

In every change, the same thing needs to be disposed in different ways, as what is now at one terminus and later at another. And this does not really take place in creation but only in our imagination, as we imagine that one and the same thing did not exist before and later does. And so we can call creation change by a similarity.

Likewise, the second objection is not compelling. For, although it is true to say that the world, before it existed, could have existed or come to exist, it is unnecessary that we say this about a potentiality. For we use the word *possible* in propositions to signify a modality of truth, namely, that something is neither necessary nor impossible. And we do not speak of such possibility about a potentiality, as Aristotle teaches in the *Metaphysics*.²³ But if we do use the word *possible* about a potentiality, we need to use it about active, not passive, potentiality. Then we understand the statement that the world could have existed before it did to mean that God could have brought the world into existing before he did. And so we are not compelled to hold that matter preexisted the world.

Therefore, the Catholic faith posits nothing coeternal with God and so professes that he is “the creator” and “maker of all things visible and invisible.”

4. The Purpose of Creation

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God Does All Things for an End

I have shown before that God brought things into existing by his intellect and will, not by a necessity of nature [I, 96], and everything acting by its intellect and will acts for the sake of an end, since the end of the practical intellect is a source. Therefore, all the things made by God necessarily exist for the sake of an end.

Second, God best produced things, since it belongs to the best to make each thing in the best way. But it is better that something is made for the sake of an end than without intending an end, since the aspect of good in things made comes from the end. Therefore, the things made by God are for the sake of an end. And an indication of this is apparent in things done by nature, each of which is for the sake of an end, and nothing of which is in vain. But it is improper to say that the things done by nature are better ordered than the establishment of nature by the first active thing, since the whole order of nature derives from this. Therefore, God clearly produced things for the sake of an end.

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The Final End of All Things Is the Divine Goodness

And the final end of things is necessarily the divine goodness. For the final end of things made by something acting by the will is what is first and of itself willed by that thing, since the active thing does everything that it does on that account. But the first thing willed by God's will is his goodness, as is clear from what I have said before [I, 32]. Therefore, the final end of all the things made by God is necessarily his goodness.

Second, the end of the coming to be of each thing that has come to be is the thing's form, since the coming to be ceases when the form has been obtained. But each thing that has come to be, whether by a skill or by nature, is by its form in some way like the active thing, since every active thing makes something in some way like itself. For example, the house in matter comes from the house in the mind of the builder, and in natural things, a human being begets a human being. And if something should be begotten or made by nature that is not specifically like the cause of its coming to be, it is still like its cause as the imperfect is like the perfect. For things may not be specifically like the cause of their coming to be because they cannot come to a perfect likeness of the cause. Rather, they imperfectly share in likeness to the cause in some way (e.g., animals and plants generated by the power of the sun). Therefore, the end of generating or making all the things made is the form of the thing that makes or generates them, namely, that the end is achieved according to the form's likeness. But the form of the first active thing, namely, God, is simply his goodness. Therefore, all things have been made in order to be likenesses of the divine goodness.

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Likeness to God Is the Reason for the Diversity of Things

Therefore, we should understand from this end the reason for the diversity and difference in things. For it was impossible that one thing perfectly represent the divine goodness because of the remoteness of each creature from God. Therefore, it was necessary that many things represent him, so that one thing supplied what another thing lacks. For even regarding syllogistic conclusions, the means of proof to demonstrate a conclusion need to be multiplied when one means does not suffice, as happens in rhetorical syllogisms. Nor does even the whole universe of creatures perfectly equivalently represent the

divine goodness. Rather, the universe of creatures represents the divine goodness by the perfection possible in creatures.

Second, what is in a universal cause in a simple and unified way is in the cause's effects in many and different ways, since something is more excellent in the cause than in its effects. But the divine goodness is the one and simple source and the root of the entire goodness found in creatures. Therefore, creatures need to be assimilated to the divine goodness as many and different things are assimilated to something one and simple. Therefore, the multiplicity and diversity does not come about in things by chance or luck but for the sake of the end, just as things are produced for an end, not by chance or luck. For the existing, unity, and multiplicity in things comes from the same source. Nor does matter cause the diversity of things, since the first establishment of things comes about by creation, which does not require matter. In a similar way, things that come about only by a necessity of matter seem to be fortuitous.

Likewise, neither is the multiplicity in things explained by an order of intermediate active things. (Some²⁴ supposed that only one thing could have come directly from a first, simple thing, but that the second thing was so remote from the first in simplicity that many kinds of things could have then come from it. And so they held that the more remote things successively are from the first, simple thing, the greater their number is.) For I have already shown before that there are many things that were able to come into existing only by creation [I, 69 and 72], which belongs only to God, as I have shown before [I, 70]. And so we conclude that God himself directly created many things.

It is also obvious that, according to the position under consideration, the multiplicity and diversity of things would be by chance, as if unintended by the first active thing. But the divine intellect planned and established in things the multiplicity and diversity in order for created things to represent the divine goodness in different ways, and for different things to share in it in different ranks. And this was so that a beauty shone in things from the very gradation of their diversity, and the beauty commended the divine wisdom.

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The Divine Goodness Causes Both Things and Every Movement and Action

And not only is divine goodness the end of establishing things, but it is also necessarily the end of every action and movement of any creature. For each thing does such things in the way in which it exists (e.g., something hot heats). But any created thing by its form shares in a likeness of the divine goodness, as

I have shown [I, 102]. Therefore, every action and movement of any creature is ordered to the divine goodness as its end.

Second, every movement and activity of any creature seems to tend toward something perfect. But the perfect has the nature of good, since the perfection of anything is its goodness. Therefore, every movement and action of any creature tends toward something good. But any good is a likeness of the highest good, just as any existing is a likeness of the first being. Therefore, the movement and action of any thing tends toward assimilation of the divine goodness.

Third, if there should be many subordinated active things, the actions and movements of all of them are necessarily ordered to the good of the first active thing as their final end. For, inasmuch as the higher active thing moves the lower ones, and every cause of motion moves toward its own end, the actions and movements of the lower active things necessarily tend toward the end of the first active thing. For example, the actions of all ranks in an army are ordered to victory, which is the objective of the general, as their final end. But I have shown before that the first cause of motion and the first active thing is God [I, 3], and his end is simply his goodness, as I have also shown before [I, 100]. Therefore, all the actions and movements of any creatures are necessarily for the sake of the divine goodness, not to cause or increase it, but in order that it is acquired in the creatures' way, by sharing in a likeness of it.

And created things by their actions obtain the likeness of divine goodness in different ways, just as they by their existing represent it in different ways, since each thing acts inasmuch as it exists. Therefore, since it is common to all creatures to represent the divine goodness inasmuch as they exist, it is also common to all creatures that they by their actions obtain the divine likeness in preserving their own existing and in communicating it to another. For first, each creature by its activity attempts to preserve itself in perfect existing insofar as it can, and in this it tends in its own way toward likeness of the divine eternity. Second, each creature by its activity attempts to communicate its perfect existing to something else in its own way, and thereby tends toward likeness of the divine permanence.

But a rational creature by its activity tends toward divine likeness in a singular way superior to other creatures, just as it has more excellent existing than other creatures. For matter constricts and limits the existing of other creatures, so that their existing neither actually nor potentially has infinity. But every rational nature either actually or potentially has infinity insofar as its intellect contains intelligible things. Therefore, the intellectual nature in us, considered in its initial existing, is potentially its intelligible objects, and since the latter are infinite, the nature has a potential infinity. And so the intellect is the form of forms, since it has not only a form determined to one thing,