet it is very manifest that there is here a *world-order*, a great and magnificent *harmony*. Therefore there must exist an Orderer and Governor; there must be a *provident* and *governing* God. In other words, in God there must be Providence, and in creatures providential Governance.

4. *This Providence must extend its influence to everything in the world not only in general, but in*

particular. For the First Causality of God reaches all reality, and individual things, in their smallest parts and movements, are realities. Therefore God's providence is no general plan, but a most detailed plan which leaves nothing out. It follows that all creatures, down to the last and least, come under the application of Divine Providence and are divinely governed.

c) CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES

Those who deny the existence of God as Providence (and among these we count the *Fatalists* who contend that everything is subject to the inevitable action of a blind drive or force; and the *Deists* who declare that God, having made the world, has abandoned it now to get on as best it may) are deceived by the apparent difficulties which lie in the way of the true doctrine. These difficulties are reducible to two: the fact that so many things appear to happen *by chance*, and, secondly, the fact that there is *evil* in the world. We must pause upon these difficulties for a brief space.

1. *The Question of Chance*. If things in the world happen by chance and not by plan; even if only a few events, or even one, were to occur by sheer chance, then, certainly, our whole doctrine of Divine Providence and Governance is done for. But let us be clear on what we mean by the phrase *by chance*. We do not

mean *without cause*. Chance cannot be conceivably the *cause* of anything, nor does it mean the *absence of cause*. Chance merely means some unexpectedness or "unforeseenness" *in an effect*. And, however unforeseen by finite minds, however unexpected, the effect which we call *chance-effect* has its adequate accounting cause in every case. Nor can the fact that an effect is unexpected or unforeseen by finite minds carry unexpectedness or "unforeseenness" to the Infinite Mind. In a word, what happens *by chance* in our view, does not happen by chance in God's view. What is no part of our plan, is certainly a part of God's plan, and this must be so even when God's plan is not wholly, or even partially, revealed to us, but is wrapped in mystery. Every normal adult has had enough experience of life and its happenings to understand that apparent evils often turn out to be blessings. Everyone knows that his little mind can take in but a small part of the universe of possibilities, and that the complexities of detail in this vast cosmos, complexities of events, of movements, of effects, must, in the main, be mysterious to him and full of unexpectedness and so-called chance. But a man does wrong to attribute his own limitations to the Infinite Being. He is guilty of gross "anthropomorphism" in putting upon God the limitations of understanding and of will, and those of time and space, which characterize human existence. God's plan is an eternal plan, eternally viewed in its entirety and

in full detail; it is not something that unfolds to God as it unfolds to creatures. Therefore, the notion that things happen by chance, as though they happened in a manner surprising and even baffling to the Almighty, is a false and unreasonable notion. And to allege the fact that we do not always understand the design of God in His government of events as a reason for denying the existence of that design, is a proud and stupid thing to do. Now, reason compels us to the acknowledgment of an existing Infinite First Cause upon Whom all things utterly depend. Reason, following up that first fact, compels us to recognize the Infinite Being as boundlessly capable, so to speak; as perfectly able and willing to take full charge of the universe and to manage it most thoroughly in its every fact and movement and event. Further still, reason compels us to acknowledge that this Infinite Adequacy is infinitely effective. In a word, pure and unclouded reason makes manifest to us the existence and effectiveness of Divine Providence and Governance in the world. And that fact, once known, must not be allowed to slip from notice. If events seem in conflict with it, then this must be only seeming and not fact. For reason compels us to recognize Providence, but it does not enable us to explain in full, and in every event, the actual working-out of Providence. The right attitude of mind, the philosophical attitude, is that of humility and calm recognition of the limi-

tations of the human mind. It is not only piety, it is true philosophy, that enables a man to know that "all things work together unto good." Nor does this mean a fatalistic acceptance of all that happens as inevitable, and as inevitably the best that could happen. No; as we have seen in discussing the concurrence of God with free-wills, man is a true and total cause of his own free-acts, and man may be perverse. And yet, as we shall see, man is wholly unable to upset Divine Providence or to distort its plan, however much damage he may do to himself. We shall touch this point in our consideration of the next difficulty, namely, that of Divine Providence and existing evil.

2. *The Question of Existing Evil.* In an earlier part of this manual (cf. *Book Third, Chap. I, Art. 2, d*) we have defined evil, distinguishing it as *physical* and as *moral* evil, and we have proved that God wills physical evil *accidentally* (or *per accidens*) but does not will moral evil (or *sin*) in any way whatever. But the point we have to consider here may be raised in this question: How does God, if He is the Infinite Provider and Governor, even *tolerate* evil, especially moral evil, in the world which He rules so absolutely? To find the true answer to this question we must bring to our study a clear recognition of two truths: first, that God's Providence and Governance is an infinitely wise and absolutely effective

direction of things to their true end; secondly, that human freedom is a fact which involves the possibility of abuse. With these two truths held steadily in mind, we attack the problem of Divine Providence and existing evil.

Providence directs realities and events to their true end. What is this end? Manifestly, it is the *ultimate* end, the last end, the absolutely final end, for this end it is that gives meaning to all subordinate and partial ends. Now, the final or ultimate end of all creatures is the manifestation of the external glory of God. And this end is absolutely achieved. We call the end of creation the *external* glory of God, for nothing internal or intrinsic can be afforded to the Infinite Being which already possesses the fulness of all perfection. And by *objective* external glory, we mean the character of creatures as an expression of God's power and wisdom and goodness and beauty. Just as a well executed painting, or a finely sculptured statue, is a *credit* to the artist who made it, so is God's world of creatures a credit to God; the work of art manifests the power and skill of the artist, his intelligence, his taste, his ability; the world of creatures manifests the perfections of the Creator. Such is the external and objective glory of God revealed in His works. Revealed? Yes, but to what or to whom? To intelligences, to minds, to persons. And here comes in the second note, the second determinant, in the final end of creatures; they

exist to manifest God's perfections to mankind, and thus to win mankind to a recognition of what they express. And we call that glory, that *credit*, that expressed perfection in a work which is *recognized* for what it is, the *formal glory* of him who wrought the work. The work of art is a credit to the artist *in itself* whether anyone ever sees it or not; it expresses his glory objectively. Yet the artist has not *formal* glory unless the work of art be known and in some sense appreciated. Now, creatures exist for the objective and formal glory of God; they exist to express this glory. And this they infallibly do. For in themselves, by their very being, they are expressions of God's *objective* external glory; and men must always recognize that objective glory and make it *formal*, even when they do not turn the recognition to their own account and through it obtain happiness. For man will forever render objective and formal glory to God, and in himself, his works, his mind, he will eternally manifest God's glory by showing forth the Divine Perfections; the souls in heaven manifest God's mercy, love, goodness; the souls in hell manifest God's justice. Thus, whether a man save his soul or lose it, the ultimate end of creation is absolutely achieved, and man is powerless to defeat it. It appears, therefore, that moral evil (that is, *sini*) which leads human lives to ruin and to endless misery, does not stand in the way of the attainment of the absolutely ultimate end of all crea-

tion towards the attainment of which all things are guided by Divine Providence and Governance. In a word, moral evil does not come in conflict with the fact of Divine Providence at all. Nor does physical evil conflict with Providence. The defects that we call physical evils (sickness, suffering, harsh climate, etc.) are really a kindness to fallen man, who, without them, would never turn to God or to the practice of virtue. Even in a world that is marked by so many hardships, or physical evils, multitudes of men are constantly looking for a temporary heaven and an earthly Paradise, uncaring for that true and eternal beatitude for which they are meant to labor in the brief workday of earthly life. All men would do so were it not for the presence and pressure of physical evils which keep us reminded that we have not here a lasting city. Further, physical evils bring out the best in men; without them, there would be no occasion for the development of that stamina, that character, that heroism, which all men justly admire. It is manifest, without further argument, that physical evils, far from being in conflict with Divine Providence, are not in contact with its main character and purpose, and are apt instruments for the achievement of its secondary end which is the happiness and eternal well being of mankind.

It is when we forget that man's welfare is the secondary end of Divine Providence, and not the primary and absolutely ultimate end, that we find the

existence of moral evil a difficulty. With this secondary end of Providence, moral evil is indeed in conflict, for it works the ruin of men. But here we must recall the fact that moral evil, like every sort of evil, is an absence and a lack, a defection and a failure, and not something with its own positive and formal constitution. And the failure and lack, the defection and fault, which we call sin or moral evil, is due to the non-conforming of free man with the full measure of God's concurrence and promotion to good. Human freedom is a fact, and, as we have seen, it is something of its very nature *subject to abuse* in a finite creature which has not yet attained its final end or goal. Given to man for his own good, as well as for the expression of God's formal and objective glory, freedom of choice (or freedom of will) is incapable of missing the ultimate end of Providence, but quite capable of missing the secondary end. It can be misused to harm man, although it cannot be misused to harm God or to upset the ultimate plans of God. God does not will its misuse, even indirectly or accidentally, or even in so far as such misuse harms man; He wills its proper use. But he wills that man act freely, and if man freely falls short of what nature and grace enable him to do, the failure is man's own entirely, and it touches man alone, and in no wise conflicts with the ultimate end of Providence. And even in its secondary end the Providence of God is often indirectly served by

moral evil. Out of the evil of persecution came the glory of the martyrs; out of the hardships vilely imposed upon the poor come nobility of life, strength of character, and the field for the exercise of the splendid social virtues that we call the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. To a thoughtful man,—and especially to one who is “of the household of the Faith” with that understanding of the family-life of Christendom which an outsider has never experienced and cannot rightly know,—it is abundantly evident that the Providence of God is constantly drawing good out of evil. Such a man requires no great effort of mind, as he traces in memory the course of his own life, and weighs the facts and events that have shaped it, to see God’s “good and gracious purpose working in all the evils” that have come upon him. It appears, then, that there is no real conflict between the fact of Providence and the fact of evil; no, not even when the evil is that moral evil which brings man to an eternal misery and an endless suffering.

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE

In this Article we have defined *providence* in general, and *Divine Providence* in particular. We have noticed that *Providence* on the part of God means *Divine Governance* exercised over creatures. We have proved the existence of Providence as a fact,

drawing our arguments from the Infinite Understanding of God, from His essential First Causality, from His Wisdom, from the world-order. And we have indicated, as an inevitable conclusion of reason, that Divine Providence and Governance are extended to the last and least details in the universe of realities, and are no mere general movement or control in the wide direction of ultimate good. We have considered certain difficulties that assail the unthinking mind when the subject of Providence is considered in the face of a world in which so much seems to happen *by chance*, and in which there are manifest imperfections (or physical evils) and much moral evil (or sin).