

Reading 6

John Duns Scotus, *Commentary of the Sentences (Ordinatio)* I, Distinctions 38 & 39*

How God can know Future Contingents by knowing His own Will?

[1] In the second part of the thirty-eighth distinction the Master¹ treats of the infallibility of divine knowledge, and in the thirty-ninth distinction he treats of the immutability of divine knowledge. Therefore, in respect of this subject matter in so far as divine knowledge relates simply to the existences of things, I ask five questions:

First, does God have determinate knowledge of everything in respect of all their conditions of existence? [1.1]

Second, does He have certain and infallible knowledge of everything in respect of all their conditions of existence? [1.2]

Third, does He have immutable knowledge of everything in respect of every condition of existence? [1.3]

Fourth, does He necessarily know every condition of the existence of everything? [1.4]

Fifth, can some contingency on the side of the things in existence coexist with the determinacy and certitude of His knowledge? [1.5]

[[2] Initial arguments]

* R. N. Bosley, M. Tweedale, *Basic Issues in Medieval Philosophy*, Broadview Press, Peterborough, 1997, pp. 284-300.

¹ I.e. Peter Lombard, on whose collection of 'Sentences' Scotus is writing a commentary. The production of a commentary on Lombard's work was required in order to graduate as a Master of Theology in the Middle Ages

[2.1] To the first question I argue no:

[2.1.1] Because, according to the Philosopher in his *Perihermenias* II, 2, in future contingents there is no determinate truth, - therefore neither is there determinate knowability. Therefore, neither does the intellect have determinate knowledge of them.

This argument is reinforced by his own proof in that same text: Because then neither deliberation nor taking trouble would be needed. It seems this is so. If there is some determinate knowledge of some future contingent, neither taking trouble nor deliberation is needed because whether we deliberate or not, this thing will occur.

[2.1.2] Besides, if God's power were limited to one member [of a contradictory pair] it would be imperfect, because if God were able to do this in such a way that he was not able to do the opposite, His power would be limited and he would not be omnipotent. Therefore, in like fashion, if he knew one member in such a way that he did not know the other, he would be limited in respect of knowledge and not omniscient.

[2.2] To the second question I argue that no:

[2.2.1] Because this inference holds: God knows that I am going to sit tomorrow. I will not sit tomorrow. Therefore, God is deceived. Therefore, by like reasoning, this inference holds: God knows that I am going to sit tomorrow. I can not-sit tomorrow. Therefore, God can be deceived.

That the first holds is obvious, because he who believes what is not the case in reality is deceived. From this I prove that [the second] consequence holds, because just as from two *de inesse*² premisses follows a *de inesse* conclusion, so from one *de inesse* premiss and one *de possibili*³ follows a conclusion *de possibili*.

[2.2.2] Besides, if God knows that I am going to sit tomorrow, and it is possible for me not to sit tomorrow, assume it is a fact that I will not sit tomorrow; it follows that God is deceived. But from assuming that what is possible is a fact, the impossible does not

² i.e., a proposition which simply asserts that a predicate holds of a subject.

³ i.e., a proposition which asserts only that a predicate could hold of a subject.

follow. Therefore, it will not be impossible for God to be deceived.

To the third question I argue that no:

[2.3]

There can be no transition from a contradictory to a contradictory without some change, because if there is no change there does not seem to be any way by which what was first true is now false. Therefore, if God when He knows *A* is able not to know *A*, this would seem to be the case in virtue of some possible change, and a change in that very *A* as it is known by God, since nothing has being if not in God's knowledge. Consequently, a change in *A* cannot occur without a change in God's knowledge which is what we proposed.

[2.3.1]

Besides, whatever is not *A* but can be *A* can begin to be *A*, because it seems unintelligible that the affirmation opposed to a negation which is the case can be the case without beginning to be the case. Therefore if God does not know *A* but can know *A*, He can begin to know *A*; therefore He can be changed into knowing *A*.

[2.3.2]

Besides, there is this third argument: If God does not know *A* but can know *A*, I ask what is this power? Either it is passive, and then it is in respect of a form and it follows that there is change; or it is active, and it is clear that it is natural because the intellect *qua* intellect is not free but rather something that acts naturally. Such a power can act after not acting only if it is changed. Therefore, as before, it follows that there is change.

[2.3.3]

To the fourth question I argue that yes:

[2.4]

Because God immutably knows *A*, therefore necessarily. (By *A* understand 'the Antichrist is going to exist.') Proof of this consequence: First, because the only necessity posited in God is the necessity of immutability. Therefore whatever is in Him immutably is in Him necessarily.

[2.4.1]

Second, because everything immutable seems to be formally necessary, just as everything possible - in the sense opposed to 'necessary' - seems to be mutable, for everything possible in this sense does not exist in virtue of itself and can exist in virtue of something else. But for it to exist after not existing (either in the order of duration or in the order of nature), does not seem to be possible without some mutability; therefore

[2.4.2]

etc.

[2.4.3] Besides, whatever can exist in God, can be the same as God, and consequently can be God. But whatever can be God, of necessity is God, because God is immutable; therefore whatever can be in God, of necessity is God. But to know A, can be in God; therefore of necessity it is God, and consequently He knows A necessarily without qualification.

[2.4.4] Besides, every unqualified, i.e. absolute, perfection of necessity belongs to God. To know A is an unqualified perfection, since otherwise God would not be imperfect if He did not know A formally, because He is imperfect only by lacking some unqualified perfection.

[2.5] To the fifth question I argue no:

[2.5.1] Because this inference holds: God knows A. Therefore, A will necessarily be the case.

The antecedent is necessary. Proof of the consequence: A rational act is not lessened by the subject matter it relates to, just as saying is not lessened if it relates to this, 'that I say nothing,' for this inference holds: I say that I say nothing. Therefore, I say something. Therefore, by similar reasoning, since God's knowing is necessary without qualification, it is not lessened in that necessity by the fact that it relates to something contingent.

[2.5.2] Besides, everything known by God to be going to be will necessarily be; A is known by God to be going to be; therefore, etc. The major premiss is true in as much as it is *de necessario*⁴ because the predicate of necessity belongs to the subject. The minor is without qualification *de inesse*, because it is true for eternity. Therefore, there follows a conclusion *de necessario*.

[[3] In opposition to the above]

⁴ I.e., a proposition which asserts that its predicate must hold of the subject. The first premiss of the argument 'everything known ...' is called the major premiss, the other 'A is known ...' is the minor premiss.

Hebrews 4: "All things are bare and open to His eyes." Also the gloss on this. (Seek it out.) Therefore, He has determinate and certain knowledge of everything in respect of everything knowable in them. Also He has immutable knowledge, as is obvious, since nothing in Him is mutable. [3.1]

In opposition on the fourth question: If God necessarily knew A, then A would be necessarily known; and if necessarily known, then necessarily true. The consequent is false, therefore the antecedent is. [3.2]

In opposition on the fifth question: Being is divided into the necessary and the contingent⁵; therefore, the intellect, when it apprehends beings in respect of their own peculiar aspects, apprehends this one as necessary and that one as contingent (otherwise it would not apprehend them as being those sorts of beings), and consequently that knowledge does not do away with the contingency of what is known. [3.3]

[[4] Others' opinions]

As regards these questions, the certitude of divine knowledge, of everything in respect of all conditions of existence, is posited on account of ideas which are posited in the divine intellect, and this on account of their perfection in representing, because they represent the things of which they are not just in respect of themselves but in respect of every aspect and relationship. Thus they are in the divine intellect sufficient reason not just for simply apprehending the items understood but also for apprehending every union of them and every mode of those items understood that pertains to their existence. [4.1] Theory 1

Against [this opinion]: The concepts involved in apprehending the terms of some complex are not sufficient to cause knowledge of that complex unless it is apt to be known in virtue of its terms. A contingent complex is not apt to be known in virtue of its terms, because if it were it would be not only necessary but also primary and immediate.⁶ Therefore, the concepts involved in apprehending the terms, [(a)]

⁵ A contingent being is one which might possibly not exist — it depends for its existence on some other being.

⁶ i.e., not provable from other more self-evident propositions.

however perfectly they represent those terms, are insufficient to cause knowledge of the contingent complex.

[(b)] Besides, ideas only naturally represent what they represent, and they represent it under the aspect by which they represent something. This is proved by the fact that ideas are in the divine intellect before every act of the divine will, in such a way that they exist there in no way through an act of that will; but whatever naturally precedes an act of the will is purely natural. I take, then, two ideas of terms which are represented in them, ideas of human and of white, for example. I ask: Do those ideas of themselves represent the composition of those extremes,⁷ (or the division,⁸ or both? If only the composition, then God knows that composition (and in a necessary way), and as a consequence He in no way knows the division. Argue in the same way if they represent only the division. If they represent both, then God knows nothing through them, because to know contradictories to be simultaneously true is to know nothing.

[(c)] Besides, there are ideas of possible items in the same way there are ideas of future items, because between possibles that are not going to be and those that are going to be a difference exists only by an act of the divine will. Therefore, an idea of a future item no more represents it as necessarily going to be than does the idea of a possible item.

[(d)] Besides, an idea of a future item will not represent something as existing any more at this instant than at some other.

[4.2] Theory 2 Another opinion is that God has certain knowledge of future contingents through the fact that the whole flow of time and all things which are in time is present to eternity.

This is shown - through the fact that eternity is limitless and infinite, and as a consequence just as what is limitless is present to every place all at once, so the eternal is present to the whole of time all at once.

This is explained by the example of a stick fixed in water: Even if the whole of the

⁷ I.e., the proposition 'A human is white.'

⁸ i.e the proposition 'A human is not white.'

river flows past the stick and thus the stick is present successively to every part of the river, still the stick is not limitless in respect of the river, since it is not present to the whole all at once. Therefore, by the same reasoning, if eternity were something standing still (as was the stick) past which time flowed in such a way that only one instant of time would ever be present to it all at once (just as only one part of the river was present to the stick all at once), eternity would not be limitless in respect of time⁹.

This point is reinforced by the following consideration: The “now” of eternity when it is present to the “now” of time is not coequal to it; therefore, when it is present to that now it goes beyond it. But it would go beyond it, when it is present to that “now,” only if it were all at once present to another “now”¹⁰.

It is also reinforced by this: If the whole of time could exist in external reality all at once, the “now” of eternity would be present to the whole of time all at once. But even though on account of its succession time is opposed to existing all at once, this detracts not at all from the perfection of eternity. Therefore now eternity itself is equally present to the whole of time and to anything existing in time.

This is reinforced by another example, that of the centre of a circle. If we let flowing time be the circumference of a circle and the “now” of eternity be the centre, no matter how much flow there was in time the whole flow and any part of it would always be present to the centre. In this way, then, all things, no matter what part of time they exist in (whether they are in this “now” of time or are past or future), are all present in respect of the “now” of eternity. In this way what is in eternity on account of such a coexistence sees those things presently, just as I can see presently what in this very instant I see.

I argue against this opinion: First, I turn back against them what they claimed about limitlessness. Given that a place can increase continuously *ad infinitum* (and this occurs in such a way that just as time is in continuous flux so God increases and

[Counter Arguments]

[(a)]

⁹ i.e. the holders of this theory argue that if the relation of eternity to time were like that of the stick to the water passing it, so that only one instant of time were present to eternity at a time, then eternity would not be unlimited. Since it is unlimited, the whole of time must be present to it all at once.

¹⁰ i.e. since eternity is present to more than the present moment of time it must be present to all moments of time.

increases the place in a process of becoming), still God's limitlessness would be to Him a ground for coexisting with some place (in some "now") only if it were an existing place. For God by His limitlessness coexists only with what is in Him, even though he could cause a place outside the universe and then by His limitlessness He would coexist with it. If, then, limitlessness is a ground for coexisting only with an actual place and not with a potential one (because it does not exist), by like reasoning eternity will be a ground for coexisting only with something existent. This is what is argued for when we say, "What is not can coexist with nothing," because 'coexist' indicates a real relation but a relation whose basis is not real is itself not real.

- [(b)] Again, if an effect has being in itself in relation to a primary cause, it unqualifiedly is in itself, because there is nothing in relation to which it has truer being. Thus what is said to be something in relation to the primary cause can unqualifiedly be said to be such. Therefore, if something future is actual in relation to God, it is unqualifiedly actual. Therefore it is impossible for it to be later posited in actuality.

Besides, if my future sitting is now present to eternity (not just in respect of the entity it has in knowable being but also that which it has in the being of existence), then it is now produced in that being by God, for only that has being from God in the flow of time which is produced by God with that being. But God will produce this sitting [of mine] (or the Antichrist's soul - it is all the same); therefore, that which is already produced by Him will again be produced in existence, and thus twice it will be produced in existence.

- [(c)] Besides, this position does not seem to help with the problem it was supposed to solve, viz. having certain knowledge of the future. First, because this sitting, besides the fact that it is present to eternity as being in some part of time, is itself future in itself in virtue of the fact that it is future and is going to be produced by God. I ask: Does He have certain knowledge of it? If yes, then this is not because it is already existent, but rather in virtue of the fact that it is future. And we must say that this certitude is through something else, something that suffices for every certain apprehension of the existence of this thing. If he did not know it with certitude as future, then he produces it without previously apprehending it. But he will apprehend it with certitude when he

has produced it. Therefore, he knows things done, in a different way than he knows things going to be done, which is counter to what Augustine says in *Super Genesim*, 7.

Secondly, because the divine intellect obtains no certitude from any object other than its own essence, for otherwise it would be cheapened. Hence even now the divine intellect does not have certitude about my action which has actually occurred in such a way that that action of itself causes certitude in the divine intellect, for it does not move His intellect. Therefore, in the same way all temporal things, given they are in their existence present to eternity in virtue of those existences they have, do not cause in the divine intellect certitude of themselves. Rather certain knowledge of the existence of these must be obtained through something else, and this something else suffices for us¹¹.

[(d)]

Besides, these people propose that the eternal life of an angel is completely simple and coexists with the whole of time; therefore an angel, which is in eternal life, is present to the whole flow of time and to all the parts of time. Therefore, it seems, according to this account of theirs, that an angel can naturally know future contingents.¹²

[(e)]

A third position says that although some things are necessary in relation to divine knowledge, it, nevertheless, does not follow that they are not able to be contingent in relation to their proximate causes. [Theory 3]

This derives some support from Boethius in the last chapter of book in of his *Consolation*, where he says the following: "If you were to say that what God sees is going to occur cannot not occur, and that what cannot not occur happens from necessity, and so bind me to this word 'necessity' I shall say in answer that the same future event, when it is related to divine knowledge, is necessary, but when it is considered in its own nature it seems to be utterly and absolutely free" etc.

In favour of this it is also argued that it is possible for imperfection to exist in an effect on account of its proximate cause but not on account of its remote or prior cause, - for example there is deformity in an act on account of the created will but not in as

¹¹ i.e. so if this account were correct we could know the future as certainly as God.

¹² But this power was supposed to belong solely to God, according to orthodox theology.

much as it is due to the divine will. Consequently, sin is not traced back to God as its cause, but rather is only imputed to the created will. Therefore, even though necessity would belong to things to the extent that it is from God's side - who is the remote cause -, it is nevertheless possible for contingency to be in them on account of their proximate causes.

Against this: We argued in Distinction 2, and showed there through the contingency of things that God thinks and wills, that there can be no contingency in some cause's causation of its effect unless the first cause relates contingently to the cause next to it or to its effect.

In brief, this is shown from the fact that where we have a cause which in so far as it is in motion produces motion, if it is necessarily in motion it will necessarily produce motion. Consequently, where we have a secondary cause which produces something in so far as it is moved by a primary cause, if it is necessarily moved by the primary cause it will necessarily move the cause next to it or produce its effect. Therefore the whole hierarchy of causes, right down to the final effect, will produce the effect necessarily if the relationship of the primary cause to the cause next to it is necessary.

Further, a prior cause naturally relates to its effect before a posterior cause; consequently in the case of the prior cause if it has a necessary relationship to the effect, it will give it necessary being. But in the second instant of nature the proximate cause cannot give it contingent being, since it is already supposed to have from the primary cause a being that rejects contingency. Neither can you say that in the same instant of nature these two causes give caused being, because on that being cannot be based the necessary relationship to the cause that perfectly gives being as well as a contingent relationship to some other cause.

Further, whatever is produced by posterior causes could be immediately produced by the primary cause; and in that case it would have the same entity it now has, and then would be contingent just as it is now contingent. Therefore, even now it has its contingency from the primary cause and not just from a proximate cause.

Further, God has produced many things immediately - for example he created the

world and now creates souls - and yet all these he produced contingently.

[5] In answering these questions we must proceed as follows: First, [A] we must see how there is contingency in things, and, secondly, [B]¹³ how the certitude and immutability of God's knowledge of these things is compatible with their contingency.

In regard to the first I say that this disjunction, 'necessary or possible', is an attribute of being, where I mean a convertible attribute in the way many such items are unlimited in respect of beings. But convertible attributes of being are immediately said of being, because being has an unqualifiedly simple concept and, therefore, there cannot be a middle between it and its attribute, because there is no definition of either that could serve as a middle.

[A] **Contingency in things.**

[5.1]

Also if it is a non-primary attribute of being, it is difficult to see what might be prior to it and serve as a middle whereby the attribute could be proved of being, since neither is it easy to see a ranking in the attributes of being. And even if we did apprehend such a ranking, the propositions taken from the attributes as premisses would not seem to be much more evident than the conclusions.

But in disjunctive attributes once we suppose that the less noble one belongs to some being, we can conclude that the more noble one belongs to some being, even though the whole disjunction cannot be proved of being. For example, this follows: 'If some being is finite, then some being is infinite' and 'if some being is contingent, then some being is necessary,' because in these cases the more imperfect one cannot belong to some particular being unless the more perfect one, on which the less perfect depends, belongs to some being.

But it does not seem possible in this way for the more imperfect member of such a disjunction to be shown. For it is not the case that, if the more perfect is in some being, necessarily the more imperfect is in some being (unless the disjunct members are correlative, like cause and caused). Consequently the disjunction 'necessary or contingent' cannot be proved of being by some prior middle. Also the part of the

¹³ For [B] see below p. 100

disjunction which is 'contingent' cannot be shown of anything from the assumption that necessary' belongs to something. Thus it seems that 'Some being is contingent' is primarily true and not demonstrable *propter quid*.

Thus The Philosopher, when he argues against the necessity of future events, reasons not to something that is more impossible than the hypothesis, but to something more obviously impossible to us, namely that there is no need either to deliberate or take trouble.

Therefore, those who deny such obvious facts need either punishment or sense perception, because, according to Avicenna in *Metaphysics* 1, those who deny a first principle should be either flogged or burned until they allow that being burned is not the same as not being burned, being flogged not the same as not being flogged. So also those who deny that some being is contingent ought to be tortured until they allow that it is possible for them not to be tortured. Assuming then that it is obviously true that some being is contingent, we must inquire how contingency can be preserved in beings.

[5.2] I say (on account of the first argument that was made against the third opinion, which is further explicated in Distinction 2 in the question "Concerning God's being") that we can maintain the contingency of some cause only if we propose that the first cause immediately causes in a contingent way, and if we do this by positing in the first cause a perfect causality, just as the catholics propose.

[5.3] The primary being causes through its intellect and will; and if a third executive power other than those is proposed, this will not help answer the question, because if it understands and wills necessarily, it produces necessarily. Therefore, we must seek this contingency in the divine intellect or in the divine will.

But not in the intellect as it has its first act before every act of the will, because whatever the intellect understands in this way it understands merely naturally and by a natural necessity, and thus there can be no contingency in its knowing something which it knows or in understanding something which it ideates by such a primary understanding.

[5.4] Consequently we must seek contingency in the divine will. In order to see how it is

to be posited there we must first see (a)¹⁴ how it is in our will, and there three questions arise: (1) In respect of what does our will have freedom? (2) How does possibility or contingency follow from this freedom? (3) Concerning the logical distinction of propositions, how is possibility in respect of opposites expressed?

As to the first question I say that the will, in so far as it is a first actuality, is free in respect of opposite acts. Also it is free, when those opposite acts mediate, in respect of opposite objects toward which it tends, and further in respect of opposite effects which it produces. [(a) Human will & contingency]
[Answer to (1)]

The first freedom necessarily has some imperfection attached to it, because of the passive potentiality and mutability of the will. The third freedom is not the second, because even if *per impossibile* it brought about nothing outside, still, in so far as it is will, it can freely tend toward objects. But the middle character of freedom has no imperfection, but rather is necessary for perfection, because every perfect power can tend toward everything which is apt to be an object of such a power. Therefore, a perfect will can tend toward everything which is apt to be willable. Therefore, the freedom that has no imperfection, in so far as it is freedom, is in respect of opposite objects toward which it tends, to which, as such, it happens that it produces opposite effects.

As regards the second [question] I say that along with that freedom goes an obvious potential for opposites. For although this is not a potential for at the same time willing and not willing (since that is nothing), still it is a potential for willing after not willing, or for a series of opposite acts. [Answer to (2)]

In all mutable things it is obvious that there is this potential for a series of opposites in them. Nevertheless there is another not so obvious potential that involves no temporal series. For if we suppose that a created will exists for just one instant, and in that instant has this willing, it does not then necessarily have it. [A will existing only for an instant]

Proof: If in that instant it had it necessarily, since it is a cause only in that instant when it causes it, it is unqualifiedly the case that the will, when it causes, necessarily

¹⁴ For (b), the treatment of the divine will, see below p. 99

causes. For in this case it is not a contingent cause because it preexisted before that instant in which it causes (and then as preexisting it was able to cause or not to cause). Just as this being, when it is, is necessary or contingent, so a cause, when it causes, causes necessarily or contingently. Therefore, from the fact that in that instant it non-necessarily causes this willing it follows that it causes it contingently. *There is, then, without any temporal series this potential of the cause for the opposite of that which it causes.* There is then this potential which is real and, as a first actuality, naturally prior to the opposites which as second actualities are naturally posterior. For a first actuality, considered in that instant in which it is naturally prior to its second actuality, so posits that second actuality in existence, as its contingent effect, that, as naturally prior, it can equally posit some other opposite in existence.

Along with this real active potential, which is naturally prior to that which it produces, goes a logical potential amounting to a non-repellency of terms. For to the will as a first actuality, even when it is producing this willing, the opposite willing is not repellent. This is both because it is a contingent cause in respect of its effect and consequently the opposite sort of effect is not repellent to it, and because in as much as it is a subject, it relates contingently to the act in as much as that act informs it, since to a subject the opposite of its *per accidens* accident is not repellent.

Therefore, along with the freedom of our will, in so far as it tends toward opposite acts, goes a potential both for opposites in a temporal series and for opposites at the same instant. I.e., either one can be in existence without the other, and the second potential is a real cause of the act in such a way that it is naturally prior to the logical potential. But the fourth potential, viz. for simultaneous opposites does not go along with that [real potential]; for that [fourth one] is nothing.

- [(3)] From the answer to that second question the third is clear, i.e. the disambiguation to be made in respect of the proposition, 'A will that is willing A is able not to will A.' In composite sense¹⁵ it is false, since then it signifies the possibility of this complex: 'A

¹⁵ The proposition 'A will willing A is possibly not willing A' is read 'in the composite sense' as the proposition "a will willing A is at the same time willing not A' is possibly true" which is false. In the divided sense it is read as 'It is true of a will willing A that it is possible for it to not will A', which is true.

will that is willing *A* does not will *A*.' In the divided sense it is true since then it signifies the possibility for opposites in temporal series, since a will that is willing at time t_1 is able not to will at time t_2 .

But if we interpret the proposition as uniting *de possibili* the terms at the same instant, for example as this proposition: 'A will that is not willing something at *A* is able to will it at *A*,' again it should be disambiguated in respect of composition and division: in the composite sense it is false, i.e. it is false that there is a possibility that it is at the same time willing at *A* and not willing at *A*; the divided sense is true, i.e. it is true that to the will to which willing at *A* belongs not willing at *A* is able to belong but the not willing does not exist at the same time [as the willing], rather the not willing [belongs to the will] because then the willing does not belong to it.

In order to understand this second distinction, which is the more obscure, I say that in the composite sense there is a single categorical proposition whose subject is 'A will that is not willing at *A* and whose predicate is 'willing at *A*,' and then this predicate is attributed possibly to this subject to which it is repellent. Consequently, to it belongs impossibly what is denoted to belong to it possibly. In the divided sense there are two categorical propositions ascribing to the will two predicates; in one of these propositions, which is *de inesse*, the predicate 'not willing' is ascribed to the will (this categorical proposition is understood as being there through an implicit composition); in the other categorical proposition, which is *de possibili*, willing *A* is possibly ascribed [to the will]. These two propositions are found to be true because they signify their predicates to be attributed to the subject at the same instant, and clearly it is true that not willing *A* belongs to that will at the same instant as possibility for the opposite of *A*, just as though *inesse* were signified along with the proposition *de possibili*.

Here is an example of this sort of disambiguation: 'Every man who is white is running.' Given that every white man (and not black or in-between) is running, it is true in the composite sense, false in the divided sense. In the composite sense there is a single proposition with a single subject determined by 'white'; in the divided sense there are two propositions attributing two predicates to the same subject. Similarly this proposition, 'A man who is white is necessarily an animal,' in the composite sense is

false, because the predicate does not necessarily belong to that whole subject, while in the divided sense it is true because two predicates are asserted to be said of the same subject, one necessarily and the other absolutely and without necessity, and both do belong and both of those categorical propositions are true.

But against this second disambiguation it is argued in three ways that it is not logical and that there is at some instant no potential for the opposite of what is the case at that instant.

[(Obj. 1)] First, through the proposition asserted in *Perihermenias* II¹⁶: 'Everything which is, when it is, necessarily is.'

[(Obj. 2)] Secondly by the following rule governing the "*Art of Obligations*" 'If something false and contingent is supposed about the present moment, it must be denied to be the case.' He proves this rule as follows: "What is supposed must be sustained as true; therefore it must be sustained for some instant at which it is possible. But it is not a possible truth for the instant at which it is supposed because if it were possible for that instant, then it could be true through motion or through change. But in neither way could it be true, because motion does not occur in an instant and change to the opposite of what is the case does not occur in an instant, because then change and its terminal state would exist at the same time."

[(Obj. 3)] Further, and thirdly: If at some instant there is a potential for something whose opposite is in fact the case, either that potential exists with its act or before its act. Obviously, not with the act. But not before the act either, because then that potential would be for an act at an instant other than the one at which that potential is a fact.

[Responses to these objections]

[(Reply to 1)] To the first I answer that that proposition of Aristotle's can be either categorical or hypothetical just as also this one: 'For an animal to run if a man runs is necessary.' Taken as a conditional this obviously has to be disambiguated according as 'necessary' can mean the necessity of the consequence or the necessity of the consequent. In the

¹⁶ i.e. *de Interpretatione*, 9.

first sense it is true; in the second, false. In its sense as a categorical proposition this whole 'to run if a man runs' is predicated of animal with the mode of necessity, and this categorical proposition is true, because the predicate so determined necessarily belongs to the subject, although not the predicate absolutely. Consequently, to argue from the predicate taken absolutely is to commit the fallacy of qualifiedly and unqualifiedly (*secundum quid* and *simpliciter*).¹⁷

So I say here that if this proposition is interpreted as a temporal hypothetical, necessarily either it denotes the necessity of concomitance or the necessity of the concomitant.¹⁸ In the former case it is true; in the latter, false. But if it is interpreted as categorical, then 'when it is' does not determine the composition implicit in 'which is' but rather the principal composition signified by the final 'is.' And then it declares that this predicate 'is when it is' is said of the subject 'which is' with the mode of necessity, and so the proposition is true, but it does not follow that therefore it necessarily is. Such an inference would commit the fallacy of "qualifiedly and unqualifiedly" in some other part. Therefore, no true sense of this proposition declares that for something to be, in the instant in which it is, is necessary, but only that it is necessary with the qualification 'when it is.' This is compatible with its being unqualifiedly contingent in that instant in which it is, and consequently with its opposite being able to be the case in that instant.

To the second: The rule is false and the proof invalid, because, although what is [Reply to (2)] supposed should be sustained as true, still it can be sustained for that instant while not denying that instant to be one for which it is false, because (contrary to what the proof intimates) this inference does not hold: 'This is false for this instant; therefore it is impossible.' And when the opponent says, "If it can be true at the moment at which it is false, either it can be found true at that instant [or could be true through motion or

¹⁷ I.e. the fallacy of supposing that because something holds with a qualification it holds without qualification. For example arguing that drinking alcohol in moderation is good for you; therefore drinking alcohol is good for you. The argument assumes that the qualification 'in moderation' can be dropped.

¹⁸ In a temporal hypothetical of the form 'When *p*, then *q*,' *q* is the "concomitant" and the whole hypothetical expresses a "concomitance." When the mode of necessity is added, a composite/divided sense ambiguity arises, just as with conditional propositions where it leads to the distinction of "necessity of the consequence" and "necessity of the consequent."

change],” I say that neither alternative is the case, because that possibility for its truth is not a possibility for a temporal series (where one occurs after the other), but is a potential for the opposite of what in fact belongs to something, in so far as it is naturally prior to that act.

[Reply to (3)] To the third I say that the potential is before the act, not temporally “before” but “before” by the ordering of nature, since what naturally precedes that act, as it naturally precedes the act, could exist with the opposite of that act. Then we must deny that every potential is “with its act or before its act” where ‘before’ indicates temporal priority. It is true where ‘before’ indicates priority of nature.

[(Obj. 4)] There is a fourth objection to this. This inference holds: If it is possible for someone to will *A* at this instant, but he does not will *A* at this instant, then it is also possible for him not to will *A* at this instant. [The reason is that] from a proposition *de inesse* follows that proposition *de possibili*. And then it seems to follow that it is possible to will *A* and not to will *A* at the same time for the same instant.

To this I answer, following the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* IX, that what has a potential for opposites so acts as it has the potential for acting, but it is not the case that a mode is applied to the potential’s term, rather than to the potential itself, as it has the potential for acting. This is because *I have at the same time a potential for opposites but I do not have a potential for opposites at the same time.*

Then I say that this inference does not hold: ‘It is possible to will this at *t* and it is possible to will that at *t*; therefore, it is possible to will this and to will that at *t*. [The reason is that] it is possible for there to be a potential for each of two opposites disjunctively at some instant, even if not for them both at once. This is because as there is a possibility for one of them so there is for the not-being of the other, and, conversely, just as there is a possibility for the other so there is for the not-being of the first. Therefore, there is not a possibility at the same time for this and that opposite, because a possibility for simultaneity exists only where there is a possibility for both to occur at the same instant, which is not implied by the fact that for that instant there is a potential for both divisively. An example of this shows up in persisting things: This does not follow: ‘This body can be in this place at instant *t*, and that body can be in the

same place at instant t ; therefore, those two bodies can be in the same place at instant t]. For the first body can be there in such way that the second body cannot be there, and vice versa. Thus this does not follow: 'If there is a potential for each to be at the same instant or place, then there is a potential for both.' This fails every time each of the two excludes the other. Thus also this does not follow: 'I can carry this stone for the whole day (i.e., it is something that is carryable by my strength), and I can carry that stone for the whole day; therefore I can carry both stones at once.' [The reason is that] here each of the items for which there is divisively a potential excludes the other. Moreover, simultaneity can never be inferred from just the sameness of that one instant or place; rather it is required to have besides this the conjunction of the two which are said to be at the same time, in respect of a third item.

Following what has been said about our will we must look into some matters [b] **Divine Will concerning the divine will.** (1) First, in respect of what does it have freedom? (2) Secondly, what is contingency in the willed items? (As for the logical disambiguation, it is the same in this case as in the former.)

As for the first, I say that the divine will is not indifferent to different acts of willing [Answer to (1)] and not willing, because this did not exist in our will apart from imperfection of the will. Also our will was free for opposite acts, in order to be free for opposite objects, [5.5.1] because of the limitation of each act in respect of its object. Consequently, given the absence of limitation on one and the same willing of diverse objects, it is not necessary in order to have freedom in respect of opposite objects to posit freedom in respect of opposite acts. Also the divine will itself is free in respect of opposite effects, but this is not its primary freedom, just as also it is not in us. Therefore, there remains that freedom which is of itself a perfection and possesses no imperfection, namely a freedom in respect of opposite objects, *so that just as our will can by different willings tend toward different willed items, so the divine will can by a single, simple, unlimited willing tend toward any willed items whatsoever.* This is so in such a way that if the will or that willing were of just one willable item, and not able to be of the opposite even though it is of itself willable, this would constitute an imperfection in the will, just as was argued earlier as regards our will.

And even though in us the will can be distinguished as it is receptive and operative and productive (for it is productive of acts, and it is that by which what has it operates formally by willing, and it is receptive of its own willing), freedom seems to belong to it in so far as it is operative, i.e. in so far as what has it formally can through it tend toward an object. Therefore, in this way freedom is posited in the divine will *per se et primo* in so far as it is an operative power, even though it is neither receptive nor productive of its willing. Nevertheless, some freedom can be saved in it in so far as it is productive, for although production into existence does not necessarily accompany its operation (since the operation is in eternity while production of existence is in time), still its operation is necessarily accompanied by production into willed being. In that case this power of the divine will does not produce primarily as it is productive but rather qualifiedly, i.e. into willed being, and this production goes along with it as it is operative.

- [Answer to (2)] As to the second article I say that the divine will takes for its object necessarily only its own essence. Thus to anything else it relates contingently in such a way that it can be
- [5.5.2] of the opposite, and this when we consider it as it is naturally prior to the tendency toward that opposite. Not only is it naturally prior to its own act (as a willing) but also [it is prior] in so far as it is willing, because just as our will, as naturally prior to its own act, elicits that act in such a way that it can in the same instant elicit the opposite, so the divine will, in so far as it is naturally prior to its one sole willing, tends toward the object contingently by such a tendency that in the same instant it can tend toward the opposite object.

And this is the case both by a logical potential, which amounts to a non-repellency of terms (as we said of our will), and by a real potential, which is naturally prior to its act.

[B] Compatibility of divine certainty with contingency

Now that we have looked into the contingency of things so far as their existence is concerned, and this by considering it in respect of the divine will, it remains to look into the second principal question, how the certitude of knowledge is compatible with this. This can be explained in two ways: (a) In one way by the fact that the divine intellect, in seeing the determination of the divine will, sees that this will be the case at time *t*, because that will determines that it is going to be at that time; for the intellect

knows that the will is immutable and unthwartable. Or in another way: (b) Since the above way seems to posit a process of inference in the divine intellect (as though it infers that this is going to be from the intuition of the will's determination and immutability), it can be explained in a different way that the divine intellect presents simples of which the union in reality is contingent, or, if it presents a complex, it presents it as neutral to it. The will, in choosing one part, namely the conjunction of these for some "now" in reality, makes to be determinately true this complex, "This will be at time *t*." Given this exists as determinately true, the essence is the reason by which the divine intellect apprehends that truth, and this occurs naturally, in as much as it is on the side of the essence, in such a way that just as it naturally apprehends all necessary principles as though before the act of the divine will (because their truth does not depend on the act and they would be known by the divine intellect if *per impossibile* there was no willing), so the divine essence is the reason for knowing them in that prior moment, because then they are true. Certainly those truths, nor even their terms, do not move the divine intellect to apprehending such a truth, because otherwise the divine intellect would be cheapened, since it would receive its evidence from something other than its own essence. Rather the divine essence is the reason for knowing simples and complexes alike. But at that point there are no contingent truths because at that point there is nothing by which they might have determinate truth. But once the determination of the divine will is given, then they are true in that second instant and the reason for the intellect's apprehending those which are now true in the second instant, and would have been known in the first if they had been true in the first instant, is the same as it was in the first. An example: just as if in my power of vision a single act that always exists were the reason for seeing an object, and if, by something else being present, now this colour is present, and now that, my eye would see now this, now that and yet by that same act of sight there will only be a difference in the priority and posteriority of seeing on account of the object being presented earlier or later; so also, if one colour were naturally made to be present and another freely, there would not be formally in my vision some difference so that on its side the eye would not naturally see both, and yet it would be able to see one contingently and the other necessarily, in as much as one is present to it contingently and the other necessarily.

By both of these ways the divine intellect is asserted to know the existence of things, and it is clear on both that there is a determination of the divine intellect to the existent to which the divine will is determined, and there is the certitude of infallibility because the divine will can be determined only if the intellect determinately apprehends what the will determines, and there is immutability, because both the will and the intellect are immutable.

[Questions 1.1-3
have now been
answered]

This responds to the first three questions. Nevertheless, the contingency of the object known is compatible with all these, because the will that determinately wills this wills it contingently (see the first article).

[Question 1.4]

As for the fourth question, it seems perhaps that we should disambiguate this proposition, 'God necessarily knows A,' in respect of composition and division. In the sense of a composition the proposition indicates the necessity of the knowledge as it holds of that object [A]; in the sense of a division it indicates the necessity of the knowledge taken absolutely [i.e. without any relation to anything], a knowledge which, nevertheless, does hold of that object. In the first sense the proposition is true; in the second, false.

Nevertheless, such a disambiguation does not seem logical. For when an act holds of an object, there does not seem to be a need to distinguish between the act taken absolutely and the act as it holds of the object. For example, if I were to say that 'I see Socrates' it is to be disambiguated into a sense which is about the seeing as it holds of Socrates and a sense which is about the seeing taken absolutely. And just as there is no distinction needed in this case of an assertoric [i.e. non-modal] proposition, so neither does there seem to be a need for a distinction in the case of the modal proposition. Rather it just seems to be necessary if the act holds of the object necessarily. Consequently, it seems we should unqualifiedly deny 'God necessarily knows A,' on the grounds that the predicate determined in that way does not necessarily belong to that subject, although without a determination does belong [necessarily].

It is objected against this that a rational act is not diminished by the material it holds of. For there is just as much an unqualified saying when it holds of my saying nothing as when it holds of my saying something. Consequently 'I am saying' follows

just as much from ‘I am saying that I am saying nothing’ as it does from ‘I am saying that I am sitting.’ Therefore in the case of God knowing is not diminished by the material it holds of so that there is not an equal necessity.

Reply to this: Even though it is not so diminished that it has only a qualified existence, still it may not have its necessity as it is signified to hold of the matter (even though in itself it has necessity). This is the case if the act is in itself especially powerful in respect of diverse objects. For example, if I had an act of speaking that was the same as its motive power and that act was able to relate contingently to different objects, then, even if I necessarily had the act just as I necessarily had the power, still I would not necessarily have the act as it relates to such an object; rather there can be necessity of the saying by itself with contingency in respect of its object, and yet the saying of that object would exist unqualifiedly and would not be a qualified saying.

[6] To the principal arguments in order:

[Scotus’ replies to the arguments for the opposite.]

To the first in respect of the first question, I say that truth in future matters is not similar to truth in present or past matters. *In present and past matters truth is determinate in such a way that one of the terms is posited.* In this sense of “posited” it is not in the power of the cause that it be posited or not posited, because, although it is in the power of a cause as it is naturally prior to its effect to posit or not to posit the effect, it is not as the effect is now understood to be posited in being. But for the future determination is not of this sort, because, although for some intellect one part is determinately true, and one part is even true in itself, determinately, even though no intellect apprehends it, still it is determinate in such a way that it is in the power of the cause to posit the opposite for that instant. This indeterminacy suffices for deliberation and taking trouble. If neither part were future it would not be necessary either to take trouble or to deliberate. Therefore, that one part is future while the other can come about does not prevent deliberation and taking trouble.

[6.1.1]

[To 2.1.1]

To the second, I say that for knowledge to be of one part in such a way that it cannot be of the other does posit imperfection in that knowledge. Likewise in the will positing it to be of one in such a way that it cannot be of the other willable object [attributes imperfection to it]. But for knowledge to be of one in such a way that it is

[6.1.2]

[To 2.1.2]

not of the other (and likewise for the will) posits no imperfection, just as a power is in determinate actuality for one opposite, the one it produces, and not for the other. But there is this dissimilarity between a power, on the one hand, and knowledge and will on the other: A power seems to be said to be for just one opposite since it can only be directed toward that, while knowledge and will [are of one opposite] in such a way that they merely know or will that. But if we treat these in a similar way, the determination is equal in both cases, because any of them is actually of one opposite and not both. Also any of them can be directed to either, but for the power to be for something seems to signify a potential relationship of it to that something, while for knowledge or will to be of something seems to signify an actual relationship to that same item. Nevertheless, nothing wrong follows if we treat the cases similarly, because then just as knowing relates to knowledge and willing to will, so producing (but not being able to produce) relates to power, and just as being able to produce relates to power so being able to know to knowledge and being able to will to will.

- [6.2.1] To the first argument regarding the second question, I say that, although from two
 [To 2.2.1] premisses *de inesse* follows a conclusion *de inesse* (not syllogistically, though, since what we have here is a non-syllogistic string of expressions that can be analysed into several syllogisms), still from one premiss *de inesse* and one *de possibili* a conclusion *de possibili* does not follow either syllogistically or necessarily. The reason is that to be deceived is to think that a thing is in a way different from what it is at that time for which it is believed to be. All this is included in the two premisses *de inesse*, one of which signifies that he believes this and the other of which denies that this [i.e. what is believed] is the case, and for the same instant; consequently the conclusion about being deceived follows. But in the other case it is different, since the premiss *de inesse* affirms one opposite for that instant, while the premiss *de possibili* affirms a potential for the other opposite, and not for the same instant conjunctively but rather disjunctively. Therefore, it does not follow that at some instant there can be conjoined in reality the opposite of what is believed [and the belief]; and, therefore, the possibility of deception, which includes that conjunction, does not follow. For a like reason the conclusion in a syllogism that mixes the *de contingenti* with the *de inesse* follows only where the major premiss is unqualifiedly *de inesse*.

This response is evidenced by the fact that if we argue from the opposite of the conclusion and the premiss *de possibili*, we do not infer the opposite [of the premiss *de inesse*] but of this premiss taken *de necessario*. Thus in order to infer the conclusion the major premiss must be really the same as that proposition *de necessario*. For this does not follow: ‘God cannot be deceived, and A can not be going to be; therefore God does not know that A is going to be. Rather this follows: Therefore, he does not necessarily know that A is going to be.

This is evident because, if my intellect always kept up with change in things so that while you are sitting I think that you are sitting and when you stand up I think that you are standing up, I cannot be deceived, and yet from these propositions: “You could be standing at time A, and I cannot be deceived” there follows only this: “Therefore, I do not necessarily know that you are sitting at time A.”

So in the matter under discussion: Although the divine intellect does not follow reality as an effect follows its cause, there is still a concomitance there, since as the thing is able not to be so the divine intellect is able not to know, and thus it never follows that the divine intellect apprehends a thing otherwise than it is. Consequently, the things required for deception can never exist at the same time; rather just as the known thing is able not to be, so God is able not to know it, and if it will not be, he will not know it.

To the second regarding the positing of the possible in being, I say that from such a positing by itself there never follows something impossible. Nevertheless the proposition *de inesse*, to the extent that some proposition *de possibili* is posited, can be repellent to something to which the *de possibili* proposition when posited in being is not repellent, since an antecedent can be repellent to something to which the consequent is not repellent. Then from the antecedent and what it is repellent to it there can follow something impossible which does not follow from the consequent plus that same proposition, which is not incompatible with it. It is no wonder if an impossible proposition follows from incompatible ones, because, according to the Philosopher in *Prior Analytics* II, in a syllogism composed of opposites an impossible conclusion follows.

[6.2.2]

[To 2.2.2]

I say then that given this proposition ‘It is possible for me not to sit’ is posited in

being, from it alone nothing impossible follows. But from it and this other proposition, viz. 'God knows that I will sit' there follows something impossible, viz. that God is deceived. This impossibility does not follow from the impossibility of what is posited in being, nor even from some incompatibility which is in it absolutely, but rather from it and something else at the same time, which is impossible.

Neither is it absurd that what is impossible follows from something *de inesse* in as much as something *de possibili* is posited as something *de inesse*, because, although 'It is possible for me to stand' is compatible with 'I am sitting,' still the former taken *de inesse*, in as much as it is posited, is repellent to the latter *de inesse*, and from those two taken *de inesse* something incompatible follows, viz. 'What is standing is sitting.' Nor does this follow: 'Therefore, the *de possibili* proposition that was posited in being was false.' Rather either it was false, or some other, along with which its *de inesse* form was taken, is incompatible with its *de inesse* form.

[6.3.1] To the first argument regarding the third question, I concede the major premiss,
 [To 2.3.1] that there is no transition without change. But in the minor I say that there is no transition, nor can there be any, because transition implies a temporal series so that one opposite comes after the other. No such can exist in this case; for just as he cannot both know and not know at the same time, so also that he sometimes knows and sometimes does not know are not able to coexist at the same time. But without this transition from opposite to opposite there is no change.

And if you ask: "At least if he is able not to know *B*, which he knows, something would be different what is that?," I say that it is *B in esse cognito*¹⁹. But it would not exist differently than it did earlier, but rather differently than it exists now, so that 'differently' would not indicate a temporal succession of one opposite after the other opposite but rather that the one opposite can be present in the same instant in which the other is present. This is not sufficient for mutation.

[6.3.2] To the second: This consequence is not valid: 'What does not know *A* can know
 [To 2.3.2] *A*; therefore, it can begin to know *A*.' This is the case when there is a potential in

¹⁹ i.e 'as known'.

something naturally prior for the opposite of the posterior at that same instant at which and in which the posterior contingently exists, just as is the case in what we are discussing. In creatures, where there is potentiality for opposites in temporal succession, the consequence holds only on account of matter. [In the divine case] although this would not be, still there would be the possibility for each of them at one instant.

To the third, it can be conceded, so far as this argument is concerned, that this power for opposites is an active power, for example, that the divine intellect, in so far as it is actual by its essence and infinite by its actual understanding, is an active power in respect of any objects whatsoever which it produces *in esse intellecto*²⁰.

[6.3.3]

[To 2.3.3]

And when the argument says, "Therefore it can act with respect to something in respect of which it was not acting before only if it is changed," I say that the consequence is not valid when the thing acting requires an object in respect of which it acts. For example, in created agents it is not required that an agent which acts for the first time be changed, if for the first time the receptor on which it acts comes near to it. Thus it is in what we are discussing. The divine will, when it determines that some object shown to it by the intellect is going to be, makes such a complex be true and thus intelligible by the fact that it is present to the intellect as an object. And just as the will can make this willed item and not make it, so that item can be true and not true and thus is able to be known and not known by that natural intellect. This is not because of some contingency which is prior in that natural agent, but rather because of the contingency on the side of the object, which is contingently true by the act of the will that makes it true.

If you object that still this cannot be without change at least in the understood object (just as the coming close of a natural receptor to a natural agent can only occur by change in the receptor, and perhaps in the agent itself as it comes close), - I answer that that object is not changed in that being because it cannot be under opposites in temporal succession. Nevertheless it is contingently in that being and this contingency is on the side of the will that produces it in such being. And this contingency of the will can exist without change in the will, as was explained in the first article of the solution.

²⁰ i.e. 'in intellectual being', that is, as existing in the understanding.

To the arguments concerning the fourth question:

[6.4.1] In response to the first I deny the consequence. To the first proof I say that even
 [To 2.4.1] if there is in God no necessity other than the necessity of immutability (i.e. it is none other than the fourth of those modes of necessity assigned by the Philosopher, according to which it means that "it does not happen to exist differently," since the other modes of necessity involve imperfection, for example the necessity of compulsion, etc.) still there we do not have just the necessity of immutability in the sense that immutability is of itself necessity, because immutability eliminates only a possible temporal succession of opposite on opposite, but unqualified necessity eliminates absolutely the possibility of the opposite and not just the temporal succeeding of that opposite. And this does not follow: 'An opposite cannot succeed its opposite; therefore, the opposite cannot occur.'

[6.4.2] To the second proof I say that although everything with being of existence which it
 [To 2.4.2] is possible to be going to be is mutable, where we treat creation, as does Avicenna, to be a mutation, even from the eternal, nevertheless *in esse intellecto or volito*²¹ (which is qualified being) it is not necessary that every possibility which is repellent to necessity of itself formally implies mutability. This is because this being is not real being, but is reduced to the real being of something necessary of itself. On account of the necessity of this other item there can be no mutability here, and yet the of-itself necessity attaching to this other does not belong to it formally, and so it is not of itself formally necessary, because it does not have the being of that term to which it really relates. Nevertheless, it is not mutable either, because in virtue of this diminished being it relates to an immutable term, and mutation in something that occurs in virtue of its relation to something else cannot occur without mutation in that something else.

To the second argument, I say that something can be in God in two ways, either formally, or subjectively in the way logically any predicate is said to be in its subject. In the first way, I concede the major that everything of that sort is God and necessarily the same as God. In the second way I do not concede the major, since, for example, a relative appellation can be in God in as much as God is said to be "Lord" in virtue of

²¹ I.e., as understood or willed.

time, and yet that appellation does not signify something the same as God (so that necessarily it is the same as God or is God Himself), because then it would not be in virtue of time.

Now, I say that for God to know *B* is, in as much as it is knowing absolutely, for him to know formally, but in as much as it is of this term *B* it is in God only in the second way. For the knowing is of this term since that known item has a relation to divine knowledge, and because of this some relative appellation is in God as a predicate in a subject.

To the third, I say that no unqualified perfection" in God depends on a creature, nor does it even with unqualified necessity require a creature in any sort of being. Consequently, for God to know *B*, where we understand the knowing not just absolutely but also as it relates to *B*, is not an unqualified perfection. Then I say that the major premiss of this argument is true for the perfection of that knowledge taken absolutely, but then the minor is false and the proof of it proves only that unqualified perfection necessarily implies that there is [knowing] of such an object, since it necessarily follows that it has such a relation to such an unqualified perfection. Nevertheless, unqualified perfection is not in him either in virtue of such a relation something else bears to him nor from the relative appellation that belongs to him.

[6.4.3]

[To 2.4.3]

To the arguments concerning the fifth question:

To the first, I say that the antecedent is not unqualifiedly necessary. And when it is argued that a rational act is not lessened by its subject matter, my reply is the one given in response to the argument put up against the solution of this question.

[6.5.1]

[To 5.1]

To the second: That mixed syllogism is valid only if the minor is unqualifiedly *de inesse*, and this means that it is not just true for all time but that it is necessarily true. Perhaps we have to think of '*per se*' as being implicit in the middle term (it is sufficient for what is proposed that it be required to be necessarily true). That this is required is clear in this case: 'Everything at rest necessarily is not in motion. A stone at the centre of the earth is at rest. Therefore, necessarily the stone is not in motion.' The conclusion does not follow even though the minor is always true — and yet not necessarily true.

[6.5.2]

[To 2.5.2]

So it is in what we are considering. For although the minor *de inesse* is always true, it is not necessarily true; for God is able not to know *A* just as he is able not to will *A*, because of contingency, which primarily is in the will and then in the object secondarily, and in virtue of this it is concomitantly in the intellect, as was explained before.

[7] To the arguments for the second opinion:

To the arguments
for the second
opinion.

To the first I allow that the limitless is present to every place, but not to every actual and potential place (as was argued in the first argument against this opinion), and thus *neither will eternity on account of its infinity be present to some nonexistent time*. From this it is clear what to say about the example of the stick and the river. Since the stick does not have that whereby it could be present to all parts of the water, it is not unlimited in respect of them. But the "now" of eternity does have, in so far as it is considered on its own, that whereby it would be present to all parts of time if they were.

The other example about the centre and the circumference similarly argues the opposite. If we imagine a straight line with two terminal points, *A* and *B*, and let *A* be held fixed while *B* is moved around (just as with a compass one point is held fixed and the other moved), *B* as it is moved around causes a circumference according to the geometers' imagination, who imagine the flowing point to cause a line. Given this, if nothing were to remain of the circumference by *B*'s flow, but rather in the circumference there is only that point (in such a way that whenever that point ceases to be somewhere nothing of that circumference is then there), then the circumference is never present at the same time to the centre, but rather only some point of the circumference is present to the centre. Nevertheless, if that whole circumference were there at the same time, the whole would be present to the centre. So it is here. *Since time is not a static circumference but a flowing whose circumference is only an actual instant, nothing of it will be present to eternity (which is like the centre) except that instant which is like the point*. Nevertheless, if *per impossibile* it were proposed that the whole of time was in existence at once, that whole would be at the same time present to eternity as to a centre.

Through the above it is clear what to say to the other argument. When it is said that the "now" of eternity as coexisting with the "now" of time is not equal to it, that is true,

because the “now” of eternity is formally infinite and thus formally goes beyond the “now” of time. But it does not do this by coexisting with another “now.” For example, the limitlessness of God, though present to this universe, is not equal to this universe, and thus formally goes beyond it; nevertheless He is somewhere only in this universe.

Through this same point it is clear what to say to the remaining argument. If the whole of time existed all at once, eternity would encompass it, and so I concede that eternity as it is of itself has an infinity sufficient to encompass the whole of time if that whole existed all at once. But no matter how much limitlessness is posited on the side of one term, on account of which it can coexist with no matter how much is posited in the other term, since coexistence indicates a relation between two terms (and thus requires both), from the limitlessness of one term we can infer coexistence only with that in the other term which exists.

Thus all these arguments rely on something that is insufficient, namely the limitlessness of eternity. From that the coexistence which indicates a relation to something else follows only if we are given something in the other term which can be a term of coexistence with that basis. A non-being cannot be such, yet all of time save the present is a non-being.

All the authoritative texts of the saints, which seem to signify that all things are present to eternity, must be interpreted as about presence in the sense of knowable. And here ‘knowable’ refers not just to abstractive knowledge (as a non-existent rose is present to my intellect by a species) but to true intuitive knowledge, because God does not know what has occurred in a *different way than what is going to occur, and thus what is going to occur is just as perfectly known presently by the divine intellect as what has occurred.*

[8] Replies to the arguments for the third opinion:

To the first argument for the third opinion: Boethius immediately explains himself in that place, for he immediately disambiguates there in respect of the necessity of the consequent and the necessity of the consequence. Using this I concede that contingents that are related to divine knowledge are necessary by a necessity of the consequence

To the arguments for the third opinion.

(i.e. this consequence is necessary: 'If God knows this is going to be, this will be'), nevertheless they are not necessary by an absolute necessity nor by a contingent necessity.

To the other for the third opinion, I say that contingency is not just a lack or defect of entity (as is the deformity of a sinful act); rather contingency is a positive mode of being (just as necessity is another mode), and a positive being which is in an effect comes more principally from the prior cause. Thus this does not follow: 'Just as deformity comes to the act itself from a secondary cause and not from the primary cause, so also contingency.' Rather contingency is from the first cause before it is from a second cause. On account of this no caused item would be formally contingent unless it were caused contingently by the first cause, just as we showed above.

