

Descartes

## MEDITATION III.

OF GOD: THAT HE EXISTS.

1. I WILL now close my eyes, I will stop my ears, I will turn away my senses from their objects, I will even efface from my consciousness all the images of corporeal things; or at least, because this can hardly be accomplished, I will consider them as empty and false; and thus, holding converse only with myself, and closely examining my nature, I will endeavor to obtain by degrees a more intimate and familiar knowledge of myself. I am a thinking ( conscious ) thing, that is, a being who doubts, affirms, denies, knows a few objects, and is ignorant of many,-- [who loves, hates], wills, refuses, who imagines likewise, and perceives; for, as I before remarked, although the things which I perceive or imagine are perhaps nothing at all apart from me [and in themselves], I am nevertheless assured that those modes of consciousness which I call perceptions and imaginations, in as far only as they are modes of consciousness, exist in me.

2. And in the little I have said I think I have summed up all that I really know, or at least all that up to this time I was aware I knew. Now, as I am endeavoring to extend my knowledge more widely, I will use circumspection, and consider with care whether I can still discover in myself anything further which I have not yet hitherto observed. I am certain that I am a thinking thing; but do I not therefore likewise know what is required to render me certain of a truth ? In this first knowledge, doubtless, there is nothing that gives me assurance of its truth except the clear and distinct perception of what I affirm, which would not indeed be sufficient to give me the assurance that what I say is true, if it could ever happen that anything I thus clearly and distinctly perceived should prove false; and accordingly it seems to me that I may now take as a general rule, that all that is very clearly and distinctly apprehended (conceived) is true.

3. Nevertheless I before received and admitted many things as wholly certain and manifest, which yet I afterward found to be doubtful. What, then, were those? They were the earth, the sky, the stars, and all the other objects which I was in the habit of perceiving by the senses. But what was it that I clearly [and distinctly] perceived in them ? Nothing more than that the ideas and the thoughts of those objects were presented to my mind. And even now I do not deny that these ideas are found in my mind. But there was yet another thing which I affirmed, and which, from having been accustomed to believe it, I thought I clearly perceived, although, in truth, I did not perceive it at all; I mean the existence of objects external to me, from which those ideas proceeded, and to which they had a perfect resemblance; and it was here I was mistaken, or if I judged correctly, this assuredly was not to be traced to any knowledge I possessed (the force of my perception, Lat.).

4. But when I considered any matter in arithmetic and geometry, that was very simple and easy, as, for example, that two and three added together make five, and things of this sort, did I not view them with at least sufficient clearness to warrant me in affirming their truth? Indeed, if I afterward judged that we ought to doubt of these things, it was for no other reason than because it occurred to me that a God might perhaps have given me such a nature as that I should be deceived, even respecting the matters that appeared to me the most evidently true. But as often as this preconceived opinion of the sovereign power of a God presents itself to my mind, I am constrained to admit that it is easy for him, if he wishes it, to cause me to err, even in matters where I think I possess the highest evidence; and, on the other hand, as often as I direct my attention to things which I think I apprehend with great clearness, I am so persuaded of their truth that I naturally break out into expressions such as these: Deceive me who may, no one will yet ever be able to bring it about that I am not, so long as I shall be conscious that I am, or at any future time cause it to be true that I have never been, it being now true that I am, or make two and three more or less than five, in supposing which, and other like absurdities, I discover a manifest contradiction. And in truth, as I have no ground for believing that Deity is deceitful, and as, indeed, I have not even considered the reasons by which the existence of a Deity of any kind is established, the ground of doubt that rests only on this supposition is very slight, and, so to speak, metaphysical. But, that I may be able wholly to remove it, I must inquire whether there is a God, as soon as an opportunity of doing so shall present itself; and if I find that there is a God, I must examine likewise whether he can be a deceiver; for, without the knowledge of these two truths, I do not see that I can ever be certain of anything. And that I may be enabled to examine this without interrupting the order of meditation I have proposed to myself [which is, to pass by degrees from the notions that I shall find first in my mind to those I shall afterward discover in it], it is necessary at this stage to divide all my thoughts into certain classes, and to consider in which of these classes truth and error are, strictly speaking, to be found.

5. Of my thoughts some are, as it were, images of things, and to these alone properly belongs the name IDEA; as when I think [represent to my mind] a man, a chimera, the sky, an angel or God. Others, again, have certain other forms; as when I will, fear, affirm, or deny, I always, indeed, apprehend something as the object of my thought, but I also embrace in thought something more than the representation of the object; and of this class of thoughts some are called volitions or affections, and others judgments.

6. Now, with respect to ideas, if these are considered only in themselves, and are not referred to any object beyond them, they cannot, properly speaking, be false; for, whether I imagine a goat or chimera, it is not less true that I imagine the one than the other. Nor need we fear that falsity may exist in the will or affections; for, although I may desire objects that are wrong, and even that never existed, it is still true that I desire them. There thus only remain our judgments, in which we must take diligent heed that we be not deceived. But the chief and most ordinary error that arises in them consists in judging that the ideas which are in us are like or conformed to the things that are external to us; for assuredly, if we but considered the ideas themselves as certain

modes of our thought (consciousness), without referring them to anything beyond, they would hardly afford any occasion of error.

7. But among these ideas, some appear to me to be innate, others adventitious, and others to be made by myself (factitious); for, as I have the power of conceiving what is called a thing, or a truth, or a thought, it seems to me that I hold this power from no other source than my own nature; but if I now hear a noise, if I see the sun, or if I feel heat, I have all along judged that these sensations proceeded from certain objects existing out of myself; and, in fine, it appears to me that sirens, hippogryphs, and the like, are inventions of my own mind. But I may even perhaps come to be of opinion that all my ideas are of the class which I call adventitious, or that they are all innate, or that they are all factitious; for I have not yet clearly discovered their true origin. [ L][ F] 8. What I have here principally to do is to consider, with reference to those that appear to come from certain objects without me, what grounds there are for thinking them like these objects. The first of these grounds is that it seems to me I am so taught by nature; and the second that I am conscious that those ideas are not dependent on my will, and therefore not on myself, for they are frequently presented to me against my will, as at present, whether I will or not, I feel heat; and I am thus persuaded that this sensation or idea (*sensum vel ideam*) of heat is produced in me by something different from myself, viz., by the heat of the fire by which I sit. And it is very reasonable to suppose that this object impresses me with its own likeness rather than any other thing.

9. But I must consider whether these reasons are sufficiently strong and convincing. When I speak of being taught by nature in this matter, I understand by the word nature only a certain spontaneous impetus that impels me to believe in a resemblance between ideas and their objects, and not a natural light that affords a knowledge of its truth. But these two things are widely different; for what the natural light shows to be true can be in no degree doubtful, as, for example, that I am because I doubt, and other truths of the like kind; inasmuch as I possess no other faculty whereby to distinguish truth from error, which can teach me the falsity of what the natural light declares to be true, and which is equally trustworthy; but with respect to [seemingly] natural impulses, I have observed, when the question related to the choice of right or wrong in action, that they frequently led me to take the worse part; nor do I see that I have any better ground for following them in what relates to truth and error.

10. Then, with respect to the other reason, which is that because these ideas do not depend on my will, they must arise from objects existing without me, I do not find it more convincing than the former, for just as those natural impulses, of which I have lately spoken, are found in me, notwithstanding that they are not always in harmony with my will, so likewise it may be that I possess some power not sufficiently known to myself capable of producing ideas without the aid of external objects, and, indeed, it has always hitherto appeared to me that they are formed during sleep, by some power of this nature, without the aid of aught external.

11. And, in fine, although I should grant that they proceeded from those objects, it is not a necessary consequence that they must be like them. On the contrary, I have observed, in a number of instances, that there was a great difference between the object and its idea. Thus, for example, I find in my mind two wholly diverse ideas of the sun; the one, by which it appears to me extremely small draws its origin from the senses, and should be placed in the class of adventitious ideas; the other, by which it seems to be many times larger than the whole earth, is taken up on astronomical grounds, that is, elicited from certain notions born with me, or is framed by myself in some other manner. These two ideas cannot certainly both resemble the same sun; and reason teaches me that the one which seems to have immediately emanated from it is the most unlike.

12. And these things sufficiently prove that hitherto it has not been from a certain and deliberate judgment, but only from a sort of blind impulse, that I believed existence of certain things different from myself, which, by the organs of sense, or by whatever other means it might be, conveyed their ideas or images into my mind [and impressed it with their likenesses].

13. But there is still another way of inquiring whether, of the objects whose ideas are in my mind, there are any that exist out of me. If ideas are taken in so far only as they are certain modes of consciousness, I do not remark any difference or inequality among them, and all seem, in the same manner, to proceed from myself; but, considering them as images, of which one represents one thing and another a different, it is evident that a great diversity obtains among them. For, without doubt, those that represent substances are something more, and contain in themselves, so to speak, more objective reality [that is, participate by representation in higher degrees of being or perfection], than those that represent only modes or accidents; and again, the idea by which I conceive a God [sovereign], eternal, infinite, [immutable], all-knowing, all-powerful, and the creator of all things that are out of himself, this, I say, has certainly in it more objective reality than those ideas by which finite substances are represented.

14. Now, it is manifest by the natural light that there must at least be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect; for whence can the effect draw its reality if not from its cause? And how could the cause communicate to it this reality unless it possessed it in itself? And hence it follows, not only that what is cannot be produced by what is not, but likewise that the more perfect, in other words, that which contains in itself more reality, cannot be the effect of the less perfect; and this is not only evidently true of those effects, whose reality is actual or formal, but likewise of ideas, whose reality is only considered as objective. Thus, for example, the stone that is not yet in existence, not only cannot now commence to be, unless it be produced by that which possesses in itself, formally or eminently, all that enters into its composition, [in other words, by that which contains in itself the same properties that are in the stone, or others superior to them]; and heat can only be produced in a subject that was before devoid of it, by a cause that is of an order, [degree or kind], at least as perfect as heat; and so of the others. But further, even the idea of the heat, or of the stone, cannot exist in me unless it be put there by a cause that contains, at least, as much reality as I conceive existent in the heat or in

the stone for although that cause may not transmit into my idea anything of its actual or formal reality, we ought not on this account to imagine that it is less real; but we ought to consider that, [as every idea is a work of the mind], its nature is such as of itself to demand no other formal reality than that which it borrows from our consciousness, of which it is but a mode [that is, a manner or way of thinking]. But in order that an idea may contain this objective reality rather than that, it must doubtless derive it from some cause in which is found at least as much formal reality as the idea contains of objective; for, if we suppose that there is found in an idea anything which was not in its cause, it must of course derive this from nothing. But, however imperfect may be the mode of existence by which a thing is objectively [or by representation] in the understanding by its idea, we certainly cannot, for all that, allege that this mode of existence is nothing, nor, consequently, that the idea owes its origin to nothing.

15. Nor must it be imagined that, since the reality which considered in these ideas is only objective, the same reality need not be formally (actually) in the causes of these ideas, but only objectively: for, just as the mode of existing objectively belongs to ideas by their peculiar nature, so likewise the mode of existing formally appertains to the causes of these ideas (at least to the first and principal), by their peculiar nature. And although an idea may give rise to another idea, this regress cannot, nevertheless, be infinite; we must in the end reach a first idea, the cause of which is, as it were, the archetype in which all the reality [or perfection] that is found objectively [or by representation] in these ideas is contained formally [and in act]. I am thus clearly taught by the natural light that ideas exist in me as pictures or images, which may, in truth, readily fall short of the perfection of the objects from which they are taken, but can never contain anything greater or more perfect.

16. And in proportion to the time and care with which I examine all those matters, the conviction of their truth brightens and becomes distinct. But, to sum up, what conclusion shall I draw from it all? It is this: if the objective reality [or perfection] of any one of my ideas be such as clearly to convince me, that this same reality exists in me neither formally nor eminently, and if, as follows from this, I myself cannot be the cause of it, it is a necessary consequence that I am not alone in the world, but that there is besides myself some other being who exists as the cause of that idea; while, on the contrary, if no such idea be found in my mind, I shall have no sufficient ground of assurance of the existence of any other being besides myself, for, after a most careful search, I have, up to this moment, been unable to discover any other ground.

17. But, among these my ideas, besides that which represents myself, respecting which there can be here no difficulty, there is one that represents a God; others that represent corporeal and inanimate things; others angels; others animals; and, finally, there are some that represent men like myself.

18. But with respect to the ideas that represent other men, or animals, or angels, I can easily suppose that they were formed by the mingling and composition of the other ideas which I have

of myself, of corporeal things, and of God, although they were, apart from myself, neither men, animals, nor angels.

19. And with regard to the ideas of corporeal objects, I never discovered in them anything so great or excellent which I myself did not appear capable of originating; for, by considering these ideas closely and scrutinizing them individually, in the same way that I yesterday examined the idea of wax, I find that there is but little in them that is clearly and distinctly perceived. As belonging to the class of things that are clearly apprehended, I recognize the following, viz, magnitude or extension in length, breadth, and depth; figure, which results from the termination of extension; situation, which bodies of diverse figures preserve with reference to each other; and motion or the change of situation; to which may be added substance, duration, and number. But with regard to light, colors, sounds, odors, tastes, heat, cold, and the other tactile qualities, they are thought with so much obscurity and confusion, that I cannot determine even whether they are true or false; in other words, whether or not the ideas I have of these qualities are in truth the ideas of real objects. For although I before remarked that it is only in judgments that formal falsity, or falsity properly so called, can be met with, there may nevertheless be found in ideas a certain material falsity, which arises when they represent what is nothing as if it were something. Thus, for example, the ideas I have of cold and heat are so far from being clear and distinct, that I am unable from them to discover whether cold is only the privation of heat, or heat the privation of cold; or whether they are or are not real qualities: and since, ideas being as it were images there can be none that does not seem to us to represent some object, the idea which represents cold as something real and positive will not improperly be called false, if it be correct to say that cold is nothing but a privation of heat; and so in other cases.

20. To ideas of this kind, indeed, it is not necessary that I should assign any author besides myself: for if they are false, that is, represent objects that are unreal, the natural light teaches me that they proceed from nothing; in other words, that they are in me only because something is wanting to the perfection of my nature; but if these ideas are true, yet because they exhibit to me so little reality that I cannot even distinguish the object represented from nonbeing, I do not see why I should not be the author of them.

21. With reference to those ideas of corporeal things that are clear and distinct, there are some which, as appears to me, might have been taken from the idea I have of myself, as those of substance, duration, number, and the like. For when I think that a stone is a substance, or a thing capable of existing of itself, and that I am likewise a substance, although I conceive that I am a thinking and non-extended thing, and that the stone, on the contrary, is extended and unconscious, there being thus the greatest diversity between the two concepts, yet these two ideas seem to have this in common that they both represent substances. In the same way, when I think of myself as now existing, and recollect besides that I existed some time ago, and when I am conscious of various thoughts whose number I know, I then acquire the ideas of duration and number, which I can afterward transfer to as many objects as I please. With respect to the other qualities that go to make up the ideas of corporeal objects, viz, extension, figure, situation, and

motion, it is true that they are not formally in me, since I am merely a thinking being; but because they are only certain modes of substance, and because I myself am a substance, it seems possible that they may be contained in me eminently.

22. There only remains, therefore, the idea of God, in which I must consider whether there is anything that cannot be supposed to originate with myself. By the name God, I understand a substance infinite, [eternal, immutable], independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which I myself, and every other thing that exists, if any such there be, were created. But these properties are so great and excellent, that the more attentively I consider them the less I feel persuaded that the idea I have of them owes its origin to myself alone. And thus it is absolutely necessary to conclude, from all that I have before said, that God exists.

23. For though the idea of substance be in my mind owing to this, that I myself am a substance, I should not, however, have the idea of an infinite substance, seeing I am a finite being, unless it were given me by some substance in reality infinite.

24. And I must not imagine that I do not apprehend the infinite by a true idea, but only by the negation of the finite, in the same way that I comprehend repose and darkness by the negation of motion and light: since, on the contrary, I clearly perceive that there is more reality in the infinite substance than in the finite, and therefore that in some way I possess the perception (notion) of the infinite before that of the finite, that is, the perception of God before that of myself, for how could I know that I doubt, desire, or that something is wanting to me, and that I am not wholly perfect, if I possessed no idea of a being more perfect than myself, by comparison of which I knew the deficiencies of my nature ?

25. And it cannot be said that this idea of God is perhaps materially false, and consequently that it may have arisen from nothing [in other words, that it may exist in me from my imperfections as I before said of the ideas of heat and cold, and the like: for, on the contrary, as this idea is very clear and distinct, and contains in itself more objective reality than any other, there can be no one of itself more true, or less open to the suspicion of falsity. The idea, I say, of a being supremely perfect, and infinite, is in the highest degree true; for although, perhaps, we may imagine that such a being does not exist, we cannot, nevertheless, suppose that his idea represents nothing real, as I have already said of the idea of cold. It is likewise clear and distinct in the highest degree, since whatever the mind clearly and distinctly conceives as real or true, and as implying any perfection, is contained entire in this idea. And this is true, nevertheless, although I do not comprehend the infinite, and although there may be in God an infinity of things that I cannot comprehend, nor perhaps even compass by thought in any way; for it is of the nature of the infinite that it should not be comprehended by the finite; and it is enough that I rightly understand this, and judge that all which I clearly perceive, and in which I know there is some perfection, and perhaps also an infinity of properties of which I am ignorant, are formally or eminently in God, in order that the idea I have of him may become the most true, clear, and distinct of all the ideas in my mind.

26. But perhaps I am something more than I suppose myself to be, and it may be that all those perfections which I attribute to God, in some way exist potentially in me, although they do not yet show themselves, and are not reduced to act. Indeed, I am already conscious that my knowledge is being increased [and perfected] by degrees; and I see nothing to prevent it from thus gradually increasing to infinity, nor any reason why, after such increase and perfection, I should not be able thereby to acquire all the other perfections of the Divine nature; nor, in fine, why the power I possess of acquiring those perfections, if it really now exist in me, should not be sufficient to produce the ideas of them.

27. Yet, on looking more closely into the matter, I discover that this cannot be; for, in the first place, although it were true that my knowledge daily acquired new degrees of perfection, and although there were potentially in my nature much that was not as yet actually in it, still all these excellences make not the slightest approach to the idea I have of the Deity, in whom there is no perfection merely potentially [but all actually] existent; for it is even an unmistakable token of imperfection in my knowledge, that it is augmented by degrees. Further, although my knowledge increase more and more, nevertheless I am not, therefore, induced to think that it will ever be actually infinite, since it can never reach that point beyond which it shall be incapable of further increase. But I conceive God as actually infinite, so that nothing can be added to his perfection. And, in fine, I readily perceive that the objective being of an idea cannot be produced by a being that is merely potentially existent, which, properly speaking, is nothing, but only by a being existing formally or actually.

28. And, truly, I see nothing in all that I have now said which it is not easy for any one, who shall carefully consider it, to discern by the natural light; but when I allow my attention in some degree to relax, the vision of my mind being obscured, and, as it were, blinded by the images of sensible objects, I do not readily remember the reason why the idea of a being more perfect than myself, must of necessity have proceeded from a being in reality more perfect. On this account I am here desirous to inquire further, whether I, who possess this idea of God, could exist supposing there were no God.

29. And I ask, from whom could I, in that case, derive my existence? Perhaps from myself, or from my parents, or from some other causes less perfect than God; for anything more perfect, or even equal to God, cannot be thought or imagined.

30. But if I [were independent of every other existence, and] were myself the author of my being, I should doubt of nothing, I should desire nothing, and, in fine, no perfection would be wanting to me; for I should have bestowed upon myself every perfection of which I possess the idea, and I should thus be God. And it must not be imagined that what is now wanting to me is perhaps of more difficult acquisition than that of which I am already possessed; for, on the contrary, it is quite manifest that it was a matter of much higher difficulty that I, a thinking being, should arise from nothing, than it would be for me to acquire the knowledge of many things of which I am ignorant, and which are merely the accidents of a thinking substance; and



certainly, if I possessed of myself the greater perfection of which I have now spoken [in other words, if I were the author of my own existence], I would not at least have denied to myself things that may be more easily obtained [as that infinite variety of knowledge of which I am at present destitute]. I could not, indeed, have denied to myself any property which I perceive is contained in the idea of God, because there is none of these that seems to me to be more difficult to make or acquire; and if there were any that should happen to be more difficult to acquire, they would certainly appear so to me (supposing that I myself were the source of the other things I possess), because I should discover in them a limit to my power. [ L][ F] 31. And though I were to suppose that I always was as I now am, I should not, on this ground, escape the force of these reasonings, since it would not follow, even on this supposition, that no author of my existence needed to be sought after. For the whole time of my life may be divided into an infinity of parts, each of which is in no way dependent on any other; and, accordingly, because I was in existence a short time ago, it does not follow that I must now exist, unless in this moment some cause create me anew as it were, that is, conserve me. In truth, it is perfectly clear and evident to all who will attentively consider the nature of duration, that the conservation of a substance, in each moment of its duration, requires the same power and act that would be necessary to create it, supposing it were not yet in existence; so that it is manifestly a dictate of the natural light that conservation and creation differ merely in respect of our mode of thinking [and not in reality].

32. All that is here required, therefore, is that I interrogate myself to discover whether I possess any power by means of which I can bring it about that I, who now am, shall exist a moment afterward: for, since I am merely a thinking thing (or since, at least, the precise question, in the meantime, is only of that part of myself), if such a power resided in me, I should, without doubt, be conscious of it; but I am conscious of no such power, and thereby I manifestly know that I am dependent upon some being different from myself.[ L][ F] 33. But perhaps the being upon whom I am dependent is not God, and I have been produced either by my parents, or by some causes less perfect than Deity. This cannot be: for, as I before said, it is perfectly evident that there must at least be as much reality in the cause as in its effect; and accordingly, since I am a thinking thing and possess in myself an idea of God, whatever in the end be the cause of my existence, it must of necessity be admitted that it is likewise a thinking being, and that it possesses in itself the idea and all the perfections I attribute to Deity. Then it may again be inquired whether this cause owes its origin and existence to itself, or to some other cause. For if it be self-existent, it follows, from what I have before laid down, that this cause is God; for, since it possesses the perfection of self-existence, it must likewise, without doubt, have the power of actually possessing every perfection of which it has the idea--in other words, all the perfections I conceive to belong to God. But if it owe its existence to another cause than itself, we demand again, for a similar reason, whether this second cause exists of itself or through some other, until, from stage to stage, we at length arrive at an ultimate cause, which will be God.

34. And it is quite manifest that in this matter there can be no infinite regress of causes, seeing that the question raised respects not so much the cause which once produced me, as that by which I am at this present moment conserved.

35. Nor can it be supposed that several causes concurred in my production, and that from one I received the idea of one of the perfections I attribute to Deity, and from another the idea of some other, and thus that all those perfections are indeed found somewhere in the universe, but do not all exist together in a single being who is God; for, on the contrary, the unity, the simplicity, or inseparability of all the properties of Deity, is one of the chief perfections I conceive him to possess; and the idea of this unity of all the perfections of Deity could certainly not be put into my mind by any cause from which I did not likewise receive the ideas of all the other perfections; for no power could enable me to embrace them in an inseparable unity, without at the same time giving me the knowledge of what they were [and of their existence in a particular mode].

36. Finally, with regard to my parents [from whom it appears I sprung], although all that I believed respecting them be true, it does not, nevertheless, follow that I am conserved by them, or even that I was produced by them, in so far as I am a thinking being. All that, at the most, they contributed to my origin was the giving of certain dispositions (modifications) to the matter in which I have hitherto judged that I or my mind, which is what alone I now consider to be myself, is inclosed; and thus there can here be no difficulty with respect to them, and it is absolutely necessary to conclude from this alone that I am, and possess the idea of a being absolutely perfect, that is, of God, that his existence is most clearly demonstrated.

37. There remains only the inquiry as to the way in which I received this idea from God; for I have not drawn it from the senses, nor is it even presented to me unexpectedly, as is usual with the ideas of sensible objects, when these are presented or appear to be presented to the external organs of the senses; it is not even a pure production or fiction of my mind, for it is not in my power to take from or add to it; and consequently there but remains the alternative that it is innate, in the same way as is the idea of myself.

38. And, in truth, it is not to be wondered at that God, at my creation, implanted this idea in me, that it might serve, as it were, for the mark of the workman impressed on his work; and it is not also necessary that the mark should be something different from the work itself; but considering only that God is my creator, it is highly probable that he in some way fashioned me after his own image and likeness, and that I perceive this likeness, in which is contained the idea of God, by the same faculty by which I apprehend myself, in other words, when I make myself the object of reflection, I not only find that I am an incomplete, [imperfect] and dependent being, and one who unceasingly aspires after something better and greater than he is; but, at the same time, I am assured likewise that he upon whom I am dependent possesses in himself all the goods after which I aspire [and the ideas of which I find in my mind], and that not merely indefinitely and potentially, but infinitely and actually, and that he is thus God. And

the whole force of the argument of which I have here availed myself to establish the existence of God, consists in this, that I perceive I could not possibly be of such a nature as I am, and yet have in my mind the idea of a God, if God did not in reality exist--this same God, I say, whose idea is in my mind--that is, a being who possesses all those lofty perfections, of which the mind may have some slight conception, without, however, being able fully to comprehend them, and who is wholly superior to all defect [ and has nothing that marks imperfection]: whence it is sufficiently manifest that he cannot be a deceiver, since it is a dictate of the natural light that all fraud and deception spring from some defect.

39. But before I examine this with more attention, and pass on to the consideration of other truths that may be evolved out of it, I think it proper to remain here for some time in the contemplation of God himself--that I may ponder at leisure his marvelous attributes--and behold, admire, and adore the beauty of this light so unspeakably great, as far, at least, as the strength of my mind, which is to some degree dazzled by the sight, will permit. For just as we learn by faith that the supreme felicity of another life consists in the contemplation of the Divine majesty alone, so even now we learn from experience that a like meditation, though incomparably less perfect, is the source of the highest satisfaction of which we are susceptible in this life.

# MEDITATIO III

## DE DEO, QUOD EXISTAT

[3.01] Claudam nunc oculos, aures obturabo, auocabo omnes sensus, imagines etiam rerum corporalium omnes uel ex cogitatione mea delebo, uel certe, quia hoc fieri uix potest, illas ut inanes et falsas nihili pendam, meque solum alloquendo et penitius inspiciendo meipsum paulatim mihi magis notum et familiarem reddere conabor. Ego sum res cogitans, id est dubitans, affirmans, negans, pauca intelligens, multa ignorans, uolens, nolens, imaginans etiam et sentiens; ut enim ante animaduerti, quamuis illa quae sentio uel imaginor extra me fortasse nihil sint, illos tamen cogitandi modos, quos sensus et imaginationes /35/ appello, quatenus cogitandi quidam modi tantum sunt in me esse sum certus.

[3.02] Atque his paucis omnia recensui quae uere scio, uel saltem quae me scire hactenus animaduerti. Nunc circumspiciam diligentius an forte adhuc apud me alia sint ad quae nondum respexi. Sum certus me esse rem cogitantem. Nunquid ergo etiam scio quid requiratur ut de aliqua re sim certus? Nempe in hac prima cognitione nihil aliud est, quam clara quaedam et distincta perceptio eius quod affirmo; quae sane non sufficeret ad me certum de rei ueritate reddendum, si posset unquam contingere ut aliquid quod ita clare et distincte perciperem falsum esset; ac proinde iam uideor pro regula generali posse statuere illud omne esse uerum quod ualde clare et distincte percipio.

[3.03] Verumtamen multa prius ut omnino certa et manifesta admisi, quae tamen postea dubia esse deprehendi. Qualia ergo ista fuere? Nempe terra, coelum, sidera et caetera omnia quae sensibus usurpabam. Quid autem de illis clare percipiebam? Nempe ipsas talium rerum ideas siue cogitationes menti meae obuersari. Sed ne nunc quidem illas ideas in me esse inficior. Aliud autem quiddam erat quod affirmabam, quodque etiam ob consuetudinem credendi clare me percipere arbitrabar, quod tamen reuera non percipiebam: nempe res quasdam extra me esse a quibus ideae istae procedebant et quibus omnino similes erant. Atque hoc erat in quo uel fallebar uel certe, si uerum iudicabam, id non ex ui meae perceptionis continebat.

[3.04] Quid uero? Cum circa res Arithmeticas uel Geometricas /36/ aliquid ualde simplex et facile considerabam, ut quod duo et tria simul iuncta sint quinque, uel similia, nunquid saltem illa satis perspicue intuebar, ut uera esse affirmarem? Equidem non aliam ob causam de iis dubitandum esse postea iudicaui, quam quia ueniebat in mentem forte aliquem Deum talem mihi naturam indere potuisse, ut etiam circa illa deciperer, quae manifestissima uiderentur. Sed quoties haec praeconcepta de summa Dei potentia opinio mihi occurrit, non possum non fateri, siquidem uelit, facile illi esse efficere ut errem, etiam in iis quae me puto mentis oculis quam euentissime intueri. Quoties uero ad ipsas res, quas ualde clare percipere arbitror, me conuerto, tam plane ab illis persuadeor, ut sponte erumpam in has uoces: fallat me quisquis potest, nunquam tamen efficiet ut nihil sim, quandiu me aliquid esse cogitabo; uel ut aliquando uerum sit me nunquam fuisse, cum iam uerum sit me esse; uel forte etiam ut duo et tria simul iuncta

plura uel pauciora sint quam quinque, uel similia, in quibus scilicet repugnantiam agnosco manifestam. Et certe cum nullam occasionem habeam existimandi aliquem Deum esse deceptorem, nec quidem adhuc satis sciam utrum sit aliquis Deus, ualde tenuis et, ut ita loquar, Metaphysica dubitandi ratio est, quae tantum ex ea opinione dependet. Ut autem etiam illa tollatur, quamprimum occurret occasio, examinare debeo an sit Deus, et, si sit, an possit esse deceptor; hac enim re ignorata, non uideor de ulla alia plane certus esse unquam posse.

[3.05] Nunc autem ordo uidetur exigere, ut prius omnes /37/ meas cogitationes in certa genera distribuam, et in quibusnam ex illis ueritas aut falsitas proprie consistat, inquiram. Quaedam ex his tanquam rerum imagines sunt, quibus solis proprie comuenit ideae nomen: ut cum hominem, uel Chimaeram, uel Coelum, uel Angelum, uel Deum cogito. Aliae uero alias quasdam praetera formas habent: ut, cum uolo, cum timeo, cum affirmo, cum nego, semper quidem aliquam rem ut subiectum meae cogitationis apprehendo, sed aliquid etiam amplius quam istius res similitudinem cogitatione complector; et ex his aliae uoluntates, siue affectus, aliae autem iudicia appellantur.

[3.06] Iam quod ad ideas attinet, si solea in se spectentur, nec ad aliud quid illas reseram, falsae proprie esse non possunt; nam siue capram, siue chimaeram imaginer, non minus uerum est me unam imaginari quam alteram. Nulla etiam in ipsa uoluntate, uel affectibus, falsitas est timenda; nam, quamuis praua, quamuis etiam ea quae nusquam sunt, possim optare, non tamen ideo non uerum est illa me optare. Ac proinde sola supersunt iudicia autem in quibus mihi cauendum est ne fallar. Praecipuus autem error et frequentissimus qui possit in illis reperiri, consistit in eo quod ideas, quae in me sunt, iudicem rebus quibusdam extra me positis similes esse siue conformes; nam profecto, si tantum ideas ipsas ut cogitationis meae quosdam modos considerarem, nec ad quidquam aliud referrem, uix mihi ullam errandi materiam dare possent.

[3.07] Ex his autem ideis aliae innatae, aliae aduentitiae, /38/ aliae a me ipso factae mihi uidentur: nam quod intelligam quid sit res, quid sit ueritas, quid sit cogitatio, haec non aliunde habere uideor quam ab ipsamet mea natura; quod autem nunc strepitum audiam, solem uideam, ignem sentiam, a rebus quibusdam extra me positis, Hippogryphes, et similia, a me ipso finguntur. Vel forte etiam omnes esse aduentitias possum putare, uel omnes innates, uel omnes factas: nondum enim ueram illarum originem clare perspexi.

[3.08] Sed hic praecipue de iis est quaerendum, quas tanquam a rebus extra me existentibus desumptas considero, quaenam me moueat ratio ut illas istis rebus similes esse existimen. Nempe ita uideor doctus a natura. Et praetera experior illas non a mea uoluntate nec proinde a me ipso pendere; saepe enim uel inuito obuersantur: ut iam, siue uelim, siue nolim, sentio calorem, et ideo puto sensum illum, siue ideam caloris, a re a me diuersa, nempe ab ignis cui affideo calore, mihi aduenire. Nihilque magis obuium est, quam ut iudicem istam rem suam similitudinem potius quam aliud quid in me immittere.

[3.09] Quae rationes, an satis firmae sint, iam uidebo. Cum hic dico me ita doctum esse a natura, intelligo tantum spontaneo quodam impetu me ferri ad hoc credendum, non lumine aliquo naturali mihi ostendi esse uerum. Quae duo multum discrepant; nam quaecumque lumine naturali mihi ostenduntur, ut quod ex eo quod dubitem, sequatur me esse, et similia, nullo modo dubia esse possunt, quia nulla alia facultas esse potest, cui aequae fidam ac lumini isti, quaeque illa /39/ non uera esse possit docere; sed quantum ad impetus naturales, iam saepe olim iudicaui me ab illis in deteriore partem fuisse impulsus, cum de bono eligendo ageretur, nec uideo cur iisdem in ulla alia re magis fidam.

[3.10] Deinde, quamuis ideae illae a uoluntate mea non pendeant, non ideo constat ipsas a rebus extra me positis necessario procedere. Ut enim impetus illi, de quibus mox loquebar, quamuis in me sint, a uoluntate tamen mea diuersi esse uidentur, ita forte etiam aliqua alia est in me facultas, nondum mihi satis cognita, istarum idearum effectrix, ut hactenus semper uisum est illas, dum somnio, absque ulla rerum externarum ope, in me formari.

[3.11] Ac denique, quamuis a rebus a me diuersis procederent, non inde sequitur illas rebus istis similes esse debere. Quinimo in multis saepe magnum discrimen uideor deprehendisse: ut, exempli causa, duas diuersas solis ideas apud me inuenio, unam tanquam a sensibus haustam, et quae maxime inter illas quas aduertitias existimo est recensenda, per quam mihi ualde paruus apparet, aliam uero ex rationibus Astronomiae desumptam, hoc est ex notionibus quibusdam mihi innatis elicitam, uel quocumque alio modo a me factam, per quam aliquoties maior quam terra exhibetur; utraque profecto similis eidem soli extra me existenti esse non potest, et ratio persuadet illam ei maxime esse dissimilem, quae quam proxime ab ipso uidetur emanasse.

[3.12] Quae omnia satis demonstrant me non hactenus ex /40/ certo iudicio, sed tantum ex caeco aliquo impulsu, credidisse res quasdam a me diuersas existere, quae ideas siue imagines suas per organa sensuum, uel quolibet alio pacto, mihi immittant.

[3.13] Sed alia quaedam adhuc uia mihi occurrit ad inquirendum an res aliquae, ex iis quarum ideae in me sunt, extrema existant. Nempe, quatenus ideae istae cogitandi quidam modi tantum sunt, non agnosco ullam inter ipsas inaequilitem, et omnes a me eodem modo procedere uidentur; sed, quatenus una unam rem, alia aliam repraesentat, patet easdem esse ab inuicem ualde diuersas. Nam proculdubio illae quae substantias mihi exhibent, maius aliquid sunt, atque, ut ita loquar, plus realitatis obiectiuae in se continent, quam illae quae tantum modos, siue accidentia, repraesentant; et rursus illa per quam summum aliquem Deum, aeternum, infinitum, omniscium, omnipotentem, rerumque omnium, quae praeter ipsum sunt, creatorem intelligo, plus profecto realitatis obiectiuae in se habet, quam illae per quas finitae substantiae exhibentur.

[3.14] Iam uero lumine naturali manifestum est tantumdem ad minimum esse debere in causa efficiente et totali, quantum in eiusdem causae effectui. Nam, quaeso, undenam posset assumere realitatem suam effectus, nisi a causa? Et quomodo illam ei causa dare posset, nisi etiam haberet? Hinc autem sequitur, nec posse aliquid a nihilo fieri, nec etiam id quod magis perfectum

est, hoc est quod plus realitatis in se continet, /41/ ab eo quod minus. Atque hoc non modo perspicue uerum est de iis effectibus, quorum realitas est actualis siue formalis, sed etiam de ideis, in quibus consideratur tantum realitas obiectiua. Hoc est, non modo non potest, exempli causa, aliquis lapis, qui prius non fuit, nunc incipere esse, nisi producat ab aliqua re in qua totum illud sit uel formaliter uel eminenter, quod ponitur in lapide; nec potest calor in subiectum quod prius non calebat induci, nisi a re quae sit ordinis saltem aequae perfecti atque est calor, et sit de caeteris; sed praetera etiam non potest in me esse idea caloris, uel lapidis, nisi in me posita sit ab aliqua causa, in qua tantumdem ad minimum sit realitatis quantum esse in calore uel lapide concipio. Nam quamuis ista causa nihil de sua realitate actuali siue formali in meam ideam transfundat, non ideo putandum est illam minus realem esse debere, sed talem esse naturam ipsius ideae, ut nullam aliam ex se realitatem formalem exigit, praeter illam quam mutuatur a cogitatione mea, cuius est modus. Quod autem haec idea realitatem obiectiuam hanc uel illam contineat potius quam aliam, hoc profecto habere debet ab aliqua causa in qua tantumdem sit ad minimum realitatis formalis quantum ipsa continet obiectiuae. Si enim ponamus aliquid in idea reperiri, quod non fuerit in eius causa, hoc igitur habet a nihilo; atqui quantumuis imperfectus sit iste essendi modus, quo res est obiectiue in intellectu per ideam, non tamen profecto plane nihil est, nec proinde a nihilo esse potest.

[3.15] Nec etiam debeo suspicari, cum realitas quam considero in meis sit tantum obiectiua non opus /42/ esse ut eadem realitas sit formaliter in causis istarum idearum, sed sufficere, si sit in iis etiam obiectiue. Nam quemadmodum iste modus essendi obiectiuus competit ideis ex ipsarum natura, ita modus essendi formalis competit idearum causis, saltem primis et praecipuis, ex earum natura. Et quamuis forte una idea ex alia nasci possit, non tamen hic datur progressus in infinitum, sed tandem ad aliquam primam debet deueniri, cuius causa sit instar archetypi, in quo omnis realitas formaliter contineatur, quae est in idea tantum obiectiue. Adeo ut lumine naturali mihi sit perspicuum ideas in me esse ueluti quasdam imagines, quae possunt quidem facile deficere a perfectione rerum a quibus sunt desumptae, non autem quicquam maius aut perfectius continere.

[3.16] Atque haec omnia, quo diutius et curiosius examino, tanto clarius et distinctius uera esse cognosco. Sed quid tamen ex his concludam? Nempe si realitas obiectiua alicuius ex meis ideis sit tanta ut certus sim eandem nec formaliter nec eminenter in me esse, nec proinde me ipsum eius ideae causam esse posse, hinc necessario sequi, non me solum esse in mundo, sed aliquam aliam rem, quae istius ideae est causa, etiam existere. Si uero nulla talis in me idea reperiatur, nullum plane habebam argumentum quod me de alicuius rei a me diuersae existentia certum reddat; omnia enim diligentissime circumspexi, et nullum aliud potui hactenus reperire.

[3.17] Ex his autem meis ideis, praeter illam quae me ipsum mihi exhibet, de qua hic nulla difficultas esse /43/ potest, alia est quae Deum, aliae quae res corporeas et inanimas, aliae quae Angelos, aliae quae animalia, ac denique aliae quae alios homines mei similes repraesentant.

[3.18] Et quantum ad ideas quae alios homines, uel animalia, uel Angelos exhibent, facile intelligo illas ex iis quas habeo mei ipsius et rerum corporalium et Dei posse componi, quamuis nulli praeter me homines, nec animalia, Angeli, in mundo essent.

[3.19] Quantum autem ad ideas rerum corporalium, nihil in illis occurrit, quod sit tantum ut non uideatur a me ipso potuisse proficisci; nam si penitus inspiciam, et singulas exminem eo modo quo heri examinaui ideam cerae, animaduerto perpauca tantum esse quae in illis clare et distincte percipio: nempe magnitudinem siue extensionem in longum, latum, et profundum; figuram, quae ex terminatione istius extensionis exurgit; situm, quem diuersa figurata inter se obtinent; et motum, siue mutationem istius situs; quibus addi possunt substantia, duratio, et numerus: caetera autem, ut lumen et colores, soni, odores, sapes, calor et frigus, aliaeque tactiles qualitates, nonnisi ualde confuse et obscure a me cogitantur, adeo ut etiam ignorem an sint uerae, uel falsae, hoc est, an ideae, quas de illis habeo, sint rerum quarundam ideae, an non rerum. Quamuis enim falsificatem proprie dictam, siue formalem, nonnisi in iudiciis posset reperiri paulo ante notauerim, est tamen profecto quaedam alia falsitas materialis in ideis, cum non rem tanquam rem repraesentant: ita, exempli causa, ideae quas habeo caloris et frigoris, tam parum clarae /44/ et distinctae sunt, ut ab iis discere non possim, an frigus sit tantum priuatio caloris, uel calor priuatio frigoris, uel utrumque sit realis qualitas, uel neutrum. Et quia nullae ideae nisi tanquam rerum esse possunt, siquidem uerum si frigus nihil aliud esse quam priuationem caloris, idea quae mihi illud tanquam reale quid et posituum repraesentat, non immerito falsa dicitur, et sic de caeteris.

[3.20] Quibus profecto non est necesse ut aliquem auctorem a me diuersum assignem; nam, si quidem sint falsae, hoc est nullas res repraesentent, lumine naturali notum mihi est illas a nihilo procedere, hoc est, non aliam ob causam in me esse quam quia deest aliquid naturae meae, nec est plane perfecta; si autem sint uerae quia tamen tam parum realitatis mihi exhibent, ut ne quidem illud a non re possim distinguere, non uideo cur a me ipso esse non possint.

[3.21] Ex iis uero quae in ideis rerum corporalium clare et distincta sunt, quaedam ab idea mei ipsius uideor mutuari potuisse, nempe substantiam, durationem, numerum, et si quae alia sint eiusmodi; nam cum cogito lapidem esse substantiam, siue esse rem quae per se apta est existere, itemque non esse substantiam, quamuis concipiam me esse rem cogitantem et non extensam, lapidem uero esse rem extensam et non cogitantem, ac proinde maxima inter utrumque conceptum sit diuersitas, in ratione tamen substantiae uidentur conuenire; itemque, cum percipio me nunc esse, et prius etiam aliquamdiu fuisse recordor, cumque uarias habeo cogitationes quarum nunc intelligo, acquirō /45/ ideas durationis et numeri, quas deinde ad quascumque alias res possunt transferre. Caetera autem omnia ex quibus rerum corporearum ideae conflantur, nempe extensio, figura, situs, et motus, in me quidem, cum nihil aliud sim quam res cogitans, formaliter non continentur; sed quia sunt tantum modi quidam substantiae, ego autem substantia, uidentur in me contineri posse eminenter.



[3.22] Itaque sola restat idea Dei, in qua considerandum est an aliquid sit quod a me ipso non potuerit proficisci. Dei nomine intelligo substantiam quandam infinitam, independentem, summe intelligentem, summe potentem, et a qua tum ego ipse, tum aliud omne, si quid aliud extat, quodcumque extat, est creatum. Quae sane omnia talia sunt ut, quo diligentius attendo, tanto minus a me solo profecta esse posse uideantur. Ideoque ex antedictis, Deum necessario existere, est concludendum.

[3.23] Nam quamuis substantiae quidem idea in me sit ex hoc ipso quod sim substantia, non tamen idcirco esset idea substantiae infinitae, cum sim finitus, nisi ab aliqua substantia, quae reuera esset infinita, procederet.

[3.24] Nec putare debeo me non percipere infinitum per ueram ideam, sed tantum per negationem finiti, ut percipio quietam et tenebras per negationem motus et lucis; nam contra manifeste intelligo plus realitatis esse in substantia infinita quam in finita, ac proinde priorem quodammodo in me esse perceptionem infiniti quam finiti, hoc est Dei quam mei ipsius. Qua enim ratione intelligerem me dubitare, me /46/ cupere, hoc est, aliquid mihi deesse, et me non esse omnino perfectum, si nulla idea entis perfectioris in me esset, ex cuius comparatione defectus meos agnoscerem?

[3.25] Nec dici potest hanc sorte ideam Dei materialiter falsam esse, ideoque a nihilo esse posse, ut paulo ante de ideis caloris et frigoris, et similium, animaduerti; nam contra, cum maxime clara et distincta sit, et plus realitatis obiectivae quam ulla alia contineat, nulla est per se magis uera, nec in qua minor falsitatis suspicio reperitur. Est, inquam, haec idea entis summe perfecti et infiniti maxime uera; nam quamuis forte fingi possit tale ens non existere, non tamen fingi potest eius ideam nihil reale mihi exhibere, ut de idea frigoris ante dixi. Est etiam maxime clare et distincta; nam quidquid clare et distincte percipio, quod est reale et uerum, et quod perfectionem aliquam important, totum in ea continetur. Nec obstat quod non comprehendam infinitum, uel quod alia innumera in Deo sint, quae nec comprehendere, nec forte etiam attingere cogitatione, ullo modo possum; est enim de ratione infiniti, ut a me, qui sum finitus, non comprehendatur; et sufficit me hoc ipsum intelligere, ac iudicare, illa omnia quae clare percipio, et perfectionem aliquam importare scio, atque etiam forte alia innumera quae ignoro, uel formaliter uel eminenter in Deo esse, ut idea quam de illo habeo sit omnium quae in me sunt maxime uera, et maxime clara et distincta.

[3.26] Sed forte maius aliquid sum quam ipse intelligam, omnesque illae perfectiones quas Deo tribuo, potentia quodammodo in me sunt, etiamsi nondum sese exerant, /47/ neque ad actum reducuntur. Exuperior enim iam cognitionem meam paulatim auget; nec uideo quid obstet quo minus ita magis et magis augeatur in infinitum, nec etiam cur, cognitione sic aucta, non possim eius ope reliquas omnes Dei perfectiones adipisci; nec denique cur potentia ad istas perfectiones, si iam in me est, non sufficiat ad illarum ideam producendam.

[3.27] Immo nihil horum esse potest. Nam primo, ut uerum sit cognitionem meam gradatim augeri, et multa in me esse potentia quae actu nondum sunt, nihil tamen horum ad ideam Dei pertinet, in qua nempe nihil omnino est potentiale; namque hoc ipsum, gradatim augeri, certissimum est imperfectionis argumentum. Praetera, etiamsi cognito mea semper magis et magis augeatur, nihilominus intelligo nunquam illam idcirco fore actu infinitam, quia nunquam eo deuenietur, ut maioris adhuc incrementi non sit capax, Deum autem ita iudico esse actu infinitum, ut nihil eius perfectioni addi possit. Ac denique percipio esse obiectiuum ideae non a solo esse potenciali, quod proprie loquendo nihil est, sed tantummodo ab actuali siue formali posse produci.

[3.28] Neque profecto quicquam est in his omnibus, quod diligenter attendenti non sit lumine naturali manifestum; sed quia, cum minus attendo, et rerum sensibilium imagines mentis aciem excaecant, non ita facile recordor cur idea entis me perfectioris necessario ab ente aliquo procedat quod sit reuera perfectius, ulterius /48/ quaerere libet an ego ipse habens illam ideam esse possem, si tale ens nullum existeret.

[3.29] Nempe a quo essem? A me scilicet, uel a parentibus, uel ab aliis quibuslibet Deo minus perfectis; nihil enim ipso perfectius, nec etiam aequè perfectum, cogitari aut fingi potest.

[3.30] Atqui, si a me essem, nec dubitarem, nec optarem, nec omnino quicquam mihi deesset; omnes enim perfectiones quarum idea aliqua in me est, mihi dedissem, atque ita ipsemet Deus essem. Nec putare debeo illa forsam quae mihi desunt difficilior acquiri posse, quam illa quae iam in me sunt; nam contra, manifestum est longe difficilior fuisse me, hoc est rem siue substantiam cogitantem, ex nihilo emergere, quam multarum rerum quas ignoro cognitiones, quae tantum istius substantiae accidentia sunt, acquirere. Ac certe, si maius illud a me haberem, non mihi illa saltem, quae facilius haberi possunt, denegassem, sed neque etiam ulla alia ex iis, quae in idea Dei contineri percipio; quia nempe nulla difficiliora factu mihi uidentur; si quae autem difficiliora factu essent, certe etiam mihi difficiliora uiderentur, siquidem reliqua quae habeo, a me haberem, quoniam in illis potentiam meam terminari experirer.

[3.31] Neque uim harum rationum effugio, si supponam me forte semper fuisse ut nunc sum, tanquam si inde sequerentur, nullum existentiae meae auctorem esse quaerendum. Quoniam enim omne tempus uitae in /49/ partes innumeras diuidi potest, quarum singulae a reliquis nullo modo dependent, ex eo quod paulo ante fuerim, non sequitur me nunc debere esse, nisi aliqua causa me quasi rursus creet ad hoc momentum, hoc est me corseruet. Perspicuum enim est attendenti ad temporis naturam, eadem plane uim et actione opus esse ad rem quamlibet singulis momentis quibus durat conseruandam, qua opus esset ad eandem de nouo creandam, si nondum existeret; adeo ut conseruationem sola ratione a creatione differre, sit etiam unum ex iis quae lumine naturali manifesta sunt.

[3.32] Itaque debeo nunc interrogare me ipsum, an habeam aliquam uim per quam possim efficere ut ego ille, qui iam sum, paulo post etiam sim futurus: nam, cum nihil aliud sim quam

res cogitans, uel saltem cum de ea tantum mei parte praecise nunc agam quae est res, cogitans, si quae talis uis in me esset, eius proculdubio conscius essem. Sed et nullam esse experior, et ex hoc ipso euentissime cognosco me ab aliquo ente a me diuerso pendere.

[3.33] Forte uero illud ens non est Deus, sumque uel a parentibus productus, uel a quibuslibet aliis causis Deo minus perfectis. Immo, ut iam ante dixi, perspicuum est tantumdem ad minimum esse debere in causa quantum est in effectum; et idcirco, cum sim res cogitans, ideamque quandam Dei in me habens, qualiscumque tandem mei causa assignetur, illam etiam esse rem cogitantem, et omnium perfectum, quas Deo tribuo, ideam habere fatendum est. Potestque de illa rursus quaeri, an sit a se, uel ab alia. Nam si a se, patet ex dictis illam ipsam Deum esse, quia nempe, /50/ cum uim habeat per se existendi, habet proculdubio etiam uim possidendi actu omnes perfectiones quarum ideam in se habet, hoc est omnes quas in Deo esse concipio. Si autem sit ab alia, rursus eodem modo de hac altera quaeretur, an sit a se, uel ad alia, denec tandem ad causam ultimam deueniatur, quae erit Deus.

[3.34] Satis enim apertum est nullum hic dari posse progressum in infinitum, praesertim cum non tantum de causa, quae me olim produxit, hic agam, sed maxime etiam de illa quae me tempore praesenti conseruat.

[3.35] Nec fingi potest plures forte causas partiales ad me efficiendum concurrisse, et ab una ideam unius ex perfectionibus quas Deo tribuo, ab alia ideam alterius me accepisse, adeo ut omnes quidem illae perfectiones alicubi in uniuerso reperiantur, sed non omnes simul iunctae in uno aliquo, qui sit Deus. Nam contra, unitas, simplicitas, siue inseparabilitas eorum omnium quae in Deo sunt, una est ex praecipuis perfectionibus quas in eo esse intelligo. Nec certe istius omnium eius perfectionum unitatis idea in me potuit poni ab ulla causa, a qua etiam aliarum perfectionum ideas non habuerim: neque enim efficere potuit ut illas simul iunctas et inseparabiles intelligerem, nihi simul effecerit ut quaenam illae essent egnoscerem.

[3.36] Quantum denique ad parentes attinet, ut omnia uera sint quae de illis unquam putauit, non tamen profecto illi me conseruant, nec etiam ullo modo me, quatenus sum res cogitans, effecerunt; sed tantum dispositiones quasdam in ea materia posuerunt, cui me, hoc est mentem, quam solam nunc pro me accipio, /51/ inesse iudicaui. Ac proinde hic nulla de iis difficultas esse potest; sed omnino est concludendum, ex hoc solo quod existam, quaedamque idea entis perfectissimi, hoc est Dei, in me sit, euentissime demonstrari Deum etiam existere.

[3.37] Superest tantum ut examinem qua ratione ideam istam a Deo accepi; neque enim illam sensibus hausit, nec unquam non expectandi mihi aduenit, ut solent rerum sensibilibus ideae, cum istae res externis sensuum organibus occurrunt, uel occurrere uidentur; nec etiam a me efficta est, nam nihil ab illa detrahere, nihil ille superaddere plane possum; ac proinde superest ut mihi sit innata, quemadmodum etiam mihi est innata idea mei ipsius.

[3.38] Et sane non mirum est Deum, me creando, ideam illam mihi indidisse, ut esset tanquam nota artificis operi suo impressa; nec etiam opus est ut nota illa sit aliqua res ab opere ipso

diuersa. Sed ex hoc uno quod Deus me creauit, ualde credibile est me quodammodo ad imaginem et similitudinem eius factum esse, illamque similitudinem, in qua Dei idea continetur, a me percipi per eandem facultatem, per quam ego ipse a me percipior: hoc est, dum in meipsum mentis aciem conuerto, non modo intelligo me esse rem incompletam et ad alio dependentem remque ad maiora et maiora siue meliora indefinite aspirantem; sed simul etiam intelligo illum, a quo pendeo, maiora ista omnia non indefinite et potentia tantum, sed reipsa infinite in se habere, atque ita Deum esse. Totaque uis argumenti in eo est, quod agnoscam fieri non posse /52/ ut existam talis naturae qualis sum, nempe ideam Dei in me habens, nisi reuera Deus etiam existeret, Deus, inquam, ille idem cuius idea in me est, hoc est, habens omnes illas perfectiones, quas ego non comprehendere, sed quocumque modo attingere cogitatione possum, et nullis plane defectibus obnoxius. Ex quibus satis patet illum fallacem esse non posse; omnem enim fraudem et deceptionem a defectu aliquo pendere, lumine naturali manifestum est.

[3.39] Sed priusquam hoc diligentius examinem, simulque in alias ueritates quae inde colligi possunt inquiram, placet hic aliquandiu in ipsius Dei contemplatione immorari, eius attributa apud me expendere, et immensi huius luminis pulchritudinem, quantum caligantis ingenii mei acies ferre poterit, intueri, admirari, adorare. Ut enim in hac sola diuinae maiestatis contemplatione summam alterius uitae felicitatem consistere fide credimus, ita etiam iam ex eadem, licet multo minus perfecta, maximam, cuius in hac uita capaces simus, uoluptatem percipi posse experimur.