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METAPHYSICS AS A SCIENCE IN THE SUMMA CONTRA

GENTILES OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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P R E F A C E

In recent years there has been a remarkable return to and revival of the study of metaphysics. This renewed interest is apparent not only within the Thomistic school, but among non-Thomists as well, both in Europe and on this continent. Among the philosophical periodicals there is hardly an issue released today which does not carry an article on metaphysics. This science has, in fact, come so much to the fore that one no longer need offer an apology or explanation for writing on the subject, as might have been the case some years ago.

We are, of course, concerned with Thomistic metaphysics. The purpose of the current probings into it is to reconstruct a genuine Thomistic metaphysics in its proper relation to the whole of Thomistic philosophy by reevaluating even its most fundamental affirmations, which have been handed down to us through the centuries. There are about as many approaches to this work of reconstruction, one might say with no great exaggeration, as there are parties taking part in it. With all due appreciation of their efforts, it would seem that if these probings are to produce the desired result, the proper approach would be to tackle the very writings of Thomas Aquinas himself. For only then will we be able to determine beyond doubt what he said and taught, and to give the proper meaning to

passages quoted out of context, and to rid his metaphysics of the unnatural accretions it has acquired through the years.

The Angelic Doctor did not write a systematic tract on metaphysics, and did not leave us a separate metaphysical system in the technical sense of the word; although a well-defined metaphysics is implied as the understructure of all his speculation. Therefore, we must study all his works and glean from them and piece together the fragments of his metaphysics. We cannot be content with limiting such a research, as many do, to one or two of his works, even if some of them do have a greater metaphysical content than others. All his works without exception must be studied if the resulting picture of metaphysics is to be true and complete, as it existed in the mind of Aquinas himself. This would, moreover, imply the need for the study of his predecessors to determine the influence they exerted on his philosophy, and to better understand it.

Work has already begun along this line. A doctoral thesis has been written on the metaphysics of St. Albert the Great by Fr. S. Ducharme, O.M.I. Currently, a thesis is in the making which has for its purpose to determine the metaphysics of Aquinas' commentary on the Sentences. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the general

historical research of Aquinas' works by studying his Summa Contra Gentiles and gleaning from this work his metaphysical doctrine. In its present form, this thesis is limited to the study of the nature of metaphysics as a science. It is, however, our intent to continue this work and extend this thesis to a broader scope, so as to include all of the important metaphysical questions discussed in the Summa Contra Gentiles. That proposed thesis would be entitled simply, The Metaphysics of the Summa Contra Gentiles.

Since this thesis is limited to the study of only one work of St. Thomas, one must not expect to find in it a detailed exposition of Thomistic metaphysics. For, important as this Summa is, it is not a philosophical work, even though it is rich in philosophical content. Thus, the metaphysical doctrine gleaned from it will, of course, be limited and partial. Yet the importance of such a study as this is of no little account, for it is an essential contribution to the rediscovery of the historical Thomistic metaphysics.

With this in mind, it becomes apparent that it is irrelevant whether the scrutiny of the Summa Contra Gentiles furnishes us with much or little on the subject of metaphysics. What is of primary importance is that such a study will manifest clearly what is and what is not

taught on metaphysics in this particular work. And that, if adequately done, will be no mean achievement.

Since we are concerned with determining the doctrinal content of a specific work we will be obliged to cite numerous passages and to comment on them. On the basis of these we will draw our conclusions. In a final chapter, we will compare the doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles with present-day studies in Thomistic metaphysics.

The bulk of the footnotes will necessarily be references to the Summa we are studying. In order to avoid a constant repetition of this name in the notes, all references to that work will be indicated by merely the Book number in Roman numerals, the chapter number in Arabic numerals and, wherever feasible, the initial words of the paragraph concerned. All these references will be to the Latin manual edition of the Summa Contra Gentiles published by the Leonine Commission in 1934.

In the English rendering of passages from the Summa, we have availed ourselves of the existing English translations of that work. For Book I we used the translation of A. C. Pegis; for Book II, that of J. F. Anderson; for Book III, chs. 1-113, that of A. C. Pegis, and for the remainder of Book III and the whole of Book IV, that of the English Dominican Fathers. Book IV of the Dominicans'

translation is not of the Leonine text. We shall be careful, therefore, to note any differences in the passages we quote from this Book. And any deviation from these translations will be indicated.

I wish to express my appreciation to Father S. Ducharme, O.M.I., of the University of Ottawa, for his inspiration, guidance, and invaluable assistance accorded me in this work. It was under his direction that this thesis was written.

CHAPTER I

THE OBJECT OF METAPHYSICS

Since the object of a science points unmistakably to, and is of great importance in determining, the nature of that science, we shall begin our investigation by devoting the first chapter of our study to defining the object of metaphysics according to the Summa Contra Gentiles of St. Thomas Aquinas. However, before we begin our consideration of the passages of this work relevant to the object of metaphysics, there is a preliminary question with regard to terminology that we must settle. It concerns the term metaphysics and its synonyms as employed in this Summa. In it metaphysics has two other names. They are first philosophy and wisdom. The interchangeability of first philosophy with metaphysics is commonly accepted because of their synonymous use in other Thomistic works. We shall, therefore, take their synonymity for granted. However, the convertability of wisdom with metaphysics merits special consideration because of its importance in this thesis. For that reason we shall presently establish it.

For Aquinas wisdom was metaphysics. This may clearly be seen at the very beginning of the Summa where

he speaks of the office of the wise man. Although he does not say so expressly, he certainly implies it. For he says:

The ultimate end of the universe must, therefore, be the good of an intellect. This good is truth. Truth must consequently be the ultimate end of the universe, and the consideration of the wise man aims principally at truth. ... The Philosopher himself establishes that first philosophy is the science of truth, not of any truth, but of that truth which is the origin of all truth, namely, which belongs to the first principle whereby all things are. The truth belonging to such a principle is, clearly, the source of all truth; for things have the same disposition in truth as in being (1).

First of all we ought to point out that in this short passage St. Thomas, without any hesitation, makes a spontaneous transition from speaking of the wise man to speak of first philosophy. The very wording of the passage cannot help but indicate that to his mind wisdom and metaphysics are one and the same.

The wise man, then, studies truth, especially the truth which is the last end of the universe. And in the same breath it is said that first philosophy, according to Aristotle is the science of truth, especially of that truth which belongs to the principle of all things. Therefore, wisdom and first philosophy have the study of truth in

(1) I, 1, Finis autem.

common. Yet, it may seem that the type of truth to be considered by them is different in both cases. But this apparent difficulty is immediately dispelled. For, the Summa continues, "the name of the absolutely wise man, however, is reserved for him whose consideration is directed to the end of the universe, which is also the origin of the universe" (2). This is the definitive unifying element of wisdom and metaphysics. Although wisdom studies the truth which is the last end of the universe, and first philosophy the truth of the first principle of the universe, actually they both study the same truth, for the end of the universe and the origin of the universe is one. Therefore, wisdom and metaphysics study the same object and are, as a result, identical sciences.

It was Aristotle who, prior to Aquinas, established the identity between wisdom and metaphysics, and the latter is dependent on the former for this doctrine. St. Thomas points out that Aristotle wrote a treatise which he called Metaphysics, but the science with which that work deals is called wisdom by Aristotle himself (3). In fact,

(2) I, 1, Multitudinis.

(3) "Et in principio Metaphysicae scientiam quam in illo libro tradere intendit, sapientiam nominat" III, 44, Patet.

St. Thomas, at a different occasion, quotes a passage on wisdom precisely from Aristotle's Metaphysics. He says that "wisdom consists in the knowledge of the highest causes, according to the Philosopher in the beginning of the Metaphysics" (4). Thus, Aristotle's Metaphysics deals with wisdom because for him metaphysics was wisdom; and it remained so for Aquinas as well.

Another fact indicative of the identity of metaphysics and wisdom in the Summa Contra Gentiles is that Aquinas, in the opening chapters of this work, has in mind the Dux Perplexorum of Maimonides, who, in his own treatise, expressly mentions metaphysics (5).

In the introduction to his recent translation of the First Book of the Summa Contra Gentiles, A. C. Pegis also interprets the first chapter as identifying wisdom and metaphysics (6).

(4) I, 94, Si enim.

(5) A. PEGIS, On the Truth of the Catholic Faith, Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One: God, p. 68, note 2; E. GILSON, History of Christian Philosophy ..., p. 650, note 38; P. SYNAVE, O.P., "La révélation des vérités divine naturelles ..." pp. 351-353.

(6) A. PEGIS, On the Truth of the Catholic Faith... p. 28.

Hence, it is apparent that in the Summa Contra Gentiles whatever is affirmed of metaphysics holds true also for wisdom, and vice versa. For this reason we shall, in this work, make indiscriminate use of texts employing the terms metaphysics, first philosophy, and wisdom.

Now, we shall begin our inquiry into the texts of the Summa which deal with the object of metaphysics, and cite all the passages which speak of the things that, in one way or another, come under the consideration of metaphysics. These are all called objects of metaphysics in this thesis. However, we employ the term object not in any technical sense, but merely as signifying in general all that metaphysics properly studies.

A very wide range of objects is attributed to metaphysics as proper to it; so wide in fact that it is all-embracing. Nothing is excluded:

For in the most noble among the sciences that we have there are included not only the highest beings but also the lowest. For first philosophy extends its consideration from the first being to being in potency, which is the lowest being (7).

(7) I, 70, Pabet autem. In this passage, Pegis translates scientia by knowledge. It is, however, apparent from the context that Aquinas is here speaking of sciences, especially since the word is used in the plural. Moreover, this passage is a response to an objection

Metaphysics is to study all things; every thing comes under its consideration. Its object is everything from God down to things that do not yet exist in act. However, it is evident that not all these things are the object of metaphysics in the same way. There is a definite hierarchy among them. This clearly appears from the following:

"The nobility of a science is measured in terms of those things to which it is principally directed and not in terms of all the things that fall within that science" (8).

Metaphysics is the most noble of the sciences. But it derives its nobility from the object to which it is principally directed. Among the objects of metaphysics this honour falls to the first being. The word principaliter indicates that the first being enjoys a certain pre-eminence over all the other things that come under the consideration of metaphysics. The first being is, of course, God. This is stated in so many words in the chapters immediately following the one now under consideration (9).

voiced in I, 64, Sexta. And there, Pegis himself translates scientia by science. For that reason, we have substituted science for knowledge in our translation. Cf. G. M. BUCKLEY, M.M., The Nature and Unity of Metaphysics, p. 69.

(8) I, 70, Patet autem.

(9) I, 72, Amplius, Illud; I, 74, Praeterea.

This point is aptly illustrated by a parallel made between metaphysics and the divine knowledge in the same paragraph. Just as God knows all things, yet the principal object of His knowledge is only the divine essence, so too metaphysics considers all things, even beings in potentiality, yet its object of a certain preponderance is the first being (10).

The First Being

The nobility attributed to metaphysics as a result of its study of the first being is entirely consistent with Aquinas' thought on the human knowledge of God, as is apparent from this passage:

Now, among other perfections found in created things the greatest is to understand God. For the intellectual nature, whose perfection is understanding, excels all the others; and the most noble intelligible object is God. God, therefore, knows Himself supremely (11).

To know God is such a perfection that it is even found in

(10) "Nam Philosophia Prima considerationem suam extendit a primo ente usque ad ens in potentia, quod est ultimum in entibus. Sic autem sub divina scientia comprehenduntur infima entium quasi cum principali cognito simul nota: divina enim essentia est principale a Deo cognitum, in quo omnia cognoscuntur, ut supra ostensum est" I, 70, Patet autem.

(11) I, 47, Adhuc. Rerum.

God Himself, for He understands Himself perfectly. It is fitting, then, that we deal first with the most noble object of metaphysics, and later with the less noble things. We shall, therefore, consider now the first being as it comes under metaphysical study.

The first being enters the field of metaphysical inquiry under various aspects. The passages which point to God as the object of metaphysics are the following:

In order to know the things that the reason can investigate concerning God, a knowledge of many things must already be possessed. For almost all of philosophy is directed towards the knowledge of God, and that is why metaphysics, which deals with divine things, is the last part of philosophy to be learned (12).

Although the first being, or God, is the object of metaphysical inquiry, and although He is the most noble of all things studied by metaphysics, He is not the first object of metaphysical apprehension. The knowledge of many other things must first be had. For this reason the other branches of philosophy must be studied first and then only can metaphysics lead us to a knowledge of divine things.

All of philosophy is, in a way, directed towards a knowledge of God, since it is the study of the universe and its causes. But everything in the universe is an effect of

(12) I, 4, Sequerentur.

the divine creation and as such is capable of leading one to the knowledge of the creator because of the cause-effect relationship. Since, however, metaphysics deals with God in a more proper way than the other branches of philosophy, having as it does God for its object of pre-eminence, it ought to be the last part of philosophy to be studied.

That all philosophy leads ultimately to a knowledge of God is expressed very tersely in the following passage: "Therefore the knowledge of God is the last end of all human knowledge and activity" (13). But if the knowledge of God is the last end of all human knowledge, it is much more so of metaphysics: "And moreover first philosophy is wholly directed to the knowledge of God as its last end, and is consequently called the divine science" (14). Not only is a knowledge of other things a prerequisite to the human knowledge of God but also a good deal of metaphysics itself.

If all of philosophy must be studied before metaphysics to prepare us for the study of the first being, then too in metaphysics itself we first must study its other objects before we approach the study of the first

(13) III, 25, Item. Quod.

(14) III, 25, Item. Quod.

being itself. For the knowledge of the first being is not achieved at the outset of metaphysics, but is rather its last end, i.e., it is that to which the whole study of metaphysics must eventually lead. If we are to interpret the word consequently of the passage just cited strictly, we are justified in saying that the reason why metaphysics is called a divine science is precisely that its last end is the knowledge of the first being; it eventually leads one to a knowledge of God.

God, as the object of metaphysics, is indicated in the following passage under a different aspect:

First philosophy is the science of truth, not of any truth, but of that truth which is the origin of all truth, namely, which belongs to the first principle whereby things are. The truth belonging to such a principle is clearly the source of all truth; for things have the same disposition in truth as in being (15).

Metaphysics is to study the truth that is the source of all truth, and the being that is the source of all being. These two are identical. But the source of all being and truth is the first being, the origin and first cause of all things. Therefore it is the object of metaphysical study.

(15) I, 1, Finis.

That God is the object of metaphysics is expressed laconically, even if parenthetically, in a chapter dealing with the divine wisdom:

Since, then, in God there is intellectual apprehension only, and since He understands nothing except by understanding Himself -- and to understand God means to be wise -- it follows that God acts in all things according to His wisdom (16).

To be wise here means to possess wisdom, sapientem esse; which in turn means to possess the science of wisdom or metaphysics. That God is the object of that science is so much a part of the thought of the author of the Summa Contra Gentiles that he feels free to mention in it an aside expression without further explanation.

Wisdom or metaphysics, as opposed to the knowledge of first principles and the sciences, is the source of man's ultimate happiness. Just as wisdom achieves its nobility from its most eminent object, so also it is because of this eminent object that it is capable of providing ultimate happiness for man. This is something the sciences cannot do: "It follows then that man's ultimate happiness consists in wisdom, based on the consideration of divine things" (17).

(16) II, 24, Voluntas. The translation of this passage is our own.

(17) III, 37, Non est. Cf. IV, 12, Et ut.

St. Thomas finds yet another aspect under which God enters the field of metaphysical speculation as its object. He says:

For if wisdom consists in the knowledge of the highest causes ... and if God especially knows Himself, and does not know anything, as has been proved, except by knowing Himself Who is the first cause of all things, it is manifest that wisdom must most especially be attributed to Him. ... The Philosopher also says in the beginning of the Metaphysics that wisdom is a divine possession, not a human one (18)

Metaphysics studies the highest causes of things. But since the first being is the first and highest cause of all things, he has a place of excellence in metaphysical inquiry. What is more, wisdom is, in the expression of Aristotle, a divine possession. The reason wisdom is found in God is the same as the reason it is found in man, that is, because of the knowledge of the first cause. God is the first cause of things, and He does know Himself. Just as God is the first being and all other things have the perfection of being in dependence on, and by participation in, the perfection of the first being, so also is wisdom primarily a perfection of the first being, and is found in finite things by participation and in dependence on the first being.

(18) I, 94, Si enim.

Among the objects of metaphysical study are included the last end and the first cause of the universe:

The name of the absolutely wise man, however, is reserved for him whose consideration is directed to the end of the universe, which is also the origin of the universe. That is why, according to the Philosopher, it belongs to the wise man to consider the highest causes (19).

To consider the ends of particular things belongs to wisdom that is only relatively such. Absolute wisdom or metaphysics considers the end of the whole universe. But the end of the universe is also its cause. So by studying the end of the universe one is fulfilling the function of wisdom given by Aristotle, namely, to consider the highest causes. This is only another aspect under which God is introduced into metaphysics, for it is He who is the last end and the first cause of the universe.

The first being is studied in metaphysics under the special aspect of truth:

Now, the end of each thing is that which is intended by its first author or mover. But the first author and mover of the universe is an intellect, as will be later shown. The ultimate end of the universe must, therefore, be ^{the} good of an intellect. This good is truth. Truth must consequently be the ultimate end of the whole universe, and the consideration of the wise man aims principally at truth. ... The Philosopher himself establishes that first philosophy is the science of truth, not of any truth, but of that truth

(19) I, 1, Multitudinis.

which is the origin of all truth, namely, which belongs to the first principle whereby all things are. The truth belonging to such a principle is, clearly, the source of all truth; for things have the same disposition in truth as in being (20).

The absolutely wise man considers the end and the cause of the universe, which is one and the same. Since the cause of the universe is an intellectual being (21) its end will be an intellectual good, which is truth. But this truth is the principle of all truth and of all things. It is divine truth, it is God Himself.

It is interesting to note how Aquinas, beginning with the ordering function of wisdom, develops it, and by his strict logical process arrives at the first being. It belongs to wisdom to order. To order, one must know the end or purpose of things, not only of particular things but especially of the whole universe. To know the end of the universe, one must know its cause. The end and cause of the universe is the first being. The first being, therefore, must necessarily be the object of metaphysical study (22).

(20) I, 1, *Finis autem*.

(21) "Quod Deus est intelligens" I, 44; "Quod Deus agit secundum suam sapientiam" II, 24.

(22) I, 1.

The object of wisdom or metaphysics may be known by man in a twofold manner, and so according to its origin in man, wisdom may be natural or supernatural, philosophical or theological. One is attained by the efforts of natural reason, the other by revelation. The object of both wisdoms is the truth of divine things. This is brought out by the following:

The intention of the wise man ought to be directed toward the twofold truth of divine things, and toward the destruction of the errors that are contrary to this truth. One kind of divine truth the investigation of the reason is competent to reach, whereas the other surpasses every effort of the reason (23).

And another passage which furnishes us with the basis for the distinction between natural and supernatural wisdom: "This revelation of the invisible things of God belongs to wisdom, which, properly speaking, is the knowledge of divine things"(24). Wisdom is the knowledge of God and things divine. But since here we are dealing with things inaccessible to the reason and revealed by God, it is rather supernatural wisdom that is meant in this passage.

The first being, then, is one of the objects of metaphysical study. It is, in fact, the object of pre-

(23) I, 9, Ex praemissis. Cf. II, 4, Si qua vero.

(24) III, 154, 1.

eminence and bestows on metaphysics a certain nobility among the sciences. The knowledge of this first being, which is God, is the purpose of all philosophy, especially of metaphysics. He is studied as the first truth, the highest cause, and the principle of the universe and its last end.

Finite Things

Since wise men are those who are trained in things both divine and human (25), metaphysics studies not only the first being but also secondary ones, as we have seen in the text quoted above (26). We shall now, therefore, approach the texts which might tell us more about this less noble object of metaphysics. Moreover, if the knowledge of the first being is the last end of metaphysics (27), then there must be other objects, the attainment of which would be the proximate end of metaphysical inquiry.

The Summa Contra Gentiles is not only a study of God but also of creatures:

(25) I, 6, Hi vero.

(26) I, 70, Patet autem. Cf. supra, p. 5.

(27) III, 25, Item. Quod.

We are aiming, then, to set out following the way of the reason and to inquire into what the human reason can investigate about God. In this aim the first consideration that confronts us is of that which belongs to God in Himself. The second consideration concerns the coming forth of creatures from God. The third concerns the ordering of creatures to God as their end (28).

This Summa is, however, in the words of its author, the work of a wise man: "And so ... I have the confidence to embark upon the work of a wise man, even though this may surpass my powers" (29). Thus the object of metaphysics is also finite being, considered under the aspect of its dependence on the first being as on its first cause and last end.

It is proper to metaphysics to study finite being. One of the aspects under which finite being is studied is its origin from the first being by creation:

Now, the first philosophers of nature, who shared the commonly received opinion that nothing is made from nothing, did not attain to the idea of such a making as this (the procession of all being from God). Or, if any of them conceived of it, they did not consider making properly speaking, since the word making implies motion or change, whereas in the origination of all being from one first being, the transmutation of one being into another is, as we have shown, inconceivable. And on this account it is the

(28) I, 9, Intendentibus.

(29) I, 2, Assumpta.

business not of the philosopher of nature to consider that origination, but of the metaphysician, who considers universal being and things existing apart from motion (30).

From a close study of this text one can see that this excludes from the domain of natural philosophy the consideration of the origin of all being from one first being. Such a consideration belongs to metaphysics. For the philosophers of nature are concerned with things under the aspect of movement and change (31). But the origin of all things from God is by way of creation, and not by the transmutation of one thing into another. In creation there is no generation and corruption but only the production of things ex nihilo (32).

(30) II, 37, Et hanc.

(31) "Communis enim philosophorum positio ponentium ex nihilo nihil fieri ... veritatem habet secundum illud fieri quod ipsi considerabant. ... Unde principium rerum perquirentes particulares factiones entium tantum consideraverunt, inquirentes qualiter vel hic ignis vel hic lapis fiat. Et ideo primi, magis extrinsece quam oporteret fieri rerum considerantes, posuerunt rem fieri solum secundum quasdam accidentales dispositiones ... dicentes per consequens fieri nihil esse nisi alterari, propter hoc quod ex ente in actu unumquodque fieri intelligebant." These philosophers, however, are philosophers of nature, for Aquinas continues: "... primi Naturales, quorum erat communis sententia, ex nihilo nihil fieri." II, 37.

(32) "Ex hoc autem apparet quod Deus res in esse produxit ex nullo praeexistente sicut ex materia" II, 16; "Hoc autem ostenso, manifestum est quod Dei actio, quae est absque materia praeiacente et creatio vocatur, non sit motus neque mutatio, proprie loquendo" II, 17.

It is well to note here that metaphysics, by studying the origin of things, does not encroach upon any particular science, for it is not concerned with the origin of things by generation and corruption, but with the ultimate origin of being as such by creation. For just as it is outside the province of natural philosophy to study the origin of things by creation it is likewise outside the province of metaphysics to study the fieri of things (33).

Furthermore, from the same text (34) it follows that metaphysics also studies things that are devoid of movement and change. From the immediate context it is apparent that by this is meant the procession of things by creation, and the things themselves that come to exist in this manner, as distinguished from the process of generation and corruption and the things that come to be in that manner. Things which receive their being immediately from

(33) "Et hanc quidem factionem non attigerunt primi Naturales, ... Vel, si qui eam attigerunt, non proprie nomen factionis ei competere consideraverunt, cum nomen factionis motum vel mutationem importet, in hac autem totius entis origine ab uno primo ente intelligi non potest transmutatio unius entis in aliud, ut ostensum est. Propter quod nec ad Naturalem Philosophum pertinet huiusmodi rerum originem considerare: sed ad Philosophum Primum, qui considerat ens commune et ea quae sunt separata a motu" II, 37.

(34) II, 37, Et hanc.

God by creation are the separate substances or angels (35) and the human soul (36). Both are independent of matter and movement (37).

Now we come to consider that part of the text (38) which is most important to us, that is, that it belongs to the metaphysician to consider common being. We have here merely the simple affirmation that common being is properly to be studied by metaphysics, without any further explanation. It is the traditional doctrine of the school that

(35) "Sed cum ... substantiae separatae intellectuales non sunt compositae ex materia et forma, non possunt causari nisi per modum creationis. Creare autem solius Dei est" II, 98, Cf. IV, 7, Item. Ex ostensis. "Substantiae autem separatae, scilicet angeli, propinquiores sunt, secundum naturam in qua creantur" IV, 95.

(36) "Quod anima humana producat in esse a Deo per creationem" II, 87; "... quia forma hominis, scilicet anima rationalis, immediate creatur a Deo..." IV, 97, Non debet.

(37) "Est igitur omnino dissimilis quidditas praedicta substantiis separatis, quae nullo modo sunt in materia" III, 41, Praeterea; "illa autem quae sunt Deo propinquissima, sunt omnino immobilia: scilicet substantiae separatae, quae maxime ad Dei similitudinem accedunt, qui est omnino immobilis" III, 72, Amplius. Quanto; "Quod anima non sit corpus" II, 65, Cf. IV, 82, Amplius. Quaecumque.

(38) II, 37, Et hanc.

common being, or ens inquantum ens, is the formal subject of metaphysics, and because of this, one might be inclined here to impose upon it a preconceived explanation. In order to avoid such a pitfall and to remain within the limits of the Summa Contra Gentiles, we shall quote and examine every passage of the Summa in which the expression ens commune occurs and study it under its aspect of being the object of metaphysical inquiry.

First of all, common being is not something existing by itself outside all other things. It does exist in the intellect as a universal concept. This common being cannot be God (39). It is something that all created things have in common (40). Furthermore, common being is something God knows through knowing His essence (41). But that is

(39) "Multo igitur minus et ipsum esse commune est aliquid praeter omnes res existentes nisi in intellectu solum. Si igitur Deus sit esse commune, Deus non erit aliqua res nisi quae sit in intellectu tantum. Ostensum autem est supra Deum esse aliquid non solum in intellectu, set in rerum natura. Non est igitur Deus ipsum esse commune omnium" I, 26, Adhuc.

(40) "Unde oportet quod, sicut effectus proprii reducuntur in causas proprias, ita id quod commune est in effectibus propriis, reducatur in aliquam causam communem... Omnibus autem commune est esse. Oportet igitur quod supra omnes causas sit aliqua causa cuius sit dare esse" II, 15, Adhuc.

(41) "Si igitur Deus, cognoscendo essentiam suam, perfecte cognoscit naturam communem entis, oportet quod

the way He knows things outside Himself. So common being is used with reference to created things. This is indicated more clearly in the chapter where St. Thomas speaks of the composition of finite things. He says:

Thus, matter and form divide natural substance, while potentiality and act divide common being. Accordingly, whatever follows upon potentiality and act, as such, is common to both material and immaterial created substances (42).

Common being is thus necessarily proper to things finite and created. It is much broader in extent than material substances for it includes the created immaterial substances as well. It cannot, however, in the sense in which it is explained here, be extended to include God, for common being is composed of act and potentiality, whereas in God there is no composition whatever, for He is pure act.

The differences or essential attributes of common being are the universal and the singular. Universal being is a concept and exists in the mind; singular being is the concrete existing thing from which the universal nature is abstracted. But both are essentially finite, and con-

perfecte cognoscat universale et singulare" I, 65, Amplius. Natura.

(42) II, 54, Sic igitur.

sequently, so is that common being of which these are essential differences (43).

God alone is the cause of universal being. It is an effect of the divine power through the knowledge of which man comes to know God (44). Furthermore, in support of the statement a reference is made to a chapter in Book II which treats of God as the cause of the being of all things (45). These considerations indicate that universal being has a finite connotation, for it is an effect of God in the universe and a perfection of created things.

In a passage in Book III we are told that God is

(43) "Sed universale et singulare sunt differentiae, vel per se passiones entis. Si igitur Deus, cognoscendo essentiam suam, perfecte cognoscit naturam communem entis, oportet quod perfecte cognoscat universale et singulare. Sicut autem non perfecte cognosceret universale si cognosceret intentionem universalitatis et non cognosceret rem universalem, ut hominem aut animal" I, 65, *Amplius, Natura*.

(44) "*Cuiuslibet effectus cogniti naturaliter homo scire causam desiderat. Intellectus autem humanus cognoscit ens universale. Desiderat igitur naturaliter cognoscere causam eius, quae solum Deus est, ut in Secundo probatum est*" III, 25, *Praeterea*.

(45) Here, as in most places, the reference of Aquinas himself indicates the Book only. The specifying of the exact chapter is the work and responsibility of the editors of the Leonine edition. Their accuracy, however, can hardly be questioned. The reference here is to II, 15.

the cause of being as being, with the specification that it has already been proved above (46). The reference, however, is to the same chapter that was referred to when dealing with God as the cause of universal being (47). What is more, that chapter deals with created being, as we have seen. Thus the expression ens inquantum ens seems to be closely related to universal or common being, and to have a finite connotation, as do these other notions. There is further confirmation of this. For we learn that the essential accidents of being as being are the one and the many (48). And here too ens inquantum ens is identified with ens universale.

However, the phrase ens inquantum ens is not limited to finite being in all the passages in which it occurs. It also has a signification which makes it something common to finite and infinite, created and uncreated being. First we have a text in which being as being is

(46) III, 75, Amplius. Cum.

(47) Aquinas' reference is simply supra. The exact Book and chapter indicated by the editors of the Leonine edition is II, 15.

(48) "Quicumque cognoscit naturam aliquam, cognoscit per se accidentia illius naturae. Per se autem accidentia entis, inquantum est ens, sunt unum et multa, ut probatur in IV Metaph." I, 50, Adhuc. Here the term "accident" is employed in a rather loose sense.

open to a two fold explanation: "That which accompanies every being belongs to being inasmuch as it is a being. This accompaniment must be found in a supreme way in that which is the first being" (49). Here, being as being may be explained as referring to created being since it appears to be something distinct from God. The perfections that are common to all created things are to be found in God in a pre-eminent way as in their exemplar and source. This explanation is favoured by the immediate context, for the illustration and proof, of which this excerpt is a part, proceed from creatures to God.

Yet, being as being may be understood as something common to God and creatures; for certain perfections are to be found in both God and creatures, in each according to their own manner, because these perfections are consequent upon the perfection of being as being, which, in turn, can be applied to God and creatures.

This interpretation receives support from another text where the meaning is unmistakably clear:

(49) "Illud quod consequitur omne ens, convenit enti inquantum est ens. Quod autem est huiusmodi, oportet quod in eo maxime inveniatur quod est primum ens" I, 72, Amplius.

Then, too, if there is a self-subsisting being, nothing belongs to it except that which is proper to a being inasmuch as it is a being. ... Now, to be caused by another does not appertain to a being inasmuch as it is being; otherwise, every being would be caused by another, so that we should have to proceed to infinity in causes (50).

Here, being as being is evidently not considered as a perfection proper to creatures, but is rather thought of as independent of being created or uncreated. It is a concept of a higher level of abstraction and as such, applies to all being, whether created or not. Such a concept, of course, may be applied to both God and creatures.

From these passages which deal with ens commune, ens universale and ens inquantum ens, it is apparent that in most cases they are considered as perfections of finite things. There are times, nevertheless, when these expressions signify a more abstract concept that applies to both created and uncreated things. Both of these aspects of being as being are the objects of metaphysics. The order, therefore, in which they are to be studied can be determined only by a study of the manner in which they are known by us.

(50) II, 52, Item. Si sit. Cf. G. M. BUCKLEY, M.M., The Nature and Unity of Metaphysics, p. 176.

Mention is further made of a new field of metaphysical inquiry, namely, the species of our knowing process:

For, since all arts and sciences have to do with things understood, it would follow that all sciences are about species existing in the possible intellect. And this is patently false, because no science, except logic and metaphysics, is concerned with such things. And yet, in all the sciences, whatever is known is known through those species (51).

This, however, is the only passage in the Summa in which reference is made to this subject. Could it be that St. Thomas envisaged the science that would treat of the mode of acquisition of human knowledge as a part of metaphysics? Such a conclusion would certainly be gratifying to a number of authors of text books on Thomistic philosophy whose opinion it is that the science of critics is a part of metaphysics, since it is concerned with being as being in so far as it is found in the human intellect (52).

Thus, finite things are studied in metaphysics in themselves and in their relation to the first being, but especially under the aspect of their perfection of being.

(51) II, 75, Ad 2. Cf. also IV, 11, Dico autem: "Unde et aliae scientiae sunt de rebus, et aliae de intentionibus intellectis."

(52) Cf. JOSEPHUS GRETT, O.S.B., Elementa Philosophiae ... II, p. 46; F. X. MACQUART, Elementa Philosophiae, III, pp. 9 ff.

The Mode of Acquiring Knowledge of the Objects
of Metaphysics

We see now the great diversity that exists among the objects of metaphysics, according to the doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles. At this point it is our task to establish some unity and order among them. This can best be done by studying the manner in which all these objects come to be known by us. Then we shall be in a position to determine the hierarchy of order and nobility that is to be found among them.

Both finite beings and the infinite being are to be studied by metaphysics. However, when we wish to determine how we acquire knowledge of them we must above all keep in mind that metaphysics is, like all other sciences, a natural human science and as such must, in the acquisition of the knowledge of its objects, follow the natural mode of the human intellect. This then is the basic manner in which the human intellect acquires its knowledge:

Again, since nature is always directed to one thing, of one power there must naturally be one object. ... Hence, the intellect, being one power, has one natural object, of which it has knowledge essentially and naturally. And this object must be one under which are included all things known by the intellect ... Now, this is none other than being (ens). Our

intellect, therefore, knows being naturally, and whatever essentially belongs to a being as such; and upon this knowledge is founded the knowledge of first principles, such as the impossibility of simultaneously affirming and denying, and the like. Thus, only these principles are known naturally by our intellect, while conclusions are known through them (53).

This passage deals with the very nature of the natural process of human knowing. It explains the fundamental and basic elements of natural human knowledge and, therefore, applies to anything and everything man is capable of knowing. From a close examination of the text we see that the intellect has one natural object. This object is known of itself and naturally. Everything else that the intellect knows is comprised under this one object; and this object is being -- ens. On the knowledge of this being is based the knowledge of the first and fundamental principles of all knowledge. Hence, everything that man knows, he knows under the aspect of being or on the basis of the principles derived from this knowledge of being. There are two things, therefore, which are known naturally by man. They are the perfection of being, and the first principles of knowledge which are founded on being. Natural knowledge here is not meant to be opposed to supernatural knowledge, but rather to acquired knowledge.

(53) II, 83, Adhuc. Cum natura.

Being and the first principles are the starting point, the major premise, as it were, of all naturally acquired knowledge. Everything else that is known by man is acquired under the aspect of the perfection of being, and on the basis of the first principles derived from the knowledge of being. And it is known, so to speak, by way of a conclusion from principles (54).

How does this doctrine of the process of human knowledge apply to or affect metaphysics? Very well, indeed. It is, in fact, very closely related to metaphysics. Perhaps St. Thomas, when writing about being as the natural object of the human intellect had metaphysics at the back of his mind (55). In any case, being, as such, is that

(54) "Patet igitur quod cognitio principiorum est nobis naturalis, non autem conclusionum. Quod autem non est naturale nobis, acquirimus per id quod est naturale. ... Non ergo conclusionum scientia est in nobis nisi ex principiis acquisita" II, 83, Praeterea. Si ita,

(55) Cf. E. GILSON, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, pp. 313-314. Here Gilson has an explanation which is reminiscent of the text on the process of human understanding that we quoted above (II, 83, Adhuc. Cum natura; cf. supra, pp. 28-29) and seems to be a commentary on it. He too applies the natural object of the human intellect to metaphysics, for he says that since being is the first principle of human knowledge, and since metaphysics deals with the first principles and the first causes, it follows, then, that being is a fortiori the first principle of metaphysics. It is certain, therefore, he continues, that metaphysics is the science of being as being. No reference is given to the Summa Contra Gentiles.

which metaphysics properly studies. But since everything that the intellect knows is comprised under its one natural object -- being, so also, everything that metaphysics studies, it does so under the aspect of the perfection of being; and this applies to both, the finite and the infinite bearers of being.

The context of the passage we just quoted is also very important to us. In that chapter St. Thomas is intent on showing that the origin of the human soul is simultaneous with that of the body which it informs. One of the proofs offered for the simultaneity of origin of soul and body is based on the natural human way of acquiring knowledge. If the soul had an existence previous to that of the body it would possess some knowledge which it would have acquired in such a previous existence, as Plato maintained. Such, however, is not the case, for the only knowledge men actually possess is such as the soul acquires through the senses. But the knowledge that the soul acquires through the senses, it did not have before its union with the body.

Relevant to our study is Aquinas' insistence upon the role of sense knowledge in human understanding. It will help us determine the mode in which we acquire knowledge of the diverse objects of metaphysics. St. Thomas

has two closely knit theories of Plato to disprove. One is the reincarnation of the human soul; the other is that human knowledge is a mere reminiscing. St. Thomas' position is clearly indicated thus:

That which we acquire through the senses did not exist in the soul before its union with the body. But our knowledge of principles themselves is derived from sensible things; if, for instance, we had not perceived some whole by our senses, we would be unable to understand the principle that the whole is greater than its parts; even as a man born blind is utterly insensible of colours. Therefore, neither did the soul prior to its union with the body have any knowledge of principles; much less of other things (56).

In this rather sweeping statement, Aquinas insists that even our knowledge of first principles is dependent upon our knowledge of sensory things. However, in the paragraph preceding this passage, he says that our knowledge of first principles is dependent on our knowledge of being which is the one natural object of our intellect (57). It follows, therefore, that, to his mind, the ens which is the natural object of our intellect and the object of metaphysics is the being of sensory and finite things. This conclusion is of paramount importance for it pins down for

(56) II, 83, Præterea. Id quod.

(57) "Naturaliter igitur intellectus noster cognoscit ens, et ea quae sunt per se entis inquantum huiusmodi; in qua cognitione fundatur primorum principiorum notitia, ut non esse simul affirmare et negare, et alia huiusmodi" II, 83, Adhuc. Cum natura.

us the elusive concept of being. It determines for us the manner of acquisition of all human knowledge and also of the objects of metaphysics. Everything that we study in metaphysics, we come to know by beginning with sensory things. For all our knowledge is based on the first principles. But these principles themselves are dependent on our knowledge of sensible things.

Remaining within the context of Aquinas' discussion with the Platonists on the origin of the soul, we find another passage in which the process of human knowledge is set in sharp relief:

It must be said that the human soul either needs the senses or does not need them. Now, experience seems to show clearly that the former is true. ... Furthermore, if the human soul does not require the senses in order to understand, then sensitive and intellective cognition in man would have no ordered relationship to one another. But experience demonstrates the contrary; for our senses give rise to memories, and from these we obtain experiential knowledge of things, which in turn is the means through which we come to an understanding of the universal principles of sciences and arts (58).

(58) II, 83, Item. Necesse est. The latter part of this passage is a quotation from Aristotle. On another occasion, while discussing an Avicennian theory, St. Thomas, again quoting from Aristotle, has something similar to say on the origin of human knowledge in just as emphatic terms: "This is part of the Platonic doctrine and is contrary to the order in which art and science come to birth in the mind as Aristotle explains it ... where he says that 'memory results from sensation; one experience from many memories; from many experiences the

All sciences begin with the first principles of understanding. But again it is unequivocally stated that for a knowledge of these principles we are dependent on sense experience. The manner, then, in which we acquire our knowledge of the objects of metaphysics must necessarily follow the pattern of beginning with finite sensory things.

How does our dependence for knowledge on sensory things affect our knowledge of the first being in metaphysics? Is our knowledge of the first being acquired through such a lowly process? The answer is decidedly in the affirmative. If we are to remain within the realm of human nature, there is no way in getting around the senses and sensory things. For our natural knowledge of God must begin with the natural object of our intellect, which is the perfection of being of finite things, and with the first principles, which are derived from our knowledge of sensory things. Hence, it remains even for our knowledge of the infinite being to be derived from finite things.

This conclusion finds confirmation in the many passages in the Summa which speak of both the dependence of our knowledge on sensible things in general, and our

universal apprehension which is the beginning of science and art!" II, 76, Item. Secundum hoc.

dependence for knowledge of things divine on finite beings in particular. Here is an excellent text in point:

For, according to its manner of knowing in the present life, the intellect depends on the sense for the origin of knowledge; and so those things that do not fall under the senses cannot be grasped by the human intellect except in so far as the knowledge of them is gathered from sensible things. Now, sensible things cannot lead the human intellect to the point of seeing in them the nature of the divine substance; for sensible things are effects that fall short of the power of their cause. Yet, beginning with sensible things, our intellect is led to the point of knowing about God that He exists, and other such characteristics that must be attributed to the First Principle. There are, consequently, some intelligible truths about God that are open to the human reason; but there are others that absolutely surpass its power (59).

So, if the infinite being, God, is to be known by us in a natural way at all, He will be known only through sensible things considered under the aspect of their perfection of being.

Furthermore, in the speculative sciences, to which metaphysics belongs, God is known by way of demonstration (60) through a syllogism, which implies a knowledge of first principles that are derived from a knowledge of being as found in finite things. An acquisition of such an

(59) I, 3, Quod autem. Other passages dealing with the human knowledge of God are the following: I, 8, Considerandum; I, 11; I, 31, Exquo; I, 33, Item; I, 35; II, 3, Est etiam; III, 2, Amplius. Si; III, 47, Quamvis; IV, 1; IV, 12, Et ut.

(60) "... in cognitione Dei qua cognoscitur per viam demonstrationis in scientiis speculativis" III, 48, Si

ordered knowledge of God, however, is not to be deemed a facile task requiring no effort. On the contrary, it is usually attained only after a good deal of study. Many, in fact, never attain it because of a lack of the physical dispositions required for such work, or because of the impelling necessities of daily life, or because of indolence. Hence, the necessity of divine revelation (61). Apropos of this, Aquinas has a favorite expression which he borrows from Aristotle and which occurs here and there throughout the Summa: "The human intellect is related to the prime beings, which are most evident in their nature, as the eye of an owl is related to the sun" (62).

The Hierarchy of Order of the Objects of Metaphysics

Having seen the manner in which we acquire our knowledge of the objects, both finite and infinite, of metaphysics, we can now easily determine the hierarchy of order

ergo. Cf. II, 83, Praeterea Si, and Adhuc. Cum natura; the natural object of the human intellect is being, and the first principles of being. Knowledge of all other things is acquired by way of conclusions from these principles. Such, then, is also our knowledge of God.

(61) I, 4, Sequerentur.

(62) I, 3, Huic; I, 11, Praedicta; et al.

that exists among these diverse objects, or more specifically, to determine in what sense God is first and in what sense finite being is first. This problem is related to the one we have just discussed and an implicit solution is contained in it.

What, then, comes first in the order of our knowledge, God or finite being? From what we have already seen it ought to be sufficiently clear that being, as found in finite things, exercises a certain priority and takes precedence over the infinite being in relation to our knowledge. For being, as found in finite things, is the natural object of the human intellect and is, therefore, the first thing the intellect comprehends. If the intellect is to know anything at all, it must first attain that which is its natural and per se object.

The knowledge of God, therefore, by the human intellect in metaphysics must necessarily be posterior to the knowledge of finite being. This is already apparent from what we said above on the manner in which God is attained by us, namely, our dependence on sensible things for our knowledge of things divine. There are other passages in the Summa which indicate the posteriority of our knowledge of God to that of finite things:

And that we may obtain knowledge of things divine from human things, it behoves us to observe that in

man wisdom is a habit perfecting our mind in the knowledge of the highest -- namely divine -- things (63).

Furthermore: "In the teaching of philosophy which considers creatures in themselves and leads us from them to the knowledge of God, the first consideration is about creatures the last, of God" (64). Thus, it is clear that first in the order of our knowledge are finite beings; and it is only through them that we can attain knowledge of the infinite being.

All of philosophy is concerned with creatures as such:

For human philosophy considers them (creatures) as they are, so that the different parts of philosophy are found to correspond to the different genera of things. ... The philosopher considers such things as belong to them by nature. ... For the philosopher takes his argument from the proper causes of things; the believer, from the first cause (65).

It is proper to the philosopher to consider creatures in themselves and in their causes. In this he is opposed to the theologian who begins with God and descends to creatures. So, he must of necessity begin with creatures and ascend to God. The knowledge of God is, after all,

(63) IV, 12, Et ut.

(64) II, 4, Exinde etiam.

(65) II, 4.

the last end of metaphysics (66). This posteriority, however, of the first being in the order of our metaphysical knowledge is in no wise detrimental to the perfection of the first being. For this relegation of the first being to a secondary position does not indicate any imperfection on its part, but only on the part of our manner of acquiring knowledge.

The infinite being does in fact retain its particular position of primacy, namely, the primacy of nobility. This primacy belongs to it because it is the most noble of all the objects of metaphysics; it is this first being that makes metaphysics the queen of the sciences, and a wisdom, by raising it from the study of created things to the knowledge of the last end, the highest cause, and things divine (67). This nobility of the infinite being in metaphysics is enhanced by the fact that it is also the last end of this science; it is its purpose of being. And this is no mean distinction, as anyone acquainted with the importance of the finis in Thomistic philosophy will agree.

In concluding our study on the object of metaphysics as taught in the Summa Contra Gentiles, we present

(66) III, 25, Item. Quod. Cf. supra, p. 9.

(67) I, 70, Patet autem. Cf. supra, p. 6.

a brief summary of the conclusions attained. We note again that the term object is employed by us in a very broad sense, meaning all that in any way comes under metaphysical consideration. We refrain from the specialized use of the terms subject, subject-genus, object and their divisions and sub-divisions, since no mention of them is made in the Summa Contra Gentiles (68). In speaking of the things that are proper to metaphysics to study, Aquinas uses such expressions as insistit circa, versatur circa, consistit in, considerationem suam extendit ad, ordinatur ad, considerat, cuius consideratio est, and the like.

Metaphysics, then, has among its objects besides the first being, also finite beings under the aspect of their dependence on the first being as on their principle and end. This also includes the separate immaterial substances. It also studies ens commune or ens inquantum ens. These expressions have a finite connotation, that is,

(68) That vocabulary, to the best of our knowledge, is not the vocabulary of St. Thomas himself, but belongs rather to his commentators. This fact seems to have been overlooked by some of our present-day Thomists. Most of them are dependent for this vocabulary on Fr. R.M. Martin, O.P., who elaborated it in an article entitled, "L'objet integral de la theologie d'après S. Thomas et les scolastiques." Fr. Martin himself was well aware of the true source of the subject-and-object vocabulary. In his article he makes but three references to a single work of St. Thomas, that is to the Summa Theologiae. The bulk of his footnotes consists of passages from Capreolus, Cajetan and John of St. Thomas.

they are studied as perfections of finite being, but can also be envisaged as applying to created and uncreated being. The perfection of being as found in finite things is known in metaphysics as its first object, upon which all our consequent knowledge is dependent. The infinite being itself is attained only on the basis of our knowledge of the being of finite things. Its existence must be demonstrated. In relation to our knowledge, the being of finite things is, in metaphysics, that which is first known and through which all else that is known, is known. God is the singular object of pre-eminence, the most noble being any metaphysician can hope to attain.

The unifying element of these so distant objects of metaphysics is the perfection of being. Metaphysics studies all its objects under this aspect. The unifying force of being is so great that it brings together in one science the most perfect being, the first being and cause of all being, and the least perfect of beings, beings in potentiality. For in metaphysics we can attain a concept of being which would apply to both God and creatures.

This all-embracing concept of being is of great importance to metaphysics for it makes metaphysics what it is. Such a notion of being is acquired by beginning with the natural object of our intellect, which is by studying

the perfection of being as found in things that come under our sense perception. All our knowledge proceeds in this manner and so must also our acquisition of the concept of being. Since, however, our metaphysical inquiry begins with sensible things, we possess at the beginning of metaphysics a concept of being which is limited, as far as our knowledge is concerned, to finite things. The existence of God is not known at the beginning of metaphysics, but must be proved in the course of that science, by means of a syllogism. And until this existence is established, we have no way of knowing that the concept of being which we acquire from finite things can apply to the infinite being also. The concept of being common to God and creatures is had, consequently, only at the term of metaphysics. It implies the process of abstraction (69). If we wish, therefore, to speak of the object of metaphysics in the sense of that which is first known and through which all else is known, we cannot say that it is ens inquantum ens as applicable to God and creatures, but only that it is ens inquantum ens as exclusively proper to finite things.

(69) I, 26, Adhuc: "Much less, then, is common being itself something outside of existing things, save only for being in the intellect!" Cf. II, 37, Communis.

CHAPTER II

THE ANALOGY OF BEING

From our study of the object of metaphysics, we have seen that its principal concern is the perfection of being; at the initial stage, it is the being of finite things; at the final stage, it is the being of God. Being is a perfection found in every thing, and when it is considered only in so far as it is being, the one concept of it can apply to all things, created and uncreated. It is the unifying element of the diverse objects of metaphysics. Yet there must be a difference in the mode in which this same perfection is found in things created and in the Creator. For how does it come about that the same perfection is found in such diverse subjects? The explanation of the relation of the being of finite things to that of God is to be found in the doctrine of the analogy of being.

In present-day Thomistic philosophy, perfections may be predicated of two or more things in common by the analogy of attribution, of proper proportionality, or by a mixed or composite analogy. This terminology originates from Thomas de Vio Cajetan, and it has become an integral

part of Thomism (1). We do not, therefore, expect to find this terminology in the Summa Contra Gentiles. What we are interested in is the doctrine itself by means of which St. Thomas explains the common possession of being by both God and creatures.

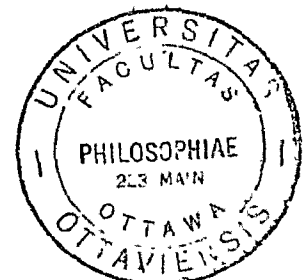
The Analogy of Causal Relation

In this Summa there is a chapter which expressly deals with the question of the analogy between God and creatures. It is entitled: "That names said of God and creatures are said analogically" (2). And in the opening paragraph Aquinas says that the perfections which are "said of God and creatures are predicated neither univocally nor equivocally but analogically, that is, according to an order or reference to something one" (3). But this type of analogy, which consists of an order to something one is twofold. For, St. Thomas continues:

(1) Cf. M. PENIDO, *Le rôle de l'analogie...* This author elaborates the doctrine of analogy of Cajetan, and his work has become a classic on that subject.

(2) I, 34. The two chapters preceding this one deal with the doctrine that nothing is said of God and other things univocally, and that not all names are said of God and creatures in a purely equivocal way.

(3) I, 34, *Sic igitur*.



This can take place in two ways. In one way according as many things have reference to something one. Thus with reference to one health we say that an animal is healthy as the subject of health, medicine is healthy as its cause, food as its preserver, urine as its sign.

In another way, the analogy can obtain according as the order or reference of two things is not to something else but to one of them. Thus, a being is said of substance and accident according as an accident has reference to a substance, and not according as substance and accident are referred to a third thing (4).

In the case of perfections in God and creatures, the analogy between them is not "according to the first mode of analogy, since then we should have to posit something prior to God, but according to the second mode" (5).

These two types of analogy, as explained in the Summa Contra Gentiles, have the makings of what today is called, in scholastic philosophy, the analogy of attribution. In both these cases the perfection concerned is explicitly stated to be found in one subject only (6). The same perfection is said of the others simply because of their relation to the perfection in the first subject, through causality. Thus, to use Aquinas' illustrations,

(4) I, 34, Quod quidem; and Alio modo.

(5) I, 34, Huiusmodi.

(6) In the illustration of substance and accident, St. Thomas restricts the being of accidents as though it were caused by the substance. We do know, however, from his other works, that he admits accidents to be beings. He does not mention it here in order that the illustration would fit his explanation of the analogy of causal relation.

health is found only in the animal; medicine is said to be healthy only because of its causal relation to the health found in the animal. And being is said of accident only with reference to being in the substance, in dependence on which the accident has its being.

The first type of this analogy is rejected with reference to the perfections found in God and creatures not because it manifests causality but rather because in it many things are said to have a reference to something one, which, of course, cannot be said of God. The second type of analogy does away with such a reference, but still retains the notion of causality. The only reference that remains is that of one subject of the perfection to the other as the relation of accident to the substance.

The causal dependence in the analogy which St. Thomas expressly attributes to God and creatures is made more clear in another passage. Thus, with reference to the perfection of being, he says:

For whatever does not belong to a thing as such appertains to it through some cause, as white to man; that which has no cause is primary and immediate, so that it must needs be through itself and as such. But no single entity can as such belong to two things and to both of them. ... Therefore, no single thing can possibly be predicated of two things so as to be said of neither of them by reason of a cause. On the contrary, either the one must be the cause of the other ... or some third thing must be the cause of both. ... But being is predicated of everything that

is. Hence, there cannot possibly be two things neither of which has a cause of its being, but either both of them must exist through a cause, or the one must be the cause of the other's being. Everything which is in any way at all must then derive its being from that whose being has no cause. But we have already shown that God is this being whose existence has no cause. Everything which is in any mode whatever, therefore, is from Him. Now, to say that being is not a univocal predicate argues nothing against this conclusion. For being is not predicated of beings equivocally, but analogically, and thus a reduction to one must be made (7).

The only apology we have to offer for this lengthy citation is its importance. This text is parallel to the one above where St. Thomas speaks expressly of analogy, since in both these texts he is concerned with predicating perfections of God and creatures. Instead of the substance-accident illustration, he here deals directly with God and creatures in their relation to being. And he expressly mentions analogy at the close of this passage.

God, then, is the uncaused being. And the only reason why creatures have being is that it was caused in them by God. Thus, this is an analogy based on efficient causality. "A reduction to one" is made, since all things are related, because of their caused being, to their one principle of being -- God. God is the principle of created being (8).

(7) II, 15, Omne enim.

(8) The dependence of finite things on God as the

This analogy which manifests causal relation is the ~~only~~one that Aquinas calls an analogy, without, of course, any further specification. It is, however, evidently the analogy which today goes by the name of attribution. Would we be justified then, to conclude, on the basis of a term, that the only explanation St. Thomas has to offer for the possession of the perfection of being by God and creatures in common is this analogy of causal dependence or attribution? It seems very unlikely.

The Analogy of Intrinsic Possession

Another explanation of the multiple predication of a single perfection is that which is, since Cajetan, called the analogy of proper proportionality. It applies to cases where a single perfection is found in two subjects, with the difference that one possesses it in a more excellent way than the other or others. Now, with reference to the perfection of being, if by this is meant that God is His own being and that creatures have being, by participation, and yet that being is an intrinsic

cause of their being is concisely expressed in another passage thus: "Sed res aliae relative dicuntur ad Deum: utpote secundum suum esse, quod a Deo habent, ... ab ipso dependentes" II, 11, Item. Non. But this point hardly need be stressed in Thomistic philosophy.

perfection of both, then, we must admit, the doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles gives such an analogy strong support, not in name, to be sure, but in substance.

There are several passages which indicate clearly that the perfection found in and attributed to creatures, is intrinsically possessed by them as well as by God.

Thus, Aquinas says:

In every genus, furthermore, there is something that is most perfect for that genus, acting as a measure for all other things in the genus. For each thing is shown to be more or less perfect according as it approaches more or less to the measure of its genus. ... Now, the measure of all beings cannot be other than God, Who is His own being (9).

God is, so to speak, the most perfect in the genus of being; all other things have being according as they approach to God; their perfection of being is measured by His perfection of being. Evidently, being is a perfection possessed intrinsically by God and by creatures; by God, of course, in a much more excellent way.

Then, there is a text which shows that the causal relation is not the only one which exists between the perfections of God and creatures. This text, it seems to us, comes the closest of all in expressing the substance of what is called the analogy of proper proportionality:

(9) I, 28, Item.

We have said that all the perfections found in other things are attributed to God in the same way as effects are found in their equivocal causes. These effects are in their causes virtually, ... So, too, the perfections of all things which belong to the rest of things through diverse forms, must be attributed to God through one and the same power in Him. This power is nothing other than His essence. ... Thus, therefore, God is called wise not only in so far as He produces wisdom but also because in so far as we are wise we imitate to some extent the power by which He makes us wise. On the other hand, God is not called a stone, even though He has made stones, because in the name stone there is understood a determinate mode of being according to which a stone is distinguished from God. But the stone imitates God as its cause in being and goodness, and other such characteristics as do the rest of creatures (10).

The diverse perfections of creatures are found in God, through His essence. They are, therefore, intrinsic to both God and creatures. With regard to God, these perfections are said of Him not only because He is the cause of them in creatures, but also because He possesses the perfections intrinsically, and creatures imitate them. The causal relation, in fact, is not enough to posit a perfection in God, and for that reason God cannot be called a stone. An intrinsic possession is required in God. Thus, even a stone imitates the intrinsic perfections of God, such as being and goodness, and itself possesses these perfections intrinsically. From this passage, then, it is made manifest beyond the shadow of a doubt that the causal relation, or of attribution, is not sufficient,

(10) I, 31, Sic enim. Cf. I, 29, Effectus enim.

according to the Summa Contra Gentiles, to explain the analogy between God and creatures. But whenever St. Thomas does speak of the intrinsic possession of a perfection by God and creatures, he also mentions the causal relation.

Now, with reference to being, it is said in this Summa that God possesses the perfections of creatures in a more excellent way:

Since it is possible to find in God every perfection of creatures, but in another and more eminent way, whatever names unqualifiedly designate a perfection without defect are predicated of God and of other things: for example, goodness, wisdom, being, and the like (11).

This definitely points to an intrinsic possession on the part of both God and creatures.

Pursuing the same thought of intrinsic possession, we find that "that which is found in God perfectly is found in other things according to a certain diminished participation ... Thus, the creature has what belongs to God and, consequently, is rightly said to be like God" (12).

St. Thomas introduces a new terminology to explain the analogy between God and creatures; it is that of

(11) I, 30, Quia enim. And, in similar vein: "Oportet igitur quicquid actu est in quacunque re alia, inveniri in Deo multo eminentius quam sit in re illa, non autem e converso" I, 28, Amplius. Nihil.

(12) I, 29, Secundum.

priority (*per prius*) and posteriority (*per posterius*):

Now nothing is predicated of God and creatures as though they were in the same order, but, rather, according to priority and posteriority. For all things are predicated of God essentially. For God is called being as being entity itself, and He is called good as being goodness itself. But in other beings predications are made by participation, as Socrates is said to be a man not because he is humanity itself, but because he possesses humanity (13).

In this passage, then, per prius and per posterius are employed to designate not only the intrinsic possession of a perfection, but also to designate the superior mode according to which the perfection is found in God. God is being; creatures have being. Thus, the terms by priority and by posteriority do not argue only an analogy of causal relation, but also one of intrinsic possession of a perfection, or as it is commonly called, the analogy of proper proportionality (14).

(13) I, 32, *Adhuc. Quod.*

(14) In I, 34, *Sic igitur quia*, Aquinas uses the terms by priority and by posteriority with reference to God. The perfections said of God and creatures belong "by priority in God according to His mode of being." The meaning of the name itself belongs to God by posteriority, since the names of perfections are taken from created things. The "by priority" application indicates not only intrinsic possession of a perfection, but also a more eminent perfection on the part of God. And we underline here the fact that this is found in the chapter where St. Thomas is apparently dealing with the analogy of causal relation. For a discussion on the meaning of per prius and per posterius in the analogy of Thomistic philosophy see J. LE ROUELLEC, C.S.Sp., Problèmes Philosophiques, pp. 126-129.

Mixed Analogy

We would now like to consider several passages which seem to point to a mixed analogy, that is, which mention both the causal relation and the intrinsic possession of perfections on the part of God and creatures.

With regard to the perfection of being, elements of the two types of analogy -- attribution and proper proportionality -- are contained in the body of a proof which St. Thomas gives to substantiate his assertion that God is to all things the cause of being. It runs as follows:

Furthermore, whatever a thing possesses by its own nature, and not from some other cause, cannot be diminished and deficient in it. ... Therefore, whatever belongs to one thing less than to others belongs to it not by virtue of its own nature alone, but through some other cause. Thus, that thing of which a genus is chiefly predicated will be the cause of everything in that genus. ... But as we proved in Book I, God is being in the highest mode. Therefore, He is the cause of all things of which being is predicated (15).

Being is an intrinsic perfection of finite things. But they possess it not only by virtue of their own nature, but also because it is caused in them by God. Hence, they possess being in a less perfect way than God does. On the other hand, being is an intrinsic perfection of God because

(15) II, 15, Amplius. Quod.

the "genus" of being is chiefly predicated of Him; He possesses it by His own nature. Hence, He possesses being in the highest mode. In this passage, Aquinas paraphrases the axiom, propter quod unumquodque tale, et illud magis, which evidently indicates intrinsic perfection. It is apparent, then, that we have here all the elements of the analogy called the analogy of proper proportionality.

Still, there is more. For the causal relation is also indicated; being is caused in finite things by God since in the former, being is not possessed as part of the nature. This brings out the analogy of attribution.

In the same chapter there is another text which sets before our eyes the two types of analogy that is found between God and creatures with reference to being. It states that since God is being by His essence, and everything else is being by participation, God is the cause of being to all other things (16). Both possess being intrinsically, each in a different manner, and one is the cause of the being of the other.

(16) "Quod per essentiam dicitur, est causa omnium quae per participationem dicuntur. ... Deus autem est ens per essentiam suam: quia est ipsum esse. Omne autem aliud ens est ens per participationem. ... Deus igitur est causa essendi omnibus aliis" II, 15, Item. quod.

The fact that Aquinas attributes to God the exercise of the axiom that the good is diffusive of itself and of being (17) renders manifest that God possesses being and goodness, and causes it in others.

All these passages on the relation that exists between creatures and God because of their common possession of perfections, especially that of being, disclose the Summa Contra Gentiles' doctrine on analogy of being. When speaking expressly of analogy, St. Thomas has in mind what is called the analogy of attribution; but his further explanations go beyond this analogy of causal relation and postulate what is called the analogy of proper proportionality.

(17) "Propter quod dicitur bonum esse diffusivum sui et esse. Haec autem diffusio Deo competit" I, 37, Amplius.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF METAPHYSICS

The Origin and Source of Metaphysics

In order to obtain a more complete picture of the science of metaphysics as it existed in the mind of the Angelic Doctor and as he expressed it in the Summa Contra Gentiles, we propose now to devote a chapter to the study of the nature of metaphysics. We shall, thus, consider the origin and source of metaphysics in man, the proper function that is attributed to metaphysics, and the effects it is capable of producing in the one who possesses it.

How, then, does man come by the science of metaphysics? In the last analysis, he is dependent for it upon Him who is wise by His essence. For just as man is dependent on God for his being (1) and in his action (2), so also is he dependent on God for his knowledge and wisdom: "... all wisdom and understanding is caused in every intelligent being by the supreme God; nor can any intellect understand anything except by God's power, even as no agent can act except in so far as it acts by God's

(1) "Quod Deus sit omnibus causa essendi" II, 15.

(2) "Quod Deus est causa operandi omnibus operantibus" III, 67.

power" (3). A parallel is here established by St. Thomas between our dependence on God in wisdom and our dependence on Him in being and action. To properly appreciate the former, we must first understand the latter. The gist of the doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles on the dependence of finite things in being and action on the first being is the following.

Everything that in any way exists, has its being in dependence upon that which does not have a cause of its own being. Since it is God Who has no cause of His being, everything that exists has its being from Him. God is the greatest being, being above all and is therefore the cause of all being. God is being by His essence; everything else is being by participation. By His actuality and His perfection, God contains all the perfections of things and is thus virtually all things, and therefore the maker of all things. The imperfect originate from the perfect; but God is the most perfect being (4).

(3) III, 76, Item. In.

(4) "Oportet igitur quod ab illo cui nihil est causa essendi, sit omne illud quod quocumque modo est. Deum autem supra ostendimus huiusmodi ens esse cui nihil sit causa essendi. Ab eo igitur est omne quod quocumque modo est. ... Deus autem est maxime ens, ... Ipse igitur est causa omnium de quibus ens praedicatur. ... Deus autem est ens per essentiam suam. ... Omne autem aliud ens est ens per participationem. ... Ipse autem sua actualitate et perfectione omnes rerum perfectiones comprehendit... et sic

Furthermore, as concerns the activity of created agents, all the power of every agent is from God as from the first principle of all perfection. Just as God gave being to things not only at their creation, but causes being in them as long as they exist by preserving them in being, so also not only did He give operative powers to things at their creation, but continually causes them in things. God is the first unmoved mover, the cause of all movement (5).

This dependence, fundamental as it is, does not, however, deprive things from acting, so to speak, on their own, and from exercising their own powers. It is true that the first being alone is the cause of being as such, since he alone has the power to bring things into being by creation (6). But all things that exist do not necessarily receive their being direct from God:

est virtualiter omnia. Est igitur ipse omnium factivus. ... Imperfecta a perfectis sumunt originem. ... Deus autem est perfectissimum ens. ... Ipse igitur est omnibus causa essendi" II, 15.

(5) "Omnis autem virtus cuiuscumque agentis est a Deo, sicut a primo principio omnis perfectionis. ... Sicut autem Deus non solum dedit esse rebus cum primo esse incoeperunt sed quandiu sunt, esse in eis causat, res in esse conservans. ... Primum autem principium utriusque motus est Deus. Est enim primum movens omnino immobile" III, 67.

(6) "Quod solius Dei est creare" II, 21.

Nor is it necessary that whatever has a form by way of participation receive it from that which is a form essentially; for it may receive it immediately from something having a like form in a like manner, namely, by participation ... (7).

For, although God alone is the cause of the esse of things, created things can be the cause of their fieri, or becoming (8). By virtue of being in act, created things retain their power of acting: "Since, then, by the act which is in us we can proceed not only to actions abiding in us, such as understanding and willing, but also to actions which terminate in things outside of us, and through which certain things are made by us" (9). Secondary causes, then, are not deprived of their acting power (10). In fact created things by nature tend to imitate God by being causes of things as He Himself is (11).

So too, then, must it be with wisdom. Fundamentally, man depends for it on the first being. This depend-

(7) III, 69, Neque etiam. This whole chapter deals with the proper activity of creatures. Cf. especially Adhuc. Quod; and Item. Sicut.

(8) "Nullum igitur corpus est causa esse alicuius rei inquantum est esse, sed est causa eius quod est moveri ad esse, quod est fieri rei" III, 65, Adhuc. Licet.

(9) II, 6, Adhuc. Quanto.

(10) "...divina operatio non excludit operationes causarum secundarum" III, 77, Item. Cf. III, 70, Neque est.

(11) "Quod res intendunt naturaliter assimilari Deo in hoc quod est causa" III, 21.

ence, however, does not exclude, but rather takes for granted, recourse to secondary causes on the part of the first being in causing wisdom in man. For this reason, man is not dispensed from a personal effort in acquiring wisdom by his natural knowing process. No kind of infusion of wisdom into our minds by God is implied.

There is, however, another aspect of the relation between the divine wisdom and human, namely, that of participation. As all perfections found in creatures are imitations of and participations in the divine perfections, so also is wisdom, for "all human wisdom and goodness flow from the divine wisdom and goodness, and are a kind of likeness thereof" (12). Furthermore, "in whatsoever way we become like to a divine perfection, that particular perfection is said to be given to us. Thus God gives us wisdom, according as in any ^{way} we become like the divine wisdom" (13). Moreover, "God is called wise not only in so far as He produces wisdom, but also because, in so far as we are wise, we imitate to some extent the power by which He makes us wise (14). Thus, it is apparent that when we speak of wisdom being given to us by God we mean

(12) III, 102, Praeterea. Cf. IV, 8, 9.

(13) IV, 21, Considerandum.

(14) I, 31, Sic enim.

that God is the exemplary cause of our wisdom; our wisdom is modelled on His; we share in His wisdom. None of this, however, effects in any way our natural process of acquiring wisdom.

As in the acquisition of all our knowledge, so also with wisdom, we must begin with creatures, even if wisdom does, in the end, lead us to a knowledge of God:

First, because meditation on His works enables us in some measure to admire and reflect upon His wisdom. ... Now, God has brought things into being by His wisdom ... Hence, from reflection upon God's works we are able to infer His wisdom, since by a certain communication of His likeness, it is spread abroad in the things He has made (15).

Since all created things reflect the divine wisdom, and since human wisdom is a participation of the divine, human wisdom is acquired by a consideration of creatures. This also indicates clearly the order among the objects of wisdom from the point of view of our attaining them.

Since human wisdom is a participation of divine wisdom, it follows that in God wisdom is identified with the divine essence, whereas in man it is an accident:

Now we assert that God's wisdom is His essence, while our wisdom is something additional to the essence, not as though the divine wisdom falls short of ours, but because God's essence so transcends ours, that such things as wisdom and justice which in us are not

(15) II, 2, Primo. Cf. II, 2, Quarto; II, 24; IV, 13, Sed quia.

essential to our being, belong to God perfectly by reason of His essence. Consequently whatever belongs to us in respect of our essence and wisdom as mutually distinct, must be ascribed to God in respect of His essence as identical: and the same applies to other matters (16).

Such, of course, is the relation among all divine and human perfections.

Wisdom may, furthermore, be considered as a virtue or habit. And under this aspect too it retains its distinction of superiority and pre-eminence. Wisdom is the chief of the intellectual virtues and of the speculative sciences:

Furthermore, he (Aristotle) proves that man's ultimate happiness consists in speculation. Hence it follows that it is not seated in the act of a moral virtue, nor of prudence or art, even though these are intellectual virtues. Consequently, it must be an operation according to wisdom, which is the chief of the three remaining intellectual virtues, namely, wisdom, science and understanding, as he proves in Ethics vi (17).

Then, St. Thomas says that "according to him (Aristotle) wisdom is one of the speculative sciences, the head of the others ..." (18). The intellectual virtue of wisdom, then, is the science of metaphysics, the science par excellence.

(16) IV, 14, Non autem.

(17) III, 44, Patet.

(18) III, 44, Patet. Cf. III, 25, Idem, Quod; II, 4, Si qua vero; G. M. BUCKLEY, M.A., The Nature and Unity of Metaphysics, pp. 209-210.

What is more:

... in man wisdom is a habit perfecting our mind in the knowledge of the highest -- namely divine -- things. And when, through the habit of wisdom there arises in our intellect an idea of divine things, this very idea or inward word is wont to be called wisdom, by that figure of speech whereby acts and effects are denominated from the habits from which they proceed: ... and in this way a man's wise conceptions are called wisdom (19).

Just as all his other acts reveal a man's habits, so also do the acts of the habit of wisdom reveal his wisdom. This intellectual habit perfects man's mind especially in the knowledge of God.

The Function of Metaphysics

He who possesses the knowledge of metaphysics or wisdom has a special function to perform, the function proper to wisdom. It is that of ordering. For "those that are more perfect in knowledge are said to order others. For it belongs to the wise man to order" (20). A higher and more perfect knowledge is required to perform the ordering function of wisdom. The reason for this is that ordering implies the governing of things and the directing

(19) IV, 12, Et ut. In this passage, the Dominican translation has "species" for "effects". The Leonine latin text has "effectus". Cf. IV, 12, Ipsum.

(20) III, 7, Attendendum.

of them so that they may achieve the purpose or end for which they exist. In order to do so, a knowledge of the end or purpose of things must be had:

They are to be called wise who order things rightly and govern them well. ... It belongs to the wise man to order. Now, the rule of government and order for all things directed to an end must be taken from the end. For, since the end of each thing is its good, a thing is then best disposed when it is fittingly ordered to its end (21).

They who are concerned with the ends of particular things possess but a relative degree of wisdom, whereas they who deal with the end of the universe are said to possess absolute wisdom (22).

If things are to be ordered well, they must be known both in their relation to one another and in their relation to their last end, which is at the same time their highest or first cause. But, since it belongs to wisdom to study the particular ends and the last end of things, the function of ordering is proper to it:

Moreover, according to the Philosopher, "it is the office of a wise man to set things in order." For things can be ordered only by knowing their relation and proportion to one another, and to something higher, which is their end; for the order of certain things to one another is for the sake of their order to an end. But only a being endowed with intellect is

(21) I, 1, Multitudinis.

(22) I, 1, Multitudinis.

capable of knowing the mutual relations and proportions of things; and to judge of certain things by the highest cause is the prerogative of wisdom. All ordering, therefore, is necessarily effected by means of the wisdom of a being endowed with intelligence (23).

From this it also follows that metaphysics or wisdom has for its object both God and creatures. The latter are known both in their mutual relations, and in their relation to God; the former is known as the last end and the highest cause of created things.

The possession of the knowledge of the highest cause and of the last end of things enables man to order and direct not only other things but himself as well, that is, his own life and his actions; for "the operations of nature are seen to proceed to the end in an orderly manner even as do the operations of a wise man" (24). And again, "it is contrary to the notion of wisdom that anything should be done in vain in the works of a wise man" (25). Moreover, "the will at times, following the order of wisdom, tends to that effect to which someone is inclined because of a defective passion; for a judge punishes from justice, as the angry man punishes from anger" (26).

(23) II, 24, Amplius.

(24) III, 24, Unde etiam.

(25) III, 69, Item. Contra.

(26) I, 91, Dico autem effectuum.

St. Thomas continues to develop the function of wisdom with regard to the ordering of one's life along the lines of virtue. He says: "For none but the wise, who are few, are able to curb these passions by their reason" (27). And similarly: "But those who follow their natural bent are in the majority, and few, namely, the wise alone, are those who avoid the occasions of ill-doing and who follow not the impulse of nature" (28). And finally: "Every wise man, who uses his power providently, moderates that use in his actions, by directing the purpose and extent of that use; or else his power would not be subject to his wisdom" (29). Man can best order himself, his life and all his actions when he has a knowledge of his relations to his fellow men and especially to his last end, which is his first cause. Such a knowledge is wisdom, and such an ordering is achieved when wisdom is allowed to be the rule of one's life.

This very ordering by man of himself and of other things may also, by extension, be called wisdom. For although wisdom is an intellectual virtue consisting primarily in contemplation, and, as such, is an end in itself,

(27) III, 154, Maligni autom.

(28) III, 85, Manifestum.

(29) III, 76, Item. Omnis.

it is also a principle of the action of ordering, and the external effects of wisdom may be called wisdom as well:

We may go yet further so as to see that even the external effect, which results from the concept of wisdom, may itself be called wisdom: in the same way as an effect may assume the name of its cause. Thus we call it wisdom not only when a man thinks wisely, but also when he works wisely: and therefore the manifestation of divine wisdom in creatures is called the wisdom of God (30).

The Effects of Metaphysics

The possession of the knowledge of the highest being and of all other beings under the aspect of their highest perfection, that is, of being itself, is not without its rewards. It grants to the one who possesses it a certain delight and intellectual pleasure. For Aquinas speaks of "the delight afforded by the contemplation of wisdom, and the acquisition of intelligible truth by our understanding" (31). Moreover, "Aristotle says ... that in the contemplation of wisdom there is a marvellous delight" (32). And still referring to Aristotle, St. Thomas insists that

man's happiness is an operation of his own according to perfect virtue. ... Furthermore, he proves that man's ultimate happiness consists in speculation. Hence it follows that it is not seated in the act of

(30) IV, 13, Sed quia.

(31) IV, 83, Auctoritates.

(32) II, 81, Circa alias.

a moral virtue. ... Consequently, it must be an operation according to wisdom. ... For which reason he declares that the wise man is a happy man (33).

At the beginning of the Summa Contra Gentiles (34), Aquinas speaks of the perfection, nobility, usefulness and delight of wisdom, and he lists its effects as being those of giving man a share in true beatitude, friendship with and a likeness to God, an entrance to the kingdom of immortality. And wisdom is shown to be possessed without any admixture of bitterness. But he is obviously here concerned with supernatural wisdom of which we spoke above (35), rather than natural wisdom. On the natural plane, however, wisdom, which is metaphysics, bestows upon man the highest type of natural happiness.

Metaphysics, then, which in man is wisdom, is possessed by him in dependence on God, but is acquired through his natural knowing process; for it is a natural intellectual virtue. Its special function is that of ordering, and its reward is intellectual delight.

(33) III, 44, Patet.

(34) I, 2, Inter.

(35) Cf. supra, p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

CURRENT THOMISTIC METAPHYSICS AND THE SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES

Thus far we have seen in our study the salient points relevant to the nature of metaphysics as a science, as taught in the Summa Contra Gentiles. At this point we would like to make a practical application of our conclusions by comparing them with those of current studies in Thomistic metaphysics. It must, however, be stated at the outset that such a comparison will be imperfect, since our research is limited to the one work of St. Thomas; the other authors hardly give a reference to this work. They are free to draw on any and all of St. Thomas' works, although in fact they limit themselves in most cases to his De Ente et Essentia and his commentaries on Boethius' De Trinitate and on Aristotle's Metaphysics. Yet, there is the common endeavour to express the thoughts of the Angelic Doctor on the one subject, and this ought to make the comparison not entirely without profit. Because of limitations of purpose and space imposed by this thesis, we shall be restricted to a brief mention of only a few studies on Thomistic metaphysics. Our selection shall be representative of the various trends among Thomistic philosophers rather than comprehensive.

Kane: The Subject of Metaphysics

A fine approach to metaphysics is made by Fr. Kane in an article on the subject of that science (1), but as the article develops, the issue becomes confused. Subject, for him, has the very special meaning of being that which is knowable and which is to be explained in the course of a given science. Thus, although metaphysics considers common being, its attributes, principles and causes, as well as immaterial being, all these are not the subject of metaphysics. The subject in this special sense is being as being. Our concept of being is attained from a knowledge of material things. And after we have learned, through these things, of the existence of immaterial beings, we can form a concept of being which would include both material and immaterial beings. But the subject of metaphysics, Fr. Kane continues, is not the first principles, or God, or the separate substances, not even the attributes of common being, but simply common being as such.

Thus far he is perfectly in keeping with Aquinas' doctrine as contained in the Summa Contra Gentiles, as he is also when he speaks of all the objects of metaphysical inquiry being studied under the aspect of their perfection

(1) W. H. KANE, O.P., "The Subject of Metaphysics".

of being. He goes on, however, to explain that common being as such, in some way includes both substances and accidents, whether material or immaterial, and that the primary subject of metaphysics is substantial being as such, common to material and immaterial beings. Common being, which is a genus of things, is the subject-genus of the science of metaphysics; when understood as including the material and immaterial, it is the proper or formal subject of metaphysics.

Fr. Kane makes his departure from the doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles by venturing the statement that being, as common to immaterial and material things, is the first, proper and formal subject of metaphysics. When he speaks of immaterial being, he does not include God in that notion, but rather seems to limit it to finite things; for he says that the First Principle of being as such is above common being and all the modes of common being. Still it is difficult to see how even this restricted universal concept, including finite immaterial beings, can be said to be the primary, proper or formal subject of metaphysics, unless by such a subject he would mean something other than that which the terms would naturally seem to indicate. The difficulty is all the greater when we are faced with his own insistence upon sensory things as the origin of our concept of being, and his express statement that a knowledge of immater-

ial beings is not had at the start of metaphysics, and that such a knowledge is necessary before we can generalize our concept of being to include both material and immaterial things. For when we spoke above about ens ut ens having a reference to finite things (2), these finite things were essentially sensory. And from what we said in the sections dealing with the mode of our acquiring knowledge and with the hierarchy of order among the objects of metaphysics (3), it is apparent that the knowledge of immaterial beings, even finite ones, cannot be had at the beginning of metaphysics. And that the knowledge of which we do not possess at the outset of metaphysics cannot be said to be its primary subject. For if we are not aware of the existence of a thing, we cannot know anything else about it.

Renard: St. Thomas' Approach
to Metaphysics

In a recent article Fr. Renard (4) discusses the approach of St. Thomas himself to metaphysics. He too is concerned with the subject of metaphysics. The subject of

(2) Cf. supra, pp. 20-24.

(3) Cf. supra, pp. 28 ff. and 36 ff.

(4) H. RENARD, S.J., "What is St. Thomas' Approach to Metaphysics".

a science, for him, is that to which predicates are attributed according to a definite modus considerandi. This subject in metaphysics is ens commune or ens ut ens, which is limited to finite being. It does not and cannot embrace God. God is studied in metaphysics not as its subject but as the first cause of its subject, that is, the cause of being as being, the cause of all reality. The subject of metaphysics considers things that can exist without matter. But no knowledge of their existence is necessary to understand and formulate, Fr. Renard insists, ens inquantum ens, the subject of metaphysics.

God is studied specifically in natural theology, which is the last chapter of metaphysics. In this science the subject is ens transcendentale, and God is a part of this subject. It is only here that both God and creatures are included in the concept of being. Such a concept is needed at the beginning of this special science as the first of all the predicables and the foundation for all predication. The concept of transcendental being is attained through a consideration of divine being and created being. It is the subject of a metaphysics which is concerned with divine being and creatures. Divine being is a part of the subject of this special metaphysics.

Now, how does all this appear in the light of Aquinas' metaphysical doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles?

There is perfect agreement with regard to the fact that that which metaphysics first studies is the perfection of being of finite things. However, we must insist, there is a point in metaphysics itself when ens commune is conceived as applying to both God and creatures. For if God is to be studied in metaphysics as the first principle of all things, as Renard himself asserts, this necessarily implies that we attain His existence and formulate a concept of being which can be predicated of both God and creatures. There is no basis, therefore, for insisting upon a special metaphysics with God for its special object. Common being is transcendental being, or at least it becomes so at the final stage of our metaphysics (5). St. Thomas conceived of one metaphysics only, which studies both God and creatures, at separate stages, of course, under the aspect of perfection of being.

Fr. Renard remarks that the subject of metaphysics is concerned with things that can exist without matter, and, apparently, these would be included in the ens ut ens of finite things. But how can we extend our concept of being to include things that exist without matter before we know that they actually exist, as he says we can? And since the concept of being which we first attain is found in things

(5) Cf. supra, pp. 24-26.

that are not only finite but also sensory (6) how can it embrace things that can exist without matter at the beginning of metaphysics? Or, to put it in another way, how can spiritual substances be included in the subject of metaphysics if the subject is that to which predicates are attributed in a science. Such a subject must be known at the beginning of the science.

Owens: The Approach to Thomistic
Metaphysics

In an article on the approach to Thomistic metaphysics (7), Fr. J. Owens, C.Ss.R., deals with the question whether being as being in metaphysics is to be considered a predicate by the analysis of logic, or as a subject by the results of natural philosophy. He rejects both these alternatives and suggests that being is something that does not fit either classification, but is attained by a procedure which is, from the very start on the metaphysical level.

With regard to the subject of metaphysics, Fr. Owens

(6) Cf. supra, pp. 36 ff.

(7) J. OWENS, C.Ss.R., "A Note on the Approach to Thomistic Metaphysics".

insists repeatedly that it is being as being, distinct from and non-inclusive of God and the separate substances.

The approach to metaphysics through logic, in which case being as being would be a predicate, has, according to Owens, a number of shortcomings. In such an approach, being, the subject of metaphysics, is a mere conceptual expression severed from its basis of actual existence. It is acquired by reflection and is thought of as a common notion existing only in the intellect. This common being, extending to God and creatures, is the subject of metaphysics. But, observes Fr. Owens, the subject of metaphysics ought to be the most common being, which must be based upon the being which things have in themselves, and not upon the being which they acquire in cognition.

Natural philosophy, on the other hand, simply cannot provide a doctrinal approach to metaphysics, since it cannot rise above form as the nature of act, and cannot conceive form as a potency to a further act. There is, however, a slight probability that the prior study of natural philosophy may pedagogically be helpful to the study of metaphysics.

Fr. Owen's proposed approach, then, is one which from the start would be properly neither logical nor physical, but metaphysical. It would begin with the being which is

grasped, through judgment, as an act of sensible things, From this being one would proceed to the ultimate principle and cause of that being, God. And then in the light of that principle it would treat whatever comes under the proper subject of metaphysics.

The De Ente et Essentia, continues Fr. Owens, comes the closest to presenting a complete outline of Thomistic metaphysics, and may be considered a typical procedure in that science. In this procedure, one acquires the notion of act and potency not from natural philosophy, but by a comparison of being with non-being. And this ought to be the proper approach to Thomistic metaphysics.

The general outline of metaphysical procedure, which is to begin with the being of sensory things, proceed to the ultimate principle of being, and in that light study all that comes under the proper subject of metaphysics, is actually a putting into words of what Aquinas does throughout the Summa Contra Gentiles. Most everything he says about finite being is considered in the light of the first principle. And this method for him is wisdom.

We should, however, point out that rather than attempt to read into any one work of Aquinas a typical approach to metaphysics, it would be more in keeping with the principles of scientific methodology and historical

research to study all of his works before attempting to establish a definitive Thomistic approach.

With regard to his discussion of the logical approach, it is true that common being is a conceptual expression. St. Thomas says so himself (8). But we cannot say that such a transcendental concept, extending to God and creatures can be the subject of metaphysics, for such a concept is acquired only at the term of metaphysics. That does not mean, however, that we study concepts, but rather the things which possess the perfection corresponding to the concept of being. In this way, common being, the subject of metaphysics, is based upon the being which things have in themselves, and not on the being which they acquire in cognition.

As concerns the approach through natural philosophy, the Summa Contra Gentiles insists upon its necessity to precede the study of metaphysics (9). It is true that in natural philosophy we cannot conceive form as a potency to a further act, but without our knowledge of the form as the act of a material being, where would we even acquire the notion of potency and act?

(8) I, 26, Adhuc. Cf. supra, p. 42.

(9) I, 4, Sequerentur. Cf. supra, pp. 8-9.

Since Fr. Owens inveighs against the notion of being as a mere conceptual expression, it would be interesting to know what kind of concept is acquired from the comparison of being with non-being, and how will it then be applied to God. In any case, throughout the Summa Contra Gentiles, St. Thomas insists upon acquiring a concept of being from sensible things which would be applied to God and creatures. But he never suggests the process of comparing being with non-being in order to arrive at the object of metaphysics.

Deandrea: The Subject and Object of Metaphysics

The subject and object of Thomistic metaphysics is discussed in a rather lengthy article by Fr. Mariano Deandrea, O.P. (10). He makes an attempt to distinguish between the subject and object of a science on the basis of St. Thomas' use of these terms. His doctrine, however, on metaphysics as a science closely approaches the conclusions we reached from our study.

Metaphysics is a study of reality as such, or being as such, and all that pertains to it by way of attributes, or principles or causes. Thus, it is the study of the first

(10) M. DEANDREA, O.P., "Soggetto e oggetto della metafisica ... " Cf. M. A. GLUTZ, C.P., "The Formal Subject of Metaphysics". His conclusions are much the same as those of Deandrea.

causes or principles of things. And among all these, God is the principal object of metaphysics, and the knowledge of Him is its last end.

He sets down the conclusions of his study in a series of four propositions. The first of these asserts that the being as being which Aristotle defines as the subject or formal object of metaphysics can only be common being, or predicamental, and, consequently, finite being. The second assertion states that ens inquantum ens is a finite being, resulting from the third degree of abstraction by which the universal ratio of being is abstracted from all matter. Being as subject of metaphysics is the result not of a simple abstraction, total or formal, but of a separation, or of an apprehension, in a judgment, of the ratio of being as not necessarily connected with matter, or as really separable from it. By this separation, the notion of being becomes actually transcendental so as to embrace all material and spiritual beings as revealed directly in a sensible reality, and absolutely transcendental so as to embrace finite and infinite spiritual realities, as known through their virtual implication in the ratio of being, abstracted from sensible reality. God, however, and angels, he asserts in his third proposition, cannot be in any way the subject of metaphysics. They can, nonetheless, he concludes in his fourth assertion, be the object of meta-

physics, inasmuch as the object of a science must include all that may be known in the formal ratio of the subject, that is, all that may be contained in the virtual implication of the definition of the subject of a science.

Thus God and the separate substances enter metaphysics because of their relation to finite or common being, and are contained in it as a cause in its effect. In other words, the sole subject of metaphysics is ens ut ens of finite being, known by a separating process of the mind. God and separate substances enter metaphysics as its material object, which includes all that may be known by an analysis of the virtuality of a subject, either as a property or as a cause.

To attribute absolute transcendality to common being, the subject of metaphysics, is to give it a value which can be known only as a conclusion of the metaphysical analysis of being as being. And by doing so, one would identify the point of departure and the point of arrival of metaphysics. Theodicy in Thomistic philosophy can be but a chapter of the general metaphysics of finite being.

These conclusions come very close to the metaphysical doctrine of the Summa Contra Gentiles. For in the course of our study we have seen that metaphysics is con-

cerned with being as such and all that pertains to it (11); that God is the principal and most noble object of metaphysics and its last end (12); that being as being has a finite connotation, but from it we can attain a concept of being which would also apply to God. We have seen, furthermore, that the being as being at the beginning of metaphysics cannot include God, since it is limited at that stage to finite things. God, however, is to be studied in metaphysics under the perfection of being. But we realize the transcendentalty of that concept only at the conclusion of metaphysics (13). Thus, we have a remarkable confluence of conclusions of two separate and independent studies.

At the risk of spoiling the unity of this thesis, we have included this chapter on current Thomistic metaphysics in order to indicate vividly the differences among the approaches to that science, and to stress the need for a thorough and systematic study of the writings of the Angelic Doctor himself. The comments on the articles were

(11) I, 70, Patet autem - cf. supra, p. 5; II, 37, Et hanc - cf. supra, pp. 17-18; II, 83, Adhuc. Cum natura - cf. supra, pp. 28-29.

(12) I, 70, Patet autem - cf. supra, pp. 6 and 39; III, 25, Item. Quod - cf. supra, p. 9.

(13) Cf. supra, pp. 20-26.

offered by way of constructive criticism, and we do not pretend that the Summa Contra Gentiles, or our study of it, has said the last word on metaphysics as a science. But, at least, as a result of our research, we do know what is said on metaphysics in that work, and we hope to have thus contributed a solid stone to the reconstruction of the edifice of the historical Thomistic metaphysics.

C O N C L U S I O N

Having reached the end of our research and study, we shall now summarize briefly all that has been discussed, and state the conclusions we have attained.

Metaphysics, first philosophy and wisdom are diverse names for the one science, the science which includes among its objects all things, from God to beings in potentiality, and studies them under the aspect of their perfection of being. The first being is the principal object studied, and because of it, metaphysics is the most noble of the sciences. The first being is studied as the principle and last end of all things, and the knowledge of Him is the purpose of metaphysics.

Finite things are studied in themselves and in their relation to their principle and end. The common or universal being which metaphysics properly studies is primarily the perfection of finite things. The concept of being, however, can also be extended to include the infinite being. In order to determine what is that which is the first known and that through which all else is known, we must study the manner in which the various objects of metaphysics are known by us. This mode will be the mode of our acquisition of all human knowledge, for metaphysics is necessarily a natural human science.

The first, natural and essential object of the human intellect is the perfection of being of finite sensory things, and on the knowledge of it is based our knowledge of first principles, and consequently, all our knowledge, even our natural knowledge of God. It follows, then, that that which is first known in metaphysics is the perfection of being of finite things. After the existence of God is realised, this concept of being can be extended to its full transcendentality so as to embrace God as well as creatures. This occurs at the final stage of our metaphysical inquiry. God, however, though last known, remains the most noble object known in metaphysics.

The fact that the perfection of being is said of both God and creatures brings to the fore the problem of analogy. When St. Thomas expressly speaks of analogy he has in mind the analogy of causal relation or attribution. But when he is concerned with explaining the common predication of perfections of God and creatures, he brings in the analogy of intrinsic possession or proper proportionality. But in most cases when he does speak of the latter, he also mentions the causal relation.

Returning to the nature of metaphysics, we find that in man it is something for which he is dependent on God, just as he is dependent on Him in being and action.

This, however, does not dispense him from a personal effort in its acquisition. In man it is a participation of divine wisdom and is acquired through the study of creatures. The proper function of metaphysics is to order things to their respective ends. This implies a knowledge of the last end of all things. It also helps to order one's own life and actions. Metaphysics or wisdom causes in man the highest possible natural happiness. This is intellectual delight.

The study on current articles on Thomistic metaphysics shows the different approaches to the reconstruction of that science. Everyone agrees at the outset that the subject of metaphysics is the perfection of being of finite things. In further elaboration, however, this seems to be forgotten, and spiritual substances, and even God Himself is, in one way or another, re-introduced into the subject. The point to keep in mind, it seems, is that that whose existence is to be proved in the course of a science, cannot be the subject of that science. This study indicates clearly that the only approach to the reconstruction of Thomistic metaphysics is the systematic study of the writings of St. Thomas himself.

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A B S T R A C T

The general historical study of the works of St. Thomas under the aspect of metaphysics has for its purpose the reconstruction of Thomistic metaphysics. This thesis is a contribution to that study. In its present form it is concerned with metaphysics as a science as exposed in the Summa Contra Gentiles.

The first chapter considers the texts which deal with the objects of metaphysics and shows that God holds a special place in metaphysical inquiry. Created things are studied both in themselves and with regard to their principle and end, and especially under the aspect of their perfection of being. For it is proper to metaphysics to study common or universal being, which in most cases is considered to be the perfection of finite things. Common being can, however, also be considered a perfection applicable to God and creatures. Thus, among the objects of metaphysics there are finite and infinite things. To establish an order among these objects, we turn to a study of texts which deal with our mode of acquiring knowledge, and we find that we must necessarily begin with finite sensory things. For on the knowledge of these is based our knowledge of being and the first principles of being. Therefore, finite things are first in our order of knowledge. God, however, is the most noble object of metaphysics, even if He is the last known by us. It follows, then, that at the outset of metaphysics

we know the perfection of being of finite things alone, and only at the term, after proving the existence of God, are we able to see the concept of being in its full transcend-ality as applying to God and creatures. God is not the first known and that through which all else is known, but He is the most noble object known in metaphysics.

Since the perfection of being is possessed by God and creatures, we study, in the second chapter, the analogy of being. When Aquinas employs the term of analogy, he has in mind the analogy of causal relation or attribution. But when he deals with perfections said of God and creatures, he speaks of intrinsic possession on both sides, and therefore has the elements of the analogy of proper proportionality.

In the third chapter we treat of the origin of metaphysics in man. He is dependent for it upon God as he is in being and action. The function proper to metaphysics or wisdom is to order, and to do so effectively, one must possess the knowledge of the last end of things. The reward of wisdom is a natural happiness.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, we discuss four recent articles on metaphysics in order to bring out the differences that are to be found in the various approaches to metaphysics and to stress the need for a systematic study of the writings of Aquinas himself.