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<60><sup>2</sup>

DISPUTATIO XXX.

*De primo ente, quatenus ratione naturali cognosci potest, quid, et quale sit.*

Hactenus praecipue ostendimus Deum esse, et ex parte de-  
5 clarare coepimus quid sit, nam, ut diximus, haec duo in cogni-  
tione Dei non possunt omnino seiungi, nunc superest ut reli-  
qua tradamus quae directe spectant ad <col. b> cognoscen-  
dum quid sit Deus, simulque declarem qualis ac quantus sit,  
10 nam in Deo non est aliud qualitas vel magnitudo, quam essen-  
tia. Supponimus autem non posse nos naturali lumine haec  
de Deo cognoscere prout in se sunt, quia id fieri non potest  
nisi per visionem claram ipsius, quae non est homini natu-  
ralis, ut infra etiam ostendemus. Neque etiam possunt haec  
15 omnia simpliciter a nobis demonstrari a priori de Deo, quia  
solum per effectus devenire possumus in cognitionem eius:  
cognito tamen uno attributo Dei ex effectibus eius, interdum  
possumus ex illo colligere aliud a priori, iuxta modum nos-  
trum concipiendi divina, divisim, et ex uno conceptu alium  
20 eliciendo, ut superiori disputatione tetigimus: et hi duo modi  
demonstrandi observandi sunt, et ad singula divina attributa,  
quoad fieri possit, applicandi. Primum igitur quasi funda-  
mentum et principium omnium quae attribuuntur Deo, est,  
esse ens per se necessarium, et suum esse per essentiam, quod  
25 demonstratum est disputatione praecedenti: ipsum ergo esse  
Dei est quidditas eius: quid vero in hoc esse includatur, quidve  
ex ipso esse per essentiam inferatur, videndum nunc est.

DISPUTATION XXX.

*Concerning first being insofar as it can be cognized by natural reason: what and what kind of being it is.*

So far I have chiefly shown that God exists and I have begun to explain  
5R in part what he is, for, as I said, these two matters cannot be entirely sep-  
arated in the cognition of God. Now it remains to discuss the remaining  
things that directly bear on cognizing what God is. At the same time, I  
will explain what kind of being he is and how great he is, for in God there  
is no other quality or magnitude than his essence. I assume, moreover,  
10R that we cannot by natural light cognize these things about God as they  
are in him, because that cognition cannot come about except through a  
clear vision of him, which is not natural to human beings, as I will also  
show below. Nor can all these things simply be demonstrated a priori  
about God by us, since we can only come to a cognition of him through  
15R effects. Yet by cognizing one of God's attributes from its effects, we can  
sometimes gather another attribute from it a priori, according to our  
way of conceiving the divine attributes—separately—and by eliciting an-  
other one from one concept, as I mentioned in an earlier disputation.  
And these two ways of demonstrating something should be noted and  
20R applied to each individual divine attribute insofar as it can be.

The first foundation and principle, as it were, of all that is attributed  
of God, then, is that he is a *per se* necessary being and that it is his through  
his essence (which was demonstrated in the previous disputation). The  
very being of God, therefore, is his quiddity. But what is included in this  
being or what is implied by that very being through essence is now to be  
25R seen.

<sup>1</sup>Latin text by and large follows the 1597 edition, with most abbreviations expanded and spellings modernized. Punctuation kept as is. I checked the text against the Vivès edition for significant variations. For recorded variants, A = 1597 edition and V = Vivès edition. Note that the Vivès edition does not have marginal notes; many, though not all, of the marginal notes from the 1597 edition are included in the Vivès edition as italicised text at the head of paragraphs.

<sup>2</sup>Numbers in angle brackets indicate page numbers in the Vivès edition for ease of reference, given that it is the most widely used edition.

## SECTIO 1.

*Utrum de essentia Dei sit esse ens omnino perfectum.*

1. Respondeo, de quidditate Dei est ut sit ens undequaque perfectum. Potestque hoc naturali lumine evidenter demonstrari. Ut haec probemus, supponendum est, perfectum id dici cui nihil deest, ex 5. *Metaphysicae*. Quod potest vel privative, vel negative intelligi. Priori modo dicitur perfectum, cui nihil deest quod ei debitum sit natura sua ad suam integritatem seu complementum, et hoc modo multa sunt entia perfecta in suis speciebus vel generibus, non tamen sunt perfecta simpliciter in tota latitudine entis. Posteriori ergo modo dicitur perfectum cui absolute nihil perfectionis deest: atque hoc modo illud ens dicitur absolute perfectum cui omnis perfectio ita debita est, ac necessario inest, ut nulla ei omnino deesse possit, nec privative, nec negative, et utroque sensu dicitur esse de essentia Dei, esse simpliciter perfectum.

Nulla perfectionis privatio in Deum cadere potest.

2. Et imprimis, quod non possit Deus privative <61> carere aliqua perfectione, est per se evidentissimum, quia, sicut Deus ex se est, ita ex se habet totam perfectionem sibi debitam. A quo enim superiori illam haberet, cum ipse sit supremum ens? Habet ergo illam independentem ab omni alio, ergo a nullo alio privari potest tota perfectione sibi debita. Nec vero ipse potest seipsum illa privare, tum quia omnis res naturaliter appetit et retinet perfectionem sibi debitam, nisi ab alio potentiori illa privetur, tum maxime quia Deus non habet huiusmodi perfectionem a se effective, sed formaliter seu negative, quia scilicet non habet ab alio, sed ex formali eminentia suae naturae. Atque hinc maxime confirmatur haec pars ex actualitate ac simplicitate divini esse, nam res simplicissima non potest aliqua perfectione privari, nisi destruat tota: esse autem Dei destrui non potest cum sit simpliciter necessarium: ergo nec minui, cum sit simplicissimum, et actualissimum: ergo non potest non simul habere totam perfectionem suae naturae debitam. Et in hoc saltem sensu attigit hanc veritatem, et rationem eius Aristoteles lib. 12. *Metaphysicae* cap. 7.

Aristoteles.

## SECTION 1.

*Whether it belongs to God's essence to be a wholly perfect being.*

1. I respond that it belongs to the quiddity of God to be a being perfect in every respect. And this can be clearly demonstrated by natural light. In order to prove this, we need to assume that something is called perfect that lacks nothing (from *Metaphysics* V). This can be understood either privatively or negatively. In the former way, something is called perfect that lacks nothing that it ought to have by its nature for its integrity or completeness. There are many perfect beings in this way in their species or genera, yet they are not perfect without qualification in the whole breadth of being. In the latter way, therefore, something is called perfect that lacks absolutely nothing of perfection. In this way, that being is called absolutely perfect that ought to have every perfection and to which every perfection belongs in such a way that it cannot entirely lack any of them, neither privatively nor negatively. God's essence is said to be perfect being without qualification in both senses.

2. And, above all, that God could not privatively lack any perfection is *per se* most evident, since, just as God exists from himself, so also he from himself has the complete perfection that he ought to have. For from what superior being would he have it, given that he is the supreme being? Therefore, he has complete perfection independently from all other beings and, therefore, no other being can deprive him of the complete perfection that he ought to have. But neither can he deprive himself, both because every thing naturally desires and preserves the perfection it ought to have unless it is deprived of it by another more powerful thing and especially because God does not have this kind of perfection from himself effectively but rather formally or negatively (because, of course, he does not have it from another but from the formal eminence of his own nature). And from here this part is especially confirmed as a result of the actuality and simplicity of divine being, for a most simple thing cannot be deprived of any perfection without destroying the whole. Moreover, the being of God cannot be destroyed since it is necessary without qualification. Neither, therefore, can it be diminished, since it is most simple and most actual. Therefore, it cannot fail to have at the same time the complete perfection of its nature that it ought to have. And at least in this sense Aristotle touches on this truth and the

No privation of perfection can befall God.

Aristotle.

Immo nec ulla  
negatio.

35 3. [2 continued.]<sup>3</sup> Quod autem omnis perfectio huic  
divino esse debita sit, atque adeo, quod non possit Deus  
omnino carere etiam negative aliqua perfectione, probatur  
primo quia hoc indicat divina scriptura, cum dicit, *Quae*  
40 *facta sunt in eo vitam esse*, Ioannes 1. et cum ipsum appel-  
lat, *Omne bonum* Exodus 33. sic etiam de Deo docent sancti  
Patres, Dionysius cap. 5. *De divinis nominibus* et Irenaeus  
lib. 4. cap. 37. cum aiunt, *Deum continere omnia*, vel, *esse*  
45 *omnia*, ut loquitur Clemens Alexandriae lib. 1. *Paedagogus*  
cap. 9. Sic denique (quod ad nos nunc spectat) senserunt  
philosophi, ut de Hermete, seu Mercurio Trismegisto refert  
Cyrillus lib. 1. *Contra Iulianum* sub fine et Suidas in Mercurio,  
et Aesculapius ad Amnionem regem, qui sic ait. *Deum*  
50 *omnium dominum, factorem, Patrem, ac septum imploro, ac*  
*omnia unum existentia, et unum omnia existentem, nam om-*  
*nia plenitudo unum est, et in uno.* Multaque similia legun-  
tur ex Trismegisto in *Pimandro* praesertim in fine cap. 5. et  
15. ubi habentur fere omnia verba, quae Cyrillus refert. Ubi  
ex Platone etiam et Porphyrio adducit non dissimilia.

55 4. [3.] Secundo probatur a posteriori ex dictis supra de  
effectibus Dei seu primi entis: Omnis enim perfectio possi-  
bilis aut est increata, aut creata. Si increata sit, in solo primo  
ente esse potest, quia nihil est increatum <col. b> extra ip-  
sum. Si vero est creata, ergo necessario esse debet ab hoc  
60 primo ente ut a prima et principali causa, quia ostensum  
est nihil esse posse praeter ipsum, nisi ab ipso: ergo necesse  
est ut omnis talis perfectio sit in ipso, nobiliori, et excellen-  
tiori modo. Quia perfectio effectus necessario supponitur in  
causa, quae ex se, et propria, ac sufficienti virtute potest talem  
65 perfectionem communicare effectui. Quo modo enim dare  
posset causa quod nullo modo in se haberet? Atque haec ra-

35R reason for it in *Metaphysics* XII, ch. 7.

3. Moreover, that every perfection ought to be had by this divine  
being and, therefore, that God cannot wholly lack any perfection even  
negatively, is proven first by the fact that divine scripture proclaims this  
when it says in John 1[:3–4]: ‘[All things] were made [by him; and  
40R without him nothing was made that was made.] In him was life ...’  
Also, when it names God ‘all good’ in Exodus 33[:19]. The holy Fathers  
also teach the same thing about God: Dionysius, *On the divine names*,  
ch. 5; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 4, ch. 20, when he says that ‘God  
contains everything’,<sup>4</sup> or ‘God is everything’, as Clement of Alexandria  
45R says in *Paedagogus* book 1, ch. 9. Finally, what is relevant for us now, the  
philosophers think the same, as Cyril of Alexandria relates of Hermes or  
Mercurius Trismegistus in *Against Julian*, book 1, near the end. Suidas  
[also says this in *Sudo*], s. v. ‘Mercurius’. Also, Asclepius to King Am-  
mon, who says: ‘I beseech God, the Lord, Maker, Father, and Encom-  
50R passer of all; who being All is One and being One is All, for the Fullness  
of all is One and in One.’<sup>5</sup> Many similar things can be read in Trismegis-  
tus, *Pymander*, especially towards the end of chs. 5 and 15, where he has  
almost all the words that Cyril of Alexandria relates and where he brings  
up statements from Plato and Porphyry that are not unlike these.

55R 4. It is proven a posteriori, second, from what was said above about  
the effects of God or of the first being. For every possible perfection is  
either uncreated or created. If it is uncreated, it can only be in the first  
being, since there is nothing uncreated besides it. But if it is created, then  
it must necessarily be from this first being as from a first and principal  
60R cause. For it was already shown that nothing can be besides it except  
from it. It is necessary, therefore, that every such perfection be in the  
first being in a more noble and more excellent way. For the perfection  
of an effect is necessarily presupposed in the cause that resulted in it and  
that can by a proper and sufficient power communicate such a perfection  
65R to the effect. For how could there be a cause that in no way had [that  
perfection] in itself? And this same argument can be made analogously

Indeed, there is  
no negation.

<sup>3</sup>Main numbering indicates paragraph numbering as found in Vivés edition; numbering in square brackets indicates paragraph numbering as found in 1597 edition. It looks like the 1597 edition’s numbering skips from ‘3’ to ‘5’ and then at some point someone split the long second paragraph to make the numbering come out right.

<sup>4</sup>Chapter divisions vary between different editions of this work.

<sup>5</sup>*Corpus Hermeticum* xvi.3.

tio eadem proportione concludit de quacumque perfectione possibili vera, ac reali, sive illa actu reperiatur in aliqua creatura sive non, nam si possibilis est, non nisi a Deo esse potest: ergo necesse est ut iam nunc sit aliquo modo in Deo, quia nihil potest esse ab ipso nisi quod aliquo modo est in ipso, est ergo de essentia Dei ut in se includat aliquo modo omnem perfectionem entis.

5. Secundo potest hoc a priori ostendi, quia Deus est primum ens, ut ostensum est: ergo est etiam summum et perfectissimum essentialiter: ergo de essentia eius est ut includat aliquo modo omnem perfectionem possibilem in tota latitudine entis. Prima consequentia ex terminis fere per se nota est: nam si Deus est primum ens causalitate et necessitate essendi, necesse est ut sit etiam perfectione primum. Quod etiam probatum in superioribus est ex eo, quod omnia inferiora entia eo sunt magis vel minus perfecta, quo magis vel minus accedunt ad hoc primum ens: neque potest in hac rerum inaequalitate ita procedi in infinitum, quin detur aliquod supremum ens, quod sit caeterorum caput et mensura, quod non potest esse aliud nisi ipsum ens primum. Est ergo illud summe perfectum. Secunda vero consequentia in principio facta, videri potest minus evidens, quia recte potest intelligi quod sit perfectissimum omnium, et non contineat perfectiones omnium, sicut homo est perfectissimus omnium animalium, et tamen non continet omnium animalium perfectiones. Sed nihilominus consequentia illa probatur. Primo ex praecedenti ratiocinatione, quia primum ens non utcumque est perfectius caeteris, sed tamquam primum principium eorum: ut autem res aliqua sit principium alterius, non satis est quod sit perfectior illa, ut per se constat, sed necesse est ut perfectionem illius in se contineat aliquo modo, si ergo primum ens est perfectissimum tamquam principium omnium, non solum est perfectius caeteris, sed etiam omnium perfectiones in se praehabet.

6. Deinde probatur a D. Thoma 1. p. q. 4. art. 2. ex principio supra probato, quod primum ens est ipsum esse subsis-

about any true and real possible perfection whatsoever, whether it is actually found in some creature or not, for if it is possible it cannot exist except from God. Therefore, it is necessary that it already be in some way in God, since nothing can be from him except that it already be in some way in him. It belongs to the essence of God, therefore, to include in himself in some way every perfection of being.

5. Second, this can be shown a priori, since God is the first being, as was shown. Therefore, he is also essentially the highest and most perfect being. Therefore, it belongs to his essence to include in some way every perfection possible in the whole breadth of being. The first consequence is almost *per se* known from the terms. For if God is the first being in causality and in the necessity of being, it is necessary that he is also the first being in perfection. This was also proven in previous sections by the fact that every lower being is more or less perfect by coming more or less close to this first being. Nor can there be an infinite regress in this inequality of things in such a way that there is not some supreme being that is the source and measure of everything else; such a supreme being cannot be anything other than the first being itself. That being, therefore, is most perfect.

The second consequence given in the beginning can seem less evident, however, since one can rightly understand that something is the most perfect of all beings but that it does not contain the perfections of all beings, just as a human being is the most perfect of all animals and yet does not contain the perfections of all animals. Nevertheless, that consequence is proven. First, from the foregoing reasoning, since the first being is not more perfect than all the other beings in any way whatsoever, but is more perfect as their first principle. Moreover, in order for some thing to be the principle of another, it is not enough that it is more perfect than that other thing—as is *per se* obvious—but it is necessary that it contain the perfection of the other being in itself in some way. If, therefore, the first being is the most perfect being as a principle of all the other beings, it is not only more perfect than them but it also has the perfections of all of them in itself before.

6. Next, (following St. Thomas, *Summa theologiae* Ia.4.2) it is proven from the principle proven above: that the first being is itself being subsist-

Ratio a priori  
conclusionis.

An a priori  
argument for the  
conclusion.

tens per essentiam, ergo claudit in se omnem perfectionem  
essendi. Quam rationem eiusque propriam vim commodius  
declarabimus assertionem sequenti. Nunc aliter probatur illa  
105 consequentia quia primum ens non solum est perfectius om- 105R  
nibus quae sunt, sed etiam omnibus quae esse possunt: ergo  
necesse est quod sit perfectius omnibus non utcumque, sed ut  
continens in se perfectiones omnium. Antecedens probatum  
est, quia primum ens non solum est primum inter ea quae  
110 sunt, sed etiam inter omnia possibilium. Item quia si esset 110R  
possibile aliud ens perfectius, vel illud esset ens necessarium, et  
sic iam actu esset, vel posset effici ab alio, et hoc non, quia  
non a primo ente, cum non possit efficere aliquod perfectius  
se, ergo non est ullo modo possibile ens perfectius, ergo pri-  
115 mum est ens perfectissimum omnium possibilium. Conse- 115R  
quentia vero probatur, quia dato quocumque ente quod excedat  
caetera in perfectione, non tamen contineat perfectiones  
omnium, illud non potest esse perfectius omni ente possi-  
bili, quia potest esse aliud quod non solum sit perfectius, sed  
120 etiam contineat reliqua. Neque enim dici potest hanc conti- 120R  
nentiam involvere repugnantiam aut esse impossibilem, tum  
quia in rebus sensibilibus experimur qualitatem vel formam  
superiorem continere perfectiones plurium inferiorum, tum  
etiam quia nulla ratio repugnantiae, aut impossibilitatis assignari  
125 potest, ut magis constabit inferius declarando modum 125R  
huius perfectionis. Ut ergo primum ens sit perfectius omni  
possibili, necesse est ut omnem perfectionem possibilem in se  
includat, nam si aliqua perfectio esset possibilis, et illi deesset,  
perfectius esset illud ens quod illam perfectionem simul cum  
130 omnibus aliis haberet. Et propter hanc causam recte dixerunt 130R  
Augustinus, et Anselmus Deum esse tale ens, quo maius ex-  
cogitari non potest. Et Gregorius Nyssenus liber *De opif-  
cio hominis* cap. 1. *Deum esse tale bonum, quod omne bonum,  
quod intelligendo cogitandove comprehenditur, exsuperat.* Cog-  
135 itando, scilicet, tali cogitatione quae in re cogitata non 135R  
involvat repugnantiam, sed sit de re vere possibili. Etenim si  
cogi- <col. b> tatio non sit huiusmodi, res cogitata non erit  
maior, immo nec res erit, sed ens rationis et prorsus nihil:  
si autem aliquid maius vere cogitetur, illud erit ens possibile,

ing through essence. Therefore, it encloses in itself every perfection of  
being. We will explain the reason for this and its proper force more help-  
fully in a subsequent assertion. At present that consequence is proven in  
another way. For the first being is not only more perfect than everything  
else that is, but it is also more perfect than anything that could be. It is  
necessary, therefore, that it is more perfect than everything else not in  
any way whatsoever, but as containing in itself the perfections of every-  
thing. The antecedent was proven, since the first being is not only first  
among all the beings that are, but is also first among all possible beings.

Also, because if there were another possible being that was more  
perfect, it would either be a necessary being or it could be effected by  
another being. If the former, it would already be actual. But the latter  
cannot be the case, since a more perfect being could not be effected  
by the first being, given that it could not effect something more per-  
fect than itself. A more perfect being, therefore, is in no way possible.  
The first being, therefore, is the most perfect being of all possible beings.  
The consequence is proven: for having been given any being whatever  
that exceeds the remaining beings in perfection and yet does not contain  
the perfections of everything, that being cannot be more perfect than all  
possible beings, since there can be something else that is not only more  
perfect but also contains all the remaining [perfections]. For it cannot  
be said that this containment involves a repugnance or that it is impossi-  
ble, both because we experience in sensible things that a higher quality  
or form contains the perfections of many lower ones and also because  
there is no reason to assign a repugnance or impossibility, as will become  
clearer below when explaining the mode of this perfection. Therefore, in  
order for the first being to be more perfect than all other possible beings,  
it is necessary that it include every possible perfection in itself. For if it  
were to lack any perfection that is possible, that being which had that  
perfection at the same time as all the other perfections would be more  
perfect.

For this reason, Augustine and Anselm rightly said that God is a be-  
ing such that no greater can be thought. And Gregory of Nyssa says in  
*De opificio hominis*, ch. 1: ‘God is such a good that he surpasses every  
good that is covered in understanding or thinking’. In thinking, namely,  
by a thought of the sort that does not involve a repugnance in the thing  
thought of, but is of a thing that is truly possible. For if the thought is  
not of this sort, the thing thought of will not be greater; in fact, it will

140 ergo et necessarium, quia haec est prima et summa perfec-  
 145 tio entis perfectissimi, ergo illud ens erit Deus, et non aliud  
 quod cogitabatur minus perfectum, est ergo de ratione Dei  
 ut sit ens tam perfectum quo maius excogitari non possit.  
 Et consequenter ut in se includat omnem perfectionem pos-  
 sibilem, tota enim perfectio vere ac rationaliter cogitatur in  
 aliquo vero ente.

150 7. Tertio potest eadem consequentia in hunc modum  
 declarari et confirmari: nam primum ens non solum ex-  
 cedit reliqua omnia sigillatim, sed etiam simul collecta: neque  
 155 utcumque illa excedit, sed optimo modo possibili in genere  
 entis: sed optimus modus superandi reliqua omnia simul  
 sumpta, est continendo eminentiori modo quidquid est in  
 omnibus illis. Quod aliter declaratur, nam quando una res  
 est perfectior aliis, non tamen continet totam perfectionem  
 160 illorum, quamvis absolute sit perfectior, tamen secundum ali-  
 quam rationem contingit esse minus perfectam, ut sol est sim-  
 pliciter nobilior luna, et nihilominus luna in aliqua dignitate  
 vel virtute excedit solem. At vero primum ens ita excedere de-  
 bet, et simpliciter et in omni nobilitate et perfectione reliqua  
 165 omnia, ut neque absolute, neque secundum aliquam rationem  
 ab aliquo superari possit quem modum perfectionis et exces-  
 sus habere non posset nisi omnem perfectionem in se con-  
 tineret. Nisi autem ita excederet omnia, non esset primum  
 ens sub omni ratione et perfectione entis, et consequenter  
 neque ab ipso posset omnis ratio et perfectio entis manare.

170 8. Dices, Hac ratione probaretur illud primum ens de-  
 bere esse tale ut omnium entium perfectiones ita in se con-  
 tineat, sicut in ipsis sunt, quia tota haec perfectio cogitari  
 potest in aliquo ente, et hic modus, excedendi reliqua est  
 175 perfectior. Respondetur negando sequelam, quia non omnes  
 illae perfectiones formaliter sumptae, spectant ad consum-  
 matam entis perfectionem: neque omnes inter se compossi-  
 biles sunt, neque cum exacta ac summa rei perfectione. Unde  
 ad hoc declarandum recte distinguunt Theologi duplices en-  
 tis perfectiones, quasdam vocant simpliciter simplices, alias

140R not be a thing at all, but only a being of reason and entirely nothing.  
 145R But if something truly greater is thought of, that will be a possible being.  
 Therefore, it will also be necessary, since this is the first and highest per-  
 fection of a most perfect being. Therefore, that being will be God and  
 not something else that is thought less perfect. It belongs, therefore, to  
 the *ratio* of God to be a being so perfect that no greater can be thought  
 and, consequently, to be a being that includes in itself every possible per-  
 fection. For all perfection is truly and rationally thought to be in some  
 true being.

150R 7. Third, the same consequence can be explained and confirmed in  
 this way: for the first being not only exceeds all the others taken singly  
 but also taken collectively all at once. Nor does it exceed them in any  
 way whatsoever, but in the best way possible in the genus of being. But  
 the best way of surpassing all the other things taken all at once is to  
 contain in a more eminent way whatever is in them. To explain it in a  
 155R different way, when one thing is more perfect than others, it, neverthe-  
 less, does not contain the whole perfection of them. Even though it is  
 absolutely more perfect, it could still happen that it is less perfect accord-  
 ing to some *ratio*. For example, the sun is more noble, strictly speaking,  
 than the moon, and yet the moon exceeds the sun in a certain dignity and  
 160R virtue. But the first being, on the other hand, must so exceed all other  
 beings, both strictly speaking and in every nobility and perfection, that  
 it cannot be surpassed by something else according to any *ratio*. It could  
 not have this mode of perfection and exceeding except that it contain ev-  
 ery perfection in itself. Moreover, if it did not exceed all other things in  
 165R this way, it would not be the first being under every *ratio* and perfection  
 of being. Consequently, not every *ratio* and perfection of being could  
 flow from it.

170R 8. You will say that this argument proves that the first being must  
 be such that the perfections of all beings are contained in it in just the  
 way that they are in those other beings, since this whole perfection can  
 be thought to be in some being. And this way of exceeding the other  
 beings is more perfect. I respond by denying the consequence, since not  
 all those perfections taken formally are relevant for the consummate per-  
 fection of being. Nor are they all compossible with each other or with  
 the exact and highest perfection of a thing. Hence, in order to explain  
 175R this matter, theologians rightly distinguish two kinds of perfection of be-  
 ing. Some they call ‘unqualified simple perfections’, but others ‘qualified

Obiectioni  
 respondetur.

Response to an  
 objection.

vero perfectiones secundum quid, seu non simpliciter. Prioris generis sunt, quae neque involvunt <63> imperfectionem ullam, nec repugnantiam vel oppositionem cum alia maiori, vel aequali perfectione. Unde de ratione perfectionis simpliciter imprimis est, ut sit absoluta et non relativa: nam perfectio relativa excludit aliam sibi oppositam, quae, quantum est ex se, potest esse aequae perfecta. Deinde esse debet talis perfectio absoluta, quae nullam includat imperfectionem, neque alteri meliori opponatur. Unde ex Anselmo in *Monologio* cap. 14. definiri solet perfectio simpliciter quod sit *illa quae in unoquoque est melior ipsa quam non ipsa*: id est, quae in individuo entis, seu in latitudine entis ut sic, melior est ipsa quam quaelibet repugnans, ut bene exposuit Scotus in 1. dist. 8. q. 1. ad 1. et Caietanus *De ente et essentia* cap. 2. Omnis autem alia perfectio, quae non est huiusmodi, dici potest secundum quid, seu non simpliciter, seu in certo genere.

9. De perfectionibus ergo simpliciter dicendum est, omnes esse in Deo formaliter, quia in suo formali conceptu nullam imperfectionem, sed puram perfectionem involvunt, neque inter se repugnantiam includunt. Unde sic illas habere, id est formaliter, melius est quam aliqua earum carere, et ideo de ratione entis summe perfecti in tota latitudine entis, est ut has perfectiones formaliter includat. Adde, in his perfectionibus non posse cogitari altio rem modum continendi illas quam formaliter, quia intra suam formalem rationem, nec limitationem, nec imperfectionem includunt, neque altior gradus entis excogitari potest quam ille, ad quem hae formales perfectiones pertinent, quales sunt vivere, sapere, et alia huiusmodi. At vero de perfectionibus secundum quid, seu in certo genere, dicendum est non pertinere ad consummatam perfectionem primi entis ut illas formaliter includat, ut recte probat obiectio facta, quia alias repugnantia et opposita includeret. Item saepe huiusmodi perfectio in suo conceptu formali includit limitationem, compositionem aut aliam similem imperfectionem: ergo ut sic non potest pertinere ad con-

perfections' or 'perfections relative to something'. Of the former kind are those that do not involve any imperfection nor any repugnance or opposition with another greater or equal perfection. Hence, it first and foremost belongs to the *ratio* of an unqualified perfection to be absolute and non-relative. For a relative perfection excludes something opposite to itself. This opposite, insofar as it itself is concerned, could be something equally perfect. Further, it must be such an absolute perfection that it does not include any imperfection and that it is not opposed to something better. Hence, an unqualified perfection is usually defined with Anselm, *Monologion*, ch. 15, as 'that where in any thing whatsoever it is better to be so than not to be so',<sup>6</sup> that is, that where in an individual being or in the whole breadth of being as such it is better to be so than to be anything whatsoever repugnant to being so. Scotus explains this well in I, dist. 8, q. 1, ad 1, as well as Cajetan in *De ente et essentia*, ch. 2. Every other perfection that is not of this kind is a qualified perfection or a perfection relative to something or only in a certain genus.

9. Therefore, concerning unqualified perfections it should be said that they are all formally in God, since in their formal concept they involve no imperfection but only pure perfection and they do not include any repugnance with one another. Hence to have them in this way—that is, formally—is better than to lack any of them. And for this reason it belongs to the *ratio* of the being that is highest and most perfect in the whole breadth of being to include these perfections formally. In addition, in the case of these perfections no higher way of containing them can be thought of than formally, since they include no limitation or imperfection within their formal *ratio*. Nor can a higher grade of being be thought of than that to which these formal perfections belong, perfections such as to live, to be wise, and others of this kind.

On the other hand, with respect to perfections that are qualified or only in a certain genus, it should be said that it does not belong to the consummate perfection of the first being to include these formally. The objection rightly proves this, since otherwise the first being would include repugnance and opposites. Also, a perfection of this sort often includes limitation, composition, or some other similar imperfection in its formal concept. Therefore, it cannot as such belong to the consummate

<sup>6</sup>This is not an exact quotation from Anselm, but it is not too difficult to gather this definition from what he says in ch. 15 (ch. 14 is commonly cited but in modern editions the relevant text appears in ch. 15). The passage is a standard one to cite among later scholastics when discussing this distinction between unqualified perfections and qualified perfections.

Anselmus.

Scotus.  
Caietanus.Omnes  
perfectiones  
simpliciter  
simplices in Deo  
sunt formaliter.

Anselm.

Scotus.  
Cajetan.All unqualified  
simple  
perfections are  
formally in God.

summatam perfectionem supremi entis. Pertinet ergo ad perfectionem illius entis, ut has omnes perfectiones eminenter contineat: estque hic modus consentaneus excellentiae illius entis, quod habet gradum et modum essendi eminentiorem, quam omne ens in quo hae perfectiones formaliter reperiuntur, et ideo eminentiori modo continere debet has <col. b> perfectiones, quam sint in entibus factis.

Quid sit unam rem in alia eminenter contineri.

10. Quid autem sit continere unam rem eminenter aliam, seu perfectionem eius, disputant Theologi cum D. Thoma 1. p. q. 4. Breviter tamen dicendum est continere eminenter, esse habere talem perfectionem superioris rationis, quae virtute contineat quidquid est in inferiori perfectione, quod non potest melius explicari a nobis quam in ordine ad causalitatem, vel effectum. Unde perfectiones omnes creaturarum, quatenus sunt eminenter in Deo, nihil aliud sunt quam ipsamet creatrix essentia Dei ut dixit Augustinus lib. 4. *De Genesi ad litteram* cap. 24. et sequentibus et lib. 4. *De Trinitate* a principio et tract. 1. *In Evangelium Ioannis*. Anselmus in *Monologio* cap. 34. et 35. et in *Proslogio* cap. 17. Dicitur autem creatrix essentia esse eminenter omnia, quatenus se sola et sua eminenti virtute rebus omnibus potest illas perfectiones communicare. Non quod formaliter loquendo, et secundum praecisionem rationis, posse res efficere sit eas eminenter continere: nos enim haec ratione distinguimus, et causalem hanc locutionem veram esse credimus: Quia continet eminenter, ideo potest illas efficere, sed explicamus illam continentiam per ordinem ad effectum, quia non possumus commodius et clarius id praestare.

11. Quod enim quidam aiunt continere eminenter perfectiones creaturarum esse, continere quidquid est perfectionis in illis, seclusis imperfectionibus, obscurius est, nam cum dicitur Deum continere quidquid est perfectionis creaturae seclusis imperfectionibus, aut subintelligitur eminenter, et sic nihil explicatur, aut subintelligitur formaliter, et sic involvi-

perfection of the supreme being.

Therefore, it belong to the perfection of this being that it contain all these perfections eminently. To contain them in this way is appropriate to the excellence of that being, which has a more eminent grade and mode of being than every being in which these perfections are found formally. And for this reason it must contain these perfections in a more eminent way than they are contained in created beings.<sup>7</sup>

10. But what it is for one thing to contain another thing or its perfection eminently is something about which the theologians dispute with St. Thomas, *Summa theologiae* Ia.4.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it should briefly be said that to contain eminently is to have such a perfection of a superior *ratio*, which virtually contains whatever is in the lower perfection. We cannot explain this better than in relation to causality or effect. Hence, all the perfections of created things, insofar as they are eminently in God, are nothing else than the very creator essence of God, as Augustine said in *De Genesi ad litteram*, book 4, ch. 24 and following; in *On the Trinity*, book 4, from the beginning; in *In Evangelium Ioannis*, tract. 1; and Anselm in *Monologion*, chs. 34 and 35, and in *Proslogion*, ch. 17. The creator essence, moreover, is said to be all things eminently, insofar as by itself alone and but its eminent power, it can communicate these perfections to all things. Not that being able to effect things is to contain them eminently, speaking formally and according to the precision of *ratio*. For we can distinguish these by *ratio*, and we believe that this causal locution is true: since it contains them eminently, it can for that reason effect them. But we explain this containing in relation to the effect, since we cannot present the matter more helpfully and clearly.

What it is for one thing to contain another eminently.

11. For what some people say—that to contain the perfections of created things eminently is to contain whatever perfections are in them with the imperfections left off—is more obscure. For when God is said to contain whatever is of a creature’s perfection but with the imperfections left off, either we are tacitly understanding ‘eminently’ with ‘contain’, in which case nothing is explained, or we are tacitly understanding ‘for-

<sup>7</sup>For nn. 9–12 I have been helped by referring to the translation in *Descartes’ Meditations: Background Source Materials*, edited by Roger Ariew, John Cottingham, and Tom Sorell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34–35.

<sup>8</sup>The notion of eminent containment comes up hundreds of times in Suárez’s writings in diverse contexts. He comes as close to a helpful explication here as in any passage of which I am aware, though one might well wish for more.

245 tur repugnantia: nam seclusa omni imperfectione non re- 245R  
manet formalis perfectio creaturae ut sic: quia in intrinseca  
formali ratione et conceptu creaturae includitur imperfectio.

Obiectioni  
respondetur.

12. Dices hinc sequi, nullam perfectionem creatam esse  
250 formaliter in Deo, quia nulla perfectio creata est, quae for- 250R  
maliter sumpta non includat imperfectionem. Respondeo,  
verum esse nullam perfectionem creatam secundum adae-  
quatam rationem quam habet in creatura, esse in Deo for-  
maliter, sed eminenter tantum: non est enim in Deo sapien- 255R  
tia creata, nam ut sic est accidens et finita perfectio, et idem  
est de caeteris similibus. Dicitur ergo Deus quasdam ex his  
255 perfectionibus continere formaliter, quia secundum eas habet  
aliquam forma- <64> lem convenientiam cum creatura, ra-  
tione cuius illa perfectio secundum idem nomen, et eandem  
260 rationem seu conceptum formalem attribuitur Deo et crea- 260R  
turae, salva analogia, quae inter Deum et creaturam semper  
intercedit. Quando vero non est talis convenientia, nec for-  
malis denominatio, sed sola efficacia divinae virtutis, tunc  
dicimus intercedere continentiam eminentialem. Atque ita  
265 in Deo nulla perfectio est formaliter nisi vel secundum pro- 265R  
prium conceptum Dei, vel saltem secundum conceptum ab-  
strahentem a Deo, et creaturis. Restabat hic alia difficultas,  
quia sequitur esse in Deo infinitas perfectiones: sed haec facil-  
lime expediatur ex dicendis in duobus punctis sequentibus.

mally’, in which case it involves a repugnance. For if every imperfection  
is left off, there does not remain the formal perfection of a created thing  
as such, because imperfection is included in the formal *ratio* and concept  
of a created thing.

12. You will say that from this it follows that no created perfection  
250R is formally in God, since there is no created perfection that does not  
include imperfection when taken formally. I respond that it is true that  
no created perfection is in God formally according to the precise *ratio*  
that it has in a created thing; rather, it is in God only eminentely. For  
created wisdom is not in God, since as such it is an accident and a finite  
255R perfection. The same is true for other similar cases. Therefore, God  
is said to contain certain of these perfections formally, since after them  
he has some formal agreement with a created thing, by reason of which  
that perfection is attributed to God with the same name and the same  
formal *ratio* or concept, as long as we preserve the analogy that is always  
260R present between God and a created thing. But when there is not such  
an agreement or formal denomination, but only the efficacy of divine  
power, then we say that eminent containment intervenes. And so no  
perfection is formally in God except according to a concept proper to  
God or at least according to a concept abstracting from God and created  
265R things.

A response to an  
objection.

Another difficulty remains here, since it follows that there are infi-  
nite perfections in God. But this will be resolved easily from what will  
be said in the following two points.