

Analogy and God's Attributes

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Analogy And god's Attributes

Analogy is responsible for a startling paradox: it both increases and diminishes the number of words in our everyday vocabulary. It is only through its indispensable aid that we grasp the essence of the Absolute, and One Being: yet, this thing called analogy drives us on to speak, (and often think and act) as if the One were actually made up of many parts, which our limited minds have seen fit to call attributes. On the other hand, analogy permits us to view a multiplicity of really different things in nature: yet, call them all "beings". In the first case, it makes many concepts jump out of a magical hat which is really and truly one thing; in the second case, it makes a number of really distinct and multifarious odds and ends, found on the magician's table, mysteriously disappear into another hat which is not really the same trick, nor even very much similar to the first prestidigitation; which only goes to show that this thing called analogy does some rather paradoxical legerdemain with both ideas, and words, both increasing, and diminishing their number at will. How is this possible? After the mind has grasped a number of objects in nature, and connecting a different concept with each different object it says that each concept, so obtained, must express itself in a singular word, analogy (ever the friend of poetry and metaphysics) shouts that we are only wasting our thoughts and words in such a process. "Don't you see that all these things have something in common? Why not express this by the word "being", always keeping in mind that there is a difference between "being" and "being"; just as there is a resemblance between "being" and "being"? Now please do not misunder-

stand me. This grouping of concepts is not an arbitrary and gratuitous affair, as some shallow men would aver; but a grouping of mental images according to the essences as they differ really, in the realm of nature. A short visit into the kingdom of our minds will convince any sincere human being that this is true. Thus it is that analogy saves us words, and extra and useless distinctions in thought concepts, gathering all manifold and diverse objects under the predicate "being" used as a noun. The prodigality of words that analogy causes, comes about when we speak of God. Why is this? Since God is absolutely simple and One, no thought or expression about Him is possible except "God is God", thus echoing and re-echoing the definition that He gave to Moses, "I am who am", through all our literature and conversation. Surely there is no waste of words here; and we have used analogy in arriving at the very notion of God, as Father Phelan has so forcefully stated:

"By reason of the analogy of being in being, it is possible to demonstrate the existence of God; not indeed merely as the prime analogue in attribution, but as the cause (analogically understood according to an analogy of proper proportionality) of the being of all that exists. For the very notion of cause itself is an analogical notion; and any demonstration of the existence of the cause of being, although it may virtually contain an analogy of attribution, derives its probative force from the likeness of proportions which must exist between beings which are only by participation and Being which is in its own right"(1)

so whence comes the superfluity of words? Analogy is a comparison on the basis of resemblance, and it is just this fact that gives rise to expressions such as, "God is good, God is just, God is omnipresent." After grasping the nature of God as the cause of all things, we begin to analogically attribute the perfections found in created things to Him, albeit in a transcendental and eminent manner. Thus if men are so and so, we say that God must also be that, for did He not make us, and is He not all that we are?

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As to the validity of such arguments which human nature seems to engage in so readily, we will consider later. We shall also investigate the type of analogy that can alone be of metaphysical value, but first let us take a look at the various types of analogy, after which we shall see and classify the attributes of God made known to us by this remarkable principle analogy.

We may the better see what analogy is if we first take a look at two terms which form the extremes of the contrary of which analogy is the middle. First there is univocity which is defined as the use of one term in exactly the same way; as predicating the word radio, of both a "Grosley" and a "Apex". In such a case we have the same reason for calling one a radio, as we do for the other. Equivocity is the use of two terms alike in form, but different in meaning, for example, we do not call a "bat" that flies, for the same reason that we call a "bat" that is an instrument for pounding a baseball. These two concepts have nothing at all to do with analogy and must not be confused with it. Univocity is one term with one meaning; equivocity is one term with two altogether diverse definitions- now analogy is one term as far a form goes, with a reason for its being called so, partly the same and partly different, as it is predicated of two objects which are really different, yet have something in common which warrants our applying the same word to them. The main point to remember is that there is but One Being yet many beings participate in it. If we once grasp that notion and train of thought and realize how utterly true it is, we might be able to share the profound thought that St. Thomas must have had when he said:

"It is not diverse realities that fall under consideration in analogicals, but diverse modes of the self-same reality."(2)

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Realizing the truth of this statement, we see that if anything exists or has essence, it is by this very fact included in a relationship with all other things that have being, and that relationship is at the very roots of being. It is indeed analogical, because each being participates in the self-same Being of God according to its nature, and hence being for it is not identical, nor yet entirely different from other beings. Here we must see the truth in what seems to be a paradox: only things that differ can be alike, and only like things can be different. The obvious explanation is that the mere fact that two things are only similar is proof enough that they are not identical. (3) Father Phelan says:

"The unity of being in being is necessarily an analogical unity. Were it univocal, diversity would be unintelligible; were it equivocal nothing would be intelligible." (4)

This means that if the word "being" as applied to all things, meant no more than, for example, the word "bat" as applied to an animal and to an instrument for hitting a baseball, then, we would not be dealing with essences anymore, so we might as well call pencils, trees, and trees, automobiles. Of course these names are arbitrary in so far as the agreement upon certain letters to stand for definite ideas, that is taken for granted; the point is that these ideas are different, and could not be called the same, despite the juggling of the names. On the other hand, if being was applied to all things in a univocal sense, all things could have only one meaning, or one essence, and hence all things would be identified- all things that our senses report to us as multiple, would indeed be one, and multiplicity would be unintelligible. Since there is no other possibility at the extremes of the contrary, the answer must be in the middle. When we attribute "being" to anything it is in an analog-

ical sense, that is the middle of the extremes equivocity, and univocity. The term predicated of a certain essence finds its analogy in the fact of likeness of relation between four terms that are altogether univocal among themselves, whose essences hold a relation to their respective existences. In short, analogy has neither to do with the unity of being nor the plurality of being. It deals with terms that are simply different, yet in a certain respect alike. It is a proportion between two relations, each of which is expressible in a ratio of two terms, each of which has a certain aspect to essence and existence. Existence and essence must always be implied, thus rendering analogy of proper proportionality just as wide as being itself. Father Phelan has this to say about the existence and essence of things in relation to analogy:

"An analogy of proper proportionality is founded on the ontological relation in which each being stands to every other being in virtue of the very act of existence whereby all that is, exists. Beings are analogical in be-ing, that is to say every being exercises the act of existence in proportion to its essence." (5)

Having realized to some extent the value and indispensable character of analogy, let us now consider the three types, adding a possible fourth type which is not strictly analogy at all. It often parades under the name of analogy of inequality. It is the attributing to two different essences the same term, for the same reason in each case. The use of a term in this way is certainly univocal. It is indeed the use of a universal, predicated of its inferiors in exactly the same way. Universals are not analogical terms, for they connote no differences in the inferiors. Analogical terms do include a difference, and the concepts cannot be called inferiors. In this false type of analogy, St. Thomas deals with words as analogous in essence, but not in concept, and says that the two objects are equally analogous, but not equal. (6). St. Thomas realized that this was not

saying much; for we already know from the above-mentioned quotation that an ontological relationship exists between all things that exist in virtue of their act of existence. The analogy of inequality, as a distinct type is outlawed, either because it is really univocality, as in the case of "animal" as applied to a dog, and "animal" as applied to a man, since the term is predicated of each for the same reason, even though the two objects are unequal in dignity; or because this pseudo-type is already included in the analogy of proper proportionality, which means nothing other than the application of the term, "being" to all essences that participate according to their very nature in the One, Absolute, Infinitely Perfect Being of God. We will pass over to the second type, namely the analogy of simple attribution.

The second type of analogy, although it can truly be called analogy, does not have any ontological value. Father Phelan has this to say about St. Thomas' essential notion of true analogy:

"The basic proposition in the doctrine of Thomistic analogy in its strict and proper meaning, is that whatever perfection is analogously common to two or more beings is intrinsically possessed by each, not however by any two in the same way or mode, but by each in proportion to its being." (7)

This consideration lets out the second type of analogy in St. Thomas' strict notion of it, for by very definition this kind of analogy attributes a characteristic present in one object, intrinsically, and formally to another object, even though that characteristic is not possessed by that object. Since a true analogy requires that the quality in question, be present in both objects intrinsically and formally, analogy of simple attribution fails to meet the stipulation, for one object possesses the said trait, extrinsically and denominatively, only. To say that a characteristic is

formally and intrinsically possessed by the object is equivalent to saying that the characteristic is not something put to the object from the outside, as a relationship of some kind, but rather that the trait in question belongs to the very essence of the thing and is present in it. For example, the Latin word "sanus", meaning healthy, derives its original, or first meaning from being used as a predicate of a subject that is capable of possessing health, like a man, or animal; but when we begin to apply the word, "sanus" to those objects, or activities that are productive of health in a living subject, it is clear that we use the word only in a way that in no way indicates the essence of a walk, or a meal. The meaning that the word receives is one put there by the mind's reverting to the formal meaning that "sanus" has when used in its first meaning. The second meaning is therefore called extrinsic, and denominative. It is this use of a term that we call the second type of analogy: that of simple attribution. The meaning of the term is formal and intrinsic in one use; but extrinsic, and denominative in the other, and hence no ontological value can be given to such analogy, any more than we could reach a notion of a meal that anyone ate, if we were simply told that it was a healthy meal. In spite of the fact that no ontological value can be placed in this type of analogy, it is nevertheless true analogy- not indeed like the first type, which was not analogy, as shown above - for it satisfies the definition of analogy: a comparison based on resemblance, or a concept or term used in two senses, partly the same, and partly different. The resemblance, to be sure, is one of a certain relation that both the meal, and the living body have to health, one having, the other producing it; but it is a relation which adds something more to the

concept that is in our minds when we think about the two objects, than was there before we attributed denominatively to the second, that quality which the first already possessed essentially.

Now we must say a few words about the type of analogy that we will later employ in arriving at the attributes of God, in the second part of the paper. First let us consider the words of Jacques Maritain as he analyzes the third kind of analogy for us in a depth of meaningful words that do not suffer in clarity:

"In an analogy of proper proportionality, however, one has to do with a concept which is analogical of itself and which designates in each of the subjects of which it is predicated something made known by the likeness of the relations which one of these subjects has to the term designated in it by this very concept, on the one hand, and the relations which the other subject has to the term similarly designated in it by the self-same concept. Obviously, in this type of analogy, the analogated perfection is known according to that which the concept signifies formally and that which is signified by the concept exists intrinsically and formally in each of the analogues."(8)

In this kind of comparison, we have relations glaring at us from every angle: a relation between the two subjects, as well as between the two predicated concepts, both expressed by the word, "being". A running commentary on what M. Maritain has so elegantly stated above is now in order. First, he says that we have to do with a concept which is analogical of itself. That is the same as saying that all things of which being can be predicated, participate in the One Being, namely God, the only self-existent Being, and that the predicate, "being" has a different definition as it is applied to the different essences. Next, by saying that this concept of being designates in each of the subjects of which it is predicated, something made known by the likeness of the relations which one of these subjects has to the term designated in it by this very concept, he simply means that if one of the subjects is God, and the other

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subject is man, then the predicate "being" designates a concept in god that is defined as "being in his own right"; while "being" designates in man a concept that is defined as "being from another", and indeed both of these terms or definitions are made known by a likeness, or proportion of relation between a cause, and an effect - the cause being god and the effect being man. The words "...and the relations which the other subject has to the term similarly designated in it by the self-same concept," simply refers to the other half of the relation. In all this we truly reason by analogy from the creature (effect) to the Creator (cause), since it is the effects apparent in the visible universe that our cognitive faculties touch and know, not the Cause of all; but just as truly as we cannot help using our senses and believing them (for it is natural to do so) when they tell us that there are activities going on outside of us, so we cannot help using and believing our intellects when they tell us that these activities are effects that are not self-explanatory, but rather needful of a cause, nay to go a step further that there is an ultimate Cause that is not only responsible for all being, but all order, beauty and truth. This natural propensity of our natures has been expressed very well by Dr. Rumble, the author of many radio sermons broadcast in Australia in defense of religion:

"The universal judgment of mankind can no more be wrong than the intuition of an infant that food must be conveyed to the mouth. The stamp of god's handiwork is so clearly impressed upon creation and above all upon man, that all nations instinctively believe that there is a god" (9)

Of course we must allow for a seeming overstatement in the direction of ontologism, or the "Common Sense" tenets of Reid and the Scottish school; but aside from that the point is well made that to

use our senses, and judgment is natural, nor can we possibly go astray if we use them directed toward their proper objects. Another modern philosopher has framed the beauties of the extramental world, in more exactly philosophical terms, when he pointed to God as an analogical reality in these words:

Life is too crowded with things which have little relation to matter or chance to permit one's accepting such a statement /There is no God/. There are love, loyalty and patriotism which transcend everything made of earth and air and their tributary elements.look aloft at the myriad lamps let down from the ceiling of heaven. vaster than the earth which we inhabit, each is a planet whirling through the confines of space during unmeasured years at a speed hardly computable." (10)

One writer wants to make it clear that the analogical relation of cause to effect is valid in reasoning and he indicates exactly where we are to look for the first part of the proportion in being from which we will then be able to arrive by causality, to the Ultimate Being in these words:

"Human reason is able to know God by contemplation of His creatures and to deduce His existence from certain facts of the supernatural order. Our primary and proper medium of cognition is the created universe i.e. the material and spiritual world." (11)

Now, the existence of the material and spiritual worlds, so surely attested to by our cognitive faculties, is a changeable, and contingent existence that is continually being reduced from some potency to its act, forming a chain of connected links of things that exist; up which we can run to that being which is not being reduced, nor has it ever been reduced from potency to act. Whatever act there is, it has two possibilities for its reason: either it was always present, or it originated, or came into being. If it came into being, it was reduced from its potential existence to actual existence. If the actual being that reduced it, was in turn reduced, we have already the true analogical proof for a being that was never reduced, which is the

being that is postulated by our intellects as the being responsible for the chain of changing beings. The mere existence of change, postulates the existence of the unchangeable. It is not that we must try to get to the very first link of that chain, but rather that we see that all the beings on that chain, and that chain itself is dependent upon something outside it for its very existence. The other possibility of explanation for the existence of any actual being is that it was always actual. In that case its act was never brought about by any other being in act - but such a being could not be only so much in act, and no further, as some empty heads who cannot grasp the fact that God must be Actus Purus, would fain persuade themselves, but rather entirely so. Why? It is because the only possibility that there is for act, as act to be anything but Pure Act, is that it be received by potency. Since that definitely requires an outside agent, existing prior to the being in question, and since by our very postulate, there is no outside being prior to God, He was not limited in Existence by having His Act received in Potency. Realizing this we can readily see that God is Pure Act, not received in potency. The conclusion is, that analogy does truly lead us to the First Cause, which gives us our connection with the second part of this paper, namely: the attributes of God. But first we must say a few words about another type of analogy, and cite a few passages from various places, illustrating the use of analogy in everyday parlance, in the Bible, and in literature. After this, we enter the part of the paper dealing with the essence of God, and the notions that flow from that essence.

The fourth type of analogy is called that of improper proportionality. It is improper because the reason for the concept is con-

tained not only in a different manner, as is the case with proper proportionality, but also in one only of the ratios, and not in the other. The relation is indeed similar, but not intrinsic in each case. This type of analogy is the same as simple attribution, differing in so far as it has four terms, while simple attribution has only two. In either case the reason for the term is in one member of the comparison formally and intrinsically; but in the other member denominatively and extrinsically. In one case the member in question consists of one term; in the other case the member is a relation of two terms. For example: we call two quite different objects by the term "face"; one the face of a man - the other the "face" of a clock. Is this merely equivocity? "Face" in each case has something in common: the concept of "that which shows forth for others to see," so the term is not merely equivocal. Our next question is whether the word is univocal, the use of an analogy of improper proportionality, or one of simple attribution. We can easily eliminate the first, and third; for the concept is not predicated in each case for the same reason - nor does the concept bear a relation to a third term, that is different in each instance of its application to the objects of which the concept is predicated. Indeed the concept of "face" is an analogy of improper proportionality because there is a likeness of relation between "face" as compared to clock; and "face" as compared to man. The concept is formally and intrinsically predicated of the "face" of man, and denominatively and extrinsically said of the "face" of the clock - that is, if we accept a definition of "face" that only could apply to man properly. If we accept a definition that applies properly to the face of a clock, then the formality of the concepts will be just reversed; but the point is very

well made in this example, that no matter which definition we may chose, it could not apply to each, except by analogy. A sure test for the distinguishing of simple attribution from the analogy of improper proportionality is this: whenever a similarity of relations can be seen, it is improper proportionality; if the concept, in each case of its application to two objects, has a relation to a third term, different in each case ("sanus" has a different relation to health when it is applied to man, and food) then it must be simple attribution.

In one or the other types of analogy, we can put many of the concepts signified by the words in everyday parlance; e.g. the book of life, queen of the home, king of beasts, lion of Juda, turning the pages of history, reading one's face like a book, the legs of a table, the Cardinal of the Church as a hinge of the Church, taken from the Latin for hinge, a family tree, a chain of events, foundation as applied to an axion in logic, and a cement understructure of a house, gate of heaven, as applied to the Blessed Virgin, and the Lamb of God, as applied to Our Blessed Savior. Indeed, all these examples only indicate what possibilities there are for analogy in everyday life and language. Besides the types of analogy that we are discussing here, we need only think of the fact that all being, even though the terms signifying it have not any other kind of analogy attached to them, is, by very nature, analogical, and we will visualize that analogy is a part of our very life.

There is a passage in Holy Scripture that requires analogy to give any meaning at all to the words of Our Lord when He said, "None is good but one, that is God",⁽¹²⁾ especially when we contrast it with the statement in Genesis, "And God saw the light, that it was good",⁽¹³⁾

does it appear inexplicable. What are we to say without a knowledge of the analogy of being? Is the light god? Is the world god? Yet that is exactly what the Bible states if there is no such defender of Scripture like analogy to save us from a hundred contradictions. Of course God is alone good, in the univocal sense of the term "good", but if analogy is the proportion of two like relations on the basis of existence compared to essence, then many other essences outside of god, can, and do participate in god's goodness, according to their natures. In fact what else was god's purpose in creating other than to allow creatures to share in His goodness, yes, to share in His Being, according to their limited essences? Another example of an apparent contradiction is the use of the words, "For I came to set a man at variance against his father..." (14), in the face of the words, "And call none your father upon earth, for one is your father, who is in heaven." (15) At first we are sincerely puzzled by such words and actions, for Our Lord teaches His Apostles, about to go out into the world to preach in His name, that they are not to call anyone at all father, but He himself has referred to a father on earth, in the first quotation (as He, as well as St. Paul, and the other Apostles very often do in other passages) and thus called some one besides god, father. In another place, (16), Our Lord makes a clear distinction between His Heavenly Father, and our earthly fathers, when He says, "... how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them who ask Him?" He said these words immediately after referring to a father and son parable. The point is, that father is used analogically in these passages, and the meaning is to be interpreted in light of what Our Lord was trying to teach at the moment. In the first instance, the only sig-

nificance that can be found in the words, "Call no man father," is that the Apostles, and we too, are not to let our view of the notion "father", be limited to an earthly interpretation, to the forgetting of our true Father, who is God, alone, nor should we use the term "father" in the same haughty sense that the Jews addressed to their Rabbis. In all these cases we can truly say that concepts are being bandied about that are analogous in meaning to the point that needed to be stressed at the time. Again analogy has come to the rescue of sanity.

For an example of analogy in literature let us consider the following, by Shelley:

" I brigh fresh showers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams." (17)

Next, we will look at several lines from another of Shelly's Odes:

"O West Wind, thou breath of autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing
Yellow and black, and pale, and hectic red," (18)

William Watson has given us a poem called the "Keyboard":

"Five-and-Thirty black slaves,
Half-a-hundred white,
All their duty but to sing
For their queen's delight,
Now with throats of thunder,
Now with dulcet lips,
While she rules them royally
With her finger tips!" (19)

The same author seems to be saturated with good analogies:

" April, April,
laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears" (20)

All throughout literature the test of value has been the ability of the author to speak of ordinary or exotic subjects in a way that attracts, and the method for doing this, is usually by analogy.

Of the greatest moment for our present purpose is the use that analogy enjoys in Natural Theology. The body of true information that analogy can give us, is defended in this paper against anyone who would attempt to start out with the premise that God is unknowable because causality cannot be trusted, or that any particular faculty cannot be relied upon. (21) We answer that if one cognitive faculty can be doubted then all faculties can be doubted. (22) If this were so, we would never know that our faculties were unreliable. (23)

We find god in three ways: causality, attribution, excellence, and negation. By seeing God as First Cause, attributing to Him all perfections in nature, in a transcendent excellence, and then denying all imperfection of Him, we reach the idea of the metaphysical essence of the First Cause. This is expressed as actus purus. It is a concept arrived at by the motion and perfection found in the world. (24) Actus purus is the adequate name for God. (25) The attributes then flow from the essence of God. (26) Since there is no real distinction between what God is, and what He does, we need not distinguish the essential, from the operative attributes; and since God is simply one pure act, we need not distinguish between immanent, and transient activities, but such a division is latent in the division that we have given. (27) Division will render the attributes of God knowable to us, without having our eyes blinded by the brilliance of God's infinity. (28) First there are the absolute attributes i.e. those belonging to God without reference to anything else outside Him. He has them of Himself before the world was made. They are further divided into positive and negative attributes. The positive ones express in positive terms- the negative, in negative terms. The absolute pos-

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itive attributes are: divine life, divine will, divine intellect, and eternity. The first two are proved from the order and motion found in the universe. (29) The first is arrived at by the very notion of life which is self-motion. God, as the first cause of all motion, is in the strictest sense living, since all motion is from Him, yet He is His own motion, receiving it from no other. He possesses all these attributes in an infinite manner, as qualities "simpliciter simplex" i.e. those attributes that in any subject at all, are better to be than not to be. From actus purus, flows infinity; indeed it is synonymous with it, and eternity flows from infinity, since eternity, being a perfection, must be had by any being that is all-perfect, and without limits. Again, eternity is defined as the duration of a being, wholly unchangeable; but if a being is infinite, it is also unchangeable, for a contradiction is involved if we say that an infinite being, either gains or loses any perfection, and that is what change implies.

Next we find the negative attributes: infinity, immutability, we have already treated, but mention them for the sake of the division integrity. Immensity, and simplicity still remain to be discussed. Immensity, being the power of a being to be everywhere without being limited by place, is clearly seen by the fact that God is infinite, and hence can be limited in no way whatever. The simplicity of God is easily seen by running through the two ways that things can be composite, and then denying them of God. God has no parts physically for He is not amenable to the senses; He does not have metaphysical parts, for His essence is His Existence, and pure act, being no essence subject to any type of development, must, with certainty, and

of necessity admit no division by potency and act; not yet by substance and accidents, for accidents can be lost and others gained without harm to the substance, but whatever God is at one moment He is at another, and whatever He is, He is by His very essence. (30)

The next attribute is one of the relative ones i.e. those that we have knowledge of in God's relation to other things, namely Providence. It is God's directing all things to their end (31), and governance is the actual domination over creatures exercised in time by God. While providence is wholly determined and unchangeable, governance is undetermined and changeable. Creation, conservation, concurrence, and governance are all the one act of God moving all things to act according to their nature - God never being the one to change but yet changing all things outside Himself. Creation is the initial coming into being of dependent things; conservation is merely continued creation, and since no intellectual being that is responsible for the existence and activity of all things could possibly withdraw His activity from creatures and still have them in existence, and since things do stay in existence, God is definitely directing them toward their end as becomes an intelligent being. Concurrence is to the effect produced by the action of the principal and secondary causes (each total in its own order) what physical motion is to the instrumental cause. One is another way of saying that God is the cause of the cause as well as the effect, while the other (concurrence) says that God is after all, a complete cause of the effect in His own order, that the secondary cause is also the complete cause of in its own order. (32)

The next three attributes form a natural grouping for they are

sometimes hard to reconcile from our point of view. They are justice, mercy, and goodness. How God can be just and merciful, at the same time is actually not hard to explain. We attribute justice to God not because He owes us anything, but because He will keep His promises after He has made them to us e.g. to give us heaven and complete happiness if we serve Him. This very justice is really mercy. God being simple is not partly merciful and partly just, but simple pure act which is, everything that it has. Goodness could be considered under those attributes that are in God absolutely, for He is good without reference to any creature, but it is also permissible to speak of goodness as a relative attribute of God. (33) We define good as that which is desirable, but God is all desirable to himself, since He knows all truth in Himself, and whatever is true is also good, to the extent that it exists, and God is existence itself. (34)

Ubiquity is an attribute that God acquires when He is really present everywhere. It is distinguished from immensity, in so far as the latter is merely His power to be present in all places at once. God acquires ubiquity only when there is place for Him to be present in, but He is Immense even before places existed. (35)

All the attributes discussed in the foregoing lines are distinct from one another by a distinction that calls for a difference in concept itself, not merely in words. But does this not produce a plurality in God? Many have tried to say that since these attributes are formally present in God (as Thomists admit) therefore there are divisions in God. This however is a fallacy. The seeming contradiction is simply answered thus: God, being pure act, cannot be appre-

hended fully by our finite minds, so we make virtual distinctions about attributes that are formally present in God, even though these are simpliciter simplex attributes. Attributes, being present in God in an infinite way would be only so many "infinities" running around unattached if they were not really identified in one simple essence. With this in mind we can see that identification in one God, of all simpliciter simplices attributes is the only way that it could be possible for the attributes to be infinite, and yet virtually distinct according to our limited knowledge of them. Before our minds consider them there is no distinction at all.

Of course there are mixed attributes in God also. For example corporeity is not formally present in God, but only virtually so, in so far as God can cause it in others. Even these attributes are distinguished virtually from one another.

Analogy has done a very noble work for the problem of the seeming antinomies between the attributes of God. The univocists said that God's simplicity was destroyed by having so many attributes predicated formally of Him. The equivocists said that if the different concepts that we have of God's attributes do not have any really different forms in God behind them, then the concepts are vain, and hence all concepts are not to be trusted. It required analogy to find that the absolute attributes are present formally in God, but virtually distinct, and that since God possessed these attributes in an infinite way, the only possible explanation to avoid a multiplicity of infinities was to admit that they must be identified in an infinite God; a solution that is indeed a mystery, in preference to one that is a glaring contradiction. (36)

finis

Notes

- (1) Phelan Gerald, St. Thomas And Analogy , (Milwaukee: Marquette, 1941) p. 41
- (2) quoted from ibidem. p. 41
- (3) Ibidem. cf. p 10
- (4) Ibidem p. 40
- (5) Ibidem p. 39
- (6) Ibidem. cf. 31
- (7) Ibidem. p. 23
- (8) Ibidem. p. 56. quoted from Maritain, Degrees of Knowledge, pp. 822-823
- (9) Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies, (St. Paul: Cathedral Press, 1938.) chapter 1, question 2
- (10) Coughlin Charles E, Radio Sermons, (Baltimore: Knox and O'Leary, 1931) p. 23
- (11) Pohl Joseph, God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes, (St. Louis: Herder, 1921) P. 10
- (12) St. Mark, chapter 10, v. 18.
- (13) genesis, chapter 1, v. 4
- (14) St. Matthew, chapter 10, v. 35.
- (15) St. Matthew, chapter 23, v. 9.
- (16) St. Matthew, chapter 7, v. 11
- (17) Miles, Fooley, and Greenlaw, Literature And Life, (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co, 1935) pp: 425. Shelly's "The Cloud."
- (18) Ibidem. Shelly's "Ode To the west Wind," p, 428
- (19) Ibidem. Watson William, "Keyboard", p. 742
- (20) Ibidem. "Song", by the same Author. p 742
- (21) "Our idea of god is clear, distinct, usable, and sufficient. It is a genuine idea, not a figment of the mind. for it is formed by the mind's working on solid reality and advancing along the solid paths of abstract reasoning." Glenn Paul,

- (22) "No cognitive faculty fails in the knowledge of its object save on account of being defective or corrupted, since by its very nature it is directed to the knowledge of that object; thus the sight does not fail in the perception of color, unless the sight itself is injured. Now every defect and corruption is beside nature, because nature aims at the being and perfection of a thing." St. Thomas, Contra Gentiles, (N.Y: Benziger Brothers, 1924) Bk. 3, chapter 107, p. 78.
- (23) "Study of values is a scrutiny of ends and purposes. Study of standards is an attempt to identify the way or possible ways to an end. Together they must enable us to say, 'This builds man up, that tears him down'. As a rule and in the long run, people must know what is perfective, and what destructive of man, as simply as they know right from left or up from down." Ward Leo, Values and Realities, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935) page 3.
- (24) We must not demand any more of our faculties than they were meant to do. We do not complain that our eyes cannot hear, nor that they cannot see everything at one glance. Never may we demand of our senses that they be something other than senses, for that is a contradiction. On this point confer idem (21) p. 127. We may not doubt our sense as long as they are directed toward their proper objects, and our senses that are naturally directed to the outside world tell us that there is something there to be seen, and our intellectual faculties that are directed to invisible things tell us that there is such a thing as causality and that causality demands a God to create the visible universe. It is suicide to do otherwise, as one philosopher has said, "If a man contravenes the law of health and eats what is poisonous, he sickens or dies; and if he transgresses the laws of thought and agrees on false principles, he contradicts himself and commits intellectual suicide." Hettinger Franz, Natural Religion, (Cincinnati: Kuster Co, 1890) from the introduction. p. 19.
- (25) "There are many who see the absurdity of the extreme positivistic position and these do a neat maneuver and come up smiling on a new attack. They say that causality can indeed be known but we cannot carry it beyond the realm of the phenomenal, you can know what causes stomachache but not what causes the stomachache - you may ask why of every atom that exists except that last one which they foolishly suppose is going to make the leap between phenomenal and ultimate primary causality. Why? It seems that these peculiar people who limit causality to the phenomenal world have themselves explored the outer and invisible realm; they have been there; they know all about it and they tell ordinary people like you and me that we can not go there." Idem (21) p. 48. Causality makes it possible for us to realize the there must be a being that has no potentiality at all - the best way that we can express this is by "Actus Purus". Also see same book, pp. 136 ff.

- (26) However we do not say that this essence is gained intentionally by the mind in the first place, as someone has written, "We do not therefore as the ontologists contended come to know of god's essence and attributes by a direct intuition of His essence." Garrigou-Lagrange R. God: His Existence, and Nature, (St. Louis: Herder, 1936) p. 67
- (27) "Although as we shall see, the mind does make distinctions in god and we speak of different and distinct attributes and perfections of god; and although the mind has some ground and justification for such distinctions, the mind nevertheless does not consider god in any sense as a composite of all these perfections but always reminds itself that in god all these perfections are identified." Idem(21) p. 119.
- (28) "When the intellect of man is confronted with being as such, it is dazzled and can only hope to see by gazing upon its analogical reflections or participations in the things that are. Those who in spite of all have tried to look upon being naked and unadorned have been struck with intellectual blindness." Idem.(1) p. 8
- (29) There is however a difference between god's knowledge and ours. "god requires no cognitional image from which to draw His plurality of ideas, as we do, hence with Him there is no plurality even though He knows a plurality of things from our point of view. The only species in god's mind is the divine essence itself which is absolutely one; in this primary object, god knows all else." Idem 21, p. 203. "Since intelligent activity is in itself a pure perfection it must be attributed in a transcendent way to the First Being. god must be the agens "per intellectum" par excellence, and this means that the ideas of all creatable things must be perfectly present in and of the divine essence from all eternity." Idem(21) p. 202

Further- god's knowledge is classified as speculative or practical- necessary or free- approving or non-approving- and knowledge of intelligence, and knowledge of vision. For explanation cf. Idem(26) p. 59 ff.

We know that god has will because He must be a perfect agent to bring things into existence. Knowing them alone would never produce them. god's will can be of good in general (antecedent) or will of good in particular (consequent)

- (30) "Therefore if a thing were not its own essence, there must be something in it besides its essence, and consequently there must be a composition therein. For which reason in composite things it has the significance of a part as humanity in a man." Idem(22) Bk. 1, chapter 21.

- (31) "For we have proved that god by His Providence directs all things to His Goodness as their end; not indeed as though His goodness gains anything from the things that are made, but in order that the likeness of His Goodness may be impressed on things as far as possible." Idem (22) Bk 3, chapter 97, p. 47.

And here is the passage referred to above: "For He is the end of all things; yet so as to precede all in being. Now there is an end which though it holds the first place in causing for as much as it is in the intention, is nevertheless last in execution. This applies to any end which the agent sets up by his action." Idem (22) Bk. 3, chapter 18.

- (32) "Indirect conservation is not sufficient to account for such an effect as continued existence; direct conservation is required." Idem (21) p. 263.
- (33) "From the fact that they acquire the divine goodness, creatures are made like unto god. Wherefore if all things tend to god as to their last end, so as to acquire His goodness, it follows that the last end of things is to become like unto god." Idem (22) Bk. 3, chapter 19, p. 37
- (34) "Now creatures do not acquire goodness in the way in which it is in god; although each thing imitates the divine Goodness according to its mode. For the divine Goodness is Simple, being as it were all in one." Idem (22) Bk 3, chapter 20; p. 38.
- (35) "god is near you; is within you, a sacred spirit dwells within us, the observer and guardian of all." From the 41st letter of Seneca to Lucilius, quoted from Gibbons, Cardinal, Our Christian Heritage, (Baltimore: John. Murphy Co, 1889) p. 61.
- (36) For a full explanation of the antinomies both the general and special, cf. idem (26) p. 187 ff.

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