

## QUESTION 2

### The Existence of God

As is clear from what was said above, the main purpose of sacred doctrine is to propound our cognition of God—not just our cognition of God as He is in Himself, but also our cognition of Him insofar as He is the origin of things and their end, and especially insofar as He is the origin and end of the rational creature. Therefore, since our intention is to lay out this doctrine, we will deal first with God (Part 1); second, with the rational creature's movement toward God (Part 2); and third, with Christ, who, insofar as He is a man, is our way of going to God (Part 3).

Our treatment of God will be divided into three parts. We will deal, first, with those things that pertain to the divine essence (questions 2-26); second, with those things that pertain to the distinction among the divine Persons (questions 27-43); and, third, with those things that pertain to the procession of creatures from God (questions 44-119).

As far as the divine essence is concerned, we must first inquire into whether God exists (question 2); second, we must inquire into what His mode of being is or, rather, what it is not (questions 3-13); and, third, we must inquire into those things that pertain to His operation, viz., His knowledge and His will and power (questions 14-26).

As for the first point, there are three questions: (1) Is it known *per se* that God exists? (2) Is it demonstrable that God exists? (3) Does God exist?

### Article 1

#### Is it known *per se* that God exists?

It seems to be known *per se* that God exists:

**Objection 1:** The things said to be known to us *per se* are such that the cognition of them is in us by nature, as is clear in the case of first principles. But, as Damascene puts it at the beginning of his book, "The cognition of God's existence is naturally instilled in everyone." Therefore, it is known *per se* that God exists.

**Objection 2:** The things said to be known *per se* are such that, once their terms are understood, they are immediately known; in *Posterior Analytics* 1 the Philosopher ascribes this status to first principles—for instance, once someone knows what a whole is and what a part is, he immediately knows that every whole is greater than a part of itself. But once someone understands what the name 'God' signifies, he immediately has it that God exists. For what is signified by this name is that than which a greater cannot be signified; but what exists in reality and in the understanding is greater than what exists only in the understanding; since, then, God immediately exists in the understanding when the name 'God' is understood, it follows that He also exists in reality. Therefore, it is known *per se* that God exists.

**Objection 3:** It is known *per se* that truth exists, since anyone who denies that truth exists is admitting that truth does exist—for if truth does not exist, then it is true that truth does not exist, and if something is true, then it must be the case that truth exists. But according to John 14:6 ("I am the way, the truth, and the life"), God is truth itself. Therefore, it is known *per se* that God exists.

**But contrary to this:** As is clear from what the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* 4 and *Posterior Analytics* 1 about the first principles of demonstration, no one can think the opposite of something that is known *per se*. But according to Psalm 52:1 ("The fool said in his heart: There is no God"), someone can think the opposite of the proposition that God exists. Therefore, it is not known *per se* that God exists.

**I respond:** There are two ways in which something can be known *per se*: in one way, in its own right (*secundum se*) but not to us (*quoad nos*); in the second way, both in its own right and to us.

For a proposition is known *per se* because the predicate is included in the definition (*ratio*) of the

subject. For instance, *Man is an animal* is known *per se* because *animal* is part of the definition of *man*. So if the real definitions (*quid est*) of the predicate and of the subject are known to everyone, then the relevant proposition will be known *per se* to everyone. This is clearly the case with the first principles of demonstration, whose terms are certain common notions that no one is unacquainted with, e.g., *being* and *non-being*, *whole* and *part*, etc.

However, if there are some who are ignorant of the real definitions of the predicate and of the subject, the proposition in question will, to be sure, be known *per se* as far as it itself is concerned, but it will not be known *per se* to those who are unacquainted with the predicate and the subject of the proposition. And so, as Boethius says in *De hebdomadibus*, some mental conceptions are such that it is only to the wise that they are common and known *per se*—as, for instance, that incorporeal beings do not exist in a place.

I claim that the proposition ‘God exists’ is known *per se* as far as it itself is concerned, since the predicate is the same as the subject. For as will become clear below (q. 3, a. 4), God is His own *esse*. But because we do not know the real definition of God, this proposition is not known *per se* to us. Instead, it has to be demonstrated by means of things that are more known to us and less known by their nature, viz., God’s effects.

**Reply to objection 1:** The cognition that God exists is naturally instilled in us in a certain general and indistinct way—viz., insofar as God is man’s beatitude. For man by nature desires beatitude, and what man desires by nature is such that it is known to him by nature.

But this is not to know, without qualification, that God exists—just as knowing that someone is approaching is not the same as knowing that Peter is approaching, even if it is Peter who is approaching. For there are many who think that man’s complete good, i.e., his beatitude, is wealth, whereas others think it is pleasure, and still others something else.

**Reply to objection 2:** It might be that someone who hears the name ‘God’ does not take it that what is being signified is that than which a greater cannot be thought. For some have believed that God is a corporeal being.

Still, even granted that someone thinks that what is signified by the name ‘God’ is what was just said—viz., that than which a greater cannot be thought—it still does not thereby follow that he thinks that what is signified by the name exists in reality rather than just in the intellect’s apprehension. Nor can one argue that it does exist in reality, unless it is granted that there exists in reality something such that a greater cannot be thought. But this is not granted by those who claim that God does not exist.

**Reply to objection 3:** It is known *per se* that truth in general exists, but it is not known to us *per se* that a First Truth exists.

## Article 2

### Is it demonstrable that God exists?

It seems that it is not demonstrable that God exists:

**Objection 1:** It is an article of the faith that God exists. But those things that belong to the faith are not demonstrable; for a demonstration makes it the case that one knows (*scire*), but, as is clear from the Apostle in Hebrews 11:1, faith is about things that are not apparent. Therefore, it is not demonstrable that God exists.

**Objection 2:** The middle term of a demonstration is a real definition (*quid est*). But as Damascene says, in the case of God we cannot know His real definition; rather, we can know only what He is not. Therefore, we cannot demonstrate that God exists.

**Objection 3:** If one were to demonstrate that God exists, this could only be by means of His effects. But God’s effects are not proportionate to Him; for He is infinite and His effects are finite, and

there is no ratio of the finite to the infinite. Given, then, that a cause cannot be demonstrated by means of an effect that is not proportionate to it, it seems that it cannot be demonstrated that God exists.

**But contrary to this:** In Romans 1:20 the Apostle says, “The invisible things of God ..... are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made.” But this would not be so if were it not the case that it can be demonstrated that God exists. For the first thing that has to be understood of something is whether it exists.

**I respond:** There are two kinds of demonstration. One kind is through a cause and is called a demonstration *propter quid*—and this sort of demonstration is through things that are prior, absolutely speaking. The second kind is through an effect and is called a demonstration *quia*—and this sort of demonstration is through things that are prior with respect to us. For since an effect is more apparent to us than its cause, we proceed through the effect to a cognition of the cause.

Now from any effect it can be demonstrated that a cause proper to it exists—as long as its effects are more known to us. For since effects depend on a cause, once an effect is posited, it must be that its cause exists prior to it. Hence, insofar as it is not known to us *per se* that God exists, this is demonstrable though effects that are known to us.

**Reply to objection 1:** ‘God exists’ and other things of this sort that, according to Romans 1:19, are known through natural reason are not articles of the faith but are instead preambles to the articles. For faith presupposes natural cognition in the way that grace presupposes nature and in the way that perfection presupposes the perfectible. But nothing prevents what is demonstrable and knowable in its own right from being accepted as an object of faith by someone who does not grasp the demonstration.

**Reply to objection 2:** When a cause is being demonstrated through an effect, the effect has to be used in place of a real definition of the cause in order to prove that the cause exists. This is especially so in the case of God. For in order to prove that something exists, one must take a nominal definition (*quid significet nomen*)—and not a real definition (*quid est*)—as the middle term, since the question “What is it?” is posterior to the question “Does it exist?”. But as will be shown below (q. 13, a. 1), the names of God are imposed on the basis of His effects. Hence, when we are demonstrating that God exists on the basis of His effects, we can use a nominal definition of the name ‘God’ as the middle term.

**Reply to objection 3:** The perfect cognition of a cause cannot be had through effects that are not proportionate to the cause. However, as was said above, from any effect it can be clearly demonstrated to us that the cause exists. And so from God’s effects it can be demonstrated that God exists, even though we cannot, through those causes, know Him perfectly with respect to His essence.

### Article 3

#### Does God exist?

It seems that God does not exist:

**Objection 1:** If one of a pair of contraries were infinite, it would totally destroy the other contrary. But by the name ‘God’ one means a certain infinite good. Therefore, if God existed, there would be nothing evil. But there is evil in the world. Therefore, God does not exist.

**Objection 2:** What can be accomplished with fewer principles is not done through more principles. But it seems that everything that happens in the world could have been accomplished through other principles, even if God did not exist; for things that are natural are traced back to nature as a principle, whereas things that are purposeful are traced back to human reason or will as a principle. Therefore, there is no need to claim that God exists.

**But contrary to this:** Exodus 1:14 says under the personage of God, “I am Who am.”

**I respond:** There are five ways to prove that God exists.

The *first* and clearest way is that taken from motion:

It is certain, and obvious to the senses, that in this world some things are moved.

But everything that is moved is moved by another. For nothing is moved except insofar as it is in potentiality with respect to that actuality toward which it is moved, whereas something effects motion insofar as it is in actuality in a relevant respect. After all, to effect motion is just to lead something from potentiality into actuality. But a thing cannot be led from potentiality into actuality except through some being that is in actuality in a relevant respect; for example, something that is hot in actuality—say, a fire—makes a piece of wood, which is hot in potentiality, to be hot in actuality, and it thereby moves and alters the piece of wood. But it is impossible for something to be simultaneously in potentiality and in actuality with respect to same thing; rather, it can be in potentiality and in actuality only with respect to different things. For what is hot in actuality cannot simultaneously be hot in potentiality; rather, it is cold in potentiality. Therefore, it is impossible that something should be both mover and moved in the same way and with respect to the same thing, or, in other words, that something should move itself. Therefore, everything that is moved must be moved by another.

If, then, that by which something is moved is itself moved, then it, too, must be moved by another, and that other by still another. But this does not go on to infinity. For if it did, then there would not be any first mover and, as a result, none of the others would effect motion, either. For secondary movers effect motion only because they are being moved by a first mover, just as a stick does not effect motion except because it is being moved by a hand. Therefore, one has to arrive at some first mover that is not being moved by anything. And this is what everyone takes to be God.

The *second* way is based on the notion of an efficient cause:

We find that among sensible things there is an ordering of efficient causes, and yet we do not find—nor is it possible to find—anything that is an efficient cause of its own self. For if something were an efficient cause of itself, then it would be prior to itself—which is impossible.

But it is impossible to go on to infinity among efficient causes. For in every case of ordered efficient causes, the first is a cause of the intermediate and the intermediate is a cause of the last—and this regardless of whether the intermediate is constituted by many causes or by just one. But when a cause is removed, its effect is removed. Therefore, if there were no first among the efficient causes, then neither would there be a last or an intermediate. But if the efficient causes went on to infinity, there would not be a first efficient cause, and so there would not be a last effect or any intermediate efficient causes, either—which is obviously false. Therefore, one must posit some first efficient cause—which everyone calls God.

The *third* way is taken from the possible and the necessary, and it goes like this:

Certain of the things we find in the world are able to exist and able not to exist; for some things are found to be generated and corrupted and, as a result, they are able to exist and able not to exist.

But it is impossible that everything should be like this; for that which is able not to exist is such that at some time it does not exist. Therefore, if everything is such that it is able not to exist, then at some time nothing existed in the world. But if this were true, then nothing would exist even now. For what does not exist begins to exist only through something that does exist; therefore, if there were no beings, then it was impossible that anything should have begun to exist, and so nothing would exist now—which is obviously false. Therefore, not all beings are able to exist [and able not to exist]; rather, it must be that there is something necessary in the world.

Now every necessary being either has a cause of its necessity from outside itself or it does not. But it is impossible to go on to infinity among necessary beings that have a cause of their necessity—in the same way, as was proved above, that it is impossible to go on to infinity among efficient causes. Therefore, one must posit something that is necessary *per se*, which does not have a cause of its necessity from outside itself but is instead a cause of necessity for the other [necessary] things. But this everyone calls God.

The *fourth* way is taken from the gradations that are found in the world:

In the world some things are found to be more and less good, more and less true, more and less

noble, etc. But *more* and *less* are predicated of diverse things insofar as they approach in diverse ways that which is maximal in a given respect. For instance, the hotter something is, the closer it approaches that which is maximally hot. Therefore, there is something that is maximally true, maximally good, and maximally noble, and, as a result, is a maximal being; for according to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* 2, things that are maximally true are maximally beings.

But, as is claimed in the same book, that which is maximal in a given genus is a cause of all the things that belong to that genus; for instance, fire, which is maximally hot, is a cause of all hot things. Therefore, there is something that is a cause for all beings of their *esse*, their goodness, and each of their perfections—and this we call God.

The *fifth* way is taken from the governance of things:

We see that some things lacking cognition, viz., natural bodies, act for the sake of an end. This is apparent from the fact that they always or very frequently act in the same way in order to bring about that which is best, and from this it is clear that it is not by chance, but by design, that they attain the end.

But things lacking cognition tend toward an end only if they are directed by something that has cognition and intelligence, in the way that an arrow is directed by an archer. Therefore, there is something intelligent by which all natural things are ordered to an end—and this we call God.

**Reply to objection 1:** As Augustine says in the *Enchiridion*, “Since God is maximally good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works if He were not powerful enough and good enough to draw good even from evil.” Therefore, it is part of God’s infinite goodness that He should permit evils and elicit goods from them.

**Reply to objection 2:** Since it is by the direction of a higher agent that nature acts for the sake of a determinate end, those things that are done by nature must also be traced back to God as a first cause. Similarly, even things that are done by design must be traced back to a higher cause and not to human reason and will. For human reason and will are changeable and subject to failure, but, as was shown above, all things that can change and fail must be traced back to a first principle that is unmoved and necessary *per se*.

## QUESTION 3

### God's Simplicity

Once we have ascertained that a given thing exists, we then have to inquire into its mode of being in order to come to know its real definition (*quid est*). However, in the case of God we cannot know His real definition, but can know only what He is not; and so we are unable to examine God's mode of being, but instead can examine only what His mode of being is not. Therefore, we have to consider, first, what His mode of being is not (questions 3-11); second, how we apprehend Him (question 12); and, third, how He is named (question 13).

By excluding from God certain things that do not befit Him, e.g., composition, change, and other things of this sort, it is possible to show what His mode of being is not. So, first of all, we will inquire into His simplicity, by which composition is excluded from Him (question 3). And because among corporeal things the simple ones are imperfect and mere parts, we will inquire, second, into His perfection (questions 4-6); third, into His infinity (questions 7-8); fourth, into His immutability (questions 9-10); and fifth, into His oneness (question 11).

As for the first point, there are eight questions: (1) Is God a body? (2) Is there a composition of form and matter in Him? (3) Is there a composition of quiddity, i.e., essence or nature, and subject in Him? (4) Is there a composition of essence and *esse* in Him? (5) Is there a composition of genus and difference in Him? (6) Is there a composition of substance and accident in Him? (7) Is there any type of composition at all in Him, or is He utterly simple? (8) Does He enter into composition with other things?

## Article 1

### Is God a body?

It seems that God is a body:

**Objection 1:** A body is that which has three dimensions. But Sacred Scripture attributes three dimensions to God; for Job 11:8 says: "He is higher than heaven, and what will you do? He is deeper than hell, and how will you know? The measure of him is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Therefore, God is a body.

**Objection 2:** Everything that has a shape (*figura*) is a body, since shape is a quality that involves quantity. But God seems to have a shape; for in Genesis 1:26 it is written, "Let us make man to our image and likeness," and, according to Hebrews 1:3, shape is called an image ("For He is the brightness of his glory, and the figure (*figura*) [read: the image] of his substance." Therefore, God is a body.

**Objection 3:** Everything that has bodily parts is a body. But Scripture attributes bodily parts to God; for Job 40:4 says, "And have you an arm like God?," and Psalm 33:16 says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just," and Psalm 117:16 says, "The right hand of the Lord has wrought strength." Therefore, God is a body.

**Objection 4:** Posture (*positio*) belongs only to a body. But in the Scriptures things pertaining to posture are said of God; for Isaiah 6:1 says, "I saw the Lord sitting," and Isaiah 3:13 says, "The Lord stands up to judge." Therefore, God is a body.

**Objection 5:** Nothing can be a spatial terminus *a quo* or terminus *ad quem* unless it is a body or something corporeal. But in Scripture God is said to be a spatial terminus *ad quem* (Psalm 33:6: "Come to Him and be enlightened") and a spatial terminus *a quo* (Jeremiah 17:13: "They that depart from You shall be written in the earth"). Therefore, God is a body.

**But contrary to this:** John 4:24 says, "God is a spirit."

**I respond:** One should assert without qualification that God is not a body. This can be shown in three ways.

First, as is clear from an induction over singulars, no body effects motion without itself being moved. But it was shown above (q. 2, a. 3) that God is the first unmoved mover. Hence, it is clear that God is not a body.

Second, the first being must be fully actual and in no way in potentiality. For even though in one and the same thing that goes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is temporally prior to the actuality, nonetheless, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality—because what is in potentiality is led into actuality only by a being that is in actuality in a relevant respect. But it was shown above (q. 2, a. 3) that God is the first being. Therefore, in God there cannot be anything in potentiality. But all bodies are in potentiality, since a continuum, as such, is infinitely divisible. Therefore, it is impossible for God to be a body.

Third, as is clear from what was said above (q. 2, a. 3), God is the most noble of beings. But it is impossible for a body to be the most noble of beings. For a body is either living or non-living, and a living body is clearly more noble than a non-living body. Yet it is not by virtue of being a body that a living body is living, since otherwise all bodies would be living. Therefore, it must be the case that a living body is living because of something else; for instance, our body is alive by virtue of its soul. But that by virtue of which a body is living is more noble than that body. Therefore, it is impossible for God to be a body.

**Reply to objection 1:** As was explained above (q. 1, a. 9), Sacred Scripture teaches about spiritual and divine things by means of likenesses drawn from corporeal things. Hence, when it attributes three dimensions to God by a likeness drawn from corporeal quantity, it is signifying the quantitative extent of His power—so that by depth it signifies His power to know what is hidden; by height it signifies the preeminence of His power over all things; by length it signifies the duration of His being; and by width it signifies the affection of His love toward all things. Or, alternatively, as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 9, by God's depth is meant the incomprehensibility of His essence; by His length is meant the outpouring of His power, which penetrates all things; and by His breadth is meant His reaching out to all things, viz., insofar as all things are taken up under His protection.

**Reply to objection 2:** Man is said to be made to God's image not because of his body, but because of that by which man surpasses the other animals. This is why in Genesis 1:26, after it says, "Let us make man to our image and likeness," it adds, "so that he might have dominion over the fishes of the sea, etc." But man surpasses the other animals because of his reason and intellect. Hence, it is by virtue of his intellect and reason, which are incorporeal, that man is made to God's image.

**Reply to objection 3:** It is because of His acts that bodily parts are attributed to God in the Scriptures by a certain likeness. For since the act of an eye is to see, 'eye', when said of God, signifies His power to see in an intelligent, rather than sentient, way. And the same holds for other bodily parts.

**Reply to objection 4:** Similarly, things that pertain to posture are attributed to God by a certain likeness. For instance, He is said to be sitting because of His immovability and authority, and He is said to be standing because of His power to vanquish everything that is opposed to Him.

**Reply to objection 5:** Since God is everywhere, He is approached not by bodily footsteps but by the affections of the mind, and it is in this same way that one departs from Him. And so by a likeness drawn from local motion, 'approach' and 'departure' signify spiritual affections.

## Article 2

### Is there a composition of form and matter in God?

It seems that in God there is a composition of form and matter:

**Objection 1:** Everything that has a soul is composed of matter and form, since a soul is the form of a body. But Scripture attributes a soul to God; for in Hebrews 10:38 God says, “But my just man lives by faith; but if he withdraws himself, he shall not please my soul.” Therefore, God is composed of matter and form.

**Objection 2:** According to *De Anima* 1, anger, joy, etc., are passions of a conjoined being. But passions of this sort are attributed to God in Scripture; for instance, Psalm 105:40 says, “The Lord was exceedingly angry with His people.” Therefore, God is composed of matter and form.

**Objection 3:** Matter is the principle of individuation. But God seems to be an individual, since He is not predicated of many. Therefore, He is composed of matter and form.

**But contrary to this:** Everything composed of matter and form is a body, since dimensional quantity is the first thing that inheres in matter. But, as was shown above (a. 1), God is not a body. Therefore, God is not composed of matter and form.

**I respond:** It is impossible for there to be matter in God.

First of all, matter is that which is in potentiality. But it has already been shown (a. 1) that God is pure actuality, with no element at all of potentiality. Hence, it is impossible that God should be composed of matter and form.

Second, everything composed of matter and form is perfect and good through its form; hence, it has to be good by participation, i.e., it is good insofar as its matter participates in form. But the first good and optimal being, viz., God, is not good by participation, since being good through one’s essence is prior to being good by participation. Hence, it is impossible that God should be composed of matter and form.

Third, every agent acts through its form, and so a thing is related to its own acting in the way it is related to its form. So in order for something to be a first and *per se* agent, it must be *per se* and primarily a form. But God is a first agent, because, as was shown above (q. 2, a. 3), He is the first efficient cause. Therefore, He is a form through His essence and is not composed of matter and form.

**Reply to objection 1:** A soul is attributed to God by a likeness drawn from the acts of a soul. For, in our own case, it by means of our soul that we will something. Hence, what is said to be pleasing to the soul of God is that which is pleasing to His will.

**Reply to objection 2:** Anger and other passions of this sort are attributed to God by a likeness drawn from their effects. For instance, someone who is angry characteristically inflicts punishment, and so the punishment inflicted by God is metaphorically called His anger.

**Reply to objection 3:** Forms that can be received in matter are individuated by the matter; for the matter cannot exist in another, since it is the first underlying subject. In contrast, the form, taken by itself (i.e., unless something other than itself prevents this), can be received by any number of matters.

However, if the form in question cannot be received in matter but instead subsists *per se*, then it is individuated by the very fact that it cannot be received in another—and this is the sort of form that God is. Hence, it does not follow that God has matter.

### Article 3

#### Is God the same as His essence or nature?

It seems that God is not the same as His essence or nature:

**Objection 1:** Nothing exists within itself. But the essence or nature of God—viz., His divinity (*deitas*)—is said to be ‘in’ God. Therefore, it seems that God is not the same as His essence or nature.

**Objection 2:** An effect is similar to its cause, since every agent effects what is similar to itself. But in created things the suppositum is not the same as the nature; for instance, a man is not the same as his humanity. Therefore, God is likewise not the same as His divinity.



**But contrary to this:** As is clear from John 14:6 (“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”), it is said of God that He is life and not just that He is living. But divinity is related to God as life is related to the living. Therefore, God is His very divinity.

**I respond:** God is the same as His essence or nature. To understand this, notice that in things composed of matter and form the nature or essence has to be different from the suppositum. For the essence or nature includes within itself only those things that are found in the definition of the species. For instance, humanity includes within itself those things that are found in the definition of man; for it is by those things that a man is a man—and this is just what ‘humanity’ signifies, viz., that by which a man is a man. In contrast, the individual matter, along with all the accidents that individuate it, is not found in the definition of the species. For instance, the definition of man does not include this flesh and these bones, or whiteness or blackness, or anything of this sort—and thus this flesh and these bones and the accidents that designate this matter are not included in humanity. And yet they are included in that which is a man; thus, that which is a man has something within itself that humanity does not include. For this reason, a man and humanity are not completely the same. Instead, humanity is signified as a formal part of a man, since the defining principles are related as a form to the individuating matter.

Thus, in things which are not composed of matter and form and in which individuation is not due to a material individual—i.e., is not due to this matter—but in which the forms themselves are individuated *per se*, the very forms themselves have to be subsisting supposita. Hence, in such things the suppositum and the nature do not differ from one another. And so, since, as has been proved (a. 2), God is not composed of matter and form, God must be His own divinity, His own life, and whatever else is predicated of God in this way.

**Reply to objection 1:** We ourselves are unable to talk about simple entities except in the way we talk about the composite entities from which we take our cognition. And so, when speaking of God, we use concrete names to signify His subsistence (since by our lights it is only composites that subsist), and we use abstract names to signify His simplicity. So the fact that divinity, life, and other things of this sort are said to be ‘in’ God should be traced back to a duality (*diversitas*) that occurs in our intellect’s grasp of the thing and not to any duality within the thing itself.

**Reply to objection 2:** God’s effects do not imitate Him perfectly, but rather imitate Him to the extent that they are able to. And their falling short in their imitation stems from the fact that what is simple and unified can be exhibited only through a multiplicity. This is why composition occurs in God’s effects, and it is because of this that in those effects the suppositum is not the same as the nature.

## Article 4

### Is God’s essence the same as His *esse*?

It seems that God’s essence is not the same as His *esse*:

**Objection 1:** If this were so, then nothing would be added to God’s *esse*. But *esse* to which nothing is added is *esse*-in-general (*esse commune*), which is predicated of all things. It would thus follow that God is a common being predicable of all things. But this is false according to Wisdom 14:21 (“Men gave the incommunicable name to stones and wood”). Therefore, God’s *esse* is not the same as His essence.

**Objection 2:** As explained above, we can know with respect to God whether He exists. But we cannot know what He is (*quid sit*). Therefore, God’s *esse* is not the same as what-it-is-to-be-God (*eius quod quid est*), i.e., not the same as His quiddity (*quidditas*) or nature.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Trinitate* 7 Hilary says, “In God the *esse* is not an accident, but rather subsisting truth.” Therefore, that which subsists in God is His own *esse*.

**I respond:** God is not only His own essence, as has been shown (a. 3), but also His own *esse*. This

can be proved in a number of ways.

First of all, whatever there is in a thing beyond its essence must be caused either (a) by the principles of its essence, as with the proper accidents that follow from the species—for instance, being capable of laughter follows from the species *man* and is caused by the essential principles of the species—or (b) by some cause outside itself—in the way that, say, heat is caused in water by a fire. Therefore, if a thing's *esse* is distinct from its essence, then the *esse* of the thing must be caused either by something outside itself or by the essential principles of the thing itself. But it is impossible for the *esse* to be caused solely by the essential principles of the thing, since nothing is sufficient to be a cause of its own *esse* if it has *esse* that is caused. Therefore, it must be the case that a thing whose *esse* is distinct from its essence has *esse* that is caused by another. But this cannot be said of God, since what we call 'God' is the first efficient cause. Therefore, it is impossible that in God the *esse* should be one thing and His essence another thing.

Second, the *esse* is the actuality of any form or nature; for goodness or humanity is signified in actuality only insofar as we signify that it exists. Therefore, the *esse* itself is related to an essence that is distinct from it in the way that actuality is related to potentiality. Therefore, since, as was shown above (a.1), there is no potentiality in God, it follows that in Him the essence is not distinct from His *esse*. Therefore, His essence is His *esse*.

Third, just as that which has fire and is not itself fire is on fire through participation, so too that which has *esse* and is not itself *esse* is a being through participation. But, as was shown above (a. 3), God is His own essence. Therefore, if He is not His own *esse*, He will be a being through participation and not through His essence. Therefore, He will not be the first being—which is absurd. Therefore, God is His own *esse* and not just His own essence.

**Reply to objection 1:** The phrase 'a thing to which nothing is added' can be taken in two ways. In the first way, it is part of the notion of the thing that the addition *may not* be made to it. For instance, it is part of the notion of an irrational animal that it is without reason. In the second way, the thing is understood as something that the addition *is not* made to, since it is not part of its nature that the addition should be made to it. For instance, *animal*, taken in general, is without reason, since it is not part of the notion of an animal in general that it have reason—but neither is it part of its definition that it should lack reason. Hence, it is in the first way that the divine *esse* is *esse* without addition, while it is in the second way that *esse* in general is without addition.

**Reply to objection 2:** *Esse* is said in two ways: in one way, it signifies the act of being, while in the second way it signifies the propositional composition that the mind forms by joining a predicate to a subject. If we take *esse* in the first way, then we cannot know God's *esse* any more than we can know His essence. It is only if we take *esse* in the second way that we can know God's *esse*. For we know that the proposition we form about God when we say 'God exists' is true. And, as was explained above (q. 2, a. 2), we know this from His effects.

## Article 5

### Is God in a genus?

It seems that God is in a genus:

**Objection 1:** A substance is a being that subsists *per se*. But this is especially true of God. Therefore, God is in the genus of substance.

**Objection 2:** Each thing is measured by something in its own genus; for instance, lengths are measured by length and numbers are measured by number. But as is clear from the Commentator in *Metaphysics* 10, God is the measure of all substances. Therefore, God is in the genus of substance.

**But contrary to this:** A genus is prior in the understanding to that which is contained in the genus.

But nothing is prior to God either in reality or in the understanding. Therefore, God is not in any genus.

**I respond:** Something is in a genus in one of two ways. In the first way, it is in a genus simply and properly, as in the case of the species that are included under the genus. In the second way, something is in a genus by reduction, as in the case of principles and privations; for instance, *point* and *unit* are reduced to the genus of quantity as principles of quantity, whereas blindness and all other privations are reduced to the genus of the corresponding habit. But God is not in a genus in either of these ways.

There are three ways to prove that God cannot be a species of any genus.

First, the species is constituted from the genus and the difference. But that from which the difference constituting the species is taken is always related to that from which the genus is taken as actuality to potentiality. For instance, the genus *animal* is taken in a concrete mode from a sentient nature, since that which is called an animal has a sentient nature; the difference *rational*, on the other hand, is taken from an intellectual nature, since the rational is that which has an intellectual nature. But the intellectual is related to the sentient as actuality to potentiality. And the same thing is clear in other cases. Since, then, in God there is no potentiality joined to actuality, it is impossible for Him to be in a genus in the way that a species is.

Second, since, as was shown above (a. 4), God's *esse* is His essence, it follows that if God were in a genus, His genus would have to be *being*. For the genus signifies the essence of the thing, since it is predicated as part of the thing's real definition (*in eo quod quid est*). But in *Metaphysics* 3 the Philosopher shows that *being* cannot be the genus of anything. For every genus has differences that fall outside the essence of the genus, whereas no difference can fall outside of *being*, since a non-being cannot be a difference. Hence, it follows that God is not in a genus.

Third, all the things that are in a given genus share in the quiddity (*quidditas*) or nature of the genus, which is predicated of them as part of their real definition. But these things differ in their *esse*, since the *esse* of a man is not the same as the *esse* of a horse, and the *esse* of this man is not the same as the *esse* of that man. And so in each of the things in a given genus the *esse* differs from "what-it-is-to-be-that-thing," i.e., from the essence. But, as was shown above (a. 4), in God the *esse* does not differ from the essence. Hence, it is clear that God is not in a genus in the way that a species is.

And from this it is clear that God does not have a genus or differences; nor is there a definition of Him or a demonstration of Him, except through His effects. For a definition is composed of genus and difference, and the middle term of a demonstration is a definition.

Moreover, the claim that God is not in a genus by reduction, in the manner of a principle, is clear from the fact that a principle that is reduced to a given genus does not extend beyond that genus. For instance, *point* is a principle only of continuous quantity, and *unit* is a principle only of discrete quantity. But, as will be shown below, God is a principle of the totality of *esse*. Hence, he is not contained in any genus as a principle of that genus.

**Reply to objection 1:** The term 'substance' does not signify just *per se* existence, since *being* cannot itself be a genus, as has been shown. Rather, the term 'substance' signifies an essence that exists in a certain way, viz., *per se*, even though *esse* is not its very essence. Thus, it is clear that God is not in the genus of substance.

**Reply to objection 2:** This objection presupposes a proportionate measure, since this measure must be homogeneous with what is measured. But there is nothing with respect to which God is a proportionate measure. Still, God is said to be the measure of all things in the sense that each thing has *esse* only to the degree that it approaches Him.

## Article 6

### Are there any accidents in God?

It seems that there are some accidents in God:

**Objection 1:** As is said in *Physics* 1, a substance is not an accident to anything. So that which is an accident in one thing cannot be a substance in another thing; for instance, one proves that heat is not the substantial form of fire from the fact that it is an accident in other things. But wisdom, power, and other things of this sort, which are accidents in us, are attributed to God. Therefore, they are accidents in God, too.

**Objection 2:** In every genus there is one first thing. But there are many genera of accidents. Therefore, if the first things in those genera do not exist in God, there will be many first things in addition to God—which is absurd.

**But contrary to this:** Every accident is in a subject. But God cannot be a subject, since, as Boethius puts it in his *De Trinitate*, “A simple form cannot be a subject.” Therefore, there can be no accidents in God.

**I respond:** From what has already been said, it is clear that there cannot be any accidents in God.

For, first of all, a subject is related to its accident as potentiality to actuality; for the subject is actual in some way because of the accident. But *being in potentiality* is altogether denied of God, as is clear from what was said above (art. 1).

Second, God is His own *esse*, and as Boethius says in *De Hebdomadibus*, “Even though that which exists can have something else adjoined to it, nonetheless, the *esse* itself cannot have anything else adjoined to it.” For instance, that which is hot can have something extraneous to heat, e.g., whiteness, but the heat itself has nothing besides heat.

Third, everything that exists *per se* is prior to that which exists *per accidens*. Therefore, since God is the absolutely first being, nothing can be in Him *per accidens*. But neither can there be *per se* accidents in Him, in the way that *risible* is a *per se* accident of a man. For accidents of this sort are caused by the principles of the subject, whereas in God there is nothing that is caused, since He is the first cause. Hence, there are no accidents in God.

**Reply to Objection 1:** Power and wisdom are not predicated univocally of God and us, as will become clear below (q. 13, a. 5). Thus, it does not follow that accidents exist in God in the same way they exist in us.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Since substance is prior to accidents, the principles of accidents are traced back to the principles of substance as something prior. And even though God is not the first being contained under the genus of substance, He is still—outside of every genus—first with respect to all being.

## Article 7

### Is God altogether simple?

It seems that God is not altogether simple:

**Objection 1:** The things that come from God imitate Him. Hence, all beings come from the first being, and all good things from the first good thing. But among the things that come from God, none is absolutely simple. Therefore, God is not absolutely simple.

**Objection 2:** Everything that is better should be attributed to God. But from our perspective, composite things are better than simple things; for instance, mixed bodies are better than the elements, and the elements are better than their parts. Therefore, one should not say that God is altogether simple.

**But contrary to this:** According to Augustine in *De Trinitate* 7, God is truly and supremely simple.

**I respond:** It can be made clear in a number of ways that God is altogether simple.

First of all, through what has been said above (a.1-6): There is no composition in God of

quantitative parts, since He is not a body. Nor is there in God a composition of form and matter. Again, in God the nature is not different from the suppositum, and the essence is not different from the *esse*. Nor is there in God a composition of genus and difference or of subject and accident. Hence, it is clear that there is no way in which God is composite; instead, He is altogether simple.

Second, every composite thing is posterior to its components and dependent on them. But, as was shown above (q. 2, a.3), God is the first being.

Third, every composite thing has a cause, since things that are, taken in themselves, diverse do not come together into a unified thing unless some cause joins them to one another. But, as was shown above (q. 2, a. 3), God does not have a cause, since he is the first efficient cause.

Fourth, in every composite thing there must be both potentiality and actuality, since either (a) one of the parts is actuality with respect to another, or at least (b) all the parts are in potentiality with respect to the whole. But it is not the case [that there is both potentiality and actuality] in God.

Fifth, no composite thing is predicated of any one of its parts. This is obvious in the case of wholes that are composed of dissimilar parts; for instance, no part of a man is itself a man, and no part of a foot is itself a foot. On the other hand, in the case of wholes composed of similar parts, even though something predicated of the whole is also predicated of the parts—for instance, a part of [a volume of] air is air and a part of [a volume of] water is water—there is still something said of the whole that does not belong to any of the parts. For instance, it is not the case that if the whole [volume] of water is two cubits, then a part of it is also two cubits. Therefore, in every composite thing there is something that is not the composite itself. Yet even if it can be said of something having a form that it has something which is not itself (for instance, in a white thing there is something that does not pertain to the concept *white*), still, in the form itself there is nothing that is not the form itself. Hence, since God is a form—or, better, *esse* itself—he can in no way be composite. In *De Trinitate* 7 Hilary touches on this when he says, “God, who is power, is not composed of weak things; nor is He who is light made up of dim things.”

**Reply to Objection 1:** The things that come from God imitate God the first cause insofar as they are caused. But it is part of the concept of a thing that is caused that it is in some way composite, since, as will be shown below (q. 50, a. 2), it is at least the case that its *esse* is different from what it is.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Composite things are better from our perspective than simple things because the perfection of a creature’s goodness is found in many things rather than one simple thing. In contrast, as will be shown below (q. 4, a. 2), the perfection of God’s goodness is found in one simple thing.

## Article 8

### Does God enter into composition with other things?

It seems that God enters into composition with other things:

**Objection 1:** In *De Caelestis Hierarchibus*, chap. 4, Dionysius says, “The *esse* of all things is that which lies beyond *esse*, the divine nature.” But the *esse* of all things enters into composition with everything. Therefore, God enters into composition with other things.

**Objection 2:** God is a form; for in *De Verbis Domini* Augustine says that the Word of God—which is God—is a form that has not been formed. But a form is part of a composite. Therefore, God is part of some composite.

**Objection 3:** Things that exist and in no way differ from one another are the same. But God and primary matter exist and do not differ from one another. Therefore, they are entirely the same. But primary matter enters into the composition of things. Therefore, God does, too.

Proof of the minor: Things that differ from one another differ by virtue of certain differences, and

so they must be composite. But God and primary matter are altogether simple. Therefore, they do not differ from one another in any way.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Divinis Nominibus* Dionysius says, “Neither does anything touch Him (i.e., God) nor is there any other sort of union with Him through a mixing of parts.” Furthermore, in the *Liber de Causis* it says, “The first cause rules all things without being mixed in with them.”

**I respond:** On this matter there have been three errors.

As is clear from Augustine in *De Civitate Dei* 7, some have claimed that God is the soul of the world and, what amounts to the same thing, some have claimed that God is the soul of the first heaven. Others have claimed that God is the formal principle of all things; this is said to have been the opinion of the Almaricians. The third error is that of David of Dinant, who stupidly claimed that God is primary matter.

All of these positions are patently false. It is impossible for God to enter into composition with anything in any way, either as a formal principle or as a material principle.

First of all, we said above (q. 2, a. 3) that God is the first efficient cause. But an efficient cause is not numerically the same with the form of the thing that is made, but only the same in species; for example, a man generates a man. On the other hand, the matter is neither numerically the same nor the same in species with the efficient cause, since the matter is in potentiality, whereas the efficient cause is in act.

Second, since God is the first efficient cause, it belongs to Him to act primarily and *per se*. But that which enters into composition with another is not primarily and *per se* an agent. Instead, it is the composite thing that is primarily and *per se* an agent. For it is not the hand that acts, but the man who acts through the hand; and fire gives warmth through its heat. Hence, God cannot be a part of any composite.

Third, no part of a composite thing can be absolutely the first among beings. And neither can the matter or the form, which are the first parts of composite things, be the first among beings. For, as is clear from what has been said (a. 1), the matter is in potentiality, and potentiality is absolutely posterior to actuality. On the other hand, a form that is part of a composite thing is a participated form; and just as that which participates in such-and-such is posterior to that which is such-and-such through its essence, so too the participated entity itself is posterior to that which is such-and-such through its essence. For instance, fire in things that are on fire is posterior to that which is fire through its essence. But it has been shown that God is the first being, absolutely speaking.

**Reply to Objection 1:** The divine nature is said to be all things as an efficient cause and an exemplar, but not through its essence.

**Reply to Objection 2:** The Word is an exemplar form, but not the sort of form that is part of a composite thing.

**Reply to Objection 3:** Simple things do not differ by virtue of any differences, since this feature belongs to composites. For instance, a man and a horse differ by virtue of the differences *rational* and *irrational*, but these differences themselves do not further differ from one another by virtue of any other differences. Hence, if we attend to the meaning of the terms, such things are properly said not ‘to differ’ but ‘to be diverse’. For according to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* 10, the term ‘diverse’ is said in an unqualified way, whereas everything that differs differs in some respect. Hence, if we attend to the meaning of the terms, primary matter and God do not ‘differ’ from one another but are instead ‘diverse’ in themselves. Hence, it does not follow that they are the same.

## QUESTION 4

### God's Perfection

Now that we have examined God's simplicity, we must consider the perfection of God Himself. And since each thing is called good to the extent that it is perfect, we must first talk about God's perfection and then about His goodness. On the first topic there are three questions: (1) Is God perfect? (2) Is God totally perfect, having within Himself the perfections of all things? (3) Can creatures be said to be similar to God?

#### Article 1

#### Is God perfect?

It seems that being perfect does not befit God:

**Objection 1:** That which is perfect is said to be made, as it were, to completion. But *being made* is not compatible with God. Therefore, neither is *being perfect*.

**Objection 2:** God is the first principle of things. But the principles of things seem to be imperfect; for example, the seed (*semen*) is a principle of animals and plants. Therefore, God is not perfect.

**Objection 3:** It was shown above (q. 3, a. 4) that God's essence is *esse* itself. But *esse* itself seems to be the least perfect thing, since it is the most common and receives all other things as additions. Therefore, God is not perfect.

**But contrary to this:** Matthew 5:48 says: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."

**I respond:** As the Philosopher tells us in *Metaphysics* 12, certain ancient philosophers—viz., the Pythagoreans and Speusippus—did not attribute *best* and *most perfect* to the first principle. The reason is that the ancients were thinking of the material principle alone, and the first material principle is the least perfect. For since matter as such is in potentiality, the first material principle must have maximal potentiality and thus be maximally imperfect.

However, God is posited not as the first *material* principle, but as the first principle in the genus of *efficient* causes; and the first efficient principle has to be absolutely perfect. For just as matter as such is in potentiality, so an agent as such has actuality. Hence, the first acting principle must have maximal actuality and, as a result, must be maximally perfect. For something is said to be perfect to the extent that it has actuality, since what is called perfect is that which lacks nothing according to the mode of its perfection.

**Reply to Objection 1:** As Gregory says: "In stammering to the extent we can, we re-echo the high things of God. For that which is not made cannot properly be called complete (*perfectum*)."

However, because among the things that are made something is called perfect when it is brought from potentiality into actuality, the term 'perfect' is transferred to signify anything that is not lacking in actuality, whether or not it has this condition by virtue of having been made.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Material principles, which we find to be imperfect, cannot be first absolutely speaking, but instead are preceded by another principle that is perfect. Thus, even though the seed (*semen*) is a principle of an animal generated out of semen, it is nonetheless preceded by the animal or plant from which it is derived. For prior to anything that exists in potentiality, there must be something in actuality, since a being in potentiality is not brought into actuality except by some being that is already in actuality.

**Reply to Objection 3:** *Esse* itself is the most perfect of all things, since it is related to all things as their actuality. For nothing has actuality except insofar as it exists; hence, *esse* itself is the actuality of

all things and especially of their forms. For this reason, *esse* is related to other things not in the way that what receives is related to what is received, but rather in the way that what is received is related to what receives. For when I talk about the *esse* of a man or the *esse* of a horse or the *esse* of anything else, it is the *esse* itself that is being thought of as something formal and received, and not that to which the *esse* belongs.

## Article 2

### Do the perfections of all things exist in God?

It seems that it is not the case that the perfections of all things exist in God:

**Objection 1:** As has been shown (q. 3, a. 7), God is simple. But the perfections of things are many and diverse. Therefore, it is not the case that all the perfections of things exist in God.

**Objection 2:** Opposites cannot exist in the same thing. But the perfections of things are opposites, since each species is perfected through its specific difference, and the differences by which the genus is divided and the species constituted are opposites. Therefore, since opposites cannot simultaneously exist in the same thing, it seems that it is not the case that all the perfections of things exist in God.

**Objection 3:** A living thing is more perfect than a [mere] being, and one who is wise is more perfect than one who is merely alive. Therefore, it is likewise the case that *living* is more perfect than *being* and that *being wise* is more perfect than *living*. But God's essence is simply to be (*esse*). Therefore, He does not have within himself the perfection of being alive or the perfection of being wise or other perfections of this sort.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 5, Dionysius says that God in His oneness already has all things.

**I respond:** The perfections of all things exist in God. And He is said to be totally perfect because, as the Commentator puts it in *Metaphysics* 5, He does not lack any type of nobility that is found in any genus.

This can be thought of in two ways.

First of all, the same perfection that is found in an effect must be found in the cause either (a) according to the same nature when the agent is a univocal cause, as when a man generates a man, or (b) in a more eminent mode when the agent is an equivocal cause—for example, in the sun there is a likeness of the things that are generated through the sun's power. For it is clear that the effect preexists virtually in its agent cause, and that to preexist in the agent cause's power is to preexist in a more perfect, rather than less perfect, mode—even though to preexist in the potentiality of a *material* cause is to preexist in a less perfect mode, given that matter as such is imperfect. In contrast, an agent as such is perfect. Therefore, since God is the first efficient cause of things, the perfections of all things must preexist in God in a more eminent mode. Dionysius touches on this line of reasoning in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 5, when he says of God, "It is not that He is this thing and not that thing; rather, He is all things as the cause of all."

Second, given what was shown above (q. 3, a. 4), viz., that God is *esse* itself subsisting *per se*, it must be the case that He contains within Himself the total perfection of being. For it is clear that if a hot thing does not have the whole perfection of a hot thing, this is because its heat is not participated to a perfect degree; but if the heat subsisted *per se*, it would not be able to lack any of the power of heat. Hence, since God is subsistent *esse* itself, he cannot lack any of the perfection of *esse*. But the perfections of all things are pertinent to the perfection of *esse*, since they are perfect to the extent that they have *esse* in some mode or other. So it follows that there is no entity whose perfection God lacks. Dionysius touches on this line of reasoning as well in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 5, when he says, "God does not exist in any particular way; instead, He already has within Himself, simply and without



qualification, the whole of *esse* in a uniform way.” And later he adds, “He is *esse* for all subsistent things.”

**Reply to Objection 1:** As Dionysius puts it in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 5, “Just as the sun, while itself existing as a unity and shining uniformly, has within itself in a uniform way many different sensible substances and qualities, so too, *a fortiori*, all things must preexist by a sort of natural union in the cause of all things.” And so things that in themselves are diverse and opposite preexist as one in God without any detriment to His simplicity.

**Reply to Objection 2:** The same answer applies to this objection.

**Reply to Objection 3:** As Dionysius says in the same chapter, even though, when they are considered as conceptually distinct from one another, *esse* itself is more perfect than life and life itself is more perfect than wisdom itself, nonetheless, a living thing is more perfect than a mere being, since a living thing is also a being; and someone who is wise is both a being and a living thing. Therefore, even if some being does not include either *living* or *wise* within itself—for that which participates in *esse* need not participate in every mode of being—nonetheless, God’s very *esse* does include within itself both life and wisdom. For no perfection of being can be lacking in one who is subsistent *esse* itself.

### Article 3

#### Can a creature be similar to God?

It seems that no creature can be similar to God:

**Objection 1:** Psalm 85:8 says, “There is none among the gods like unto You, O Lord.” But it is the more excellent of all creatures that are being called gods here by a kind of participation. Therefore, it is even less the case that other creatures can be called similar to God.

**Objection 2:** Similarity is a relation. But there is no relation among things that belong to diverse genera. Therefore, there is no similarity among them; for instance, we do not say that sweetness is similar to whiteness. But no creature belongs to the same genus as God, since, as was shown above (q. 3, a. 5), God is not in a genus. Therefore, no creature is similar to God.

**Objection 3:** It is things that agree in form that are called similar. But nothing agrees in form with God, since nothing except God is such that its essence is its very *esse*. Therefore, no creature can be similar to God.

**Objection 4:** In things that are similar, the similarity is mutual. For what is similar is similar to what is similar to it. Therefore, if a creature is similar to God, then God will be similar to some creature. But this is contrary to Isaiah 40:18: “To whom then have you likened God?”

**But contrary to this:** Genesis 1:26 says, “Let us make man to our image and likeness,” and 1 John 3:2 says: “When He shall appear we shall be like to Him.”

**I respond:** Since similarity has to do with agreement or commonality in form, there are many kinds of similarity corresponding to the many ways of sharing in a form.

Some things are called similar because they share in the same form according to the same nature and the same mode. These things are called not just similar but equal in their similarity. For instance, two equally white things are called similar in whiteness. This is perfect similarity.

In a second way, things are called similar because they share a form according to the same nature but not according to the same mode, with one having more and the other less. For example, a thing that is less white is called similar to a thing that is more white. This is imperfect similarity.

In a third way, things are called similar when they share in the same form, but not according to the same nature. This is clear in the case of non-univocal agents. For since every agent, as an agent, effects what is similar to itself and yet acts as a unit in accord with its own form, it must be the case that in the effect there is some likeness of the agent’s form. Therefore, if the agent is contained in the same species

as its effect, there will be a similarity in form between the maker and what is made, as when a man generates a man. But if the agent is not contained in the same species, then there will be a similarity, but not a similarity according to the same nature of a species. For instance, the things generated by the sun's power bear some similarity to the sun, but only to the extent that they receive the form of the sun according to a similarity of genus and not according to a similarity of species. Therefore, if the agent is not contained in any genus, its effects will bear a still more remote similarity to the form of the agent—not according to the nature of either the genus or the species, but in such a way that they participate in a similarity according to some sort of analogy, given that *esse* itself is common to all things. And this is the way in which the things that come from God, insofar as they are beings, are assimilated to Him as the first and universal principle of all being.

**Reply to Objection 1:** As Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 9, when Sacred Scripture says that something is not similar to God, “this is not contrary to something’s being assimilated to Him. For the same things are both similar and dissimilar to God—similar insofar as they imitate Him to the extent that it is possible to imitate Him who is not perfectly imitable, but dissimilar insofar as they fall short of their cause.” And they do not fall short just with respect to intensity and remission, in the way that a less white thing falls short of something that is more white; rather, they fall short because there is no agreement either according to species or according to genus.

**Reply to Objection 2:** God stands to creatures not as a thing of a diverse genus stands to another, but rather as that which is outside of every genus and the principle of all genera.

**Reply to Objection 3:** A creature is said to be similar to God not because they share in a form according to the same nature of genus or species, but only because of an analogy, viz., insofar as God is a being through His essence and the others are beings through participation.

**Reply to Objection 4:** Even though there is a sense in which it may be conceded that a creature is similar to God, one must in no way concede that God is similar to a creature. For, as Dionysius points out in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 9, “Things that belong to the same order are susceptible to a mutual similarity, but not a cause and that which is caused.” For instance, we say that an image is similar to a man, but not conversely. Likewise, in some sense it can be said that a creature is similar to God, but not that God is similar to a creature.