Notes on Avicenna, *The Healing, Metaphysics*, Book Eight,
“On knowing the First Principle of all existence, and on knowing His attributes”

1. Chapter One: On the finitude of the efficient and the receptive causes
   a. The cause of a thing is co-existent with it (in time)
   b. There cannot be an infinite series of ordered (as causes of the same effect) causes
      i. Each is either
         1. Cause alone (first)
         2. Both cause and caused (intermediate)
         3. Caused alone
      ii. In an infinite series, all would be intermediate—a contradiction, because there can be no intermediate (conditional) without a first (unconditional)
   c. The necessity for an unconditioned cause holds even if the number of intermediate causes be infinite
   d. ...

2. Chapter Two: Concerning doubts adhering to what has been said, and the resolution thereof
   a. Our exposition is based on the arguments in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book Lesser Alpha
   b. ...

3. Chapter Three: On showing the finitude of the final and formal causes, on proving the existence of the first principle in an absolute manner, on making decisive the statement on the first cause absolutely and on the first cause restrictedly, showing that what is absolutely a first cause is a cause for the rest of the causes
   a. There must be an ultimate final cause, because we act for a perfect end, but intermediate ends are not perfect.
   b. The first efficient cause is the cause all the other principles
   c. The Necessary Existent is one—all other things are in themselves non-existent
   d. The priority of Creator to created is essential, not temporal

4. Chapter Four: On the primary attributes of the principle that is necessary in its existence
   a. The first is not multiple in any way—though there are negations true of it, they are accidental and not part of its essence
   b. The First has no quiddity other than Necessary Existence
   c. The First has no genus or differentiae

5. Chapter Five: As though a confirmation and a recapitulation of what has been previously discussed concerning the unity of the Necessary Existent and all His attributes, by way of conclusion
   a. There is only one Necessary Existent

6. Chapter Six: That He is perfect—indeed, above perfection—good, bestower of existence on everything after Him; that He is truth and pure intellect; that He apprehends intellectually all things, and the manner of this; how He
knows Himself; how He knows universals; how He knows particulars, and the manner in which it is not permitted to say that He apprehends them.

a. The First is perfect
b. Existence = goodness
c. The First is intellect, because he is essence disassociated from matter
d. Intellect, intelligible, and intellecting, without thereby being multiple
e. He knows all things, but in a universal manner, as their cause (not in a way that would entail temporal succession in Him)

7. Chapter Seven: On the relation of the intelligibles to Him; on making it clear that his positive and negative attributes do not necessitate multiplicity in His essence; that to Him belongs supreme splendor, the loftiest majesty, and infinite glory, on explaining in detail the state of intellectual pleasure

a. ...  
b. Affirmative predications of the First must be understood as negations  
c. ...