

The **Second Principle** that we must consider is a corollary of the principle which governs a series of movers *per se* subordinated. Each mover, as we can see from the above example, is ontologically dependent on the one that precedes it. Here let us return to our illustration of the long goods train passing our position close to the railway line on the Nullabor Plain.



We do not know how long the train is or how many wagons there are. But one thing we know assuredly, that one of them at least, must be a locomotive. Using the terminology we have adopted, there may be 100 mobiles, but there must be a movent.

<u>Movent</u>		<u>Mobile</u>
Locomotive		100 Wagons

We feel this in our bones. The wagons only explain their number and order, they do not explain the movement. As Aristotle says somewhere in his writings when dealing with a series of movers subordinated *per se*, "it is necessary to stop".

"[I]t is impossible that one thing should come from something else as from matter in an infinite regress, for example, flesh from earth, earth from air, air from fire, and so on to infinity. Nor can the causes from which motion originates proceed to infinity, as though man were moved by the air, the air by the sun, the sun by strife, and so on to infinity..." (*Metaphysics* Bk. II, c. 2, 994 : & see St Thomas's comments on Aristotle's teaching in his *In II Metaphysics*, Lesson 2.)

It is impossible for a series of movers subordinated *per se* to proceed to infinity. Therefore, *there has to be a first which is itself unmoved*. Peter, even as he moves the shovel to move the stone, is ultimately being moved by a first mover itself unmoved.

Here is the argument laid out rigorously.

FACT : It is certain that some things undergo movement in this world.

PRINCIPLE I

Nothing undergoes movement save according as it is in potency to that towards which it is undergoing movement.

Now something moves according as it is in act. (For to move is nothing else than to educe something from potency to act : but from potency nothing can be brought to act save through some being which is itself in act.)

But it is not possible that the same be together in act and in potency under the same respect (but only according to diverse respects : for what is hot in act cannot together be hot in potency, for it is

cold in potency). It is impossible, therefore, that according to the same and in the same manner something be moving and be moved, or in other words, that it move itself. Therefore it is necessary that everything undergoing movement is being moved by another.

PRINCIPLE II

If that whereby it is being moved is itself being moved, this also must be moved by another; and that by another; and that by another, and so on... But the succession of movers being moved must come to an end, for a succession of movers does not explain the movement, only the number of intermediaries.

Therefore it is impossible for a series of movers subordinated *per se* to proceed to infinity.

CONCLUSION: Therefore there must be a first mover which is itself unmoved.

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Could there be more than one first mover ? To consider this objection we must consider what Aristotle has to say about proportionality between causes and effects. (*Physics* Bk. II, ch. 3) A particular effect argues a particular cause. If the fellow next to you gives you a push, you know well enough the immediate source of the movement. If the earth circles the Sun every 365¼ days in a regular cycle (as it does), then the source of this movement must be more universal. And if we find movement throughout the universe in all its immensity, its ultimate cause must be most universal and must be one, the unmoved mover.

To postulate that there could be more than the one first mover involves a contradiction, for the movement of any hypothetical other would not be reduced to the one cause of movement which would not then be its *universal* cause. Aristotle was of the view that, as well as being universal, motion was eternal and continuous. Since what is continuous is one, the unmoved mover, the ultimate cause of movement must, therefore, itself be eternal, and continuous, and one. (*Physics* Bk. VIII) He argues, moreover, from the principle of economy, more are not required where one will suffice, and a single first mover suffices to explain the universal effect.

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Now, let us note that there is a further step to be taken to show that this first, unmoved, mover is God. We will come to this in due course.
