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<327, col. b>²

CHAPTER 8.

In what way, finally, God cognizes future contingents.

1. *The reason for the difficulty.* — In all divine matters it is more difficult to understand how they are than how they are not. For this reason, having rejected the unsatisfactory ways in which these future [contingents] are cognized, what is left over for now is what is more difficult: for us to show, if it can be done, the way in which these are cognized [by God].

The reason for the difficulty, moreover, can be gathered well enough from what was said, since it seems that they can be cognized neither in something else nor in themselves. Therefore, how can they be cognized? As a result of this difficulty, as I was saying above, almost all the nominalists say that we can indeed know (*scire*) by certain faith that God cognizes these things, yet it is impossible for the human intellect to explain the way by which he cognizes them. Ockham says this in I, dist. 38, q. 1, Gabriel in q. 1, art. 2, after the second conclusion, Gregory in q. 2, art. 2, and Antonio de Córdoba says almost the same thing in dub. 10 of the previously cited I, q. 55.³

2. *These future [contingents] are cognized through a simple intuition of truth.* Nevertheless, it should be said that God cognizes these future [contingents] only through a simple intuition of the truth or of the thing that is future in its difference of time and insofar as it is in that future and according to all the <328> conditions of existence which are going to hold in that. The very same authors teach in this way. For, although they say that we cannot explain how this intuition happens—which is true, since

¹Translation is based on the Vivés edition.

²Numbers in angle brackets indicate page numbers in the Vivés edition for ease of reference, given that it is the most widely used edition.

³1.7.4.

we cannot conceive divine things as they are in themselves—they do not, however, deny that we can understand that this kind of intuition is possible and in some way can be assigned its sufficient principle. Scotus, whom we cited above in chapter 5, having admitted a determination of the divine will, also grants this way. More often than not, it pleases the theologians of our time, and it always seems pleasing to me. It was not, however, invented by recent theologians, as certain people object, but belongs to ancient theologians to whom we return. Indeed, even St. Thomas and others who explain this through presence and a simple intuition, meant nothing different, since it was shown that they were not speaking about a presence according to real existence. That having been set aside, one cannot think of any other mode of presence.

3. *That this way of cognizing is possible is shown.* First, therefore, I prove that this way is not impossible, since no repugnance that it involves can be shown. Second, because not only a present thing but also a past thing can be directly seen and cognized in itself, since just as a present thing is determined to one [possibility] so also a thing that was at one time. Hence, the truth that is revealed concerning it is already determinate and necessary. For this reason it is thought cognizable in itself and through itself by simple intuition. It will, therefore, be the same concerning future truth, which we showed above is also determined to one [possibility].⁴ Third, because each thing, in the way in which it is, is of itself cognizable, if the power is not lacking on the part of the one cognizing. But just as a present and past possible thing is understood to have its own proper disposition (*habitudinem*) to being according to which it is cognizable, so also even a future thing by reason of which the truth about the future is always determinate. Therefore, this whole is, as far as the side of the object is concerned, something cognizable. But no power of cognizing can be lacking in God. Therefore, from this we understand well enough that this mode of cognition is not impossible.

4. *What the principles of this cognition are.* And from here we further explain in some way the sufficient principles of this cognition. These can be required on two sides. First, on the side of the one cognizing. Concerning this there is no difficulty and nothing new that we need to say. For in God his essence alone is <col. b> the sufficient reason for any possible cognition, as much

⁴1.2.6–9.

in the mode of species as in the mode of potentiality or actuality if the necessary things concur from elsewhere or from the side of the object. For in the power and efficacy of his understanding God is infinite without qualification. And from this very source arises certainty and infallibility of every sort in that *scientia*, because when it is essentially infinite it is also essentially directed to the true and cannot fall short of that. Another source, therefore, is the object itself and in this is the whole difficulty. For, since nothing is before it exists, it is not clear how it can be visible of itself and in itself or how by reason of it there is from eternity a true proposition about the future, or what this truth is since it is nothing real.

5. *A way of speaking of some is explained and rejected.* On account of this, some people say that one should not look for proportion or commensuration between *scientia* and object in this cognition. For the former is not certain from the certitude of the object but only from the eminence and perspicuity of the divine intellect, which is able to cognize these objects more certainly than they themselves are cognizable. For insofar as they are not from eternity, to that extent they are of themselves uncertain. Consequently, from their side no *ratio* of such *scientia* can be given. But, nevertheless, God by his infinite power cognizes them and, as it were, defeats that difficulty.

But this thus distinctly stated involves [or] seems to use a repugnancy, because, just as the divine power cannot do that which is not of itself doable, so also divine *scientia* cannot know that which is not of itself knowable. Nor can a certain judgement be brought about that which in itself is entirely uncertain. For *scientia* cannot be brought beyond its object, nor can it in any way not be commensurated to its object in certitude and infallibility, since it requires adequation.

For this reason St. Thomas often says that *scientia* cannot be necessary unless the object has necessity under some *ratio* by which it is attained. This is the way in which objective certitude can be required on the part of the object, that is, a mode of truth such that it is apt that a certain and infallible judgement be brought. Every truth, of course, has this by virtue of the fact that truth is determinate.

6. Therefore, two dispositions should be distinguished in an object: one is of a principle and the other as it were of a terminus. In the former way, it is true that in the object of divine *scientia* one should not look for an entity or reality through which there

can be a principle of such *scientia*. For the *scientia* of God is not taken from this object, especially since this object <329> is secondary with respect to that *scientia* according to itself. And so the difficulty ceases with respect to this.

But in the latter way future contingents can be the termini of divine *scientia*, even if they do not from eternity have eternal existence to God but only through their times. For to be the terminus here is not something real and intrinsic in the object determining the *scientia* but is an extrinsic denomination arising from that *scientia*. Hence, if the *scientia* in itself otherwise has a sufficient power for infallibly attaining such an object, it can have its terminus in that object, even if there is no actual entity or existence in that object through which it is the terminus for such an act.

And this rightly explains the examples given about *scientia* of past things as such. For past things insofar as they are past also do not actually have any existence or entity with respect to those times through which they are called past. The same is true in the case of possible things, concerning which we said above that they also are termini of cognition or *scientia*, since, nevertheless, according to their state they do not have in themselves a proper and actual entity but only in cause.

Inferences from the things said in this chapter.

7. *First.* From here one understands, first, how that being which a contingent effect has or will have in its time can be a sufficient foundation on the part of the object so that it can be cognized through some eternal and most eminent *scientia* and can be seen as perfectly from eternity as if it already were, even though the being is not really from eternity. For, namely, it is sufficient so that an act of intuition can have it as its *terminus*, if from elsewhere there is sufficient power on the part of the knower.

8. *Second: what the determinate truth is that these future [contingents] have.* Second, one understands what it is for these truths or statements about future contingents to be determinately true from eternity, and what their eternal truth is, since the thing itself at that point is nothing. For properly that truth is even formally only in the divine intellect, as St. Thomas rightly teaches above, especially in the cited q. 16, art. 7,⁵ and what Aristotle indicated about truth in general in *Metaphysics* 6. But on the part

⁵1.7.19 (where the Vivès edition erroneously cites art. 2).

of the objects, this truth is nothing other than a certain aptitude or non-repugnance so that the intellect, having a sufficient power to understand, can truly state or judge concerning such an object. This aptitude in reality is nothing beyond the very being that the thing in its time <col. b> will have, by reason of which it can be related to an earlier time (and in that way is called future) and to a later time (and in that way can be called past). For this reason, this truth on the part of the object is usually called fundamental [truth], which does not always require real existence in act but only according to the *ratio* of truth. Hence, Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 5, text. 14, and near the end of book 6, distinguished two kinds of being: one that truly is and one that, although it is not, suffices for the truth of a proposition. In this way we can here say that although this future [contingent] is not from eternity, nevertheless, it, has a certain mode of being insofar as it can sufficiently ground the truth of an eternal judgement or statement, and can be the terminus of an act of understanding, which by its power can be terminated in anything participating for any reason in the *ratio* of being, whether present or future, whether past or possible.

9. *Third: what their objective presence is.* From what has been said, it is understood, third, what the objective presence that we were speaking about above is. For it can be considered in two ways. First, it can be considered in second act or, rather, with respect to a second and ultimate act. In this sense, objective presence is nothing other than actually being seen. Concerning presence explained in this way, it is very truly said that it does not precede even according to reason the *scientia*, and that for this reason the *ratio* of *scientia* cannot be rendered from such presence since the latter comes to be through the former.

In the second way, [objective presence] can be taken aptitudinally, as in the case of sensible things an object, even though not actually seen, is said to be objectively present when it is so nearby, illuminated, and arranged that it can be seen as far as it is concerned. In the present case, then, if we wish to explain objective presence in this way, it is nothing other than the very being that a thing will in its time have. It is said to be present according to existence in relation to the time in which it actually exists, yet future relative to all previous time, true or imaginary, before it comes to be. That being, therefore, insofar as it is a sufficient foundation on the side of the terminating object so that it can be seen by God (as was explained), is a sufficient *ratio* on

the side of the same object so that it can be present to an act of intuitive *scientia*. This aptitude on the part of the thing to be cognized, therefore, can be called, for its part, objective presence. And there is nothing else that can be considered.

10. *Fourth: why eternity, and the coexistence of things with it, is required for that cognition.* Fourth, from what was said it is understood in what way eternity, or the coexistence with eternity, <330> is necessary for this *scientia* of future [contingents]. For, in the first place, on the side of the divine *scientia*, the very fact that it is eternal is necessary in order to be able eternally to attain whatever in time is future. For it belongs to the *ratio* of the eternal to have its whole perfection all at once. Moreover, it belongs to the perfection of *scientia* to attain every knowable object by the very fact that it is knowable. Therefore, it cannot be that divine *scientia* acquires this perfection little by little. Therefore, from the power of its eternity it has that whole all at once from eternity itself, just as for its part it also at once has whatever is necessary for really coexisting with any thing whatever (if it itself exists). But on the part of things, in order that they can be known absolutely and eternally, it is necessary that they coexist with eternity at some time or another, even if that coexistence is not eternal, as I said. Nevertheless, on the part of the object, in order that it can be the terminus for eternal *scientia*, it is necessary that it exist at least at some time.

11. *But in what way St. Thomas infers the scientia of future [things] from eternity.* From here one can also understand what force St. Thomas's discussion in the aforementioned *ST* Ia.14.13 has, where he infers this foreknowledge of future [things] from God's eternity. It should be noted that at the beginning of that article, St. Thomas assumes as certain that God in some way cognizes these future things, which he proves from the this alone: because 'God cognizes all things that are in his power or in the power of a created thing and certain of these things are future contingents to us, and so God cognizes even future contingents.'⁶ This argument, if considered closely, immediately proves only that God has *scientia* of those things that are contingently future only insofar as possible things exist contingently, because nothing else is cognized from the force of a cognition of a power or of a cause. But because God not only cognizes those things that are in his power or in the power of a created thing as they are in themselves but also as they are in him, by directly and

⁶*ST* Ia.14.13 co.

properly conceiving and cognizing them, therefore, St. Thomas also assumes as known that God has some kind of *scientia* of future things contingently in themselves and as they are in him. Hence, at the very least, it is also clear that God can cognize the actual existence of such things, at least when they have it. All that remains to prove for him is that God can cognize things of this sort and their actual existence before they actually are in themselves, and to that extent can cognize those to be future. For these two things are either converted or, rather, are the same thing with respect to one who cognizes future things in a perfect way and through a clear intuition.

St. Thomas, then, very well makes the proof on the basis of the eternity <col. b> of divine *scientia*. For, he says, God's cognition is measured by eternity, just as his being is.⁷ He understands this concerning that cognition and *scientia* not only as it is understood absolutely in God according to his real being but also as it is understood by us under some respect or termination in some cognizable object. For it belongs to the infinite perfection of God that in this way there can be no variation in the *scientia* of that [object], since it is neither possible for the *scientia* itself to be augmented in reality nor possible not to represent simultaneously everything that can be cognized through that very [*scientia*]. For it represents naturally and necessarily, having assumed truth or cognizability in the object. For this reason, then, not only divine being but also his *scientia* is measured by eternity.

From this St. Thomas further gathers that the divine *scientia* includes in its eternal intuition everything existing in any time 'as they are in their presentiality', that is, as each has real presence in its time. That is what is put before the eternal divine view. For if that *scientia* is measured by eternity even as it is understood to be under every respect, it has that respect of *scientia* or intuition to each thing as it will be in its time. And that is what it is to have a future thing present in its eternity. It is the same thing to cognize these truths about future contingents in themselves. For God does not cognize them through the mode of combination or composition, but by intuiting the actual existences of individual things according to their times. And this is the way the old Thomists understood this discussion by St. Thomas cited at the end of the previous chapter, especially Giles of Rome in I, dist. 38, the last question. Alexander of Hales seems to use the same [understanding] in I, q. 23, memb. 4, art. 4. And this argument

⁷ST Ia.14.13 co.

was explained in this way not only through extrinsic and common [features], as certain people suggest, but from *propria* and *a priori* from the side of divine *scientia*, because, namely, it at the same time has all the possible perfection of *scientia* yet always presupposing cognizability on the part of the object. The object has this cognizability in virtue of the fact that it will have existence at some time and will coexist with eternity, as was sufficiently explained.

12. *Finally, it is gathered what cognition of the cause is required for this scientia.* Finally, one understands from what has been said that a certain cognition of the cause is necessary for having a certain *scientia* of future contingents. For, although we said above in chapter 3 with St. Thomas that these future [things] are not sufficiently cognized in cause, <331> nevertheless it is true that they are not cognized without a cause (that is, without the influx and determination of cause). Thus, in a word, we can say that they are not cognized in cause but are cognized as from a cause, that is, not by seeing the effect only in the power of a cause, but by seeing its emanation from its cause. This seems especially necessary in the case of God's *scientia*, since, as we said, it is intuitive and most perfect. Hence, it is also comprehensive of such an effect and for that reason does not cognize it without intuiting its emanation from its cause.

But two causes come up directly and are relevant as far as the present case is concerned, namely, the divine will and a human will. Therefore, the determination of each needs to be cognized through this *scientia* in order to cognize the contingently future effect. But this determination in the human will is nothing other than the very action through which it elicits free consent insofar as it is from itself, as was shown in detail in the books on *de auxiliis*. Therefore, to cognize the determination of such a causes is to cognize the very emanation of such a future effect from such a cause, for there is no intervening thing between that action and the power (under which we comprehend its every first act). And therefore, to cognize the effect and its emanation from such a cause in its determination is nothing other than to cognize the emanation in itself and the effect as it will emanate or is emanating from its cause.

But in the divine will, the determination is understood to be through an eternal free decree by which it wills to inflow [being] into such an effect at such a time. This decree, whatever it is, in our way of understanding mediates between the divine will and

the action or determination of the human will insofar as it is from God. And in relation to the divine will it is a transeunt action, although it is immanent in the human will. For this reason, such a decree is not from the divine will as from an action, because it is not an action to the action. Therefore, it is as from a cause and, if I may put it like this, as from a proximate principle on the part of God. Therefore, it is necessary to cognize this effect as going to be from such a cause.

Cognition of the divine decree is also necessary. The result of this is that in order to cognize future contingents in the stated perfect way, it is also necessary to cognize the decree of the divine will from which each future thing comes. A direct cognition of the decree alone is not sufficient, as I said, but it is necessary. Otherwise, the emanation of the effect from its whole cause cannot be cognized.

Nor is it the case that someone is stuck in future sin in virtue of not being from some decree of God as from a cause. For, although this is true of a sin insofar as it is a sin, nevertheless, the free act itself by which the sin comes about and without which it would not have come about and as it is here and now is not separable from the evil. That act, I say, is from some decree of God in its genus. For this reason, cognition of that decree is necessary for cognizing the future effect. Indeed, although we imagine the future [effect] without any positive act through a pure omission, it will be necessary to pre-cognize the decree permitting such a sin, although the decree is not its cause but only a non-impeding. In order to cognize a future effect it is not enough to cognize that the intrinsic cause will be determined to it if it is not impeded. It must also be known that it will not be impeded by some extrinsic cause, which on the part of God depends on the aforementioned decree.

From these things it is customary to infer further that this *scientia* of future contingents is, according to reason, posterior in God to the free decrees about those future contingents. But whether and in what way this is so we will discuss more fully at the end of the following book.⁸

⁸2.8.