

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 'what-ness' (*quidditas*), 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 (*situs*) 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 movement without itself being moved (*nullum corpus movet non motum*). 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 continuous thing, 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 only 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 movement, ‘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 is 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 human-ness. 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, human-ness (*humanitas*) 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 ‘human-ness’ 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 human-ness. And yet they are included in that which is a man; thus, that which is a man has something within itself that human-ness does not include. For this reason, a man and human-ness are not completely the same. Instead, human-ness 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 was explained above (q. 2, a. 2), 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 'what-ness' (*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 human-ness 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 *should not* be made to it (*non fiat ei additio*). For instance, it is part of the notion of a non-rational animal that it is without reason. In the second way, the thing is understood as something that the addition *is not* made to (*non fit additio*), 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 ‘There is a God’ 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 intellective nature, since the rational is that which has an intellective nature. But the intellective 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 ‘what-ness’ (*quidditas*) or essence 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 (q. 44, a. 1), 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 *Physics* 1 says, 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 (a. 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.” In the same way, 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 what 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 *being capable of laughter* 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 come 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 (aa. 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 diverse, taken in themselves, 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 a part—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 nature

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 Caelesti Hierarchia*, 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*, chap. 2, 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 very 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 (q. 2, a. 3) 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 other differences, since this feature belongs to composites. For instance, a man and a horse differ by virtue of the differences *rational* and *non-rational*, 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.