

EXISTENCE DOES NOT DIFFER from essence in God, or, what is the same thing, it is essential for God to exist. Whence God is a necessary being.

Creatures are contingent, that is, their existence does not follow from their essence.

Necessary truths are those that can be demonstrated through an analysis of terms, so that in the end they become identities, just as in algebra an equation expressing an identity ultimately results from the substitution of values [for variables]. That is, necessary truths depend upon the principle of contradiction.

Contingent truths cannot be reduced to the principle of contradiction; otherwise everything would be necessary and nothing would be possible other than that which actually attains existence.

Nevertheless, since we say that both God and creatures exist and we say that necessary propositions are true no less than contingent ones, it is necessary that there be some common notion, both of contingent existence and of essential truth.⁵⁶

In my view it is common to every truth that one can always give a reason for every nonidentical proposition; in necessary propositions, that reason necessitates; in contingent propositions, it inclines.

And it seems to be common to things that exist, both necessarily and contingently, that they have more reason for existing than others would, were they put in their place.

Every true universal affirmative proposition, either necessary or contingent, has some connection between subject and predicate. In identities this connection is self-evident; in other propositions it must appear through the analysis of terms.

And with this secret the distinction between necessary and contingent truths is revealed, something not easily understood unless one has some acquaintance with mathematics. For in necessary propositions, when the analysis is continued indefinitely, it arrives at an equation that is an identity; this is what it is to demonstrate a truth with geometrical rigor. But in contingent propositions one continues the analysis to infinity through reasons for reasons, so that one never has a complete demonstration, though there is always, underneath, a reason for the truth, but the reason is understood completely only by God, who alone traverses the infinite series in one stroke of mind.

The matter can be illustrated with an appropriate example from geometry and numbers. Just as in necessary propositions, where, through a continual

55. Editors' title. Gr 302-6. Latin.

56. The "contingent" and "essential" were late additions to the sentence. The paragraphs that follow suggest that they are carelessly and improperly placed in this sentence, and that it should read "... it is necessary that there be a notion of existence and a notion of truth, common both to contingent and essential propositions."

analysis of the predicate and the subject, things can at last be brought to the point where it is apparent that the notion of the predicate is in the subject, so too, when dealing with numbers, one can, in the end, arrive at a common measure through a continual analysis that consists of dividing first the one, then the other. But just as there is also a proportion or relation even among incommensurables themselves, despite the fact that their resolutions proceed to infinity and never end (as Euclid has demonstrated), so too in contingent truths there is a connection between the terms, that is, there is truth, even if that truth cannot be reduced to the principle of contradiction or necessity through an analysis into identities.

One can ask whether the proposition *God chooses the best* is necessary or whether it is one of his free decrees, indeed his primary free decree.

Similarly, one can also ask whether this proposition is necessary: nothing exists without there being a greater reason for it to exist than for it not to exist.

It is certain that there is a connection between subject and predicate in every truth. Therefore, when one says "Adam who sins exists," it is necessary that there be something in this possible notion, "Adam who sins," by virtue of which he is said to exist.

It seems that we must concede that God always acts wisely, that is, in such a way that anyone who knew his reasons would know and worship his supreme justice, goodness, and wisdom. And in God there never seems to be a case of acting purely because it pleases him to act in this way, unless, at the same time, it is pleasing for good reason.

Since we cannot know the true formal reason for existence in any particular case because it involves a progression to infinity, it is therefore sufficient for us to know the truth of contingent things *a posteriori*, that is, through experience, and yet, at the same time, to hold, universally or in general, that principle divinely implanted in our mind, confirmed both by reason and experience itself (to the extent that we can penetrate things), that nothing happens without a reason, as well as the principle of opposites, that that which has the more reason always happens.

And just as God himself decreed that he would always act only in accordance with true reasons of wisdom, so too he created rational creatures in such a way that they act only in accordance with prevailing or inclining reasons, reasons that are true or, in their place, apparent.

Unless there were such a principle, there would be no principle of truth in contingent things, for the principle of contradiction certainly has no place among contingent truths.

One must certainly hold that not all possibles attain existence, otherwise one could imagine no novel that did not exist in some place and at some time.* Indeed, it does not seem possible for all possible things to exist, since they get in one another's way. There are, in fact, an infinite number of series of possible things. Moreover, one series certainly cannot be contained within another, since each and every one of them is complete.

From these two principles, the rest follows:

1. God always acts with the mark of perfection or wisdom.
2. Not every possible thing attains existence.

To these one can add:

3. In every true universal affirmative proposition the predicate is in the subject, that is, there is a connection between predicate and subject.

Assuming that the proposition "the proposition that has the greater reason for existing [i.e., being true] exists [i.e., is true]" is necessary, we must see whether it then follows that the proposition that has the greater reason for existing [i.e., being true] is necessary.⁵⁷ But it is justifiable to deny the consequence. For, if by definition a necessary proposition is one whose truth can be demonstrated with geometrical rigor, then indeed it could be the case that this proposition is demonstrable: "every truth and only a truth has greater reason," or this: "God always acts with the highest wisdom." But from this one cannot demonstrate the proposition "contingent proposition A has greater reason [for being true]" or "contingent proposition A is in conformity with divine wisdom." And therefore it does not follow that contingent proposition A is necessary. So, although one can concede that it is necessary for God to choose the best, or that the best is necessary, it does not follow that what is chosen is necessary, since there is no demonstration that it is the best. And here the distinction between necessity of the consequence [*necessitas consequentiae*] and necessity of the consequent [*necessitas consequentis*] is in some way relevant; in the end, the proposition in question is a necessity of the consequence, not of the consequent, because it is necessary once we grant the hypothesis that we take it to be the best, assuming that the best is necessarily chosen.⁵⁸

It seems safer to attribute to God the most perfect way possible of carrying things out. In creatures one cannot be so certain that they will act in accordance with even the most obvious reason; with respect to creatures, this proposition cannot be demonstrated.

*Primary Truths (1686?)*⁵⁹

THE PRIMARY TRUTHS are those which assert the same thing of itself or deny the opposite of its opposite. For example, "A is A," "A is not not-A," or "if it is true that A is B, then it is false that A is not B or that A is not-B." Also "every thing is as it is," "every thing is similar or equal to itself,"

57. The question is: does \square (if p has greater reason then p is true) entail (if p has greater reason then \square p)?

58. This distinction is made somewhat clearer by appeal to the following passage, from some notes on Bellarmine that may date from 1680–82(?):

Necessity of the consequence is when something follows from something else as a necessary consequence; absolute necessity [what Leibniz calls necessity of the consequent in the text?] is when the contrary of a thing implies a contradiction. (Gr 297).

59. Editors' title. C 518–23. Latin. "Primary Truths" has been redated as 1689.