Bonaventure's *I Sentence* Argument for the Trinity from Beatitude

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Abstract. Bonaventure's *Sentence Commentary* provides the most comprehensive set of trinitarian arguments to date. This article focuses on just one of them, the one from *beatitude*. Roughly, beatitude can be thought of as God's enjoyment of his own, supreme goodness. After a brief rationale of Bonaventure's speculative project, I assay the concept of beatitude and exposit his four-stage argument. Bonaventure reasons: (i) for a single supreme substance; (ii) for at least two divine persons; (iii) against the possibility for an infinite number of divine persons (iv) for at least three, and against the possibility of four (or more) divine persons. I show how this line of reasoning is significantly more complex than Bonaventure's terse summaries initially indicate. My primary goal is to explicate the four steps and unpack their main support. Along the way I attend to the argument's logical progression, some of its sources, and I respond to several concerns.

I. Introduction

The past three decades have seen a resurgence in philosophical trinitarian speculation.[1] Accompanying this resurgence is interest in some traditional trinitarian arguments, which are used as a springboard for constructive accounts. Richard of St. Victor's *De Trinitate* receives the lion's share of attention, to the exclusion of other capable thinkers, such as Gregory Nazianzen (indeed any of the Cappadocians), St. Anselm, and St. Bonaventure. Bonaventure's trinitarian argumentation is more extensive than anything on offer today, and making those argument accessible to contemporary thinkers will only aid philosophical trinitarianism.[2]

Critical and historically sensitive investigation of Bonaventure's thought can help meet that need. One voice from the previous generation of Bonaventure scholars, Ewert Cousins, rightly recognized that a dynamic trinitarianism is foundational to Bonaventure's whole theological synthesis. Cousins argued that the philosophical dimensions of that foundation "demand critical analysis and evaluation."[3] This paper seeks to make steps toward these ends.

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[1] By 'speculation', I mean nothing more than reasoned arguments for aspects of trinitarian doctrine. Proponents include: Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford; O.U.P., 1994); Thomas V. Morris, *Our Idea of God: An Introduction to Philosophical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: I.V.P., 1991); Stephen T. Davis, *Christian Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2016); William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-personal God*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: O.U.P., 2013).

[2] This is not to say that Bonaventure's larger trinitarian theology has been ignored. His trinitarianism continues to receive deserved attention. Two recent examples include Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Great Medieval Thinkers) (New York; O.U.P., 2006); Zachary Hayes, OFM, "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology," *Brill Companion to Bonaventure* (Brill, 2013), 189–245.

[3] Ewert Cousins, "God as Dynamic in Bonaventure and Contemporary Thought," *Thomas and Bonaventure: A Septicentenary Commemoration*, ed. G.F. McLean, O.M.I. (Catholic University of America: Washington D.C., 1974), 138.

I will focus on the trinitarian speculation in the *Sentence Commentary*, which has received little historical attention[4], though it ranges more widely and, at times, explores matters more deeply than anywhere else in Bonaventure's corpus.[5] In this vein I endeavour to draw primarily from the I *Sentence Commentary* (hereafter *Commentary*) in my study. In the *Commentary's* second distinction Bonaventure asks *Whether in God there is to be posited a plurality of persons?*,[6] and lists a series of responses:

> And that this is so, is shown by supposing four things concerning God: the first, that in Him there is a most high beatitude, the second is, that in Him there is a most high perfection, the third is, that in Him is a most high simplicity, the fourth is, that in Him is a most high primacy.[7]

In this paper I direct my attention to the first argument in the series, namely, the one from beatitude, which Bonaventure develops along four steps:

Step 1. Establish the existence and nature of the single divine substance
Step 2. Argue for a plurality of divine persons
Step 3. Argue against an infinite number of divine persons
Step 4. Argue for at least three, and no more than three, divine persons

Bonaventure's expression of this argument is terse, amounting to about 24 sentences–a mere two-dozen lines to make a convincing case for the existence of three, and only three, divine persons.[8] Though terse, it is not facile. Bonaventure outlines a serious and, in places complex, argument–one worthy of consideration from contemporary trinitarians, particularly those who hope to advance trinitarian arguments of their own. Thus, my primary task in this paper is to unpack what Bonaventure so tightly summarizes.[9] Along the way, and this is my secondary task, I will address several of the main concerns with this argument.

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[4] In contrast to the *Sentence Commentary*, other works–e.g. *Breviloquium*, *Itenerarium Mentis ad Deum*, and *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* (hereafter '*Disputed Questions Trinity*')–have received a fair amount of scholarly attention. One good example of each: J. Isaac Goff, *Caritas in Primo: A Study of Bonaventure's* Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2015); Dominic Monti and Katherine Wrisley-Shelby, *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium* (Franciscan Institute Publications, 2017); Hayes, "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology."

[5] So Hayes: "In his *Sentence Commentary*, Bonaventure treats scientifically the major questions of both the metaphysical and logical orders. His doctrine on the divine processions, relations, Person, properties, notions, appropriations, as well as the subjects of logic and language, are all found in the *Sentence Commentary* as the most comprehensive treatment he was ever to provide. Bonaventure's Trinitarian considerations within later works are all clearly shaped by his earlier treatment found in the *Commentary*." Hayes, "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology," 200.

[6] St. Bonaventure, *Commentaries on the First Book of Sentences* (hereafter I *Sent.*) d. 2, q. 2, *Utrum in Deo ponenda sit personarum pluraltatis*. Latin quotations are from the Quaracchi critical edition, *Doctoris Seraphici, Opera Omnia*, (Quaracchi, 1882). Unless noted, I use the English translation edited by Br. Alexis Bugnolo (Mansfield, Massachusetts: The Franciscan Archive, 2014). Though Bugnolo's edition is not a critical translation, Question 2, from which I primarily work in this essay, is highly accurate.

[7] *Et quod sic, ostenditur supponendo de Deo quatuor: primum est, quod in ipso sit summa beatitudo; secundum est, summa perfectio; tertium est, summa simplicitas; quartum est, summa primitas.*

[8] Gonzalez contrasts the *Sentence's* presentation with that of the other major Trinitarian works: "The contributions of the *Commentary* is the briefest and at the same time the most complete. He only enumerates the ideas without being especially detained by them. There sit the elements that in one form or another are later reworked, deepened, and displayed from another perspective." Olegario González, *Misterio Trinitario y Existencia Humana: Estudio Histórico Teológico en Torno a San Buenaventura* (Madrid: Rialp, 1965), 112.

[9] Cousins notes that, in drawing from Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventure "implies" what Richard "spells out." This observation rings true for the entirety of the argument, requiring us to re-spell out the contents of the arguments. Cousins, "God as Dynamic," 142.

II. Trinitarian Arguments: Methods and Goals

There is some debate on the precise role of reason in relationship to faith in Bonaventure's corpus, and more specifically on the nature of his trinitarian arguments.[10] Without wading into that debate, I will briefly state my stance on a couple of the most pertinent issues. A thorough apology for triadic argumentation is beyond the scope of this essay, but stating my position will serve as a very general rationale for Bonaventure's trinitarian speculation by addressing some main points regarding its nature, goals, and intended audience.

Following the 'method of reasoning' (*modus ratiocinativus*), the *Commentary* advances 'probable reasons' (*rationes probantes*) for the Trinity.[11] We must proceed with care at this point, since the term 'probable reasons' does not map neatly onto modern understanding of such terminology. On Bonaventure's usage, there is no sense of statistical probability or Bayesian quantification. Scholastics thought of probable arguments in the sense of " 'able to be approved of by reliable opinion' or 'plausible'."[12] In modern jargon, the argument from beatitude is sufficient to place its proponent squarely within her epistemic rights in affirming its trinitarian conclusions.[13] The arguments for those trinitarian conclusions are philosophical in that none of their premises appeals to an authority of the faith (i.e., scripture, creeds, or early church fathers).[14]

The beatitude argument employs evidence drawn from the senses, so does not make deductions from some initial set of indubitable principles, but rather makes its deductions from claims grounded on common experience.[15] Therefore, the certainty that the beatitude argument yields can be very strong[16], but not as strong

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[10] Goff's recent *Caritas in Primo*, chp.1 is a good entry point to the debate. Also touching upon many points under discussion is Gregory LaNave's article "Bonaventure's Theological Method," in *The Brill Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. J. Hammond, W. Hellmann and J. Goff (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 81–120.

[11] I *Sent.*, pro., q. 2, resp. 5,6.

[12] I *Sent.*, pro., q. 2, conc. Charles Burnett, "Scientific Speculations," in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, ed. P. Dronke (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1988), 154.

[13] Aquinas' description helps highlight this: "persuasive arguments (*rationes persuasiones*) [show] that what is proposed in our faith is not impossible…" Aquinas, ST II.II, q. 1, a. 5, ad. 2, trns. English Dominican Province (London, 1920).

[14] It cannot be stressed enough: Bonaventure believes that such philosophical arguments can only be given by those who already have faith, and most likely will only be accepted by the faithful. Cf. Christopher Gray, "Bonaventure's Proof of Trinity," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, v. 68 n. 2 (1993), 201–217, esp. 225.

[15] Bonaventure's trinitarian speculation diverges most greatly from Aquinas' at this point, with the *locus classicus* of Aquinas' critique in *Summa Theologigiae* I, q. 32. Stated roughly, Aquinas views forms as 'intrinsic' to created substances. Bonaventure's theory of participation is more heavily 'extrinsic', holding to an ongoing formal relation between created beings and the forms contained in the divine exemplar (viz., the Word, the second person of the Trinity). Both thinkers agree that God creates substantially, as single causal principle. However, Aquinas' intrinsicism allows for reason alone to only discover a single simple substance and distinction between divine word and will; it can never discover God's word and will to be hypostases. Bonaventure's extrinsicism demands that the tri-personal substance leaves signs of personal plurality at all levels of reality (though to varying degrees, e.g.: shadows, footprints, and images). By faith and through illumination by grace, some can even have eyes to cognize the tri-unity via creation. In short, Bonaventure and Aquinas have different epistemic positions grounded upon different metaphysical ones. On Bonaventure's position see: Ilia Delio, "Does God 'Act' in Creation? A Bonaventurian Response," *The Heythrop Journal*, XLIV (2003), 328-344; "From Metaphysics to Kataphysics," *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, v.64 n.2 (2011) 161–179; Leonard J. Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *The Journal of Religion*, v.55 n.2 (1975), 181–198. On Aquinas' see Gilles Emery, OP, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxoford: O.U.P., 2010), chps. 1–2; John McDermott, "Is the Blessed Trinity Naturally Knowable?," *Gregorianum*, v.93 n.1 (2012), 113–149.

[16] Viz., as strong as the certainty we have our experience and intuitions.

as the certainty yielded by scripture. Because its premises are grounded on human experience, the beatitude argument reasons from effect to cause, and so is an argument *propter quid*, and not *quia*.[17] Thus, while this argument offers congruent reasons (*rationes congruentes*) rather than necessary ones (*rationes necessaria*), it is still a demonstration, i.e., a deductive argument.[18]

This survey of the nature of Bonaventure's arguments only sharpens questions regarding his intent: *What does Bonaventure hope to accomplish with these arguments*? *What is their place in the life of faith*? Though necessary (in the way just described), these arguments are not necessary *for faith*. Indeed, unless a person first believe, it is impossible that she could ever be persuaded by–much less formulate–such arguments. So the beatitude argument is demonstrative in the technical (logical-deductive) sense just specified, but not somehow independent of or prior to faith.[19] The beatitude argument cannot yield faith, but it can deepen it. In this vein, the arguments have three goals divided among three target audiences[20]: first, to quiet enemies of the faith (who, for example, say it is impossible for there to exist three divine persons); second, to encourage the weak in faith (by showing how their devotion to the tri-une God is reasonable); and third, to delight the advanced in faith (by unveiling some of the riches of trinitarian dogma). Bonaventure, then, will have no part with rationalistic "dryness of speculation".[21]

III. Step 1: The Single Divine Substance

The nature of the divine substance is the metaphysical foundation for all trinitarian reasoning in the *Sentence Commentary*. For Bonaventure, several aspects of the divine nature are included in the very concept of 'God'. A person who correctly understands the concept understands that God is simple, the one whom nothing greater can be thought, and *summum*. From these attributes she also understands that God exists necessarily.[22] In this

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[17] In this way, none of the *Sentence Commentary* arguments offer any explanation or greater insight into the doctrine of the Trinity, but only offer a subsidiary, supporting role. Cf. A Menard, "Une Leçon Inaugurale de Bonaventure: Le Poemium du Livre des Sentences," *Etudes Franciscaines*, v. 21 n. 59 (1971), 273–298, esp. 284–286.

[18] Necessary reasons are those that cannot be otherwise; congruent ones which argue for the possibility (or likelihood) that some proposition is true, though it may possibly be false. Thus, on the medieval understanding, necessary/congruent reasons are mutually exclusive, while probable/necessary reasons are not (the two can complement each other). Following Boethius' distinction between probable but not necessary, necessary but not probable, probable and necessary, and neither probable nor necessary. Boethius, *De Differentia Topicis* I.

[19] On this issue, the *a priori* and *a posteriori* distinction creates more confusion than it eliminates. For Bonaventure, the beatitude argument will only be given by someone who, through grace, believes in the doctrine of the Trinity; in this way the argument is posterior to faith/scripture/authority. However, none of the argument's premises is grounded in or appeals to those sources; thus, in some sense, it is prior to or non-dependent on faith. Yet again, a hearer of the argument must receive some degree of grace to see the truth of its premises and be persuaded by its conclusion; hence another sense of posteriority to faith. One of the best places to start for thinking about Bonaventure's theological reasoning is Gregory LaNave, "Bonaventure's Theological Method," *A Companion to Bonaventure* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 81–120.

[20] I *Sent.*, pro., q. 2, conc.

[21] *Disputed Questions Trinity*, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 8.

[22] "For 'God' simply refers to the supreme being both in reality and in the mind of the thinker. Because in reality, all things are from him and in him and to him, and in him is their entire standing. And so it is impossible to understand, without prejudice to this understanding, that someone [produce] someone else [as] perfect as himself from himself. Likewise, nothing greater than, or even equal to God is able to be thought, because [God] is supreme in the mind [of the thinker]. And so it is impossible and unintelligible to posit a plurality of gods." I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, conc. (my translation). *Deus enim dicit simpliciter summum et in re et in opinione cogitantis. Quia in re, ideo omnia ab ipso et in*

step we will limit our attention to the final attribute, God's supremacy (I shall translate *summum* and its cognates using 'supreme' and 'highest' interchangeably). On the indubitable condition that God is highest, Bonaventure argues,

> therefore, all things are below Him: therefore, all others are from Him and for Him.[23]

Here Bonaventure isolates two aspects of *summum*. First, he has in mind the hierarchy of being. God is the most perfect essence in the sense of having the most perfections, and having them to the fullest possible extent.[24] In this way God is more perfect than all other beings, whether actual or possible. In contemporary parlance, God is maximally perfect–the most perfect possible. Second, God is the ultimate cause. On Bonaventure's Platonic theory of causation, God is a cause in three ways. He is the efficient cause who sets all things from non-existence into being. He is the exemplary cause in that all other beings participate, or have a limited share, of God's being (which includes both the act of existence, and the qualities that characterize them).[25] Finally, he is the final cause of all creation, the *summum bonum* or greatest good to which all created beings are attracted as their perfective end.

IV. Step 2: The Plurality of Divine Persons

With these suppositions about the divine substance in place, Bonaventure quickly moves to his primary subject, viz., the three divine persons. In Step 2 he argues for the conclusion that in God there is a plurality of persons. Above we saw his list of four arguments, viz., those from supreme beatitude, perfection, simplicity, and primacy. Expanding on the first, he argues,

> wherever there is a most high beatitude, there is a most high goodness, a most high charity, and a most high jocundity. But if there is a most high goodness, since it belongs to goodness to communicate itself in a most high manner, and this is most greatly in producing from itself an equal and in giving its own 'being' [*esse*]: ergo etc. If a most high charity, since charity is not a private love, but (a love) for another: therefore it requires a plurality. Likewise, if a most high jocundity, since "there is no jocund possession of any good without company", therefore, for the most high jocundity there is required society and, thus, plurality.[26]

The argument for three divine persons from beatitude (*summa beatitude*), hereafter 'The Argument', is composed of three discrete lines of reasoning: one from supreme goodness (*summa bonitas*), supreme charity

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ipso et ad ipsum, et in ipso omnino est status; ideo impossibile est intelligere, salvo hoc intellectu, quod aliquid sibi parificetur aliud ab ipso. Item, nihil maius Deo cogitari potest nec etiam, aequale, quia summum in opinione. Ideo impossibile et non intelligibile est ponere plures deos.

[23] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, fund. 3: *Ex hac arguitur: ergo omnia sunt infra ipsum: ergo omnia alia ab ipso et ad ipsum.*

[24] See J.M. Bissen, *L'Éxemplarisme Divin selon saint Bonaventure* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1920), chp.1.

[25] See L.J. Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *The Journal of Religion*, 55 (1985), 181–98.

[26] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 2, f. 1. *Ubicumque est summa beatitudo, est summa bonitas, summa caritas et summa iucunditas. Sed si est summa bonitas, cum bonitatis sit summe se communicare, et hoc est maxime in producendo ex se aequalem et dando esse suum: ergo etc. Si summa caritas, cum caritas non sit amor privatus, sed ad alterum: ergo requirit pluralitatem. Item, si summa iucunditas, cum "nullius boni sine socio sit iucunda possesio", ergo ad summam iucunditatem requiritur societas et ita pluralitas.*

(*summa caritas*), and supreme jocundity (*summa iucunditas*). Adding the suppositions about the single divine substance, we may outline The Argument generally,

> *The argument for plurality of divine persons from beatitude*
> 1. God is supremely simple, the highest that can be thought, and supreme.
> 2. In God there is most high beatitude.
> 3. Necessary for most high beatitude are: (i) supreme goodness, (ii) supreme charity; (iii) supreme jocundity.
> 4. Any one of (i), (ii), and (iii) is sufficient for a plurality of divine persons.
> 5. Therefore, in God there is a plurality of divine persons.

We have already touched upon premise 1 in our overview of the divine nature, so let us turn to 2.

Premise 2: Supreme Beatitude

Early in the *Commentary* (while discussing Augustine's *uti-frui* distinction), Bonaventure briefly describes beatitude as a quieting and delight of the spirit, a state beyond which nothing further is sought.[27] The lengthy *respondio* which immediately follows develops this description, the central insight being that of the 'finished soul' (*anima finire*) and a 'going to rest' (*quietatione*) of the agent when she encounters the object of her love (*dilectione*). But being 'perfectly finished' (*perfectam finitionem*) requires a perfect delight (*delectatio*) and, "for that reason only in God is there perfect [delight]."[28] This short discussion from early in the *Commentary* introduces the main elements of Bonaventure's wider notion of beatitude. A notion we may consider in greater detail from three perspectives.

The first is the formal-objective distinction.[29] Formally, beatitude is a perfection or fullness of the soul. Objectively, beatitude is the restoring principle—the object which effects formal perfection in the subject. Applying this analysis to the divine substance we see that for God perfection is not achieved by union with the divine substance, but instead formal beatitude or perfection is had substantially—God *is* perfection itself.

Second, we may consider beatitude under the concept of causation. As 'most high', God is maximally powerful, effecting the grace necessary for a created being to achieve the form of beatitude (efficient cause). As supremely simple, God is goodness itself, and thus is the beatitudinal form—the form of perfection in which a subject participates (exemplar cause). As *summum bonum*, God is the ultimate, perfecting end of all created beings (final cause).[30]

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[27] I *Sent.* d. 1, a. 3, q. 2, ad. 5. (Concerning created beatitude:) *Omni eo est fruendum, quo habito animus quiescit et delectatur et nihil ultra potest quaerere..*
[28] I *Sent.* d. 1, a. 3, q. 2, conc.
[29] I draw this and the following two perspectives from the unpublished thesis of Father Nathaniel Macheske O.F.M., *The Essence of Beatitude According to St. Bonaventure* (Burlington, Wisconsin; St. Francis College, 1943), chp. 2.
[30] See *Breviloquium*, 5.6.1–6.

Third, beatitude encompasses *all* of the subject's powers and faculties.[31] For God this includes intellect, will, and affect. Intellectively, God fully beholds, or sees the divine goodness by knowing himself.[32] Along with full knowledge, God completely wills or loves the divine goodness. God's desires for goodness–that is, for himself–are fully realized. The result is a fulfilment of the affect: both a fullness of joy[33] as well as a rest in the satisfaction of all desires.[34]

To summarize, we can say that beatitude is the state in which a personal subject is unified with (or possesses, or beholds) the supreme good. Supreme beatitude, then, is supreme unification with (or possession, or beholding of) the supreme good. We are now in a position to see how Bonaventure moves from premise 1 to 2.

Premise 1 identifies three aspects of the divine nature, namely the Platonic notion of supreme simplicity, the Anselmian idea that God is the highest that can be thought, and the Augustinian idea that God is *summum*. Any one of these is sufficient to ensure supreme beatitude.[35] Isolating just the third aspect, namely, the idea that God is supreme, we can outline the argument this way,

> *The argument for supreme beatitude from supremacy*
> 6.   God is supreme.
> 7.   If God is supreme, then God is supremely perfect.
> 8.   To be perfect is to have beatitude. [Definition of beatitude]
> 9.   To be supremely perfect is to have supreme beatitude. [Definition of supreme beatitude]
> 10. Therefore, God has supreme beatitude.

Premise 6 iterates the claim from 1 that God is *summum*. What support does Bonaventure give for this claim? While speaking on the existence of only one divine substance, he mentions in passing a key argument,

> It must be said that it is impossible that there be more gods, and if the thing signified by this name 'God' be rightly accepted, it is not only impossible, but also not intelligible: for 'God' means simply the Most High Being both in reality and in the opinion of the one thinking.[36]

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[31] Macheske, *The Essence of Beatitude*, 24: "Substantially the reward of beatitude exists in God. The principle acts of glory, therefore, are those according to which a soul is turned toward God. There are three such acts, because no less than three are needed if the soul is actually to enjoy God. These three acts are: 1. perfect vision; 2. perfect love; 3. perfect enjoyment. These acts are intimately related with each other. Thus it is a mistake to say that perfect vision is sufficient in itself to furnish the whole reward. He who sees perfectly, loves perfectly, and possesses perfectly as well. These three acts share mutual dependence, one upon the other. Together, they constitute the complete substantial reward."

[32] Bonaventure expands upon the knowledge element of beatitude in *Disputed Questions Trinity*, q. 1, a. 1, ad. 7.

[33] Cf. *Brev.* V.6.6, "This peace, once attained, is necessarily followed by…overflowing spiritual delight…" *Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic Monti, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure University, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005). Again, Bonaventure here describes human beatitude, but the object of beatitude and its effects overlap generally at least in these regards.

[34] E.g., *Brev.* V.6.3, where achieving the object of perfection results in "perfect repose."

[35] In fact, these attributes are a metaphysical 'package deal': if one obtains, then they each do.

[36] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, conc.: *Dicendum, quod impossibile est esse plures deos, et si recte accipiatur significatum huius nominis Deus, non solum est impossibile, sed etiam non intelligibile. Deus enim dicit simpliciter summum et in re et in opinione cogitantis.*

The passage introduces several ideas that Bonaventure will later develop in detail.[37] For our purposes, the important point is that a correct concept of 'God' includes the notion of *summum*. Premise 7 works out some of the content of supremacy. As supreme, God is maximally complete, having every highest perfection to the greatest possible degree.[38] As we saw in premise 8, beatitude just is the state of completion. If 7 is sound, we may conclude that God has beatitude and has it maximally: in the greatest possible ways (think: the richness of divine beatitude), and to the greatest possible degree (think: the extent of divine beatitude).

Premise 3: Supreme Beatitude includes supreme goodness, charity, and jocundity.

Before analysing Premise 3 let us familiarize ourselves with Bonaventure's conception of goodness, charity, and jocundity.

Goodness. Goodness is one of the widest notions found in Bonaventure's thought.[39] For the present discussion it will be most helpful to think of God's goodness through Bonaventure's notion of *Deum Esse*–or as J. Isaac Goff translates it, 'pure being'.[40] Pure being is fully in act. This means that *Deum Esse* is necessary (it cannot not exist), and–more pertinent to the argument from goodness–it has every highest perfection and has them maximally.[41]

Charity. Charity is a species of love, roughly, the mutual love between two or more persons. It is "noblest" of all divine affections because it is the "root," or grounds, of all other affective states, including joy and hope.[42] Regarding joy specifically, the charity relation is the most delightful relation that a personal being can have.

Jocundity. Jocundity is the delight and overflowing happiness that occurs when enjoying a good thing with another person.[43] Unlike charity (a species of love), it is not clear that jocundity is a species of joy. That is,

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[37] The most detailed account is in *Mysteries of the Trinity*, q.1, art.1. For a brief overview, see Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2006), 63-69.

[38] This statement must be read considering God's simplicity. Thus God 'has' a perfection because he *is* that perfection; he has it to the greatest degree because he is the source of that perfection, and therefore nothing exterior to God can increase his having of it.

[39] For studies of goodness that pertain to the present essay see: Ilia Delio, O.S.F., "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," *Theological Studies* 60 (1999), 228–246; Delio, "From Metaphysics to Kataphysics: Bonaventure's Good Creation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 64, issue 2 (May 2011), 161-179; Ewert Cousins, "God as Dynamic in Bonaventure and Contemporary Thought," in *Thomas and Bonaventure: A Septicentenary Commemoration*, ed. G.F. McLean, O.M.I. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1974), 136–148.

[40] Goff, *Caritas in Primo*, 1-2, 206-216.

[41] Goff, *Caritas in Primo*, chp. 1.

[42] I *Sent.* d. 10, q. 2, resp.: "For the affection of love is first among all the affections and the root of all others… And that affection is the most noble among all others, since it has more of manner of liberality. This is the gift from which all other gifts are given, and in which consists all delights of intellectual substance." (My translation). *Affectio enim amoris est prima inter omnes affectiones et radix omnium aliarum... Et ista affectio nobilissima est inter omnes, quoniam plus tenet de ratione liberalitatis. Unde hoc est donum, in quo omnia alia dona donantur, et in quo consistunt omnes deliciae substantiae intellectualis.*

[43] Beyond Seneca, the theological application–and therefore source–for jocundity language in Bonaventure's theology has received no attention. Richard of St. Victor used it in a similar context (*De Trinitate*, Bk. III.3). The *Summa Fratris Alexandri* uses the same language in a similar context (*Summa* I, q. 14, contra e), perhaps coming ultimately from Bernard, "The only true joy is derived not from creatures but from the Creator, no man can take it from you, and compared to it all earthly joy (*jocunditas*) is no better than sorrow; all pleasantness, grief; every sweet thing, bitter; every seemly thing, mean; and finally everything else which might give pleasure, wearisome." Bernard

Bonaventure may understand jocundity to be i) a distinct type of joy, ii) the highest degree of joy, or iii) both. Whichever is the case, the result is that jocundity is a supreme perfection.[44]

According to Bonaventure, if God has supreme beatitude, then God has supreme goodness, charity, and jocundity. Our brief summary of the nature of these three qualities helps reveal why they are coextensive with beatitude: goodness, charity, and jocundity accompany beatitude because they *compose* beatitude–at least in part. As we saw, beatitude is a complex state that can be considered from several perspectives. Considered objectively, it is the perfect object (i.e. goodness) to which the subject moves (via love), and in which she encounters joy (jocundity). Considered causally, beatitude is the state of joy which results when a subject moves through the will (i.e. in love) toward her final end (i.e. goodness). Whichever route we approach the concept of beatitude, will, goodness, and joy are present as constitutive elements: beatitude just *is* the will's jocund rest in the good. Thus, supreme beatitude is the supreme love for the supreme good, having or being unified to that good, and the resulting supremacy of joy.

Premise 4: Supreme goodness, charity, and jocundity are each sufficient for a plurality of divine persons

Goodness. Next, Bonaventure develops three arguments for multiple divine persons, one argument each from supreme goodness, charity, and jocundity. He presents the first this way,

> But if there is supreme goodness, because it is the nature of supreme goodness to supremely communicate itself, and this is maximally done in producing from itself an equal and in giving its own being, therefore there is plurality of persons.[45]

This passage is a terse statement of the three elements Bonaventure sees as most essential to the argument from goodness: (i) the axiom 'it is of supreme goodness to supremely communicate itself'; (ii) the claim that supreme self-communication includes both giving one's own being and producing an equal; (iii) the conditional claim that if there is supreme goodness, then in God there is a plurality of persons. I will examine each of these elements beginning with (i), which employs an axiom we can state this way,

> (Supreme Communication) It is the nature of supreme goodness to supremely self-communicate.[46]

of Clairvaux, "Letter 117 'To a Nun'," in *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, trns. B.S. James (Surrey: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 117.

[44] While Bonaventure makes it clear that charity is one of the highest perfections, he is not so explicit about jocundity. He hints at the idea saying, "Likewise, every and the most high perfection of plurality is in unity, therefore, the perfection also of distinction is in a union; but among all unions, which are among distant beings, the most high and most jocund is the unity of charity; therefore, if there is a distinction There, there is union; and if a union, there is an emanation of charity." Minimally, then, the jocund delight of charity love is a supreme perfection. I *Sent.,* d.10, a.1, q. 2, fund. 3: *Item, omnis et summa perfectio pluralitatis est in unitate, ergo et distinctionis in unione; sed inter omnes uniones, quae sunt inter distantes, summa et iucundissima est unio caritatis; si ergo est ibi distinctio, est unio ; et si unio, est caritatis emanatio.*

[45] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 2, fund. 1 (my translation). *Sed si est summa bonitas, cum bonitatis sit summe se communicare, et hoc est maxime in producendo ex se aequalem et dando esse suum: ergo etc.*

[46] Several reliable manuscripts read "it is of goodness to supremely communicate itself," (*cum bonitatis sit summe se communicare*) and the Quaracchi edition goes with this reading in the main body of the question. However, the Vatican edition reads "it is of supreme goodness to communicate itself" (*bonitatis sit summae sit se communicare*). In a

This principle is similar to its highly-studied relative, the so-called Dionysian Principle: 'goodness is self-diffusive' (*bonum diffusivum sui*). But the two principles are distinct,[47] and so we must ask, What does this Supreme Communication amount to? Where does Bonaventure get it from? And why should we believe it? A brief survey of three proponents of goodness' self-diffusion will address the first two questions.

In Plato's cosmogony the 'framer' of the cosmos (ὅ δημιουργὸς) necessarily distributes his goodness,

> He [the 'Cause' (αἰτίαν)] was good, and what is good has no particle of envy in it; being therefore without envy he wished all things to be as like himself as possible…It is impossible for the best to produce anything but the highest.[48]

Plotinus gives this idea its most sober and systematic development. In reasoning about the diffusion of the One-First, Plotinus looks to the common objects of everyday sense experience,

> And all beings, while they abide, give off from their own being, around themselves on the outside, from the power present in them, a necessary dependent existence, which is an image, as it were, of the archetypes from which it emerged. Fire gives off heat from itself, and snow does not only keep cold within itself. Fragrant things especially, bear witness to this; for as long as they exist, something around them proceeds from them, and what is nearby enjoys their existence. And all things, once they are perfect, generate; but what is eternally perfect eternally generates and generates what is eternal.[49]

Plotinus later applies the principle of self-diffusion to the supreme good, asking, "How then could the most perfect remain self-set–the First Good, the Power towards all, how could it grudge or be powerless to give of itself…?"[50] In these passages we see that self-diffusion is both universal and necessary. Universal because each being, to some degree and in the way(s) particular to its kind, 'gives' or 'generates' being; *all* beings produce some sort of likeness to themselves. Further, things could not be otherwise. To exist as a concrete being is to be effective and, as we will see below, the effect is always contained in or similar to its cause.

Adopting and modifying Plotinus' system, Pseudo-Dionysius utilizes the self-diffusion principle in the famous passage from the *Divine Names*, "They call the divine subsistence itself 'goodness.' This essential Good, by the

textual note, the Quaracchi editors determine that the best reading combines both traditions, yielding: 'it pertains to supreme goodness to supremely communicate itself' (*ad summam bonitatem pertinent se summe communicare*). I agree with this third, combined reading, for reasons explained in the rest of this section.

[47] The Quaracchi editors state that Bonaventure's goodness argument not only uses the *bonum diffusivum sui* axiom, but also draws it directly from Pseudo Dionysius. In his detailed study, Bougerol recognizes the link between Hales and Bonaventure in other places, but here identifies the principle as one of many examples of the Psuedo Dionysian 'goodness is self-diffusive'. Jacques Guy Bougerol, *Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite*, in *Actes du Colloque Saint Bonaventure* (Orsay, 1968), 83, 90–92. To my knowledge, the only scholars who recognize a distinction are Ewert Cousins and Olegario González. See Cousins, "God as Dynamic," 140; González, *Misterio Trinitario*, 132-133.

[48] Plato, *Timaeus*, trns. Desmond Lee (Penguin Books; London, 1976), 4 (29B–E). C.f. *Phaedrus* 247A.

[49] Plotinus, Ennead V.1, from *On the Three Primary Levels of Reality*, trans. Eric D. Perl (Las Vegas: Parmenides, 2015), 41. Note that Plotinus finishes the argument by stating, "and it generates what is lesser than itself," which most Christian commenters rejected except in regards to creative (i.e., non-divine) diffusion.

[50] Plotinus, Ennead V.4.1, from *Plotinus: The Enneads*, trns. Stephen MacKenna (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 388.

very fact of its existence, extends goodness into all things."[51] And a short while later, "But the Good, wherever it is present completely, succeeds in producing goodness that is perfect, untainted, and total."[52]

Though brief, our review of these three thinkers is revealing. They give us a feel for what it means to say that goodness is self-diffusive and, importantly, each of these thinkers links the supreme good with supreme diffusion. Bonaventure explains that supreme communication is the sharing of "the whole" of one's being, all that a person can possibly share.[53] Further, he draws from Aristotle in describing the product of that communication as similar in substance and nature. In supreme communication, then, the first divine person shares all but his distinguishing characteristic of being *innascible*; he shares the entire, simple divine nature.[54] As simple, the shared nature does not generate another substance but only another person alike in every way except for relations of origin.[55]

The seeds for Bonaventure's Supreme Communication axiom are present in the three respected sources. But to locate the immediate source of Bonaventure's use of that axiom, we need look no further than the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*. In their case for a plurality of divine persons[56] the summists argue,

> The good is naturally and essentially self-diffusive…Therefore, the completeness of manner [*ratio*] of the good includes self-diffusion. Therefore, *where there is the supreme good, there is supreme diffusion*. Moreover, supreme diffusion is that than which no greater can be thought; moreover, greater diffusion cannot be thought than that which is according to substance and especially according to total substance. Therefore the supreme good necessarily totally diffuses itself according to substance, and this diffusion is understood to be in it naturally. But the generative power is nothing other than the power of the substance *diffusing itself for the purpose of producing another of the same nature*.[57]

I have emphasized those lines which most clearly express the parallels between this passage and Bonaventure's argument from goodness. These parallels provide strong evidence for direct influence. Thus, *contra* the Quaracchi editors, I suggest that Bonaventure's primary source in the goodness argument is not Pseudo Dionysius, but the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*.[58] That the beatitude argument draws most directly from the *Summa* has not been recognized among Bonaventure scholars.[59] But this finding has more than historical value since

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[51] Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names," in *The Complete Works*, trns. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 71 (693B).

[52] Pseudo-Dionysius, "Divine Names", 86 (717C).

[53] "…*Pater dat Filio totum quod potest*." I *Sent*., d. 2, q. 4, ad. 1.

[54] I *Sent*., d. 9, q. 2, ad. 1

[55] I *Sent*., d. 9, q. 1, conc. Cf. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 2; *Metaphysics*, 7.

[56] More specifically, in their case for the necessary generation of the Son.

[57] *Summa* I. 295 (translation and emphasis mine). *Bonum naturaliter et essentialiter est sui diffusivum…Completa ergo ratio boni includit in se diffusionem; ergo ubi est summum bonum, ibi est summa diffusio; summa autem diffusio est qua maior excogitari non potest; maior autem diffusio cogitari non potest quam illa quae est secundum substantiam et maxime secundum totam; ergo summum bonum necessario se diffundit secundum substantiam totam, et in ipso naturaliter intelligitur haec diffusion sed nihil aliud est virtus generativa nisi virtus diffusiva substantiae suae ad hoc ut producatur simile in natura.*

[58] Compared with the *Divine Names*, the *Summa* is obviously the more direct inspiration of the axiom: the *Summa* is synchronically closer to the *Commentary*; it is thematically much more similar to Bonaventure's discussion in the passage above (e.g., discussions of simplicity and personal plurality and of necessary reasons for the trinity).

[59] However, since the 20th century scholars have increasingly recognized the *Summa* and Alexander's influence on Bonaventure. Cf. González, *Misterio Trinitario*; Hayes; "Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology"; and especially Albert

the summists, unlike Bonaventure, supplies reasons for *why* we should believe the Supreme Communication axiom. They give at least three.[60]

In the first argument, the *Summa* asks us to consider two good objects, O^1 and O^2, identical in all ways except that O^1 diffuses its goodness and O^2 does not. "It is clear," the summists explain, that O^1 "is better and more praiseworthy" than O^2. They conclude, "The nature of the complete good includes self-diffusion. Therefore, where there is supreme goodness, there is supreme diffusion."[61] The thought experiment shows us that diffusion is a good quality, and so it is an aspect of the nature (*ratio*) of goodness. Since supreme goodness is the maximally complete nature of goodness, anything with supreme goodness will diffuse supremely.

Where the first line of evidence is something of an *a priori* argument, the second reasons from the 'top-down'. The summists begin with the Augustinian idea that just about all people agree that "whatever is most noble and perfect and powerful is attributed to God."[62] From this "common conception," the summists reason that whatever is most noble and powerful is to be attributed to God. But, the greatest power an agent has is to actually produce another with a similar nature. God has the greatest capacities, and the power to act on them, therefore God actually produces another with an identical nature.[63]

In contrast to the top-down approach, the third argument reasons by analogy, or from the bottom-up. The summists state that it is a perfection of human nature be able to produce something of an identical nature.[64]

Stohr, *Die Trinitätslehre des heiligen Bonaventura: eine systematische Darstellung und historische Würdigung*, vol.1 (Münster, 1923), chp. 1.

[60] The summists give five arguments for the necessary generation of the Son, four of which support the Supreme Communication principle. I survey three, but the fourth, which I do not include, argues that God is spiritual light and, like the sun, necessarily produces or generates a 'coeval splendour' (*coaevum splendorem*), or better, 'equal radiance'. I do not include this traditional argument partly for space, partly because it is so distanced from contemporary sensibilities and, anyways, Bonaventure does not employ this sort of idea in his later trinitarian speculation (e.g., *Itenerarium*, *Disputed Questions Trinity*, *Breviloqium*).

[61] *Summa* I. 295 (my translation). *[U]nde haec est laus boni, scilicet se diffundere, quia si ponerentur duo bona in omnibus aequalia praeter quam in hoc quod unum suam bonitatem diffunderet, aliud non: constat quod bonum illud, quod se diffunderet, in hoc esset magis laudabile et melius alio bono quod se non diffunderet. Completa ergo ratio boni includit in se diffusionem; ergo ubi est summum bonum, ibi est summa diffusio.* Elsewhere they state that the related axiom, 'goodness is self-diffusive', is self-evidently true (*quia bonum est sui diffusivum, haec est per se vera*), *Summa* 1. 330. The fact that goodness is self-diffusive, even if obviously true, does not immediately yield the conclusion that supreme goodness self-diffuses supremely. For this reason I do not include the self-evident truth of *bonum est sui diffusivum* as an evidence for the Supreme Communication axiom.

[62] *Summa* I. 295 (my translation). *Communis conceptio animi est quod quidquid est nobilitatis et perfectionis et virtutis est Deo tribuendum.* Cf. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.6.6–7.7.

[63] In his study on the matter, Kevin Patrick Keane recognizes that there is a missing step in this argument. Keane explains, "The last transition, from the presence of a power to its actualization, would appear to be based on the conception of generative power as a purely positive reality in and of itself. Any really positive reality must be attributed to God in a pre-eminent way, so long as that reality is essentially unmixed with deficiency or potency. The summists chose to see the power of giving one's nature to another in this way and thus held the transition valid…anything which agrees with the Divine nature must be found there, and so perfect a power as that of giving life in one's own fashion seems to agree with divinity in the highest way. Since nothing positive can be lacking to God, he must generate." In short: God must have the greatest attributes most greatly, which means in act. "The Logic of Self-Diffusive Goodness in the Trinitarian Theory of the Summa Fratris Alexandri" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 1978), 93, n. 51.

[64] *Summa* I. 295. *Perfectio naturae est et nobilitas ut habeat virtutem qua possit ex se producere tale quale ipsa est sive simile sibi in natura - unde si homo ex se non posset producere hominem, istud esset imperfectio in ipso, quia natura est vis insita rebus, ex similibus similia procreans, sicut dicit Philosophus - sed quidquid est nobilitatis et perfectionis est in summa natura; ergo in ipsa est vis productiva similis in natura ex se; sed haec est virtus generativa; ergo in ipsa est virtus generativa; ergo et generatio, et Pater et Filius, et generans et genitum.*

"But," they explain, "whatever is most noble and most perfect is in the highest nature." Therefore, in God there is a Father and Son, a generator and generated.[65]

In sum, the *Summa* gives at least three reasons to believe Supreme Communication: one *a priori*, one from the 'top-down', and one from the 'bottom-up'. Further, each reason offered in support of the axiom also supports the claim that supreme communication is substantial and therefore produces a like. Putting all of this data together we can construct a more nuanced form of Bonaventure's argument,

> *The argument for plurality of divine persons from goodness*
> 11. Supreme goodness is supremely self-communicative.
> 12. Supreme self-communication includes (i) producing an equal and (ii) giving one's own being.
> 13. God has supreme goodness.
> 14. Therefore, God produces an equal and gives his own being to another.
> 15. God's being is personal–God is at least one person.
> 16. Therefore, in God there is a plurality of divine persons.

So far in this section we have been almost entirely concerned with premises 11 and 12. Looking briefly to premise 13, we see that it follows from 2 and 3 (since supreme goodness is necessary for supreme beatitude), and 14 follows from 12 and 13.

Finally, we must consider whether God is personal (premises 15), and whether the supreme self-communication is productive of persons (premise 16). Bonaventure does not address these questions directly in The Argument (i.e. distinction 2). But he does not need to: the notions of beatitude–and therefore goodness, charity, and jocundity–implies personhood. As we have seen, beatitude is a state only persons experience. Since God has supreme beatitude, God is (or has) at least one person. However, the goodness argument is more cogent when we understand what Bonaventure means by personhood. [66] "A person," Bonaventure explains in later distinction, is "a supposit of a rational nature distinguished by a property."[67] We may think of a supposit roughly as that which does not inhere (and is not attributed) to anything, but instead is that in which essences and accidents inhere.[68] Regarding premise 15, since God has (supreme) wisdom, there is at least one intellective supposit, or person. To produce an equal, the product must also be intellective.[69] An intellective supposit (a 'who'), sharing the divine substance, but distinguished by modes of production satisfies all conditions of personhood. In short: multiple divine substances are impossible; further, divine self-communication involves sharing the single, simple substance.

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[65] This argument, like the previous, also has some implicit premises: It is a perfection in humans *to be able* to produce a like; but in God it is most perfect to *actually* produce the like. Once again Keane's explanation–viz., that the highest capacities are had supremely, and therefore actually–addresses the lacuna.

[66] I *Sent.*, d. 25, a. 1, q. 2, ad. 4. Cf. Laure Solignac, "Les personnes selon Saint Bonaventure," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 94, n.3 (2010), 451-480.

[67] I *Sent.* d. 25, q. 1., conc. Cf. distinctions 23 and 34.

[68] Of course Bonaventure denies that God has accidental properties. A good place to start with Bonaventure's (and others') view of 'supposit' is Marilyn McCord Adams and Richard Cross, "What's Metaphysically Special About Supposits? Some Medieval Variations on Aristotelian Substance," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 79, n.1 (2005), 15-52.

[69] See I *Sent.* d. 9, q. 1, conc.

Similar trinitarian speculation has led some, such as Richard Swinburne, to be accused of tritheism.[70] Before moving on to the next argument, then, I want to direct attention to how Bonaventure anticipates and shuts down all such accusations. Not only does he argue for the impossibility of multiple divine substances in the very first distinction[71], his argument from goodness develops a positive case for substantial monadiscism. The others whom the first person produces cannot be substantially distinct: producing out of one's whole self (*producere ex se toto*) cannot lead the producer to lose or divide his substance, which is what a separate divine substance would entail. The produced persons are therefore identical to the single (simple) divine nature, but distinct from the unproduced (or *innascibile*) first person.

Charity. Bonaventure next argues from supreme charity.

> If a most high charity, since charity is not a private love, but (a love) for another: therefore it requires a plurality.[72]

Sticking close to Bonaventure's language, we may outline the argument this way,

17. Charity is not private love, but is love for another.
18. Supreme charity is supreme love for another.
19. Therefore, in God there is a plurality of persons.

Premise 17 may be easily misunderstood as claiming that charity is exclusive to self-love.[73] Bonaventure should be understood here as committed only to the claim that charity is not *mere* self-love but, as discussed above, is a species of love which is essentially mutual. As stated, the argument from charity is a very terse summary of the fuller argument. Filling in the most important gaps we have,

The argument for plurality of divine persons from charity
20. God has supreme charity.
21. Charity is love between multiple persons.
22. Therefore , God has supreme love for another person.
23. Supreme love can only obtain between divine persons.
24. Therefore, there is a plurality of divine persons.

The key premise in this argument is the proposition that God has supreme charity. Certainly, most find it plausible that a perfect God must be perfectly loving, but not all agree that perfect love includes other-love. Dale Tuggy, for example, argues against contemporary trinitarian arguments at precisely this point, asking,

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[70] Edward C. Feser, "Swinburne's Tritheism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 42, n.3 (1997), 175-184.

[71] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, conc. See part IV, premise 6 of this paper for a statement of Bonaventure's argument.

[72] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 2, fund. 1: *Si summa caritatis, cum caritas non sit amor privatus, sed ad alterum : ergo requirit pluralitatem.*

[73] There was some debate on the issue in medieval theology. For two differing opinions, see Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God in Thirteenth-Century Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.); Rousselot, *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages*, trans. A. Vincelette (Milwaukee: Marquette U.P., 2002). For Bonaventure, charity is compatible with, and probably includes, self-love.

Why couldn't a "unipersonal" God exist alone and yet be well-off, not lacking any good which is necessary for his being happy? Yes, he would be capable of loving another, but...he wouldn't actually have such a relationship. He would be lacking any kind of other-love. And he would want that sort of love. But why couldn't God be so serene, so complete in himself that he could simply "absorb" this lack, happiness intact? [74]

As an initial reply I believe Bonaventure would simply explain that Tuggy's objection here misses the metaphysical point. The first divine person does not necessarily share with others because he would otherwise lack some good, but rather because his nature is to share his perfect goodness. In Bonaventure's words, "it must be said that it is true, that He is not in need, nor is Another posited on account of [lack]…but as one communicating in beatitude." [75] Even so, a more developed response would support premise 20 which is under attack. Bonaventure appeals to two lines of thought in the following passage,

For the affection of love is first among all the affections and the root of all others, just as St. Augustine shows in very many passages…of The City of God. And that affection is the most noble among them all, since it has more of the reckoning of liberality. Whence this is the gift, in which all other gifts are given, and in which all delights of intellectual substance consist. Whence there is nothing among creatures that they consider so delicious, as mutual love; and without love there are no delights. [76]

This passage contains two supports for premise 21. The first is the Augustinian idea that love grounds all other affections, expressed in *The City of God*,

For what are desire and joy but a volition of consent to the things we wish? And what are fear and sadness but a volition of aversion from the things which we do not wish? But when consent takes the form of seeking to possess the things we wish, this is called desire; and when consent takes the form of enjoying the things we wish, this is called joy. In like manner, when we turn with aversion from that which we do not wish to happen, this volition is termed fear; and when we turn away from that which has happened against our will, this act of will is called sorrow. And generally in respect of all that we seek or shun, as a man's will is attracted or repelled, so it is changed and turned into these different affections. [77]

On this psychology, love is desire, and desire is any movement of the will. All affectations depend on the will, and so are ultimately grounded in love. The point is important, so I will state it again: fear, sadness, joy, and all

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[74] Dale Tuggy, "On the Possibility of a Single Perfect Person," in *Christian Philosophy of Religion: Essays in Honor of Stephen T. Davis*, ed. C.P. Ruloff (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 130.

[75] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 2, ad. 1. *Dicendum, quod verum est, quod non indigent; nec ponitur alius propter indigentiam…sed in beatitudine communicans.*

[76] I *Sent.*, d. 10, q. 2, resp.: *Affectio enim amoris est prima inter omnes affectiones et radix omnium aliarum, sicut ostendit Augustinus in pluribus locis…de Civitate Dei. Et ista affectio nobilissima est inter mones, quoniam plus tenet de ratione liberalitatis. Unde hoc est donum, in quo omnia alia dona donator, et in quo consistent omnes deliciae substantiae intellectualis. Unde nihil in creaturis est considerare ita deliciosum, sicut amorem mutuum; et sine amore nullae sunt deliciae.*

[77] St Augustine, *The City of God*, trns. Marcus Dods. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 2. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120114.htm>.

other affective states are ultimately grounded on the will (i.e., love). If, as Tuggy grants, God experiences desires and/or joy–which he must if he has beatitude–then God has love. After explaining why God must have love, Bonaventure explains that God's love is the best, or 'most noble'. He then states, apparently grounded in experience, that the best love is liberal, or giving, love. Thus, God must have giving love.

The second line of reasoning looks to charity's effects. Mutual love is more pleasurable than mere self-love, and is in fact the most pleasurable experience possible: "there is nothing...so delicious, as mutual love." This insight gives us resources to formulate a response to Tuggy. Tuggy–no classical theist by any stretch of the imagination–argues that God lacks many goods, including other-love. Yet, a mono-personal God's pleasure in his other attributes more than makes up for his lack of other-love. Though Bonaventure would disagree with Tuggy regarding God's having all possible perfections, he need not do so here. Granting Tuggy's claim that God must not have all perfections for the sake of argument, Bonaventure can point out that other-love is the most intensely delightful experience possible, and whatever other goods God may lack, he surely has the *very best* one. Further, Bonaventure could argue that, since charity is the cause of the greatest possible joy, then its absence is the cause of the greatest sorrow.[78] In short: no other goods are as pleasurable as charity, and so no other goods are sufficient to "absorb" the effects of its absence.

In summary, Bonaventure reasons that charity is a supreme attribute because it grounds all other emotions, and because it is the most pleasurable attribute. Bonaventure's claim is not that God must actually have all good attributes ('perfections'). Instead, he only claims that God must have the highest.

I find that the most pressing question with this argument is in response to premise 24, *Why can't God love a created person supremely?*[79] Bonaventure explains that the generative act of love is so perfect (i.e., complete, full), that no creature could receive it.[80] DP1's fullness is simply *too* full for any created being to receive, much less requite, in its entirety. To perfectly and completely share his love, expressed as an act of self-communication, DP1 can only share with another divine person(s).

Jocundity. The argument from jocundity is the most neglected of the three beatitude sub-arguments.[81] Bonaventure summarizes it this way,

> Likewise, if a most high jocundity, since "there is no jocund possession of any good without company," therefore, for the most high jocundity there is required society and, thus, plurality.[82]

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[78] An extensive line of thinkers argue precisely this way, from Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, to Richard of St. Victor.

[79] Richard argues that a created being is not worthy of supreme love. If God loved a finite being infinitely, then God's love would be disordered. But God's love cannot be disordered. For his love to be perfectly ordered, a divine person can only love another divine person supremely. Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, bk. 3.2. Bonaventure was no doubt familiar with Richard's reply, but does not utilize it.

[80] I *Sent.*, d. 9, q. 1, conc. Cf. *Hexaemeron*, 11. 11: "the creature is unable to receive all that God can grant."

[81] For example, in his chapter on Bonaventure's beatitude argument, Gonzalez ignores the sub-argument from jocundity altogether. Gonzalez, *Misterio*, pt. 2.

[82] I *Sent.* d. II, q. 2, fund. 1: *Item, si summa iucunditas, cum "nullius boni sine socio sit iucunda possessio", ergo ad summam iucunditatem requiritur societas et ita pluralitas.*

Outlined,

25. Jocundity is a joy shared with another.

26. Supreme jocundity is supreme joy shared with another.

27. Therefore, in God there is a plurality of persons.

As with the argument from charity, we may usefully expand upon Bonaventure's concise statement,

The argument for plurality of divine persons from jocundity

28. God has supreme jocundity.

29. Therefore, God supremely shares joy with another person.

30. Supreme joy can only obtain among divine persons.

31. Therefore, there is a plurality of divine persons.

The heart of this sub-argument is premise 28. Bonaventure's reasons for believing God has jocundity are grounded in experience, and he refers to philosophical tradition to develop the point. In this case he employs a moral principle from one of Seneca's letter to Lucilius,

> Nothing will ever please me, no matter how excellent or beneficial, if I must retain the knowledge of it to myself…No good thing is pleasant to possess, without friends to share it.[83]

We can formulate this sentiment as an axiological-psychological principle,

> (Senecan Principle) There is no jocund possession of any good without company.

The core idea of the Senecan Principle is that when two (or more) subjects enjoy some good together, the resulting joy is (i) greater than the joy had if the good was enjoyed alone, (ii) a type of joy qualitatively distinct from that which is had alone, or (iii) both i and ii. The goods which, when shared, yield jocundity can be mundane material goods or the good of charity and friendship itself. For example, later in the *Commentary* Bonaventure appeals to Aristotle, arguing that beatitude is either essential to, or an effect of, friendship.[84] Like in the previous two arguments, Bonaventure's use of a principle drawn from philosophical authority is not an instance of the informal fallacy 'appeal to authority' because the principle itself is verifiable (or falsifiable) via common human experience.

At first blush the Senecan Principle seems dubious as a universal maxim: there appear to be many goods which are less enjoyable in company. In fact, some goods, such as a relaxing game of solitaire, are only possible to experience alone (in the most relevant sense). But these are not defeaters of the jocundity argument because Bonaventure does not rely on the universal application of the Senecan Principle. That is, Bonaventure only needs the principle to be true about maximally perfect, or divine, persons. Upon close inspection we see his claim is only that *supreme joy* occurs in the company of others; a divine person's enjoyment of his perfect goodness is increased when shared with another. Like we saw with charity, the claim is not that God must

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[83] Seneca, *The Epistles of Seneca*, Epistle VI, ed. Jeffery Henderson (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard U.P., 1917), 27. Scholia by the Quaracchi editors further include references to Aristotle's Ethics, bk. 9 chp. 9. There Aristotle argues that even for a perfect man, friendship is necessary for happiness.

[84] I *Sent.* d. 10, q. 3, ad. 3. Cf. Aristotle, *Ethics*, 8, 9; *Magna Moralia*, 2; *Eudemian Ethics*, 7.

actualize or have all possible forms of joy, only that he must have the very greatest. Perfect charity and perfect jocundity are the greatest possible experiences of love and joy, and Bonaventure claims only that God must have these. Since supreme charity and jocundity necessitate multiple supreme–i.e., divine–persons, there exist multiple divine persons.

V. Step 3: The Impossibility of an Infinite Number of Divine Persons

Step 3 of the Argument rules out the possibility of an infinite number of divine persons. This step may appear somewhat superfluous given that Step 4 argues both against the possibility of a fourth (and therefore fifth, sixth, etc.), and for the necessity of exactly three. If both lines of reasoning from step 4 exclude the possibility of an infinite number of persons, why devote an entire question to the matter? My hunch is that Bonaventure includes this step to make The Argument more cogent. Though purely anecdotal, I find that when discussing trinitarian arguments, the first and most pressing question is often regarding the possibility of an unlimited number of divine persons; The Argument cannot receive a fair and open hearing until this objection is treated. If Bonaventure's readers shared similar worries, then he must definitively attend to this most pressing concern before moving on. Whatever his motivation, Bonaventure gives several arguments, including the following one from beatitude,

> If there is supreme completion in divinity, therefore divinity naturally completes someone else. Therefore, since the completion of persons is in beatitude, divinity naturally beatifies. But if there were an infinite number of persons, it would be impossible for someone to be beatified by God. For knowledge of each of the persons is part of the substantial reward [of beatification], since the entire goodness is in each person. Therefore, either the soul knows all the persons, or it would not be beatified. But it is impossible to know all the persons, since the soul's power is finite. Therefore, the number of divine persons is not infinite.[85]

This fascinating argument is somewhat complex, and a detailed outline will help us identify its key parts,

> *The argument against an infinite number of divine persons from beatitude*
> 32. If there is supreme completion in divinity, then divinity completes other non-divine persons.
> 33. Beatitude is the completion of persons.
> 34. There is supreme completion in divinity.
> 35. Therefore, divinity beatifies other non-divine persons.
> 36. The divine goodness is had by each divine person.
> 37. Cognition of the divine goodness is essential to beatitude.
> 38. Therefore, cognition of each of the divine persons is essential for beatitude.
> 39. If a non-divine person does not have cognition of each of the divine persons, she is not beatified.

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[85] I *Sent*. d. 2, q. 2, arg. 4 (my translation). *Se est ibi summa completio, ergo nata est dvinitas alia complere : ergo cum completio personarum sit in beatitudine, nata est beatificare. Sed si essent personae infinitae, impossibilie esset aliquem beatificari a Deo ; cognitio enim cuiuslibet personae est de substantia beatitudinis, cum tota bonitas, quae est substantiale praemium, sit in qualibet personarum ; ergo aut anima omnes cognosceret, aut non esset beata ; sed impossibile esset omnes cognoscere, cum virtus eius sit finita : ergo etc.*

40. It is impossible for a finite person to cognize an infinite number of persons.

41. A non-divine person is finite.

42. Therefore, it is impossible for a non-divine person to cognize an infinite number of persons.

43. If there were an infinite number of divine persons, it would be impossible for non-divine persons to be beatified by divinity.

44. Therefore, there is not an infinite number of divine persons. (4 & 12)

This outline syncs some terminology and supplies a few implicit steps, but the gist is that humans can only experience beatitude if there is a finite number of divine persons. As a first note, this argument does not argue that the creation of non-divine persons is necessary; instead, it tacitly supposes the existence of contingent persons. The first three premises seek to establish from reason that beatitude obtains. They do this via an understanding of the ultimate good as the final end toward which every contingent being moves. Divinity, or God, is by definition wholly complete, lacking no good in kind or degree. As maximally good, God is complete and, as such, completes all other beings (premise 34). For human persons, completion yields joy and blessedness–but this just is beatitude (premise 33). Thus, given the existence of God and humans, we know that beatitude of humans obtains (premise 35).

The heart of the argument are premises 36 through 39. The idea in 36 is that the divine goodness (e.g., divinity, or glory itself) is shared fully among the divine persons. To behold a single divine person is to experience unlimited glory, but not the fullness of it. Premise 37 states a necessary condition of beatitude, which I discussed earlier. Per premise 38, only by beholding all the divine persons can a created person be fully complete. Premise 38, and therefore 39 as well, look like the most promising areas for objections. Indeed, it is precisely here that Duns Scotus objects, arguing this way,

> speaking about the absolute power of God, there seems to be no contradiction in its being possible on the part of the intellect and on the part of the will that the act of each should be terminated in the essence and not in the person, or terminated in one person and not in another, to wit that the intellect should see the essence and not the person, or see one person and not the other, and that the will should enjoy the essence and not the person or enjoy one person and not the other.[86]

According to Scotus, the divine essence is substantial goodness and, as supreme goodness, is the ultimate end of creatures. The human soul is beatified when it directly sees (by intuition) the divine goodness. Scotus appears to agree with premises 32-37. Unlike Bonaventure though, Scotus does not believe it necessary to see all the divine persons to experience beatitude. Scotus teaches that it is possible for the divine goodness to be seen in three ways: by seeing all the divine persons, by seeing one or some of them, or by seeing the essence itself. If correct, Scotus' second and third mode of beatitude are counterexamples to premises 38-39.

Scotus' position on the matter is of course complex, but we may limit our attention to what I take to be the most acute point of contention. Scotus argues that the concept of divine person includes the concept of essence (and therefore goodness), but not the contrary. That is, the concept of divine essence does not include

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[86] *Ordinatio*, d.1, q.1, n.42. *The Ordinatio of Blessed John Duns Scotus*, translated by Peter L.P. Simpson, accessed March 12, 2021, 2017, http://www.aristotelophile.com/Books/Translations/Ordinatio%20I.pdf.

the concept of person. Stated another way, we may remove the concept of person from the concept of essence and still have essence, but we cannot remove the concept of essence from the concept of person and still have person. From this conceptual analysis, Scotus concludes that essence is the primary, or ultimate, object of beatitude.

While Bonaventure grants the distinctions made in Scotus' analysis[87], he would deny the conclusion. As we saw in Step 1, he argues that a full, and therefore most accurate, concept of God is one that includes personhood. That person and essence are conceptually distinct does not mean that the essence is a distinct object of beatitude. Scotus believes that the essence is the one, ultimate relatum of the 'enjoyment' (or beatitude) relation; the human can relate to the divine essence by seeing one, or several, divine person(s), or all of them. To Bonaventure's lights, however, the divine essence, or goodness, is seen only by beholding the persons together: all of them, and in relation to one another.

A fuller defense of premise 38 would require an attack on Scotus' theory of beatitude, obviously beyond the purview of this study. But we may ask a few pointed questions before moving on (without allowing Scotus to reply). What would it mean to behold or know the divine goodness without beholding the persons who have it? Such a state sounds very much like mere propositional knowledge and, if so, surely a full-blown personal (*and* propositional) knowledge is the perfective end of humans. My outline of the debate here is just that: a summary, not a rebuttal. Even so, summarizing the main lines in the dialectic helps us identify the point of contention, and hint at a few possible ways forward for the Bonaventurian.

VI. Step 4 (Part 1): Minimum of Three Divine Persons

So far the notion of supreme beatitude leads us to posit a finite plurality of divine persons, but not to specify how many. In the fourth and final question of distinction two, Bonaventure argues for at least three, and against four divine persons. I will discuss the argument for three persons in this section, and the argument against four in the next. Regarding three persons, Bonaventure explains,

> It must be said, that, as the Catholic Faith says, one is to posit only three Persons, not more nor less. And for this there is employed a reason for (its) necessity and congruity. At any rate the reason for the necessity, why there cannot be fewer than three, is most high beatitude...For most high beatitude demands dilection and condilection…[88]

In this step of the argument Bonaventure only employs the notion of charity-love, and not those of goodness or jocundity. Once again he merely directs our attention to the essential points of a larger argument. In this case the argument is that two particular types of love, dilection and condilection, are necessary for beatitude. The first type, dilection, is the love freely given, received, and returned between two lovers. This type of love is

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[87] "…the understanding [*intellectus*] of nature precedes the person, and a nature is not out of persons, but a person out of natures." I *Sent.* d. 9, q. 2, ad. 6.

[88] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, conc. *Dicendum, quod, sicut fides catholica dicit, ponere est tantum tres personas, non plures nec pauciores. Et ad hoc sumitur ratio necessitatis et congruitatis. Ratio utique necessitatis, quare non possunt esse pauciores quam tres, est summa beatitudo...Nam summa beatitudo exigit dilectionem et condilectionem.*

included in the notion of charity, for which Bonaventure made a case in premises 3 and 18-25. The second type, condilection, is the love two persons share for a third–it is the overflowing love which refuses to remain confined, but turns out to another.

> Likewise, if there were less than three, there would not be a perfect charity there, because a perfect love both is liberal and is common: because it is liberal, for that reason it tends unto the other; because it is common, for that reason it wants one to be loved by the other and that one love the other as itself and by itself: therefore, there is a dilection and a condilection there; but this cannot be among less than three.[89]

This argument is a précis of Richard of St. Victor's more thorough case in *De Trinitate* book III.11. Briefly outlined, Richard reasons this way,

Richard's argument for condilection

45. Supreme charity lacks no excellent characteristic of charity.

46. The desire that someone else be loved as you are is an excellent characteristic of charity.

47. Therefore, supreme charity entails that each divine person desires for someone else to be loved as he is.

48. Divine persons would be able to fulfill their desire for someone else to be loved as they are.

49. Therefore, two divine persons would love a third divine person with charity-love.

Premise 45 conveys the idea that supreme charity is totally complete, has every quality proper to charity, and has them to the fullest possible degree. Premise 46 does most of the heavy lifting and can be stated positively and negatively. Positively, giving and receiving perfect love results in a tremendous joy. With this joy comes the desire that someone else know what it is like to be loved by the beloved–the desire that another to partake in those special experiences that come with loving the beloved. For example, if you were loved by a perfect lover then you would want someone else to know the delight that your lover brings. Stated negatively, you do not want your beloved to be a secret; you do not want them and their love to go unknown. What to say about this argument?

Initially, premise 46 looks problematic. The worry is that in many relationships we absolutely *don't* desire that some outside party experience our beloved as we do. An obvious example is romantic love, in which lovers typically desire that their partner be romantic only with them. However, this sort of scenario misses the point of 46. Richard is not proposing that lovers desire for their beloved to give *identical* love to a third party. In fact, such a proposal would be ridiculous. For instance, a father does not desire that his child love the mother precisely as he (the father) is loved. In other words, Dad wants Son to love Mom *as Mom*, not as Dad. Similarly for divine persons (DP). DP1 shares supreme charity with DP2. If 46 is true, then DP1 desires that there be a DP3 who knows the delights of DP2's love. However, DP1's desire is that DP3 is loved in the way

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[89] Bonaventure supplies this passage to support premise 40. I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, arg. 1: *Item, si essent pauciores quam tres, non esset ibi perfecta caritas, quia perfectus amor et est liberalis et est communis: quia liberalis, ideo tendit in alterum; quia communis, ideo vult illum diligi ab altero et diligere alterum sicut se et a se: ergo est ibi dilectio et condilectio; hoc autem non potest esse minus quam in tribus.*

appropriate to DP3–DP3 must be loved *qua* DP3. Stated generally, a divine person experiences supreme joy in loving another divine person–his desire is for that joy to push the bounds of just the two lovers and overflow to another.

In whatever way Bonaventure approaches the concern over 46, I am not convinced that Richard's argument is the only reason for positing at least three lovers. For another line of support, imagine being neighbors with a married couple.[90] The two are delightful and, as far as anyone can tell, are superb lovers of one another. Indeed, whenever you see them they are walking hand-in-hand, heads together, conversing happily amongst themselves. When you greet them you always receive a warm, sincere, reply. Never are you brushed off or ignored. But then, neither are you ever invited into their lives in any respect. The two lovers are so taken with each other that they never turn their affections outward, never seek outside friendships, never develop community any further.

This scenario looks to make a point about the limits of mutual-love when shared only between two persons. Negatively, something seems odd about the couple. Perhaps even amiss: things just seem to be going wrong if two lovers, no matter how great they are to each other, never turn their love outward. Positively, something seems tremendously right about lovers who invite others into their world. If our scenario is on the right track, it shows that dyadic love is not the most perfect love possible. There must be at least three persons, a lover, a beloved (*dilectus*), and co-beloved (*condilectus*) for charity to be supreme.

VII. Step 4 (Part 2): Impossibility of Four Divine Persons[91]

The argument from concordance

To complete his trinitarian speculation Bonaventure must show why it is impossible that four or more divine persons cannot exist. Employing the notions of beatitude, perfection, simplicity, and primacy, he addresses the question *Whether there are only three divine persons?* Continuing with our focus on the first notion, we will look at his two arguments from beatitude. He advances the first in *the arguments for the opposite*,

> From the first supposition [viz., beatitude] it is thus shown: if there is a most high beatitude there: therefore, a most high concord; therefore, there is a most high sharing-of-one-origin, a most high charity. But if there were more than three, there would not be a most high sharing-of-one-origin there; if less, there would not be a most high charity there: therefore, there are only three.[92]

Once again Bonaventure draws directly from Richard.[93] Further, this argument builds upon previously established conclusions regarding charity and advances those conclusions. Outlined,

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[90] The following is my variation on a similar intuition pump given by Richard Swinburne, *Was Jesus God* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2008), 29.

[91] If a fourth person is impossible, so too is a fifth, etc.

[92] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, arg. 1. *Ex prima suppositione ostenditur sic: si est ibi summa beatitudo: ergo summa concordia; ergo est summa germanitas, summa caritas. Sed si essent plures quam tres, non esset ibi summa caritas: ergo sunt tres tantum.*

[93] See *De Trinitate* Bk. V. 1-16.

The argument for exactly three divine persons from beatitude

50. If there is supreme beatitude, then there is supreme concord.

51. If there is supreme concord, then there is a supreme sharing of one origin and supreme charity.

52. If there were more than three divine persons, there would not be a supreme sharing of one origin.

53. If there were fewer than three divine persons, there would not be supreme charity.

54. Therefore, there are exactly three divine persons.

Premise 50 contains two suppositions from earlier in The Argument: the necessity of plurality of divine persons, and the presence of supreme beatitude. Having beatitude, divine persons must be supremely harmonious (*concordia*). Premise 51 specifies two necessary elements of supreme concord. First, divine persons must be in concord regarding their origin (*germanitas*). This means that each divine person shares all that he can. Second, the divine persons are maximally united and completely at rest with one another, they share supreme love (*caritas*).

Bonaventure gives a sub-argument for premises 52 and 53. The argument for 52:

> The proof of the minor. If there is a fourth person there, either He proceeds from one, or from two, or from three. If from one and/or two only, then He does not perfectly and equally convene with all; but if from three, then the two intermediate persons convene more with one another than with the extremes, because they are produced and produce; and thus there is not a perfect nexus there.[94]

Outlined,

The argument against a fourth divine person from concordance

55. A fourth divine person, DP4, proceeds from either: (i) DP1, (ii) DP1 and DP2, or (iii) DP1, DP2, and DP3.

56. If i or ii, then DP4 does not equally convene with DP3.

57. If iii, then DP2 and DP3 convene with one another more than with DP1 and DP4.

58. If DP2 convenes more with DP3 than with DP1 and DP4, then there is not a perfect nexus.

Key for this argument is the notion of concordance (*concordia*) and convenience (*convenio*). Both express unity between parties, unity which involves sharing, solidarity in purpose, and a resulting peace and harmony. From Step 2 we know that there are multiple divine persons, but we also know that they each have completion and joy. Premises 50 through 54 all trade on the idea that supreme beatitude is not enjoyed by the divine persons in isolation; instead, their supreme happiness necessarily includes their mutual, ongoing relationality. Thus all of the action takes place in the sub-argument, particularly 56 and 57.

Premise 56 argues that perfect concord is missing if a fourth divine person shares no origin with one of the preceding three. Bonaventure earlier described what it means to share origin, "the Father gives the whole, of

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[94] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, fund. 1: *Probatio minoris. Si est ibi quarta persona, aut procedit ab una, aut a duabus, aut a tribus. Si ab una vel duabus tantum, tunc non perfecte et aequaliter convenit cum omnibus; si autem a tribus, tunc duae peronae intermediae magis conveniunt ad invicem quam cum extremis, quia producuntur et producunt; et ita non est ibi perfectus nexus.*

what he can, to the Son" by "producing" the Son, which is a "giving [*dare*]."[95] Approached from the perspective of the first three persons, to supremely convene each must give everything which is in his power to give, and so they all must give to DP4. Approached from DP4's perspective, to be equally related to all other divine persons, DP4 must proceed from them all. Both perspectives yield the same conclusion: options i and ii are impossible.

Premise 57 considers the only remaining possibility, viz., that DP4 proceeds from all three others. In this case, DP2 and DP3 share more with each other than with the others. This is so because DP2 and DP3 each proceed from an other (DP2 proceeds from DP1; DP3 proceeds from DP1 and/or DP2), and each produce an other. The force of this argument is grounded on the fact that, given the relations of emanation, there are only three modes of existing: un-produced and producing, produced and producing; only producing. We may schematize the thought this way,

DP1:	Produces	
DP2:	Produces	Produced
DP3:	Produces	Produced
DP4:		Produced

What 57 argues, and the diagram seeks to show, is that DP2 and DP3 both share two features (being produced and producing), while DP1 and DP4 each share only one feature (producing and produced, respectively). Compare with three persons,

DP1:	Produces	
DP2:	Produces	Produced
DP3:		Produced

Three divine persons are each characterized by one of the modes of emanation, and no two persons share more in common than with the third. This is the perfect 'nexus' Bonaventure mentions in 58.

The argument from fecundity

Bonaventure argues from fecundity this way,

> Likewise, the reason for the necessity, why there cannot be more, is…the principal of fecundity, which does not permit a person to produce by any genus of emanation, except according to the reckoning of understanding it be prior to it. Whence the first Person, because He is innascible and inspirable, generates and spirates; the second, because (He is) inspirable, but generated, does not generate, but does spirate; but the third Person, because He is spirated and proceeds from one

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[95] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, ad 1 (in full): *Peter totum quod potest, dat Filio; sed qui dat totum quod potest, non potest amplius dare: ergo nec aliam personam producere, cum illud sit dare.*

generating, neither generates nor spirates. And for this reason it is impossible, that there be more than three.[96]

This argument builds on many of the concepts introduced in the immediately preceding argument from concordance. Outlined,

> *The argument from fecundity against the possibility of four or more divine persons*
> 59. Divine persons are distinguished by their mode of emanation.
> 60. There are only three modes of emanation.
> 61. Therefore, it is impossible for four or more divine persons to exist.

The idea in premise 59 is that, given God's simplicity, divine persons each fully, and therefore equally, have the divine nature. If there were no difference between the persons whatsoever, then they would be identical, and God would not really be tri-personal. Bonaventure locates personal distinction in the modes of origination, so that the fecund Father is distinguished by being un-emanated (i.e., innascible and inspirable), the Son by being generated, and the Spirit by being spirated.[97] Per premise 60 there are no other logically possible modes of emanation. Thus, the existence of four or more persons is impossible.

The argument from charity

Finally, Bonaventure advances a fittingness argument from charity,

> From the sufficiency of the combinations, because since "there is love among all the Persons," as Richard of St. Victor says, and there is not but a threefold love, namely "gratuitous and due and a mingling from both," there are only three Persons: One, who only gives, in whom is gratuitous love: the Other, who only accepts, in whom is due love; and a Middle, who gives and accepts, in whom is a love mingled from both.[98]

This argument makes a similar dialectic move to the previous one from fecundity, as seen in the outline,

> *The argument from charity against the possibility of four or more divine persons*
> 62. Each divine person loves in a different mode.
> 63. There are only three modes of loving.
> 64. Therefore, it is impossible for four or more divine persons to exist.

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[96] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, conc. *Item, ratio necessitatis, quare non possunt esse plures, est...principalis fecunditas, quae non permittit personam producere aliquo genere emanationis, nisi secundum rationem intelligendi sit prior illo. Unde prima persona, quia est innascibilis et inspirabilis, generat et spirat; secunda, quia inspirabilis, sed genita, non generat, sed spirat; tertia vero persona, quia spiratur et procedit a generante, nec generat nec spirat. Et ideo impossibile est, esse plures quam tres.*

[97] This way of distinguishing the divine persons is heavily represented by Franciscan thinkers, while the largely Dominican approach distinguishes by relations of opposition. Russell Friedman calls these the 'emanation account' and the 'relation account', respectively, and discusses them in *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2010), esp. chp.1.

[98] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, conc. *Ex sufficientia combinationum, quia com "amor sit in omnibus personis," ut dicit Richardus, et non sit nisi triplex amor, videlicet "gratiutus et debitus et ex utroque permixtus", tantum erunt tres personae: una, quae tantum dat, in qua est amor gratuitus; alia, quae tantum accipit, in qua est amor debitus; et media, quae dat et accipit, in qua est amor permixtus ex utroque.*

Drawing from Richard, Bonaventure avers that there are only three modes of love: (i) gratuitous (*amor gratuitus*), (ii) owed (*amor debitus*), and (iii) both gratuitous and owed.[99] Modes i and ii roughly correspond to human experience, in which a person loves another by (i) initiating love, (ii) requiting the love that has been initiated, (iii) both initiating love (with person 3) and requiting love (with person 1). Of course, there is no temporal distinction in the love of divine persons, so 'initiating' love in human experience corresponds to DP1 sharing the totality of his being with the others, DP2 receiving DP1's being; initiating and requiting corresponds to DP2 joining with DP1 to share the fullness of their being with DP3; and requiting corresponds to DP3 receiving that love from both others.

Some contemporary thinkers have incorrectly understood Richard's argument as merely exhausting the reasons for positing divine persons.[100] That is, we should not posit a fourth because there is not good enough warrant for further speculations.[101] However, Bonaventure correctly realizes that if Richard's argument is sound, then it is *impossible* for four or more divine persons to exist. This makes it all the more surprising when we find that Bonaventure does not categorize the argument as necessary (like the previous two), but instead as an argument from congruence (*ratio congruitatis*) "from the sufficiency of the combinations":

> Likewise, they can be combined in another manner according to the reason of origin, and the sufficiency of this manner of combination consists in three things. For it happens that one understands a person who is the beginning of a person and is not begun, and again a person, who is begun and not a beginning of a person, and in a third manner a person, who is begun and a beginning. But the fourth manner, because it is neither a beginning nor begun, is entirely impossible and non-intelligible.[102]

Richard applies divine simplicity to his argument from love to make the point that the personal modes of loving are in fact the modes of procession. Bonaventure captures that logic in the above passage, and the structure of the resulting argument parallels his argument from concordance,

65. Divine persons are only distinguished by their mode of loving.
66. There are only three modes of loving.
67. Therefore, it is impossible for four or more divine persons to exist.

Whether this final argument is necessary (one that ought to be believed) or congruent (one that puts the believer in her epistemic rights for believing), the general matter is clear: there are several good reasons grounded in the notion of beatitude to believe in three, and only three, divine persons.

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[99] Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, Bk. 5.16.

[100] E.g. Jin Hyok Kim, "A Trinitarian Logic of Divine Love: Richard of St. Victor's Rational Argument for the Trinity and Modern Appropriations of His Trinitarianism," 신학논단 제 (*Theological Forum*) 82 (2015), 7-37.

[101] For instance, in one place Swinburn does not posit a fourth DP simply because any good reasons to do so run out. Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: O.U.P, 1994), 177–179. In a later work he argues for the necessity of only three. Swinburne, *Was Jesus God*, 28-39.

[102] I *Sent.*, d. 2, q. 4, conc. *Item, alio modo possunt combinari secundum rationem originis; et huiusmodi combinationis sufficientia in tribus consistit. Nam contingit intelligere personam, quae est principium personae et non est principiatum, et rursum personam, quae est principiatum et non principium personae, et tertio modo personam, quae est principiatum et principium. Quartus autem modus, quod nec sit principium nec principiatum, est omnino impossibilis et non intelligibilis.*

VIII. Conclusion

In this essay I have sought to unpack the *Commentary* argument from beatitude, and to present the main lines of evidence that can be marshalled in its support. If, as Bonaventure hoped, such arguments are to answer doubters and encourage the weak in faith, there is further work to be done. On a horizontal axis–that is, within Bonaventure's corpus–he gives three other sets of arguments: from perfection, simplicity, and primacy. Along with these he also argues along the Augustinian psychological model, from memory, intelligence, and will.[103] These arguments require careful exposition and analysis. On a vertical, or critical, axis are some serious questions regarding Bonaventure's speculative project.[104] Engaging these general questions would take us beyond the scope of this essay, though I have sought to address concerns specific to the beatitude argument. For those pursuing further work in Bonaventure's trinitarian speculation, or offering speculation of their own, we do well to remember Bonaventure's warning about "the violence of reason" which seeks only to chart philosophical waters; such motivation is "harmful to man's soul."[105] In contrast, and this is Bonaventure's driving motivation, "when faith does not assent on account of reason, but on account of love of Him to whom it assents, it desires to have reasons."[106] In short, love of God kindles desire for knowledge about the Trinity. We must take care to interpret Saint Bonaventure in this light, and to pursue any constructive trinitarian theology accordingly.[107]

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