

something more fully to one ardent with the desire to apprehend God, we ask that [it] be disclosed.

5 CARDINAL: I think that very many [of these] things are also very deep and lie hidden from me. But what I now believe is the following: The Apostle wanted to teach us how it is that we can invisibly apprehend in God those things which we see in the creation. Assuredly, for example, every actually existing created thing is able to exist; for what is not able to exist does not exist. So, then, not-being is not a created thing; for if it were a created thing, assuredly it would exist.⁷ Moreover, since to create is to bring forth from not-being to being, assuredly [the Apostle] indicates clearly that not-being is in no respect a created thing. And to have apprehended this [point] is no small matter.

6 But I add consistently: From the fact that every existing thing is able to be that which it actually is,⁸ we behold absolute actuality, through which the things that actually exist are what they are. (By comparison, when with the visible eye we see white things, we intellectually behold whiteness, without which a white thing would not be white.) Therefore, since actuality actually exists: assuredly it is also able to exist, because what is impossible to exist does not exist. Now, absolute possibility is not able to be anything other than possibility, even as absolute actuality [is] not [able to be] anything other than actuality.⁹ This possibility which was just now mentioned [viz., absolute possibility] is not able to exist prior to actuality—unlike the case where we say that some particular possibility precedes its actualization. For how would [absolute possibility] have become actual except through actuality? For if the possibility-of-being-made¹⁰ made itself actually exist, it would actually exist before it actually existed. Therefore, absolute possibility, about which we are speaking and through which those things that actually exist are able actually to exist, does not precede actuality. Nor does it succeed actuality; for how would actuality be able to exist if possibility did not exist? Therefore, absolute possibility, actuality, and the union of the two are co-eternal. They are not more than one eternal thing; rather, they are eternal in such way that [they are] Eternity itself.¹¹

Do these matters seem to the two of you to be thus or to be otherwise?

BERNARD: Surely, no rational being can disagree [with these points].