

made, so that they actually exist, presuppose an order in terms of which what is possible to be made is [actually] made, then surely order itself, which is all that it can be, is eternal. For if order had been created, then surely in an *orderly* way it would have passed over to actuality from what-is-possible-to-be-made. Thus, order would already have existed before it existed—[something contradictory]. Therefore, order has neither a beginning nor an end. Hence, order is eternal.

But how is it that order is present in the most simple Beginning of things unless order is the Beginning itself—is *Beginning without beginning* and is *Beginning from a Beginning* and is also *Beginning proceeding from both* of these?<sup>272</sup> For apart from these [three] order cannot be seen to be present in the Beginning, since a beginning, a middle, and an end are of the essence of order. If [these three] are denied to be present in the simplicity of the Eternal Beginning, which is also Eternal Order, then order is denied [to be present there]. If order is removed, then nothing remains, since what is deprived of order and beauty cannot exist.<sup>273</sup> For how could being that lacks order and beauty have passed from potentiality to actuality? And if the Beginning lacks order, then from where do things originated have their order?

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Furthermore, I see [the following]: From the fact that there is Beginning without a beginning, Beginning from a Beginning, and Beginning proceeding from both, there will likewise be (1) that which is originated but not from any prior originated thing, (2) that which is originated from this first originated thing, and (3) that originated thing which proceeds from these two. That which is originated apart from any earlier originated thing is *essence*; that which is originated from this first originated thing is *power*, and that originated thing which proceeds from these two is *operation*. Indeed, these [three] are found in all things, so that all things partake of Divine Order. This entire world is a world of things intellectual, things living, and things existent.<sup>274</sup> The intellectual nature is supreme, not having prior to it anything originated earlier [than it]. The vital nature is in the middle, being preceded by the intellectual nature, which is its basis (*hypostasis*). But the nature of existence proceeds from both [of these others]. In the first nature the two subsequent ones are enfolded; for it understands, lives, and exists. The second nature lives and exists; therefore, in the second nature is enfolded the third nature (just as the third nature is also enfolded in the first nature); this third nature only exists. The first nature's existing and living are its understanding. The second nature's existing and understanding are its living. The third na-