

A Simplified Commentary on the Summa

Aron Aziz, Joseph Samo, Will Whitlow



Figure 1: St Thomas Aquinas

We would like to dedicate this work to the following people:

Aron:

Aron response file not found!

Joseph:

To those who have taught me what it is to be loved.

Will:

In gratitude for the formation that I have been so blessed to receive. “You received without pay, give without pay.” (Matt. 10:8)

“In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone.”

St. John of the Cross

# Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
1.1	The Philosophical Preliminary Foundation . . . . .	1
2	INTRODUCTION TO THE SUMMA . . . . .	7
2.1	Structure of the work . . . . .	7
2.2	Question Structure . . . . .	8
3	PART 1 . . . . .	10
3.1	The Nature of Theology (1) . . . . .	10
3.1.1	Question 1. The Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine . . . . .	10
3.2	The Existence and Nature of God (2-43) . . . . .	19
3.2.1	A. The Existence of God (2) . . . . .	19
3.2.2	Question 2. The Existence of God . . . . .	19
3.2.3	B. The attributes of the divine nature (3-26) . . . . .	24
3.2.4	Question 3. The simplicity of God . . . . .	24
3.2.5	Question 4. The Perfection of God . . . . .	28
3.2.6	Question 5. Goodness in general . . . . .	29
3.2.7	Question 6. The goodness of God . . . . .	34
3.2.8	Question 7. The infinity of God . . . . .	36
3.2.9	Question 8. The existence of God in things . . . . .	37
3.2.10	Question 9. The immutability of God . . . . .	38
3.2.11	Question 10. The eternity of God . . . . .	39
3.2.12	Question 11. The unity of God . . . . .	41
3.2.13	Question 12. How God is known by us . . . . .	43
3.2.14	Question 13. The names of God . . . . .	47
3.2.15	Question 14. God's knowledge . . . . .	53
3.2.16	Question 15. Ideas . . . . .	62
3.2.17	Question 16. Truth . . . . .	62
3.2.18	Question 17. Falsity . . . . .	63
3.2.19	Question 18. The life of God . . . . .	63
3.2.20	D. God's will (19-21) . . . . .	64
3.2.21	Question 19. The will of God . . . . .	64
3.2.22	Question 20. God's love . . . . .	65
3.2.23	Question 21. The justice and mercy of God . . . . .	65

3.2.24	E. Providence , in respect to all created things; for in the science of morals, after the moral virtues themselves, comes the consideration of prudence, to which providence belongs (22-24) . . . . .	65
3.2.25	Question 22. The providence of God . . . . .	65
3.2.26	Question 23. Predestination . . . . .	66
3.2.27	Question 24. The book of life . . . . .	66
3.2.28	F. The power of God, the principle of the divine operation as proceeding to the exterior effect (25-26) . . . . .	67
3.2.29	Question 25. The power of God . . . . .	67
3.2.30	Question 26. The divine beatitude . . . . .	67
3.3	The Blessed Trinity (27-43) . . . . .	68
3.3.1	A. The question of origin or procession (27-28) . . . . .	68
3.3.2	Question 27. The procession of the divine persons . . . . .	68
3.3.3	Question 28. The divine relations . . . . .	68
3.3.4	B. The signification of the word "person" (29-32) . . . . .	68
3.3.5	Question 29. The divine persons . . . . .	68
3.3.6	Question 30. The plurality of persons in God . . . . .	69
3.3.7	C. The trinity of divine persons (26-43) . . . . .	69
3.4	The Procession of Creature from God (44-119) . . . . .	70
3.4.1	A. The production of creatures: creation (44-46) . . . . .	70
3.4.2	B. The distinctions among creatures . . . . .	70
4	PART 1 OF PART 2 . . . . .	71
4.1	Human Action (1-48) . . . . .	71
4.2	The Intrinsic Principles of Human Acts (49-89) . . . . .	72
4.3	The Extrinsic Principles of Human Acts (90-114) . . . . .	73
5	PART 2 OF PART 2 . . . . .	74
5.1	Theological Virtues (1-46) . . . . .	74
5.2	The Cardinal Moral Virtues (47-170) . . . . .	75
6	PART 3 . . . . .	76
6.1	The Mystery of the Incarnation (1-59) . . . . .	76
6.2	The Sacraments (60-90) . . . . .	77

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide a guide for a newcomer to philosophy through Saint Thomas Aquinas' Magnum Opus, *Summa Theologiae*. This document was written by novices in the field, and therefore, facilitates to their growth as well as the reader's. Therefore, the commentaries are not rigorous or dense, but rather, should provide a more digestible reading experience for the lay man.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 The Philosophical Preliminary Foundation

The modern foundations of knowledge are based on empirical evidence. While there is nothing wrong with this as a framework for knowledge there are some notable drawbacks when one attempts to study a work like the *Summa Theologiae*. Whereas the contemporary educational system places emphasis on grammar, mathematics, and science. The medieval tradition of education was more naturally steeped in the liberal arts.<sup>2</sup> Education for the medievals began with *trivium* of grammar, logic, and rhetoric as the foundational courses.

---

1. I was clearly hungry when writing this.

2. Liberal arts reveal an important notion within the name. They are called such because they are the free arts. These are the types of practices that one is able to enter into when every moment does not have to be dedicated to survival and you have free time.

Students would later progress to the *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Eventually allowing students to progress to philosophy and then theology. Now, why does this matter? This is important because it explains the prerequisites that St. Thomas Aquinas is presuming of his students while writing the *Summa Theologiae*. The *Summa Theologiae* is the textbook for students studying theology. Since we are not formed in the same educational system, it is often difficult for casual readers to pick up the *Summa Theologiae* as a cold starting point. Let's consider some of the notable aspects of this educational system, in order to avoid the mistake of trying to study nuclear physics without having any concept of atoms.<sup>3</sup>

**Importance of Logic** The *trivium*, foundation of all sciences,<sup>4</sup> is the language through which one is able to understand how Aquinas is forming ideas. While it is certainly my hope that the audience for this project through their technical background are naturally predisposed to engage with the logic of the work, it is still important to outline some of the basics of Aristotelian logic in order to ensure a common framework. Largely thanks to the advancements in mathematics and computing, the main understanding and engagement with logic is through, what it is called in philosophical language, symbolic logic. The idea of this logic is that you have variables through which you are able to perform discrete operations on in order to express arguments in a simplistic mathematical manner. The challenge with this is that mathematical operations can lead to contradictions in comparison to how language operates. Thus symbolic logic is incredibly powerful in computing where every operation is

---

3. Disclaimer: as an author I am squarely a product of the contemporary STEM focused educational system more than I am a product of the Traditional Liberal Arts. Some may find this appealing, others will likely be annoyed by various grammatical errors in my writings. I apologize for this and hope that the errors will decrease over the duration of the project. It took typecasting writing into computer programming for me to truly have any interest in this art, which says a lot about my approach.

4. This will be the more encompassing use of the term science as Aquinas would have used it. Which means science refers to topics of study rather than empirical investigations. In this view, theology is the highest science because it grasps the highest most perfect truth and object of study (i.e. God). As God is the Creator, God is also beyond His creation, thus empirical knowledge of God is not logically possible. This last part is putting the cart in front of the horse as we will cover this very shortly in the *Summa*.

reducible to pure binary. While it would not be facetious to engage with the *Summa* from this framework, it would also not be in the spirit of how the author is forming arguments. As such, continuing to review the principles of Aristotelian logic will be important for this project.

**The Ten Categories** The foundation of Aristotelian logic is the ten categories. You have likely heard of these in different settings, but they are important as many of the misunderstandings with the Summa derive from faulty perceptions of the ten categories. To begin the ten categories are subdivided into two different sets. The first being that of substance. Substance is actually both one of the categories and an entire subset containing only itself. The second subset is accidents. The accident subset is composed of the remaining nine categories. Admittedly even this description is a simplification for more in-depth discussions consider the following article: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-categories>

A Substance - Defines the whatness of entities.

1. Substance - The term substance is actually divided into two: primary and secondary substance. In short, substance deals with what something is.

i Primary substance - is an individual. The example that you, the reader, are an individual human.<sup>5</sup> Primary substance is not human, but you specifically as in the individual who is called *INSERT YOUR NAME*. Likewise you may have a dog or a cat who would likewise be a primary substance.

ii Secondary substance - is the universal nature that the individual is. For instance: human, cat, or dog are all terms that indicate a secondary substance.

***iii Important metaphysical note: There is only one case in which primary and secondary substances are one and the same. That***

---

5. Presuming AI or other computer programs are not parsing over this text.

*is with God. This is true as God is entirely one and yet the term God also describes the secondary universal properties of God.*

B Accidents - Define non-essential properties of entities.

2. Quantity - how many substances are present. As in you may have two dogs. The number present is not a requirement of their existence. 1
3. Quality - Age, loudness, fitness, etc. are all the accidental qualities that adhere within the substance.
4. Relation - Are the dogs siblings from the same litter or are they simply became friends in relation by having the same owner?
5. Place - Where are the dogs? Are they sleeping in the living room, standing in the kitchen, or at the vet clinic?
6. Time - Everything that we experience exists in time. Thus we can describe the dog as it was at 1 year, 2 years, etc.
7. Position - Is the dog walking on your left hand side? If so then the position of the dog can be described as to your left. This is subject to change and therefore an accidental property.
8. Possession - Is the dog playing with a ball? Did it fetch a stick or a newspaper? We would describe the dog as having possession of these items.
9. Action - Is the dog running, sleeping, or eating? It is capable of action, but not capable of doing all three of the examples simultaneously.
10. Passivity - Is the dog sick? It is capable of being acted upon. As in it could be struck for example by a falling branch, and thus having been struck. The idea that this is something that befell the substance and not of necessity.

**Relationship of Matter and Form** One final note to conclude this brief summary of Aristotelian philosophy. One of the early debates of Greek philosophy, of which the influences thereof are present in mass throughout the *Summa*, is how to explain the nature of individual substances. In short, why are there humans, dogs, and cats, amongst so many more? Various elemental answers were proposed but the two most prevailing, that continue to influence contemporary philosophy, are those of Plato and Aristotle. Platos solution to this problem was to propose the realm of the Forms. Through this proposal the highest end of life was identified to be contemplation of the Forms. Every physical entity is said to be an image or instantiation of the form in matter. Matter is the principle of existence by which an individual is differentiated. Accordingly, matter is considered to be akin to a dirty and faulty medium as we come to identity defects from the forms. Defects from a Form is called a privation, as in a three legged dog would be described as having a privation because of the missing leg. Important aspects of this philosophy are present in key passages of the *Summa*, however, the divide between interpreting Aquinas along Platonic or Aristotelian lines is one of the most active sources of debate amongst contemporary Thomists.<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, the student of Plato, proposes a different solution of *hylomorphism*.<sup>7</sup> The key distinction is that the Form does not reside solely in the abstract realm, but instead is present in the primary substance. Thus an individual substance is composed of matter and form. The form being the principle that gives definition to the matter. The question of what is matter in these systems as a principle of pure potency is an interesting question, but one that is beyond the scope of this introduction. The topic will likely be explored over the course of the project, feel free to ask questions about it though if interested.

---

6. For those interested, I have an example that I like to use comparing Platos theory of the Forms to Java, the object based programming language. As an analogy it works surprisingly well.

7. The combination of the Greek terms for matter and form.

**The Four Causes** The importance of Aristotle's Four Causes is something I did not realize at the start of this project. However, so many of these early articles have references to the Four Causes, as such, here is a brief intro. To begin, let's name them, and define them.

1. Material - As you might expect from the discussion on matter and form, the material cause refers to the material substrate of a substance. As the material cause of a boat or piano may be wood.
2. Formal - Again, formal cause is certainly in reference to the ideas of the form. As such, the formal cause provides what something is. It will also be the cause of its ability to act. As the ability to bark for a dog, or meow for a cat are considered aspects of their respective formal causes.
3. Efficient - is the cause that produces the observed effect. As you might consider how fire is the efficient cause that converts wood into ash. (Also, wood to ash is an example of substantial change, as you the substance of the wood has changed through this process)
4. Final - is the cause that defines the end of a being. As you may say that the final cause of an apple tree is to produce apples.

This really is a basic introduction, but since it comes up frequently in Aquinas it seemed worth briefly discussing.<sup>8</sup>

---

8. More information can be found at this link: SEP Aristotle on Causality

# **Chapter 2**

## **Introduction to the Summa**

### **2.1 Structure of the work**

#### **Part I Prima Pars**

God's existence, nature, and creation (including angels, humanity).

#### **Part II Secunda Pars**

Moral theology, human action, virtues, and law, further split into two sections (Prima Secundae and Secunda Secundae).

#### **Part III Tertia Pars**

Christ, the sacraments, and humanity's return to God (incomplete)

## 2.2 Question Structure

A Question is a collection of questions has the following structure.

### Question (Quaestio)

A specific theological problem is posed.

### Article

A subset of the question that provides the user with higher specificity.

### Objections (Objectiones)

Arguments against Aquinas's eventual position. Until I find a better "author" for these I shall refer to them as anti-Aquinas/anti-Thomas. A common argumentative fallacy is that of straw manning your opponent. In this fallacy, the debater constructs a weak poor representation of their opponents position and then refutes this instead of their opponents true position. What Aquinas does with Objections is the opposite, in that he is steel manning his opponent's position. By describing his opponent's position better than most of them may be able to do he is able to truly and accurately refute the position.

### On the Contrary (Sed Contra)

A brief, authoritative statement (often from Scripture or a Church Father) supporting the thesis.

### I Respond That (Respondeo)

Aquinas's detailed explanation and solution.

## **Replies to Objections (Ad Objectiones)**

Specific refutations of the initial objections

# Chapter 3

## Part 1

### 3.1 The Nature of Theology (1)

#### 3.1.1 Question 1. The Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine

**Article 1. Whether, besides philosophy, any further doctrine is required?**

**Objection 1.** Here anti-Aquinas proposes that Philosophy is the highest end and therefore further knowledge, E.G theology/science, has no end or benefit.

**Objection 2.** The only things worth teaching is that which is true. All that can be proven true can be deduced through philosophy. Therefore, we can know God through philosophy and thus Theology is a subset of philosophy.

**On the contrary** Objection 2 thinks we can know God through human reason, but Aquinas states that the Revelation of God is ~~outside of~~ derived in and of itself(*per se*) by human reason and therefore not a part of philosophy.

**I answer that** The revelation of God through time/the prophets/the bible/the Church was necessary for humans to grasp the true nature of God as this nature is beyond human reason. Human reason could eventually conclude some of the aspects of God, but, even this, would be fraught with error and only a select few would attain that height. Thus, God's revelation was necessary for man to reasonably realize the truth of the Nature of God, thus leading man to a path of salvation.

**Reply to Objection 1.** God is the source of man's reason. Therefore, God's absolute nature will always be above man's reason. Belief that the former statement is false is due to one pride.

**Reply to Objection 2.** There are many paths to God, philosophy is not the only route. Therefore, Theology is sacred doctrine and not philosophy.

This begins one of the unique aspects of the *Summa* for a modern audience. Sciences are distinguished by their object of study and derive from first principles. In this light theology is defined as the study of God, and the first principles thereof are what Aquinas is beginning to define here.

## **Article 2. Whether sacred doctrine is a science?**

**Objection 1.** Sacred doctrine requires faith in divine revelation and is therefore, not a science. A science being a form of study through observation of and defining of first principles. Faith is required to understand Sacred doctrine.

**Objection 2.** Science does not deal with specific events, therefore, Sacred doctrine is not a science in that Revelation takes place in specific historical events. The fact that Isaac Newton got hit on an apple is irrelevant to the nature of gravity. Gravity is a universal reality, the event is circumstantial occurrence.

**On the contrary** Here, Aquinas quotes St. Augustine stating that Sacred Doctrine generates faith, not the other way around. Note, when Aquinas quotes a saint, he does so to utilize their authority on the subject. Further, Sacred doctrine is the sole generator of faith; therefore, Sacred Doctrine is the only science which produces an effect.

**I answer that** There are two types of science, the sciences we discover through intellect and the sciences we discover through the principals of higher sciences. We can learn about signal processing through observation of the physics in the world around us (Intellect). We can likewise learn how to make DSP components by building upon the fundamentals revealed by the study of signal processing. We can not conclude how DSP ought to work through natural observation alone. In Sacred doctrine, God is the fundamental reality that reveals the principles in which sacred doctrine is built upon. These fundamentals about God can only occur due to divine revelation.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Re-read I answer that.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Divine revelation has been revealed to us through the circumstances of people's lives through God's ordaining. The specific people are, for the intention of learning who God is, are irrelevant. Abraham could have been "Steve", but the actions in which God performed for "Steve" reveals who God is... Abraham just so happened to be who God chose, as he is a better example for us to learn of God's person.

### **Article 3. Whether sacred doctrine is one sciences?**

**Objection 1.** Science should have only one subject. Sacred Doctrine consists of two, God and man.

**Objection 2.** Objection 1, but also, there are angels, spiritual creatures, and creation (all of which could be investigated in their own respective sciences).

**On the contrary** These arguments claim that since Sacred Doctrine consists of multiple subjects that it is multiple sciences. Aquinas states that the sciences of things revealed by God. He then gives an Aristotelian example of three objects; man, ass, and rock. These three subjects are wildly different, but when observing them through sight we can observe similar things about them, E.G., color.

**I answer that** Sacred theology is like sight in the previous example. We know more about the subjects through God's revelation.

**Reply to Objection 1.** God is not equal to man. God is the subject, man is related to God in that man's beginning and end is God.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Reply to Objection 1, but "man" -> "all things" ... are related to God in that all things beginnings and ends are God.

#### **Article 4. Whether sacred doctrine is a practical science?**

**Objection 1.** There are two types of science in Aristotelian logic. Practical and Speculative. Practical sciences are things that are oriented toward action, E.G., Ethics or Politics. Speculative Sciences relates to things that are abstract and ordered towards pure knowledge. E.G. Mathematics or physics. Sacred theology is a practical science, that is something to be used in a way to affect the world, like ethics. The bible calls us to action.

**Objection 2.** We have laws of motion, therefore the 10 commandments are laws of human morality.

**On the contrary** Sacred doctrine teaches us not only about what we should do, but who God is. The nature of God is speculative, our call to action from this revelation is practical.

**I answer that** Sacred Doctrine is both practical and speculative, but primarily speculative.

**Article 5. Whether sacred doctrine is nobler than other sciences?** This article pertains to what is the highest form of study.

**Objection 1.** Anti-Aquinas states that the highest science would not be dependent on other things, E.G., faith.

**Objection 2.** Sacred Doctrine relies on a myriad of sciences to be fully understood. Philosophy makes it easier to understand sacred doctrine. Further, Sacred Doctrine requires divine revelation to exist therefore divine revelation is higher than sacred doctrine.

**On the contrary** The end of all other sciences is to serve Sacred Doctrine, therefore, they are beneath it.

**I answer that** Sacred Doctrine is both practical and speculative, but primarily speculative. This is because knowledge of God, the highest good, ~~calls us to imitation of Him~~ enables us to grasp at that which is beyond the limits of human reason. By all accounts Sacred Doctrine is the highest science.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The reason we require faith is because we have a dulled intellect. Had we a perfect intellect we would ascent to the divine reality readily. Further, the smallest knowledge of God, the highest good, is far superior to a vast knowledge of all lower things as God is the source of all things.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Similarly to Thomas' reply to Objection 1. God is the source of Sacred Doctrine. Other sciences simply aid our weak intellect to better comprehend God. Had we perfect intellects than Sacred Doctrine would be completely stand alone as it is the study of the perfect God

#### **Article 6. Whether this doctrine is the same as wisdom?**

**Objection 1.** Anti-Thomas claims that Sacred Doctrine can not be an ultimate knowledge or authoritative set as it uses principals given by another field. E.G., Divine revelation. Further, Sacred Doctrine relies on revelation and not natural reason.

**Objection 2.** Sacred Doctrine does not reveal anything about other sciences and is therefore incapable of being the chief of science.

**Objection 3.** Apparently anti-Thomas equates sacred doctrine coming from human wisdom with the wisdom of Divine inspiration. Accordingly this undermines that notion that Sacred Doctrine could be considered as an aspect of wisdom. Since if wisdom in this regard is achieved through human agency, it would no longer be a gift of the Holy Spirit.

**On the contrary** Quote revealing that divine revelation claims that it is wisdom.

**I answer that** God is the source of wisdom. Sacred doctrine is God's revelation, therefore, not only is sacred doctrine wisdom in the simple sense, but it is wisdom par excellence.

**Reply to Objection 1.** God is the source of our knowledge, since God is the highest wisdom and He is the source of Sacred Doctrine we can be assured that the wisdom He imparted is the highest.

**Reply to Objection 2.** This science is above human reason and comes directly from God. Thus, it is not associated with human reason. Further, we can derive that anything contrary to God's imparted wisdom must be in error.

**Reply to Objection 3.** There are two ways in which a man can come to just judgment wisdom imparted by the holy spirit, and through knowledge of Sacred Doctrine. A saint may know what is right through his/her inclinations. A person who has studied Sacred Doctrine may know what is right or wrong through study. Both originate from God.

**Article 7. Whether God is the object of this science?**

**RECOGNIZING THE SCOPE AND TIME CONSTRAINTS THE PART BY  
PART COMMENTARY WILL CONCLUDE HERE. INSTEAD THERE WILL  
BE OUTLINES OF SOME OF THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS FROM  
EACH ARTICLE. ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ASK  
QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY DETAILS EXCLUDED AND RESPONSES  
WILL BE ADDED AFTERWARDS.**

In some aspects this article can be considered a precursor to Aquinas's 5 ways. The reason behind this is because Aquinas is beginning to wrestle with the precise reality of what makes Theology such a difficult subject to grasp. We are wrestling to comprehend that which is not possible to fully comprehend. Accordingly, there will always be aspects that are simply unknowable. Ad 1 (Reply to objection 1) is a good example of this. Aquinas is beginning to describe how the science of God must be an *a priori* study. That is we go from effects to the cause. The basis of modern science is *a posteriori* investigations. That is to go from causes to effects. When we can go from a cause to an effect than we know this relationship directly and absolutely. Going from effect to the cause leaves gaps that we are often unable to fill in. This is an important aspect that will become more apparent in the famous 5 ways argument found in I.2.3 (To decode that, that is Prima Pars [this book], Question 2, article

3). God is absolutely what theology is ordered towards, but it is a science that can never be conclusively solved in the same manner that geometry permits absolute proofs.

**Article 8. Whether sacred doctrine is a matter of argument?** Aquinas is addressing the appeal to Faith fallacy. As if to answer the question why do we even bother studying theology if all it is, is a matter of doctrine? Why can't someone merely tell me what I need to believe? Aquinas grants that where there is not even the remotest provision to accept the Articles of Faith there is no argument that can be had. Since it is not possible to derive many of these principles through reason alone, it is difficult for Sacred Doctrine to be a matter of argument without them. Yet, it holds that once the Articles of Faith are granted, it becomes possible to engage with the Faith as a manner of proving certain truths through argumentation. In many ways a follow-up to St. Anselm's famous quote *fides quarens intellectum* (Faith seeking understanding).

**Article 9. Whether Holy Scripture should use metaphors?** Again, we are trying to grasp that which is beyond logical comprehension. Therefore, metaphors are appropriate insofar as they reveal the first inclinations of the truth present therein. Metaphors necessarily fall short of describing the true reality of what they are signifying. Thus, the use of a metaphor is often an understatement of God's true nature rather than hyperbole.

**Article 10. Whether in Holy Scripture a word may have several senses?** *Philosophical Note For Deeper Understanding* Actually the very nature of this question brings about an important philosophical distinction. There are three senses in which we can understand terms. Those being: univocal, equivocal, and analogical/analogous.

1. Univocal terms are those which can only be understood in a singular meaning. They admit not multiplicity of understanding. For example: 'triangle' a term that by its very nature always and without doubt refers to a three-sided polygon.

2. Equivocal terms (or equivocation) are when the same term is being used for vastly different meanings. For example: the term ‘bat’ could just as easily refer to a baseball bat as it could to a flying mammal.
3. Analogical/Analogous terms are those which are used and refer to different realities despite being the same term. These realities are often related though. As describing something as ‘fire’ is often utilized to mean that it is hot much like a campfire. These terms are very common in English and increasingly more so with Internet culture.

The on the contrary provides a good example of how Holy Scripture by its nature admits of several senses. Then the main area of focus on this article is towards what is commonly understood as the four senses of reading Sacred Scripture. In this manner, Aquinas is proving how Sacred Scripture can be used in Theology to make the arguments required. The four senses of Sacred Scripture, as most often represented today, are: literal, allegorical, moral, and eschatological.

1. Literal - is the historical sense of what actually occurred.
2. Allegorical - speaks to the meaning of how Sacred Scripture continues to reveal truths in every age.
3. Moral - speaks to how one ought to act.
4. Eschatological - speaks to our Final End in the Beatific Vision

With all of this outlined Aquinas is now prepared to proceed to the notion of God’s existence. Having argued for the ability to leverage Divine Revelation as his primary means of argumentation.

**On the contrary** Defining the terms that are referenced by Aquinas here and following may prove useful.

## 3.2 The Existence and Nature of God (2-43)

This section is broken into three sub-categories:

### 3.2.1 A. The Existence of God (2)

Here Thomas is trying to prove God's existence, soon thereafter he will describe what God is.

### 3.2.2 Question 2. The Existence of God

**Article 1. Whether the existence of God is self-evident?** Essence: The what-it-is-ness of a thing. The qualities of a thing that makes it a member of a category. The color of an apple, in most cases, makes its color a member of the category red.

Here Aquinas will argue that while God's existence is self-evident, his essence, or nature, is beyond human understanding. Because we can not grasp all of what God is, He is not self-evident.

**On the contrary** Since there are people who exist who can say "There is no God", then God's existence is not self evident. It would have to be known by all intelligent creatures. See Alex O'Connor.

**Article 2. Whether it can be demonstrated that God exists?** The existence of God can be demonstrated through posteriori, but not priori. That is to say we can know God exist because of his created effects, E.G., creation. We can not know God through His essence as His being is infinite and therefore beyond our reason. A brief commentary about the difference between *a priori* and *a posteriori* argumentation was made back in I.1.7 (First Part, Question 1, Article 7).

**Objection 2.** If we can't know the essence of God, then we can't know if He actually exists.

**I answer that** There is two ways to demonstrate that something is,

Cause, "priori"

and

Effect, "posteriori".

We can know God exists because of His effects which depend upon His Cause. In simple terms, we can know there is an architect because we see the building. We can not know the architect because we're ants to His personhood. We can gleem that He built it, but we can not grasp Who He is.

**Article 3. Whether God exists?** Here we are gifted with Thomas's Five Ways, that is, Five Ways we can know God exists. These terms are distinct and irreducible, but appear to be the same thing at first glance. Note, this section takes a strong grasp of metaphysics to fully understand the significance as they are basically summaries of something the reader should already be familiar with. Therefore, I implore a greater authority to rework this section.

These are also often reffered to as St. Thomas Aquinas's ontological arguments. The significance of calling them ontological arguments is the recognition that these are arguements based on the fundamental reality of being. Ontological arguments were popular in the medeival ages, and thus there are several that appeal to various aspects of being. To provide an example, an almost equally famous ontological argument is that of St. Anselm. The argument of St. Anselm is as follows: "a being than which no greater being can be conceived." The idea of this argument is took a moment to imagine the greatest possible being. Now ask the question, does it exist? If the answer to this question is no, than it is not the greatest possible being because if it had existence it would be greater still. Thus, this being

which no greater can be conceived we call God.<sup>1</sup> This argument will share similarities with Aquinas's fourth way, but it also gives a pretext for the philosophical exercise that ontological arguments require. The majority of Aquinas's Five Ways will borrow a principle from Aristotle. Namely, the rejection of real infinites. The idea, emerging as a counter to Zeno's paradox, that real infinites (as in the infinite division of distance) are physical impossible whereas mathematical infinites (as in the infinitely divisible number line are possible).

Another significant note is to recognize the limitations of these arguments. In short, they do not prove the existence of the loving personal God, nor do they prove the existence of the Triune God. Rather they merely prove that God must exist. To say nothing about specific attributes which will be the subject of many of the following questions.

1. From Motion: The First Mover, or the Unmoved Mover. This explains why change is happening now. There must be a first mover that does not depend on temporal creation. In addition, this argument makes reference to the important philosophical principles of potency and act.<sup>2</sup> In short, potency refers to that which is possible to later exist in act. As an acorn is in potency to becoming a large oak. The large oak in this instance does not have existence. Rather the process of planting the acorn and allowing it to grow, is what changes this potency into act. The *argument from motion* is not a reflection on Newtonian physics, but is instead focused on how the potent realities that we see everywhere have existence. Everything in creation is in motion to a different state. This is only possible if there exists a being that is already pure act in order to bring these potencies into existence. A notion that will be explored more in the following questions. Still at this moment we can conclude with Aquinas's words,

---

1. Personal opinion: I believe this is a great argument for those who already have faith as opposed to drawing people to belief in God from atheism. I do know someone who credits this argument with their conversion, which is to say God's grace is more powerful and immense than we can imagine.

2. Reference to this may need to be added to the introduction

“this everyone understands to be God.”

2. From Efficient Causality: First Efficient Cause, basically something had to get the ball rolling. Feel free to reference the introduction for the philosophical introduction to address questions here. This argument is constructed from the application of the four causes in Aristotelian philosophy. Those being: material, formal, final, and efficient. Effecient cause is identified as the agent that produces the change. As the painter is the efficient cause that causes the paint brush to move and results in paint being applied to the canvas. The painting cannot come into existence without the multitude of steps that occur through each interaction of the painter. In a like manner, there must be a singular efficient cause to Creation. Otherwise, there would be an infinite regress without any one cause having converted potency to act, since that which is in potency is not capable of converting itself into act through its own power. Therefore, we can conclude with Aquinas's words regarding the first effecient causality, “to which everyone gives the name of God.”
3. From Contingency and Necessity: The Necessary Being, creation is contingent on something as nothing can come from nothing. Therefore, there had to be a creator. Let's return to the acorn example from the first way. If we take this same acorn and crush it with a steam roller, the large oak tree will never come into existence. According to this the oak tree that we are discussing is a contingent being, meaning that it is possible for it to not exist. There is a famous principle amongst the ancient Greek philosophers, presented here in Latin because we don't know Greek, *ex nihilo, nihil fit* (out of nothing, nothing comes). In order for Creation to exist, it must have been created. This seems obvious until you realize that means there must exist a being of pure act capable of producing Creation. The implications of which will be explored more in the following questions. Still with this we arrive again at Aquinas's words that, “this all men speak of as God.”

4. From Gradation: This is one of the moments where our advances in science can make it a little difficult to read Aquinas. In particular, our understanding of thermodynamics and the physics of heat transfer undermine Aquinas's example. The important aspect though is what the ability to make comparisons implies. If we, under our finite conditions, can make comparisons then that implies that there must be a maximum in any category by which all comparisons can be based. The Maximum of Perfection, if transcendentals such as goodness, or truth exists then there must be a perfect good and a perfect truth, which is God. God is the fullness of being, this is known as a participation argument. Many aspects of this argument can be considered as paralleling aspects of Anselm's argument. To which we conclude with the base understanding of "this we call God."
5. From Governance: As the second way dealt with efficient causality, this way deals with formal causality. The Intelligent Governor, natural, unintelligent things all act towards a end. "Gotta make that money, man"[Eaz94] Recall the philosophical introduction regarding Plato's realm of the Forms and Aristotle's hylomorphism. Both were trying to address why creation operates towards a specific end. The reality that creation is intelligible and not a mere amalgamation of collected parts reveals this reality. The question is what is the origin of this comprehensibility. The formal cause defines what something is and the end it is ordered towards. The fact that all beings have a formal cause implies that there must have been an intelligible being that bestowed this formal cause as the principle of intelligibilty. To which we conclude with Aquinas, "this being we call God."

Change, causation, existence, perfection, and order each require a distinct ultimate explanation, and these explanations converge on one reality. God exists as The First Mover, The First Cause, The Necessary Being, The Maximum of Perfection, and the Intelligent Governor.

**On the contrary** True mic drop moment regarding ontology.

### **3.2.3 B. The attributes of the divine nature (3-26)**

#### **3.2.4 Question 3. The simplicity of God**

Now that we have established God's existence, we will cover the *simplicity* of God. This is to say that God is metaphysically simple, not intellectually so. This is to say that God does not have any basic principles, He is basic principles. To put this in English, a man can be wise, God is wisdom; a man can be good, God is goodness; etc... Further, in God His goodness is His wisdom is His power is His being. God does not have different parts, He is. Hence the sacred name I am who am (cf. Exod 3:14 and remember I.1.8 validated use of Sacred Scripture as an argumentative source<sup>3</sup>).

#### **Welcome to the Challenges of Trinitarian Theology and Christology**

There are a few ideas that will be explored in-depth throughout the Summa and, not to get ahead of ourselves, this is one of those key aspects that make these ideas difficult/impossible to comprehend. Divine simplicity, the principle that God cannot consist of any multiplicity is absolute. For if there is multiplicity in God, then aspects of God would have been in potency first and thus lesser than the principle that brought them into act. God being perfect, must also be simple. Then I am going to tell you that God is a Triune composition of three persons, but not in the exact manner that you commonly know the term 'person' to be used. Instead that is merely the best term to have. The Trinity does not mean that there is a multiplicity in God. Then, I am also going to tell you that the Second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, became man in time and in Creation. I am also going to tell you that this does not violate Divine Simplicity (at this point we are rapidly approaching the limits of what can be understood). Rather what is known as the hypostatic

---

3. Comments like this will decrease as we make it further into the project

union takes place where the Second person of the Trinity, and only the second Person of the Trinity, united human nature with divine nature. Such that Jesus Christ is both human and divine. Not one or the other but both simultaneously. We have now experience of realities like this so they seem to violate the very essence of Creation, but this is the true nature of our God. I hope you are having fun, because we are only just getting started. Let's dive into the basic metaphysical principles of God!

Notice in the preamble portion of this question Aquinas is asserting that the path we are taking to knowledge of God is the *via negativa*. That is to say the path of asserting what God is not. For although we cannot grasp God perfectly, we can assert what God must not be and that still gets us closer to what God is.

**Article 1. Whether God is a body?** Seminarians chime in here, but my understanding is that God in his divine nature does not have a body. That is to say God is outside of creation as that is the only way that He can be the First Mover. That said Christ in His *human nature* has a body. The mystery of the hypostatic union is how God, Creator of Creation and therefore wholly outside of Creation, entered into Creation, assumed our lowly flesh, united it to His divine nature, and by dying has elevated us to the potency of sharing in His divine nature (more on this in the Christological passages).

If we are not ready to accept the principles of the Five Ways then these Questions will seem illogical. The greatness of the Summa is how each Question intentionally builds on the previous ones. The proof that God cannot have a body is manifest, because such a body would necessitate potency in God, which would violate how we described God in I.2.3.

**Article 2. Whether God is composed of matter and form?** This is a continuation of Article one in the sense that it is asking if God is a non-bodily entity composed of matter. This may seem apparently obvious until you consider the existence of angels. With this you realize that there does exist incorporeal being that still have a matter to their composition.

The nuance is that a body is clearly defined, God is not a body, nor does He have physical characteristics. He is outside of creation. Again, this gets confusing with the Incarnation, but we'll get there. Recognize that matter in this instance is referring to the principle that enables all potency within contingent beings. As God is the only necessary being matter does not apply to God.

**Article 3. Whether God is the same as His essence or nature?** This harkens back to whether God is purely the virtues. Simply put, God is not composed of things, He is them. See the introduction to Question 3. Article 4 may help to illuminate some of the distinctions that Aquinas makes in this article.

**Article 4. Whether essence and existence are the same in God?** This is asking, "Is God a thing that has being, or a thing being itself." God is being, for if he weren't all of the preceding points about God's essence would be in contradiction. Further, God could not have been the being of the five ways for he would not be a Pure Act. Let's consider Aquinas's example of fire. When something is set on fire it is said to be participating in the nature of fire as it is now sharing this quality from the original source of fire. Fire in this case becomes a formal cause to explain the end it is being actualized towards. This idea is very Platonic. Plato's philosophy held that all of creation participated in the Form of the good which informed all creation and marked our final end. What Aquinas is demonstrating is that God's essence must be the same as His existence. For if this were not the case, that would mean that God is participating in the formal cause of another principle that is causing God's existence. Accordingly, this is how we are able to understand that we only exist through participation in God's being.

**Article 5. Whether God is contained in a genus?** Genus as a philosophical term is similar to how it is used nowadays as a biological term. Genus is the over-arching structure

of a set, of which individuals are species. This is a very Aristotelian notion. The traditional example of this, is the definition of human as a rational animal. That being the difference + genus. Where difference is rational and genus is animal. That being said in philosophy we may discuss the genus of humans of which you are one species. As such, it may mirror set theory a little more than biology. As God is indefinable it does not make sense to apply these terms to God.

**Article 6. Whether in God there are any accidents?** If you haven't picked up these articles flow to the conclusion of the original question; let's recap. God is not a body(a.1), nor does he have a physical form(a.2). He is metaphysically simple (a.3), and He is His existence. Therefore, God can not be any genus. Put in other words, God can not be defined, not because he is indeterminate, but because He is existence itself. To be in a genus God would have to have a limited essence, but He is pure essence in the metaphysical sense. In short, those qualities that are accidental in us (such as wisdom, goodness, love, etc.) are not accidental qualities in God, but substantial aspects of His essence. God is not good, in the sense that we may say "that is a good man." God is goodness itself.

**Article 7. Whether God is altogether simple?** This article has 2 parts, it shows that God is the pure being, by showing this we can conclude that he is not a composite. That is God is, as explained in the introduction, without parts in any sense. God is his essence and is consequentially immutable (unchanging), indivisible, eternal, and perfect (Lacking nothing). Note, God being described as having multiple essences perfectly is a distinction made for our comprehension. That is to say in God wisdom is not different than justice is not different than love. This essence is God, and the virtues we attribute to Him are how we can grasp at His singular essence. The argument Aquinas reference from Hilary is beautiful here. Namely, that it does not make sense for God to be composed of the very elements that only have intelligibility because of God. The Creator has no need to be constructed from

His Creation because He is infinitely greater than His Creation.

**Article 8. Whether God enters into the composition of other things?** This is an argument that basically sounds like, “God is simple, but maybe the entirety of the universe is a composite of God and matter.” It does not belong to the first efficient cause to also be entirely the material cause. Aquinas refutes this as God transcends creation yet causes its creation and sustains it without losing His simplicity.

**Objection 3.** The notion of if prime matter exists. This is a fun philosophical topic. How does the entity of pure potency have existence? Afterall, existence requires act.

### 3.2.5 Question 4. The Perfection of God

An interesting note to pay attention to in the intro to this question, is how Aquinas is using *good* in a transcendental sense. Here we are engaging with why Theology is the highest of sciences. For we are truly entering into metaphysics at this point. The term ‘transcendental’ is one of the most important philosophical terms. The reason for this is that it is describing the core properties of being in absolute simplicity. As the previous question revealed, simply because something is simple does not make it easy to understand. As such, there is a great deal of discussion that has taken place over the centuries.<sup>4</sup> Good as a transcendental is a strong candidate for the best understood of the transcendentals. As we begin discussing transcendentals, we arrive at the fun notion that everything, insofar as it has being, is good. The metaphysical definition of evil is merely the privation of the good. Now good in this sense refers to the degree to which a being achieves perfection. Evil, therefore, is the degree to which perfection is lacking. It is for this reason that Aquinas addresses God’s perfection before addressing goodness.

---

4. On a personal note: my Master’s Thesis was on the analogical nature of beauty. A portion of which explores beauty’s transcendental status. All this to say discussions over transcendentals are of interest to me, but I recognize are immensely complex. - Will Whitlow

**Article 1. Whether God is perfect?** Once more this revolves around the distinction to whether the first principle is a material or efficient cause. Which in other terms asks whether the origin of Creation arises from matter or act. If the first principle is matter, then it will be imperfect as it is only a principle of potency. If it is of act, then it must be perfect because it is pure act. Therefore, since God is the first efficient cause, we can conclude that God is perfect.

**Article 2. Whether the perfections of all things are in God?** All that it seems odd that the multitude of beings in creation would have the perfection in God, this follows from the principle of God as first efficient cause. Since as the cause that puts everything else in motion, it is also the cause that produces the effects that are seen in Creation. As such, the perfect ends of all things exist as they find their origin in God, their efficient cause.

**Article 3. Whether any creature can be like God?** What do we mean by like? That's the question Aquinas is truly asking at this moment. In this regard there is a qualified manner by which creatures can be said to be like God.

### 3.2.6 Question 5. Goodness in general

Now at last we come to the main philosophical event. Now we are going to address good as a transcendental.

**What is a Transcendental?** The very notion of a transcendental is a topic that has been implicitly referenced in the previous question, but now it is time to address it directly. I desperately wish that this would be a simple definition to give. Experience has taught me that it is quite the opposite. To begin, the standard list of transentials are Good, Truth, and Beauty. Even presenting this list as such represents an oversimplification, wherein many philosophers will agree unequivocally and many will be fumbling over another presentation

of this list. In addition, other elements that are often included in the transcendental discussion are One, Thing, and Something. To conclude the summary in set theory mode. Many philosophers will define the Three Transcendentals as Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Aquinas, in *De Veritatae*, defines Five Transcendentals as One, Good, Truth, Thing, and Something. The distinctions between these lists are more so due to the distinctions of how the term transcendental is defined rather than the actual metaphysical properties of the respective elements contained within. In discussions I have discerned two similar, but different definitions of a transcendental. The first is what I will call the co-extensive definition. This means that a property that is universally present in all manners of being is a transcendental. The other definition is what I will term the positive definition of transcendental. What this means is that the transcendental should add a positive aspect to being. According to this definition, the three transcendentals are One, Good, and True. Thing and Something, even according to the distinction of Aquinas, are more logical and relational distinctions. Therefore, they are noteworthy, but not often the subject of discussions around transcendentals. Let's proceed with a brief explanation of the main transcendentals.

1. One - the idea that each element of being is its own self contained individual. This is the principle wherein we are capable of representing a form as being distinct from another. Accordingly, one shares similarities with thing and something, but is an important aspect as it provides the wholeness aspect to being.
2. Good - good in a metaphysical sense is the end that something is ordered towards. A good car is one that drives and runs smoothly. A good man is one who does not steal but gives to charity. A good apple tree is one that produces fruit. If the apple tree were not to produce fruit, then it would not be achieving the end that its nature is ordered to. Therefore, it would not be a good apple tree.
3. Truth - describes the essence of a being. To say that a being is an apple tree implies knowledge of what the term 'apple tree' refers to. Therefore, truth provides knowledge

of the form extracted from the being.<sup>5</sup>

4. Beauty - is a transcendental that only truly seems to imply when one utilizes the co-extensive definition. This will be addressed in more explicit detail when discussing Article 4 of this Question, and in Question 39. I will argue that beauty is only possible to comprehend if one grasps the other three transcendentals. Let's continue with this apple tree example. Let's say that you are 10 miles away from an orchid of apple trees. At this distance you cannot distinguish one tree from another and, therefore, you cannot discern their beauty. Now, let's say you approach the orchid. However, you were born and raised in a country where apple trees could not grow. First you must know the truth of what an apple tree is in order to grasp their beauty. Let's say you have studied apple trees and know how to evaluate them. Then you will know the end of the apple trees and you will be able to identify the degree to which they are fulfilling this end. Accordingly, you will be able to grasp the goodness of each apple tree (even if you lack this level of study, if you saw all the trees producing fruit, and one that did not, you could discern that tree was less good than the others). The degree to which you are able to evaluate all three of these transcendentals, is the degree to which you are able to ascertain the beauty. Does that mean the apple tree was not beautiful when it was 10 miles away? or before you knew what an apple tree was? or grasped its degree of perfection according to its goodness? No! Rather, this means that it is through knowledge of all this things that beauty can be discerned. Thus, it is always present in every element of being. The limitations are on our experience and knowledge. This also means that an arborist is the most qualified to determine the beauty of any particular apple tree, through the wealth of their experience and knowledge. This is a lot to take in and distills my thoughts on beauty rather quickly.

---

5. Warning: this is an initial foray into epistemology. More will probably arise when we reach Q15 Divine Ideas

As this is an area of expertise of mine, please ask questions and expect more comments to continue.

### **Article 1. Whether goodness differs really from being?**

**Objection 1.** I can't recall if this name has appeared previously, Boethius is a significant philosophical figure. Boethius was instrumental in the preservation of Aristotle, and if he had not been killed by the emperor may have brought Aristotle to the West centuries earlier. Thus, Aquinas engages frequently with Boethius as one of his major neo-Platonic sources (plenty of room for more elaboration here if desired).

**Objection 2.** *Liber de Causis* is another major neo-platonic source that is incredibly influential.

**I answer that** Aquinas is recognizing how everything in act, acts towards a desirable end. What will differ is the perfection of this end.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The beginning of this reply is to distinguish between accidental being and substantial being. Ultimately we can assert that everything is good insofar as it exists, because it possesses actuality. The degree to which this actuality has been perfected, is the degree of its goodness. According to this definition, evil is not a being, but a privation of being. Therefore, to say something is evil is to say that it lacks being. Accordingly, evil does not exist from a metaphysical perspective. Everything, including the evil one, possesses an ontological goodness from the nature of our existence.

**Article 2. Whether goodness is prior in idea to being?** Consider how you would define a unicorn? A: A horse with a horn. Notice that when we fashion imaginary creatures,

we begin with the nature of creatures that actually exist. This is in part what Aquinas is implying here. We cannot begin to speak of goodness before we have the idea of being.

**Objection 1.** It seems that the non-existence comments are a peculiarity of Platonic philosophy. Again this is the interesting question of prime matter. What is an entity of infinite potency? Since it has no act, it has no definition.

More importantly is the idea that end is prior to form. Consider the apple tree again. The end of the apple tree is to produce apples. The form is the manner by which this occurs. The form is constructed as to achieve this end. The same can be said of all goodness, which all desire.

**Objection 2.** Again understanding requires grasping Aristotle's Four Causes.

**Article 3. Whether every being is good?** This is the exact point that all the commentary has been trying to make about the true essence of the *good*.

**I answer that** This is Aquinas at some of his most precise. Questions are welcome.

**Reply to Objection 4.** Mathematical entities (squares, circles, triangles, hyper-dimensional planes, etc.) are all examples of intelligible beings. This is one of the four modes of being. These aspects are abstracted from the material world. Since they are only logical, they lack material being. Accordingly, there is no proper end for these entities. Their greatest utility is for further progress in the understanding of mathematics through proofs.

**Article 4. Whether goodness has the aspect of a final cause?** In short, there cannot be an end (or final cause) without an efficient and formal cause.

This is somewhat complex as there are two orders being presented. The first describes the direction of action. That all act toward their end (goodness), enabled through the efficient

cause, and lastly defined by the form. The second flips this list, so that, first is the form that defines action, followed by the efficient cause, whereby it achieves its perfection as a measure of goodness. In both these cases the formal and efficient causes are of absolute necessity. The goodness of the being remains the final end.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Does Aquinas think beauty is a transcendental? Ask about this part of the Summa at a convention of Thomistic Philosophers and sit back for a good show.

If beauty and goodness are fundamentally identical does that mean beauty is transcendental. Afterall, beauty refers to the formal cause and is evaluated accordingly. This is the traditional Thomistic definition. Wherein beautiful things are described as “pleasing when seen.” This is not to say that beauty is subjectively in the eye of the beholder. Rather those things which are rightly conformed to their form are beautiful. It does suffice as a brief intro, even if it is not as clear as desired. This topic will be developed further in Q. 39.

**Article 5. Whether the essence of goodness consists in mode, species and order?**  
I believe this to be a demonstration that, if goodness is truly transcendental, then it must apply to all manners of reference to being.

**Article 6. Whether goodness is rightly divided into the virtuous, the useful and the pleasant?** When the appetites are being discussed realize that appetite does not solely refer to hunger. Rather appetite refers to the powers of our soul. Therefore, there is an intellectual appetite, an appetite for leisure, as well as, an appetite for food. The goodness of which can be measured according to the manner they are justly perfected.

### **3.2.7 Question 6. The goodness of God**

In the previous question Aquinas defined what is goodness. He will now utilize this definition to outline why God is not only good, but goodness itself. This section will be essential to

one of the ultimate conclusions of the summa. That God is the ultimate good.

**Article 1. Whether God is good?** The nuance of this article is that if *good* describes how well one is ordered to its end, how can God be good? The resolution to this dilemma is that God is in His *essence* is goodness. That is that God is the highest end, the ultimate good. Further, all things ultimately desire perfection which exists to the highest degree in God. This reality resolves Obj 2.

**Article 2. Whether God is the supreme good?** For Catholic readers, this article can be described as an expansion of and defense of the phrase "Source and summit" when describing the Eucharist.

God being good as He is the source of creation, its nuturing and its end, is consequentially the ultimate good. We can say that all things, bar God, are depended on its end to be attributted with the quality of good. God in His essence is goodness in the most excellent way.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The reality that we call other beings good does not make the goodness of good a superlative addition to God's essence. This is largely due to the fact that supreme good refers to a reality of relation. Recall Aristotle's 10 categories. Relation is an accidental and not substantial distinction. Accordingly, this does nothing to the essence of God, but further distinguishes God from His Creation.

**Article 3. Whether to be essentially good belongs to God alone?** As Aquinas outlined in Question 3, regarding God's simplicity, God does not have goodness, God is goodness. This question expands on that to ask if this quality belongs to God alone. One may ask about the saints or angels, are they not perfected in Heaven? While they are perfect in the since of their quality, they are dependant on God for their existence. Further, the angels and saints are finite and caused. God alone is infinte, uncaused and self-subsisting.

He says as much in Isaiah 43:10: “You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.”

**On the contrary** Recall the discussion of Platonic Forms and Aristotelian hylomorphism from the Introduction. This comment from Boethius, about participation, is an example of neo-Platonism. The idea of participation is a strongly Platonic idea. As such, considering the notion of the forms, it is the idea that we only share in goodness by virtue of being a part of God’s Creation. In this manner, Aquinas is blending these two pillars of Philosophy (a rather common practice).

**Article 4. Whether all things are good by the divine goodness?** In this article we introduce the metaphysical concept of participatory goodness. That is that creation derives its goodness from God’s goodness.

### **3.2.8 Question 7. The infinity of God**

For a brief recap, we have discussed that God is *pure act* I.3, *perfect* I.4, *essentially good* I.6. Aquinas will then show how a being without the limits of physical form, genus, or essence must be therefore be without any limit, or infinite. He will show this by showing God is not finite. Further, when we cover the nature of His infinity, and whether or not other beings possess this quality.<sup>6</sup>

**Article 1. Whether God is infinite?** See intro.

**Article 2. Whether anything but God can be essentially infinite?** In I.6.3 we showed that God is the only being who does not rely on another for its being. God being

---

6. Spoiler alert, Aquinas claims there is not.

the source of all things makes him self-subsisting. Angels, lacking material form, are a viable candidate for having an infinite nature as they lack physical form. Angels and other spirits lack the ability to self create, so they're limited by what God has made them to be.<sup>7</sup>

**Article 3. Whether an actually infinite magnitude can exist?** This article claims that God is not infinite in magnitude, or physical size, because God does not have a physical size. This is because God is pure act, I.3.

**Article 4. Whether an infinite multitude can exist?** This article is relatively tricky and nuanced, but put succinctly, Aquinas is saying that in creation nothing can be infinite as infinity is a property that belongs solely to God. This is not a claim that God is limited in His ability to create, but that creation is limited by its nature. God could create a great many things, but the nature of creation is to be limited and therefore the nature of being a created thing limits the reality of its existence. See Convergence and Bounding of Definite Integrals at Infinity.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2.9 Question 8. The existence of God in things

**Article 1. Whether God is in all things?** The specific of this insight is similar to how transcendental goodness was being described. God is in all things, less in the idea that God forms a part of things but more so that all things participate in the being of God. Things only exist through participation in God's being. Therefore, they must be inseparably united

---

7. Could God create an infinite spirit? I assume by needing to create the spirit it couldn't be unmoved, (Seminarians): This is an interesting question. For one, to define something is to limit it, and thus an infinite spirit would be undefinable. In a similar sense to how God is, properly speaking, undefinable. Mathematics makes this interesting to comprehend, as we both can somewhat think about infinity and are limited from comprehending infinity. Will W., I am going to say no, because if God could create an infinite spirit it would violate the argument from degrees. In short, if God created an infinite spirit, then this spirit, although lesser for having been created, would be equal to God in whatever manner it is infinite. (I'm not 100% on this and may return to this idea later)

8. Joke, but actually.

to God.

**Article 2. Whether God is everywhere?** This is the contrary to the notion of the disinterested clock maker. One false idea of God is as an entity that put the existence into motion, but has since lost interest in it. God is still omnipresent to all of creation. Of course, it becomes an interesting matter of Faith to hold that God is simultaneously eternal, immaterial, outside of creation as the creator, and inseparably connected to every facet of creation. (This is why study of this work earnestly requires a full lifelong commitment)

**Article 3. Whether God is everywhere by essence, presence and power?** All of the above. By virtue that everything is contingent on God. In actuality God is more fully aware of every aspect of our existence than we will ever be.

**Article 4. Whether to be everywhere belongs to God alone?** This properly belongs to God as referenced in the other articles. It does not make sense to describe a where without God, since the where can only exist if God is there.

### 3.2.10 Question 9. The immutability of God

This question covers the immutability, or the unchanging nature, of God. Aquinas will show from the previous 5 Questions Q.3-7, that it is a philosophical conclusion that God is unchanging. In this section Aquinas will claim that God has no potency. In metaphysics potency involves the ability to transition from will to action. God is pure act and can therefore not transition from "What He could be" to "What He is" as He already is... this is a high flutent way of saying that God is incapable of changing as nothing can be changed in His being. To contrast this with the angels, angels had potency in their ability to choose God or not God in the fall of the angels. Man is an ever-changing being and can change in both body and will.

**Article 1. Whether God is altogether immutable?** Aquinas proceeds to demonstrate the immutability of God in three ways. First, through God's being being *pure act*. Because God is act, he can not transition from what He could be to what He is. Secondly, through God's simplicity. God has no matter, accidents, or composition. God does not have a physical form, and therefore can not be re-arranged or moved. Thirdly, God is both infinite and perfect. Therefore, He can neither gain or lose, as He lacks nothing and His infinity is part of his essence. Thus, God can't change.<sup>9</sup>

**I answer that** Philosophical Aside: The ancients that Aquinas is talking about in referring to immovable, are those who ascribed to Aristotle's unmoved mover. Similar to efficient causality, the ancient Greeks realized there could not be an actual infinite regress, and thus posited the existence of an unmoved mover.

**Article 2. Whether to be immutable belongs to God alone?** Creatures can be relatively immutable in some respects, but not absolutely. See end of the intro of Q.9.

At least a portion of this argument is also in reference to how angels mutable position. This is in regard to accidental properties, for instance when the archangel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### 3.2.11 Question 10. The eternity of God

This question has to deal with the un-ending nature of God. It naturally flows from Q.9. that if God is unchanging over time, then over an infinite amount of time He would still remain unchanged. The definition of eternity Aquinas uses is the Simultaneously whole and perfect possession of interminable life. That is, active being for infinite time lacking nothing. Read

---

9. Can we discuss how Jesus grew in Wisdom and in stature? I assume this has to do with His human nature vs. His divine nature. A topic that will be further covered when we arrive at the Christological portions of the Summa. Something something this is a mystery.

Heaven.<sup>10</sup>

**Article 1. Whether this is a good definition of eternity, "The simultaneously-whole and perfect possession of interminable life"?** (Seminarians, I don't see the significance of this article beyond defining terms. Help.)

In part, what Aquinas is showing here is how we are incapable of truly comprehending eternity. As we only have experiences of the compound realities of time. Eternity, however, does not imply the instance to instance progression of time. Rather, it is something beyond the nature of time. Therefore, our understanding of eternity is merely to grasp it as a simple reality different from our own experiences of time. In this regard it is fair to describe it as interminable.

**Article 2. Whether God is eternal?** It flows from God's immutable self-generating nature that if He doesn't change then he won't change over infinite time. In addition, God is the only being that is eternal.

**Article 3. Whether to be eternal belongs to God alone?** God is the only eternal being as only God is *pure act*, but creation can be granted eternal life by relying on God as a source of their own being. Interestingly, in Objection 2. Aquinas makes the argument that the Damned do not possess eternity as they exist in time as their being will change as their suffering waxes and wanes. Continuing this thought, it would seem that humanity does not escape the realm of time with death, but experiences either unending salvation or unending damnation in the afterlife.<sup>11</sup> As such, it is not properly *eternal* as it has a definitive beginning.

---

10. Some copies have 2 articles, some 6. Apparently, some editors broke apart the original two Aquinas wrote as to provide clarity.

11. Yes, there is a worthwhile caveat about purgatory that for simplicity is being ignored for right now

**Article 4. Whether eternity differs from time?** Yes, they differ. Eternity is the whole existence in the presence of God. Time, particularly *forever*, lacks the wholeness and is instead a measure unit of before, or after. See the intro. It is interesting to see how Aquinas makes sure that this difference is not understood as being purely accidental, but as a substantial difference between the two.

**Article 5. The difference of aeviternity and time** Aveiternity is the dynamic between eternity and existence in time. That is that God is outside of time and we, the readers, are inside of time. Note that aveiternity has a beginning, but no end. There was a time when time did not exist.<sup>12</sup>

**Article 6. Whether there is only one aeviternity?** This question is asking whether there is only one start to existence or many. While the nuance seems high flutent, it is important to ask whether there was a first act of God in creation. Aquinas concludes that there is a first movement and therefore one aveiternity.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2.12 Question 11. The unity of God

This question asks what it means to be one, as in unique, and whether God is one. That is to say whether or not there is another like God. This is dealing with the three persons of God, but with His unity. God is an undivided being. We know this because God is not a composite, does not have *potency* (That is the ability to change from unrealized to realized act), and is unlimited. Further, being one can be expanded that there is no other equal. Thus, God will show that there is only one God.

---

12. Joke.

13. Thus, Aquinas would likely disapprove of the multi-verse in the Marvel Cinematic universe.

**Article 1. Whether "one" adds anything to "being"?** This article asks whether being *one* adds anything to being. That is to say, whether being indivisible adds to the quality of God. Aquinas will argue that being indivisible is a property of God because He is already whole. Being one simply means that God is a perfect essence. We can conclude that His being is indivisible from the previous questions, Q.3-4, and Q7-9 in particular. See the intro to this question for the three divisible means.

**I answer that** Philosophical note: Notice how Aquinas describes one in this instance, “*one* means undivided *being*. This is the very reason why *one* is the same as *being*.”<sup>14</sup> This is transcendental language. This is not describing one in the sense of mathematical quantity. Instead, this refers to ontological properties. It is for this reason that Aquinas can identify *one* as an equivalence to *being*.

**Reply to Objection 1.** This objection addresses *one* as a mathematical property.

**Article 2. Whether "one" and "many" are opposed to each other?** Don’t nuke it, this one really is simple. It’s just a definition.

**Article 3. Whether God is one?** Aquinas uses three ways to show that God is one. Through his Simplicity, Q.3, His infinity Q.7, and His being the first mover Q.2.3. His simplicity is an attribute only God has, again see Q.3. His infinity, again is something only God has; see Q.7. His being the first mover Q.2.3. His being the first mover was the trickiest of the three ways to show the oneness of God. In short, since God is the only one who could be the first mover, he is the only first mover, being the only entity capable of something He is unique for this capability.

---

14. Italics in translation being used. Can be found at aquinas.cc

**Article 4. Whether God is supremely one?** This is a pretty short, but sweet article. Since God is perfect in being, infinite, and self-generating, it is metaphysically impossible for there to be another like God. If something else would have all the same qualities of God, then they would have to be God. To put it another way, if you were to describe the best toy car; the fastest, coolest looking, with flame decals... If you were to find a faster, cooler, more flamable car, then that car must be the best toy car. God is the supreme being with no equal, if you find a better being please inform the authors. In many ways this echoes the argument from perfection in Q.2.3.

### **3.2.13 Question 12. How God is known by us**

This question deals with how we can know what we know about God. It begins with whether or not we can see or perceive the essence of God, which we can't. Aquinas then "asks" if not by sight then by intellect?<sup>15</sup> Finally, he asks if by bestowed grace? The answer is still no. The finite can not comprehend or perceive the infinite. Imagine you're Adam the sole man on Earth. If you lived forever you can eventually explore the entire universe... Let's say you built a computer to record everything too. Your storage space would have to consist of more mass than what your recording to accurately record it. God made the universe, so He's "larger" incomprehensible than that.

**Article 1. Whether any created intellect can see the essence of God?** Can a created being ever experience the True and Living God in His essence? Yes, this is known as the beatific vision and is experienced by the saints. It's kinda the point of practicing the faith.

**Article 2. Whether the essence of God is seen by the created intellect through an image?** Can we make a created thing that perfectly represents the infinite? No. By

---

15. Spoiler, also no.

creating it we are imposing limits on the representation and therefore it by nature will fail. Attached is my illustration of infinity.

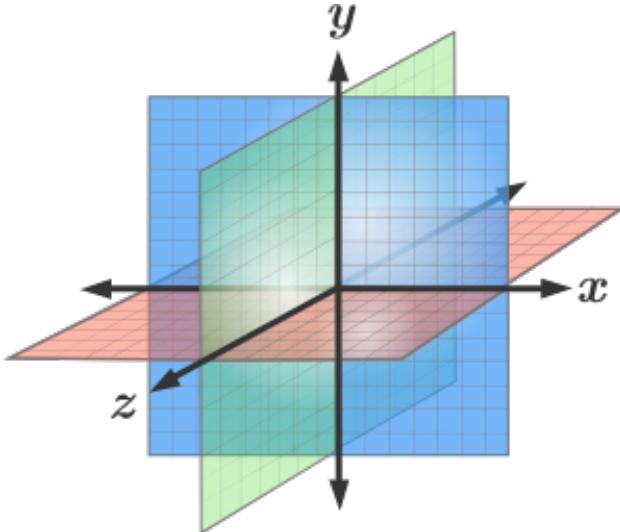


Figure 3.1: Representation of infinity. Note is limited to third order; for higher orders see *Orthogonal Projection of Polynomial Space in n-th Dimensional Space*.

**Article 3. Whether the essence of God can be seen with the bodily eye?** Similar to the previous article, I.12.2, can we physically see the essence of God. The answer, no. God does not have a material form. See I.3.2.

**Article 4. Whether any created intellect by its natural powers can see the Divine essence?** Bro, Aquinas really wants to know if he can know, you know. No, we can not see God's essence by our natural powers, but given grace by God then yes. Which is reason to respect *some* atheists as they may have, through no fault of their own, not experienced God.

**Article 5. Whether the created intellect needs any created light in order to see the essence of God?** To start, let's define created light. This is the grace that God bestows on an individual to perfect their intellect and soul to receive the beatific vision. It

is not God himself, but a created supernatural power that is not God, but from Him. With that in mind, we can circle back to article 4. With the grace of God we can see Him. With the wound of original sin our being loss the ability to naturally see Him, but He can restore it if/when/why/how/to who He wills.

**Article 6. Whether of those who see the essence of God, one sees more perfectly than another?** This article is kind of why I've been pursuing holiness. Invest in your forever now, perfect charity within you and you'll be able to have a greater grasp on the infinite and therefore a greater time in Heaven. :)

**Article 7. Whether those who see the essence of God comprehend Him?** No, it is ontologically impossible for the finite to encapsulate the infinite.

**Article 8. Whether those who see the essence of God see all in God?** All though it is impossible to fully grasp the essence of God, grasping the fullness thereof to our maximum ability enables us to see how God has always been the cause of all things. Consider a magic show, all we may know is that one object seems to have defied the laws of physic before our eyes. Reasonably we know that this cannot actually be the case. If we were able to see through the perspective of the magician we would know how this happened as we would come to understand the cause. When in the essence of God the entirety of our intellect is immersed in the Beatific Vision. As all of Creation participates in God's being we 'see' all things in the essence of God, as God is the cause.

**Article 9. Whether what is seen in God by those who see the Divine essence, is seen through any similitude?** When we are given the beatific vision we will see God as he is, not some representation. We will be granted *lumen gloriae*, or the light of glory, to elevate our intellect to better grasp the infinite.

**Article 10. Whether those who see the essence of God see all they see in it at the same time?** This article is asking how the blessed, those in heaven, see God. The answer is the same as the name of the movie directed by Daniel Kwan and Sceinert, staring Michelle Yeoh, which won 2 Golden Globe awards.<sup>16</sup>

**Article 11. Whether anyone in this life can see the essence of God?** No. We can only perceive with our mortal bodies, God doesn't subsist of any matter, so we can not perceive Him. Anything that man perceives of God, through God's will, is a work of imagination or a work on the senses. The nuance is subtle, but it basically equates to watching a video of a person, and knowing that person perfectly. We just live far enough away, in corporeal bodies, that we can not know that person, so a TV is "required". God still has to broadcast for us to receive that stream though. See the Gospel for accounts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not have a material form, but our senses identified Him as a dove.

**Article 12. Whether God can be known in this life by natural reason?** We can have some ideas of God through our natural reason and His effects, but we can not know His essence. We can see tire marks and know that someone came by, but how a car works will be forever beyond us in this life. This is because we lack the capability of looking "under the hood".

**Article 13. Whether by grace a higher knowledge of God can be obtained than by natural reason?** This is like trying to get to know someone by looking at their resume (Natural Reason) Vs. talking to them (Grace). You're going to know someone a lot better by encountering them than you are trying to derive things by their effects.

---

16. Everything Everywhere All At Once.

### **3.2.14 Question 13. The names of God**

This section threw me for a loop for a while, as the terms are a little niche and outside my daily lexicon. To assist the reader I have made a list of them and their significance. The list now exist in the glossary in the end of this book. Feel free to add to it as desired. In metaphysics/Sacred Tradition somethings Name meant more than that by which we call something. A name is a description typically of the essence of some thing/someone. This is students of angelology will know that is a very big deal to know a spirit's name. St. Michael's name means, "Who is like God?". His highest achievement, known to us, is the expelling of Satan and his demons from Heaven. His name is a response to Satan's desire to be equal to God. Likewise one could look at St. Raphael in Tobit for a humorous misunderstanding of names between men and spirits.

This question specifically focuses on the name(s) of God as it in plain English asks, "Can we describe God's essence properly in an encapsulating manner?". The names of God are sacred and in a most literal sense should not be used in vain as doing so is mortally sinful. Some of the names of God are: Yahweh, I am who am; Adonai, Lord, Master and Judge; The Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; El Shaddai, God the Almighty; Elohim, God the Creator; Abba, Father; Jesus/Emmanuel, God is with us. The question will explain that while these names are good at giving us an idea of who God is in essence, they fail to encapsulate all of who He is.

To perhaps provide further context. One of Aquinas's most frequently cited sources is pseudo-Dionysius (it was Aquinas who first recognized that the name in this reference was a pseudonym). The work at stake is titled, *On Divine Names*. This is an ancient neo-Platonic source. It is deeply metaphysical and speaks to everything that is being asked in this Question. This is one of the Questions from the Summa that might best be understood by bringing it to prayer. In that, you can then recognize your own finitude and limits before the unlimited God. Ask for the insights to understand the gift of God in informing your

understanding. If that seems circular and complex, it's because it will always be a subject for meditation, more than scientific dissection.

**Article 1. Whether a name can be given to God?** Pretty straight forward if you read the intro. We can not perfectly name God, but with His revelation we can come up with pretty good descriptors. Think of gravity, we can feel the effects of gravity, describe them, model them, and yet still not fully understand what's going on.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, is the notion that language is merely conventional signs. That is, language is merely the set of agreed upon symbols that represent concepts within our intellect. There is nothing that mandated 'dog' being the word that describes a four-legged mammal, with a tail, and often referred to as man's best friend. Any term, such as perro, equally suffices. Likewise, in giving a name to God, we are naming that which we can understand, whether little or great.

**Article 2. Whether any name can be applied to God substantially?** This question can be a little wordy, so don't let it trip you up. Aquinas is simply saying that God is the supreme being and thusly is the superlative of any virtue applied to Him. To say God is good is not to say that His general nature is benevolent, but rather His essence is goodness. Whatever virtue someone has, it is present and preexistent in its most perfect form in God.

Also, this is the prime definition for the *via negativa*. Which is to say that we more accurately describe God, by describing what God is not. In that, when we say, "God is not a creature," or "God is not material." These are some of the most definitive statements that we can make about God. Simply because it excludes any possibility of confusing God with the elements of creation

---

17. If you're reading this long after the writing of this document and we have fully understood gravity, perhaps consider man himself, as our own state of unknowing is beyond even ourselves.

**Article 3. Whether any name can be applied to God in its literal sense?** Anti-Aquinas argues that we can only come up with generalizations or metaphors for God, and not literal names. We can say, "God is a fierce warrior, but not God is justice. For we, the ants<sup>18</sup> in comparison to God's infinite can not comprehend who He is in nature. We can only generalize."

Aquinas however states that while we can not perfectly know the essence of God, we can know that he is the perfected nature of the moral good existing within creation. As He is the origin of all perfections as He himself is the creator of all things and not the creator of things lacking.

Consider a great statue. We can see the beauty portrayed in the statue and properly conclude that the creator of it has great skill. We do not know the full extent of the artist's skill, but we can properly assess that it must be great to capture beauty. Likewise, in looking at the goodness existing in, *Insert the most virtuous person you know*, we can say that the creator of that individual must in Himself possess great virtue. Conversely, think of the greatest villain of all time, *The Wall from Marvel's Spidey Super Stories* [https://villains.fandom.com/wiki/The\\_Wall\\_\(Marvel\)](https://villains.fandom.com/wiki/The_Wall_(Marvel)), while Joshua Waldermeyer[sic] possesses a lack of virtue and God is still his creator; the absence of his virute is due to the imperfect nature within Joshua and not God. It is an important distinction to hold onto for later questions, as God lacks nothing, so any deficiency in any good thing is due to a seperation from God or that creations imperfect nature.

**Article 4. Whether names applied to God are synonymous?** Simply put, since our terms are not encapsulating, they don't have to be synonymous. Recall that in I.3 we said that God's natures are all perfected in Him and are who He is. God is goodness, He is justice, He is mercy. This is because we can not describe God with only one nature as we lack the capability to do so. So we use imperfect terms to describe His natures that are

---

18. Even an ant would be too grand in a strict comparison.

necessarily synonymous. Justice does not mean mercy, but in God they are the same virtue expressed in different ways.

Think of a car, I can say that the car is fast and reliable, both are true, but its speed and quality are independent of each other.<sup>19</sup>

**Article 5. Whether what is said of God and of creatures is univocally predicated of them?** Univocally: To express something in a clear unambiguous manner.

This question asks if qualities we attribute to God are equivalent to how we apply those qualities to creatures. The answer is no, a man can be wise, but God is wisdom itself. The key distinction here is that anything in God takes the infinite and perfect form of it, such that it transforms that quality. God isn't good, God is goodness.<sup>20</sup>

**Article 6. Whether names predicated of God are predicated primarily of creatures?** Analogical: A comparison between two things. See analogy.

This question reveals an inverted way of thinking. It asks, since we know creatures first and we name their qualities first, then these qualities primarily are named in creation. That is to say, since I learned what kind is from a stranger, then I assign that virtue to describe God. It neglects to consider that God is the origin of that kindness. The confusion comes from the fact that Anti-Aquinas experiences life as a human, and not as an eternal all knowing entity.

**Article 7. Whether names which imply relation to creatures are predicated of God temporally?** This one gets a little tricky as it is almost opposed to everything we've discussed so far in regards to the essence of God. This question asks whether the names of God are an eternal reality, or something that happened within time. Now to reiterate, God

---

19. The real solution is to just describe God as a being that possesses that Je ne sais quoi, and call it a day.

20. Hot take for bumpsticker users/Christian home decorators..

is unchanging, but His relation to creation can change as creation didn't always exist. God could not have been the father of all creation prior to His act of creating it. So God's relation to creation can change as creation itself can change. In baptism we are adopted into God's family and become daughters/sons of God. Prior to our baptism our relationship to God was that of creature/creator, not child/father. Hence, the language used to describes God relation to creation can predicate temporal properties in respect to God. Resulting entirely from the change that occurs from the perspective of the creature. Think of how in physics problems, you may exist as the frame of reference for the mathematics. Accordingly, you would have a velocity of 0 from this frame of reference. A similar analogy can be applied to God and creation, where God remains absolutely unmoved and unchanged.

**Article 8. Whether this name "God" is a name of the nature?** It is. Hopefully an easy Article.

**Article 9. Whether this name "God" is communicable?** Similitude: The quality of being similar to something else.

This question asks if the descriptor God or divine being can be used to describe anything else. This question Recall I.11.3, there is one God; so the answer is no. Anti-Thomas has a really good counter in Objection 1. "He hath given us great and precious promises, that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). But we will share in His nature and not be one in it. Basically, we will become like God, but not become God as we will still be dependant on Him for our generation.

Precisely, the only manner by which the name of God is communicable is by a similitude to the Divine Nature. The moment it refers to an actually defined (think limited) being, it no longer is communicable of God.

**Article 10. Whether this name "God" is applied to God univocally by nature, by participation, and according to opinion?** This is some really dense highly intellectual word salad, it took me quite a while to grasp, but here's my best go: This question asks if the descriptor "God" is clearly given by His nature, His sharing of essence, or by subjective judgement. The answer, which is not immediately obvious, is that God's essence is revealed through analogy or reason in modern English. Basically, God does not share his Essence with anything, so the only way we can know who He is is through higher levels of thought. Consider how we theorized about 4D shapes, such as the tesseract, for thinking higher levels of thought. We have never seen a tesseract, but can reason what it is through... reason.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, Aquinas is pointing out the precise definitive qualities for the term 'God' as regards philosophy of language. It might be helpful at this point to revisit univocal, equivocal, and analogical.

Univocal - term can only be used in one way. Ex: 'triangle' Equivocal - term can be used to describe at least two very different ideas. Ex: 'bat' could refer to a baseball bat or a flying mammal Analogical - term applied to different ideas by way of similitude. Ex: How 'God' is being used here.

The term 'God' as used by the non-believer and the believer refer to different realities. Yet insofar as they resemble a supernatural (that is above nature) entity responsible for the aspects of creation, there is a similitude present.

### **Article 11. Whether this name, HE WHO IS, is the most proper name of God?**

Consider Exodus 3:13-14: The Divine Name Revealed

13 Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name? what shall I say to them? 14 God said to Moses, I am who I am.[a][b] And he said, Say this to the people of

---

21. This stays, I find this hilarious and that it provides the reader an insight into how much of a nightmare that question was.

Israel, I am has sent me to you.

So, to answer the question in simplest of terms, "What is the most proper name of God" I would implore the reader to use the name people give you to refer to them as... Regardless, on a more intellectual level, God's name I am who I am, while sounding like something a sassy 2000's girl would say when making an odd fashion choice, reveals the nature of God. God's essence is being. As we have discussed in I.3.7 God's existence is his essence, he is the self generating first mover. <Insert remaining 3 of the 5-ways.>

Aquinas also holds this pronouncement in high regard for the metaphysical truths being communicated. We have grown accustomed to this being the Divine Name, but to the original audience this may very well have seemed as an Abbott and Castello type answer. "I am who I am" is akin to naming someone is. A name that does not, in itself communicate an essence. This lack of communicating an essence is important, as we have discussed often, because God is not definable due to God's infinite nature.

**Article 12. Whether affirmative propositions can be formed about God?** So, whether the reader realizes it or not, we have been doing this pretty much since we've started. This question asks, "Can we really say anything about God"? Anti-Thomas will argue that we can only describe what God isn't, but Aquinas will reject this. In short, while we can never truly know all that God is, because He is simple we can assert concrete truths about Him. Hence our use of describing God as justice or love. Just because we can not know God in his entirety does not mean we can not know about His nature.

Also the multiplicity of these affirmations is due to the nature of our intellects, not a part of God's Divine Nature.

### **3.2.15 Question 14. God's knowledge**

**Article 1. Whether there is knowledge [Scientia]?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 2. Whether God understands Himself?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 3. Whether God comprehends Himself?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Article 4. Whether the act of God's intellect is His substance?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Article 5. Whether God knows things other than Himself?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 6. Whether God knows things other than Himself by proper knowledge?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 7. Whether the knowledge of God is discursive?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 8. Whether the knowledge of God is the cause of things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 9. Whether God has knowledge of things that are not?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 10. Whether God knows evil things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**Objection 4.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Reply to Objection 4.**

**Article 11. Whether God knows singular things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 12. Whether God can know infinite things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 13. Whether the knowledge of God is of future contingent things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 14. Whether God knows enunciable things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Article 15. Whether the knowledge of God is variable?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**Objection 3.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

**Reply to Objection 3.**

**Article 16. Whether God has a speculative knowledge of things?**

**Objection 1.**

**Objection 2.**

**On the contrary**

**I answer that**

**Reply to Objection 1.**

**Reply to Objection 2.**

### **3.2.16 Question 15. Ideas**

**Article 1. Whether there are ideas?**

**Article 2. Whether ideas are many?**

**Article 3. Whether there are ideas of all things that God knows?**

### **3.2.17 Question 16. Truth**

**Article 1. Whether truth resides only in the intellect?**

**Article 2.** Whether truth resides only in the intellect composing and dividing?

**Article 3.** Whether the true and being are convertible terms?

**Article 4.** Whether good is logically prior to the true?

**Article 5.** Whether God is truth?

**Article 6.** Whether there is only one truth, according to which all things are true?

**Article 7.** Whether created truth is eternal?

**Article 8.** Whether truth is immutable?

### **3.2.18 Question 17. Falsity**

**Article 1.** Whether falsity exists in things?

**Article 2.** Whether there is falsity in the senses?

**Article 3.** Whether falsity is in the intellect?

**Article 4.** Whether true and false are contraries?

### **3.2.19 Question 18. The life of God**

**Article 1.** Whether to live belongs to all natural things?

**Article 2.** Whether life is an operation?

**Article 3. Whether life is properly attributed to God?**

**Article 4. Whether all things are life in God?**

**3.2.20 D. God's will (19-21)**

**3.2.21 Question 19. The will of God**

**Article 1. Whether there is will in God?**

**Article 2. Whether God wills things apart from Himself?**

**Article 3. Whether whatever God wills He wills necessarily?**

**Article 4. Whether the will of God is the cause of things?**

**Article 5. Whether any cause can be assigned to the divine will?**

**Article 6. Whether the will of God is always fulfilled?**

**Article 7. Whether the will of God is changeable?**

**Article 8. Whether the will of God imposes necessity on the things willed?**

**Article 9. Whether God wills evils?**

**Article 10. Whether God has free-will?**

**Article 11. Whether the will of expression is to be distinguished in God?**

**Article 12. Whether five expressions of will are rightly assigned to the divine will?**

### **3.2.22 Question 20. God's love**

**Article 1. Whether love exists in God?**

**Article 2. Whether God loves all things?**

**Article 3. Whether God loves all things equally?**

**Article 4. Whether God always loves more the better things?**

### **3.2.23 Question 21. The justice and mercy of God**

**Article 1. Whether there is justice in God?**

**Article 2. Whether the justice of God is truth?**

**Article 3. Whether mercy can be attributed to God?**

**Article 4. Whether in every work of God there are mercy and justice?**

**3.2.24 E. Providence , in respect to all created things; for in the science of morals, after the moral virtues themselves, comes the consideration of prudence, to which providence belongs (22-24)**

### **3.2.25 Question 22. The providence of God**

**Article 1. Whether providence can suitably be attributed to God?**

**Article 2. Whether everything is subject to the providence of God?**

**Article 3. Whether God has immediate providence over everything?**

**Article 4. Whether providence imposes any necessity on things foreseen?**

### **3.2.26 Question 23. Predestination**

**Article 1. Whether men are predestined by God?**

**Article 2. Whether predestination places anything in the predestined?**

**Article 3. Whether God reprobates any man?**

**Article 4. Whether the predestined are chosen by God?**

**Article 5. Whether the foreknowledge of merits is the cause of predestination?**

**Article 6. Whether predestination is certain?**

**Article 7. Whether the number of the predestined is certain?**

**Article 8. Whether predestination can be furthered by the prayers of the saints?**

### **3.2.27 Question 24. The book of life**

**Article 1. Whether the book of life is the same as predestination?**

**Article 2. Whether the book of life regards only the life of glory of the predestined?**

**Article 3. Whether anyone may be blotted out of the book of life?**

**3.2.28 F. The power of God, the principle of the divine operation  
as proceeding to the exterior effect (25-26)**

**3.2.29 Question 25. The power of God**

**Article 1. Whether there is power in God?**

**Article 2. Whether the power of God is infinite?**

**Article 3. Whether God is omnipotent?**

**Article 4. Whether God can make the past not to have been?**

**Article 5. Whether God can do what He does not?**

**Article 6. Whether God can do better than what He does?**

**3.2.30 Question 26. The divine beatitude**

**Article 1. Whether beatitude belongs to God?**

**Article 2. Whether God is called blessed in respect of His intellect?**

**Article 3. Whether God is the beatitude of each of the blessed?**

**Article 4. Whether all other beatitude is included in the beatitude of God?**

### **3.3 The Blessed Trinity (27-43)**

#### **3.3.1 A. The question of origin or procession (27-28)**

##### **3.3.2 Question 27. The procession of the divine persons**

**Article 1. Whether there is procession in God?**

**Article 2. Whether any procession in God can be called generation?**

**Article 3. Whether any other procession exists in God besides that of the Word?**

**Article 4. Whether the procession of love in God is generation?**

**Article 5. Whether there are more than two processions in God?**

#### **3.3.3 Question 28. The divine relations**

**Article 1. Whether there are real relations in God?**

**Article 2. Whether relation in God is the same as His essence?**

**Article 3. Whether the relations in God are really distinguished from each other?**

**Article 4. Whether in God there are only four real relations paternity, filiation, spiration, and procession?**

#### **3.3.4 B. The signification of the word "person" (29-32)**

##### **3.3.5 Question 29. The divine persons**

**Article 1. The definition of "person"**

**Article 2.** Whether "person" is the same as hypostasis, subsistence, and essence?

**Article 3.** Whether the word "person" should be said of God?

**Article 4.** Whether this word "person" signifies relation?

### **3.3.6 Question 30. The plurality of persons in God**

**Article 1.** Whether there are several persons in God?

**Article 2.** Whether there are more than three persons in God?

**Article 3.** Whether the numeral terms denote anything real in God?

### **3.3.7 C. The trinity of divine persons (26-43)**

## **3.4 The Procession of Creature from God (44-119)**

This section is broken into three sub-categories:

### **3.4.1 A. The production of creatures: creation (44-46)**

### **3.4.2 B. The distinctions among creatures**

1. The distinctions among things in general (47-49)

2. Angels (50-64)

3. Corporeal creatures (65-102)

a. The six days of creation and the seventh day of rest (65-74)

b. On man (75-102)

### **C. Gods governance of the world**

1. The governance of creatures in general (103-104)

2. The actions of creatures on one another (105-119)

# **Chapter 4**

## **Part 1 of Part 2**

### **4.1 Human Action (1-48)**

This section is broken into three sub-categories:

**A. The end of human life (1-5)**

**B. Human acts (6-48)**

**C. Action (6-21)**

**D. Passions (22-48)**

## **4.2 The Intrinsic Principles of Human Acts (49-89)**

This section is broken into two sub-categories:

**A. Virtue (49-70)**

**B. Vice and sin (71-89)**

### **4.3 The Extrinsic Principles of Human Acts (90-114)**

This section is broken into two sub-categories:

**D. Law (90-108)**

**E. Grace (109-114)**

# **Chapter 5**

## **Part 2 of Part 2**

### **5.1 Theological Virtues (1-46)**

This section is broken into three sub-categories:

**A. Faith (1-16)**

**B. Hope (17-22)**

**C. Charity (23-46)**

## **5.2 The Cardinal Moral Virtues (47-170)**

This section is broken into two sub-categories:

- A. Prudence (47-57)**
- B. Justice (58-122)**
- C. Fortitude (123-140)**
- D. Temperance (141-170)**

# **Chapter 6**

## **Part 3**

### **6.1 The Mystery of the Incarnation (1-59)**

This section is broken into three sub-categories:

- A. On the fittingness of the Incarnation (1)**
- B. The union of the Word with his human nature (2-26)**
- C. What Christ did and suffered as a human being (27-59)**

## **6.2 The Sacraments (60-90)**

This section is broken into five sub-categories:

**A. The sacraments in general (60-65)**

**B. Baptism (66-71)**

**C. Confirmation (72)**

**D. Holy Eucharist (73-83)**

**E. Penance (84-90)**

# Glossary

**Analogical** A comparison between two things. See analogy. . 50

**Essence** The fundamental, unchanging properties that define what a thing is, its core nature, independent of physical existence or human perception, contrasting with temporary or accidental attributes. The what-it-is-ness of a thing that makes it a member of a category. . 19

**Name** A term used to signify the essence or nature of a thing. In metaphysics, to name something is to attempt to signify what it is. When angels reveal their names, this indicates their office or function: Raphael signifies God's healing, and Michael signifies the question Who is like God? God, however, cannot be named according to His essence, since His essence exceeds the comprehension of the created intellect. Nevertheless, we apply names to God analogically, according to the perfections found in creatures. . 47

**Similitude** The quality of being similar to something else. . 51

**Univocally** To express something in a clear unambiguous manner. Much unlike the use of univocally in common parlance. . 50

# Bibliography

[Eaz94] Eazy-E. Foe Tha Love of Money. Song, performed with Bone Thugs-N-Harmony.  
From the EP Creepin on ah Come Up. 1994.