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From *Lectures on Book I of The Sentences*

[Question One: Does an infinite being exist?]

The first question raised in connection with the second distinction is this: "In the realm of beings is there some being which is actually infinite?"

[Pro et Contra]

It would seem not, for:

[Arg. I] If one of two contraries were actually infinite, it would be incompatible with anything other than itself. But good and evil are contraries. Hence, if some good were actually infinite, nothing would be actually evil, which is false.

2 In answer to this some say that the evil in the universe is not a true contrary to God or the infinite good, because he has no true contrary. But this is no solution, for whether the contrariety be formal or only virtual between two things, if one of the two be infinite, it will tolerate nothing contrary either to itself or to its effect. If the sun, for instance, possessed infinite heat either formally or virtually, nothing would be cold. Consequently, if some good were actually infinite either virtually or formally, then throughout the universe evil, as the contrary of some good, would be simply non-existent.

3 [Arg. II] An infinite body would not allow another body to coexist; therefore an infinite spirit will not allow another spirit to coexist. The antecedent is evident from Bk. IV of the Physics. The consequence is thus proved: just as two bodies cannot coexist in one place because of their opposed dimensions, so neither does it seem possible for two spirits because their actualizations are opposed.

4 Another proof of the same consequence is this: if another body could coexist with an infinite body, then there would be something larger than an infinite body. It would seem then that if another spirit existed in addition to the infinite, there would be something virtually greater than the infinite.

5 [Arg. III] Furthermore, whatever is here and nowhere else is limited in its whereabouts; what exists now but not then is of limited time; and what acts by this action and no other is limited in action, and so on. But whatever exists is a "this" in such a way that it is no other; therefore it is finite, whatever it be.

6 [Arg. IV] Furthermore, if some power were infinite, it would cause movement instantaneously, as Bk. VIII of the Physics proves. Motion, therefore, would occur instantaneously, which is impossible.

7 To the contrary:

In Bk. VIII of the Physics, the Philosopher says that the first mover is infinite. And therefore his power does not reside in any magnitude—not in an infinite magnitude, because there is no such thing, nor in a finite magnitude, because something of greater magnitude would have a greater power. But this argument is not valid unless it be understood of something that is infinite in power, because a body, like the sun, would be infinite in duration.

[Question Two: Is it self-evident that an infinite being exists?]

8 This poses the further question: Is the existence of something infinite, such as God's existence, a fact

that is self-evident?

[Pro et Contra]

The arguments that it is are these:

[Arg. I] Damascene says in the first chapter: "The knowledge that God exists is implanted in everyone." Such knowledge, however, is self-evident, as is clear from Bk. II of the Metaphysics, where first principles, which are like the [proverbial] door, are presented as something self-evident.

9 [Arg. II] Furthermore, the existence of a thing is self-evident if it is impossible to think of anything greater than it. For if one were to grant the opposite of the predicate, it would destroy the subject; because if the thing in question did not exist one could think of something greater, viz. its existence, which is greater than its non-existence. And this seems to be Anselm's argument in chapter two of the Proslogion.

10 [Arg. III] That truth exists is self-evident; therefore etc. Proof of the antecedent: Whatever follows from its own denial is self-evident. But truth is such, because if you affirm that truth exists, then it is true that you affirm this and hence truth exists; if you may deny that truth exists, then it would -be true that truth does not exist. And therefore some truth still exists.

11 [Arg. IV] Furthermore, those propositions are self-evident which derive their necessity from that fact that their terms have at least that qualified existence that comes from being in the mind. All the more then is that proposition self-evident which owes its necessity to the being of the thing and terms in an unqualified sense. But "God exists" is such a proposition. Proof of the antecedent: Suppose that neither a whole nor its part existed. The very fact that these terms in the mind are related the way they are, guarantees "Every whole is greater than its part" to be a necessary truth. In such a case, however, the terms would have only a qualified existence in the mind.

12 To the contrary:

No mind can deny what is self-evident: but God's existence can be denied for "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God" [Psalms 13,1].

[I. Reply to the Second Question]

13 We must answer this second question first. To solve it, we must understand first of all what is meant by a self-evident proposition. Then it will be clear if "God exists" (or some other proposition in which "existence" is predicated of something belonging to God, such as "An infinite being exists") is self-evident.

14 To understand the meaning of "self-evident proposition," know that when a proposition is said to be such, the word 'self' does not rule out every cause whatsoever, because it does not exclude knowledge of the terms. For no proposition is self-evident unless there is knowledge of its terms. What is excluded is any cause or reason which is not essentially included in the concepts of the terms of the self-evident proposition. Hence, that proposition is self-evident which does not need to borrow knowledge elsewhere, but draws the evidence of its own truth from the knowledge of its terms and has the sole source of its certitude within itself.

15 But the name, now, is one term and the concept associated with it is another, the difference between them being that of a name and its definition. Proof: In a demonstration, the definition of one of the extremes serves as a middle term, the remaining term in the premises being the same as in the conclusion. The extreme differs from the middle term as the defined differs from the definition. If the term and concept of the thing defined were the same as that of the definition, then the most cogent form of demonstration would involve a begging of the question. What is more, it would have but two

terms. Consequently, the concept of the definition is different from that of the thing defined in so far as the latter is expressed by the name which is defined.

16 Furthermore, Bk. I of the Physics says that much the same thing happens in the relation of names to their definitions as does in the relation of the whole to its parts. The thing defined is known even before its definition is discovered by an analysis of the parts it has. Wherefore, in so far as the concept of the definition is expressed by the name of the thing defined, it is something confused and is known before [the definition]. But it is expressed more distinctly by the name of the definition, which distinguishes the several parts of the defined. Hence the concept associated with the name of the thing defined is other than that of the definition.

17 From this it follows that a proposition is not self-evident if our only knowledge of it stems from a definition of its terms. For, inasmuch as only that proposition is self-evident which is evident from a knowledge of its terms, and the definition and the name are different terms, it follows that a proposition whose evidence stems exclusively from the definition of its terms, is not self-evident, since it borrows its evidence from something beyond itself and it can be a conclusion with reference to some other proposition.

18 Likewise, if a proposition whose evidence stemmed from the definition of its terms were self-evident, then every proposition would be self-evident that is in the first mode of per se predication, such as "Man is an animal, and a body" and so on, up to "substance." Consequently, knowledge of the definition is not enough to make a proposition self-evident.

19 Therefore that proposition only is self-evident which draws its evidence solely from the knowledge of its terms and does not borrow it from the evidence for other concepts.

20 From this we see there is no point or purpose in distinguishing propositions which are self-evident by their nature from those which are self-evident to us; or among the latter, those which are self-evident to the wise from those which are self-evident to the foolish; or those which are self-evident of the first order from those which are self-evident of the second order. For a proposition is not called self-evident because it happens to be in a particular mind, but because its terms are by their nature apt to cause self-evident knowledge in any intellect which conceives them as self-evident in themselves. And therefore nothing is self-evident which can be demonstrated to any intellect. Nevertheless, grades do exist among self-evident propositions according to their value or lack of it. Thus, "It is impossible for the same thing to both be and not be" is of more value than this: "Every whole is greater than its part," etc.

21 Secondly, turning now to the question at issue, I say this: Suppose one means by the name "God" something which we do not conceive perfectly—such as "this divine essence" where the latter term is grasped as self-evident, as would be the case, for instance, if God, seeing himself, were to impose this name "God" upon his essence. Then one might ask whether "God exists" or "This essence exists" would be self-evident. I say that they would be, because the terms in this case are such that they are able to make such a proposition evident to anyone who grasped the terms of the proposition perfectly, and "self-evident" could not be more aptly applied than to this essence.

22 But suppose you ask whether existence is predicated of any concept which we have of God's essence, so that such a proposition would be self-evident wherein existence is predicated of such a concept, as when we say for example that "The infinite exists." To this I say: No! For nothing which can be the conclusion of a demonstration is self-evident from the knowledge of its terms. But every proposition predicating existence of any concept we have of God is just such, viz. the conclusion of a demonstration. Proof: Anything which pertains to a more comprehensive but less extensive concept according to the first mode of per se predication, can also be shown to pertain per se to a broader concept by using the more comprehensive concept as a middle term. For instance, if some attribute pertains primarily to "triangle," it can be demonstrated to be an attribute of "figure" by means of "triangle." Every concept that we use to conceive of God, however, is less comprehensive than "this

essence." Therefore, by using as middle term "this essence" to which existence primarily pertains, one could demonstrate existence of every concept that we use to conceive of God. Consequently, no proposition such as "An infinite being exists" is self-evident from a knowledge of its terms but it borrows its evidence from something else, and hence is not self-evident.—The major of this argument, however, can be asserted in an even more universal form, viz. whatever pertains to something primarily, does not pertain to another except in virtue of that nature to which it belongs primarily. But "existence" belongs primarily to "this divine nature." Therefore it is not ascribed [primarily] to some property [of this essence], neither does it pertain to any other [divine attribute] except in virtue of the nature of [the divine] essence. Therefore, no proposition in which existence is predicated of some property of this [divine] essence which we conceive is primarily true, but it is true only by reason of some other truth, and consequently it is not a primary or self-evident proposition.

23 Furthermore, if a proposition is self-evident, then any intellect which conceives its terms, will by that very fact know that the proposition is true. But this is not the case with such a proposition as "God exists"—where by God is meant not this essence which we conceive, but some concept which we have about this essence—or "God is infinite" or "An infinite being exists." Therefore, it is not self-evident. The major is evident. The minor is established as follows. Every one who assents to any proposition either because of faith or belief or because it is demonstrated, grasps the meaning of the terms. But we assent to this: "God exists" either because of faith or because of a demonstration. Therefore, the meaning of the terms are known prior to faith or demonstration. But this apprehending of the terms does not make us assent to the proposition, otherwise we should not know it only by faith or demonstration.

24 What is more, there is a third argument. To understand it, you must keep in mind first of all that some concepts are simply simple and others are not. That concept is simply simple which is not reduced to some prior or simpler concept, nor is it fully resolved into more than one concept. Such are the concepts of being, and of the ultimate differences. But a concept that is not simply simple is one which, though it be simply grasped, i.e. nothing is affirmed or denied about it, is nevertheless resolved into more than one concept of which the one can be conceived without the other. Such is the concept of the species which can be resolved into a genus and a difference. Consequently, even though a concept be simple in the sense that nothing is affirmed or denied, one must distinguish further whether it is simply simple or not in the aforesaid sense. From this it is clear how one should understand or explain the statement of the Philosopher in Bk. IX of the *Metaphysics* where we read that so far as simple concepts are concerned the deception characteristic of what is composite is absent. It is not a question here of an affirmation or negation of anything, for one can err by asserting something of a simple concept just as one can say something true or false of a composite concept. What he has in mind is that "the definition of the composite is a long rigmarole," in which many concepts are lumped together and error can arise concerning their conjunction. Sometimes the combination may even include contradictory elements as is the case with "dead man" [i.e. a man without a soul] or "irrational man" [where man is defined as a rational animal]. But such is not the case where simple notions are concerned, for here either one grasps the whole or he grasps nothing.

25 Keeping this explanation in mind, I argue as follows: No proposition about a concept which is not simply simple will be self-evident, unless it also be self-evident that the components of such a concept go together, as I shall prove. Every proper concept that we have of God, however, is not simply simple and consequently, nothing is self-evident of such a concept unless we know that the parts of such a concept essentially go together. But, as I shall prove shortly, it is not self-evident that this is the case. As a consequence, no proposition in which any thing is asserted of any concept we have of God will be self-evident, e.g. "God exists" or "An infinite God exists."

26 Proof of the major: no notion is true of anything unless it first be true in itself. For if it is false in itself, it will not be true of anything. This is clear from Bk. V of the *Metaphysics* in the chapter "About the False," where the Philosopher intends to say that the false in itself includes a contradiction, whereas what is false of something is that which is not false of everything whatsoever, as is the case with the false in itself. Consequently, it is necessary that one must first know that a thing

is true in itself before one can know that it is true of something. But if one does not grasp that the parts of a concept that is not simply simple go together, he does not conceive something that is true in itself and hence does not conceive it as being in something or as true of something. Nothing therefore is self-evidently known about a concept which is not simply simple unless one first recognizes that the parts of this concept go together.

27 The other proposition assumed in the argument is also true, viz. that every concept which we have of God is not simply simple, because every such concept I have of God has to do with what is common to me and to him, as will become clear later.

28 The other assumption is true too, viz. that it is not self-evident that the parts of the concept we use to think of God go together, because it can be demonstrated that one part goes with the other, as is the case, for example, when we demonstrate "God is infinite" or "God exists" (where by "God" we mean what we conceive God to be).

29 From this it is clear that they are incorrect who claim such propositions as "God exists," "A necessary being exists," or "What is operating is in act" are self-evidently known on the grounds that the opposite of the predicate is inconsistent with the subject, and therefore the proposition is self-evident. I say that they are not self-evident, because whenever you use a concept that is not simply simple as the subject you must have self-evident knowledge that the parts go together, which is not the case with "A necessary being exists" and "What is operating is in act", for it is not self-evident that something necessary exists, but this can be demonstrated. That is why the Heracliteans were wont to deny "necessary being" and assert that all is in continuous motion. It is the same with "What is operating is in act," because it is not self-evident that there is actually anything which is operating. Hence it does not follow from the fact that the opposite of the predicate is inconsistent with the subject that the proposition in question is necessary. Indeed, it may even be that such a proposition is false, as is the case with "An irrational man is an animal": for this is inconsistent: "No animal exists, yet an irrational man exists." It is the same with the proposition: "Something greater than God exists," which is false, even though the opposite of the predicate is inconsistent with the subject.

30 If you insist that the predicate is already posited in the subject in the proposition like "A necessary being exists" or "What is operating is in act" and consequently they are self-evident, I reply that this does not follow, because it is not self-evidently known that the notions which are presumed to be present in the subject can actually go together.

31 To this it is objected on logical grounds that if the opposite of the predicate of some proposition is inconsistent with the subject, then from the existence of the subject follows the existence of the predicate. For example, in the proposition "Man is an animal," the opposite of animal is inconsistent with man; therefore this follows: "If a man exists, an animal exists." Hence, if in the proposition "An irrational man is an animal," the opposite of the predicate is inconsistent with the subject, then this would follow: "An irrational man exists, therefore an animal exists." Hence the medium used to infer this, viz. "An irrational man is an animal," is true. Therefore, if the opposite of the predicate is inconsistent with the subject, the proposition will be true and necessary. To this I say: the inference does not follow, because those extremes must be united for which the inference holds. But in this: "An irrational man exists, therefore an animal exists," the consequence holds solely because of "man" and not because of "irrational," and therefore it is by virtue of "Man is an animal" that it holds. Consequently, the following is not an inference: "An irrational man exists, therefore a man exists," because "irrational" adds nothing to the inference, and to go from one thing to the same thing is not an inference; neither then is this: "A necessary being exists, therefore it exists."

32 And so it is clear, then, first of all what a self-evident proposition is, seeing that it is one which draws its evidence from the concepts of its terms and from nothing else, whatever be the intellect which conceives those terms. For this follows what was said above [Cf. 14-20]

33 It is also clear in what way "God exists" is self-evident and in what way it is not. For if we mean

by God "this divine essence" which we do not conceive, it is a self-evident truth; but if we mean by God, that which we first conceive God to be in such universal terms as "first principle" and "infinite" and many such like, then the truth is not self-evidently known, as has already been shown.

## [II. To the Arguments at the Beginning of the Second Question (par. 8-11)]

34 [To Arg. I] As for the first reason, based on Damascene's statement that the knowledge of God is implanted in all, I say that in the same place he says that "no one knows God except by revelation" so that it is necessary to gloss his statement. Therefore it can be said that the cognition of God is implanted in everybody, not in particular but in universal terms and according to common notions which are most appropriately applied to God, and therefore by way of appropriation it is said that the knowledge of him is implanted in all. Hence "being" and "act", etc. are most appropriately applied to God. Or one could say that the knowledge of God is implanted in everyone by reason of their knowledge of creatures, from which they come to know God. But even for him the knowledge of God is not self-evident.

35 [To Arg. II] As for the other, where it is argued that according to Anselm the existence of a thing is self-evident, if it is impossible to think of anything greater, I reply that such is not the case. Hence Anselm's intention there is not to show that the existence of God is self-evident, but that it is true. And he makes two syllogisms, of which the first is: "Something is greater than anything which does not exist; but nothing is greater than the highest; therefore the highest is not non-being." There is another syllogism: "What is not a non-being, exists; but the highest is not a non-being, therefore the highest exists."

36 [To Arg. III] As for the other reason, where it is claimed: "That truth exists is self-evident", I say for one thing the argument fallaciously affirms the consequent, since it proceeds from truth in general to this "Truth" which is God. For another, I say that it is not self-evident that "truth exists." And when it is argued that "If truth does not exist, it is true that truth does not exist," I say that the consequence does not follow, because there is no truth except fundamentally in things and formally in the intellect. But if nothing is true, then nothing exists and consequently in nothing is there truth. Hence, it doesn't follow that if truth does not exist, therefore this dictum "Truth does not exist" is true.

37 [To Arg. IV] As for the next argument, when it is claimed that the proposition "God exists" has terms which are purely necessary, whereas this is not the case with "Every whole is greater than a part thereof" I say that the necessity of the proposition is not a necessity characteristic of real things, but it consists of the evidence for the proposition which is in the mind because the terms are there. "God exists," however, has a necessity and an evidence that stems from reality, but the other proposition has the greater evidence in the mind, once its terms are known, and consequently it is self-evident, whereas the other is not.

## [III. Reply to the First Question]

38 In answer to the first question one must say this. Some properties of the infinite being have reference to creatures and from the existence of their referents, the existence of these properties can be inferred. From this it follows that the proper way to know the existence of God and his infinity is by way of such divine properties as have reference to creatures.

### A. God's existence demonstrated from properties which refer to creatures

39 Now there are two properties of God which have reference to creatures, one is eminence in goodness, the other is causality. Eminence is not subdivided further, but causality is. According to some, its divisions are: exemplar, efficient and final cause. Such say that the exemplar cause gives a thing its essential being. But I say here (and later on in more detail) that the exemplar cause is not to be numbered alongside of the efficient cause, for it is only as a concomitant factor of an efficient cause that the exemplar in the mind of the artisan gives any being to a thing. And if [the exemplar in

view of its effect] can be considered as a formal cause, then it would pertain to eminence rather than to causality, for the more excellent being contains virtually the forms of other things and contains them unitively. Hence in God there are these three: eminence, efficiency and finality.

### 1. The Argument from Efficiency

40 Now efficiency can be considered either as a metaphysical or as a physical property. The metaphysical property is more extensive than the physical for "to give existence to another" is of broader scope than "to give existence by way of movement or change." And even if all existence were given in the latter fashion, the notion of the one is still not that of the other.

It is not efficiency as a physical attribute, however, but efficiency as the metaphysician considers it that provides a more effective way of proving God's existence, for there are more attributes in metaphysics than in physics whereby the existence of God can be established. It can be shown, for example, from "composition and simplicity," from "act and potency," from "one and many," from those features which are properties of being. Wherefore, if you find one extreme of the disjunction imperfectly realized in a creature, you conclude that the alternate, the perfect extreme exists in God.

Averroes, therefore, in attacking Avicenna at the end of Bk. I of the Physics is incorrect when he claims that to prove that God exists is the job of the physicist alone, because this can be established only by way of motion, and in no other way—as if metaphysics began with a conclusion which was not evident in itself, but needed to be proved in physics (For Averroes asserts this falsehood at the end of the first book of the Physics). In point of fact, however, [God's existence] can be shown more truly and in a greater variety of ways by means of those metaphysical attributes which characterize being. The proof lies in this that the first efficient cause imparts not merely this fluid existence [called motion] but existence in an unqualified sense, which is still more perfect and widespread. Now the existence of a primacy in the higher class does not follow logically from the existence of a primary in a lower [or more specific] class, unless that member is the most noble. For example, this does not follow: "The most noble donkey exists, therefore the most noble animal exists." Consequently, from the property of being the most noble being, one can argue better to a primacy among beings than from the primacy characteristic of a prime mover.

41 Hence, we omit the physical argument by which a prime mover is shown to exist and, using the efficiency characteristic of beings, we argue that among beings there is one which is a first efficient cause. And this is Richard's argument in Bk. I, chapter eight On the Trinity.

Some being is not eternal, and therefore it does not exist of itself, neither is it caused by nothing, because nothing produces itself. Hence, it is from some other being. The latter either gives existence in virtue of something other than itself or not. And its existence, too, it either gets from another or not. If neither be true—i.e., if it neither imparts existence in virtue of another nor receives its own existence from another—then this is the first efficient cause, for such is the meaning of the term. But if either of the above alternatives holds [viz. if it receives existence, or imparts it to others only in virtue of another], then I inquire about the latter as I did before. One cannot go on this way ad infinitum. Hence, we end up with some first efficient cause, which neither imparts existence in virtue of another nor receives its own existence from another.

42 Objections, however, are raised against this argument. To begin with, it seems to beg the question, for it assumes that there is an order and a first among causes. But if no efficient cause is first, then both the order and the terminus in such causes would have to be denied.

43 Furthermore, inasmuch as the argument begins with a contingent premise, it does not seem to be a demonstration. For a demonstration proceeds from necessary premises, and everything exists contingently which owes its existence to God. Consequently, with reference to God this statement is contingent: "Some being is non-eternal," because from it this statement follows: "Some non-eternal being exists," and this latter is contingent.

44 Furthermore, since there is no demonstration of the reasoned fact, neither does there seem to be any demonstration of the simple fact. For, whenever some conclusion is established by a demonstration of the latter type, one can always set up a converse demonstration of the reasoned fact (from cause to effect). But from the existence of the first cause, the existence of other things cannot be inferred by a demonstration of the reasoned fact; therefore, neither is the converse relation demonstrable as a simple fact.

45 To solve these objections, then, know this to begin with. Incidental [per accidens] causes are not the same as causes that are ordered to one another incidentally, just as essential [per se] causes are not the same as causes essentially ordered to one another. For when I speak of essential [i.e. per se] and incidental [i.e. per accidens] causes, I express a one to one relationship, viz. between a cause and its effect. But when causes are said to be incidentally or essentially ordered, two causes are being considered with reference to a single effect, so that we have a two to one relationship. Now causes are essentially ordered if one is ordered to the other so that [together] they cause a third thing, the effect. But causes are incidentally ordered if one is not ordered to the other in the very act of causing the effect. This would be the case with father and grandfather with regard to the son.

46 Secondly, it follows from this that essentially ordered causes differ from incidentally ordered causes in a threefold way:

The first difference is this: one cause depends essentially upon the other in order to produce an effect, which is not the case with causes that are ordered to a single effect only incidentally. Wherefore, the single causality of one of the incidentally ordered causes suffices to produce the single effect, whereas the causality of only one of the essentially ordered causes does not suffice.

47 From this, the second difference follows, viz. where essentially ordered causes are concerned, their causality differs in kind and they are not related to their effect in the same way. But the causality of all the incidentally ordered causes is of the same kind, since they can be referred immediately to the same effect.

48 From this, too, the third difference arises, viz. that the causalities of all of the essentially ordered causes concur simultaneously to produce the effect. For what is needed to cause an effect is that all its necessary causes concur. But all the essentially ordered causes are necessary causes. Therefore, all such must actually concur to bring about the effect. But this is not required where incidentally ordered causes are concerned, because each of itself possesses perfect causality as regards its effect, and they are of one kind so far as their immediate effect is concerned.

49 With these things presupposed, then, what remains to be shown is that the proof for a first cause does not involve a begging of the question. Therefore, I first prove that there is such a first where essentially ordered causes are concerned. I do this:

First, by the argument of the Philosopher, Bk. II of the *Metaphysics* (and that of Avicenna, too, Bk. VIII, chapter one) which seems to be this: All causes intermediate between the first and the last, cause by virtue of the first, so that their causality is derived from the first. As the Philosopher points out there, it is not derived from the last but from the first, for if "to cause" pertains to any of them, a fortiori it will pertain to the first. Now the minor of his argument seems to be this: "If the series of causes is infinite then all are intermediate causes." Consequently they all cause in virtue of some first cause, so that it is necessary to assume a first among efficient causes.

50 But you may object: When you say in the minor, "Every cause in an infinite series is an intermediate cause," either you mean by intermediate such causes as lie between a first and a last in the series, and so assume that there is a first, or else you mean it in a purely negative sense [i.e. as being neither the first nor last], in which case there are four terms, and again the conclusion does not follow.



51 I say, therefore, that the statement first assumed by the Philosopher is not the major in the argument, but is antecedent thereto. The argument, consequently, goes in this way. Every intermediary cause having a first and a last, derives its causality from the first. Hence the causality of the intermediary causes comes from the first. But if there were an infinity of such causes, they would all be intermediary. Hence, their causality is derived from some first. But if they are infinite, then there is no first. Hence, there is and there is not a first cause!

Proof of the aforesaid consequence:

All causes in anyway intermediate, be they positively or negatively so, are caused. Therefore, the whole concatenation of intermediary causes is caused. Hence, it is caused by something which is outside the concatenated series. Hence, there is a first.

52 What is more, the causalities of all the essential causes must concur simultaneously to produce their effect, as was pointed out above. But an infinity of things cannot so concur to produce one thing, hence there is not an infinity of such causes and therefore a first cause does exist.

53 Furthermore, a cause which is prior as regards the causation has a more perfect causality, and the more it is prior, the more perfect its causality. Hence, a cause with infinite priority would have an infinite causality. But if there were an infinite regress in essentially ordered causes, then there is a cause with infinite priority. To assume an infinite regress, then, is to grant a cause whose causality is infinite. But surely a cause which exercises infinite causality when it causes, does not depend upon anything else, and as such it would be the first. Therefore, etc.

54 Furthermore, to be able to produce something is not a property which of itself entails imperfection. But whatever is of such like is able to exist in something without imperfection. And thus there must be an efficient cause in which it can exist in this way, which is impossible if the cause does not produce its effect independently, and this means it is the first efficient cause. Therefore, etc.

55 Likewise, if one assumes an infinity of incidentally ordered causes, it still follows that there is a first in essentially ordered causes, for those causes which are incidentally ordered are in individuals of the same species. Then [one argues] as follows: No deformity is perpetual, unless it is brought about by a perpetual cause—outside this coordination—which perpetuates this deformity. Proof: Nothing that is part of this concatenation can be the cause of the whole of this perpetuated deformity, because in such incidentally ordered [causes], one is the cause of one only. Therefore, it is necessary to postulate—beyond this deformed concatenation—some first essential cause which perpetuates it. The deformation, then, is due to the deformed cause, but the continual uniformity of this deformity will be due to a cause outside this concatenation. And thus, if there is a process in incidentally ordered causes, there will still be a terminal point in some first essential cause upon which all the incidentally ordered causes depend.

In this way we avoid begging the question as regards a terminus and order of essential causes.

56 Now for the second objection raised against the aforesaid argument, viz. that it proceeds from something contingent, scil. "Something other than God exists." The philosophers would say that this is something necessary because of the essential order that holds between the cause and what it produces.

But I say, first, that even though it be contingent with reference to God, it is nevertheless most evident, so that anyone who would deny the existence of some being which is not eternal needs senses and punishment. And therefore, from what is contingent in this way we can establish something necessary, for from the contingent something necessary follows, but not vice versa.

57 Also, I say that although things other than God are actually contingent as regards their actual existence, this is not true with regard to potential existence. Wherefore, those things which are said to

be contingent with reference to actual existence are necessary with respect to potential existence. Thus, though "Man exists" is contingent, "It is possible for man to exist" is necessary, because it does not include a contradiction as regards existence. For, for something other than God to be possible, then, is necessary. Being is divided into what must exist and what can but need not be. And just as necessity is of the very essence or constitution of what must be, so possibility is of the very essence of what can but need not be. Therefore, let the former argument be couched in terms of possible being and the propositions will become necessary. Thus: It is possible that something other than God exist which neither exists of itself (for then it would not be possible being) nor exists by reason of nothing. Therefore, it can exist by reason of another. Either this other can both exist and act in virtue of itself and not in virtue of another, or it cannot do so. If it can, then it can be the first cause, and if it can exist, it does exist—as was proved above. If it cannot [both be and act independently of every other thing] and there is no infinite regress, then at some point we end up [with a first cause].

58 To the other objection (viz. that whenever an argument proceeds by way of a demonstration of simple fact, a converse demonstration of the reasoned fact can be constructed), one must say that such is not always true, because when we argue from the effect to the existence of a cause our argument may merely prove that the latter is a necessary condition rather than a sufficient reason for the effect. But it is only when the argument from effect to cause establishes the latter as a sufficient reason that the above principle [of converse demonstration] holds good.

59 And so we show from efficiency, to begin with, that something which is first exists, for—as we have made clear—something exists which makes all possible things possible. But that which makes all possibles possible cannot fail to exist of itself, for otherwise it would be from nothing. Therefore, it must needs be actually self-existent. And so our thesis is proved.

## 2. The Argument from Finality

60 That something first exists is established secondly from finality. Something is suited by its very nature to be an end. Hence it so functions either in virtue of itself or in virtue of another. If the first be the case, we have something which is first; if it functions as an end only in virtue of another then this other is suited by its very nature to be an end, and since there is no infinite regress, we arrive at some end which is first. This is the argument of the Philosopher in *Metaphysics*, Bk. II and Bk. XII about the most perfect good, and it is also the argument of Augustine in *On the Trinity*, Bk. VIII, chapter three: "Consider this good and that good, abstract from the 'this' and the 'that,' and consider, if you can, simply the good itself, and thus you will see God, who is not good by reason of some other good but is the goodness of all that is good."

### [3. The Argument from Eminent Perfection]

61 The third way is that of eminence. Some good is exceeded in perfection, or is able to be exceeded if you prefer to argue from possibility. Therefore, there is something which exceeds or is able to exceed something else in perfection. The latter either is or is not able to be exceeded or is actually exceeded in perfection by something else. If it is not, then it is first in the order of eminence, if it is not first and there is no regress ad infinitum, then we argue the same as before.

62 And so we show that something is first in three ways, first in the order of efficiency, first in the order of eminence and first in the order of ends.

And this triple "first" is one and the same because the first efficient cause is fully actualized, while the most eminent is the best of things. But what is fully actualized is also the best, with no mixture of evil or potentiality. Then too, the first efficient cause does not act for the sake of anything other than itself, for if it did, this other would be better than it. Consequently, it is the ultimate end, and hence first in the order of ends. The same thing, then, enjoys [a triple primacy].

63 Before establishing that some being is infinite, we prove God is his own knowledge, for if his

knowledge were not his nature but something accidental to it, then as the first efficient cause of everything, he would produce his knowledge. But God acts with knowledge; hence he would have to know about this knowledge beforehand. About this prior knowledge we inquire as before. Either there will be an infinite regress before something is known—and then nothing will be known—(or we admit finally that God is his own knowledge].

## B. Proof of the Infinity of God

64 I turn now from these things to the thesis to be proved and declare that this most eminent being, which is both the ultimate and as well as the first efficient cause, is infinite.

65 The first proof of this makes use of the notion of efficiency as employed by the Philosopher in Bk. VIII of the Physics where he argues that, inasmuch as the first mover moves for an infinite time, it follows that he has infinite power.

66 Of course you may object to this argument on two grounds: first, the antecedent as a matter of fact is not true, since motion will not continue forever.

67 Furthermore, the inference itself seems to be invalid, since, according to the mind of the Philosopher, a body like the sun, though its power is finite, will continue to move things for an infinite time—and as a matter of fact, it could move things for an infinite period.

68 For these reasons, some reword the argument in this fashion. Where a cause produces its effects in virtue of itself alone, it has in its power at once all the effects which are produced in succession, for such an agent cannot receive power to act from anything other than itself, and hence it holds within its power at one and the same time all the effects it will eventually produce. The first efficient cause acts in virtue of itself and hence holds in its power at one and the same time all the effects which are successively produced, and these are potentially infinite. But this is to have infinite power. Now this is not, they say, the case with the sun, since it acts in virtue of something other than itself, and consequently it does not hold in its power at one and the same time all of the effects it will eventually produce.

69 Also, were the first mover to move for an infinite period of time, it could produce eventually an infinity of things, because with each movement it could produce something and this by reason of itself alone. But to possess in itself an ability to produce an infinity of things is to possess infinite power.

70 These reasons, however, are not conclusive because an effect does not become more perfect because it continues to exist for more than a moment. Whiteness which lasts for a hundred years, for instance, is not more perfect than whiteness which lasts for a day. In like manner, a cause does not become more perfect because it produces its effect repeatedly instead of once. The same strength that enables something to move once a day, will enable it to move for an infinite period of time. All that is established, consequently, is the eternity of the cause, but from this one cannot infer its infinity.

71 Furthermore, to produce several individuals of the same species successively is not a matter of any greater perfection than to produce one individual at one time. Something hot [like the sun], for example, does not become more perfect by making several things hot over a period of time than it was when making one thing hot. But this infinity of things which are produced by means of motion concerns things which are only individually, and not specifically, distinct. Consequently, its production implies no greater perfection [in the cause] than does the production of a single individual.

72 Still one must say that the argument of the Philosopher is valid, for even though the antecedent is false if it is understood of what is actually the case, the antecedent is true if you take it of what could be the case, without averting to whether it is or not. For if the first mover could move for an infinite period of time and it does not derive this power from anything other than itself, then it possesses such power of itself. And from this follows the further conclusion that it is of infinite power, so that the

inference is valid. The proof lies in this. Whenever numerical plurality in one extreme requires a greater perfection in the other extreme, where the plurality of the one is infinite, the perfection of the other is infinite. For example, if to carry ten objects requires more strength than to carry one, then to carry an infinite number requires infinite strength. To produce several things at one time, however, requires more power than to produce but one; therefore, to produce an infinity requires infinite power. But the first mover, so far as it itself is concerned, could produce an infinity at one time, as I shall prove. Therefore, in itself it will be of infinite power.—Proof of the assumption: It is clear that the first efficient cause has power as a remote cause to cause an infinity at once, if such an infinity were able to be produced. But if the proximate causes by which things are produced successively all existed at the same time as the remote first cause, they could produce an infinity at once. Since the power of the first efficient cause, however, includes all the formal powers of the intermediary causes which are potentially infinite, and it possesses all of the causalities of all intermediary causes in an even more perfect way than if they were actualized, as will be proved, it follows that the first efficient cause, so far as it itself is concerned, has power to produce an actual infinity. Proof of the assumption: It is clear that the first cause possesses the causality of the proximate cause more perfectly than the latter, because this latter has its causality only in virtue of the first cause. Similarly, the second cause possesses the causality of the third cause more perfectly than the latter, since the third cause receives its causality from the second, and so on down to the lowest cause. Consequently, the first cause possesses more perfectly the causalities of the intermediary causes, from first to last, than they do themselves.

73 Another proof of the implication is this. It is not that the causality of the production is more perfect that the second cause is needed to work with the first cause. (Proof: if it were for the sake of a more perfect causality that several causes are needed to produce a given effect, then the effect produced by the lot would be more perfect than the effect produced by one cause; now it is the effect furthest removed [from the first cause] that needs all the causes, whereas the nearest effect needs only the first cause. But since the more remote effect is less perfect than the proximate effect, it follows that it is not because of any weakness in its causality that the first cause requires the cooperation of a second cause.) Hence, if the first cause could produce an actual infinity of effects provided only that all of the infinitely numerous intermediary causes were actualized, then it follows that so far as the first cause itself is concerned, it could produce an infinity, and consequently, it will be infinitely powerful.

74 That is why the philosophers wished to say that the reason a second cause was needed to cooperate with the first cause was not because of any deficiency as regards causality, but it was to explain how an imperfect effect could be produced. For they thought that it was only through the intervention of some intermediary cause that an imperfect effect could be produced by a perfect first cause.

75 Using this way of efficiency, some add as a further proof of our thesis that inasmuch as the first being is able to create, it must have infinite power. They show that this follows because there is an infinite distance between contradictories which nothing short of an infinite power can bridge. Hence, since to create is to make something from nothing, it follows that if the first efficient cause can create, its power is infinite.

76 This argument, however, has no force.

First, it assumes that there is a creation—which is something we take on faith—and consequently, it is not a demonstration.

Secondly, between contradictories there is the least of all "distance," for no matter how little something departs from the one extreme, it immediately comes under the other. Hence there is the least latitude or distance here, although virtually speaking the distance between contradictories is greatest because this minimal distance between them establishes the "distance" and opposition between all other extremes.

77 What is more, the argument has another defect inasmuch as distance can be understood to be

infinite in two ways. Either the distance in itself is infinite in the sense that it lacks limits as would be the case if one has an endless line, or the distance is infinite by reason of one of the extremes. We speak of a creature being infinitely distant from God, for instance. This is only because the one extreme is infinite. And even if we assumed the existence of the most perfect creature possible, between such a creature and God there would still be an infinite distance in the second sense. And it is in just this sense that "distance" between something and nothing or between affirmation and negation is to be understood. Consequently, negation is no more distant from affirmation than is the affirmation itself, and therefore whatever is able to make the affirmation is able to bridge the distance. Consequently, the argument is not conclusive.

78 The second main argument for infinity stems from divine knowledge. As was said above, whenever numerical plurality implies the presence of greater perfection, then an infinite number implies the presence of infinite perfection. Knowledge whereby several things are known distinctly is more perfect than knowledge whereby only one such is known, as I shall prove. Hence, knowledge of an actual infinity requires infinite perfection. Now the first intelligent and efficient cause with a single intellection knows an infinity of things actually and distinctly, as I shall show. Therefore, it is actually of infinite perfection.

79 Proof of the first assumption: To know each object distinctly requires some perfection, hence to know several objects in this way is something more perfect. If then there is a single intellection which actually contains the knowledge of them all, it will be of greater perfection than would be the knowledge of only one.

Proof of the second assumption, that God's knowledge has to do with an actual infinity, like an infinity of figures and numbers: Wherever you have a potential infinity, if all its members were to exist at the same time, you would have an actual infinity. This is clear if you consider the consequences of any alternate hypothesis. Consider the intelligibles which we know by thinking of one after another. They are potentially infinite and they are all actually known by God, because he knows whatever can be. Hence, he knows an actual infinity.

80 The third argument for infinity is drawn from the fact that the divine essence itself serves as the [principle or] reason why God knows. For just as knowledge wherein several things are grasped distinctly is more perfect than that wherein but one is known, so also is the principle for knowing several things more perfect than is a principle for knowing only one of them. And an essence which represents several things distinctly will be more perfect than one which represents but one. But the divine essence represents an infinity of things distinctly, and consequently, its power of representation is infinite. Therefore the [essence itself] is infinite.

81 What is more, the reason this is so lies not merely in the ability of [the essence] to make all things known distinctly but because it produces a clear vision of a thing like a stone. If something is the precise effect of some cause, and nevertheless something else can produce the same effect in even more perfect fashion, the proper cause cannot add anything to the perfection of the latter. If something be the precise cause of a for instance, and if b causes the same effect even more perfectly, then it is impossible that a should add anything to b. For were there any perfection to be added, it would be because b lacked some perfection needed to produce the effect in question, since it is precisely this effect that a's power is adequate to achieve. Any object, however, by its very nature is fitted to be the precise and proper cause of an [intuition or] vision of itself. It is impossible, then, that such a vision be achieved in an even more perfect manner unless it be by reason of something to which nothing in the way of perfection could be added. But such a vision is had even more perfectly by reason of the divine essence, so that neither a stone, nor any other essence, could add anything to the perfection of the divine essence. But anything of this kind is infinite. Therefore, etc.

82 The fourth argument for infinity is derived from the fact that God is an end. Our will can love a good that exceeds that of any finite good. This we know, first, because our intellect can know such a good, and also because our will is inclined to seek an infinite good, for it delights in evoking such an

act of love, which would not be the case if it were not inclined to do so. If the ultimate end were not an infinite good, however, the will would not be inclined towards, nor seek, an infinite good. Proof: It is incompatible with the very notion of an ultimate end that there be any good greater than it, as we have shown [Cf. par. 60]. For then it could either exist of itself, or in virtue of another, neither of which can be assumed to be the case. If the ultimate end, then, were finite and not infinite, it would be impossible for any good to be infinite. And if this were so, the will could neither love the infinite nor be inclined towards it, because it has no inclination towards the opposite of its object.

83 The fifth argument for infinity is based on the eminence [of God]. Anything to which infinity is not repugnant, is not simply perfect unless it is infinite. For instance, if the tenth degree of some perfection is not repugnant to a certain thing, then it is not simply perfect unless it possesses the tenth degree. But to being qua being infinity is not repugnant, as will be proved. Therefore, the most eminent and most perfect being will be infinite.

84 Proof of the assumption: If "infinite" were repugnant to "being," then the repugnance would either be formal, like "man" and "not-man," or virtual, like "man" and "not-risible." The first is not the case, for formal repugnance stems from the meaning of the terms. But as Avicenna teaches in Bk. I of the *Metaphysics*, the meaning and notion of "being" cannot be made any clearer. The concept of "infinite" is also clear, because the infinite is that which cannot be surpassed. But there is no contradiction between these notions, for there is no contradiction that something be a being and that it cannot be surpassed. Neither is there any virtual repugnance, for the primary attributes of "being" such as "true," and "good" and such like, are most evidently characteristic of being. But this is not the case with "infinite," for "being" does not of itself include "infinite" as a coextensive attribute. Consequently, "being is infinite" is not a primary truth unless you add in disjunction its opposite [viz. "being is either infinite or finite"].

85 Also since an amount of power is of greater perfection than an amount of mass, and since infinity is not repugnant to the latter, then neither is it opposed to the former.

86 Another proof of the same point is this. Any faculty naturally perceives any lack of harmony in its object, and it will not naturally put up with it or be content with it. If then "infinite" were something that contradicted "being," our mind would be naturally repelled by "infinite being" as something which includes a contradiction. But this is false, for our mind rather than finding any contradiction discovers its rest therein.

#### IV. To the Arguments at the Beginning of the First Question (par. 1-6)

87 Consider the first argument, where it is said that if one of the contraries were infinite, it would be incompatible with anything other than itself. It must be admitted that this would be true if we were dealing with an agent that was necessitated by its nature to act, as is clear from the case cited about the sun. It is not true, however, if that which is either virtually or formally contrary turns out to be an agent which is not necessitated in this way. Hence, if God acted by a necessity of his nature, it would not be possible for evil to occur, for it is virtually contrary to himself and formally contrary to what he causes, viz. the good of the universe.

88 You may object that the philosophers assumed that God and the first good acted out of necessity in their nature, and still they admitted that evil could occur in the world.

To this I reply that they could not save the fact that evil occurs contingently or that anything occurs contingently, on the assumption that God acts by a necessity of his nature. For if God produced the first effect in such a way, since the latter could only in turn produce something in virtue of the first [being] by which it was produced, it follows that this next effect is also produced by a necessity of nature, and so on down [through the hierarchy of celestial causes] to the fact of my sitting now, which would also need to be produced by a necessity of nature.

89 Still the philosophers could maintain that evil occurred in the world by a necessity of nature, since they claimed that God moved one series of causes which terminated in the eduction of the form and another series which brought about the superabundance of matter. That the body of an animal is an organism results from the first series, whereas that it has too many members is a consequence of the second. And so it happens that the animal turns out to be a freak. Yet this does not happen contingently, because if the one cause acts necessarily, so the other impedes its action necessarily. There is no alternative good, however, to evil of this kind, for it was a matter of necessity that these other causes impede the action since they are the stronger.

90 But you may say that although the Philosopher assumed that a heavenly body was necessarily produced by God, he still held that such a body, like the sun, had different movements, and according to its proximity or distance from us it could cause events contingently, and in consequence, some things do occur contingently.

I claim this does not follow. For while he could admit that even though God acts of necessity by reason of the way explained above, it could be that something does not exist forever, and to that extent, has contingent existence. But he could not consistently hold that the thing occurred contingently [i.e. that it need not have occurred at the time it did] as the reason above proves [Cf. par. 88].

91 [To Arg. II] The second main argument should be answered by denying the validity of the inference. And as for the proof wherein it is claimed that just as two bodies cannot coexist in one place because of their opposed dimensions, so neither can two spirits because of their opposed actualizations, it should be pointed out that there is no parallel between the two. The reason this holds in regard to bodies is that one body fills a place to the full extent that place can be filled. Similarly, the reason two opposed forms cannot coexist in matter is that matter is perfected by one to the extent of its capacity. But beings are not so proportioned that one being takes up all the room so that there cannot be more than one.

92 As for the other proof of the inference, I say again that there is no parallel. If one assumed that another body coexisted with an infinite body, there would be an opposition viz. that there would be something both infinite and finite. But if a finite spirit is assumed to coexist with an infinite spirit such an opposition does not follow, because when the finite spirit is present with the infinite, there is no one thing which results that is of greater perfection than is the infinite spirit itself, for the latter's perfection stems from itself whereas the other's is derived from another.

93 [To Arg. III] As for the other argument, we must point out that it does not follow. Neither is the manner of arguing valid except for what is finite. It is not valid as regards the infinite, as for example, when it is assumed that whereabouts is infinite and a body is infinite. For then it does not follow "This body is in this place in such a way that it is in no other, therefore it is finite as to its whereabouts." Or, "Motion is at this time so that it is not at another, therefore it is finite in time" does not follow either according to the view of the Philosopher, who assumed that motion was perpetual. And so too it does not hold for what they try to prove, viz. "God is just this essence in such a way that he is no other, therefore he is finite." What does indeed follow is that he is not numerically infinite, but it does not follow that he is not intensively infinite.

94 [To Arg. IV] As for the next, we must insist that the Philosopher did not say that if an infinite power were to move things, it would do so in an instant. What he intended to prove there was that infinite power does not reside in any magnitude, because if it did it would move things instantaneously. And the reason is this: an infinite power, if it were to move things according to the utmost of its power and by a necessity of nature, would move them instantaneously (Proof: if it were to move things only over a period of time, then some other finite power could be increased to a point where it could move an equal amount in an equal period of time, and thus the two powers, each doing the utmost it could do, would be equal). If an infinite power were to reside in some body, however, it would be a power to move, since it is clear enough from the context that the Philosopher there is

speaking about a power which is divided up according to the divisions of a body so that the greater power resides in what is larger and in any part thereof it is only there in part. And what is more, since a body can be divided and can differ as to the position of its parts, it is the whole that is needed to produce movement. And consequently [if it were infinite] it would move things and do so instantaneously [which is a contradiction]. Now although we too postulate an infinite power, we do not claim that it moves things to the utmost of its ability. Hence it does not follow that it moves things in an instant. What does indeed follow is that it could act instantaneously and could transfer a body from one place to another in an instant, but this is not to "move" in the proper meaning of the word. Neither would there be any motion in such a case.

95 The Philosopher, you may object, claimed the first mover acted of necessity and to the utmost of its ability, and he proves it to be of infinite power. Still it does not follow that it moves instantaneously, for he admits that the heavens move in time.—I say that if the Philosopher were to postulate that the first mover acts necessarily, he cannot also assume that anything is moved immediately; motion can only occur through the intervention of some finite cause. With this Averroes agrees in Bk. XII of the *Metaphysics*, where he says that the heavens have a double motor cause, one which exists apart and guarantees the perpetuity of the movement, and another which is captivated by the former. But it is only the combination of the two that allows for temporal movement.